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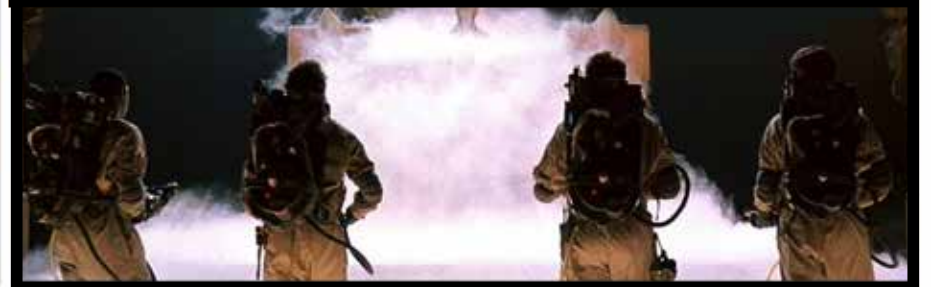
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Words with Androgyne (in Lekwungen territory)

By John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves:

Willa – Vocals (she/her)

Alexis – Guitar (they/them)

Oz – Drums (they/them)

Amanda – Bass/Guitar (she/her and they/them)

Thorn – Bass and Shredding Guitar (they/them)

AU: How would you describe your sound?

Androgyne: "Heavy" is probably the best general term for it. We all have disparate and varied influences which come through and sound great, but also kinda kill any genre specificity.

AU: When / how did the band come together?

Androgyne: Willa had been thinking about how, as much as she like bands like G.L.O.S.S., there wasn't any bands out there that represented her experiences as a queer trans woman. She started babbling about it to Alexis who probably agreed to be in a band just to shut her up (she's a bit like a chihuahua when she's excited about

something). Then Willa ran into Oz at a bus stop and started babbling about it again and Oz joined the band just to make her happy. We recently welcomed Amanda and Thorn to the band and yo, it's pretty rad.

AU: More or less the same lineup started as another band. (GUSH) Tell us about that.

Androgyne: Oh, it's the same band. Same music, same people, just a different name. The old band name just wasn't really working for us anymore and Androgyne just sounded better. Silver lining: cis people can never pronounce it right and that is funny... to us.

AU: Tell us about your creative process. (who does what)

Androgyne: Dawg, I gotta be real but we basically all do everything. Alexis, Thorn, or Amanda will come up with riffs and bring them and then we all jam it out until it works. Willa takes care of vocals once the song is generally built.

AU: How important are lyrics in your music? Do you supply the words with your releases?

Androgyne: Woof. I mean, they're important. Super important if you ask Willa, but she's biased. In the end, as important as the lyrics are, they're just words without the music. The individual components of this band, while incredibly important, would be nothing without the rest. Every aspect of this band is important to us, and the lyrics are merely one part. We have all the lyrics for every song listed on our Bandcamp and will be releasing liner notes for any physical releases.

AU: What are your songs about?

Androgyne: Mainly the politics of gender, gender expression, disability, mental illness, and queerness.

Willa: I write what I know.

AU: Tell us about your two releases.

Androgyne: We put out two releases under the name Gush: an EP called "Gutterqueer" and an LP called *Gender Death*. We still like and play many of those songs, and that's why they're still up and available for download on our Bandcamp. We are writing new stuff, however, and tinkering with our sound, so keep an eye out for a new release next year (or the year after, or maybe in ten who knooooows)

AU: You did some recording with Cody at Circle A. Tell us about the experience.

Androgyne: Ah recording at Circle A with Cody is the best. He's an incredibly talented engineer who listens to what we want and gives it to us. Very professional, super knowledgeable, and has recorded most of the heavy bands in town. Plus we can always bribe him with pizza! Which is nice.

AU: What bands influence your sound?

Androgyne: G.L.O.S.S., Cancer Bats, Gallows, Every Time I Die, Integrity, Ringworm, Sea of Deprivation, and Dystopia, to name a few. One of Alexis' favorite bands is Korn, Willa is known to listen to outlaw country, and we're all pretty sure Thorn is secretly a massive Kate Bush fan.

VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY

We have a lot of influences, which honestly strengthens the band.

AU: What bands would you like to be billed with? Tell us some of your favourite local bands.

Androgyne: We're finally playing with Alien Boys on November 26th, so that's rad. Otherwise, if we fit the bill then we're probably down to play.

Some favourite locals:

Altered Dead (Victoria)

A Mourning Star (Vancouver)

Smuther (Vancouver)

Jisei (Victoria/Vancouver, this is Alexis' other band)

Warpage (Victoria)

Sporus (RIP, Victoria)

Tapioca (Victoria)

Jobsite (Victoria)

Legit Heat (Victoria)

Bodyrot (Victoria)

Chaos, Disorder, and Panic! (Vancouver)

SISSY XO (Vancouver)

AU: What's ahead for Androgyne?

Androgyne: We'd like to get out to the rest of Coast Salish territory/BC, maybe play shows in Kamloops and Kelowna, head out into Calgary and Edmonton in Alberta. We'd also love to play Mexico, or anywhere on the west coast of the US. Otherwise, we're writing a new album, playing a grip of shows in the fall, and helping Thorn change the tire on their van.

AU: Where can people connect, get info on the band?

Androgyne: Our Instagram and Bandcamp are the best places for info.

IG: andr_gyne

Bandcamp: androgyne.bandcamp.com

AU: Any final words?

Androgyne: Sure here are a few!

1. Land back
2. Clean drugs for everyone.
3. Trans rights are human rights.
4. "Non-violence only works against people of conscious and the... government has none" - Stokely Carmichael
5. No, fuckin seriously give the land back you assholes.
6. Arm the homeless
7. Bring back the Choco-Taco you bastards.
8. Read up on Fred Hampton
9. Fuck cops
10. Sepultura is better than Pantera.

Chat and imagery: John Carlow/Finding Charlotte Photography

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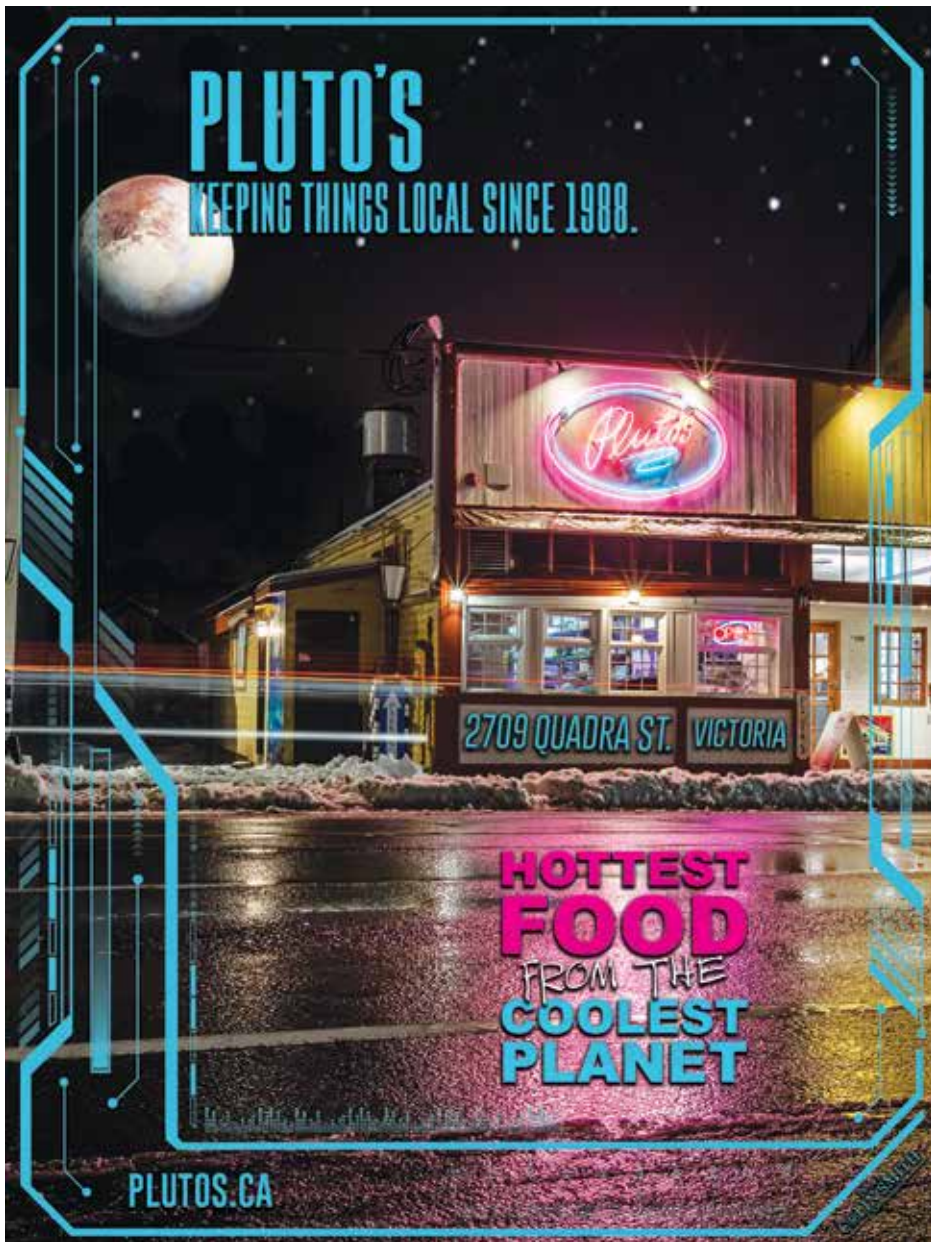
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Scooter Rally

By Dick Kaupf

It's been many years since I've been to a scooter rally, but after my recent purchase of a Vespa Primavera (and my children have grown up or are old enough to ride with me now), I jumped at the chance to join in again and the local Nanaimo scooter club, Last Bastion SC, provided with their ninth Salmon Run Rally.

Due to having a 50cc scooter I wasn't able to go on the longer rides with the self described "mostly vintage Italian scooter club" but meeting at the destinations around town, the 20-25 were very welcoming. I started with the meet up at Departure Bay Park for morning coffees and hangouts, however it was reported that there was one breakdown while



doing the 155km round-trip Salt Spring ride, but the scooterists were still able to make it to the show that night. At local hotspot The Nanaimo Bar, DJs Chris Panik and DJ Uppercut took turns spinning some old school ska records for the attendees. Sunday opened up at The Modern Cafe downtown Nanaimo for breakfast and followed by

hangout/social time after to settle stomachs before the final ride of the rally, a tour of the backroads topped with one of Nanaimo's best British styled pubs, The Crow and Gate, before heading back to town. Next year hopefully with things opening up, more will attend, Maybe even farther than Seattle? I know I plan to be in attendance, scootin along.
-Dick Kaupf



Brass To Launch New Album

By Ed Sum

Vancouver, BC's Punk scene is diverse, and like many other bands during the past two years because of the pandemic, they had to take a pause.

As one past press release put it, "Rather than taking a hiatus during the lockdown, BRASS went to work, adding new members Kennedy Pawluk and Zach Mouallem and recording a new record, chalk full of all the catchy rage and infectious hooks fans have come to expect."

This group was born in the dive bars and alleyways of East Vancouver. BRASS is a punk/hard core band infamous for their energetic and sweat-soaked shows fueled by shout along anthems and heavy hitting riffs. They have lived the West Coast life, and have done everything from living out of their cars or just being difficult for one reason or another. Thankfully, this is not the case here. What we are doing is reporting on an upcoming show to celebrate their third studio album.

Look on the Bright Side will be released Oct 21st,

2022 and there will be a performance/launch party on Nov 4th 2022 at The Wise Hall in Vancouver, BC. Tickets will be available online.

Early Onset Records is their label, and this album is described to "reflect on the chaotic and often dark state of the world we currently live with lyrical themes that explore the tumultuous nature of our neighbours to the south, toxic masculinity and acknowledging one's privilege. Though as the name suggests, there're bright spots in our lives and hope to hold on to."

While growing a following around Western Canada

for their chaotic shows at house parties, skate parks and dive bars, BRASS has opened for IDLES, H09909, Pissed Jeans, Fucked Up, Single Mothers, Touche Amore, culminating with a short run with Canadian punks PUP. After several Canadian tours of their own and numerous festival appearances BRASS eventually brought their raucous live show overseas for a month-long European tour in 2017.

BRASS' previous records include *No Soap Radio* and *For Everyone*. They received widespread praise when released. The former was named Album of the Year by local publication *BeatRoute*.

MEMBERS:

Tristan Milne - Guitar
Rory Troughton - Drums
Zach Mouallem - Guitar
Kennedy Pawluk - Bass
Devon Motz - Vocals





QUAZAR'S ARCADE

John Carpenter's Halloween Pinball

Manufactured by Spooky Pinball 2022

By N.Jonson & S.Webb

Do you like your pinball a little... Spooky? Well, that's what Charlie and Bug Emery are delivering with their horror-themed company out of Benton, Wisconsin, Spooky Pinball!

Originating as a podcast in 2010, this father and son team grabbed the attention of the pinball industry a year later when they brought their custom *Godzilla* re-theme to the Pinball Expo in Chicago. Unfortunately, their first attempt at breaking into the business didn't make it to production as the theme instead went to Stern Pinball.

Thankfully they weren't discouraged. Three years later, they released their first proper machine: America's Most Haunted. Aside from a few contracted off-topic machines (for Domino's Pizza and The Jetsons), they held strong to the theme their name suggests; with Rob Zombie's Spookshow International, followed by Alice Cooper's Nightmare Castle. Given their clear love of the genre, John Carpenter's Halloween seems like a perfect thematic followup for Spooky.

Halloween is currently in production, with a limited run of 1250 units. It is available in a Standard and Collections Edition, which can be upgraded with Spooky's infamous 'Butter' cabinet. This design is very knife heavy. The plunger is a knife, there's a gigantic knife in the shooter lane and there's a third knife located in the backbox topper, stabbing the machine while you play. The backglass features the dead-in-the-eyes image of Michael Myers holding, you guessed it, another butcher knife.



This theme is so well executed and will engage even the non-Halloween enthusiasts with its hand-painted artwork by acclaimed illustrator, Jason Edmiston. Accompanied by a suspenseful soundtrack of original scores as well as new compositions by musician Count D, Halloween features callouts voiced by PJ Soles reprising her role as Lynda.

Our advice when stepping up to this machine is to drop all preconceptions you may have about pinball (and any expectations of having a relaxing time). There no are slow, curling wireframes to relax and dazzle your eyes. Immediately after launching the ball, it is hurling towards you at top speed. In typical Spooky fashion, this game is fast! It features three upper playfields with an array of challenging shots and a playfield-length wireframe passing through hedges that trigger the appearance of Michael Myers. An elevator hidden by plastics under each in-lane allows for the creepiest of re-entries, with balls seeming to appear out of nowhere. You will experience many drains while familiarizing yourself with where the balls reappear.

If this all still sounds too frightening for you despite it being an expertly crafted table, Spooky Pinball also released the same machine with the Ultraman: Kaiju Rumble theme. John Carpenter's Halloween is now on the floor at Quazar's Arcade in Victoria, BC; as well as other quality pinball establishments in your area.

quazarsarcade.com

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

LM: My name is Logan Morrison, and I guess I would be best known for large scale tattooing and different forms of art.

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

LM: I have been tattooing around 12 years now. I got into tattooing through getting tattooed and falling in love with the art work and the power of tattoo.



AU: Tell us about your new tattoo shop. Where is it located?

LM: The shop is called Total Relaxation, it is located in beautiful North Bend, BC. It is a very small railroad town in the Fraser canyon. The

building its self is an old farm church from the 50s that I have converted into a tattoo shop on one side and railroad museum on the other. I have saturated the place in artwork and collectables from my travels around and collected from friends.

AU: What made you want to venture out of town?

LM: It is more peaceful and you can focus on your projects. I would like to learn to live like a real human being before the skills are lost or we are too plugged in to care about old ways. I go camping pretty much every weekend in the area of the shop, so just through good timing and the right connections the space presented itself at was too perfect.

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

LM: My shop is unique because of its extremely relaxed location, the CP and CN mainline runs right in front of the building offering low rumbling ambience of heavy freight action. My space is more of a hang out and get tattooed or chop some wood then get tattooed haha, it's not get 'em in get 'em out type street shop vibe. I usually just have one person in the space at a time and we take our time and really sink into the tattoo and music. Usually after the session we get a fire going and cook up some good food on grandpas old grill.

AU: What/if any other services other than tattooing do you offer?

LM: I offer 100% Relaxation and a chance to get out of the city and camp out on the property after the session. I don't have wifi so you might just have to go look at a tree or do a drawing or sit in total silence and think about your life.

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

LM: I'm most proud of what I've created out of a simple idea in my head and just going out there every weekend and building it piece by piece and setting it up at my own pace and just doing whatever I want out there. I'm also very proud of the feedback from people that have come out and got tattooed and fully got the vibe and experience of what I'm going for out there. The shop is not for everyone and I'm perfectly cool with that.



AU: Are there any calls to action you are seeking for your shop?

LM: I would really love old railroad rolling stock on the property especially an old caboose to convert into living quarters and open boxcar for various events or show space. Now, I want more heavy equipment for moving earth and larger scale projects. A lot of the bigger ideas will come to life when the time is right.



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

LM: I do mostly traditional style Japanese and western style, now I do a lot of backs so maybe that. I really like large tattoos and whole body suits.

AU: Does anyone else work at Total Relaxation with you? If so, what is their area of expertise?

LM: I work alone there, just me and my client. I am

going to have other friends tattoo there as well and have little events this fall.

AU: What's your favorite tattoo you have done this year?

LM: For sure the pallet fire back piece. Such a weird ass idea but it finally felt like I tattooed something "Canadian." Just a big fuckin' pile of pallets on fire. You get hammered with your friends and have the best time at a pallet fire, it's nothing but a good time. It turned out cool for a pretty out there idea.



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

LM: Just more body suits. I'd like to do a whole body of just flowers and black background. Body suit of just dragons would be nice. More backs. Always more backs, I wanna have a little back piece army.



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

LM: Oh shit, I rock my little mp3 player all day. It has around 300 songs. Damn, I go from hardcore techno to outlaw country then we take a trip down memory lane with some doo-wop hits, then say hello to Satan with black metal, then to some delta blues. I like all music when it's the right time for that type of music. I've noticed a lot of tattoo shops totally blow it with the music playing shit that makes their client uncomfortable. Music has huge power when it comes to a tattoo session. I try to feel how the client would feel. Personally, I wouldn't want my ribs tattooed with some butt rock metal playing in the background. I'll even get the spa music going if we are doing a hardcore spot. Tattooing is kinda intense as it is. I try and get rid of any other stimuli that isn't beneficial to the session.

AU: What do you enjoy doing the most after tattooing? What gives you 'Total Relaxation'?

LM: Lately, I love Muay Thai. I love everything

about it. I go every morning before tattooing. It is very intense and peaceful at the same time. It has made my mind and body sharper and I am grateful to discover it. I also reach Total Relaxation when I'm doing art. Hours can go by and I'm only unaware of the time till I snap out of the trance, when your in that state of pure focus: that's TR. No phone, no bills, no issues. I'm constantly trying to be in that state of just relaxed and focused.



AU: What are your plans for the next 5 years for the shop?

LM: I would like to get a caboose, get hundreds of

pieces of art, and just create a cool space people wanna come see.

AU: Any final thoughts to share with our readers?

LM: Make sure to break the law a few times a day, get enough rest, focus on yourself so you can be a good version of you to others around you. Cut bullshit people out of your life, go outside as much as possible, don't watch any TV at all. Find a hobby you like and really go after it. Eat your vegetables. Shout out to all the railway workers who built the railway through the Fraser canyon.

AU: How do people find and connect with you and your shop online?

LM: You can reach me at Logan1184@gmail.com or on instagram @logan1184



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Andrew Currie

Interview by Liam Crocker

I had the pleasure of interviewing Andrew Currie on his thoughts about the great genre of horror and a retrospective on his classic Canadian horror film, *Fido*.

Absolute Underground: What were your roots in horror, and what has drawn you to that genre? You've made other horror films as well, "Night of the Living."

AC: I mean, I've always been drawn to darker things in life, and the idea of things lurking beneath the surface, what's said and not said, that sort of thing. And, I think the horror genre really fits into that. I read a lot of horror, and fantasy when I was young, Lovecraft, Poe, Bram Stoker, Dean Koontz, Stephen King, anything that explored the rational world meeting something irrational, or unexplained, and I loved horror movies like *Jaws*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, and more personal horror films like *Eraserhead*. Probably my favourite show growing up was *The Twilight Zone*, which was sci-fi horror, and really tapped into that as well. As a kid I suffered from endless nightmares, which I'm sure weren't helped by my interests. But in a way that became really interesting to me. I learned about Lucid

dreaming and how to do it (it's basically when you're in a dream, but you're aware that you're dreaming, and therefore can control it), which was exciting, and helped I think face some of my personal fears, and allowed me to explore the world in a more rational, or at least less-fear driven way. Also, I don't know about you, but for me growing up in Victoria was weird, it had such a perfect Stepford Wives quality, it made you want to pull back the curtain so to speak and see what goo was underneath, you know what I mean? There were all these rumours in the 80s about Victoria being a Devil worshipping capital, and



Ross Bay cemetery being haunted, secret tunnels under the city, that sort of thing. It wasn't that I necessarily believed any of them, but like great horror and fantastic fiction, it really triggered my imagination, and that was exciting. And I loved pushing into that darkness and see where it would lead — like getting in an altered state, and walking through Ross

Bay cemetery after midnight, and seeing things that didn't seem normal. I remember being there around 2am on a full moon, and seeing a deer walking through the cemetery. It stopped, and was silhouetted against the moon, which was really an amazing image. I remember thinking, 'do deer even do that? Walk around in the middle of the night?' It didn't make sense to me, which tapped into the belief that something didn't add up. Which honestly as a writer, is a great starting point towards creating something.

AU: What about the horror genre makes it an effective medium for social commentary?

AC: That's a good question. When we made *Fido* we wanted to make a zombie movie that was a satire about America, especially the fear-driven America that George Bush was pushing. The idea

that if you keep your population afraid, and that you have the answer to safety, which in Bush's case was military might, that the people would follow you anywhere, and you could maintain power. It's such a disturbing, anti-democratic idea, that it seemed like a perfect thing to satirize. *Fido* is a world where the government and the corporate world have come together to form ZomCon who run the town of Willard, which is surrounded by a tall wall to keep out the wild zombies. Inside zombies have been domesticated with collars, and basically are slave labour for the residents. The head of ZomCon is a fascist leader, but he's friendly and polite, so seems less threatening. When he talks to a group of school kids in the beginning of the movie he tells them that he's building the wall around the town higher, and they're adding more military vehicles, and they're going to take everybody's picture "Just in case you get lost" he tells them. The implications are pretty grim, and it felt like zombies were a perfect way to satirize the dangers of living in a fear-based tribalistic world, which is actually more that way now, then it was when we made *Fido*. Beyond my own stuff, look at a TV series like *The Walking Dead*.

It made great social commentary (especially in the first 5 seasons) because it took society, stripped it off all its institutions, government, military, laws, and all of the normal support like hospitals, libraries, police, were all gone. Then it leaves people to fend for themselves. Then the creators explored what really matters when that happens. Food, water, shelter, loyalty and trust, and the value of human life, all start to have far greater value.

AU: What is your favourite horror film?

AC: I don't have a single favourite horror film. I think David Lynch's *Eraserhead* really influenced me. It was probably the first time I saw a horror film that I could clearly see came from a personal place. Lynch was making the film during the time his wife was pregnant with his daughter, and you can see that *Eraserhead* is sort of a manifestation



of all of his unconscious fears he was probably having during that time. Having a first child, being a parent, etc. And, he took such a fearless approach to his anxieties, I just really connected to it. I've seen it probably more than fifty times, and the first time people watch it, they generally feel it's just really disturbing. But, after you see it a few more times, it actually works as a really dark, deadpan comedy. Anyway, it made me think about horror in a different way. The idea that you could explore a personal fear, fascination, issue, etc. through the horror genre was really exciting. I loved films like Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers*, or Polanski's *Repulsion* and *The Tenant*, or newer films like *The Babadook*, *Hereditary*, *The Devil's Backbone*, *Black Swan*, and more recently *Get Out*, etc. When I was at the Canadian Film Centre in the late 90s I made a short called "Night of the Living," which was about a kid who was a horror fan. His dad was an alcoholic who had stopped drinking, then fell off the wagon. The kid believes his father has turned into a zombie, and starts to try and connect with his dad that way, by researching zombies, he tries to feed his dad a raw steak, etc. None of that goes over well, and eventually the kid realizes there's a connection between alcohol



and his father being a zombie, so the boy drinks in order to connect to his dad. That's really what I mean about personal horror films, they're the ones that really connect to me.

Andrew is working on a new film coming out next year! The Invisibles, starring Tim Blake Nelson and Lucy Liu. Keep an eye out!

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Bewitcher

Cursed Be Thy Kingdom

Interview by Sheldon "Speed 'Til You Bleed" Byer

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

MVB: Mateo Von Bewitcher, guitars and vox and if I'm famous for something, nobody bothered to tell me.

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

BW: We started back in 2013 with myself and Andreas Magus (bass) as a two-piece studio project and began playing live a couple years in. Our current lineup is rounded out by Aris Hunter on drums. What are we all about? Heavy fuckin metal, duh!

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible?

BW: Rock n' Roll on the Wings of the Devil.

AU: Tell us about your album *Cursed Be Thy*

Bewitcher

Kingdom that came out last year. How was the reception?

BW: Overall the reception has been great. People have been reacting positively to the new stuff on the road and the kids already know the words to a lot of the songs. Pretty cool to see.

AU: Shotgun to the dick - what are your top three Bewitcher tracks?

BW: If you're talking top three to play live... "Satanic Magick Attack," "Valley of the Ravens,"

BENEATH THE WHEEL

"Bewitcher."

AU: You're about to embark on an American tour with Cavalera and a handful of Northwest dates with Wormwitch. What are you looking forward to most hitting the road this fall?

BW: It will be rad to play to the bigger crowds on the Cavalera tour and to see those old Sep classics live every night. That's what I'm looking forward to most.

AU: What can your Canadian fans look forward to other than your one off date with Wormwitch at the Red Room on November 15th?

BW: I don't know...hockey season?

AU: What are your favourite Canadian bands?

BW: Bryan Adams, Nickelback, Roadrash. In that order.

AU: What is the worst thing a member has done in the tour van?

BW: Let's just say we live amongst a lot of dried up bodily fluids of various types. How they get there remains a mystery...

AU: Where do you guys draw your biggest influence from that directly impact Bewitcher's sound?

BW: First wave of black metal, NWOBHM, 70s hard rock and a bit of punk. Throw all that shit in a blender and you pretty much get our sound!

AU: Have you ever picked up a hitchhiker? If the answer isn't yes you're all automatically total dicks.

BW: Dude there's barely room in that fuckin van for us most of the time!

AU: When can we expect new music from

Bewitcher?

BW: Depends on when we can get off the road long enough to work on something new. In the meantime, come see us live and listen to our old shit!

AU: The people need to know - who shits their pants the worst on a long drive?

BW: Everybody dances with the shit demons from time to time. Way of the road, boys.

AU: What's the heavy metal capital for Bewitcher?

BW: Why, whatever city we happen to be playing in, of course!

AU: Best new bands you've been able to play with or have caught in recent memory. Ones our readers may not know about?

BW: Recently? Probably Vorlust out of Oakland, Check'em out!!

AU: Bewitcher's favorite Canadian delicacy?

BW: Now we're fuckin talkin bud. Coffee Crisp, Jos Louis, Hot hamburger, butter tarts, Nanaimo bars, donairs and poutine. Canada's got it all, baby.

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

BW: Nah, I think that about covers it. Come see us on tour for fuck sakes!

AU: Any final words for our readers? Especially any Canadian bangers who are going to see you.

BW: It has been awhile but we will return to terrorize the great white north again soon. Hopefully when it's warm!!

AU: How do people find you online?

BW: Hit up bewitcher.us for news and info and all the usual social media horseshit...YOU KNOW THE DEAL!!

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Call In Dead

Questions all answered by Scott (drummer) with occasional input from slacker bandmates.

AU: Absolute Underground: Who are you most famous or infamous for?

Scott: We are Call in Dead, a hardcore punk band from OBT in Orlando, FL. I can't say we are famous for anything, but I think it can be said that people appreciate that all four of us move around on stage and have a stage presence, that we support local and touring bands, and actively participate in fundraising for various charities. With the addition of our new singer, Ripley, we also seem to have struck a chord with the transpunk community, particularly the teens.

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

Scott: The band is made up of four veteran punk rockers, one from DC, and the other three from FL. With the oldest at 48 and the youngest at 35, they bring their different music experiences and styles together to make a sound that should be familiar to fans of hardcore punk while also giving it the uniqueness that comes from blending their past together into the present. Fitting on shows with pop punk bands, old school hardcore bands, psychobilly bands and metal bands is just one example of how it's been difficult to pin down the answer to the perennial question: What band do you sound like? Five years into playing shows they have released a CD EP, The EP, via Violent Breed Records, a set of digital singles, a live split 7" with 2AMature via DCxPC Live and in October of 2022 a full-length vinyl album, *Deepest Condolences*, via Wrecking Crew Records. The band's first tour was canceled due to Covid, but they've used that time to put on various live streams, start a record label (DCxPC Live), raise over \$2,000 for mental health and \$600 for the LGBTQ Center of Central Florida, plus get voted Best Punk Band in Orlando by Orlando Weekly readers in 2020 and 2021. In the summer of 2022 we went on a ten day tour from FL up to Rhode Island and back.

In the nascent stages of the band we were still searching for a guitarist to replace Chris who had moved far enough away that he briefly quit the previous incarnation of the band. One brief potential guitarist had texted that we should all go to a Darkest Hour show, but like the aging punks we are, we all said we had work in the morning. He responded to "Call in Dead". Since we have all spent time in jobs where we have felt like we'd rather be dead than go to work, we thought it was a perfect name.

The first full length, *Deepest Condolences*, is being

released by Wrecking Crew Records and preorder starts on 10/14/22 with an album release show with Blitz Kid on 11/5 at The Haven in Orlando. It features their original singer, Jaeh Peck, and while he left the band last December to focus on family, the band stands behind and loves this album. It is the culmination of all their time together. The album has an option of two covers: The death angel cover by <https://jonathangrimmart.com/> who has done a lot of Call in Dead's t-shirts or hooded death by www.alexfine.com whom Call in Dead's drummer called the Raymond Pettibon of Baltimore for all the flyers, shirts, and album covers he's done over the decades for punk, hardcore, ska, psychobilly, etc. bands. Not to mention his current work for

The Atlantic, Newsweek and even a Golden Girls Coloring Book! We've also recorded and released a two song lathe cut 7" with our new singer Ripley who joined in January of 2022. One is an original song called "Patriarchy" that explores the issue of toxic masculinity and the harmful effects of enforcing society's prescribed gender norms. The other is a cover of "Religious Wars" by The Subhumans. Both songs highlight the more direct and political direction that Ripley wants to take in her lyrical approach to the band. The reaction we have had to her joining us at home and on the road has been amazing, and while we will always miss Jaeh, we are stoked in the direction we are going working with Ripley.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

Scott: It's really hard to put a finger on it because we never set out to sound a specific way. Chris gets a lot of influence from Hellcat era punk like The Casualties, Leftover Crack, No Cash, etc. but he also dives deep into metal especially Black Sabbath and Motorhead and loves the blues. I'm basically a DC hardcore drummer who would fit in just fine on any early Dischord release. Mike loves grindcore, Powerviolence, NYHC, garage rock, old Hardcore/punk and dirty metal, and then whether it's Ripley or Jaeh, the vocals have never fit well into a specific mold of "they should like this..." So if you put a gun to my head: We currently sound like a hardcore punk with some influence by metal and blues and plus vocals by a female who knows how to wail with aggression.

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

Scott: So we have the two-song 7" with Ripley that just rips, and we have the new 12" coming out via Wrecking Crew Records called *Deepest Condolences*.

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

Scott: It's not a concept album by any means. The songs all tend to deal with the obstacles that life puts in your way and how to overcome them. Themes of alienation, betrayal, depression, as well as resolve, resilience and belief that the world could and should be better.

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

Scott: We start our set with "Song About a Horse" which will be our first digitally released single on 10/14. Per Jaeh, "The song's about doing what's

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right when it's wrong and feeling betrayed but also loving someone or anything that gives zero love or emotion back. Possibly also about a horse."

We are also stoked for our new song "Patriarchy" with Ripley. We got such a great reaction from it that half way through the tour we moved to close the set with it, and it's been a great way to end each night.

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

Scott: It's very DIY much like the label that Mike and I run (DCxPC Live). There are no contracts. It's based on trust and respect for each other. He's a really nice dude with a lot of punk rock knowledge, and he really believes in the bands he releases. It's really dope that he took the chance on us and helped us release this album.

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

Scott: Well living in Florida, people treated it like it was over back in January of 2020 except for the area most of us live in (Orlando), but we spent most of the time recording this album, doing a live stream, and then Mike and I started DCxPC Live as a result. The pandemic sucked, but we made the best of it. I really missed shows. I love shows, not just playing them but going to them, and I'm glad I get to do it again.

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

Scott: We have a show on 11/5 with Blitz Kid and

our friends Casket Culture. Once the new year hits, we'd love to do a lot of weekend runs of 2-3 dates throughout FL and the Southeast. We're also discussing another tour in the summer.

AU: How would you sum up 2021?

Scott: Rebirth. Ripley joined the band and brought a new energy and inspiration that was needed after two years of a pandemic, and the quality of our time together at practice, shows and on tour felt like life had finally gotten good again.

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

Scott: We've all been doing this since we were 16, and we'll all still be doing it when today's 16 year olds are our age...or we will be dead.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Scott: Remember that the punk scene is more than bands and people in them. It's the community around you. It's the people you make connections with. Bands are the nexus for how the community meets, but it's the community, the people whose lives are now forever part of mine that I value most. Making those connections is the most punk rock thing I've ever done.

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Deadwolff The New Wave of Heavy Rock and Roll

Interview with Tommy Wolffe
By Ryan Dyer

Tight jeans, sleazy mustaches and even sleazier rock n' roll. Toronto, Ontario's Deadwolff have the look, the sound and the attitude of the '80s incarnate. Formed just two years ago, the band has released a self-titled EP and recently went on the prowl across Canada with friends Rebel Priest. This October, they hit the road with The Casualties. We catch up with pack leader Tommy Wolffe before the next chapter in the legacy of the Wolff.

Absolute Underground: Deadwolff is - musically and aesthetically, an '80s creation living in the modern world. What about this decade, its music and the atmosphere that comes along with it is appealing to Deadwolff?

DW: The era was a simpler, more carefree time with better tunes and less technological distractions.

AU: You chose the wolf as your band and stage name. Why this noble animal?

DW: My last name is really Wolffe so it all kind of worked out. Also, wolves are fucking deadly.

AU: How did you get the band started? Who were your main influences?

DW: I had been writing a bunch of songs and drumming up ideas for a new band, getting all the ducks in a row, etc. I started looking for members for this new project. I was first looking for a guitarist because I could already record drums by myself. Bobby came in and slapped some meat on the bare bones of songs that I had and

there you have it. We both had the same goals, dreams and influences and have been putting our full ass into it. Angus came into the band on a whim because we had a string of shows set up when our original drummer bailed. He learned the songs real quick and quickly became the missing piece. Our influences are very wide spread, so it's hard to name a few.

AU: You hail from Toronto. How is the scene there

these days? Are there any bands playing a similar style of music as Deadwolff?

DW: The scene's always been pretty solid. Bands come and go but the fans remain the same. Since we consider ourselves the new wave of heavy rock n' roll, we're able to play with a wide variety of other bands

AU: You just embarked on the Rebel Wolff tour which saw you hit a bunch of Canadian cities. How did it go?

DW: The Rebel Wolff tour was a great success! We made a lot of new friends, played with a lot of great bands. We had excellent turn-outs and excellent responses and appreciate everyone who took the time to come see us play.

AU: What was the most memorable show on this tour?

DW: All shows that we played had their own highlights and great crowds, but I'd have to say Calgary really showed out.

AU: Your first EP, "Deadwolff" was released in 2020. What are the songs featured on it about?

DW: It's kind of across the board from losing money to losing love.

AU: Tell us about the making of the "Double Up" music vid.

DW: It was an extremely fun experience that was kind of thrown together last minute. It was shot in the dead of winter



and where we shot was heated with propane. Between the propane fumes, so much beer, and not really knowing what we were doing, needless to say the next day was a massive hangover. It was worth every lost brain cell.

AU: How much Canadian Tire money do you have?

DW: Like 8 bucks.

AU: You're currently on the Metal Assault label, being the only Canadian band on it. How are they handling you guys?

DW: Metal Assault was good to us in regards to putting out the EP and helping us gain more traction.

AU: Have you started writing for a full-length yet? If so, what are some of your inspirations this time around?

DW: Yes, we have. Our inspirations dabble in the same subject matter and then some.

AU: Last words!

DW: We love and appreciate everyone who's taken the time to read this and check out our tunes. This is the new wave of heavy rock and roll.

deadwolff.bandcamp.com



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Iron Kingdom

Absolute Underground: Welcome back to Absolute Underground Mag, for readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?

Chris Osterman: Hey! Ya, thanks so much for having us back! Iron Kingdom is a Traditional Metal or NWOTHM act that formed in 2011 in Vancouver, essentially, we have an 80s vibe to our music and stage show, kind of along the lines of Judas Priest, Savatage, Iron Maiden or The Scorpions for example. We love to play fast, with double kicks, guitar solos and soaring vocals!

AU: It's been a gap (due to Covid) since your last album *On The Hunt* in 2019 and you have a new one entitled *The Blood of Creation* due out on Nov 4th, what can ya tell us about this new record?

CO: Ya it's been a minute since the last release, you know Covid was a weird time for a few reasons, it sorta made it feel like time stopped, and we had all the time we wanted to write the new record. So, we definitely took advantage of that. Plus, adding Max Friesen (Drums) to the lineup also played a big role in the coming album, a new drummer that fit right in on day 1. It's been an amazing process and we're really stoked to get this record out! There's a new epic at the end, we got some bangers, some speedy tunes and lots of killer new melodies. I definitely recommend checking it out!

AU: You self-self-produced, and recorded *The Blood of Creation*, how was it once again to be behind the board being self-produced, any thoughts on bringing on a producer for your next record?

CO: Honestly, doing this one on our own was so much better than last time, we had a lot more time first of all, so we tried things and re-started, and tried again. We even had a couple friends come in and share their expertise on mic

placements and a few other things and I think it really helped, the production value on this record is so much better. We also went back to Andy Boldt for our mixing engineer and I think he just really gets what we're about, so it's great working with him. A producer could be a cool addition for the future, although finding the right person to really see the vision of what Iron Kingdom is and could be is the real key. I wouldn't put it out of the question, but it's hard to say what will happen next, only time will tell.

AU: How is it with new drummer Max Friesen added to the recording and live line-up?

CO: Max has been an incredible addition, I didn't think it was possible to find someone who just fit in so well, from a writing point of view, to just a shared vision of what the band could be. It's great having a whole group of people who all get along and just have a great time writing and playing music together. I think Max being with us is a whole new ball game for the band and I can't wait to really tour this lineup, I think there's something special here for sure.

AU: We read that Chris Osterman broke a few of his fingers prior to recording and still recorded and played the album tracks, how was that process, literally sacrificing pain for the art?

CO: Haha, yea I did, well I broke one finger, my fretting hand ring finger, right on the 'tuft' as the doctors called it. Due to Covid-19 I lost my job in the entertainment industry doing lighting and audio for events, so I took up some work with

my dad as a mechanic to try and get through the pandemic (from a financial standpoint). Sadly, from exhaustion I dropped a breaker bar on my finger, it spit open and broke the bone. I wasn't able to use my ring finger or picky finger (because they sorta work together), so I had to play with only 2 fingers for about 3 months. It really sucked, but I still wrote some cool riffs and made the best of it. Thankfully we were still writing at that time, so my finger healed before we actually started tracking guitars, pretty lucky about that!

AU: You toured Europe during March 2020 for your last record and almost got caught during Covid shutdowns, how worried were you about being stranded on another continent? Will you be hitting Europe again? How do you find touring Europe compared to North America?

CO: Ya that was crazy, we were playing shows and all of a sudden things became really serious, people started to panic. We tried to call the airlines to move out flight sooner, but they didn't answer the line even after waiting for seven hours, so we gave up. We decided, hey you know what, we're in Europe, we're having an amazing time, let's play as many of these shows as we can and hope our

tough, they're so different. I love Europe because there's so much history and fascinating places to see, plus people really love what we do over there and it's always a blast! North America is interesting because some areas are so amazing and some are really tough. I feel like North America as a whole somewhat follows what they think is popular elsewhere, so if you're big in Europe let's say than North America really listens, or at least that's my belief.

AU: What has drawn the band to play NWOTHM / NWOBHM style of metal? Why do you think classic metal is the most beloved of all metal sub-genres?

CO: Well for us, we grew up with it, and we thought it was awesome. I can say for me personally I couldn't understand why music got worse over time, I figured wow! If Deep Purple made *Machine Head* in 1972, music must have just gotten better and better! Well, (although I think *Machine Head* is one of the best albums ever written) music did grow from that point in some ways, but that only lasted for a while, eventually Metal seemed to just try to out heavy each other and it felt more like a competition than for the music, plus on the other hand dudes wanted to look like chicks in the glam scene and that also went too far, and once again felt like it was no longer about the music. Eventually the 'classic' or 'traditional' metal kinda disappeared. Why did this happen? I dunno, but I wanted it back, so I started a band.

AU: If Iron Kingdom was a medieval kingdom, how would the band reign over its people?

CO: Oh buddy, it would be a land of Heavy Metal, doesn't matter who you are, where you come from, what you believe, if you love Metal the doors would be open. If you wanted to learn about Metal the doors would also be open. Iron Kingdom would be a mecca for metalheads, kinda like a Wacken or another large Metal festival. A place where you feel united and you just understand everyone around you, you work together you party together. I love the spirit of metal heads and I think it would be a great place to be.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours you like to mention?

CO: Ya! We're playing the Wise Hall on Nov 4th for *The Blood Of Creation* album release party, The Invisible Orange is putting it on and we've got a killer local lineup, this will be a show to remember!

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

CO: Just want to say thanks for reading the interview, we hope you've enjoyed our latest single 'In The Grip Of Nightmares', if you haven't heard it go check it out, and we hope to see ya at the show on Nov 4th! You can get advanced tickets to the show from The Invisible Orange website and if you'd like you can pre-order the album at our website www.iron-kingdom.com. Thanks again for the interview and as always, Keep It Steel!

www.iron-kingdom.com



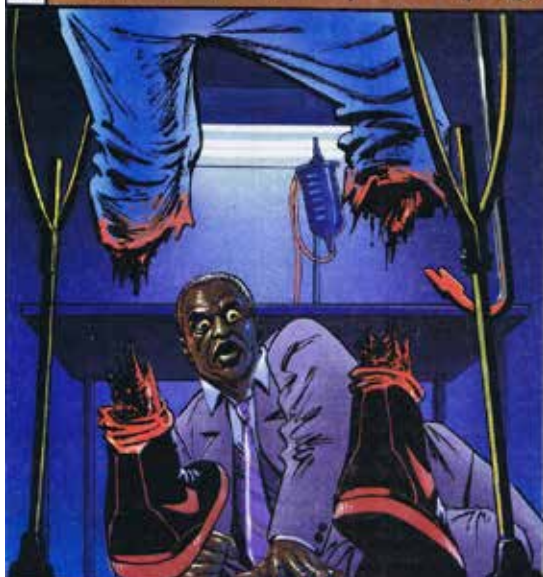
flight doesn't get cancelled. We got really lucky, because our original flight ended up being one of the last three flights out of Paris to Canada. Definitely had someone looking out for us on that one.

As for going back, yea we'd love to, but it's all about the right opportunities, so for now we're planning to get this record out and see what people think, maybe we'll get some killer festivals lined up and get back out on the road!

Comparing Europe and North America is a bit



TALES FROM THE CRYPT



Jack Sholder Hidden Nightmares - Part 3

Interview with the director of *The Hidden*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*, and *Alone In The Dark*.

by Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

AU: Why do you think there are so few new horror icons these days?

JS: I think the really good horror movies these

days are the ones that are more kind of story driven than character driven. With some of Jordan Peele's films, if you think about *Get Out*, the concept is really what makes it work. *The Babadook* I think is a really good one and *A Quiet Place* is another one. Those are really well done. But they're more about the concept rather than a villain. The thing that Wes (Craven) did was he created a real character. If you think about *Friday the 13th* it's basically a guy pops out and kills people. It's not really much of a character. Whereas he wrote Freddy as a character, and then he cast a great character actor to play the role. He didn't cast some big, muscular lunk. If you look at Robert Englund back then, he didn't look like the guy who would be a murderer in a horror film. But he was a terrific actor and he had a real power about him.

AU: Are there any movie projects from the past that you almost got completed but didn't? Any ones that got away?

JS: My second movie was *A Nightmare On Elm Street 2*, which made a lot of money so that got people in Hollywood interested. Then I was looking to try to do something out of the horror genre. I actually got involved with a thriller cop buddy movie but we could never get it cast the way the studio wanted. I was also offered a lot of other horror films but I wasn't interested. After *The Hidden* came out, while it didn't make a lot of money, when they test screened it tested very high. Everyone in Hollywood seemed to love the film so for about six months I was pretty popular. What I was trying to do was to get an A list script.

Because if you want to really make a top notch movie you have to get a really great script. *The Hidden* was a really great script and that's part of the reason why it's a great movie. I do think that I did a good job with it and I did do some things with the script that I think improved it. But basically it was a terrific script. A movie that I really was dying to do was *Ghost*, the Patrick

Swayze movie. I just loved that script and I tried my darnedest to get the movie and I couldn't. I was sort of on the top of the B list but I wasn't on the A list at that point. Then I ended up doing a film called *Renegades* which was another kind of cop buddy movie that didn't do particularly well and that kind of slowed things down.

AU: Any advice for aspiring filmmakers?

JS: Well, things are completely different now than they were when I was doing it. If you wanted to make a movie and didn't have any money, you couldn't make a movie. You had to find somebody with money or you had to get involved with a studio. Nowadays you can make a movie for practically nothing, you can shoot a movie on your iPhone. There are basically two things that are important to make good movies.

One is you need a good script and the second thing is you need good actors. So that they can play that script in a way that is believable and relatable. If the film has gorgeous cinematography and it's empty, who cares? But if you can relate to the story and the characters and it feels original then people will see it. Write a story that only you can write or find a script that only you can direct. Something where you feel a real personal connection as opposed to doing what you think would sell. It's really the story, you've got to find a story. If you think about the movies that you love, you think about the emotion that you got from watching them. That's what it's all about. That's why I wanted to make movies. They were films that really attracted me emotionally. I'd walk out of the movie theatre and I feel differently than I felt when I went in. I wanted to make movies that would make other people feel that way about something that I had done. I thought if I could do that I would be a great success because to make people feel some emotion I thought it was a great thing. So that's my advice.

AU: Tell us about the episode of *Tales from the Crypt* that you directed.

JS: Well, *Tales from the Crypt* was a kind of a prestigious thing for HBO and they had this story for it called "Fitting Punishment." It's about a cheapskate funeral home director who takes in his nephew and eventually murders him because he's scored the wrong size coffin and it cost him money. They had a script but my agent said they



were unhappy with it, they felt the script didn't work. So they hired another writer this young guy who had just written the *Chucky* movie, Don Mancini. I grew up in Philadelphia where there's a large African American community and it kind of struck me that one of the leading figures in the black community was a funeral director, so I thought wouldn't it be fun to do it with an all black cast. I proposed that and HBO said go for it. Don wrote a good script, we got a great cast, and it probably the most fun I've ever had on a movie

set. It was a half hour show and I think we had seven days to shoot it. So we had enough time to really do it the way we wanted to and make it make it look good and it was very effective. Everything just sort of came together in a really good way and it kind of served my sick sense of humor. When we were shooting it we actually made a field trip. We wanted to visit a real African American funeral parlor so we went down to South Central LA and it was pretty awful. They had these big needles that they stick in the veins to drain the blood out and put formaldehyde in. If you've seen the episode, the scenes where they're doing the embalming

was pretty grim. With the blood dripping off the table and kind of very unsanitary. I remember we were screening the dailies of the embalming scenes that we shot while we were eating lunch and my wife happened to drop by. She walked

in and we're watching the scenes of people being embalmed and blood dripping all over the place while sitting there laughing and eating sandwiches. I think she had second thoughts on who she had married.

Tales from the Crypt was really fun. It's actually one of the things that I'm very proud of. Apparently

William Gaines, who is the comic book publisher of *Tales from the Crypt*, I heard that he said it was one of his favorite episodes, that it really captured the comic book. That was a nice compliment.

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Nightmare on Film Street

Interview by ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

Absolute Underground: What can you tell us about your Nightmare on Film Street podcast?

Jon: Nightmare on Film Street, for us, has always been about recreating those nights at the movies with your friends. The movie was always fun but the highlight of the night was getting a drink and laughing about whatever terrifying new flick you just saw. We're also really big fans of double-features and we've always structured the show. Sometimes it's as simple as picking two movies that are thematically similar but sometimes we get silly and match-up movies that have characters die in tanning beds or rad synth scores.

Kim: When we set out to make the podcast 6 years ago, we really wanted to fill a void - maybe selfishly, haha. Horror movie obsession felt so 'outsider' growing up. You were lucky if you knew anyone who even liked watching them let alone obsessing over them. The podcast really allowed us to open up that zone - find those people who grew up like we did... banking 20 years of horror knowledge and just ready to talk to someone, ANYONE about it. We've got such a great little community around NOFS, my childhood self would be so jealous of how many people I get to chat about horror with on the reg.

AU: What's the dynamic between you both on the show? Do you both bring something different to the table?

Kim: Jon has a much better memory than I ever will, so he's the half of the show that remembers all the boring details and facts. I'm like a goldfish when it comes to movies. Unless it's *Beetlejuice* or *Poltergeist*, I'm pretty much guaranteed to forget it a week after we watch it. It can be frustrating, but there's totally an upside - I get to watch all of these movies for the first time all over again. So I come to each episode of the show with fresh eyes and the energy of someone just discovering their new favorite horror movie.

Jon: Yeah, I have a crazy stupid memory. I'm just a sponge for useless information but it turns out that comes in handy when you have a podcast. You need to know the name of a fictional band from an 80s B-movie? I'm your guy. Curious where the infamous Wilhelm Scream came from? I gotchu.

AU: What does your motto "Horror for the Casually Obsessed" mean?

Jon: Casually Obsessed about Horror is what

we've always been and we try to bring that energy to every recording of the podcast. We're not professors, we're not historians, we're just fans. There's a lot of gatekeeping out there - as with any niche interest, and we wanted to bridge that gap.

Kim: Yeah, like - you can't call yourself a Horror fan if you hadn't seen *Suspiria* 11 times. It's the horror equivalent of cornering a girl in a Slayer t-shirt and demanding that she tell you three album titles to prove her fandom. We never gave a shit about being the biggest, baddest horror fans in town. We just liked

watching scary movies and we wanted to make a show for other people that were tired of listening to film critics suck the fun out of their favorite genre.

AU: What are some of your favorite episodes of the show?

Jon: One of my favorite episodes was something we called "This Is Your King On Drugs", which was a double-feature of Stephen King movies where Stephen King was high as a kite when he made them. King has been pretty open about his cocaine addiction in the 1980s and there is no better example of that than *Maximum Overdrive*. That movie was practically directed by cocaine! The other movie on that episode is called *Dreamcatcher* which King wrote while tripping ball on painkillers after getting hit by a truck. It's a wild ride of weird alien stuff that I'm not sure makes any sense at all but I love it.

Kim: We recently did a series for our Patreon supporters where we watched every single *Nightmare On Elm Street* movie in one sitting and recorded an episode in between each, called 'Never Sleep Again'. It took us like 36 straight hours. I remember getting so loopy halfway through that nothing meant anything anymore. The series goes so off the rails with demon babies and nuns - the lines got so blurred between what I watched and what I imagined, hahaha. It's pure chaos.

AU: Who are some of the guests you have

interviewed so far?

Jon: We love interviewing indie filmmakers who are contributing to the modern horror scene. So many of our favorite interviews have been with filmmakers who've hustled an amazing horror movie into existence.

Kim: Yes! Like Ryan Spindell with THE MORTUARY COLLECTION, Spider One with ALLEGORIA, Mimi Cave with FRESH, BJ McDonnell with STUDIO 666...

AU: How did you first become obsessed with horror?

Jon: This is always a hard question to answer. I don't have a specific memory of watching a horror movie and becoming obsessed. I've just always been into weird, creepy stuff as far back as I can remember.

Kim: Creepy is just in my DNA. Even as a tot I was always obsessed with Halloween and I think that naturally progressed to seeking out every scary, dark thing I could get my hands on. There was no single 'awakening' moment... it's just always been there.

AU: VHS or Blu-ray?

Jon: VHS. No contest. There's a reason that creepy video from *The Ring* wasn't on a blank disc. Cassette tapes are just creepier.

Kim: Give me static or give me death.

AU: What films are on your 31 Days of Horror Halloween challenge this year?

Jon: For me, it's not Halloween until I've watched *Night of The Living Dead* (1968) or *House on Haunted Hill* (1959). It might just be because those movies are ALWAYS on TV around Halloween but *House on Haunted Hill* embodies that fun, playful Halloween spirit while *Night of The Living Dead* is a hokey horror flick that creeps up on you like a slow-moving zombie you overestimated. And I'd be lying if I didn't say I'm stoked to see Michael Myers do his thing in *Halloween Ends*.

Kim: *Trick R' Treat*, baby. That movie is just Halloween PERFECTION. What a modern classic.

AU: Tell us about the Nightmare on Film Street Fiend Club.

Jon: The Fiend Club is our spooky little speakeasy for fans of the show. A little clubhouse for all the cool creeps that support us on Patreon. It's where we host livestreams and watch parties, horror-themed game nights, and where you can find bonus episodes of the show.

Kim: We have so many fun little spaces carved out, too. Social media can be such a blur of nonsense, it's nice that there are these little corners - like our Facebook Group and Discord server, where we can actually chat and it not feel like an echo chamber.

AU: Any special events or episodes planned for Halloween this year?

Kim: I'm actually celebrating my directorial debut this October! I directed the segment "Do Us Part?"



in the upcoming horror anthology *SINPHONY*. The film has its world premiere on October 15th at the Brooklyn Horror Festival, and then will hit all major VOD platforms (like iTunes and Google Play) on October 21st!

Jon: Kim's been working to be a screenwriter as long as we've been doing this podcast. It's the first project that's come to fruition in 6 years of constant behind-the-scenes writing and hustle - so needless to say we're super stoked.

AU: Anything else to mention or promote?

Kim: If you're in the market for a cat, animal shelters usually offer black cats without any donation fee leading up to Halloween. Go give a spooky kitten a fur-ever home!

AU: How can people find your podcast online?

Jon: You can find the Nightmare on Film Street podcast wherever you find podcasts. We release a new episode every Thursday and we've even got a few bonus episodes lined up in October to help keep that spooky spirit alive this Halloween season.

Kim: The easiest way is to head to NOFSPodcast.COM/GO!

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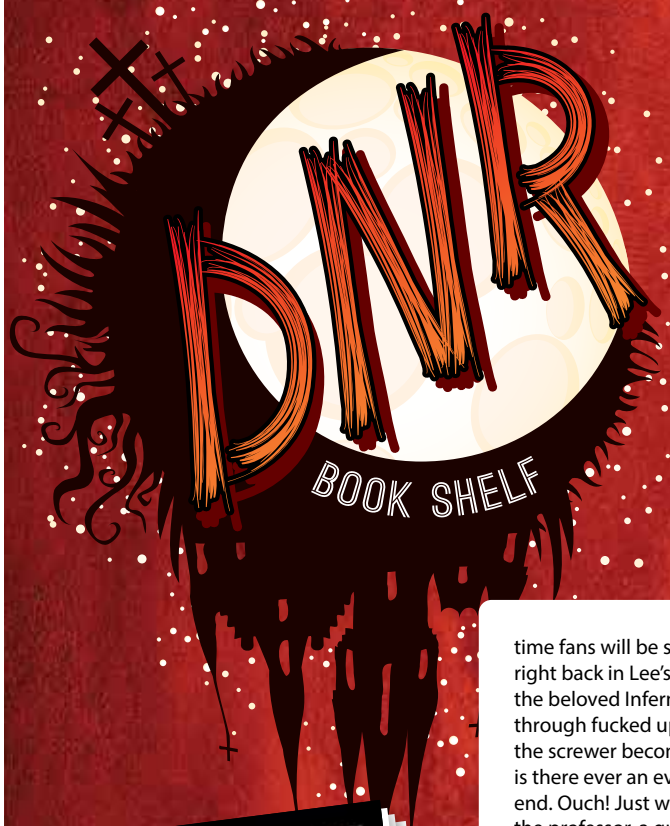
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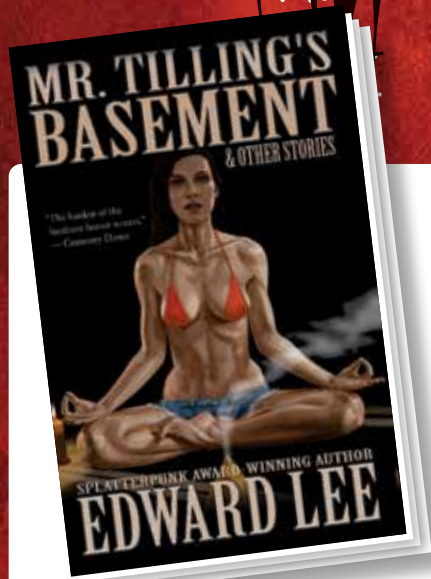
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MR. TILLING'S BASEMENT & OTHER STORIES

Edward Lee
Deadite Press
July 26, 2022

It's been a while since fans of Edward Lee could pick up a new book, but man did it ever feel great to do just that! This past summer Deadite Press released a short collection of Lee stories that felt flavorful and classic. Our favorite outlandish wordsmith is back on the horse in a huge way.

Kicking off the collection was the title story, "Mr. Tilling's Basement." We see an old retired egg-head professor who is newly retired moving into a modest house to finish off the rest of his days unbothered and unfettered. Cue the door-bell and his commonplace life as he knew it was finished. Enter the beautiful, mysterious and crass Tevi only described in true Lee fashion (an ex porn star - never!). Tevi explains to Tilling how the house used to belong to her very close elderly companion, Jerry Orne who is now spending his final days at a special needs retirement home incapable of taking care of himself or much else. Over a short time Tevi fills the professor in on what had transpired in the basement when Orne was able bodied and her participation in such events. I don't want to give too much of the story away because it really is such a good one. Long

time fans will be so thrilled to be placed right back in Lee's classic Mephistopolis from the beloved Infernal collection. Like a walk through fucked up memory lane. In the story, the screw becomes the screwee and man is there ever an evil, unexpected twist at the end. Ouch! Just when we were starting to dig the professor, a guy almost feels sorry for him.

"The Night-sitter" is the second story in this collection. A re-write from a collection Lee contributed to from Gerard Houarner's infamous Necro Publications "Painfreak". He really liked the story, so he re-tooled it with a different abomination so as to not step on Gerard's toes.

Cam-girl Jessica gets approached by an elderly "client" Edmund to house-sit for him, from dusk until dawn for \$500 a night. No sexual propositions involved. We learn Mr Roulet is a bit of a wealthy recluse and hires young, beautiful women in the industry for various household tasks. Elated to start this new job and get life back on track, Jessica takes the job. Accordingly, the house is placed on the spot of a brutal battle between the US Army and the Seminole Indians in 1830... ah yes what could possibly go wrong? Deadpasses with gorgeous bald succubus' and melting corpse companions of course!

"An American Tourist in Poland", the third in the collection features a retired man, Foster Morley heads to Poland to satisfy his bestial needs. A bit of a deviant we find as he searches out some carnal encounters but ends up in progressively demoralized circumstances, sicker than the SD card films he unwittingly screens. Some pretty sick torture, occult components mixed with horrendous aberrations make this one a disordered thrill.

"The Statment of Sgt. Jessop" is the last quicky we procure in the collection. Sgt. Jessop reveals to the interviewer his first-hand account of exactly what he saw that day. Lee having fun with modern day exploits.

A great little collection proving our man is back in a big way and we can't wait to see what else Lee churns out over years to come.
Demonika

OF MEN AND MONSTERS



Tom Deady
Crystal Lake Publishing
May 28, 2021
Of Men and Monsters is the first piece of work I have read from Tom Deady, who snagged a Bram Stoker award for his debut novel *Haven* in 2016. This novella—organized by date

instead of chapter—recounts the summer of 1975 when Ryan Baxter moves, along with his mother and brother, from Malden, Massachusetts to the small (and fictional) beach town of Bayport. Along with this "Hardy Boys" nod the story is full of homage and nostalgia. As we know from the likes of H.P. Lovecraft and Stephen King, New England provides a ripe setting for horrific events, and Deady seems to take inspiration from that legacy, tentacles included!

The narrative voice is that of Ryan looking back on the events of his fateful summer from adulthood, recounting the days with descriptions that are sometimes jarring—the juxtaposition of describing "boogery-looking" Chinese food in one moment and referencing the idyllic Americana of *Saturday Evening Post* covers the next. I can't claim that this was a particularly beloved recent read for me, as in some ways the coming-of-age premise hit as a bit too "young reader" through much of the first half. That said, though generally predictable, *Of Men and Monsters* offers a fun story despite its dark themes and while likely more suited as a beach read than a cozy autumn one, is worthwhile for anyone who might want to revisit their pre-internet-age youth. If you like your scares of the preternatural variety, however, a word of warning: the monsters in these pages are mostly men.
Laura Phaneuf

RETURN OF THE LIVING ELVES



Brian Asman
Mutated Media
November 29, 2022

I've said it before and I'll say it again, Brian Asman is a complete and utter nut job... in the best way possible. His soon-to-be-released Christmas tale, *Return of the Living Elves* is no exception. I don't

know how the guy comes up with this shit, honestly. Take Dan O'Bannon's cult classic, *The Return of the Living Dead*, and throw it in a blender with the biggest holiday of the year and this is what you have... one fruit cake-flavored zombie regale. The writing is so funny and quick-witted to the point of laughing out loud, something we see in most Asman books. You can tell immediately that writing is a labor of love for him and he probably has a blast even though it's a hell of a lot of work.

Opening with Tommy (a Juggalo - Whoop! Whoop! with his paint on) getting a job at a massive Christmas warehouse and Manager

Jimmy unleashing the chaos with a snow globe and from the get go, we're thrown into the time-honored story. A complete Christmas homage but with Christpunks (yes, hardcore Christmas Punks!) and the military tasked with keeping tabs on the (elf) zombies are, you guessed it, Santas! Landfill, our blood-flecked shovel-wielding heroine, is the stand-out character for me, fighting the good fight and saving her man... even if he is a Juggalo. The whole thing is really so clever and so, so spectacularly stupid. The perfect book to read during the holiday season. Bet you didn't know they made SSLCCs with ball gags! Well, now you know!

Demonika

COPZ N ROBBERZ



Chris Walter
GFY Press

February 23, 2022

I think I have enjoyed every single one of Vancouver's own, Chris Walter's books I've ever read. They are so perceptible and easy to get sucked into. Same goes for his newest sex,

drugs and rock n' roll charged release, *Copz N Robberz*.

Starting off in Vancouver, the band Sabotage is getting wild across Canada on tour. Guitarist - Skippy, lead singer - Elliot, bassist - Nigel and drummer - Andrea, thrill seekers and rockers doing what rock n rollers do, except for one cloak-and-dagger operation we as readers are privy to early on. Jewelry thieves if you can believe that! Skippy, the outspoken, pain in the ass, having way to much fun, getting sloppy at their covert operations, riling up crowds, and generally fucking up big time everywhere they go has us really sucked in as a central figure. Meanwhile, our underdog, a Vancouver detective who's about had it with life, teetering with his own addiction problems; Tom McFarland's spidey senses have kicked in and the quest is on. McFarland has many road bumps, including Dear old Dad, bosses, and a fentanyl haze to fight his way through to get his golden goose or geese as the case may be.

Lots of epic tour bus nonsense, sexual rendezvous, song lyrics, and ego clashing to revel in. The denouement is super exciting and suitable for the big screen. Very cool idea and who doesn't love a good coring drill?

Demonika

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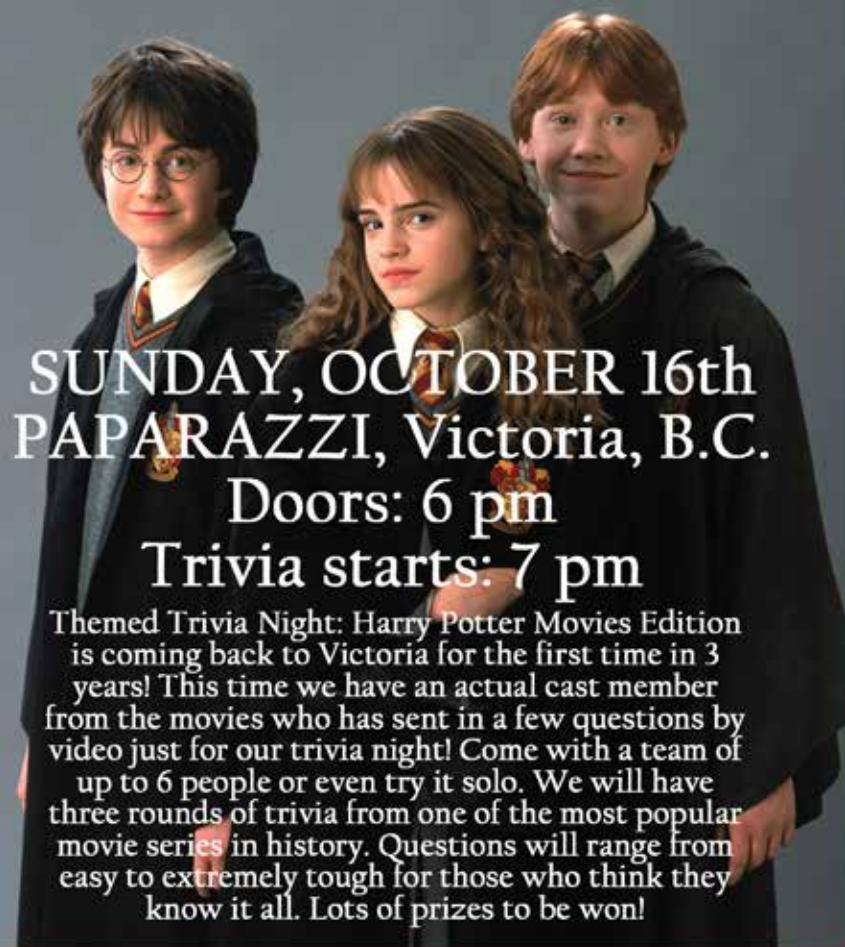
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The Hu

Interview by Anthony Nadeau
 Behind the Scenes

Absolute Underground: you have some of the most epic music videos, especially for "Black Thunder," how long did it take to film?

Gala: It took us about ten days to shoot the whole video and a production team of hundred people to bring the storyline alive.

AU: Is the music video a historical reenactment from your culture?

G: The video is about a warrior called Danjila who lived noble life with honesty and bravery. Regardless of the numbers, bravery, and wisdom always triumph all obstacles.

AU: Who inspired you all to want to make music? --you are inspiring others and even Elton John has sung your praises!

G: There are so many people who inspire us every

day, legendary artists, historical figures, and people we meet and tour together every day. Mostly, our respect to our brave ancestors mixed with our love to metal music helps to create the music we perform.

AU: Currently you are on tour with 5-Finger Death Punch & Megadeth, congratulations on the tour! How do you feel to be a part of it?

G: Thank you, we are thrilled to be part of the tour. Everyone on the tour is amazingly professional and we

are learning so much from them. Especially, Megadeth consists of the most hard-working and talented people on this earth.

AU: The album has been extremely popular and brought you some good success, how are you planning on following this one? Do you feel a bit of pressure at all?

G: Our second album has been very successful as well. The feedback we are getting is enormously generous and people understand and feel the energy we tried to put in our sophomore album.

AU: I'm curious about the culture and the ancient origins of the tones & how far back does the history of the sounds of the music go?...

G: Our history goes back to the start of human history and the instruments are dated as far as we know. The sound our traditional instrument makes is similar to an ancient war cry and that is why it has no problem being mixed with the metal rock. It gives you deep feelings.

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 BULLY'S STUDIOS - 67 6TH STREET - NEW WEST
 DOORS 7PM - BANDS 8PM - \$15 PRESALE - \$20 DOOR
 TICKETS AVAILABLE AT ORANGETICKETS.CA

COLTON'S BIRTHDAY EXTRAVANGA V: PREPARE TO DIE EDITION

PARAMNESIA
 DEATH PREACHER, FALLEN STARS, NAMELESS KING, SPATTER

SATURDAY OCTOBER 22ND 2022
 BULLY'S STUDIOS - 67 6TH STREET - NEW WEST
 DOORS 5:30PM - BANDS 6PM - TICKETS \$25
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RITUAL DICTATES

WITH **TO REEF**
SHATTERED THRONE

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 FORTUNE SOUND CLUB
 DOORS 6PM - BANDS 7PM
 \$17 PRESALE - \$20 DOOR
 TICKETS AVAILABLE AT ORANGETICKETS.CA

NECK OF THE WOODS **BEAD QUIET**

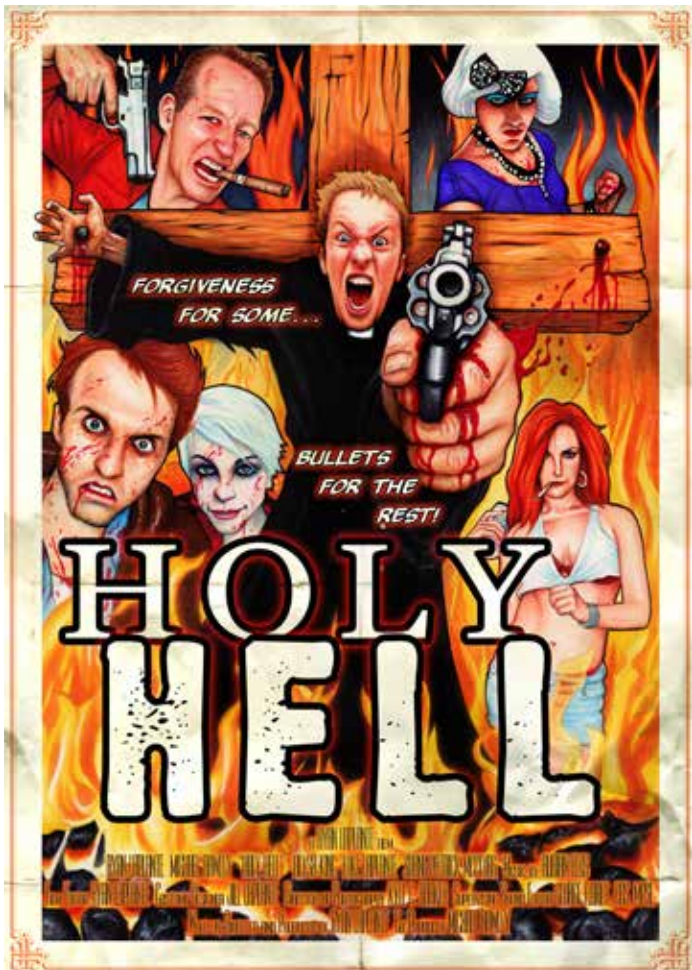
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Journeyman Productions

Tickets available at Orangetickets.ca

ABSOLUTE HORROR



Ryan LaPlante

Interview with Horror Scribe and Filmmaker Ryan LaPlante

By Vince D'Amato

I first met Canadian genre writer and filmmaker Ryan LaPlante on a genre film festival circuit back in 2016 when his crazy film *Holy Hell* was making the rounds across the USA and Canada. But "crazy" might not exactly be the right word for it. In Ryan's own words, "It is... outrageous, offensive, ridiculous and violent."

Indeed. And he continues, for the benefit of those who haven't had a chance to see this insanity yet, "*Holy Hell* is the story of a priest who witnesses the murder of an entire family, has a breakdown, starts praying to a gun he calls "the Lord" and sets out to seek vengeance."

Holy Hell did receive a small theatrical release in Ontario, and to everyone's shock is currently streaming on Amazon Prime. I asked Ryan how this bonkers film came to be. "The whole process began while I was directing a production of the musical *Rent*," he tells me. "It required me to work with the actors and be so in touch with my feelings that the moment it was done, I wanted to do the most offensive,



insensitive, ridiculous thing I could. I ended up writing *Holy Hell* over the course of three days. The day I finished the script I accidentally left it out overnight and woke up to find my mom sitting, staring at it. She looked up at me with a thousand-yard stare, making it very clear she had read the whole thing, and said to me, 'Don't show this to anyone!' It's even funnier looking back as she ended up appearing in the film, doing the costumes, and touring to a bunch of film festivals for it!"

Obviously, I had to ask him if there were more funny or amusing stories. "I literally have more than I can tell. We were almost shut down by a SWAT team while shooting a battle between a bunch of farm implement wielding people in corsets and me in a priest costume, until the owner of the property

we were shooting on came out and yelled the cops down."

Working in the distribution industry, I was also very curious to find out how Ryan felt the eventual distribution of his feature film had been handled. Distribution for independent films is a volatile thing at the most normal of times. Knowing Ryan's personality, it was no surprise to me that he had a somewhat pragmatic response to this, "The priority for me with distribution," he said, "was always about A) making money, and B) getting the film into as many hands as possible. We've got great partners and the team behind our film are the same team behind *The Boondock Saints*. The moment I heard that, I knew they would be a great fit. Unfortunately for us, the pandemic really changed the streaming landscape and the extremely-offensive-movie that could is still finding its right home among the streaming services. However, it's available for rent through most major services."

And while *Holy Hell* is still finding life across these streaming services and on DVD, Ryan has crossed the bridge from screenwriting to full-on horror-lit, going back to what seems to be his first creative love with his new horror novella "Wulfen".

"I've spent more than a decade as a screenwriter and writing coach, which led me to start working in video games and then digital publishing.

Shifting over to write a novella (and then novels) was a great way to flex my narrative muscles and learn new skills, as well as bring what I knew about story to the art form. Also, I've loved novels and traditional publishing since I was a kid. I loved books before I even knew how to talk to people.

"This novella, 'Wulfen', is written as a love letter to my teenage self, written by my older self. I wanted to write the kind of story I've always loved to read.

"It's a dark, gothic tale about a teenage girl who's bitten by a werewolf. She becomes a monster and loses everything, before being trained by a wayward monster hunting Priest (Are priests a theme in my work? I guess? Weird, considering I'm a staunch atheist.) and going after the werewolf who turned her into a beast. But when a vampire invasion looms, can she protect those she's come to love? Or will she lose everything to the monsters in the night yet again?"

"I've been a lifelong fan of vampires and werewolves. I read the entire *Interview with the Vampire* series in Grade 4, and then went on to read everything else I could get my hands on with fanged beasts in them. My Grade 4 teacher apparently told my parents they had to stop me from reading anything else with vampires in it. My dad immediately responded, "No." (Making him my personal hero.) I have gone on to read and now write about vampires and werewolves for a living. The lesson here is, parents: if your kids like to read about something, let them keep going even if it's annoying."

And so where can we find this monstrous opus of love and bloodshed? "The book is available on godless.com September 23rd, and then on Amazon on October 7th. There will be e-books, paperbacks and hardcover copies available. I love a physical book myself, but I also fully appreciate the environmental friendliness of digital copies!"

I love that Ryan's "Wulfen" is getting a release in time for the Halloween season this year, and I love that it's given us an opportunity to reconnect post-Covid. Of course, I also love getting to chat about horror movies and horror novels with a fellow fan, and I had to ask Ryan what his top recommendations might be this Halloween (aside from his own book, of course).

"If you're in the Halloween spirit, I 100% recommend watching the original *Halloween* (1978), followed up with *Halloween* (2018) and then *Halloween Kills* (2021)! You get the joy of an absolute classic that redefined the genre, followed by modern sequels that maintain



continuity and add the pacing, blood and guts we all love now! In terms of books to read this Halloween - I am a big fan of *The Pilo Family Circus* by Will Elliott if you want something strange,

twisted and surreal." Since first meeting Ryan LaPlante over six years ago when *Holy Hell* was making the rounds, I have discovered that he is one hell of a prolific scribe and filmmaker, having seen his later short films pop up unexpectedly at the various film festivals I'd been attending

(pre-Covid, that is, when we all used to go out to film festivals), and although I never got the chance to cross paths with him in-person again since 2016, seeing his subsequent short films at those later film fests, he would often pop into my mind; he was truly missed at those film fests (even the directors of the PDXtreme Film Festival in Portland, Oregon even specifically mentioned this to me) - Ryan is one of the best film-festival attendees you would ever meet - hilarious, engaging, wildly energetic, and one of the friendliest people I've ever met. His sense of humour is wicked, quick-witted and hysterical. Kind of like his films. Having a few drinks with this guy is an event unto itself.

"In addition to all my horror work," he says, closing out our conversation, "I'm also a part of a Vampire the Masquerade podcast that produces weekly episodes and is available for free. So, if you like



storytelling, strong voiceover work, ridiculous jokes and extreme vampire violence/horror look for "Blood & Syrup: a Vampire the Masquerade Podcast" anywhere podcasts can be found." Does this guy ever sleep? If he does, I'd bet money his nightmares are hilarious.

Ryan LaPlante's short films include: "Mom Jail," "The Devil's Due," and "Don't Sneeze."

"Wulfen" the book will be available on Amazon starting October 7th

Holy Hell is available at holyhell.ca

Ryan LaPlante can be found on twitter and insta @theryanlaplante

Vince D'Amato can be found at <https://darksidereleasing.com>

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Tales for a Halloween Night

Storm King Productions

Interview with producer and publisher Sandy King

By Ira Hunter and Ed Sum

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

SK: Sandy King and I am best known for producing John Carpenter movies and being the first woman founder of a comic book publishing company.

AU: Can you please share some of your career highlights to date.

SK: In my movie career I have worked with John Cassavetes, Francis Ford Coppola, Michael Mann, John Hughes and John Carpenter so I feel like I've been lucky enough to work with amazing auteur filmmakers in a wide array of genres. In animation, I worked for Lewis Hall and Carlos Gutierrez on a film called *Anti-Matter* that won the first first Student Academy Award, which was pretty cool. With John, I've done some pretty classic horror films, including *They Live*, which I think was an important film for our times.

How many filmmakers today can say they've made dramas (*Killing of a Chinese Bookie* with Cassavetes), comedies (*16 Candles* with John Hughes), westerns (*The Long Riders* with Walter Hill) animated films and horror movies during their careers? My whole life is a highlight reel. I'm lucky and happy.

SK: We had a story that was appropriate to that form of story telling and decided to dive in. Thomas Ian Griffith had come to us with the foundation of a story we liked and it went from there. We spent two years researching the art and the business of comics and the result was our first book, John Carpenter's *Asylum*. It won awards; it was fun to do, and we've never stopped. Probably our most popular title is the annual anthology we publish every October, John Carpenter's *Tales for a Halloween Night*.

AU: When and how did you first meet your husband, director John Carpenter?

SK: I met him when I interviewed for the script supervisor job on *Starman*.

AU: How involved is John Carpenter with the various comics pitched and later produced?

SK: The comics are made out of the same offices where we do all of our other projects from movies to tv shows and music tours. He's involved in it all. The comic company is mine, so I do the heavy lifting, but he sees every story, weighs in on stories and art and writes a story every year in the anthology.

AU: I'm very curious about how the artist selection process works. Do they pitch to Storm King Comics, or do you approach specific individuals? I like to note that I love the work put into *Stanley and the Forgotten Forest*. Dave Alvarez really made this work feel like an animated cartoon rather than a comic strip.

SK: In general, I find the writers and artists...they don't find me. And much like when I crew up a movie, I match make the teams on each comic.

AU: What was the genesis of the idea to start your publishing company, Storm King Comics? What are some of your most popular titles?

AU: In the upcoming *Tales For A Halloween Night Vol 8*, that page with Osiris is really cool and I wish I could own a print of that.

What made you decide to go for an Egyptian theme for the splash pages that precede the story?

SK: Anna Carillo, who writes the interstitials each year pulls the theme of each one from the stories that follow. Her brother, Jaime, is the artist. I just dug the concept they had of Bastet cruising through time in various guises. It took the Halloween black cat to another level. Jaime is an incredible painter, isn't he?

AU: How does John Carpenter's *Tales For A Halloween Night* differ from other anthology series that's produced around this time? How would you compare this to, for example, Edgar Allan Poe's *Snifter of Terror*?

SK: I don't know. I don't compare our books to what other people are doing. I think what's different about our books in general is how I choose the writers and that they're not all the expected comic writers. And when they are, I push them outside their usual lanes.

AU: When did the idea to produce comics under the Storm Kids label come about? Also, is it okay to introduce kids to the horror genre at a young age?

SK: I thought there weren't enough good books in the genre aimed at kids that dignified them as a real audience with taste. R.L. Stine was the only real author I saw who got age appropriate horror and served it with good solid writing that holds up through the years. Not that it isn't out there. I just wasn't seeing it served up with good art and good writing. I had families stopping by my booth at the cons and kids were wanting to look at our books which are aimed at adults. The themes are more existential. What's frightening in them is over their heads. I think horror is an allegorical art form and is absolutely okay when dealt with on an age appropriate level to help kids through their fears. They can conquer separation anxiety, loss and death on their own terms handled gently.

ABSOLUTE HORROR

The littlest ones (4-8 year olds) can just come to the party and feel included in the Halloween hijinks with ghosts and pumpkins and bats.

AU: For the parent company, Storm King Productions, are there any films or TV series currently in production?

SK: Yes. But there are NDAs on everything until the networks and studios announce them.

AU: Any plans for Halloween this year? Wildest Halloween you can remember. Craziest costume you ever wore.

SK: October is always pretty packed for us. We work the whole month. I'll be at New York Comic Con next week Booth#3036. There will be 12 of the writers and artists from this year's *Tales for a Halloween Night* at the booth signing during the weekend. The following week, my husband's movie, *Halloween Ends* comes out along with the digital version of the soundtrack album. (The vinyl version is coming in January.) On the 22nd of October, John and I and a bunch of the West Coast artists and writers are doing a signing of *Halloween Nights Vol.8* at Golden Apple Comic store. I can't remember what else is happening. I think it settles in to handing out candy on the big night.

AU: Favorite obscure horror movie?

SK: *The Crawling Eye*.

AU: Anything else on the horizon to mention or promote?

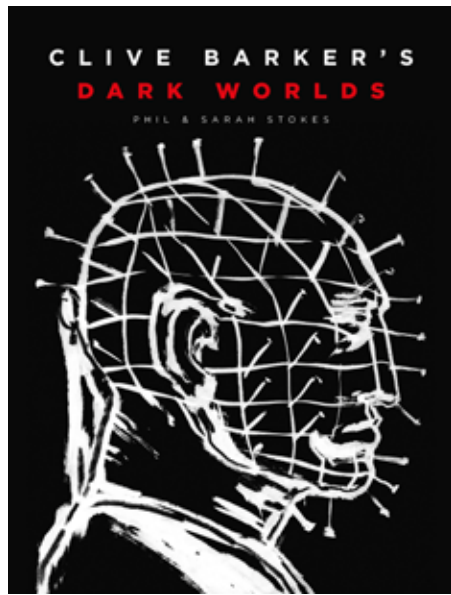
SK: We have five new comics coming out this Fall. Check the website for more info on them all. The first two are *Tales for a halloweenNight* and *Coffin Road* by Alec Worley from the Night Terrors line.

AU: How can people find you online?

SK: @stormkingcomics on twitter, instagram and Facebook.

www.stormkingcomics.com on the web.

Instagram: @theofficialsandyking



CLIVE BARKER'S DARK WORLDS

Interview with authors Phil & Sarah Stokes by Ira "Hellbound" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we chatting with today and what are you best known for?

Hi, we're Phil and Sarah Stokes and we run the Clive Barker Archive, curating Clive's works in all media, including his working notes, papers and sketches for hundreds of projects – both published and unpublished – dating from the mid-1960's to the present day.

AU: Please tell us about the latest book you are just about to unleash on the masses, Clive Barker's Dark Worlds.

In essence, this book showcases a creative life.

Every project – every vision and every story – that Clive creates is in one way or another a view onto a new landscape, an unseen world. If it works, then *Dark Worlds* offers just one way to walk through this terrain. We know that many people are very familiar with certain portions of Clive's work but our hope is that by turning the pages of *Dark Worlds* they will see how his other works sit alongside them – both in the 350-or-so images and in the accompanying text – and see something of the breadth of endeavour of one creator.

Our aim has been to strike a balance not just between the known and unknown but between the visual and the text, between fact and commentary, between overview and detail, to build a volume that a reader can turn the pages of from image to image, or can dip into at any stage to read, without having read what's gone before. We hope that even the keenest of Clive's readers and fans will find something new here!

AU: What was the genesis of this project? How much research was involved and what makes

the book unique in your opinion? What areas are explored that have never been unearthed before?

We were approached by an editor at Abrams back in the summer of 2020 with an idea for an illustrated book that would span Clive's work in all media. We love a challenge and we began to sketch out the bare bones of what that might include. We ended up with a mind-blowing list of projects and topics to explore that could have made a whole series of books... So compressing that into something that is – if we've got it right – both visually engaging and wide-ranging enough to satisfy readers, whether they're experts or casual observers, was the piece we wrestled with the most.

Rather than unearthing new areas – though there are lots of unpublished photos and artwork and details of projects that didn't get made – we've worked to make connections between work in different formats and across a span of decades to illuminate a continuity, a continuum of imagination, expressed in whatever medium was right for that idea at that time.

AU: What was Clive's involvement with the book? I assume you did some in depth interviews with him to get to the guts of his inner workings.

Clive was our first port of call, of course, before we agreed to write it. We suspect it's not always easy to have your life and work written about but he was, as we've often said, unfailingly generous with this project as he has been with our other work together. He's talked about having a largely positive philosophy to share the sandbox with others who want to play in it and it suits his collaborative way of working.

We've been talking and working with Clive for many years now and we decided to approach *Dark Worlds* not as a retrospective view – it doesn't feel like the right time for that while his work is ongoing – and instead using for the most part the words spoken and written about each project as it was live. Hopefully we've successfully woven in the moments here and there where you'll find Clive looking backwards, but for the most part our intention is for the commentary to feel of the moment.

AU: What was your initial introduction to the dark worlds of Clive Barker? / { What was your initial reaction to his works?

We initially came to Clive's work through his writing, (followed swiftly by his first movie), and what stood out for us was the poetic elegance of his prose in a genre that was often typified at the time by shock language or that was slightly tongue-in-cheek. His insistence that 'lowbrow' horror deserved the kind of language usually reserved for highbrow literature; that the underlying story could offer as complex an exploration of the human condition as any literary novel, was both intriguing and enlightening to us.

We met him at a few book signings and other events in the UK and he was as fascinating in conversation as he was on the page and on the screen.

AU: Tell us about the Clive Barker Archive.

We've been working with Clive's manuscripts, papers and artwork for a long time, back to when he handed us research copies of his unpublished stage plays maybe twenty five years ago. We've written and published three books in a series called *Memory, Prophecy* and *Fantasy* that cover in detail the period from his birth in 1952, his school and university days in Liverpool, his move to London, his work through to the end of 1982 with the Dog Company in theatre and his early poetry and fiction. We've edited a collection of his non-fiction work – *The Painter, the Creature and the Father of Lies* – as well as a companion book to his Abarat series, and published the Imaginer series of books that showcases Clive's incredible artwork across eight volumes. The Archive also acts as a resource for academics and others seeking to dig deeper into themes in Clive's work.

AU: When and why did you first begin archiving Clive Barker materials?

It's a question we get asked a lot! Whilst we were writing *Dark Worlds* the team at Abrams suggested that it would be helpful to write something about ourselves in the book and that was perhaps the hardest part!

Clive's appearance 'from nowhere' was curious to us and we began to seek out the interviews which illuminated something of his work before the first *Books of Blood* were released in 1984 and *Hellraiser* arrived on screen in 1987. We saw that there were (and are) ongoing themes and concerns that Clive orbits and accesses as he works, and a few copies of Shock Xpress, Cinefantastique and Fangoria later the collection had begun... We started the Revelations website at www.clivebarker.info in 1998 to start to organise our own thoughts and it grew from there.

AU: Are a lot of items featured in the Clive Barker Archive from Clive's personal collection.

Yes, many of them came from Clive but we've also assembled items from many other sources – cover artists for his books, comic book creators, publishers' materials, film studio items, storyboards, reviews, etc. We've been collecting and curating them for almost forty years and we still get excited by seeing something that's brand new to us.

AU: What are some of the most unique/rare items?

Well, any original sketch, painting or page of handwritten manuscript is unique, and even things that were commonplace in their time – flyers for events or posters for the movies, for example – are ephemeral and can become harder to find over time. Each person we show things to reacts differently to pieces when they see them, so we think there's value in it all.

AU: How can people check out the Clive Barker Archive? Is there a physical museum or is it an online experience?

Right now, some elements of the archive can be accessed digitally online, and also through publications of works such as Clive's stage plays – some of which have not been seen since they



were performed in the 1970s and early 1980s. Digitization is ongoing and publications will continue to grow, with more plays set for release next year.

Our aim is to open a physical space where manuscripts, paintings and drawings can be seen alongside rolling exhibitions of the more ephemeral visual material – posters, books, models and more. We hope to cater to anyone interested in the working methods of a creative artist, be their focus academic or artistic or general interest in the culture of our time.

For now, though, the www.clivebarkerarchive.com website is where we showcase some of the pieces.

AU: Tell people more about the Clive Barker Imaginer series of art books you have produced.

The Imaginer books – and for those that haven't come across them yet, they collect hi-resolution photographs of over six hundred of Clive's oil paintings – were a team effort in more ways than most books. We know, Ira, that you are one of the dedicated people who collected the full series of eight volumes so you are one of the heroes who helped to make it happen!

Clive's oils are magnificent beasts, many of them five feet tall, and they bear close inspection to see the depth and huge variety of colours that make up each canvas. A plan to photograph each one and publish them in large volumes was funded through Kickstarter and many of Clive's fans helped to make the first volume happen. Unfortunately the model broke down during the second volume and at that point the Archive stepped in to complete the vision of eight volumes. For anyone who is interested in how Clive's mind works in a purely visual sense, these books unapologetically focus on image rather than word.

AU: Clive is always busy creating. Can you fill us in on what new Clive Barker projects are on the horizon?

There are no dates on these yet but we confidently expect to see some television projects alongside Clive's next novel and showcases of his poetry and his photography. So many exciting things ahead!

AU: When is the official release date for your book and how can readers get their hands on it?

CLIVE BARKER'S DARK WORLDS is released by the Cernunnos imprint of Abrams on October 18, 2022 and is available, as they say, from all good bookstores!

How do people find you online?

You can find us at www.clivebarkerarchive.com and for news and more from Clive, here: linktr.ee/clivebarkerarchive

Image credits:

Clive Barker's *Dark Worlds* (front cover design © Abrams Books, artwork © Clive Barker)

Clive Barker's *Dark Worlds* (back cover design © Abrams Books, artwork © Clive Barker)

Self-portrait (© Clive Barker)

Celebrant (Two) (© Clive Barker)

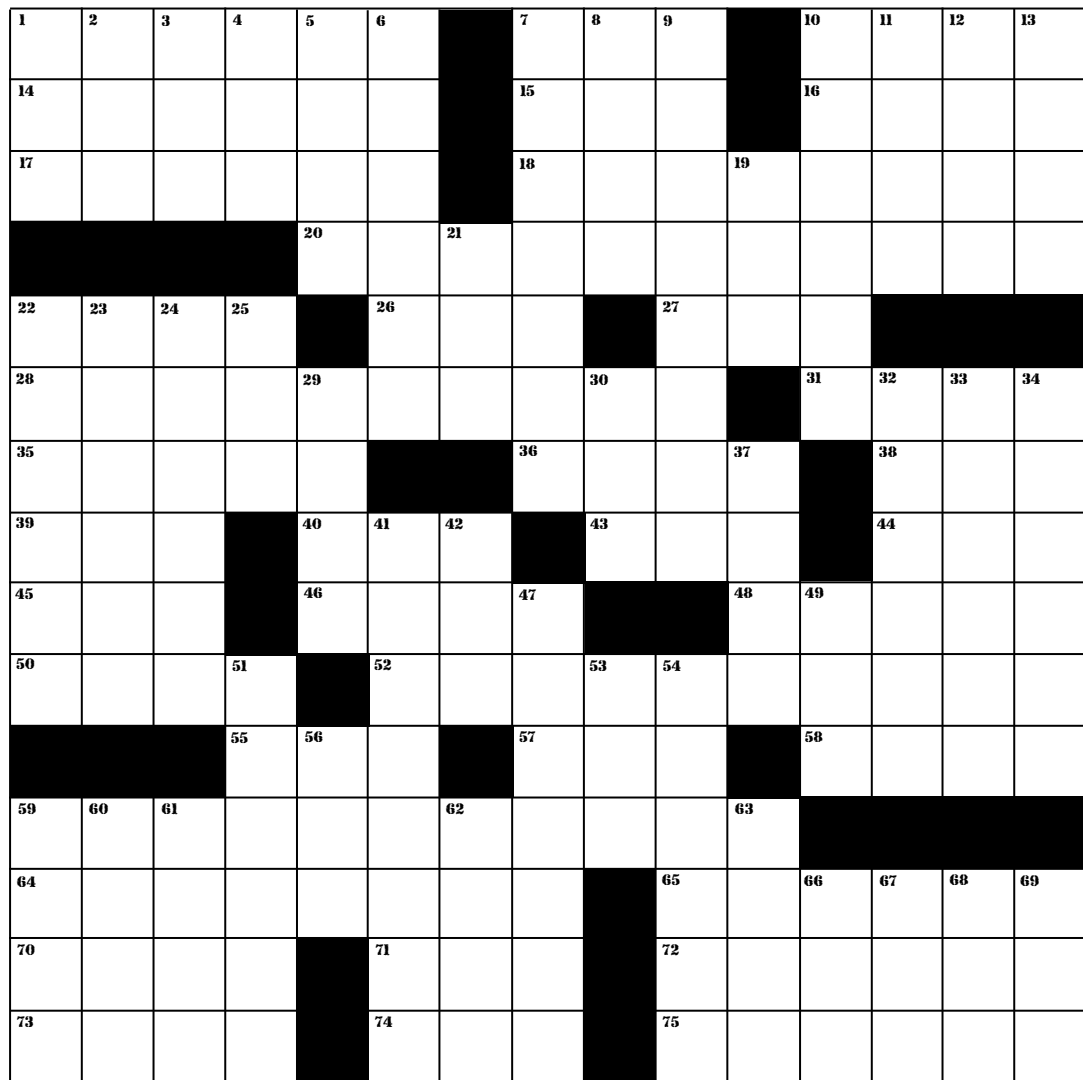


ACROSS

1. Beat
7. Mr. Clamptett
10. Joan Jett's "____ Friends"
14. Having a strong dislike
15. Guadalajara gold
16. Diarist Frank
17. Nova Scotia kebab confection
18. *Musical about a US Treasury Secretary
20. *Good nickname for New York?
22. Sweden's biggest 80's export
26. CIA predecessor
27. Big role for Keanu
28. *Two ways to dance to 59-across
31. They're controlled by computer
35. "_____, With Love"
36. Liam's brother in music
38. ____ Scabies
39. Typesetter's spaces
40. US doctors' org.
43. Tire reading
44. Boston's #4
45. Summer quaff
46. First 'graph of a story
48. Car co. with a Hiroshima HQ
50. *With 52-across, a beach holiday suggestion
52. *See 50-across
55. Airport listing
57. Annual Toronto fair
58. Sean Connery, for ex.
59. *Subject of this puzzle
64. *A tapeworm or a flea
65. Castle
70. "____ Happens"
71. Tollywood blockbuster of 2022
72. Creates an unexpected union?
73. "____ Reader" digital digest
74. Common starter in Saguenay
75. Power tool giant

DOWN

1. "Sex Mad" song
2. Mitsubishi rally car
3. Swamp
4. Historical period
5. "Yeah right!"
6. "Planet ____" from Robert Rodriguez
7. Blues guitarist Robert



CROSSWORD NO. 78

FALL, 2022

8. Latin 101 verb
9. Kids' game
10. Snowman's partner in film
11. ____ Flag
12. Slip ____
13. Beginning of a kid rhyme
19. Cube of T
21. Egyptian viper
22. It's a great deal
23. "Atomic ____"
24. Actress Angela
25. Marie's friend
29. Type of exam
30. The Republicans
32. Panic disorder pill
33. Common exercise type
34. Magellan or Cook, for example
37. Peru capital
41. "Captain N" superheroine
42. It can be about nothing
47. Some artists
49. Reactions to a new baby
51. The upper house
53. Anagram for 27-across
54. It could be done with praise or criticism
56. They often mark papers
59. Vulcan matriarch
60. Right, in a way
61. Brockovich
62. French 101 verb
63. Singer Bozzio
66. Bowie album
67. Auto helpers
68. Animation item
69. The most (suffix)

HAMMERCROME.FU



VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

to and what are you infamous for?

Bog: Bog from Vancouver, BC, infamous for fucking up the program.

AU: How did the guys in BOG find each other and end up in a band together?

Bog: Dive bars and freak scenes, and poor life choices resulted in being in a band together.

AU: How did you come up with the name BOG?

Moths & Locust, and Wolf Rider

Nov 19th Nanaimo tbd

Dec 3rd Vancouver @ Lana Lou's with Captured by Robots

AU: What is Bog's process for writing a typical song?

Bog: Taking something that works, amputate it, dissect it, and slap her back together

AU: For those out of the loop, where can they access BOG's music?

Bog: www.bogvancouver.bandcamp.com
YouTube clips of live shows

AU: How do the members of Bog feel about Halloween? Does the band have anything planned for Halloween this year?

Jackson: meh

Raffin: meh

Jonny: meh

Poib: It's the wiccan new year, let's celebrate!

AU: If Bog were to go out trick or treating together, what member would not have to wear a costume because they are already scary enough? And what makes him so scary?

Bog: Raffin, he's got some Grizzly Adams/King Buzzo shit going on.

AU: Any last words?

Bog: Life's all about choices, if you don't wanna show up... don't.

facebook.com/bogdoom

bogvancouver.bandcamp.com

instagram.com/bog_doom

BOG

By Heath Fenton

It's so refreshing when a doom or sludge band comes along and does something different. It seems the genre has been plagued with saturation as of late. So it is my pleasure to introduce you to BOG, if you haven't already met them. BOG has been messing with peoples' ear drums for the last eight years and doing it with a style all their own. They bring the slow tempo and drag it out of the mud pit of despair.

Their music is full of disjointed weird ass riffs and crazy drumming, with shrieks direct from the depths of Satan's anus. They are dark, brutal and will punish you hard. They aren't afraid to fly the freak flag high, and their unhinged live show will eventually turn on you until you are fully throttled. After words when you leave the show you will most likely be deaf and disoriented in a haze of distortion and hate. They are kind of scary. I recently spoke to the BOG boys, and this is what they had to say.

Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking

Bog: Long story, old news.

AU: While going over BOG's history, it seems that you have a bit of a revolving door for vocalists. Why has it been that way, and how are things now?

Bog: Not just vocalists, considering that there have been two other bassists and three other guitar players since Bog's first album. Life just happens and people move on. The silver lining is we get to utilise the variety that comes from the different talent and musical influence of each member past or present. Our current line up has officially dug ourselves a pit of despair and comfort since 2019.

AU: What can we expect to witness during a live Bog performance?

Bog: Atmospheric overload of blissful chaos.

AU: Is there gonna be a new recording? What have you got going on for future shows?

Bog: New album is in the works, recording very soon.

Future shows:

Nov 18th Victoria events centre, with Moonbather,

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Whorrify

By Ryan Dyer

Trash Talk with Whorrify - the Calgary-based grindcore band who have been tearing up the scene for the greater part of 2022. After releasing their self-titled EP, the band has gone from doing streaming shows from the jam room to opening for Cradle of Filth. I speak with guitarist Joel Peterson and vocalist Nate Trash about their run so far, and what is next for the band as the new year approaches.

Absolute Underground: What is Whorrify all about?

Nate Trash: Whorrify is all about fast music and as many crazy circle pits as we can muster.

Joel Peterson: Whorrify really, is all about family. We want to make people really FEEL like a Whorrify when they listen to Whorrify. But in the end Whorrify is really about making lots of money and then blowing it all on Yu-Gi-Oh! cards.

AU: What is Whorrify not all about?

NT: Good music.

JP: Family.

AU: The band is made up of four different personalities (surprise, surprise, all bands are made up of different personalities). What about these personalities makes Whorrify, Whorrify?

NT: I think it's the fact that we are all idiots off stage, but focused and relentless on stage. Still idiots, also.

JP: Whorrify is like a dysfunctional family. It's a bunch of losers past their prime who suddenly found themselves in a band together. Like a bad dream where you wake up on a stage naked. Except also with bad music.

AU: Why does Russ wear a Casey Jones mask?

NT: He's shy.

JP: Because he is In-fact the real Casey Jones. The character was based on him.

AU: You have played a handful of shows, though have made a name for yourself in the community as a must-see band in the Calgary scene already. Let's compare how you felt as a band during the first Vern's show:

NT: The first show was bunk. I didn't have any sleep the night before and I had to work that day so I was just exhausted and anxious the whole time.

JP: Less fat, less tired.

AU: The latest, upcoming headlining Vern's show:

NT: Very stoked and very comfortable with the boys and with the music, every time we perform it feels more and more natural and less like something we need to plan and rehearse. Couldn't be more pleased to be tearing it up with Tymo (Edmonton) Exit Wound (Calgary) and Supermodel Taxidermy (Fort Mac) as well.

JP: Fat and tired.

AU: I'd like to go through each of your songs. Say what you wish about the lyrical content or writing process for each:

"Hate This"

NT: "Hate This" is the first song we wrote after Joey joined and it's about people hating things just for the sake of contrarianism, so hopefully people will hate us for ridiculous reasons too.

JP: I don't understand what this song is about. Like a lot of our songs I wrote it in five minutes. And then Nate wrote the lyrics in another five minutes.

AU: "Ordinance Delivery Vector"

JP: An ordinance delivery vector is a vector primarily used for the delivery of ordinance. It's a line from The Simpsons used to describe a fighter jet. The full line is, "Our most dollar intensive ordinance delivery vector," and to me it's the funniest line in the history of the show.

NT: Did Joey tell you The Simpsons thing? It's The Simpsons thing.

AU: "Devour the Indolent"

NT: This is our fastest one and the lyrics are about hallucinating after a cannibalistic feeding frenzy.

JP: Russ liked the word indolent so we used it in this title. I don't remember anything else about it or what it is about.

AU: "Open Grave"

NT: The lyrics for this one came through quickly like the other ones. It's about people spreading bullshit and suffering the internal consequences of it.

JP: I frequently read *The Psalter According to the Seventy* and it has a line in there about a throat being an open grave. Orthodox Christian speak for talking shit. I love religious texts because they are so fucking hard it's unbelievable. Full of sex and violence and absolutely cutting language.

AU: "Whorrify"

NT: Joey wrote this one and it's a killer.

CALGARY CARNAGE

JP: Inspired by a shitty ex-family member and the violent thoughts they inspired in me.

AU: "Negative Response"

NT: This one also came from Joey fully formed, it's his favorite for sure.

JP: I wrote this song so long ago Ryan that you were actually on the first demo for it ever recorded, in my old apartment. You probably don't remember. And that recording doesn't exist anymore. It changed a lot over the years. I am sick of playing it and I hate it.

AU: "Forms of Kanly"

JP: It's a *Dune* song, from the perspective of the Harkonnen.

NT: *Dune* fuckin rules. This is also the first single off of our second EP, so stay tuned for that lil fella.

AU: "Slaughter in its Circuitry"

JP: It's based on a Harlan Ellison short story. Thank God he's dead so he can't sue us.

NT: Harlan Ellison wrote some wild shit, so we stole some of it. Fuckin shreds too. This song comes out on our next EP and will have a proper single released shortly.

AU: What will 2023 bring for Whorrify? Any plans to take this freak show across Canada or abroad?

JP: Hang out and smoke weed with our shitty fans I guess because we are also shitty. Play more shows maybe. Who knows/cares.

NT: Currently we are recording our new EP as well as getting ready to slow down so Rukkies can settle in with his fresh baby that he stole, or will steal shortly. My bad. As far as touring prospects we haven't given that more than a passing thought because of current family situations. Joel also stole a baby recently so we have to wait til the heat dies down.

whorrify.bandcamp.com



continued to write & record but hadn't released anything else because I wanted to wait until my dream post-punk band was formed! Being a weird and anxious loner, I had trouble meeting people to form a band; friends were moving left and right, so I embraced my fate, doomed to solo bedroom projects.... Enter Adrianna, Alejandro, Miranda... I swooned Adrianna Don of Homewreckers fame with a once-in-a-lifetime bowling performance at Bonnie Doon lanes, entered into a relationship. I then met & quickly became friends with local sweethearts Alejandro and Miranda (Sacrificial Rites, Mortillery). They hadn't played music in a band for some time either & were anxious to start a new project. We actually started wanting to play something like Sacrilege with Adrianna on vocals, but my drumming wasn't up to snuff, so I gently pushed the idea of post-punk on them, which they embraced with open arms! We've been a band ever since our first full jam together, which was just about a year ago this September actually.

Clergy

Interview by Sheldon Byer

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

Clergy: Hello! We are Clergy: a gothic post-punk band formed in so-called Edmonton! We are most infamous for being social rejects who came together to play some classic gothic post-punk music! Because we are sad!

AU: Give us a brief history of Clergy, who are you BOILS & GHOULS & what are you all about?

CG: So, I (Porter) have been writing my own dark post-punk music for a while, and had previously recorded *Idle Talk*, releasing a two song EP. I



AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

CG: We've been compared to the Chameleons multiple times which is a huge compliment. Not worthy of the comparison but we'll take it for sure. Personally, I'm a huge fan of The Cure, The Sound, Bauhaus, and The Chameleons, amongst many others so some weird amalgamation of classic/gothic post-punk with little tastes here & there from other punk sub genres.

AU: What does Clergy do for Halloween CHILLS?

CG: We literally, and have been doing this for years, lay in a graveyard together holding hands (starting precisely at 3:15 am) and cry until morning. It's normal fun for us.

AU: When can we expect a full length? Tell us

aBOOit! What can we expect to FEAR?

CG: End of October hopefully! We are currently just in the mixing phase of an eight-song full-length. October would be the digital release, and then we would get vinyl pressed and hopefully by summer 2023? Who knows! I am doing the mixing myself so between work, child, and depression, the exact timeline is a little up in the air. We recorded in an old Mason's Hall which was very cool, punk and goth, although probably not necessary. BUT it was haunted, so we hope that aura comes through in the songs.

AU: Any CUTS you are stoked on?

CG: There's a brand-new song we wrote while recording called "Submission" that I'm stoked on because it is cool and punk.

AU: Tricks or treats?

CG: Mainly tricks. We are full of tricks and get joy from that so that is a little treat in that for us too.

AU: What are Clergy's biggest influences CLASICKK and modern?

CG: Chameleons, Bauhaus, The Sound, The Cure, Joy Division, Crisis, The Mob, Discharge, Skeletal Family, Blitz, Cortex, Echo & The Bunnymen, Christian Death, Southern Death Cult, Pink Turns & Giants, Wipers, Wire, Angelic Upstarts, Leonard Cohen. Current stuff: Sektion Tyrants, Belgrado, Crack Cloud, Rhythm of Cruelty, Molchat Doma, Uncanny Valley, Pawns, not to mention House of Pain, and The Candle Man's Grave, of course.

AU: Any tips for hanging around graveyards this holiday season?

CG: Just do it safely honestly. There are so many sad spirits this time of year, so just being mindful of that and knowing that anything can set them off. Side note: carry naloxone.

AU: Is anyone in the band ordained or did the church at least give you parking passes?

CG: Well, the hope is to get a sponsorship deal which would hopefully include parking passes. In all seriousness though, we are all ordained and

can park wherever the fuck we want!

AU: What makes a Clergy show SPOOKTACULAR and unique?

CG: We are slowly wanting to ramp up our stage show. Right now, we just use ominous cryptic samples of stuff that help add to the spooky atmosphere. I foresee fog machines, candles, and maybe interpretive dancers in our future (seriously).

AU: Any bands that are a SCREAM you've gigged with and we don't know about?

CG: We've only had three gigs so not much insight on that front. HOWEVER, every band we have played with thus far has been solid. Standouts are Sektion Tyrants (Vancouver), Total Chroma (Vancouver), and Da'at (Calgary). Really hoping for a show with Rhythm of Cruelty and Uncanny Valley in the future!

AU: What should we know about BOO that we don't already? Anything else to promote? Any SKELETONS in the closet?

CG: So many skeletons in the closet, don't get me started (we are chaotic and bad). The only thing I will say is that we do have PLANS to do a legit music video which I am stoked for but it's a matter of getting our mixes done for our album first. No further questions, thanks.

AU: Any last words/rights for our readers?

CG: We are all going to die. Don't fear death, embrace it. There is no inherent meaning in life. Life is suffering. Embrace that and create your own meaning. Religion is a sham. Morality is a sham. Create your own morality. Start a fortune 500 company today ask me how.

AU: How BOO people find Clergy online?

CG: We are on Bandcamp, Instagram, and Facebook. Google Clergy post-punk and we will surely come up!

clergypostpunk.bandcamp.com/

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Deformatory

Absolute Underground: Welcome back to Absolute Underground Mag, it's been a while since we last spoke to Deformatory, for our readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?

Charlie: Hey, thanks a lot! It's nice to chat with you again. For the uninitiated, Deformatory is a death metal duo hailing from Canada's national capital. We've been unleashing our brand of maniacal death metal since 2010 and our latest offering "Harbinger" came out on September 13.

AU: How is the metal scene these days in Ottawa post-Covid hiatus?

C: From what we can gather, it's slowly getting better with more shows rolling through than there have been these last few years. Just waiting to see which new death metal band that spawned during the pandemic is going to emerge and destroy everything.

AU: Deformatory is back with a new EP, "Harbinger" after releasing 2021's *Inversion of the Unseen Horizon*. What can you tell us about this new EP?

C: Everything you have grown to expect from Deformatory is still in this EP however, we allowed for a more emotional and aggressive atmosphere

to permeate our compositions. The result is a very visceral listening experience that will connect with your anger on a level that is far beyond superficial.

AU: How was it releasing the new EP post Covid times compared to last year's record during the pandemic?

C: It's not much different, to be honest. The way music is typically being released and more importantly, consumed these days, is very different than how it was 10 years ago. As an independent and older band, it's been an adjustment. We're pulled in the direction of what we want to do and also what we know we should be doing. Often, they're very much

opposed to each other. We chose to release this EP a little differently than how it's typically done these days and made some decisions on what we wanted to do so on social media this time around (which is a lame but unfortunate thing to have to consider when releasing music).

AU: The band released a nonstop punishing full EP music video? What made ya decide on this approach?

Neil: One of the things we absolutely enjoy is that we try and do everything ourselves, where possible; including shooting and editing.

Where our last release has a significant video promotion package, including a documentary, making of, track-by-track, and individual track videos, we wanted "Harbinger" to be more focused and more to the point. Where we almost had a video for every song off our last full length, we really wanted to make sure that for the EP that we had a video for each of the songs. Plus we really liked the idea of having it be the entire length of the release, which you typically do not see bands do. Since the whole EP would be uploaded, it made sense to have a full-length video for it.

For the concept, we developed some simple ideas to keep it focused on the music and performance. Shot in our rehearsal space (The Cell), we set up five different cameras, a backdrop, and lighting

and basically played the songs through twice. That gives us enough footage to create the general playthrough. The B-roll elements added for this series of videos turned out incredible. They add such unique visuals and enhance the songs and images while we play behind them. We also really enjoy the general uneasiness of the video image quality. The flat black, with grit, and a warped, every changing, image really mirrors the themes of the EP music and lyrics.

AU: How was it working with legendary Topon Das of Fuck The Facts to produce this record?

N: Topon is incredible to work with. He creates such a relaxed environment to work in that you really feel like you are just hanging out with friends while producing some killer music.

This time around we spent a lot more time on the drum sounds for this EP compared to *Inversion*. *Inversion* turned out killer; however, this time I still wanted to push for a slightly clear tom sound and more nature snare tone as well. I think this focus on these two pieces really comes through in the final mix. With headphones on you feel and sound like you're behind the kit. The clarity of the drums is just incredible and I couldn't be happier with it.

Even with a great working environment, Topon will still call out something that's not working, to ensure the best possible part for the song. I mean, we didn't use a click for the writing or recording of "Harbinger." He was flexible enough to work with us, and my parts, to offer suggestions on how to bring clarity to certain parts to give space and have the idea better translated into the final product.

We really do have a great there, even though it is work. He is so meticulous with creating the sound for the band, it's like he is a 3rd member. The whole process, from tracking, idea development, soundscapes, mixing, all goes so smoothly. We definitely will be back to Apartment 2 Studios to work with Topon again.

AU: Would you guys ever consider album guests for future releases?

OTTAWA ONSLAUGHT

N: I think it's fair to say we are down to work with someone as a guest, but it has to be the right collaboration. We were so fortunate to be able to have legend Jon Levasseur (ex-Cryptopsy) guest solo on *Inversion*, that I still can't believe it. That situation, the additions he made to the track, felt so right and I would love to do that again.

AU: What's next for Deformatory, can readers expect a new release of another album or EP in the near future?

C: We are currently working on our next creative rendering. We have some really interesting conceptual ideas mapped out, including how the next creation can be released in a unique fashion. Anyone who has followed us closely knows that we put an insane amount of thought into every aspect of a new release. This one will be an exceptionally calculated and deliberately devious death metal creation. On top of that, we already have new songs written that are absolutely devastating. Fans can definitely expect to get a glimpse of the new madness we're brewing in the later part of 2023.

AU: Any tours or upcoming shows for 2022 or 2023 you like to mention?

C: Without giving any of the special details away, Deformatory will be hitting the stage again in 2023 to deliver our punishing sonic experience in the flesh.

AU: Anything else you'd like to add?

C: Thank you for supporting the extreme underground scene. We really appreciate all of the work you do to catalogue extreme music history and capture in-depth moments with some of the best bands around. Stay Deformed!

deformatory.bandcamp.com/

facebook.com/Deformatorypast

MONTREAL MASSACRE



The Occult

Absolute Underground: Welcome to Absolute Underground Mag, for our readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?

ES: Thank you and thanks for having me. I'm Eric Savanis, lead singer and main songwriter for The Occult.

AU: How is the metal scene these days in Montreal post-Covid hiatus?

ES: Alive and well. I mean I don't really see a difference between before the pandemic and now. Like we had those two years + of uncertainty and what have you but things look the same now as they did prior to that whole mess. As for our local scene, we got great bands playing in this city. You got the Lord Fez Khan's new band Double Cross which is doing some great stuff. House of Dusk is playing their first show with us on Oct 4th, opening for Wednesday 13, and I gotta say, I'm just as excited to see their set as I am to play that show. I've been fortunate enough to have heard the demos for the upcoming material since Gianni is not only a friend but was an essential part of that first Occult record as he

engineered a lot of it. His band is monstrous and I would highly suggest everyone go check it out.

AU: The Occult released its debut self-titled album this past August, what can you tell our readers about this first offering?

ES: While the material took about three months to write and complete, the recording and mixing took years. Other than Gianni I didn't have a

stable lineup at the time, so I decided to continue writing, since that was something I could actively do, while I searched for people to join the band. Montreal is unfortunately a small city. Most drummers you encounter are in like 17 bands so to get one to commit to your band is practically impossible. Luckily, my guys and I - Carlos and Raf, are surrounded by great drummers so if we got gigs or recording sessions coming up, hiring someone is an email/phone call away.

AU: We understand this band and record first began as a solo project by frontman/vocalist Eric Savanis, and has been a long journey to come to fruition. What can you tell us about recording it?

ES: I don't know if I would call it a solo project per se because it's certainly not Eric Savanis and the gang. The Occult is a band. The distinction is that like Type O or Danzig, there's one person writing the songs. I know that my bassist Carlos (Carvalho) has a lot of ideas and has set me riffs that turned into Occult songs that will eventually be recorded so I certainly don't have a problem with him or Raf (Corzo) contributing. Regarding the guys on the record, I've known Alex since

high school and I consider him to be one of the best guitarists on this planet so having him play on the record is nothing short of awesome. Gianni who played bass on it also recorded all the guitars and some bass and vocals. He's a super talented guy who just kept pushing me to keep looking for people to get things going. Justin, who was playing with my buddy Dominic in his band The Chronicles of Israfel, was recording drums for their second record and I asked Dom if he thought Justin would be down to record. I ended up hiring him and he smashed them over a weekend and that was that. The Lord Fez Khan did guest screams on our song "Planet Pisces." He's a friend who I met about 10 years ago and was pretty active with his old band Crosstitution. I wrote that part for him and his voice just fit perfectly in that section. The guys I got to play on the record are some of the best musicians that have come out of this city. I basically ended up with an all-star lineup and considered myself to be so damn lucky that things fell into place the way they did because I basically won the lottery with these guys.

AU: You have some very politically opinionated tracks such as "Strangling Republicans," "It's Amateur Hour," "Occupy Unite," what's your opinion on the current state of political affairs in Canada and the world? and How do you feel music can influence politics to music consumers?

ES: The left-wing parties in Canada and the US, have unfortunately been contaminated by woke nonsense and have been pandering to those ideologies for quite some time. Both Canada and the States don't have major left-wing parties. The Liberals in Canada, like the Democrats in the US are centre-right parties that pander to corporate influence. The Conservatives, like the Republicans in the US, are exactly the same. So where does that leave us? The middle class has been all but obliterated. When you encounter people that pander to tribalism and state things like "I'm a (insert political party name here)" I

find that utterly disturbing. These politicians will do nothing to better our lives and don't give a fuck about us. Why would anyone in their right mind deliberately join forces with these demons? Having been raised by a WW2 veteran certainly clarified this early on; these people do not have our best interest at heart and will do anything to accumulate more for them and less for us. So ya, that'll certainly bleed into the songs since it's something that I realized early on because of my grandfather. How these songs will affect a person listening to the tunes is anyone's guess really. As long as people keep their minds open that's all I can really ask for.

AU: What are you looking forward to the most with this new record and live shows back?

ES: Sharing it with the world. The reception we've gotten thus far has been incredible. People seem to really dig the tunes so we're certainly eager to get out there and play.

AU: Any tours or upcoming shows for 2022 or 2023 you like to mention?

ES: We have a big show coming up on Oct 4th with our friends in House of Dusk opening up for Wednesday 13th at a legendary local venue called Founfouness Electrique. Playing the same stage that Kurt stood on, Trent stood on or Peter Steele stood on is a huge mindfuck as well as a complete honour. After that gig, we will figure out what's next for us as the gigs have kept us really busy.

AU: Anything else you like to add?

ES: That we appreciate the interview and that if anyone wants to support us they can purchase the record directly from our Bandcamp or subscribe to your YouTube channel. Every little bit of support helps us. Also, a tour with Metallica or Life of Agony would be awesome.

theoccultband.bandcamp.com/

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[youtube.com/channel/UCOSHma00K6M3Q3oYovQqyvQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOSHma00K6M3Q3oYovQqyvQ)

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Force Majeure

Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking with and what are you best known for?

K: I'm Karl, I play guitar and shout in Force Majeure and spin Soul records under the name "Heart of Montreal Soul Club".

AU: Where are you guys from? When did Force Majeure start?

K: We're all born and raised Montrealers and that's where it started. I moved back here five years ago and got to chatting with Scott (Offside, La Gachette etc) about doing a band. The rest of the lineup has changed at the beginning but we now have Marty (Prowlers, Ultra Razzia) with us and that has been our definitive lineup since March 2019.



scene in Montreal?

K: We have the best Oi! scene in Canada, no question. It ebbs and flows just like everywhere else but I'd say now you have to be of a certain standard here or else your band won't cut it. We put out a compilation last year called *Montréal Tombe*, it sold out pretty quick, I see it as the measuring stick for new Oi! bands here and in the rest of Canada for that matter.

AU: Any band mates in any other bands past or present?

K: Oh man... how long you got? Hahaha

I was in Last Crusade and Hard Pressed, Scott plays in La Gachette as well as Offside, Marty is in The Prowlers and Ultra Razzia... we all did a whole bunch of other shit but I've tried to name the bands that are relevant to this interview.

AU: What bands do you guys feel influenced the band?

K: Templars, The Clichés, Snix, L'Infanterie Sauvage, Warrior Kids, a lot of '77 punk bands too. I love all sorts of music so perhaps some other stuff has crept in subconsciously.

AU: How's the Oi! Skinhead

AU: Most memorable show or funniest story from a gig.

K: Most memorable, I would say Beach Beer Chaos for sure. Simon from Claimed Choice wound up with a gnarly gash in his arm as a result... he carried on going mad all weekend anyway. A true soldier. My birthday gig was also pretty fun. We just played Toronto for the first time with Violent Way and Enforcers, that was also a good one.

AU: We see that you guys played Beach Beer Chaos Festival, it looked like a hell of a time! How was that?

K: That was fantastic. Best parts of a beach holiday and Oi!/punk festival. Four days of drinking and hanging out in the sun. Must have ate my weight in tapas. Couldn't have asked for more!

AU: You guys also played Vancouver recently at Have A Good Laugh Festival was that your first show in Vancouver? And what did you guys think about Vancouver, will you come back?

K: I played twice with Hard Pressed but yes this was our first gig there with Force Majeure. It was super fun, people seemed to dig it despite the language barrier. We will definitely be back.

AU: Alongside fronting the band, you are also a soul DJ, how long have you been spinning records And how is the soul scene in Montreal?

K: Yes I've been doing it on and off for about four years. Not much of a scene to speak of, certainly not like in other cities like Toronto, Edmonton or Victoria but people still show up which is cool. We

VOICE OF THE STREETS

get a few enthusiasts (mainly Brits or Euros that live here now) as well. I got to DJ out of town a handful of times, that was always fun.

AU: You have put out a ton of EPs and splits including *Beton Arme Ultra Razzia* and most recently *Tchernobyl*. What's your favorite release? And anything new in the works?

K: Our EP *Encore Debout* still holds up. We're working on recording a full length which will



probably surprise a few people. Keep your eyes out for that... next year on Primator Crew / Double Turn Records.

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

K: Shout out to everyone that supported us from the jump and to everyone that actually puts in the work and gets off their ass instead of just talking about doing shit.

forcemajeuremtl.bandcamp.com

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Microchip Terror Long Live the New Flesh. Hail Mechanical Gore

By Ryan Dyer

From the Lab of Madness located somewhere in the Singapore underground, comes the half man/half machine electronic experimenter Microchip Terror. Like synthwave artists such as Perturbator, the man behind Microchip Terror has ties with the metal community, playing in bands before going the full electronic route. In 2016, he released his first single "Relentless Bug Hunt", inspired by the *Alien* franchise. Since then, Microchip Terror's film influences have been at the forefront of his electronic onslaught, producing a cover of the main theme from *Phantasm* as well as having songs/an aesthetic that is straight out of Japanese cyberpunk films *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* and *Rubber's Lover*. We caught up with him to talk about new flesh and mechanical gore.

Absolute Underground: Were you in any other projects before Microchip Terror?



MT: Before Microchip Terror, I played bass and backup vocals for the death metal band Psycho and bass/lead vocals for the prog/thrash metal band Sanity Obscure.

AU: You are obviously influenced by Tetsuo: The Iron Man. What are some other cyberpunk influences you cull from (Ghost in the Shell/Blade Runner/Meatball Machine/Robogeisha)?

MT: *Ghost in the Shell* and *Blade Runner* are definitely essentials, *Meatball Machine* too as my track "Mechanical Gore" is pretty much based on it, *Robogeisha* is really fun but not really an influence. I would say the biggest influences aside from those and *Tetsuo* would be Shozin Fukui's *Rubber's Lover* and *964 Pinocchio*. These films highly inspired the *Illegal Experiments* theme.

AU: "Eraser" features the sample "Don't be afraid to let your body die" from Videodrome. Being Canadian, I am highly influenced by Cronenberg's filmography. Which is your favorite Cronenberg film and is Microchip Terror set to do more "electronic body horror" type tracks?

MT: *Videodrome* is definitely my favourite because it has all things body horror and technology, can't go wrong with that combination! I'm not too sure what "Electronic Body Horror" sounds like, but if you consider "Eraser" under that category, my next release has some of those tracks.

AU: Aside from films, what electronic artists have inspired you?

MT: My early influences for this project were Perturbator, Protector 101, VHS Glitch, Irving Force, Surgeryhead, Ministry and Chu Ishikawa. Lately I've been very inspired by the sounds of Schwefelgelb and Phase Fatale.

AU: For literal illegal experiments, I have visited Unit 731 in Harbin, China, where many were done. Are you influenced at all by the media connected to it such as Philosophy of a Knife (and its soundtrack)?

MT: Oh man, that must have been quite an experience for you. I have not seen *Philosophy*

of a Knife but I've seen the infamous *Men Behind the Sun / 731*. I wouldn't say it influenced my work, but it definitely left a big impression on me as it was pretty grotesque and depressing knowing it was based on real war crimes.

AU: How many Illegal Experiments albums do you foresee?

MT: I think I'm finally done talking about illegal experimentation through my music after two full length albums and I'm sick of it now (laughs). The third sequel usually lacks something if we are talking about movies in general so I'm going to avoid going that route.

AU: You created a female android head for your EP. Tell us about it! Where is it now?

MT: It's made from a mannequin head that I bought from an ex-salon owner combined with some tech junk I got from the electronic waste put together with some super strong glue. I actually made five heads but it was taking up too much space so I had to "retire" them by sending them back to the electronic wasteland.

AU: Peter Hua is the model on the cover of Illegal Experiments 2. What was this photo shoot like? Have you considered making a full-length film or video to accompany the music?

MT: Peter is my childhood friend - we did a science experiment in primary school that won first prize 22 years ago, so it is a blast to work on an experiment again with him two decades later! The photo shoot was done at my home in my wife's office with talented photographers Dave Adeth and Kei Chen whom I've had the pleasure of always collaborating with, along with a bunch of homemade props that I put together from tech junk.

Making a full length film is pretty intimidating, so I've only stuck with making shorter videos to accompany my music. We did this with another model - the legendary and Godly Allson Ng as seen in the beginning of my pre-recorded show



from home - The Live Experimentation Continues where he plays a synthetic slave experimental subject named AL-245, which is also the title of one of my singles from *Illegal Experiments 2* and I was extremely influenced by *964 Pinocchio* for this idea.

AU: What is the electronic/noise/industrial scene in Singapore like?

MT: I wouldn't be able to comment on that as I'm not really active in any scene here - I'm a music and movie nerd that prefers staying home most of the time but I'm going to use this opportunity to give a shout out to some electronic/noise artists here in Singapore that I've been acquainted with so please check them out!

N3M3515, Snoopdroop, sl-owtalk, Prospexx, Schizophrenic Wonderland, Khronoform503, Catatonia,

Sludgefeast, Switchblades, Zeekos Perakos, deformed, Mitch Advent, The Analog Girl, Don Aaron, The Beat Usagi, Barren Sector.

AU: Any last words?

MT: Thank you very much, to anyone reading this, please watch *Tetsuo: the Iron Man*, *Rubber's Lover* and *964 Pinocchio*.

<https://microchipterror.bandcamp.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MICROCHIPTERROR>



CURSED BLESSINGS

Moving into October, Victoria troublemakers Fully Crazy (fresh off an incredible summer run that saw them wreak havoc in California, Washington state and their own stomping grounds of British Columbia) are set to invade Ontario with 3 killer shows (Hamilton, Toronto & Oshawa) supporting Almighty Trigger Happy and being featured in the incredibly

Season Of The Safety Pin

The fall of 2022 has quickly become the Season of the Safety Pin thanks to Toronto punk/metal label Cursed Blessings Records.

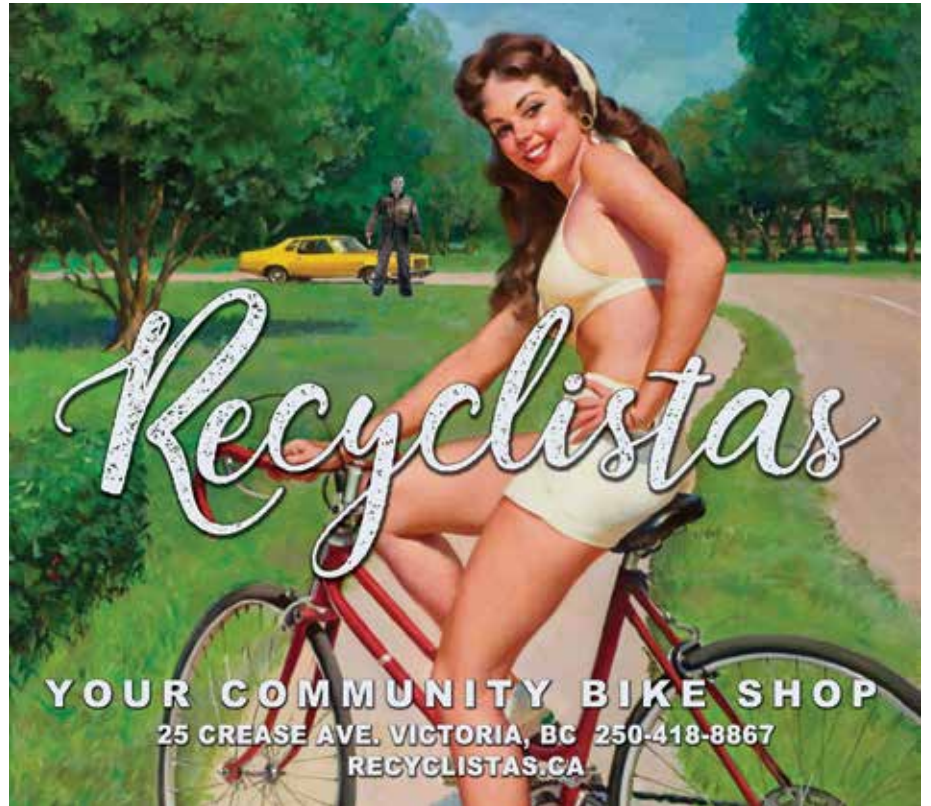
September saw the label's eclectic and hardworking roster firing on all cylinders with spots on some of the biggest bills out there. From BC's Modern Terror blowing the doors off of "Punk In Drublic" in Abbotsford to Siksika Alberta punkers No More Moments headlining many prominent festivals and supporting Canadian punk icons Propagandi to the legendary Almighty Trigger Happy returning to the big stage with their old pals from Lagwagon. It was a September to remember for the upstart label.

popular In Crust We Trust festival in the mighty Shwa. St Catharine's punks The Holdouts will also be on some bills making for a rip-roaring good time!

Speaking of the Holdouts, this up and coming band was dealt a massive blow recently when bassist (and super nice dude) Derrick Gordon passed away earlier this season. Derrick was a huge part of the St Catharines scene and was dearly loved by all who knew him. The band will carry on in his memory and have their debut vinyl EP "325" set for release at the end of October on the home of the 'pin.



London Ontario's very best Mvll Crimes have been destroying all over Ontario and Quebec and Toronto legends Random Killing are doing the same as they gear up for the release of *Bring Out Your Dead* on CB.



Toronto hardcore darlings Choices Made are

set to release a new video for their track "Nothing Without" from their incredible EP "Reason For Conflict" (available now on Cursed Blessings) and will also take part in the Shwa punk festival In Crust We Trust.

The finishing touches have been made to *Blood Red And Forever Blue*, a retrospective compilation from the aforementioned Almighty

Trigger Happy and will be available in the coming

months. Toronto punk favorites The Cola Heads are ready to release a new album soon and Calgary's finest Citizen Rage are also putting out an amazing album entitled *Harsh Reality* in a variety of formats in the next few months as well.

Season of the Safety Pin is in full effect. Be sure to check out www.cursedblessingsrecords.com and the label's socials for all the details and dates.



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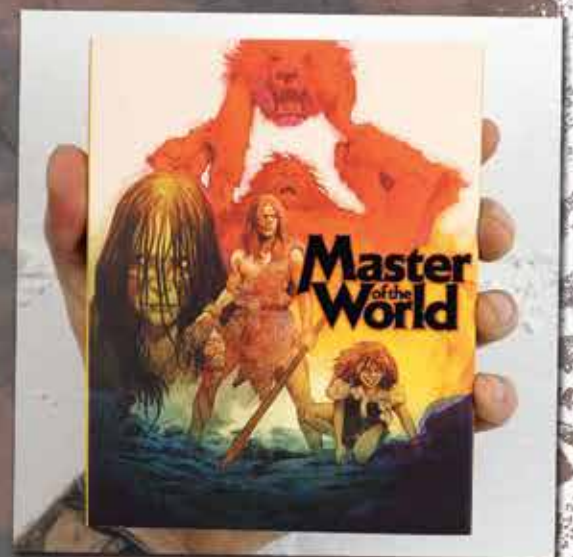
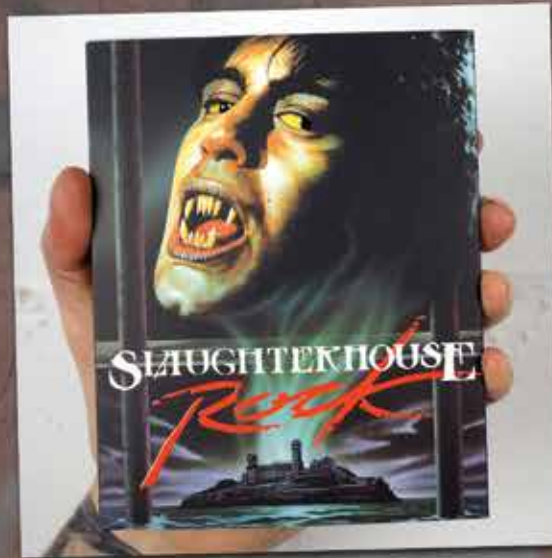
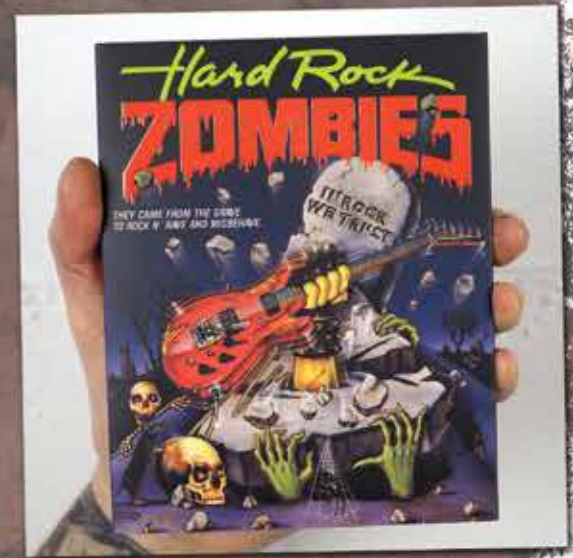
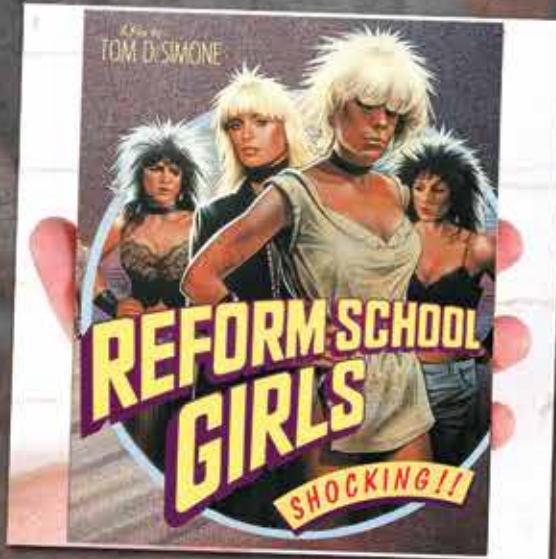
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ABSOLUTE HORROR



Writing Horror and the Cinema of Horror Writing - Vince D'Amato

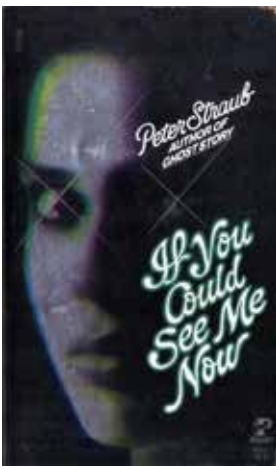
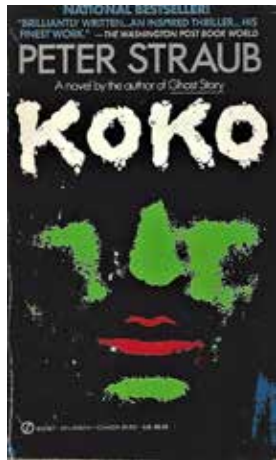
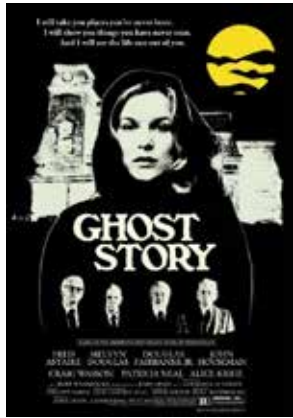
In September, popular horror scribe Peter Straub passed away in Manhattan. He was popularized by his literary collaborations with Stephen King, which in some ways is really great, as his horror work became showcased to probably the widest literary audience it could; but it was also a shame that he became more known for his work with Stephen King than he did in his own right, despite penning some of the next horror novels in existence today.

With a body of work that strangely paralleled Stephen King's universe in the 1980s and 1990s, like Sam Neill fitting together the works of fictional author Sutter Kane in John Carpenter's *In the Mouth of Madness*, while Stephen King's publishers were releasing his last *Castle Rock* trilogy of novels and novella ("The Dark Half", *The Sun Dog* from his 4-part anthology *Four Past Midnight*, and "Needful Things"), Peter Straub's publishers were busy releasing his Vietnam/serial killer horror series of novels *Koko*, *Mystery*, and *The Throat*, plus "The Blue Rose" novella within his 5-part anthology, *Houses Without Doors*. Unlike Stephen King, however, Peter Straub's characters were rarely influenced by or directly reliant on the craft or career of writing in and of itself; instead he focused more on the worlds of war, academia, and corporate America (such as in his brilliant and nearly epic novel *Floating Dragon*). Peter Straub's work belongs in a category of literary horror alongside Stephen King, Anne Rice, Bari Wood, Dan Simmons, and Robert McCammon; authors who are writers first but constantly display keen and profoundly deep interests, intrigue and intellect when delving into the universe of horror and the supernatural.

Even though Steven Spielberg had announced that he had purchased the rights to the King/Straub novel *The Talisman* back in 1984, nothing to date has ever come of that, and possibly, part of the reason Peter Straub may have not achieved the type of mainstream horror success as his peer and key collaborator Stephen King could be that only two of his books were made into films, neither of which were huge commercial successes; and following his recent death, many of his readers responded on social media declaring the more famous of his two adaptations, *Ghost Story*, to be a poor film overall – something which I can't agree with in the least. To me, the film adaptation *Ghost Story* is an eerily gothic and erotic tale of guilt, secrecy, haunting, and revenge, deserving of a yearly

autumn rotation – and speaking of revenge, this was a theme that Peter Straub turned on his head and played throughout his literary works with a sort of profound insight, from the 70s to the 90s, with *If You Could See Me Now* and the aforementioned *Ghost Story*, *Koko*, and *Houses Without Doors*. The film *Ghost Story* is a good late-October watch (and was fairly recently reissued by Scream Factory in the USA), the film co-stars Alice Krige (Stephen King's *Sleepwalkers*) and Craig Wasson, who was no stranger to Hollywood genre cinema in the 1980s, with starring roles in director Brian DePalma's *Body Double* and Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*. DePalma is also no stranger to horror-lit works, having directed Stephen King's *Carrie* and John Farris' *The Fury*; and incidentally, writer/director Wes Craven would later turn the *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise and his own writing on its head with his horror-meta pseudo-sequel Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* in 1994. The mid-nineties were a glorious and delirious time for horror cinema; and strangely, a lot if it was meta- and writer-based stories; including John Carpenter's *In the Mouth of Madness* which sees insurance investigator Sam Neill and literary publishing promoter Julie Carmen head off on an insane Lovecraftian roadtrip to a small Stephen King-esque town called Hobb's End to track down missing horror writer Sutter Kane (Stephen King, get it?). In a deeper example of the film's meta-horror, the very idea that the antagonist is a horror author in and of itself is based on the literary works of Stephen King, who creates both protagonist and antagonist roles for his author-characters (*The Shining*, *Secret Window*, *1408*), and sometimes both in the same story (*The Dark Half*). All of these films have stand-alone merit, and to be honest *1408* might actually be my favourite of the bunch; with actor John Cusack, who at one time played horror author Edgar Allan Poe in *The Raven*, playing an alcoholic supernatural writer with a dark past who gets himself trapped in a haunted hotel room in New York. However, I'd like to circle back to *The Dark Half*, a film directed by one of Stephen King's two favourite career collaborators, George A. Romero (his other favourite being Peter Straub, of course). While I've been familiar with this film adaptation since it first came out in 1992, *The Dark Half* has, over the past couple of years, solidified a spot in my top-favourite horror films and I've taken to the opinion that it's George Romero's most underrated film. *The Dark*

Half, much like *Ghost Story*, retains a creeping gothic and mysterious quality that lures the viewer in; punctuated by some perfectly-timed visceral scenes – although by visceral I don't actually mean gory; in fact, it's also my opinion that Romero's restrained directing style in *The Dark Half* (well, restrained by his gory standards), was part of what distanced a lot of his *Dawn* and *Day of the Dead* fans from fully embracing this film. That, and the horrifyingly bad CGI that unfortunately served as the final frames of the film. I choose not to blame Romero for that. But on the flipside, one of the key ingredients that makes *The Dark Half* really work as a piece of truly gothic art is the music score by Christopher Young, an insanely talented film score composer who also wrote the soundtracks to Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*, Sam Raimi's *Drag Me to Hell*, and the 2019 *Pet Sematary* remake. I would count *The Dark Half* and *Hellraiser I & II* as his best scores, hands-down. With these wonderful key ingredients mixed together, like actress Alice Krige in *Ghost Story* (whom herself also bears an eerily erotic and gothic quality) and pretty much every



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mask rights from Fun World. It is one of the more interesting iconic killer IP's for the fact that it came from a mask that was already sold in stores.

AU: Michael Myers was a Captain Kirk mask.

DS: Yes exactly. But they did alter it to become its own original mask and you can't really license a hockey mask. Down here I would say that Michael Myers leads Jason just by an inch. But when I've done the horror conventions in Canada, Jason is like 90% ahead of Michael Myers. At first I was like, I wonder why that is? and then I was like, Duh he's got a fucking hockey mask. That's why Jason is such a big thing in Canada.

AU: They get The Killer really stoned with an aquarium bong in Scary Movie. Do you partake of the herbal remedies in real life?

DS: I do. I didn't for a lot of years. I did it as a kid and by the time I got to college, I was

already in ever cleanup and get sober program. When kids were just starting, I was already done. Then I got a little older and was like, okay I can just take one little puff before bed. Lately I love the edibles, mainly the gummies. I'm into gummies as kind of a daily vitamin.

AU: How did you first get into acting?

DS: If an actor has a 30 year career like myself, most likely that's the only thing they can do. I wrote my first sketch comedy show in second grade. I did a film called Super pickle on Super 8 in first grade. I've been doing this as long as I can remember. It's really the only thing I can do.

AU: How did you get the role for The Killer in Scary Movie?

DS: I demanded the role of The Killer when I read the script. I was already cast as Doofy and I saw that Doofy was the killer. I saw the potential where the Ghostface character could be funny and there's a lot of physical humor. So I basically told Miramax, if I'm going to play Doofy, I have to play The Killer as well.

AU: Did you keep any props?

DS: I took two masks, the wassup one with the tongue and I took my hero mask. I wish I had grabbed all of them. But I did ask them to take those two masks, a robe, and a knife.

AU: What was your role in The Devil's Rejects and what was it like working with Rob Zombie?



SCARY MOVIE THE KILLER REVEALED

Interview with writer, producer, director, actor, Dave Sheridan

by Ira Hunter

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

Dave Sheridan: What's up? I'm Dave Sheridan and I'm most famous for *Scary Movie*. Playing Doofy and Ghostface was one of my bigger hits. But also *The Devil's Rejects*, *Hatchet 4*, a ton lower budget horror movies and big budget comedies like *Corky Romano*, *Bubble Boy*, *Ghost World* etc. I'm infamous for not really ever having a matching pair of socks.

AU: In Scary Movie, was the character still called Ghostface?

DS: His credit I think is The Killer. I'd have to go back and look at the original *Scream* movies. I think we shot *Scary Movie* after *Scream 3*. I always call myself Ghostface Number Four. Like Ari Lehman is first Jason, I'm fourth Ghostface. When I introduced myself to Ari because he's always like "Hey, Ari Lehman first Jason." I went up to him and said "What's up? Dave Sheridan, fourth Ghostface, first Doofy." He was so confused. I'm wondering what the original credit in *Scream* was. Was it Ghostface or not Ghostface? I don't know.

Fun World/Easter Unlimited released that mask in 1990/91. The producers of *Scream* saw it in a store and thought it fit. They were designing their own mask but they saw that mask and said let's just use this. The *Scream* franchise along with *Scary Movie* were both at the time from the same company Miramax/Dimension. They licensed the

DS: Well, I was a sheriff's deputy Ray Dobson. I was kind of Sheriff Wydell's right hand man. He was my mentor and I was also his peon and lackey. I wouldn't say I was complete comedic relief but I definitely served as a little bit of a lightheartedness to such depraved violence and sickness from the *Firefly* family and WyDell himself as he became unhinged.

That stemmed out of doing a movie called *Ghost World* where I played a character named Doug. Then the Chili Peppers saw *Ghost World* and they put me in two music videos as Doug and I think Rob Zombie saw those. His company reached out and it was great working with Rob. He is definitely a very envisioned and visual director. Then when he hires actors, he really does his homework. He lets an actor go and do what the actor wants to do. I love directors that are hands off with the actors to at least let them go and play. To be immersed and become part of the scene and get into the character. If the director is trying to micromanage and line read and all that other stuff it really just pulls the actor out.

AU: How about your role in Victor Crowley and working with director Adam Green.

DS: I loved working with Adam green. We were friends for about 10 years and I would constantly be hanging out with him at his ArieScope production office. Eventually I got a call out of nowhere and he said I specifically wrote a role for you. When I read a few pages of the dialogue of the character, I was a little like, oh you wrote this for me, do you really view me that way? Because Dillon's a little dumb, a little cocky a little bit of a jackass. He said read the whole thing though. Because his concept of the character was to write a character that the moment you meet this guy, you're like, oh he's dead. I can't wait to see him get killed. Then there's all these different moments where you thought here's were Dillon's gonna get it, but Dillon never got it until he did it to himself. A lot of people don't see that coming like, (Spoiler Alert!) Oh, he's the guy who's going to kill Victor Crowley at the end. I love that film. I think *Victor Crowley* came out great. I refer to it as *Hatchet 4*

AU: How did you meet Felissa Rose, and tell us about the production company you started together? And what projects you've done?

DS: I met Felissa at a convention in 2015. I was screening a movie that I produced called *The Walking Deceased*. Which is kind of like a *Scary Movie* version of *The Walking Dead* meets *Warm Bodies* meets *Zombieland*. The person that runs the convention walked me around and introduced me to everybody. But this is while they were all signing, so she doesn't remember meeting me. But I met her and I took her card. I was sending her emails and some scripts. She was actually running a company called Carolco and I never really heard back. Then when I got on the set for *Victor Crowley* to my surprise, she was also part of the cast. I don't think I ever brought up that she never returned my emails. Haha.

Felissa was amazing in *Victor Crowley*. I think she stole the movie, in



my opinion. We became friends after that and I had her on my podcast. Then she just gave me a call one day to be in one of her films. She's such a prolific producer, she's making like five or six films a year and she's also acting in a lot of those. She started casting me in stuff and she was giving me these opportunities to do some roles that nobody else was thinking about me to do. Ones that really stretched what I was known for and

challenged me as an actor and I absolutely appreciate that and love her for it. We've been doing stuff together for six years now, like 32-33 movies. I think we're both learning a lot about the business. In terms of trying to better our product each time in terms of low budget, ultra low budget horror movies.

AU: Best Halloween costume you ever wore?

DS: In third grade *Star Wars*

was big and I made a Jawa outfit. I made all my costumes growing up. That's just the way it was in the 70s. The worst one I ever made was in second grade. I decided to do the Wolfman. I used karo syrup to glue the cotton balls on my face but I had flies everywhere all around me because of the syrup. So really, I was a fly-ridden Wolfman coming to people's doors.

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?

DS: Someday my goal is to write and direct films. I went to school for writing and directing films and that's really been my ultimate goal all along. I kind of fell into acting because it is in my DNA and once I got going in the Hollywood thing they only see you as one thing. So my scripts and directing kind of fell aside. Because prior to hitting it with *Scary Movie*, I sold like seven scripts to the studios. I worked for DreamWorks, Jim Henson Company, Sony, Paramount. But once I got into the acting they were like, okay, you are an actor. So I'm trying to veer it back. I think in 2023, I would love to finally say, this is the film I wrote and I'm directing it. It probably will be a horror movie. I didn't start out as a horror movie fan, but I've come to really love that genre.

AU: How was your recent experience at the Capital City Comic Con in Victoria and returning to where the original Scary Movie was filmed?

DS: Yes, oddly enough we shot *Scary Movie* in Victoria. How many hit movies have been shot there, let alone a movie that spawned six franchise sequels? So it felt great coming back.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans up here in our igloos?

DS: Be sure to look up a show I did called *Arbor Live*. It's on a Canadian channel called APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network). I am part of the First Nation by blood, so that allowed me to come up and be a part of this Canadian show. It's a music show where we take aboriginal music and cross it with American rockers. We had *Mötley Crüe* on there, we had the *Red Hot Chili Peppers* come and play with aboriginal drummers. I loved that I was able to introduce some of my rocker friends to aboriginal culture.

[tiktok.com/@dave_sheridan](https://www.tiktok.com/@dave_sheridan)





Sleepaway Camp

A Nice Place For Summer Vacation. A Perfect Place To Die!

Interview with actress, producer, and certified scream queen Felissa Rose by Ira Hunter

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

Felissa Rose: Hi, my name is Felissa Rose and I'm most infamous for a movie called *Sleepaway Camp* from 1983.

AU: How did you land the role in this cult horror classic?

FR: I really always loved performing since I was like two years old. Later my parents found a local manager in New York, who was looking for young kids and at the time, I was about 11 or 12 then. My first audition at 12 was for a horror movie called *Sleepaway Camp*. I met with the director, he and I really connected. I loved chatting with him about the film and the character, Angela. Then I did get the part and we started filming when I turned 13.

AU: Were you already a fan of horror at that time or is that something that has had a prolonged effect on you?

FR: I really hadn't been exposed to many horror movies up to that point, but once we started filming *Sleepaway Camp* I became incredibly amazed and captivated by the special effects and storylines. So I really started watching all of the classics at that time. *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* became my favorite movie, the original, and now I'm just a massive fan. I love that adrenaline rush. My whole life has been horror movies.

AU: Can you explain the premise of *Sleepaway Camp* for someone who hasn't seen it?

FR: Spoilers. The story is sort of intricate. I always say it's the kind of film that is better on the second viewing. There are a set of twins, a boy and a girl. Suddenly, there's a boating accident and one



child dies, we think. And then the girl is raised by her aunt and cousin. The girl and the cousin go off to camp, there's a lot of killings of all these teenage campers, who are mean kids. Suddenly one by one they're killed off and then we find out who killed them and the backstory as to why, and the true story behind the twin's death. It's sort of a two fold film in that you learn about the main character, but you

also have these bullies. So there's quite a bit of social commentary. I think it's pretty progressive.

AU: It has a very twisted shock ending to the film. How was it originally received and do you think today the ending is more embraced?

FR: Today there's a lot more communication and a lot more discussion, which I love. Angela has other things going on with gender identification and sexual orientation. So back when it first came out in 1983, I think it did resonate with audiences, it was an original story. But definitely, they were shocked by the ending. I think today we really try to understand this character and we have more compassion.

AU: Was there any hesitation by your parents to let you do the role?

FR: No, my mom and dad loved the idea of me pursuing my dreams and they thought the script was cool. They go to camp. It's a fun horror movie. There's a twist ending.

AU: What are some other gender identity related films that you are a fan of?

FR: I love *The Crying Game*. I recently rewatched *Tootsie* with Dustin Hoffman. If you listen to the monologue at the end that Dustin Hoffman gives, it almost sounds like he's telling the story of *Sleepaway Camp*. So I wonder how much of an influence that film had on the writer of *Sleepaway Camp*, Robert Hiltzik.

AU: How many movies have you been in? What's the number to

officially become a Scream Queen?

FR: I think I've done probably 180. I don't think being a Scream Queen has to do with a number but just your dedication and love for the horror genre.

AU: How was your recent experience as a guest at the Capital City Comic Con in Victoria?

FR: It was one of my most favorite experiences I ever had, truly. It doesn't get better than Victoria. The people were so kind and so positive. I'm still flying high from that convention.

AU: What was your involvement in the sequels to *Sleepaway Camp*?

FR: Well, I met with Michael Simpson, who is the writer and director of parts two and three. But I think he had Pamela Springsteen in mind. When I read the part, the new kind of creation of Angela in the sequels and it didn't really

connect with me. Then I was able to come back for Return to *Sleepaway Camp* and I worked with some of the original people like Robert Hiltzik, Paul DeAngelo, and Jonathan Tiersten. It was really fun to go back 20 years later and recreate that camp feeling like we had in the original one.

AU: What was it like working with Adam Green on the Hatchet film *Victor Crowley*?

FR: I love Adam Green so much. I was already a huge fan of the Hatchet franchise. So for me, it was like living in a dream bubble. I had met him a year prior at a convention in Massachusetts and I received an email from him a month later asking if perhaps I'd like to come by for a Scary Sleepover episode that's on ArieScope.

com. We just really hit it off. When he called me later on to tell me about *Hatchet 4: Victor Crowley* and that he had a role for me, I couldn't stop sobbing because I was so thrilled to be a part of that universe.

AU: Why are there are so few new horror icons?

FR: We, as a horror community, we really are sentimental. I think that's why conventions are such a big part of our world. Because we not only treasure yesteryear, and revel in how we remember seeing, and probably being too young, watching these older classics. We were at sleepovers and we were terrified. So it's not only celebrating the old movies, but it's also celebrating those innocent times. I think with the newer films it's just a different experience. Not saying one is better than the other but certainly it's a different time for movies. We're not going to the video store and seeing the artwork anymore.

AU: Art the Clown is definitely one of the new Horror Icons that has stuck. What can you tell us about *Terrifier 2* and your role in it?

FR: I have a cameo which I'm just thrilled for because I love Damien Leone, David Howard Thornton, and the Fuzz on the Lens team that produced *Terrifier* and *Terrifier 2*, they've become dear friends of mine, and I sort of stalked them like I did Adam Green. I was like "I love *Terrifier* and I love you and I really want to be a part of this." and David was so kind to actually call me and say "I wrote you a scene." So I flew out to New York and just had so much joy being on that set. I played a teacher. It will be a film that we'll be talking about forever and ever. It's a staple now in the genre. Art the Clown is a forever icon.

AU: Do you get killed or do you survive?

FR: You have to go watch the movie. I can't wait to see it in the theater.

AU: What are some upcoming projects you are working on?

FR: I have two films coming out this year one is called *Time's Up* and the other one is called *Dark Circles*. Also other movies called *Late Checkout* and *Watchdog*. I produced a movie called *Maccabre Mountain*. I work closely with Dave Sheridan. We've done 32 films together. So that's a real partnership. We met on *Victor*



Crowley. As a producer and an actor I think he's one of our greatest talents. He was Doofy in *Scary Movie*. I always say he's the Christian Bale of the indie world because I've never worked with an actor who can transform into these characters quite like he does. He's such a chameleon.

AU: Have you also produced any music videos?

FR: Yes, for Slayer. I was fortunate to produce three videos off their *Repentless* album.

AU: Dude: How did that happen? What was the connection there?

FR: My husband is a musician, he was in CKY. Now he's in 96 Bitter Beings and they're signed to Nuclear Blast Records. When they acquired Slayer they were saying to him "Yeah, we're going to make these horror movie videos for Slayer." He said "Talk to my wife, she's a producer." I was like "No I'm not." I bought like three books on Amazon on how to teach myself and I went and produced. I was just faking it. We got through it and we did two more because they loved the first one. It won Best Metal Video for that year.

AU: What are your plans for Halloween this year?

FR: I'll be a guest at a four day haunt in Germany called Halloween Halloween House Alsdorf so come hang out and see myself and

Dave Sheridan and come to this elaborate extensive haunt that I hear is just outrageous. I think I'm too chicken to go in. But certainly I'll be there experiencing our favorite holiday of the year.

AU: What's the story with the *Sleepaway Camp* box set that had the Red Cross logo on it like a first-aid kit? It was recalled?

FR: Yeah, that's exactly what happened. Red Cross said "No, you can't have a horror movie box with the Red Cross symbol on it." So they sent a cease and desist and had them recalled. So anyone who purchased one prior to the recall, it's a collectible. And then they put out the other box set that just said survival kit.

AU: What are some of your favorite horror movies to watch around Halloween?

FR: I love *Funny Games* as well as *Home Invasion*. Of course, *Halloween*, *Halloween Kills*, a lot of the classics like *Friday The 13th*, *The Shining*,

Poltergeist, *Misery*, *The Strangers*. Now *Terrifier*.

AU: VHS or Blu Ray?

FR: I'm a VHS girl!

AU: Horror VHS is rising in value.

FR: It really is. People come to my table all the time and they're like, "I can't get *Sleepaway Camp* on VHS. So we're hopefully putting out a limited edition at some point. I think that would be cool.

AU: Final words for Canadian horror fans up here in the frozen wastes.

FR: I love you so much Canada. I'll be coming back for Shock Stock in London, Ontario. Also, if you have Shudder up there, check out *The Last Drive-in* with Joe Bob Briggs.

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bit about it? What are some of the new songs all about? Any tracks you are pumped about?
 BH: Violence, drugs, poverty, survival, rock and roll, love and the bond all these things make. The whole album's top shelf like with one of our first singles "Tenement Kids" as soon as I spat



The Black Halos How the Darkness Doubled

Interview by Chuck Andrews

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

BH: Billy Hopeless, your friend and humble narrator.

RJ: I'm Rich Jones and I started the Halos in 1994 with Billy Hopeless.

AU: What are some career highlights and lowlights you might be willing to share for the unacquainted?

BH: Playing CBGBs, eating a pizza cooked in CBGBs kitchen.

RJ: I once played a set of Damned songs in London with Rat Scabies, Sami Yaffa, Ginger Wildheart, Frank Turner, Jim Jones and Beki Bondage. I also once played a set of my own songs to 3 people in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

AU: You guys have a new full length album coming out soon? Do you want to tell us a little

out the opening lyrics, "Crooks and castles cracks and assholes," I knew we were really creating masterworks.

RJ: It's a nasty, greasy slab of scummy rock anthems that slides right into our catalogue next to our best work. It's been inspiring being back together with Billy and Jay for the first time in over 20 years, and John and Danni have brought a new fire to the band. I'm pretty stoked about this record!

AU: How does this album compare to previous releases?

BH: Though the *Alive Without Control* album after Rich left held its own, this one sounds like the direct follow up to the *Violent Years*.

RJ: Obviously this is the best thing we've ever done.

AU: Any new influences musically or otherwise on the new record?

BH: I work overnight healthcare in Vancouver's downtown eastside so a lot of the lyrics came from my surroundings. It's a never-ending source of adventure and inspiration.

AU: Is the current lineup the original lineup of the band?

RJ: Myself, Jay and Billy are from the original lineup. John Kerns is one of our oldest friends - you may know him from *The Age Of Electric* - and Danni Action came to us from Toronto scumbags ACIDZ

AU: Right before the pandemic hit you played a show with Bishops Green in Vancouver, correct? Was that going to be the return of the Black Halos, but you got side swiped by Covid? Or was it more of a one off?

RJ: In true Halos fashion we were getting ready to make a record and relaunch the band when Covid hit, so we got derailed for a while. So yeah, that show was supposed to be the start of our return. Instead we all went home for two years. But, you know, it gave us a lot of time to work on songs and I think it was a blessing in disguise because we ended up writing some of the strongest songs on the album during that time.

AU: Is Rich Jones playing in both the Black Halos and Michael Monroe's band?

RJ: I am! I'm currently writing to you from Helsinki where we're getting ready for a big show tomorrow for Michael's 60th birthday.

BH: On one song on the album we're all playing with Mr. Monroe (he guests on our cover of *The Wanderers*' "Ready To Snap").

AU: Are you guys excited for your upcoming show with L7?

BH: We became like family when we toured together years ago and the bond still holds, it's always very exciting to reunite with our Sisters!

RJ: Absolutely! We toured with them quite a bit in the early 2000s and they were some of the coolest, nicest people that we ever toured with. So this is a bit of a reunion and I'm really looking

forward to seeing them again!

AU: Do you have any set plans to do a tour once the new album is out?

RJ: Well back in the day we were one of the hardest touring bands out there.

These days everyone has pretty different lives but we'll definitely be getting out there to play some shows once the album is released.

AU: Any plans for Halloween this year?

BH: I'm working so it's another Halloween on Hastings for me.

AU: Craziest Halloween you can remember?

BH: I've got to go with *Halloween 3 Season of the Witch*, though it's a total offshoot from the main storyline it's a cult unto its own and one of my personal faves.

RJ: Gotta agree with Billy on this one. I really hated *Halloween 3* when it came out but now I see it as the stand-alone cult classic that it is. Powerhouse performance from Tom Atkins as well.

AU: Best costume you ever wore?

BH: One year I dressed up as John Lennon and no one recognized me including Rich.

AU: Anything else to mention or plug?

BH: We have an exclusive song in the soundtrack to a killer Troma film called *Eating Miss Campbell* that's out now and will be available on the soundtrack vinyl next year sometime.

AU: Final words of Rock 'n Roll wisdom for our readers.

BH: To quote Jay Millette, "I'm not taking smart lessons from Billy Hopeless."

AU: How do people find you online?

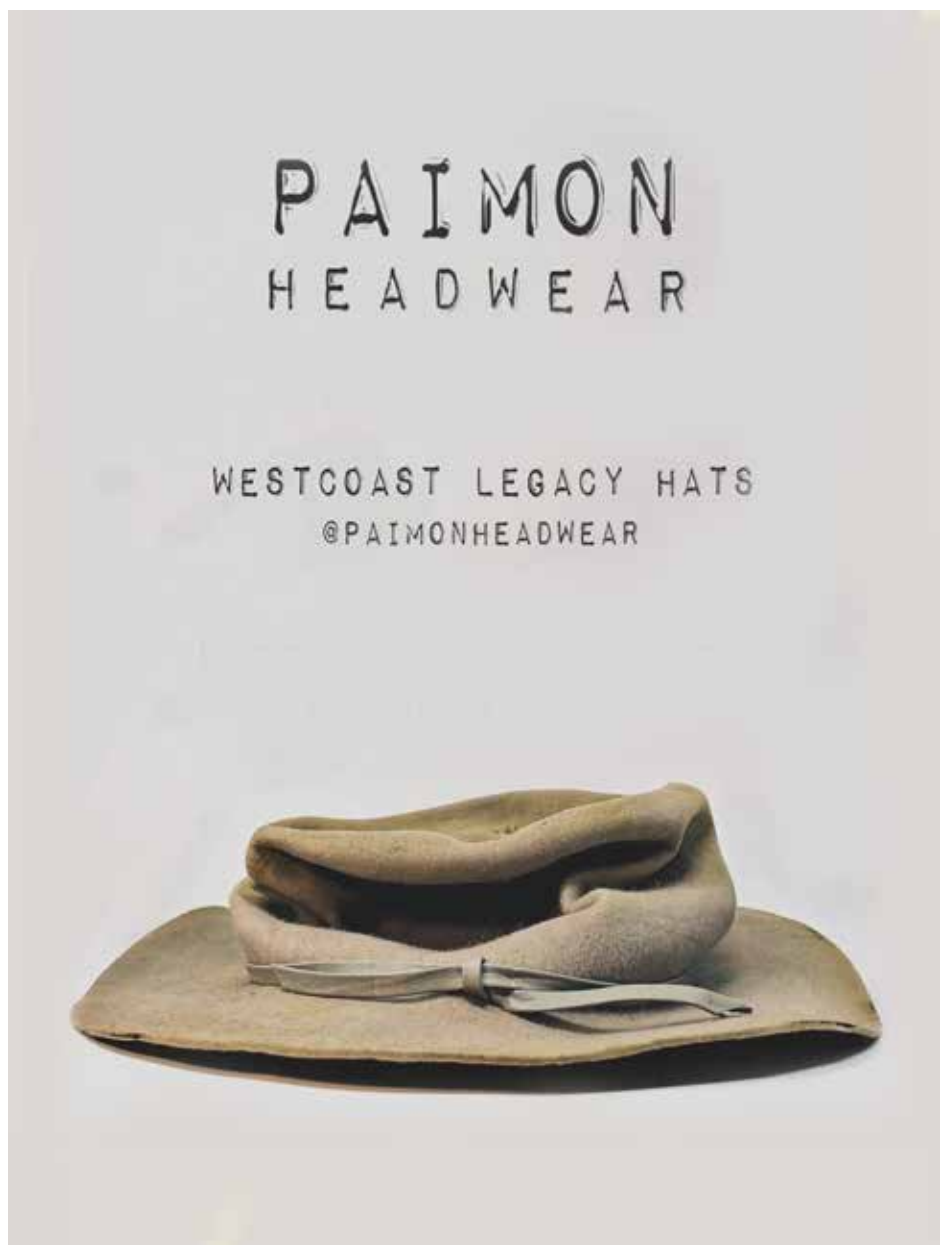
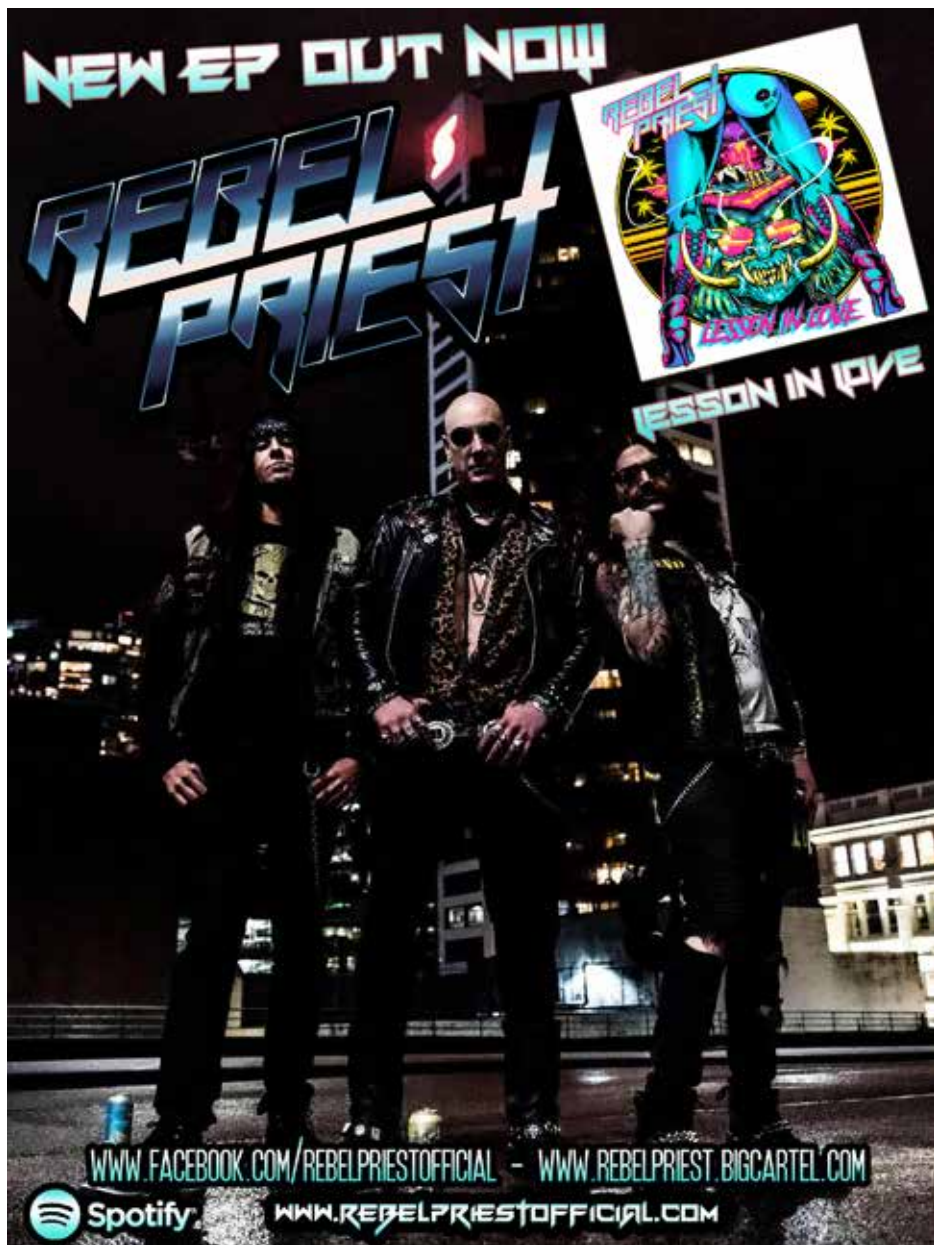
BH: Quite amusing I'm told

[facebook.com/TheBlackHalos](https://www.facebook.com/TheBlackHalos)

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Photo Credit: Michael Crusty





The Sorels Sorels-o-Ween III - The Season of the Witch

by Billy Hopeless

When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightening, or in rain? When the hurly-burly's done, When the battle's lost and won. Therefore to meet MacBilley! Well kiddies it's my favourite time of year again and for this Halloween I've got a special triple threat treat for all of you. The sisters Sorel are as wicked as they are enchanting and put a charm on me at first listen. It's always exciting for me when that old black magic has me in its spell, but when I find a new young fresh cast of magic, well, it's witchcraft. So grab onto you're bedknobs and broomsticks we're off to Witchypeg Man-I-Told-Ya to visit my new Canadian crush, The Sorels!

names like Which Witch Which?

JR: Our pal Jan had it in his pocket and suggested it for us. It's a tip of the hat to The Shirelles, with a smack of prairie winter boots. We played with The Headpins at The Walker Theatre (a gorgeous old haunted vaudeillian theatre in Winnipeg) where Darby Mills told us it meant "sisters" in Italian! She WAILS!

BH: Holy hot pockets, don't that make you feel like dancing? Now let's talk about the craft. When yer brewing one of your musical charm spells, what are the key ingredients to mesmerizing a pumpkin head like me?

JR: 1-part sweet candy. A fist full of nails and whiskey. Just a pinch of get off yo ass.

JILL: And some hand claps. Gotta have the hand claps.



HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

BH: Ok, let's let er fly, are you witches? Cause if there's one thing I've learned from Shakespeare to the Sanderson Sisters, it's that witches always work in threes and you are a trio thus you must float like ducks.

Paige: I'm the good witch of the North.
JR: I AM ON FIRE!

JILL: I am buoyant, yes... and I may have been called a witch several times in my life, but I assure you I'm not made of wood! (Please do not attempt to build a bridge out of me!)

BH: So what's in a name? Where did you get the name The Sorels from, which is way more original than if you were to go with one of those trendy witch band

BH: Ah yes the clap I've been warned about that. I guess we should talk about your home haunt of Winnipeg, which also like witch, starts with a W. What's the scene like in Witchypeg these nights?

Paige: Winnipeg is a cheap place full of cheap people and cheap thrills. I mean this as a compliment. I MOVED HERE!

JR: I see the same ghouls and goblins at a rap show, then a rock n roll show, and then at a metal show! It's the BEST! Lots of comradery, collaborating with so many different cool weird artists.

JILL: Yeah, Winnipeg's always had an incredible scene for underground music and art for weirdos. Even though it's way too cold most of the year, and people get real stabby...Witchypeg's where it's at!

BH: Yer newest and third release is out on Reta Records and is entitled Love Your Rock N' Roll. Who's rock and roll do you love and listen to for inspiration?

JR: Slade, The Go Go's, Sweet, The Chantels, Ramones.

BH: If each member of your coven had a familiar, or could transform into one, what would they be?

Paige: It would be sick to trade places with my cat for a day and let him go out and earn the cat food money for once while I lay around.

JR: Bat Girl. Not DC comic, but National Enquirer.

JILL: Some days I truly feel I must be part human, part house cat (I have three at home!)...who's to say I don't already trade places with one of my furry familiars? Who would know?!

BH: Will you be flying out on tour soon or will you just be gathering around your stove in your cool candy houses 'til summer?

JR: Booked our broomsticks for some December shows in Ottawa and Montreal with Taxi Girls & Street Panther, as well Edmonton in January... dun, dun dun... are you scared?

JILL: Winnipeg's tiniest tuffest girl gang comin' yr way!! We're hoping to get out there a lot more in 2023. The sky's the limit when you've got a magic broom!

BH: Since this is our Halloween issue what do The Sorels dish out for Halloween to all the little rock n roll goblins?

Paige: Hawkins Cheezies.

JR: Nutty Club Pearled Peanuts.

JILL: I always do the trifecta; mini bags of chips, some kinda candy (Swedish berries? Sour patch kids?) and some kinda teeny chocolate bars. Y'know, cover all the food groups.

BH: You had me at pearled peanuts and Hawkins cheezies, much better than a shiny apple any day. So, if our non-local readers want to fill their trick or treat bags witch your magical merch sent by flying monkeys, where can they send their requests?

JR: Visit our website thesorels.com to snatch our treats! Reta Records bandcamp, and Surfin Ki records at sufinkirecords.bigcartel.com

BH: Well, it's sure been a pleasure visiting you and until I meet with ye three again look into your cauldron and tell us what do you see in the future for the Sorel sisters?

JR: Look out!! The Sorels are coming your way to get you and your little dog tooooooo!!!

Jill: (Woof!)

thesorels.com

retarecords.bandcamp.com

sufinkirecords.bigcartel.com



Devouring Void

Interview by Devon Drive

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

We are Devouring Void, and we play black metal in the ways of old, but with our own spin on things.

AU: What bands have you been in previously?

AR: My previous band was War Boar. It was black/death kinda stuff.

KB: I have been playing filthy black metal with Euthanized since 2016, and have my hands in some other shit as well.

KH: I've played in a couple bands before Void that are not worth writing about.

AU: Share with us the legend of Devouring Void.

This project has been a vision since around 2014, but a fleshed out project since 2019. KB and I got it going originally as a side project for both of our bands, and over time, it developed into our main focus. After adding KH to the fold, we wrote, recorded and released a demo in December of that year. We have since begun work on a full length album, and have played a handful of shows in western Canada.

AU: Who is in the band and what do they bring to the table?

AR: Nefarious dissonance, preacher of negativity. Dismal compositions

KB: Low end, howls of agony, signer of unholy pacts and live belligerence.

KH: Hammers from hell and master of occult auditory necromancy

AU: Describe the band's sound if humanly possible.

A mixture of second wave black metal negativity with bits and chunks of first wave black metal and speed metal vomited on top.

AU: Have you released an album recently? What can we expect to hear?

It has been nearly 3 years since the demo, and we are working very steadily on the upcoming LP.

AU: Any stand-out tracks? What are some of the songs on the new album about?

We are not yet releasing track names or information about the new lp, but there are several stand-out moments. Thematically, the LP will continue in the same fashion as the "Septic fluids..." demo, preaching nihilistic hatred towards the futility of the human race.

AU: How did you survive the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?

We hope nobody survives.

AU: What's the most intense Halloween

you can remember? Best costume you ever wore?

KB: I can't, that's the point.

AR: I can't stand halloween costumes, they can all fuck off and die.

KH: Fukk off with that communist shit.

AU: How can people check out the tunes? Is there a physical release planned?

"Septic Fluids Dripping from the Open Wounds of Gaia" is available on spotify, bandcamp and youtube. Physical tapes are all gone. We may do another pressing once the LP is out, time will tell.

ABSOLUTE METAL

AU: What's the play by play for your live performance?

People stand with their arms crossed. It's a good time.

AU: Any tour plans?

None as we speak, but that is bound to change once the LP is released.

AU: Final words for our devoured readers?

If you are false. Do not enter.

Devouringvoid.bandcamp.com



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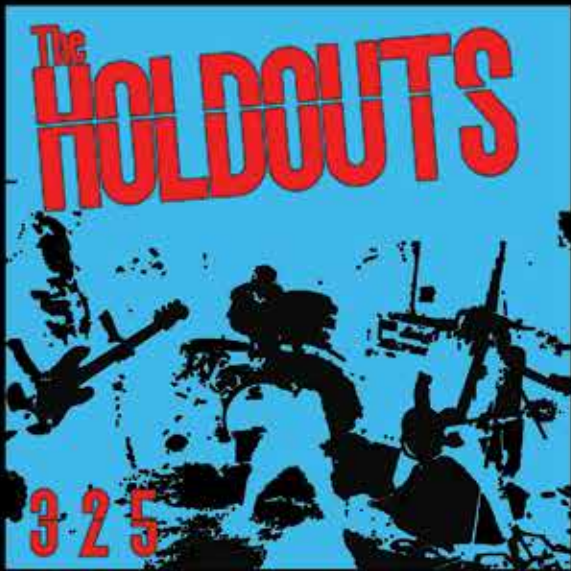
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Anxious Pleasers

Total Rock 'n' Roll Annihilation

By Ira Hunter and B.A. Johnston

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are some of your many talents?

Matt Ellis. Hamilton punk rock musician. Talents include slugging it out in the Hammer city underground and I also manage to be able to take naps almost anywhere these days.

AU: What is the origin story of your band, Anxious Pleasers.

Matt: We've all been friends for years since high school and before. Our first band Rocket Reducers played for years and did a few albums. It had been like 15 years since we all played together so it was time for something again. Our bands played shows together and we shared members and even a jam space for a while.

We started this band as a low key project since TJ and myself were sharing Burger on Drums in our bands, Flesh Rag and TV Freaks. We figured why not one more band with Burger on drums and combine the two for something new? We played a few shows, recorded an album and enter Covid-19 and everything went on ice. Two of us have families now and the world opens back up and here we are. Too stupid to stop playing Rock 'n' Roll music!

AU: Who all is in the band and what are your claims to fame?

Matt: TJ sings and plays guitar. This band is his baby. His claim to fame is his musical ability combined with his artistic eye and his rugged good looks.

Burger played drums on the album and (wherever he lives) his claim to fame is he drove his bike from Hamilton to Victoria last summer! And he's everybody's best friend. He is the mayor of good times!

I'm Matt and I play bass, I try not to drive on show night, and my claim to fame is I haven't had to bring my bass amp to one show yet! (Mikey let me borrow that old ampeg again soon please! It sounds fucking killer!)

Curtis is the drummer for us now. I met him when we started playing in PlasticHeads. He plays in Imploders from Toronto, your new favourite punk band. He has the fastest hi-hats in Ontario!

AU: Describe the band's sound and describe your live show if possible.

Matt: The band's live show is straight ahead classic punk rock. Three guys playing fast, honest and fun music. Pagans, Saints, Dead Boys ect. Snotty punk rock that's a little rough around the edges but is still catchy.

AU: Tell us about the most recent album you put out. Any other new music in the works?

Matt: The album was recorded right before the pandemic. The world turned sour quick and we forgot about it. Finally we mixed it and put it out on a tape because we thought that would be it, but then our friend Josh heard it. He runs one of Canada's best punk labels, Neon Taste Records, and he offered to put it out properly as an LP and things were opening back up and it felt right to continue. Burger had moved to Vancouver and Curt stepped in on drums for us. It's really the first band TJ has sang for and I usually don't play bass so it's been great for us all to mix things up. We have a lot of fun playing and we are very proud of this album. There will be another one in the works after we play some shows to support

this one.

AU: What songs are you most stoked on?

Matt: My favourite song is the album opener 'Suck', it's simple and catchy punk rock and I get to play a fun little bass line. It was the first song we played together and I knew it clicked right away and we had something good going.

AU: Who are some of the other killer Hamilton bands around these days? What are the best venues to play locally?

Matt: Favourite local band right now is

ANXIOUS PLEASERS

Bad Crush, first time I saw them at Hammer City Records! was floored! Punk with a tinge of garage/dark surf. They are playing our album release. There is also a real great black punk/metal band called Hex Offender.

Best club is the Doors Pub taco joint and metal bar. It's a staple of the city. Our favourite club was the legendary This Ain't Hollywood (RIP). The city lost a big one when it closed. We also all miss Gord Lewis, a true Hamiltonian and guitar hero. Thanks for all the mean licks and memories Gordie! FUCK THE REST CUZ HEADS THE BEST!

AU: Any plans for Halloween this year? Most nutty Halloween you can remember? Greatest costume you ever wore?

Matt: Best one was Dr Frank-N-Furter from *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. I was bartending years ago and wore it to work. I ruined my relationship with some of the regulars as the macho guys could never look me straight in the eyes the same way after that!

I am a family man now with two little girls so I'll be dressed up with my daughters and Partner and trick or treating and listening to the monster mash till I can't Mash no more! My oldest is thinking we go as the Addams family or us all

dressed as black cats and bats. She gets the final say on this one!

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

Matt: The last album I released was a solo album titled *Full Moon Fever*. I just started working on the follow up. I had a lot of fun making it on my own so that's my winter plans. Punk rock hibernation.

The almighty TV Freaks are recording another album. Burger did his drum takes when he was home visiting this summer. As always it will be an absolute ripper and you will love it!

AU: Any final words of wisdom for our readers?

Matt: Life is short so be nice, don't let the bastards grind you down, eat your veggies and make sure you brush your teeth.

B.A. JOHNSTON BONUS QUESTIONS

BA: What's your fav submarine sandwich shop in town and what's your go to order?

Matt: Speedy subs. The guy there makes the subs fast! He left Fennel subs (my first local shop) and went solo years back. Prices are good and it's super close to me. Sometimes you just need an old school sub. When you crave one there is no substitute!

BA: You ever wear shorts on stage? If not, why not? How hot would it have to be to get you to wear them on stage?

Matt: I do not wear shorts when I play. I wear jeans. You ever see Joey Ramone, Kieth Richards or Lemmy in Shorts on stage? No, they want to look good. shorts just make you look like a kid. They are ok for the beach or the backyard. Angus Young, now that fucker can wear shorts but I mean...that's tough to beat. but I am a super serious and cool Rock 'n' Roll tough guy! No time for shorts no matter how hot it is. If you can wear shorts and feel comfy, great. But for me wearing shorts is like forgetting your wallet, or not having a belt on... I'm just missing something. My vanity knows no bounds!

BA: You are trapped in a hotel for 24 hours alone with a VCR. What tapes you bringing?

Matt: Let's go October style.

Evil Dead, *Evil Dead 2* or *Army of Darkness*. My first true VHS love was those films, I've seen em many times. True classics and each has its own vibe but

HAM JAMMERS



classic B movie, slapstick, action, laugh fest all around.

I'm a big John Carpenter fan but *Halloween* is a benchmark film for the slasher genre. The theme song is iconic and I love all Carpenter's synth work also.

Phantasm. I just rewatched it and what a weird film with a lot going on. It's just nuts on so many levels. The tall man and those weird flying balls? Crazy!

Hellraiser. I seem to have watched this in October a few years in a row. Sexy S&M demons who tear people apart? Sign me up. "I AM LIVING IN HELL!"

Big ups to the original *Dawn of the Dead*.

Zombies in a mall? Still relevant and representative of where the human race is at these days.

BA: How you goobers get to shows? Describe your band ride.

Matt: Embarrassingly nice. I'm a Dad so I upped my mini-van game and got a Honda Odyssey. I remove the kids seats pre-gig, vacuum the cheerio crumbs up and remind everyone no smoking in the van anymore and no road beers. Sorry boys. If you get bored or lonely on the ride there are crayons and stuffed animals in the back seat though.

anxiouspleasers.bandcamp.com

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PHOTO CREDIT: Philip Monahan



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Publisher : Catacomb Publishing

Print length : 260 pages

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Trick 'r Treat Sam Speaks

Interview with actor Quinn Lord at 2022 Calgary Horror Con panel.
Moderated by Chadsolute

AU: Have you ever read the graphic novel for *Trick 'r Treat*? It continues to story on a little bit more than the movie.

Quinn Lord: Read it thoroughly? No. I think I definitely looked at a lot of the pictures as I was very young at the time. But I'll probably have to go and look through it, now that I've actually matured.

AU: Were you allowed to see *Trick 'r Treat* in full when you were done filming?

QL: Well, I ended up attending a lot of the screenings. Because there was a delay between its finished filming and the release and it didn't get a theatrical release, it got a DVD release. But during that time, the director Michael Dougherty ended up taking it to a whole bunch of horror festivals. We got to walk the black carpet not the red carpet. That was a lot of fun. So at those screenings I ended up watching it. But because I was so young at the time my parents came

with me and it's like, okay yeah maybe not the werewolf stuff. That's a little suggestive. But yeah when you slash the person's throat out, that's fine.

AU: How does it feel for you to know that you played a character that shares a similar holiday to Michael Myers from *Halloween*?

QL: A little surreal. Never really expected that. It's been a huge awesome experience.

AU: Do you like horror movies now as an adult? And who is your favorite horror movie character that isn't Sam?



QL: I'd say Ash from *Army of Darkness* and Shaun from *Shaun of the Dead*. These movies are more comedy than horror. I don't get scared very easily. This has been the case since I was a kid. So therefore, I was able to see a lot of scary stuff. I think the only movie that truly scared me was *Volcano*. It wasn't even really a horror movie. It was like a natural disaster movie. I'm like that can actually happen. Look how fast that lava is moving, fuck, Run!

AU: What was the casting process like for *Trick 'r Treat*?

QL: I don't remember the whole casting process but I remember the audition. I was like, Okay this is kind of like a demonic kind of child here. Also, this is another thing for the audition I think Sam even had lines. Looking back on that, Sam was speaking. I think the audition material was when Sam was walking up to Mr. Kreeg to deliver the final blow. But he was sort of slowly talking

while he's walking forwards, it was like "Give me something good to eat," but I was doing my little demonic kind of growl at the time because I'm having fun with that as a kid. I think the main thing that happened with the audition was I was just having so much fun playing a demonic character that right afterwards as I was about to leave, I was like "Do you want me to show you something I think Sam would do?" Mike is like "Yeah, do it," so I ended miming petting a little cat saying nice kitty, nice kitty and then I grabbed it by the tail and walked away. I think it actually made it into the movie because when he gets the Hollie-ho bar from Dylan Baker's character he turns around and he drags the sack down the stairs and he hears something is in the bag and you hear a cat. So a nice little easter egg there. *Trick 'r Treat* had a bit of morbid curiosity to it.

AU: Have you ever thought about how you're part of an unofficial trilogy of movies where people know the true meaning of Halloween between *Trick 'r Treat*, *Halloween III* and *The Halloween Tree*?

QL: That sounds interesting. I'm going to have to look into that. I like connections that aren't there but are there. I saw one on some random YouTube video. It's like, "Remember Willy Wonka with Gene Wilder? and you remember *Snowpiercer* with Chris Evans? They're the same!" I was like holy shit! I have to watch both of them again. I'm going to delve deep into that rabbit hole now. Thank you.

AU: Any new projects you have coming up?

QL: I just finished filming an indie superhero movie. My first superhero movie. It's called *Iké Boys* and it's anime related.

AU: How many horror conventions do you do a year?

QL: I have a whole bunch more conventions this year so I'm really going to focus on that aspect. Usually I was doing two or three a year, but now it's like seven. I'm also really looking forward to the merchandise and everything because there's so much new Sam stuff every single time I go to a convention.

AU: Since playing Sam in the movie, have you ever dressed up as him for Halloween?

QL: Not for Halloween, no. I only did it for a costume contest once and everyone just lost their shit.

AU: Do you have a collection of all your Sam stuff?

QL: I have a glass cabinet and it's got Sam merchandise that I get from conventions. It's more like people generously just bring me cool stuff. Some are personally made.

AU: Where's the original costume and the sucker?

QL: There was a screening in 2013 and I remember seeing it in a glass box sort of just standing there. But that was a long time ago. I only ever got to keep just a few sheets of the original burlap material. So I could make my own mask, maybe, with the original material.

AU: We know the *Trick 'r Treat* rules from the movie. Is there any that you would add?

QL: I think the rules sum it up pretty well. You don't want to add too many rules or this little guy will come after you if you break the slightest one or try to bend one.

AU: On the Blu-ray release they did these little

vignettes like, *Halfway to Halloween*. Were you involved with those at all?

QL: No. I probably outgrew the costume by then. I could have maybe but then you'd see some full grown person in a Sam costume. It'd be a little questionable.

AU: Watching *Trick 'r Treat* as an adult now, which is one of your favorite stories that doesn't involve Sam?

QL: Don't all the stories from *Trick 'r Treat* involve Sam? So where Sam is not the forefront character? Well, I do take a liking to the werewolf storyline. Also Dylan Baker's involvement, his character being who you think is the hunter but becomes the victim. That aspect of it I thought was pretty cool. It was a nice trap for him.

AU: Are your favorite projects you've worked on?

QL: There was one project where practically the entire movie was in the studio with harness and green screen work. It was a lot of fun. It was for the debut of an album by the band Nightwish. It's called *Imaginaerum*. Basically the premise of the movie was what goes on inside the head of a dementia patient. It's really trippy. *Trick 'r Treat*. Need I say more? Halloween for months on end? It was around Christmas and I just sort of came in with gifts. I was wearing the orange jumpsuit and I ended up putting on a little Christmas hat that had the attached beard. I called myself Samta Claus. So that was a blast. Of course Mike Dougherty is like I want you to go over to that person and say, Red Rum.

AU: So with your costume as Sam, and burlap being the most luxurious of materials, did you end up with any chafing?

QL: No, I was fairly well protected. I think it had to do with the way the orange jumpsuit had a little bit of a collar on it and then the sort of bubble apparatus that was on top but underneath the burlap. I think I only felt a little bit of burlap when I did the head tilt. But that's it.

AU: Did you get to eat a lot of candy on set?

QL: Yes, they did have a nice little crafty tent. So whatever I desired it was there. But I tend not to be a sweet tooth kind of person. I don't jump at the chance to get candy for some reason. I don't know what went wrong in my childhood.

AU: Because they do *Versus* movies in horror sometimes, is there anyone you'd like to see Sam go up against? Like *Chucky* maybe?

CL: I mean, fight someone your own size, right? Oh, there's so many. I ended up running into Mads Mikkelsen when he was still doing *Hannibal* the TV series. So we have a nice little photo of me with the lollipop looking at him and he's looking at me. It's almost like a little versus poster. So that would have been pretty cool.

AU: Do you find yourself following the Halloween rules from the movie now?

QL: Oh yeah. Well for the past three years of this pandemic I was following the one of not going to a stranger's house.

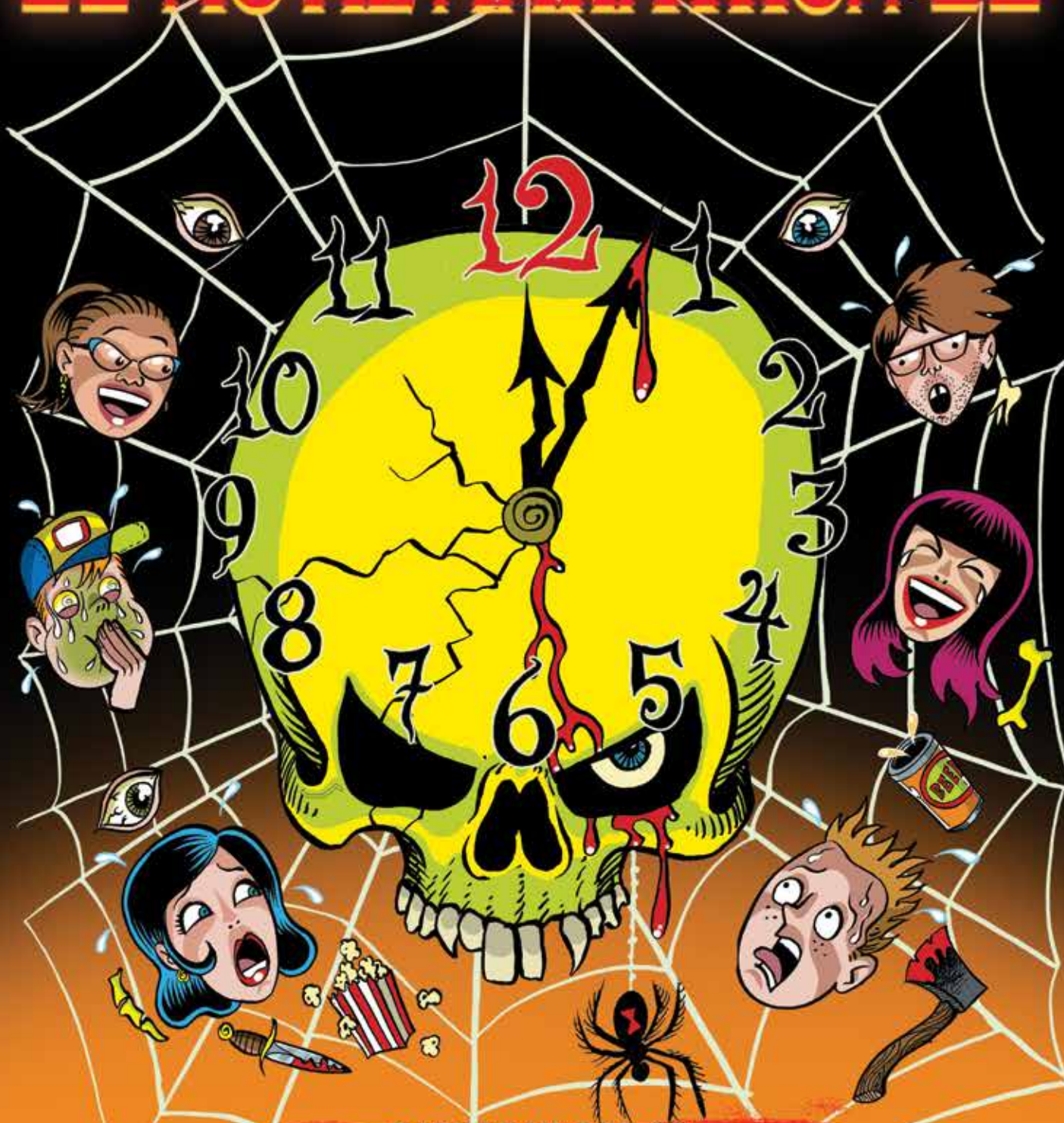
AU: Given the opportunity would you participate in the making of *Trick 'r Treat 2*?

QL: If I can I absolutely will. That would not only be a nostalgia trip for me but if there is any of the same crew or cast again that would be a reunion and a half.

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Forbidden Dimension Horror Is My Business and Business Is Good

By Ty "Crawling Eye" Stranglehold

With the shadows growing long and a bite in the air, we turn our attention to all things ghoulish and creepy. In the frozen tundra of Canada, one band has been at the forefront of all that goes bump in the night for more than thirty years. Calgary's Forbidden Dimension.

Originally slithering from the crypt of garage rock stalwarts Color Me Psycho in the late 80s, Forbidden Dimension is the evil brainchild of the dual personalities of horror obsessed artist Tommy Bagley (a.k.a. TOMB) and a guitar slinging wraith known as Jackson Phibes. Beginning with

a drum machine and a nightmare and later a shambling horde of rhythm sections, for the last fifteen years the lineup has been solid featuring Phibes, along with Virginia Dentata on bass and PT Bonham on drums.

We reached out the only way we know how to contact the band (other than social media, of course). As the wind picked up, and the power went out, the planchette began to move on the Ouija board... we had entered the Forbidden Dimension.

Absolute Underground: Is this Ouija board on?

Whom am I communicating with?

TB: This is Tommy Bagley. Jackson Phibes is around somewhere but he's hiding from an angry torch-bearing mob so he said I could answer for him. He's probably in the old watch-tower.

AU: Did the decade of being cryogenically frozen between 1997's *Widow's Walk* and 2007's *A Cool Sound Outta Hell* change the direction of FD at all?

TB: Definitely. More involved bits, some elements becoming more metallic, other parts being more weirdo wonky garage rock. Overall, basically the same approach throughout though. It's been nice working and evolving the band with different people than the old Cargo Records-days guys.

AU: I have often likened FD songs to individual episodes of classic shows such as *Twilight Zone* or *Tales From Crypt* or films like *Creepshow*. Do you approach each song with a theme or lyrics first, or does the music direct where the story

goes?

TB: It's different each time! Often a song title will present itself and I'll have to fit the words/music to fit the concept. Sometimes I'll have the music and think it's going to be a big menacing number, but then it gets twisted into some goofy concept lyrically before the tune sees the light of day.

AU: Speaking of the very specific sub-genre of "horror-rock", is that a label that you embrace? Is there any kind of fraternal order amongst bands that lurk in that particular swamp? I picture a *Cracked Monster Party* kind of scenario.

TB: "Horror rock" is fine as a term, allowing that there are many different musical styles and themes one can work with beneath that particular bat-shaped umbrella. We always still get the Misfits/Cramps comparison attached to our music, esp. in reviews, but I really don't hear it. Have these reviewers actually listened to the Cramps? I certainly don't mind being tarred (and feathered) with the macabre brush though. I like being invited to the *Cracked Monster Party*!

AU: I understand that you are a collector of curiosities. What is your favorite horror toy and why?

TB: I have lotsa figures n' skulls (Randottis!). My wife collects weird stuff too. It kinda looks like Pee Wee's Playhouse around here, but with more Movie posters, books n' old magazines. I still love my old AHI Frankie action figure I got in Grade 4, even though our dog of the day ate his little plastic shoes. Those old Imperial Toys rubber



gorillas are treasured keepsakes.

A lot of my favourite horror stuff tends to be more paper goods. Lotsa old posters and horror mags. I just tack 'em up though, hang rubber bats and shrunken heads off the pins. I don't care if I'm devaluing them! The old mags I take care of, though.

AU: How far does your creepy influence reach? FD is known Canada wide as being top purveyors of the macabre, but what about the rest of the world?

TB: A few overseas followers (Poland! Switzerland!), a few in the States. We're still pretty sub-underground compared to a lot of the bands out there. We're so far-out, we're...out! Sub-cult is good. Obscurity ftw!

AU: I feel that the aesthetic of FD could not be complete without the visual art of Jackson Phibes' alter ego TOM B. Could you have one without the other?

TB: It's always been akin to a sprawling art project, so that's the way I like to roll!

AU: How would you describe the art you create? What are some of the coolest art



projects you've worked on in the past?

TB: I try to work within my limitations, so I keep it cartoony, occasionally going for a bit of quasi-anatomical accuracy. Any time I get hired to create a drawing for an interesting band or publication is cool! I really enjoyed doing the Corb Lund project recently. I also love making the drawings for the Video Vulture YouTube show that they kind of animate in the opening credits. That stuff is an extension of a local weekly movie column I used to illustrate back in the days of print media, which I truly miss.

Going back a few years, the old FUBAR book was a fun project.

AU: Does Jackson Phibes have an eerie origin story?

TB: We all do! PT Bonham and Virginia Dentata too! Self-illustrated versions appeared in the *Morbid World* CD from 2017 (vinyl re-issue in the New Year!). All drawn on post-it notes.

AU: How did the current round of reissues on Wasted Wax come about? Was it satisfying to see the earlier albums get the vinyl release that they deserve?

TB: It began with a flippant remark! A friend was selling his old FD cassettes on Facebook and somebody said something about how "somebody should release all that stuff on vinyl!". Bart at Wasted Wax figured it was a good idea! I went about re-designing the *Mars Is Heaven* tape from 1990 and the 3 *Cargo* albums. I kept the illustrations to era-specific sources like gig posters and T-shirt designs and coloured everything so they sort of resembled old underground comics (Skull, Slow Death etc) or blacklight posters.

Bart kept the numbers low so they've been selling really well. A couple of them are long gone now.



TB: It was my first band that wasn't a basement high school heavy metal band. Definitely leaned way more towards 60s punk (spot the Remains and Sonics ripoffs!), although we were also putting in some 70s punk and stuff like Killing Joke/ Alice Cooper. The first cassette was from 1986 and it just got reissued on LP last year. First time I was ever in a recording studio! It kinda sounds like juvenilia to me. I don't

think my balls had dropped yet. The reissue was AI (Zon Zippers) and Jack Tielman's baby, but I was happy to re-design the cover art from the old cassette images. P.T. Bonham (long-time FD drummer) was the drummer in CMP in another Earthling incarnation, so we've been joined at the

hip since '85 (few years apart in the 90s, of course).

AU: What can you tell us about the horrifying new music you're working on? What else is in store for FD?

TB: We are just finishing off studio album #9 at present for release next year. It will be called *Midnight Stew*, mostly written over the Covid break. Wasted Wax will be handling that as well as first-time vinyl releases of our last two albums, *Morbid World* and *Muchas Moscas*. (We're going through our "M" album title-era!)

AU: Any plans for Halloween this year? What's the most insane Devil's Night you can remember?

TB: I believe we have a local all-ages gig this year. The most fun Halloween we've had in recent memory was the Boston/NYC trip in 2018, which included the legendary haunted New England Road Trip. Visited Lovecraft's grave, stayed at the

Lizzy Borden house n' stuff. Hard to beat that one with a bloody board.

AU: Where do you draw your corpse paint influences from? How has your decayed look evolved over time?

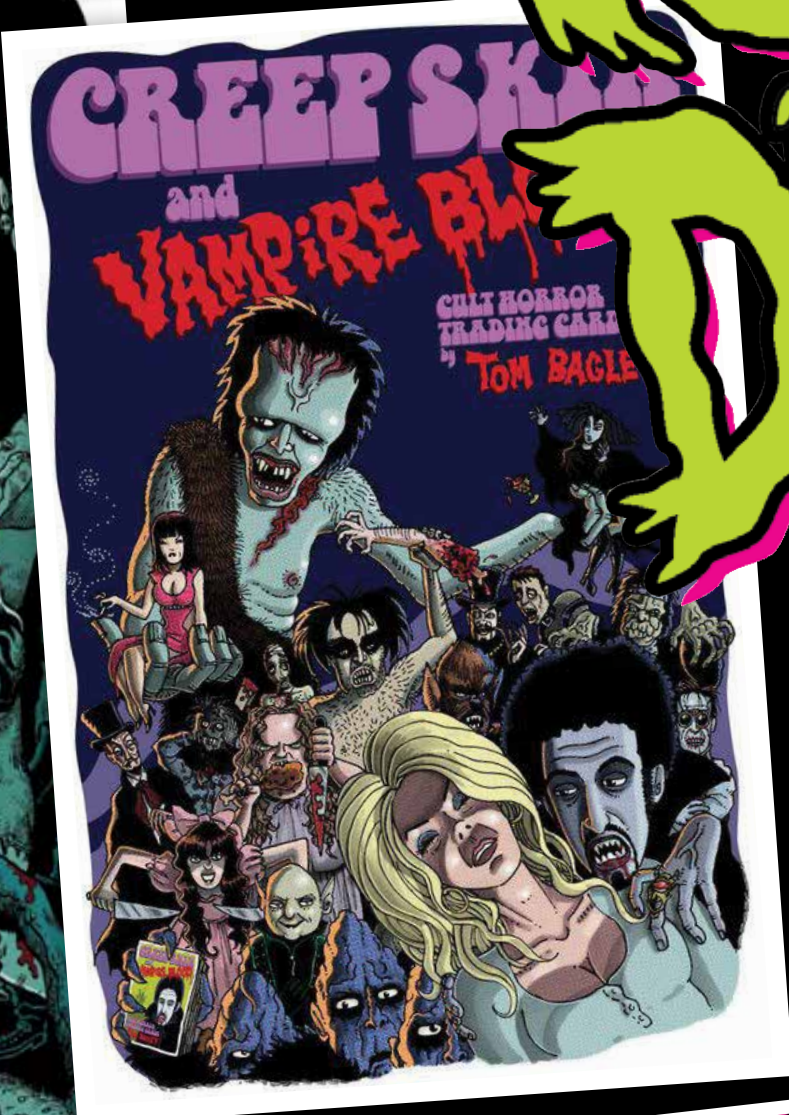
TB: Initially I never wore any make-up, but then I went through a Dave Vanian-lost-a-bar-fight phase, then weird curlyQs, now it's more like veins or branches (my bandwagon-jumping "folk-horror" phase!) The drippy-mouth stuff has always been quasi-King Diamond, of corpse. Old photos of Screaming Lord Sutch were probably my initial inspiration, along with TV horror host guys... and Count Floyd!

AU: Any last rites for all our cryptic readers out there?

TB: Buy all our play-sets and toys!
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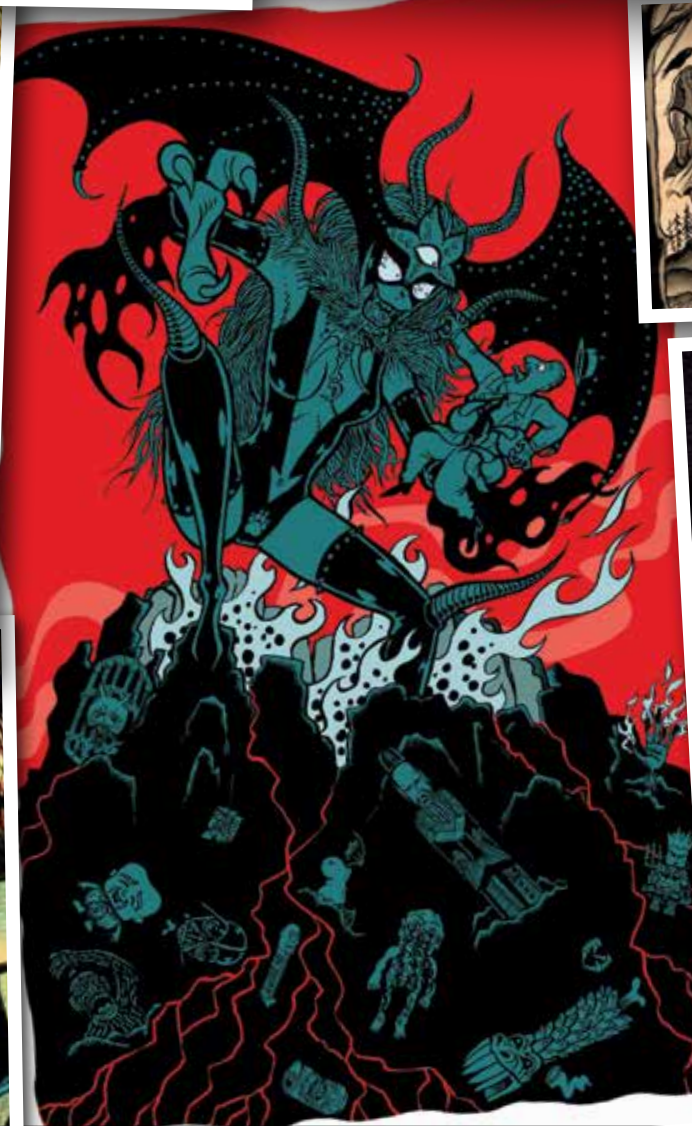


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PURE PUNK



No Fun At All Seventh Wave

Interview by Ira Hunter and Jared "Out of Bounds" Amos



"Suffer", the seed for No Fun At All started to grow.

AU: Please give us a brief history of No Fun At All.

MD: Swedish punk rock formed back in 1991 by me in a small town called Skinnskatteberg. Ingemar Jansson and Kjell Ramstedt joined in a couple of years later. After four albums and relentless touring in 90's the band took a hiatus for some years but started to do live shows again once in a while in 2004. In 2017 we decided to do it full force again and recruited two new members Fredrik Eriksson and Stefan Bratt. And here we are with our seventh album coming

MD: It was released in the heydays of melodic punk back in 1995 when people still bought CDs like crazy. It even made the Top 20 in the Swedish charts. It's got some of our most popular songs on it like "Beat 'em down", "Master Celebrator" and the title track.

AU: Satanic Surfers were on that tour as well. Any antics to share? What made that tour special?

MD: Always great to tour with good friends and they totally rip it live. We got to visit Vancouver Island for the first time, that was awesome. Me and Fredrik visited Leonard Cohen's grave in Montreal, that was really special. Playing the Red Bridge Festival for the first time was cool too.

AU: How did Canada treat you?

MD: All five of us got sick, that's how we got treated! Haha, amazing shows as always and the friendliest of people. Can't wait to come back.

AU: I saw NFAA perform at Hellfest in 2019 to a massive crowd. Have you seen a rise in popularity again for punk music in general?

MD: Yeah that was one of the biggest shows we have ever played. Such a monster of a festival. Yeah maybe that could be the case actually. That's good.

AU: Tell us about the most recent album you put out entitled Seventh Wave. What does the title refer to?

MD: The album was recorded in Studio Soundlab together with Mathias Färm from Millencolin, just like the last album *Grit*. He is a good friend of ours and the recording process was really smooth. It has 12 tracks of that fast melodic punk rock you can't resist. Just like the seventh wave in the ocean it will blow you away.

AU: Any particular singles or tracks you are most stoked on?

MD: My favourites are "Every single screen", "Future days, future nights" and "It's not a problem."

AU: In the past you released an

album on your own label, Beat 'Em Down Records, are there any other bands on your roster? Other than Satanic Surfers, who are some other awesome Swedish Punk bands?

MD: Actually I don't think you can really call it a label. It was a friend of ours who helped us out to release *Low Rider*. After that there were no more releases. My favourite Swedish punk band right now is called Larma, crusty as fuck!

AU: Any plans for Halloween this year? Funniest costume you ever wore.

MD: We're gonna be on tour in Australia on Halloween, so I guess it's gonna be a wild one. But the Halloween celebration has never been a big thing for me so I have never ended up in a funny costume.

AU: What did you miss most about live music during lockdown, and what has it been like getting back out on tour?

MD: As a guy regularly visiting shows, it was a real drought. I visited one small jazz gig at a bar during the pandemic with just a few people and it was a real treat for the soul. After 18 months of no shows we played a small festival in Belgium where people had to sit down at chairs. It was so great to be back at it again.

AU: How does the Swedish Punk scene differ from that of North America?

MD: As a band we do a lot better in Canada compared to Sweden. But the US was pretty slow for us last time we played there in 2019. But the shows supporting Lagwagon in California were really good.

AU: Any final words of wisdom for our readers?

MD: The faster you run the sooner you get there.

facebook.com/nofunatalofficial
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Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

MD: You're talking to Mikael Danielsson of No Fun At All, perhaps most famous for delivering contagious melodies and a barrage of riffage.

AU: What was the Punk scene like growing up in Sweden, and what was your first introduction to it?

MD: My first introduction to punk rock was when I borrowed Ramones *Leave Home* and *Rocket to Russia* from an older neighbour of mine when I was young kid. I just listened to Kiss and other hard rock at that time but I was blown away by the intensity and their cool looks. But I got in contact with the punk scene years later when I started to visiting a venue called Rockborgen in a nearby town, Fagersta. Youth of today among other great HC/metal bands played there in the late 80's early 90's. When I heard Bad Religion

up on October 14th.

AU: Who is in the band and what is their hidden talent?

MD: I'm the rhythm guitarist and I have run a 50 miles (80km) ultra marathon. And 16 regular marathons.

Fredrik Eriksson is the lead guitarist and he knows all 263 episodes of *Frasier* by heart.

Kjell Ramstedt is the drummer and he knows all capitals of the world.

Ingemar Jansson is the singer and he knows everything you need to know about electricity. Stefan Bratt is the bass player and he is an Iron Maiden encyclopaedia.

AU: You were recently celebrating the 27 Year Album Anniversary Tour and playing your album *Out Of Bounds* in its entirety. What has made this particular album so popular in your opinion?

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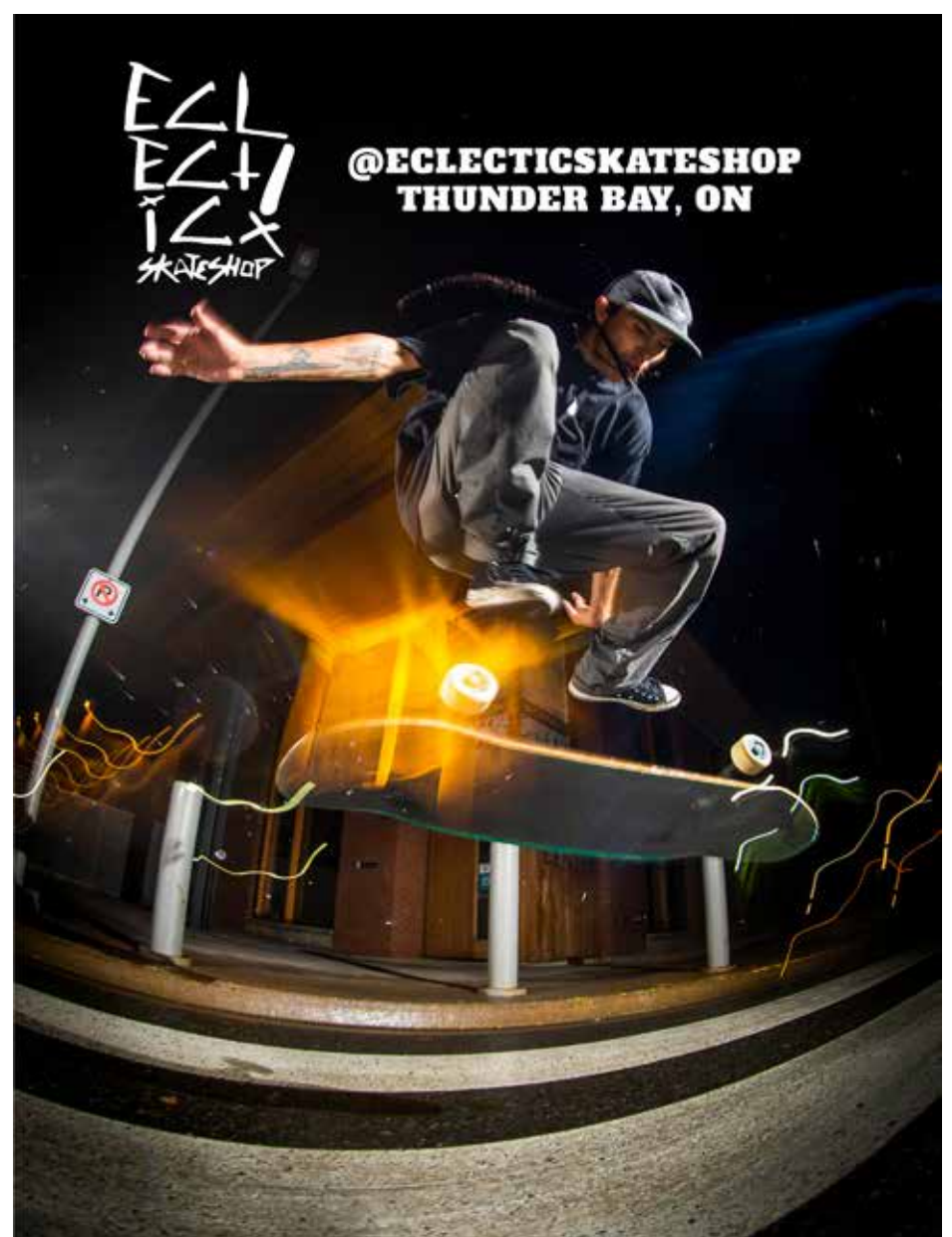
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Roots of The Swamp Thing

Interview by Ira "Hellblazer" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your claim to fame?

JB: My name is John Boylan. I'm a completist collector when it comes to *Swamp Thing*, Jason Woodrue, *Poison Ivy*, *Rose & Thorn*, *The Beagle Boys* & Uncle Scrooge's number one Dime. I hold the Guinness world record for the largest collection of *Swamp Thing* memorabilia. My collection is at around 3,500 unique items.

AU: When and how did you first come across the muck encrusted world of the Swamp Thing? Was it an instant obsession or did it grow over time?

JB: It was a slow burn. I didn't start collecting *Swamp Thing* collectibles until 2007. The first time I'd read a *Swamp Thing* comic was sometime in the 90s. I recall seeing the movies when I was a kid in the 80s, but I didn't fall in love with the writing and artwork until the early 2000s.

AU: How would you explain who Swamp Thing is to someone who has no clue?

JB: Swamp Thing is a humanoid plant god that controls all plant material throughout the world. He's not a superhero, but he finds himself in scenarios where he's saving earth and others.

AU: What made you decide you were going to dedicate your life to Swamp Thing?

JB: When I first read Alan Moore's run of *Swamp Thing*, I wanted to know as much about the character as possible. Not just the stories in the comics, but the movies, merchandise and creative teams involved with the series. Since reading Moore's *Swamp Thing*, I was off and running. Also, being obsessive and thorough about things is my hobby. I really get into the weeds when I'm interested in something.

AU: What made Swamp Thing comics so good in your opinion?

JB: *Swamp Thing* fans are lucky in that, the creative teams have always been solid. And, if the writing was ever poor, typically the artwork was fantastic, and vice versa. From the beginning, the creative teams on the title have built a world for the character that is entertaining and fun to get lost within. It also helps that Swamp Thing is a versatile character. Not only in regards to his abilities and powers, but for not being a typical comics character. He stays out of the spotlight but is called upon by DC's most popular heroes. I find that the powerful characters who are on the periphery to be much more intriguing than the big name characters.

AU: Can you explain the differences between the early Len Wein and Bernie Wrightson issues and the later Alan Moore's tales of sophisticated suspense?

JB: Len & Bernie created Swamp Thing in '71. They went on to develop the character in a standalone series in '72. In the series they introduced a scientist by the name of Dr Alec Holland. While working on a top secret bio-restorative formula, Holland was killed in an explosion. His body laid to waste in the swamp waters outside his bayou laboratory, mixed with the chemicals from his bio-restorative formula. As a result, Holland emerged from the swamp as a plant monster. For years, the character was defined as Alec's human remains

within the Swamp Thing form. Much of Swamp Thing's efforts, in series 1 & 2, were focused on trying to become human again.

In 1984, Alan Moore took the reins. He started from scratch by "killing off" Swamp Thing in issue #20 (series 2) and then Alec Holland in Swamp Thing #21, "The Anatomy Lesson." Moore redefined the character by brilliantly using pseudo science to explain how in '72, Alec Holland died and Swamp Thing was born. Moore wrote that Alec had died in the explosion, but his memories and consciousness lived on within the swamp monster because of the bio-restorative formula and planarian worms. Fans were blown away by this new explanation of what happened to Alec Holland. Moore created a new, thorough story that readers could easily believe in. It was a catalyst for great things to come not only for Swamp Thing but for comics as a whole.

AU: Do you own any original art from the Swamp Thing comics?

JB: I own quite a few original pages. I have a couple Mike Perkins pages, a number of Phil Hester pages, a couple Scot Eaton pages, sketches from a series Steve Bissette & Nancy Collins were working on in the mid 90s (never came to fruition), and various pieces from artists who've worked on Swamp Thing over the years. I also own original art from the cartoon series, merchandise marketing materials and from the films.

AU: Do you consider yourself a collector or an archivist?

JB: An archivist, for sure. When I started collecting, I wanted to create the first Swamp Thing library that housed every instance of the character I could find. I wanted it to be the ultimate reference tool so other fans didn't have to scour through books and the internet for obscure appearances and collectibles. It's the reason I started my website.

AU: How extensive is your Swamp Thing Collection?

JB: It's really big. Without trying to sound like an ass, there are few Swamp Thing items I don't have. Right now most of my collection is neatly stored away because our son is 1 and everything looks like a good time to him. But, in my old house, the whole second floor was a Swamp Thing museum. I'll get the museum running again once our little dude gets older and can help out.

AU: What are some of your most prized/rarest Swamp Thing treasures?

JB: Swamp Thing wristwatch from Dick Durock's estate. Props, pieces of screen worn costume and crew member apparel from the TV series and movies. Original pages from the comic series, Swamp Thing merchandise marketing style guide, A random assortment of rare non-US editions.

Getting to know most of all the talent who has worked on the *Swamp Thing* series over the years. The relationships I've been fortunate to have with people like Steve Bissette, Phil Hester, Nancy Collins, Len Wein's widow Christine Valada and many more means a lot to me.

AU: Were you a fan of the Swamp Thing movies and the animated series growing up?

JB: I can't say that I was. I thought Swamp Thing and Toxic Avenger were one in the same and didn't pay much attention to them when I was a kid. I recall seeing a portion of the cartoon or

movie at some point when I was a kid, but it never stuck.

I think some of the most endearing and memorable moments in *Swamp Thing* books involve themes that relate to, what it means to

be human, how we are perceived and how we choose to deal with others. For me, that hit just right when I was in my 20s. I don't think my palate was refined enough to appreciate the craft that went into storytelling prior to then. I'm not saying *Swamp Thing* is only for adults. But, a kid going to the source material after seeing the

Swampy cartoon or movie would have found two very different Swamp Thing characters.

AU: Are there items you are still searching out to complete your collection?

JB: I'm still on the lookout for:

The Swamp Thing high tops from the early 90s. I tracked down the guy who produced them. Sure he was weirded out by my phone call but he guaranteed me that boxes left his warehouse and into stores. So I know they're out there. I've only seen one person that has them.

Kenner toy line production prototypes

A handful of non-US editions that feature Swampy on the cover

A few apparel items from the early 90s.

AU: What will people find when they go to your rootsoftheswampthing.com website?

JB: They will find a reference library of all things Swamp Thing, The site houses the most comprehensive lists of Swamp Thing appearances, collectibles, parody appearances, articles and ads, that you can find.

AU: Tell us about the Swamp Thing fanzine you publish called the Holland Files?

JB: Holland Files is an annually published, international Swamp Thing fanzine featuring articles, interviews and illustrations. Swamp Thing fans from around the world come together to share their love for the muck-encrusted mockery of a man. The book acts as a way to carry on Swamp Thing's legacy as well as a thank you to all those who have shared in the joy and excitement that the character has inspired. The character's fifty plus year history has been crafted by renowned artists and writers. A number of those greats contribute to the Holland Files.



AU: Why do you think this unique character has endured so long and have you seen his popularity grow over the years?

JB: I think Swamp Thing endures because he struggles with the aspects of humanity that we all can relate to. I think stories involving identity and perception have a long shelf life for readers. That, and it's housed within beautifully drawn and written books.

AU: What was involved with receiving the Guinness World Record for your Swamp Thing collection?

JB: I believe the format has changed some since Covid, but here's what I had to do: You must hold a public viewing event where the public can see your entire collection. You must send out press releases announcing the event.

You must have a Guinness officiant (or 3 people who Guinness deems credible) present at the event to review every item in the collection. The event must be photo documented and video recorded.

Every item must be photographed and cataloged in a spreadsheet.

At the end of the event, all evidence of the collection (photos, videos, spreadsheets, etc) must be sent to Guinness for final review in a timely manner.

After evidence has been reviewed, Guinness lets you know if you have a record or not.

AU: What does the future hold for Swamp Thing?

JB: It seems like he's more popular than ever, popping up in animated series and key DC comics. There are rumors that he'll appear in future DCU series and movies but I don't believe anything has been confirmed. I'd love to see Swamp Thing in a more grounded comic storyline, back in Houma.

AU: Final thoughts on Swamp Thing and his legacy.

JB: I recommend reading Nancy Collins' run of Swamp Thing. It's amazing and underrated.

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BACKSTAGE PASS - VENUE PROFILE



Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves

JO: Jay and Olivia, husband and wife team that run the bar and building.

AU: Tell us about how The Terminal came to rise from the ashes of The Cambie?

JO: The building went up in 1912 and has seen some interior changes. The stage has moved around, kitchen closed and hostel closed. It was up for sale October 2019 and was a bit of a shock; but had been listed off and on for years. The previous owner sold it to Chris Wall. He lives in Vancouver and owns several buildings (The Empress, The West Hotel and more)..... This was a relief because he was clear the changes he had coming were going to be great and we all still had jobs. He was able to keep the Cambie name for one year and had to

change it, so it made sense for him to go back to The Terminal. We had been working the Cambie for 5 years or so, moved onto doing live shows and then up to managing the building and venue as a team.

AU: Tell us what you have done since taking the helm.

JO: The building was bought just before Covid hit. We've been working to restore the bar to what it once was and more. Chris trusts our vision and knows the history and the need for live music in Nanaimo. Olivia and I wanted to maintain the history inside but add to it. We put up neon all over the bar, added some art from our personal collection, painted, redid the bar wood, changed the bathrooms, had the patio redone. Chris gave us full creative control and his trust. We are targeting sound improvements in near future.

AU: You had trouble getting live/loud music back on the stage. Tell us about that.

JO: Finding an affordable insurance policy during Covid was impossible. We were able to do acoustic only and have deejays and karaoke. It was heartbreaking finally getting to run the whole bar and not being able to have loud bands. The entire community felt it and hopefully now that we can turn it up people will come from all over to support shows.

AU: What kind of bands are you now booking in?

JO: We continue to offer variety like karaoke, drag shows, country, metal, comedy and special events. For bands, things have definitely changed because of Covid for various reasons. We need to be more selective now with lineups and can't just book shows with three new bands playing for their first time. Shows have to draw well for us and bands in order to cover costs. We are more strategic and put new bands on solid lineups so everyone gets a chance to play our stage. We try out best to give everyone a chance but can't do 12 shows a month like we used to. For now.

AU: Who makes up your audience at shows so far?

JO: We strive for inclusivity at the bar and want everyone to feel like they belong. For instance, at any given punk show we find all walks of life

having fun even if they didn't come for the band. People from all over come to the bar. Not just on show nights. We have worked really hard to make the bar a place for everyone.

AU: You are lead singer for AAC/Inappropriate Elimination and you run a live music venue. What advice can you give to young bands.... and those who want to tour....record....etc?

JO: Do it because you love it. Don't let anyone else tell you that you can't or need to be a certain way or sound like someone else. Everyone has an opinion but if you do it for the love of the music the audience will feel it. Fuck what other people think and fuck those bands that think they built the scene. Nobody gives a fuck. It's about community.

AU: How has it been working with the Queens right across the street as a live music venue as well?

JO: The Queens is amazing and have always supported us and vice versa. They have always communicated with us around shows and are like family.

AU: What do you think of the music scene in Nanaimo?

JO: The Nanaimo scene has always been rad as long as I've been here. There are a lot of great bands and solid people that just wanna play and have fun. A strong sense of community. It's important to remember that. Now more than ever shows need support. Without it venues won't be able to stay open.

AU: What's in the future for The Terminal?

JO: Hopefully we continue to be able to have live bands and the numbers to support it. Nanaimo has a strong sense of community, and we definitely feel the love. Inflation is keeping people at home more so we will keep trying to stack the shows so it's worth it for people to get out.

Chat/Images: John Carlow/Finding Charlotte Photography

The Terminal

Nanaimo

By John Carlow

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AU: Now back to all serious questions, Hunting Giants released its first full-length entitled *Mythos* on Sept 30th, a total of 13 tracks, what can ya tell new listeners about it? and what made ya decide to go full album instead of an EP like 2018's *Skyward Eyes*?

SA: It is a wild ride with soaring highs and somber instrumental pieces to dark and grungy breakdowns. We wrote these tracks intentionally with a

coherent unity in theme and composition, they all contain aspects of the central theme which constitute the album.

AU: We found it to be such a great diverse listen from hard rock, grunge, to prog elements, each track had its own character, what inspires the songwriting and is there a specific age of music the band is influenced by?

SA: Each of us are influenced by very different genres. While some of us listen to folk rock bands like Grizzly Bear or The National while others prefer Meshuggah or Mudvayne, but we are all influenced greatly by the late 80s and early 90s grunge and metal scenes. We experiment with our varying

taste of music while keeping our roots deep within the shoulders of the giants who came before us.

AU: We really enjoyed the music videos the band has been putting out, who comes up with the concepts?

SA: Brad Trivett is the visionary behind the music videos, he has a love of film and prior schooling in the field. We all contribute to the ideas behind the video but it is him to translate those concepts into reality.

AU: Any tours or upcoming shows for 2022 or

2023 you like to mention?

SA: We are playing the Fox Cabaret on December 2nd for our official CD Release and will be hitting the festival circuit hard next year.

www.huntinggiants.com

Hunting Giants

Absolute Underground: Welcome to *Absolute Underground Mag*, for readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?

Stephen Atkey: We are Hunting Giants, a progressive heavy rock band hailing from the west coast of Canada. We love weaving hooks into groove driven riffs.

AU: How many giants have Hunting Giants slayed in their lifetime?

SA: We have slain 18 giants, one got away ...

AU: If the band was to hunt giants as a career, which monsters would you be hunting, Big Foot, Godzilla, Goliath...?

SA: We seek mainly the thrill of the hunt and don't regard the variety of giant. If we were to choose one foe we seek to conquer however, it would be the unknowable cosmic terror from the deep, Cthulu.



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Vile Execution

Interview by Mal Content

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

VE: You are talking to Vile Execution, a death metal band currently based in Toronto and Calgary.

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

VE: Vile Execution was born in 2019, as an offshoot of Gnosis. The two members are D. Hudson and J. Fraser, who handle strings/ vocals, and drums, respectively. Vile Execution is about making music that is fast and aggressive, while still embracing dissonance and atmosphere.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

VE: Vile Execution blends the savage riffage and brutish heaviness of bands like Suffocation and Malevolent Creation with a modern edge that harkens to bands like Hyperdontia and Mortiferum.

AU: Have you released an album recently?

Tell us about it, what can we expect to hear?

VE: We have recently released our debut EP, "Waste & Rot." It was written during the 2020 lockdowns in isolation, and was recorded over the span of three days in Calgary and Victoria by Pat Palardy and Andrew Kingsley, the latter of Unleash the Archers fame. It contains three tracks of relentless death metal that weaves between straightforward riff-heavy passages to cacophonous dissolutions that make the listener feel like they're staring into the void.

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

VE: The three-tracks on "Waste & Rot" explore themes that we were faced with during the writing process - nihilism, dystopia, and the

BENT WINDOW RECORDS

experience of losing one's mind.

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

VE: For anyone looking to hear the crushing and ruthless death metal of Vile Execution, look no further than the single "False Pedestal." We are extremely proud of all three songs on our

EP, but this is the most condensed representation of what Vile Execution is about.

AU: What record label is Vile Execution on? What makes them a unique label in your opinion?

VE: We are currently on Bent Window Records.

They are a small label based out of Vancouver that releases small runs of tapes for underground artists. What makes them unique is the breadth of music they release - from death metal and black metal to harsh noise. We also appreciate that they are explicitly anti-fascist. True fans of underground metal need to keep their eye on Bent Window Records.

AU: Any plans for Halloween

this year?

Any killer Halloweens you can recall from the past?

VE: D. Hudson is going to see Conan in Toronto, who are playing with a black metal band from Saskatchewan called Wilt, and J. Fraser will likely drink and watch some classic horror films.

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

bent window records



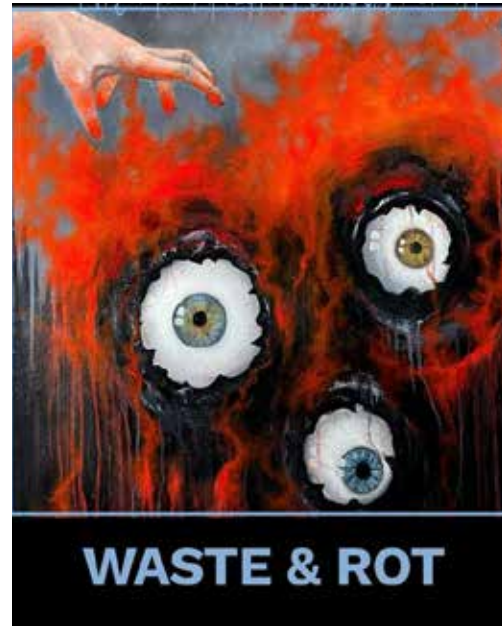
VE: You can buy our debut EP "Waste & Rot" on tape and digital download from Bent Window Records on Bandcamp. You can also buy a digital download code or a T-shirt on our Bandcamp.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

VE: Follow us on Bandcamp and Instagram to check out our music and keep up with our new releases.

AU: How do people find you online?

BANDCAMP: vileexecution.bandcamp.com/releases - bentwindowrecords.bandcamp.com/album/waste-rot
INSTAGRAM: @vile.execution



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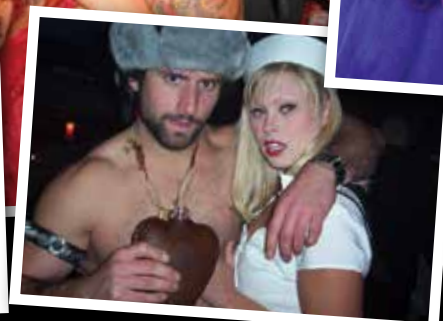
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Frederick Cooper



ARTIST PROFILE



The Monster Art Of Frederick Cooper

Interview by Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

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

FC: Hello! I'm Frederick Cooper. I am an independent artist known for horror and monster artwork. I'm mostly known for my poster art and my two art books, *Vereor Nox* and *Lux et Umbra*.



AU: What got you started as an artist?

FC: I got started as a child just playing with paper and pencil at home, the support from my brothers and school teachers made me both improve and maintain it as a hobby. Out of school I found art jobs and contests to participate in until I began getting involved professionally for a few companies. So I think it's fair to say I've been an artist all of my life. There was a short period in which I left the professional scene with aspirations to become independent and it took about a year to really find what I'd call my style.

AU: How would you describe your art?

FC: I've seen fans online call it both realist and dream-like depending on the picture and I'm not quite sure about the technical description. All I know is that I try to give a sense of how real and bewildering these monsters were to me as a child.



AU: Any major influences on your artistic style?

FC: Many science fiction, fantasy, and horror artists. I grew up working odd jobs to get money for comics and magazines like *Eerie*, *Creepy*, and *Famous Monsters* so I was exposed to amazing artists like Basil Gogos, Bernie Wrightson, Sanjulian, and my personal favorite Frank Frazetta. These were definitely my biggest influences. Not only because I was a monster kid growing up so everything they did was right up my alley but more so because I got to take their art home with me. Trying to mimic them in the late hours of the



night was my earliest professional tutelage.

From my exposure to the monster scene and their artists I began to explore outside, into the wider artistic medium with artists like N.C. Wyeth and classical artists like Raphael. That's a practice I haven't stopped since. The work of your peers is an invaluable source of learning.

AU: What sort of stuff did you start out doing?

FC: Funny enough, the same sort of stuff I do now. Monsters. When I became independent I found it right to return what got me drawing in the first place. As a boy I drew what excited me and growing up my brothers took me to see lots of horror and monster movies. Vincent Price! *Godzilla!* Even a re-release of the 1933 *King Kong*. It thrusted me deep within the monster kid fandom and I haven't left since.

AU: How'd you get your first professional job?

FC: At fourteen I got a series of jobs doing t-shirt designs and newspaper illustrations. Collectively they gave me the image that pursuing art was truly available to me. Moreover, they taught me how to work under constraints like image requirements and deadlines. This was a crucible that formed a lot of my work ethic as an artist.

AU: What first got you into horror?

FC: Universal and Hammer were my first real exposure to horror films that I definitely was not old enough for yet. They've been so very influential on my work. Movies that really show the value of atmosphere. Universal was my first Monster Kid love. Gothic and iconic in every way. Hammer Films are equally as iconic but with blood drenched color added. They're like two sides of the perfect horror coin.

AU: Have you drawn any modern monsters?

FC: If you consider Jason and Michael Myers as modern, absolutely. I'm not against contemporary movies but I tend to opt for classics when I can.

AU: What are your favorite horror movies?

FC: Universal's *Frankenstein* and Hammer's *Brides of Dracula*. Recently I'm on an Italian horror kick, so things like Mario Bava's *Blood and Black Lace*, Dario Argento's *Suspria*, and Lucio Fulci's *The Beyond*. Mario Bava specifically, his grasp of atmosphere, even when working in black and white such as with *Black Sunday*, influenced me.

AU: Any favorite projects you've worked on?

FC: Without a doubt it would be my two art books *Vereor Nox* and *Lux et Umbra*. Not only because it was the realization of a dream I've had for a long time but because it was the culmination of a lot of work from my family. My two children and my wife stepped up and it became a series of group

projects and brought us together. I'm immensely thankful for the time it gave me with my children.

AU: Tell us more about your art books.

FC: *Vereor Nox* and *Lux et Umbra* are most definitely two parts of a whole. *Vereor Nox* being the color art and *Lux et Umbra* - Latin for Light and Shadow - being its black and white, sketch companion. It's something I put a lot of effort into the presentation of, even creating the backgrounds myself for each book page so that it was relevant to the subjects I put with it.

AU: Ever worked on any album covers?

FC: Yes! It came as quite a shock when I was contacted by the British rock band The Wildhearts last year for an album cover. It was so fun to work with Ginger and the guys.

AU: When working on an image from a certain horror film do you immerse yourself in the movie marathon as inspiration?

FC: Oh absolutely. Movie or radio music marathons are a standard in my home studio. It always pays to surround yourself with the tone you're trying to achieve. Whether it's monster



movie staples, Italian giallos, or luchadore adventure flicks.

AU: What mediums do you work in?

FC: I have a history with watercolors, digital art, pencils, and most other styles but my mainstay has been color pencils and markers.

AU: Any music you listen to when working?

FC: I'm a big classical music fan. Nothing gets me going first thing in the morning like Bach. In the afternoon, it's a wildcard between surf and punk rock, classic rock, and soundtrack recordings. I love The Ventures, Cramps, and Messer Chups.



FC: Years ago as *Frankenstein*. Decked out in platform shoes and makeup like the Universal version, it was a great time. This fall I'm trying to have a relaxing one with my wife, watching scary movies in the dark.

AU: Dream project you are still dying to do.

FC: One thing I've been wanting to do more is more full scenes rather than just close ups. Beyond that, I have always dreamt of putting my all into something outside of horror. Old world mythology like Greek or Norse. The old myths and stories have stayed with me ever since Harryhausen's works got me into reading them.

AU: Any words of wisdom for aspiring artists?

FC: Look outside your fandom's works and take the time with the great works elsewhere. Don't limit yourself to just a few outlets. You won't lose your interest in what first drew you in. You'll only grow. What you learn from outside your box will come with you and enrich your box for years to come.

AU: Any upcoming events to promote?

FC: I'll be making a few appearances this October, including Spooky Empire in Orlando, Florida!

AU: Where can people connect online?

FC: I'm on social media as Frederick Cooper Arts with the accompanying website where I sell my works.

frederickcooperarts.com





The Real McKenzies Songs Of The Highlands, Songs Of The Sea

Interview with frontperson Paul McKenzie
by Mal Content

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

PM: I am Paul McKenzie. I am best known for a great number of things, some good, some bad, some happy, some sad, some stupid, some smart, but the best one yet is The New Real McKenzies. I have the honour to be touring and recording with the best bunch of crazy bananas ever... EVER!

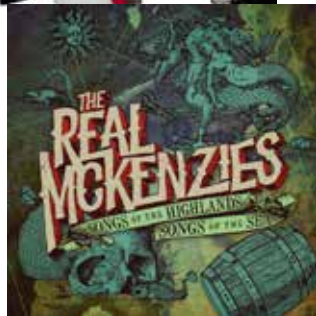
AU: The Real McKenzies put out a greatest hits album this year. Are there any plans for a new studio album in the next while?

PM: Yes! Our new album is entitled *Songs of the Highlands, Songs of the Sea*. It'll be out in

November. It is the truest, finest, eclectic, collection of ancient sea shanties and traditional Scottish ditties. We are currently smackin' our heads together over pickled herring rollmops and planning our next tour de force in terms of world domination.

AU: What are some of the songs about? Any tracks you are particularly excited about?

PM: What are ye? Daft? The album is ENTITLED *Songs of the Highlands, Songs of the Sea*. At my age, I get excited about just about everything. If I had to pick one, I'd pick "Leave Her Johnny" because it's about the Highlands AND the Sea.



AU: What makes this newest album unique compared to the rest of your catalogue in your opinion?

PM: This album is unique for a multitude of reasons. It was conceived, written, and recorded during the stupid pandemic and during a time when there wasn't a stable Real McKenzies line-up. Our friends, and RMck alumnus, Dirty Kurt and Little Joe filled in on guitar and bass. It is also a throwback to the original concept of the band. Breathing new life into ancient songs. Reverence through irreverence. Most of all, there is an emotional quotient that is palpable not found

in any of the other records. Probably due to the difficulty of the pandemic and my affection for these ancient songs.

AU: Who plays in the band these days? What other bands do they play in?

PM: Myself, Kenny, Barry, Mario, and Aspy. Kenny plays in Rest Easy. Barry plays in Joanie Loves Chachi and a bunch of other projects. Mario is in The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets and Mystery Machine. Aspy plays in Bastards On Parade.

AU: Favourite food to eat on the road? Favourite food when at home?

PM: Only good stuff. No junk food. It is poison. On the road, there is always a case of water, lots of dried fruit and nuts and cheese, and canned fish and beer for me.

I eat the same at home because that's what I like to eat along with fresh fish (sushi) and fruit and veggies with organic Balkan yogurt.

Hunkering down to a big meal pre-show does not at all work for us. So we have an after-gig tradition of eating the backstage platters because they are good for us. We call it a scary or spooky buffet. Everyone has to tell a spooky story if they want to partake. It's a lot of fun and we eat good stuff.

And a good breakfast with eggs, tea, and toast. Breakfast is essential, not only for nutrition but also, for verbal communication and comradery between us all.

AU: What countries haven't the McKenzies played yet?

PM: There's a lot we haven't played! Bring it on!

AU: As a proud Scotsman what are some rules to live by to enjoy a good life?

PM: Eat good food. Drink good drink. Give to those in need. Enjoy time with your friends. Practice benevolence.

AU: You have a song about the Queen called "Bitch Off The Money." Any words now that she has finally kicked the bucket?

PM: We all know where she and her parcel of rogues came from, and what they've done and gotten away with. I have no words for that c**t. Glad she's gone. I wonder about how the "New

King" feels, knowing full well that his father and his granny killed his mother.

AU: What band that you have shared the stage with over the years blew your mind the most live?

PM: Patti Smith. Wonderful performance. Unfortunately, her security detail was not fond of us.

AU: Any plans for Halloween this year?

PM: Yes. Both trick AND treat. Halloween is my favorite time of year. Fuck Santa, fuck the Easter Bunny, and the Groundhog.

New Years? Yes.

Robbie Burns Day? Yes.

Summer and Winter solstice? Yes.

All the rest just suck in my opinion.

AU: Craziest Halloween you can remember?

PM: The craziest Halloween was in one of my past lives (of which there have been many) in the 1700s in Salem Massachusetts. The details shall remain undisclosed.

AU: Best costume you ever wore?

PM: I wear the most GLORIOUS costume every day, now and forever!

AU: Anything else to mention or promote?

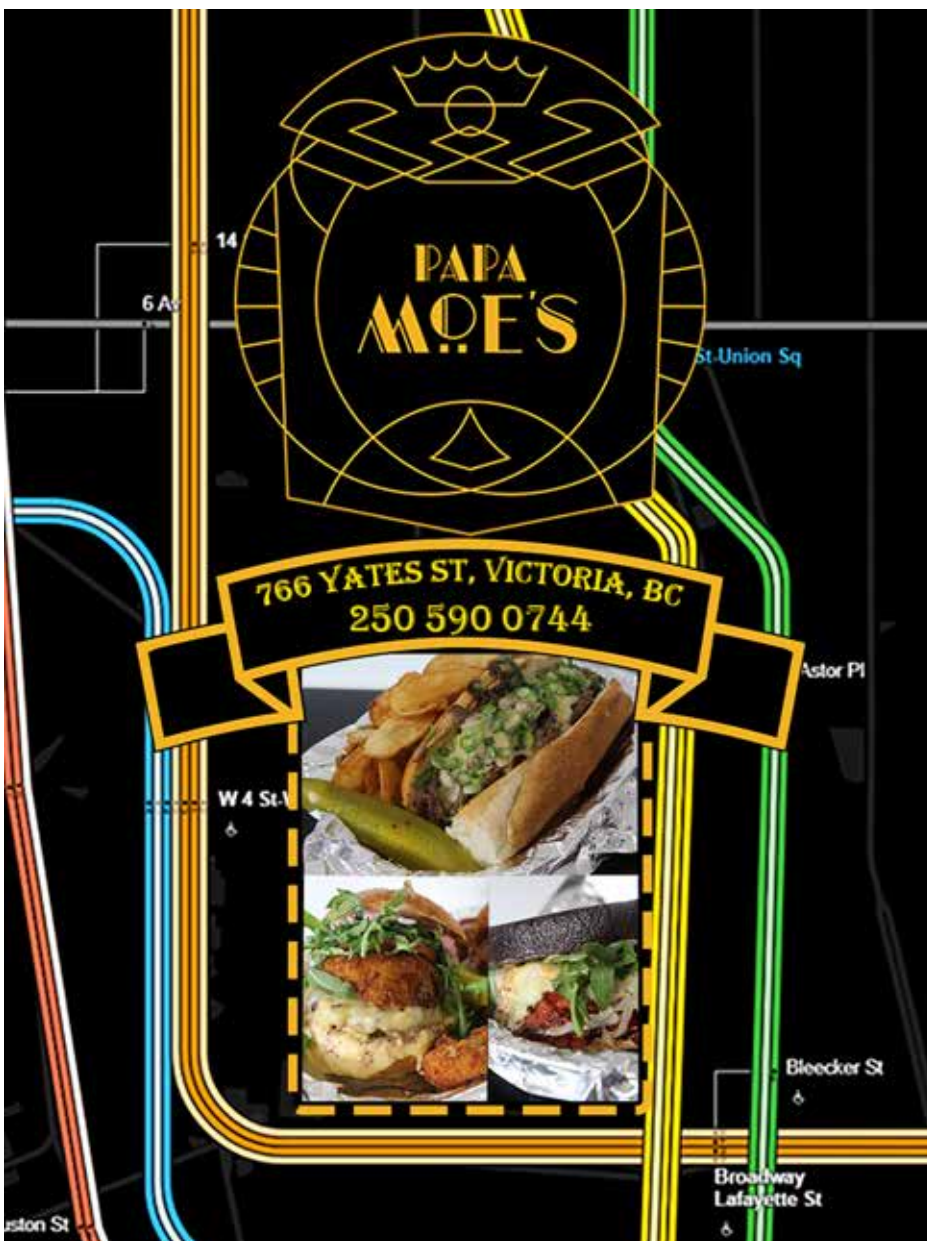
PM: We will be in support of the new album starting in January in Europe. You'll be able to find me, Paul Kevin McKenzie, on Cameo in the near future. New merch will also be available at www.realmckenzie.com in the coming months.

AU: Final words for our readers.

PM: Keep reading. It's good for you.

AU: How do people find you online?

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LUNCHMEAT

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

JS: Hey-yo! My name's Josh Schafer and I'm the Editor-in-Chief / Head Videovore at *Lunchmeat Magazine* and *LunchmeatVHS.com*, your number one destination for the appreciation, celebration and preservation of VHS and video store culture!

AU: Tell us all about Lunchmeat. What's the origin story and what are you all about?

JS: Lunchmeat is a publishing and production label with focus on the celebration and preservation of VHS and video store culture. That's everything from rewind-inclined publications, a slew of fresh VHS releases, Tapehead apparel, bodacious VHS-driven live events and so much more. Lunchmeat all started way back in the early 2000s when Ted Gilbert (Co-Editor and my number one dude) when we wanted to start a zine dedicated to all of the incredible movies only available on VHS. Over the past 15 years or so, it's grown at an amazing rate, and we're still here pressing play on all the VHS and video store culture we can to connect likeminded people of the VHS community and celebrate all the films, people, and everything in-between to help keep VHS / video store love alive!

AU: What is Lunchmeat's motto and mission statement?

JS: VHS is Happiness! We've said it above, but really, anything and everything we can do to keep VHS love alive and growing, we're gonna do it. VHSay it with me, my dudes: VHS IS HAPPINESS!

AU: How has Lunchmeat grown over the years?

JS: We've just expanded what we do and done our best to VHServe the community, artists, and filmmakers that lend themselves to VHS culture. We've released publications (*Lunchmeat Magazine*, *Stuck on VHS*, *Home Video Horrors*, and most recently *Video Stores Still Exist!*), released over 150 VHS tapes, produced accessories and apparel to champion the Tapehead lifestyle, and created the largest VHS-driven event in the nation with *DRIVE-IN VHS FEST* - held at Mahoning Drive-In Theater in Lehigh, PA. We're coming up on our seventh year in 2023, and it's an absolute blast every time. It's a total VHS party and we hope you can make it one day!

AU: Are there any video stores left where you live?

JS: There actually is! It's called Video Vortex, and it lives inside Alamo Drafthouse in Raleigh, NC. I actually moved here to help create that video store. It was an incredible experience. It was such an honor and joy to create that video store, and share it with the community of Raleigh. I no longer run Video Vortex, but it's still there, and you can still rent (for FREE!) there. It's the second largest rental selection in the country (only behind the legendary Scarecrow Video), and if you're in the area, I hope you check it out. It's

changed a lot since I've been there, but it's still a rad place.

AU: What are some of the VHS related events you have been part of over the years?

JS: Man, so many over the years. I did a lot of work with Matt D. from *Horror Boobs* up in NY in the 2010s. I did a bunch of screenings and tape swaps in Philly while I was living there. I did some work with *Severed Short Film Night / Horror Vhs Collector's Unite* convention while that was still running (and it was such a great meeting place for collectors then), and of course, *DRIVE-IN VHS FEST*, which is our absolute favorite. I also created *VHStival* for Alamo and ran that for a couple years.

There have been so many, man. Def too many to count or recall in full. But all awesome in their own way.

AU: What are some of the movies you have done special limited edition VHS releases for?

JS: Again, a ton. But off the top here are some: *Video Violence Diehard Videovore Edition*, *CreepTales* (first time ever issued on VHS), *Scare Package*, *The Last Blockbuster*, *At The Video Store*, *Hard Ticket To Hawaii*, *The Ranger*, *We're All Going To The World's Fair*, and those are just a few. Def check out our website (*LunchmeatVHS.com*) to see all our VHS releases. The titles on there are just from the past couple of years. We revamped our website a couple of years ago, so not all the releases show. We've done so many. It's wild to think about.

AU: Tell us about Home Video Horrors and Video Vortex?

JS: HVH is a project I created with phenomenal photographer and artist Jacky Lawrence. We wanted to create something that Tapeheads could enjoy all year round, so we thought a calendar would be rad. We take cult horror tape favorites and photograph them in situations that reflect themes in the movie, and just make them fun to look at. It's been a blast, and we've got a lot more in *VHStore*, so stay tuned! *Video Vortex*, as I mentioned before, is a video store that I helped create, curate and open for Alamo Drafthouse. That was a hell of a ride. I learned a lot, and had a bunch of fun in there, getting people excited about the video store vibe and renting movies. I no longer work there, but it's still running. I hope it sticks around. It has an incredible selection.

AU: What books have you been involved with writing and what was the inspiration?

JS: Mainly *Stuck on VHS*, which I created alongside Jacky Lawrence of *Home Video Horrors*. For that book, we wanted to collect as many pieces of video store sticker ephemera we could, and give people a chance to relive those glory days of the video store through the stickers. We've featured so many stores and seen so many memories and connections come about because of it. It's been extremely rewarding to see that happen. In many ways, these stickers help encapsulate the video era. Seemingly small, but they really help tell a bigger story. For instance, a sticker with a video store's name on it might be the only remnant of that store. In that way, when we publish it and talk about it, it helps that store (and those stores) live on. That's really the main objective with *SOVHS*.

We took *Stuck on VHS* and made a magazine extension, and that's been really fun to expand the world and go further into the history of these video stores. We'll have a new issue of *Stuck on VHS* dropping very soon, so keep an eye peeled!

AU: What started your VHS obsession? How crazy is your personal collection?

JS: I've been VHS-obsessed since I was a kid, and I just never VHSopped, man. I was a broke teenager / 20-something, and VHS was an incredible (and cheap) way to expand my movie library. And while collecting, I found there were so many movies only available on VHS. And then

it just kept expanding from there. I just never stopped; and finding a community out there to engage and share with, it's just propelled me to keep going with Lunchmeat and keep VHS rolling as much as we can.

Oh, it's pretty crazy, I think! I have about a few thousand tapes. But it's really not quantity, more quality. I just grab whatever I think looks interesting, and that adds up to a major collection. I've moved a bunch over the last several years and packing up thousands of VHS is wild. Word to the wise: VHS ARE HEAVY AND TAKE UP SPACE.

But they also bring me a lot of Happiness. It's a compromise that I've learned to love.

AU: What are some wicked obscure horror movies people should check out?

JS: *CreepTales* is a great one for Halloween. *Hauntedween* is another great one for the season. *Halloweenville* is a favorite of ours: it's a documentary about a small NJ town that goes absolutely bonkers for Halloween, and it's super heartwarming (if not a little strange - in a beautiful way). That one is directed by Gary Gohen of *Video Violence* fame, and we'll be issuing that on VHS here again soon.

AU: Why do you feel so strongly about keeping VHS alive and about respecting your VCR?

JS: Man, I could write a book on this question (and I'm sure I will at some point), but really, it's just because it's still a viable format and it holds so much amazing entertainment and information. We wouldn't be who we are without the advent of VHS / videotape, so I think it's important to remember that. There is just so much going on in the world of VHS. It's one of the most important pieces of media ever created. And it's the gateway to so much stuff. It's hard to be succinct with this, but suffice to say VHS is something that should always be remembered and respected. It's the way so many of us were introduced to our favorite movies, the way we captured our first day school, the way we taped our favorite shows and movies from TV. It's a huge part of our culture. It's part of us as a culture.

AU: How do you feel about the renewed interest and collectability of VHS? Some tapes

vhs zone

are going for crazy dollars these days.

JS: I think it's incredible. That's really all we wanted to do with Lunchmeat: get people excited and interested in VHS again. But, of course, things change. The prices do get insane, but that's just an inevitable byproduct of cultural expansion. It does make VHS inaccessible to some because of prices, and that's a bit of a bummer, but the fact that people are rewinding back and loving VHS again, that's something we're all about.

AU: Any plans for Halloween this year? Most insane Halloween you can remember? Most killer costume you ever wore?

JS: No big plans! Just a stack of tapes and mountain of sweet eats. I've done my share of partying over the years, so I like to keep it pretty chill nowadays.

Most insane? My best friend back home had this Apocalypse Party for Halloween one year: his apartment was being torn down in a week, so we just like trashed the place while partying. It was insane. What a night that was. Just wild. Holes in the walls, etc. We sure did make the most of that opportunity. Most killer costume? Probably not what you'd expect, but one time in my teens I dressed up as Cap'n Crunch and honestly man it was a blast. I did it a couple times actually because it was so much fun. I would have a box of Crunch and spoon into people's mouths. It was ridiculous and hilarious. Great times.

AU: What projects and releases does Lunchmeat have on the horizon?

JS: So many, man. We're super excited about all that's in store. Best thing to do is follow us @LunchmeatVHS and visit our site at *LunchmeatVHS.com* and sign up for the newsletter. We release all info through there!

AU: Final words for all the tapeheads out there.

Thanks for all the VHSupport over the years and remember: REWIND OR DIE!





is a gun calibre and therefore cooler/more macho.

Ron: I happened to be in the right place. I hit some drums with sticks for a while in Damaged Heads. We were messing around in Barb Carter's basement and her brother sat in on drums. He was, and still is, an amazing musician. I sang "Jumpin' Jack Flash" and Barb called Al the next day and said she had a singer. That's how I remember it. I was blown away when

they called. I knew these fellas but not that well. We jammed and they asked me to join.

AU: Who were your contemporaries and what was your impact?

Mark: We did pretty well in the early days. We could all play reasonably well and Ron was a very charismatic frontman. Lots of shows and we had fun writing together. Things were looking good until Personality Crisis from Winnipeg (with a couple of hired hands from Calgary) showed up and it was all over. After that we were pretty much a paid distraction to get through until PC played. They were as great as any hype you may have read about them. Still, we managed to stagger on and were soon under the spell of another Winnipeg band: The Stretch Marks. We probably recognized them as the same as us: competent second stringers. We loved those guys to no end.

Al: We played The Calgarian a fair amount, and as far as impact, it might have varied on the given

night, but we had fun anyway. I was pretty okay with our local status – I liked our band and was glad we weren't Personality Crisis. Through our short existence, we did shows with the Stretch Marks, Subhumans, SNFU, DOA, etc., and with lesser-known locals like Sting Zilda, RSG, Eye on You, New Regime, and maybe a dozen others.

Ron: There were so many bands in Calgary at that time. Al mentions a lot of them. We had a good following and got to play a lot of great shows.

AU: Why did the band end and what happened afterwards?

Mark: After Bolo quit, we briefly tried to get a new bassist but it just wasn't going to happen. Ron and I talked about getting something going but our tastes were diverging, to say the least. Eventually, I got back together with Bolo in the Doris Day Film Festival – a short-lived psychedelic/Killing Joke crossover band in search of discount acid and loincloths.

Al: I crawled back down into the basement and didn't do anything related to music for quite a while. Never missed a weekly installment of

"World's Worst Film Festival" on CBC, though.

Bolo: Yup, I quit the band. I don't know if it was the right thing or not even today, but at the time I felt we were trying to emulate certain bands by playing faster and faster. That's kind of where things were heading with all the hardcore stuff and I thought we were losing the feel of the music by speeding up so much. It seemed like every show we played faster than the last one and I just didn't feel it

anymore.

Ron: I think we all started going in different directions. I moved on to White Noise, which turned into Beyond Possession. (White Noise put out the *Dead and Alive* tape in 1984 and morphed into Beyond Possession the following year.)

AU: How do you look back at the group now?



Mark: It was a great experience. We had lots of laughs, made lasting friendships and got to be part of a pre-digital global movement. I wish we had ventured a little further south (maybe we would have got to play Punk Rock Bowling) but that wasn't meant to be. I'm not sure we created anything fantastic but I'm glad it's finally available for those who want to check it out.

Al: I think we did some good stuff, and had our day in the sun. We did what we wanted and made our own songs, warts and all. It felt good to be doing music that wasn't bullshit and was maybe part of something bigger.

Bolo: To be recognized for anything 40 years later is impressive. It was an important band for me, and these guys are still my pals after all these years, so it's pretty cool!

Ron: Riot. 303 was a huge part of my life, playing music in Al's basement and then playing live. When you realize that people like the music you created in that basement is the biggest rush. It's cool to have it released.

Editing: Jason Flower

Copy editing: Frank Manley

Archival material and photos: Doug Boland, Al Charlton, Mark Igglesden

Calgary Punks Riot .303 Nightmares Of Another Kind

Doug "Bolo" Boland – Bass

Al Charlton – Guitar

Ron Hadley – Vocals

Mark Igglesden – Drums

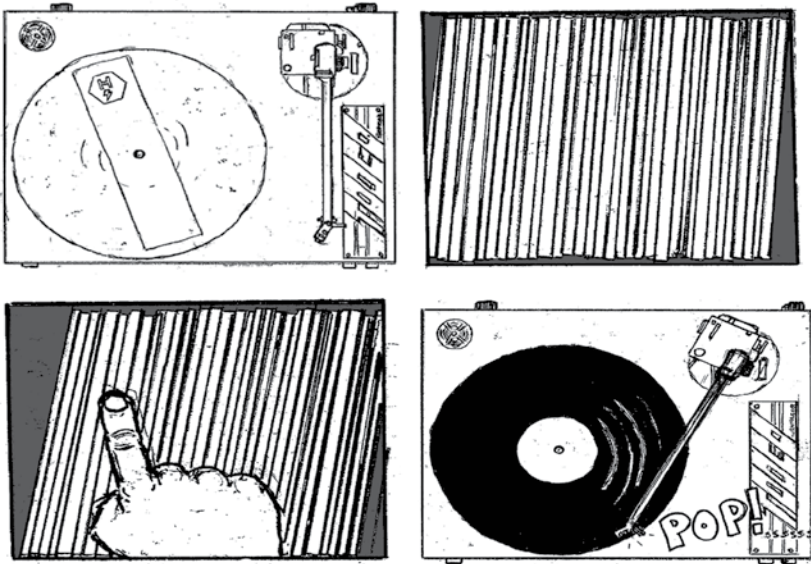
Absolute Underground: How, why, and when did Riot .303 form?

Mark: We had all been in bands before Riot .303. Al and I were in the Sturgeons, Bolo was in Suburban Slag (with future Personality Crisis/SNFU/DOA drum supremo Jon Card) and Ron had played drums in Damaged Heads. We wanted to do something a little tougher sounding than Sturgeons and we knew Bolo from playing shows with the Slag. Al heard that Ron wanted to try singing so we learned a few covers and off we went. I had a British dystopian novel called *Riot '71* (by Ludovic Peters) that I thought would be a good name. Al said "How about Riot .303?" which



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BREWING 101



Season of the Witch

The disenfranchisement of women in the brewing industry

by Daniel Van Netten

As the days grow shorter and the nights are colder, longer, I embrace the eventide... this is the time of the harvest, the work that will carry one through the uncertainty. It should be a time to get together to celebrate and share. Historically brewing was a source of nutrition and a great way to preserve grain. Women were almost exclusively the brewers up until the 1500s. Fermentation was an everyday household task. In the Middle Ages a religious movement (the Spanish Inquisition) brought an onslaught of Catholicism, thus intensifying superstition in capitalist male dominated society. Many religious organizations

went to great lengths to take money from the poor for their fear of the unknown. When we think of brewers today, we see burly hipsters with plaid jackets and gum boots. Historically women were brewers and in the Middle Ages were victims of a movement to take it away. Thus the invention of the witch...

Before knowledge of microorganisms, yeast was a powerful entity. Yeast was captured in a broom and used for the next batch. Cats were kept in the brew house to keep mice/rats away.

The tall and pointy hat was common at markets to signify beer was for sale. Beer was brewed in a large cauldron, broomsticks would be placed outside a home signifying beer for sale, a star would also be placed to represent



quality of the brew. Widows and unmarried women would often sell beer to earn extra money. The invention of the witch took brewing away from women, and made an image of female brewers as grotesque and untrustworthy. The image created of witches making magic spells and potions, could be punishable by death. Men were not accused of witchcraft and often took the lucrative trade to the churches and monasteries. Women brewers were seen as servants to the devil. In the Netherlands some women were still allowed to brew, but only if they were widows, they could have their husband's license.

A mold that grows on rye called ergot (similar to LSD but more dangerous) caused mass hallucinations in Massachusetts in the late 1600s. Many believe ergot and religion to be responsible for the Salem witch trials.

In Peru, traditional brewing is still alive and well. Women chew corn and the enzymes break down the proteins to make chicha (a fermented corn beer). When the chicha is ready, a broomstick with a red flag is placed on the street



at an angle outside the door.

This time of year, with the harvest and Halloween, this horrific chapter of history especially shouldn't be forgotten. It's a good time to reflect on the mistakes of the past, and celebrate progress for a better future.



AU: What kind of music is IQ78 all about?

Daryl: Its all about Punk and Oi! And having a good time.

Sina: Fast, heavy, loud

Tobias: Good beats, good riffs and tons of energy. Yeah. Rock'n'roll.

AU: How did the band come together?

Tobias: I think we came together in the spring?

Daryl: I think it was

IQ 78

By John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves.

Jorden: I'm Jorden and...

AU: What do you do?

Jorden: I shine boots.

Sina: I'm Sina. I make Pizza

Daryl: I'm dazzlicious Daryl and I do the singing.

Tobias: I'm Tobias. Sometimes I do the dishes but not very often.

AU: Tell us about your band name

Sina: It's the sum of all our IQs.

Tobias: That about sums it up. I believe a 78 IQ is borderline retarded.

Jorden: Here's the thing though. (Points at Tobias) You're like, really well versed and really well read. I think you're a Rainman, Sina. You have a degree and are well educated. This guy over here Daryl's got his own business. He's an entrepreneur. Me, I dunno.

Sina: But you know the word entrepreneur!

Jorden: Ask me to spell it! Probably not.

closer to like Christmas.

Tobias: I think it was in the new year of 2022. I remember meeting Daryl at a barbecue at Raz's place before that. I've known Jorden for years and played in a couple bands with him.

Daryl: For me I've had this idea of starting a band for a couple of years. I was like, fuck! I've never been in a band before. I don't know what the hell I'm doing but I finally asked Jorden to join, and he got on board with our old drummer (Liam). We had the idea of starting a band together. But due to shitty shit he's not here anymore. Even though we all love him. So, then we found Sina.

Sina: It isn't like he died.

Daryl: Well, he didn't die but he's not in the band anymore. Then Jorden got Tobias in and we got together and we all meshed and here we are.

Tobias: So, it all started at a barbecue really. A cool front yard soul dance at Raz's place.

Daryl: I guess you could say it started at Raz's house where we met.

Tobias: Actually, I saw you (Daryl) before at the Fairway Market in the Chinese food section and you were all spiffed out in your skinhead gear.

Daryl: And you didn't say Hi to me?

Tobias: I didn't know who you were. I was like

"who's that skinhead dude" and thought maybe you were a bonehead or something. And I was just some fuckin random old guy pushing a shopping cart around. You didn't even look at me.

Daryl: I met Sina through cutting his hair and we became friends and we needed a drummer. Actually, he became my roommate first 'cause I needed a roommate and then we needed a drummer.

Tobias: And he's a good drummer but he's yakking on the phone with somebody now.

AU: Tell us about your creative process.

Tobias: Sure! I fart around playing guitar and sometimes I play the odd riff that isn't a piece of shit. Sometimes the ones that aren't pieces of shit; if I don't forget them and can remember them at band practice, I'll bust them out. Then Jorden starts wailing on the bass and Sina just kicks it in and fucking Double Barrel Daryl whips a notepad out of his ass pocket and starts yelling.

Jorden: Usually he pulls out an etch-a-sketch!

Tobias: Then in about ten or 15 minutes we have a punk song.

AU: What are IQ78 songs usually about?

Daryl: I'd say I write mostly about things I know. Things that are real. I don't like to write about things I don't know about. Most bands that write about things that aren't relevant just seem like cookie cutter bullshit. I sing about my life and stuff that resonates with me.

AU: What bands influence IQ78?

Daryl: I'd say Sharon, Lois and Bram.

Tobias: They sound a bit too heavy and old school. But seriously, I like punk and 70's rock. That's mostly the stuff I'm into that I can play. I listen to all kinds of stuff but as far as my guitar abilities go; I just play basic 3 chord Monty shit. I like throwing some melody into it.

Daryl: I'd say a lot of my influences at first were classic Oi! Bands. I just love Oi! And punk in general. Jorden and Sina are similar. Same with Tobias except he's obsessed with Leatherface.

Tobias: I love Leatherface! They're so good. We could rattle off tons of bands. We're definitely dabbling in stuff like The Professionals, Slaughter

and the Dogs, Cockney Rejects, Peter and the Test Tube Babies. Old English classic punk.

AU: Tell us about some of your favourite local (ish) bands?

Tobias: Oh, I definitely can rattle off a few that I would go check out any day of the week. Like Keg Killers comes to mind. AK47 are a killer Victoria band. Theres lots of good bands here.

Jorden: Chain Whip

Daryl: Some Vancouver bands like Last Call, Toy Tiger, Buzzers, obviously Bishops Green and Alternate Action.

AU: Where can people find your music?

Tobias: They'll have to come see us live cause we haven't recorded anything that's fit for human consumption.

Daryl: Yeah, we're pretty new. We don't have anything online or links. We do have an Instagram. You can come look at our pictures. iq78_punk

AU: What's ahead for IQ78?

Tobias: We got a bunch of shows coming up 'till Halloween here in Victoria.

Daryl: We are planning on recording some songs after we finish playing this slough of shows going on.

Tobias: After Halloween we might have enough pennies saved to go record maybe 4 or 5 songs.

AU: So where do you get your hair cut?

Sina: Little Barbershop of Horrors!!!!

Daryl: The only place to go.

AU: Is there anything else you guys want to add?

Tobias: I got a joke that I wrote!

AWKWARD SILENCE

Tobias: So, a skinhead, an Iranian, a Jew and a Priest walk into a bar...

The barkeep says "Hey Fellas! You must be IQ78. I'll unlock the backdoor so you can load in. Soundcheck is at 7."

Chat/Imagery: John Carlow/Finding Charlotte Photography



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Absolute Album Reviews



U.K.Subs-Acoustic XXIV Captain Oi! Records

One of the unique things about U.K Subs is their alphabetical musical releases, thus XXIV is their 24th (!) album, and *Acoustic XXIV* was originally a bonus disc with XXIV (hence the title!), and this is its first time on glorious vinyl and believe me, it deserves it. (I must also mention how spectacular the thought-provoking sleeve art is on 12").

Now, the Subs going acoustic is unexpected, and I'm sure it shocked a few of their long-term fans, however, I'm sure their shock quickly turned to awe, because *Acoustic XXIV* is truly excellent, and testament to the Subs' talent and longevity.

It's hard to pick highlights, but, for instance, I love the cover of Mott The Hoople's 'Angel Of Eight Avenue'. The Subs really put their own stamp on it. Their original 'Sleeping Rough' is most heartfelt and poignant, particularly in these dark times, where we see more and more homeless people sleeping on the streets, something that should never happen in a civilised society. A safe place to sleep is a basic human right. This is the true spirit of punk, it's about protesting for justice. Indeed, it reminds me of Dylan.

The U.K. Subs have always reflected reality, none more so than on the sincere 'Stop Global War', something we're all suffering from now, directly or indirectly. I love the line, 'choose war or feed your people'. How sad but true. I have to single out 'Higher Tide', a short seafaring ditty that reminded me of sea-fishing with my late, much missed Dad, he would have loved this song.

Finally, I have to single out 'Thunder in The Sun', a song about New York Doll Johnny Thunders. A cautionary tale to those who idolise him, the lyrics are razor sharp: 'Light and shade, a price is paid for doing the drunken two step, don't be dumb, he's not the one, don't try to emulate the burned out sun'. Marvellous stuff! It remains only to mention that the vinyl really shows off Pat Collier's production to full effect.

An excellent album from a band that are truly an institution that recognises no boundaries but its own and you can't get more punk rock than that!

-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 Diggie 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

Dead Kennedys - Fresh Fruit For



Rotting Vegetables 2022 Mix Cherry Records

Dealing with the matter of the mix first. It's warm and full and adds further clarity to the record, all the musicians involved sound great. It goes without saying that *Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables* sounds excellent on vinyl, which is as it should be!

Now, that's the matter of the mix taken care of (Two thumbs up for the mix!), next we come to the no small matter of the music contained within its sacred vinyl grooves. Of course, *Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables* is a stone cold classic in any genre, not just punk. The first version I ever heard of 'Drug Me' was Sepultura's cover version, I was amazed later to discover how different it was to the original but fateful in spirit.

You cannot argue with an album that features such songs as 'California Uber Alles', 'Kill The Poor', 'Let's Lynch The Landlord', and 'Holidays In Cambodia'. Incidentally, I have to give props to Disposable Heroes of Hip-Hoprisy's amazing cover of 'California Uber Alles', which features Jello Biafra. Again, like Sepultura, they did a cover that is faithful but different. They too were a truly great band that burned brightly but far too briefly, intelligent and sincere. I wish they'd inspired more hip-hop groups in their own vein. No stupid lyrics bashing women with the Disposables which is as it should be, but unfortunately so often isn't

The songs on *Fresh Fruit* are first class and so is the musicianship, but the most

emarkable thing is this: the songs are all just as valid today, *Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables* could have been recorded this morning, it's sadly still chilling relevant. This is timeless music, the world it reflected when it was composed and recorded is still very much with us, it's themes still resonate, change a few words here and there and 'California Uber Alles' could be about Donald Trump for instance. SO, a unique album from a unique band, no one sounds like the Dead Kennedys, true original...the Once and Future Punks! Timeless.

There's no more to be said, this truly is one of the essential albums of all-time.

-Steve Earles



Solitude Aeternus - Into The Depths Of Sorrow/Beyond The Crimson Horizon Cherry Red Records

Now, this is indeed a special package, two of the greatest and most influential epic doom metal albums of all time packaged together and given the exposure and respect they so richly deserve.

Now, to give you some important perspective, Solitude Aeternus was founded in 1987 in Texas by guitarist John Perez. Now, it's vital to remember that in 1987, you had thrash metal, hair metal, and in the underground death metal was beginning to make its mark. Doom metal as we now call it was very obscure. You have to remember that the originators of doom metal, Black Sabbath, were a joke at this point, with only Tony Iommi, and an ever-revolving cast of members joining the Sabbath show, devaluing the legacy. Of course, it has to be said that the number one influence on Solitude Aeternus would have been the seminal Candlemass, hence the band's name. This is as it should be. As to the music, both albums are superb, beautifully composed and played, utterly heartfelt and moving. This is marvellous heartfelt music in any genre. In the case of both albums it is impossible to single out a particular song as a favourite, because all the tracks work in harmony with each other, like a symphony of sorrow.

I feel *Beyond The Crimson Horizon* has a slight edge, the production is somewhat rawer and more organic, and the influences of Iron Maiden and 'Rising'-era Rainbow shines through.

A hero of the tale of Solitude Aeternus, to me, apart from the courage of the band in following their dreams, is Roadrunner Records Monte Conner for signing them in the first place. When Monte signed them, their debut album was already recorded, yet had languished unreleased for over a year. Moreover, you have to look at Roadrunner's own roster, just to see how out of place Solitude Aeternus was, yet Roadrunner released both of these albums, and here they are, thanks to Cherry Red, for us to enjoy once again. This two CD package comes enhanced by excellent liner notes from Chris Chanter, with contributions from Ben Ward of Orange Goblin, and Will Palmer, who has played with Sloth and Mourn, and now plays with the mighty Angel Witch. He also started the much loved *Iron Fist* magazine (please bring out a new issue, Will, I'll gladly help you). By coincidence I note I interviewed Ben Ward for a feature in *Zero Tolerance* magazine, and for the same magazine, I did a feature on Sloth. I also had a pint with Ben at Siege of Limerick in Dolans!

What is good in metal, you'll find that in *In The Depths Of Sorrow/Beyond The Crimson Horizon*, metal in its most sincere and heartfelt form. Absolutely essential! Doom or be doomed!

-Steve Earles



The Sorels - Love Your Rock n' Roll EP Reta Records

It's been a while since I've heard a band quite like this. With their old school rock 'n' roll sound, I could see them playing Crybaby's high school prom after ripping into the parking lot on flaming motorcycles.

Their lyrics are full of nostalgia, with melodic vocals about partying, teen love (and heartbreak), hating school, and loving music. "Make Me Party" and "Love Your Rock n' Roll" are where they really hit their stride. These tracks are super catchy and leave me feeling like an EP is not enough. I'm really looking forward to seeing where this project goes.

-Aeryn Shrapnel



Forever Dead Pretending We're Surviving Review

In the early days of the first lockdown, Forever Dead! reasoned that, being a family band, they had mastered being socially distant and where better to shelter in place than the studio?

Spanning 18 tracks, *Pretending We're Surviving* explores such subject matter as beer, meeting one's heroes, bongs and hunting feuds. The bands' cohesion and Chelsea's vocal prowess allow them the freedom to explore the dingy corners of the condemned church basement that is skate punk. Kicking off with Backpedal, Chelsea proclaims the mission statement, "If all is for naught, we just won't give a fuck". The rest of the album takes that lead, with classic FD! servings such as the frenetic "Gut Pile" and the anthemic "Event Horizon" or detours such as hard-core offering "Fuck Ya, Hell Ya" and the psychedelic surf rock instrumental "Space Madness".

I've been shamelessly poaching this album for skate edits since its release and have yet to find a vibe it can't fill. With *Pretending We're Surviving*, Forever Dead! continues to exemplify Thunder Bay Punk Rock and I personally can't wait for more.

- Adam Phillips

Adam Phillips is a skate video producer and part of the skate crew Skate Nasty Thunder Bay.

Feature Review



Iron Fist - 40th Anniversary Reissue

Iron Fist has always been in an interesting spot among Motörhead's catalogue. Following up the bands two biggest successes *Ace Of Spades* and *No Sleep 'til Hammersmith* with production credit going to Fast Eddie Clarke, the result was something less than desirable by the band's standards. In fact the recording of *Iron Fist* along with Clarke's aversion to the "Stand By Your Man" sessions with Wendy O. Williams led to sever him from the band.

40 years later and quite some time before that *Iron Fist* is a stone deaf classic to fans. Weak production aside, musically, the album is a full on locomotive. "Iron Fist," "Speedfreak," "Heart Of Stone," "Bang To Rights" are staples and realistically the album is just a banger start to finish. Motörhead and Bertelsmann Music Group have been celebrating the 40th anniversary of all the classic era albums starting with the '79 albums *Overkill* and *Bomber* up to *No Sleep*. It is now *Iron Fist's* turn with a deluxe reissue of the album as hardback book-packs in 2 CD and 3 LP formats, featuring a hammer fist blow, remaster of the original album, previously unreleased demo bonus tracks and a full concert, originally broadcast on Radio Clyde from 18th March 1982 in Glasgow.

The demo recordings are interesting for diehard Motörheadbangers. Most notably "Young & Crazy" which is a very underdeveloped

version of "Sex & Outrage." You won't be blasting it cranked to 11, but it's worth a laugh & is interesting enough, along with the other tracks to see these songs develop. "Lemmy Goes To The Pub" previously released on the *Deaf Forever* compilation is always good for a chuckle with lyrics like, "Your boring waffle gets me down."

The real jewel of this massive 44 track reissue is the "Live at the Glasgow Apollo '82" portion. This has been around for years as various unofficial bootlegs, so it's nice to get a proper release. The boys are in fine form and it shows. They actually feel "ultra tight" compared to some of the sloppier live recordings this line up produced. The drums are buried a bit but there's only so much we can expect for a soundboard radio broadcast 40 years ago. The show takes place on March 18th 1982, 57 days before the firing or exit (depends who you ask) of Clarke, so it's a great window into what the band sounded like in their final days. It's also the only time you'll hear such an "Iron Fist" heavy setlist comprising 7 cuts from the album played at blistering speed.

All in all, just like the previous 40th anniversary releases - this is for the diehard Motörheadbangers. Casual listeners will probably not care and are better off getting a standalone of the album. Regardless, don't be a "Loser" and crank this album up to celebrate 40 years of *IRON FIST!*

-Sheldon Byer

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Absolute Live Reviews



Airbourne

The Native Howl

Sept 30, The Palace, Calgary AB

September was the month of rock, with Dirty Honey, The Cult and now Airbourne runnin' wild through Canada. The Australian band ended the month with a bang at the Palace nightclub, and on this Friday night the band and the crowd brought the energy for a concert of pure rock fury that won't be forgotten soon.

Detroit's "thrashgrass" band The Native Howl were up first. If you've seen the TV show *Border Security: Canada's Front Line*, you'll know how strict the Canadian border is, and their drummer was the latest in the string of people or full bands that couldn't make it across. This didn't stop the "three out of four shitheels" from coming through Canada anyway, with singer Alex Holycross keeping the beat with a single large bass drum at his feet. With his long hair, big muscles, elbow pads and red hanky in his pocket, I swore this guy was WWE Superstar Elias at first glance... Without a drummer, the band did sound more bluegrass than metal, though their songs didn't lose the energy of the original versions. The highlight was their mashup of Metallica's "Harvester of Sorrow" and Soggy Bottom Boys' "Man of Constant Sorrow" entitled "Harvester of Constant Sorrow."

It was time for the beer cups to take flight, as Airbourne took the stage. AC/DC comparisons aside, the band does have the spirit of rock running through their veins, and I'd be damned to think of a more higher-energy rock show in the past while. Their latest album, *Boneshaker* was released back in 2019, so these songs desperately needed to get some air. "Ready to Rock" opened the show like a bomb explosion, going into "Too Much, Too Young, Too Fast" among other high-energy anthems which sent the audience into a frenzy. It seemed shirts were optional, not only for singer/guitarist Joel O'Keeffe, but the fans as well - the pit soon looking like a Japanese bathhouse.

Airbourne did a few cool things to make their show stand out from others - first, O'Keeffe going on the shoulders of a security guard and playing throughout the crowd. Second, O'Keeffe pointing out a fan in a wheelchair and playing a solo in front of him for about a minute. Third, when doing their Lemmy tribute, "It's All For Rock n' Roll," O'Keeffe pouring some Jack and Cokes for the band via a mini "Lemmy's Bar." Last but not least - not letting the crowd go home thirsty and tossing out at least 20 cups of beer into the audience. They ended the set with the song that brought them to the dance, "Runnin' Wild," with a final statement for the rowdy fans, "Enjoy the Saturday morning hangover."

-Ryan Dyer

Dirty Honey

Mac Saturn

September 3, Commonwealth, Calgary AB

Los Angeles California's Dirty Honey brought their 2022 California Dreamin' tour to Canada for their first ever tour of the country. With it, they had special Canadian t-shirts made and even did a special guitar giveaway (something they are doing on every Canadian date) after opening band Mac Saturn heated up the Commonwealth on this hot n' humid Saturday night.

I had been waiting to see Dirty Honey since 2020 - at this time they were booked for Japan's Download Festival, which was ultimately canceled due to COVID. Since then, their legend has grown, opening for truly legendary bands KISS and Guns N' Roses.

The band they enlisted to open the tour was Detroit's Mac Saturn. They went with Dirty Honey like a peanut butter and honey sandwich. They performed songs from their EP "Until the Money Runs Out," with singles "Diamonds" and especially the ode to the car industry in Detroit, "Mr. Cadillac" standing out. Vocalist Carson Macc is one to watch out for - he knew exactly when to acknowledge the crowd who in turn wanted more.

It was time to get "Dirrty" when the Los Angeles natives took the stage. It's easy to be critical of new rock bands such as Greta Van Fleet or Airbourne for being imitations of past bands, though there are diamonds in the rough who are writing memorable songs and have their own sound. Dirty Honey (and Mac Saturn) do have something to offer, and besides the songs, in a live setting, get to show their chops, too. Along with their original tracks like "Scars" and the already classic "Another Last Time," the band threw in a few covers for Aerosmith's "Last Child" and Prince's "Let's Go Crazy."

The band didn't do the traditional and predictable "leave the stage and come back after two minutes" encore routine. Instead, singer Marc LaBelle asked the crowd if they wanted one more song, they played the song ("Rolling 7s") and then promised they'd be back. For some quality, no BS new rock, add both bands to your playlist.

-Ryan Dyer

The Cult

Sept 17, 2022, The Grey Eagle, Calgary AB

With their 10th studio album *Under the Midnight Sun* on the horizon, The Cult embarked on this 12-date tour with nearly half the dates spread across Western Canada. Calgary was the second slot on the tour, which saw the band at the Grey Eagle Resort and Casino, a mini Las-Vegas of sorts, where patrons can hit the slot machines, smoke cigarettes and eat cheap wings before their favorite band takes the stage in the

next room.

At this concert, seats were put in place. They were soon completely disregarded, though, as The Cult took the stage, with people rushing to the front of the stage and standing in the aisles. A rather plain mesh background was up behind the band, meaning that this Cult show was less about flashy stage props and more about the focus being on the mystic rock music the band has brought to the masses during their near 40-year existence.

Opening with the sludgy "Rise" from *Beyond Good and Evil* to get the crowd properly amped, the band then went into "Sun King" and "Automatic Blues" from their classic *Sonic Temple* album before getting to the first peak of the night, "Sweet Soul Sister."

The incomparable Ian Astbury was well aware of the venue being on aboriginal land, paying respect in between songs - his hair styled in double-braided native American fashion. Always outspoken, he commented on a few of the fans in the front - "Where are my longhairs at? The long-haired men, that is" while also acknowledging the younger folk in the audience.

By the time the batch of hit songs were played - "Fire Woman," "Revolution," "Rain" and "She Sells Sanctuary," the crowd was getting a bit too feisty, with the seats being used for walking across, dancing, and even fighting. Yes, during "She Sells Sanctuary" a brawl broke out right in front of the stage, which Astbury noticed. He had the crowd mellow out and pointed out a victim of the violence who had his hoodie ripped - "What size do you wear, brother? Extra large - we'll hook you up."

The band then took a short break before the series of encore songs began, "Lil' Devil," the live debut of new song "A Cut Inside" and the immortal "Love Removal Machine." Astbury asked the audience member if he got his new Cult hoodie, which he replied with some devil horns thrown towards Ian's direction. It was a heartwarming gesture which resulted from a nasty incident that could have turned far uglier - instead, the fans will remember The Cult on this night as being a true band of the people - playing their hits and new material with passion and showing that same amount of passion to the fans.

- Ryan Dyer

Om / Zombi

Starlite Room, Edmonton AB, Sep 23, 2022

Maybe it sounds cheesy but if I could describe Om in one word it would be "hypnotic." I could repeat the oftentimes mentioned worldly influence the band has (hint: the name), but I can't even pretend to know enough about those sounds to wax poetic about them here. Regardless of where the band's music comes from, though, you don't need to know much about much to know these guys can lock into a groove that's almost like quicksand.

I'll confess that I barely know the names of any individual Om songs since I've never bothered to split the albums up accordingly. I'll add that my first introduction to the band was their 2006 release *Conference of the Birds* and that even then it didn't seem necessary to think of the album as a collection of songs but rather as one long composition. Maybe it's the fact that I came to Om from Sleep and that *Dopesmoker* made the idea of one song being an entire album simultaneously the most innovative yet common sense thing in the world, but I'd be so bold as to say that the band's onstage presence would suggest I'm not too far off track -- I could be wrong, but I think the band introduced maybe 3 songs the entire night. As soon as the band took the stage,

you'd have to get the point.

Anyone who's listened to Sleep would already know how good Al Cisneros is on the bass (and if you haven't, then what the hell, man?), but I would be remiss if I didn't mention how damn good the drummer was. A perfect compliment to the riffs, Emil Amos' playing went from almost frustratingly tense and slow in building to massive and thundering and back. If Al Cisneros brought something close to hypnosis, I'd say Emil Amos brought something a bit more akin to menace.

I would suggest the most enjoyable part of it all is that the music itself has the power to be both forefront if you let it, or perfect for looping in the background like a soundtrack to whatever you have rolling around in your head. I can't deny this is exactly what happened to me at the show, since my friend Dave and I went from not looking away from the stage to talking randomly and trying to tally all the good shows we had seen at this same venue. Maybe that's what makes the band itself, not to mention the scene that spawned it, so damn interesting anyways: it's not flashy like rock n' roll, it doesn't high pitch and growl like so much metal, and it doesn't come in bursts of crazy like punk rock. It doesn't need to command your attention for its own sake because it knows it'll seep in whether you want it to or not. I remember Chuck Dukowski saying something along the lines of punk rock songs are so short because that's how long the inspiration lasts. I'd say Om can remind any of us that you can go slow and lock it down and let that sound ooze long enough to get your fill in a different way. Say Om and let the sound of them hold: eventually you'll get lost in the hum, and that's time well spent.

- Dre Calderon

Photo Credit: Raoul Hernandez

KEN mode

Vile Creature

Mares of Thrace

Sept 25, The Palomino Smokehouse, Calgary AB

With the release of their eighth studio album, *Null*, Winnipeg's KEN mode came out of a three-year touring drought to test Canadian audiences with their new songs and destroy live venues in the process. First would be their hometown, and

then they went out west, playing in Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton. The tour was accompanied by Hamilton's Vile Creature and Calgary's Mares of Thrace.

Mares of Thrace have had a long relationship with KEN mode, with band visionary Thérèse Lanz playing bass for the band in 2010/2011. They are currently promoting their latest LP *The Exile*, and used their opening slot to reintroduce themselves to anyone who missed their Sled Island show. Although the band is made up of only two people, the Lanz/Casey Rogers duo sound like there are at least five people on stage - though that's what experience and thinking outside typical songwriting boxes will get you - though they also don't forget to rock the fuck out, too.

Vile Creature were of interest to me - at their merch table they were selling what looked like a horror VHS - this led me to believe that the band would be more horror-based, and in some aspects, they were. Slow, heavy doom tracks were given a swampy makeover with dual vocals offering layers of agony. Backing tracks provided a chilling Italian horror-esque atmosphere which allowed for the sludge to come back down hard for the end of the set.

KEN mode haven't toured in three years, though bassist Skot Hamilton's Adolyn came through town a few months ago which satisfied some live performances itches he may have had. The rest of the band, however, needed a big scratch, and the attendees at the Palomino had their nails ready. The band have always played like they have something to say and every word, every note, is played with conviction. Jesse Matthewson always has that look on his face like maybe he shouldn't say the next lines of the song because the truth in them may cut too deep, while Hamilton is exorcising demons with his possessed bass playing. Alongside the band was Kathryn Kerr, whose saxophone made the band sound at times like avant-garde black metal band SIGH, while at others her synth sounds were a foreboding underbelly, like in Primitive Man songs. The set ended with "Never Was" - a song with a message that will never be lost in time - "Religion is a cancer" - which could only be accompanied by a rousing climax of man-made sludge and noise.

-Ryan Dyer

The Cup: Come Get Fancy 2022 (aka The Kuntfucky Derby) July 23rd, Hastings Racecourse, Vancouver BC

My intentions for the day were simple: get drunk and watch horses run fast, so I went down to Hastings Racecourse. As I approached, I felt I had entered into some sick *Twilight Zone* episode. From the bus stop I could hear their shitty DJ "Felix Cartal" and the crowd around me were wearing outfits that were equal parts *Great Gatsby* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. I was underdressed to say the least. I approached the ticket booth and over the crushing bass of Top 40 remixes, I asked what was going on. The employee told me it was "The Cup!" with a dead eyed smile. "It's like The Kentucky Derby in Vancouver!" Tickets were 94 dollars. I laughed; you couldn't pay me \$100 to hang out with a bunch of depthless WASPs for an afternoon.

In the parking lot I scored a wristband from someone barfing on their Versace shoes. I tied it around my wrist haphazardly and I was in. "Shots" was blaring and a crowd of bespoke frat boys was slurred screaming along. Dads in beige suits, weirdos wearing fake top hats and monocles, and girls in ball gowns. All paying \$15 for White Claws and \$50 for glasses of champagne. What a hellscape. I slunk through the crowd trying to eavesdrop. Security shot me strange looks but that was ignored with help from my flask. In the smoke pit, a red-faced hockey dad told me, "My bitch wife spent all our gambling money so now I'm just here to look at boobies." He and everyone else I tried to talk to about their jobs refused to elaborate anymore than "I'm in tech". I assumed NFT scams. These old money fucks were blowing more on overpriced food and cigars than I earn in a month. Not to mention the gambling. When my only bet of the day lost me my last \$20, I bounced. If you like dressing up like a dickhead, hanging out with elitist rich kids and overpaying for drinks, this is your place.

-@GigRatt

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John 5 & The Creatures with guests Krash Karma Rickshaw Theatre, Aug 30th, 2022

John 5 is one of the sought after guitarist in the music industry who has been the axeman for many top tier musicians & songwriters including his current gig playing for Rob Zombie. He hit the stage with Krash Karma at the Rickshaw Theatre in support of his new album *Sinner*.

KrashKarma is a duo from Los Angeles the band includes a drummer and a guitarist who has a bass pickup that allows them to play both guitar and bass at the same time. They opened the show by entering through the front doors of

the theatre and performing most of their opening song in the audience, later in the set they did a cover of Metallica - "Damage Inc." The band was extremely energetic and fun and covered a lot of ground as a two piece.

John 5 played a great set with a few tracks from the new album. The stage production featured plasma balls on the amps and four screens featuring vintage film, horror imagery, band footage. They also had some characters on stage in costume one a robot and a chainsaw killer. The backing band The Creatures were really impressive and on point. Two songs that were per-

formed that stood out for me was "Que Pasa" which has studio vocals from Dave Mustaine of Megadeth and Queen cover "Crazy Little Thing Called Love." I would totally see the next John 5 show through town, he never disappoints.

-Malcolm Quick
Photo Credit: David Jacklin

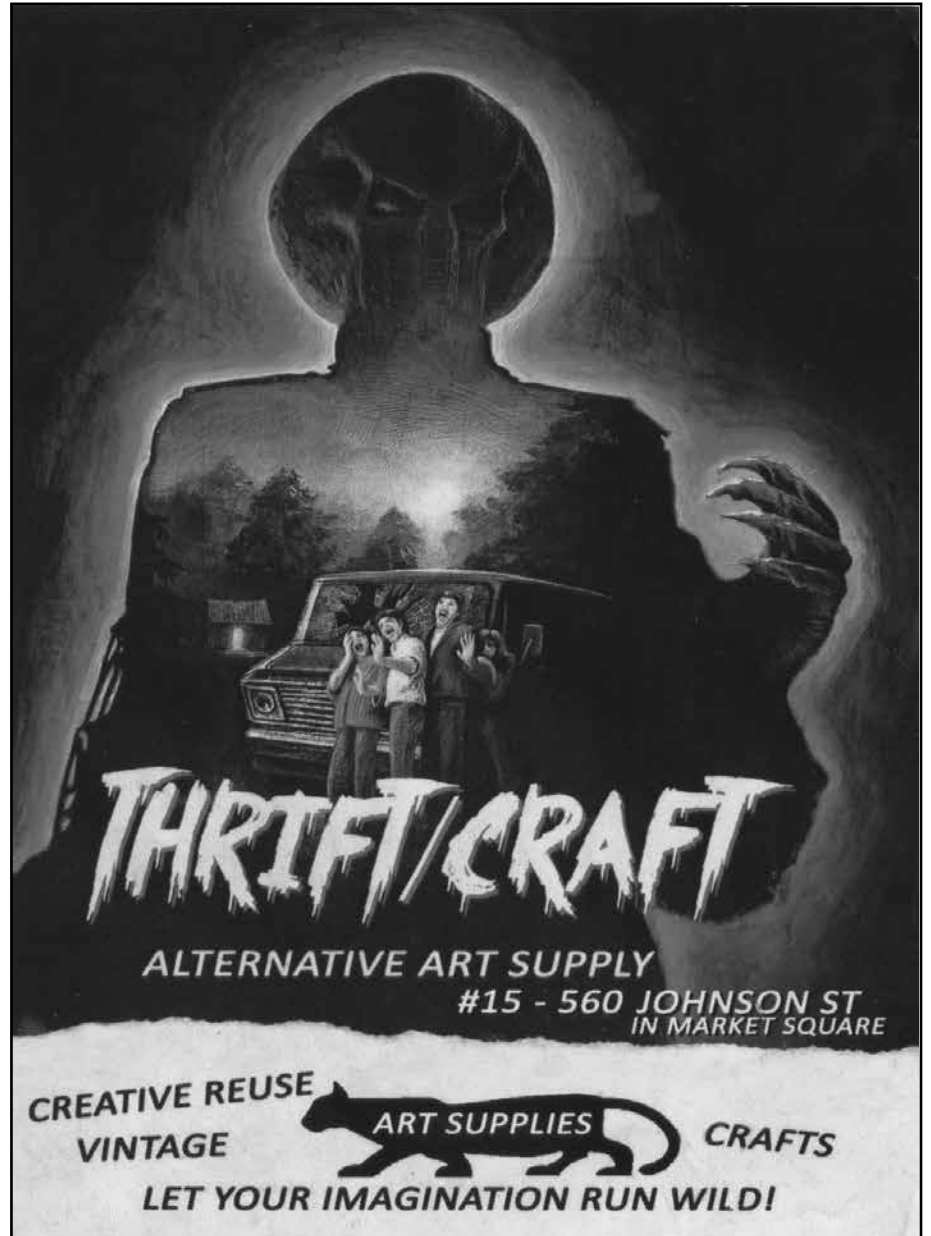
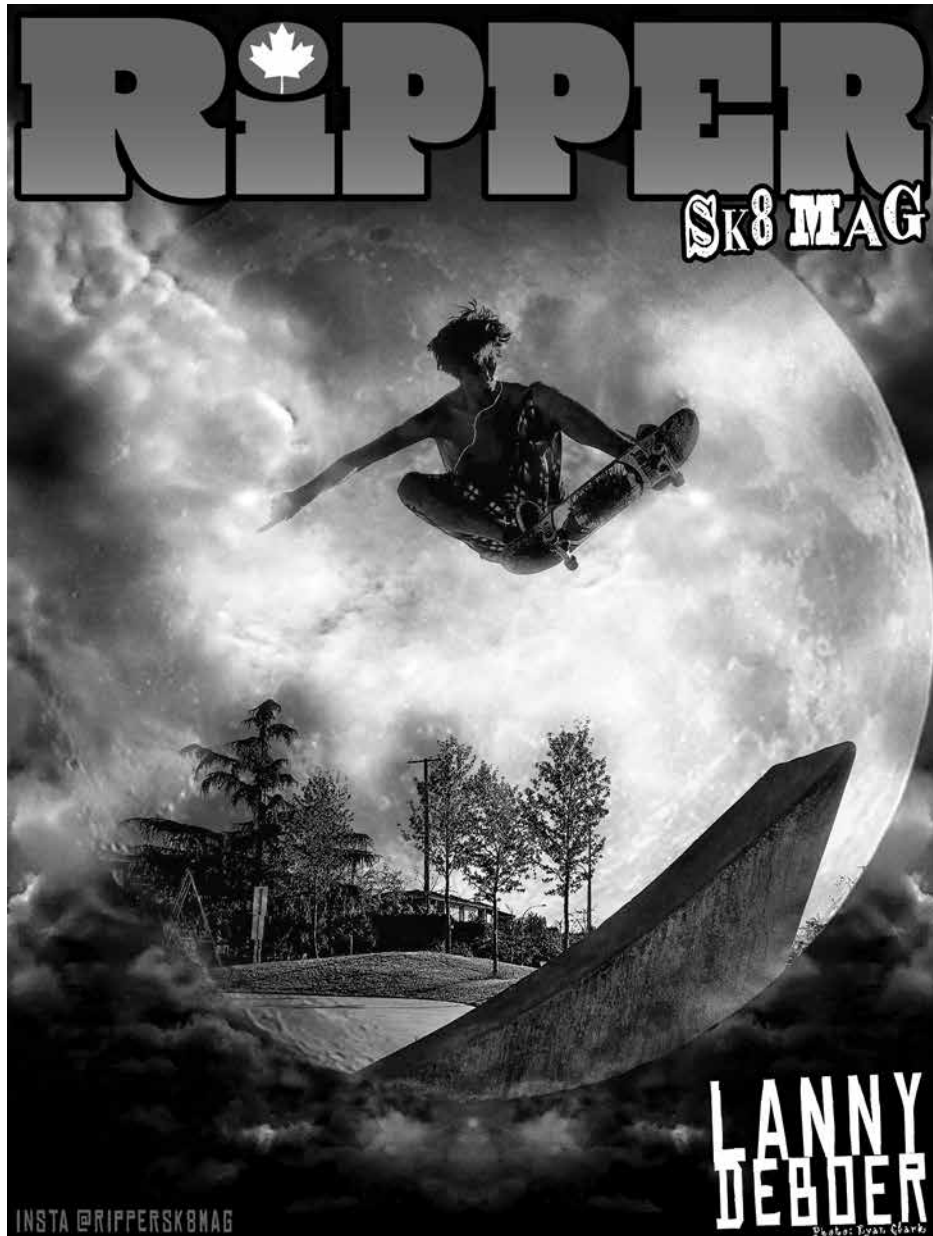


**Lamb of God
Killswitch Engage
Spiritbox
Fit For An Autopsy
Oct 9th - UBC Thunderbird - Vancouver BC**

Lamb of God tore into the Doug Mitchell Thunderbird Sports Centre two days after the release of their ninth studio album entitled "Omens" The band played a solid 1 hour/15 minutes of fan favorites and new songs on their only Canadian stop

during the Omens tour. Their high intensity energy seemed to be fueled by the positive reviews coming out about their new album, but they were definitely amped up by openers Fit For An Autopsy, Spiritbox, and Killswitch Engage

Check Lambofgod.com for upcoming show dates, and look for more photos in the Dec/Jan issue of Absolute Underground.
Photo by Colin Smith Takes Pic







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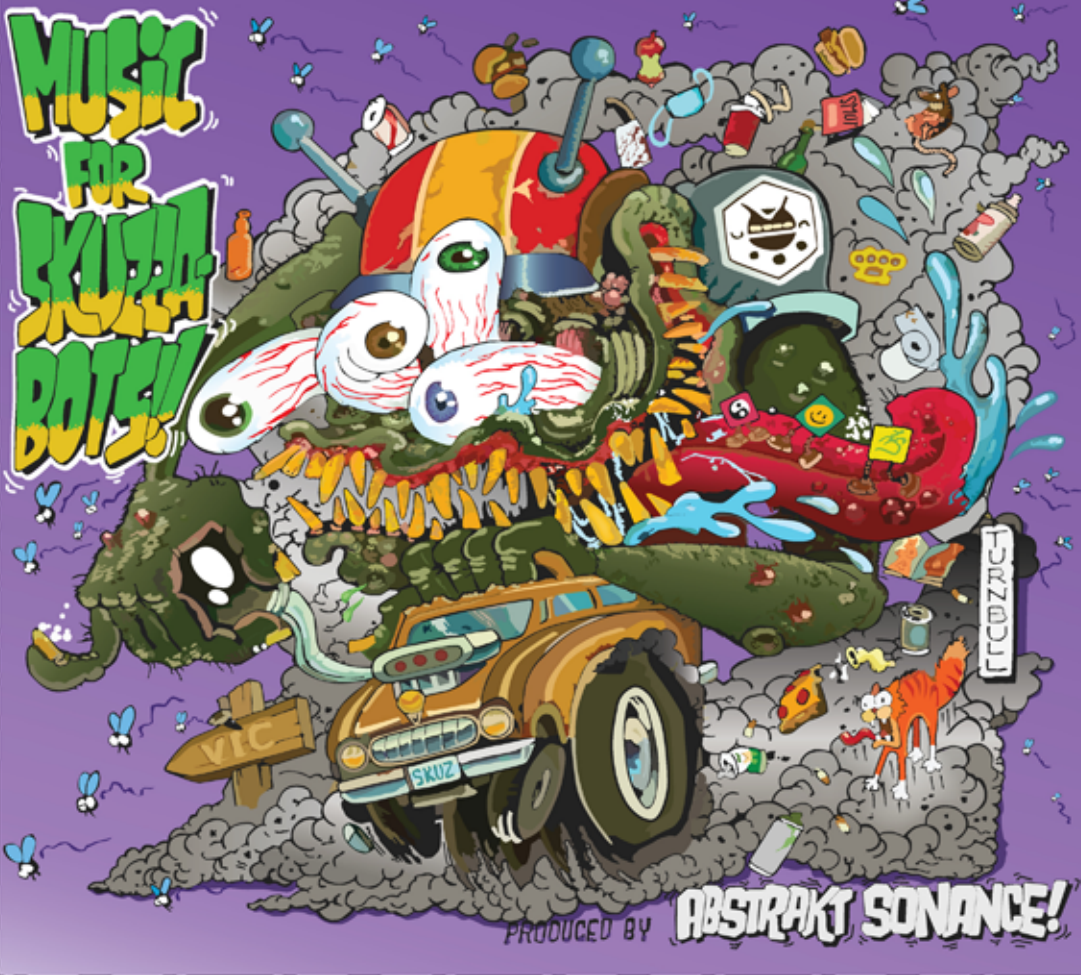
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Absolute Film Reviews

Sirens

Emerging out of the Middle East is Slave to Sirens, a thrash metal band wanting to prove to the world they're unstoppable. In addition to allowing their journey to be filmed, what we see is a story different from mythology. Here, nobody is being lured to false promises and find themselves drowning in the river of life.



Instead, what *Sirens*, the documentary by filmmaker Rita Baghdadi, presents is the daily struggles of the five women in Beirut, Lebanon who want to be musicians. This world doesn't understand what heavy metal is about. As this country's first all-girl band struggling against its natural conservative norms, I was hooked!

Their conflicts with everyday issues are limiting. These women's options in how to succeed aren't as diverse as in living in America. I've been watching a lot of VH1's Behind the Music specials lately, and what happens in *Sirens* is no different. This group—created by Shery Bechara and Lilas Mayassi—has growing pains. Although Baghdadi's focus on these two leaves out the others, I'm hoping what's left out can be added in later. It might become supplemental material for the eventual home video release.

That is, we don't learn too much about what Maya Khairallah (vocalist), Alma Doumani (bassist) and Tatyana Boughaba (drummer) want.

Since the making of *Sirens*, the line-up may well change. But what makes me smile is in the fact the people involved are truly dedicated. Lilas is really the focus here, and I can understand why she was singled out. But can she manage a group with egos? What we see and what I believe is that they can be as big as The Runaways.

Back when they started in 2015, what they offered to the local heavy metal community wasn't necessarily groundbreaking. It took time for them to become accepted and as for how they'll adapt to west(ern) audiences depends while they strive for global recognition. What's revealed

here is nail-biting, but I believe they can do it.

Since this band has finally gotten the love by performing on television, perhaps they'll try again to spread their wings. Their fame doesn't have to be restricted to one country, when all the world's a stage for them to rock out on.

— Ed Sum

Greywood's Plot

Some nightmare scenarios come from not waking up to smell the roses. And in Josh Stifter's movie, *Greywood's Plot*, Dom (played by this filmmaker) has to deal with facing his problems head on. He's a bookworm and wannabe cryptozoologist who podcasts out of his basement. Despite efforts from his mom to help, it seems he's done nothing fruitful.



Technically, he's the hero of the story, and the way he treats Miles (Keith Kadichel) makes up part of the tale. After receiving a mysterious videotape confirming there are creatures skirting around his neck of the woods, Dom drags his pal along, and they nearly have a fight. Even their friendship is in jeopardy, and when they split up, it's safe to say, "uh-oh."

They're lost in the woods of some remote part of Minnesota, in a search for answers to life, universe, and everything. The reason Dom is lauded is that he believes American versions of many famous cryptids exist. I had to laugh out loud when he said the Banshee exists. Getting respect in this community is tough. And dealing with trolls is the least of his worries. He finally does something about it and is on a real hunt for proof.

Sadly, where he goes is dangerous. When he intrudes on Doug Greywood's (Daniel Degnan) private domain, he better be prepared for anything. The secrets hidden in them thar hills show the duo are not qualified to handle it. This individual is the glue that keeps interest in the film from waning.

And what happens transitions from a dark drama to full-blown terror. This film draws from various sources for inspiration. I could identify bits which include *Tusk* (where a similar scenario unfolds), and *Nightbreed*. Ultimately, *Greywood's Plot* is about freeing that personality hiding within. And as for what Greywood does, well, that'd be telling.

Although this movie's tiny budget holds this film back, I can't say what's presented hurts the film. It's a sophomore product from talents just starting out in this trade. The finale, where things get dark and bloody, shows the most promise for those who love blood and guts. It's an early Halloween treat that I'm sure fans of the *Saw* franchise will most likely appreciate.

- Ed Sum

The Munsters

Universal 1440 Entertainment

Don't let the bad reviews influence you - Rob Zombie's *The Munsters* is not as bad as people are making it out to be, and despite its noticeable flaws, it is an enjoyable Halloween-themed romp which is suitable for the whole family.

Not having seen much of the original *Munsters* TV show, I wasn't sure how much of the lore I needed to know before going in, but thankfully this film acts as a prequel to the established ghoulish family. Lily Munster has hit the dating scene - looking for that special monster, though the Nosferatu-looking dudes she has had dinners with aren't up to her standard. It's up to Richard Brake to make her a perfect man, and when he unveils Herman Munster on a TV show, it's a match made in a cemetery. The plot basically follows this lead, with the two meeting each other, getting married, and getting a new house. All the while there are lighthearted jokes, with the only real conflict coming from Count Sam (Grandpa), who initially disapproves of Herman.

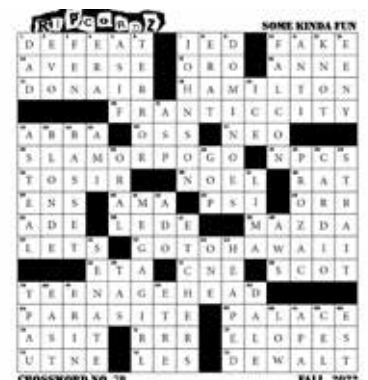
The costumes are top notch and the sets are fantastic (kind of like some of the scenes from *House of 1000 Corpses* such as the opening one featuring the Murder Ride), with Rob Zombie putting in some original songs, such as the scene at the Zombie-A-Go-Go club where Herman plays with his band. This scene almost looked like a White Zombie music video. The scenes in which The Munsters interact with the normies of the world have a Tim Burton-ish quality as well. While not as effective as the '90s *Addams Family* movies, they are memorable.

But with the good come the missteps. Like his other movies, I still feel Zombie is too damn stubborn with his casting. The same usual suspects are here, including Sheri Moon Zombie, who plays Lily. Her performance is



at best, passable, though at certain times it really feels off and you wish he would have picked an actress truly suitable for the part and not just the closest actress to him. The film is also too long, so while it does amuse at times, at others you are wondering when exactly it's going to end. In conclusion, Rob Zombie's *The Munsters* is harmless Halloween viewing - just keep an open mind (not a hollow head) and you might enjoy it.

- Ryan Dyer





UNEARTHED HORRORS

Dungeonmaster

Found a great copy of the bizarre 1984 movie *Dungeonmaster*. I'd only ever seen the beat-up VHS version and this new version looks terrific. However, the HD transfer spoils some of the lesser makeup effects a bit.

I loved this as a kid, and it's easy to see why: the premise is that a nerdy computer programmer is transported to an alternate dimension by "Mestema" (aka Richard Moll) where he's forced to survive various challenges to save his girlfriend, including fighting

sleazy tongue-wagging zombies, demons, a serial killer, a cool stop-motion giant statue, post-apocalyptic road warrior style scavengers, and best of all: the band W.A.S.P.

The funniest thing about this now is how dated the idea of making the protagonist a freaky social misfit because he has a PC. Even if his talks to him, offers answers to basic questions, gives him extra info through his special glasses, allows him to time his runs, and withdraw money from an ATM!

Totally alien, futuristic concepts for 1984.

The editing feels disjointed (not just because each individual segment has its own director) and the ending is a bit rushed but I still love this picture. It would honestly make for a great big-budget remake.

-Brian Clement

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Vicious Rumors The Atlantic Years

Interview with guitarist and founding member Geoff Thorpe
by Sheldon "No stepsisters" Byer

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

Geoff Thorpe: Geoff Thorpe here! I'm the founder,



about this release.
GT: The box set is something I've always wanted. I am so proud to share the attitude and musical chemistry we had on these three albums 30 years later. VR has never broken up and is constantly moving forward but it's an honor to celebrate some of our glorious past with a new audience.

AU: One of the most interesting songs on these albums is "Six Stepsisters." This song's writing credit is to Mark McGee and yourself and the lyrics are something else. From what I can tell it's about having sex with your mentally unstable stepsister with a split

personality disorder. Am I right or am I taking this too literal?

GT: Man, what the hell is wrong with you? This has got to be a new low from the press and the most stupid fucking question anyone has ever asked me! Honestly the interview should end right now sicko, but now I feel the need to explain. It's about dating a girl with a split personality, six of them!

Christ almighty you got real problems man!

AU: "Hellraiser" off your self-titled album, though never coincided with one of the Hellraiser films, seems like it could be a track straight off the Hellraiser 3 OST. Did you guys take any inspiration from the Clive Barker classic?

GT: "Hellraiser" is not related to the movie, it's about five young men in the band full of fire desire and the will to kick ass in our Heavy Metal band! Signing to Atlantic was a big deal and we were ready and did raise HELL! We still do. Larry and I Just know how to do it without hurting ourselves at this age! Ha!

AU: On that note are you a horror fan at all? If so, what's the first film Geoff Thorpe pulls off the shelf when he's in the mood?

GT: I have loved Horror movies since I was a kid. I was going to theaters to see three horror flicks on the weekends in Hawaii in the 70s. If I had to pick one, I'd go old School... *The Exorcist!* Works every time!

AU: You mention in the liner notes that for 15 minutes Vicious Rumors was bigger than Nirvana in Japan when you had a swarm of 60 fans

and they had about 15 when you stayed in the same hotel. Did the changing of tides from heavy metal to grunge in the mainstream put fuel in the tank to keep pushing through the 90s and so on?

GT: No, the Nirvana thing was just funny cause they were already huge all over the world except that one hotel in Osaka that night... we blew them away!!

AU: Not to mention the loss of Carl Albert in 1995 it's very clear Larry Howe and yourself are extremely passionate about keeping the Vicious Rumors flag flying high. Having played with you guys twice, once at a theatre and once at a festival I know you're both super friendly, appreciative and humble. Do you think that attitude through your career has allowed more opportunities for Vicious Rumors compared to some of the other U.S. Power Metal bands (ie: Liege Lord, Chastian, Virgin Steele, Jag Panzer) of the era?

GT: I think treating people the way you like to

be treated is just a good way to live. We could have never lived this Heavy Metal life without the support of our world wide fan base and I'll always be appreciative and thankful for it! As for the bands you mentioned, you'll have to ask them.

AU: There also seems to be something in the water when it comes to Bay Area bands. Exodus, Death Angel, Testament among others are all known for being extremely kind to fans and supportive of the Bay Area scene. Are there any new/up and coming bands that have caught your attention over the last few years?

GT: "Dress the Dead" is pretty cool. I'm not really looking for new acts but the Bay Area is always a good talent pull.

AU: When it comes to your choice cut off The Atlantic Years records, what's the song that comes to mind?

GT: Tough choice. It's like picking out your favorite kid, don't get weird on me again! "Down to the Temple," "Don't Wait For Me," "Strange Behavior," and "Mastermind," four songs, but who's counting!

AU: The Vicious Rumors logo has always had this sort of spherical ninja star that seems to have acquired more blades over the years. Now this is just my interpretation of it, can you clear the air and tell our readers exactly what this destructive semi-mascot is?

GT: The VR ball is a symbol of power! It's grown and gotten more aggressive over the years. With more blades and more powe, it lives, it breathes, it will hurt you if you let it! It's our weapon of choice!



AU: Ronny Munroe has been selected to fill vocal duties for the upcoming Atlantic Years tour. What stands out about Ronny to capture the magic of Carl Albert's unforgettable vocal performance on these albums?

GT: We welcome Ronny Munroe (formally Metal Church/Trans-Siberian Orchestra) to the band! I've known Ronny for a long time and always thought he was a fantastic singer and performer! The timing was right and he's one of the few who can do the Carl Albert era songs the way they should be! Look for Ronny on tour with VR in 2023 and on the new studio albums to follow on SPV/

Steamhammer.

AU: What's the Heavy Metal capitol for Vicious Rumors? Are you taking the Atlantic Years tour there? Can we expect to see some Canadian dates as well?

GT: Our plans for the Atlantic Years Tour include all of North America and Europe Summer festivals

in 2023. We've always been based in the Bay Area of California but have homes in Germany, Rhode Island, Portland, OG and Sweden. It's a big family!

AU: Any final words for your Canadian fans new, old and upcoming who are gonna check out The Atlantic Years after reading this interview?

GT: Many thanks to all our incredible fans, friends and colleagues in all of Canada! It's always a pleasure to see you on tour! We're coming for you! The best is yet to come! Keep it heavy and rock on!

AU: How do we find you digitally dictate online and where do we pick up a copy of The Atlantic Years?

GT: All social media sites and pick it up at www.cherryred.co.uk



lead guitarist, songwriter and producer of Vicious Rumors for the last 43 years! I'm most famous for having the balls to keep the dream alive in VR for 43 years. We have an excellent reputation for high quality live shows, albums, and musicianship. We invented a special sound mixed with traditional heavy metal and elements of thrash, power and melodic metal in the San Francisco bay area in the 80s. We have been a driving force of our own the whole time.

AU: For anyone who hasn't heard Vicious Rumors, describe your sound.

GT: I think our music speaks for itself. We're like a symphony with harmonies and a theater with tragedy and drama. Death and hope. Smooth like hot butter and devastation, like a refrigerator falling down stairs. All wrapped up in a whole lot of fun and volume! Heavy Metal dreams come true kinda thing. We write songs with heart, power and memorable riffs with lyrics that can be interpreted by the listener.

AU: The Atlantic Years 3 Album Box Set. Tell us



Isolated Earthlings

AU: Who are you and what are you best known for?

Blarc: It's blind Marc here. I guess I'm best known for playing the drums. I've been playing the drums since I was 11, so about 35 years now. Currently playing for the Dayglo Abortions.

AU: What other bands have you been in?

Blarc: The first band I ever played in was when I was 15, I played in a thrash metal band called Malicious Intent then a year later we changed our name to Mind Kill. Then I joined The Boozehounds when I was 17. I grew up in Alberta then I moved to Victoria and started a band called Drunk Tank. Then I played in Betty Ford. After that I sang for a band called The Shivs. I've also played in the Keg Killers, the Frostbacks, Black Flab, Junkie Death Squad. I did a couple tours with Bunchofuckingoofs across Canada and played drums for The Viletones for one show out in Hamilton. There's probably a few more that I forgot about basically have played in about 30 bands over 30 years.

AU: Give a history of The Mutated Earthlings.

Blarc: I started The Mutated Earthlings about 15 years ago. I bought myself a bass and a little practice amp and wrote a bunch of songs. Then I recorded my solo album and I called it The Mutated Earthlings. I played the drums, bass, guitar and did the vocals. Then I got a band together to play live. No Thumbs Dave on the

bass, Dustin Jak on the drums, Lettuce on second guitar, and then I played the guitar and sang. We ended up recording another album with the full band in 2011.

AU: Now you are called the Isolated Earthlings?

Blarc: So a couple years ago when Covid hit and basically put all of us in lockdown. I was bored with no gigs whatsoever.



So I got myself a computer with recording software and wrote a bunch of songs and recorded them in November 2020 in my living room. I only had my electric drums though,

so they were basically just demos. I sent them off to my buddy Rob Lawless in Edmonton to see if he could help me mix and master them. It just so happened that we were flying out to Edmonton to record the new Dayglos record last summer called *Hate Speech*. Rob convinced me to re-record the drums and bass tracks. I also redid most of the vocals. So I called it the Isolated Earthlings because I'm the only mutant in the band and I figure I've already milked the mutant factor enough. Hopefully my next album will be called the Liberated Earthlings, that's if the world doesn't implode before I get a chance to record it.

AU: Who is else currently in the band?

Blarc: I got my buddy Mike Caton and my other buddy Sanchez to do the guitar tracks for me. A.k.a. Mac&chez. I also got Mike Jak to play a few guitar tracks. My nephew Nolan also does a banjo and guitar solo on a couple songs.

AU: What are the new album about?

Blarc: This album is pretty much a comedy album with a little bit of rock 'n' roll to fill in the blanks. I've got a song called "Ode to SCTV" and another one called "Spaceballs."

AU: Tell us about the album art and also about the band photo.

Blarc: When I was in Edmonton recording last summer someone told me that there was a Bob and Doug statue with them sitting on a bench drinking stubbies. So I bought an old case of Pilsner stubby bottles and all of us went and sat with Bob and Doug and got the band photo for the back cover of the album taken by Gabrielle Pietersma. I got Dustin Jak to draw the front cover for me. I wanted it to be a row of boarded up houses with a bunch of lockdown humans watching their YouTube videos and checking their Facebook status. With a cell phone tower in the background shooting radiation into the houses and then across the street a family of aliens barbecuing wondering where the hell all the humans were?

AU: Any survival tips the Apocalypse?

Blarc: Well I moved out of the big city five years ago, it's the last place you wanna be if shit hits the fan. When the grid goes down and all the zombie cannibals that aren't able to check their social media profiles are walking around you don't wanna be anywhere near them. People need to put their differences aside and agree to disagree and find common ground, play music, laugh, and get along with each other because when shit goes down we're all humans and we're all in the same boat.

AU: Plans for Halloween? Best costume?

Blarc: I think the Dayglos have a couple shows up island around that time. I guess my favourite Halloween costume that I ever wore was when I put on a lobster costume and got a mullet wig and an AC/DC shirt and went as a Rock Lobster. A few years I also went as a blind ref, basically that was an easy one, I just wore a referee shirt with the black and white stripes and walked around as a regular old blind guy. I also dressed up as blind Mork one year. I had my gumboots all done up with tinfoil and a cardboard triangle on my chest while wearing the red long underwear suit

AU: How's the eye sight restoration project?

Blarc: Well unfortunately the clinical trial is over I was able to regain some vision for five or six months in each eye the first time around but then

the medicine wore off and Covid hit so I wasn't able to get back down for a couple years. I went back down last fall and tried it again with my right eye and unfortunately it didn't work a second time. Then in January I tried again with my left eye and same thing it didn't really work again. So that's it for now back to the drawing board.

When I started the trial back in 2017 they asked if I would document all the changes to my eyes so that is what I did I took notes on my phone and recorded it all. And over the past four years I ended up writing my autobiography. The first half of the book is my life story growing up as a crazy knucklehead blind kid getting into all kinds a shit. In the second half is the clinical trial. My book is called *Blind And Proud My Life is a Two-Four*. It has 24 chapters and I broke it up into 4 parts, with a six pack of chapters in each part.

AU: Skated the new Topaz Skatepark yet?

Blarc: No I haven't tried the new skatepark yet but one of these days I'll get down there for sure.

AU: How can people check out the tunes?

Blarc: So my album is all mastered and ready to go just waiting for the final artwork then I'm gonna probably release it on bandcamp.

AU: Is there a physical release planned as well?

Blarc: I definitely want to put it out on vinyl but the turnaround time these days is pretty long. All the big bands are pressing vinyl again so basically all of us independent musicians need to get to the back of the line.

AU: Any tour plans?

Blarc: I'm sure the Isolated Earthlings will play some shows at some point. I just wanna wait to get the album out before I make any plans.

AU: Any final words for our mutated readers?

Blarc: We all need to get along, we're all humans. It's the billionaire elites that are in control. They're the ones that are manipulating everything so don't believe everything you're told, do your own research and don't villainize somebody because you don't agree with their opinion.

blindmarc.bandcamp.com

Photo Credit: Gabrielle Pietersma



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Suzi Moon

Interview by Chuck Andrews

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

SM: Hey, it's me! Suzi Moon from, uh, Suzi Moon. My skills are songwriting, singing, performing, creative director for the band, social media manager, homemaking, hand-sewing, cooking/baking, punk rock DIY. None of these things really pay the bills, though.

AU: Your new album *Dumb & In Luv* starts off with a line about Blackpool UK. I just arrived in Blackpool for the Rebellion Festival, which you are playing. Coincidence? Probably. Are you excited for Rebellion? Have you been to it before?

SM: No coincidence at all, the song is based on an experience I had in 2017 when my old band Turbulent Hearts played Rebellion. It's one of my favorite fests to play. As of 2022, I have played Rebellion 6 times! Twice with Civet, 3 times with Turbs, and once with Suzi Moon. Going back there always feels like a family reunion.

AU: What other festivals are you playing this summer that you are especially stoked for?

SM: We played quite a few fests this summer. Xtreme Fest in Albi, France was my favorite, but we also had an amazing time at Back To Future Fest in Glaubitz, Germany, and a wild show at Outside Rodeo Festival in Coburg, Germany. I love touring Europe & the UK. It takes months of preparation to pull off an overseas tour, so once you're over there all that stress melts away & you can really just enjoy being there, playing to people who are super grateful that you made the trip. We have one more festival in 2022, it's

PIRATES PRESS RECORDS

called Punk In The Park and it's happening in Orange County in November. That'll be sort of a homecoming for me, and I am really looking forward to it.

AU: You are doing a fall tour of the USA with the Dead Boys and The Briefs! Are you a big Briefs fan? I haven't seen them in a while, I have fond memories of going to Seattle to see them several times.

SM: I am so excited for this tour! It is a dream come true to have my band billed on the same tour package as Dead Boys. They are without a doubt one of my biggest influences. Just getting to spend time with Cheetah Chrome and hear those songs every night, it's insane. A huge honor. As for the Briefs, I've never really heard their music. I know the name, I

know they are important, but I just don't know the songs. I am actually consciously avoiding listening to any of their records before the tour because I want to fall in love with them in a fresh way, by seeing them & soaking up what it is they are all about in real time. That might sound weird but it's an opportunity for me to fall in love with the band in an organic way. Drew and Patti are big fans of theirs, though, and they are all super stoked to meet them and share the stage!

AU: How would you describe your new Pirates Press Records album *Dumb & In Luv*? When will it be available to the public?

SM: *Dumb & In Luv* is a classic California punk record. All of the songs were actually written before my two EPs. It's a record that I desperately needed to record & release. These songs have been welled up inside of me for too long, and it kinda felt like I just couldn't move forward as an artist until I got them outta my head. We started recording the album in August 2020, right before I left LA for DC. I've grown so much in those two years, ya know? I didn't have my bandmates back then. Now after a year of touring with my dudes and evolving as a band, I'm like, really fucking hungry to make another record that captures the energy we create together. I'm super happy and proud of *Dumb & In Luv*. It's my first full length as a solo artist, which is a huge accomplishment for me. Now I know I've got the balls to do it. I think people will get a better understanding of my range and influences as far as songwriting goes, but I'm ready to push myself to the next level. *Dumb & In Luv* is officially out everywhere Sept. 23rd on Pirates Press Records.

AU: Would you compare it in any way to your previous two EPs?

SM: I wouldn't compare them, no. The EPs really stand alone as their own little collections, like an appetizer for the album and for the fans. EPs are cool in that way, but the album is more fully formed and takes you on a bit of an emotional rollercoaster. *Dumb & In Luv* has a narrative, a theme that runs through it and it tells a complete story. I definitely get in my feels on *Dumb & In Luv*, but you know me, I gotta keep it snarky and witty whenever possible. The "Animal" EP would be more of an indication of where the band is headed musically because those songs were

written most recently. That's all pretty confusing, I know, but hey, I guess if you wanted to listen to Suzi Moon in chronological order, start with *Dumb & In Luv*, then listen to "Call The Shots," then "Animal"!

AU: What new albums or bands are you listening to?

SM: We played with this band Clowns from Australia while we were in Europe. They kick so much ass! I couldn't stop smiling while they were performing because they have so much energy and are really, really good players. It's been a while since I've seen a band that good. They made me feel hopeful for the future of punk and I hope they have a long and successful career cuz rock n' roll needs more bands like that. But at the same time rock n' roll needs less bands in general, there are too many bands and not enough good ones. Keep Clowns and throw away like 30 shit bands, please.

AU: Do your band members play in any other bands?

SM: Our guitar player Drew has a fun classic punk covers band called CBGBDC, they are really fun to watch because you don't get to hear songs like "Garageland" by The Clash or "(I'm) Stranded" by The Saints played live really anywhere. We all hear these recordings all the time but to hear great

music played live is a whole other experience! Our drummer Neil does some hired gun stuff for quite a few bands back in London, and he's got a rad metal band called Amulet that he plays in consistently. Patti Bo & I are only in Suzi Moon!

AU: Any plans for Halloween this year? Craziest Halloween you can remember. Favorite costume you ever wore.

SM: This year we will be driving from Taos, NM to San Diego, CA over Halloween, so we won't really get to celebrate in a traditional way. I am hoping we can find some roadside haunted house to pop into or a corn maze or something like that! Being on tour over the holiday happens a lot. One year Civet was playing in Manchester, UK on Halloween and we decided to all dress up as the Spice Girls and walked on stage to "Spice Up Your Life". The crowd like, didn't get it. Nobody was dressed up, we were the only ones there in costume! So that was weird, but I remember feeling really cute as Ginger Spice.

AU: Anything else to mention or promote?

SM: We're gonna be on tour a lot in 2023, promoting the new album. I've also started writing songs for the next release, but we don't know when will be a good time to start pre-production and recording plans. We just wanna be on the road as much as possible and get these songs to the fans! This past year has been insane for us, so we just wanna keep the momentum going.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans.

SM: I've always had a good time in Canada and have met wonderful people at shows there. Suzi Moon band has yet to grace the Great White North so I am really hoping we get some gigs booked up there next year!

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Immortal Masks

Interview by Robdog

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

GF: Hi, I'm George Frangadakis and I'm the co-owner of Immortal Masks, from Hollywood CA. We are the industry leader in Silicone Masks, often referred to as the "Mission Impossible" masks because they move with your own facial mechanics, instantly transforming you into somebody or something else.

AU: What put you on the path you are on in the silicon prop/mask industry?

GF: Well, I moved to Hollywood after finishing a Masters in Producing. I've always had a keen interest in Practical FX, but no formal education in it. I spent my first few years working for the Academy Awards and the Emmy Awards but knew I was wanting to try my hand at something else. I had an old family friend that happened to be best friends with Stan Winston's daughter. She arranged a meeting. Stan became my first FX mentor and introduced me to the world of FX supervision (he basically told me that I could just as easily produce an FX shop as a Movie) From there I took a job as the Shop Supervisor for Vincent Guastini Productions. It was there that I'd meet my eventual Partner, Andrew Freeman. (I met his wife Michelle, who would be the third partner in our company around the same time) I think we were with Vincent for about five years before deciding to break out on our own and try our hand at commercializing an aspect of the FX industry. That's essentially how Immortal Masks



was born... just like many stories previous, in a garage with an idea and a couple of bucks.

AU: Who were your inspirations growing up?

GF: My Dad, My Grandfather, Evel Knievel and Stan Winston.

AU: What is your favorite horror film or franchise?

GF: Predator... I'm not sure if that's horror, but I'm a sucker for that monster.

AU: How many movies have you worked on or provided masks and/or torsos for?

GF: Wow, way too many to count. I honestly don't know. and sometimes i find out about them after the fact as some productions will buy directly from our website.

AU: Do you do custom mask work?

GF: Yes, often. We almost always have a custom project in the shop at all times.

AU: What is the process from start to finish when making a mask?

GF: Well that is pretty difficult to explain in detail, so I'll give you the CliffsNotes version. All masks start with an idea. We conceptualize it with either references or a sketch. Then we either traditionally sculpt it in clay or we model it in a program such as ZBrush. The clay sculpture will be molded in epoxy and fiberglass, while a digitally rendered mask would

have the molds printed. After that we cast them in platinum silicone. The mask will de-mold and be sent to our seam and patch department for clean up. After that it will head to paint. Silicone masks are painted in a thinned down version of the silicone they were cast in. When it cures, it will move to its respected finishing departments to get horns, teeth, lights, hair, etc.

AU: What are some of the creations you are most proud of?

GF: I love what we are doing recently with lighting systems. We are working on a pretty cool consumer Animatronic mask that I really think will be a game changer. And while I can't say which movie yet, we did some fun stuff for a Marvel Franchise that has yet to come out.

AU: How do you prevent tears in your masks?

GF: All of our masks have a powermesh hood encapsulated into them to reduce the risk of tearing. We are one of the only companies to do this and introduced the concept to the silicone mask world over ten years ago.

AU: Do you ship worldwide?

GF: We do.

AU: What are some tips for mask wearers to make their experience easier?

GF: Have fun creating your character, we are just giving you the foundation, but it's your creativity and personality that will bring them to life.

AU: Did you catch the big one while fishing on Vancouver Island?

GF: Ha... I don't know about that, but I had fun trying and sure did enjoy your beer.

AU: Any plans for Halloween this year? What is the craziest Halloween you can remember? Best costume you ever wore?

GF: Oh ya, one of the other FX companies throws a pretty big party. It's a chance for the majority of our industry to catch up and get a little wild. The costumes at an FX industry party are pretty wild. My craziest costume was well before I came to

Hollywood and was living in San Francisco. I had a full predator suit. Lasers, wrist blades, the whole thing. I made an impression that night

AU: Anything else to mention or promote?

GF: Costumes! Every year we try to introduce a new product. This year we launched Immortal Threads, it's our high end costume line and they are available in stock on our website.

AU: How do people find you online?

GF: All the general social sites, Instagram. Youtube, Facebook, TikTok and you can order directly from www.immortalmasks.com



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Topaz Skatepark

AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

JM: My name is Jimmy Miller and I am a longtime skater from Victoria, BC. At this stage of my life I guess I'm best known for being an outspoken skatepark advocate. .

AU: What can you tell us about Topaz Skatepark that just opened in Victoria?

JM: The Topaz skatepark is a 3,000 square metre all-wheels skatepark with a 6,000 square metre bike park/pump-track. The opening day reception was one of appreciation and stoke. The skatepark part cost 3.5 million to build.

AU: What did it take to make this a reality?

JM: Topaz Park itself was up for upgrades, so the City of Victoria created a survey asking the general public what they wanted as amenities. Thankfully a skatepark ranked very high on the list of choices, so the stars aligned from there. Honestly, with how hard we've have fought for skateparks through the years, the budget, size and speed of the Topaz project took me by surprise. This project is a product of accumulative proof that skateparks deserve to exist.

A big shout out to Ryan Lance for pushing so hard to ensure skating gets the support it needs.

AU: What company was involved in Topaz Skatepark's construction?

JM: After careful review and consideration, the City of Victoria chose New Line Skateparks as the company to work with. New Line's expertise was leaned into heavily with regards to park drainage planning and implementation. I feel they delivered a rad grass-roots product that took into account all the requests that were made..

AU: What makes this skatepark unique?

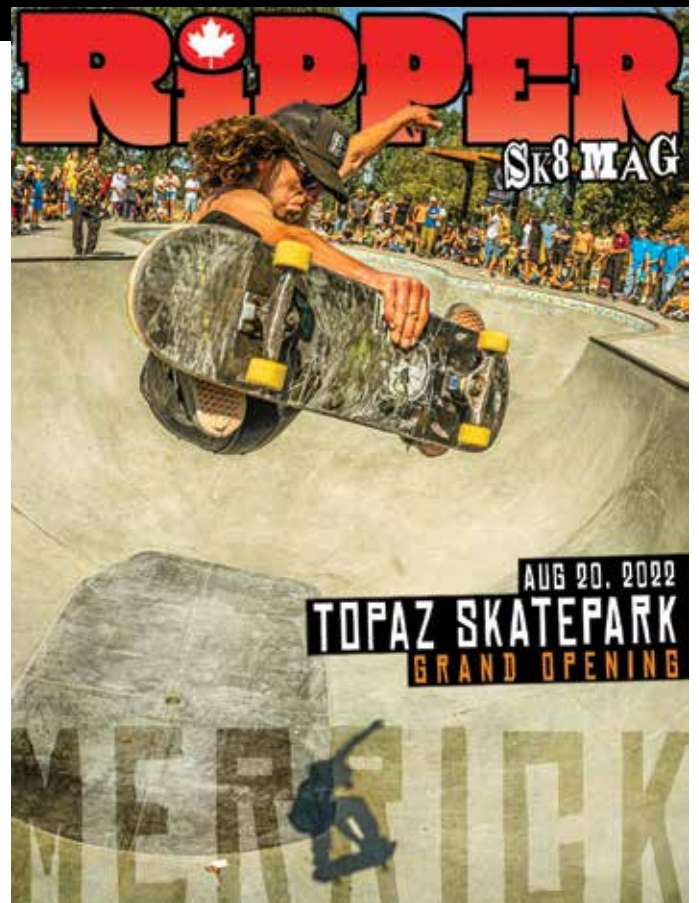
JM: What some people may not know (or remember) is that the City of Victoria once eyed up the Topaz site for a skatepark in the late 80s before Vic West was chosen for Vee Dub. From this point of view, the story seems sort of poetic that we've circled back to this area to meet our present needs. It's also the first skatepark that I've worked on that features a pedestrian thoroughfare through the center/diagonal of the park. With regards to the art installation involved, the metallic indigenous blooms were created by Germaine Koh. They actually light up and respond to the skating and surrounding noises. At first I was concerned that this type of interaction could be distracting to riders in action, but that's not the case at all. While we're on the topic of lights: Topaz has them! This is a huge win for the local user-group, especially during hot summer months.

AU: Describe some of the features of the park.

JM: One of the things you'll notice when you first arrive is that it's a very open space. There are lots of fun things to mess around with within the expanse, but the big bowl is something I'm particularly proud of.

The South Island hasn't had a bowl this deep and publicly accessible since Saanich Skatewave in the early 80s. The pool block portions are 6' and 8' deep, while the 10' features steel coping and an elliptical transition radius.

On the flip side, some of the smaller scale elements of the skatepark were crafted with beginner riders and park-instruction in mind, as the City's skatepark host program and kids' camps will extend to Topaz too.



AU: How was the opening day Topaz Throw Down skate comp?

JM: Uniquely, the opening event for Topaz was two events made into one; initially the official ribbon cutting/opening was meant to be on Go Skateboarding Day (June 21st) and the "Topaz Throw Down" best trick later in the summer. Concrete delays cancelled that first date, so that led to an event mash-up. I'm happy to say that both aspects went well and the celebratory tone remained. Props to Councillor Jeremy Loveday and Mayor Lisa Helps for being skaters themselves and always seeing the physical/mental benefits of riding.

AU: Who was pulling off the sickest tricks?

JM: As for the best trick part of the day, my favorite skater was Lucas L'Heureux. He just kinda' cruised around casually dominating each of the obstacles that we focused on. He nearly ollied up the Carlsbad gap, so that was bonkers. Riders like Merrick Orr and James Clarke set the tone in the bowl for sure. Honestly, this year's event was more of a party. It was a bit of a curveball to host a best-trick comp at a brand new park, but that was part of the spontaneity of it all.

Shout out to my co-host Everett Tetz and it should be noted that two legendary skaters entered the fray on event day. Rob "Sluggo" Boyce started things off by giving away sixty RDS completes as well as many decks. Rob and his brother Dave grew up in Vic West (not everyone knows this) so I know it meant something special to him to see Victoria get another new park.

The other special skater that graced us with his presence was Southern California's Kanten Russell.



SHRED SESSION



that Victoria's west shore is one of Canada's fastest developing areas, which has young families needing things for their kids to do, speaks to itself. Geez, I wonder why youth disengagement and crime is a topic in the news? If you don't give inexpensive and accessible things for children to do, they'll find trouble. Not every kid wants to be an elite sports superstar (and not every family has the time or money to support such ambitions either). The great thing about skateboarding is that it only takes a board and a sense of adventure to become involved. I will always tout these virtues because they are undeniable.

AU: Your passion for skating is Jedi level. What keeps you so involved?

JM: Honestly, I love skateboarding and what it has provided me. Full disclosure, my childhood

life was pretty rough. In addition to some very tragic family stuff, I was always small in size and got picked on at school. Skateboarding gave me a reason for living and I suppose I feel indebted to pay that back.

AU: Who are the raddest skaters in Victoria?

JM: Victoria's in a great place right now! There already was a rich and vibrant scene but now there's a whole new age of riders that rip.

I will throw some shine towards Dylan Timmins for his loose spontaneous ability to skate anything and Una Farrar for simply being so down to earth, as well as taking/making her sponsored path so intuitively her own. I have to mention Harry

Hovata, who just celebrated his 60th birthday and can still crank out frontside inverters if harassed enough. I also enjoy skating with Todd Tessier, Steve McInnes and Evan Reemer amongst others.

AU: Any advice for the youngsters?

JM: Skate to have fun primarily and nudge yourself along each session.

local skateshop is the place to check-in and form a bond. Skateshops are the backbone of so many scenes across the world, and I would like to thank Coastline, Goodnews, Artavi and Influence for always having my back when I create/promote something new. On this note, thank you to all my brand and distributor buddies within Canadian skateboarding -so many like-minded people who



Kanten works for New Line these days designing skateparks, so he was along for the ride in that sense, but we also got a glimpse of his big gap skating during the demo.

AU: What other skatepark related projects are in the works on Vancouver Island?

JM: By the time this issue of AU goes to print, the ground will be broken for the new skatepark at West Shore Parks and Recreation. As President of the Westshore Skatepark Coalition, I can tell you this has been a huge battle and a major win to get to this stage after seven years of advocacy. Thank you to our core coalition as well as our broader membership that have helped us on this tough journey!

This is where I'm going to get a bit salty. The fact

want to give back to the activity they love.

For me, skateboarding and skatepark creation have always been about facing fears, pushing against limitations, and that shining moment when a triumph takes place. In this respect, I greatly appreciate all the teams of people that pushed hard to get us Topaz, because it is a victory for our growing community. I can't wait to see how people develop their skills and enjoy Topaz in the years to come.

AU: Anything else to mention?

JM: I've heard some whispers about people in the Qualicum and Parksville area wanting to update their skateparks. It's still early days yet, but I'd stay tuned. Especially since a new PD's Hot Shop/Skull Skates shop opened in that area (congrats guys).

AU: How can people keep informed and support future skatepark development?

JM: Most people hit me up on social media or pick my brain at the skatepark. Additionally, your

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DALLAS TRADLER

SLUGGO

JAMES CLARKE

MERRICK ORR

LUCAS L'HEUREUX

AUSTIN BASARABA

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TOPAZ THROW DOWN

RIPPER SK8 MAG

AUG 20, 2022 TOPAZ SKATEPARK GRAND OPENING

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BLAST FROM THE PAST



Hello past and future past blasters...

Welcome to the celebration of all rock and roll things 1982 - that year was amazing. From the New Wave of British Metal to the 'New Wave' era of rock and also the heyday of what is now called 'Classic Rock,' we celebrate the journey of the music releases and concert tours of 1982.



Next issue will feature a full story of that year in rock. A detailed insight to how important 1982 was. Until then please enjoy some artifacts from my vault I call the 'Clarchives.'

Until then... Rock out and Roll On...
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Yours truly,
Clark 'Superman' Clark

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Top Ten Movies to Watch This Halloween

By Ed Sum

Fans of horror films will find the upcoming All Hallows Eve season promising. Usually, these films are reserved for release closer to the day, but such is not the case. The movies slated for Autumn started right after Labour Day! This top ten list offers a selection starting from that time and leading up to Halloween.

Jeepers Creepers Reborn Sept 19

Fans of Horror Hound's conventions know how a day goes. Meet geeks, freaks, and cosplayers of the ghoulish persuasion, and it'll be a merry time for all. But for Chase and Laine, what they learn about the host city may be worse. It's said the local urban legend, The Creeper, is real, and he's out for blood at this event! This product can easily lampoon convention culture, or just be an all-out YA adventure.



The Munsters Sept 27

This reboot of a beloved sitcom from the silver age of television may not be for everyone, but when Rob Zombie is involved, many metalheads will be curious. Here, he'll look at the courtship of Eddie's father—Herman Munster and Lily. Her maiden's name was never made known in the series, and we'll learn about her pre-marital day in this take!



Mr. Harrigan's Phone (Netflix) Oct 5

This film based on a short story by Stephen King follows a young boy who loves reading. When he meets a reclusive bookworm, Mr. Harrigan, the two form a bond which even stretches beyond the grave. EVP communication is widely accepted to contact the other side, but when you're in continuous contact, I suspect what this film examines is far worse than what Cole Sear suffered in *The Sixth Sense*.

Hellraiser Oct 7

Fans of Clive Barker's film will either hate this reboot or love it. Usually, it's best to not reimagine popular horror icons of the past. All we have to look at is where *Friday the 13th* and *Evil Dead* fared. But for everyone else, there may be something to like. When this tale concerns a young girl finding a puzzle box and whom she meets is played by an actor, I'm curious where this version will go.



Spirit Halloween: The Movie Oct 11

Anyone who bought their decorations from Spirit Halloween will get a chuckle out of the fact they also helped produce one huge piece of advertising, appropriately titled, *Spirit Halloween: The Movie*.



This work is no doubt developed to sell product, and if the terror is perfect, that's okay. Here, we follow three middle schoolers to the store. They are locked in after hours, and when they discover it's haunted, what's next is an easy decision.

Christopher Lloyd and Rachael Leigh Cook have roles in this film, and although this presence won't

sell the beast, hopefully watching this work by David Poag, an up-and-coming director, won't kill the curious cat since it's all about selling that product and giving this pop up shop a place in popular culture.

Halloween Ends Oct 14

After last year's *Halloween Kills*, four years have passed, and Laurie is determined to free herself from the past. Michael Myers is still around and haunts her nightmares. She has plans to put an end to his rampage. This tease will have fans wanting to see how it all concludes.



For newcomers, I suspect a home video box set release to watch in full how the terror has developed over the years.

V/H/S/99 (Shudder) Oct 20

When the horror anthology *V/H/S* first debuted in 2012, its success forced a sequel to be rushed into production to keep up with consumer demand. New visionaries hired to fashion new tales created *V/H/S/2*. Another collection, titled *Viral*, went to VOD. And as for what's next, fans couldn't wait, and we have a series that deliciously riffs on the "retro."



V/H/S/94 riffs on the year handheld cameras were the hottest thing in consumer electronics, and the latest *V/H/S/99* will consider the rise of DVD technology. According to *Bloodydisgusting.com*, this collection is said to show "the final punk rock analog days of VHS while taking one giant leap forward into the hellish new millennium." Although *Hellraiser 3* was ahead of its time with its similar styling, perhaps poking fun at emerging media trends was too soon.

Slayers Oct 21

Elliot Jones is a vampire slayer whose motive is to take vengeance on all who laid eyes on his daughter. But he can't do it alone. What he needs is help from the social media front. Two big influencers, Jules and Flynn, help, but what they discover is going to be crazy!



Guillermo del Toro's Cabinet of Curiosities (Netflix) Oct 25

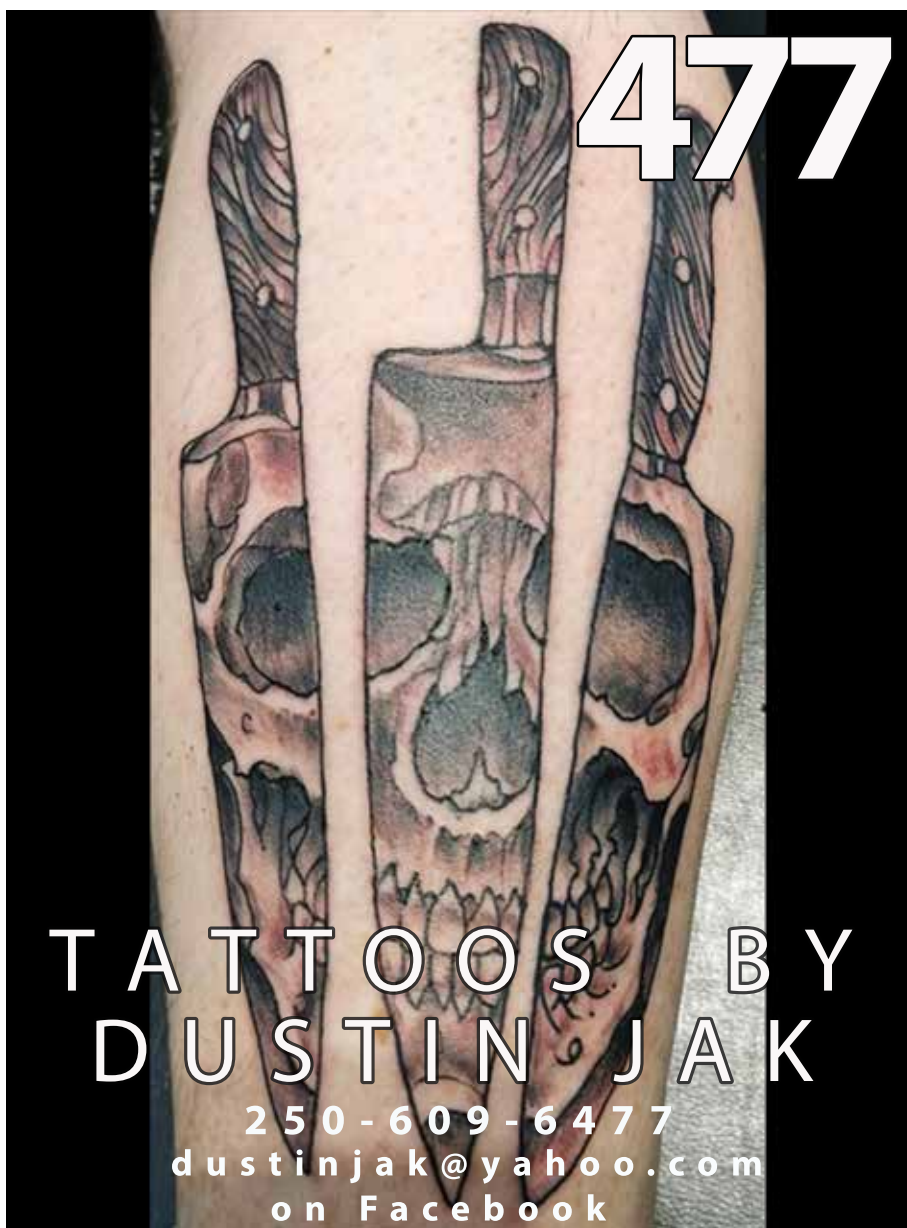
This filmmaker is very enthusiastic about the occult, and he's picked the talents who will contribute to this anthology. Fans can expect eight macabre tales! Two of which will be from his own fertile mind, and the others from Michael Shea, Mika Watkins, Emily Carroll, Henry Kuttner, Panos Cosmatos and Aaron Stewart-Ahn.



And when del Toro can't make his *Mountains of Madness*, he's still adapting stories from H.P. Lovecraft for cinema.

Prey for the Devil Oct 28th

It's tough to top this description: In response to a global rise in demonic possessions, the Catholic Church reopens exorcism schools to train priests in the Rite of Exorcism. On this spiritual battlefield, an unlikely warrior rises: a young nun, Sister Ann.





(broke it) and step by step (with home-learned animation) I started conjuring artificial life. Somewhere along the line, I convinced myself (and my teachers) that making a mini movie was an acceptable form of 'book-report' and got away with

SPLATTER GODS

James Gunn - Also not an employee, but a young film-maker that we had tons of early fun with... web series and shorts he'd shoot at Sean's house, or in our studio. I think he's gone on to do a few things...

Steve Kostanski - Started working with us over ten years ago, as an artist on some films and in our Toronto shop. He's now a cult-leader of his own church, directing classics PG: *Psycho Goreman* and *The Void*.

Mike Dougherty - Also a filmmaker that we helped with his early work, shorts, et al.... He's now the legendary director of *Trick or Treat*, *Krampus*... even a huge *Godzilla* movie!

There's many others that we consider family, that have enjoyed success. And we love working with creative types of all-powers... After doing this for a while, I really enjoy seeing how the industry recycles. And I see so many friends from previous eras again and

from *True Blood*... Borg from *Star Trek*... babies from *Look Who's Talking*... werewolves from *Underworld*... Chucky from *Child's Play*... and the predator from the recent, *The Predator*.

Masters continues to innovate and lead the art form with a unique approach to every project... among the first to integrate practical FX with Visual FX.

Recent projects include: *The Boys*, *Day of the Dead*, DC's *Legends of Tomorrow*, *The Umbrella Academy*, and the cult hit, *Psycho Goreman*.

AU: Who are we talking to today?

Todd Masters, the President and Chief Monster Maker at MASTERSFX.

AU: Who did you look up to growing up? Who were your inspirations to create monsters for a living?

Ray Harryhausen, Dick Smith, Mij Htrofnad, Craig Reardon, and Rick Baker.

AU: What movies had a deep impact on you when you were younger?

Jaws!
Star Wars!
Poltergeist!
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

AU: How did you first start your journey to becoming a Special Effects creator?

I was an artistically-driven kid. At a young age, I liked to draw... then that turned into little sculptures... Then I stole my Dad's 8mm camera

some creative early-years experiences, using friends as victims for my monsters in my little films...

AU: Did someone take you under their wing initially and teach you the tricks of the trade?

Absolutely. Even some of my heroes have even guided me (Ray Harryhausen, Dick Smith, Mij Htrofnad, Craig Reardon, Will Vinton, Rick Baker...) I've been very fortunate to be helped by the true masters! I used to find their numbers in the phone-books, phone them! I totally learned from their advice and by doing it... (screwing it up) as there really was no other way... some books. But barely. Eventually it seemed higher education in the arts... but only going to art school for less than a day. Quit. Moved to Hollywood.



AU: Have you done the same for others, and has anyone gone on to greatness?

YES! Several from our team, from over our thirty-five years, have gone on to win Oscars, Emmys, etc..

A few other notables (that I can think about):

Gucci Westman - Now a cosmetics magnate, was once our runner!

Seth Green - Never was an employee, but we knew each other since we were kids - he'd come over to my studio and work on his miniature characters... which eventually evolved into his Emmy-winning *Robot Chicken!*

again.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

Everyday is truly unique... Whether, it is high or low, it is what we make of it. It itself is not good or bad.

"Take these marbles from my hand..."

In brief: more textures than I think I can share...

AU: I heard from a little bat that you spent some time touring and creating the special effects for W.A.S.P. Can you share your experience hitting the road with them and perhaps how it's contributed to your future career?

MASTERSFX

Interview with Todd Masters

by Ira "Horrorfiend" Hunter and Sophia "Lycanthrope" Lonestar

Todd Masters is the founder, designer and chief monster-maker to North America's largest, longest-running Monster Effects Shops - MastersFX. With multiple studios, MFX has provided effects and characters for thousands of feature films, TV shows and commercials. Masters is a veteran of the "Golden Era" of practical monster-making... working on genre classics: *Big Trouble in Little China*, *Night of the Creeps*, the original *Predator*, *Poltergeist II*, *Hellraiser IV*, *Nightmare on Elm Street 5*, *Tales from the Crypt* and many more.



For over 35 years, he and his company have left a mark - inside and outside Hollywood: The cadaver-creators for *Six Feet Under*... the vampires

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Yeah, Blackie and gang asked us to create some gags for their stage shows. Mid 90s, I think.... It was: A repeatable head-slicing pig. A crucified nun... some other stuff.

I like doing rock-n-roll and live, stage stuff... It's fun departure from the usual, movie and TV productions. Different challenges and pace.

AU: Another music question... is it true you also worked with James Brown? Not many people can say they worked with him so that is pretty special.

Career highlight, for sure. Yeah, it was for Seattle EMP (Experience Music Project), late 90s. We all went to Augustus, GA, to mold his face... but his security refused. So, we had to pull a fast-one to get a face cast off Mr. Brown. So fast, I doubt if he knew it happened! He was a very interesting dude... I love James Brown music, so it was an honour to do that project.

AU: Besides your work with bands, you also had a toy company that featured the 'OH LANTERNS' - a ghoulish group of pumpkins for every house and home. What inspired this venture?

Well, I had just opened up my Hollywood FX company and need something to market myself with... It was heading into the Fall and my favorite season... So came up with these pumpkin-faces... Sent them to 30 film studio, to announce my cool, FX company. I received zero movie jobs from this venture. But I did receive 29 phone calls from strangers asking where they might buy more! So, I networked towards some folks interested in manufacturing these... and the next season they were a huge hit! We sold millions of them, thirty-five years ago. I had just turned twenty years old.

AU: You've obviously worked on a lot of amazingly gory projects. Everything from Tales from the Crypt to Leprechaun 2, and from Fido to Slither. In your time, making messes so to speak, is there one scene or shoot you can remember where the amount of blood and gore being used was monolithic in volume?

Yikes... well... there was a Hemlock Grove episode we must've pumped 55 gallons of blood out of Madlene Brewer's neck, in one blast...

that might be the most? Hard to say. So much blood... annually.

AU: Aside from being a master in makeup effects, is there another project that you've worked on that really stood out to you?

There's a book coming out in the next few months, I helped produce... when I was really sick, called *Home Detox*. It's written by Daniella Chace, about detoxing one's life... Somewhat based on some shit I went through.

Dani's great and really helped me a lot... and this book should help many others, as well.

Also, there's the big *Star Trek: First Contact: The Making of the Classic Film* book coming out soon, that I'm in. October 11th?

I produce stuff as well, (*Aliens Ate My Homework*, *Aliens Stole My Body...*, *Day of the Dead*, etc...) and have a few project developing with our Monstertainment division.

Uhm... I'm always busy with other projects. I like working. I like looking ahead... And I like when we can keep out teams very-active, as well.

AU: Working in this industry you must have seen it all. I want to know if you can share any real sort of paranormal, nightmarish or alienistic experiences you have personally had that you could pull inspiration from?

I'd have to kill you, if I said...



No seriously. I have seen a lot of things. Not sure if I've seen it all... But beyond show-biz, I've seen ghost-cats... I've molded dead people, I've seen things we really should not see... I've met people we shouldn't meet. And been to places I cannot say. It's such a big, involved world. Go get your own! Live your life. Don't settle for random shit. Turn off the TV... Read, rise and be free. Go left, when they say right.

AU: Night of the Creeps is a great movie. What can you tell us about working on that cult classic?

I was actually across town working on *Big Trouble in Little China*, when we were doing *Creeps*. So by day was China. By night I'd work all-night making *Creeps*. We mainly focused on the ending sequence - which was added in Post - where the 'wall of Creeps' is found in the basement and blows up. I was a miniature stop-motion sequence.

AU: What did you do on John Carpenter's film Big Trouble in Little China? Did you work with Steve Johnson on that one?

Yeah, Steve was one of my bosses. It was my first Hollywood project! I was a lowly assistant, but worked a lot on Thunder's expansion and exploding... as well as worked on the Wild Man and Lo Pan.

AU: How was it working with director James Gunn on the movie Slither?

A bit nutty! It was really James' first real film.

AU: What was your involvement with the 2019 remake of Child's Play?

We produced the evil doll and created the bloody make-up effects for the film.

AU: Is it true you were the one who put those motherfucking snakes on that motherfucking plane?

Haha! No, I did the results of those mutahfuckers! There's several makeup effects, swelling bites, etc... Most snakes are digital.

AU: What made the Psycho Goreman project you worked on a unique experience?

It was made by our guy Steve Koistanski (see above) and the Toronto shop really kicked ass making gobs of monsters for it. And it's funnier than fuck.

AU: How has the special effects industry changed since you first started out? What's better these days and also what's worse?

Wow - Nearly EVERYTHING has really changed. Of course digital has happened, during my career... And film has gone away... mostly a luxury, now... And it's all much faster.

AU: Any interests or hobbies that might surprise us?

Haha. I press flowers and do poetry... (NOT)

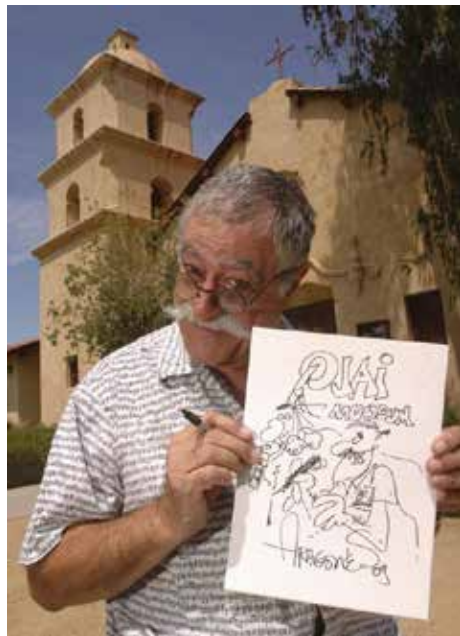
AU: What do you look for in someone you bring into the fold at the studio?

We would likely look for people with artistic abilities and a morbid force to be reckoned with. Experience and experimentation go a long way in this industry!

AU: What are some of the latest projects you have been involved with?

Monster High, *The Midnite Club*, *Fall of the House of Usher*... are a few coming out in the next few months.

www.mastersfx.com
Instagram: @masters.todd

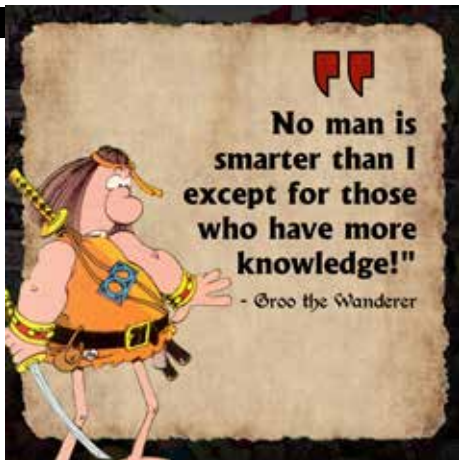


book store and buy new comics?

Sergio: No, but fortunately I'm on the on the guest list of many companies. So I look at the work and I do follow a lot of new things. Sadly a lot of the art has become very, very similar.

AU: Was it nice to see comic books finally get some respect and recognition when they started being featured in libraries and bookstores?

Sergio: Yeah. It was to me a logical step. It was very fortunate that they made it to the movies. But to me it has always been about the pleasure of reading a comic book, turning the page and seeing what's going to happen. I love



and I gave talks. It was very successful.

Then I did another show at the museum with my collection of original art. Different comic books, magazine, cartoons. Every division of the art and humour of comics. I showed the whole progression and how it is done based on my private collection. I have had collections at other Museums as well. I've done

shows in Mexico, Spain, and in Brazil.

AU: Have you kept most of your original art?

Sergio: Yes, I have all my artwork. Except for some from the beginning. Bill Gaines kept some of the original artwork because it was cheaper for him to make copies from the originals. Back then the photostats were very expensive. So he kept the original art. Not for its value, but to save money for the foreign reprints. Then when he had enough he auctioned them and we got part of it. I said, "I'm getting my part because I put in all the time." He said "Sure be my guest." But later it was so much art that they started to return it. So I have a lot of my artwork. I have all of my marginals. I have all my Groo, everything.

AU: Any advice for someone looking to make a career in comics nowadays?

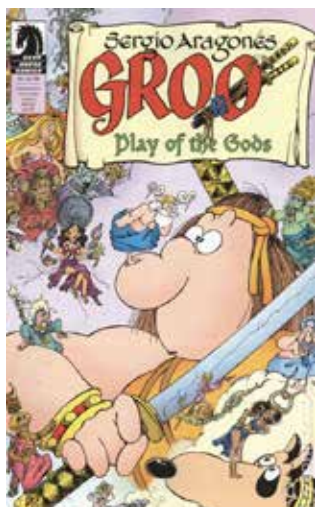
Sergio: First is perseverance. I mean, you cannot quit and you have to love it. You want to make money, get into banking. Making money is easy.

Sergio Aragonés – Part 5

AU: You've worked on different types of horror comics like House of Mystery, Treehouse of Terror for The Simpsons, and you did Boogeyman. Do you like the scary stuff?

Sergio: Sure, I have nothing against it. I don't like it when it becomes stupid or repetitious. But I love horror, it's a lot of fun. My least favourite genre is science fiction. Because I didn't grow up with it. I grew up in an era of jungles and pirates and swords and the Musketeers and things like that. So Jules Verne's science fiction was a little absurd.

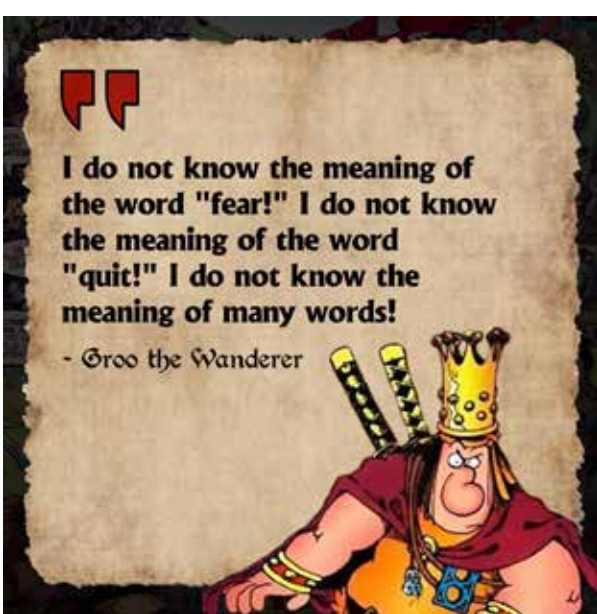
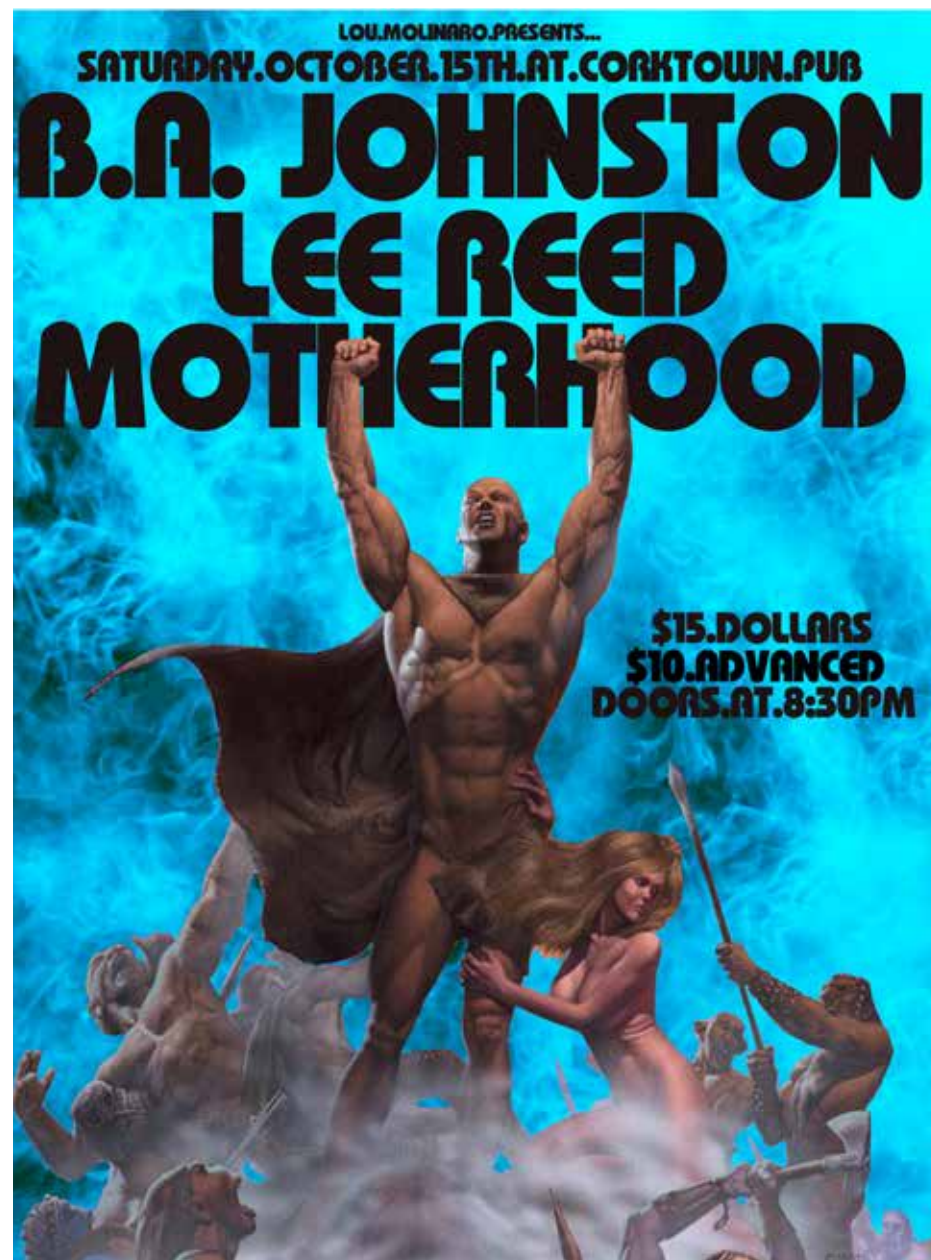
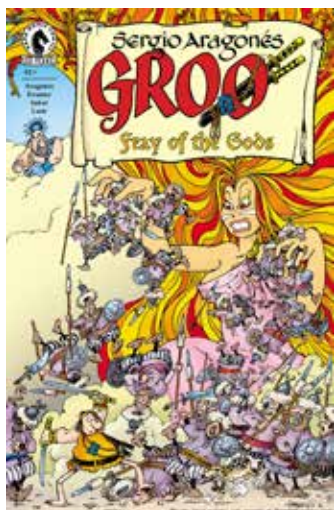
AU: Do you still go to the comic



animation, but it's very hard for me to watch the new things because they are too fast. I sound like an old fart but I probably am.

AU: Didn't you have a big art show in your local town?

Sergio: Yes, I had two of them. I had one about me and all my work at the museum. I showed a lot of original artwork and my books



AU: Any upcoming projects you want to mention?

Sergio: I am a prisoner in my house where I have a lot of time now to work. So I'm going to continue doing Groo. Dark Horse already has four issues that are being coloured. I'm putting some collections of my work out, selling originals, and doing Commissions. So I'm really busy, it's good.

AU: Is it a new ongoing Groo comic or a limited series?

Sergio: What I do now is a series of four. Then if the series deserves more, I do four, four and four. Like the ones I did with the gods. I did one series called the *Fray of the Gods*, then the other is *Play of the Gods* and the third one that I did is *Gods Against Groo*, which is being coloured right now.

To Be Continued Next Issue...

groo.com

sergioaragones.com

facebook.com/aragonescartoons

You buy something for \$1 and sell it for two. That's it. There's no secret. But if you want to be a cartoonist, you'd better love what you're doing, really love it. It is not easy. Because you have to learn a lot of things. Don't rely on the computer doing it for you, because you're never going to learn. For instance, perspective is easy now with your computer you can put in any angle you want and just trace it and put the buildings there. But that's cheating, you don't understand what you're doing. Take it seriously. The example I use when talking to a lot of artists is if you want to be a doctor, you have to go to college to learn. You can't just say "Oh, hey, I want to be a doctor. Tomorrow I'm going to operate on this guy's brain." You're going to kill him because there is certain ways to do it. So what you want to do is create yourself a career in your head. Learn perspective, learn anatomy, learn everything and then become a professional. You are a professional when you are taking somebody else's job. So learn to do it well. The other thing is, don't



Top 13 Titles to Satisfy the Demanding Horror Enthusiast

By Ed Sum

Halloween will soon be here, and this year promises to be very good in the release of various graphic novels and trade paperback compilations. In order to be ready, it's best advised to seek these titles out to add to your shelf, lest Jack Skellington get you! He'll give you a lump of coal rather than something good to read by the bedside.

This top thirteen list comprises recently released, new or upcoming titles:

Bernie Wrightson: The FPG Years

Bernie Wrightson is a talent who needs no introduction. His artwork in *Frankenstein and Swamp Thing* cemented his status as a master of the macabre, and to see it all compiled into an art book is a must for all horror enthusiasts.



The Cullen Bunn Library: All My Little Demons

Cullen Bunn's imagination knows no bounds, and to have his most-requested tales published by AfterShock is now collected into a spellbinding hardcover for readers to enjoy. In this collection are "Brothers Dracul," "Dark Ark: After the Flood," "Knights Temporal," "Unholy Grail," and "Witch Hammer," "Bloodflies" from *SHOCK Vol 1*, and "Man, I Am Evil, Dude" from *SHOCK VOL 2*.



Cult of Ikarus Trade Paperback

Say vampires and magic in one breath, and you'll have some fans of young adult fiction salivating. No, we're not talking about a revision to *Twilight*, but we have an idea by Jenna Lyn Wright that concerns Hunter, a young teen, who needs to discover who she is. The series was published by Scout Comics early this year as individual issues, and now that the story is finished, the trade paperback can follow.



GWAR: In The Duoverse of Absurdity

Just what GWAR can offer to comicbookdom is crazy, and Z2 Comics is there to present a multiversal travesty of this band fighting themselves! An even darker version of themselves is unleashed in our universe, these incarnations are bent on dominating and subjugating all of humanity to the will of The Master. Now... it is GWAR's throbbing, messy duty to save us all before it's too late!



Hellboy and the BPRD: The Return of Effie Kolb and Others

Honestly, I admit to being a huge fan of the Mignolaverse, and to pick up any collection as they're released will always make my list. Here, readers can "travel from the Appalachian Mountains to Russia and France, and all the way back to Savannah, Georgia as Hellboy

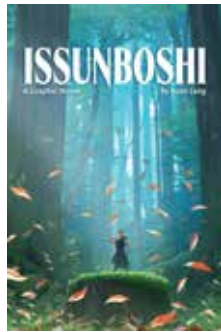


returns to take on phantoms, demons, and reanimated foes."

Collected in one volume for the first time are "The Return of Effie Kolb," "Long Night at Goloski Station," "The Seven Wives Club," "Her Fatal Hour and The Sending."

Issunboshi: A Graphic Novel

Here, the creatures of myth and folklore walk amongst men, and there's a demon wanting to take over the known world. But for a one-inch tall samurai, Issunboshi, to save his realm will be tough. He'll have to reforge an ancient weapon if he's to succeed. From the crowdfunding page, "He also is the final and most important piece of the weapon," and that's enough to enthrall readers.



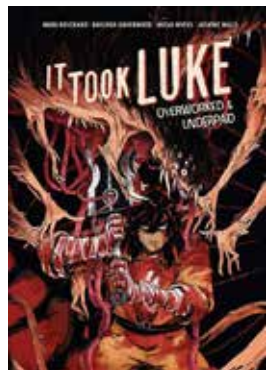
It Crept From The Tomb

This anthology uncovers atomic comics lost to the Cold War, rarely seen (and censored), British horror comics, the early art of Richard Corben, Good Girls of a bygone age, Tom Sutton, Don Heck, Lou Morales, Al Eadeh, Bruce Jones' Alien Worlds, HP Lovecraft and much more. Some of which have been featured in *Heavy Metal* magazine, and it's a must for those fans of the pre-code days.



Not Only That, But it Took Luke Overworked and Underpaid

To offer a wide range of representation, this recommendation delves into queer adult graphic novels and crunch culture. Here, in the future of L.A., down-on-their-luck exterminator Sal Hernandez is sick of long hours and living in their work van, and is ready to reconcile with their estranged partner(s). The line between reality and hallucination blurs. Sal and their teammates Molly and Hussam are as experienced as they come, but will it be enough to overcome the horrific creature that waits in the shadows and the incompetence of their boss?



John Carpenter's Night Terrors: The Coffin Road

This filmmaker needs no introductions, and the fact he's involved in producing comics under the Storm King Comics label is terrific. Here, on a haunted road in the backwoods of New England, a luckless recovery driver helps a distraught young woman pursued by a malevolent spectre. Together, they must unravel the mystery of the so-called Coffin Road and escape before dawn, or else remain trapped here forever.



Monsters of Metal One Shot

This comic book written by Jason Howden is an Absolute Underground reader's wet dream come true. That's because it brings together a lot of our interests into a brilliant mash-up that we've been dreaming about for some time, monsters, music, and mayhem in a comic book! This comic book has five covers to choose from, and it brings together five semi-iconic beasts together as a rock band! We have Christensen, Bride of Frankenstein, Medusa, Werewolf and Jack-o'-lantern ready to tear it up!



Our Encounters with Evil and Other Stories Library Edition

Join monster hunters extraordinaire and jump into eerie and whimsical Victorian-style tales of monster hunters, vampires, and supernatural sleuths in this collection of stories that are equal parts chilling and charming. In this three-part collection, Professor Meinhardt and his assistant Mr. Knox pursue the undead and Mr. Higgins' tragic history; explore strange supernatural happenings with investigator Ms. Mary Van Sloan; and seek to uncover the truth of the prolific vampire slayer and onetime compatriot of theirs, James Falconspeare.



Stranger Things Omnibus Volume 1

Anyone who has missed out on the single issue releases or jumped aboard the Dark Horse Comics bandwagon of all new side-stories from

Netflix's series about urban horror has a chance this Halloween to get caught up! These adventures delve into the finer points of character development, and as for what lurks in the mind of the boys and girls who've survived for five seasons now, the onus is on how it'll all wrap up. This collection includes: "Stranger Things: The Other Side," "Six," "Into the Fire and Space Camp."



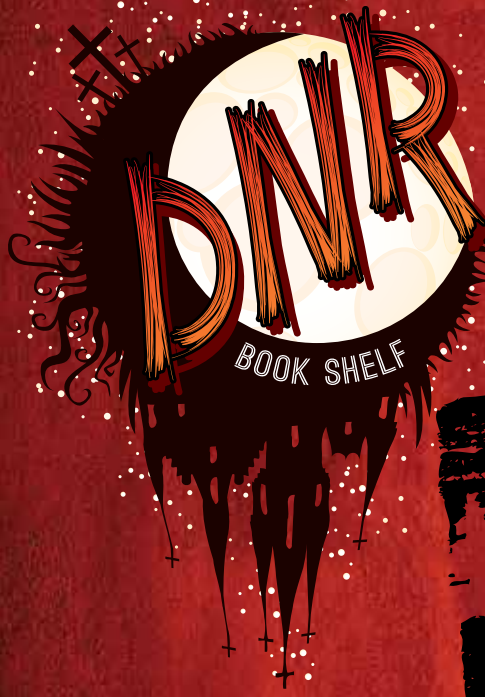
Vampire Macabre: Nosferatu One Shot

Asylum Press is no stranger to pumping out comic books for the horror enthusiast. They've partnered up with *Heavy Metal Magazine* to publish #271 and standalone, they are better known for *Asylum of Horrors* and coming soon, *Skinwalker*, where a group of young men on a road trip to the Burning Man Festival for a week of debauchery find themselves the unwitting targets of a supernatural skinwalker from Native American folklore! No UFO connection is needed here. But what makes this publisher special is that they love their vampires, and this one shot looks at the legend as only an international group of artists can imagine. We have Frank Forte, Edu Menna, and Tim Vigil contributing to this special release!



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EDWARD LEE

THE EXTREME CULT MASTER HAS RESURFACED!



Bighead Illustration by Demonika

Interview with Edward Lee by Demonika

Last month I was lucky enough to talk to underground horror author icon; **Edward Lee**. For those not in the know, Edward Lee is an underground American horror novelist who has released just over 50 books to date. His style is over the top, depraved visceral violence mixed with morbid, often sexual imagery and at times sprinkled with backwoods hillbilly humor. Clutching your guts from laughter whilst trying to not hurl your supper is usually the way he's read. What a lovely sicko! Be sure to check out his newest books entitled *Three Little Pigs* and *Mr. Tilling's Basement*.



Absolute Underground: Canada loves Edward Lee! Have you ever been here before? If so; where have you been that stood out - for better or worse?

Edward Lee: And please know that Edward Lee loves Canada! About 20 years ago, when I lived in Seattle, some friends of mine and I went to Victoria Island, which was beautiful and had a great Chinatown. Unfortunately we were only there for a few hours, then had to take the ferry back. Always wanted to go to Vancouver, though. It sounds like a happenin' place that's more civilized than big USA cities.

AU: Do you have a favorite Canadian Horror author? or Canadian Author that you enjoy?

EL: First and foremost is Michael Slade. He's a friend and a very cool guy and his books are mind-blowing exercises that kick the rest of us to the curb. He practically invented modern extreme horror, and he was doing it in bigtime best-seller fashion. His work is the bedrock of the subgenre and a massive influence to guys like me who were just starting out in the late-80s. His importance can't be overstated.

AU: This year, we've seen you resurfacing online and on social media. What made you pop your head up and start to reconnect with the fans?

EL: Too many clusterfuck things happened to me since about 2012 (it would take forever to explain and be interminably boring); I was at a point where I thought I might be burning out, it felt like I'd lost all my creative energy and my career was over. This happens when you get older, of course. But about a year ago, I moved, and the new creative environment seemed to relight my fire, so to speak, and suddenly I got back on track in a big way. I think I'm at about the same output I was 20 years ago! In other words, my tank has been refilled and I'm burning rubber again. It's a great feeling. I've never been much of a social media fan, but I do have a facebook now that one of my publishers runs. So I'm findable now. I use it basically as a means to let fans know what I'm doing at the present moment.

AU: You have quite a few new books that have just come out and or in the process of coming out, what can you share with us that is new and exciting?

EL: Well, since 1982 I've had 52 or 53 or so books released, then the aforementioned dry spell where I pretty much only produced the *White Trash Gothic* series, but now I'm rolling on a bunch of novellas. There's a brand-new bonus novella in the back of the Crossroad Press reissue of *Infernal Angel* that I really like. It's call *6-Thirteen*, about a convenience store in Hell. Very recently Evil Cookie released a new sequel novella to my novellas *The Pig and The House* (which some say are the most extreme things I've ever written.) But the new novella is called—*are you ready?—Ouija Pig*, and it's in a collection called *Three Little Pigs*. Several months ago Madness Heart Press published *Czech Extreme*, an anthology that I coedited and contains stories by 7 different extreme Czech horror writers, plus a new novella by



me. Several other reissues have been released, like *Minotaur*, *Going Monster*, *City Infernal* (which also has a brand-new bonus story—this one about John C. Holmes in Hell) and others. *White Trash Gothic 3* (unavailable for a while due to the publisher's death) should be reissued soon as well. And I'm very pleased with my latest release, from Deadite, a collection called *Mr. Tilling's Basement & Other Stories*. It has a brand-new fat novella in it.

AU: As you mention, shocking to horror fans, Dave Barnett passed away in 2021. We saw your heartfelt words on Christine Morgan's blog, World of Words. How are you coping with the loss today?

EL: It sucked, and it still sucks. Dave was not only a major publisher of my work but also one of my closest friends. He really was the first to take the chance, back in the early '90s, on extreme and alternative, non-mainstream horror, and I wouldn't have a name as an extreme writer without him. It's so ironic, but he had so many long-term health problems that he expected to die every night when he went to bed but what takes him out was a reckless driver. What a kick in the ass.

AU: Political views aside, it's been a crazy time for all of



us over the last few years during the 'Pandemic', how have you fared?

EL: Believe it or not, my life didn't experience much of a change during the pandemic, simply because I'm a reclusive novelist! I don't get out much!

AU: Today, what does your work space/office look like? How do you make yourself get on with it - tell us how the process looks over a regular week.

EL: My work space is hilarious. I live in a redneck trailer and landshare I bought awhile back. For work, I sit on what has to be a 30-year-old couch and have my laptop on a snack tray. It's perfect! Every day I rise at the crack of eleven, slide over the snack tray, and start writing. I typically get one to two thousand words a day.

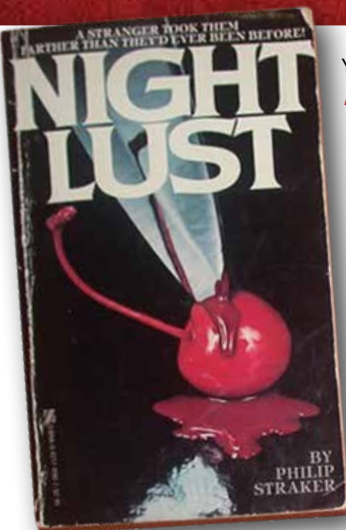
AU: What do you do when you feel overwhelmed, stressed out, not motivated to work or in need of 'me' time? What makes you feel your best?

EL: "Me" time IS my writing time. Since I moved here almost exactly a year ago, I'm never overwhelmed, stressed out, or unmotivated. It's a great feeling for a writer—especially an OLD writer. I'm ALWAYS in the groove!

AU: There are so many different versions of your work out there - different publishing companies, different languages, hardcover, soft, special editions, chapbooks and so on. Do you keep a copy of everything?

EL: I used to keep a copy of everything but it got to be too much of a hassle to keep track of and worry about. Kindle kind of ruined the joy of book collecting. Why keep a roomful of old books, limited hardcovers, foreign editions, low-run chapbooks, etc, when you can store it all on a Kindle? I'm at the point where I'm not concerned with what I've written in the past; I'm focused, instead, on what I'll produce in the future. But don't get me wrong. For the many folks out there who've spent a lot of time and money collecting my stuff, I'm very grateful.

DO NOT RESUSCITATE DO NOT READ



You rock bigtime!

AU: You have a lot of 'super fans' who try to collect them all, myself included! Are you a book collector? Do you covet anything special if you do?

EL: The above answers most of that. But I haven't gotten rid of everything;

there are a few super-

rare doozies sitting here, like my very first published horror story; it's called *The Horror of Chambers*, published in May, 1982 in *Weirdbook* editor W. Paul Ganley's *Eerie Country*. I have one French copy of *The Innswich Horror* that I don't even remember selling! A chapbook or two that I cowrote with Jack Ketchum. One copy each of my first two novels by "Philip Straker," from 1982. Even one unpublished novel and several unpublished stories.

AU: Is there anything recently in the horror 'scene' (books, films or otherwise) that has surprised or stuck with you?

EL: The latest *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* contains the BEST decapitation in the history of cinema. I can't believe it. Has anyone seen that actress since then? Damn! But what I'm most surprised by is how the "extreme" sub-genre of horror fiction seems to have grown exponentially where other horror sub-genres either haven't or have even dwindled. Extreme horror clearly isn't a fad; it's not the next short-lived *Pet Rock*. It's a snowball getting bigger and bigger. That tells you something.

AU: Our magazine not only satisfies horror fans, but also music fans. We always see you in dust jackets or other pictures in band shirts such as *Joy Division*, *Black Flag*, and so on. Who are you listening to these days?

EL: For me, music pretty much ended in 1983. I couldn't even tell you who the big singers and musicians are today. Recently I reread David Schow's award-winning story *Red Light* which is reminiscent of Siouxsie and the Banshees (whom I saw in 1982) so I re-listened to the first four Banshees' albums. Music that great simply isn't made anymore. The industry isn't capable of producing it. And of course, nothing puts a spring in your step faster than *Black Flag*, *Minor Threat*, and *Dead Kennedys*, and nothing opens your eyes to the darkness more effectively than *Joy Division*. All that stuff is the best of the best. Listen to *Lydia Lunch's 13:13* or *King Crimson's Red* or *Magazine's Real Life*. Those were the Good Old Days! As for the shirts, I still have them, even the ones I bought in the late 70s (but they're mostly too frayed to wear). I'm particularly proud of my first *Black Flag* and *Joy Division Unknown Pleasures* shirts; then there's my favorites: *Cherry Red Records* and *Alternative Tentacles!* Try finding those!

AU: What is your wish regarding your career into the next 10-20 years? How do you hope that looks for you? Real or Fantasy answers are acceptable.

EL: I'm confident that I will be able to write actively for the rest of my life. I certainly have enough notes and outlines. If I live 20 more years, I only hope they allow me to have a laptop in the nursing home. Now, if God or Yog-Sothoth grants me another 10 years, I will continue writing extreme horror. I've got a lot of cool stuff coming down the pike. I ain't done yet!

AU: Anything else you would like to mention to the Canadian fans?

EL: To my fans in your outstanding country: thank you! Canada kicks ass. Over 40 years ago when I was in the U.S. Army Tank Corp, we did war games against the British, the Germans, and the Canadians. The Canadians ALWAYS won.



Edward Lee with Jack Ketchum and Michael Slade

You can find Edward Lee's Novels on Amazon.ca, theevilcookie.com and many more quality sites. His newest Zoom Interview with *Dead Headspace* (282): Episode 154 is on YouTube. [Facebook.com/OfficialEdwardLee](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialEdwardLee)



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Tubero

Fixing the Leaky, Shitty Pipes of Society

Interview with vocalist Lovel Ajok
By Ryan Dyer

Since 2008, the Filipino grindcore outfit Tubero, meaning plumber, has been fixing the shitty pipes and faucets of the world through lyrics which strike a nerve and inspire the common folk of the Philippines. Regional issues which can be understood on a universal level are what Tubero brings to the scene. Like Sepultura or Brujeria, though, you don't have to be Filipino to connect with lyrics about shitty neighbors, even shittier guards and being broke.

Absolute Underground: A Tubero is a plumber, but he also has another secret job, right?

Tubero: Yeah. I saw this placard of a plumber on a light post on the street saying "TUBERO-call this number XXXXXXX" and from that moment on I knew it would be the name of my band. Tubero's songs are reflections of the SHIT in our society. Brief, short and most importantly, true lyrics which people can relate to. The listeners who relate to them get a little satisfaction and joy like the clogged pipes of a broken society being fixed by these songs.

AU: What is Kupal Metal?

Tubero: It's basically nothing, just a term I

invented. In the Philippines, kupal means smegma and it is used as an insult. My version of grindcore in the Philippines is thus this funny term Kupal Metal and the songs are meant to piss off those who are affected by my lyrics.

AU: Has Tubero ever played outside of the Philippines?

Tubero: We haven't had a gig outside the Philippines yet.

The farthest we have been is Southern Cotabato. That is in Mindanao, one of the three major islands of the Philippines. All the band members of Tubero are from Luzon Island. Though, of course, it would be amazing if we were given an opportunity to perform outside the country.

AU: I have been to Manila but didn't visit Cubao. What can you tell me about it?

Tubero: Cubao is the grand old commercial heart of Quezon City. You can find historical buildings like Araneta Coliseum and Ali mall. The first major shopping mall in the Philippines. Cubao is also the place where Club Dredd was located before its move to Libis and was the first night club to accommodate the underground bands in the Philippines during early '90s. It was considered a home by a number of pinoy rock bands that became the most popular recording acts in the Philippines in the 1990s. Beside the historical buildings, you can find lots of hotels and motels along Aurora Avenue. And if you want premium rooms just try to check-in at Mariposa Hotel or the famous one like Sogo Hotels.... HEHEHEHE!

AU: The Pulp Summer Slam is the biggest metal festival in the Philippines. You have played it, but besides Tubero they don't seem

to book local brutal bands...

Tubero: In 2014, I'm pretty sure Tubero was the only extreme metal band that performed at the Pulp Summer Slam. The performing bands were being voted by the people. We got lucky. Though in the early 2000's, there were already extreme metal bands that got to play at Pulp, like Loss of Control, Powertools, Mortal Grudge, SIN and a lot more. There are so many purists that do not agree that Tubero belongs, even though we are one of the best bands in Asia (laughs). That's why I hate the underground scene here in Manila because so many people are pulling us down. They don't know the reason why we play this

ABSOLUTE ASIA

kind of style of music!

AU: How accepted is extreme metal in the Philippines?

Tubero: The mainstream music scene here is full of politics (laughs)! Not like from our neighboring countries in Asia where the metal scene is huge. Really, Tubero was lucky to be able to play at the Pulp Summer Slam. Tsk tsk!

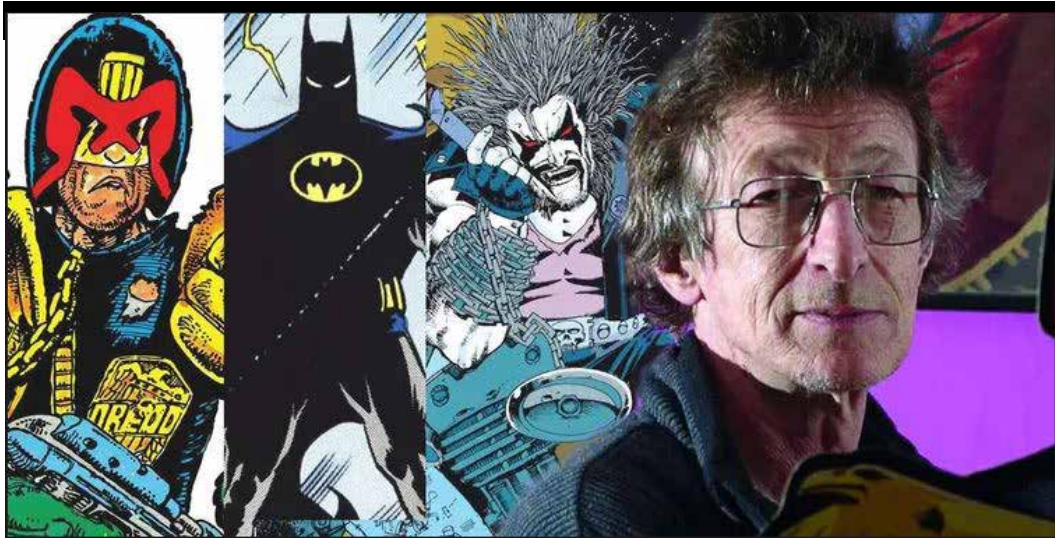
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FALLEN SOLDIERS



Alan Grant

February 9, 1949 - July 20, 2022

By Steve Earles

It took me a while to get around to writing this obituary to Alan, as he was not only a great comics writer, but a personal friend. So, I wanted to do him the justice he deserved. Alan began his career working on romance comics for D.C Thomson (no relation to the American D.C Comics who Al would go on to produce fine work for in later years) in Dundee, where Al lived with his parents, and two brothers, in the late 1960s. The romance comics of this period showed a great emotional depth and story-telling skill, a lot of great writers honed their craft here

This was the crucible that forged Alan's writing skills. D.C. Thomson were hard task masters. There was no question of writers and artists being credited for their work. I remember telling Al that I had the very bad experience of not being credited for my work on several comic stories with another writer over several years, by the writer I wrote with. He was disgusted with the treatment I had received, and told me no editorial team would ever sanction a writer being treated like that (I had been told by the writer I wrote with that I would not be able to receive a credit by his editors, something Al did not agree with. He felt all editors and indeed readers would like to know who worked on a story), that it was bad

treatment, and actually took the time to write down a great deal of useful information in case I ever sought to right this wrong done to me (I feel karma will take care of it). Al was a man with a strong moral compass, a strong sense of right and wrong, it often cost him financially, but he didn't care, it was fair play to himself and others that mattered.



Following his stint at D.C Thomson, Alan began his fruitful partnership with John Wagner, also taking up a post as sub-editor at 2000AD. This was during 2000AD's golden years, a time when comics were produced for all readers, as opposed to a narrow clique of fans.

The list of stories Al worked for 2000AD, and other titles like *Eagle* on is immense. I must mention the classic *Strontium Dog*, illustrated by the incomparable Carlos Ezquerra, you cannot imagine how much we looked forward to seeing the next episode of our favourite stories in the weekly comics that ruled the roost at the time. It was the polar opposite to the click and download culture that exists now. It was in print and you had to have patience, and like all good things, that made it all the sweeter.

JUDGE DREDD

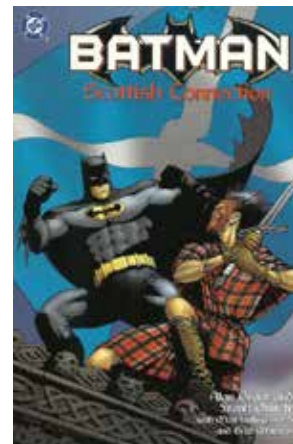


DREDD VS DEATH

He also worked on *Ace Trucking Co* (which needs to be given the deluxe reprint treatment, an absolutely crazed psychedelic story, with the most wonderful way-out art from Massimo Bellardinelli), *Invasion 1984* (Al and John Wagner's massively exciting take on H.G Wells' *War of the Worlds*, drawn in

real privilege. I must mention Judge Dredd, *The Apocalypse War* in particular, looking at what's happening with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it now looks prophetic, again drawn by Ezquerra, and essential.

A highlight for Al's 2000AD tenure is *Anderson*. Very much in the classic girls comics vein of the 70s and 80s. It displayed a huge emotional depth and imagination (particularly when drawn by the great Arthur Ranson). Al told me how sad he was that he didn't get to write *Anderson* in recent years. He took that to heart. Away from British comics, Al did sterling work on Batman and especially Lobo. Al had a great sense of humour, he told me he only ever wrote one story without humour (*Mazeworld*), and this shone on Lobo. His tenure on Lobo is the best the character has ever been written.



When the Foot And Mouth cattle crisis afflicted his adopted Highland home of Monaive, he began the Monaive Comics Festival to boost the local economy.

Even with ever failing health he continued to be kind and generous, producing a comic to aid and encourage the local community during Covid (and to see page drawn by the great Glenn Fabry along side art from local school kids is amazing, how many professionals would do that)

I lost my Dad after a five year battle with cancer during Covid, and even though his health was very bad at this point, Al sent me a lovely sympathy card and a signed Batman book.

A highlight of Al's career is *The Bogie Man*, eventually made into a TV series, and two marvellous Robert Louis Stevenson graphic novel adaptations illustrated by the legendary Cam Kennedy.

I could fill the entire issue with Al's comics career, and still not cover it all. So, instead I'm going to focus on the man rather than the impressive body of work he left behind, which you should all check out.

When I was a kid I used to write and draw my own comics (as opposed to now, where I just write them),



Steve Grimmett

Aug 19th 1959 - Aug 15th 2022

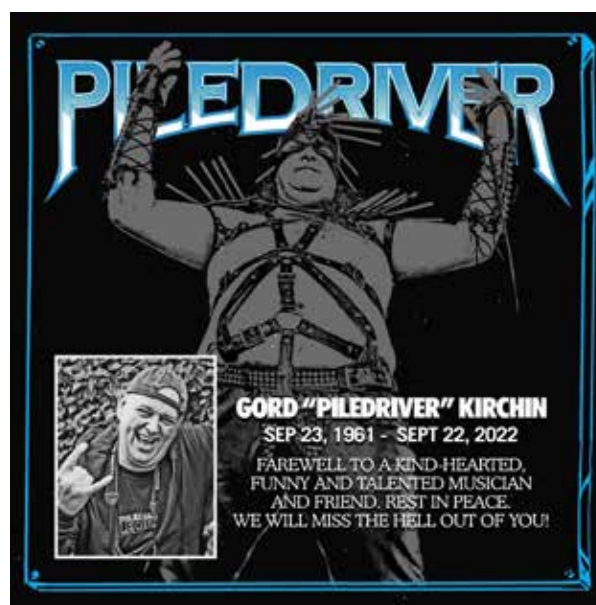
Grim Reaper was one of those bands that every metalhead with a clue knew about. Be it from Beavis & Butthead saying they "suck" or picking up one of the 3 classic-era Grim Reaper albums at the record store.

They held a very special place in the community, and lead singer Steve Grimmett, even at 62 years old, still held the Grim Reaper flag high. Steve passed away peacefully in his sleep on August 15th 2022. At the time of this writing the cause of death is not public knowledge. In January 2017, he was hospitalized during a show in Ecuador for an infection in his right leg. Surgery led to a partial amputation. He began to walk again with a prosthetic leg and kept touring the world extensively.

His biggest singing inspiration was Elton John. Steve loved music, his wife, Jack Daniels, aeroplanes & his fans. He was always happy to give a hug, sign an autograph, have a drink or take a photo with anyone who would have him. Most importantly he kept his voice in incredible shape until his last breath. Unless you bought him too many jack & cokes the night before!

See you in hell my friend.

REST IN POWER!



Gord "Piledriver" Kirchin

Sept 23rd 1961 - Sept 22nd 2022

Rest In Peace to a Canadian heavy metal legend Gord "Piledriver" Kirchin. 'Ol Piley lost his battle with lung cancer on September 23rd 2022 months after being diagnosed. He was 60 years old. His legacy of going against the grain of the PMRC with songs like "Alien Rape" & "Sodomize the Dead" & bringing Canadian heavy metal to the world will never be forgotten. His projects Piledriver, Dogs With Jobs & Convict are staples in the underground community. His hero was Frank Zappa, who fought against Tipper Gore & the PMRC, protecting & rationalizing Gord's art. He loved Alice Cooper, Montrose & everything that truly rocks. He was smart, funny an iconoclast, & never took himself too seriously. When diagnosed Gord told everyone he was "ready for battle" & was in a positive mindset through the whole process. His last moments with family he played

Mötley Crüe's "Home Sweet Home" & KISS' "Rock n' Roll All Nite" for them. An epitaph couldn't be more accurate, "The party's just begun, we'll let you in!" REST IN POWER!

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