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ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

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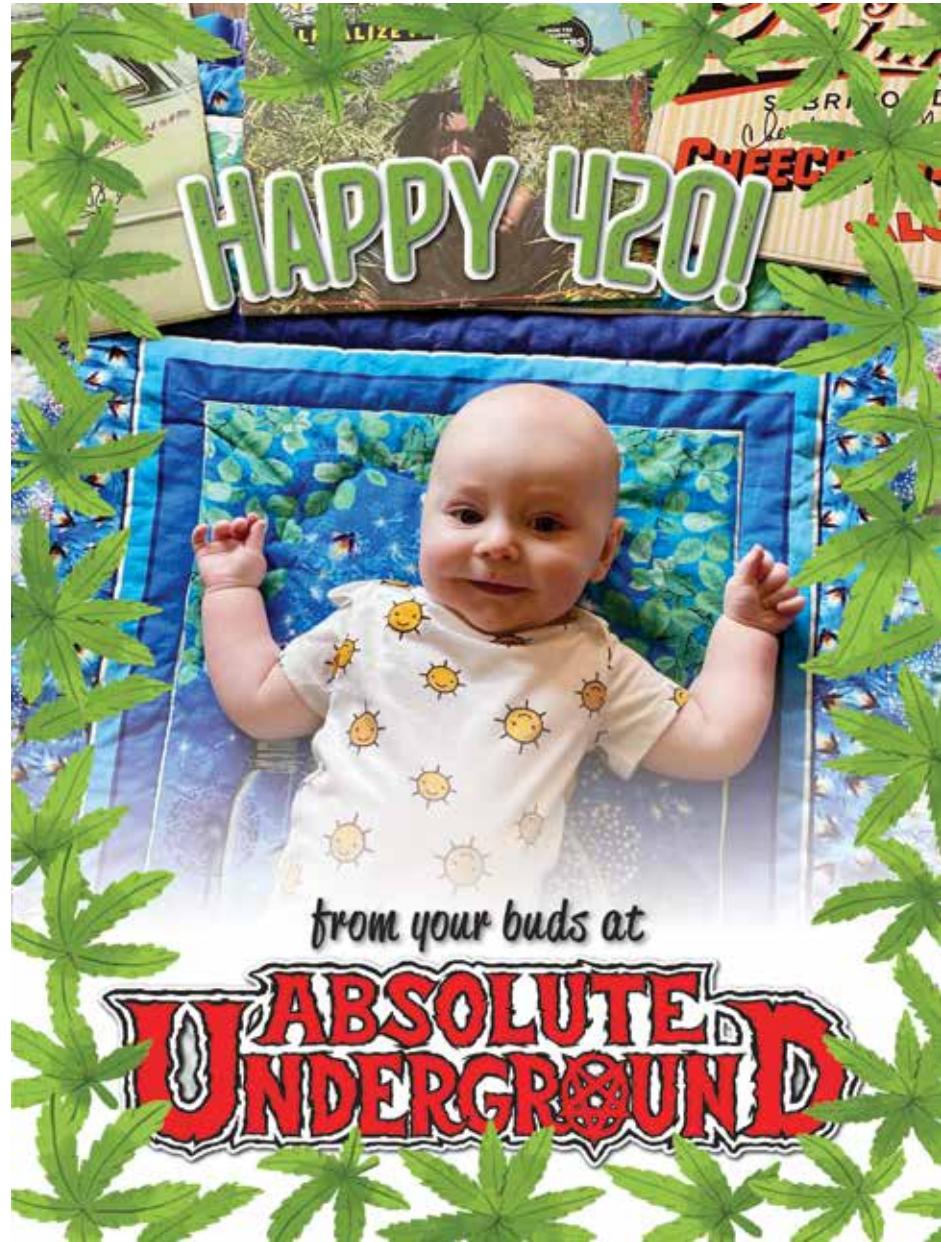
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Poubelles

Chat and photographs: John Carlow/Finding Charlotte Photography

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves.

Poubelles:
Amber Banman- Drums and Lead Vocal
Former bands: Last Chance
Anna Pascal, Aztec, Razorvoice
Kent Bendall-Bass guitar, backup vocal
Former bands: Budokon, Cable Vision, Astro Zombies
Stephen J Horak-Guitar, backing vocal
Former bands: The

Laundronauts, Captain Cook and the Nootka Sound, Waffle House 5

AU: Interesting name. How did that come about?

Poubelles: Originally, back in 2018 we were calling

VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

Teenage Violets, Weirdly Green, Tower of Dudes, Johnny Graves

AU: Recording/ releases?

Poubelles: We released a six-song self-titled EP in Feb of 2020, right before the pandemic. Released a single "Spellbooks and Fishhooks" in 2021. Moving forward we will be releasing new material as singles regularly and have a music video in the works for the next one coming up!!

AU: What's the plan for this band?

Poubelles: Keep making rock and roll and entertaining people! With the restrictions lifting and shows opening again we want to take full



ourselves Panzer Panda, haha. We tossed a handful

of ideas around. The phrase "hot garbage" was used around the studio but felt like we were more polished than that label. Our band is basically the representation of every "Classy vs Trashy" party you've been to, and that's when the suggestion of the French translation came up, and so The Poubelles were born!

AU: What kind of music can people expect when they listen to your band?

Poubelles: Peppy and loud! Guitar-based rock and roll with garage and pop punk influences.

AU: What is the creative process for your band?

Poubelles: Steve and Kent usually initially bring in a riff or idea and Amber, musing about life, love, or broken appliances will write the melody and lyrics while building the drums parts to coincide.

AU: What bands have influenced what you create and play?

Poubelles: All three of us pull inspiration from different genres, our selection of covers definitely points towards that. Steve yelled "The Evaporators!" Haha.

AU: What can people expect to see when they catch a live Poubelles set?

Poubelles: We're having a good time, all the time. We are trying to entertain each other just as much as reaching the audience. Amber often tries to sneak Steve's name into the lyrics of a song, or to change it up she'll sing a few songs out in front with either guitar in hand or milk crate under feet. And expect a strong power stance from Steve.

AU: Who do you cover in live shows?

Poubelles: We've got a variety:

"Chaise Longue" -Wet Leg

"20th Century Boy" -T.Rex

"Three Small Words" -Josie and the Pussycats

"Honeymoon" - The Muffs

"Beat Your Heart Out" -The Distillers (with Amber hopping up on guitar.)

AU: Most unusual/ funny thing to happen at a Poubelles show?

Poubelles: Kent fainted out of the blue at a Vinyl Envy show with Weirdly Green! Due to things he both did and did not consume... hit the deck in the middle of their set.

AU: Who are some of the memorable bands you have been billed with?

Poubelles: Start with the Cobra, The Castagnes,

advantage and go full speed ahead, festivals, bigger shows, the works.

AU: Any last thoughts?

Poubelles: Support independent and local everything!

www.facebook.com/thepoubelles/

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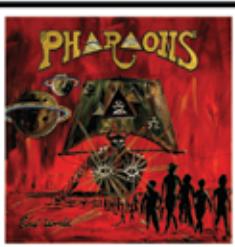
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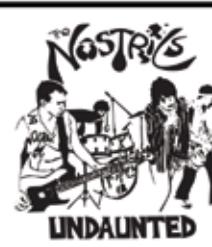
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War For Your Money

Interview by Heath Fenton

So I stumbled upon this intriguing Vancouver band. Very stoney and all over the map but in a precise way. Easy on the ears but still heavy as a truck. If you dig those psychedelic stoner type bands from Sweden, well there is a similar band of that ilk right here in Vancouver. So I spoke to the very humble bass player and this is what he had to say.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to, and what are you infamous for?

DG: I'm Darryl Greer. I've been a bass player and a writer in this town for more than 15 years, which means I'm wildly unpopular and generally unwelcome in most circles. But folks may know me from such bands as Trophy Wife, Revenger, or Harvest the Infection.

AU: How did you four gents wind up playing

music together as War For Your Money?

DG: I met Riley, the lead singer, at a weekly karaoke night where we bonded over a mutual love of alcohol and general malcontented feelings toward the state of the world. It took us a year of drunkenly running into each other before even disclosing we were musicians. Then one night he said he needed a bass player and it just so happened I had just become a free agent again.

AU: What were some challenges of getting a new band together during these Covid times?

DG: We played our third show ever on March 13th, 2020. Then the entire world changed a few days later. Masks. Vaccines. Social distancing. No shows for the foreseeable future. It was beyond fucked up. But man makes plans, God laughs as it's said. Being an atheist offers cold comfort in such moments.

AU: Tell us a bit about the new album *Buyer's Remorse*



VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

DG: *Buyer's Remorse* is the culmination of years of songwriting by Riley and Matt and Adrian, and I came in a little after the fact except on a few tracks. When I joined the band they had about a half a dozen songs, but they weren't as heavy and dynamic and intense as they could be. I kind of just came in, wrote and arranged a bit, and told them to turn on their distortion pedals.

AU: The name of the band is quite interesting and fitting with the times and basically history. How did the band name come about?

DG: War For Your Money was the name of a Trophy

Wife song that never got recorded, and we only got to perform it a few times before breaking up. I was always hearing ads about getting "more for your money," and in the backdrop was seemingly perpetual war. Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, the list goes on. It's all state-sponsored death and violence and victimisation. The idea that taxpayer dollars fund these actions is repugnant and outrageous. It's 2022, and instead of having flying cars and colonies on the moon, we're still fighting Nazis and dealing with anti-vaxxers. It's complete madness and we're probably doomed, but I digress...

AU: What are some of the lyrical themes explored in the music?

DG: Riley writes all the lyrics and his experience as a guy from small town Revelstoke before the move to Vancouver plays into a lot of it. It's more personal than political I can say, but his words have always struck me as those of a man trying to make his own way in a world that's trying to crush him.

AU: If you had to describe War For Your Money's music for someone who has never heard the band, what would you tell them?

DG: We're a rock and roll band, first and foremost I would say. But we have some progressive elements and grungy throw-back elements as well.

AU: With things now opening up for bands to do their thing, what do you look forward to most on the horizon for War For Your Money?

DG: We're open to whatever comes our way. We're still a new band, so we need to play live a lot more and pay our dues above all else.

AU: Besides the album *Buyer's Remorse*, does War For Your Money have some new music?

DG: We have a lot of new and unrecorded material on the go. Our first album was recorded in 2019 and released a year later into a changed world. We got a lot of time to refine it, but our newer material is more intense for sure.

AU: With every "scene" being on relative pause for the last two years, how do you think War For Your Money will emerge and fit into Vancouver's music scene?

DG: It's hard to say how things will take shape once the pandemic is truly over. Our hope is that the pent-up demand for live music is big enough to sustain the many venues that were devastated by the closures.

You can find War For Your Money on Spotify, YouTube, Bandcamp. And stay tuned for the video for the first single "Nothing to Fake," set to be released soon. It is safe to say that they will be around town, too.



Mares Of Thrace

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

TREZ: I'm Trez, I play baritone guitar and yell. I'm famous for signing "Ronnie James Dio" whenever anyone asks for my autograph.

CASEY: I am Casey Rogers and around these parts I'm known as the guy who regularly gets forcibly removed from Indian buffets. I've also been a very active musician in the Calgary metal scene. You may remember me from such bands as Caveat, Greybeard, Exit Strategy and Truck.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band. What



possible.

TREZ: Like a grouchy nerd made a doom, sludge, hardcore, and noise rock mixtape, then dropped it in a dumpster full of industrial waste.

CASEY: Dark and fierce with moments of vulnerability. I think with my playing on the record this time around, the sound has evolved into a more churning mechanical feel. With

are you all about?

TREZ: Stef and I started the band in 2009 or so because we wanted to make evil slow riffs in a basement, just the two of us. It turned out to be really fun. We put out two records, did a bunch of touring, then took a very long hiatus to do job stuff. Stef, alas, is currently occupied with literally saving people's lives, whereas I'm still an irresponsible chaos goblin, so Casey volunteered to play drums.

CASEY: I was actually around during the formation of the band. I recorded some demos for the first two albums and have been friends

with both Trez and Stef for years before that. I was intrigued with their new direction in comparison to the hardcore punk vibe of their previous band.

AU: Describe the band's sound if

TREZ: "My turn-ons include tube amps and good manners. My turn-offs include Jordan Peterson."

CASEY: Oh man. The few dates I've had and including my current relationship were all initiated in person. I'd probably need to have some sort of flatulence disclaimer on my profile if I made one

playing both drum and bass, I was able to ensure that both instruments worked together to support and hammer home all of Trez's riffs and vocals.

AU: Where is the band from and what is the local scene like?

CASEY: The Calgary scene despite the pandemic has proven to be resilient. The bands that managed to stay active have had some very successful shows since the reopening.

AU: Who is in the band and what would it say on your dating profiles?

TREZ: "My turn-ons include tube amps and good manners. My turn-offs include Jordan Peterson."

CASEY: Oh man. The few dates I've had and including my current relationship were all initiated in person. I'd probably need to have some sort of flatulence disclaimer on my profile if I made one

AU: Have you or are you releasing a new album soon? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

TREZ: Full-length #3, *The Exile*, is out March 25th on Sonic Union Recs!

AU: Does the latest album explore any particular themes or topics? Who did the album artwork?

TREZ: Yes, it's about leaving your home and never being able to return, hence the name. I did all the art.

AU: Any stand-out tracks or singles you are stoked on?

TREZ: "Onward, Ever Onward" contains the best riffs I've ever written, I'm probably never going to top it and should probably just give up now.

CASEY: "Mortal Quarry," always got me going.

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?



CALGARY CARNAGE

TREZ: Honestly I had it on EZ-mode. I hate leaving the house and talking to people.

CASEY: I've managed to keep myself busy throughout most of the pandemic. My day job didn't shut down and I managed to complete two other albums alongside *The Exile*. I'd say keeping yourself occupied is a good strategy.

AU: Any live shows or tours planned for the near future?

EVERYONE: HELL YEAH, BROTHER! TBA.

AU: What's the craziest thing to ever happen on stage during one of your shows?

CASEY: I had a light rack fall on me once at a festival show.

That was pretty crazy.

AU: This is our 420 issue. Are there any chronics in the band? If so, what are some of the best strains to smoke?

TREZ: Sorry, I lead an upright, god-fearing lifestyle, and everyone knows smoking the devil's lettuce is a direct gateway to demonic possession..... hahahahahaha jk

CASEY: I consume cannabis in various forms, but I'm no connoisseur. I like a good strong sativa leaning strain for non fun things like doing dishes or laundry and a nice easy indica strain to unwind after a stressful day. Otherwise I like to keep a clear head most of the time.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

CASEY: Peace and long life

TREZ: Was that a Star Trek reference? I'm super into it if so.

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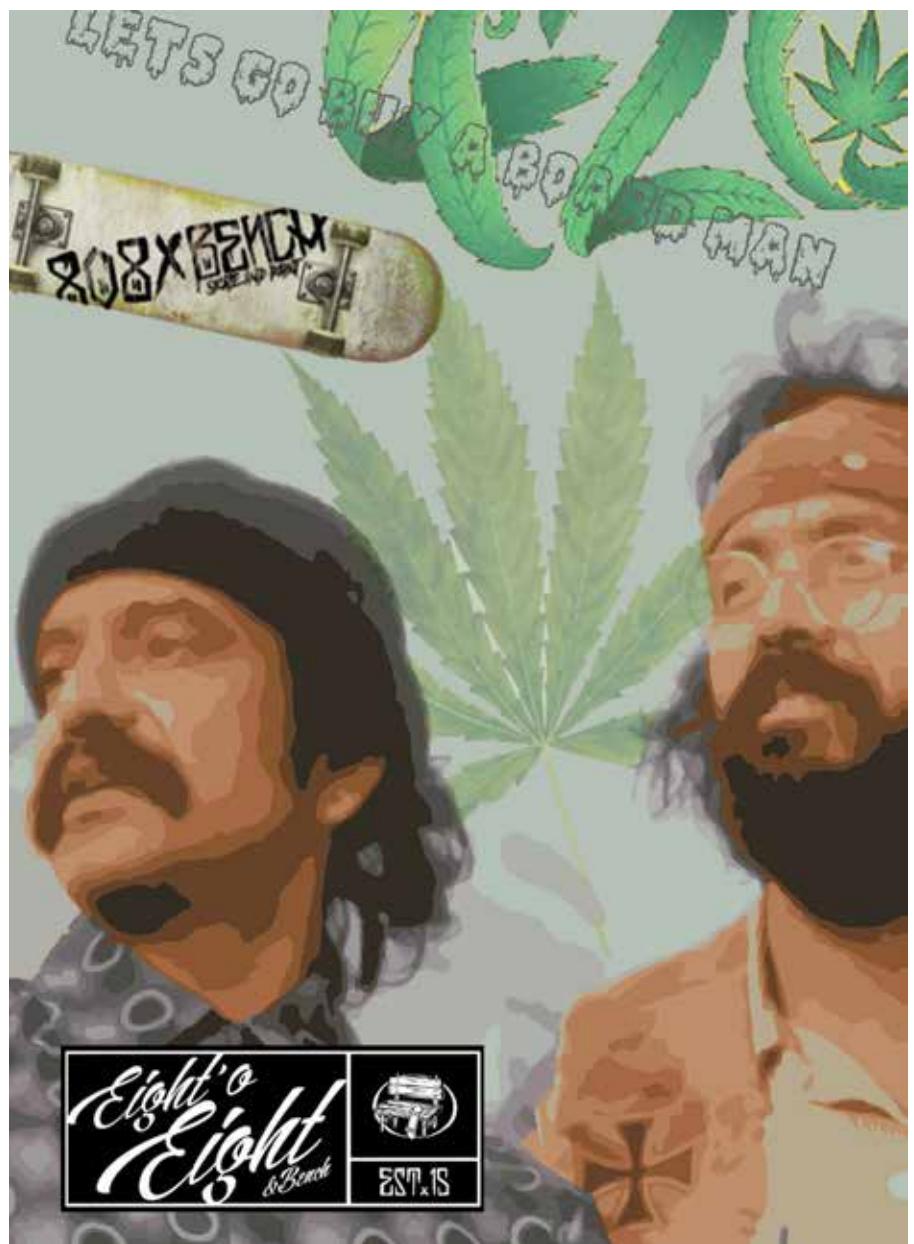
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Falamh

Absolute Underground: For those unfamiliar with the band, what can you tell us about Falamh?

Kyle Tayler: We are a melodic black/death metal band based in Northern Ontario, Canada. Formed in 2019 out of the need for a creative outlet and artistic expression for extreme music.

AU: You just released your sophomore EP, "Aeons Effigy," how do you feel this record compares to your debut? Any plans for a full-length?

KT: I prefer not to compare them since in many ways "Aeons Effigy" is more of a continuation of "The Unbound Beyond." Both lyrically and musically. The material was written simultaneously and either release could've had any of the tracks switched around. That being said, there are different aspects that I enjoy from each. For example, "The Unbound Beyond" has longer acoustic and clean parts. As for a full-length, that is currently the plan and writing has already begun!

AU: We really enjoyed your track and video for "Winds of Silence," the scenery from North Bay looks very beautiful. Have you found that your geographical surroundings are an influence on your songwriting?

KT: Very much so. The outdoors has already been a big inspiration and part of my life. Growing up in a rural area had a profound effect on me. Going on walks along the trails or climbing trees and just enjoying the sounds of nature was an almost daily occurrence. The North Bay area has tons of amazing little spots for camping, a personal

favourite hobby of mine. You can just pack up the canoe and paddle to some little island and just getaway.



AU: We read that, "The concept for this EP is about the journey and discovery of oneself and the transformation effects that occur." What was the learning experience when writing this EP for you and the band?

KT: That nothing turns out the way you think it will. But I guess that can be said about most things in life! The overarching concept didn't really start revealing itself until late in the writing process. The narrative just started happening and I thought to myself, "I guess I need to get this out of my system," and instead of fighting I tried to naturally have it come out. With this EP and the first one as well, we learned a lot about what NOT to do. From a recording/production and writing standpoint. They're always things that you aren't happy with but at some point, you have to say, "I can live with it," or else it'll never come out.

AU: Are there plans for the band to tour in Canada or beyond?

KT: We're gearing up for some live shows but currently, there are no plans to hit the road for any prolonged period of time. Whether that changes or not remains to be seen.

AU: Anything else you like to add about for our readers?

KT: We hope you enjoyed what you've heard and we'll see you on the road. Thanks for checking us out!

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Time Capsule Old Photographs

When : August 30, 2012

Where : Tavern of the Damned (Logans)
Victoria BC

Bands : Spectres/ Red Dons/ The Estranged/ No Problem

One of the cool things about buying more file storage is moving old stuff onto it. Like emptying old boxes from the basement, you stop and look at stuff you've forgotten. In my early years of shooting everything from downtown parks to bands I was really bad at cataloging image



Back in the summer of 2012, I was shooting the local scene, occasionally venturing into festival lineups or names that demanded a bigger stage. A solid home and foundation for the best parts of a live scene was the local underground. Did a lot of my music/photography education at the now closed Logans (I prefer Tavern of the Damned). Rising Scum Festival was around that time, and I'd just seen Last of the V8 Interceptors. In August of 2012 on a Thursday night in Victoria I caught four out of town bands I had never experienced. Red Dons (Portland) Deranged/ The Estranged (Portland) Dirtnap / No Problem (Edmonton) Deranged and Spectres (Vancouver), were on a Logans show.



The bill was a Talks Cheap gig, (still downtown at the time) built on a Red Dons tour going up the coast at the time. After some band shuffle to make a Vic date work, a ten buck Thursday night gig at Logans was assembled. Historically there have been many bands on stacked bills that draw nobody for various reasons. This particular Thursday night was a flatline turnout. I was lucky enough to see these talented bands and have lotta room to move around to shoot them. Did what I could with the mostly dark stage. Those who wandered through what was lit I managed to capture. The bands were fed, had a few beers, place to stay for the night, and a few bucks in hand on the pocket of the promoter. I do remember everyone playing like the joint was packed. I appreciate bands that make that effort.

Red Dons are still out there. From the band: "We are still active. The pandemic derailed what was going to be a busy year of touring. For the first time in over a decade, most of us live in Portland again. Only Daniel Husayn our bassist lives elsewhere. He is in Munich. We hope to release a new record and hit the road a little bit once things calm down regarding Covid. We have band practice tonight actually! Ha!"

According to their label, The Estranged went inactive but still play the occasional show. For No Problem, front man Graeme Mackinnon says "No Problem is currently on hiatus as our bass man Matt is set to have his first child. In the meantime, Steve is doing a hardcore fanzine called @ absolutetruthzine and I have just started a new project Called Home Front. Either way the band



folders. If I did a show with four bands or a small festival, I wasn't naming those files. Add on a few years and the band names get more difficult to recall, especially if they aren't still active. There's lots of good sources I can run stuff by now, but occasionally I'll get stumped. Everything is well organized now and this many years on, shooting and editing skill has bumped up a few notches. On occasion I'll open a folder of source files and if I see something I like, I might take another whack at bringing out those (usually) dark, old photos. Recently found an old, unmarked folder, took another stab at producing the source files, then tried to remember what I was looking at.



will be back, so keep your ear to the ground." Spectres have released three more albums since 2012 including the amazing 2020 release *Nostalgia*. I'm a huge fan of their work.

Just a glimpse into a previously unmarked folder on my storage drives. Lessons learned; always label your photographs, and even if you're getting to the party late, you can always discover a great band from years past.

Words/ Images – John Carlow (Finding Charlotte Photography)

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Jazz Cigarette

By Sheldon Byer

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

CO: My name is Cody and I play bass and do vocals for Jazz Cigarette. I am blissfully unaware what I am most infamous for.

AU: Give us a brief history of Jazz Cigarette, who is in the band and what are you all about?

CO: We are three friends who have played in many different bands over the years. Mostly punk and metal, but

we decided to start a Rock n Roll band. We originally started as a 5 piece under a different name. Now it's a trio consisting of Eric on drums, Tyler on guitar and myself.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

CO: Heavy Rock n Roll.

AU: When can we expect a full length? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

CO: We are hoping to record a full length this year. We were all set up to do so right before the last set of covid restrictions kicked in and fucked everything up. Songs are ready to go, just gotta get in the studio. You can expect songs similar to our demo...just more of them.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

CO: I'm pretty stoked on all the songs we are gonna record, but the one that stands out for



of fun at our shows.

AU: Any cool bands you've gigged with that we don't know about?

CO: Shows have been few and far between the last couple years for obvious reasons. We recently just did a couple of shows with Traveler, WMD and Torcher. Before that we played with our friends Tekarra, Death Knell and Malicious Intent. Looking forward to playing more gigs soon.

AU: How do people find Jazz Cigarette online?

CO: All the basic sites. Facebook, YouTube etc. You can download our demo on Bandcamp <https://jazzcigarette420.bandcamp.com/album/no-filter-demo>

SHR-EDMONTON

me is "SlowBurn," because it is a lot longer and a lot slower than all our other tracks. It's the one you light a Jazz Cigarette to.

AU: What are Jazz Cigarette's biggest influences classic & modern?

CO: Bands like Motorhead, AC/DC, Judas Priest, Thin Lizzy, Midnight.

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?

CO: Wash your hands.

AU: Are you guys going to get your own logo or just keep jacking shit?

CO: I don't know what you are talking about.

AU: What makes a Jazz Cigarette show unique?

CO: Not that it's unique, but we like to be a party band. We like to have some drinks and have lot

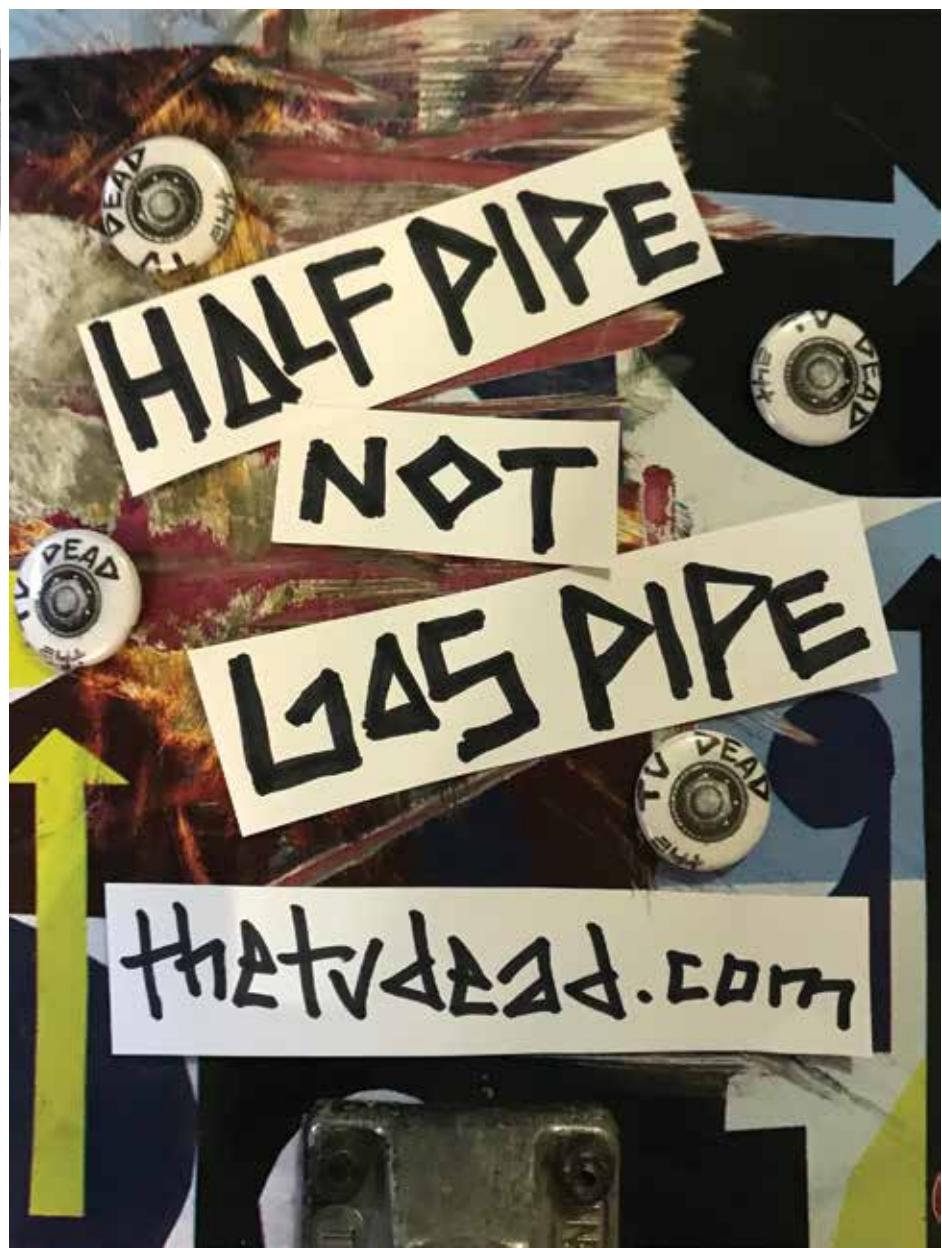


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My Hollow

Interview with Angelo Giammattolo

Absolute Underground: For those unfamiliar with you, please tell us a little bit about the band.

AG: We are My Hollow, a six-piece group from parts of Ontario, recently described as Melodic Deathcore. We have been a band since 2011 and have been passionate about the music and scene ever since.

AU: Congrats on the release of your new EP "Fighting The Monsters," how many monsters did you fight to make this record?

AG: Thanks so much and that's a great question, Metaphorically, we were outnumbered by the "monsters" and had to overcome some serious stuff to make this album come to life. We have been working on it for a few years with tweaks to the sound as we have added a keyboardist and a new lead guitarist during the writing process. Of course, there was a pandemic to contend with which was its own beast to overcome. Making plans and arrangements was difficult and slowed the recording process down significantly. As a group, we made new habits for ourselves on how to write, share and practice in this new day

and age and it has helped us grow. For us, the pandemic made the creativity flow as that's all we had to focus on without being able to play live shows. Now that the album is done and shows are opening, My Hollow is ready for an exciting 2022 and beyond!

AU: We watched both your two music videos in support of this record, how did you come up with the idea of puppets or rather a muppet parody for the track "Vultures?" And for your cartoon video for the title track "Fighting The Monsters," what made you decide to go animated?

AG: Yes, the "puppet" music video for "Vultures" was a blast, and all thanks to our singer's wife, Jenn (who's also our artist for album, logos, and design) who came up with the idea for a puppet video. It was a lockdown and we were in a band chat meeting, throwing out ideas for a video for "Vultures". While we were having the chat, Graham's wife Jenn was listening to the convo and she yelled out from the back, "Why don't you guys do a puppet video?" Well, we all had a good laugh at first but then circled back and got serious and realized that it was a brilliant idea! Jenn then took the reins for the entire storyboard and fabricated the puppets. We found a fantastic director and some quality help to put this together and we are super pumped on how it turned out!! Sticking with the "out of the box" ideas, we had a similar convo about what to do for a video for "Fighting



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TORONTO TRASH

AG: Since our last full album in 2015, we have evolved drastically. Our sound is forever changing as it encompasses what we are into at that time. We have never been a group that plays and creates average-sounding music, for better or worse. Our songs are mostly different tempos with scattered layouts between them, all while being able to bop your head along. Since picking up a keyboardist and new lead guitarist, the music is evolving itself from within. We're revisiting older song ideas and injecting them with our new style and the results are exciting! Like our music, we continue to evolve as a group, learning from each experience. Every practice or live show, there's always a lesson to learn and we have the ability to be aware of that and incorporate it into our band. We have taken cues from other bands and artists on how to create, perform and conduct ourselves. We believe we have become better at writing new material, as the process has especially evolved as well as recording most of our own tracks. We have a few very "techy" guys in our band and that helps every aspect of the group.

AU: Any plans for touring this summer?

AG: The summer of 2022 is looking rather promising for us as we are playing the Loud as Hell festival in Drumheller, Alberta at the end of July. We are touring there with our bros in Tortured Saint from London, Ontario and we plan to play shows on the way there and back. So far the festival is booked and we are currently planning the tour around that. We're beyond pumped to be on the bill with such great Canadian bands.

AU: Anything else you like to add for our readers?

AG: My Hollow is constantly trying to think outside the box to bring new content to people from all over. We encourage you to #FollowMyHollow

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BLAST FROM THE PAST



The Legacy of Guitarist Randy Rhoads

Dec. 6, 1956 - Mar 19 1982

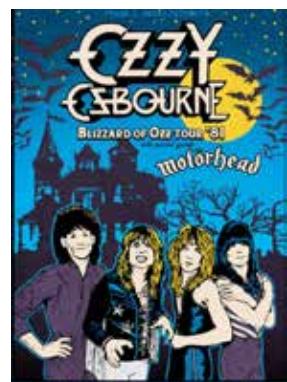
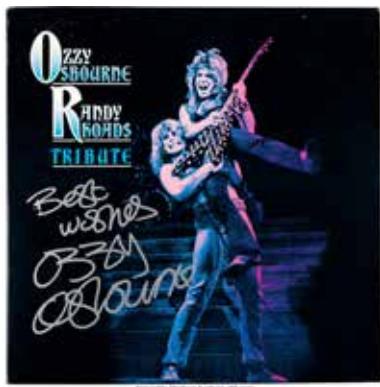
By Clark'Super'Mantei

Welcome back past blasters. I thought for this issue I'd pay a special tribute to the legendary guitarist, Randy Rhoads, who tragically died 40 years ago this spring. Randy became famous in 1980 when he caught the ears of millions as the new guitar player for Ozzy Osbourne. The album *Blizzard of Oz* was released in September 1980 and "Crazy Train" was the single and Randy was suddenly heard around the world. Ozzy had just left Black Sabbath and Randy Rhoads auditioned and suddenly history was in the making it seemed, as Ozzy became a household name. Yet, who was this guitarist and why is he so special? Let alone who Ozzy is!

Ozzy Osbourne started his career in 1967 as the singer of the Birmingham Band called "Earth" and by 1969 that same band changed its name to Black Sabbath and the rest is history with a self titled LP arriving on none other than Friday the 13th of February 1970. They were indeed the birth cry of Heavy Metal in many respects. Tony Iommi is to this day the only guitarist they ever had or will ever have for that matter. He is an icon to say the least.

Ok, let's move to 1979/80 when Ozzy gets fired from Black Sabbath as he'd become a burnt out singer and change was needed. Ozzy got the boot, and Black Sabbath went on without him. Yet, they were a band and only needed a new singer. Ozzy needed a band and at that he needed a great guitarist to reboot his career, yet who?

Randy William Rhoads was born on December 6th 1956 in Santa Monica, California. His parents were both musicians. Sadly his father left and his mother, Delores Rhoads, raised all 3 children by starting her own music school called 'Musonia School of Music.' The children were raised without a stereo and solely relied on the home piano and instruments from the school to entertain themselves. Randy began taking classical and also folk guitar lessons at 7 years of age and by middle school he met his best friend Kelly Garni who along with Randy's brother Kelle on drums formed a band.



Randy was transfixed at 14 when his brother took him to see Alice Cooper in July of 1971 and by 1972 Randy had taught Kelly Garni to play the bass. Kelly and Randy formed many bands. The names morphed along the way. Among them, The Katzenjammer Kids, The Whores, Violet Fox, Mildred Pierce, Little Women and eventually landed on the name of Quiet Riot in 1973 when they met singer Kevin DuBrow and drummer Drew Forsyth. The group attained a recording and distribution deal through Sony, but only for Japanese release. The albums Quiet Riot and Quiet Riot 2 were released in Japan in 1977 and 1978 and to this day have never been re-released in America or anywhere else. Also since Randy was 16, he became a music teacher by day and performed with his band by night. However, by the time 1979 came, it saw Quiet Riot suffer tensions within the band and bassist Kelly Garni left and was replaced by Rudy Sarzo, so Quiet Riot had a chance to continue yet something else was happening, which indeed was Ozzy in Los Angeles auditioning guitarists. Randy didn't originally want to take the gig as his teaching was his love, yet he answered the audition solely to stop being asked by a friend to do it. Through a series of meetings, Randy told his mother he had the opportunity and he wanted to take it... He did get offered the opportunity and he went on to make history. It should be noted that prior to joining Ozzy, Randy also approached a Luthier(guitar maker) named Karl Sandoval to design a custom Polka Dot Flying V for him as he wore Polka dot cloths on stage in Quiet Riot. This guitar is one of a kind. Karl worked for Fender then Charvel and still is active today. Randy also had 2 Gibson Les Pauls and then designed a Jackson Flying V with a Concorde style neck.

In the spring of 1980 Randy was now in the UK to record a debut solo LP with Ozzy Osbourne, along with bassist, Bob Daisley, and Uriah Heep's drummer, Lee Kerslake. Ozzy and his new band went into record the album. Except for one small special thing that is...

Randy asked Ozzy if it would be ok to record a small ballad on his classical guitar and

dedicate it to his mother Delores. The solo piece was entitled 'Dee' and it is a very special token of his honor to his mom who raised him to be a musician. Randy shone bright on the entire LP. His classically trained style brought an amazing edge to this new modern metal that was being born. Black Sabbath now had Ronnie James Dio on vocals, who came from Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow band. Yet, Ozzy had Randy who was very much like a modern Ritchie in that he too was well versed in style and technique. Randy brought a well versed style and edge

to Ozzy's music and it was and still is brilliant to this day. They toured in support of the LP and pretty soon they recorded another full length LP entitled *Diary of a Madman*. This was released on November 7th, 1981 hot on the heels of *Blizzard* and the momentum was blooming. Ozzy was all over the radio and let's not forget the January 82 show when a kid threw a bat on stage and Ozzy bit off the head and spit it out and spent weeks getting rabies shots, talk about media hype! Yeah, Ozzy was back and what could possibly go wrong? Rock and Rollers tend to get rowdy and there are umpteen stories in the history books, and the bat takes the cake (bat cake)? Yet something else was looming.

Randy, Ozzy and the band had made a great run of it. Two quick years had passed with successful albums and touring with a small crew and all seemed well as could be except one thing... That one thing was Randy wanted to go home as soon as the tour ended to finish his studying and continue towards a degree in classical guitar

and pretty much told Ozzy he wanted out after the tour. Ozzy, not used to NOT partying, heard this face to face from Randy and after the conversation was done Ozzy went off to bed to ponder what he had heard. He had told Randy "You're crazy to leave now" and Randy on Ozzy's party ways replied "You'll die from all that partying". Quite surreal was this chat between them as it was the evening of March 18th, 1982 at a stopover to rest and fix the bus's air conditioner

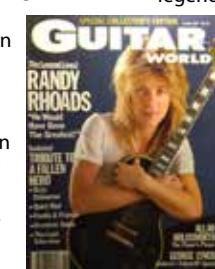
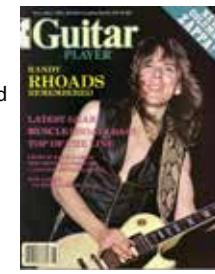
the next day before heading to a festival in Florida to perform. Ozzy claims if Randy had not said these things he would have not gone to bed and awoken the way he did. History might be different but what's done is done. On the morning of March 19th, 1982 in Florida where the Ozzy band and bus were parked and Ozzy was asleep, Randy was asked by the tour bus driver if he wanted to go up for a little plane ride around the area. Randy did not like flying yet he saw a few people do a short trip and thought it would be nice to take a few

photos of the countryside for his mother, so he climbed aboard the plane. Up they went for a little spin so Randy could take some photos...

Ozzy might have been performing since 1967, but I personally was born that year. Like Randy Rhoads seeing Alice Cooper at 14 and getting transfixed to dream about performing himself, I too at 14 saw a show that blew my mind and made me want to become a drummer (which I did) and I'm forever grateful for that show in July 1981 here in Victoria. That show was April Wine on July 31st. What a memory, yet there is another memory I'll never forget. On July 14th, 1981 just 2 weeks earlier, I was delivering the afternoon newspapers and my buddy stopped me and asked if I wanted to go to see Motörhead with Ozzy Osbourne tonight at the Memorial Arena?

I firmly said "Who? Um no... I'm going to cruise on my skateboard after my paper route." I lived for that skateboard. Until the next time when he dropped the needle on an album called *Blizzard of Oz* by Ozzy Osbourne. My jaw dropped. I had missed this concert?! I had never heard energy or music like this. I was sensational. Pure bliss. I was hooked.

I drummed along to Rush and now Ozzy and then in November 81 a new album called *Diary Of A*



Madman came out and I was so blown away with the sheer magic of this amazing guitarist's music. Life was grande. I had jobs and good school friends and drums and a turntable and then winter turned to spring and one day I came home for lunch and saw on TV that a plane crash had taken the life of the musician for Ozzy Osbourne. Guitarist Randy Rhoads had died that morning in Florida. What a loss. His skill and tone and humble demeanor said a lot. Randy could play that guitar so well and it's not lost on us all how rare that truly is. Randy would often have teachers set up in different cities to keep up with his studies and it's known he would often end up teaching them. A sincere, shy guy with a work ethic. The music remains true. The recordings Randy made shine as bright today as they did 40 years ago. Songs like "You Can't Kill Rock and Roll" and "Revelation (Mother Earth)" are as vibrant as ever. The ballad of "Goodbye To Romance" or the ever scary "Diary Of A Madman" remain powerful. Sheer brilliance.

When Randy died it was sheer sadness and disbelief. Ozzy made 10 more studio albums after the passing of Randy Rhoads and is about to release his 13th Studio album. I saw the March 1984 show of Ozzy with Jake E. Lee on guitar, and during that show Ozzy stopped to talk to the crowd about Randy and to please behave and be kind to Jake (as people were yelling at him and throwing stuff).

Ozzy's new LP features Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, Zack Wilde and Tony Iommi on guitars. Rock royalty some might write. Yet, let's get that right first by saying as good as those guys are, and legends they certainly are, let it be said that Randy Rhoads is surely missed as he was taken so young at just 25. Yet he made history forever with two albums in as many years. Jimi Hendrix did 4 in as many also. Randy looked up to all these guys and he also learned from them too. However, no one sounded like him and he was a sound all his own. Randy's finger magic can never be replaced. And lastly, one thing is for certain and that is that he made Ozzy as famous as famous can be, and he left his magic for us to hear forever. All aboard... Hahahaha!

Blessings to Randy and his family, fans, and friends alike. Rest In Eternal Musical Peace. Until the next issue... Rock Out and Roll On.
-Clark'Super'Mantei

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SPLATTER GODS



Jason Ward

Interview by Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

JW: My Name is Jason Ward, I suppose, if you were to say I was famous for something, it would be having worked for Todd Masters at Mastersfx for 17 years. I started as a shop runner, moved to blood rigs and splatter effects, dummy armature fabrication, puppet building and puppeteering. I was the Special Make-up Effects coordinator and on-set supervisor for shows like *The Magicians*, *American Mary*, *The Girl in the Photographs* (shot in Victoria BC), *See No Evil 2*, and the 2019 version of *Child's Play*, along with many others.



AU: I first met you when you were working on Victoria director Brian Clements low-budget horror films. What did you learn from that experience?

JW: Really, that's precisely when I learned what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. It's an incredibly fun, rewarding and challenging career. I learn something new with every show as we are constantly creating new and better, (sometimes not), ways to do the gags we are asked to do. I was a fledgling FX artist in my 30s just learning the processes. I created a couple Ghouls and Werewolves using pull over masks and face prosthetics for his movie *Exhumed*. I very quickly realized that I needed a lot of practice and it takes an immense amount of education whether it be on the job or going to school to get it if you want to be a great FX artist. Most importantly, just keep doing it and don't ever believe you know it all.

AU: You also helped do the special effects for my *Zombie Jesus* short film. What do you recall about that shoot?

JW: I remember being exceptionally tired. I was super busy at Mastersfx and was making things for you at my house at the same time. I remember a whirlwind weekend, getting on the Ferry to Victoria on Friday night, doing the shoot and was back by Sunday eve. The team that helped on set were Tasha Winters, Janine Theobold and Naeedene Rees. I can't remember honestly how they came to be there whether it was you or me that found them but they were a total lifesaver and did a phenomenal job.

It was a really fun shoot, was it all done in one day? Seems likely.

AU: What was the first movie you ever professionally did effects for?

JW: I had just moved to Vancouver and convinced Ryan Nicholson from *Flesh and Fantasy* that I knew what I was doing so he hired me to help him with his own movie

Live Feed. Very low budget and very gory. The first big budget movie I was on with Ryan was *War* with Jet Li and Jason Statham. The work we did for *War* was OK but not exceptional. The best thing I personally made for it was an under costume chest rig that had a reservoir filled with very delicate bags filled with blood. Statham was to swing an axe into the cavity and burst the bags open. Worked perfect on the first shot.

AU: What are some of your career highlights?

JW: Career highlights are so difficult to list. I've gotten to work with so many amazing artists and as many incredible projects. I guess the top of the list is, 2 Daytime Emmy Awards, one for *Monsterville*; *Cabinet of Souls*, the other for *Aliens Stole My Body*. *Underworld: Awakening* where we built the werewolf suits, *The Magicians* series was an incredible experience. Five seasons of *Beautiful Fun Creatures and Wonderful Stories*. Being a part of *Puppeteer* crew with Keith Arbuthnot, Mike Fields and Josh Raymond, for the CHUCKY doll on *Child's Play* 2019. The absolute, top, number one highlight of my career that made everything I've worked my butt of for... the new *Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock* series.

AU: Most satisfying or rewarding effect?

JW: I'll go horror on this one. *Child's Play* 2019. The team built a dummy body for Gabe, played by Trent Redekop. He was hanging from scorching hot water pipes above a table saw, saw gets kicked over by

Chucky, Gabe loses his leg. I was the puppeteer holding moving the legs while the saw was cutting through his flesh, I was wearing garbage bags and goggles, we emptied a huge canister of blood and I was right in its crosshairs. It was a blast. TAKE 2 DO IT AGAIN!! Joyous

AU: In this age of CGI why are practical effects still so important in your opinion?

JW: I don't feel that there will ever be a day where practical effects will be obsolete. VFX have come a very long way but nothing beats the way real physical objects interact with characters. Even the best VFX in the Marvel universe still feels cartoony. The enhancement of VFX on top of practical is what really looks and feels best. I think



actors can react better to seeing the creature and interacting with it physically over a person in a Motion Capture.

AU: Tell how you got the job to work on the new *Fraggle Rock* series?

JW: It was a fortuitous series of events really. I left to move back to Regina after the pandemic hit us. While I was there doing some construction work I got a call to go back to Vancouver to do set dec work on a puppet show called *The Barbarian and The Troll*. This was way out of the realm of shows I had done before... I'm not sure who told me but the rumour of *Fraggle Rock* was swirling around so when I found out it was real I reached out to a colleague at Jim Henson's Creature Shop in LA. After I sent my resume, I had two separate interviews, one with Henson New York and one with The LA shop. They hired me and I didn't go back to the other show after Christmas hiatus

AU: What were your duties on *Fraggle Rock*?

JW: We set up a full fabrication Creature Shop at the studio in Calgary. Everyday we would go in and build gags for each upcoming episode. My main job was to make sure the Doozers and all the other animatronic elements kept working smoothly and looking great on and off camera.



What we actually did was create fun props and things for the Doozers to do all day.

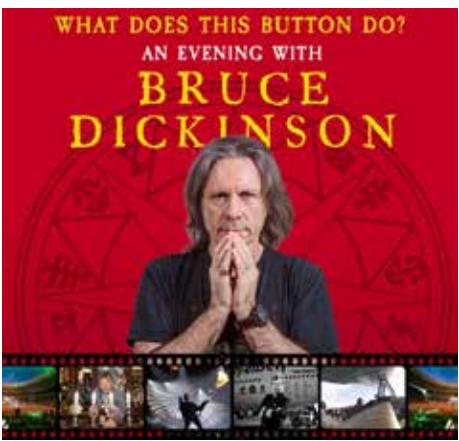
AU: What FX company do you currently work for?

JW: I am currently working as a free agent. It gives me the opportunity to take jobs like *Fraggle Rock* as they come along and lets me spend more time with my family and partner Suzanne in Regina.

AU: What is the dream project you would still like to work on?

JW: I have always wanted to work on an Alien or Predator movie taking care of and puppeteering the creatures.

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BRUCE DICKINSON

Bruce Dickinson, legendary Iron Maiden frontman, is currently taking his spoken word tour 'An Evening With Bruce Dickinson' on an extensive US and Canada run

Aside from decades spent delivering high-octane performances, Bruce has lived an extraordinary off-stage existence as well.

A true polymath, his accomplishments include: pilot and airline captain, aviation entrepreneur, beer brewer, motivational speaker, podcaster, film scriptwriter, twice-published novelist and New York Times Top 10 best-selling author, radio presenter, TV actor, sports commentator and international fencer... to name but a few.

Split into two parts, the first section of the show sees Bruce taking a humorous and often satirical look at the world from his own very personal perspective, all delivered with characteristically infectious enthusiasm and wry wit, treating the audience to private insights into his drive and ambition, peppered with plenty of Maiden anecdotes, and a myriad of other experiences encompassing not just the giddy

heights but also the extreme lows, told first-hand, punctuated with photographs and sometimes even erupting into song a-capella, to illustrate a point.

The final section of the evening is devoted entirely to a Q&A session, with the opportunity to pose questions on any subject whatsoever. As Bruce's answers will all be completely improvised – the more left-field and quirky the question, the more interesting and compelling the response is likely to be!

Q&A from An Evening With Bruce Dickinson - Wednesday, 16 March 2022 @ Royal Theater in Victoria BC

*a picture is projected of Bruce and an unknown man, in front of Oxford University *

Bruce Dickinson: Here is a picture of a bloke, wearing flippers dressed as Sherlock Holmes, as if by magic, and next to me is my buddy Dan. Dan is a psychologist from Oxford University – who has had to keep an eye on me.

Bruce begins to read cards containing questions from the audience

Question: What are your thoughts on wearing a psych ward shirt, for those fans who might have mental health issues?

BD: Well, it never occurred to me that my psych ward shirt might inspire you to have mental health issues! But to help you all out, I'm actually doing a podcast with a psychologist. That's Professor Kevin Dutton from University of Oxford, and also in Adelaide, and he's an expert in psychopaths.

So he is investigating most of the US presidents. The only one not on the spectrum is Jimmy Carter, who is nice enough. But everyone else, I mean, Hillary Clinton, for



example, and Donald Trump, both score about the same on the index, kind of interesting. The podcast, which is called *Psycho Schizo Espresso*, as you probably gathered, is not sponsored by anybody and it's free! It's on YouTube and not on Spotify. I'm actually pretty proud of it because I think, for example, we just interviewed England's only living bullfighter, who talks about bullfighting and actually raised a few points about cruelty – and you know – he's on the spectrum somewhere as a psychopath. Andy McNab, who writes all the SS books. We got him in one of the shows as well.

A lot of surgeons are psychopaths. Brain surgeons, heart surgeons and orthopaedic surgeons! "Oh, yes. Whip his bone out, hit it off with a hammer and shove it into his leg! Yeah!" There's a lot of surgeons who are psychopaths. We've got one of our guys, Professor Steve Westerman, who's the head of cardiothoracic at John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. Diagnosed a psychopath, brilliant heart surgeon. He would do all the operations that other heart surgeons will go "I'm not going to touch that patient! Shit. He might die." And then he would go "Fuck off, I'll bring him back, I'll rip him open, it works 50% of the time" so anyway, that's it *Psycho Schizo Espresso*, and you know, any problems – I'll just refer you to Professor Kevin.

Q: I have a tattoo on my private parts. Can you see the writing on my balls?

BD: I don't fucking write these! That's what is brilliant. I mean, I think this is just gold.

Q: Is 22 Acacia Street a real place?

BD: Oh yes. But it's the wrong address.

Q: Is Dave Murray an alien?

BD: Survey says... "Is Dave Murray an alien?" Hands up who thinks so? *crowd puts up hands* Survey says... YES.

Q: What is your favourite fencing sword and why?

BD: Whichever one I'm holding in my hand at the time, to be honest with you? First of all, I mean, if it was a real one, it would be the one that is about three foot longer than the other guys! But in competition I fence foil and épée, which is completely incomprehensible to every other human being on the fucking planet. Because when you watch fencing matches, it's like watching cricket. I tried to explain cricket to my French girlfriend... It's like trying to explain Pythagoras to your cat. It's one of those sports that you have to be in to understand.

Q: Are you aware that you are a meme? It's a picture of you in tight trousers, your penis represents the hand of a clock reminding everyone to set their clocks ahead for daylight savings time.

BD: Are you sure it's not two minutes to midnight?

Q: Do you have any advice on vocal production or recording?

BD: Not really except if it doesn't sound like you, the producer is shit. No, seriously, I mean, you should sound relaxed. A naturalist, the only way of getting the best out of you is if you're relaxed or natural and comfy. Personally I hate headphones, I hate microphones. I just want to be in a room and sing. It's the job of the producer to capture that. To hold a mirror to your performance, and capture it. Now, there's all kinds of things you can do to fuck with your voice if you can't sing, or if you can't hold a tune. Or you can have one of these funny little vocoders, which people think is actually a human voice, but it's not anymore. You need ambience to give you the comfort zone. A good producer, or a good setup. You should feel relaxed and you should feel like you're just in a room singing, that's the thing. I love that.

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POWDER SEEKERS



Charles Beckinsale

Interview with Master Terrain Park Builder, Charles Beckinsale – Part 1
by Ira "Big Air" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

CB: My name is Charles Beckinsale. I'm 37 years old. I'm a terrain park builder from Jindabyne, Australia. I used to be a semi-pro snowboarder back in the day and transitioned into park building when I was about 21. I juggled both through my early 20s, then from my mid 20s on I went full on park builder. I am also the director and head builder of The Stomping Grounds Projects.

AU: You were recently on Vancouver Island helping them upgrade their terrain park at Mount Washington Alpine Resort. How did



the island, so it was kind of on my bucket list. So I took the opportunity and while I was there I offered a couple of nights to just hang out with the park crew there and give them a hand. I met the crew up there. They're super passionate and young and motivated. I think at this point in my career, I'm happy to try to share as much knowledge as I can.

AU: What were the park upgrades you helped with at Mount Washington?

CB: We mainly just focused on the jump lines and on the intermediate and the beginner parks as well. I feel the beginner and intermediate parks need to be a pretty strong focus to lure kids into riding park and keep them kind of hungry for it. Because these days the industry is kind of competing with video games and all the cell phone stuff kids are into. So I think you definitely really need to focus on the beginner to intermediate stuff, making it easy for people to get to your advanced parks through good safe progressive jumps.

that come to be?

CB: Just kind random. I was in Vancouver just by chance with a few days to kill before I had to go back to Baldface for a job. I've got a few friends from the Canada Snowboard Federation that live on Vancouver Island. They were just asking if I felt like popping by Mount Washington and checking it out. It's pretty bad that I've spent 12 years doing winters up in Whistler and never got out to

AU: Yeah, I discovered the beginner park you helped create. It was so fun! Just air after air.

CB: I've got a five year old son. So I'm really into that now myself. I can't go and do the big double corks anymore. I'm definitely past my prime with that stuff. But I can still have fun in the beginner park and roll with the kid. It's pretty fun.

AU: I know what you mean about progression. At the start of the season, I'm hitting the small and medium jumps in the park and by the end of the season I'm ready to start hitting the larger jumps like Shocker.

CB: Oh totally. I'm kind of in a weird spot. I'm around the best athletes in snowboarding on the regular and I'm in the snowcat building stuff. But

introduction to snowboarding. Then the next year we got a season passes and could actually snowboard the whole hill. So we weren't just park rats but the park was definitely a big focus.

AU: What would you say were the highlights of you snowboarding career?

CB: I did a bunch of Cups earlier on like Red Bull Rails, which was a big one in Australia. They had these events and I won one of them got second in another. I used to do a bunch of different big air comps too but then I got lucky enough to transition into filming and shooting for the magazines. So I kind of just went more that route, less competitive and more media driven. This was



then you hang out with them riding and they're all doing double corks. So in the back your head you're like well I'm doing a 360 or 540 or 720. So yeah, it's super mellow, but you are still hitting quite big jumps. I think a lot of the

fear is taken out of it because I'm so acquainted with the jump because I've built it. You can see where the guys are dropping in from and you know that as long as you drop from that point, and you don't do any extra speed checks, you're gonna land in the sweet spot and nothing really bad can happen there.

AU: What was your first introduction to snowboarding?

CB: It was at Thredbo when I was probably 13 years old. My mom was a single mom and she kind of came down here on a whim just to ski instruct one year. She pulled us out of school and we did homeschooling for the season. My sister and I would hike up to the terrain park and cut laps and that's kind of how we got our

my early 20s, I really focused more on handrails and riding backcountry. I'd go to Whistler and have a sled and film over there for the productions back home. We'd go on handrail trips to Helsinki. It wasn't really a competition list of

accolades, it was more media stuff like a few magazine covers and a lot of video parts in Australian/New Zealand productions.

AU: Sounds like the name of a wicked snowboarding video, Handrails in Helsinki.

CB: It does, it's catchy. The highlight for me was just having good sponsors and decent travel budgets back then to see the world and document snowboarding.

To be continued next issue...

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Sloan

**Interview with Chris Murphy
by Billy Hopeless**

I coaxed and cajoled Chris Murphy and all I got was this killer interview.

For many, the top modern Canadian rock team of the last 20 years was The Tragically Hip but for me it was Sloan, who rolled up the rim and won the double double cup. Now with most every band or sports team, fans always have their fave player, for me in team Sloan mine is center ice Chris Murphy who's here with us today on Hopeless Night In Canada.

Absolute Underground: Let's start with the name. In the early mid 90s when I worked at a comic book store one of our regular customers told me his nickname was Sloan which is where the band's name came from. Is this true or was he just pulling a clever piss take on me?

CM: Yeah, Jason Larson was from Bedford, NS and he played in a band in the late 80s called The Stratejackets. He was called Sloan because his boss called him "Slow one." I was in a band with Jay Ferguson before Sloan called Kearney Lake Rd. and we were friendly with The Stratejackets. They were better players than we were. They were into



Sabbath and we were into the Minutemen. We toured with them up to Toronto and Montreal in 1989. In 1991, when Jay and I formed a new band with Patrick and Andrew we thought Sloan was a good name so I asked Jason if we could use it. He said if we put his picture on the cover of our first record, he would be ok with it. We kept our word and put his face on the cover of our debut EP, Peppermint.

AU: Now you've often been referred to as Canada's Beatles, but which member of Kiss do you think represents your talisman in the Sloan box of superpowers and why?

CM: Whether you're talking about The Beatles or Kiss, I welcome the comparison because we are trying to do what both of those bands did so well, which is to have a band where you know everyone in the band. Everyone sings lead and writes songs like The Beatles and Kiss. We tried hard to make it a more even distribution of lead singers and songwriters over the course of the albums and set lists. There is not a clear who's who for our band and Kiss or The Beatles. I guess I would have to be Paul in that I am usually talking to the audience between songs but I'm like Gene

in that I am sober and driven. I am a huge fan of both bands and can talk about it at length/ad nauseam.

AU: What bands did you listen to back in your youth that shaped your songcraft and still hold as dearly as I do those rolling on with those right angled wagon wheels?

CM: The Beatles for sure. I loved Kiss in elementary school and I insist that their first couple of records are power pop records that hold up. Great songs. I also loved AM radio and then I loved Cheap Trick then new wave then Rush then U2 then punk and hardcore. The Sex Pistols album is one of my favourites. Great songs, lyrics, delivery, playing, packaging... I just listened to it the other day. The drums are so considered. Great drum hooks throughout. The hardcore stuff is less an influence musically than politically. Community building. Fair deals. Information sharing. Do it yourself. etc. In the early 90s, I loved My Bloody Valentine, Supergrass and Stereolab. I came to the Kinks later in life. Ray Davies is the greatest writer. So funny and scathing. I also adore Sweet. Terrible lyrics there though.

AU: I got the opportunity to listen to your punk covers album *This One's an Original!* I've got to say you guys did an amazing job on nailing all those classic 80s classics. Tell us about how the album came about and what were your fave hits from that driving era of punk?

CM: Patrick and I loved hardcore more than Jay and Andrew did but they were game to do this project. I was mentored by a few people in high school and I borrowed and taped records from a friend's girlfriend's older brother. Some of those were Descendents - Milo Goes to College, 7 Seconds - The Crew, Bad Brains - Rock for Light, Bad Religion - How Could Hell Be Any Worse? I loved Minor Threat and the DC/Dischord bands the most. After the early 80s glory days of hardcore, in the mid 80s

I loved Rights of Spring, Beefeater, Gray Matter, Soul Side and King Face. I went on 2 punk pilgrimages to DC in 1987 and 1988 to bask in the presence of my punk Mecca. I saw Fugazi in 1988, which was a huge deal for me.

AU: So are you working on any future originals with the band or is it all nostalgia from here on in?

CM: Sloan has a new record in the can. Our 13th full-length. It will be out by the end of this year. I play in another band called TUNS. We put out our second record last year. I am in another band called Anyway Gang and we're putting out our second record next month. I'm still at it.

AU: You're touring across Canada playing the complete *Navy Blues* album in its entirety. Why did you decide to tour the Old Navy and will we still get to hear other hits including a punk classic or two?

CM: In 2012, Sloan made a reissue box set of our second record, *Twice Removed*, which bought us a whole tour without having to have a new record. In fact, as you might suspect, more people came out to see us play an old record that they

knew well. At the time, we had just put out our 10th album. It's difficult to remain on the tips of everyone's tongues for 10 albums. Anyway, we were encouraged by the people that came out of the woodwork to see the reissue tour so we did another new record and it seemed that was a bigger crowd than our previous tour for a new record. After that, we reissued our third record, *One Chord to Another*, which was even bigger than the *Twice Removed* reissue tour. Anyhoo, we did another new record then a reissue of *Navy Blues*, which is where we were when Covid hit. We were able to tour most of that cycle before Covid but we had to postpone some. We have another album ready to go in the fall.

AU: I've been asked by our editor-in-war-chief to bring up my long may you runner Nardwaur.

CM: We were interviewed by Nardwuar in 1992 on his radio show at UBC. I didn't know who he was or his "act." He was hilarious but he was making fun of us and taking callers who were allowed/encouraged to shit on us. I walked out embarrassed. To make it worse, an A&R guy from Geffen was with us and watched us get our ass kicked by this crazy man. I was pissed that Nardwuar had blown our chance at the big time. In the end, we got signed to Geffen anyway

and I met Nardwuar again in 1995 when I was touring as the drummer in The Super Friendz and Nardwuar and I became good friends. Super friends, in fact.

AU: Finally, why should anyone who's anyone be at a Sloan show on this tour?

CM: Are you mad at me? Anyway, we are the second greatest Canadian band of all time after Rush. We have an immaculate discography of well over 200 songs. We have had the same four guys the whole time, which is unheard of. We sound better than ever. Since 2006, we have toured with a keyboard player from Vancouver named Gregory Macdonald and he can play and sing his face off. Name a band you like still doing it. We

are better than them for sure.

AU: What is the joke in someone waking up covered in coke fizz? Please explain the structure and punchline of this statement.

CM: That whole section of that song was made up on the spot onstage in Buffalo, NY. For whatever reason, we were jamming, which we are not known for. Patrick had the main riff and a semblance of the chorus part and I sang those nonsensical words overtop of the chords and we kept it. I sometimes mull over lyrics for weeks at a time but that one song with a chorus made up on the spot is our most listened to song on streaming by far.

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Pitch Black Tattoo

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are your skills to pay the bills?

RW: Hi, I'm Romance Willson, and I tattoo out of Pitch Black Tattoo in Kelowna, BC

AU: How long have you been a tattoo artist? What got you started?

RW: I've been tattooing for six years now, and I started because I always drew crazy shit, I've always gotten tattooed, and all my buddies wanted me to tattoo them, so I hatched a crazy mission that is a long story, to make it happen.

AU: Tell us about Pitch Black Tattoo. Where is it located? What makes your shop unique?

RW: We're located in Kelowna, BC. We've been open since June '20, right outta the rona shutdowns. The shop is unique in that it's just a super chill, clean, positive vibe with rad music at all times. No drama or attitudes, everyone here is very humble. Sometimes artists act like they're curing cancer or doing brain surgery or something because no one tells them they suck, which many do. But there's lots of amazing artists out there too. At the end of the day we're drawing pictures on people, not saving the world.

AU: How would you describe your shop's style?



AU: Who did you apprentice under?

RW: I'm self-taught, which is the hardest and worst way to learn, but that's how it goes sometimes in life.



AU: What was the first tattoo you ever got and what was the first tattoo you ever did on someone?

RW: I got some Old English on my ribs back in the day because everyone said the ribs was the worst so I had a smart-guy theory that if I do that, every tat after won't be so bad. Which was completely wrong, as getting my throat

done felt like getting stabbed and electrocuted by manta rays all at once, but hey you gotta start somewhere. First one I ever did was on my thigh and I did it up high so if it sucked it wouldn't be really visible. Another attempt at being SMRT. But I didn't realize til I was going that it was actually

RW: Everyone here has a totally different style, so it just depends what you're looking for, but we have it all covered. From metal, gothic type of styled pieces, to american traditional, realism, to crazy custom scripts, we do it all.

AU: What style of tattooing are you best known for?

RW: There seems to always be a debate on what to call it, as it is unique apparently. Usually people will say gothic most often, but I also hear black and grey, surreal, grimy, to who-knows. One person will see a piece I've done and say it looks kinda dark and someone else will call it softly shaded, so who knows officially. As long as it's intriguing and makes people pumped, I'm happy.

quite hard to reach and stretch that area, so that was super sick.

AU: Who else works at Pitch Black Tattoo with you and what is their area of expertise?

RW: There's me @romancetattoos, Matt Tyefisher @longcatmatt, Shevy McConnell @shevyart, and Tanner Kalin @xposvr.

AU: What's the craziest tattoo you have ever done?

RW: You know when people ask that I always wanna say like a pope portrait on a chick's lady-taint, but that wouldn't be true, so hmm, you tell me, contestants are: 1- a sick script saying "welcome to hell" right over a girl's vagina, or 2- a real fancy, classy script saying "touch dicks, fuck titties" on the side of a chick's calf. Probably one of those.



AU: Is there a certain tattoo you are dying to do on someone?

RW: Yes! Every one that I post on IG as 'want-to-do.' I draw many designs up that I want to do, and people get them, instead of waiting around for someone to ask for it. And all of my flash collection is quite popular, as people really dig the ability to just see something unique and cool

and get it.

AU: Do tattoos have to have a deep meaning or can they simply be about awesome art?

RW: They can be both, none of mine mean shit they're just evil, creepy, or crazy things from artists I know, or look up to. That's why I have my flash collection for people, and why I like drawing up stuff before people even ask for it. It's like a crazy menu to choose from. I always like it when artists I want to get work from do that, too.

AU: What are you most proud of in regards to your shop?

RW: Just that I get to do this every day with cool dudes, and make people happy, and that we've survived all the bs rona rules and shenanigans, and people are always super pumped on the work they get here.

AU: What kinds of music or bands do you play at the shop when working?

RW: Literally everything but country! Sorry country hats, time and a place for everything you know. Burzum to Hendrix, I go with the "when the music suits the mood" vibes.

AU: Any final thoughts to share with our readers?

RW: Kelowna is the best excuse for tattoo road trip ever, we have so much stuff to see and do here all year, just get the tattoo at the end of it, cause hot tubs, lakes and shenanigans don't mix with fresh bloody tats, haha.

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Human Instrumentality Project

Neon Genesis Evangelion Inspired Metal

By Ryan Dyer

Anime inspired bands are currently taking over the metal underground as something not to be taken lightly. It's no longer just about putting a bloody schoolgirl on the cover and calling it a day - as bands like Dehumanizing Itatrain Worship are taking grind and slam to their absolute limits while incorporating themes of animation in their presentation.

Human Instrumentality Project are a new anime inspired deathcore band from Guangzhou, China. Most of their compositions are based upon the apocalyptic, psychological drama anime

Neon Genesis Evangelion (1995) and by using the harsh and often introspective style of deathcore, present the mech universe of Evangelion across the canvas of their music.

Their first EP, *The Brutal Angel's Thesis* references the anime in several ways - from the art to song titles to the overall theme. The five tracks plus the instrumental versions presented here represent a new direction in deathcore. Much like the characters in Neon Genesis Evangelion connecting their bodies to the mechs to create something more powerful, the same could be said for the combination of brutal music and anime, and Human Instrumentality Project represents a high point in this new wave of content.

Human Instrumentality Project's guitarist Syond Lin discloses more details on this project and the genre of anime grind:

Absolute Underground: What is it about *Neon Genesis Evangelion* that inspired the band?

HIP: In the beginning, our vocalist Ray proposed we use the concept of EVA, because he wanted to do so for a long time. This is a work involving religion, philosophy, psychology

and is equipped with various pictures of the underworld: this artistic conception is too suitable for extreme music.

AU: You utilize some elements from the series soundtrack. How does this enhance the theme



you're going for?

HIP: Many soundtracks are just right when they directly attack the character's soul (or ourselves), which is what we yearn for when using the theme. We refer to the soundtrack for heavy adaptation, but most of the elements integrated into our music are not simply copied: we must ensure that we can avoid some unnecessary infringement problems while conforming to the animation theme.

AU: What do you think of the bands who just use a gory anime photo as the album cover without having an overarching theme - does it distract from the music?

HIP: I have also noticed that in recent years, there has been some extreme music with animation as the theme. The music is very cruel and aggressive, but in contrast to the traditional brutal death metal and grindcore, their album covers may be more extreme and have more bloody and violent elements, so I think their music and cover design

match. For fans who like this style, they feel that it does not affect the expression of music, but meets their two wishes at one time. However, from another perspective, the integration of animation elements and extreme music may be inadvertently seen by some children who are not suitable for this age group, or by audiences who do not like this kind of theme, which may cause some discomfort and disgust. I think no matter what the band uses as the cover, their works still need to be suitable for the theme they choose. If they just draw a cruel picture of an animated girl as the cover without substantive content expression, the work will be empty and meaningless. Even for extreme bands, we must carefully think about the content of the works we want to express.

AU: Would you say that the anime inspired



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bands are like the new wave of death metal acts, though instead of horror/gore/sci fi, these fans were brought up inspired by anime?

HIP: I can't comment on music fans of other bands, but a considerable part of the audience of our band have never been exposed to extreme music before. They commented that they would like to see this anime after listening to our music. There are also some animation fans who have not been exposed to this type of music before, but those who have seen this work will also recognize our music. Of course, there are some audiences who can't understand our music, which is also reasonable.

AU: Will you be tackling any other anime series in the future?

HIP: For the next work, at present, we still intend to adhere to EVA as our theme, which may be another EP or full album.

AU: What is the future of animation inspired metal music?

HIP: As a new music style, it combines two elements: animation and extreme music. In recent years, it has continued to develop internationally, and many bands have achieved success. However, if this style of music wants to continue to develop, there must be a group of bands that can highly integrate animation elements and extreme music. Whether in composition or lyrics, they need to be considered carefully, not just put on a shell, otherwise this trend will soon disappear. These bands are actually the equivalent to pioneers in this field. We are making contributions together and hope to leave our traces in the history of extreme music.

humaninstrumentalityproject.bandcamp.com

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Dirty Shirt

Interview with Mihai Tivadar (keyboards, guitars, main composer)

Absolute Underground: Hey Dirty Shirt, how's it going? Are your shirts clean these days?

MT: Yes, they are, when we used to wear dirty shirts a long time ago, not so much anymore.

AU: For those unfamiliar with the band especially our readers in Canada, what can you tell them about who Dirty Shirt is?

MT: Dirty Shirt is a crazy Romanian metal band, from Transylvania to be more precise, with 8 base members and many guests musicians, both in the studio and on stage.

AU: What can you tell us about this genre you have dubbed Folkcore?

MT: FolkCore metal seemed the best term to describe our music that combines the aggressive

and modern sound of metal (nu-metal, hardcore, industrial, alternative, progressive) with the energy and the warm sound of acoustic and traditional instruments from Eastern Europe



AU: You have your sixth album coming out on April 1st entitled Get Your Dose Now, what can you tell us about this album compared to your previous records?

MT: I think that *Get Your Dose Now* continues our musical journey, a continuity to our previous albums, combining various influences but still keeping a homogenous musical vision. I think that our fans will find our specific sound, but they will also get surprised when listening to the new songs because we explored some new directions and also we re-introduced a more progressive concept in the album.

AU: How was it working on this album during covid times and having members living in different areas across Europe?

MT: We got used to working in different towns and countries, having the possibility to record at our home studios or real studios. But the covid complicated things a lot, because we also need to spend time together for rehearsals and recordings, and with all these restrictions and lockdowns traveling was complicated and also, several times, members of the band or guests musicians had covid, so studio sessions were canceled...

AU: Dirty Shirt is a big unit of 8 members and guests, how do you all work out coordinating songwriting together?

MT: I am the main composer of the band, so I record instrumental demos in my home studio, and then I send them to my colleagues to work on them. Of course, everybody comes with ideas, not just the band members, but our guests also. Of

course, I am in charge of arrangements and deciding what to keep from the tons of recordings and ideas. For the guests, usually, there is a combination of pre-established parts and free inspiration. As a consequence, as we were more than 30 musicians involved in this album, the result is very colorful and diverse.

AU: We understand too that the band is full-on DIY from recording to booking to putting out your records? How do you divide the tasks among members are there future plans for the band to sign with a label, or been offered to sign with a label?

MT: Yes, there is a lot of DIY, from audio recording and mixing (I'm also including our sound engineer who is considered a full member of the band), to video editing (our videos are mainly produced by Cristian and Dan, our guitarists), band and merch management, van repairing, etc... Of course, we are also working with professionals for design, booking, management and PR. Our last albums were released via small labels, but one of them closed its doors, and the other reduced its activity, so the solution was to make a self-released album, which right now could have many advantages, as you can distribute your music worldwide by your own. Honestly, we were in discussions with "big"

labels, but there were only two issues: we are too old for that (they actually said this 10 years ago) their offers were really unfavorable for the band, especially since we cannot tour as much as to make these deals interesting (in other words we are too old, haha)

AU: Any plans for the band to tour in North America?

MT: Not yet, we are still developing in Europe, and for a band with a minimum of 8 members plus a tech team, a tour in North America would be too expensive. But yes, we would love to.

AU: We understand you performed at the Wacken Battles and performed at Wacken 2014? Canada also hosts battles, what advice can you tell bands entering the competition and trying to perform at metal's holiest festival?

MT: Yes, we played at the international final of Wacken Metal Battle in 2014, after winning the contest in Romania. It was our third attempt, as once we finished second in Romania, and once we completely missed the national semi-finals (huge technical problems). Anyway, playing at Wacken Metal Battle is a huge chance for small bands to play at a major festival. Of course, the better the result at the finals, the better the exposure. For us, winning second place in 2014 was clearly an important step in our musical career, as we got exposure, network, endorsement deals, and of course notoriety. But winning a prize at Wacken Metal Battle doesn't mean that you are already an internationally known band. It is just a shortcut and there is still a lot of work remaining. For example, for us, after winning second prize in 2014, it took 5 years of intense activity (including internationally) to finally come back and play at Wacken as part of the line-up and not in the contest.

AU: Anything else you like to tell or add for our readers about Dirty Shirt?

MT: Keep supporting underground music and take care of yourself and each other in these crazy times.

dirtyshirt.bandcamp.com

PIRATES PRESS RECORDS

BOOZE & GLORY

Booze & Glory Raising the Roof

Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Mark: I formed Booze & Glory in 2009 and I'm the only original member.

AU: What's your current lineup?

M: Me (Mark - vocal, guitar), Kahan (guitar), Chema (bass) and Frank (drums)

AU: Who can drink the most?

M: We all drink a lot when we are on tour. Probably Frank gets drunk the most and the quickest - he is small and Italian. Italians can't drink. Poles can!

AU: How would you describe the present sound of Booze & Glory?

M: Punk Rock...or Street Punk. Some people call it Oi! which in fact means Street Punk, some people say we play Pop Punk which is fine for me too. Call it whatever you like - we play Punk Rock and because in the period of 10 years we recorded and released five albums and a singles collection (which is another album actually) there's no way we could make them albums sound the same. One album sounds rougher, the other one more melodic, one is more about football and parties, the other one has got more serious and meaningful lyrics. That's why Booze & Glory is still going strong, because we make things the way

we want, not the way some people expect us to do just to fit a certain style. And just to make it even more complicated we recently recorded a few reggae tracks.

AU: Do you feel your music and style has changed at all over the years?

M: Of course. It has changed because we all change, we grow up, we go through different things in life, we also changed the line-up few times, but I think the main reason was we actually learned how to play the instruments and how to work in a studio. Those "three chords and guitars out of tune" songs are not as funny as they were 12 years ago.

AU: Has skinhead and punk culture evolved over time in your opinion?

M: I believe so! We have different times today than 20 years ago. Today punks listen to Spotify on their phones with an apple on it. I guess I'm one of them too. But I still do lots of old school stuff - like listen to vinyls and ride two-stroke scooters - which lots of "modern" people don't understand.

AU: Are you guys still based in London, England?

M: We all moved out of England few years ago. Me and Kahan live in Poland, and Frank and Chema live in Germany. Actually I'm not sure where Chema lives as he's been living in Thailand the last three months!

AU: Who's your favourite band that you have toured with?

M: I like all the bands we have toured with. I really enjoyed tours with Broilers, Dropkick Murphys, and Antagonizers. Also the Persistence Tour with Sick Of It All, Ignite, Municipal Waste. The longest tour we have done was around Europe with Giuda and The Analogs, that was probably the best time on the road.

AU: Are any of you still involved in scooter culture?

M: Kind of. I mean, I own two Vespas but I don't go to rallies since I moved from the UK. I love the UK scooter scene, but here in Poland there's nothing like this. I use my scooter for commuting. I



recently finished new resto project - Vespa Capone 225 built on Spanish Motovespa and can't wait to have it on the road soon.

AU: What would you like to say about the songs on your new EP Raising the Roof on Pirates Press Records?

M: We wanted to make them sound like from our As Bold As Brass album released few years ago. Two of those tracks are already out and so far we have nothing but great feedback. One of the tracks even made it to No.1 on the official radio in Poland - above Scorpions, Ghost, and Liam Gallagher! hahah! And wait until you see the record - Pirates Press make the best looking records full stop.

AU: Are you playing Rebellion Fest this year?

M: Yes. We've played Rebellion Festival 4 or 5 times already and it's one of the best weekends. The amount of bands you can see playing or meet backstage is unbelievable, infamous chips & gravy at 2am and the biggest hangover you can experience the following day!

AU: Final words for Canadian fans.

M: We love Canada, we played in Canada few times and we always have an amazing time! Last time we played Canada was with Dropkick Murphys in Toronto. One of the best shows on that tour.

boozeandglory.com

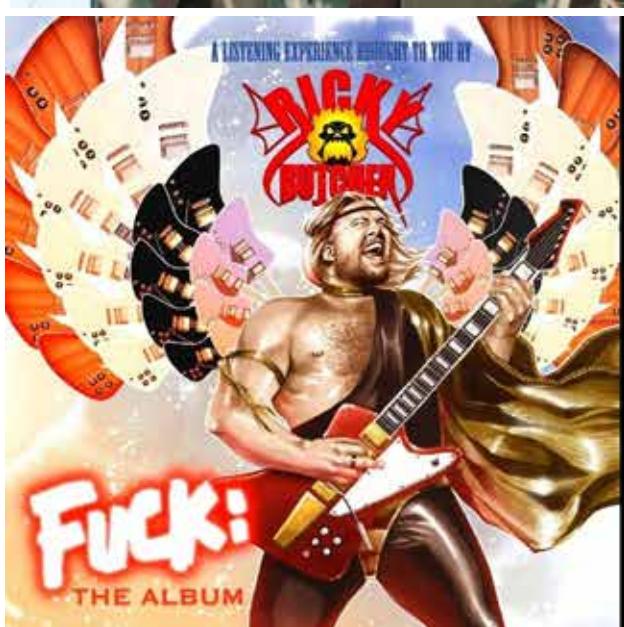
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The Fake Friends

By Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

S: You're talking to Sergio and I think I'm best known for doing this interview.

AU: How would you describe the sound of your band?

S: It sounds like old hardcore guys trying to make pop songs. Which sounds like it should be terrible but it's just the best parts of both AKA sweet licks with breakdowns sometimes.

AU: Who all is in the band and what are their hidden talents?

S: There's a Shrek and a Dracula and a virgin. And me and Joel. We all have the same super talent of

being able to be around each other for extended periods of time.

AU: Who are your biggest influences?

S: Our absolute and unflinching drive to perform at Osheaga

AU: Can you tell us a little bit about your new EP that's coming out on Stomp Records?

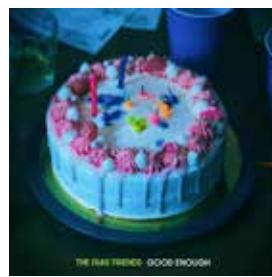
S: Yeah! It's pretty representative of what we're trying to do. It's that mix of loud/heavy/frantic of hardcore that we have a background in with mellow parts so that you can listen with your mom in the car.

AU: Are you planning on following up with an LP anytime soon?

S: Yeah, for sure. Right now I think we're really focused on the live aspect of being a band. There's a sweet spot now of things opening up and people being really excited that we'd like to be a part of. Every show feels like France after WW2, everyone just dancing and fucking and being stoked.

AU: Is there a good story behind the name of your band?

S: I lobbied HARD to call it Teen Penis but they absolutely would not have it. Eventually they came up with The Fake Friends to stop me from saying Teen Penis in public. Now I'm writing Teen Penis



AU: Have you guys ever played western Canada? If so, where?

S: In this band, no. Individually tons of times. My favorite memory of being out west was doing Sled Island when it was Flood Island and I played my favourite show of my career in someone's kitchen to what felt like 1000 people.

AU: One of you owns the Turbo Haüs bar in Montréal?

S: Yup, I'm part owner and run the day to day

AU: How does Turbo Haüs play a role in the underground music scene?

S: Just remaining open after not only the pandemic but a myriad of other issues surrounding live music venues like noise complaints from people moving into neighbourhoods that historically night life hot spots or ever increasing rents. The old saying of "the best ability is availability" is ringing true for more and more live music spaces.

AU: What's the best thing about the music scene in Montréal?

S: Us.

AU: This is our 420 issue so just curious if there are any stoners in the band and if so what are their favorite strains to smoke?

S: Luca smokes hella weed and I assume he grows it in his backyard.

AU: What would you like to add about your new EP coming out on Stomp Records?

S: We're really happy that they decided to take this and us on. It's great to be on the same page with the people you're working with.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans.

S: See you at the gigs!

@thefakefriendssuck



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Brian James

The Guitar That Dripped Blood

Interview by Ira Hunter and Jayme Black

Absolute Underground: Well this is fucking great isn't it? Brian fucking James of The Damned, Lords Of The New Church, The Brian James Gang, The Racketeers, Bastard, The Dripping Lips. You're living the life and kicking ass at it. Welcome and thank you for your time. Can we please get an official introduction for our readers. Who are we talking to and what are you most famous for?

Brian James: I am probably most famous for writing "New Rose" and "Neat, Neat, Neat."

AU: I wanna start out super selfishly and ask about one of my all time favourite songs. "World Without End" (Lords Of The New Church) is amazing musically but also has a pretty intense message, what was the inspiration at the time and in this current world's societal turmoil, does it feel almost just as relevant today?



AU: How did you end up recording and touring with Iggy Pop's solo group in 1979?

BJ: I got a phone call inviting me to meet up and have a play together. The whole thing was a dream come true.

AU: I need to know the story behind this photo. You, Billy Idol, and Marc Bolan backstage. Please tell me you were talking about Monty Python, haha.

BJ: The picture was taken at the Roxy punk club in London at an album launch party for Marc's *Dandy in the Underworld* album. I can't remember

BJ: World Without End, the lyrics were written by Stiv, and I really don't think it's my place to talk about somebody else's vision. I wrote the music and Stiv wrote the lyrics in most of the Lords self penned material.

AU: What were your early musical influences?

BJ: Initially it was bands like the Pretty Things and The Yardbirds and of course the Stones in the early 1960s. Then I moved on to blues artists like Howlin' Wolf, Jimmy Reed, and Muddy Waters. Followed by Jazz artists like John Coltrane and Thelonius Monk. Then along came the Stooges and MC5 and that more or less brings us up to the formation of Bastard.

AU: Tell us about the early days of punk rock and your involvement.

BJ: Early days of punk rock started with Bastard but for most people it started in 1976 with first of all the Sex Pistols and then the Damned, my band.

AU: What do you remember about one of your other bands, Tanz Der Youth, and them touring with Black Sabbath in 1978?

BJ: Tanz Der Youth was an experiment that didn't work out due to personalities within the band. The tour with Black Sabbath was a lot of fun, I never toured with a Heavy Metal band before and the guys in the band couldn't have been more obliging to us.

AU: When Stiv Bators was working on The Wanderers "Only Lovers Left Alive", did this period have any effect on what would become The Lords Of The New Church sound?

BJ: Seeing that it was a bit of a shadow project at the time and half of that would become Lords. The Wanderers had no influence on the Lords at all apart from me meeting Dave T for the first time. Stiv and I had known each other since 1977

AU: With the world shutting down for two years after you announced getting the original line-up of The Damned back together, how did

Billy being there, I think Marc and I were talking about the Western series *The Virginian*. Because Doug McClure was also at the party.

AU: How do you feel about the new wave of popularity around the song "Neat Neat Neat"? It's been in movies, commercials and seems to be sparking a new generation to jump into The Damned head first.

BJ: I feel great about it. It's a great song that I feel proud of.

AU: The Racketeers -Mad for the Racket, I mean what was the story there? Just to be a fly on the wall! The Damned, Guns n Roses, Blondie, MC5, Sting, and the list goes on of associated groups but that group was amazing, why so short lived?

BJ: Not Sting, it was Stewart Copeland. I always wanted to work with Wayne Kramer and we figured it was a good idea to get a bunch of friends in as opposed to starting a totally new band. Once the job was done, we did a few gigs and released a cool album and it was time to move on.

AU: So when Fast Eddie left, why didn't you jump in with Lem and Motörhead? You've got the speed and skill, and you have known each other for along time! Another Perfect Day would have been a whole different album, haha!

BJ: The only person I'd be a hired gun for was Iggy. Also it meant Lemmy and I would stay friends.

AU: When Stiv Bators was working on The Wanderers "Only Lovers Left Alive", did this period have any effect on what would become The Lords Of The New Church sound?

BJ: Seeing that it was a bit of a shadow project at the time and half of that would become Lords. The Wanderers had no influence on the Lords at all apart from me meeting Dave T for the first time. Stiv and I had known each other since 1977

AU: With the world shutting down for two years after you announced getting the original line-up of The Damned back together, how did

PURE PUNK

you keep busy during the stunted music travel economy?

BJ: guess the same as everybody else have been doing. Trying to stay healthy and out of trouble's way.

AU: With the original four back in business, it's been 20 years since you played with the guys. How has the practice been?

BJ: What practise? Me and Rat have been playing on and off over the last 20 years.



AU: What is the current plan and schedule for The Damned original members tour?

BJ: For us all to stay alive. And then make a great big fucking noise.

AU: What is your review of the 2015 documentary *The Damned: Don't You Wish That We Were Dead*?

BJ: I though my bit in the Damned Don't You Wish That We Were Dead, worked well.

AU: How was it working with Cheetah Chrome on your most recent solo album, *The Guitar That Dripped Blood*?

BJ: Me and Cheetah bump into each other from time to time and it was fun having both our guitars together on a track.

AU: Anything else you would like to mention or promote?

BJ: I am busy writing an autobiography, called *The Bleedin' Book* and recording a new album which both should be released in 2023.

AU: Any words of wisdom for Canadian fans?

BJ: Wisdom has never been my forte, but noise is. So come to the reunion gigs in October in the UK. Thanks for inviting me to this interview

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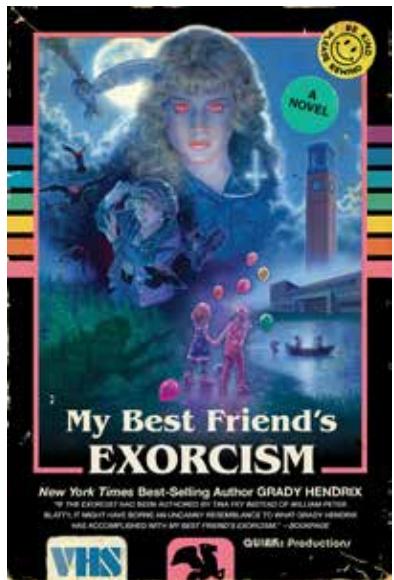


The Devil Made Me Do It

Vince D'Amato

Over the last couple of years, the traditionally dark themes of religious horror and fictionalized devil worshiping in American horror movies has made way for a hard right turn away from the seriousness of the seminal classics in this sub-genre, like *The Exorcist* and *Race with the Devil*, into the realm of hip satire. I don't know why I was surprised to see author Grady Hendrix's name plastered on a screenwriting credit for 2020's *Satanic Panic* – he is, after all, the author of *My Best Friend's Exorcism* and *We Sold Our Souls* (the latter a comedy-horror novel about Rock & Roll, obviously borrowing its name from the classic greatest-hits Black Sabbath record); Hendrix's highly entertaining twists on horror regularly flip the genre's expectations on their ear, and in particular, the movie *Satanic Panic* cleverly has a lot of fun twisting the genre's tropes in its rapid-fire plot line. Cheezy? Yes, a little (okay, maybe more than just "a little"), but I don't think that's really avoidable when you're out to poke fun at the Satan-worshiping sub-genre. These are the types of themes that Hendrix's literary peers David Wong (*John Dies in the End*), and more specifically Richard Kadrey (*The Sandman Slim* series), also dove into. But before these modern authors, old-school horror scribes Edward Lee and Tom Piccirilli very likely set the stage for Hendrix, Wong, and Kadrey.

Edward Lee went balls-out into the gorezone with his *Infernal* trilogy of novels for Leisure



Horror back in the early 2000s, but the late Tom Piccirilli's book *A Lower Deep* (2001) appears to be almost two decades ahead of its time, with a clever satirical approach to a Satanic-detective-revenge "noir" plotline and its tight, jazz-like prose that follows a put-upon anti-hero who must go on an otherworldly mission in order to save the soul of his dead girlfriend. Also taking the genre for a spin in the early 2000s, author A. Lee Martinez then took this

supernatural save-the-world-with-a-bucket load-of-humour approach to new heights with his absolutely hilarious novel *Gil's All-Fright Diner* in 2005, which was championed by *Rue Morgue* magazine and launched Martinez' career as a genre author into orbit, even though he has never been able to write another novel as good, or as funny, as *Gil's All-Fright Diner*, which took equal cues from Piccirilli's 2001 book and author Joe R. Lansdale's *Hap & Leonard* novels (and if you haven't read Joe R. Lansdale yet, put this article down and go and find one of the first few *Hap & Leonard* books). Incidentally, Lansdale also authored (pre-*Hap & Leonard*) a seriously groundbreaking horror novel at the beginning of his career –

The Nightrunners.

Fast forward a couple of decades, around the same time that *Satanic Panic* was released, we also got Netflix streaming *We Summon the Darkness*, which is actually far better than I thought it was going to be; the satire here really worked as a gender-flipping Satansploitation flick. Like *Satanic Panic*, the story is good and the writing is swift and clever, and with a bigger budget this could have been amazing. As it stands, it's highly entertaining, and of course the alluring Alexandra Daddario, who cut her teeth on the low-budget Mary Lambert horror film *The Attic*, is always a pleasant asset for a horror movie. This time around, in *We Summon the Darkness*, Daddario gets to play the lead, where she impressively pulls the entire film together nearly single-handedly – which is sort of a

first for this unheralded millennial scream queen.

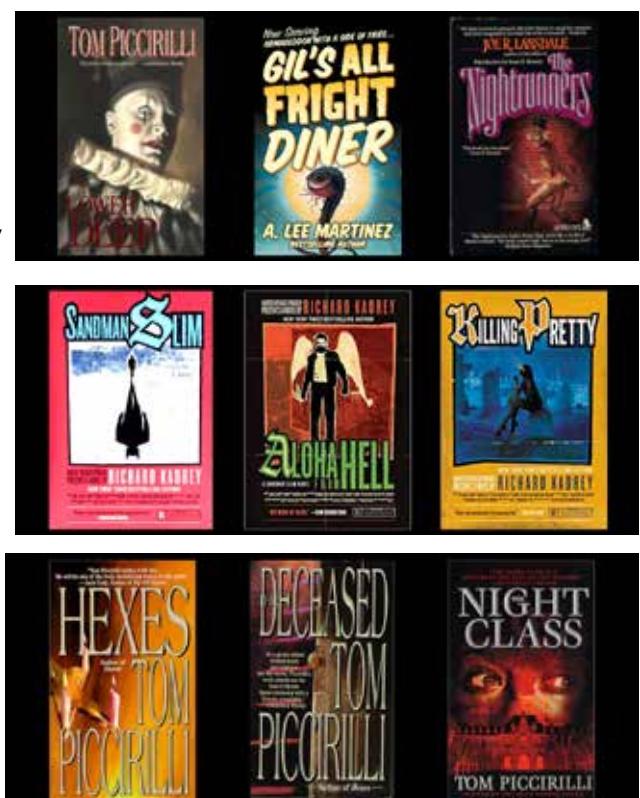
While it was also enjoyable to see her in her other horror credits: Joe Dante's *Burying the Ex*, 2013's *Texas Chainsaw* franchise installment, *American Horror Story*, and *We Have Always Lived in this Castle*; it was 2019's *We Summon the Darkness* that really allowed this actress to shine in a bona fide strong leading role; which was also a close precursor to her critical and commercial success in the currently streaming *White Lotus* TV series.

But I'd like to circle back to the ahead-of-his-time horror author Tom Piccirilli, whose novels of the early 2000s and 2010s initially flummoxed genre readers with their free-flowing prose that carried some pretty outrageous (and yes, funny and amusing) ideas – in a style that was far more dreamlike than other horror novels of that era. As said, some readers were left confused, while others were left to declare that Piccirilli had an easy, readily accessible style to his novels. Honestly, I can personally see both sides of that coin; my own experience with Piccirilli's novels is that I knew I liked them, I knew I was attracted to them, but it was difficult for me to recall any exact plot points, which left my own memory of his novels slightly confused within my own mind – however, when reading them a second time over (which I've now done with three of his works, including *A Lower Deep*, which helped inspire this article), my brain automatically synced into the rhythm of the prose, and I was left wondering how I ever thought his books were at all confusing confusing in the first place. I suppose the best way to read his books would be to just go with the flow. Like soothing jazz, you've gotta just lean back and let it happen all over your brain. In that sense, Piccirilli was a bit of a genius when it came to horror novel writing. In the early 2010s he turned his writing pen towards Southern Gothic sensibilities with *A Choir of Ill Children*, which read like a wicked mix of *Tales from the Crypt* and, oddly, the similarly Southern Gothic works of Joe R. Lansdale.



Like quite a few of the really great horror paperback authors of the 90s and 2000s, Tom Piccirilli passed away a few years ago. But unlike his literary peers of that time period T.M.Wright, Charles L. Grant, Dennis Etchison, and Rick Hautala, who have also passed on, Piccirilli was much younger than them, having succumbed to cancer in 2015 at the age of 50, at a time when *A Lower Deep* was (and really still is) mistaken as being confusing by readers who came across the book in the early 2000s when it was first published. I have no trouble believing that readers, in this new and modern era of writers like Grady Hendrix, David Wong, and Richard Kadrey, would find much to be amazed at, amused with, and entertained by in Piccirilli's handful of early novels, just as we're finding entertainment in the atypical comedy of Satanic films like *Satanic Panic* and *We Summon the Darkness*. And while I'm at it, I'll throw a big shout-out to Kadrey's *Sandman Slim* series, which is still ongoing and with no end to this prolific author's hugely entertaining output in sight.

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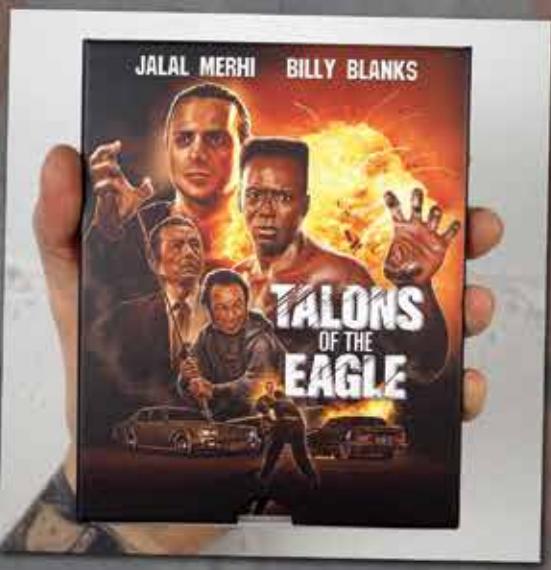
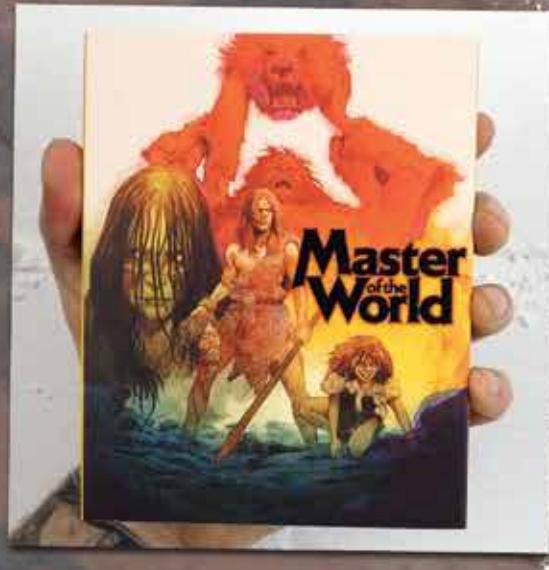
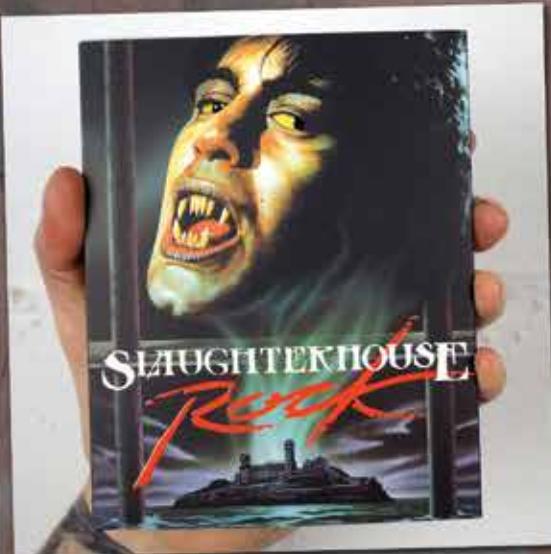
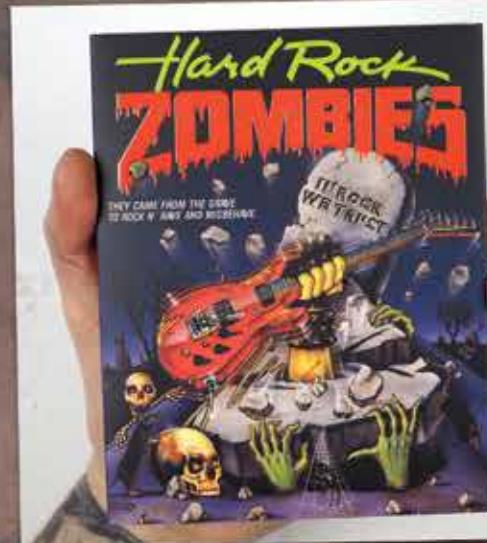
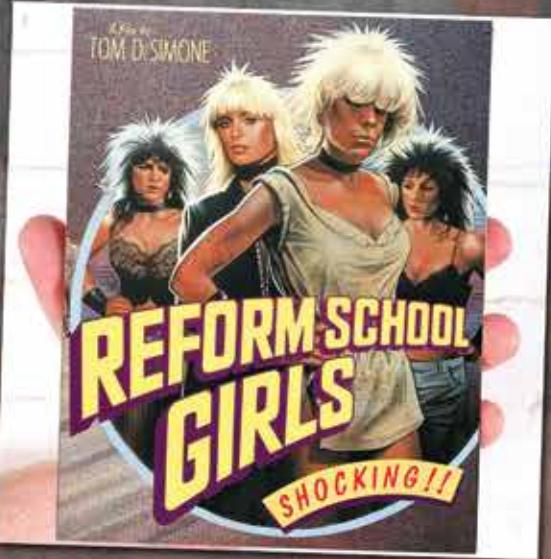
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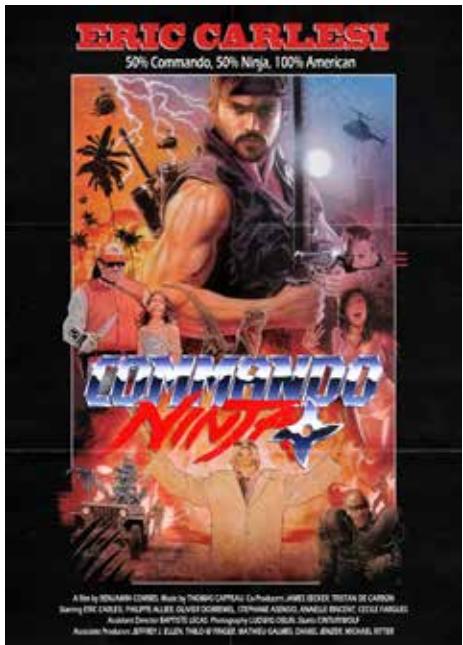
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Commando Ninja 50% Commando, 50% Ninja, 100% American.

Interview with filmmaker Benjamin Combes
By Ira "VHS" Hunter

AU: Who are we talking to today?

BC: Hi, I'm Benjamin Combes, an indie filmmaker from south of France, currently based in Vancouver BC. I've been serving the video games industry for the last 12 years, at Ubisoft France, and Sega in Canada. Worked on big brands like Ghost Recon, Assassin's Creed, Mario, SpongeBob... and now more for indies! I'd say, if I'm a little famous for something, that would be my film Commando Ninja. And infamous for, maybe my sense of humor.

AU: How did you get involved in filmmaking?

BC: Of course like every film director I started in my backyard with my parents camcorder. Then YouTube was a thing, and I signed a contract with Machinima Santa Monica to create a *Minecraft Live Action* web series. Then we did some fan films for fun, among them *Half Life* and *Alien Isolation*.

AU: What inspired you to create your latest movie *Commando Ninja*?

BC: Simply a very strong love for the 80s action hero movies, and the desire to pay my tribute to this over the top form of art, mixing explosions, punchlines, action, muscles and comedy.

AU: What is *Commando Ninja* about?

BC: John is a Vietnam Green Beret Vet, Half Commando, Half Ninja, whose daughter has been abducted by a secret Ninja Organization, led by a Central-American dictator, who wants to create a new-world order... through time...

AU: Is it safe to say there is lots of blood and over-the-top violence in the movie?

BC: For sure, but really not even half as much as I wanted.

AU: Who handled the Special FX for the film?

BC: Myself and my assistant Basile. As we were 100% amateur and indie, we tried a lot of different techniques to create our own SFX and blood. Blood squibs were made with air pumps. We used ridiculous dummies, and real brains / guts. We did this movie with a crew of 2 people, us.

AU: Even though it is an obvious homage to 80s action movies, what makes *Commando Ninja* special and unique in your opinion?

BC: I'm happy that a lot of people have told us that we have a very true and strong passion for the genre. Making this movie was like a full, blind, 3 years black out love catharsis, driven by passion for the genre. I must have watched one 80s movie a day during those 3 years.

AU: The film was originally made popular on YouTube and then funded through Kickstarter?

BC: I have no idea, first we filmed everything we needed for the big trailer with my own money, then released it with the Kickstarter campaign.

Then the Kickstarter was half way, and one day David Sandberg, *Kung Fury* creator, shared our campaign on his Instagram. I think it helped a lot.

An advertisement for Wollammo, featuring a werewolf and a werewolf head with a bomb.

The 80s revival wave was quite big in 2016, it was the year *Stranger Things* came out. Now it's over!

AU: Who played Commando Ninja?

BC: His name was Eric Carles. He is a fitness coach.

AU: What would it say on his Tinder profile?

"Never miss leg day"

AU: Who created the soundtrack?

BC: The soundtrack was created by Thomas Cappeau, a french composer. It also includes existing titles from the Synthwave scene. The soundtrack was inspired by famous 80's orchestral movie scores, made with synths. Like Jerry Goldsmith (*Rambo*), Paul Hertzog (*Kickboxer*), music from *Home Alone*.

My main demand was to try to make it sound realistic (music from a real 80s movie), and not like modern synthwave music, by using classic 80's synths. The inspiration also includes John Williams, Alan Sylvestri, Michael J Linn.

AU: Are there any boobies in the film? How many boobies are we talking about?

BC: I'd say about four pairs.

AU: Is a sequel to *Commando Ninja* planned?

BC: Yes, we are working on *Commando Ninja 2* right now, but it's a very long process as I live and work in Vancouver, and shoot the film in France with my team. So we are filming during summer, and I'm editing / doing VFX during fall/winter.

We did a successful Kickstarter. But in the end we would need twice or three times that money, so currently looking for national indie cinema funds.

People can still contribute directly via paypal, like it was Kickstarter. Just remember it's pre-order, and the movie will not be ready before two years: benjamincombes.com/commando-ninja-2-kickstarter-follow-up.

I've learned a lot since the first movie. How to write and structure a movie, how to light a scene to get this movie look, how to choose your focal length. The first movie was basically a trailer that we ended up making a full movie from.

AU: What are the best obscure 80s action flicks?

BC: *Action Jackson*, *TAPS*, *Alamo Bay*, *Toy Soldiers*, *Stone Cold*, *Best of the Best*, *Dead Heat*...

AU: Anything else to promote?

BC: We also did a crazy old school comic book. It's available digitally: commandoninja.bigcartel.com

AU: Any advice for aspiring filmmakers?

BC: Start small, you will always learn something from any shooting. Gear is not a priority, you can do something great with your smartphone.

If you want to do something with meaning, then spend more time on the script. A good story will always lead to a good movie. Also learn how to not lose the viewer, with a good structure and an appealing intro, good actors.

If you want to have the movie look, don't waste your time looking for the best lens and camera, it's all in the lighting. Then step by step, year after year, you will learn that everything matters when you are making a movie : the focal length says something, the movement of the camera says something, the light too, the colours...

If you like *Commando Ninja* and you want to do something fun or based on something (genre movies), then try to at least have a feature, something new, and also respect the original genre. If you want to make genre films, you will need perfect costumes, locations and props, it's very hard and expensive.

Then as the Film Riot guy says, "Write Shoot Edit Repeat."

AU: Where can people buy or watch *Commando Ninja*?

BC: For sure, it's still free on our YouTube channel, but you'll need an account as it's censored. youtube.be/No6isuzn0FQ

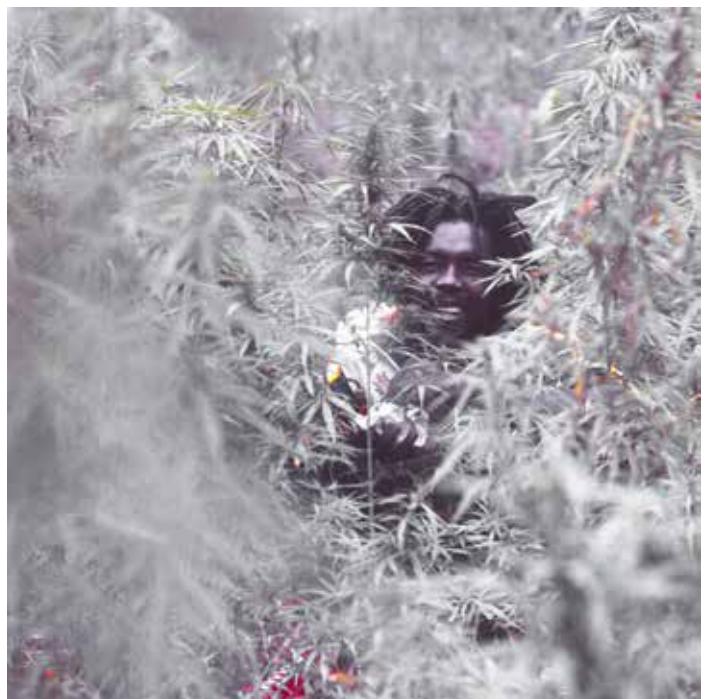
There remains 364 copies of the limited Bluray at Vinegar Syndrome, including *Making Off*, *Extras*, and "*Commando Ninja 2 Prequel: Hopkins*," a short tribute to the vigilante 70's noir movies vinegarsyndrome.com/products/commando-ninja-etr-media

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LEE JAFFE

Natty Dread

Interview by Iree-i

AU: Who are we talking with today?

Lee Jaffe: I'm a visual artist and I'm a musician. I've had the good fortune to work as a producer with some fantastic Jamaican musicians, singers and songwriters. I'm also a painter and sculptor.

AU: Several years ago you exhibited your photography of Bob Marley and Peter Tosh as part of Victoria's Ska and Reggae Festival. I remember you telling the story about when you were taking the pictures for the Legalize It album cover and how you walked over two mountain ranges and then as you came over the third mountain range and finally saw the neon green of the Jamaican ganja fields below.

recording of the first Wailers album on Island Records, *Catch a Fire*. Jim was like, "Oh you have to hear this, this is amazing." He put it in his boom box and I would say it changed my life forever. Hearing the first lines of that song, Concrete Jungle. The music was amazing and so original. The lyrics were brilliant poetry and socially conscious. It was art that was powerful on so many levels.

AU: Did you guys smoke some herb at that first encounter?

LJ: Uh yeah, I would say we did. I smoked a lot of herb with Bob. I had seen The Harder They Come in England a few months earlier. So I had some idea of Rasta culture from that and some awareness of Jamaican music. It was kind of a preparation for meeting Bob. Bob was in New York to buy equipment for his band to start rehearsing to go on their first tour to support *Catch a Fire*. I

That really stuck in my mind.

LJ: It's a very strong, vivid memory. A life changing memory.

AU: How did you, starting off in a Jewish family in New York, meet Bob Marley? How did you end up going to Jamaican and getting involved in that whole scene?

LJ: I met Bob through a musician friend Jim Capaldi, who was in a group called Traffic. They were signed to Island Records. I went to visit him at his hotel after their show at Madison Square Gardens in early 1973. Bob Marley was in his hotel suite. Jim had a cassette of the newly finished unreleased

played harmonica and Bob played guitar so we kind of hit it off.. He liked the rootsiness of the harmonica. My friends from college were the biggest herb dealers in New York. I took Bob to one of my friend's stash houses on the Upper East Side where he had 800 pounds hidden in a false wall. Bob was really impressed with that and I think it kind of solidified us being friends.

AU: What kind of flavours of herb would have been in that situation?

LJ: Colombian. Colombian golds or reds and they had a thing called Cheeba which was darker. It was still seeded somewhat as this was before Sinsemilla.

AU: Back then there was like 10 flavours of weed, now there's like 10,000.

LJ: Yeah. I think it was North Americans coming to Jamaica that started later in the mid 70s that introduced farmers in Jamaica to growing seedless herb, called Sinsemilla.

AU: Any earlier musical projects before meeting Bob Marley?

LJ: I had a band that broke up before they ever played a gig.

AU: What was the name of the band?

LJ: It didn't even have a name yet. We had a temporary name, Wiggy Wailers and the Walgreens. Because we were so into drugs.

AU: You had the word Wailers in there, that's interesting.

LJ: It was four hippie looking guys and a 300 pound black female gospel singer. It would have been good, but we had all our equipment stolen before we ever played a gig. Which led me to go to Brazil to recover from that loss.

AU: What were some of the films that you made?

LJ: They were kind of experimental films at the time of the conceptual art movement. I made a film with the artists Vito Acconci and Miguel Rio Branco called Impact. I made a film with the

artist Gordon Matta-Clark. I wanted to make a documentary when I first moved to Jamaica with the Wailers but the financing fell through. That would have been iconic.

AU: Why did you originally travel to Jamaica?

LJ: The founder of Island Records, Chris Blackwell was organizing a small group of people to go on a vacation trip from Kingston in Jamaica to Trinidad for Carnival and I got invited on the trip. Mainly because over the period when Bob was in New York, I was helping him go around buying equipment for the band. We'd kind of become really tight. So I got invited on the trip. After two days in Trinidad we island hopped back to Jamaica. Chris had bought a house which he was planning to use as a small



office for Island Records. It was a big old rundown Jamaican colonial great house. It had extra bedroom for me to stay. It was on Hope Road a few hundred yards up from the Prime Minister's residence. There was a yard behind the main house and in the back of the yard, there was a shack. Which had been the slave quarters of the house. They had turned it into a small rehearsal studio. When I arrived at Hope Road, Peter Tosh was there with Family Man (Aston Barrett) and Carly (Carlton Barrett) and Wire (Earl Wilberforce Lindo) the keyboard player and they were rehearsing this song "400 Years". It was incredible, the vibe coming out of this former slave quarters. So I just felt like it was the most interesting place to be. I really didn't want to leave. Chris asked me if I'd be interested to help organize what became The Wailers first North American tour. It was a way for me to be involved and try to help get this music and message out to the world.

AU: Is it true you were supposed to only go for 10 days but ended up staying for 5 years?

LJ: Well, I kind of stayed my whole life but I lived at Hope Road for over three years. Then after the Natty Dread tour, which I got to play on as a musician, which of course was a highlight of my life. One of the highest highlights. I began to

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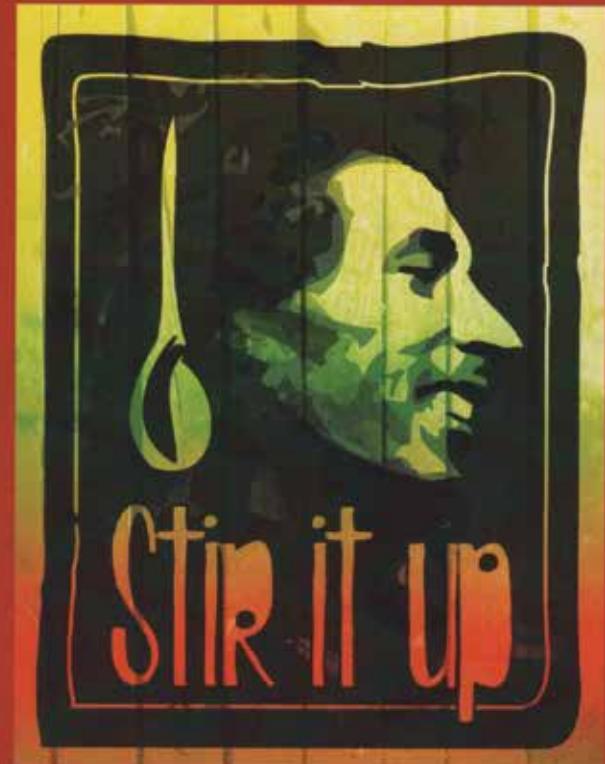


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work with Peter Tosh to help produce his first solo album, the *Legalize It* album.

AU: What was your experience like when you first arrived in Jamaica? Was it sort of culture shock or did you just fit right in?

LJ: Well, I definitely didn't just fit right in. I had a little preparation from seeing The Harder They Come. Also my experience of living in Brazil for a year and a half before that. Spending time with the artists there, and filmmakers and musicians who were deeply involved in creating work opposing the military dictatorship and all the risks that involved. That prepared me for living in Jamaica in a highly charged political atmosphere.

AU: What was your role within Bob Marley and the Wailers? Where you their manager or tour manager?

LP: No, I wouldn't say I was a manager, but I organized the first two North American tours, one for *Catch a Fire* and for *Burnin'*. We were very low budget so I was kind of out there by myself just kind of doing everything. We didn't have much of an audience. Those first two Island Albums didn't sell very well but we started to build. It was impossible to get radio airplay. We only had a couple of stations playing our music because it didn't fit into any of the categories. Radio was very segregated. You had the rock stations that would play music by white people and then you had R&B stations. We didn't fit in either of those categories. So it was hard to break through. But we started to get good media attention. The Natty Dread tour was the first tour where Bob had started having bigger audiences. I got to play on the *Natty Dread* album. I got to play on this song called "Rebel Music (3 O'Clock Roadblock)", which became a number one single in Jamaica, and I got to play on that tour. There's also another song I played on "Talkin' Blues", which was actually written about me. Because I was sleeping on the porch at Rita Marley's house, sleeping on the floor.

AU: Cold floor was your bed last night?

LJ: Yeah, cold ground was my bed. So I was sleeping on the floor and Bob woke up and he started singing and writing that song. It was great. I mean, I was sleeping on the floor but I had Rita making me porridge with the kids before they went off to school. It was like I was part of the family. It was amazing. It was tough times. There was no money but I felt I was part of the struggle and privileged to be allowed to help get the music through.

AU: At what point does the popularity explode? Did it have to do with Eric Clapton covering I Shot The Sheriff?

LJ: Not really no. It helped Bob out somewhat because he had written the song. So it was some money coming in. He had a bunch of kids, he had the responsibility of his band and he felt the weight of responsibility for all the sufferers in the ghetto.

AU: Did you become a Rastafarian while in Jamaica?

LJ: Yeah I did. I started to have dreadlocks and I fell right into the lifestyle and the culture, that's how I became a band member.

AU: What are the main principles of Rasta?

LJ: Well, it's about respecting the body and the idea of living eternally. Organic farming, living fruits and vegetables. Herb is a sacrament. Things seemed to me to be very advanced thinking.

AU: What were the herb strains in Jamaica?

LJ: We were always looking for Lambs Bread.

AU: Was it one of those situations where most of their Ganja was exported? Or was it mostly kept on the island for the people?

LJ: Well, both. Barrington Levy had that song "Under Mi Sensi". It's about how the Rasta man growing herb is bringing money to the island.



Later I produced two albums with Barrington.

AU: What was the herb you smoked in Jamaica like?

LJ: Jamaican herb has a special flavour, which I still find delicious.

AU: When Peter Tosh left the Wailers to go solo, what made you decide to stay with Peter?

LJ: I felt I had contributed to Bob Marley and the Wailers, but I felt I had done my part. We played in Central Park for 20,000 people and Bob had

a new manager who didn't really want me around. It was time for me to do something new. I got a call from Peter asking if I'd be interested to help him do a solo album. I went to see him at his house and on his acoustic guitar he played me 30 songs. I had no idea he had these songs.

Basically the songs got recorded for *Legalize It* and *Equal Rights* and that's when I realized why they split. It wasn't a lot of acrimony between Peter and Bob. It was more, Peter having all these songs and the songs not getting recorded. He had a few songs on those first two Island albums and these songs needed to get out there. Bob was starting to find a wider audience and Peter felt that I could help. That I had helped to expand the Wailers audience and that we could build on that together.

AU: What was your involvement with Peter Tosh's legendary album, *Legalize It*?

LJ: Pretty much producing it all. We had no money. Smuggled some herb to the States to help finance recording. Helped to organize studio time, musicians, and engineers. Peter had the song, "Legalize It", the anthem, and I had been to a herb field with Bob. I knew what an impression that had made on me. In the US people didn't really know what an herb plant looked like. I thought that would be great to have on the cover. It would make an impact.

AU: Were you a photographer before going to Jamaica?

LJ: Yeah, I'm a visual artist working in photography and film and I've continued to do that.

AU: So you took the iconic photo for the *Legalize It* cover?

LJ: Yeah, but Columbia Records didn't want an herb field picture as the album cover. I had given them seven pieces of film, which I thought were the best from the photoshoot. They came back and said they lost the film. I had another one that I thought could work, so my

eighth favorite photo. I told Peter that he had to insist that the album be called *Legalize It*. Which he did and my eighth favorite picture became the cover. Then around 2000 Columbia re-released the album in a beautiful box set package and they were making a pamphlet to go in it. I got a call from someone at Colombia saying they wanted to license some pictures. So they miraculously found the film and they returned it.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

LJ: I'll definitely smoke some herb on 420.

AU: Canada recently legalized marijuana nationally. Do you think Peter Tosh would have been happy with the way things have progressed with concerns to legalization?

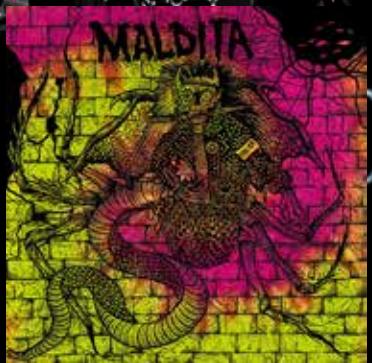
LJ: I would say he'd be probably frustrated that it's happened so slowly. But definitely would feel great about it being legalized nationally in Canada, we haven't gotten to that point in the United States. But you can buy herb in a store in New York now, that just started in the last few weeks actually. I'm in New Jersey across the river and I can walk to a herb store. That's kind of amazing. So we're getting there. But we still have a ways to go. There is still a lot of people in prison. So we've got to keep going.

leejaffe.com

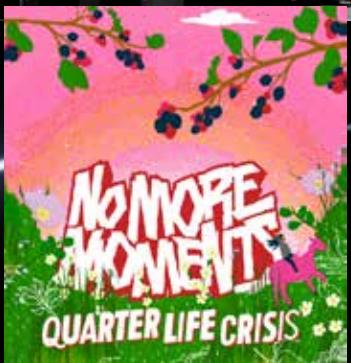


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Choices Made

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

Josh: This is Josh, I sing in the band and I am an imperfect perfectionist.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band. What are you all about?

Josh: We are a band that formed over the likes of Craigslist in late 2018, but have all been playing music for many moons. The music is all about being a form of release and not trying to turn it into another form of routine work.

AU: Who is in the band and what would it say on your dating profiles?

Josh: Andrew, aka Kenneth, the South African Dynamo who slaps the bass with gusto.

Steve, hair for days and riffs that will melt your face off. Watch out Nicolas Cage and John Travolta.

Andrew 2.0, drum skills that'll make you go postal, Mr. Postman.

bass licks and powerful drums. Lyrics mostly just come from whatever is on my mind at the moment which tends to be things relating to mental health or current state of affairs.

AU: Have you or are you releasing a new album soon? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

Josh: Currently we have released our first 7 inch with Cursed Blessings Records. Can be purchased on their website or at our shows. But we are in the works on a new release and are currently workshoping the songs. We have a new single coming out soon though, stay tuned.

AU: Does the latest album explore any particular themes or topics? Who did the album artwork?

Josh: Artwork is done in house by our bass player Andrew and the themes or topics often float around mental health, 9-5 work-life woes and how an individual might feel trapped in the middle of all the current chaos going on in the world.

AU: Any stand-out tracks or singles you are stoked on?

Then there is myself, I sing and write words on paper. The others really do all the work.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

Josh: Influenced by hardcore/punk (for fans of SOIA, Good Riddance and Ensign), most of our songs clock in under 2min and basically cut right to the point. Blistering guitar riffs, solid

Josh: "Reason for Conflict" is a great track from our current release, also "Sideroads" is one of my personal favourites (both can be found on your standard streaming platforms) but I am VERY stoked on our new single coming out. No Spoilers.

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?

Josh: Own cats. When you are trapped indoors and have spent many years locked away inside a small apartment, unsure when to see the light of day... they really do keep you entertained and the bond helps keep some form of humanity intact.

AU: Any live shows or tours planned for the near future?

Josh: We just started booking more shows again. We are playing Hamilton April 15th for the RULES album release show. We are playing April 23rd in Toronto at the Bovine Sex Club to finally give our 7inch its official release show and then a few confirmed dates but not yet finalized for Guelph



way of our creative processes. Simply because they believe in what we are doing. It is refreshing and we have such admiration for them taking on so much work in such unprecedented times.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

Josh: Right now, we are focused on getting back into doing live shows. We have missed it dearly and had a slight tease earlier in the year when we

got to come back for a few. We also are focusing on new material right now so we can follow up our last release. "Reason for Conflict" is a really solid 7 inch that best represents everything we are bringing to the table.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Josh: Might sound cliché but be yourself and don't worry what others say. Social media has its positives, but there is a lot of negatives, especially around human interaction

and perception. Don't live your life for the photoshopped picture perfect smile, just live it and own it.

AU: How do people find you online?

Josh: @choicesmadeto on Instagram and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/choicesmadeto. And all the streaming services, too.



and Peterborough.

AU: How have you been enjoying being on the Cursed Blessings record label? What makes the experience unique?

Josh: It's been a very great experience. Al and Doug have a true appreciation for the music they are putting out and genuinely do not get in the

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Beyond the Wasteland

**Interview with filmmaker Eddie Beyrouthy
by Ryan "Master Blaster" Dyer and Ira "Feral Kid" Hunter**

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous

for?

EB: My name is Eddie Beyrouthy and I'm the Co-Producer and Director for *Beyond the Wasteland*. *Beyond the Wasteland* is my debut feature documentary.

AU: Tell us about the documentary you directed, *Beyond The Wasteland*. What was the genesis for the idea?

EB: *Beyond the Wasteland* is a celebration of *Mad Max* fans from around the world who go to extraordinary length in the name of a franchise that has truly changed their lives. These incredible super fans live and breathe the franchise, the Wasteland, and everything in between. The seed was planted for *Beyond the Wasteland* in August 2018 from a conversation with my good friend Bertrand Cadart about a series of 40th Anniversary *Mad Max* fan events taking place in early 2019 in Clunes, Victoria, Australia and the surrounding regions where the original *Mad*

Max movie was filmed. Bertrand, at the time was diagnosed with leukaemia and wanted to take a 'final' road trip from his home town of Mapleton, Queensland through outback Australia to Clunes, Victoria where it all began for him with *Mad Max*. Bertrand designed the original bikes in *Mad Max* and played a minor, non-speaking role as 'Clunk' from the toe cutter gang.

My producing partner, Phil Lambert, and I spent

some months researching and developing the concept. We realised very quickly that this eccentric world of cars, costumes, props, artwork, collectibles had to be seen by the rest of the world. Pre-production commenced in October 2019 and the rest is history.

AU: What's your personal history with the *Mad Max* franchise (when did you first watch one of the movies)?

EB: I remember renting *Mad Max* and *The Road Warrior* from 'Movieland' in Melbourne, Australia in the mid 90s. There was a '7 weekly movies for 7 dollars' deal and that was our Friday night ritual. We were young, curious, and didn't know what to expect. The result... terrified! At such a young age, after watching *Mad Max*, I believed that the Australian Outback was indeed haunted with motorcycle gangs who were scavenging for fuel, and killing for the pleasure of it, but at the same time, cool cops like Max and Jim Goose existed, so I felt safe!

AU: Which movie of the original trilogy is your favorite and why?

EB: I still have a soft spot for the original *Mad Max*. This was the birth of the *Mad Max* franchise and the Wasteland and really put Australian Cinema on the map. The classic 'Ford vs Holden' battle, the picturesque Australian Outback, the badass cops defending the Wasteland, what more could one ask for?

AU: What did you think of the newer *Mad Max* film?

EB: *Fury Road* is a fuel raging action masterpiece. I think this has revived the *Mad Max* franchise for today's younger audiences, strongly appealing to a new breed of cinema-goers. Dr Miller is a master of cinema, and *Fury Road* is a strong sign that the franchise will live forever.

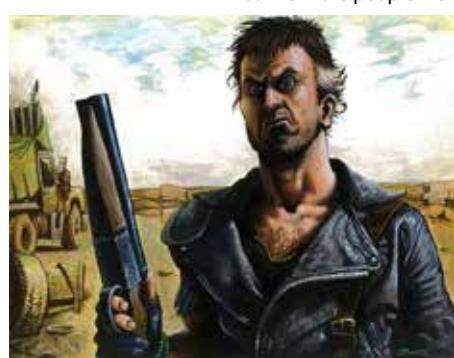
AU: What exactly is Wasteland Weekend and

how would you describe the experience?

Wasteland Weekend is a post-apocalyptic *Mad Max*-style event held in the Californian desert. It's the mecca of the apocalypse and an event that everyone must add to their bucket list. Jared Butler was kind enough to stage a Wasteland Weekend car show for *Beyond the Wasteland* in Los Angeles in April 2019 and we were proud to showcase Wasteland Weekend in the documentary.

AU: *Mad Max* has had a big influence on the world of pro-wrestling as well, with characters like Demolition dressing like characters and Thunderdome inspiring the Elimination Chamber. Did you encounter any wrestlers for this documentary?

EB: The more people we met, the more we



Artwork by Ryan "Humanburger" Jones

realised that *Mad Max* has such a strong impact in many subcultures including fashion, sport, art, animation, music videos, artists and entertainers. The *Mad Max* Universe exists and inspires us in ways we sometimes don't perceive. I am aware of Demolition and the Elimination Chamber but sadly weren't able

to include any pro-wrestling elements due to our time constraints. One of our main characters Jim 'Tank' Dorsey is the closest we got to a pro-wrestler!

AU: What is the most surprising thing you've seen influenced by *Mad Max*?

EB: The fans in Japan influenced my journey in so

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Nanaimo based metalcore band Backtalker has been forming its sound for a few years now. With the pandemic slowing them down from getting out on stage in 2020 BT is ready to get out and stir up the crowd. With a mix of influences from southern hardcore to classic metal or pop-punk this band has a style and sound that is addictive to the ear. With high energy rhythmic grooves and catchy melodic choruses you won't want to miss their upcoming BC shows.



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many ways. To see hundreds of fans, with Black Interceptors, Yellow MFP's, Kawasaki motorbikes, all dressed in leathers, was a sight I will never forget. Yoshiaki Murata, Tomokiyo Shiraishi, and the entire Wasteland of Japan keep the franchise alive in the most influential way. It does not stop there, Roby Della Ricca from Italy has a small piece of the Wasteland, so does Melvin Zed from France, and the Cult of Chrome from Germany, Jim 'Tank' Dorsey from USA, and Adrian and Linda Bennett from the *Max Max 2* museum in Silverton. The seed was planted in Australia, but has spread globally and continues to thrive.

AU: Does the *Mad Max* community and the steampunk community have any crossovers?

EB: Wasteland



Weekend in California USA is the perfect example of the *Mad Max* and Steampunk communities crossing over. The Cult of Chrome in Germany is another phenomenal group of artists who create costumes beyond our imaginations. These artists come from different backgrounds and have different styles producing highly ornate costumes, props, and jewellery. You really have to see it to believe it. The sense of escapism these people feel really brings out their creativity.

AU: Is *Mad Max/Road Warrior* fan art featured in the documentary as well?

EB: We are proud to have featured *Mad Max* fan art throughout the documentary and continue to support artists from around the world.

AU: Your filmography includes *Peek A Boo* from 2012 that you directed. Did getting out there and filming in the hot outback yourself give you any new appreciation or insights on George Miller's work?

EB: *Peek A Boo* was a first feature I directed in my early years. I wanted to completely understand the filmmaking process and really push myself through the limits. Filming in the Outback has always been a passion of mine. The harsh, yet stark landscape has given me a new appreciation for Dr Miller's work. Storytelling is a passion for me, so if I can push the boundaries with every film, then I know I have achieved something I am proud of.

AU: Is George Miller or any of the original actors aware or featured in your documentary?

EB: Along side Bertrand's journey, we interviewed Paul Johnstone and Roger Ward as they were actors that connected with our fans on so many levels. Steve Bisley, Hugh Keays-byrne, Vince Gill, Tim Burns, Joanne Samuel and many others were also featured at the 40th Anniversary event. Kennedy Miller Mitchell are aware of the Documentary and we are proud to have produced a Film about the Fans of the Franchise.

AU: Did you come across any hardcore collectors of *Mad Max* merchandise? What was the most impressive collection?

EB: All of our super fans are hardcore collectors in their own unique way. Jim 'Tank' Dorsey has a *Mad Max* collection that even Max Rockatansky will be proud of! It doesn't stop there... Adrian and Linda Bennett own the *Mad Max 2* Museum in Silverton and you can only imagine what is on display there! Melvin Zed is the 'encyclopedia of *Mad Max*', Roby Della Ricca has a custom made Fury Road flamethrower guitar, and Yoshiaki Murata has two burnout bikes! I won't say anymore but the documentary will reveal all!

AU: Tell us about some of the more extreme people featured in the film? What's the story about the bodybuilder guy who does the Lord Humungus character?

EB: All of our featured characters have a unique approach to how they live and breathe *Mad Max*, and Jim 'Tank' Dorsey is one that we all can relate to in many ways. Jim Dorsey is a loving husband, a proud dad, a son, a hard-working American, and

an inspiring human being, but, along side all that, Jim finds time to embrace and live his passion, that is *Mad Max*. We all have busy lives and Jim's life is one we can all be inspired by.

AU: The world premier took place at the Village Coburg Drive-In in Melbourne. By the looks of it a lot of fans with their custom cars attended. Could you tell us about it?

EB: *Beyond the Wasteland* premiered at the Coburg Village Drive-In in Melbourne, Australia. Our Australian Distributor Umbrella

Entertainment and our Marketing Company Monster Pictures were instrumental with planning such a successful event. We wanted our viewers to experience a documentary about fans of a franchise

from the 70s and 80s at one of Australia's last remaining Drive-In theatres, which opened in 1965. This experience brought back many nostalgic memories that we will never forget. Fans were encouraged to dress up in *Mad Max* costumes and bring their pride and joy for a memorable night. We had fan-built *Mad Max* vehicles on display, the Black Interceptor, Yellow MFP, and Lord Humungus' truck!

AU: How long did it take to put this together? When did filming take place?

EB: Production began in January 2019 to July 2019. Post-production was complete March 2020 with an anticipated release in Mid 2020. COVID delayed the release until February 2022.

AU: Tell us about the upcoming screening of *Beyond The Wasteland* at Calgary's Underground Film Festival. Will you be in attendance? What can the audience expect to experience?

EB: We are proud for *Beyond the Wasteland* to be accepted at Calgary's Underground Film Festival. I, unfortunately won't be in attendance due to production commitments in Australia but look forward to reviews and feedback from attendees at the Festival. The audience can expect a human piece about super fans from the *Mad Max* franchise who live and breathe in a world they find escapism in, and of course, extreme machines, costumes, motorbikes, events, and a little bit of history too!

AU: The fandoms for Star Wars or Star Trek are of course bigger and more noticeable, though when did you realize the *Mad Max* one was substantial enough to make this documentary?

EB: After reaching out to *Mad Max* fans from around the world and wanting to know more about their lives in the Wasteland, we realised very quickly

that the *Mad Max* fandom was bigger than we expected. It wasn't just in Australia or USA, it was in Europe, in Asia, South America, and everywhere in between. We wanted to know how the *Mad Max* fandom spread like wild fire, and how these fans connected from all over the world.

AU: Any other projects on the horizon?

EB: The Picture Lot is currently developing two feature films and we look forward to sharing some news later this year.

AU: Any advice for aspiring filmmakers?

EB: Get out there and live your passion. Life is too short to hold back.

AU: Any final words?

EB: A sincere thank you to Calgary's Underground Film Festival for accepting *Beyond the Wasteland*. We wish the organizers and attendees a successful festival.

AU: Where can people find more info online?

EB: We invite fans to like our Facebook page which will have the latest information on screenings and release dates.

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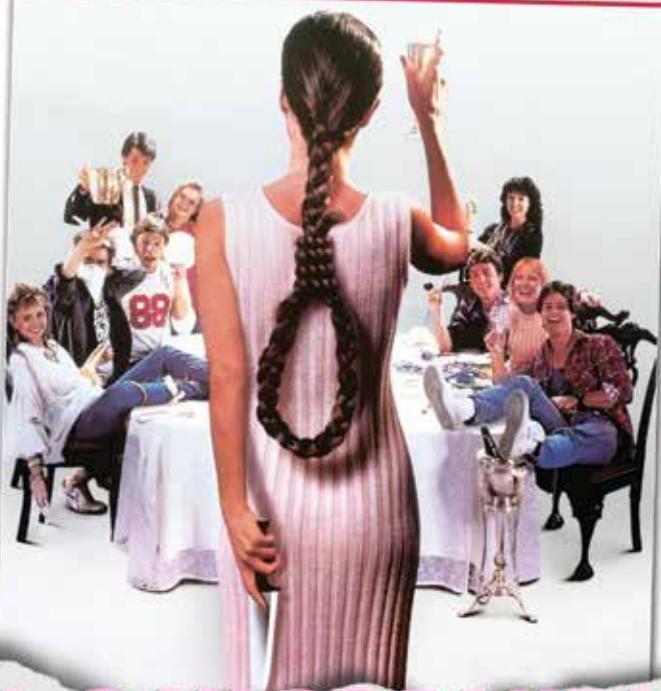
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U.K. SUBS

Interview with songwriter/bassist and author Alvin Gibbs – Part 1

by Ira "Warhead" Hunter and Dustin "Rock N Roll Savage" Jak

Transcribed by Sheldon "Road Rash" Byer

At an age when most punk rock bands have either hung up their studded leather belts and torn jeans jackets, British punk icons UK Subs keep coming back with new music to keep the old school punk rock spirit alive! Their latest song, "Sensei," was recently released on Cleopatra Records. The song is a full-charged blast of audio karate that shows these punk rock masters haven't lost an ounce of attitude or chops.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with today, and what are you most famous or most infamous for?

Alvin Gibbs: Alvin Gibbs bassist of the U.K. Subs. Apart from playing with the U.K. Subs since 1980, I spent two years touring with Iggy Pop. I played with a band called Cheap 'N' Nasty for guitar



player Nasty Suicide, who was in Hanoi Rocks and I played with them for four years. Infamy? I'm working on it. I have to try harder.

AU: We are calling you at your home in France today?

AG: Yes, I live in the Southwest not far from Bordeaux and Cognac in the Bordeaux wine region. That's where I've lived for the past 16

years.

AU: So you're a big wine connoisseur?

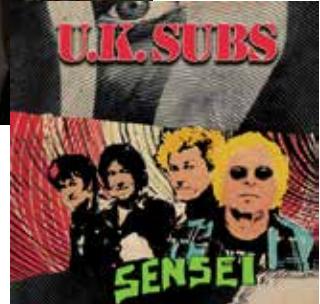
AG: I love wine. Good wine.

AU: U.K. Subs started in 1977. How did you end up joining in 1980?

AG: U.K. Subs's official first show was in 1977. Charlie (Harper) had a band called The Marauders in 1976, which kind of morphed into the U.K. Subs.

They had

a different lineup to the lineup that eventually recorded the first record, Another Kind of Blues in 1979. Two members of the Subs were sacked, so I replaced



Paul Slack on bass and Steve Roberts replaced Pete Davies on drums in 1980. It was just a band that Charlie had put together to play the pubs, then when Nicky Garrett joined, that's when things got a lot more serious in terms of the songs and the attitude. That's when they started to make waves. Eventually they were signed to GEM Records in '79.

AU: The name U.K. Subs, does it have to do with like, tops and subs like a sexual thing? What is it short for?

AG: It's shorthand for United Kingdom Subversives. Initially, the band was called the United Kingdom Subversive. In those days to get posters, or flyers you would pay per letter, not per word word, so it got shortened thereafter.

AU: Each of the albums started with the letter of the alphabet in order, and they've now made it through the entire alphabet. What is the plan going ahead?

AG: We made it from *Another Kind Of Blues*, which is the very first album through to Z with the album *Ziezo* in 2016. That was going to be our final album but we had a lot of stuff we had recorded and material that we never used. And it was good stuff so we started thinking it might be a good idea to get that stuff out.

AU: I think the letter C got skipped. Do you know why?

AG: It didn't get skipped! *Crash Course* - it's a live album, it wasn't a studio album.

AU: What can you tell us about this new single called "Sensei"?

AG: It's from the forthcoming album. The B-Side is actually from a record that we did for Cleopatra Records, a covers record called *Subversions*.

AU: Who originally did the B-Side?

AG: "Diversion" is a song by The Equals. Steve, our guitar player, really loved this song. Eddie Grant wrote it and sang it originally. Charlie doesn't sing it, Steve does. It sounds great.

AU: What is "Sensei" about?

Is it like a martial arts thing?

AG: I didn't write the song. Jamie, our drummer extraordinaire, did. I don't think there's anything specific in the lyrics that would indicate it was to do with martial arts. There's no references to Bruce Lee or Chuck Norris.

AU: Tell us about the books you've written?

AG: I've written four books.

My first back in '95 was called *Neighbourhood Threat: On Tour With Iggy Pop* and it was about my experiences playing over seven continents with Iggy as his bassist. It was the Instinct Tour. Then I wrote a book in '96 called *Destroy*, which was an attempt to somehow balance the history of punk with my involvement in it. About two years ago, I published a book - Volume One of a memoir *Diminished Responsibility: My life as a U.K. Sub & Other Strange Stories*. It did extremely well and sold out. Volume Two is selling now and the final instalment will be out later this year. It basically starts off with my initial interest in rock music and going to see bands in the 70s and how I was infatuated by glam rock. Eventually punk rock came along and I got to see The Clash and others in the early days.

AU: Got a good Iggy Pop story to share?

AG: Iggy told me a story one time after he had kind of straightened out, he told me about a time when he wasn't like that back in The Stooges days and he was living in L.A. He had gone out to the clubs, they'd been doing drugs and they'd been drinking heavily. At some point he took this particular pill. When he got back to his apartment, he said the sun was coming up and he suddenly felt really hungry. He went to the icebox and got out two beef patties. He turned on the oven, pulled down the door, grabbed these patties, one in each hand, knelt down to put these patties in the oven and suddenly realized that the pilot light had gone out. Gas was gushing out and at that point the drug kicked in and he couldn't move. He was paralyzed. There he was kneeling in front of the oven, gas coming out with a patty in each hand going,

"Shit. Any minute now I'm going to succumb to the gas, my head will fall in the oven, and people will assume that I committed suicide. But what the fuck are they gonna make about these pieces of meat



in my hand?" He was worried there'd be all kinds of people going "that's symbolic," "that was his offering to the Rock Gods." Luckily, somebody smelled the gas and kicked the door in. They managed to get him out of there before he succumbed and ended up dead in the oven.

AU: Were you in a band before the U.K. Subs and what was it like in that early scene?

AG: It was very exciting because it sort of swept everything

before. Prior to that, I was into sort of glam rock stuff like Alice Cooper and the New York Dolls, The Stooges, Mott the Hoople, and T Rex. Punk came along and it was so persuasive. I was in London, so I could go and see the bands. First punk band I saw in '76 was The Stranglers and I didn't like them because I thought they sounded like The Doors. But then I saw The Ramones a few months later on their first tour of the U.K., and that was my moment of conversion. I just remember opening the doors and just this wave of energy. There were



these pogoing hordes, leather jackets, brightly colored hair, and they are on the stage in true Ramone's style going from one song directly into the other, and I just stood there and went "This is how it should be done. This is brilliant." I loved the way they sort of deconstructed rock music to its basic components. I joined my first band called The Users in 1978. In 1979, Brian James, who had been a guitar player for The Damned, left the band and I played with him for a year and a half. That was my first real touring experience. We supported The Police in Europe and we did a lot of shows. I learned the trade through working with Brian, as a result of that I got invited to join the U.K. Subs.

To be continued in the next issue...

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Paddy Waggin'

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most notorious for?

AC: You're talking to Aidan Carroll AKA Paddy, AKA CURDLE, and I am the Lead Bard/Shenanagator of Paddy Waggin' notorious for belting out an old Irish Rebel tune with a pint in hand.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band. What are you all about?

AC: Paddy Waggin' is a six-piece Celtic Punk Rock band spawned in the bowels of East Van. Formed by Dublin, Ireland born singer Aidan (Paddy) and drummer Rob Stewart, the Scotsman of the group. When one night the two shared a fateful ride in a VPD Paddy Wagon singing the Old Triangle all the way to the station (those poor officers regretted it instantly). The lads recognized their instant affinity with the ol Irish tunes and decided to start the Paddy Waggin band. We play acoustic but with a full drum kit and up tempo. We also have guitar, bass, accordion, and alternating banjo/mandolin and occasionally fiddle and harmonica. We are a Celtic Party band that plays lots of traditional, originals, covers, rebel and drinking songs.

AU: Describe your sound if possible.

AC: We were recently told we are like The Pogues

and Flogging Molly on craic (Irish for friends, music and good times) We play acoustic and very fast while our originals are rhythmic and catchy with loads of group vocals so the whole band is involved and audience participation is highly encouraged.

AU: Where do you draw your influences from?

AC: There's loads of great Irish bands that we all have a great appreciation for to name a few I'll say The Dubliners, Christy Moore, Planxty, Luke Kelly, The Pogues, Then there's loads of current bands we love like Flogging Molly, The Rumjacks, The Mahones, The Peelers, The Dropkicks and The Dreadnoughts. Recently I've been cranking The Street Dogs a lot.

AU: Where are you guys from? What's the scene like there?

AC: We are based out of Suna Studios in East Vancouver. Suna was the brainchild of our drummer Rob "Diamond Dick" Stewart so that's where we've been rehearsing the last seven years. It's been a great place for us since we have access to Eagle Ears studio @ The Rockery where we record all our tasty tracks. The scene is coming



back quick in East Van so hoping to see some old places re opening or new places too.

AU: Who is in the band and what would it say on your dating profiles?

Aidan Carroll -AKA- Paddy- Voxboy 4 hire

Andrew Whyte -AKA- Skinny McWhyteboy- I am Guitarhollio

Jon Poliquin -AKA- Jonny Needles- Masterbassman/ lead shrieker

John Jandera -AKA- BBQ- Mando/Banjo mouth fartist

Phillip Meyer – AKA- Philly Falafel-Squeeze machine

Rob Stewart -AKA- Diamond Dick-Mad banger

AU: Have you released an album recently or is one coming out soon? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

AC: We recently re-released and performed our album *Race to the Bottom* to a killer sold-out show on St Paddy's Day at Lana Lou's. It was the first time we got to play it live in its entirety since COVID killed our big EP release party in 2020. The turnout was

our biggest yet and we sold out of our new album as well. It was absolutely fantastic to see everyone having a good time again, dancing and singing! Most recently we are very excited to be working on a new album with the legendary Finny McConnell of the Mahones offering his producing skills. We are shooting for next St Patrick's Day for our release.

AU: Does your music explore anything specific?

AC: Drinking, whiskey, drinking whiskey, having the craic and also the trials and tribulations of drinking... starting to see a bit of a theme here.

AU: This is our 420 issue. Are there any chronic in the band? If so, what are the best

ways to consume cannabis and some of the best strains to smoke?

AC: A few of us in the band partake for medicinal reasons only of course. A good thick joint of some strong indica always does the job. Needles likes Gnomestar Craft Cannabis the strain he suggests is Meat breath. It's great to have so many options to buy different strains and different products now that it has been "legalized" we highly suggest the THC infused brown sugar its great in a cuppa T.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

AC: There aren't a lot of bands that do what we do in Vancouver it's a very small genre so we have had some great opportunities because of that. We won a Battle of the Bands at The Blarney Stone in 2020 and donated \$12,500 to the SPCA which was really cool. We are an independent band so for us it's great to have the recognition of a live audience where everyone votes based on your performance is huge.

AU: Tell us what sort of shenanigans you got up to at your recent St Patrick's Day show?

AC: Well, the night started with the incomparable Stephen Fox straight from Dublin Ireland and playing all the traditional Irish tunes. He was dressed in an Irish Tartan kilt and a pair of hand knit woolen kilt socks from his Ma back home he really started the night out right. We live streamed the first half of the night and had people watching from all over the world. We played two 45-minute-high energy sets and had the audience up dancing through the entire night. Thanks to the amazing staff at Lana Lou's and everyone who came out to support us.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

AC: May your glass ever be full. May the roof over your head be always strong. And may you be in heaven half an hour before the devil knows you're dead. (Old Irish saying) Seriously though make sure you come out to see us when you get a chance it's a guaranteed great time.

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Hyperia

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do does your band do?

Marlee Ryley: We are Hyperia, a Melodic Thrash Metal band based out of Vancouver, Canada

AU: Hyperia just released *Silhouettes of Horror* on March 18th, what can you tell our readers about this album?

MR: It's our second full-length release as a band and we all think that it is a massive step up in terms of songwriting, performance, and production quality compared to our first album *Insanitorium*. It's over 50 minutes of non-stop thrash, a super fast-paced album that we hope has enough variation to keep the listener's attention!

AU: The album feels like a nonstop headbanging thrashing windmill, how would you compare your evolution on this record to *Insanitorium*?

MR: It definitely is. I think the whole band has matured and evolved as musicians as well as in our musical relationship with each other. We've settled more into our own roles and have more



experience creating a cohesive-sounding album, rather than stringing a bunch of riffs together. The writing process was pretty much the same, but I think everyone felt more confident in taking their parts to a new level and adding their own flair to the songs.

AU: We read that some of the lyrics were taken from Marlee's personal battles with night terrors? How have ya found writing lyrics for this album to cope with hellish dreams?

MR: Honestly, as most writers would probably say it is very therapeutic. Writing one's thoughts, experiences or even creative ideas down can be quite the release. This album has also helped boost my confidence in writing as everything just

seemed to flow out of me. As far as coping being able to write it down has helped me deal with the nightmares in a better way. I look at them as more of a story to be written down than a nightmare now.

AU: Not to take away from the other members and their respectable contributions but we read that Colin and Marlee are a husband and wife team in the band? How is that dynamic?

MR: By now I think everyone is so used to it that it's not even a conscious thing. We're pretty good at not getting our personal lives too intertwined with the music and all have good and open communication between each other.

AU: How was it recruiting Gord Alexander (Tessitura, Tides of Kharon, Immunize) for recording the drums on the album?

MR: It was great. Gord has been a friend of ours for a few years and we've always revered him for his awesome drumming. We were stoked that he

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was up for the challenge and he laid down drums that were better than any of us were expecting.

AU: We understand you now make Vancouver your hometown metal scene after beginning in Calgary? How does each scene compare to one another?

MR: We moved to Vancouver mid-pandemic, so unfortunately we still haven't gotten the whole Vancouver Metal Scene experience yet. As the world slowly opens back up we have attended some killer shows out here and can't wait to play our own. Calgary's metal scene will always hold a special spot in our heart, it's a quite tightly knit community with lots of support and turn out at most shows!

AU: We love that you covered ABBA's Gimme Gimme, what made you want to give this classic a metal rendition?

MR: All of us are big fans of ABBA haha. We felt it's a great party song that everyone knows, and once we started transcribing it as a cover we realized how well the song actually works as a metal song. I think we were all drinking one night when it

came on and someone thought it'd be a fun song to cover, and here we are!

AU: Any plans to tour Canada? or beyond? this summer?

MR: Definitely. This year we have a few festivals lined up and talk of a tour as well. We will also be celebrating our album release with shows in Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and possibly more. It's tricky to plan anything still but we're hoping to play a good amount of shows this year and aim to make 2023 a year for some international tours.

AU: Anything else you like to add for our readers?

MR: Thanks for taking the time to check us out! Your support means a lot to us. We hope you enjoy our newest album and hope we can make our way to wherever you are sometime in the near future!

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Dreadnoughts

Vancouver's Dreadnoughts have just announced a new single and live performances for St. Patrick's Day 2022. To support the release of their new single "Cider Holiday," the band will be headlining two nights at Vancouver's Rickshaw Theater on March 19th and 20th. The exclusive first single from the upcoming album *Roll and Go* on Stomp Records, hearkens back to Flogging Molly's finest material. It's a celtic-punk's tribute to the finest real farmhouse cider in the world, an extended meditation on the joys of exploration and booze. With over 80 MILLION streams on Spotify alone, The Dreadnoughts are the biggest band you've never heard of. Formed in the dirty and violent back rooms of Vancouver's infamous Ivanhoe Hotel back in '06, they've been on a cider-fueled bender across the globe bringing their furious brand of celtic polka punk klezmer mayhem to an ever growing legion of obsessed fans.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

We are the Dreadnoughts, 12-time winners of the Juno Award for Best Canadian Folk-Polka-Celtic-Klezmer-Sea Shanty-Punk Group. We are famous for many things, but the most important has to be the time we retweeted a Kanye West tweet about Corn Pops. That was all over the news.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band. What are you all about?

It was 2006, and a few of us met at the Ivanhoe

Hotel in Vancouver to discuss forming a band. We knew we liked NOFX and Flogging Molly, and I taught the guys some sea shanties, and eight rounds of Fireball later we had a plan. Our drummer's Dad often said that we were destined for stardom, and sure enough, here we are, 6 albums and a bunch of tours later, absolutely adored by several dozen people in Poland.

AU: Who is in the band and what would it say on your dating profiles?

We used to gently make fun of the Real McKenzies for having so many members rotating in and out; how young and foolish we were. That's what we do now, so I could barely even answer this question. But we actually did have a band dating profile on Plenty of Fish: we pretended to be a young, slim blond woman with a tattoo on her lower back named Irena. We would have conversations with these megabros who messaged us and then we'd say: "Hey do you wanna go out with me? I'm going to see my friend's band, they're called the Dreadnoughts, just meet me there!" And at a few of our early shows you'd see these absolute Chads wandering around looking confused after having paid full price. Cha-CHING!

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

How about this: if an accordion magically became self-aware, and you fed it bottles of vodka and tortured it with electrical currents for a few days, we are the noise it would eventually start to make.

AU: Are you releasing a new album soon? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

Yeah, we're just putting out *Roll and Go!* Basically, we've been under serious strain: we live in different parts of the world, our jobs and families have taken us away from the music, and of course COVID-19 made any and all in-person interaction impossible. Under the stress of constant isolation and fatigue, we decided to craft an album that stands as a big, giant middle finger to all of it, a defiant re-assertion of everything we stand for. These are punked up polkas, waltzes, irish jigs, klezmer dances and sea shanties, all absolutely drenched in alcohol and delivered with a defiant

scream.

After ducking and weaving through countless travel restrictions, we managed to converge at Factory Underground Studios in Norwalk, Connecticut, USA, to learn, record and mix an entire album in nine days. NINE. It was a harrowing, intense experience, one made even more intense by the fact that six guest musicians were recording their own parts in six different cities around the world, and that all of this had to be coordinated with virtually no time. But we got it done.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

It's about rediscovering merriment, it's about comradeship, it's about learning to take life by the nards again and make it what you want to be. Being back in the driver's seat.

AU: Any stand-out tracks or singles you are stoked on?

Very pumped about "Cider Holiday," which we just released! It's a classic celtic-folk-punk barnstormer. Also very excited for "Problem," a song about Eastern Europe which actually contains some hip-hop. Yeah. We'll see how that goes.

AU: Any live shows or tours planned for the near future?

Yeah! We have a slew of dates in central Canada and Quebec coming up this summer, and then we are off to the UK for a weekend to play Outcider Festival, an absolute must-visit if you're ever in England in early August. You think you know what cider tastes like? You don't.

AU: What's the craziest thing to ever happen on stage during one of your shows?

Easy: we lit our mandolin player on fire. We were doing an interview for a Polish TV station and the interviewer asked if people could expect anything crazy at the show, and without missing a beat one of us said, "we're going to light our mandolin player on fire." And then we realized that

this was on live TV. So we did it! There's a video somewhere; I'll never forget seeing the fire crawl up his leg while he bashed out some complex mandolin part. This was incredibly stupid in retrospect.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

Oh yeah we run a music substack at thedreadnoughts.substack.com it's full of insider info and extra demos and all kinds of fun stuff.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Strongbow isn't cider! Growler's isn't cider! Magner's isn't cider! It's all sweetened prison wine! Don't do it!

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Haunt

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to & what are you most infamous for?

TWC: I'm Trevor Church and I'm infamous for donut thievery. Don't leave donuts anywhere near me.

AU: How did Haunt 2022 come to be?

TWC: 2020 was a hell of a year and I've gone through many beta versions 2022 I had some break through in silicone valley. Now Google accepts me.

AU: Haunt is known for non-stop musical

output with five albums & two EPs (not to mention a plethora of other material) in your five-year existence. Do you have a crowning achievement?

TWC: Your first release is generally your most celebrated release. *Luminous Eyes* seems to hold up to that.

AU: When can we expect the next Haunt release and can you tell us about a track your particularly stoked on?

TWC: July 1st the new album *Windows of Your Heart* is out and the title track is by far my favorite. I wrote it for my son Rex. It's just about being away and how we will be close no matter what. In short.

AU: Tell us about the Allied Forces tour. Who's on it and how'd it come to be?

TWC: Traveler, Screamer, and Saber. I'm friends with these bands and I wanted

to put together a tour that was full of heart. It was difficult to get it all together with two bands not from the USA but like I said the heart made it happen.

AU: What can Canadians expect from a live Haunt show?

TWC: Basically you can watch me sweat profusely. No gimmicks just rocking out.

AU: Fuck, marry, kill: Traveler, Saber & Screamer - no chickening out!

TWC: My thoughts exactly. I'll need a neck brace after this.

AU: Have you been to Canada before with

Beastmaker or on a recreational level?

TWC: I have been to Canada. Many years ago I was hired to play in an indie rock band. There was a lot of snow and it was the first time I saw coloured money. I'm very much looking forward to my return as myself.

AU: What are your favourite Canadian bands?

TWC: Traveler, Freeways, Cauldron, Road Rash, Thor, Goathorn, The Death Wheelers, Skull Fist, Thunderor, Spell, Striker, many more.

AU: What are Haunt's biggest influences? Classic & modern.

TWC: Megadeth, Angel Witch, Ozzy, Metallica, Dokken, Blue Oyster Cult, Sabbath, Hagar.

AU: Who is Thor the Rock Warrior to you?

TWC: Lightning Strikes and Lazor Eyes are crucial to daily life. If you are feeling down put that on and remember he was held hostage.

AU: What's your most ridiculous tour story?

TWC: One of my favourites it was Beastmaker in Copenhagen. We show up to the hostel the guy asked me if I had brought my own linen and I was completely caught off guard. It was like I was snarky and I was like "Yes, I travel the world with my bedding," he laughed. We go up to our room front desk guy opens the door and there is someone sleeping in there. At this point I was like this is a hella interesting experience. Come morning I need to take a shower. The communal bathroom experience isn't my favorite. There is no lock on the shower door so I was like ok here we go. I decided to just keep my penis facing the shower door so no poor soul had to catch a glimpse of my rusty sheriffs badge. My instinct was correct as a European man opens the door and seems to be in shock, because I have a

circumcised penis perhaps. I'm looking at him and I go can I help you. He closed the door and then I realized I had no towel. So I used the sheet off of the bed. This was the first show of that tour and first impressions always leave a mark.

AU: Who would win in a fight: Doyle or Thor?

TWC: In my heart Thor would win but Doyle doesn't seem to age.

AU: Your dad is Bill "The Electric" Church of Montrose & Sammy Hagar fame. You're currently helping him write his autobiography. How did that come to be & when can we expect a release date?

TWC: My Dad is my hero and I grew up in awe of him and all of his accomplishments as a musician. I actually reached out to a Canadian writer Martin Popoff and after one conversation with Martin I knew he was the guy. We are almost done with the book. We only need to get the photos put together. Sammy Hagar wrote a forward for my old man and I helped get this whole project going it's been a long ride compared to what I'm used to. Should be available this summer.

AU: Any last words for readers?

TWC: Canadian Maple Syrup is superior.

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Revolution 514 Skateshop

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your involvement in the Montreal skate scene?

PW: Paget Williams, co-founder of Revolution 514 and over the years have always supported the scene producing music / skateboarding events such as Ramp Rage and Warped Tour. The shows we produced were the soundtrack to the skate scene.

OC: My name is Orion Revolution Curiel. I had my hayday in the Montreal skate scene in the 80s and 90s with a short stint in the late 80s in Vancouver.

AU: What is the origin story and history of your skate shop Revolution 514?

PW: We are four owners, myself (co-founder of Greenland Productions), Orion Curiel (Shades of Culture), Peter Edwards (Grim Skunk), Louis Corbeil (OG Mtl Skate icon).

OC: I always felt that I should own a skate shop so after spending 14 years in corporate working in the video game industry (And touring with my band Shades of Culture), I decided to get a job at a skate shop which lasted three months and led to

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514

wheels to deal with cracks and the only pipes we smoke are made of concrete.

PW: Come see yourself...

AU: What is your mission statement as a business?

PW: To promote skateboarding in every way possible.

OC: We have strived and will constantly strive to create a safe inclusive space for anyone at all to come through and feel comfortable that they won't be judged by us and that we want everyone to have a purist and positive experience so that they leave feeling good about being a skater. No judgement, no discrimination just real and core... Being something more down to earth and less "big

box" comes naturally when the owners are the ones actually running the shop.

AU: When did you first jump on a skateboard and what first got you stoked on



skateboarding?

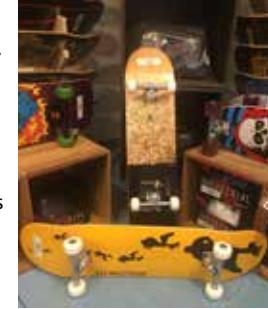
SHREO SESSION

PW: Someone who is a bit an ambassador to skating.. pma.

OC: Positivity...creativity.

AU: Advice for younger skaters hoping to make the team one day.

OC: Skate for yourself and make sure to always enjoy what your doing. Don't waste your time trying to impress me or anyone else watching just skate with heart and enjoy yourself and the rest falls into place.



AU: What sort of music and bands do you like to listen to when skateboarding?

PW: Bad Brains, Stone Love , Eric B & Rakim. Public Enemy. OC: Bad Brains. Heiroglyphics. Public Enemy. Ten Foot Pole.

AU: Any special events planned at Revolution 514 in the near future?

PW: As soon as we safely can we get back to doing our monthly gathering sat the shop.

AU: Anything else you would like to promote?

PW: A great local digital label @standproductions There are 3, about to be 4, free downloadable comps with bands from around the world.

OC: Stand Productions, Sound Central, Shades of Culture

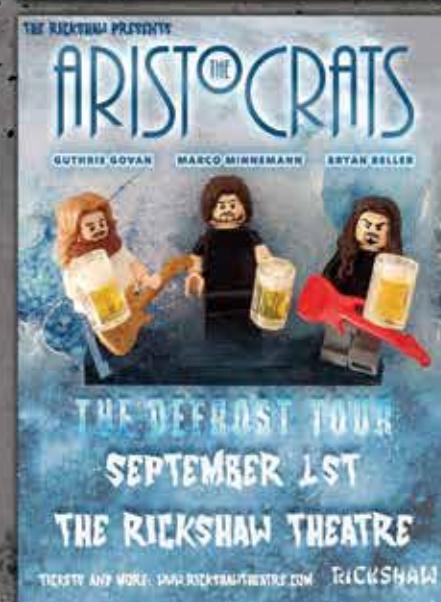
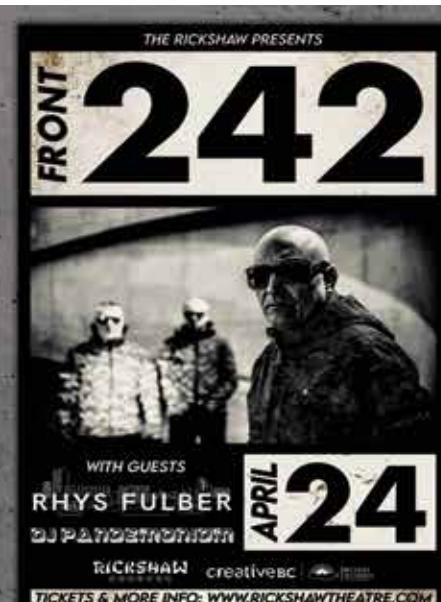
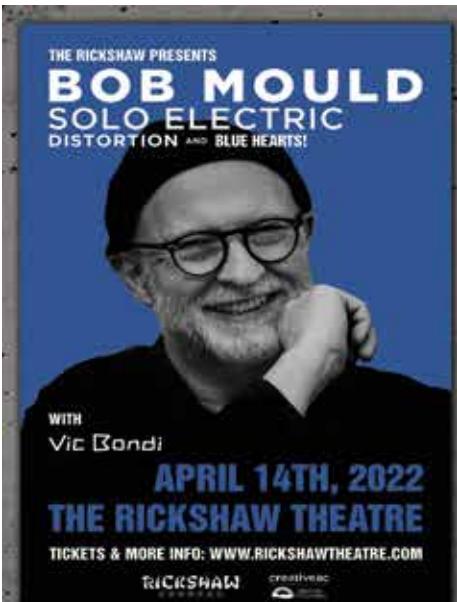
AU: Final words of wisdom for our reader.

PW: Dream big and make your dreams reality.

OC: Keep it solid. Integrity is most important. DO look back because you need to learn from your mistakes but always look forward to make sure not to step in dog poop.

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ARTIST PROFILE

A Wacky interview with Garbage Pail Kids artist Brent Engstrom

By Eye-Raw Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you most famous or infamous for?

BE: I'm Brent Engstrom and I'm most known for my Topps work painting Garbage Pail Kids

AU: How long have you been an artist? What got you started?

BE: I've been drawing for as long as I can remember. I have a twin brother and we would draw together all the time.

AU: How would you describe the art you create?

BE: I'm an illustrator, so it depends on the job. Most of the time I'm painting GPKs. I work traditionally with acrylic paint and I airbrush the backgrounds.

AU: What are some of the major influences on your artistic style?

BE: I loved Popeye cartoons from the 30s when I was a kid and those might be my earliest influences. Too many comic artists to list have greatly influenced me over the years. Jack Kirby, Erik Larsen and Charles Addams to name a few. John Pound and Tom Bunk painted the original GPKs from the 80s, so they are a huge influence on my Topps work of course. Also when I work on Wacky Packages, Norm Saunders is who I think of while working on those.

AU: What sort of stuff did you start out doing when you were first getting started?



BE: I'd do any freelance illustration I could get when I first started. I did a lot of spot illustrations for magazines and stuff at first. A friend of mine was an editor for a baking magazine and I did covers and spot illustrations for her. That led to painting portraits for the Baking Hall of Fame. Oddly enough that's still a job I do once a year. I actually started painting GPKs pretty early on in my professional career. I've been painting them since 2005.

AU: How did you get your first break?

BE: I drew a daily comic strip for my college newspaper called *Monkeyboy*. When I finished school I really wanted to continue *Monkeyboy* in the comic book world. I submitted a story idea to Erik Larsen, the creator of the *Savage Dragon*, and I ended up doing a two part back up story in that comic. Written and drawn by me and colored by Erik Larsen.

AU: What are some of your favorite projects you've been involved with?

BE: The aforementioned *Savage Dragon* story was huge for me. That led to me doing *Monkeyboy* comics for Nickelodeon magazine too. I also created a character named Billy Blevins Boy Inventor for the pages of *MAD* Kids magazine, so that was a dream come true.

AU: How did you get the job working on Garbage Pail Kids?

BE: My friend and fellow comic artist Ray Dillon met the then editor of Topps, Jeff Zapata, at a comic convention. He thought GPKs were something I'd be interested in, so he got Jeff's contact info. I wrote him and got a trial painting. That led to me getting a crack at painting gpk's and Jeff was nice enough to give me a chance to

do it and continue to give me a chance to improve.

AU: What was your involvement in the documentary 30 Years of Garbage: The Garbage Pail Kids Story?

BE: Not much, I just did one interview for it. That was a fun experience for sure.

AU: What is the creative process like when creating a new Garbage Pail Kid design? Are there other people involved with coming up with the initial ideas or is it all you?

BE: It's all me. They usually give me a theme for the set and I go from there. Ideas usually come to me right as I'm about to fall asleep, so I keep my phone next to my bed and I wrote ideas down so I don't forget them.

AU: Have you done any album covers for bands?

BE: I did recently do a cover for an Australian metal band called Ocean Grove.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

BE: I'm just glad to be getting consistent work when most things have gone digital these days.

AU: Have you worked in the comic book industry at any point?

BE: I've done the previously mentioned comics work, plus a few other comics. I love comics and would love to do more. I've been working on my own personal comic in my free time for the last 10 years.

AU: Have any celebrities you have drawn or parodied ever commented to you?

BE: I've had celebrities share images I've done of them on Instagram. Elvira and Rob Zombie were a couple of personal favorites.

AU: What mediums do you work in?

BE: I use acrylic paint when I paint and when I ink comics I use the same brush to draw those in ink.

AU: Have you also worked on Wacky Packages? How much does the nostalgia of your own childhood play into the art you create?

BE: Yes, I've painted hundreds of wacky packages and over one thousand GPKs. I grew up in the 80s watching horror movies constantly and I did buy GPKs at the gas station, so my job is packed with nostalgia for sure. I even had Wacky Packages stuck on my bed backboard my entire childhood.

AU: Have you ever seen your art tattooed on people?

BE: Yes! I find people on Instagram all the time that have gotten my GPKs and other work tattooed on them. It blows my mind every time. I have a friend that got one of my Wacky Packages tattooed onto his leg.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

BE: I'm sure I'll be strapped to the drawing table.

AU: Is it safe to assume you are a fan of horror movies?

BE: I love horror movies. I grew up walking distance to a video store and they would rent me and my brothers any movie we handed them, so we watched every horror movie we could get our kid hands on.

AU: Any words of wisdom for our readers or aspiring artists?

BE: Deadlines are very important. I have a lot of sleepless nights getting stuff done.

AU: Any upcoming projects to promote?

BE: There has been some delays with retail GPK sets due to the supply chain, so I have three sets done that haven't come out yet. Look out for GPK Go On Vacation, GPK Chrome series 4 and GPK Bookworms. I'm currently working on another set that I can't name yet.

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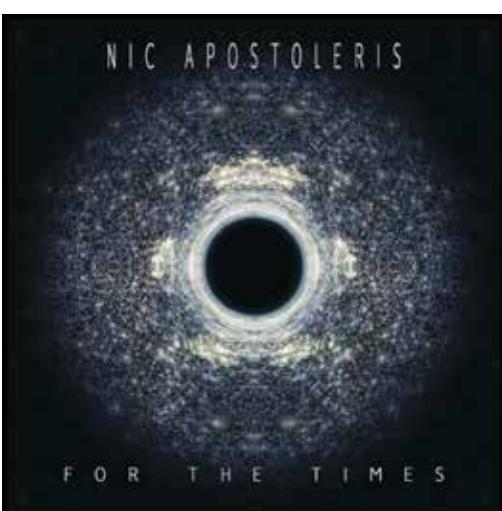


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Nic Apostoleris

WRECKING CREW RECORDS

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

NA: Hey! This is Nic. Most famous for? I'm in health care, not famous for my music - not famous for anything really. Releasing my first EP and happy to talk about it.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band and what are you all about?

NA: I'm a rhythm guitar rock/punk guy who had some songs in my head - there was a pandemic going on, so I pretty much just laid them down. I work with a couple of fantastic drummers that make everything good. Lucas Apostoleris adds serious jazz musician chops and Gaetano Nicolosi makes everything rock large. There's one very serious guitar solo - on "Stand This Up" - that was NOT me - that's Tim Van Slyke who is from In the Shadows of Giants and is in a different league.

AU: Describe your sound if possible.

NA: Guitar sounds like a Jimmy Zero/Keef/Malcolm Young/Peter Buck/Mike Ness/Billie Joe sort of thing? Depends.

AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

NA: First EP is "For The Times" - a pandemic solo project. My own roots are punk and I wanted to record my idea of punk - had to be good songs, not just sounds. There are two or three pretty raw punk songs, then there are these other songs - I don't know what they are - protest songs? Rock stories? Pretty laid back vocals on some, compared to the punk songs, but I got into all of them - they're all saying something.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

NAH: People that I've known who've been through the worst, who've had the least, often show the most grace and compassion. People who have a lot often get all bent out of shape when something's not right - people who've lost friends, lost family, they see the world differently. It's not so much political as about my take on people in tough spots. And also just not selling out - no matter what.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

NA: The track "I-84" is getting it down to basics for me - essence of the power I feel from the music. "Stand This Up" too, but it has this wild combo of stripped down punk with Tim's lead.

AU: What record label will this new album be released on?

NA: J Page's Wrecking Crew Records in Quebec. A small punk label - the man likes my music so that is all good. Check out Wrecking Crew's lineup on Bandcamp, it's serious!

AU: What do you like best about working with Wrecking Crew Records?

NA: No pretense, no hype - without trust and cool people, where would we be?

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?

NA: Get the priorities in order - I think a lot of people are doing that. What we thought was normal or expected is nonsense. Find a way forward living with your values and treating

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people kind.

AU: Any shows or tours planned to promote new release?

NA: Jon wants me to come up to Quebec - very tempting - only been there once, beautiful place.

AU: How would you sum up 2021?

NA: So glad to be alive, surrounded by good people, family survived COVID ok so far. So many people lost so much - I'm grateful. And you learn what people really believe, which is important.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

NA: Not yet - finished mastering the second EP, "Loved Ones" - which has a different vibe - maybe

late 2022/early 2023 before that will get pressed.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

NA: A musician friend of mine said I do 'soul music.' It's my first go at writing songs and singing lead. It's also led to some fun collaborations where I go back to guitar and leave the writing and singing to others. This has been a total blast - hope your readers enjoy.

AU: How do people find you online?

NA: Bandcamp is great. Check out WreckingCrewRecords.bandcamp.com or NicApostoleris.bandcamp.com.

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Eyehategod

Interview with bassist Gary Mader
By Erik Lindholm

...from home // in New Orleans...
// 70 minutes on health, and perspective,
appreciation // late November 2021

Absolute Underground: Hello out there, where are you now?

GM: A few days ago, we found a couple of our people had COVID. It's kind of a bummer. Tour is grounded. But the bright side is the people that tested positive are either asymptomatic or in recovery. We're thankful. But it's something that you don't expect when you're in the middle of a two month tour to deal with, it's an obstacle.

AU: Certainly. And we can only imagine the

obstacles you have faced in the band lately, and with the tour. How does it feel to be out on tour again?

GM: Last time that we were out, we had a small run in September, maybe 10 days or so, to get back into it. Before that - almost two years. We were on tour with Napalm Death in Europe. Ended March 2019. It's been a little chunk of time. Despite what we're dealing with right now, just to be out again is a gift. You realize how much you appreciate what you do, when you're stuck and not able to get to it.

AU: Can you tell us what you feel when you're out on tour, and what you enjoy about the experience of playing live?

GM: I'm trying to put that into perspective, man. Because you do kind of, re-learn what it was all fun about it, when you can't do it anymore.

One of the things that I enjoy the most, about getting back on the road - of course, playing music is a given - is hanging out with friends

again, people that you used to always see every year, no matter wherever you went. Good friends that you've made along the way. And then, to be moving all the time. I really miss travel. A lot of people look at touring as something that gets in the way of their regular life. And for me, it's the opposite. It's a chance to go out and see different places and to be on the road without any kind of destination at all. For me, to have that gift of movement.

AU: Could there be a better title for your most recent record *A History of Nomadic Behavior*?

GM: Yeah, it's the lifestyle we embrace. It's not something we complain about, we love to do what we do. And yeah, if the record name applied to the band, it's appropriate.

AU: Did this record feel different than previous records with the band? There was a forced break and maybe you had more time in the studio. What have you learned?

GM: This record was a challenge. Our first record without our drummer Joey. He was such a significant contributor to the creative process in addition to being a great friend. Being lucky enough to run into Aaron and come together as a band again, to feel like we had something powerful still, you know? We got past that part of it. Then Brian left the band, around 2017. He left because he had family obligations...

That was the other major thing to adjust. I've been in the band since 2002. To not have him around - was also something to get used to. There was this gap - just something that was missing. I think that as a four piece, we all had to compensate for him being gone. With Brian there were bluesy leads, and back and forth with Jimmy. It was a "blues versus Black Sabbath thing."

For this record, we leaned more into Black Flag. From that point of view, of being more stripped

ABSOLUTE METAL

down, and still being tasteful about it. You can strip it down too far and then it just sounds simple as well. Which we are trying to avoid.

AU: There's a magic with EHG. It can be so groovy, and you as the listener think "oh, this is fun!" And then you hear some lyrics, it gets real dark and then lost in feedback. You change gears. There's a lot going on. It's unique about the band: groove, blues, backbeats. I don't know if that's a question or a statement.

GM: We're lucky to maintain that. Like I was saying, to me, personally, our biggest obstacle was finding another drummer that had that swing that Joey had. That's something that's unique about us, and it has a swagger like an old jazz quartet. And we were lucky to find somebody in Aaron that had the same intensity and presence as Joey had, you know? To me, that was that one of our biggest



obstacles. Oh, actually, take that back. Actually, when Mike got his new liver. That he was pretty close to dying... Yeah, that's definitely the biggest thing we've overcome, for real, on this record.

(to be continued...)

Post script: EHG got cleared, started touring, double header in Vancouver with Clutch end of March '22 // this interview captures a brief moment in time – last of the COVID blues – in time, nature heals //



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Happy Daze



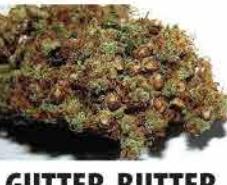
UNICORN POOP



GOLDEN NUGGET



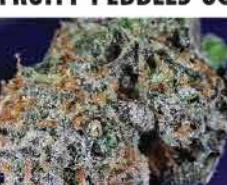
SUNSHINE LIME



GUTTER BUTTER

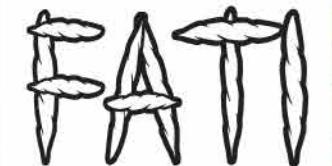


FRUITY PEBBLES OG



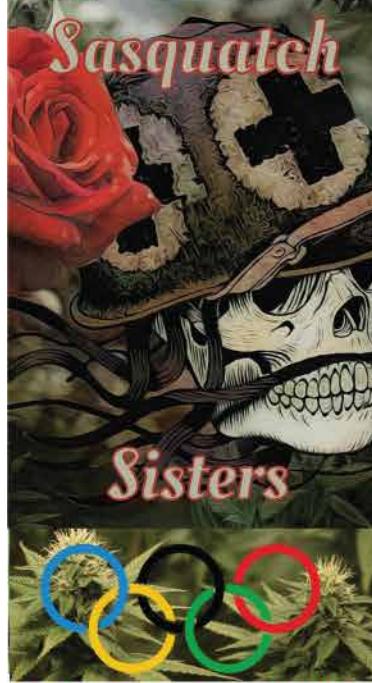
BLUE SKUNK

CANNABIS STRAIN	Appearance	smell	taste	potency	Medicinal Qualities / Effects	Score 1 - 10	COMMENTS
UNICORN POOP (50/50 HYBRID)	FULL SPECTRUM COLOUR PATTERNS AND CRYSTAL INTENSE FINESSE	SMELLS LIKE A UNICORN ATE MY BUDS AND FARTED RAINBOWS. PURE BLISS.	FRUITY PEBBLES. YUMM YUMM	INTENSE HIGH WITH ENERGY FLASHES. WORTH THE CASH FOR MY STASH	GOOD ON THE MIND TO KNOW YOU HAVE THIS KIND, KEEPS ME HAPPY	8.5	STUPID NAME GREAT STRAIN. NO PAIN, I WILL SMOKE AGAIN
GOLDEN NUGGET (60/40 INDICA DOMINANT)	LOOKING OK, DADY BIG BUDS, CHUNKY NUGGETS	LIKE A MANGO FARM IN THE FALL	THICK SMOKE, CLEAN BURNING, FLAVOURS TO SAVOUR	THIS RIGHT HERE IS STRONG HEY HEY, MY MY! WOW	GETS YOU HEAD STONED. NUMBS THE DRAMA SHOW	7.5	IT WORKED JUST FINE, BUT IT WASN'T A FINE WINE
SUNSHINE LIME (80% SATIVA 20% INDICA)	SUPER WHITE GLISTENING CRYSTALS	STRONG LEMON MERINGUE PIE VIBES	FLAVOUR OF THE DAY ORANGES AND LEMONS WITH A ZIG ZAG TWIST	20 % THC. STRONG ENOUGH FOR ME, POSSIBLY MAYBE, SURE	IF YOU NEED A PAINKILLER THIS WOULD BE EASY TO SMOKE LOTS OF	8.5	IF THE BUDS WERE BIGGER THIS WOULD GET A HIGHER RANK
GUTTER BUTTER (SALTSPRING SEEDY OUTDOOR) (90% CBD 10% SATIVA)	NOTHING TO LOOK AT HERE, SEED BAIL FAIL	LIKE OLD SOCKS, DAMP WASH CLOTHES	MOLDY BURNT TOAST, RACCOON	GOOD GOD IT'S 2 % CBD AND LIKE 1 % THC AND HALF SEEDS	I GUESS IT HAS CBD, AND FIBRE. HAHA!	-0.5	IT GETS A NEGATIVE BECAUSE I WOULD NEVER EVER SMOKE THAT AGAIN
FRUITY PEBBLES OG (55% INDICA 45% SATIVA)	NOW THIS IS LIKE A RAINBOW IN A BUD, AMAZING	SMELLS OK, BUT OK DON'T CUT IT MAN	LOOKS LIKE SKITTLES BUT TASTES LIKE WEED GOOD WEED	SMOKED SEEM THIN, LOOKED UP STRAIN, 12 % THC, NOT GREAT	FOR PEOPLE WITH WEAK LUNGS, OR A GOOD COOKING HERB	7.75	THE LOOK IS A 11 OUT OF TEN BUT EVERYTHING ELSE IS A LET DOWN
BLUE SKUNK (80% INDICA 20% SATIVA)	HEAVY RESIN COATED BLUE HUE GREATNESS	THE BLUEBERRY CROSSBREED COMES THROUGH IN AN AMAZING SMELL	GOOD STRONG CLEAN WEED TASTES LIKE BLUEBERRIES AND SMOKE	I'M ZOMBIFIED AND PETRIFIED, PIE EYED AND ELECTRIFIED	GETS YOU FULL ZONE, STONED TO THE BONE	9.5	OUT SPACE CROW BABY IF YOU KNOW YOU KNOW



CANNABIS STRAIN	Appearance	smell	taste	potency	Medicinal Qualities / Effects	Score 1 - 10	COMMENTS
UNICORN POOP (50/50 HYBRID)	IT'S THE MONEY SHOT. BEST LOOKING STUFF I EVER BOUGHT	SMELLS LIKE HELL (JUST KIDDIN) SMELLS LIKE GOOD SHIT HAHA	I'VE NEVER EATEN POOP OR SEEN A UNICORN	IT CHANGED ME OLD PERSPECTIVE, DRAMATICALLY AND ERRATICALLY	IT IS WHAT IT IS, DOES WHAT IT'S SUPPOSED TO DO	9.25	IF A UNICORN SHIT THIS OUT, I LOVE THAT ANIMAL
GOLDEN NUGGET (60/40 INDICA DOMINANT)	HOLY BIG HAIRY BALLS	LIKE A CHEAP DOLLAR STORE SOAP NISLE	MADE ME HACK BUT SEEMED HEAVY CITRUS INFUSED	FOREHEAD BUZZ, INSTANT FUZZ	IF GETTING STONED IS THE PLAN, IT'S A WIN WIN	8.75	THE BIG HAIRY NUGGETS HAD SOME POTENCY GIRTH
SUNSHINE LIME (80% SATIVA 20% INDICA)	LIMEY GOODNESS	OBVIOUSLY THE NAME SPEAKS FOR ITSELF	CAN I USE THE SAME COMMENT AGAIN?	I LIKE WEED AND THIS WEED IS ALL I NEED	MADE MY FUCKING DAY, IS THAT A BENEFIT?	8.75	WHY DID I ONLY GIVE THIS 8.75 OUT OF 10?
GUTTER BUTTER (SALTSPRING SEEDY OUTDOOR) (90% CBD 10% SATIVA)	HAWAII, REALLY NOW? LOOKS LIKE A GREEN PEANUT SHIT	YEAH IT SMELLS BAD, OLD SOUR MEAT OR SOMETHING WORSE	JUST BURNT BURNING BADNESS, BLACK ASHES AND POPPING SOUNDS	PLEASE WHO COULD EVEN SMOKE THAT?	DEFINITELY HELL NO, UNLESS YOU NEED TO QUIT WEED	-10	I BELIEVE THAT WAS THE WORST, THANKS FOR THAT BAD EXPERIENCE -10 YES
FRUITY PEBBLES OG (55% INDICA 45% SATIVA)	IS THAT FOR REAL? I'M GONNA STEAL IT, GIMME GIMME	NOT MUCH OF A SNOOT ON THAT ONE	I'M NOT GOING TO COMPLAIN, BUT IT WASN'T CHAMPAGNE	IT'S FREE WEED MAN, ONE MORE JOINT I WILL BE BAKED	NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO BE CALLED A PAIN KILLER, BUT OK FILLER	5.5	TASTED LIKE DIRT, BURNED LIKE MUD, IT SMELT WRONG, LOOKED LIKE A DREAM
BLUE SKUNK (80% INDICA 20% SATIVA)	I LOVE THE LOOK OF THIS STRAIN MORE THAN GOD, BABY JESUS AND MOMMA	I LOVE THE SMELL OF THIS MORE THAN THE DEVIL LOVES EVIL	BETTER THAN MY LAST MEAL IF I WAS ABOUT TO BE ELECTROCUTED	MORE POTENT THAN EVERYTHING ELSE I TRIED, I'M PERPETUALLY FRIED	GOOD FOR THE KNOCKOUT, BAM RIGHT TO THE HAM	9.5	I LOVE THIS STRAIN MORE THAN KITTENS PUPPIES OR FLOWERS

LIVING GHOST



GOLD MEDAL: BLUE SKUNK
SILVER: UNICORN POOP
BRONZE: SUNSHINE LIME
DISQUALIFIED: GUTTER BUTTER

CANNABIS STRAIN	Appearance	smell	taste	potency	MEDICINAL QUALITIES / EFFECTS	Score 1 - 10	COMMENTS
UNICORN POOP (50/50 HYBRID)	SUPER DUPE FOR THE DOPER SMOKER	SMELLS GREAT CAN'T WAIT TO GET BAKED AND CONTEMPLATE	WORTH THE WAIT, CLEAN BURNING, TASTE BUDS CURHURNING	AS A TRUE STONER, THIS ONE GIVES ME A TRUE DODGER	MY TYPE OF MEDICINE, AND MAYBE A BEER OR 6 OR 16	8.75	SELF ABSORBED, HAVE NO COMMENT, NO LONGER BORED
GOLDEN NUGGET (60/40 INDICA DOMINANT)	MONSTER NUGZ, KIND OF LIKE HARD OUTDOOR	FRUITY FOR SURE. SMELLS BETTER THAN IT LOOKS	DENSE FOGGER, CHARGED MY LUNG OUT	THIS IS THE KNOCKOUT PUNCH FOR DAMN RIGHTS	HURT MY LUNG I MAY NEED LUNG MEDICINE	7.25	IT WAS STRONG BUT SOMETHING WAS WRONG
SUNSHINE LIME (80% SATIVA 20% INDICA)	A BLINDING GREEN	FRAGRANT, REAL VIBRANT FRUIT PUNCH TO THE NOSE	THIS ACTUALLY TASTED LIKE LIMES, BLEW MY MIND	SEEMED LIKE A GOOD MIDDLE OF THE DAY DOOBIE	VERY ENJOYABLE FLAVOURS AND SNOOT ACCEPTABILITY	9.25	I SMOKE ENOUGH, I GO FOR FLAVOUR OVER POTENCY
GUTTER BUTTER (SALTSPRING SEEDY OUTDOOR) (90% CBD 10% SATIVA)	IS THIS A JOKE? IS THAT EVEN WEED?	CAT BARK MIXED WITH FRESH CAT POOP SMELL	GROSS, HORRIBLE, BURNING POPPING SEEDS AND ALL	WHO CARES? REALLY I'M SURE TREE BARK IS STRONGER	GIVING THIS TO THE SICKLY MAY KILL THEM	0	I GET TO BE A JUDGE AND YOU FORCE THIS DOWN MY LUING? WOW!
FRUITY PEBBLES OG (55% INDICA 45% SATIVA)	I LOVE IT WHOLE HEARTEDLY WITH EXTREME PASSION, SO MANY COLORS	KIND OF LIKE HAY OR AN OLD BARN	DIDN'T BURN RIGHT, HAD NO REAL TASTE, WHAT A WASTE	SEEMED VERY WEAK I HAD HIGH HIGH HOPES, SAD FACE	WELL IT'S A JOY TO LOOK AT, PROBABLY HELP SOMEONE SLEEP	6.5	COOLEST BUD I'VE EVER SEEN BY FAR, EVERYTHING ABOUT IT IS SUBPAR THOUGH
BLUE SKUNK (80% INDICA 20% SATIVA)	DARK HEAVY CRYSTAL MAGNIFICENCE	BLUE AND SKUNKY	SPLENDID, GENUINE AND EXTRAORDINARY DIVINE IN FACT	HITS LIKE A SHOVEL, KICKS LIKE A HORSE, PUNCHED ME IN THE BRAIN WAVE	GETS ME HIGH AND HAPPY. I'M NOT CRAZY NOW	9.25	NOTHING IS PERFECT, BUT THAT IS AS CLOSE AS IT GETS



The Weed OLYMPICS SPECIAL THANKS

Sasquatch Sisters

CANNABIS CORNER



Watermelon

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

W: I'm Watermelon. (A.K.A. Mary Jean Dunsdon) Infamous Nudist Comic Cookie Dealer!

AU: What are some of your other talents?

W: Tango Dancing and Hula Hooping.

AU: How did you first get introduced to Cannabis?

W: Older sisters.

AU: Tell us about the origin story of Watermelon Girl?

W: I woke up hungover on Wreck Beach one summer morning desperate for a drink of water but no vendors in sight. Finally a vendor came down selling bottled fruit juice that was so full of

sugar it was the worst \$2 I had ever spent in my life. When I gathered enough saliva to make it up the 500 stair exit I went immediately to buy watermelon to sell for \$2 a slice. The next day I sold out without trying too hard and never looked back. I retired after 22 years of vending.

AU: And now you are more known as a baker and for your medicated Gingersnap cookies?

W: Watermelon slices weren't enough to live on in this town so one fine day I found a big bag of shake (cannabis) in my friend's basement and began making weed cookies to supplement my income. The next day I went to Wreck Beach and sold the whole batch for \$5 a cookie. Now I was really onto something. Dehydrate with weed, rehydrate with watermelon. The perfect pairing. I went on to produce some of the very first cannabis cooking shows ever. My first "Baking a Fool of Myself" was rented at Rogers in 2002. Check out Medical Margaritas or Cannaburgers on YouTube.

AU: How did you first start doing comedy?

W: Life is funny. One cannot take it too seriously. I got my start in LA with my sidekick Paddy White an 80 year old Irish Bootlegger. We had a short lived comedy duo. I went on to become a stand up comic. 2019 I did a series of shows called The Wrong Show with a bunch of wildly hilarious women I knew. We called it Comedy Broadville. The pandemic brought everything to a full stop.

sugar it was the worst \$2 I had ever spent in my life. When I gathered enough saliva to make it up the 500 stair exit I went immediately to buy watermelon to sell for \$2 a slice. The next day I sold out without trying too hard and never looked back. I retired after 22 years of vending.

AU: What are some career highlights of your comedy career so far?

W: I've opened up for Sarah Silverman, Janine Garafalo, Tig Notaro, Zach Galifianakis and Scott Thompson so far.

AU: Can you tell us a pot joke if possible please?

W: I lost twenty pounds in two days. Ask me how? Cops Confiscated it.

AU: Any special plans for 420 this year?

W: Yes I am hosting a few events at the BC Cannabis Summit in Kelowna BC. Very excited about this.

AU: What's the best, most fun 420 you can remember from the past?

W: When I used to sell pot cookies on the Art Gallery stairs and make \$1000 an hour. That was fun. Those days are gone.

AU: Please explain to people about the infamous cookie case?

W: I was arrested and charged with trafficking in gingersnap cookies on a nude beach, with your tax dollars. Flattering I know. Nobody had ever gone to court for it before me and I don't think the crown counsel really knew what to do. When they demanded my lawyer, John Conroy, tell them what my defense was, John very calmly stated that it was "up to the crown counsel to prove beyond a reasonable doubt." They couldn't and lost, not just one Provincial trial against me but three. A hat trick if you will. In the end, the amount of RCMP resources they spent on me was embarrassing considering all they had were a few cookies in a bag marked "Exhibit A" and the sweetest little baker you ever did see.

AU: Was that experience what drove you to become more of a cannabis activist?

W: I saw through the propaganda about cannabis at a very early age. My first love was psychedelics. Acid and mushrooms mostly. I thought, if we can't even legalize cannabis how will we ever get around to legalizing psychedelics? One has to put the horse before the cart.

AU: What are your thoughts on the current state of things in Canada since legalization?

W: I think Ottawa is a greedy monster who wiped out a lot of mom and pop farms across western Canada to fill their own coffers.

AU: Explain the Wreck Beach vibe for the uninitiated if possible.

W: Back in the day it was glorious. A truly freeing experience. There was live music, hammocks, specialty food vendors, cocktail ladies, great drug dealers, mostly nude people, fires at night, frisbee and volleyball all day. Today it is overrun with "textiles" (clothed people) taking selfies and doing bad drugs on the weekends but the weekdays can still be the last frontier of freedom.

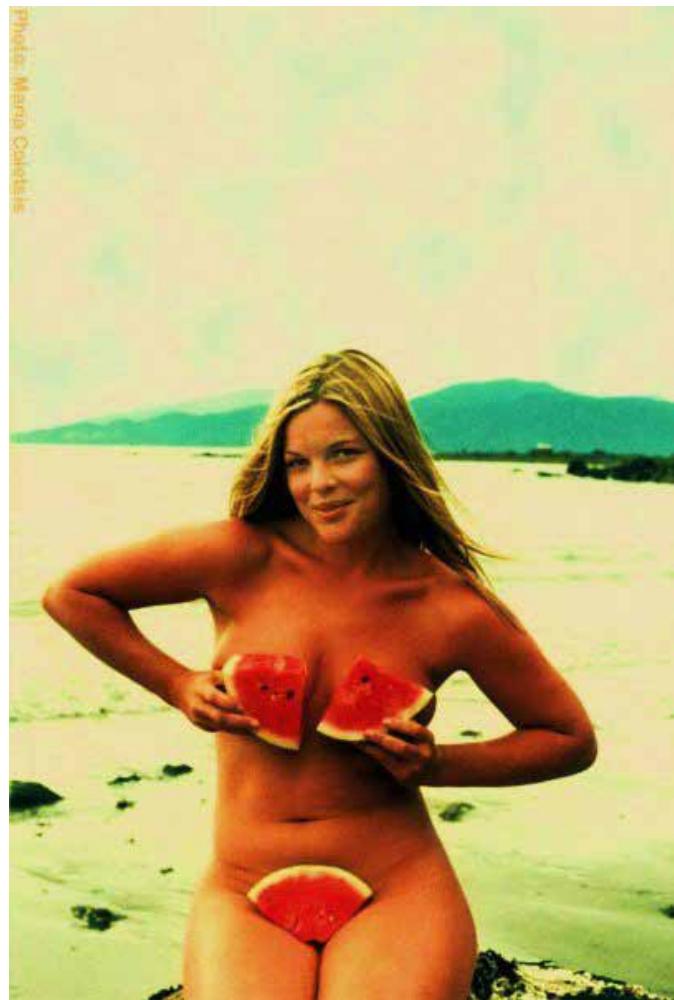
AU: What are some of your favorite marijuana strains?

W: Good Question. I love them all at different times for different reasons. I especially love the strains I smoke with friends after dinner.

AU: Do you prefer joints, vaporizers, edibles?

W: Old fashioned joints and edibles.

AU: What are some of the uses for Cannabis that are being underutilized?



W: I think not enough people understand how effective topicals are for localized pain. Try some and be amazed.

AU: I hear your Ginger Snaps are recommended for people who have a fear of flying in airplanes? What was your motto for that?

W: Anybody can upgrade to first class for \$5.

AU: What is the secret of a happy life?

W: Being outside as much as possible. Being naked as much as possible. Talking to humans in real life as much as possible. Eating with friends as much as possible. Kartwheels and Cannabis.

AU: What's on the horizon?

W: I have been writing for Maximum Yield Magazine for around 5 years. I recently began a comic strip project with Alex Basio where I take historical figures and dress them up in "weed drag" ie. Marijuana Monroe, Jacques Coustoner, Neil Dimebag, Cleopatra etc... Alex is the illustrator. I am the writer.

AU: How do people find you online and where can people get your world famous Gingersnap cookies?

W: I don't have a website anymore but anyone can email me at emailwatermelon@gmail.com and I am happy to help. Also I own two candy stores in Vancouver BC specializing in licorice. If you are lucky you might see me working behind the counter at the one on Commercial Drive a few days a week.

AU: Final words of wisdom for Cannabis connoisseurs out there.

W: Use marijuana as a rub on salmon and be amazed. You're welcome

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Vancouver

NO PARTY - Beach Closed

Usually, Vancouver celebrates 420 at Sunset Beach. However, this will not be the case and you can blame the barge. On November 15, 2021, a barge washed ashore and has been stuck on Sunset Beach ever since. Unfortunately, efforts to refloat the beast have failed and the barge can only be removed piece by piece. How long that will take is anyone's guess. As a response to the situation, the City of Vancouver showed strong leadership and took action... they renamed the beach. The company tasked with the removal needs to use the whole beach as a staging area and it looks like the process has begun. In support of these efforts, the City of Vancouver has temporarily closed Barge Chilling Beach.

420 Celebration at The Vancouver Art Gallery

The 12pm - 10pm

Vancouver's 420 celebrations are legendary and have been going on for over two decades. This year, the party is back in full swing. Collective Event Management is tasked with putting it on and Dusk2Dawn Productions will be setting up the stage. The founder of the Cannabis Substitution Program, Neil Magnuson will MC the event; no music headliners have been announced. There will be an open-air market and booth sales are selling out fast. This year, event organizers are expecting a crowd of over 20,000 stoners.

The event will be followed by an afterparty at an undisclosed location. This will take place from 10 pm to 6 am and all are welcome.

Victoria

420 Celebration at The BC Legislature

Music from 2pm - 6pm

The annual 420 Celebrations are a party with a purpose and you can feel it when you go to Victoria. It takes place on the front lawn of the BC legislature building and vending is technically not allowed. As a result, this celebration is less of a market and all about having a good time. The event has been organized by The Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club and it will serve as a fundraiser for an upcoming legal battle. In January of 2022, the VCBC received a \$6.5 million dollar fine from the Community Safety Unit.

Here is what they had to say about this upcoming 420:

"We will be dancing and toking together to the musical stylings of Submersive Studios from 2 to 6 pm, with some booty shaking bass powered by PK Sound. We will have speakers, prizes, and performers to fill the afternoon with magic and joy to commemorate this special day. Join us on Wednesday, April 20th for an afternoon of old-school cannabis protests, some consciousness-raising about the pitfalls of the legal industry, to raise some funds for the VCBC legal battle, and to join together with our canna fam once more to celebrate this important day."

If you're in Victoria or Vancouver, get ready to party because this 420 is setting up to be a very good time. No matter what you are up to this year, here's hoping that you have a Happy 420! vcbc.ca

CANNABIS CORNER

420 Event Listings



We are ordering some hard to find metal and punk from all over the world & will be the go-to place for that record you have been searching for. We take great pleasure in going out of our way to find your special requests.

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MALAGASY METALHEADS – PHARAONS

Ra-Fidy – guitar & lead vocals

Ra-Jean – bass & vocals

Ra-Mamy – drums & vocals

*Interview with Ra-Fidy**

TELL US ABOUT MADAGASCAR AND THE PEOPLE THERE

Madagascar is located in the Indian Ocean, and is the fourth largest island in the world. It's been inhabited by humans for at least two millennia, but storytellers mention an ancient people (Vazimba) who lived here before the earliest known ocean-borne settlers arrived. The Vazimba may have been Africans (possibly an early Bantu tribe).

Around 2,000 years ago, sailors from Sumatra, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Borneo followed the ocean currents and arrived from the east. Over the centuries, wave after wave came, most occupying the highest part of the island. There was probably also a wave of Africans who sailed across the Mozambique Channel. Later, groups of Arabs arrived from the north to trade, and some of them mixed with the locals and settled. In the 16th and 17th centuries, some groups of

Europeans, including pirates, also arrived, adding to the island's ethnic mix.

The Malagasy ("people from Madagascar," in the local language) are technically Africans, but because of the historical population mixture, they look different from those from the continent. And since the Malagasy were on an isolated island, they developed their own culture and way of living.

SO HOW DID YOU START YOUR OWN BAND?

In 1985-86, it was a weird time to be growing up in Madagascar. We were effectively brainwashed by our society. My brother and I had no sense of curiosity and didn't trust many people. That day we were nervous, even scared, about what we saw and experienced. To help put things in perspective, people talked about vampires, a centaur that lurked around our town, and how our president had an animal that fed on people's blood.

In 1988, we did not really plan on playing music, but we felt we had messages and stories we wanted to tell the world. Inspired by history books, world news, and the sounds of Brazilian bands like Sarcófago and Sepultura, and the Swiss thrash metal band, Coroner, I started to write lyrics and poems. We discovered various Western heavy-metal bands by trading cassettes with friends. We loved their guitar riffs, their brutality, the way they sang, and their arrangements – all unmatched at the time. Our local language was not an option, so I wrote in French first but then translated them into English. I did that to stay under the radar – and out of jail – as long as possible, for few people in Madagascar spoke English.

"CRAZY METAL"

We were fascinated with punk and reggae music as well, especially the lyrics and the rebellious messages. We chose thrash metal as our platform because it's loud, fast, brutal, heavy and bizarre. By adding punk or reggae's rebellious philosophy instead of heavy metal lyrical fantasies, we thought we would be able to get attention, annoy or disturb the government and other reactionary institutions. We also hoped to bring more

diversity to the local scene. With our naivete and inability to play well, we called our own version "Crazy Metal." We were looking for something different, a name to capture what we were trying to do.

"EVIL WORLD" ALBUM CONTROVERSY

The album appeared in several stores in Antananarivo. Our fans were excited to buy it, but many were disappointed because it was not what they expected. The feedback was bad. Our reputation went down and the album did not sell well.

THE PEADOPHILIA FROM VATICAN (1989)

Your bible in your hands
You talked about the Christ
You spoke softly
Like an angel with a crisp

You talked about wisdom
And the Heaven's freedom
Happiness is an eternal
Pleasure is for all
The Christ will be the Master
And the father will be Eternal

But one Christmas night
You sneaked into the room
A room of an orphan boy
You told him to be quite
And never tell anyone

You kissed him on his mouth
And took all his clothes
You owned the power,
And he had lost his dignity

Lie!!!!



PHARAONS IN RETROSPECT

We were not focused on being popular or wanting to be the best. Instead, we were a pretty dedicated underground band on a mission, primarily to record and release an album of our rebellious music.

Over the years, some of our European friends shared the songs on the Evil World cassette with others. Since the lyrics were mostly in English, they were accessible to a lot of people and the word got around about us. Some have claimed that Pharaons were the first metal band from Africa. I don't know about that, but we were certainly one of just a few African heavy metal bands that put out an album circa 1990.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE ALBUM COMING OUT NOW?

I am very excited and thankful to Jason and the Supreme Echo team that made this happen. The album is not new to my ears. I acknowledge all the mistakes and weaknesses, the offbeats, etc., but that's what my band could do at the time.

Working with someone like Jason was my dream some 30 years ago. No one took us seriously back then. We didn't fit in our society or in the local music industry. International audiences and fans were out of reach. I guess everything has its time and season.

Band history: Fidy O. Raveloson

Editing: Jason Flower & Frank Manley



FRAGGLE ROCK: Back To The Rock

Interview with Ben "Junior Gorg" Durocher

by Ira "Fraggle" Hunter

AU: Who are we talking to?

BD: Ben Durocher and I'm best known at the moment for Fraggle Rock, and puppets in general.

AU: How'd you get into the world of puppetry?

BD: I was introduced to puppetry by a woman in my hometown of Ottawa called Noreen Young from a show called Under the Umbrella Tree. She sort of mentored me through my teenage years.

AU: What made you decide to make puppets part of your profession?

BD: To be honest, I thought puppetry wasn't very realistic in terms of an occupation. I thought about going to school for puppetry, but it was so limited and from what I was told there were not a lot of jobs. So I went and studied musical theater, which is another huge passion of mine.

AU: What are some of your career highlights?

BD: Definitely working on Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock, which we shot in Calgary last year, airing on Apple TV+ and I got to do Avenue Q off-Broadway in New York City for almost three years.

AU: What does a Puppet Wrangler do?

BD: A puppet wrangler is basically the tech onset who's responsible for the puppets. Dressing and doing costume changes, or doing rigging, rodding, any kind of special rigs that the puppets might need to do the various actions the script calls for. You're also there to make sure nothing breaks and to repair it. You have to keep your eyes



their repair person.

AU: How did you get your start with The Jim Henson Company?

BD: I got my foot in the door at Henson because I knew Melissa Creighton, who is the production manager here in New York. I've worked with her at the O'Neill Puppetry Conference. I just bugged her enough to let me come in as an intern and I've been with the company for almost eight years. I

just kept finding ways to be useful. I saw wrangling as an opportunity. I did my share of crap work sorting big bird feathers and such, but Sesame Street is obviously a really fun show to work on and just so iconic and Fraggle Rock, of course, even more so in my heart.

AU: What was your initial reaction when you heard about Fraggle Rock: Back To The Rock?

BD: I kind of knew it was happening before it had been officially released because I worked at Henson and when the pandemic happened they sent us home. They eventually figured out that they could send us old puppets and we could refurbish them from our living rooms. So as Fraggles was ramping up, they sent us old Fraggle puppets to refurbish them. We also built new background Fraggles and I had a little Fraggle factory in my living room. As soon as I heard it was going to film in Canada, I just about lost my mind, because I knew that was my opportunity to really push



and hope to get an audition.

AU: What is your role/involvement with the new Fraggle Rock?

BD: I worked a little bit as a puppet builder in New York and from home and then once I got to Calgary, I was there as a puppet wrangler. Then I was also Junior Gorg, so I was the suit performer to Dan Garza's face and voice performance, and I was also a background puppeteer. So I did a lot of background Fraggles and Doozers.

AU: What was it like putting on the Junior Gorg costume for the first time? He's such an iconic character from so many people's childhood.

BD: No kidding, including mine. He's a character that I loved, I love the Gorgs. I know that they can be a bit polarizing, but I thought they were just such interesting forms of performance, especially once I was older and I knew how they worked. I thought it was such a cool way to use technology and physicality. I'm a theatre performer with a background in dance and physical theater. So that sort of slapstick physical comedy that the Gorgs bring in is so in my wheelhouse, and just so fun.

The first time they got me in the suit in the Creature Shop was kind of magical.

AU: How does it work when playing Junior Gorg with Dan Garza? Who does what?

BD: I do all the physical things inside the costume, and Dan is just off camera mic'd. He's got a controller that controls the mouth and the eyes are all controlled by him in real time, he does the voice and the face animatronics. But I do the physical gestures and beats.

AU: How was working with the crew in Calgary?

BD: Everyone in Calgary was amazing. I was just blown away by the level of professionalism and the infrastructure. Working on a show like Fraggle Rock, it's kind of hard to have a bad day.

AU: What are the differences between the original Fraggle Rock and this newer version?

BD: There's obviously a lot of similarities between the two versions. I think the writers and producers did such a great job of updating the show, the characters are all there as we remember them, but there's sort of a new modern edge. They're able to tackle stuff that wasn't tackled 35 years ago.



AU: As a fabricator do you start from scratch and build the actual puppets?

BD: A lot of what I've done as a builder, especially for Henson, is sort of rebuilding, working from patterns from builders that built these puppets originally. But I also build for other clients and independently so I've definitely done my share of building stuff from scratch. I worked on a New York production of Winnie the Pooh, which had all these larger than life walk around puppets

that I got to be the lead builder on. I also worked on the SpongeBob SquarePants puppet shows for Nickelodeon.

AU: Any advice for aspiring puppeteers?

BD: It's a tough, tough scene. I was told there's so few jobs, but it is so much fun and such a rewarding career. If it's something that you're passionate about and that you love, you gotta work hard and you've got to really tune and hone your craft. Watch a lot of puppetry and practice like hell. But if you love it, you have to go for it.

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Pouzza Pizza Poutine Punk Perfection

By Billy Hopeless

Well looks like spring has sprung and along with the rebirth, concerts and festivals are back in action. When I first heard of the Pouzza festival it was back in 2020, when my cohorts the Black Halos were booked to play. Let me tell you they had me at Montreal in the spring, but then when I heard the Festival was named after Pizza and Poutine and featured a killer line up of punk bands I was in heaven. So after an unfortunate three-year hiatus, the party's back on and I'm pleased to have one of the festival's organizers, Guilhem, as my guest this column to fill you in on what's cooking at this year's Pouzza Fest.

Absolute Underground: Ok let's start with the name Pouzza, from what I understand this is a combination of pizza and poutine I've seen this done here in Vancouver on Commercial Drive but not by that name, they just called it poutine pizza. Who coined the term pouzza?

Guilhem: Yes, Hugo Mudie came out with the name in the 90s. It's not an actual thing you can get in most places around here. It's mostly a DIY gourmet meal and that's why it fits with the festival that started and still mostly is DIY. When



you want a Pouzza, you need to get a slice of Pizza and smash a poutine on top.

AU: So is there Pizza and Poutine actually involved in this festival? To me, combining pizza poutine and punk or the Three-P Plan, as I call it, is adding a fourth P, pure brilliance!

Guilhem: Yes, for a few years we've had a few food trucks helping us creating this divine meal. It always sells out too fast, unfortunately.

AU: So get it while it's hot. Now you started this back in 2010, how has it evolved and what do you feel has contributed to its long running success?

Guilhem: The people who attend the festival every year is the only reason we keep on doing it. We don't make money. None of us are into Pouzza full-time. We're a bunch of volunteers running this festival because we know there are a thousand people or so who love the festival.

AU: Bless all you curd and crust punks! Like everyone else, you were held back two years by the evil fourth P, The Pandemic. How did you survive?

Guilhem: We just put everything on hold for two years. We did try to do a smaller version in September 2021, but the restrictions were too heavy and it would not have made any sense to make it, so we cancelled it.

Not a fun time for a festival, but hey, we're back in 2022!

AU: Well hell, it sucked for sure, so let's go back to P3, the punk. Who are some of your fave bands on the menu this year?

Guilhem: I can't tell. I'm not impartial enough. I like all of them. But hey, don't miss Proper, Catbite, Cluttered, Teenage Halloween, Dollar Signs, Signals Midwest, Lost Love, Chloe Hawes, Rope skills and Gloomy June.

AU: Well those are some choice toppings and

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

I must say you got the full meal deal going on this year with headliners like Bad Cop Bad Cop, Chixdiggit, Good Riddance, Propaghandi, etc, as well as many others, that's a fully loaded circle of punk. Now who are some of the ingredients on yer wish list for future deliveries?

Guilhem: Most people won't like this answer, but we want to broaden our horizons and book more genres and focus on becoming some kind of alternative festival, not a punk/rock festival.

Maybe it'll happen, maybe it won't. All I'm saying is diversity in genres of music can be fun to mix and I think that there are "punks" in all genres. We just need to find them. And put them all together in a nice festival. Just like we put together Poutine and Pizza.

AU: Variety is the slice of life, mon ami. So what's the craziest things you've witnessed at past Pouzza parties?

Guilhem: My lawyer said I shouldn't mention the craziest things. But hey at some point, the singer from Molly Rhythm climbed on top of the stage structure and she fell CHIN first on the stage. Everyone was worried about her. Everyone, except her. Because she kept on singing and smiling with a bleeding chin. She ended up alright, but it was scary. PS: Hi Elissa!

AU: How many bands and venues does this

festival involve and how do you yourself keep from going crazy with your hands in that many pies?

Guilhem: This year, we have 100 bands and five venues (I think?). I don't keep myself from going crazy, I go crazy for three days.

AU: Ok well for those about to Pouzza, we Salut you! Now, before we go, tell us where is the best pizza and poutine in Montreal?

Guilhem: Again here, my lawyer said I shouldn't say, but, the best pizza is either Fugazzi or Pizzeria Dei Compari. The best poutine is far from downtown (the closest you get to a city, the worse the poutine gets, that's a rule). So I'd say that within Montreal's city limit, Paulo & Suzanne is probably the best poutine.

AU: Well you obviously haven't had some of the poortine they try and pass off here in Vancouver, I don't have a lawyer but I wont mention the name of these places just as thinking of them just brings back the insult. Oh one more thing before we say bye bye mon cowboy, as it is very unfortunate that we Black Halos who were scheduled for the fest back in 2022 can't make it this year but hopefully we'll be there in 2023. Until

then, can you do me a favor if you see french chanteuse Mitsou around, will you tell her I hope we can reschedule our dinner date for a later date?

Guilhem: Hell yeah, Mitsou, si tu lis ça, viens jouer au Pouzza en 2023 <3

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SERGIO ARAGONÉS – PART 2

Absolute Underground: Why do you always joke that people mistake you for the person who created Spy vs. Spy?

Sergio Aragonés: That's sort of like a running joke that we have because we were the only two Latinos working there at *MAD Magazine*. Many times when people met me and I didn't speak good English they thought I was Antonio Prohías. I kept saying "No, I'm not Antonio Prohías."

AU: Tell us about all the digest pocket books you did for MAD.

Sergio: What happens with cartoonists is that the character becomes more famous than the author. If somebody says Calvin and Hobbes, you know the strip but many people don't know the name of the author. Only when the author becomes important like in the underground comics do you realize who is who. If you say Underground Comix, the first word that comes to your head is Crumb. That was a big change. So that's why when you do a cartoon that has no characters like in my case, I always drew myself as a character, as a vignette. So people will associate that caricature with my cartoons. When I did the Pocket Book format, I did 16 Pocket Books with new material, that artwork had never been published in *MAD*.

Jaffee, Martin, Prohías and Berg, we did that. We were the guys who wrote and drew their *MAD* material. So I figured what is going to sell best a Sergio Aragones book? or a *MAD* titled book? It was *MAD* of course. So every book that I did for *MAD* was called *Viva Mad*, *Mad about Mad*, *In Mad We Trust*, *Madly Yours*, *Mad as a Hatter*. Always had the word *Mad* and then my name at the bottom and I drew myself as a little self caricature on the covers. People now identify that book by that author. It was not vanity, it was just a necessity to draw my face on it.

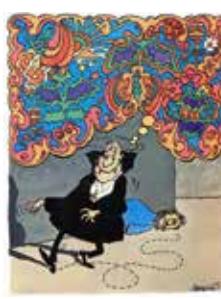
AU: That's good because way back in the day they didn't give any credit to the early comic artists and writers.

Sergio: Yes, we were just known as "The Usual Gang of Idiots".

AU: We have a mutual friend, Gareth Gaudin, the owner of Legends comics in Victoria, BC. He's doing a documentary on *MAD* creator Harvey Kurtzman. I was wondering if you

were going to be a part of that documentary or if you have any Harvey Kurtzman stories to share?

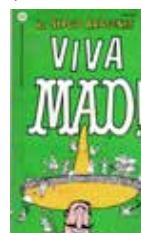
Sergio: Yes, Gareth is a sweet man. Well I met Harvey, but later after *MAD*. I knew he was the guy who founded it because I had read the history. I met him and I was fascinated by the gentleman. We became friends and one day he asked me to illustrate a book. A collection of stories by him called *Harvey Kurtzman's Strange Adventures* and the story that he wanted me to draw was



called Captain Bleed instead of Captain Blood. It's a good book, it has me, Tomas Bunk, Robert Crumb, Sarah Downs, Bill Stout, Harvey Kurtzman, Dave Gibbons, and Rick Geary. It was published by Epic Comics. I've also got a lot of his Harvey Awards. I have about nine awards like that and a few of them were given by him to me, so we became friends. I was very happy and proud that I had the chance to work with him. I visited his house and he showed me his studio. Oh, he was extraordinary. Harvey worked very strangely with his artists. He drew the whole thing and then he gave it to them. So if you look at the sketches drawn by him you can see how the other guys drew all the originals based on his work. It's a very good way to understand how he worked.

AU: He's still getting his vision but with your style, that's interesting.

Sergio: Yeah, because his humour was in line with



started figuring that I wanted to do a story about Tarzan but he had a twin brother who was a putz. He couldn't do anything right. So I figured, oh my god, I have the perfect character. But then I'm walking on the street in Paris and I look in the window and there's a movie called *Tarzoon (Shame of the Jungle)*. It was a cartoon about a stupid Tarzan. I went in immediately. It was not what I had in mind. It was totally erotic. But it was the idea, I couldn't do it now it would be a ripoff.

AU: So then you created Groo instead?

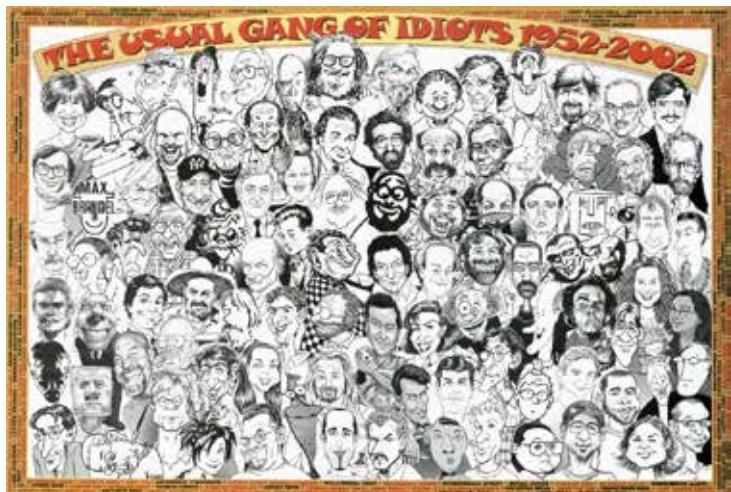
Sergio: Yes, I figured what wasn't in the comics were barbarians. But that was later. Once I was back from the trip, I went to DC Comics a lot to say hello to all my friends who were there. That was in the late 60s. By then the Underground Comix had come out and it was the first time that humour was applying to comics. The American comics had children's comics, they had teenager's comics, they had funny animals. But there was not one humour comic at all. Except when the Undergrounds came out, then everything was funny. It was a total life changer for many people, including the direction of all the humour in European magazines. That was a beginning in France for *L'Echo des Savanes* and *Métal Hurlant*. All the cartoonists that were working in France for *Pilote* and *Tintin* and all the magazines that were weeklies decided, oh we can do what we want now. The magazines said no, you cannot go more adult because these are for children. So they left the magazines and opened their own magazines. *Métal Hurlant* was *Heavy Metal*. Everything changed, the magazines like *Pilote* died because all the good artists left to do their own work in their own magazines. It was a big, big, big change.

AU: Did I hear something about a Groo movie or a TV show being developed?

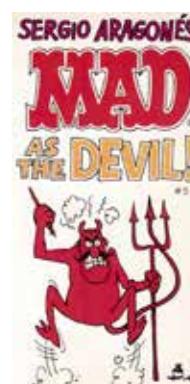
Sergio: Oh yeah, people bought the rights to try to do a movie and they have a certain time limit. Right now there's a very good group that's bought the rights to do it. They pay well for it, they have a limit of a certain number of years and if they do it, that'd be great. Let's see what happens.

AU: In the 60s you seemed to be influenced by Underground Comix. Were you ever a hippie doing LSD and smoking grass?

Sergio: No, no, no. What impressed me about



the Underground was the individuals working in their own style, with no limits on what they wanted to say. I was already a little, not too old, but already too established to change. Basically I'm



a very squarish guy. A European old fashioned son of a refugee type of thing. But I loved the work that they did. I loved the style but the content had nothing much for me relate to it because I never did any drugs at all. When I was growing up in Mexico, marijuana was just for sailors and bums. So you didn't want to be associated with that. When I was in high school we would make fun of people who smoked marijuana. It was something that you didn't

want to do at all. So everything that they were rebelling against didn't have anything to do with me politically or socially about the freedom of life. I was already probably too square for it. But I loved the work and I loved the freedom they had. To me, that was the best thing that ever happened to the comics was the Undergrounds.

AU: You had a comic strip in MAD where a vampire sucks the blood out of a stoned hippie and then he has all these trippy psychedelic paisleys in his head.

Sergio: Yeah. I did a lot of cartoons about cops beating up protesters. But it was not as drastic as the Underground. The Underground was visceral. They went for the jugular vein in everything that they did about sex, about drugs, even religion. One of my favourites was about the Virgin Mary. That was an amazing story.

To be continued next issue:

groo.com
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Expanding *Groo the Wanderer* to new Audiences

mine there was no problem with that. He was very funny.

AU: How does your collaboration with writer Mark Evanier work?

Sergio: Basically usually I always work with my own stories, but for instance when I do *Groo* the comic book, I do it in collaboration with Mark Evanier. He has helped me with the English and in general basically he's the editor of the comic book. We talk a lot about it and sometimes when he sees the finished work he says, these pages could go better if you put them in the back instead of the front, or change this or change that. Many times he says, "Hey, what about a comic about a guy who has the same name?", or things like that. So I go from there. Mark has been a fantastic help. He's a great friend and a great writer too.

AU: What made you decide to create *Groo the Wanderer* as your own comic book character?

Sergio: I wasn't that much of a fan of superhero comics. I never read any, ever. I like the ones with humour. I loved *Little Lulu* and *Donald Duck* and I loved European comics. I figured that I would love to do a character in comic book form. So I figured it out very basically, what isn't out there already. When I was in Europe, I went there for two years in the 60s, I got so immersed in the comic book industry over there that I said I have to have my own comic. I didn't know yet what I wanted to do. I was thinking about doing a Tarzan takeoff. That's easy to draw, jungles and animals, perfect. So I



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Absolute Live Reviews



Spit of the Sin
Whorrify
Pridelands
Hockey Moms
Verns, Calgary AB

Feb 25, 2022

As COVID restrictions hang on by their final thread in the city of Calgary, this show marked one of the first major underground concerts to take place in downtown. No more setbacks - no more rescheduled dates - it was a night to get down and real greasy at Calgary's famed watering hole, the drum cymbal decorated basement den run by beer baron Clint, Verns.

Soccer moms have long been known to haunt the suburbs in big vans. Hockey Moms could be even more sinister - with sharp objects like skates used for weapons against the sons on opposing teams with Jason Voorhees hockey masks hiding their aged faces during their attack. The Lethbridge band, taking this ominous name, opened the show with a number of cover songs including a track by Rage Against the Machine.

I assumed Pridelands were an aboriginal band going by their name, but found I was severely misguided when a bunch of heavily tattooed Caucasian fellas from Red Deer hopped on stage. Any beer left on the tables near the stage had a snowball's chance in hell regarding not getting tipped over when this band kicked in, as enthusiastic air-shit kickers showed no mercy on the small dance floor. Nirvana's "Breed" was a highlight from these four lads.

The myth and legend that is Whorrify was finally brought into a living, breathing, tangible form with this first ever show from the new metallic grindcore band. Their first EP release and jam video sessions posted for people at home to nod their head to were crucial for the audience to get to know the material, and the band's sense of humor before this debut show. Throughout their short set, the crowd became unhinged, unhinging vocalist Nate Trash's microphone more than once. The Andy Kaufman-esque humor of guitarist Joel Peterson pleased some and irritated others as the man who claimed to be Dr. Jordan Peterson's nephew read from his very own 12 Rules of Living list, which included advice like "When masturbating, should you have the need to do so, you should masturbate only to male pornography." This type of banality certainly riled up some of the audience, who were ready to explode during the band's final song.

The groove/thrash metal trio Spit of the Sin, led by multi-instrumentalist Sasha, were a metallic paradigm shift after a mostly punk and hardcore-centric night. Opening with "Fuck the Shit" by Sons of Butcher, the band tore through an eight-track set featuring songs from their 2019 EP with a few surprises. Vocally, I found Sasha channeled Morgan Lander of Kittie at times, and the band is certainly formidable, though I think they would sound more powerful with a rhythm guitarist to assist the leads.

The town was in dire need of an enema and these bands broke the seal for the 2022 concert year. Get ready for the incoming shitstorm.

-Ryan Dyer

The Weir
Adolyne
Heavydive
Broken City, Calgary AB

March 4, 2022



The COVID period certainly made a few local scenes broken, with some bands not performing for as long as two years. Saskatoon's Adolyne were one of these bands and with this concert, with friends The Weir from Calgary and Heavydive, they made it clear they wanted to shake off the stage rust at this free show at Broken City. The Weir and Adolyne threw this show (and the one the next day in Saskatoon) to celebrate their cassette-only Dummies Portishead tribute split featuring The Weir's interpretation of "Roads" and Adolyne's cover of "Glory Box". Needless to say, these tapes sold like hot cakes at the show.

Calgary's Heavydive warmed the crowd up - this three-piece blending lighter, dreary, introspective vocals with some well-needed shoegazey heavier parts. Before Adolyne began playing, vocalist/guitarist Skot Hamilton waxed on about how this band saved him from killing himself and that one of the great-

est things about being in Adolyne was befriending The Weir. A touching moment before a half hour of music teetering on the edge of being totally unhinged, though somehow glued together by the notion that there has to be a semblance of structure or it would be all-out white noise. Hamilton's pre-show announcement drove home the vulnerability in his screams - his guitar tone following suit - being simultaneously ear-shredding and therapeutic, like Merzbow took up guitar.

It was time for Broken City to turn into sludge city. The Weir, on this very show, were celebrating 10 years of playing in the muck. The lights dimmed, the reverb was turned up, and soon a blanket of sludge engulfed Broken City. If that blanket wasn't soggy, filthy and suffocating enough - they then grabbed another blanket, one used by a homeless guy in the alley behind the bar, drenched it in sludge and doubled down on Swamp Thing comfort. The boys know how to write a slow, heavy and misanthropic track as good as any doom band you can think of. That being said, just because they aren't fast doesn't mean they aren't smart - these are intricately designed songs that build like magma surfacing to the top of a volcano - when you think it couldn't get any heavier, they unload a triple growl from the Paleolithic period that makes you think The Weir and Primitive Man should maybe swap names.

-Ryan Dyer



Obscura
Vale of Pnath
Interloper
Skepsis
Dickens Pub, Calgary AB

March 14, 2022

Leave it to Obscura to ring in concerts in the semi-normal, post-COVID restrictions era with a powerhouse show featuring an eclectic and devastating lineup. Their 2022 tour in support of their new album *A Valediction* began in San Diego on February 3 and with every show, the band has been leading by example - packing clubs which only a few months prior were still closed or were experiencing limited capacity.

At this show in particular, the beloved Calgary venue Dickens recently re-opened after several false-starts, and the arrival of Germany's tech-death giants brought the deprived metal heads in full force.

As Abysmal Dawn dropped off the tour, there was some extra time for local openers. At this show, and the next in Edmonton, the duty went to Edmonton based Skepsis. The band blended soaring vocals with shrill screams, bringing to mind the work of Devin Townsend. This was shown further when they played a cover of "Detox" by Strapping Young Lad, which had the crowd at its most interested.

California based progressive metal band Interloper were next. After putting out several singles and an EP in 2021, Nuclear Blast released their first LP *Search Party* and with this tour, they're showing the world their chops. The three piece band featuring ex-Rings of Saturn members was a full-on guitar-based progressive metal attack. There was nary a bass in sight, though with Interloper, it wasn't a requirement.

From the Mountains of Madness in Denver, Colorado to the mountains of Alberta, Vale of Pnath brought the H.P. Lovecraft's inspired tech/death/black metal from the underworld to Dickens' stage. With Abysmal Dawn off the bill, some ferocity was needed, and this bone, blast beat and banshee filled vale was the right void to fall into.

Since 2002, Obscura have been consistently proving to the metal community that they deserve to be listed among the heavyweights in the genre. They cut their teeth opening for greats such as Cannibal Corpse and Nile, though now, with their first release as a part of Nuclear Blast, the band's reputation has been amplified further, and this headlining tour has cemented their place as tech/death legends. Aided by so many extra strings, you'd think they'd need more fingers, the Steffen Kummerer led band blasted through a crowd-pleasing set starting with new tracks "Forsaken" and "Solaris." Much attention was spent on the new songs, though Obscura, like any other band who have been around for at least a decade, know the fans want some old shit too - and they delivered with tracks from their concept-filled back catalogue of *Diluvium*, *Cosmogenesis* and *Omnivium*. The extremely energetic Calgary crowd seemed to have pleased Kummerer, who decided to extend the set while the energy was at its peak before finally ending with "Incarnated."

-Ryan Dyer

An Evening With Bruce Dickinson Royal Theater, Victoria BC

March 16, 2022

At last minute notice - an invite to attend a spoken word gathering with the indomitable Iron Maiden singer, Bruce Dickinson... sure why not? Singer of a massive band, interesting chap. The night covered a lot of ground. With growing up in England, being a bit of a rebel at school, joining the drug-addled Samson as a vocalist (prior to Maiden), touring the world with Maiden (including Sarajevo in wartime, Brazil for "Rock In Rio" 1985) eventually becoming a major airline pilot as a side gig - catching throat cancer and winning/not dying - mixing in a bit of semi-pro sword-fighting/fencing.

This maelstrom of life was delivered in typical Dickinson manner: running around the stage and high energy posing, tons of different character voices and plenty of British black humour and sarcasm. A slide show with supporting images as well. He entertainingly cut up his own fashion choices with a "favourite stage wear trousers" segment. Perhaps the undercurrent running

Photo Credit: Finding Charlotte Photography



through the night was that he became so successful by: 1) taking chances, and 2) not giving up. The stories seemed to provide a backdrop proofing to these concepts.

And inspiration for those in the audience, young and old, to do the same. After an exclusive look at the new Iron Maiden video "The Writing On The Wall" a brief intermission.. he was back to answer audience Q+A. Questions wandered around his best memories as a pilot, how he got interested to start with flying in the first place, advice for young musicians and more.

Overall, a satisfying night - curious to hear how a singer who moved 100 million albums grew up and also how he keeps going. Lots to learn from someone on the road for 40 years... timeless lessons...

- Erik Lindholm



Magic Sword
Dance with the Dead
Das Mörthal
Dickens, Calgary AB

March 29, 2022

This is what it's like when synths and metal collide. Magic Sword - the mysterious trio who look like mages listening to Daft Punk. Dance with the Dead - one of the earliest synthwave bands on the scene to incorporate heavy metal guitar into horror themed dance tracks. Both bands utilize different dynamics to entertain an audience, and when put together on this 2022 tour, pleased metal fans who are into a little synth, electro fans who like something a bit harder edged, '80s minded heshers, fans of swords and sorcery and even a furry.

Pertaining to swords, Magic Sword were selling lightsabers for this tour, so as Das Mörthal was opening up the show with his DJ set, the dance floor was quickly lighting up with the sacred swords - if someone wasn't familiar with the bands tonight, they may have assumed it was a Star Wars themed concert.

Das Mörthal was like a warm up and stretch before a hardcore exercise regimen came in the form of Dance with the Dead. Touring on the strength of their latest record, *Driven to Madness*, Dance with the Dead had their guitars turned up with the synths resonating somewhere in the background of their dance-metal onslaught. The Orange County duo (accompanied by live drummer John Terry) combined machine with muscle in a live show which drew upon their strengths from the metal side of their persona, going all out and leaving no room for a breather during their entire 45-minute set with track after track of hard hitting guitar driven songs like "Hex", "Sledge" and older jams like "Go!" which made the people dancing mosh and vice versa. They ended it with a synth metal rendition of "Kickstart my Heart" which did in fact rev up the crowd into a new gear for the upcoming Magic Sword.

The three cloaked immortals forming Magic Sword took to the stage next. The Seer, the Keeper and the Weaver brought a mystique and gravitas to their live show which deserved the headlining slot. Dance with the Dead was like a musical sledgehammer and Magic Sword was like, well, a magical sword fight - with each instrument being its own sword and clashing with the other in a beautiful display of might and magic. There are a lot of mythos behind the music, with comic books set to Magic Sword's songs which tell an epic story, though you don't need to be caught up with the latest chapter to get sucked into their performance. The Jedi sabres were waved, swung, licked and thrust as Magic Sword brought their already pristine sounding recorded material to life - the highlight being the guitar work here, played on a white B.C. Rich, which was the VIP musical weapon in the Sword's repertoire. They left as mysteriously as they came - no bantering, no encore - another chapter finished on the Sword's 2022 tour.

-Ryan Dyer



**Clutch
Eyehategod
Tigercub
The Palace Theatre, Calgary AB**

April 1, 2022

Clutch's two-month tour from March to May found them in Calgary on April Fool's Day. Rock is serious business, after all, and the set they brought to the Palace was no joke, with bearded Gearheads who have been to multiple concerts praising the song selection. The band are veterans in every sense of the word, but are still riding high on the integrity of never selling out and keeping the quality of new releases at a premium level.

For the first half of the tour, Clutch enlisted Tigercub and Eyehategod to open. Tigercub were basically unknown to the Calgary crowd, and Tigercub knew it. It didn't stop them from making a pretty good impression, with the Brighton-based band bringing an intriguing mix of soft vocals, electronic beats and nasty sludge-based passages that made some of the ears waiting in line for \$9 tall boys perk up.

Eyehategod must have been determined to lay Canada to waste - their tour with Napalm Death was halted at the border late last year, but this time they made it through and the band couldn't have appeared happier on stage. Guitarist Jimmy Bower appeared onstage to noodle away on his guitar, making some in the audience think it was just some type of soundcheck, though soon the rest of the band would join him one by one until they tore into their set. Mike Williams' seething lyrics along with the band's album art and logo make up the nihilistic aesthetic of EHG, though during this set, it was Bower's riffs that I realized were the imperative ingredient to the NOLA soup.

With live shows, Clutch remains a highly coveted concert experience - one that fans will attend multiple dates of on a single tour due to the set list being updated every single night. Clutch utilizes every song from their 12 albums along with B-sides and covers - maybe it's to keep the fans interested or maybe themselves. Whichever the case, it works. The band has stayed true to their bare bones ethic, making the music speak for itself. Neil Fallon is ever the rock preacher, and here at the Palace, with its theatre atmosphere, he was allowed to project his tall-tale lyrics to the upper sections. The set was, as mentioned before, full of crowd pleasers such as "Profits of Doom," "Earth Rocker" and the obligatory song about cruising through space in a car, "Crucial Velocity" while also performing new track "Boss Metal Zone." The band unveiled a treat for this show too, playing "Lord of This World" by Black Sabbath for the first time publicly. Their encore brought out the moving to Canada and smoking lots pot favorite "The Mob Goes Wild," "Big News 1" and "Impetus." What's that smell? A Clutch set done too-well.

-Ryan Dyer

**Holding Two Balloons
Date : February 19 2022**

**Venue : Vinyl Envy / Victoria BC
Bands : Poubelles/ Queens Park**

First show out from behind the pandemic gate for Vinyl Envy (record store by day, live music venue by night) was a double bill from locals Queens Park and The Poubelles. A Saturday night, all ages and "dancing capacity allowed" status more or less guaranteed the sellout.

VE isn't a large space and it's difficult to not be nervous about the vinyl cocoon that surrounds the pack when things really get jumping. This was a sentiment shared by the bands and audience alike on this occasion.

Queens Park:

"There is a value in understanding the fragility of a room that provides for you when you show up with distortion pedals and sing about being reckless. It demands a bit of self-awareness which is always a great practice. "It's a younger demographic that makes up the attendees that evening; students, friends, supporters outside of the bar scene wanting to partake in being able to once again experience without restriction."

Amber from Poubelles said, "The energy was palpable, the windows were fogged, the air was heavy, I could've cried on that stage watching people jump around and dance with reckless abandon after 2 years of going

without! Was a night to remember!!"

Vic trio The Poubelles (see Victorias Locals Only) opened the night with a just under an hour set of originals and crowd ramping covers by Wet Leg and Katy Perry. You could tell there was electricity in the room right out of the gate. It really didn't seem that much was holding back the euphoria of being able to fully participate in live music again after a very long two-year drought. It's a decibel limiting neighborhood and venue that just falls shy of being able to support a mosh. I don't think anyone wants to see record racks collapse, but the joint was getting rocked just the same. From the back of the room, I observed a compact version of a scene being played out at venues across the city as live music returned, no longer restricted to livestream only performances, social distancing, and masked faces.

Poubelles are a fun, crowd pleasing band that plays often around town. They connect easily to an audience and fit perfectly as a local live music restart on this night. (Shout out to Angelina and Sarah for always being there for the band.) Queens Park set into their 3rd live show (second at VE) after the floor had emptied for a much needed cool night air break. I saw this band at their first ever live gig and it was great to see how far they have moved ahead in such a short while.

The band remarks: "One of the most memorable parts is opening with the first song we wrote; "I Just Need My Friends." It was written during the peak of Covid restrictions. It's basically about missing your friends, wanting to waste time and grow old together. It's the darkest and heaviest song we've written so far, but it's also the most wholesome. A juxtapose of the times we are living. Finally, getting to play it with our friends is one of the reasons Queens Park exists."

Clocking ten (almost all original) tracks in roughly 45 mins, the band threw more fuel on the already lit crowd. Kinda hard to accurately pin this band's vibe. I'll rely on this quote from the band themselves: "Queens Park is a mix of seriousness and satire. We're always looking for ways to make each other laugh. The band feels like Sylvester Stallone covered in sparkles, holding two balloons, one popped and the other still holding enough air to keep going."

I couldn't have come up with that. Going to keep my eye on this band. I expect you'll hear lots more from both these bands and shows of all genres are now booking all over the city. Support the local music scene. From basement all ages shows to arena dates, be a part of it.

Words / Photography – John Carlow/Finding Charlotte Photography



HAPPY 420

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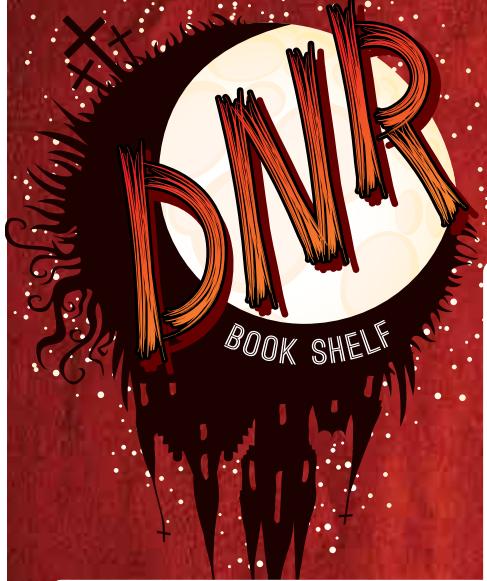
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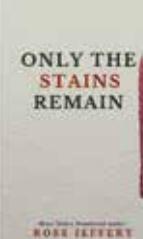
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ONLY THE STAINS REMAIN



Ross Jeffery
Cemetery Gates Media
July 20th 2021

Ross Jeffery has been on my radar ever since his book *Tome*. I thought *Tome* was pretty damned good, but he really hit a home run with this one.

This reminds me most of Jack Ketchum's "The Girl Next Door." It deals with the same type of situation - child abuse. So if that's not your cup of tea, please move on.

This is an incredibly dark book dealing with loss, pain, anger, and desperation. This is an extreme horror story that will break your heart. The characters and emotions that they are dealing with just jump off and bite you. I would definitely recommend this one to fans of reality-based horror.

Michael Cushing

DUST



Chris Miller
Death's Head Press
June 10th 2020

This is one of the better splatter western novels that have been released over the last year.

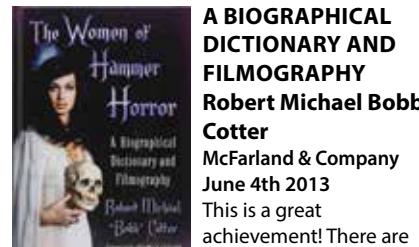
It reminded me strongly of the main plot line for Stephen King's *Dark Tower* series... "The man in black fled across the desert, and the gunslinger followed". Except once we enter the land of Dust, the plot takes a hard left hand turn and you're in the middle

of hardcore splatter punk cosmic horror. Chris Miller writes this novel in a prose that is nearly impossible to put down once you reach a certain point. This was maddening for me in the time that I chose to read this novel because I never had a huge amount of time to dedicate to reading at any one point. I found myself having to back up a little bit to where I really remembered, and then picking the story back up multiple times.

With that being said, this was very entertaining. If you have the time and desire this summer to pick up something that's quite a bit off the beaten path and you have the time to be entertained, this is a good book to bank on.

Michael Cushing

THE WOMEN OF HAMMER HORROR: A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY AND FILMOGRAPHY



Robert Michael Bobb Cotter
McFarland & Company
June 4th 2013

This is a great achievement! There are so many books in print on Hammer Horror, yet this is not only one of the best, it covers aspects of Hammer I didn't know about (and I know a lot about Hammer Horror!).

Author 'Bobb' Cotter has had the genius idea of covering all the women of Hammer, not just the famous ones like Raquel Welch, and including the TV series and the welcome rebirth of Hammer. His research is impeccable, and his writing always entertaining, respectful, and good humoured. He loves what he's writing about, and he puts this across to his reader. He's also featured all women who contributed to Hammer, whether they headlined the film or made a brief appearance in it. He's left no stone unturned! Some of the actresses did little more genre work (Nike Arrighi in the classic Dennis Wheatley adaptation *The Devil Rides Out* for instance), while many such as the late and much lamented Ingrid Pitt made the fantastic their career (Years ago, Ingrid very kindly signed my

copy of her autobiography, a very nice lady indeed). To whet your appetite, I'll share just a few of the things Bobb has uncovered...

Lalla Ward starred in *Hammer's Vampire Circus*, an excellent and unusual Hammer film (also starring Adrienne Corri, who herself is well and dervedly featured in Bobb's book). Later she went on to star in *Doctor Who*, and indeed was briefly married to the best Doctor Who, Tom Baker. She was married to Richard Dawkins! She clearly doesn't like dull men!

Elsewhere, Hilary Swank, excellent in *The Resident*, shows she has a good sense of humour, showing some Hammer Glamour in a publicity shot where she invokes the spirit of Raquel Welch in *One Million Years BC*, and doing a splendid job of it!

He covers one of my all-time favourite actresses, the late and much-missed Angharad Rees (well known for her role as Demelza in the popular TV adaption of Winston Graham's *Poldark* novels.) She gave a fine performance in *Hands of the Ripper* (at the time Hammer were doing some very different riffs on traditional horror which produced some superb films such as *Kronos-Vampire Hunter*, written by Brian Clemens and starring the legendary Caroline Munro).

Another *Poldark* star Ralph Bates played the lead opposite (literally opposite!) the striking Martine Beswick in the highly original *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde*, which benefitted not only from superb performances from its two leads, but a very good script from *The Avengers'* Brian Clemens (by the way, surely the time is right for *The Avengers* to return to television?)

Bobb's book's cover star Valerie Leon is featured in detail, she starred in the somewhat jinxed production of *Blood From The Mummy's Tomb*.

Joanna Lumley is featured, she appeared in *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*, Hammer's attempt to update *Dracula* (though ironically, fun though the film is, it's more dated than any of the period Hammer *Dracula* films). Bobb has really done is homework here, and really shows the breadth of Joanna's career. Jacqueline Pearce starred in not only one of the best Hammer films, *Plague of the Zombies*, but one of the best zombie films period. *Plague of the Zombies* is truly superb, and in this era of massive interest in all things zombie

related, deserves further investigation. She also starred in a film shot back to back with *Plague of the Zombies*, *The Reptile*, which is an underrated gem (at that time Hammer were shooting films back to back, often utilizing the same cast and sets redressed, for example *Dracula: Prince of Darkness* was shot back-to-back with *Rasputin The Mad Monk*, another classic!)

Bette Davis starred in *The Nanny* and *The Anniversary*, and Bobb rightly gives her credit as an actress of great power. And a book that can go from Bette Davis to the stunning Collinson Twins who starred, not surprisingly, in *Twins of Evil*, is some book! And another strength of the book is the films it draws your attention to, for instance the Hazel Court (who gave a fine performance opposite Vincent Price in the Roger Corman production of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Masque of the Red Death*) starring *The Man Who Could Cheat Death*, which I haven't seen but looks worth checking out.

And the book is beautifully bound and laid out, a thing of joy forever! All I can say to sum up, if you only buy one book on Hammer Horror, make it this one, it's that good!

Steve Earles

BLOOD RELATIONS



Kristopher Triana
Grindhouse Press

MAY 5th, 2020

This is one of those collections where it's hard to write a review because there's so much to say about a lot of the stories that are included.

All of the short stories in this novel somehow include family situations, which I have to give mad respect for actually compiling because most people's first wounds came during childhood. There would be a lot of people who I would recommend not reading this collection.

But with that being said, if you're already a fan of Triana's work and you know what type of horror you're going to be experiencing and still wish to go ahead then this is one of the best collections I've read in recent memory.

Michael Cushing

'EVERYBODY IS A BOOK OF BLOOD: WHEREVER WE'RE OPENED, WE'RE RED.'

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Absolute Album Reviews



Goat Horn mixed NWOBHM with Cathedral style doom and a raw punky vibe!

Could there be a more metal name than Goat Horn? The answer is no. Even their very name goes all the way up to eleven!

Disc one consists of Goat Horn's statement of intent debut *Voyage To Nowhere*, it's clear the band did everything as it should be done right from the start. Splendid stuff! Some excellent live and demo tracks as a bonus there.

Disc two consists of the cult *Storming The Gates*. Love the cover of Sacrifice's 'Re-Animation'. Bonus tracks include an excellent live cover of Helloween's 'Heavy Metal (Is The Law)', which it should, of course, be!

Disc Three is Goat Horn's equally excellent swan song *Threatening Force*. There are six excellent bonus demo tracks, some of which would resurface in Jason Decay's next band, Cauldron.

Apart from the excellent music (kudos to Cherry Red for this excellent release, done with love and respect as always), what makes this collection extra special is that it comes with a detailed essay about Goat Horn from the late legendary journalist Malcolm Dome. Malcolm, to my mind, was the best metal writer ever. Old school to the core, he was full of enthusiasm for the music he loved. His knowledge was second to none, and he could write! Malcolm sadly passed away shortly after completing the band interviews for this release. Malcolm's writing formed a major part of my childhood metal education. He was utterly fearless both in promoting good music and highlighting the bad. He really cared. I always hunted down anything he praised. He never got it wrong. If I could be a fraction of the writer Malcolm was, I'd be a happy man.

This release is rightly and respectfully dedicated to his memory, as is my review. R.I.P Malcolm Dome, gone but never forgotten.

- Steve Earles



Goat Horn - Voyage To Nowhere: The Complete Anthology

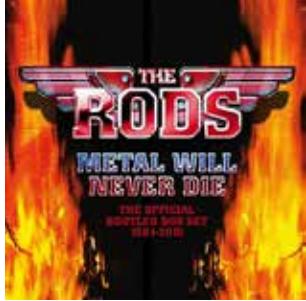
Cherry Red Records

This is a truly excellent three-CD set from Canada's cult legends Goat Horn. For those who don't know,

but no less catchy. Disc three is the scarce *Live and Rare*, which captures Fasterpussy Cat in all their live glory. Disc four is their final Elektra album, 1992's *Whipped!*, which is great fun, but by the following year, the band, at least in their classic incarnation, had called it a day.

Overall, a great package, good fun, and I love their cover of Carly Simon's 'You're So Vain', how apt for a glam metal band!

- Steve Earles



The Rods - Metal Will Never Die: The Official Bootleg Box Set 1981-2010

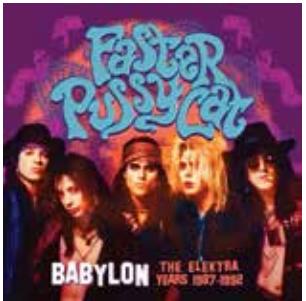
Cherry Red Records

Now, The Rods are a band with a pedigree. Guitarist and vocalist David 'Rock' Feinstein had cut with teeth with his cousin Ronnie James Dio's pre-Rainbow/Black Sabbath band Elf. We are not worthy!

This is an easy collection to review. We have excellent 80s style American metal, captured in all its authentic live rawness, as it should be. The first two discs hail from the 80s, the third and forth discs date from 2009 and 2010, but are equally enjoyable.

Overall, a great collection of 80s metal, live and in the raw!

- Steve Earles



Faster Pussycat - Babylon: The Elektra Years (1987-1992)

Cherry Red Records

Before grunge, alternative rock, and the hole their hairspray made in the ozone layer, killed them off, hair metal bands ruled the Earth (or at least the Sunset Strip). The splendidly named Faster Pussycat sum this era up to a T! I have to say Faster Pussycat's music is great fun, and I'm not being ironic, reviewing this was a happy experience. The world needs more of that, especially in these dark times.

Babylon consists of four discs:

Disc one is Faster Pussycat's self-titled debut and it is very much of its glam metal time. Disc two is their second album, *Wake Me When It's Over*, which is heavier,

but no less catchy. Disc three is the scarce *Live and Rare*, which captures Fasterpussy Cat in all their live glory. Disc four is their final Elektra album, 1992's *Whipped!*, which is great fun, but by the following year, the band, at least in their classic incarnation, had called it a day.

Overall, a great package, good fun, and I love their cover of Carly Simon's 'You're So Vain', how apt for a glam metal band!

- Steve Earles



Rosalie Cunningham - Two Piece Puzzle

Cherry Red Records

It's always a joy to review a new album from Rosalie Cunningham. The only thing you can be sure of is that it will be unique, wonderful and individual; apart from that, expect the unexpected. Rosalie created some vital and beautiful music with her previous band Purson (their *The Circle And The Blue Door* is one of my all-time favourite albums, with one of the best cover photos ever), and Rosalie's solo output continues in the same vein.

The title *Two Piece Puzzle* refers to the duality of human nature, we are like icebergs, much of our truth remains hidden, from ourselves as much as others. Perhaps that is an evolutionary trait, necessary to live with ourselves. One of the few positive elements of the lockdown is all the great music that's now emerging. Freed (albeit involuntarily) from the myriad distractions of the world around us, many artists creativity found free rein.

So, there are no weak tracks on *Two Piece Puzzle*, as regards instrumentation, I feel it is more simplified than previous Rosalie works, but all the stronger for it. For instance, the instrumental opening track 'Start With The Corners' (for those who don't know, that's traditionally how you start a jigsaw puzzle) is like a long jam between Jethro Tull and Black Sabbath (and interestingly The Iron Man himself, Tony Iommi once played in Tull, you can see him beneath a rustic hat in the films of The Rolling Stones' 'Rock'N Roll Circus', an exercise in '60s madness that has

to been seen to be believed!). This would have fitted in nicely on Purson's debut. Elsewhere the theatrical 'Donovan Ellington' and its sequel 'Donny pt. Two' are fine examples of the English story-telling tradition, though musically, both tracks have their roots in The Kinks or The Small Faces. 'Suck Push Bang Blow' is the best song ever about sex, because it was written by a woman, and has a remarkable sense of honesty. Well done, Rosalie, never sacred to tell it like it is (or should be!). My favourite track of all is 'The Liner Notes', both heavy and heartfelt, I love it.

Overall, yet another beautiful, adventurous, simply wonderful album, from one of the best musicians in any genre. Long may she reign!

- Steve Earles

Suzi Quatro - Back To The... Spotlight

Cherry Red Records

Suzi really is a lady who deserves to be described as a rock n' roll legend, and this is greatly evidence by this excellent 2CD package.

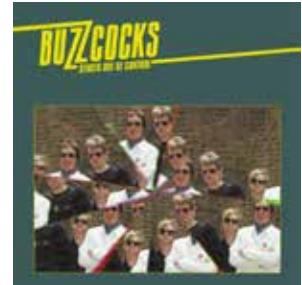


Disc One, *Back To The Drive* was produced by Andy Scott of The Sweet, and it shows, the album has that authentic 70s vibe, but with a modern twist, love the cover of Neil Young's 'Rockin' In The Free World', looking at the tragic news unfolding today, the sentiment is more important than ever.

Disc Two is *In The Spotlight*, produced by the legendary Mike Chapman, and once again, it rocks hard in that unique *Detroit Rock City* way!

Overall, like a fine wine, Suzi only gets better with age!

- Steve Earles



Buzzcocks - "Senses Out Of Control"

Cherry Red Records

With the sad death of the legendary Peter Shelley, I did approaching reviewing this 10" vinyl single with a certain degree of apprehension.

Luckily, I am happy to say that the late great man would be delighted with 'Senses Out Of Control', a song that is more than true to everything The Buzzcocks stand for, sincere and joyous. It is true to what came before, but also moving forward confidently into the future.

The 10" has two additional non-album tracks. 'Carnival Of Illusion' reflects on society today, on things like 'cancel culture', the way we now live in a world where one action can brand an individual forever, trapping them in amber. It also has a great Steve Diggle riff. The EP ends with 'Hope Heaven Loves You', another superb song.

This is a band with much to offer for the future, which is life affirming in itself, and in these dark times of war, something we really need right now.

- Steve Earles

Absolute Film Reviews

Studio 666

Roswell Films

Available to stream on Amazon Prime, Apple TV and Redbox

Any fan of Foo Fighters will get a kick out of *Studio 666*. It's a horror comedy with a few good beats to show the band in their off stage hilarity. Most of it is fictional and the timing of its broader release

to streaming cannot be any more surreal following the recent news of Taylor Hawkins death. The film is not meant to mirror real life.

Here, the story focuses on how the dead can come back, to finish an Evil Dead type ritual so that Skye Willow (Jenna Ortega) can gain power. She never finished his summoning spell because her bandmates put a stop to it during this film's introduction. But, on the verge of dying herself,



Skye must find a person to possess.

Fast forward to the present, Dave Grohl has debts and is in a rut. He'll have to develop a new album and earn enough income to get out of it. His manager, Jeremy Shill (Jeff Garlin) offers him a place (where Skye once lived) to stay and work on it. Once the band settles, not everyone is aware of the danger. Acting-wise, the band does a reasonable

job at playing their fictional selves. It's not as stale as early attempts to turn musicians into actors, and I'm sure none of that tension between mates is real. We get to see them at their most eccentric!

This film's concept is nothing new. If it's about a deal with the devil, we don't know all the details. This film is not like the 1986 *Crossroads* movie where it delves into why Blues music is deep. The motifs aren't explored in

Studio 666 and nor does it become a Scooby Doo mystery (I wished it had). To add a mythic context would've helped make this work equal. Sometimes, the tunes help the listener get past hard times, because the lyrics show they're not alone in their grief.

What's presented is a film that doesn't know how to nicely end. Instead, it's a slasher film. The plot is about how Grohl can't find the riff that'll lead to closing off the song. They discover a book, a recording (all from *Evil Dead*), and by the time he figures it out, this musician is a solo act.

We don't know a lot about what drives Skye since the introduction was quick. As for explaining why the devil made Grohl do it, perhaps another film is required to show him possessed and fighting Skye's spirit from within. This movie was written by him, Jeff Buhler and Rebecca Hughes feels incomplete. What's made is just the B-Side, and Side A still needs to be produced.

- Ed Sum

Beyond the Wasteland

Countless kids in the '80s dressed as the hockey mask wearing Jason Voorhees. Once you have the mask, it's an easy costume - just get some ragged clothes that look close enough to what he wears in the film and a machete and you're golden. A select few other kids, however, such as Jim "Tank" Dorsey from the United States, looked to another hockey mask wearing idol to emulate - Jim spent the hours in the gym and then dared to strip down almost naked to portray Lord Humongous.

Beyond the Wasteland follows individuals like Jim, who has painstakingly concocted a screen accurate costume, as well as other collectors, cosplayers and car builders who all have one thing in common - their love for the post apocalyptic world of Mad Max. Director Eddie Bayrouthy takes us to the outback and beyond, introducing us to fans from the USA, Italy, France, Germany, and Japan.

If you thought Mad Max fans weren't as extreme as Star Wars, Star Trek or superhero fans, Beyond the Wasteland will surprise you in showing these post-apocalyptic maniacs' attention to detail and passion. It wasn't always like this though, with those who dressed up in those early days being rather lonely in their fandom. It wasn't until Fury Road was released when the prospect of Mad Max cosplay truly hit the mainstream. Now, Jim just has more victims to play with.

Original cast member Bertrand Cadart (Clunk) makes a final film appearance, guiding the doc while fighting stage IV leukaemia as he and Bayrouthy travel to the "Wasteland," the desert location of Mad Max 2 in Silverton. Cadart unfortunately passed away in 2020, so Beyond the Wasteland also acts as a tribute to the actor.

Any Road Warrior worth their weight in gas should drive their Kawasaki up to the Calgary Underground Film Festival for Beyond the Wasteland's showing on April 23.

- Ryan Dyer



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Voice of the Streets

Interview with Mike Oldfield
by Daryl Bidner and Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking with, what are you best known for?

MO: Mike - and in the punk community I guess probably for playing in bands locally and playing soul records in pubs.

AU: I know the list is long but ... What bands have you played in/are playing in?

MO: No Heart, Off The Clock, The Choice Few, Last Crusade, Thankless Graft + teenage punk bands like ThrashMadonna in the past - currently I am playing in Split Arrows(Mod Revival/Post-Punk) and Crosshairs(UK82).

AU: What got you into the skinhead subculture and when?

MO: I transitioned to it from being a young mohican'd then bald punk in my late teens - I had kind of got burnt out on fast hardcore punk at the time and felt a disconnect with the punk scene at that point. I first heard Oi! when I was 14/15 but it was "too slow" for me back then, but the combination of re-visiting

classics like Cockney Rejects and Sham 69 and hearing the then "new" band Alternate Action got me hooked and it just felt like a better fit for me. In a weird way, alot of fast hardcore punk had started to sort of sound like tantrums to me, where as bands like the Rejects, AA and The Blood played uplifting songs about the monotony and pitfalls of life that really struck a chord. Also, a polo, harrington and sambas was a smarter look then worn out jean jackets with patches and pins on haha. I will always have a lot of time for the punk scene though, and consider myself part of it.

AU: Favourite up and coming Oi band?

MO: To be honest I don't keep up on current bands very much anymore, atleast not for Oi! bands. Bands in the last few years that I've really enjoyed are The Royal Hounds, Squellete and Lion's Share (a criminally under rated Newfoundland band).

AU: Favourite all time Oi band?

MO: Too tough to say, I'm going cheat and say 3 haha. Cock Sparrer, The Burial, The Blood.

AU: Favourite band, any genre, you have seen live?

MO: Again, a near impossible one to answer. Cock Sparrer in Blackpool 2011, Templars in London 2013, Infra Riot in Vancouver 2019.

AU: How did your old band, Last Crusade, come together while you were in England?

MO: My friend Ben and I had been chatting about starting something Oi! for a few years (Ben would be replaced by another Mike), and a local hardcore punk kid who lived in our area suggested this messageboard on facebook to get members, as most of our friends didn't play. I went on it and a hardcore kid from Montreal



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AU: We're very excited on the new Split Arrows EP. Is there a Split Arrows LP in the works?

MO: Yes, it is now available on a ltd. 160 7", through LSM Vinyl (Canada) and Tasm Records (Germany). We only just finished recording the Split Arrows LP, it still needs to be mixed and mastered - but it's seven brand new songs, two re-do's of our favourites from the 7", and a cover by The Burial.

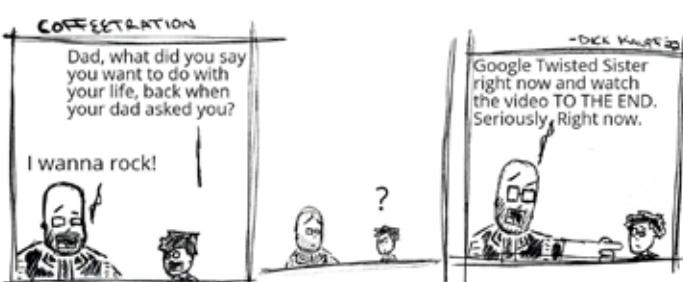
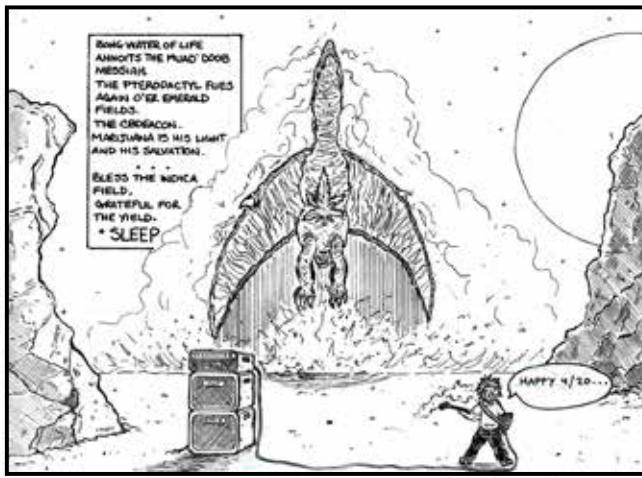
AU: Are Crosshairs putting out any records?

MO: We have two songs on the *British Columbia Bovver* compilation 12" coming out in April, and a 4 song cassette EP out in March/April on *Slow Death Records*. I have a 7" worth of material written, so we will hopefully record that this spring/summer and get that out by year's end.

AU: Anything else you would like mention?

MO: Cheers for the interview Chuck! Daz it's new folks like you with enthusiasm for our thing that keeps it going. Also, would love to see more punks coming out to the soul and reggae DJ afternoon's that we do at Caffe Fantastico monthly. "Never trust a skin who wasn't a punk!"

Absolute Comix



ACROSS

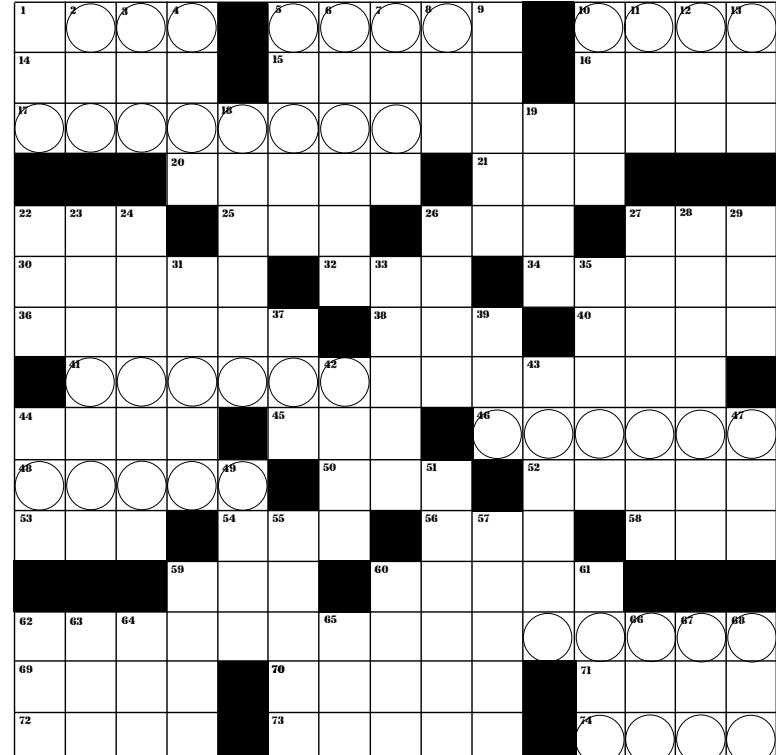
- Word with vacation or G
- Big-eared dwarf
- Tarlek of WKRP
- Farming prefix
- Amazed at
- Cruising
- Belonging to Peter Parker's girlfriend
- Wrap star
- Cheery syllable
- It's often torn in sports injuries
- Pitcher Young and namesakes
- Greg Ginn's label
- "My life sucks" in text talk
- Elvis's "All ____ Up"
- Love, Italian style
- ____ throat
- Youppi or the Phillie Phanatic
- Promise of a lifetime
- Snake's warning
- 30s film that inspired a current Edmonton Punk name
- Town with a leaning landmark
- Punk show purchase
- Band of Brothers that weren't brothers
- Slammer
- La Palme ___, top prize at Cannes
- You can do this on Google
- Herpes, for example
- Tic-tac-toe win
- The Greatest
- A Rock Star has one
- Canine comment
- Police leader
- Lawn or lifestyle warning
- Prepares for war
- She went from sitcom to talk
- Popular cookie
- Manson family victim Sharon
- Morrison's group
- Garden annoyance

DOWN

- "____ I Am"
- Org. for Palmer and Nicholas
- Bruins' great
- Aerosmith's "____ in the Attic"
- Alt-Rock's Guadalcanal ____
- Paid for by the US space agency?
- Song of praise

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- "Ick!"
- ____ in the making
- Relative of this puzzle's theme
- "____ Beso"
- Cartoon chihuahua
- Certain degrees
- ____ all trades
- Body art
- Suffix with phant or org
- It may swing low
- Leave Vicious behind?
- Pop
- Toy popular in parks
- Actress Debra
- Records
- Character played by Sinatra and Clooney
- Fanzine printer until the 70s
- Destination for a 64-down
- Asian holiday
- Uneven
- Try again
- Keeping a record of
- Nightwear
- It turned into Tokyo
- Toreador's opponent
- He replaced Cronkite
- Iced
- Lenders often demand these
- Church recess
- Site of a key WWII battle in France
- ____ op
- Tattoo artist Von D
- Notable time period
- Ambulance worker
- 60's band ____ and Eddie
- "Ripcordz ____ Go!"
- Observe
- Dirt

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SHADOW CABINET WITH GRAYSON CALIGARI:

Looking Back at Lovecraft

By Grayson Caligari

A few issues back, I took a short look at gothic writer Sheridan Le Fanu. In that vein, here is a quick introduction to Howard Phillips Lovecraft and his enduring influence.

In his day he was underrated, underpaid, and largely unnoticed. However, the anxiety, xenophobia, and proto-existential dread that underpinned his works became themes central to much of modern horror.

The idea that humankind is not alone in the universe had been explored before; but authors like Jules Verne suggested an ordered world with divine providence. H.P. looked to the stars with fear and anticipation. He used a tone of disillusioned wonder in his stories. Lovecraft made it clear: human lives are insignificant. The cosmos is filled with planets and gods aplenty warring for control in an inter-dimensional ocean of chaos. We can only hope to glimpse a fraction of the universe before we die.

One should not confuse this attitude with the hopelessness of nihilistic dread. There is meaning to the universe in Lovecraft's world; however, this



meaning is utterly beyond our ability as humans to understand. To try and do so will drive us to the depths of madness. This is the theme of one of his most famous short stories, *The Mountains of Madness*. It is a wonderful dark romp through Antarctica. The story flows better when read out loud. For many years reading ghost stories and horror was a popular pastime. This has

since been replaced by horror films, but podcasts and "creepy pasta" audio on YT preserve the tradition. At the Mountains of Madness can be an excellent introduction to Lovecraft because of the accessibility and familiar horror themes.

Those who are horror critics will notice that he does take longer than contemporary writers to establish normalcy. We would call this "establishing normalcy" step one in the hero's journey, but in horror there is often no formal "call to adventure". Horror often depicts a slow decay of the normal world which leads to disillusionment. This modern approach is due at least in part to Lovecraft's writing.

Therefore we can break horror into stages:

- 1) establishing normalcy,
- 2) undermining normalcy
- 3) total collapse of established boundaries
- 4) torment and insanity
- 5) return to the ordinary world transformed

by suffering. *The Mountains of Madness* is an outstanding example of the above modern pattern horror story which can be seen in almost all of Lovecraft's writing.

[1] In *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* we learn of a dark sea port that seems abandoned and yet is teeming with fish-like demonic creatures. We get a peek into the strange oceanic nightmare of Cthulhu's brethren. I recommend listening to an audio book version as you read along. It helps convey the atmosphere to hear the words. *Horror Babble* has some good versions of Lovecraft on YouTube. Other great stories to check out are, "The Dunwich Horror," "Dreams in the Witch House," and "The Colour Out of Space."

To read Lovecraft is to wade through occasional clumsy use of adjectives and antiquated language. While some readers enjoy the conscious archaism, it is the general consensus that HP's archaic language is comical at times but does not detract from the richness of the stories. The reward of reading is vivid imagery and world building that will haunt your dreams and stay with you for a lifetime. His stories and the Cthulhu mythos have inspired filmmakers, musicians, and writers. HP influenced kingpins of horror such as Clive Barker and

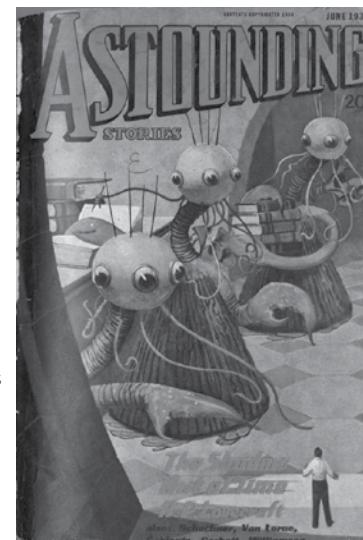


The effect of the monstrous sight was indescribable! Some fiendish violation of natural law!

Stephen King. Goth, punk, industrial and metal all have bands with references to HP's works. He has even inspired occult writers to create versions of his fictional grimoire the *Necronomicon*.

Lovecraft had a passion for adventure stories set in the middle east and Egypt which is evident in his creation of the author of the *Necronomicon*: Abdul Alhazred, an adventurous character that Lovecraft pretended to be as a boy. He had a complex relationship with race. His ideas were very conservative even for his time and occasionally used terms modern readers find offensive. I hope you can look past his awkwardness to enjoy the strange dark worlds of his creation which now make up much of the backbone of current horror.

Be sure to check out Robert W. Chambers 1895 book *The King in Yellow* if you are a HP fan and need more to read.

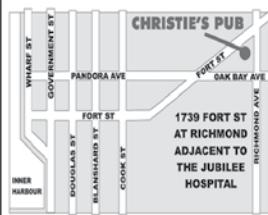


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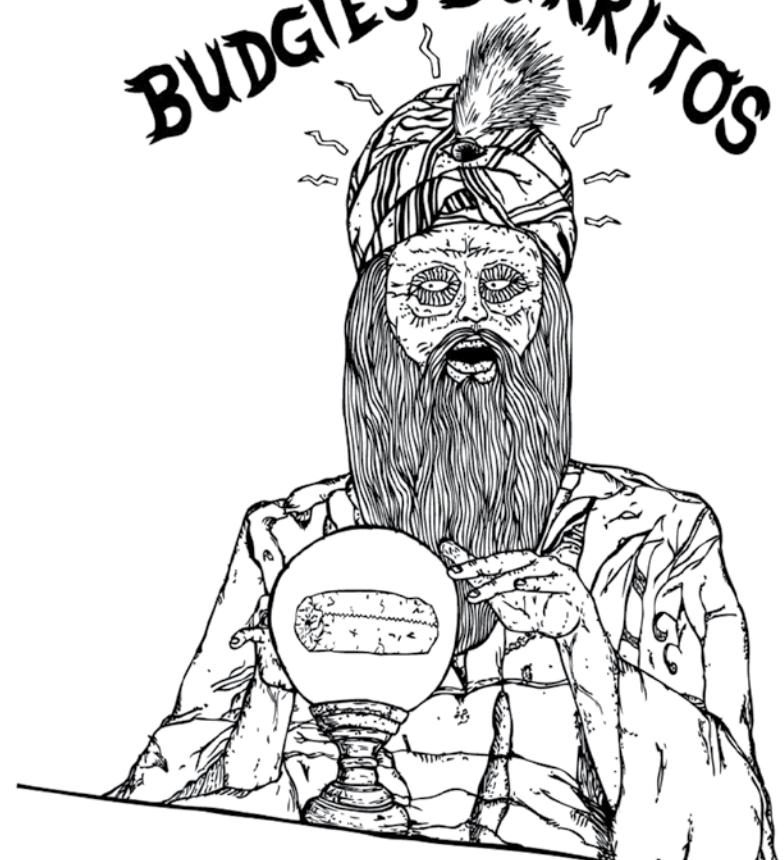
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- 14) Animals - "Monterey"
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- 17) Grateful Dead - "St. Stephen"
- 18) Nazareth - "Sold My Soul"
- 19) Yes - "Heart Of the Sunrise"
- 20) Led Zeppelin - "No Quarter"
- 21) Rolling Stones - "2000 Light Years From Home"
- 22) MC5 - "Sister Anne"
- 23) Jefferson Airplane - "Plastic Fantastic Lover"
- 24) T. Rex - "Jupiter Liar"
- 25) Queen - "The March of the Black Queen"
- 26) The Stooges - "Dirt"

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- 29) The Who - "We're Not Gonna Take It"
- 30) David Bowie - "Savior Machine"
- 31) Peter Frampton - "Do You Feel Like We Do"
- 32) The Move - "Feel Too Good"
- 33) Three Dog Night - "Shambala"
- 34) Mountain - "Nantucket Sleighride"
- 35) Rush - "Anthem"

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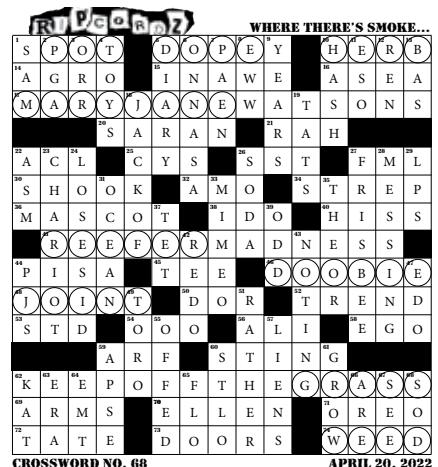
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Rad Wraith #1

Review

By Ed Sum

Scout Comics' Black Caravan imprint has been knocking it out of the park with their horror themed works. They have a lot of titles! To name a pair, *Black Friday* and *Tales Told in Techni-Horror*, have themes explored are nicely wide and varied. The latter is an anthology that isn't afraid to shock.

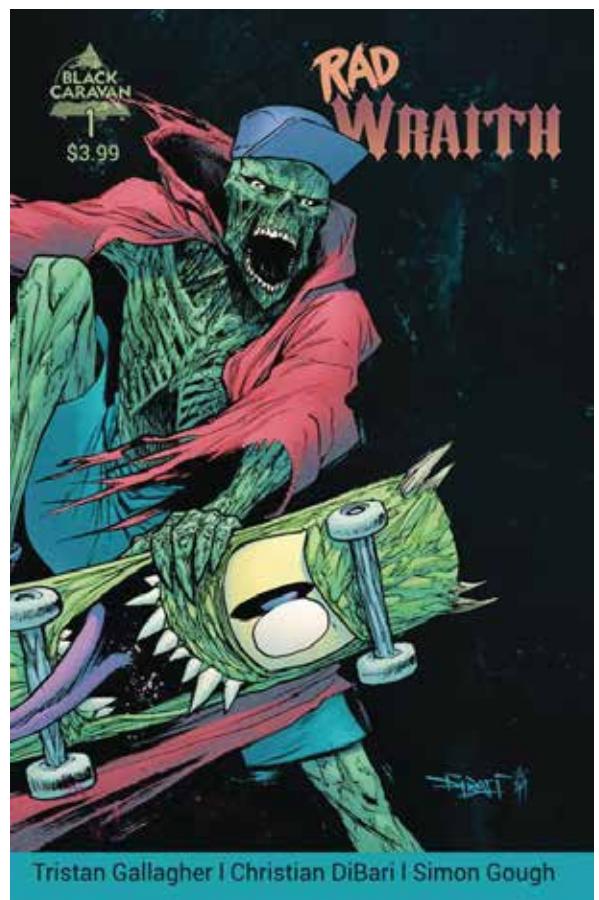
Recently released is *Rad Wraith* which delves into classic *Tales from the Crypt*-style storytelling. We have a ghoulish tale about a young skateboarder named Grom who may well have turned into a different type of Ghost Rider. This character emerged from the body of a deceased kid and wants to exact vengeance on those bullies who killed him. When he was alive, he was the target of their jokes and pranks. He was hurt after going down the half-pipe. Classically (Stephen King style) this skate-park was built over cursed land.

Although the trope is overused, I can buy into it as long as those Indian spirits are out to play equaliser.

Any skater will see that writer Tristan Gallagher knows the sport. He's not just imagining it, but also lives vicariously through Grom and others. It's a lifestyle that's

not just Tony Hawk. The artwork by Christian Dibari is classic and is perfectly storyboarded, so I can imagine it as though it's to establish the cinematography for a movie. I can't help but be reminded of those pre-code horror comics and what EC Comics offered in his layouts and

COMIC-GEDDON

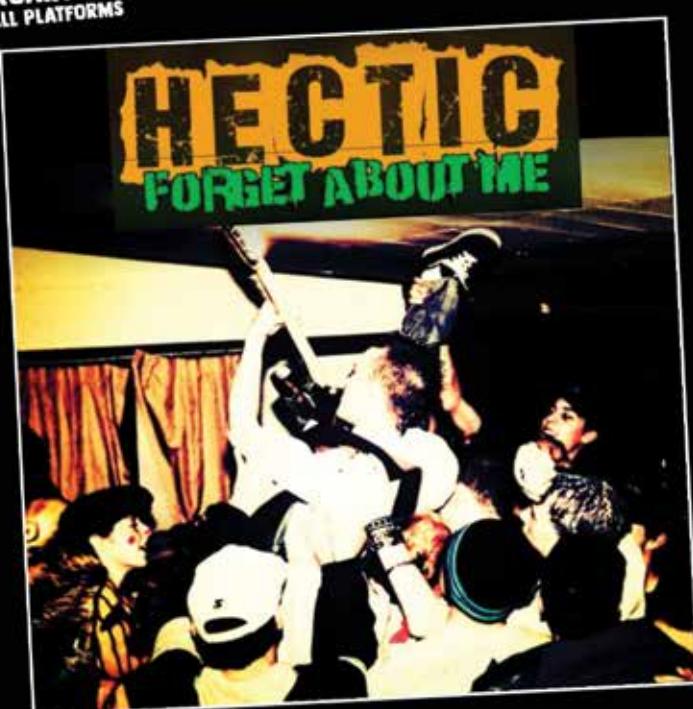


design of *Rad Wraith*.

Usually a single issue is not enough to judge a story by. Based on what's revealed, I'll be cheering for *Rad Wraith*. He's not just an undead creeper, but is truly a reaper. He'll claim your soul unless you're willing to change your ways.

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Viking Beer

By Howl Brewing

As the sun sets on suburban homes, and we are nestled into our routine, sometimes it's easy to get lost in the cups and dream of lands across the sea...

"From the land of ice and snow, from the midnight sun..."

Beer was not always a recreational beverage, but a means of survival. Before the days of refrigeration, fermentation was a means of increasing the longevity of food. In many cases fermented beverages such as beer and wine were safer to drink than water. The English longbow archers were fueled by egg ale (ale made with fermented eggs and beef drippings) in the battle of Agincourt. Lactobacillus, a naturally forming bacteria that thrives in anaerobic



environments, was a key player with cured meats and the ability of the Roman army to advance (lactobacillus is found everywhere and turns sugar to lactic acid). Genghis Khan's followers would store meat under a blanket on the saddle, the kinetic energy would "cook the meat".

In the Viking era throughout Scandinavia beer was not just food, but a connection with Norse gods such as Odin and Aegir. Beer was brewed in a hollowed out log called a "kuurna". The trough-like vessel would be blocked off on both ends, with a bung on one end. Juniper branches and straw would be layered to create a filter, this process was called "laying the bun". It was only done traditionally by women, who were the brewers at the time. If done incorrectly, safety at sea would not be insured. Grain would be dried in saunas and would develop a smoked flavour common with most historical brews. Once the bun is layered with juniper branches, the barley and rye and water would be added. Stones would be heated up and placed in the kuurna. This process is the same principle as a modern day mash tun. The mashing process hydrates the grain with hot water, activates the enzymes in the grain and converts the starch into fermentable sugar. More hot stones would be added to increase the temperature, a process called step mashing. This gradual increase in temperature would help break down the protein and gluten and help the brewer extract the fermentable sugars. This process was necessary in a time when grain was less modified. After a series of temperature increases and rests, the hot beer wort (liquid extracted from the grain) would be collected and naturally cooled. Wild yeast would naturally fall into the vessel and start the fermentation, often a stick would be



placed in the wort, and if it fermented properly the stick would be reused for the next brew and considered a magic stick. Often herbs such as Yarrow (a herb commonly used by warriors to stop bleeding) would be added for flavour and ritual. The style of these brews are called Sahti in Finland, and similar in Sweden (with honey) was Gotlandsdricka. We reproduce these styles at Howl using a stainless steel mash tun lined with juniper branches. We use natural gas to heat the water and beer wort, and blend commercially available yeast to make a re-creation of these styles. When I opened my brewery in 2018 we

realized that by having a very small operation, we have a unique opportunity to experiment. We have reproduced Sahti, Gotlandsdricka, Mannheimer Braun bier, Brunswick Mumm, Grodziskie, Chicha, Koyt, Grisette, Gruit, etc.. and often very few commercial examples of the styles were available (most of which I had never tried before making). Hopefully we are opening a window to experience and taste these brews from the past. Cheers!



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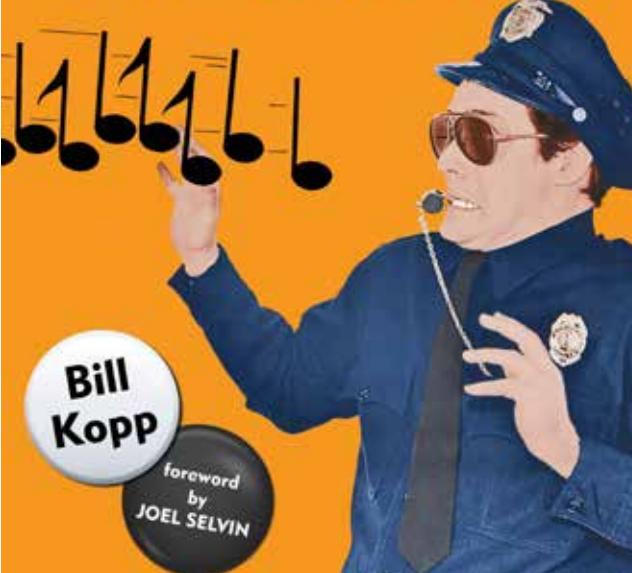
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DISTURBING THE PEACE

415 Records and the Rise of New Wave



Disturbing the Peace: 415 Records and the Rise of New Wave

Interview with author Bill Kopp
by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

BK: My name is Bill Kopp. I'm an author and music journalist. Right now I'm probably best known for my new book, *Disturbing the Peace: 415 Records and the Rise of New Wave*. Prior to its publication, I was probably best known for my first book, *Reinventing Pink Floyd: From Syd Barrett to the Dark Side of the Moon*.



AU: What is the elevator pitch for your new book?

BK: 415 Records was a small independent label based out of San Francisco started by two individuals, one of whom owned an independent record store and the other was a late night DJ on non-commercial radio. As an extension of what they were doing to try to nurture and support the Punk and New Wave scene of the Bay Area they started their own record label, with no particular experience in that area. For the years the 415 operated, 1978-86, it was very successful on a creative level and it helped further the careers of a number of artists. To take things to the next level they eventually got involved with the majors with Columbia and CBS. While that was somewhat inevitable, it spelled the beginning of the end. So while the 415 story is really full of a lot of great music and interesting stories, it's also kind of an object lesson of what happens when you make a deal with the devil as it were.

AU: How would you describe the record label founder, Howie Klein?

BK: Howie was and is kind of a hustler and a visionary. He got into DJing radio shows, mainly because he was passionate about the music and about really wanting to support and nurture these artists that he met, in the Bay Area especially. It was the next logical step to start releasing records to help and encourage these artists to take things a step farther.

AU: So his partner and co-founder owned a record store?

BK: Right. Howie Klein was a regular customer at Aquarius Records. The owner at the time was Chris Knab. Initially one of the local radio stations approached Chris and said "Hey, you know about this New Wave and Punk stuff. How about you come on our show late at night and spin some records?" Chris said "Well, okay." He had no experience as a DJ. So he said "I should bring along a friend, Howie Klein." So that's how Howie got involved. As 415 took off, Chris was able to apply his record store retail experience to what 415 was doing.

AU: How did this sort of a DIY record label influence others that followed?

BK: A big part of that was guerrilla marketing. Howie and Chris reached out and cultivated relationships with college radio stations and independent record stores around the country. There really wasn't any precedent for doing that kind of thing. The major labels didn't bother with those things. So

the manner in which Howie and Chris worked within the independent sector of the industry kind of provided a template that other labels could follow.

AU: Who are some of the bands that are featured in the book?

BK: Well, there was The Mutants and they're really important in the Art Punk part of the Bay Area scene. There was also SVT, which was kind of stripped down melodic rock. In a lot of ways SVT sort of connects that whole scene with a previous era. The band featured a bassist of some renown, named Jack Casady, who was in Jefferson Airplane and Hot Tuna. Two bands, which are about as different from the whole New Wave scene as you can imagine. There's Roky Erickson,

who was a legend in the psychedelic rock scene. He released an album on 415 called *The Evil One*. Arguably the best thing he ever did. The most interesting thing about that album is the instrumental tracks were cut in the Bay Area and when that was done Roky went back to Texas, at which point he was promptly re-institutionalized. Stu Cook followed him out there to do the vocal overdubs and to do that he would have to go to the mental hospital and check Roky out each day, bring him to the studio and then bring him back when they were done.

AU: How would you describe New Wave?

BK: New Wave to some extent is a marketing term. It was a way of making Punk or Punk influenced music a little more palatable to the masses. It's a term to describe a kind of music that

had the spirit of Punk but that followed on musically. New Wave is a way of describing music that's melodic, has some pop values, has kind of an urgency and a little more heart than head.

AU: How would you describe the early San Francisco New Wave scene?

BK: The people that I interviewed talked about San Francisco being a very small and varied scene. Everybody knew each other, even though the kinds of music being made were radically different. You had bands like Red Rockers, they were more or less the American Clash. Then you had The Offs, who were kind of a punk reggae thing, and The Units which was synthpunk. So there wasn't any one particular sound or style that defined the scene.

AU: What were The Nuns all about?

BK: The Nuns were one of the really early Punk bands. Their first single was the first record released on 415. They had three lead singers, each of which was quite different from the others. Their history is tied up fairly close with another band called The Dils. Members of The Nuns and the Dils went on to be in Rank and File. The Nuns also had a female lead singer named Jennifer Miro. At her best she could give Debbie Harry a run for her money in terms of style and vocal ability.

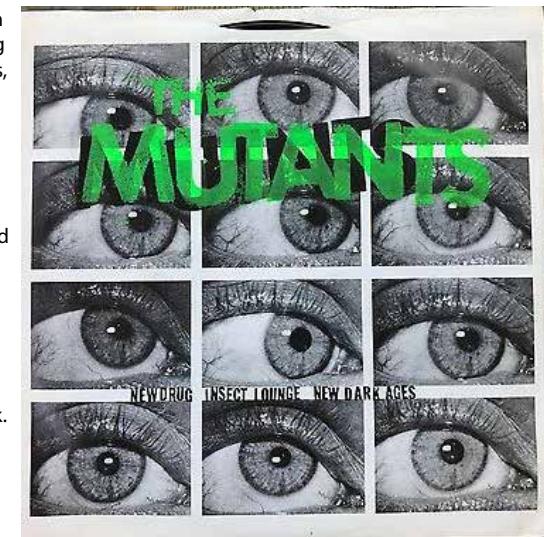
AU: Once 415 was bought by a major record label, Columbia CBS, what releases were put out?

BK: There were basically five bands from the 415 Columbia era. There was Wire Train, Translator, Red Rockers, Until December, and

Romeo Void who were probably the biggest success.

AU: What makes your book unique compared to other books on New Wave?

BK: Nobody has really told the story of the San Francisco Punk/New Wave scene in book form quite to this extent. I did 96 interviews and the book covers 29 bands. It gets into not only the story of those artists, but also the history of the label and the scene as it was happening. Also the fact that a lot of the people that I interviewed, opened up their personal archives and shared memorabilia, unpublished photos, set lists, and gig posters.



AU: Yeah, it's a monster of a book. It's 362 pages with over 300 images. Who is the publisher and how can people get a hold of the book?

BK: The publisher is HoZac Books. HoZac is an indie Punk record label out of Chicago. The book is available directly from them at hozarecords.com/store

AU: Who are some of your favorite bands for the 415 Records era? Any overlooked hidden gems?

BK: I like SVT a lot, their stuff is really powerful. The Nuns material is good. Probably the most interesting one would be an album called *Digital Stimulation* by The Units. As far as overlooked bands I would say The Units should be your first stop.

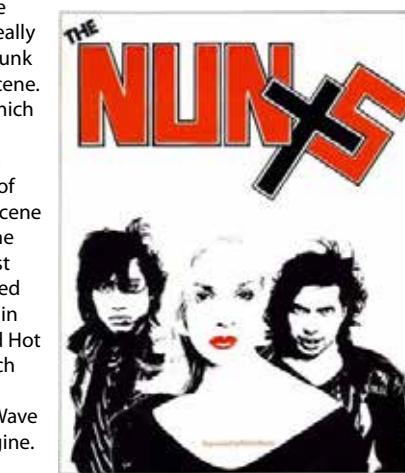
AU: How do people find you online?

BK: I have a blog called musoscribe.com where I publish new content every single day. I've been doing so for the last 12 years. So there's about 4000 of my pieces there. Including over 1000 artists interviews.

AU: Any final words of wisdom?

BK: Keep buying records and CDs. The artists need you to do that, and support live music when you can.

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memorabilia, unpublished photos, set lists, and gig posters.



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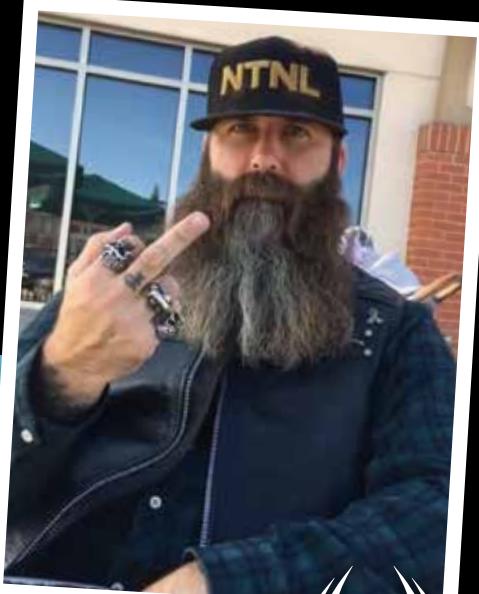
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JEFF NEWBURY

JUN 16, 74 ~ MAR 2, 22

ODIN, I BID YOU TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE HALLS OF VALHALLA, WHERE THE BRAVE SHALL LIVE FOREVER. NOR SHALL WE MOURN BUT REJOICE, FOR THOSE THAT HAVE DIED THE GLORIOUS DEATH.

FALLEN SOLDIERS



**Joshua
Jonathan Myall-
Primeau**

Born September 17th, 1984 in Peterborough Ontario, passed March 4th, 2022

My best friend. A pure China Creek Rebel and a true TTM brother. Josh was the funniest, most loving man.

His energy touched your soul and left you needing more. His music, his skateboarding, Skateboard Hockey, everything he did had a life of its own. His laid back skate style, his melodic beats, or his crunchy punk rock (Ovary Action) sets the moods. He was always there with his wisdom and love and hijinks... We are gonna truly miss you brother.

CHEERS JOSH! We love you brother!!

Carry Naloxone!!!

- Joe Sinik TTM



Remembering Simon Kassam

Owner - Charisma Gifts, Calgary, AB

By Ryan Dyer

Charisma was as important an institution as any live music bar in Calgary. If you're reading this and living in another city, I'm sure you have a Charisma of your own and can relate to this story. At this trying time, his wife Mary is keeping the store open due to having way too much merchandise. Drop this magazine and run down there pronto to give your support.

In my teenage years I often planned and looked forward to going to Charisma on weekends to browse the shirts and maybe get a new one for the collection. Simon was always happy to see me, as well as any other grubby young metalhead looking to get a Kreator, Danzig, Korn, Slayer, Metallica and so on piece of merchandise. Besides clothing, Charisma also sold items like accessories and hair dye. From the location on Stephen ave to the one now in Kensington, it was always a home for music lovers before the age of big brands like Hot Topic showing up in malls. My experiences with Simon and Charisma are not unique - he treated every customer as a member of his own family.



RIP Simon Kassam

A bell jingles as a fresh faced young man walks into the store. He has just gotten off school at the college nearby. He whips his long hair out of his face and unzips his leather jacket to let the air conditioned environment press against his thin Children of Bodom T-shirt. All around him are stylized names pressed on black pieces of cloth. Bongs and pot smoking paraphernalia sit under a counter, finger armor and upside down crosses shine under the store lights. The young man sniffs up his snot and walks to the counter.

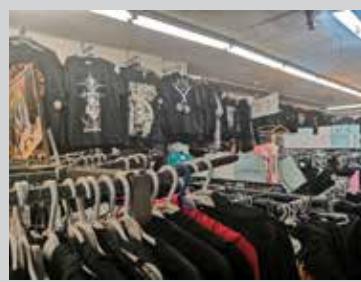
"Got any Agoraphobic Nosebleed hoodies?" he asks.

A musty, old, weathered and very foreign voice answers, "Yes, of course. Over here."

A little man leads the lad deep into the store where they are soon surrounded by more band t-shirts than a hundred concert merchandise stands combined. He adjusts his plain colored cardigan as he picks up a long curved stick.

"Agoraphobic Nosebleed, yes" he says as he pushes his small glasses up his nose. He uses the stick to reach some elevated t-shirts. He pulls each forward, showing the customer the graphic illustrations on the chests.

The young man purchases the shirt, along with a spiked bracelet



to replace the one he made out of rusty nails. The small man sits back down behind the counter and opens up his newspaper, surrounded by his metal goods. Simon Kassam. Metal merchandiser.

Simon runs Charisma Gifts, a store which has existed in Calgary for nearly two decades. Metal fans, punk fans, rock fans, pot smokers, and people interested in underground culture have been flocking to Charisma for the same amount of time. Whether they want a flag, a t-shirt, a patch, a wallet, or a poster of their favourite band, Charisma is the place. With over 10,000 items all relating to the macabre, it seems odd that this man who modestly avoids a question about his age, along with his wife could be the ringmaster of this metal shrine—especially when he doesn't even listen to the music.

"Everyone has ideas floating around in their heads—mostly young, bright people. I had this idea and this is where it brought me," says Simon.

Bands are brands to He knows his loyal customers by name, and remembers just what they're into. He is open to suggestions on what to bring in, always being open to widening the store's already bursting reputation.

"People have many tastes. You could come into the store today and ask for a Kataklysm hoodie, and then tomorrow come in looking for Moonspell. It is my job to supply both, and many more," says Simon.

He presents his shipping lists, which include over 20 companies that he orders from regularly. He says that although some of the bands in his store are underground, he tries not to deal with independent companies due to their specific demands.

He notes the importance of diversity in the business market, making reference to the huge conglomerates selling mainstream versions of his product.

"Without selection we wouldn't have Walmart. My shirts last for a lifetime. I see some who bought a shirt from me ten years ago and it still looks brand new," says Simon.

As the bell jingles for the last time that day and Simon closes up shop to go home with his wife, one can make allusions to metal never dying, that is, as long as the business is good.

- Ryan Dyer, (College Article, 2009)

Simon. He is simply interested in having every one - popular and obscure – together in one place for consumer convenience.

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