

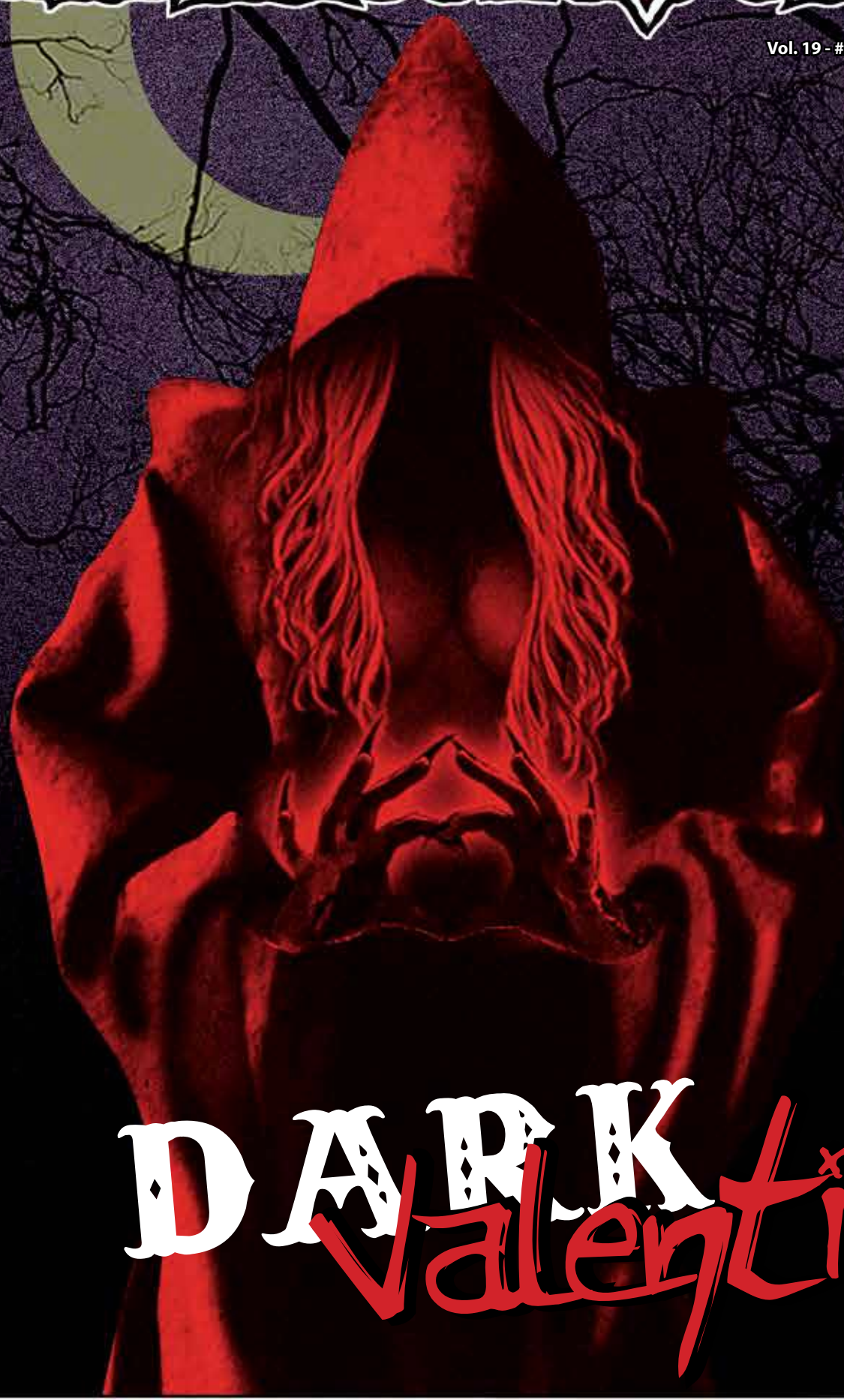
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EST. 2004

Vol. 19 - #2 - Issue 110 - February / March 2023

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Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what's been your role with Absolute Underground?

WG: I'm Willow and I've been a writer and music editor for *Absolute Underground* for the better part of the last decade.

AU: What first drew you to *Absolute Underground*?

WG: I moved to Victoria in 2012 and was wandering around Trounce Alley looking for purpose. I checked out Wolf/Sheep and then dropped into the AU headquarters and I think kind of started working there that week? It was a cool shop/art studio space with horror-themed art on the walls, local music 'zines and tapes, and

FAREWELL TO MUSIC EDITOR WILLOW GAMBERG

chainmail lingerie. What's not to like!?

What year did you first start working as Music Editor? What was your previous journalism experience?

WG: I think it was sometime around 2014, my previous experience included some journalism classes at VIU in Nanaimo, writing for their student paper, *The Navigator*, some Continuing Studies courses in Editing at SFU downtown Vancouver, and some writing for the arts & culture magazine *What's Up Yukon*, back home in Whitehorse. Oh and I used to write reviews and interviews for *Powerplay* Mag out of Manchester, UK.

AU: What have been some highlights and lowlights of working as Music Editor?

WG: Highlights have been attending some festivals and conferences, Noctis Metalfest with Ira and Chad was a blast, and we got some rad press passes. I've met and interviewed some of my favourite artists, Baroness, Orange Goblin, and so many others. Lowlights I'm sure I share with Ira and Chad - late, late night work to meet deadlines with late submissions, getting up at 4am to interview bands across the world with a shitty internet connection, and trying to transcribe Ira's interviews from Punk Rock Bowling. Yeah actually those were the worst. Drunk interviewers, drunker interviewees with thick British accents, screaming background bowlers, high winds and clouds of weed smoke made those some of the toughest transcriptions I've ever done.

AU: How have you seen the magazine change or grow over the years?

WG: It seems to just be getting bigger and bigger these days, we did some of our longest issues ever in the past year or so! I'm really proud of

this magazine, we hung on throughout Covid and longer term over the general death of print media, thanks to the dedication and utter tenacity of the staff and so many volunteers and supporters along the way. This is a community-created and community-supported mag, always has been and always will be, and I think that's rad as hell. I am sad to be leaving it and am really looking forward to seeing where it goes in the future.

AU: What's been happening in your busy life these past few years and what's led to your decision to take a bow on your editorial position?

WG: I moved home to the Yukon a little over three years ago to open Road Dogs Music, a guitar and record shop, and in a completely predictable turn of events, it's taken over my life! My roommate and Vancouver music industry veteran Taya Fraser has joined me here in the north and opened a

rock n roll bar called Lefty's Well, where I also work, and together we have opened a jam space called The Lab Studios. Next up is a promotion company. I have really loved working for *Absolute Underground*, but with all these projects happening, I can't dedicate the time to the mag that it deserves, and figure it's time to pass the torch to someone who can take it through its next evolution!

AU: Final words for our readers.

WG: Thank you for sticking with us all these years! Thanks for reading our interviews, for sending in your contributions and thoughts, and stocking it in your shops and studios.

Also huge thank you to Ira and Chad and everyone else at AU who work so diligently to keep this medium and this magazine alive and thriving. It really is a special thing created by very rad people, so keep reading and supporting AU Mag!

Cheers!!

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BRADY TIGHE

Music Editor Introduction Interview

Absolute Underground: Please introduce yourself to our readers. Who are we talking to and what are your roles at Absolute Underground?

Brady Tighe: My name is Brady Tighe, and I'm the new music editor of Absolute Underground. I do ad design for AU as well, but that's as The Hashtronaut Art Department.

AU: What first drew you to Absolute Underground?

BT: All of the coolest and weirdest people I knew either worked there or ended up in the pages of it. I figured I would try and pull the professional equivalent of breaking into the circle right at the end of a joke, and then hoping nobody noticed if I just blended in. Also, they talked about heavy metal and comic books, and also gave the whole terrific monster of a magazine away for free.

AU: What is your previous journalism

experience?

BT: Jeez, you a cop? Look, I got into this writing-cartoonist-with-long-hair-and-destroyed-hearing-who-avoids-responsibility-he's-not-interested-in-like-the-plague thing as a way to not ever have to answer fucking awful questions like that one. Not your fault. Sorry, job interview flashbacks.

AU: Do you have a motto or vision going forward as Music Editor?

BT: Oxford comma or death.

AU: How would you like to see the magazine change or grow in the future?

BT: I'd like all of the very talented local artists and writers who are looking for a free, open and Canada wide

underground publication to submit to, to do so. If you're bummed out you weren't in Open City, Mad, or Zap, this is the modern version of that. Send your stuff to brady@absoluteunderground.ca

AU: What are some highlights and lowlights of working for Absolute Underground so far?

BT: Highlights would be the sick free T-shirt I got. Lowlights would be dealing with the tyrannical oversight of IraHunTar, a vicious dragon-like creature and vicious taskmaster. Its snarling resolve for violence and flame wills this magazine into existence every issue. Yes, it's super metal. No, it's not fun at 3 A.M. when you're fleeing around Langford, broadsword in hand, knowing you're under the gun to finish editing a *Dark Prison Riot* album review.

AU: Final words of wisdom?

BT: Read more comics, draw more comics, and listen to more *Motörhead*.

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KNIFE MANUAL

Timed with a Stopwatch -

Couple of Mins with Knife Manual

By John Carlow / Photos by Finding Charlotte Photography

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves!

Knife Manual: Rayce: Guitars and backups.

Dan: Bass.

Ty(rone): Guitars and backups.

Donnie: Drums.

Ty(ler): vocals.

AU: When and how did Knife Manual come together?

Ty(ler): We started practicing together in spring of 2019. Rayce, Tyrone and Dan were already playing with some other guys, but it wasn't really happening. Ever since *Total Shit* ended, Rayce and I had talked a lot about starting up another *Teem Shitty* band. Since those three were already playing together, it made sense to join in. Quickly, Tyrone suggested his roommate Donnie play drums and he play guitar. It clicked, and away we went. Our first shows were during the *Jaks* reunion in July of that year.

AU: Lotta familiar faces. What are some bands behind the makeup of Knife Manual?

Dan: I was in *Code 19*, *Orange Krush*, *Last Of The V-8 Interceptors* and currently play in *Thrashlord*.

Ty(ler): *The Hoosegow* and *Angry Snowmans* for me.

Rayce: *Total Shit*, *After You & The Pardon Me's* and *Angry Snowmans*.

Ty(rone): *Blood Nasty* and *Azotobacter*

Donnie: *Pistol Whipped* and *S.L.A.G.S*

AU: What's the story behind the name?

Ty(ler): We all have these running lists of band names on our phones that we come up with along the way. Some good, some bad, usually funny... *Knife Manual* was on my list as a name I really wanted to use for my next band. It is the title of a song by the old Seattle punk band *Silly Killers*. I love that song so much, but for many years I thought it was a *Gas Huffer* song because they covered it in the early 90s. Now I wish I had gone hunting for a *Silly Killers 7"* in the 90s... they go for a few hundred bucks these days... So yeah, these guys liked the name too, so we went with it.

AU: If the band had a genre thrown at it, what would that be?

Ty(ler): I guess punk rock of the short, fast, and heavy variety. I jokingly called us "chud-punk" on a poster once and that still lingers around from time to time. Not sure what that even means other than being fans of *Cannibalistic Humanoid Underground Dwellers*.

AU: What are the songs about?

Ty(ler): Struggles: mental, physical, societal and environmental. In 2019 I was trying to figure out

what it was to be middle aged guy who fronts a punk band... then the pandemic came along and really escalated that. The world is not a great place. Coupling that with way too much time in my own head gave me lots to yell about...oh, and horror movie stuff too.

AU: Influences that make up your sound?

Ty(ler): For me, stuff like *Poison Idea* or *Negative Approach*, and newer stuff like *Night Birds* or *No Problem*. *AK-47* for sure.

Dan: *Zero Boys*, *Devo*, *Battalion of Saints*, *Poison Idea*, *Raw Power*

Donnie: *Minor Threat*, *Vandals*... anything fast and thrashy.

Ty(rone): *Night Birds*, *The Briefs*, *7 Seconds*, *F-Minus*

AU: You guys have played a lot. Weirdest thing to happen at a KM gig?

Ty(ler): Does anything weird happen at shows anymore? Nothing is coming to mind. We are planning to play some shows in the U.S. in 2023, so we may have to get back to you on that.

Dan: There was that time we had the guy dressed as a high school gym coach timing our songs with a stopwatch.

Ty(rone): Our sets are so short it doesn't give people much time to get weird.

AU: Do you have a Christmas Song? (Oops! Wrong band.)

Ty(ler): Ha! No Christmas in this band. With Rayce and I (and sometimes Donnie) in *Angry Snowmans* we wouldn't want to do that.

AU: If one of you won the lottery, would you open your own Logans?

Ty(ler): In theory, yes. Having that for as long as we had, we were so fortunate. It would be nice to

VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

have that again. I guess a lottery win would mean I could have someone else run it, because I would probably be terrible at that.

AU: What's next?

Ty(ler): We recorded our debut last summer, so we are looking for that to come out in 2023. Ideally, we want to release a 7" with 6 or so of the songs, but vinyl pressing is really backed up these days... it may have to come out digitally first. Like I said before, we want to play some shows down south, and elsewhere in general. Write some new stuff.

AU: Anything you want to add?



Ty(ler): I don't hate metal; I just don't want to play it... I have a short attention span.

Dan: If anyone is looking to time our songs while dressed as a high school gym coach get in touch.

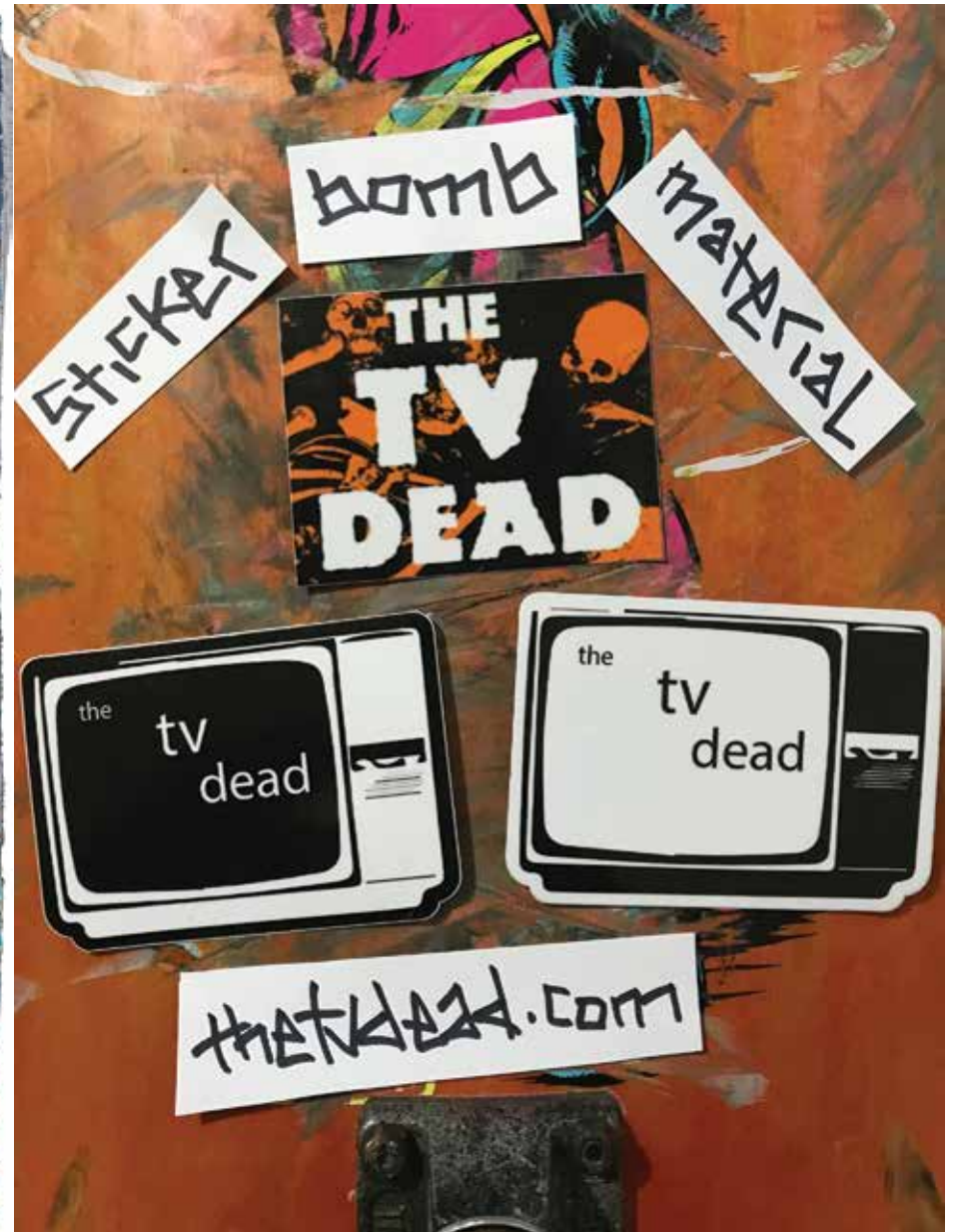
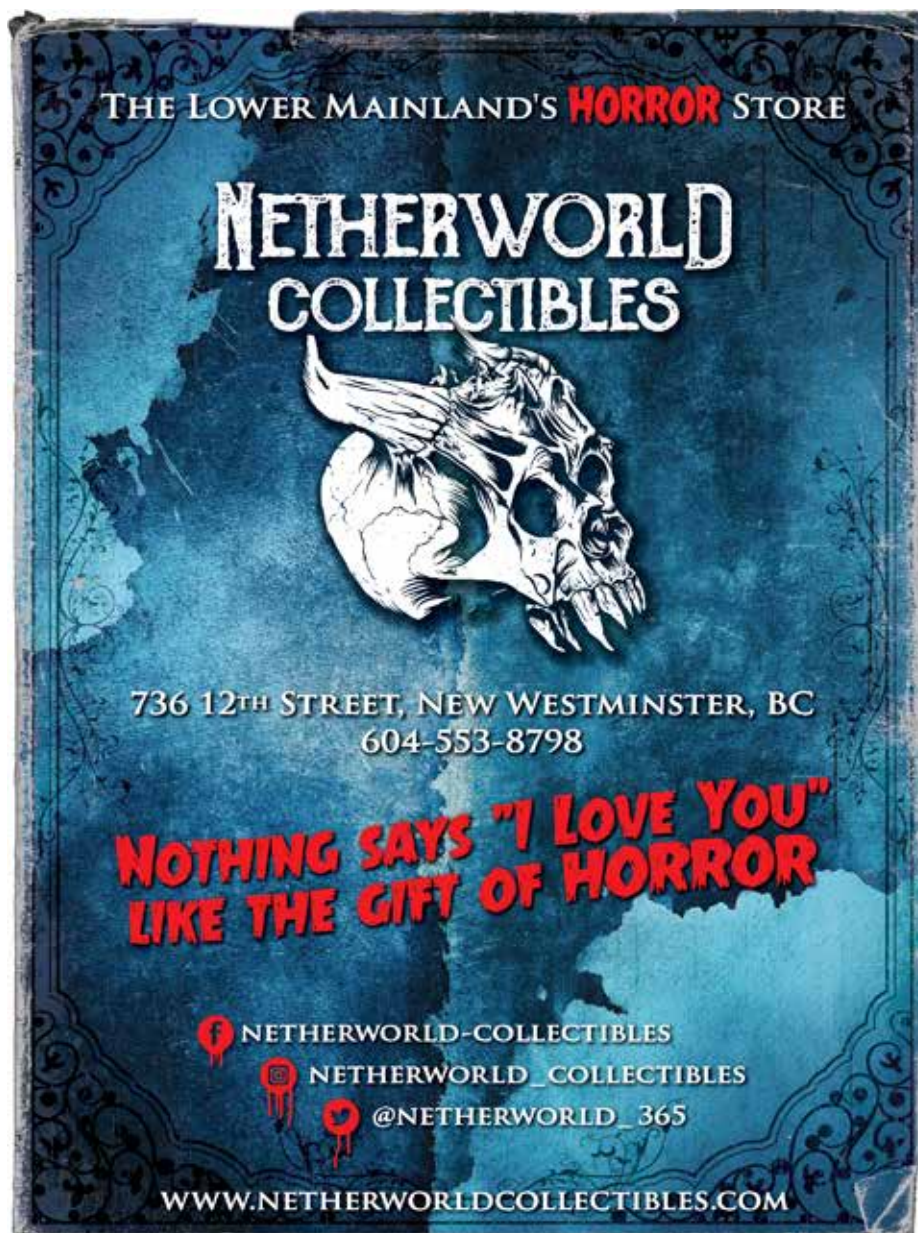
AU: Where can people find Knife Manual?

Instagram - @knife_manual

Facebook - Facebook.com/knifemmanual

Bandcamp - https://stiffhombre.bandcamp.com/

No *Knife Manual* there yet, but some of our older bands like *Total Shit* and *The Hoosegow* are there.



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VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

A: Four bassists in 3 years. The longer the hair, the shittier the bassist. Our current bassist has the least amount of hair and is by far the least shitty. By the time he's bald we'll be unstoppable.

AU: Who else is in the band and what does it say on their Tinder profiles?

RN: No Tinder, as dating is for suckers

AU: Who is the best skateboarder in the band?

A: Rodney has spent most of his time in the band as a cripple but I've heard he's a good skater. He does own the greatest number of skateboards.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

A: We are the opposite of progression. We are *Digression*.

C: We write songs with a point but get distracted a lot.

AU: Where are you from and what's the music scene like there?

C: We're from Vancouver where the music scene is super awesome and supportive unless you're in a punk band.

AU: Any plans to release an album soon?

RY: Yes

AU: Any current songs you are stoked on?

C: "In League With Zider" by Captain Zider Stinky Pants

AU: Any plans for Valentine's Day this year?

RN: Valentine's Day is a stupid day made up by

corporations to profit off of suckers.

AU: Any dating/marriage advice for this post-pandemic world?

RN: Don't date or get married.

AU: Any fetishes to share?

A: So once upon a time I was getting a blowjob while deep sea jigging for ling-cod. Something about pulling on 400ft of braided line, a 32 oz jig head, the likelihood of hitting an 80-pound cod at any moment...I call it a jig job.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

C: The childhood dream of opening for Dayglo

Abortions will be coming true on March 3 at the Wise Hall.

AU: Anything else to promote?

C: Watch my movies at vimeo.com/bullterrierproductions

AU: Any final words for our readers?

RY: Car 87 is way cooler than Digression

C,A,RN: Agreed.

digression.bandcamp.com

DIGRESSION

In League with Zider
An interview with Clay, Aiden, Rodney, and Ry

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Digression: This is Clay(C), Adrian (A), Rodney (RN), and Ry (RY).

AU: What are your skills to pay the bills?

C: We make *Digression* pottery so buy a mug at one of our shows.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

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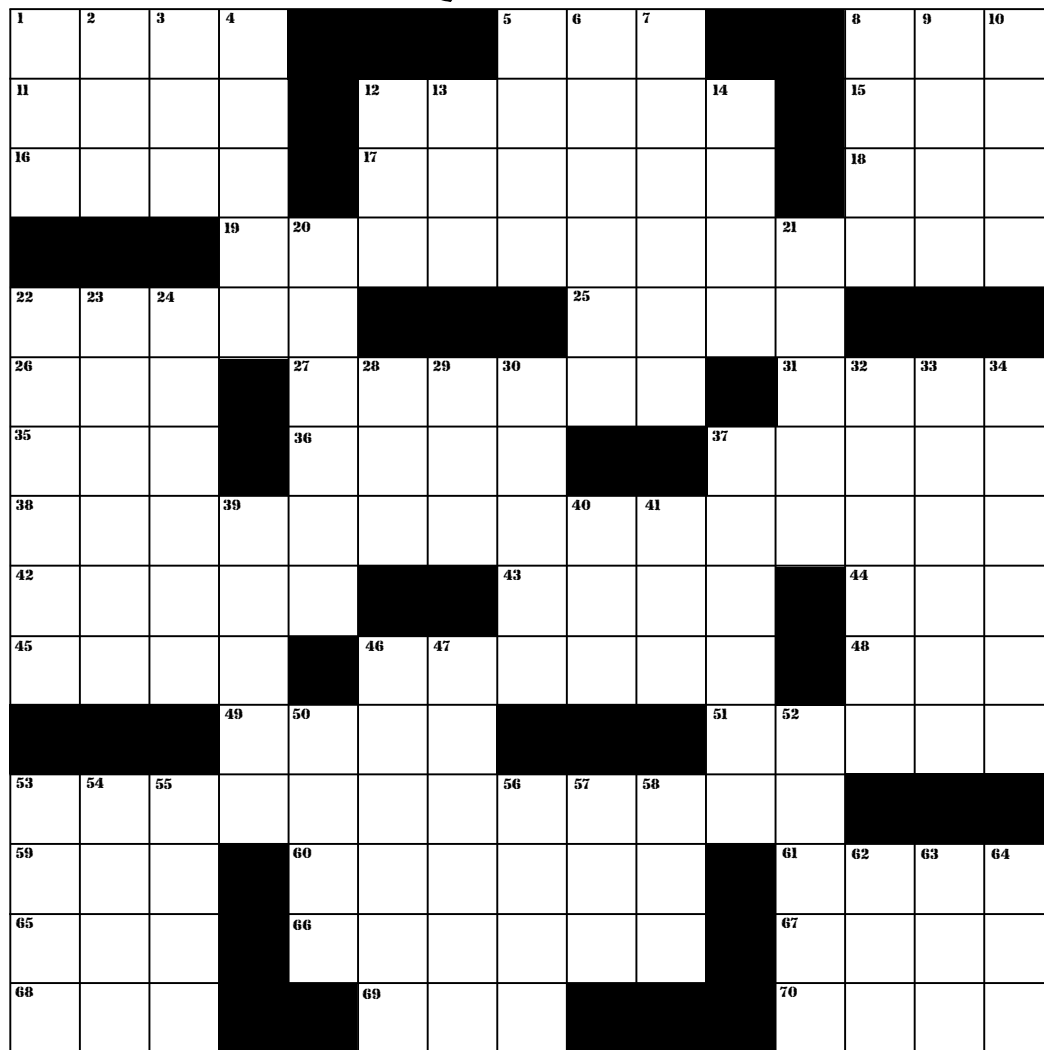
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ACROSS

1. *Accusation from a squealer? with 5-across and 8-across
5. See 1-across
8. See 1-across
11. Singer Amos
12. Carbon, alloy, tool & stainless
15. Button on a tape deck
16. Term for technical disciplines
17. Oopsies
18. Dog's warning
19. *Words from a new mom?
22. Words, shortened
25. Global TV org.
26. _____ standstill
27. The AMPAA is known for them
31. "It's a _____!"
35. Toulouse turndown
36. 1977 Michael Crichton thriller
37. Came up
38. *Common question at a sock hop
42. "And?" (Fr.)
43. The Tragically Hip's Downie
44. Siesta
45. Actress Olin
46. "Get _____!" (move on)
48. Anger
49. Singer Basil or Tennille
51. "Have _____ with Fear"
53. *A 6-month-old who makes witty rejoinders?
59. Stadium cheer
60. He flew too close to the sun
61. Old guy
65. Damage
66. Sign outside an apartment
67. It made the Arrow
68. *A lover's parting words, with 69-across and 70-across

DOWN

1. Big part of municipal maps
2. Smokin'
3. "____ I saw Elba"
4. The lion king
5. Lois in "Lois and Clark"
6. Made better
7. John and Motello
8. Clothing-optional party?
9. He's known for 8-down



CROSSWORD NO. 89

FEBRUARY 14, 2023

10. Off-white
12. F-1 driver Vettel to his friends
13. Attempt
14. Bullpen specialty
20. Ancient calculator
21. Word yelled by a newsboy
22. Someone who damages or destroys needlessly
23. Actor who played Lawrence
24. GMC truck
28. Plasmatics singer
29. US doctors group
30. A cowboy might find their home on it
32. Singer Radke
33. A ghost may give you one
34. Eye
37. Command while making a table
39. Make a pompous speech
40. Neither's partner
41. Jackie O's second
46. Where to find corn
47. Church office
50. Last words?
52. One way to travel in town
53. Greaser's accessory
54. Anti-aging oil
55. _____ mortals
56. Blue-skinned Marvel aliens
57. Word with hamburger or hair
58. Maritimes time
62. Eggs
63. Globe
64. Richard Pryor film (with 'The')



THEY GRIEVE TO WHICH I BORE WITNESS

February 2023





LETHAL INCENDIARY

A Lethal Dose of Brutal Japanese Metal

Interview with Shogo Hiruta

By Ryan Dyer

In the Land of the Rising Sun's underground scene, there is a plethora of death, thrash, and grind bands to discover. In 2019, I was able to see three of these groups as part of Brutal Fest in China: *Needle Contaminated Pork*, *Invictus* and *Lethal Incendiary*. I was quick to realize both the attention to detail and professionalism these groups showed, and let's not forget their commitment to brutality, which *Lethal Incendiary* brings in buckets of disgusting riffs and vocals. DJ Lethal - spin that shit.

Absolute Underground: First, how would you describe Lethal Incendiary to a metal fan who might be interested?

Shogo Hiruta: We play a raw and not too modern form of death metal. Maybe we can call the style "organic death metal."



originally a cover band of old *Carcass* songs. We played three songs from their first full-length in November 2015. I remember that modern metalcore and screamo were quite popular at my university back then. I just wanted to play something raw, and early *Carcass* popped into my head. After a few shows with *Carcass* songs, we started to make our own songs, and continued to play more seriously. From *Carcass* goregrind songs to *Napalm Death* and *Last Days of Humanity* influenced songs. But we all loved thrash metal as well as death metal, so our first songs had guitar solos and technical metal riffs. About seven years have passed and we have had member changes, though we are still all about old school grind and death metal.

AU: It says your name was previously AxCx Japan. Anal Cunt Japan?

SH: Yes correct, haha. I named it this because I wanted to play something raw and dirty, we named it this for our temporary cover band.

AU: When and under what circumstances did you start the band? Who were your influences at the time?

SH: I started the band around August 2015 with friends from my university. The band was

AU: I saw and met you in Tianjin for their Brutal Fest concerts. You went there in 2018 and 2019. How did you like the Chinese shows/crowds? How do they differ from the Japanese shows?

SH: That was great to see you by the way. Yes, we played in China in 2018 and 2019. We want to say thank you so much again to Nicky and all of the Chinese metal heads. This is just my opinion, but due to Chinese internet policy, it's difficult to reach the Chinese metal scene from Japan. *Renchei* and *The Dark Prison Massacre* are relatively famous brutal death metal bands though. The things I noticed were their uniqueness. As we all know, China has a strict internet policy and it's impossible to access YouTube or other sites without a VPN. It's easy to say that Chinese bands/audiences are not following the latest scenes and trends and that they are behind. But I noticed a sense of un-typicalness everywhere during shows. This is not only about song structure and riff writing. For example, slam dancing is famous nowadays but dancing and mosh pits in China are very different from ours. I realized that the internet makes it easier to learn what's going on in the latest scenes but also makes tons bands that just copy each other. I would say that the Chinese scene still has its own originality thanks to its isolation politics. Young metalheads should check out the Chinese scene.

AU: You played there with Dark Prison Massacre, Impure Injection and Rectal Wench, who are my favorite brutal bands out of China. What did you think of them?

SH: As I explained my opinion or even hypothesis in the previous question, I think they're unique and great groups. If I had to pick one group, I would say *Dark Prison Massacre*. They are not only unique, but they also completely understand what's up in the scene. And also, I have all of their albums. They combine Chinese traditional instruments and modern slamming brutal death metal - It's beyond unique.

AU: You also played the Taiwan Death Fest. Could you describe that experience?

ABSOLUTE ASIA

SH: Just awesome! We played Taiwan Death Fest 2019 and a good friend of mine Larry Wang provided vocals for our song from the latest demo, Demo 2019. During that fest, there were also Korean, British and Hong Kong bands. We won't forget that night. The Taiwanese are so friendly and open minded, and the cuisine is awesome. I know there's difficult political problems around Taiwan right now, but it's worth it for everyone to go to Taiwan, trust me.

AU: Is it difficult touring abroad (the paperwork/visas)?

SH: Beijing Death Fest 2018 was our first show outside of Japan, so we had trouble with bringing instruments on the plane. But thanks to Nicky, the other Beijing Death Fest crew, and members of *Hitobashira*, we managed to play our first show in China. Regarding paperwork, I have to appreciate having a Japanese passport. No visas were required for China and Taiwan so far.

AU: I'd like to ask about the meanings of some of the songs: "Bloody Headless Prostitute," "Family Killing Injection," "Charred Fetus Revelation." Are they based on actual events?

SH: Technically yes and no. It's an extremely embarrassing story. These are our earliest songs that we made in late 2015 and early 2016. I read some horrible stories on websites in English and German, but my language skills were terrible, and I misunderstood them. I thought they were real stories but I guess they were not!

AU: Where would you like Lethal Incendiary to go next (how about Canada)?

SH: Anywhere there's someone who wants to see us! Canada sounds like a very good plan. It's where *Cryptopsy* was born. Even if no one invites us, I would love to visit as a tourist.



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MALICE DIVINE

Everlasting Ascendancy

Interview with Ric Galvez

AU: Welcome back to the pages of Absolute Underground! For readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?

Malice Divine: Hey guys! My name is Ric, and I am the sole songwriter behind *Malice Divine*. I write all of the music and lyrics and I perform all of the vocals, guitars, and bass in the studio. With *Malice Divine*, I combine black metal, death metal, and thrash metal, while also putting my own spin on it.

AU: You're unleashing you're second album as a one-man band entitled *Everlasting Ascendancy*, what can you tell us about this record?

MD: I am very proud of the new album, and I can confidently say that it's a major step up from the first one. Overall, it's a more aggressive and intense album than the first one, while also still being highly melodic. The guitar solos are even more virtuoso-esque, and the vocals are more in your face. Once again, the album was engineered and mixed by Tyler Williams of Monolithic Productions,

and once again it also features Dylan Gowan on session drums. Jamie King from Jamie King Audio handled the mastering this time around.

AU: Do you prefer doing everything yourself or have any thoughts of making *Malice Divine* a full-fledged band?

MD: As of right now, I prefer being a solo artist as opposed to being in a band. I wouldn't say that I do everything myself, as I have hired recording engineers and a session drummer, but I do everything at least as far as the song writing is concerned. Obviously, I do the majority of the performing as well. Aside from working with PR, I do all of the promotion myself too. I have considered making *Malice Divine* making a full-fledged band. Unfortunately, I just haven't found the right people, so for the time being I am better off being a solo artist.

AU: If you could choose your all-star lineup for recording and live, what musicians would you choose?

MD: Honestly, anyone who has the chops, commitment, and work ethic, is someone who would work for a recording and live line-up. If they have those qualities and also aren't douche-bags, then that's all that matters. I really don't care about having an "all-star lineup".

AU: What are the pros and cons of being a one-man band?

MD: The pros are that I have complete creative control, no one else to please but myself and I don't have to split any return on investments with anyone. I'm sure there are more pros but those are what immediately come to mind. As far as cons, the only cons that I can think of are the heavier workload and the fact that I am the only person contributing to the project financially. Those aren't complaints though because I really love what I do, and the pros greatly outweigh the cons for me.

AU: You've been on Banger TV's Shredders of Metal competition? What did you learn from that experience?

MD: I learned that there were certain aspects of my guitar playing that I needed to work on (which I have, as I have improved a lot as a guitarist since then). I also learned not to doubt myself, because overall I still did a pretty good job. I also learned

TORONTO TRASH

that it's not worth taking things personally, particularly considering how toxic the comments section was. The experience brought home the message that other people's perceptions of me really don't matter.

AU: How has your music degree from York University influenced your writing process?

MD: I'd say the main way that my music degree from York University influenced my writing process was the inspiration to incorporate classical guitar into my music with *Malice Divine*. Both albums consist of a fair amount of classical guitar sections. There are also some music theory concepts that I've learned that I have incorporated into my song writing as well.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours to mention?

MD: As of right now, there aren't any shows or tours planned out for *Malice Divine*. However, I

do plan on changing that in the future. I just need to find the right live line-up first.

AU: Anything else to add for our readers?

MD: I just wanted to say thank you to everyone who has supported my music in any way! I have merchandise for sale at malicedivine.bandcamp so I'd love it for you readers to go check it out and purchase something. The support means a lot to me.

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ALIENATÖR

Regrets

An Interview with Brad King of Alienatör

Absolute Underground: Welcome to Absolute Underground! For readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?

Alienatör: Hello Absolute Underground Mag. We are Alienatör, a post-hardcore sludge band from the middle-of-nowhere Canada

AU: You recently unleashed your second album "Regrets," what can you tell our readers about this record?

A: It's a dark and intense album that reflects the chaotic time in which it was written. Hopefully, the listener finds it both creative and interesting, and that it takes them on a journey.

AU: How was it writing this album as a trio this time around? We read that you added a new drummer

Simon the lineup, and your bassist Sean Skillen became more involved with the writing process, which added a new dimension. How would you compare this record to your debut album "Pariahs"?

A: It's a collaborative effort, and more cohesive thematically.

AU: Would you say the band is a political band or just one that feels the need to make political topics known and bring attention? We read that you said this album is "Dark and cathartic, exploring personal themes, as well as racism, and abuse of power in Canada and the erosion of truth we've seen in modern times."

THUNDER-DOME BAY



A: Some of our songs are about personal issues and some are about political issues so I'm fine with being labeled political. I'm a political person. Fuck the cops and all that.

AU: How does it feel to get back to releasing music again post Covid?

A: It's great to put out the record. I just got COVID two weeks ago and it sucked, so I don't think we're post-COVID yet. It's great to be out

of lock-down though.

AU: How's the Thunder Bay scene these days?

A: Lots of good bands. Not enough venues. Pretty isolated.

AU: What can fans expect from an Alienatör show?

A: The live show is the same as the record. Same intensity. No bullshit.

AU: Anything else to add?

A: Check out the album if you like noise rock, sludge etc. Keep on rockin' in the free world.

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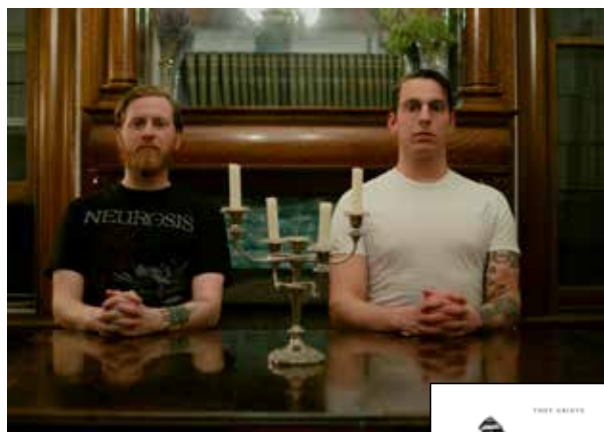
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THEY GRIEVE

To Which I Bore Witness

An Interview with Gary Thibert and Deniz Guvenc:

AU: For readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?

Gary: Thanks for having us! We are *They Grieve*, a two-piece post-metal band from Ottawa, Canada. Our music is a blend of sludgy doom, ambient drone, and post-rock, influenced by our collective experiences of depression.

Deniz: Hi!

AU: It's been 4 years since your debut "*Made My Sacrifice Accordingly*" and your new album "*To Which I Bore Witness*" is being released this February on Silent Pendulum Records. What can you tell our readers about this release?

G: The last few years were spent really refocusing what we wanted to accomplish with the project. We wrote, scrapped, and then re-wrote almost every song on the album until we were satisfied it reflected our intentions. We decided to approach our good friend Topon Das, who I've worked with many times in the past, to help us bring these tracks to life. It is metal, but it's really meant to evoke a sense of sadness more than anger.

D: We really feel like we took a huge step

forward writing "*To Which I Bore Witness*." We spent a lot of time in self-reflection over the past few years, both emotionally and musically, and the final product commemorates that process. We're extremely happy to have had the opportunity to work with old friends again: the artwork was created by Pascale Arpin, who also did the artwork on our first release; the video for the first single was created by Cory Thibert and Linnea Gwiazda. Finally, Mike from Silent Pendulum Records, who played with Gary's previous band a few times, has provided us with a wonderful home for the album.

AU: What's the message or emotions you're trying to express with this record?

G: Dread, depression, sadness. *They Grieve* is truly an extension of our long-standing friendship and the conversations we have about our life experiences.

D: I think those conversations are as much a part of the writing process as the music itself. We always seem to come up against this feeling that there are things we experience in our daily lives that exceed and overwhelm the grasp of plain language. Or maybe we just haven't figured out how to do it yet. Either way, our music picks up where these conversations leave off—it's a difficult but cathartic and therapeutic process.

AU: How was it working with producer Topon Das of *Fuck The Facts* fame at his Apartment 2 Studio? How was the experience?

D: He really is an incredibly patient person. He's also always engaged, always coming up with ideas—he never phones it in. He has a great

knack for getting good takes out of artists. He really doesn't shy away from telling us when he thinks we messed up, which we really appreciate because honestly, we need all the help we can get.

AU: Your music video for the album's title track was a great short cinematic experience. How did the concept come to life for making this video?

G: We love collaborating with other artists. The video was filmed by my brother Cory, who is a filmmaker, and was performed by his partner Linnea, who is a professional performance artist and choreographer. They brought a lot of ideas to the table, and we had input in most of the steps along the way. We really loved the way they both translated concepts and ideas from music into visual concepts through their respective art forms. For that reason, we wanted them to really take the lead for "*To Which I Bore Witness*", the self-titled track released as the first single from the album. At each stage, they used the material we sent to narrow and refine the scope of the concept until it was ready to film.

AU: If Greber never asked the band to play a last-minute show when you didn't have a name yet? What other band name would you have chosen?

G: That is a great question! I honestly can't remember any of the other names we were considering at the time. I think I'm a little fonder of the name than Deniz is. I know we had a list going at the time of potential names, maybe Deniz still has it kicking around.

D: I don't think I'll remember any at this point... you can probably just look up 'dread' or 'sorrow' or something similar in a thesaurus. We have been half-joking about starting a power violence band called *Gloomlurker* for 7 or 8 years though.

AU: How do you find the dynamic as a duo compared to having more members in the

OTTAWA ONSLAUGHT



band?

G: From the beginning, we agreed that the project would always be a duo. The idea was to see how the limitation of two would influence the writing.

D: Yeah, it's something we've talked about, but we've never seriously considered adding other members. We realized that so much of what we do comes from our personal relationships and friendship that adding another person at this point would alter the dynamic too drastically, it would have to be a new band entirely.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

G: We are playing a local album release show on February 25th in Ottawa at House of Targ. We're also hitting up Southern Ontario from March 2nd to 5th and currently working on some Quebec dates for April.

AU: Anything else to add?

D: Thanks so much for the interview! The two singles we've released thus far are available on YouTube, Spotify, and all other streaming services. You can also pre-order the vinyl through the Silent Pendulum Records web store. And we're getting better at posting on social media more regularly if you want to follow us there.

theygrieve.bandcamp.com



Vulgar Deli

Interview with Uncle Costa Tabarnakis

By Mal Content

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

CT: You're talking to Uncle Costa Tabarnakis, also known as the Screaming Greek. I was the singer for *Blood Sausage* from 1989 to 1997. We released our one and only album: *Hungry Dogs Follow Me*. After the breakup, 1998 saw the beginning of *Vulgar Deli* and I've fronted it ever since. Next February will be *Vulgar Deli's* 25th anniversary. From the *Blood Sausage* era to today I've had the pleasure of doing several collaborations with bands such as *Grim Skunk*, *Overbass*, *Bodyjar* (Australia), and *Irish Nails*. About 5 or 6 years ago, I fronted a short-lived band



of the band. Joined by John Isherwood and Tom Pillon on guitars soon after. Danny, Francois and John were all members of the *Ripcordz* at one point or another. Francois was also in *Amnesie* and *Street Troopers*. Tom Pillon was from *Les Unknowns*. We were soon picked up by Indica Records and

released our first self-titled album in 2000.

Unfortunately the band fell apart a few years later. Around 2010 we reformed, but this time as a six-piece. That went on for a while then the band fell back to a five-piece.

We're now a four-piece, and I'm the only original member left. The lineup is now me, Troy, Daryl (from *CHOMP*, *K-Man*, and *The 45's*), Mikey Dangerous on bass, and we're in the process of breaking in a

new drummer.

AU: Did you start the band for the sex, the

called *Ass-Wagon*. Most recently, I wrote "Scum Fuck Blues" for Montreal's mighty *Dopethrone* and recorded a duet with Toronto's *Random Killing*.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band Vulgar Deli.

CT: Danny Duke on bass and Francois Demers on drums and myself, were

drugs, or the rock n roll? Or all of the above?

CT: All of the above, of course! But these days, you can replace "sex" with whiskey and gin.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

CT: We used to sound like a hardcore band with some rockabilly/psychobilly flavor. But that's long gone now. Our sound now is what I like to call Extreme Rock'n'Roll

AU: Have you released an album or any songs recently?

CT: We released "Smell The Fuck," our third album independently on our label: Coke-Dick Records in February 2021. We also released a split 7-inch with our brothers *Armed and Hammered* from Toronto at the same time.

AU: Describe a Vulgar Deli live show verbally if you can.

CT: As much as I love our recorded music it's never been able to capture the intensity of our live shows. We play hard and loud. It's the real deal served up with an abundance of booze and drugs and usually, ends up with women knocking each other out for some reason.

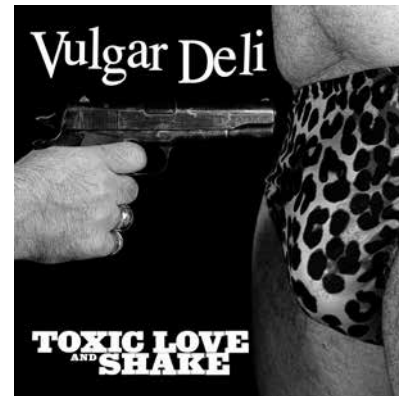
AU: Any shows or tours planned?

CT: The only show I can say for sure is my annual FUCK CHRISTMAS SHOW that happens in the middle of December every year.

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

CT: Amongst other things, I'm

MONTREAL MASSACRE



also a graphic designer/artist so I've created almost all the art, logos, album covers, digital photography, posters etc...from *Blood Sausage* to *Vulgar Deli*.

Screaming-greek.com is the home of our label: Coke-Dick Records, where you can buy physical copies of our latest *Vulgar Deli* albums and our all our merch.

AU: How do people find you online

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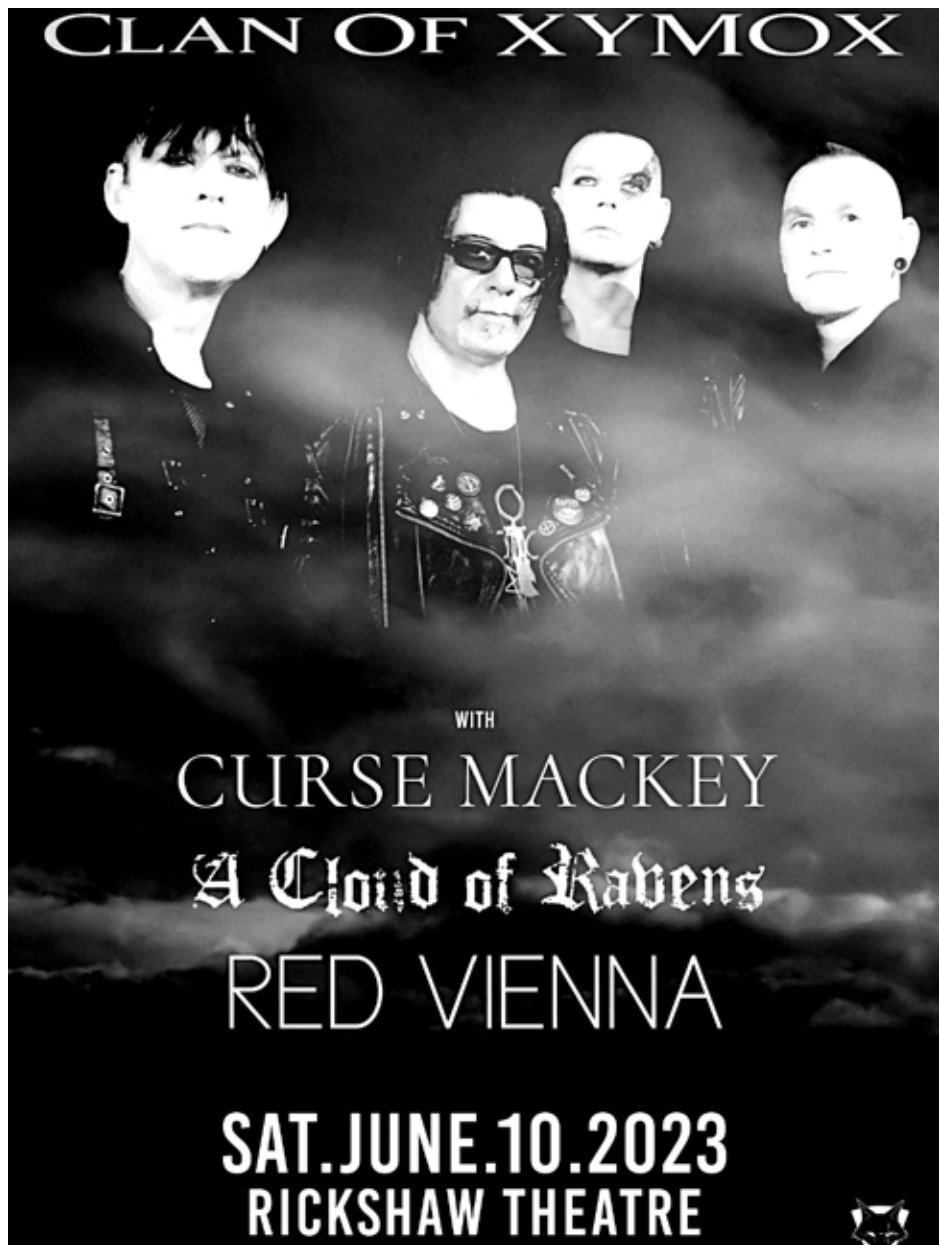
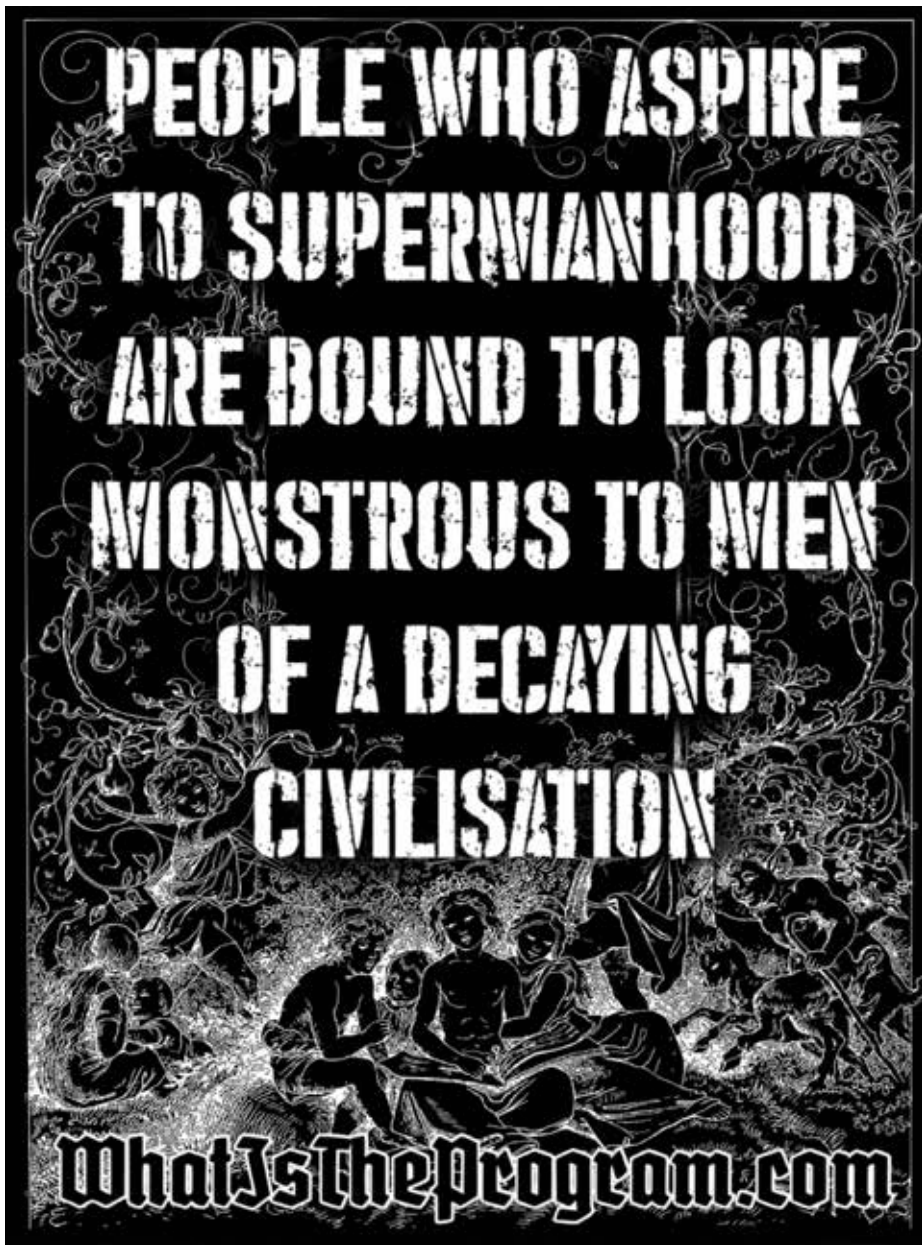
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Crown Court

By Tiny Daz'er & Chuckster Bloodvessel

AU: Where is Crown Court from?

Crown Court: We are actually from all over; Trevor is from North London, Jack is from South London, Danny is from Glasgow, Ronnie is from Dieren in Holland, and I'm from Derby. But the band originated in London, and we make our music there so we'll go with Seven Sisters London.

AU: What's the punk scene like where you are?

CC: It's mainly the old school die-hards still doing it but it's good to see more of the younger generations getting into it. Both

Enemy, and *Poundflesh* would be the most well known. But recently waving the punk rock banner of Derbyshire we have *Paul Carter* and *the Destroid*, *Fight Back*, *Sods Law*, and *Addictive Philosophy*. *Anti-Pasti* are still touring but those are current bands and people you tend to see about a lot more.

AU: How does this lineup of the band differ from the last, sonically and member wise?

CC: I'd like to leave the audience to decide that really.

AU: Are there any singles

that are awaiting release from Crown Court?

CC: We have a split single with Canadian titans

bands and people of all generations are essential for keeping it alive by showing an appreciation for the music. Just need a few of them younger ones who have started coming to gigs to start forming bands and we should be on to a winner.

AU: Who are the local bands from your scene that we need to know?

CC: From my local scene: *Anti-Pasti*, *The*

The Enforcers out soon.

AU: Do you guys have plans to put out a full length follow up to "Capital Offence?"

CC: Yes, our new album "Heavy Manners" comes out in March.

AU: What's your favourite show you have ever played?

CC: That's a very tough question, but I'll go for *Rebellion 2022* because I've never seen so many of my closest mates in one room showing support.

AU: Are there any other bands past and present that you guys have played in?

CC: Danny still has another band called *Half Charge*. Ronny is in *Day Drinker*, *The Reapers*, *Malad*, and countless previous bands I can't keep track of, or he just doesn't mention. Jack used to be in *Code Blue*, *Dog Rotten* and *16 Guns*. Trevor used to be in *Stomping Ground*. I've done a few things but *Last Crusade*, *Antisocial*, a very brief stint in *Certified*, and my current other band *Concrete Bollocks* would be the ones you can find. Ronny and Trev both have a side project called *Roughed Up* as well.

AU: What are your biggest lyrical influences?

CC: Trevor is the man with all the lyrics so it would have to be *Tottenham Hotspur FC*.

AU: Have you guys toured North America or do you have plans to?

CC: We haven't played there yet but negotiations are ongoing.

AU: How many times have you played Rebellion Festival?

CC: *Crown Court* has played there twice.

AU: When you played Rebellion this year Trevor mentioned something about the age of

VOICE OF THE STREETS



the members of the band, i.e. you guys are still in your 20s. Do you feel that gives you a fresh outlook on the genre/punk in general?

CC: Although that was written when more than half of us were in our 20s, the song is actually titled kids of the 20s which is just about life after the lockdown that's all. But I guess the band's new lineup does bring a fresh element.

AU: Cheers for the interview! Thanks for helping to keep the oi and punk scene alive, do you have anything further that you would like to add?

CC: Not really, just thanks for the interview and sorry it took ages.

crowncourt.bandcamp.com



Father Moon

FATHER MOON

Interview with guitarist Olek

by Rightous Snarf for Absolute Underground

AU: Who are we talking to and what is your hidden talent?

Father Moon: My name is Olek, and I am the guitarist of the entity that is known as *Father Moon*, one of the three members who have given their consciousness to the larger concept we call a band. My hidden talent, shared with the other

three members, is being able to channel the collective unconscious that has come into being as the musical manifestation known as *Father Moon*.

AU: Give us a brief history of *Father Moon*.

FM: *Father Moon* came into being from the void in early 2018 and has been utilizing the power of heavy riffage to stay in this level of existence ever since. Since that first moment of unexpected existence *Father Moon* has released a few singles and two EP's (Our first EP titled "2" and our send EP titled "Father Moon").

AU: Who else is in the band and what other bands have they been in?

FM: *Father Moon* as a manifestation of the collective consciousness is composed of Will Guenter on Drums, Olek Janusz on guitar, and Samesh Thompson on bass. There was nothing before *Father Moon*. There will be nothing after.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

FM: Close your eyes. Slowly rub your eyes until you start seeing those weird colours and shapes that make up the peripheral of your vision among the darkness. Sprinkle a little bit of tired heaviness

to your eyelids as if you haven't slept in a long while yet are still content with your existence on this mortal plane. That is how we sound.

U: Where are you from and what's the music scene like there?

FM: We have been told that this realm is called Calgary Alberta, a city exemplified by the fantastic juxtaposition of cold arctic winds countered by the warm mountain air of the chinooks. The harsh cold prairie with the occasional warmth is the perfect metaphor for the abyss we reside in. The city also has a great metal scene highlighted by some amazing thrash groups!

AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?

FM: Rock 'n' Roll. Until this mortal coil is severed, and we are unleashed back into the void. Drugs are cool too.

AU: Any plans to release an album in the near future?

FM: Yes! In the darkness of a basement suite, we recorded and will be releasing our first full length album titled *FM* - out on February 5th 2023 everywhere. For those that need heavy riffs, melancholy, and a smidge of hope to keep the existential abyss and panic at bay, we believe *FM* will be the perfect doom record to keep you and your personal void company.

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

FM: The song "Penance" has a wonderful guest vocal by Calgary vocalist Dan Loudon, from the amazing band *Benevolent Like Quietus*, and is a dense track built on basic doom principles of drone and slow methodical riffage. I would also recommend the album single "Iron God" and the kaleidoscope that is "Empire."

AU: Any dating/marriage advice for this post-pandemic world?

FM: Communicate and be open about your feelings. In a world of changing tides, being open and vulnerable about your feelings will enable you to share the burden of existence with grace, kindness, and dignity. Also listen to more music and experience more art to better understand our multiplicity. The cathartic nature of art can enable all to accept the void within.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

FM: We will be taking part in The Electric Highway in March - a stoner rock/doom festival in Calgary. Come for the heaviness, stay for the fun.

AU: Anything else to promote?



FM: Keep your eyes and ears ready for another album release. We recorded another full length within the confinements of our basement in April and are ready to unleash a torrent of heavy and doomy sounds when the world is ready. If you want loose and shimmering doom metal built on the natural dynamics of three people in a single room, our next release will be a perfect accompaniment to your daily grind.

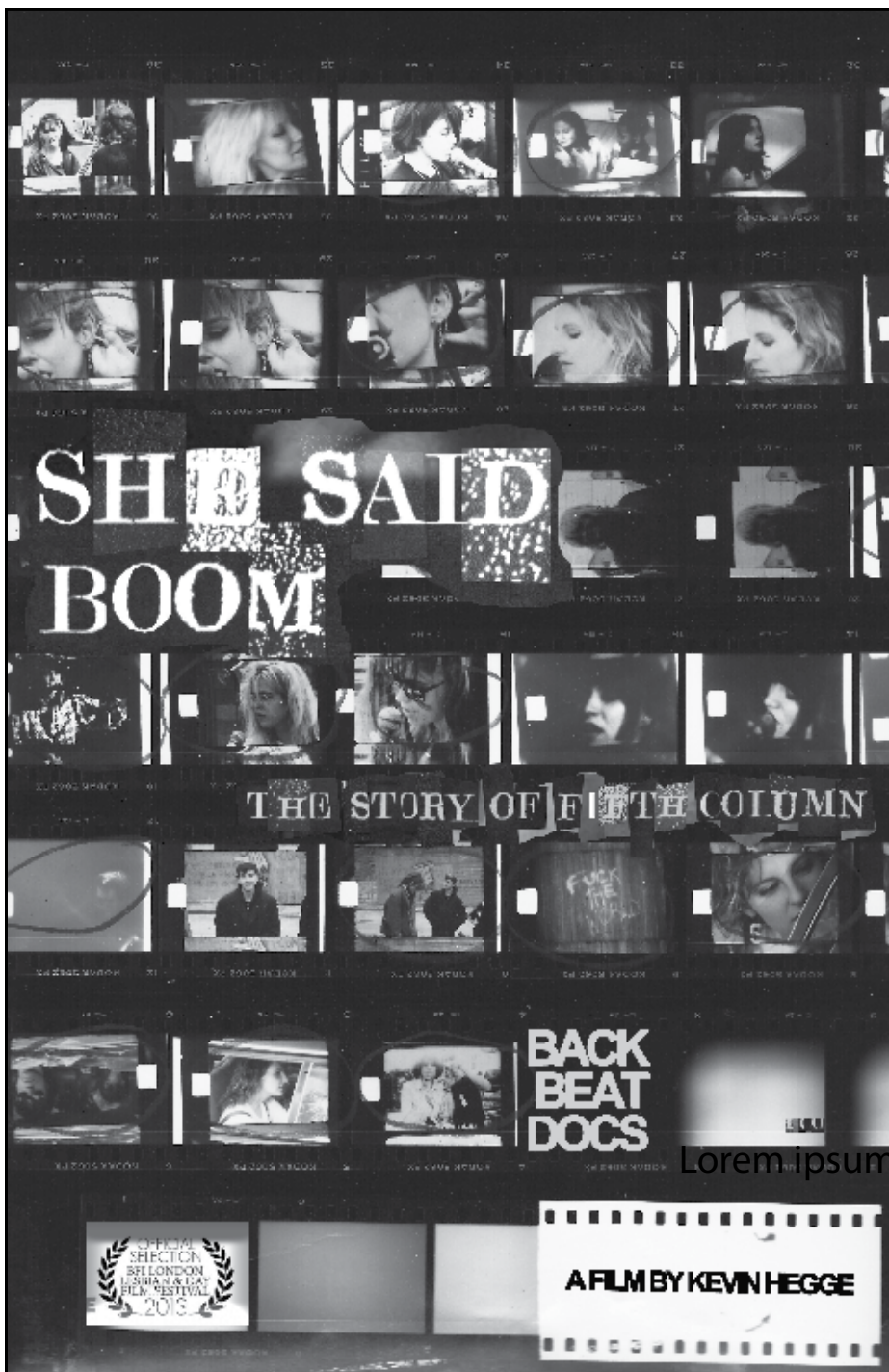
AU: Any final words for our readers?

FM: The abyss is in us all. Let it breath and be, and in time the void will not only be a friend, but a comforting companion in this reality.

AU: How do people find you online?

FM: You can find the manifestation of our collective consciousness on all streaming platforms, on bandcamp at fathermoonofficial.bandcamp.com, and you can learn more about our shared work on our website at fathermoonofficial.com

Photo Credit: Joeri Geentjens



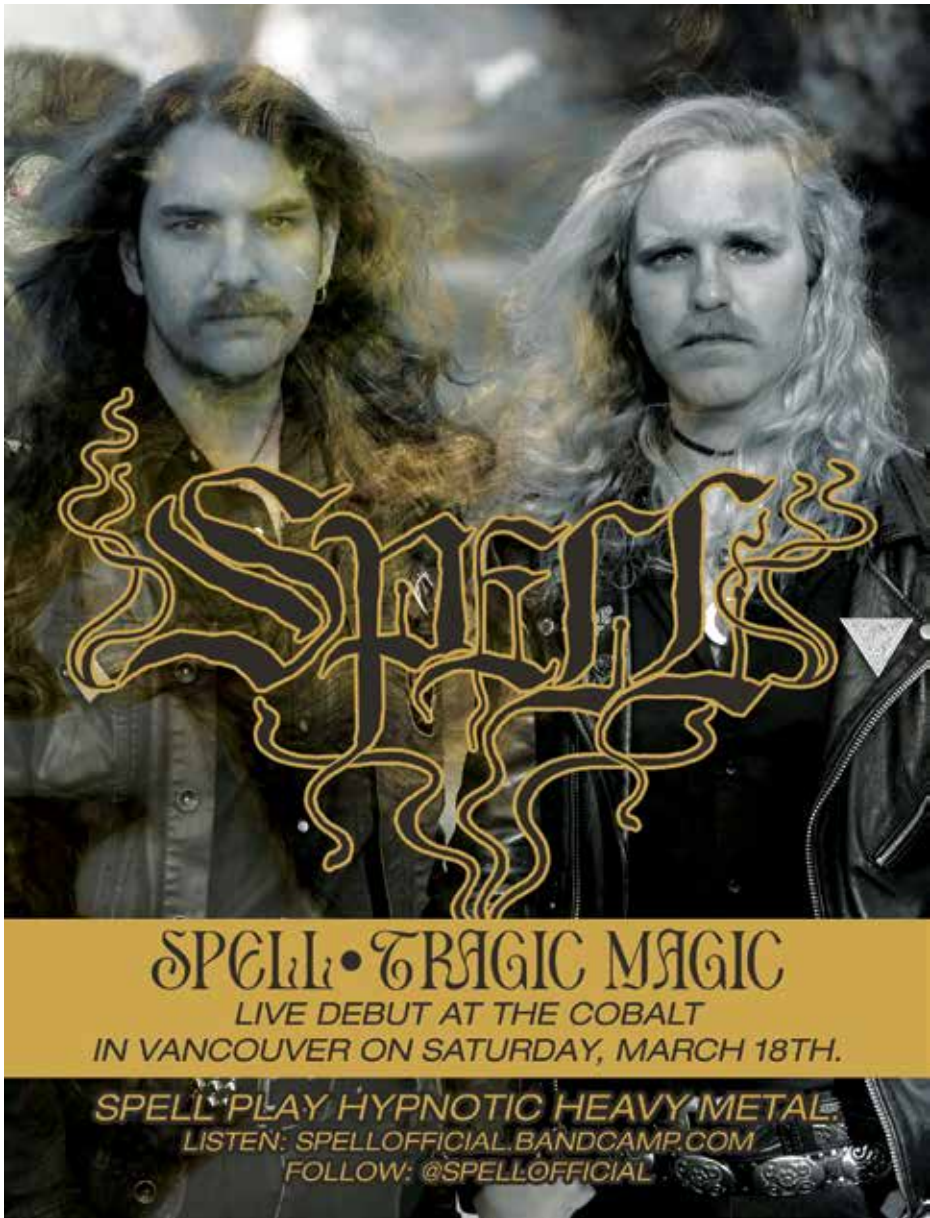
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Medevil

Interview with bassist Eric Wesa

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

Eric Wesa: Thanks, great to be back! I'm Eric, the bassist for the Vancouver-based metal band Medevil. We have a mix of styles of different metal sub-genres, especially in our newest release, but I'd like to describe our music as 'Power/Prog'. We are a group of passionate musicians that create music out of a love of the genre, rather than trying to appeal to specific fans of certain genres, so our is more like a collage of our favourite artists.

AU: We'd like to give our condolences to the band, we understand your drummer Chris Malcolmson passed away after the recording of your second record *Mirror In The Darkness* and the release of it is a tribute to his memory.

EW: Thank you, I really appreciate that. Yes, this album was recorded while Chris was still with us on drums and the release is dedicated to his memory.

AU: It's been 7 years since your debut *Conductor of Storms* in 2016 and since then, the band made quite a name for itself by getting to the National finals of the Wacken Metal Battle Canada in 2015 and playing lots in the Vancouver area and opening for Sepultura. As the band moves forward to release the new album this April, what can you tell our readers about it, musically and lyrically?

EW: This album has truly been a long time coming for us. Some tracks date all the way back to 2016, around when we released *Conductor of Storms*. The album as the name implies is a dark album and tackles heavy and personal subject matter mostly related to depression. Although there are some songs that have their own theme, such as *Among Thieves* relating to greed. The music is also quite dark, but also extremely ambitious I would say. It includes straight-cut-thrash songs, progressive and complex rhythms in others, a couple songs I'd consider to label as 'epics' being longer in length, as well as a couple curveballs where we



try something completely new. 'Veiled' actually contains our first synth solo! I think each song has its own identity, and after showing some friends the materials I've found different people have different favourite tracks which really feels like we hit our goal to make an album full of variety.

AU: For those who didn't know your drummer Chris, what would you like people to know about him as a person and musician?

EW: Chris was exactly the person we needed at the time when he came into the band. After Ross left following the *Conductor of Storms* tour, we were trying to figure out what we should do. We felt like we lost a part of our 'distinct style' and so it was tough.

When he came in it really felt like he brought new life to our music, and was very active in writing with us. He was capable not just as a drummer, but he also played guitar as well and would come up with ideas along with us. He was an amazing friend to all of us. Extremely bright personality, and super inspiring to be around. I have some fond memories of jamming with him and a buddy of his outside of Medevil, learning a bunch of Iron Maiden and Metallica tracks over a week. The entire band feels the impact of him leaving this world, we really miss him.

AU: How has the band been coping with the loss of a fallen comrade and moving forward for this record's release?

EW: I think we are all handling it in different ways. When we heard the news I and Brett were in the

CHILLIWACK ATTACK

middle of recording vocals and then mixing the album. We didn't know how little time he had left. We were learning how to mix as we were going with this one, something I think caused a good bit of guilt at least for me for not initially going with a process that would be quicker. We are in a place now where we want to celebrate the gift he left us in these recordings, and share it with the world.

AU: Does vocalist Liam Collingwood's vocals ever get mistaken for UDO? He really sounds exactly like him.

EW: You know I think I hear this at every show haha. It's a great compliment, Udo is class. Liam's main inspirations are actually David Wayne (Metal Church) and Justin Hawkins (The Darkness).

AU: Are you guys excited to play Hyperspace Metal Festival on April 13th? What can fans expect from one of your first shows in 2023?

EW: We are extremely excited. It's been a long time coming for us after everything, and we can't wait to hear what everyone thinks of the new album. It'll be the first event to purchase the physical album on CD, and this really feels like a huge milestone for us.

AU: What are the future plans for the band? Shows, Tours, more music?

EW: We are still figuring out things in regard to tours, though we are definitely putting on individual shows! We've been through a lot mentally after everything, and Liam is taking a break from things for now. We are figuring things out as we go, but we have Eric Willmott from the band Apprentice who will be fulfilling the singer role for Hyperspace.

AU: Anything else to add for our readers?

EW: I'd just like to say thank you to all our fans and everyone for all the patience, it's been a long time since our last album but we really feel like you're in for a treat with this one. I think we've outdone ourselves, and it's worth the wait. See you all in April!



NO MORE MOMENTS

Quarter Life Crisis, and Many Moments Ahead

Interview with Drummer Carlin Black Rabbit
By Ryan Dyer

For 15 years, Calgary's *No More Moments* have been a source of inspiration in and around the Calgary area. The hardcore punk band, based in Siksika Nation (one hour's drive from Calgary) and made up of aboriginal members has been a driving force in progressing the community's music and arts scene. This has come from both building their own festival, Moments Fest, and through drummer Carlin Black Rabbit's involvement as a community bandleader. But let's not forget about the music, "Quarter Life Crisis" was recently released, with the songs going through a number of relatable topics such as social injustice and balancing the arts and family life. The band also just finished up Moments Fest 2022, the biggest in its history, with bands like *Dayglo Abortions* and *WAKE* sharing the stage with *NMM*. I caught up with Mr. Black Rabbit to get his thoughts on the moments so far and the moments to come for the band.

Absolute Underground: When did you start to play the drums?

Carlin Black Rabbit: Around 2008/2009. I became more dedicated around 2010ish with deciding the types of sticks and gear I wanted. It wasn't something that I always aspired to be. I always wanted to play other instruments but drums just kind of happened and I haven't gone back since.

AU: I know you listen to other types of music and have other influences, though what made you want to start a punk/hardcore band?

CBR: I think during those first couple of years, we were exploring what we were capable of. So a lot of the influences we were listening to were along the lines of black metal, nu metal and *Misfits* punk-rock kind of stuff, and it all came in as one, so I think that's how our sound was created. Whatever I was listening to at that time - grade 9, 10, 11 - went into it. I never had any formal lessons, I just watched YouTube videos and tried to play as fast as I could.

AU: During those formative years at Siksika, who were your peers?

CBR: During that time there were youth groups who would host concerts and there would be like four or five bands playing. At that time - we weren't too young to play, but we were just starting out. We were figuring out how to play covers and write our own songs. It took us a little time to transition. By the time we were show-ready, a lot of those bands kind of just stopped.

AU: How were those early shows?

CBR: We weren't getting a lot of bookings in Calgary, and we took whatever show we got in Calgary, but a lot of the time we went down to the Blood Tribe to play a show, and then those bands would come to Siksika. On occasion we'd get the odd booking at Vern's on Thursday night or whatever. It was like that for the first five years

and during that time I'd start networking with people like Mark Russell and Chris Hewitt (Dickens). Chris and Ambor played a big role in getting us shows. It progressed over time, and I'll be honest with you, I was very excited, ambitious and motivated at the time and I still feel that way today; but I had all these dreams - playing on this stage or opening for that band, and it's really cool, now that I think back on it that all that stuff I wanted to do, happened, you know.

AU: Tell me about the Moments Fest. It is quite the massive show now. When did you come up with the idea?

CBR: The idea of the Moments Fest was about bringing more bands to the community. When I was working at Dickens, a lot of the bands I'd talk to there said they always wanted to play the reserve, so it was something I thought about for years and years. When we finally ran the first one, we had two stages and 10 bands, my band included. It just started to grow each year. We looked at a few festivals for inspiration. What's unique about Moments Fest is it's on the land, and I wanted to gear it more towards the kids and the youth, because a lot of these kids don't have the transportation to get to Calgary, so when something like this happens, everyone there will show up. It has grown from there and this past event (2022) was probably the biggest event we've had to date. Attendance-wise, we



had about 30 bands play, including *Dayglo Abortions* and *WAKE*, and the success of it proved to me that Moments Fest is creating its own kind of legacy. I also wanted to make it as barrier-free as possible - for example, if people can't afford the admission price or gas - I'm trying to make it more of like a pay-what-you-can festival. It's not about making money, it's all about creating an experience for people.

AU: How do you see the festival evolving?

CBR: What I want to do in the future is rent out teepees to the attendees. I'd like to have the people have a chance to actually assemble a teepee, too. It's a lot of work to get it up! I'd also like to incorporate some of the traditional aspects of Siksika, like having elders doing storytelling or having a pow wow and drumming featured as part of the festival.

AU: What do the new NMM members bring to the table?

CBR: Our new guitarist, Oscar, is a pro. He's the kind of guy who will play for 10 hours a day. He's really helped bring the band in a new direction, which is making me excited again. For a band that's been around for 15 years, you've got to keep that flame going. He's one of my cousins, so I've known him forever but it's awesome to have him in the band.

AU: Tell me about playing at the Palace. How did it compare to other venues?

CBR: It's all business. Very professional. You get in and get out. There's no time to socialize after you play, you really need to just get your stuff off the stage as quickly as possible. It was a great experience and music industry-wise; it was interesting to see things from that perspective.

CALGARY CARNAGE

AU: Have you personally noticed or been told you've been an influence on the youngsters? Have any come up to you and said, "Hey Carlin, *No More Moments* inspired me to start a band...?"

CBR: It's so cool now because there is a group of friends who have been seeing the band for a few years. They used to be teenagers but now they're young adults and getting their band together. I'm always filled with gratitude because I remember telling these other bands that they were inspiring me, so it has really gone full circle.

AU: Where would you like to take *No More Moments* in the future, as far as touring abroad?

CBR: I went to the U.K. earlier this year as part of a delegation and I really enjoyed being there. But really, anywhere this band can bring us, we'll always be open minded to and if the opportunity comes, we'll figure it out. China, Japan, Brazil - these places where before we never imagined to go, I think it's more realistic now than it's ever been. Maybe 10 years ago I would have been delusional if I considered these places but now, I feel like anything is possible for the band.

AU: At this point you're seeing a lot of success, and tours are being booked in an easier fashion than before, but is it harder now since you guys are older and have families and responsibilities?

CBR: Yeah, I'm 30 now and just being in a band is tough. The physical toll my body is taking - I don't want to say it affects me, but I don't have the energy of a 20-year-old anymore. We're all family men and finding the time to gig - it's all about planning and organizing and communication - those core, basic characteristics. We're lucky to have made the band work in that way.

AU: You have "Quarter Life Crisis" out now. Where do you see the band in another 15 years during a possible mid-life crisis? Furthermore, what would you like the legacy of *No More Moments* to be?

CBR: Hopefully we will still be writing and making music. Working with PR companies and other people in the music industry. Distribution deals to help make the band more sustainable. For us it's about "What's next? How can we top what we did before?"

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sKiN
**Interview with guitarist/vocalist
 Jason Dublanko and drummer
 Tim Rechner
 by Dre Calderon.**

"We're not in it for the money," can seem like a contrived statement, but not when coming from a band like sKiN. Bands in Edmonton are not necessarily formed with the hopes of striking gold, however, the two members of sKiN seem to take commitment to creating art for art's sake to a new level: between the both of them, they are part of no less than 8 bands in total. Forming in 2010, the band has seen periods of playing often and playing once a year, and to date have exactly one recording



I'll admit that when I first saw them play live, my impression of what I heard coming from the stage was raucous rock n roll in the purest sense; that which is not flashy or gimmicky but chaotic and raw, and yet a sound contained enough that it holds a discernible form. I assumed it was no coincidence that both members also do abstract paintings that, for all of their wildness, are still subjected to staying on canvas. Later, when they told me they were including saxophone on some of their new tunes, and provided a list of bands that most impacted them as listeners: Dinosaur Jr, Sonic Youth, Pixies, The Velvet Underground, and The Stooges. The curveball I did not expect was that the list would also include Junior Kimbrough and that both members would describe their music as mostly blues-based—they

to their name. This is neither intentional nor accidental but perhaps incidental, since after spending an afternoon with them one word they used seems to ring louder than the others: inertia. They have been playing music for approximately 30 years each and it's something I get the impression they couldn't stop doing if, for whatever reason, they even thought about trying.

even told me that some of their friends were pleasantly surprised to hear them playing these sounds. I scratched my head a few times over this, and felt self-conscious enough to wonder how the hell I missed it on a first listen, but they helped me along by describing the importance placed on their lyrics. I was reminded of a quote I didn't remember until after I left the interview: Iggy Pop saying "I Wanna Be Your Dog", was his attempt at writing his version of a blues song. I didn't hear it at first then either, and now it's impossible to separate. I've listened to the sKiN recording since this eureka moment and though I still hear a fantastic noisy band, it's now a fantastic blues-based noisy band. I'll be goddamned, but I stand corrected in the best possible way. And yet the lyrical side offers another dangerous detour to getting these guys because, for all the appreciation of poetry, they're also admittedly half-nonsense stuff that can go from talking about relationships to talking about food, specifically chicken (their words, not mine). It goes from there to discussing how they are committed to completing new recordings right away but admit that they don't listen to these once they're done; how they love to play shows and will play as often as they can but when they do they're anxious to get it over and done with; and how they're happy to see you at the show but maybe happier when you miss it and hear from other sources how good it was. When I took that opportunity to ask what their most memorable shows were to date, they told me these were:
 a) the last one they played (for no specific reason

SHR-EDMONTON



other than that they hadn't played in so long)
 b) one played to three people in a windowless basement that was full of cigarette smoke. Cue the band mentioning Simply Saucer's description of playing music as, "you making your noise but exterior motivations are needed to keep it going." The band does describe playing live as being the perfect mix of very badly wanting things to go as planned and yet being strangely satisfying when things go to hell. I offered the analogy of the feeling of eating sour candy or putting too much hot sauce on your food. However, the band corrected me, and described a scenario in which you're desperately trying to unlock your door as some unnamed nastiness is creeping up on you and at the very last second you pop the

key and get inside safely. I can empathize with that anxiety to an extent, since I'm anxious to see them record again. Maybe in the end the lesson learned is that music will come from your deepest recesses but it's still an internal experience played out in front of a crowd and, like blood touching oxygen, there will be a reaction between both sides whether you like it or not. Go see sKiN at their next show and give them a reaction before they let these songs slip into the ether. sKiN's music can be found at:
skin780.bandcamp.com
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Red Lantern Tattoo

Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?

This is Rebecca Lofsnes, one half of the dynamic duo who owns Red Lantern Tattoo.

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

I've been tattooing for 4 years now, I got started in permanent makeup, and made the switch to tattoos in 2019. Dating a tattooer was the main catalyst.

What styles of tattooing are you best known for?

I'm personally known for handpoking. I specialize in finger tattoos, lettering, tiny tats and freckles. When I use the machine, I prefer minimalism, continuous line art and fun doodle style tats.

What makes Red Lantern Tattoo unique in your opinion? How would you describe your shop's style?

Red Lantern is a bit different from many other shops because of our diverse styles between the artists. We offer fine line, American traditional, machine free tats, freckles, finger tats and tiny tats so we tick a lot of boxes. Being newer to the island, we don't have long wait lists to book and we are open to walk-ins.

The style of Red Lantern's decor and vibe is cozy Chinatown sweet spot with a penchant for vintage cats and quirky treasures. People describe Red Lantern as warm, inviting and a fun place to spend some time.

Who else works at Red Lantern Tattoo with you and what are their areas of expertise?

Cam Davis, aka The Clam is the other shop owner and happens to be my partner in business and life.

Cam has been tattooing for 15 years and his expertise is American traditional with a twist on the typical colour palette.



Cam also really enjoys tattooing cartoons. In addition to doing bold, beautiful clean tattoos,

Cam is an avid painter and many of his original paintings are for sale at Red Lantern.

Alannah Jimmo is tattooing at Red Lantern as well and her style is more fine line. She loves tattooing botanicals, insects, butterflies and other beautiful subjects. We are very pleased to have Alannah as part of the team! She's



personable, kind and very talented.

Where is the shop located and what made you decide upon the location?

Red Lantern is in the heart of Chinatown in Victoria BC. We are steps outside of FanTan Alley in the midst of all the tourist attractions on Fisgard.

Part of our decision to move to BC from Ontario was to be closer to my brother Jimbo The Drag Clown. Jimbo told me about an available apartment and when I picked up my keys, the souvenir shop below was just closing down and it all seemed to fall into place.

What's the craziest tattoo you've ever done?

I don't know about crazy tats, but there's been some memorable ones. Handpoked throat tats, palm tattoos, those were fun. Cam did some eyelids for his bestie recently.

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

Tattoos do not have to have deep meaning in my opinion. I respect when people have a reason or a story behind their tattoos, but it's also fun to just collect some art on your skin too.

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

We play quite a variety of music, depends on the mood. Clients can



hear old school hip hop, 80's, disco, low fi beats, yoga electronica, 90's grunge. If Cam is in charge of the music, there's a good chance you'll hear some Tool or Action Bronson and if Alannah can get Alexa to listen to her, then there will definitely be some Fleetwood Mac.

How do people find and connect with Red Lantern Tattoo online?

We have a website that people can connect with us on. Redlanternattoo.com

We also check our Instagram daily so sending us at DM at @red_lantern_tattoo on IG works.

People can call us at the shop or if in the area, just walk in. We will try our best to accommodate walk-ins but booking an appointment is the best way to guarantee a spot.

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skateboarder in the band?
DD: Christina is progressing the most. Larry is regressing the most. Watch out for Jen and Beth on roller skates.
AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.
DD: Dirty Garage LO-FI Surf.
AU: Where are you from and what's the music scene like there?
DD: Ukee, Vancouver Island. Great bands, great crowds, and be ready to get spit out by the pit

AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?
DD: Surf, tea, and roller skates.

AU: Any plans to release an album in the near future?
DD: Obviously. We will be recording our first EP here in Ukee. It will be produced by David James Brown (@pretendgineermusic) at Cheeseburger Mountain Studio.
AU: Any current songs you are stoked on?
DD: Our new song, "Eating Dirty" about the dirty dozen, and anything KMPV does.
AU: Any plans for Valentine's Day this year?
DD: Make dinner, listen to records, and not watch TV.
AU: Any fetishes to share?
DD: Chocolate covered almonds of course.



DEATH DROPS

Fresh from Cheeseburger Mountain
Interview by Mal Content

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?
Death Drops: Jen on guitar, Christina on drums, and Larry holds it down on the bass.
AU: Give us a brief history of Death Drops.
DD: Smashed faces playing roller derby, smashed waves surfing, smashed beats as Vagenre, and now 7 years later we're Death Drops.
AU: Who else is in the band and what does it say on their Tinder profiles?
DD: Beth, Baby boomer on oxy/9am raver.
AU: Who is the best

UKEE SURF REPORT



words for our readers?
DD: Stand with the water below your tits. Jump and ride that wash when the close out hits.
deathdropsband.com
@deathdropsband

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?
DD: March 10th here in Ukee, but we always have shows on the go, so keep your eye out for the posters. Our 2 favourite places to play are ANAF 293 in Ukee and Vault Skateboards aka Ollies in Nanaimo.
AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? What don't you want your family members to know?
DD: Jen can drop in and rip a bowl on roller skates, and Beth plays tambourine in a death metal band.
AU: Anything else to promote?
DD: Our album should be out this spring on 8 track, available at your local record store and online.
AU: Is there a turf war between Ucluelet and Tofino? What's the beef and why do people say Tofino Sucks sometimes?
DD: It's kinda like Tofino drinks wine Ukee drinks Lucky, Tofino has yoga pits Ukee has mosh pits, Tofino has a scooter park and Ukee has a skate park, so yeah Tofino sucks.
AU: Any final



BREWING 101



BONES BREWING

Interview by Bobby Barrel

AU: Who are we talking to today?

GM: Garrett MacDonald co-founder of Bones Brewing.

AU: How long have you been involved in the world of beer?

11 years professionally, many more as an enthusiast.

AU: What was the genesis of Bones Brewing?

Bones came about when I was introduced to Mike Roberts, an accomplished brewer who had been living in Thailand and returned to BC with his family. He had the concept for Bones and I had the industry experience to launch the brand. We wanted to introduce a brand that made premium quality, fun beer styles while supporting local artists and the community we work in.



AU: What types of beer do you brew?

We've made a variety of styles. My personal favorite is our West Coast Pilsner. Bones is mostly known for our Sours - we use massive fruit additions in our kettle sours which results in a fruit bomb with great flavour and a thicker mouthfeel. We've also gotten lots of love for our 10% ABV Imperial Vanilla Pastry Stout.

AU: What beers are currently available?

At the moment we have a Mosaic IPA, Raspberry Sour, Dry Hopped Passionfruit Sour, Raspberry, Passionfruit & Blueberry Imperial Sour, and the Imperial Vanilla Pastry Stout

AU: Any other beers planned for release?

We're working on a new Pilsner as well as a Session IPA

AU: What sets your beer apart?

We don't cut corners on the process or skimp on ingredients. The BC Craft Beer drinker is sophisticated and you can't fool them!

AU: Any brewing secrets you can share?

Practice on a small brew system so you can be bold with your recipe development.

AU: Where are you located? Can people stop by



to sample your beer?

Currently we don't have a tasting room. We brew out of a production facility but we hope to have our own Taproom open in 2023!

AU: Where can Bones Brewing currently be found on sale and on tap?

Bones cans can be found at multiple liquor stores around the province. On the Island you can find us at Liquor Plus stores, Cascadia Liquor Stores and Vessel Liquor. We're on tap at The Garrick's Head Pub in Victoria.

AU: Do you plan to attend any events this summer like the Great Canadian Beer Festival?

We'll be at GCBF, Langford Beer Fest, the North Island Beerfest and anywhere else that will have us! We love going to events and seeing the entire beer community.

AU: What do you like best about working at Bones Brewing?

I love the freedom and flexibility of having our own brand. We can make beer how we want without having to cave to corporate pressure on making certain styles or meeting

certain price points. We just try to make good beer and the rest sorts itself out!

AU: Anything else you want people to know?

The beer world is all about bringing people together. We're always on the lookout for artists and creative people to work with so feel free to reach out to us any time.

bonesbrewing.ca

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sounds, it is somewhat comparable to say chicken noodle soup in a mason jar. The cock ale was also considered an aphrodisiac and was credited to increase male vigor and potency. The growing popularity of coffee in the late 1600's led to a women's petition against coffee, in favour of the said ale. This petition was to outlaw coffee for those under sixty, "returning to the good old strengthening liquors of our forefathers." Cock ale was credited to excite lust and aroused

Cock Ale

One Strange Brew

By Daniel Van Netten

There are some very bizarre chapters in beer history. One of these historic oddities was a beverage from 1600's England known as cock ale. As it sounds, it is made with a fermented rooster, and I apologize to the vegetarians/vegans who may be reading this article.

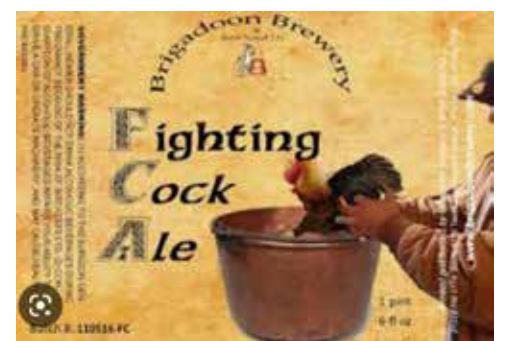


sexual desire. A song written in the 1670s, the anonymous author praised several particular beverages: "With love and good liquor our hearts we do cheer, Canary and Claret, Cock Ale and March beer."

Coffee was thought to dry men's brains, and life without cock ale was thought to be meaningless. It's interesting how such a popular beverage could vanish into oblivion...probably because it sounds gross, anyway happy Valentine's Day!



One must remember that before the days of refrigeration, fermentation was a means of preserving food. Much of what was consumed daily was fermented. As weird as this ale



TEARS *Of A Fallen* HERO

TEARS OF A FALLEN HERO

Save Us From Ourselves

An interview with lead vocalist Rick Steele

Please read these answers with a Swedish accent

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

Rick: This is Rick, and I guess I'm most famous for being the vocalist of *Tears of a Fallen Hero*.

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

R: Me, Daniel (Guitar) and Robin (Drums) played in a band together between 2004-2009 called *Hero in Action*. We quit playing when we had kids. In late 2017, we started to write music again, just sending files from our home studios to each other. Daniel came up with a riff he named "Tears of a Fallen Hero," which alludes to our break up with the old band. We really liked it, and it became the name of the band. Our 2nd release was called "A Hymn for the Broken." Here we are now with the debut album release coming up. Earlier this year Patrik joined the band on bass, he is our drummer Robin's little brother.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

R: We play rock music. Some say Alternative rock, some say Pop-punk. We play the music we like ourselves and take influences from Rock, pop, metal and punk. Some bands that inspire us are *Millencolin*, *Anberlin*, *30 Seconds to Mars*, and

melodies.

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

R: We're about release our debut album on February 3rd, it will be released on vinyl via Wrecking Crew Records. It is called "Save Us From Ourselves" and it's an album with lots of variation. The songs are about a bit of everything; some are about love, some about the fact that some people are willing to sacrifice themselves for another human or essence, and some about how we treat the world and each other and so on. But expect to hear a record with lots of melodies, we like it, and we hope you do to!

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

R: Like I mentioned before, the album is about everything and nothing. But the title describes the topic of the album pretty good, "Save Us From Ourselves". We're pretty sure that if the world continues as it does, we will for sure erase ourselves before we know it.

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

R: I think I'll cover the whole band if I say that "Yours to Destroy," "Stay Away," and "Come Closer" are the songs we like most from it.

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

R: Wrecking Crew records from Canada will release it on Vinyl.

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

R: When we first got in contact with John who runs the label we had a good feeling about him. He runs the label with a passion for music and for the bands. He is also a really nice guy! I guess that's the best and most important thing.

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

R: In Sweden we were pretty spared from restrictions if you compared us to the rest of the world. But it sucked not to be able to see or



play any gigs. So we spent time writing and finishing the album. So the tip would be to take the chance to be creative. Most of the best songs are about misery, or

written when you're in a bad place. So, try to make something good out of the bad.

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

R: We'll have a release party for the album in our hometown Gothenburg (Sweden) February 11th, one week after the release. After that we'll sit down and make a plan about upcoming tours. We have some offers to think about.

AU: How would you sum up 2022?

R: It has been a good year for us with lots of singles being released, and also a year of waiting for the vinyl to be finished. Overall, it was good to



play gigs and watch gigs again. We were finally free from the restrictions, even if we didn't have that many.

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

R: Make sure to give the album a spin, and if you like it you should support John and Wrecking Crew Records and place an order for the album. Also, check out the videos we've made for the singles.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

R: Hope you find us interesting and we hope you like what you hear! Thank you for your time!

AU: How do people find you online?

R: You can find us on Youtube, Facebook, Bandcamp, Instagram, TikTok and on almost all streaming services.

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Montreal Scene Report

by **Uncle Costa Tabarnakis** from **Vulgar Deli**

During a recent interview with Uncle Costa, we asked him to list some of the cool bands in his local scene. His response was long enough and detailed enough to need it's own sick article. A more indepth rundown of the coolest tunes from the biggest province does not exist anywhere else.

"La Gachette has just released their third album: *Dans Les Tranchées*. A great Franco Street Punk album.

Out Of Order just released their fifth full length: *Life Sentence*. Great Street Punk!

If you're into garage punk Dirty Cheetah is a new local band you want to look out for. Check out their full-length: *Never Too Late*.



On the heavier side, Montreal's sludge masters *Dopethrone* are working on their much anticipated full album. *Dopethrone's* Vincent has also just released a second EP from his side project *Niggght* called "Gutter Gold." Slow and Sleazy Sonic Rock!

Scum Metal outfit Urban Aliens just released their latest *La Grande Castration*.

You might also want to check out Danny Dukes and Sean Riot's: *RIOT*.

If you're into *Ramones* style pop punk you should check out *Fast Food Fairies*.

Montreal's legendary Oi! band *Gassenhauer* has just released: *Live and Loud! The Blacklite Tapes*. A double LP available on Brink Records.

Speaking of Montreal legends, *SCUM* is re-releasing their classic: *Born Too Soon* and I believe they're in the process of writing a new album.

Finally, in an act of shameless self-promotion check out *Vulgar Deli's* *Smell The Fuck*.
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ARTAVI SKATE + SNOW

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What is the origin story and history of your shop Artavi Skate & Snow?

We started out as a board and clothing company - just decks, shirts, hats kind of thing. Toured it around to festivals the first year, and

when the summer was over, didn't want the dream to end, so found a super small space to rent kind of near where we're at now. People were stoked on what we were doing - throwing art

shows, screen printing our own decks - and probably weirded out that we didn't have any trucks or wheels or anything, so we ended up just getting in more of what folks were asking for.

Does the shop's name, Artavi, have a special meaning or story?

Super roughly combines "Art" and "Flight".

You were originally just a skate shop I believe, when did you also branch off into snowboards and snowboarding gear? I feel that's a much needed thing here in Victoria.

Yeah - definitely. It was crazy that you couldn't get any proper gear in town for so many years, so we took the leap.

Let us know what sort of snowboard gear and brands you carry.

We try to carry the full spectrum - street jibbers to split/touring gear. We've been lucky to work with so many amazing brands - Capita, Union, Rome, ThirtyTwo, Electric, VonZipper, Volcom, Airblaster, Kindred, and NeverSummer to name a few!

What was the best powder day you ever experienced on the mountain?

Might have been last season in December when it was really cold - caught first tracks on the Boomerang after a massive storm mid week.

Describe riding through deep powder snow verbally if possible.

I imagine it would kind of feel like surfing a really thick cloud while skydiving.

Does Artavi sponsor a skate team and what does each individual bring to the table?

Yeah - we've got a great crew! Leo's been holding down the Team Manager spot like a champ, and is definitely the reason so many folks are on board! Everyone is so diverse, and sick in their own way, it



would be too long to list here, so I'll drop a link to the team page instead: artavi.ca/pages/team

Any sponsored snowboarders at the moment? I'm available if you need someone to jump off cliffs and slap up stickers at Mount Washington for you.

We just brought on Tyson for the snow side of things! Haha - 100% :)

Any special events planned at Artavi in the near future?

Nothing coming up - but send us your ideas! We're stoked to use the space for rad things.

Final words of wisdom for young skaters and snowboarders.

Do the things that you have the most fun doing, and do lots of em.

artavi.ca



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KINDRED

Custom Snowboards & Skis

Interview by Irocker

AU: Who are we talking to today?

Ange and Evan, owner operators of KINDRED!

AU: What is the origin story and history of Kindred Custom Snowboards & Skis?

Curiosity kind of morphed into an idea that made sense. It was summer 2010. We had just left our jobs at Mount Washington and were searching for a change. We were cruising the Old Island Highway in our home, a 1990 Ford Ranger with camper atop, when Evan expressed interest in the snowboard build process. We decided to look into it. We borrowed some wifi from a friend and in less than 24 hours we were on our way to pick up our first press, and started searching for somewhere to set up shop. We managed ten boards that first winter, including our first 2 marquetry topsheets. The boards were



well received right away, and we are super lucky to have had such enthusiastic support from family and friends right down the line.

AU: What is your mission statement as a business?

We build high quality skis, snowboards, and splitboards for every rider, using the best materials available, specializing in high-performance and custom wood marquetry artwork. Kindred enhances everything you love about the ride.

AU: What makes Kindred unique?

Customers can work directly with us, the builders. Customized specs and artwork give a tailored feel to everything that leaves our workshop. We produce one of a kind custom wood

marquetry topsheets that stand out in the lift line and make the boards and skis look as good as they feel.

AU: Where can people buy your snowboards and skis?

Online or in person directly from us. Revelstoke Powder Rentals. Artavi Skate and Snow in Victoria. Ski Tak Hut in Courtenay. Mount Cain.

AU: Please describe the artwork and aesthetics of your boards and skis

We can create any artwork to suit the rider. We want people to look down at the artwork on their KINDREDS and feel stoked to ride, and maybe even a deeper connection to the activity itself. Our signature look is wood marquetry, which lends itself to everything from nature scenes to pop art. It's unusual



and eye-catching. Ideally people would be proud to hang them on the wall in the off-season, or

once they retire.

AU: What was the best powder day you ever experienced on the mountain?

Ohooo... I mean, they all start to blend together into white clouds. Probably that recent 44cm day at Wash... but we've had incredible days cat skiing with dear friends, and there is nothing better than hearing all your friends hooting and hollering while bombing a powder run together.

AU: Describe riding through deep powder snow verbally if possible.

It's like oscillating between a silky peaceful dream state and adrenaline thrill chills. You feel alive, cold, and time slows down in the best way.

AU: Do you prefer an orgasm or a powder run?

Why choose?! Both. Same day is best.

AU: Any sponsored snowboarders at the moment? I can always volunteer if you need someone to jump off cliffs and slap up stickers at

Mount Washington for you.

Thanks! We'll hook you up with some stickers for sure!

Tyler Turner – 2022 Gold (Boarder X) and Bronze (BSL) medal Paralympic snowboarder.

Andrew Wood – Black Creek local shredder, and all around stoked individual.

Tamo Campos – Founder of Beyond Boarding, he shreds the gnar and walks the talk!

Patrick Kitto – Local Jump Camp founder. He is core to the Vancouver Island

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snowboard community.

AU: Any special events planned?

We support several annual events, and add on any that cross our plate that feel relevant and good. Locally its Stokefest in Downtown Courtenay, Backcountry Fest at Mount Cain, Island Alpine Guides and Avalanche Canada's "Party for the Bulletin", the West Coast Triple Plank, and we have some things coming down the pipe with Mount Washington. Luckily if you miss any of them they come back around!

AU: Anything else you would like to mention?

Ange does all the artwork and design in-house but we're stoked to partner with local First Nations artist, Karver Everson. He's been drawing up incredible Northwest

Coast designs specifically for our skis and snowboards. People can choose his artwork on any of our shapes.

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STRYPER

The Final Battle

Interview with singer and guitarist

Michael Sweet

by Ira “Holy Hell” Hunter

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

Michael Sweet: I'm Michael Sweet of *Stryper*. I play in several other groups as well. The other band went by the name of *Iconic*. I just finished my third album with George Lynch formerly of *Dokken*. We came up with an original, creative name for that band, *Sweet and Lynch*. I am formerly a member of the band *Boston* who I toured with briefly. I've been very blessed to be able to do what I do and do it almost 40 years.

AU: Tell us about the new album “The Final Battle”

MS: In this day and age, with a band like *Stryper*, it's bittersweet when you release an album because you're so excited about doing so; You work so hard on it, putting blood sweat and tears literally into every note, and then it comes out and a week later it feels like it's forgotten. It's just it's a very short life cycle for albums these days. We're with the label called Frontiers. They do an amazing job, but we're not with a Sony. Labels like that can really stretch things out and prolong the lifecycle. That's how it was for us back in the old days. So, when we release an album after a few weeks, it feels like it's dead and gone. “The



Final Battle,” I really believe it's our best album. I get excited when I listen to it. I put it against other albums that we've done, classic albums, new albums, and I really feel it's our best. I think it's certainly the most diverse and eclectic. Got a great flow to it, great energy to it. I'm really pleased with how it turned out.

AU: When you were

getting started with *Stryper*, we're there any inspirational Christian rock bands? Was it a void that you wanted to fill? Something that needed to be done with all the satanic stuff going on?

MS: That's the difference with *Stryper*. Most people think or assume that we grew up on Christian music and we didn't. When we were growing up and rehearsing in the garage back in '78, '79/'80, '81, '82, were cranking *Ozzy*, *Van Halen*, *Priest*, *Maiden*, *Scorpions* and *UFO*. Those bands were very inspirational to us & helped to shape who we are as a band. No Christian bands. That's not to take anything away from any Christian band. It's just good old fashioned historical facts. We didn't listen to Christian bands. That's what sets us apart. I think most Christian bands did listen to Christian music and grew up on it. So, when we became Christians, we wanted to continue being who we were, as a rock band, and doing what we do in terms of our show and our style. We just changed the lyrics to be inspirational, encouraging, and certainly faith based. We just performed with *Mercyful Fate*, *Behemoth*, *Judas Priest* and *Pantera* in Mexico. Here's *Stryper*, we come out and we're throwing out Bibles, singing about Jesus, and it makes it very interesting. Their fans, not all of them, accept who we are, and listen to *Stryper*. Many of our fans, listen to *Mercyful Fate*, *Judas Priest* and *Pantera*. It's very interesting how that worked out.

AU: There's an old photo with Robert Sweet & King Diamond. Now there's a new set of photos with King Diamond and yourself.

Were you a fan of King Diamond or Mercyful Fate?

MS: I wouldn't say I've been a fan or was a fan of King Diamond, but I'm a fan of his voice. I think he's a brilliant singer and I respect his voice, his range and his technique immensely. I never bought *King Diamond* or *Mercyful Fate* albums. I'm guessing he never bought *Stryper* albums and listened to us, but I could be wrong.

I'm old school. I would listen to *Judas Priest* “British Steel” all the way through and then I'd pop in *Journey* “Escape”. After I'd put on *Bad Company* album, followed by *Foghat* and *Loverboy*. After that, maybe *Dio*. My taste is on the eclectic side. Some metal fans don't understand that, they're like, “it's metal - only.” I just like good singers and good songs. I don't care what style it is.

AU: How did Robert Sweet and King Diamond get together in that picture?

MS: Rob was doing a promotional tour, went over to Europe to do a press conference of sorts and wound up coincidentally, with King Diamond there. They met and he was very polite & sweet. When I met him in Mexico and took that photo, he was a really nice guy. It was very nice to see that. He seemed genuinely excited to meet me and I was excited to meet him.

AU: The name *Stryper* did that have to do with your outfits or is there another meaning?

MS: Before we were called *Stryper*, we were called *Roxx Regime*. It was somewhat difficult to pronounce and remember. The label didn't like the name and I agreed with the label. So, we started seeking a new name and writing them down 'til we landed on *Stryper*. Everything was already striped when we were *Roxx Regime*, it made perfect sense. We found scripture that goes with that, which is Isaiah 53:5.

AU: Is it always Isaiah 53:5 under the *Stryper* logo? What is the quote?

MS: Yes! “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

AU: Any standout tracks that you were really pumped up on regarding “The Final Battle”?

MS: I'm really pumped up on every song. That's the thing I love about *Stryper*, I go out of my way, and put extra effort into making every song different. I personally am not a fan of albums that you purchase and you hear the first single and go “Wow, I love that”. Then you buy the album, you take it home and you listen to it. The second song sounds just like the first song. The third song sounds just like the second song. It all blends together and sounds the same. There's not a lot of diversity. I love to mix things up. That's why we have a song called “Transgressor” which is

nothing like “Same Old Story” which is nothing like “Till Death Do Us Part”. Every song is different and has its own signature. But you can instantly tell that it's *Stryper*.

AU: Would you say is a little bit of a heavier album this time around?

MS: We have a heavy side to us and we have a lighter side to us. Like I said earlier, we listen to *Priest* and *Maiden* but also *Journey*, *Earth Wind and Fire*, *Loverboy* and *Ambrosia*. It really comes across in our music.

AU: Have you seen the new *Metallica* artwork and what do you think of it?

MS: I saw the yellow and black thing; people were texting me saying “they ripped you guys off” and I'm like “no they didn't”. I mean, everybody's been using yellow and black since the beginning of time. I think it's cool they're still going and still releasing music. I applaud them, give them props and respect. They're *Metallica*, what can you say about what they've accomplished? I'm not a fan. I never have been and it's not my thing. I prefer metal with melody with singers that can really belt it out and have a broad range vocally. *Metallica*, they've reached that level where they'll always do well, and people will always take notice.

AU: We won't name a band specifically but, if you were approached to do a “heaven and hell” type tour, *Stryper*, co-headlining with a band of the same status with satanic themes in their music, would *Stryper* do it?

MS: Sure. We were approached by a promoter recently to do a a run with *Mercyful Fate*. We would certainly consider it I mean; everything would have to make sense logistically and financially. The ultimate Heaven and Hell tour would be, although I wouldn't say they're a satanic band, but *Mötley Crüe*. We talked about a potential Heaven and Hell tour way back in the day. It would have to be large scale to create a buzz and cause a lot of controversy. Even bigger than that would *Ozzy Osbourne* or *Ghost*. That would be interesting. We just performed in Monterrey, Mexico and right after us *Behemoth* came out and played. The crowd watched us and cheered then the crowd watched them and cheered. It's opposite musically, spiritually, lyrically, but yet the crowd just enjoyed the show. Some people might scratch their head and say, “No, that can't work”. But absolutely, it could work and it does work and it has worked.

AU: *Stryper* is a band that appears to get heavier leaning towards thrash/power metal as time goes on. Is this just a natural musical progression? Or was there a predetermined idea to hit harder to shake some of the cliches associated with your earlier years, or both?

MS: It's something that's always been within us. We've always enjoyed and been fascinated by heavy music. The minute something heavy comes on, we say “turn it up”. It's not something that we're trying to force or pull out from within us that isn't there. It's just a natural transition. I enjoy doing heavy stuff and stretching out a little bit. That's why I wrote “Take It to The Cross”, I knew it would cause a bit of a buzz in a positive way and a negative way. People love it or hate it. There's no middle ground. I just enjoy trying different things. Musically, I do that with solo stuff and all the projects that I'm a part of. There's an excitement that comes from doing that. You feel like you're

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his designs for you, he also seems to just do every single album cover for Frontiers records, including all of the Michael Sweet side projects. Do you guys have a say in the artwork or is this a purely label controlled thing?

MS: We have a say in the artwork. We push to use Stan because we really like him. He always delivers really great quality, brilliant artwork. Now we always with all *Stryper* albums, *Sweet* and *Lynch* albums and all the album's that Stan has done that I've been a part of, we always give Stan ideas. We say "Hey, Stan, we're going for like, the look of Christ returning on a horse with four angels that kind of look like the band coming back to fight the battle of Armageddon. We want this on the cover and this and that". Then we'll send him a picture saying something that might kind of be similar to this. He'll put something together and we'll say, "Wow, that's amazing. Really close. Not quite, but almost there. Can you change this and this and that. Then he does the second draft and there it is. That's usually how every album goes. "The Final Battle" is Christ returning. Biblically, in the book of Revelation, Christ will come back to cast the enemy's fate into the pit and fight the battle of Armageddon and basically kick ass. It's not going to be pretty. People think, "Oh, Christ is going to be in a white robe with the white beard". No, that's not how it's described and not how it's going to go down. If you believe in the Bible, Stan really captured what we were going for. He does that on every album, it's all a series, "No More Hell to Pay"

stretching yourself, breaking the boundaries and trying new things without compromising who you are. If I tried to be a country artist or rap artist, that's just silly. Oddly enough, a lot of rock and metal guys tried to do the country thing and I just shake my head and I think "that's just not real". Could you imagine Blake Shelton releasing a metal album? It's comical. I try to stay in my lane and do stuff that's from the heart yet at the same time, stretching myself out as an artist a little bit.

AU: We once heard someone say *Stryper* is just Heavy Metal Styx. Dennis DeYoung and Lawrence Gowan are extremely talented vocalists and Styx is of course a great band. But how do you take that statement?

MS: I understand some of the comparisons in my voice in terms of tonality is similar to Dennis DeYoung and always has. In argument to that, have Dennis sing on a *Stryper* song and then tell me if it works the same. Probably not. I don't recall Dennis DeYoung doing high screams. I think there's similarities here and there, but for the most part, we're two completely different singers.

AU: Stan W. Decker has been handling the artwork duties for *Stryper* for almost a decade. Though there seems to be a clear theme in

to "The Final Battle". It looks like a series of books.

AU: Against the Law has been repeatedly at the bottom of your best *Stryper* albums. Typically, your latest release falls in the number one position and then drops down the list when the list is revised. Is this just hype?

MS: No. I most definitely believe that at this moment in time, but things change over time. You know some albums move up on the list some albums moved down on the list. "The Final Battle" may move down on my list, but it's not going to move far down the list, if at all. Right now, it's in the #1 position, it's the album I still enjoy listening to. I'm not tired of listening to it. I like the way it sounds. I like the production, the songs, the flow. *Against The Law*, on rare occasions I go to Spotify, iTunes, CD or even vinyl, put it on and listen to a song or two. It just doesn't do anything for me. I understand why people would say it's a good album, because it's produced brilliantly, but it's an album where we threw away everything that we were, from the colors to the look, we grew beard stubble. We started frowning instead of smiling, trying to look like tough guys. We lost the yellow and black. We changed our songwriting, we changed our guitar tones, we changed everything about the band. We were trying to be a different band. Trying to be *Van Halen*, because that's what a lot of the album sounds like to me. We're not *Van Halen*. I don't care for it. I feel like we really sold ourselves out on that album. It's my least favorite album of all time, least favorite *Stryper* album and it forever will be.

AU: Why does Robert turn his drums sideways? We already know he has nice thighs from promotional photos.

MS: Robert started turning sideways back around 1983. Maybe he saw another drummer do it and decided to do it, I know *Night Ranger* was doing it. They were out before us and Kelly turned his drums sideways as well. One of his favorite artists is David Lee Roth and was drawn to the "front man". Maybe Rob should have been a front man, he turns sideways so people can see him. Semi-joking, I even suggested moving his drum kit out to the front and me going in the back, but he was like "that'd be cool". That's just his personality, he

really should have been a front man.

AU: Do you attend church?

MS: When we can. I mean, we're traveling so much. It's difficult sometimes to go to church. When we're home and we have the time, absolutely. I always remind myself that church is wherever you are, it's not a building.

AU: What about this trend where people are trying to say that Jesus was the original zombie, they call them "Zombie Jesus"? Because he came back from the dead.

MS: Zombies are the undead. Right? If you believe in the word of God, Jesus isn't dead, he's alive and on the throne. So, it's quite different. Zombies come back to life, but their flesh is rotting, they're decaying and dying as they walk the earth. No emotion, sensation, or capability of using their brains. At least that's how they're always portrayed in movies. That's not at all what the Bible explains. So, I don't know who comes up with these trends. But most of the time, it's pretty silly.

AU: Did you feel the pandemic was maybe a sign of the apocalypse?

MS: I don't know if I felt that it was a sign of the apocalypse but, I certainly felt it was a sign of the times. I went as far as to say, in recent interviews, sign of the "End Times". When you make a comment like that people are really quick to raise an eyebrow. It's almost like, so many of us feel that we're untouchable. The pandemic certainly humbled everyone on the planet. It made us realize that we're all, we're all touchable. Anything can happen at any given time, unexpectedly. I believe in God and I believe there's a God up there. I think that he's just kind of sitting up there shaking his head at us sometimes, like, "when will they ever get it?" Most likely never.

AU: What's the best way to find *Stryper* online?

MS: *Stryper.com* and you can find me at *michaelsweet.com*. Also, Facebook, Twitter & Instagram. You can pick up "The Final Battle" online at *www.frontiers.it* God Bless!

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HUNTING LIONS
The Feeling of Rock 'N' Roll Oxygen
Interview with Ben Coleman (vocals)
By Chuck Andrews

AU: Who are we speaking with?
Hunting Lions: I'm Ben, and I sing.

AU: Where are Hunting Lions from?
HL: We are based out of Sonoma County, California, which is just north of San Francisco.

AU: How long have you guys been a band?
HL: The band started at the end of 2019.

AU: What bands other than Roadside Bombs, and Swingin' Utters have you guys played in, or do you play in currently?
HL: Collectively we have been in: *The Burdens*, *the Muggers*, *Resilience*, *Tiger Army*, *U.S. Bombs*, *Viva Hate*, *The Feelers* and probably a dozen more I can't think of right now. Greg still plays with *The Beltones* and Jesse is still in *Lucky Ol' Bones*.

AU: Hunting Lions have a debut full length record that is out now on Pirates Press Records correct?
HL: That is correct! It will eventually be available in multiple versions to be announced soon.

AU: What are your favourite tracks from your

record? The lead off single "The City" is fantastic, such a catchy chorus!
HL: Thank you! "The City" is up there for sure, but I like to perform "Maggie's Date," "War," and "Dead Generation" a lot.

AU: Are there any particular subject matters presented in the lyrics that you would like to expand on?
HL: I try not to write in riddles, I'm generally pretty "on the nose". So, I feel the songs do a pretty good job of expressing themselves. That said, "Good Riddance" is a good example of where my head is at right now; It's about the selfishness of the 1%, and the hoarding of wealth that could be put to good use and is instead used in a pissing match between a select group of manipulative technocrats and financial royalty. Fuck 'em.

AU: Who or what are the biggest influences on your band?
HL: Rock and Roll! The feeling I get when I make music. The feeling I get when I hear it! I wake up and throw a *Bronx* or *SLF* or *Sparrer* or *AF* or *Springsteen* album on way too loud every morning. It's oxygen to me.

AU: What would you like to say about your LP?
HL: Just that it is an honest offering. Pirates Press has done an amazing job with the packaging and associated media and if you like punk, oi! Or just good ol' Rock 'n' Roll, it's definitely worth a spin.

AU: Any gigs coming up that you are really excited to play?
HL: We are doing a PRB club show with *Anti-Heroes*, and that'll be killer.

AU: Which bands from your local scene are you guys most excited about right now?

PIRATES PRESS RECORDS

HL: *Hometown Addiction, Human Issue, The IFIC, Hot Laundry, Brigatta Vendetta, Ultra Sect.*

AU: Any plans for Valentine's Day this year?
HL: I'm gonna take my wife to dinner.

AU: Any dating/marriage advice for this post-pandemic world?
HL: I've been married twice for a total of 26 years. As long as you're dedicated to the other person and to staying in the relationship, you'll do what it takes.

AU: Any fetishes to share?
HL: I like westerns and milk chocolate?

AU: Final words for Canadian fans?
HL: How would you feel about a tour with *HL* and *Territories*, because I would love it!

@huntinglions707
[huntinglions.bandcamp.com](https://www.huntinglions.bandcamp.com)
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Photo Credit: Greg Davis



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SONS OF BUTCHER

Interview with Ricky Butcher

by Ira Hunter and B.A. Johnston

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

Ricky Butcher: This is Ricky Butcher from the band and cartoon of the same name, *Sons of Butcher!* I'm most infamous for my song "Fuck the Shit" which is almost ready to crack one million plays on Spotify! Also, the current record-holder of most tits signed on a Canadian tour by a band that also serves meat!

AU: Who else is in the band and what does it say on their Tinder profiles?

RB: Doug Borski is our resident janitor at the butcher shop and he's on bass in the band! Doug's Tinder profile says 'moppin' the blood and poo so you don't have to! DM me for rates! Crissy Stixx is our skin slapper on the drums and is happily married and has probably never heard of Tinder! If he did have a Tinder, it would probably say 'I will raise the BPM's of your heart, DM me for

rates!'

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

RB: We stumbled onto the scene in early 2002 and by 2004, we had our own cartoon television series with Teletoon! We toured Canada twice in full spandex suits and even did a live action tour special! The cartoon was cancelled in 2007 and we hung up the wet spandex for a decade. We continued to release albums throughout the years until 2020 when we got the rights back to our show! We are now working on a brand-new EP and playing as many shows as we can!

AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?

RB: Bangin', bongin' & bringin' the rock with a side of meat!

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

RB: Mike's Subs in Hamilton on Ottawa Street & my go-to is the Apollo!

AU: 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.

RB: We wear spandex on stage and spandex only! Spandex breathes and we feel cool, even in the hottest venues!

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

RB: *U Turn*, *Child's Play*, *C.H.U.D*

AU: How you goobers get to shows? Describe



your band ride?

RB: We had to sell our tour van so now we all arrive at the venue in separate unimpressive rides

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

RB: *Sons of Butcher* sounds like the corpse of Hair Metal being revived with Grunge defibrillators on a bed of laughs in the key of D

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

RB: We have the pleasure of opening up a few shows for B.A Johnston! March 11 in Hamilton @Casbah, April 1 in Toronto @Baby G, April 7 in Ottawa @House of Targ!

AU: Anything else to promote?

RB: I have a second band! I'm the lead singer/guitarist of a band called *'Moonlight Desires'*, we do hard rock versions of 80's pop tunes! Moonlightdesires.bandcamp.com (and all other platforms)

Also, *Sons of Butcher* is ripping it up on Tik Tok @sonsofbutcher with nearly 100k in likes in just over a month of going live- check it out for short clips of the best moments from our cartoon!

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

RB: We have a new EP called *'Skids'* coming out later this year! We hired our old producer Jordon

HAM JAMMERS

Zadorozny, who did all of our biggest releases! It's a return to form! A celebrational!

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

RB: Steak, Bacon, Denim & Handjobs- all of life's greatest things!

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

RB: Track 1 is also the first single, *'Denim Dreamin'* is the first radio-friendly SOB song ever! Also of note- *'Makin' Bacon'* is a wild ride tipping on metal, the heaviest SOB ever!

AU: Any plans for Valentine's Day this year?

RB: Planning to play the bacon fiddle for my sweetest girl!

AU: Any dating/marriage advice for this post-pandemic world?

RB: Fuck the internet, find your partners in real life! Marriage advice? Nope.

AU: Any fetishes to share?

RB: I really love peanut butter, lettuce and cheddar cheese together on toast! I'm also a closet Spectrophiliac- turned on by hot ghosts!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

RB: Keep fuckin' the shit!

AU: How do people find you online?

All digital streaming platforms!

@therealsobs on Facebook, Instagram @sonsofbutcher on Tik Tok!

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PUNKS IN RECOVERY



Punks in Recovery

By Gregorio Lewis

The reason why I speak so openly about the fucked-up things that happened to me as a child and as an adolescent and even as an adult is because for most of my life, I was viewed by many as a problem.

I got into punk rock at the tail end of the 80's. I met my first punk rocker in 1988 in a psychiatric hospital. Many punk rockers, independent thinkers, and unique individuals experience disapproval from the society, the system, and often from our own families who view our natural expression of who we are as an indicator of there being something wrong with us.

Somebody is indeed delusional in these sorts of encounters, and, unquestionably, it is generally not the subject being identified.

For some of us, we were simply identified as problems, often for no legitimate reason, and in need of treatment. How many people reading this know exactly what I'm talking about? Well, if you survived to make it till today and you're doing okay, you're likely in the minority.

I talk openly about what was done to me because

it's an incredibly stigmatizing, life-impacting experience to be labeled as something bad or something sick when in fact you're often just a healthy person reacting to the sickness of the society around us. In fact, in my expert opinion as a professional crazy person, I know based on personal experience that many people who are afraid of expressing their true selves need to identify those who are free as being sick or problematic.

They do this in order to make themselves feel better or to satisfy some societally based method of social control. So, what happens when those insecure people—who are terrified of being free—have the illegitimate power to turn their judgment, criticism and displeasure into an act of force upon another?

They grab someone like me, and dehumanize them, and that is the beginning of the potential end. That is why I talk openly about the fucked-up things that happened to me.

If you do not get that toxic unhealed trauma out of you, you will become poisoned by what

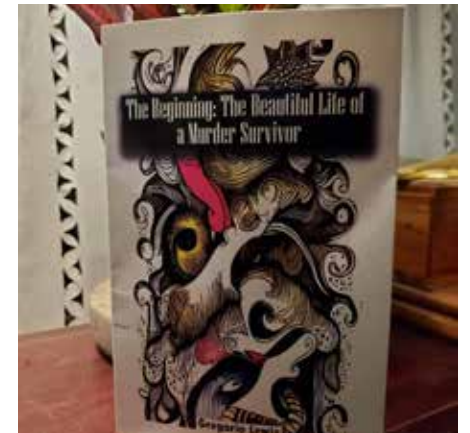
was done to you, and you will continue to perpetuate the cycle of abuse. I chose to break the cycle. It is brutal, hurtful, and yet 100% worth the pain.

We live in a day and age in which talking openly about mental health is an actively promoted concept. However, if your healing experience contradicts the mental health recovery paradigm—if you are a punk rocker, an independent thinker, or simply smart enough to know better—your honest narrative may interfere with the opportunities that you are presented with, despite your worthiness. I think it is unhelpful to blanket dictate a one-size-fits-all ideal of what being healthy and well and a contributing member of society is. This is why I speak openly about the fucked-up things that I experienced and am actively healing from.

I speak openly about my experiences so the people out there like myself

can know that, despite what they and others said about us, there's very little that's actually wrong with us. It's really okay to celebrate ourselves for being the amazing unique and special people that we are.

I have always generally found myself on the outskirts of all the communities that I'm



connected to, and never felt like I belonged anywhere. Thankfully, I do feel pretty good living in Mexico. As part of my personal healing and recovery adventure, it is my responsibility to myself to do and say what I need to, in order to help anyone else possible. Period.

We exist in every country in the world, and we must make sure that every one of us knows, whenever possible, that we have the power within ourselves to heal, transcend and most importantly, to be happy, no matter what happened to us.

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Keith Clark Photography



ZEKE

Roses are Red Violets are Blue, love is a four-letter word and Zeke is too!

Interview by Billy Hopeless

Ok, so I just got back from tour, and I've got a shitload of interviews lined up for my column, but I needed to come up with something fast to make it cross the deadline. As it's the Valentine's issue it had to be true love. Well you know what? I love Zeke, there is no band I've ever rode with that races as relentlessly full throttle and cruises with a v-twin heartbeat on the black tar mainline of life. So now let's run the red light and try to catch up with brother Blind Marky Felchtone!

Billy Hopeless: So long time no see. The last I had heard you and co-founding drummer Donny Paycheck had taken different highways, and you put out the "Hellbender album." Now you're back together and with former bassist Jeff Matz riding at your side as well. How did

roll.

MF: Yeah...I guess they are calling this music speed rock, or whatever in Europe. As if it's some sort of defined sub-genre. I guess we are known for this sort of 1 minute HC type music...the thing that sets us apart from, I don't know, *Minor Threat* or *Angry Samoans*, is we despise punk rock cliches, and our song structures are honestly very standard rock n roll oriented. We appear to be a HC band live when juxtaposed against a band like *New Bomb Turks* or, say, *Nashville Pussy*, even. But, in essence, we probably have more in common with those bands. I really just suffer from zero attention span, so the idea of a 3-minute song just makes me want to end it all.

BH: Ah yes, I remember when the Germans were calling the L.A. sound steam rock fever,



HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

passed him in school because he couldn't read due to a learning disability. I was like, 'oh fuck, man, I'm sorry.' Couple years pass, I'm reading some Jim Thompson books on tour. He's like, 'can I check that out?' I'm all, 'Sure!' and I give him a copy of *Croppers Cabin*. Next day, he starts asking me all these questions about what a character's motivation was in this sort of elaborate plot. I don't think we talked for the rest of the tour. <laughs>

BH: Thanks, that's just what the doctor

Sex is pretty much the same deal...

BH: Ok lone wolf no bitchin let's try a different pick up, what would you consider to be the biggest love song in Zeke's catalogue?

MF: I don't know...what's wrong with 'Wanna Fuck?'

BH: I was going to say fuck all night but after your last answer I'd say "Twisted." Let's talk houses of the asshole, what was the worst place you've ever crashed on the road?

MF: We had a transmission go out in Nevada, stayed with the promoter's parents, got kicked out for doing drugs in the bathroom. It was really hot in that damned van, and we wound up in a ditch in Texas with a Morphine drip and a box of methadone. The Rangers decided to leave that and bust us for pot.

BH: You truly ditched the drugs eh, back to true love what motorcycle are you riding currently and what six string are you slinging?

MF: My favourite is a chopped '72 Harley Electra Glide. I have another Harley that runs all the time. I'm using a '72 Les Paul custom right now, but I'm putting my sunburst standard with Avedisio pickups back together soon.

BH: Nice two rides and two guns who could ask for anything more? I've just been told this is a dark love themed issue so who's your favourite Black Sabbath vocalist.

MF: I love "Heaven and Hell" and "Mob Rules." But I'm going to go with Oz.

BH: I'd also accept Ian Gillan, poor lonely Martin, no one picks Tony. Where you guys playing next and will you ever be returning to Canada? We had a blast the last time, remember?

MF: We are working on it. I lost my paperwork <laughs> Like I said, we're headed for Europe next.

BH: Dog ate it, eh? What a hoser! Ok, before we take off eh what are your favourite memories of touring the great white north?

MF: Hanging out with y'all, hitting comic book shops. The snow! Bilal! Food! So many great bands on those shows, that nobody will ever know about! I've got to get back up there!

zekeyou.com



you guys get back together?

Marky Felchtone: I had to get "Hellbender" out at any cost. It's unfortunate that we had so much trouble around that, but at least Kurt and those guys were fun to work with. Everyone wrote songs, so they obviously know this music inside and out. Donny is available now. And we seem to be getting along, <laughs>! Honestly, it's way more natural with Donny. He's been playing that style for so long. As long as we aren't fighting on the floor of the club, I'd like to continue with the lineup as it is. Jeff did some guest appearances here and in the Netherlands, but he is still in *High On Fire*...and some math rock band. He and I were doing a project with Slayer Hippy (R.I.P.), and Mike from Yob. I don't know if that'll ever get released.

BH: Who else is in the gang now and where did you pick them up at?

MF: It's Jeff Hiatt who played in *The Lemons*, *Family Sex Jackpot*, and *Hell Bound for Glory* with me, on guitar, Jason Freeman (who has been in ZEKE for years,) back on bass, Donny Paycheck is doing drums, and myself.

BH: I was just on tour, and with most of your songs running from one to two minutes at breakneck speed your sets can be half the time than most bands but still fit in as many songs. What's the Zeke philosophy on speed race 'n'

screaming rock believers. So any plans on putting out a new album with the current line up?

MF: Well, we are going into the studio on Monday, so we should have new music available for our European tour.

BH: Well, there's some good news, now to the bad: recently I was really bummed out by the tragic loss of your long-time guitar player and all-around killer dude Sonny Riggs, who came back in the fold just before his passing. Can you tell me a funny or good memory of Sonny that will make me smile?

MF: Well, Sonny was one of the best guys ever. Nobody loved Rock 'n' Roll more than he did. His sound was so big. He played on the last *Cutthroat Brothers* record with Donny. Cancer took him. He had impeccable taste and style. When he joined the band, I was doubtful. I almost was angry at Donny for bringing him to practice. This kid with a blonde surfer haircut, and a tropical shirt. Like... fuck THAT, y'know? But he knew every song, and I just couldn't deny that we sounded way better with him. So, we became friends. Turned out he was into cars and bikes as much as me. He was hilarious. Once, he lived with me and didn't pay rent for a while. I said, 'hey man. You might need to get a job.' He told me a story about how they





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Good as Gone

Interview with Singer/Drummer

Matt Wood

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

Matt Wood: I sing and play drums in *Good As Gone*.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band Good As Gone.

MW: Adam Sherart (Guitar) and myself started writing together in 2014. A couple years later we got Mike Payette (Bass) and Bryan Wolosnick (Guitar) on board and gave the project a name.

AU: What other bands have you and your

bandmates been in?

MW: Lowborn, S.T.R.E.E.T.S., Grass City, Worse, Pride Tiger, 3" of Blood, Congress, Haggatha, Goatsblood, Bison, Children, Bogus Tokus. I'm probably forgetting a few.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

MW: Hard rock I guess? There's definitely a southern rock thing going on too. Classic rock? Dad rock as the kids say?

AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?

MW: Jerking off, caffeine/nicotine and rock 'n' roll

AU: Any plans to release an album in the near future?

MW: Yes. Can't say yet when it'll be complete, but we're currently working on it.

AU: Any current songs you are stoked on?

MW: The entire *Rocky MTN Roller* record called "Haywire".

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

MW: No, but we'll get our shit together soon.

AU: Anything else to promote?

MW: We also have a self-titled LP available. You can get it from either the band, or YeahRight! Records.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

MW: Big thank you to our friends in *Minx* for doing this split release with us.

AU: How do people find you online?

goodasgone.bandcamp.com

[instagram.com/goodasgoneband](https://www.instagram.com/goodasgoneband)

minx.bandcamp.com



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Giviner Love with Deaner Valentine's ReLAYtionship Advice

Featuring Paul Spence aka Deaner

Questions by Irocker

AU: Who are we talking to today and what makes you an expert in the ways of love?

I'm Dean Murdoch, the Governor of Giviner. I'm SINGLE which means, Strong, Independent, Nomad, Giviner, Literally, Everyday

AU: What's the official history of Valentine's Day?

Saint Lay got a boner, made a day.

AU: Who was your super crush growing up?

My buddy's older sister Martine, she was always hanging around in Daisy Dukes.

AU: What was your first sexual experience?

There's a barn in Northern Manitoba that still has a hole in the side from me banging around at night. They called me "Splinter" that summer.

AU: Any good Valentine card sayings to share?

Roses are red, violets are blue.

Buy me a six pack and I'll romance you.

AU: Any good pick-up lines to help break the ice?

Hey baby there's a million stars in the sky, but only six beers left, and you can have one.

AU: Please explain to our younger readers how babies are made.

There's that magical romantic place where you've had enough beers to forget about pulling out, but not too many to pass out.

AU: What's better, a lady of the night or a

friend of the road?

I prefer my ladies in the back of a van.

AU: Any plans for Valentine's Day this year?

I'm gonna buy myself two pizzas, eat one for dinner and leave the other beside my mattress when I pass out so I can offer myself breakfast in bed the next morning.

AU: What's the proper kneecap rubbing technique for getting the ladies frisky?

Treat the fiddle like a fiddle, start slow on the low notes and work your way up to a jig.

AU: What are some tips for getting some action on the first date?

I like to tell stories about all the other times I got laid on a first date and how bad the sex was, to work on the woman's competitive side. It's never come through, but the theory seems strong, so I ain't gonna give up.

AU: Finish this sentence; Hey Diddle Diddle...

I've got ten minutes until the pizza gets here let's giver.

AU: Any dating advice for this post-pandemic world?

Kissing with a mask on fucking sucks.

AU: Are you a lover or a fighter?

Which ones pass out in the ditch? I'm that one.

AU: Ever found yourself in a ménage à twizzler type situation?

Look man, a threesome with a girl and another dude is ok as long as the guy doesn't look at you. Like fuck man just do your thing, I'll do mine, no need to cheer me on, or slap high fives. Threesomes with two girls is also fun, but one of them needs to be a good listener.

AU: How many spawns have you fathered to your knowledge? Any advice for new fathers?

Only Merlin knows. Best tip on being a dad is to shut down the social life for a few months and just do 100% dad duty. After that the kid's pretty much able to take care of himself.

AU: Ever performed in an adult movie?

No, I don't want to give away my secrets.

AU: What would your porn star name be?

Mike Hawkshard.

AU: What's your safe word?

Hawaiian.

AU: Any fetishes to share?

I like it when ladies wear tiny little bells on their toes and they tinkle them when they climax. Like when you leave a convenience store, you know?

AU: Final words of wisdom for people looking for a Valentine's date this year.

Don't ever try to get laid, just try to have fun. When you giver in the right direction, the power of passion descends when the time is right.



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KEVIN HEGGE

Director of *She Said Boom: The Story of Fifth Column*

Interview by John Carlow

AU: Who am I talking to?

Kevin Hegge: Hi! I'm Kevin Hegge. I'm a filmmaker and freelance writer based in Toronto. *She Said Boom* was my first movie. I just finished my second feature length film called *Tramps!* which centers around the New Romantics in 1980's London, UK. Other than that, it's all existential crisis. Who am I, indeed!?

AU: Who was the 5th Column?

KH: 5C are most easily described as a post-punk band that formed in the early 80s in Toronto. There ended up being core members GB Jones, Caroline Azar and Beverly Breckenridge but there was a frequent line-up change with members coming and going over their career span of a decade or so.

I like to think of the band as more of an artist's collective for that reason, because their work also extended into zine culture with GB working on zines like J.D's with artist Bruce LaBruce, as well as Caroline and others working HIDE zine, and many others. GB and Bruce, who was also loosely a member of the band as a go-go dancer, were making Super 8 films regularly - and of course GB has an extensive career as a visual artist, and all these elements came into play under the guise of *Fifth Column*. I think their work was too diverse and malleable, even experimental as an entity to be described solely as just a band.

AU: What drew you to create a documentary about the band?

KH: I was just a super huge fan of all these elements; of the band itself but also of all the offshoot artwork that was described above. GB Jones is a national treasure - and like many national treasures in Canada goes largely uncelebrated. I was sort of hating living in Toronto and needed a source of inspiration for my own livelihood, and I found that in *Fifth Column's* work. So I just decided one day I would try to try to make a movie to delve into the mass of work they produced, and to collect all the different media into one package that I could share with people internationally. Documentaries are a great way to gain access to an archive that otherwise would be out of reach - so I just started reaching out and collecting everything to try and get it in one place.

I thought talking about *Fifth Column* was a great

way to celebrate the depth and richness of both Toronto and Canada's art history. 5C were the root of what became known as the Riot Grrrl scene out of the USA, and their effect on international subculture was profound, and with such often challenging, confrontational, and super smart content. The people who really make a mark are usually women who go unrecognized, and I wanted to contribute something to work against that.

The long and short of it was that I was a fanboy and wanted to combine my studies in film and my experience in the music industry into one package. It was my first movie, and it was a challenge to try to tell my version of their story, which is of course seeped in fable and myth, so the movie is just my take on that. Nothing is concrete about it. It's just my attempt at a narrative around their work.

AU: How long did the film take to research and create?

KH: The whole thing happened quickly, as both myself and the band were based in Toronto. It took about two years to make. Since I was in the city I could bike around and collect zines and Super-8 films from people in the city, so accessing the archives was easy really. And since most of it came from ex-punks, they basically held onto everything - as punks tend to be collectors, so I was really lucky.

AU: Tell us a bit about the process of pulling the film together

KH: GB was of course central to the entire process because she's a walking encyclopedia of information - her precision of memory is astounding, and the depth of her knowledge is basically infinite. It was a lot of working directly with the band on getting things together.

It was mostly biking around gathering zines and Super 8 footage but the interviews themselves were fun. I had this whole thing where I hated seeing documentaries about people that were just shot in a person's flat with no consideration for aesthetics. I always found it depressing to see someone you respected just sat around a bunch of personal junk like piles of paper or whatever

is laying around their apartment. I decided for *She Said Boom* to have fun with the settings and put everyone in very cartoony, almost caricature like scenarios to make it more fun. For instance, GB Jones is so mysterious and private, so I really wanted to make it look like we were having this clandestine meeting in the park. Funny story about that is I didn't realize there was a cruising area in the park we were in so all around us there were guys trolling around for sex.

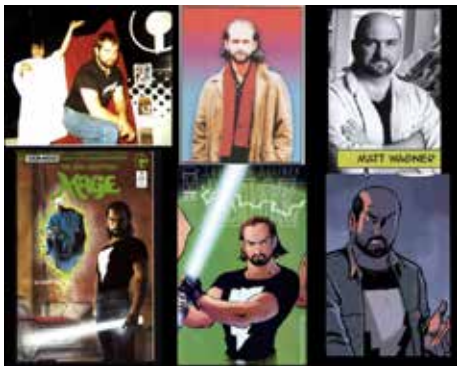
There was some downtime while we were waiting to re-shoot Caroline's interview because it didn't turn out as expected and, in that time, we ended up going to NYC to shoot Kathleen Hannah and also Vaginal Davis in her crazy apartment in Berlin. It was stressful having the delays waiting to re-shoot but, in the end, it was for the better because Vaginal and Kathleen add so much energy and perspective to the whole thing.

I should also say the movie was edited with my friend Oliver Hussain, who is an amazing filmmaker and artist based in Toronto. He's a total genius and having his help navigate this story was totally priceless.

AU: Why is it important people see this film?

KH: There are just so many truly radical and diverse stories about the Canadian art community that we let slip away. I wish 5C would upload their records to streaming services because they are so weird and timeless and would really resonate with kids these days. I hope the movie picks up a bit on that impetus - to inspire people and also just demonstrate how a few voices can cause a lot of trouble and shake up dominant culture in a way that transforms it far beyond their own means - I mean look at bands like *Hole* and *L7* - there's a total link there to what 5C were doing and it's important to take that space as well to inspire!

Finding Charlotte Photography with Cavity Curiosity and Absolute Underground Magazine will present a special screening of *She Said Boom: The Story of Fifth Column* February 27, 2023, at The Phoenix Bar and Grill.



MATT WAGNER

The Man, The Myth, The Legend.

Interview by Ira Hunter Rose

Absolute Underground: Hi Matt, this is for a print magazine. It goes all across Canada. It's kind of got a punk rock vibe to it. But I've also had a booth at Comic Con for 20 years selling my self-published horror comics.

Matt Wagner: If you're into punk rock, do you know the podcast The Last Podcast on the Left? One of the main guys in that, Marcos, and his wife do another podcast called No Dogs in Space, where they do these deep dive histories into all the original punk bands. So Ramones, Velvet Underground, The Stooges, The Damned, The Replacements etc. They just finished a three parter on Patti Smith. I just adore that podcast, it's just terrific. You know how everybody's got songs where you mishear the lyrics for years and you thought it said this and it says something else? Well, there's an old punk song by Richard Hell called Love Comes in Spurts and for years Marcus's wife, Carolina, thought the song was saying "No Dogs in Space." So they named their podcast No Dogs in Space.

AU: Who are we talking to officially and what's on your creative resume?

MW: Hi my name is Matt Wagner. I'm the creator of both Grendel and Mage, two indie titles dating way back to the 80s. I've also worked on a variety of projects for mainly DC Comics over the years including a lot of Batman.

AU: What got you started on your path to working in comics?

MW: I was an only child and I grew up in the days before there was much video entertainment. Our original TV was in black and white and only got four stations. I drew to entertain myself and my mom was an English teacher and always encouraged me to read. Comic books were both reading and drawing all in one lovely little package. Unlike a lot of English teachers of her generation, my mom didn't mind that I was reading comics, so long as I was reading. She thought I would grow out of them and instead I grew into them. My parents had a scrapbook when I was a kid, one of those school memories books, and on all the grade school years it has a spot to paste your school photo and then fill out your height and your weight and all that crap and on the back of each one of those pages it says "What I want to be when I grow up." One year I wrote astronaut, I assume that was

1969 when they landed on the moon, and every other year I wrote comic book writer. I'm one of those rare breeds that got to grow up and do what he wanted to do when he was a little tiny kid.

AU: Yeah, everyone's always like "What are you gonna do when you grow up?" And then when you finally think about it and find something that makes sense, it kind of clicks in your mind. When I thought about writing comics, it really made sense to me because I worked in a comic shop when I was young. I also wanted to be a movie director but back then I thought creating comics was a more realistic thing I could do. I didn't have millions of dollars to make a film but I could do the comic book version instead.

MW: Yeah, of course, they're both visual storytelling. So there is an inextricable link there even though they're completely different beasts in the long run. I initially didn't really think I was going to get into comics, I thought I was going to be a commercial illustrator of some kind. Because in the old days before the internet and digital information transfers and stuff like, that even before the days of overnight postal delivery or FedEx, you had to live around New York. You had to live within an easy train ride of New York to be in the comic book industry for the most part. Because you would physically go into the publishers office and pick up your job, same with dropping it off when you're finished. I didn't live anywhere near New York and so I had no hope of ever entering the business. I didn't really know much about the business either. Then I moved to Philadelphia to go to art school. That had a close proximity to New York and I met some guys that knew a lot about the industry from a fan perspective. They had this dream of starting an independent publishing company and that became Comico: The Comic Company.



So I kind of stumbled into it almost accidentally. I had these opportunities presented to me, which I will say I took and did the most with but I was kind of in the right place the right time.

AU: I love Comico. I always wondered where they were from.

MW: Their initial offices were in a duplex about 20 minutes outside of Philadelphia in a small suburb called Norristown.

AU: The first comic they put out was called the Comico Primer?

MW: Yes. Grendel, of course, premiered in the second issue of that. The first round of their comics, which were Comico Primer and then for singular titles Grendel, Az, Slaughterman, and Skrog. That all preceded the black and white boom of the 80s by just a few years. So we missed out on really benefiting from the huge sales that resulted during that time period for black and white comics. The decision was made on their end that they needed to move into colour production. They had a pitch from a wannabe writer who turned out to be Chuck Dixon. He and his then

wife a gal named Judith Hunt, had a book called Evangeline that they had pitched to Comico. It was about a nun who was an assassin for the futuristic Vatican. I don't know if it's still a prevalent trend or not but in those days they did what was called gang printing. The printing presses were wide enough that printing two books side by side was the most cost feasible way to do things. It really benefited you financially to print two books at once. So they needed another colour book and of the four black and white books that we had done Grendel had gotten the most positive feedback. So they offered me an opportunity to come up with a book for colour publication and that turned out to be Mage. So there again I kind of stumbled into the right place at the right time for that one too.

AU: Is it true that Comico was an early example of creator owned comics? That you kept the rights to Mage and Grendel?

MW: Yes it was. It got messy when Comico filed for bankruptcy. But ultimately, I was able to secure the rights to both of them back to me. But yeah from the very beginning we were just idealistic young creators who believed in retaining the rights to our own intellectual property and didn't want to have to sign over everything to the publisher, which was the de rigeur norm back in those days.

AU: Mage is one of my favourite comics, but for people that haven't discovered it yet please give us a brief overview?

MW: I'll give you the descriptions of both Mage and Grendel. Mage is a contemporary urban fantasy about a character who kind of against his own will and against his own inclinations is set upon the very archetypal hero's journey, as outlined by Joseph Campbell in so many of his writings, and seen in so much heroic fiction. All of Star Wars is based on Campbell's writings. I didn't quite realize it at the time but what I was also doing with Mage was internalizing it and making it an allegory about my own life. The character looks like me so... It's a fantasy trilogy set in modern days and in a contemporary setting that kind of goes down the traditional hero's journey but also echoes so many aspects of my life. As a result it took me a long time to complete the trilogy. The first one came out in the mid 80s, the next part of the trilogy didn't come out until the late 90s, and the third part only came out a few years ago. So it took me a total of 35 years to cover that entire saga. The reason being since it was an echo of my life, I had to live my life to get the material to draw from to basically mythologize and turn into this fantasy narrative. At first that bothered me that it took me so long but by the time I finished it I thought, nope this was the only way it could have worked.

AU: What's the story behind your other creation, Grendel?

MW: Grendel started out as a contemporary piece of crime fiction. Kind of based on certain European uber criminal characters, like Fantômas

COMIC BOOK ICONS

and Diabolik, and follows the adventures of a kind of dashing criminal overlord, Hunter Rose, in a contemporary setting. But there again, Grendel, just like Mage, grew into something that I didn't quite expect. Comico at one point approached me and said "We'd like to continue Grendel" and I said, "Well, that's going to be hard because I just killed the main character in my first storyline." So I struck upon the idea of having the identity and the persona of Grendel move from character to character. Kind of following and inspired by the old Phantom comic strip. There's many Phantoms stretching back centuries, the mantle handed down from father to son. There wasn't as direct a lineage in Grendel but basically it kept moving it ahead. Changing it, changing the narrative, changing the characters, changing the tone, changing the art style. Really just making it a huge experiment in collaboration and narrative techniques. In 2022 we celebrated Grendel's 40th anniversary of publication.

AU: The four issue series of The Demon that you did for DC Comics was an interesting delve into the realm of Merlin. Did you adjust your art style for that book? It was kind of a more darker and sinister style.

MW: Very much so. I tried to draw it in a little more DC-ish style than my more simplistic look. The production of that series was kind of a mess. I didn't know how to work for the big companies and DC didn't really know how to handle a guy that was so indie and such a noob. The first issue was completely inked three different times, by three different inkers before we finally ended up with Art Nichols.

I loved Jack Kirby's art when he came to DC. He was definitely an early influence. At DC Kirby did stuff like Kamandi, The Demon, and OMAC. I quite loved all three of those. So the way The Demon came about was I was at a convention in Atlanta. This is when conventions were small enough that they took all the guests out to dinner all at once. I happen to get seated next to Dick Giordano who was editor-in-chief of DC at the time. We had quite a few drinks together and he offered me the chance to give them a pitch and so I pitched them on a Demon series.

AU: What was your take on Garth Ennis' run of The Demon?

MW: I never read it. That follows mine and again, I had a not so great working process on The Demon. So I was a little sour on the character and the whole storyline following that experience. My whole thing was that I separated Jason Blood and The Demon into two different characters and shortly after that, I think it was in Cosmic Odyssey, they immediately put them back together again. I was like ah well fuck that. There goes my effort. So I didn't really look at any Demon books for a long time following that.

To be continued next issue...



M. WAGNER



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Wacken Metal Battle Canada Announces Battle Rounds

One Unsigned Canadian Band To Play Wacken Open Air 2023

By Absolute Underground

Wacken Metal Battle Canada is proud to announce its 2023 Battle Rounds. From coast to coast, unsigned Canadian bands will battle for a chance to perform on one of the world's most prestigious stages and largest metal festivals: Wacken Open Air.

Previous winners include *The Slyde*, *Centuries of Decay*, *Profaner*, *Vesperia*, *Mutank*, and *Crimson Shadows*.

Battles will be hosted in the following cities: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec City.

All bands will be performing in front of experienced music industry professionals, who

will be making judgments at each qualifying round based on various categories of professionalism and musicianship.

Full list of dates below, event links for each battle can be found on <https://www.wackenmetalbattle.ca>:

Battle Rounds

Vancouver - Preliminary Round

Thurs, Feb 23 - The Cobalt

Calgary - Preliminary Rounds

Tue, January 17 - Dickens w/ *Grim Prognosis*, *Lynx*, *Tyrants of Chaos*

Wed, February 1 - Dickens

Wed, February 15 - Dickens

Wed, March 1 - Dickens

Edmonton - Preliminary Rounds

Thurs, Jan 19 - Starlite Room

w/ *Fall of Earth*, *Withered Days*, *Enosis*

Thurs, Feb 2 - Starlite Room w/ *Arcane Tyrant*, *Repugnant Scum*, *Malicious Intent*

Sun, Feb 5 - Starlite Room w/ *Pre Breaker*, *Sparrow Blue*, *The Judge The Juror*

Thurs, Feb 16 - Starlite Room w/ *Rising Sun*, *The Usual Suspects*, *Hollow Point* & *Buried Beneath*

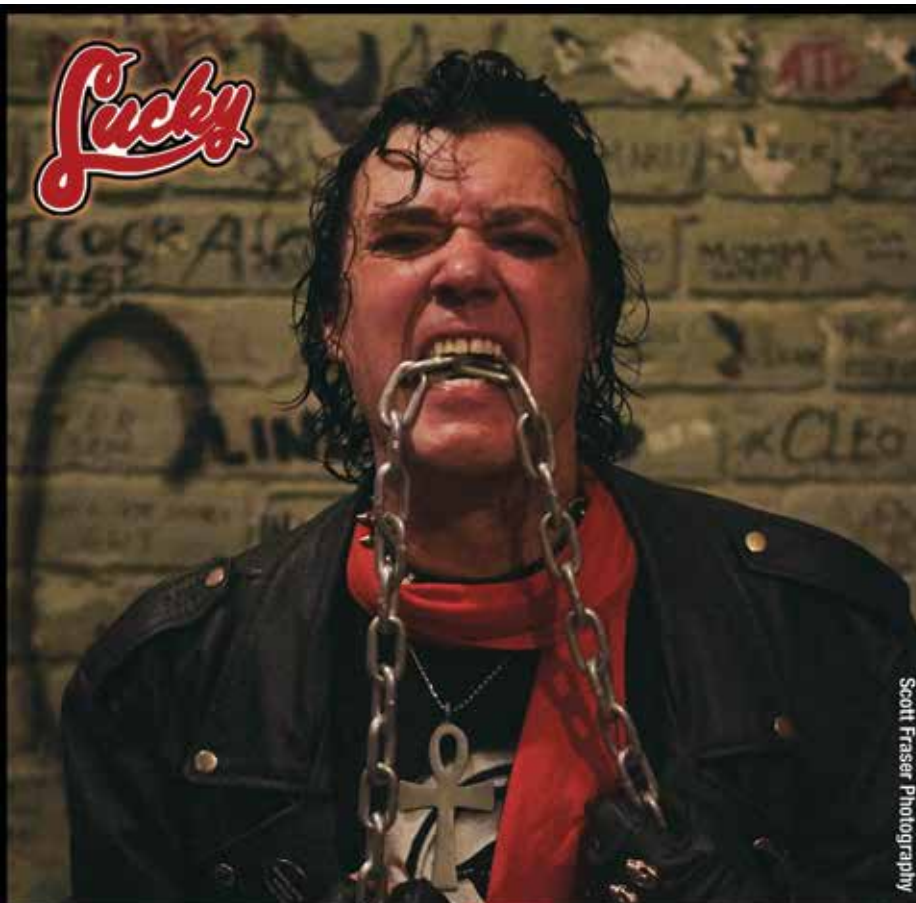
Hamilton - Preliminary Rounds

Fri, Jan 27 - Mainstage Studios w/ *Sarcophilous*, *Aquila*, *Eaten by Sharks*, *Hollow Core*, *Death Perception*

Toronto - Preliminary Rounds

Sat, Jan 28 - Hard Luck w/ *Ammo*, *AxMinister*, *Devil Witch*, *Xephyr*

Sat, Feb 4 - Hard Luck w/ *Phantom*, *Burdizzo*, *Bloody Monroe*, *CNTRL*



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BENEATH THE WHEEL



SPELL

Beneath the wheel with Cam and Al Mesmer of Spell

Interview by Sheldon Byer

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

Cam and Al Mesmer of Spell: We're a hypnotic heavy metal band from Vancouver. We're probably most famous for writing music with tons of layers and harmonies, and then failing to pull it off live as just a 3-piece – but that won't be the case anymore with our new lineup, which we'll finally debut in Vancouver this March!

AU: You released a new album "Opulent Decay" in April 2020, a split with Wytch Hazel in September 2022 & "Tragic Magic" in October 2022. When can we expect new music?

CM: We're always working on it! I started writing new music the day we finished work on "Tragic Magic," and I've got rough ideas for about 8 songs so far, so – soon as possible! I believe that getting to release an album is an incredible privilege. So many things must go right all at once to make it possible and we only get so much time in our short lives to make our mark, so I'm always trying to get the next album ready as soon as I can. We'll also have a few little 'peripheral' releases coming up sooner, so keep an eye out!

AU: What's your association with the unknown indie metal label Metal Blade Records? How did that relationship come about?

CM: <laughs> We can thank Will Palmer of *Angel Witch*/Bad Omen Records for that. He showed our stuff to the guys at Metal Blade, and they liked it enough to take us on for North America. Bad Omen Records still handles our releases for the rest of the world. Metal Blade rules, we're honored to have a place among the legends on their roster!

AU: In your press release for "Tragic Magic," legendary songwriter Russ Ballard is mentioned. What's your favorite Ballard song & would you ever consider covering one of his songs? Some artists have had OK luck with it.

AM: Russ Ballard is a legend and songwriting inspiration for sure. Songs like "Voices" and "In the Night" off his 1984 album (that Simon Phillips plays drums on) are just such compelling hits. Both kind of centered around one single groove each. He does so much with simple structures, not to mention his voice and guitar playing are killer too. "Rene Didn't Do it" off the "Barnet Dogs" album is an ultimate party-banger as well. It all rules really. Playing his songs worked out pretty well for Ace Frehley, *Uriah Heep*, etc. and I'd love to cover one someday, but you never really know if a cover is going to work well until you start trying it out, and then sometimes it's just terrible even if you're playing the song correctly, so who knows! Thanks for asking about Russ, he deserves more love from the modern-day rock crowd!

AU: Fuck, marry, kill: Brian Slagel, Gene Simmons, Jeff Black

CM: Tough one. We can kill Gene right off the top (love *KISS* but I couldn't go to bed with a guy who thinks Rock'n Roll is dead!). Probably marry Brian because he's got that stability, and I'll bet Jeff is good for a romp, just don't tell his girlfriend.

AU: Speaking of Jeff Black, who the fuck is that?

CM: Whenever I hang out with Jeff, we accidentally stay up till 4 am listening to records and getting overly excited. I've been told that we share one brain cell between the two of us. With a friendship like that, you've just got to play music together. Jeff also has a legendary epic metal band called *Gatekeeper* (who have a

and it couldn't have been a more perfect fit.

AU: Can we expect any other contributors on future *Spell* releases?

CM: Yeah, we're also now playing with our pal Gabriel, who also plays with local new wave/goths



new album due out next month, by the way!) as well as solo projects, so the guy just has music coming out of his ears. We first played together like ten years ago in a *Candlemass* cover band, but it took me a while to get up the courage to ask if he wanted to join *Spell* recently (because if he said no, I didn't want to hurt our friendship!). Being in a band with people is kind of like dating them, it can really colour your relationship. Anyhow, after our first rehearsal he knew the songs perfectly

Girlfriends & Boyfriends. Gabriel played synths on "Tragic Magic" so we got to work with him a lot in the studio. After I heard the last *Girlfriends'* album "Fallacy of Fairness" I was like 'who the hell is this guy?' because he put hooks like crazy all over that album! When we got him in the studio, we discovered we got on like peas in a pod, and that he rips on the guitar and loves heavy metal too! So, asking him to join up was a no-brainer and we couldn't believe our luck when he was game! It's

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fantastic to have a *Spell* lineup with dual guitars and synths now – it sounds massive!

AU: Enough about the future! Let's look to the past. What tracks on "Opulent Decay" were you particularly stoked about?

CM: Looking back – I think my favourite songs on that album are "Dawn Wanderer," "Iron Wind, and Psychic Death." We're still really proud of that LP, even though I think the new one cleans its clock, overall.

AU: How about "Tragic Magic?"

CM: Might still be too close to it to really tell, but I think our first single "Ultraviolet" sounds good. I'm also very proud of "Watcher of the Seas" and "Fever Dream," also "Hades Embrace." Hell, I'm super proud of the whole thing, but I guess the ones we did videos for were picked for a reason.

AU: If you were going to make a mix-tape for someone getting into the band, what would that look like retrospectively?

CM: It'd have to have a bunch of our favourite and most influential bands on it, like *The Devil's Blood* and *Cauldron*. Also Genesis "Live" (1973), *King Crimson's* Red, then some *Camel*, *Kraftwerk*, *Diana Ross*, *Cocteau Twins*, and *Fleetwood Mac*, and *Accept*, *Candlemass* and *The Damned*... hell, I should probably make this playlist!

AU: You've bedded Wytch Hazel. If you could pick any other modern band to do a split with, who would it be?

CM: <laughs>, it was awesome to release a split 7" with *Wytch Hazel*. That's something we were planning for more than ten years. We tried to make it happen back around 2012 but kept on having to push it back for one reason or another. They're an amazing band, and they'll have a new record out very soon. I got to catch a sneak preview, and I can tell you it's easily their best yet.

As far as who else we'd do a split with – I'm dying over the new *Sonja* album "Loud Arriver," so it would be cool to collaborate with them. But we also love *Danava*, *Hallas*, *Satan*, *Blood Ceremony*... maybe *Cauldron* wants to resurrect themselves for one more release? Or you know what, hell, put us on a split with *Ghost*, that's the best answer.

AU: Do you guys know what "DED" stands for?

CM: Something about a double-ended... what now? Yep, we haven't played a single show since before the release of our last album back in 2020, so we're going to do 'em both at once at The Cobalt in Vancouver on March 18th!

AU: Let's talk about your "DED" or double album release party in Vancouver. Same thing. What can people expect?

CM: Well – our new lineup means we can play the songs as they were always meant to sound. Dual guitars, synthesizers, backing vocals – it's all there! I don't know why we didn't become a 4-piece years ago, it sounds way better and it is so damn fun to play this stuff. Since this is probably our only local show of the year, we're intending to really make it an event, with all the fixings! Miss out if you want, it's your grave.

AU: Jeff Black will be there, but can we expect anyone else?

CM: So far, I've heard it's going to be Saqib's birthday party, and we'll also have a guest joining us onstage from another well-known Vancouver band, so it's all pretty exciting. We've got direct support from *Girlfriends & Boyfriends* who will be playing a set of goth bangers (and that means Gabriel will be doing double-duty!) Plus the best dark heavy metal DJs in town, the evil geniuses behind the Covenant Festival! We're planning to sell it out, so get your tickets in advance.

AU: Will this be our only chance to hear certain songs from the last two albums?

CM: Yep. We're always working on new material and looking towards the future, so certain songs will only be played at this one show. Also, this

will be your only chance to see *Spell* in a certain format that will never be recreated. I can't say any more.

AU: 2023 is a big year for you, it marks 10 years of operating as *Spell* and 16 years as a band. Has the hypnotic heavy metal become less hypnotic, or do you feel more magical than ever?

CM: Holy crap. Has it been 16 years?? I can't believe it. [I'll attach a photo here from our first ever show.] Our first ever show was right after I moved out of my parents' house as a teenager



and moved into an old run-down place with some friends. We played in the living room with our friends *Funeral Circle* and the police and fire trucks showed up really quick. Amazing we weren't instantly evicted. That was fun, but we've come a long way! I'm writing music faster and better than ever, and more inspired to rock than ever before! We've been on a constant (slow) upward trajectory ever since the beginning. As long as we keep getting better, why ever stop?

AU: Speaking of 10 years ago, Cam started the legal process of changing his name from Cam Mayhem to Cam Mesmer. Was this a difficult transition?

CM: <laughs> It wasn't difficult. We've always loved those type of cool 'heavy metal' pseudonyms — you know, Blackie Lawless, Away (Voivod), Sebastian Bach, Ian Chains, etc. Just sounds cool. Also, I want to keep my music career a bit separate from my day job as an elementary school teacher. Sometimes the kids find out, and that's fine, but I don't like to advertise it. I'm not writing music for kids.

AU: What's the most magical thing to ever happen to *Spell*?

CM: I mean, it was pretty cool that time we ran into Mick Fleetwood (*Fleetwood Mac* drummer) on the ferry to Victoria and gave him a copy of our first album (which has a *Fleetwood Mac* cover on it). But overall, really, just getting the chance to perform around the world and have kids we've never seen before screaming our lyrics into our faces. Not much could be as magical as that. After experiencing that once or twice, I'm pretty much fieding for it all the time, now.

AU: Is there a spell to enhance our readership?

CM: Ooli-boolie, rat-tat-tat, read Absolute Underground or turn into a bat! (Actually, the real spell is listening to our music. Music is the best form of real magic I know)

AU: Where do we find you online & where can we buy your albums new, newer & old?

Our tunes are on all the streaming platforms – Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal, Youtube, Bandcamp, etc. But best of all, you can find it (or demand it!) at your local record store!

instagram.com/spellofficial

facebook.com/spellspell

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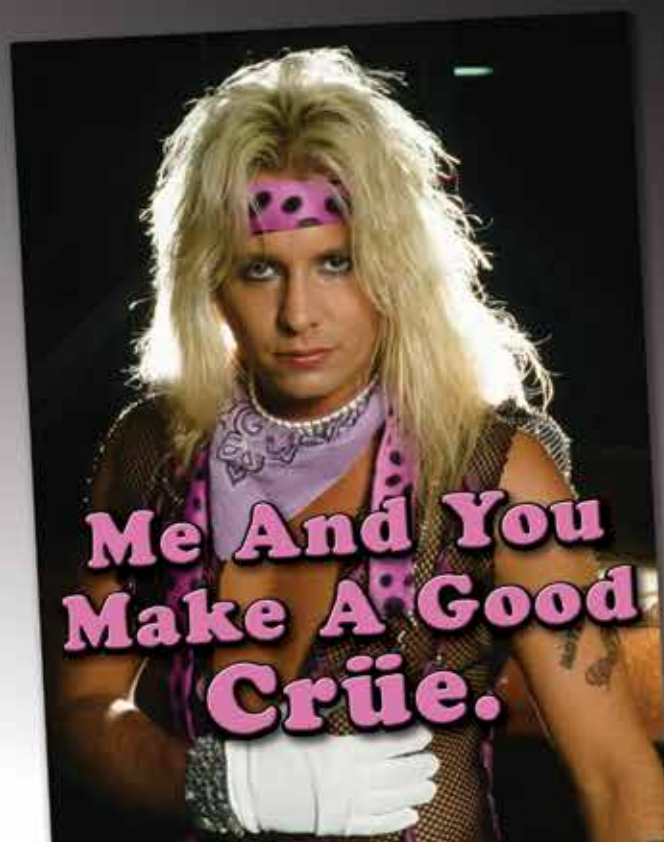
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THE DICKIES

Balderdash From the Archives

Interview with guitarist Stan Lee

By Ira "Infidel Zombie" Hunter

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

Stan Lee: Stan Lee, guitar player for *The Dickies* and *Punk Rock Karaoke*.

AU: What was your first exposure to punk rock music?

SL: *The Damned's* "New Rose," the *Sex Pistols'* "Anarchy in the UK," *Buzzcocks'* "Spiral Scratch," and *The Clash's* "White Riot."

AU: What is the origin story and history of your band *The Dickies*?

SL: I saw *The Weirdos* and thought to myself, "I just started playing guitar a few months ago and I could do this now." Then I went on the hunt for other players.

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

SL: Isn't it your job to know who is in the band? I had an answer but I'm not going to say, because of this treatment.

AU: What is your superpower?

SL: None, but I wish I could fly.

AU: What made your guitar playing stand-out in the early days in your opinion?

SL: No rapid down strokes.

AU: Tell us all about your rarities collection called "*The Dickies - Balderdash From The Archives*" that is going to be out February 10th on Cleopatra Records.

SL: It was a money grab and hopefully a way to buy some more time before our new album gets finished.

AU: What makes this rarities collection unique? What can people expect to hear? Any songs you are particularly stoked to be releasing finally?

SL: The tracks that were released on the new 7" single (Blink 183 & Clean Money) and are bonus tracks on the CD, were unreleased *Dickies* tracks unearthed twenty years later. The rest of it was found on bootlegs by Cleopatra. Also, some

demos and outtakes. How the bootleggers got 'em I have no idea. They were for our ears only at the time.

AU: What formats is this collection being released on. Any special plans for the vinyl packaging? Will there be a booklet or colored vinyl?

SL: Not sure, ask Cleopatra records. They do pretty good packaging for us. My brother shot the cover in 1977 or 78. Those were the days.

AU: What's the definition of Balderdash and how does it relate to your music?

SL: I think balderdash means nonsense or bullshit, so it's kind of fitting.

AU: Is it true you were friends with Iggy Pop as well as Kevin DuBrow the singer of *Quiet Riot* way back in the day? Any anecdotes or stories to share now that the statute of limitations has passed?

SL: Yes and no. I'm old and typing is a pain in the balls. I'm amazed I'm doing this!

AU: I love the *Dickies* theme song for *Killer Klowns from Outer Space*. How did that opportunity come about and how did you approach the song? Were you able to see the completed film before writing the song?

SL: Enigma Records approached us, and the lick got us the job (and my charm at the time of course). I've lost a lot of the charm, which I think comes with age. I'm wiser and less charming.

AU: The soundtrack was recently released on Waxwork Records. Did you get a copy?

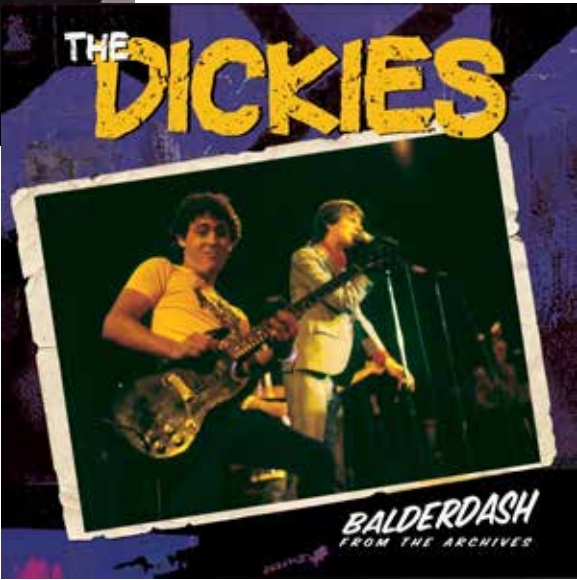
SL: I did not, are you sure it's out?

AU: What was the latest single you released called Blink 183 all about?

SL: "Blink 183," is about a band called *Blink 183*. There is a reference to *Blink 184* in the song. That is a completely different band than *Blink 183*. It is a factitious composition.

AU: What were your thoughts when the comic pioneer who shared your name Stan Lee passed away?

SL: I thought "oh man another genius gone for good." A sad day, but he had a long life. Also, he is



one of maybe five people whose autograph I've asked for, along with Frank Sinatra.

AU: Are you a long time comic book fan? If so, what are some of your favourites?

SL: Spider-Man all the way. He is my favourite. He has a sense of humor.

AU: Any plans for *The Dickies* to come tour Canada? Or is the band full of felons?

SL: One felon has kept us out for years. No poutine for us.

PURE PUNK

AU: Anything else you want to mention or promote?

SL: Look for *The Dickies* final album at some point, and watch for *Punk Rock Karaoke* (now doing singles for Cleopatra Records.) The first one with Tony Hawk singing is out now! Run to YouTube or Spotify and check it out or (better yet) buy the single on Cleo and hold it in your hand just like the old days! Also, the *Gary Glitter Getaway / Dickies* single is rad as balls and backed with a cover of "I Want To Hold Your Hand" by *The Beatles*. Shameless advertising!

AU: Final words for us Canadians up here in our igloos just trying to survive the latest Siberian cold front.

SL: Stay warm.

AU: How do people find you and *The Dickies* online?

SL: I can be found on Instagram; slee9383 and *The Dickies* at official dickies or something like that. And there is a store for tees.

I think it's still up and running. Here are our links:

thedickies.com

facebook.com/TheDickiesOfficial

twitter.com/thedickiesband

instagram.com/the_dickies_official

Is that it? Can I go home now? Wait I am home. So I can go back to what I was doing?

See ya in the pit!

Band Photo Credit: Scott Sturdy

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AU: Is love transcendent or just some chemical reactions in the mind?

EN: Both. I often think about the uncanny fissure between our scientific understanding of biology and the intangible spiritual truths of things. I find it comforting to accept existing in that liminality. It's all magic in the end and even if there's a logical explanation for every trick in the book, some people would rather just suspend disbelief and be amazed than know how it's done.

Elan Noon, Lo-Fi Lover-boy

The Victoria based indie folk artist dispenses his thoughts on Valentine's Day, love songs and relationships with robots.

By Liam Crocker

Absolute Underground: Is Valentine's Day cool?

Elan Noon: I think it's cool, even if it can bring about negative feelings. It's been somewhat relegated to just another day for me as I don't have a partner, but at the same time I like that it calls upon you to meditate on who you love and who you receive love from—beyond the framework of a typical monogamous relationship. I'm lucky in that I have close enough friends that I don't feel like I need to find someone new to be romantically engaged with in order to feel seen and cared for.

AU: Are you aware of the pagan origins of the holiday? Does it bother you that most holidays have pagan origins or is that titillating?

EN: Admittedly, I know nothing of the origins. It doesn't bother me, personally. Should it? <laughs> I understand the desire people have to upend holidays that stem from archaic, or even problematic origins, but I guess I also see possibilities in ascribing new meaning to them based on personal experiences with family or otherwise.

AU: Have you ever written a love song?

EN: Lots. I think they come more easily to me than any other type of song. And to be cheesy as hell, I would consider the fact that almost any song could be spun as a love song. To write a song about something is essentially the same as putting a frame around it, which to me could be thought of as designating a significance thereof. Even a song made out of spite could be seen as a sort of an anti-love song. Inverted love. But yes, there's nothing quite like a good old-fashioned poetic longing.

AU: Tell me about your first love.

EN: I can think of two. The first was cool in that I had never experienced someone who I had a crush on admitting to having feelings for me. I think my being shy caused it to sputter out before it even began; but that's sort of the essence of a true first love. The second, I wish I hadn't been such a melodramatic, lovesick mess. I partially blame movies for having an unsightly impact on youth, in that romantic films can prescribe this sort of unhinged, catalytic behavior as being the mode through which various stages of a relationship are accessed. Which, of course, is not the case.

AU: Is love worth the heartbreak?

EN: I think it's funny how the answer is so

malleable. It just depends on where you're at with love as a phenomenon at the time. I imagine most people cycle through regarding it as the most pivotal accomplishment to then casting it aside in pursuit of other aspects of themselves and/or life again and again. At least that's what's tended to happen for me. But to answer your question... I'm not sure it's answerable. For me anyway. I think love is inevitable. As is heartbreak. Yin and yang. In constant exchange. I've sought after trying to find beauty on both sides of the coin.

AU: Could you fall in love with a robot?

EN: I wouldn't think so, but hey; call me modern. In all seriousness dating can be so abysmal these days that it wouldn't surprise me if, once A.I. can pass as having a convincingly unique personality that doesn't arbitrarily ghost you, we'll all be living

NAKED LUNCH

WITH LIAM

out Spike Jonze's *Her*. But maybe I'm just having a spell of jadedness. At any rate, I find it hard to

imagine a substitute for the reality of 'falling in love' with another human, in all its awkward, imperfect multi-modality. But again, given the current rate of technological advancements, who could honestly say they'd be surprised by this happening? I guess for now we can reserve the right to think we're too complex to be romantically rivaled by computers,

which is ironic considering most people today already seem to have a spellbound intimacy with their phones.

Check out Elan Noon's music on your preferred streaming platforms or support him directly at elannoon.bandcamp.com





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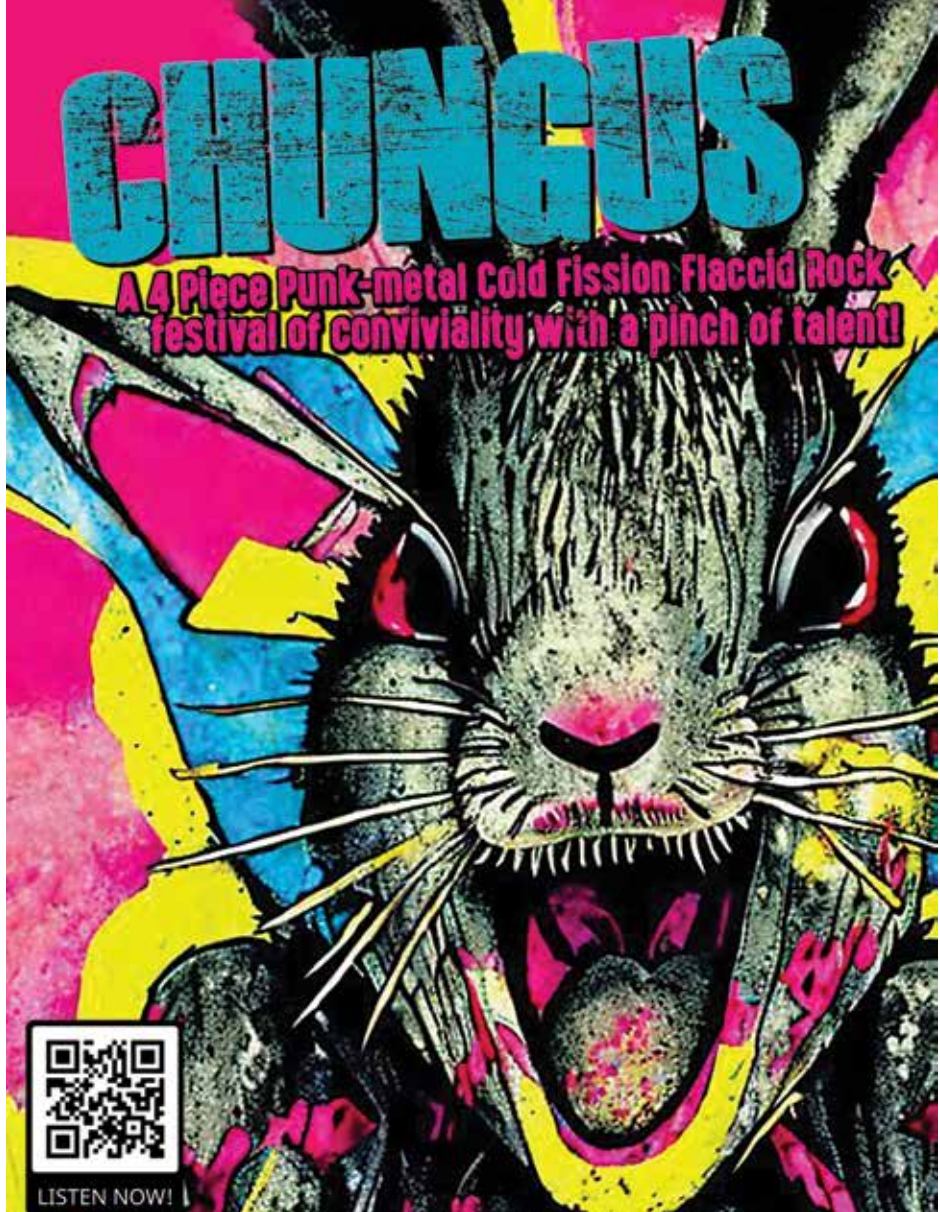
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TRICITY SMOKE
PORT COQUITLAM, BC

TriCity Smoke

by Iree-I

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

TriCity Smoke: TriCity Smoke is a micro craft cannabis producer in Port Coquitlam, BC and we cultivate the legendary cannabis that BC is renowned for. We grow each of our strains using only organic nutrients, meaning no pesticides or fungicides to produce the highest quality cannabis possible that is cleaner and healthier.

AU: When did you first start growing Cannabis?

TCS: TriCity Smoke's master growers have more than 35 years of growing experience. We have been cultivating cannabis for decades and we continue to evolve and refine our techniques, which we believe gives TriCity Smoke a unique perspective in the small batch craft cannabis space.

AU: What drew you to the Cannabis industry?

TCS: When we say it was for the love of the plant, we truly mean it. Two of TriCity Smoke founders do not consume cannabis! It's exciting to be part of an industry where you see firsthand the complexities of growing our favorite plant along with its many varieties and the level of knowledge and expertise required to ensure the plant thrives.

AU: As a consumer, why would I want to buy small batch craft cannabis instead of the big brand name stuff?

TCS: Craft cannabis producers focus on quality and growing in small areas with that extra level of daily care and attention to detail throughout the lifecycle of the plant. Hand trimming also differentiates small batch producers as it helps protect the integrity of the plant to consistently deliver a top quality product.

We are a proud member of the BC Craft Farmers Co-op. The Co-op is a network of growers, retailers, decision makers and consumers who want to ensure access to quality locally grown craft cannabis. They create resources to support and promote the craft cannabis industry in British Columbia, and we're very happy to work with small "mom n' pop shops" like Evergreen Cannabis in Kitsilano.

AU: What strains do you currently produce?

TCS: Citrus Rock, Lady Marmalade, Grease Monkey, Mandarin

CANNABIS CORNER

growing in your opinion?

TCS: Master growers are truly horticultural experts who have exceptional knowledge of the cannabis plant, its growth requirements, and disease management techniques. They possess the skills and knowledge to precisely control the number of nutrients, light, humidity, ventilation, and water the cannabis plant requires to thrive and take the necessary corrective measures if needed.

AU: What should I be looking for when choosing which strain is right for me?

TCS: I would first suggest thinking about the kind of experience you are looking to have. For those of us that smoke regularly, we have that favorite go-to strain that either relaxes us, puts us in a hyper creative mood, or lands somewhere in the middle. Once you have that experience in mind, consult with one of BCs great budtenders for their expert direction to take you on that type of journey.

AU: Where are your products available?

TCS: TriCity Smoke has been very fortunate to be supported by a number of private retail cannabis stores throughout BC, just check our Instagram @tricitysmoke for locations our product is available at or you can have it delivered anywhere in the province of BC from our friends at Evergreen Cannabis, Vancouver's 1st retail cannabis store Evergreen Cannabis [ecsvan.ca]

AU: How can people find you online?

www.tricitysmoke.com and on IG @tricitysmoke

Sunset and Blueberry Tang (available February 2023).

AU: Which one are you enjoying the most right now?

TCS: I'm really enjoying smoking my way through BCs finest Bud. Whenever I visit a retailer I love asking the budtender to recommend a local flower that is currently rocking their world. Lucky for me, there is always a great selection of BC Bud for them to recommend. Ask your friendly Budtender for a recommendation next time your picking up BC Bud.

AU: What makes an expert



JP: We started in San Diego in 1991. We are a combination of high school friend groups and out of town strangers. We started playing both the bar scene and the All-Ages scene in San Diego. Most bands stuck to one or the other. That proved to be helpful to us. San Diego is both a college town and a military town. That would eventually help us later in our touring years. We would see people in other cities and states that were stationed in San Diego or went to college here.

AU: Who's all in the band and what are their superpowers?

JP: Jon – Vocals: Pretends to sing well and write lyrics he thinks mean something.

Jonas – Guitar: Excellent

ability to know the difference between a chord substitution, an extension, or an alteration. He can hear a phony from the first chord.

Andy – Bass: Has the endurance to work 23 hours a day.

Craig – Sax: Uses rubber bands on his Sax to get that unique 3er wave ska sound.

Tony – Trumpet: Can make fun of anybody and everybody at any given moment. Has excellent timing and basing skills.

Dan – Trombone: His laugh is so loud and contagious; it will scare the negative energy right out of the room!

Steve – Drums: Can draw pictures and patterns on your skin and it will never disappear!

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

SKANK IT UP

currently on and are there any awesome new Ska bands people should check out?

JP: I guess we are considered a 3rd wave ska/punk band. I have heard people say we're currently in a 4th wave, but I don't think that term has really stuck like 3rd wave and 2-Tone did. There are, however, some excellent bands currently. I don't care for the 3rd wave brand. We're just a band.

AU: Have you guys ever played the Victoria Ska & Reggae Festival in BC, Canada? If not, you should.

JP: Never have but, an invitation would most likely get us there!

AU: The album is called 572 Days Later – Live at Earthling – What's the meaning behind the name? And where/what is Earthling?

JP: Earthling is the name of the studio where we recorded this one and "FunDayMental." The name refers to the amount of days that passed between our last show

performance and doing this record. We've never gone that long without playing music together. The worst 572 days of my life.

AU: Are you working on another new album?

JP: We're almost done with a brand-new album of 14 originals! It's going to be called "Cut Out the Noise."

buckonine.com
cleorecs.com



BUCK-O-NINE

572 Days Later - Live At Earthling

Interview with vocalist Jon Pebsworth

by Ira "Pass the Dutchie" Hunter

Ska Heroes Buck-O-Nine Overcome Obstacles Both Personal and Global To Release New Single & Album!

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

Jon Pebsworth: I am Jon Pebsworth. I sing and write the lyrics for *Buck-O-Nine*. The scale of my fame and/or infamy is too small for me to claim anything, at least from my perspective... but, according to the internet, I sing and write the lyrics for *Buck-O-Nine*.

AU: Give us a brief history of Buck-O-Nine.

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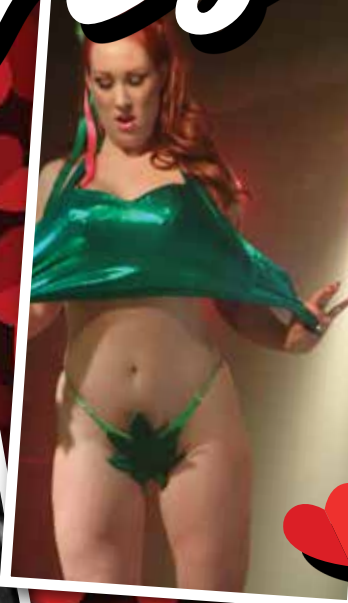
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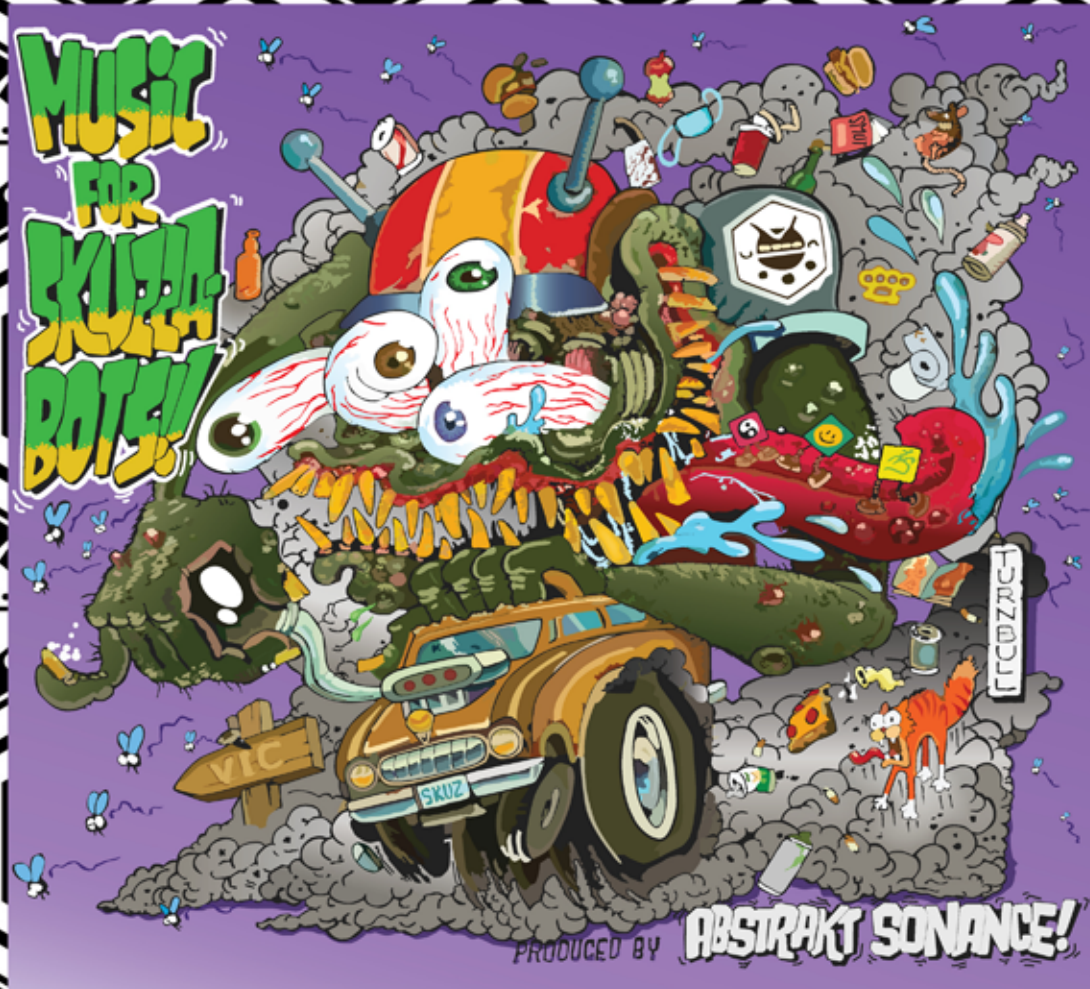
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Dastard

Interview with Max, Kyle and Emmett

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

Dastard: Max, Kyle and Emmett from Dastard. Most infamous for devouring bags of chips and painting objects chrome.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band Dastard.

D: We met each other through a shared skin flute instructor.

AU: What other bands have you and your bandmates been in?

D: The Mufasas, Tarpit, Armadiller, Yard Waste, the Graham and Roiko quartet, Omobuono, Abigail and the Vomitcocks.

AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?

D: Paint thinner 'n' lego.



AU: Any plans to release an album in the near future?

D: We're planning on releasing an EP as soon as possible.



AU: Any current songs you are stoked on?

Max: "Baby 9" by Sickboyarari and "Ego Death" by Exhalants.

Kyle: "Plastiphilia" by Dopplereffekt and "Dub Fire" by Aswad.

Emmett: "Kreepin ona bloc" by BBCROW and "Death Came Early this Year" by Piss for Pumpkin.

AU: Any plans for Valentine's Day this year?

D: Three homies, one foamie.

AU: Any dating/marriage advice for this post-pandemic world?

D: Game is game.

AU: Any fetishes to share?

Max: Oil derby, blue angel technician, SFR.

Kyle: Vehicular manslaughter, orbeez, SFR.

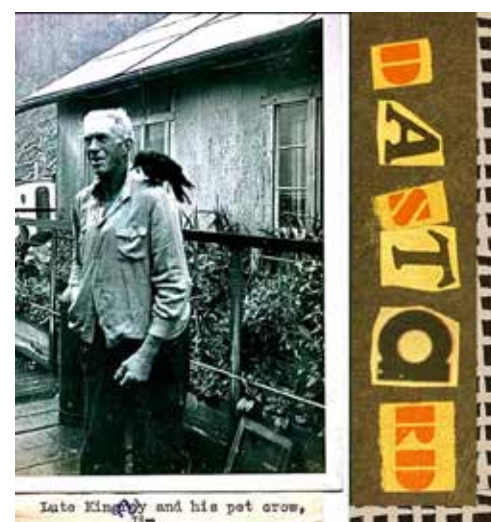
Emmett: Ass centaur, veterans, SFR.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

D: Nothing planned but we want Dyltwosix.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

D: Discount at the merch table for anyone wearing Japanese denim.



AU: How do people find you online?

@dastarrrrrrd on Instagram.

Dastard's album horselip is available on all platforms.



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CHURCH OF THE COSMIC SKULL

Multi dimensional 70's inspired psychedelic prog-rock

Interview by Matt Norris

Absolute Underground: Your music is a flashback into the past days of uninhibited creative atmospheres blending into a super group of original sounds and multiplex emotions. What are the inspirations behind your colorful unique songs and albums?

Church of the Cosmic Skull: Thank you! The inspirations are multiform and manifold - the songs that are channeled directly from the Cosmic Skull seem to be influenced by *Queen, Thin Lizzy, ELO, Pink Floyd, Black Sabbath, Dio, Rainbow, Elf, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Genesis, The Beach Boys, The Doors, Steely Dan, Mahavishnu Orchestra, ZZ Top, Jimi Hendrix, ABBA, David Bowie, Slade, Heart, Judas Priest, Ozzy, Fleetwood Mac, Kate Bush, Randy Newman, Billy Joel, Roy Harper, Peter Gabriel, Toto, Kansas, Gentle Giant*, the list goes on...

AU: In the afterlife would you rather return as the resurrection of the dinosaurs or be the first known alien on earth?

COTCS: The Skull dictates that it is not for us to decide what we should experience after the current phase of the reality-hallucination is extinguished through material death, but probably dinosaurs.

AU: Music is the ultimate.

COTCS: Certainly.

AU: For first time listeners to the band, what

would you suggest the readers to check out as a good representation of your styles?

COTCS: You might enjoy our Tele-Vision output, where there are many music videos and other visual stimuli to introduce you to the Church alongside the music: cosmicskull.org/television

AU: If I can be the best I can be, what would I be?

COTCS: You can achieve total self-actualization and mental freedom via our unique technological science-based transformation system, the 'Psychic Ascension To Humanity' or simply The Path: cosmicskull.org/path

AU: Your band calls Nottingham, England home, what is your favorite recipe from your hometown?

COTCS: You don't need to eat when you have Mother's Milk.

AU: If you could play a concert with any three bands, who would you do the concert with?

COTCS: We would certainly be open to *Queen, Thin Lizzy*, and *ELO* supporting us.

AU: Any mind-altering piece of advice you'd like to share with us?

COTCS: As mentioned before, join the Cosmic Family and embark on The Path to escape the grey forces of normality and become a living super-being: cosmicskull.org/path

AU: If I happened to hallucinate while listening to your album, what do you think I saw in my visions?

COTCS: The Light of the Cosmic Rainbow

AU: What is the greatest high in the world?

COTCS: Achieving total self-actualization and ego-death via The Path

AU: What does the near future hold for your band? Any new releases or tours?

COTCS: We are touring the USA East Coast and South from April 1st - 14th, various European

festivals and then Australia in August! Get tickets at cosmicskull.org/events

AU: Church of the Cosmic Skull was formed in 2016, What are your greatest achievements or personal favorite concerts?

COTCS: The fact that we have remained completely independent despite offers from major labels and are able to tour internationally proves that there is a sea change in the industry - you can do it yourself - as long as you have the magical combination of self-belief, immeasurable talent, and unstoppable charisma.

AU: What is your description of the band?

COTCS: We are a 7-piece rock group and spiritual organization open to all who observe the 7 Objects. Join us: cosmicskull.org

AU: you could play a concert one of three different locations: the moon, Area 51 or inside King Tut's tomb which would you choose?

COTCS: They all sound fairly impractical and unlikely to have the equipment that we require for 7 members singing in perfect harmony, but we could certainly attempt an acoustic session in the pyramid.

AU: Love is?

COTCS: In our hearts.

AU: Any self promotion you'd like to share?

COTCS: Yes, it really is imperative to the future of music and humankind that you visit and share the following:



Watch: cosmicskull.org/television

Listen: cosmicskull.org/listen

Tickets: cosmicskull.org/events

Join us: cosmicskull.org/path

AU: Thank you for your creative awesomeness and enlightenment.

COTCS: Thank you!

Church of the Cosmic Skull is:

Bill Fisher - guitar, vocals

Joanne Joyce - vocals

Caroline Cawley - vocals

Michael Wetherburn - keyboards, vocals

Marty Fisher - guitar, vocals

Sam Lloyd - bass, vocals

Laurence Stone - drums, vocals

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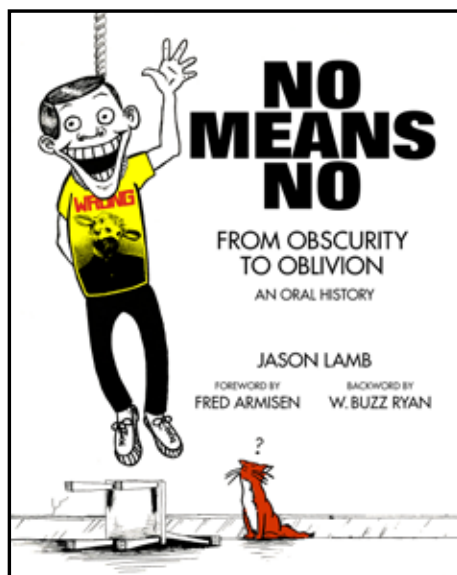
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NOMEANSNO

From Obscurity to Oblivion: An Oral History

Interview with author Jason Lamb

By Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for? What are your skills to pay tha billz?

Jason Lamb: I'm Jason Lamb - probably best known for being on the morning show on The Zone @ 91-3 radio in Victoria BC, as well as the producer and host of 'The Punk Show on The Zone'. Soon hopefully I'll be known as the author of a cool book about *NoMeansNo*.

AU: When was your first introduction to punk rock?

JL: Probably when I was about 13 years old, and a friend played me a cassette of the *Dayglo Abortions'* Feed Us A Fetus album. From there I started collecting punk records and started going to shows when I was about 16.

AU: Living in Victoria, what were your early encounters with the band *NoMeansNo*? What were your first impressions of their music?

JL: First time I saw them was I think 1988 - maybe FOE Hall? I thought they were old men, and they blew my mind!

AU: How would you describe *NoMeansNo* to the uninitiated?

JL: The greatest punk band you've never heard of. They are unlike any other band on the planet.

AU: Tell us about the genesis of your *NoMeansNo* book project?

JL: I had interviewed John Wright and Tom Holliston of *NMN* separately on my Punk Show and then I was invited to interview them both a few hours before they were inducted into the Western Canadian Music Hall of Fame in 2015.

That was my first introduction to them. In 2019 I decided I wanted to write a book about them, and forwarded a proposal to Melanie Kaye, who is my friend and was their publicist. I was not expecting anything to come of it, but my friend (and Victoria music scene legend,) Scott Henderson contacted the guys on my behalf and told them if they were ever going to be open to this kind of thing, then I was the guy to do it. This book would never have happened without Scott's help. I'm forever indebted to him.

AU: What is the title of the book, what publisher will be printing it, and who helped you write it?

JL: It's called *NoMeansNo - From Obscurity to Oblivion - An Oral History*. It's being published by PM Press out of the USA (I couldn't get a Canadian publisher interested!) I had an enormous amount of help editing it from Paul Prescott, who gets a credit on the cover.

AU: What does *From Obscurity to Oblivion* mean to you? Who came up with the title?

JL: The title comes from a line that John Wright wrote that appears in the liner notes of their album "All Roads Lead to Ausfahrt," John suggested it as a title, and it was perfect. I had thought of calling it, "This Story Must Be Told" (a *NMN* song title,) but this one fit better.

AU: How did you get Fred Armisen to write the forward?

JL: I knew Fred was a big *NMN* fan, and it was actually Bob from *DEVO* who contacted him on my behalf. I was originally just going to interview Fred for the book, but I decided to ask him to write the forward, and after thinking about it - he said yes!

AU: The backword is by W. Buzz Ryan. Who is that for those who don't know?

JL: W. Buzz Ryan is the alter-ego of *NoMeansNo*'s second guitarist Tom Holliston. W. Buzz wrote hilarious and completely fake press releases, liner notes and more during most of *NMN*'s career. And he came out of hiding to write the 'backword' for my book. Nobody knows where he is now.

AU: What makes this book unique in the world of punk books?

JL: There are a lot of quirky things that I think will set this book apart from other oral and visual histories. *NMN* was always very funny, kind of mysterious, sometimes dark and usually tongue in cheek.

I tried to make the book have a similar aesthetic.

AU: What sort of access to the band members did you receive? Were you camping out at their houses drinking beer for weeks?

JL: <laughs> It was a long and delicate process getting to know these guys, but I can now say they are all my friends, which still blows my mind.

I've stayed with John and Tom in Powell River several times now and have visited Rob in Vancouver many. Andy Kerr lives in Amsterdam, but we have become good friends through social media, phone calls, Skype etc. I look forward to finally meeting him this Spring. John Wright brews fantastic beer.

AU: How long did it take you and how many interviews did you conduct?

JL: It's taken almost exactly three years since I got the green light from the Wright brothers. I interviewed nearly 500 people during that time, plus 'met' another 300 or so folks and fans

around the world who provided photos, posters, etc. I ended up gathering 21,000 unique images that I had to whittle down to several hundred for the final book.

AU: Who are some of the musicians and people who provided *NoMeansNo* stories for the book?

JL: Name dropping time! Beyond the band themselves and all of the folks in their universe... Ian MacKaye of *Fugazi*, Mike Watt, Kim Thayil of *Soundgarden*, Matt Skiba, Donita Sparks of *L7*, Bob Wiseman, Fat Mike, Joe Shithead, author China Mieville, Jello Biafra...It's a very long list. You'll need to buy the book to see them all!

AU: Who were you most surprised to learn was a hardcore *NoMeansNo* fan?

JL: There are so many, some of whom I wasn't able to track down for quotes. But the *Green Day* guys are all big fans. Bruce Cockburn, I heard he is a fan. Dave Grohl, John Darnielle of *The Mountain Goats*, comedian Bill Hader.

AU: What is the proper way to write the band name?

JL: <laughs> This is an interesting question. I've concluded that the proper way (and the way I spelled it throughout the book) is *NoMeansNo*. However, even the band themselves have done it differently over the years: *No Means No*, *NoMeansno*, *NOMEANSNO*, etc. It's all so goddamn confusing!

AU: Give us a little tease of what people can expect when they read the book.

JL: If you're a hardcore fan, you're going to have most if not all of your questions answered. It's the full story, from their birth to their retirement and everything in between. Every album and tour is covered. There are stories in it that even the most die-hard *NMN* fan has never heard before.

AU: Did you unearth some archival gems and wicked gig posters and photos as well?

JL: Hundreds and hundreds of them.

AU: Any chance the band will get back together to play the book launch?



Photo Credit: Curtis Stankalis

JL: The chances of that happening are about as close to ZERO as you could imagine.

AU: What were a couple things you learned about the band while researching this project that really blew your mind.

JL: They are all really nice guys and hilarious. They intentionally avoided mainstream success, yet not always. They could not have succeeded the way they did without the people around them - promoters, sound guys, roadies, friends etc. *NoMeansNo* was much larger than the sum of its small parts.

AU: Was this the hardest or the most enjoyable thing you ever did?

JL: It was both. I have never taken on anything even close to the size of this project. It was (and is) an incredible adventure. There has been enormous stress, but has been incredibly rewarding. It has quite literally changed my life.

AU: Do you have a release date for the book?

JL: Looks like November 2023. That's the date that PM Press is aiming for. The book is up for pre-order already, but in early fall there

will be a Kickstarter pre-sale launched with goodies like signed copies, shirts etc. made available.

AU: How can people get a hold of the book when it comes out?

JL: Go to pmpress.org and search '*NoMeansno*' - it is also available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble etc. and will be in bookstores of course. It will also be distributed in Europe, so *NMN* fans there won't get boned on shipping.

AU: Who would you like to thank for helping you get this book completed?

JL: There are literally hundreds of people who helped make this happen, and they're all thanked in the book. But in particular - Paul Prescott, Scott Henderson, John Wright, Rob Wright, Andy Kerr and Tom Holliston.

AU: Facebook? Websites?

JL:

pmpress.org

'NoMeansNo - We're So Wright We're Wrong'

page on Facebook,

"NoMeansNoThing," podcast





MY BLOODY VALENTINE

Interview with Soundtrack Composer Paul Zaza



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

Paul Zaza: Canadian Film Composer. Probably best known for movie scores for these films:

Murder By Decree

Porky's

Prom Night

A Christmas Story

My Bloody Valentine

AU: How did you first get inspired to work on film scores?

PZ: Just by closely observing and studying the sound in movies as a kid.

AU: Please share some career highlights to date?

PZ: Too many to list here.

AU: How did you get the job working on the 80's cult classic horror film *My Bloody Valentine*?

PZ: They just called me out of the blue. I didn't



go after the job.

AU: What was the director George Mihalka like to work with?

PZ: He was terrific. Very creative and a straight shooter who knew exactly what he was doing.

AU: What kind of instruments and elements did you incorporate into the score for *My Bloody Valentine*?

PZ: Some early synthesizers and a small orchestra.

AU: What made *My Bloody Valentine* a unique horror film at the time?

PZ: It was real; No CGI, animation or special effects.

AU: Previous to *My Bloody Valentine* you did the score for another horror film, *Prom Night*, do you enjoy creating horror soundtracks?

PZ: I somehow got typecast as a horror soundtrack composer even though I had done many other genres.

AU: Were most of the movies and directors you were working with at the beginning Canadian productions and Canadian directors?

PZ: Yes, with the exception of Bob Clark, who was an American.

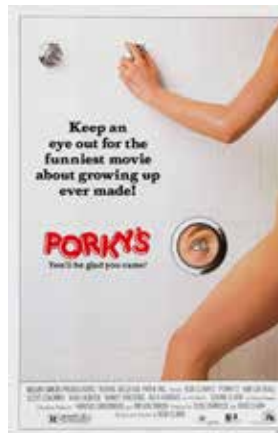
AU: You also worked with legendary director Bob Clark on such classics as *Porky's* and *A Christmas Story*. How were those experiences?

PZ: Hectic.

AU: Did you enjoy the 3-D remake of *My Bloody Valentine*? I know I was ducking and dodging flying pick-axes in the theatre.

PZ: I never saw it.

AU: What can you tell our readers about the documentary



involvement with that?

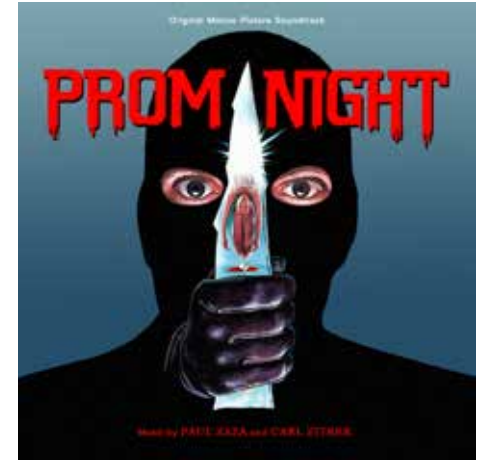
PZ: It was a good time. Also, nice to see George and the old team after so long.

AU: What soundtrack scores that you worked on are you most proud of?

PZ: *Murder By Decree*.

AU: Do you collect soundtracks on vinyl? If so, any gems in your collection that you are exceptionally proud of?

PZ: Not really.



AU: Did you ever meet actor Peter Cowper who played Harry Warden/The Miner? If so what is he like in real life?

PZ: No.

AU: What do you think the lasting legacy of *My Bloody Valentine* is?

PZ: People just like the small town vibe and

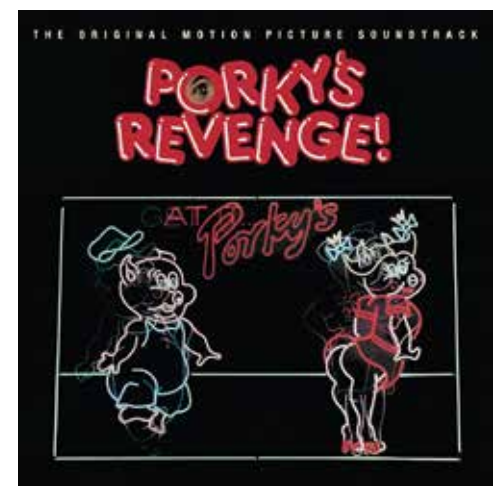


honesty of the film.

AU: Have you heard anything about the potential *My Bloody Valentine* sequel called *Valentine Bluffs*?

PZ: No.

www.paulzaza.com



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DAYGLO ABORTIONS

Wake Up, It's Time to Die

Interview with Murray "The Cretin" Acton (guitar/vocals) conducted summer 2019 by Jason Flower.

Describe the exact moment you stopped being the Sickfucks and started being the Dayglo Abortions.

The Sickfucks essentially fizzled out in 1980 because our singer, "Anne Archy," felt I was writing songs/lyrics that she didn't want to sing. Our last gig (at the old Smilin' Buddha in Vancouver) was billed as a battle of the bands with the winner receiving "free advertising for a year." We apparently won the battle so at the end of the night the promoter came up to me and said "Congratulations, here's your free advertising kid, knock yourself out," then handed me a case of DayGlo brand, emergency-orange spray paint. To be honest, I was stoked. I figured, what fun, I'm gonna cover Victoria with my political commentary.

I had been jamming in my basement with Brian "Bonehead" Whitehead on drums and Trevor "Spud" Hagen from the Sickfucks on bass. Bonehead and I had actually jammed together before the Sickfucks were even formed, as he sang in Airborne, the prog-rock group I had circa 1978. I had a handful of particularly edgy songs, much heavier than the ones the Sickfucks had been playing, and one day Bonehead and I came up with the brilliant idea of starting a band that would be a parody of punk rock and call itself the "Dayglo ____" whatever the most frequently used word on the front page of the paper that day was. We went out and found the paper, and it just happened to be the day that a clinic in Montreal was raided by police for performing abortions

(which I'm assuming were illegal at the time in Canada). It was a message from God. My path in life was suddenly very clear. The Dayglo Abortions was to be my mission.

Why were there two different spellings of the band's name at the beginning?

The reason we were initially called the "Dayglo Abortions" instead of the "Dayglo Abortions" is simple. By the time we got around to putting out an album I had used up all the spray paint so there was no can lying around to check the spelling. Later, after the first album was released, I found a can and figured, "What the fuck!? I can admit being wrong – it doesn't happen much, but I'm willing to own it when I am."

Can you tell us something about recording the first album in Victoria with Nick Jones (Pointed Sticks) and Colin Griffiths (Wasted Lives, U-J3RK5) at Legacy?

That was an experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. I learned a lot from them (I'm sure they figured that we were a bunch of

highly disturbed young delinquents – we were) and much of what I learned there has taken years to sink in. I had a vision of making weird abrasive anti-social noise; Nick and Colin come in with studio experience, plus they both played in awesome Vancouver punk bands, and had multiple recordings under their belt. They actually knew what would work in the studio and even though I remember pushing for heavier sound, it was their sensible logic that made *Out of the Womb* sound the way it does. Nick did the harmony backups and Colin played the organ at the beginning of "I'm My Own God." That album still stands alone, and I am very proud to have been a part of it.

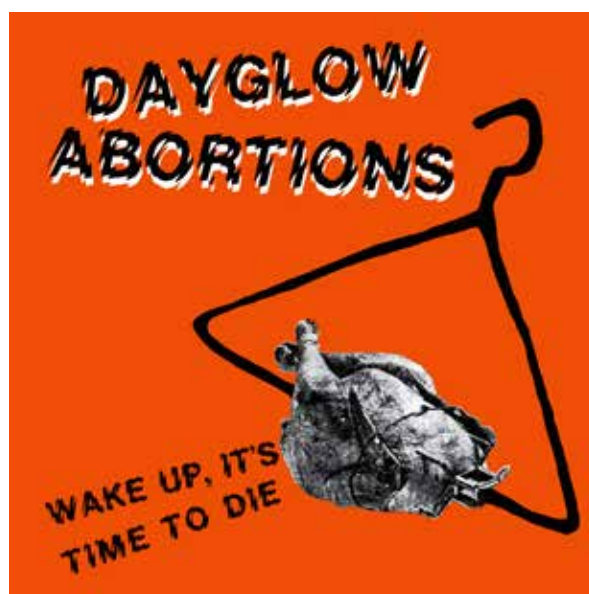
I understand the LPs were originally sold in used LP jackets up until you printed your own?

Yes, we had the vinyl but the sleeves hadn't been printed yet. We started selling them out of Scott Henderson's record store (Richard's Records) with random covers from the delete bin. There was Dionne Warwick's *Out of My Womb*, and Captain & Tennille's *Out of Our Womb*. I thought it was really funny. Some people did not.

Early on in Victoria, *Out of the Womb* was sold in a paper bag due to the cover. What was the response when the LP came out?

Yes, the response was quite something. We obviously struck a nerve. A local feminist group known as FLAG broke the front window of Richard's Records because of the cover. The cover apparently meant something very different to them than I had intended it to mean. They also found out that I was going to Camosun College, so a group of them

showed up there and had a protest. My physics professor asked me to leave class and go and deal with them. That was really funny, as they were screaming the most abusive shit at me and all I could do was laugh at them. Every time I went from class to the cafeteria they were chanting stuff like "Bury him in the sand and mow his head off with a lawnmower." They made threats to any



local music store that carried the album, so A&B Sound did up their whole window display with copies. I have to thank all those people and their misguided hatred for giving me the early press that got us on the map.

Describe the scenario for recording the *Wake Up, It's Time to Die* EP with Scott.

Metropole was super rad. It was in the basement of an old clothing store owned by two really cool people. They were very nice to us and rented us a spot in their basement. It was very musty and dusty and we were surrounded by racks of old clothes. It damped the sound down really nice because two of the walls were brick. We had really shitty gear, but we did have a small PA and we practised three or more times a week. Scott came in with his Tascam 4-track reel-to-reel and a little mixer. We recorded the drums and bass to two tracks in stereo, then overdubbed the guitar and vocals in mono on the last two tracks. It's real raw. I always liked it. I noticed over the years people trying to get that early 80s sound with everything over-driven and packed into the available bandwidth. There are other similar punk recordings done back then that I loved too, especially the Bad Brains' early stuff. Fucking amazing and very unique sounding. They were very different from the other bands.

How do you summarize those early days for the group?

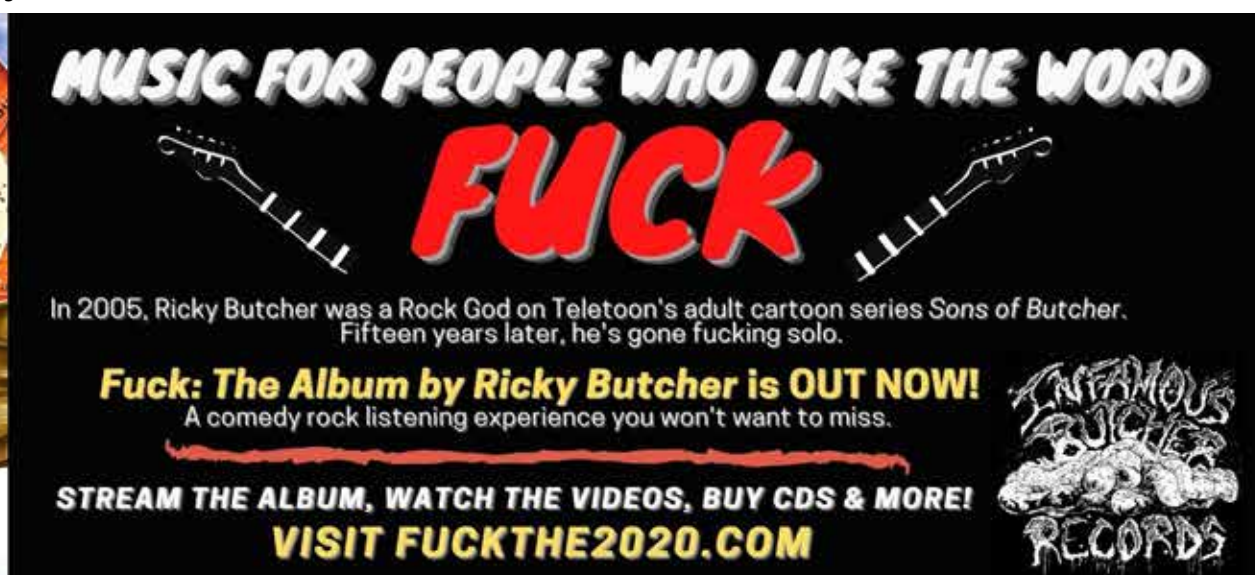
We weren't popular at first. Very far from it. But we kept getting publicity. Bad publicity. I guess it helped that we started to get better as a band. When we played other towns they liked us, just not in Victoria so much. Eventually though, Victoria gave in once we were playing in the States and all across Canada, and people either liked us or protested outside our shows, which just attracted more people.


What was the biggest show you ever played and what keeps you going at it today?

That would be the Montebello Rockfest in Quebec. There were over 200,000 people there. They had us on the indie stage at 9:00 on a Friday night when there were no bands playing on the big stages (it was a gift from the promoter) there were probably 100,000 people watching us.

The reason I keep doing this is because it's what I am supposed to be doing. In my own way, I can fight the evil in the world, and convince others to join me in that battle. I've known this since I was a little kid.

Photo Credit: Gregor Schmidt





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BACKSTAGE PASS - VENUE PROFILE



Catching up with The Phoenix -Victoria BC

By John Carlow

A couple of years ago the Phoenix Bar and Grill opened its doors to the bands who had called Logan's home for so many years. I met the manager/owner Jennie Turner back when weekends started booking up, at a time when not all venues had reopened and there was still a lot of uncertainty about live music in small spaces. Her and her staff have always been welcoming; making it easier to get back into shooting live music. I wanted to check in and see how it was going and to find out what is in store for the new year.

AU: What currently is the role of the Phoenix as far as the live music scene in Victoria goes?

JT: We are a little pub that showcases live, local music four to five times a month.

AU: How many shows do you think you have put through the doors since starting?

JT: I'd say roughly 150. We've been throwing shows since 2017 but it's only been a regular weekend thing for the last few years.

AU: I imagine you have learned a lot since starting to host live music?

JT: Yes, I most certainly have. The liquor industry is one thing, the music industry is quite another. Like any business you will interact with many

personalities, sometimes complex issues, and with live music also comes live audiences. Hats off to local organizers of events, festivals and fundraisers that have taken place here.

AU: Has it been predominantly punk/metal bands that take to the Phoenix? Or a mix of all kinds of music?

JT: We showcase all types of music, however, since the closing of Logan's, the punk and metal bands needed somewhere to play, and there's a lot of them! We have hosted bluegrass, folk, soul, funk, and more.

AU: Given that venues have all restarted up schedules now, do you get fewer bands checking out the space for shows?

JT: No, if anything we are busier. We're almost booked up for 2023, and January isn't over yet! I think we stand out because bands receive 100% of their door fee, in a 150-seater, with no overhead rental cost for the room. Granted, we don't have a sound engineer or sound equipment, however that gives bands the freedom to choose their own sound.

AU: What shows have stood out to date?

JT: One show that stands out is the B.A Johnston show in June 2022. That was a fun show! The *Angry Snowmans* are always a wonderful time, *Fully Crazed* is one of our favourites, *Dead Rights*, *The Gnar Gnars*, *Torrefy* and *Danezig* have always put on killer shows. The first annual Punk Fest in August was incredible too with live acts, acoustic sets and an amazing punk

market.

AU: Funny, unusual incidents?

JT: B.A Johnston getting the entire pub into our 65sq/ft men's bathroom for his encore ranks up there as pretty unusual.

AU: Have you or your staff discovered some personal new favourites?

JT: We have all become fans of *Razorvoice*, *The Poubelles*, *My Son the Hurricane*, *Mar Mar and the Grits*, *The Grinning Barretts*, and *The Poor Choices* to name just a few.

AU: Do you still have to deal with noise complaints?

JT: Not recently, but knock-on wood! Although, there was Covid, the heavy rains, finding staff, and equipment issues. So there's always challenges.

AU: What are your plans now as far as having more live music events in the future?

JT: The need for a community venue like this in the city is so important. As long as we have the space for bands to play, we hope to bring in live music. We have also seen a gathering place evolve. Each show is like a reunion for some and a space for so much interaction, close to and away from the stage.

AU: Will you be investing more into facilitating more live events?

JT: The liquor industry has taken a beating the past few years. We're going to take it slow for the next little bit, so we keep our heads above water.

AU: Thoughts to send out to the bands and audiences that have been part of the Phoenix Bar and Grill live scene?

JT: Thank you. From the bottom of my family's, my staffs and my heart, thank you. The punk and metal community are a hidden gem, in attitude, in ethics and in soul. We are proud to be a place that bands can call home, and our door is always open! (Except on Sunday! We are closed on Sundays!)

Chat/Photographs: John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography





RAW CULT

Peace, Love & Disorder.

RAW CULT is a graphic driven clothing company, drawing inspiration and influence from punk ideologies, hip hop culture and an offbeat way of life. Just Say No To Predictable Fashion.

AU: Who are we talking to?

You're talking to Lando, Forest Ranger at RAW CULT.

AU: What is the origin story of your company RAW CULT?

RAW CULT was born in the summer of 2019 and the official launch party took place at Foufounes Électriques, featuring ILL Bill, Lord Goat & DJ Eclipse of Non Phixion. Those cats are some of my favourite MCs and DJ, and to have them perform at my brand launch, at the legendary Foufs, was a huge honour, to say

the least.

AU: What is RAW CULT all about?

Dope art. Dope clothing. 6 shot espressos. Peace, love and disorder.

AU: What makes RAW CULT unique?

We don't necessarily follow the seasonal drop agenda that the fashion industry abides by. We release when the stoke and the time is right. We also work with an eclectic array of artists, so the RAW CULT vibe may not have the same flavour from one release to another. We also don't do fucking tote bags. Sorry.

AU: Do you come up with the designs yourself or do you have a crew that helps out?

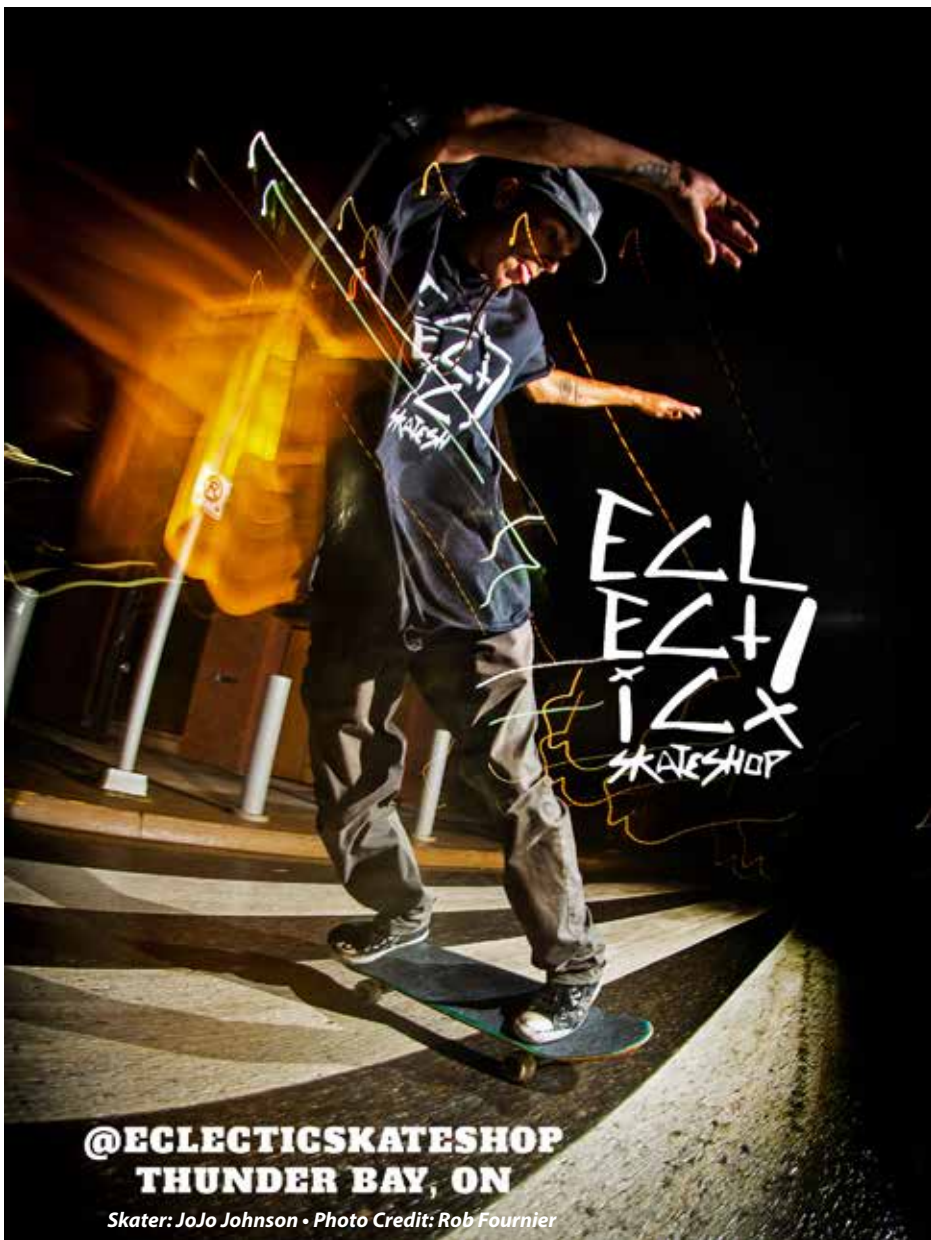
I come up with all of the design ideas, but the artwork is brought to life by artists that I dig.

AU: Where is RAW CULT clothing available? Any stores carrying your merch?

It's forever available in the webhole at www.rawcult.ca and in the flesh at Revolution 514 Skateshop, in Montreal.

AU: Can you tell us about some of the collaborations you've done over the years?

I did a collaboration with the hip hop group, Onyx, back in 2020. That kinda set the pace and the bar high for future collabs. Following that, I worked with Michel 'Away' Langevin, the drummer of the thrash metal band, Voivod. Michel is not only an incredible, super influential drummer, but also an amazing artist and such a nice person. He's responsible for doing all of Voivod's mind blowing artwork, going all the way back to the early 80s. So, he created a design that I call the RAW CULTerrestrial. I also did a collaboration with Mike IX from Eyehategod. It's definitely one of a kind, just like the man himself.



BUSINESS PROFILE



AU: Do you skateboard?

Yes, indeed. It's been a big part of my life for at least 30 years.

AU: Any special events or drops planned in the near future that RAW CULT will be involved with?

By the time your next issue drops, a really cool collaboration project with Ross Hell will have dropped. Ross is a really awesome tattoo artist based out of London, England—check him out! Our next pop-up is at Montreal Comiccon on January. 28th & 29th and there will be some special events happening this spring and summer.

AU: Any fetishes to share?

That's a good one.

AU: Any dating/marriage advice for this post-

pandemic world?

Whatever your local pastor suggests.

AU: Any plans for Valentine's Day this year?

Fetishes.

AU: Anything else to promote?

Freethinking.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

You likely have a very real, tangible copy of Absolute Underground in your hands right now. You're holding something very special that is way cooler than your phone will ever be. Ira and Absolute Underground RULE!

AU: How do people find you online?

Dial www.rawcult.ca and @rawcultdnf on IG. You can also prank call us at 514-439-CULT. Leave a detailed message.





HERON

Empires of Ash

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Good day fellow bird lovers, where are you now? Set the scene for the readers. What's just outside the windows?

Heron: Jamie is in Mission at his home office watching a group of construction workers across the street try not to die while building a four-storey apartment in the snow. Ross is no doubt knee-deep in a plumbing setup just down the road. Scott is looking through the windshield of his work truck as he drives all around the Lower Mainland and Bina is at her home in Gibsons, building something in her art room and enjoying the silence.

AU: The new record "Empires of Ash" has dropped! This is huge. The cover art is superb, with the purple encased figures entering the distraught city scene. Can you unpack your meaning of the cover art?

H: The imagery is in reference to the impermanence of all humankind's great works. Every glorious victory, every sky-reaching monument, every pile of treasure soaked in blood will be ground down by the gears of time to become dust and ash. Still, amongst all this destruction, there are three figures that walk through the ruins of the old world – on their way

to create a new one. The black hole in the distance is a reminder that this new world will also eventually end. Such is the way of things. Ups and downs. Ebbs and flows.

AU: How did the record launch gig at Bullet Farm go? What is your most striking memory of the night?

H: The night went fantastic, and we were happy to play for a very energetic crowd. To see them circling pitting, thrashing, and generally being maniacs was very encouraging. The kids today are going to be alright, but our old backs hurt just watching them.

AU: Touring plans for the record? Upcoming shows?

H: Our plans currently are to play a few local shows here and there and just relax and focus on our other projects. There is always a strange feeling of "Now what?" after we write and record an album we just poured everything we had into it, so working in other genres and with other musicians helps gets us back in the head space to write music together again.

AU: There is a lot of space to reflect in the music, the ideas seem to flow gradually, measured. And in the lyrics themselves; solitude, reflections on time passing. Can you tell us about how the album came to be, thematically? And how you found inspiration to capture these moods and soundscapes on tape?

H: I think this album made us think less about the heaviness and more about the presence. A more settled feeling in our nothingness than a race for deep meaning. We've had to use our music as creative screensavers - finding insights and hope amidst this pandemic. Impending doom was a feeling felt by all and we were paying more

attention to the outside world while being forced to stay away from it. But hope is a part of doom and after we emerged from the pandemic we all held onto that hope tighter than we did before.

AU: What is something you learned on this recording session that surprised you? That you'd like to pass on to fellow musicians, or possibly even for a listener of this album.

H: We really learned the importance of a great sound engineer this time around. Michael Kraushaar recorded our last album as well and he is always professional and encouraging but this time he had so many ideas about the techniques to best record us: different rooms, different microphone types and placements, interesting pedals and filters - Michael came to work every day brimming with ideas and enthusiasm.

AU: What's a book you've read and really enjoyed, found thought provoking in the last few months? Anything goes!

H: *Blood Music* by Greg Bear is a science fiction novel about a self-aware infection that merges with the cells in your body and makes them "sing" to you. It's weirder than it sounds. Also check out Jisei which are poems that are traditionally written when the author's death is imminent. We have included a translation of one below:

Empty-handed I entered the world

Barefoot I leave it.

My coming, my going —

Two simple happenings

That got entangled.

— Kozan Ichikyo (1283–1360)

AU: In the last few days we saw the scientists who run the The Doomsday Clock, that predicts how close humanity is to nuclear war – set it closer to human doom than every before. They even have a playlist! Is there film or set of visuals that comes to mind for you,

ABSOLUTE METAL

when you hear this album? Perhaps that we could see in an upcoming video?

H: The title "Empires of Ash" was inspired by a series of cheap post apocalyptic movies filmed in the Lower Mainland. Jamie watched them a bunch of times on cable in the 90's (mostly because he was a burgeoning teenage pervert and they had brief nudity). The title has been bouncing around in his head for decades and fit in nicely with the overall lyrical themes of impermanence, decay, and change. A video set in the ravaged ruins of the West Coast sounds like a



great idea to us!

AU: Thank you for taking the time today to reflect on and share your music.

H: Thank for your interest in our music and for all that Absolute Underground does for the independent music scene.

AU: Last words and messages to the readers of this magazine?


H: We're here for a good time, not a long time, so have a good time, the sun can't shine every day.

For giggles here is the playlist: thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/doomsday-clock-playlist/heronsludge.bandcamp.com/music





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ANTI-FLAG

“Lies They Tell Our Children”

Interview with Bassist/Vocalist Chris #2
By Mal Content

AU: Please introduce yourself to our readers in the frozen wastes of Canada.

Chris #2: I'm Chris #2, and I play bass and sing in a punk band from Pittsburgh, PA called *Anti-Flag*.

AU: Why was it decided you would be Chris #2? Did you lose an arm wrestle?

C2: There are two guys named Chris in the band, and Head was there first. Dibs. Classic dibs.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk rock?

C2: A cassette tape from a cousin of mine. It had *Cringer* on side A and *Bad Religion's* “80-85” on the other. Then from there I got *Dead Kennedy's* “Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death,” and *Green Day's* “39 Smooth.” They took the ideology I loved from the *Cringer* and *BR* tape, and *DK* and *Green Day* spoke to a 13-year-old me more directly. They changed my life forever.

AU: What is the origin story of *Anti-Flag*?

C2: Pretty hard to summarize 30 years, but the band started and still exists as an ANTI-WAR statement. Pittsburgh was a town with very little opportunity at the time, as it had been ravaged by capitalist expansion and the steel industry leaving. To most of the poor young people in the town the military was the only option to get out. So we had friends signing up, recruiters pressuring us and our families to sign up, so we chose punk rock and this band to provide space for us to be able to see the world in another way.

AU: Many bands say they try to stay out of politics, why did you feel it was important to do the opposite and be extra political?

C2: Because it's what's inspiring to us. The only job of the musician or artist is to be true to themselves, so following this path and singing these songs is an extension of that attempt.

AU: Please tell us all about your latest album, “Lies They Tell Our Children,” that recently came out on Spinefarm Records.

C2: It's a concept album, and with each song we're actively trying to trace back the historical moment, political policy and/or corporate cultural shift that lead us to the world we live in today. It's an attempt to show that a lot of these issues are relatively new. Knowing reality can become an empowering thing, and our ability to challenge and change these things becomes clearer when we have a better understanding of why and how these injustices exist.

AU: Can you please take us through the track list and briefly comment on each song or tell us about some of the stand-out tracks that you are most stoked on.

C2:
Sold Everything - Created to be almost a guide map of the issues and subject matter of the album.

Modern Meta Medicine – A song tracing back the origins of the American for-profit healthcare system.
Laugh. Cry. Smile. Die. - The album title comes from a 1970's car advertisement. All of the major oil companies at one point had science departments that actively studied the effects of their product on the planet. When they found out where the use of fossil fuels would lead us, they shut down those science divisions and spent all of that money on marketing and disinformation campaigns to confuse the public on the issues of the climate crisis. This is the beginnings of that campaign.

The Fight of Our Lives - this song looks at the shifting of global economics towards economies based on war. The corporate deregulation of and media blitz that surrounds war and allows it to drive our economic system.

Victory or Death – This song aims to serve as homage to the long history of activists and agitators that disrupted a status quo of violence, racism, and greed. Ones often whitewashed, or made out to be less radical than they truly were, or even written out of and forgotten by history as a whole.

The Hazardous - The American banking practice of red-lining was and is known to be racist. Its impact today is often unspoken of.

Red-lined neighborhoods experience the effects of the climate crisis more, as on average these neighborhoods are hotter because they were not invested in, provided green spaces and parks, or have had their trees cut down to help law enforcement be able to track “criminals” more easily.

Shallow Graves - The violent history of America begets its violent present begets its violent future. Slaughtering and murdering native peoples made room for slavery's expansion, which made room for Chinese migrant abuse, which made room for an immigration program abusing Mexican males, all of which lead to the immoral policies in effect currently.

Work & Struggle – A song tracing labor movements. There is a heavy Pittsburgh influence on this song.

NVREVR - The acknowledgment of both being a beneficiary and a victim of a hyper-capitalist system. The marketing campaign of the American dream, tracing back where that idea came from and why.

Only In My Head – About for-profit prison systems, and America as the prison house of nations. It also brings up a little-known story of how money set aside for affordable housing in New York State was how the first for-profit prison was built.

AU: What are some of the lies they tell our

children?

C2: See above.

AU: What are your thoughts on the current political happenings in the world?

C2: The world is majorly fucked. But at the same time, we have so much hope. We meet people on a daily basis who are doing the real, tangible work to be kind, to be radical, to create a more egalitarian and just world. We've got a long way to go, but there are mass movements of people globally challenging us all to leave things better than we found them.

AU: Do you approach the songs you create differently whether the republicans or the democrats are in power, or do you hold them both equally accountable?

C2: There is no approach that varies based on Coke and Pepsi politics or one party systems that pose as two, a president, prime minister, pope or CIA

kingpin. They don't dictate the art. Part of the privilege of our years as a band is perspective, we actively try to not let party politics influence the things that the band creates and shares.

AU: In your opinion, what are the solutions to some of the biggest problems in the world today and what can people do to make a difference for our future?

C2: Remove corporate money from politics. If you have politicians working in the interest of votes, and not using campaign finance for their own personal wealth, I believe you would see a much different world.

AU: How have things changed for the band since the beginning days when I assume you used to sleep on floors at either the kitty-litter castle or the pit-bull palace a few times when out on tour?

C2: Yeah. We can afford hotels after the shows. Our gear is a bit better. We're a lot better as musicians and people. We've worked on all of these things a lot over 30 years. But truthfully, we're just four people from Pittsburgh who love each other and this band. So, in a lot of ways not much has changed.

AU: Does Justin Sane wear so many scarves to protect his vocal cords from the cold weather of Pittsburgh?

C2: I don't know. Pat wears more scarves than Justin. But Justin is a little guy, and he's always cold.

AU: What was the local scene like when *Anti-Flag* was starting out?

C2: Political. Punk. A force to be reckoned with. The geography and politics of Pittsburgh really shaped all of the art that came out of it. We had great mentors like *Bad Genes* and *Aus Rotten*. Bands that lived their politics and their music. It was an inspiring time when the band started, and I think Pittsburgh is still that way to this day.

AU: What other local Pittsburgh bands should people check out?

C2:
Homeless Gospel Choir
Jack Swing
Short Fictions
Peace Talks
Nightmarathons
Endless Mike and the Beagle Club

AU: Have you ever visited the mall in Pittsburgh where George A. Romero filmed *Dawn of The Dead*? Do you like horror movies?

C2: Yes, many times. I don't really like horror movies though, sorry.

AU: Do you skateboard or snowboard? Are there any mountains to ride in the Pittsburgh area?

C2: Skateboarded for a long time as a kid, but I never got into snowboarding. There are some places to ski and snowboard around here, but they were for rich folks when I was growing up <laughs>.

AU: Pat Thetic your drummer, what's his secret talent?

C2: Driving the van in silence.

AU: Tell us about your music festival, ANTIfest. What makes it unique?

C2: It's ours. It's uniquely ours. It's about creating the kind of show we always want to play. It's an extension of the DIY community we grew up in; when the thing you want doesn't exist, you just fucking make it on your own. So, we did.

AU: Final words of wisdom?

For more about the band go to Anti-Flag.com

For more about the world go to DemocracyNow.org



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On the Prowl with Steel Panther

Interview with Michael Starr

By Ryan Dyer

The world has never needed *Steel Panther* as much as now. Following COVID, the return of live concerts has seen the band go on the 2022 Heaps and Loads tour, which has brought back the much-needed excess of metal straight from the Sunset Strip or your favorite strip club. The L.A. based band is on the cusp of releasing their sixth album *On the Prowl*, coming out Feb 24 and currently, the new single from the album “Never Too Late (To Get Some Pussy Tonight)” is inspiring pussy seekers everywhere to get out there

and make their move. I caught up with vocalist Michael Starr to talk about the new album, their new bassist, and their current live shows.

Absolute Underground: You just released a new song, “Never Too Late (To Get Some Pussy Tonight).” Has it ever been too late for one of you to get some? What happens then?

Michael Starr: That would only happen if you snorted meth. Then you’re fucked, and pussy seems to just get in the way of your high. That’s why you got to be careful out there when you’re doing blow. Sometimes it’s not what you think, and you end up alone on meth. Not cool.

AU: On the Prowl is out soon! Could you tell us about a few of the other songs on it. Perhaps, “On Your Instagram” or “One Pump Chump” - who is that about?

MS: I love pussy. I love to party. I love to hang out with people after shows and party. I love to talk all

night long and party. These songs are about what happens during those times.

AU: Your new bassist Spyder is currently cutting his teeth - having to come up with lyrics for “Weenie Ride” on the fly as well as playing the songs like the rockstar he has become in Steel Panther. He has been friends with the band for a long time before becoming an official member. How has he been holding up?

MS: He is doing a great job so far. We have been in bands before together, so we know each other really well. He has never played in a band like this one though. So, yes! He has had to learn to ride the wave of insanity that *Steel Panther* provides for like-minded crazy ass party animal metalheads.

AU: You had around 700 video submissions for the bass position. Could you name a few memorable ones?

MS: Yes, I can name many, but the ones that made me excited were the ones where they said, “I can’t play bass but I can learn how, cause I love your band,” How cool is that!

AU: Your new 1987 guitar pedal is described as sounding like a three-way between the owner, Ginger Lynn and Christy Canyon. That sounds phenomenal! Why the year 1987? Was it more memorable for you compared to other years in the ‘80s?

MS: 1987 was the peak of heavy metal. We didn’t know it at the time though. By the end of the decade it started to get taken over by a new style of music called “Grunge”. Other amazing things happened that year too:

August 1987: I moved out of my mom’s house and got my own place with a stripper I met at 7-11.

September 1987: I ended up finding a chick who had all her dad’s guitars because he went to jail for life, and she gave me a 1965 Fender Strat.

October 1987: On Halloween I dressed up like David Lee Roth. It was bitchin’.

November 1987: Moved back to my mom’s house.

That’s why we named our pedal 1987. It was a killer year, and heavy metal was there being the

soundtrack. When you plug in your guitar into our new pedal you will Feel the Steel.

AU: You just played Australia and New Zealand with Airbourne. I just saw these guys in Calgary as well and was amazed at their tendency to rock hard while keeping the alcohol flow endless. But they couldn’t out-party Steel Panther, could they?

MS: They did out party the Panther. You see, cocaine is hard to get in Australia. We ran out and they didn’t.

AU: You played a few big, nice casinos here in Canada. What’s your favorite casino to play at?

MS: Casinos are always fun to play no matter which one it is. The venue is usually amazing, with lights and killer sound. After the show the hotel is transformed into an after party with beds everywhere. That’s fuckin pretty dope.

AU: On that thought, I recommend you go to Macau for your next tour. It’s like Asia’s Las Vegas, located near Hong Kong. Lots of hookers...

MS: Okay, thanks for the hot tip. Always nice to get those kinds of tips.

AU: And on that note, have you guys been to Thailand? I’d like to know your opinion on ladyboys.

MS: Not yet but I can’t wait.

AU: The lockdown is basically over now, but people are still taking precautions. How does Steel Panther stay safe in these uncertain times?

MS: If we need to wear a mask, no problem. I prefer not to wear a mask though. I prefer not to wear underwear too. They make my balls sweat. That’s not healthy either. I noticed that people were putting their masks on as they were walking up to say hi. They said they heard that older people could get sick easier. What the fuck? Well I know one thing for sure, We are gunna to rock until we drop!

steelpantherrocks.com
Photo credit: Dave Jackson

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MONEY HACKS

For Metalheads & Old Millennials
Conquering Personal Finance, One Riff At A Time



The Revised and Expanded Second Edition
By Jessie May

Money Hacks for Metalheads and Old Millennials

An Interview with Librarian, Author, Mom, and Musician Jessie May

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

Jessie May: Hi folks, I'm Jessie May: school librarian by day, musician and author by night, mom 24/7. I live in Connecticut, which is on the east coast of the US. My bands are *Turkey Vulture* and *Owl Maker* (I have a thing for birds), and I recently put out the second edition of my personal finance book *Money Hacks for Metalheads and Old Millennials*.

AU: What started you on your path to becoming an author?

JM: While going through some family knickknacks last month, I discovered a construction paper magazine my brother and I made in elementary school that was like an Anti-Highlights -- the cover had kids holding signs like "Poo on Grownups" and "Adults Destroy." So, I guess I had an early

taste for subversion. Now I work in a school and tell kids to check out Highlights! Go figure...

AU: Tell us about the book you wrote *Money Hacks for Metalheads and New Millennials*. What was the genesis of the idea for the book? Why do you think it was an important book to write?

JM: I was doing a lot of research on personal finance for my own edification, and it made me think about how you wouldn't necessarily know this stuff unless you went looking for it. So my goal with the book was to put the basics into a fun package that would draw people in and help them gain knowledge that would improve their day-to-day lives.

There's also a whole financial side to underground music that I wanted to discuss, after many years as a musician, blogger, and PR copywriter. Is it a hobby, or a job? What should your expectations be? Those answers will be different for everyone.

AU: Who published the book and how did that come about?

JM: I published it! Self-published on Kindle Direct. I uploaded it into Kindle Create and BAM! It was on the internet.

AU: You recently released a *Revised and Expanded Second Edition*. What extras have you added to this new version?

JM: It has an expanded investing section and some updated numbers, but the main addition is a new chapter on parenthood! That's a new chapter in my real life as well, and talks about the financial aspects of raising kids in the US, as well as the balancing act of trying to keep a band going while raising a family.

AU: Are there any bands or musicians who help

by sharing advice in the book as well?

JM: Yes, I got input from a bunch of other musician parents too! Amy Tung from *Year of the Cobra* was kind enough to contribute a feature interview, and several other folks shared their experiences as well. The common thread was that a support system will make or break parents' attempts to keep a band going.

AU: Can you share a few basic money hacks for our readers trying to keep a little extra beer money in their pockets?



JM: Prioritize setting up an emergency fund. Don't worry about how much is in it, just worry about getting it started. Make monthly auto-transfers to a high yield savings account (or a high-interest savings account in Canada). Even if you can only afford to contribute \$25 or \$50 a month, would you rather have a couple hundred bucks in the bank the

next time your car breaks down, or zero bucks? And the next time you get a raise or pay off a debt, increase that contribution. On that note, it's helpful to have a good idea of your monthly expenses. If you're not sure where to start with your finances, track expenses for a month and see what you find out. Knowledge is power -- and eventually more beer money!

AU: How can people get a copy of the book to

check out?

JM: It's available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle formats. Just search up "money hacks for metalheads second edition" and you'll find it!

AU: Tell us about the band you are in with your husband called *Turkey Vulture*.

JM: We're hanging onto it for dear life <laughs.> We have a show coming up this month though! *Turkey Vulture* is a mix of our styles; a little bit of metal, and a little bit of punk. We also incorporate some Americana influences, although those might be harder to hear right away. As long as the song tells a good story, that's what counts. You can hear us on our bandcamp (link below,) and our most recent EP is called "Twist the Knife."

AU: Final words of wisdom for our readers?

JM: I'll steal my dad's classic line: every day's a holiday and every meal a feast.

AU: How do people find you online?

JM: My Linktree linktr.ee/jessiemayontheweb has all my sorted endeavors. Thanks for reading! turkeyvulture.bandcamp.com/music.

Cover art and design by Jim Clegg

Photo by Anthony Frisketti



OMNIA NIHIL

**On Stage at The Invisible Orange
14th Anniversary Show**

The Invisible Orange is an independent concert promoter in Vancouver established in 2009. When building the line-up for our 14th Anniversary Show (Featuring 2023 Juno-nominated band *Wake*, we thought of *Omnia Nihil*, a band from Kelowna we had recently connected with at the Armstrong Metal Festival. Gladly the band also appreciated the idea of playing, and now they will be performing on-stage. We had a short online conversation with the band that we share in this space.

The Invisible Orange: Can you tell us about the band's background and history, for those that would need an introduction?

Omnia Nihil: *Omnia Nihil* was meant as a continuation of our former project, *Apollyon*, rather than simply just a change in name. We felt a collective detachment from the music of *Apollyon*, and all agreed that a fresh start was the right choice. Unfortunately, shortly after we announced this project, our dear friend and front-man, Matt Depper, passed away unexpectedly in January of 2022.

IO: People wonder about filling the vocalist spot. How did the process come around to decide who would be in the position?

ON: There's been a lot of hesitation around whether or not we'll be finding someone to take Matt's place. We'll have a friend of the band filling in on vocals for this upcoming show with *Wake*, but at this point in time, we aren't exploring any permanent options. Finding someone who can fully replace Matt is just not possible, but we do know that he would want us to continue. For the moment, we'll be having friends fill in if we perform live. It feels like the only appropriate way to go forward for now Involving people who have been close, impactful, and inspirational to us as a band.

IO: Any plans to release new music?



ON: We've been sitting on Matt's final recordings, about an EP worth of material, for some time now. Hopefully, that will be out later this year. Recently we did some scratch tracks for a full length that we've been working on for several years, but that's about all we can say at the moment.

IO: What is the impact you want the band to have?

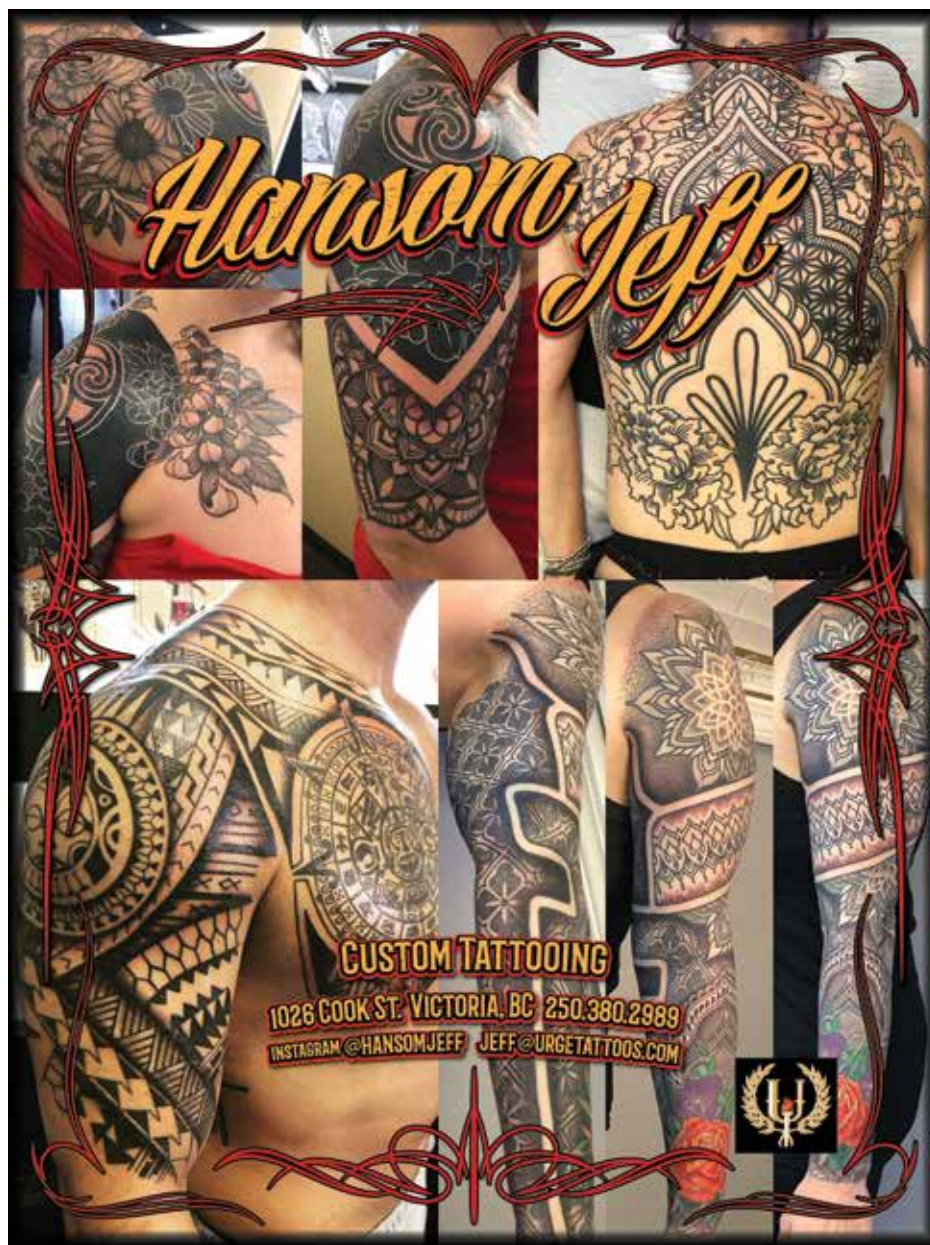
ON: This band, regardless of what its future may be, will always be dedicated to Matt's memory and legacy. In anything we do, he should always be remembered.

IO: And of course, anything else you would like to add, acknowledge, or share. This is your space and your voice.

ON: We're all looking forward to performing live again, as strange as it will be without Matt. Coming back from something like this is complicated for so many reasons. The show with *Wake* and the preparation leading up to it will definitely be an experiment in regard to how, and if, this project will operate going forward. None of us could have really imagined what it would be like to go on without him, but we truly believe that Matt would have wanted us to continue, and we're going to do our very best to make it work. We would also like to take a moment to thank everyone who was involved in Matt's Memorial Set at Armstrong Metalfest last summer. Performers, family, friends, organizers, & attendees, we are grateful for you taking the time to be a part of it.

IO: Omnia Nihil will perform next at The Invisible Orange 14th Anniversary show, with Wake and Liminal Shroud, on March 25 at The Wise Hall in Vancouver. We at The Invisible Orange are honoured and humbled to have the chance to host Omnia Nihil in this unique event.

www.theinvisibleorange.com





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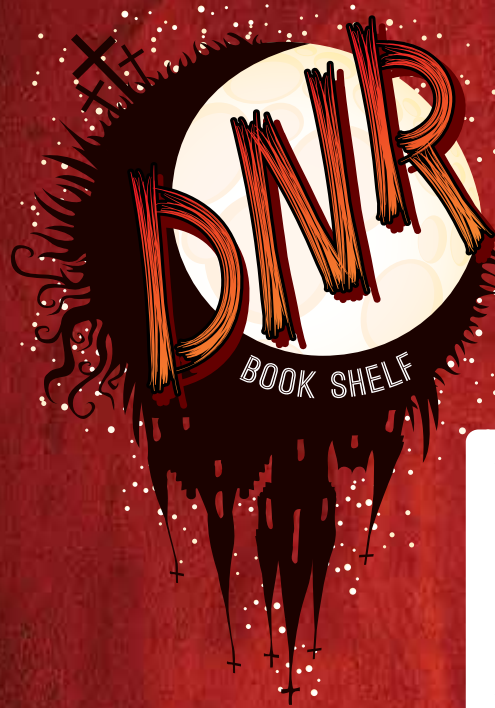
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THE LAKE OF THE DEAD



André Bjerke
Valancourt Books
February 1, 2022

First published in 1942, *The Lake of the Dead* (or "De dødes tjern") has become a contemporary classic in a country that generally claims no solid foundation in horror fiction. Voted Norway's all-time best thriller in 2001, this is the first time a true-to-form English translation has been made available to international readers.

The Lake of the Dead follows hack crime novelist Bernhard Borge, who is seeking inspiration. His well of creativity has dried up, and he appeals to friends at a house party to provide ideas for his next book. This is where Borge first learns the story of Tore Gruvik, a vengeful man who, many years ago, beheaded his beloved sister and her lover in a rage. He threw their corpses into the lake up near his hunting cabin in the woods and, driven mad by his own actions, drowned himself. What could be better inspiration than such a sensational story? It turns out that one of Borge's acquaintances has even purchased the former hunting cabin of Tore Gruvik, heedless of the supposed curse—the curse that says Gruvik's spirit, and his madness, haunts the place and will possess anyone foolish enough to linger there.

What follows is a well-crafted and tense story, following our narrator and his companions as they encounter one question after another in trying to understand what is real and what is superstition, and if there is room in the rational mind for both. André Bjerke's writing—though dusted heavily with dated ideas that clearly mark its age—shows masterful suspense and brings a fresh sensation of foreboding with each page. Kudos to Valancourt Books for bringing this one to a modern audience!

Laura Phaneuf

DON'T CALL IT HAIR METAL



Sean Kelly
ECW Press
May 16, 2023

Everything you want to know but were afraid to ask about what went on behind the scenes in the evolution of heavy metal is well accounted for in Sean Kelly's *Don't Call It Hair Metal*. This book is great at delving into the origin of many famous bands from the 70's onward, and the reasons why they've kept at it throughout the years. From Slade

to KISS to Ozzy Osbourne's solo career after Black Sabbath, this book offers something new I didn't know before about each act. A lot of bands from that era are covered, and I've barely scratched the surface on who is represented. Instead of exploring the decade as a whole, each chapter deals with a few years at a time. We get even more studies about how talents like Randy Rhoads developed their signature sound, and the interviews from industry observers and other fellow guitarists only add to the picture. Whether that's about their heydays or something anecdotal, I'm certainly enjoying this read. It's best not to power through this book, either, as there's a lot of terrific quotes from the talents Kelly interviewed. As this book insinuates, it's not about the hair, but the intention of why each group wanted to make a dent in the industry. MTV's influence is recounted here, and without them and the music videos which showed these bands at their craziest (or best), I doubt this era would be remembered fondly. Kelly's love for the genre and his personal journey makes for the perfect narrative device to move readers year to year, and I suspect writing this book took more than a few months to craft. Although the preview edition doesn't contain any snapshots, that may change when the hard copy of *Don't Call It Hair Metal* finally comes out.

Ed Sum

THE TELEVISION



Edward Lee
Madness heart Press
September 2nd 2020

Average joe American Icarus Farthing ends up becoming the sole beneficiary to his recently deceased Uncle Eldred's estate in England. Excited to hear money awaits him but the living situation is odd: a humble trailer in a trailer park. There is also the unusual stipulation that he must relocate and live there or he gets nothing. After a visit and initial meet up with the lawyer, he finds a wonderful bar to hang out at that is close by, a nice beach and more. He decides to stay, as there is nothing holding him back in the states, and the deal is made.

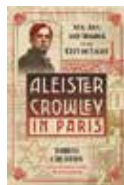
The story unfolds and we find Uncle Eldred has some interesting antiques and has a bit of a dirty side, as an old album of lude polaroids is found. Also, there is a room at the back of the trailer that just doesn't make sense. Completely empty except for a chair and one of the first TVs to ever exist, with no method to power it on, no chord, nothing.

Eldred begins to have nightmares, strange cars circling and spying, weird phone calls, and then the TV turns on by itself and shows the worst human atrocities one could ever imagine. Lee takes his time to describe every horrible detail. This is not for the squeamish at all, as some are pretty horrible, and the descriptions do go on. Uncle Eldred's old assemblage turns up and it's game over for anything enjoyable for old Eldred. This book is pretty brutal and disturbing in so many ways. I thought the book was a real breeze to read other than the TV time, where it got a little long and drawn out for me as the

channels changed and you're forced to 'watch' too, but a great story none-the-less.

Demonika

ALEISTER CROWLEY IN PARIS: SEX, ART, AND MAGICK IN THE CITY OF LIGHT



Tobias Churton
Inner Traditions
December 20, 2022

A new book on Aleister Crowley from his greatest and most meticulous biographer is always a special event, and always a marvellous read. Tobias Churton possesses a rare ability to tell Crowley's entertaining, complex and esoteric story in a manner the reader will comprehend and enjoy. The city of Paris and Crowley made a perfect match, weaving a magick spell on one another in a delightful dance of decadence. It was in Paris in 1900 that Aleister was initiated into the Inner Order of the Golden Dawn, an occult order which at various times included the likes of W.B. Yeats in its ranks. Moving to Montparnasse in 1902, Aleister became engaged to the beautiful and bohemian Anglo-Irish artist Eileen Grey and partied with the great and artistic of Paris many times thereafter. These were the years before World War One came along to ruin the party, though of course, Aleister would return in the years following The Great War. Paris was a vibrant and exciting occult city, and its influence on Crowley's philosophical and magickal work and writing cannot be underestimated. This is psycho-geometry in action, where we physically are has a great influence on our happiness and creativity. Nothing good ever comes out of a bad place. Indeed, this book is as masterful a biography of Occult Paris as it is of Aleister Crowley. It would be wonderful indeed to travel back to this Magick Paris. The most important lesson of all to be derived from Crowley's life for all of us, is we should all live and not just exist.

'Do what thou wilt...'

Steve Earles

BITS 'N' PIECES



Jonathan Edward Ondrashek
Plumfukt Press
March 27, 2020

Horror anthologies are often a chore to either sit through or read. The ABC's of Death might have one or two memorable stories, though the rest might as well end up with the remains of the alphabet soup you had for lunch. Fortunately, *Bits 'n' Pieces*, while being a bit on the heftier side - 24 stories to be exact - benefits from both the ideas of writer Jonathan Edward Ondrashek, and the sequencing order of the tales.

The first, "Familiar Scents," does well to introduce the reader to Ondrashek at his most revolting. Not to spoil anything, but you probably will have this story in mind when you visit your grandma at the old folk's home.

With the raunchy introduction out of the way, topics such as revenge ("The Tooth Fairy"), tipping ("Just a Tip") and good old quick karma

("Layer") bring out the horror that this book was marketed as. "Horrorcoaster" has kind of an Insane Clown Posse "Halls of Illusion" vibe while "The Cavalier Cavalier" brings to mind John Carpenter's Christine fucking David Cronenberg's Crash.

Bits 'n' Pieces is a fitting title not only for the stories, which are often just a page long, but for the outcomes of some of the characters. Morbid poems are also intertwined between the stories, offering both a breather and a chuckle from the building carnage of the main stories. So have a bit and read a poem or try to swallow an entire piece without losing your lunch.

Ryan Dyer

PLASTIC MONSTERS



Daniel J. Volpe
Independent
July 14, 2022

The concept of this book is absolutely terrifying. We see a "prettier than average," Pamela Rose fight tooth and nail to be the prettiest, spending every cent on treatments for her beauty and looks and never quite feeling satisfied. A co-worker comes into work one day with a perfect new set of breast implants and that is the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back. Pamela 'snaps' and we see her character cross over into the dark side quite quickly, brutally attacking other women who are prettier than her on the street and just turning into a listless villain. She becomes obsessed with getting more treatments any way she can, including by tracking down an excommunicated plastic surgeon just getting out of prison for doing heinous things to his patients. She doesn't care, and will stop at nothing to become his next patient, even though she meets her match when it comes to whom is more nefarious. It turns into a royal fucked-up bloodbath with a godawful ending that will shake you. Absolutely excellent read.

Demonika

THE RESIDENTS: FACELESS FOREVER – A RESIDENTS ENCYCLOPAEDIA



Jim Knipfel & Brian Poole
Cherry Red Records
December 9th 2022

Amazingly The Residents are celebrating their 50th anniversary (or is their 500th, so mysterious are the band, anything is possible, rule nothing out!). This book celebrates that anniversary! Compiled, written and edited by Residents insiders Brain Poole and Jim Knipfel, with contributions from The Residents themselves, Paulie Krayak, Chris Combs, The Eyeball Museum and Richard Anderson. There are over 500 entries, and without spoiling the book for potential readers, it isn't boring, it's endlessly fascinating, and really, it's exactly what you'd expect from a book about The Residents! No greater praise can I give it. Acquire or expire!

Steve Earles

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Submit your inquiries or reviews to:
demonika@absoluteunderground.ca

THANK
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SHRED SESSION



Dan Newton - FS boardslide

ECLECTIC SKATEBOARD SHOP

Shredding in Thunder Bay

AU: Who are we talking to and what is your involvement in the Thunder Bay skate scene?

Eclectic Skateboard Shop: Hey, it's John from Eclectic. I've been involved in keeping our local skate scene alive and thriving for a while now. I've worked on getting skate parks built, putting on events, and just whatever is needed to keep things rolling here in Tbay.

AU: What makes Eclectic unique?

ESS: Putting the love of our skateboard community over profit. We all work full time jobs to make ends meet, and then volunteer our time to make it all

happen. 2023 will be 10 years!

AU: Who is currently on your skate team and what does each individual bring to the table?

ESS: We have an amazing collective of riders representing the shop. Each



Photo Credit: Patrick Chondon

brings their own sense of power, style, and individuality to the table. Shout out to Collin Dawson, Sam Erkkila, Dan Newton, JoJo Johnson, Patrice Poulin,

Kai Meekis, Joshua Strain, and Travis Brown for representing our local scene so well. It has been amazing to watch you all progress throughout the years.

AU: Any events, comps, or demos planned for the Eclectic Skateboard Shop skate team?

ESS: Always! Go Skate Day (June 21st) is always a big one for us. July 1st will be our 10th birthday as well, and it's going to be a good one!

AU: Any plans to film a skate video?

ESS: For sure! If anyone is curious to get a glimpse of our local skate scene, check out "SMILE" by Collin Dawson on the KING SKATE page or "EVE" by Joshua Strain. The link is available on our instagram page.

AU: Anything else you would like to promote?

ESS: Being so isolated in Northern Ontario, we always want to promote our local artists and musicians. Not everyone gets to see the incredible talent that comes from here, but when they do, it's always worth the trip. If anyone is cruising by Tbay, make sure to hit us up! Always a good time to be had.

AU: Final words of wisdom for our reader?

ESS: Own who you are. Skate and Create, Skate and Destroy.

@eclecticskateshop

Photo Credit: Rob Fournier



Joshua Strain - No-Comply



Kai Meekis - Crook



Kai Meekis-Ollie

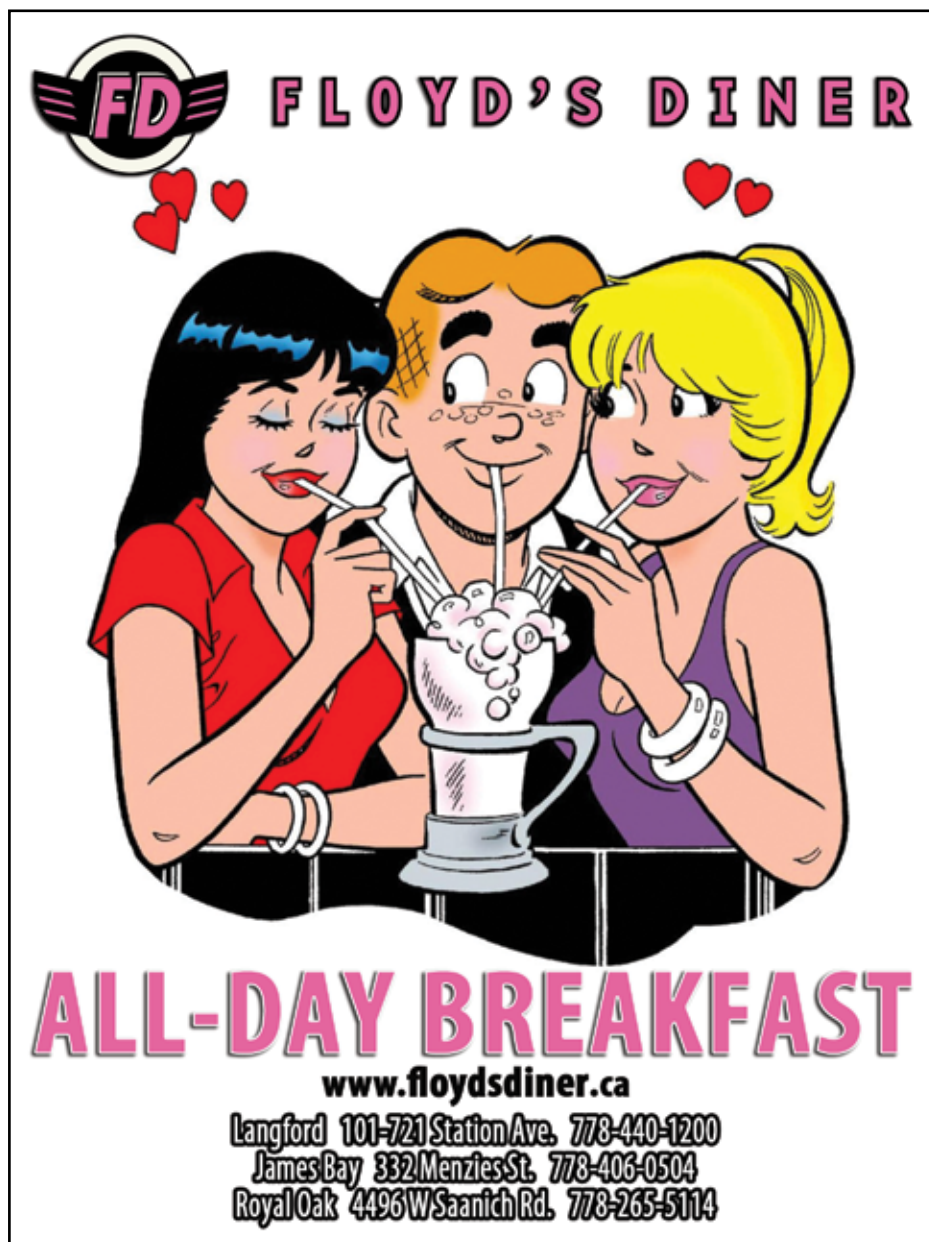
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Just How Trek Will the Pacific Northwest Become in this Pop Culture Convention Roundup?

By Ed Sum

The season is nearly upon us for pop culture conventions taking place in the Pacific Northwest! From Vancouver down to Portland, the gambit is covered. Fan Expo is in the lead because this brand is occurring on the same weekend in two different cities, with a nearly similar guest lineup.

Repeat talents like Carl Weathers, Anson Mount and Ethan Peck from the latest Star Trek are but a sampling. If the organisers are smart, they should find someone to build a real life transporter to help them and Star Trek The Next Generation's Gates McFadden, Jonathan Frakes and Brent Spiner avoid travel fatigue as they bounce from one show to the other. Or maybe a Floo Network from Harry Potter is needed, since Matthew Lewis is as



a guest. Hyperspace travel isn't real yet, because from Star Wars, Anthony Daniels is sure to be a hit with fans! It's safe to say cancellations will occur because with this many guests, something is bound to happen. This year, the organisers are really covering their bases rather than to depend on backup plans.

The fun begins in Portland, Oregon on Feb 17 to 19 with the Back to the Future cast (Christopher Lloyd, Michael J. Fox, Lea Thompson and Thomas F. Wilson) as the big headliners. Sadly, they won't be joining the other talents who'll afterwards journey to Vancouver, British Columbia, where that celebration starts Feb 18 and ends on BC Family Day on the 20th. This will be exhausting. Therefore, fans have to be understanding should the wait to meet these guests become capped.

At the Canadian event, Saturday may feel light. However, a talented pool of voice actors will appear every day. On this list includes Sarah Natochenny, the latest talent who is Ash Ketchum from Pokémon, and the team of Alessandro Juliani, Brad Swaile and

Brian Drummond from the anime Death Note. For fans of Star Wars: The Clone Wars, Ashley Eckstein, Matt Lanter and James Arnold Taylor are reuniting to share new stories of their recording sessions.

Also, for those fans of The CW's Arrowverse, Stephen Amell is returning! He'll appear in the last season of The Flash and as for how much has been filmed—Kayla Compton, Danielle Nicolet, and Danielle Panabaker—the women who helped keep this series fresh may well be the spokes ladies for this universe's future.



Additionally, Sean Gunn might even have something to say about Guardians of the Galaxy Volume 3! Also in this mix is Robocop himself, Peter Weller!

Hopefully, the three weeks between shows won't have some attendees feeling exhausted. There's high hopes Emerald City Comic Con will announce even more talents, because to bank on one Doctor, David Tennant, as the biggest name is a gamble. They've also moved locations. The Washington State Convention Center still has its



old base, but the newer one located a block away is wider and should ease people congestion.

Other returning entertainment guests include James Marsters, Katee Sackhoff, Matthew Lillard and Ray Wise. Or we can call ECCC the year Twin Peaks is getting love, as other names include Sherilyn Fenn and Sheryl Lee to make it the most names from a single show to appear.

Sadly, Capital City Comic Con won't be returning in 2023. They are taking a break because to plan one in March following last year's September event is too short a time frame to really make work. This celebration is run by three organisations with other duties on top to help bring tourism into the

COMIC-GEDDON

Garden City of British Columbia.

Thankfully, across the strait is Port Angeles, Washington's Squatchcon which runs from March 31 to April 1st! This event is advertised as, "...a celebration of the weird, wild and wonderful art, culture, and legends that grow in the misty mountains of the Olympic Peninsula." The name suggests bigger things than a Bigfoot, preferring

to leave an impression.

But as long as local fandom shows their love, each convention can stand out on its own. Fan Expo Vancouver is bringing back after-hours activities, and one of them includes a ghostly walk! Nothing is advertised yet for the others. But the Portland show is restarting under new management and may have yet to complete plans. Like their Canadian cousin, I'd love to see a partnership with restaurants, as it's more of a food mecca than the others.

And as for the crown jewel known as Emerald City, there won't be news until closer to the event. The action is always in their extensive Artists Alley and those talents than the celebrities they bring in. As a result, it's tough to say how the newest will fare; Squatchcon is going into its second year, and only time will tell regarding how big it can grow.

Five Crafty and Dark Valentine's Day Reads

By Ed Sum

There's not a lot of macabre themed Valentine's Day comic books, and when they appear, those works are either tongue-in-cheek, or a trip through the looking glass where desire is too deep or simply disturbing. There's a lot more material to find on the cinematic front, but for comic books, the best reads include:

Love Stories (To Die For)

Devil's Due Entertainment

This anthology shows how love can kill you, and it's grisly! Finding romance during a zombie apocalypse, an alien invasion, and a vampire fight, but it won't be your typical tale where everyone dies.

I Hate Valentine's Day

This self-published comic book by Amina Delamere delves into familiar territory.

Here, Valerie doesn't believe she'll ever find love. But when a man from a television show appears right before her, and can't leave her alone, there's going to be problems. She doesn't know which reality is more important.



Mood: The Me You Love in The Dark Image Comics

Ro needs inspiration, and when it comes from a ghost, perhaps she'll get a lot more than she bargained for. The question is if she can escape her rut. Fans of Skottie Young (*Deadpool*, *Strange Academy*) and Jorge Corona (*Super Sons*, *Feathers*) will love this work, it's available as a trade paperback, which is available to order on Amazon or your local comic book dealer.

Zombie Tramp Valentine's Day Special

Action Lab Comics

Holiday specials are expected for popular titles at the peak of its run. Back in 2016, when Dan Mandoza was still writing this comic, he crafted an excellent look at Janey's past, before she became a member of the walking dead.

She had a teenage crush, and when she gets a chance to see this man in her present state, what we read is certainly sweet. But as for how well that date goes, it's expected someone will turn up to turn a happy day to a bad one.

Readers who haven't kept up with this series may not know Action Lab Comics fell under scrutiny last year, and the company folded. Thankfully, the rights are back with this creator, and he's continuing stories with his own label, Still Ill Princess.

Vampirella: Valentine's Day Special (2021)

Dynamite Comics

This publisher's love affair with Vampirella has



been a long one. With a lot of different series, it's tough to keep track of it all, and in the past few years, she's been giving fans something to lust for during Valentine's. But not every year has a special, and although there's no release this year, the last three years are worth fondly looking at again.

The best single-issue special dates to 2021



where she's married to Dracula.

According to the official synopsis:

"In a terrifying alternate reality, Dracula and Vampirella have wed, and the world has been plunged into darkness. Humanity has become little more than cattle, and Vampirella has sworn a sacred oath to her Husband and King not to fight against Vampire supremacy.... But a rebellion is brewing in the shadows. Who is the mysterious rebel Bloodwing, and why does Dracula, and the vampire race, fear her so?"

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A black and white advertisement for Jefferson's Barbershop. The central graphic is a large black heart shape with a white outline. Inside the heart is a circular logo featuring a pair of scissors and the text "JEFFERSON'S BARBERSHOP" at the top and "HAIR CULT" at the bottom. The words "EST." and "013" are on either side of the scissors. The heart shape has black liquid dripping down from its base. The background is a textured stone wall.

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A black and white photograph of a skateboarder performing a trick on a ramp. The skateboarder is in mid-air, with the skateboard tilted. Another person is visible in the background, also on a skateboard. The ramp has graffiti on it. The background shows a residential area with houses and trees.

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Source of Hatrid by Mesrine

I recently snagged this cassette from Death by Digital although it was originally released by D7i. This is a “new to me” label but this tape was top quality and I can go out on a limb and assume there is much more to be found on this label.

Mesrine are an old-school grind/death grind style band with obvious thrash elements, and I remember listening to them when I was a teen. Their sound has pretty much stayed the same but the production quality is a lot more hi-res. I still don’t know a hell of a lot about Mesrine, but after a brief search I found out that they hail from Quebec City—a place that is well known for some decent grind.

The grinding is pretty standard, and there are many bands that have a similar sound, but Mesrine has been at it for a long time and they are well deserving of the so called “pat on the back”. Their output has been almost constant since they formed, and although this is not one of my favourites from my recent tape haul it is still a hell of a lot more than decent, and I would suggest this to anyone looking for those old-school vibes!

DJM

Angelic Upstarts
‘The Singles 1978-85’

Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles

The splendidly (and appropriately) named *Angelic Upstarts* produced an amazing body of work in a relatively short period of time.

I am writing this review shortly after punk iconoclast Vivian Westwood’s sad death, but I’m cheered by the sincerity of the *Angelic Upstarts* music in this collection. It is the spirit of punk as embodied by Westwood, a spirit of non-conformity. Many of the singles in this collection actually charted, and that’s amazing to think of in today’s music world.

A lot of the *Angelic Upstarts* music was forged in the cauldron of the times it was created in. There’s a lyrical honesty and astuteness that is impressive here. History is repeating itself, and the world is very much at war. *The Angelic Upstarts*’ music is inspired by a hatred of the system, and is just as timely now as then.



Holocaust- ‘Heavy Metal Mania-
The Complete Recordings

Volume 1 1980-1984’

Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles

Once again Cherry Red Records releases an awesome collection from a fine heavy metal band that would be otherwise lost to history. How to do they keep coming up with ideas for such collections? They must have a Metal Guru on tap! Hope they appreciate him.

Now, *Holocaust* are best known for *Metallica*’s 1987 cover of their classic track “The Small Hours” which first appeared on *Metallica*’s “The \$5.98 EP-Garage Days Re-Revisited.” A fine cover version that was also later included on *Metallica*’s multi-platinum selling *Garage Inc.*

But there is a lot more to *Holocaust* than just that song, and listening to this 6 CD box set proves that

Outstanding tracks include ‘Teenage Warning,’ ‘Out Of Control’ and an awesome cover of *The Animals*’ “We Gotta Get Out Of This Place”.

An excellent collection from an excellent band that really do embody the true spirit of punk! Vivian Westwood would be proud!

Don’t Stop The Music - Trapeze
Complete Recordings Vol 1 1970-1992’

Purple Records/Cherry Red

Reviewed by Steve Earles

A six CD box set of *Trapeze*’s music is a real treat!

Trapeze have their origins in two British midlands bands, *Finders Keepers* (which featured Mel Galley on guitar and vocals, Dave Holland on drums and Glenn Hughes on bass and vocals,) and *The Montanbas* (which featured John Jones on vocals and trumpet and Terry Rowley on Keyboards, guitar and flute.)

Signing to Threshold Records, *Trapeze* as they were now called, recorded their self-titled debut as a five-piece. While competent musically, it is very much of it’s time, a pop album with five-piece harmonies and shows only hints of what was to come. Stripped down to the classic three-piece line up of Hughes, Holland and Galley, *Trapeze* really shone on their next two albums. *Medusa*’ is up there with *Deep Purple*, *Cream*, *Led Zeppelin*, *Free*, *Humble Pie*, and so on... Because, and it only seems apparent in retrospect, *Trapeze* were magnificent, one of the all-time great rock bands. All the albums from the three-piece line-up deserve deluxe editions. *You Are The Music... We’re Just The Band* is truly superb.

Alas, Glenn joined *Deep Purple* (and really, I wonder why Blackmore felt the need to recruit two singers, when Glenn would more than have sufficed, listen to him on *Purple*’s ‘Holy Man’ or ‘Sail Away’ for proof).

Trapeze did continue for a while after Glenn joined *Purple*, both with and without Glenn, but they never achieved the success they deserved; however their music is a potent legacy and should be a part of any self-respecting rock fans collection.



Girlschool- ‘The School Report
1978-2008’

Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles

First off, massive kudos to Cherry Red for giving *Girlschool*’s legacy the packaging it deserves. The packaging of ‘*The School Report*’ is magnificent and done in the manner of a hardback school book- I love it! Lars Ulrich rightly commented in Kerrang! many moons ago, *Girlschool*, “rocked hard.” They surely did, and more importantly, they had the tunes to go with it.

Girlschool began life in the 70’s when guitarist Kim Mc Auliffe and bassist Enid Williams joined forces as *Painted Lady* (CD 5 of this box set is a rare live recording from *Painted Lady* and it’s truly great fun!). Denise Dufort joined on drums, and Kelly Johnson joined on guitar in 1978, and *Girlschool* were born.

Girlschool’s debut LP *Demolition* was released in 1930, making the Top 30. Then *Girlschool* teamed up with friends and label mates *Motörhead* as *Headgirl* to record ‘The Saint Valentine’s Day Massacre’ EP. The E.P was a Top Ten hit, and *Headgirl* appeared on Top of the Pops. This is truly awesome. They followed up this with *Hit and Run*, and then, their third album *Screaming Blue Murder* in 1982. CD1 ‘Demolition Girls’ covers this period in *Girlschool*’s history and it’s a plethora of great energetic songs.

Later 80’s albums included ‘*Nightmare At Maple Cross*’ in 1986, and 1988’s ‘*Take A Bite*’. The cream of the tracks from this period are included on CD 2 ‘Playing Dirty’.

After a quiet period *Girschool* returned with a self-titled album in 1992, and this began a new lease of life for this much-loved band. The pick of songs from this period are included on CD 3 ‘Still Not That Innocent’

CD 4 is a terrific collection of singles and b-sides, some great stuff, including another duet with *Motörhead* on ‘Emergency’ and ZZ *Top*’s ‘Tush’. There are also some terrific demos.

All in all, a great band finally getting the comprehensive collection their legacy deserves. And there’s still plenty of life left in these ladies in leather.

Panzerfaust sound like *Def Leppard*’s *Hysteria*, but that just adds to it’s appeal, and I love it. The sound is far superior on the later *Holocaust: Live (Hot Curry & Wine.)*

Then, as things are wont to do in life, there was an unexpected shift in all things *Holocaust*. John Mortimer, the metal mastermind, was ousted from the band.

The remaining members re-branded themselves *Hologram*, and released an album called ‘*Steal the Stars*’. It’s a fun slab of 80’s hard rock, not without its joys, but it’s not metal, and without John Mortimer, it has no identity and could be any band.

Happily, in 1984 John Mortimer rescued the *Holocaust* name from hard rock infamy and together with drummer extraordinary Steve Cowen released the excellent return to heavy metal form (though I would love to know what the cover actually is?).

This set is rounded off with a lovely bonus of a CD of all *Holocaust*’s singles to this point. Heavy metal nirvana!

Feature Review

POINTED STICKS

Review of their new record,
“Beautiful Future”

By Les Wiseman

Pointed Sticks were one of the Vancouver scene’s first punk bands. They were an anomaly at the time: determinedly positive and upbeat amid the protest sounds of *DOA* and *Subhumans*. As the latter combos became more political and their music more thrashy and metallic, “Direct Action” became their tagline, while *Pointed Sticks* deferred to “Pointed Sticks are Fun!” While the others engaged with rage, singer Nick Jones told the makers of *Bloodied but Unbowed* –the Vancouver punk documentary—that some felt: “They can’t be real punks because they’re not singing about oppression in daily life. What’s your oppression in Vancouver? That you can’t get in the Buddha because you don’t have any I.D.? That the cops came to your party and made you pour out your beer?” So the Sticks uncomfortably fell under the label of “power pop.” Still, the hardcore respected the band for its musicianship, song-smithing, studio skills, and its gigs were generally cheerier affairs than those that were dedicated to smashing the state. This got them major interest from Stiff Records and gigs in Britain. They were “The Great White Hope” of Vancouver punk.

But that was four decades or more ago. The Stiff deal wasn’t worth a fuck and the band dissipated in 1981. In 2006, the older wiser members reformed to tour Japan and Europe where rabid fans had kept their music alive. They released the album “Three Lefts Make a Right” (on Northern Electric,) in 2009 and were stalwarts of the annual Khatsahlano Street Party.

Last year, they decided to release two new songs on Bandcamp every two months for a year. Without a plan, they unwittingly formed the album, “Beautiful Future” (on Northern Electric). It is an amazing achievement. With nothing left to prove to anyone, and their lives largely lived, they have put together a dream album of positivity from the title through the lyrics and the melodies.

It first hit me as punk’s “White Album,” as there is as much diversity in these grooves that it compares well to that *The Beatles*’ landmark. It’s largely simple stuff, some bordering on the themes for cartoons, but it has that ineffable catchy something. Plus, it is so damn upbeat. This could become cloying and saccharine, but given the band’s commitment to melody and song structure, it doesn’t.

Then, there is Nick Jones’s voice. It is a strange phenomenon, unlike anyone else’s stylings. When first heard, one thinks it is high and somewhat nasal, but it’s really not. He is a master of phrasing; mannered but not fey. *Pointed Sticks* never sounded like any other band and that voice is one of the prime reasons.

TRACK BREAKDOWN:

Here Again: The opener sets the tone for the album



like welcoming listeners to a block party. Great tempo changes and work by keyboardist Gord Nicholl.

Pessimists’s Son: The classic *Pointed Sticks* sound. Great melody and catchy hooks. If there was any justice, this would be a hit single. A crystalline lead by guitarist Bill Napier-Hemy and dramatic keyboard swirls from Nicholl.

Snapshot: This song starts off like a county-fair hoedown. With saxophone from Johnny Ferreira that pulls the song that issues it into a 1950’s teen pop territory that Frankie Avalon, Bobby Vinton or PJ Proby have would done proud. Great catchy chorus as well.

Trials of the Picayune: is all about having fun with no remorse.

Two Pairs of Shoes: An odd inclusion. It is about having two pairs of shoes. Plus, its lovely country-inflected melody owes a certain amount to Harry Nilsson and Jimmy Rodgers. Sung by bassist extraordinaire Tony Bardach, it is likely the simplest track here, but may outlast the better cuts as a campfire song. “I’ve got nothing I can’t lose.”

Infected: A sinister vibe with roaring fuzz bass guitar developing out of an almost rockabilly start.

Beautiful Future: Led by Ian Tiles’s drums, this evolves into amazing harmonies espousing optimism, and a tasty solo with Napier-Hemy channeling his inner Keith Richards.

Born Undecided: Builds on a sound of dynamics that harken back to that Brill Building/Tommy Boyce/Bobby Hart formula for catchy teen records. Credit must be given here also to one of the band’s admitted influences, *ABBA*.

Billy Wilder: A paean to the Hollywood director and legend who gave us classics including *Lost Weekend*, *Sunset Boulevard* and *Some Like It Hot*. “What he didn’t know was not worth knowing, he put it on the silver screen and it’s still showing.”

For a Song is about figuring out how to finish a song. This one is sung by drummer Ian Tiles –who as Buddy Selfish was the singer for *Buddy Selfish and His Saviours*. Lovely melody and cascading harmonies spilling over onto a somewhat country structure.

There’s the Door: Finally, a song that discernably reveals the band’s punk heritage. Fast and dissonant, it’s an aural assault that embodies straight ahead rockin’ at *Buzzcocks* level speed.

Anywhere: I can’t help but think that this was inspired by the Max Miller/Keith Richards line “It’s good to be here; it’s good to be anywhere.” A look back on the poverty and joy of the Vancouver punk scene. With crazy fuzzed bass guitar cutting through like a chainsaw.

“Beautiful Future” is a collection of diverse tunes that rewards repeated listening to appreciate what each player is contributing. It is full of catchy earworms that will stick with you like jism to a wool blanket. Let the good times roll.



SINCE 1992

Legends Comics

AND ZINES!

HOME OF THE MONSTER SISTERS.

633 JOHNSON ST. VICTORIA, BC

COFFEETRATION

Would you love me if I was a worm?

Yes

A flower?

Yes

A politician?

I didn't know it could become an innie!

It went so far up I think I can taste it

WELL, I GOT SOMETHING TO SAY!

BE MINE ON VALENTINE'S DAY!

CROSSWORD NO. 89

RAMONES ROMANCE

S	H	E	S	T	H	E	O	N	E
T	O	R	I	S	T	E	E	L	S
S	T	E	M	E	R	R	A	T	A
B	A	B	I	L	O	V	E	Y	O
V	O	C	A	B	E	N	E	X	
A	T	A	A	W	A	R	D	S	T
N	O	N	C	O	M	A	A	R	O
D	O	Y	O	U	W	A	N	N	A
A	L	O	R	S	G	O	R	D	N
L	E	N	A	O	V	E	R	I	T
T	O	N	I	A	B	E	E	R	
C	O	M	E	B	A	C	K	B	A
O	L	E	I	C	A	R	U	S	C
M	A	R	T	O	R	E	N	T	A
B	Y	E	B	Y	E	B	A	B	Y

CROSSWORD NO. 89 FEBRUARY 14, 2023

Ooooo..H MY GOD...

WTF I FEEL LIKE SHIT...

AND I LOOK WORSE

WHAT IS- uRp-

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING.

THIS WORLD IS FULL OF MONSTERS AND MANIACS, SO YOU GOTTA FIND THE GOOD STUFF AND HOLD ON TIGHT.

FUFFIES, BARTOONS.

MEMORIES OF KISSING SOME JERK IN THE FACE.

SOONER OR LATER, IT'S ALL LOST TO THE LIKE A PIRT ON A WINNY FAY.

THIS WORLD, IT'LL BITE YOU UP AND POOF YOU OUT.

AND THEN IT'LL PUT THE POOF IN A BOX AND YELL AT THE BOX UNTIL THE POOF FEELS SAD.

LIFE IS TOUGH, IS WHAT I'M TELLING YOU. TOUGH LIKE A BARTENDER WITH HALF FINISHED TATTOOS.

TOUGH LIKE PANNY TREJO RIGHT AFTER SOMEONE KICKED HIS YOG.

PLARIS 2023

SPLURGE

HISS

KRICEIT!

YOU GOTTA BE READY.

EXCUSE ME, WHY ARE YOU TALKING TO MY SON?

I RUNNO, HE JUST LOOKED BORED.

YOU GOTTA LOOK LIFE IN THE EYE AND SAY, "NOT TODAY, YOU PIECE OF TRASH."

MAYBE TOMORROW, BUT NOT TODAY.

I THINK I HAVE CHRONIC DEPRESSION NOW.

Absolute Film Reviews

Unicorn Wars
Playing at the
Victoria Film
Festival (Feb
3-12, 2023) and
coming to select
theaters and VOD
beginning March
10, 2023

Spanish filmmaker
Alberto Vázquez
(*Birdboy: The
Forgotten Children*)
made an animated
film about militant
teddy bears who
believe in a crazy
gospel that turn
peaceful unicorns
into something
else. If *Unicorn
Wars* is supposed
to say they started the fight, then honestly, the misnomer
throws viewers off.



Here, when a bear kills the last unicorn and drinks its
blood, that life form becomes king. He then rules the
Magic Forest, and all animals have to bow to him. This
causes most of this species to go into training at Camp
Love, learning how to fire heart shaped arrows and kill
without getting PTSD.

Bluey and Tubby are a pair of brothers who go through
boot camp together. After graduating, their first mission
is to locate a lost patrol and soon we see how badly they
get along not only between themselves, but also with
their platoon. Bluey is downright aggressive, and the
sibling is the polar opposite.

Anyone enamored with the colourful movie trailer will
find the visual motifs very telling. This film is about how
awful war is. It's absolutely not made for children to view.
Instead, it's for people wanting further social studies
into a world that resembles 19th century Europe. If the
way these creatures die isn't troubling enough, then the
finale will assuredly stab at you. I suspect this work is a
look at what Vázquez thinks of the time when Francisco
Franco ruled Spain.

As a result, viewers will either leave the theatre perplexed
or depressed. The ideologies presented aren't hard to
fathom. Fortunately, we can learn from the mistakes
these cartoon characters made. Humanity can be better,
assuming that's this director's goal.

— Ed Sum

The Colour of Ink
Playing at the
Victoria Film
Festival on
Feb 4 (1pm)
and 7 (9pm)
And coming
to theNFB.ca
Summer 2023

Brian D. Johnson's
*The Colour of
Ink* is a beautiful
documentary to
behold on the
silver screen.
Not only does
it vividly render
the pigmented
products made
by Jason Logan
for us to behold,
but we also
see Nicholas De Pencier's camera work provide some
beautiful juxtapositions.



To hear what others think of Jason's product is very
insightful. After being raised on the sights and sounds
that make up the natural beauty of Gambier Island,
he decided to become an artist himself. To bring that
location essence to the canvas meant creating his own
paints. These days, he lives in the big city, working as a
graphic designer for big clients like The New Yorker. He
also is managing the Toronto Ink Company, where he
creates specialty inks in small batches for clients all over
the world!

Because he sources his material from natural
environments, what's sold is non-toxic. His most popular
product is walnut black and sumac. They are naturally
sourced, and as for other tones, they're made from things
he finds in the city suburbs and forests!

Los Angeles-based and internationally known tattoo
artist Roxx is profiled because she hates using toxic
paints on a client. When she can't order from Jason, she'll
make her own non-glycerin based material, and it's her
desire to be sustainable that deserves high praise. Other
guests interviewed include surreal artist Yuri Shimojo,
author Margaret Atwood, and cartoonist Liana Finck.

Overall, viewers will get quite the education from this
film. The careful love and attention put into profiling
these individuals shows why they got into art, rather
than just why they use ink over paint.

— Ed Sum

Door Mouse

Door Mouse has
plenty of Quentin
Tarantino and
punk rock vibes
in its story about
Mouse (Hayley
Law,) a comic
book illustrator
whose only real
paying job is that
of a burlesque
performer.
But when her
colleagues get
kidnapped,
she becomes
a gumshoe
detective with
a mission—to
protect her
sisters from the
hood, who have a habit of winding up dead or much
worse. Worse, the cops dismiss the problem as not worth
investigating. Instead of waiting to be a victim, she'd
rather be a victor in this quirky indie film smartly written
and well-directed by Avan Jogia.



This movie's greatest strength lies in how perfect the
neo-noir atmosphere is realized. Not only is it coloured

in pastel lights, but also we get appropriate sound
design to make the world feel grungy. Additionally, the
illustrations are animated to recognize how this lead
looks at the world. This approach works to explain why
she's drawing from her life experience to create her
comic book. The grittiness that's visualized makes me
wonder if we'll ever see a sampler as a booklet when the
home video release is ready. The sketches I see makes me
think this artist is inspired by Robert Crumb.

Mouse hasn't made it big in her chosen profession,
and without the support of friends and readers, to get
a publisher to print her work will be tough. She's been
self-publishing for a while now, and that's tough on the
pocket book.

Elsewhere, this heroine's workplace is a cesspool.
Mama (Famke Janssen,) doesn't want her staff to feel
under-appreciated so she helps out when she can. Her
operation helps give them a sense of financial stability,
but there's more to her than meets the eye.

Ugly (Keith Powers,) is like a shining light. He tries
his best to help Mouse, and this cool cat is this film's
highlight! He's more than a friend to her, although she
doesn't know it. Not only does he have style, but that
charm is infectious! But ultimately, this movie is about
Mouse trying to succeed on her own. But it can't happen
until she understands she has friends willing to help.

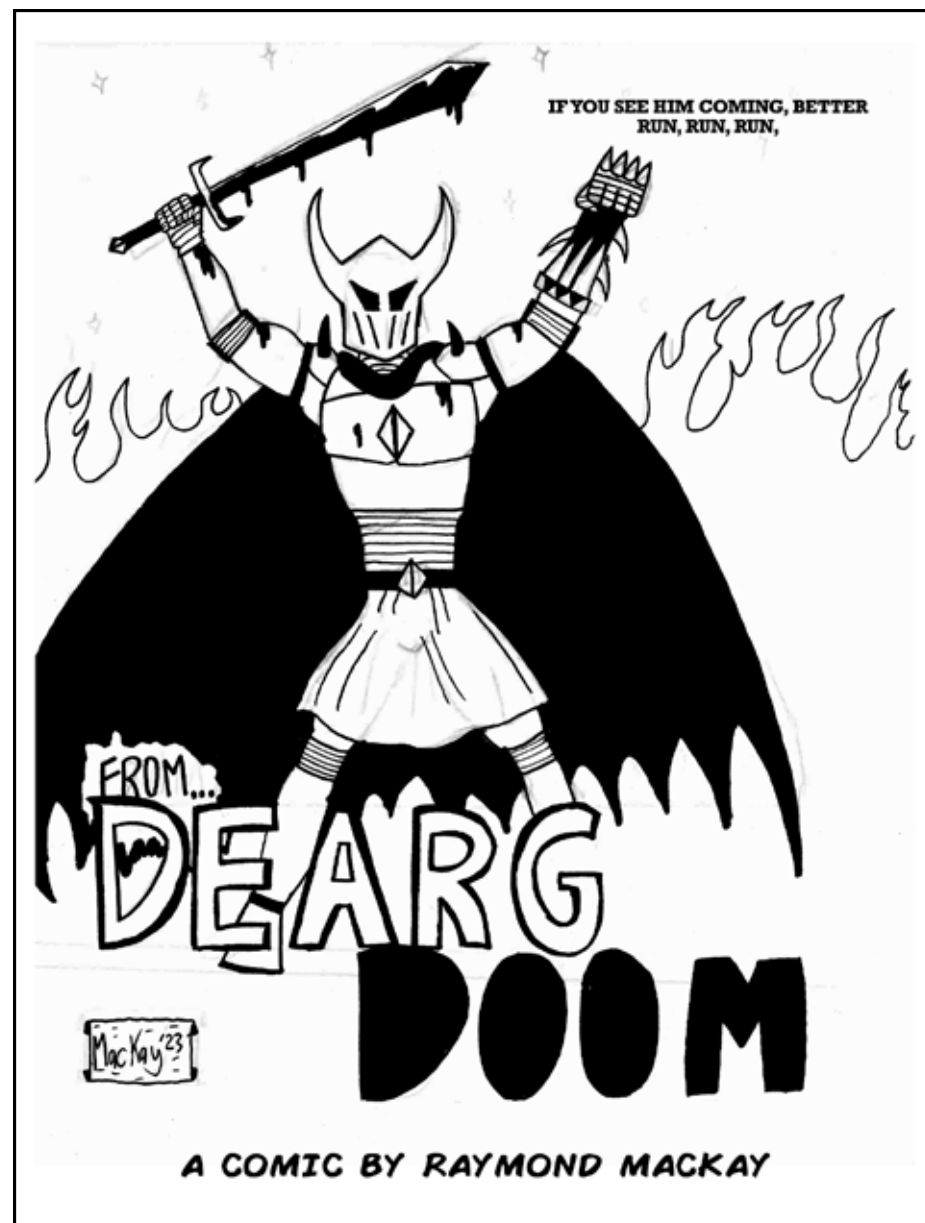
— Ed Sum

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Absolute Live



Anthrax
Black Label Society
Exodus
January, 22, The Grey Eagle,
Calgary AB



For Anthrax's 40th anniversary tour, they took friends *Black Label Society* and *Exodus* along to share the celebration. Flames fanatic Steve Souza of *Exodus* just couldn't get enough of Calgary the last time they rolled through a mere few months ago, so with this gig, the band got to see more of what the city had to offer with a show at the Grey Eagle Casino and Resort.

As folks were still piling into

Exodus began their set. Their show at the Palace a few months ago seems to be gaining a sort of minor legendary status, with Souza asking the crowd how many showed up at that show. Of course, many did, and knew what to expect from them. The crowd was rabid, as expected, but since the Grey Eagle had a larger floor - it seemed less chaotic than the dense, sweaty, sold out Palace show. Souza came onto the stage once again in his Calgary Flames jersey for the last few songs. "The Toxic Waltz" yielded a wall-of-death and "Strike of the Beast" had the fans clawing



the venue, waiting in the hefty t-shirt line, gambling or having a token outside,



for more. Admittedly, I don't consider myself a member of the *Black Label Society* Doom Crew, but I still have immense respect for the playing ability of Zakk Wylde. His presentation and production were a step up from *Exodus*, with Wylde fully utilizing the video screens to show *BLS* art. In the most touching moment of the show (and a reminder that Wylde is currently playing with *Pantera*), Wylde took to the piano for "In This River" while images of the Abbott brothers with Wylde were displayed on the screens. After all the tears were wiped off, Wylde finished the set off with heavier tracks "Suicide Messiah" and "Stillborn." It is sometimes hard to imagine that a band that sounds as youthful as *Anthrax* is celebrating its 40th anniversary. The show began with an intro video featuring various musicians and celebrities putting over *Anthrax*. The curtain dropped, and the band charged into "Among the Living" from the classic album of

Absolute Valentines Mixtape

By Dustin "Doctor Love" Jak

- 1) Alice Cooper - "I Love The Dead"
- 2) Wayne County - "Toilet Love"
- 3) The Besmirchers - "Puppy Love"
- 4) Johnny Thunders - "Pirate Love"
- 5) FEAR- "I Love Livin in the City"

the same name. Though they have 40 years of material to plow through, the band wasted no time getting through some of their most popular songs - "Caught in a Mosh" and "Madhouse." For the new and old fans

in attendance, they then played the heavy-as-hell "Keep it in the Family." I had only seen *Anthrax* just one other time - as part of the Download Festival in Tokyo. At the time, I believed that Anthrax had the best live guitar sound out of any band I'd ever seen, and it's safe to say that it wasn't just Japan - *Anthrax* really do have the best live guitar sound I've ever heard, with "Keep it in the Family" confirming it. The John Bush era was covered with "Only" from *White Noise*, with the set ending after "Bring the Noise" and the immortal "Indians." At just over an hour, the band could have played another 30 minutes, but like the set at Download, sometimes shorter is better. Perhaps they felt they didn't want to overstay their welcome, but *Anthrax* is definitely welcome to come back when they wish.

- Ryan Dyer



DOA
KNIFE MANUAL
SKÜLL
SATURDAY, 28 JANUARY 2023
VICTORIA EVENT CENTRE

As the denim-patched punks ascended the flight of wooden stairs at new home of punk in Victoria - The Victoria Event Center - the place buzzed with excitement. Old and new faces alongside each other were catching up and making new friends. Three bands to take in: *Sküll*; a new three piece who brought a high-tempo d-beat hardcore flavour with a tight, rapid set. Enjoyable! *Knife Manual* had more soldiers on the small stage, looking crowded and lively. Big energy, fast tempos! Sense of humour; and got people

warmed up - ready to move. DOA next and closing. What can be said? Active Vancouver band since 1978, seen it, done it, and has the t-shirts. They aired great classics like "Race Riot", "Liar For Hire," and even *BTO's* "Taking Care of Business" for some cover flavour. They worked the room like pros, jumping around, big kicks, behind the head guitar, and between song banter urging action in your life and political perspective. Add some spilled beer, big smiles, bit of dancing - it's what you came for, and it's what you expected. Cheers to the bands and crowd, and to Esther for organizing.

TALK - ACTION = 0
- Erik Lindholm.

Photo Credit: Colin Smith Takes Pics



Hyperspace Metal Festival

Canada's premier melodic and power metal festival HYPERSPACE is proud to announce its full lineup for its 2023 edition being held on April 13-15 in Vancouver, BC at The Fox Cabaret and Rickshaw Theatre.

Joining the final lineup is Calgary's speed demons *Riot City*, Atlanta power thrashers *Paladin*, power prog saviours *Immortal Guardian*, Denver fantasy heroes *Celestial Wizard* along with local epic metallers *Atavistia*, and one-man instrumentalist Zack Brannon.

The lineup also features previously announced headliners California melo-death warriors *Exmortus*, Edmonton Juno Award winners and heavy metal champions *Striker*, along with HMF

alumni *Judicator*, and *Lords of the Trident*.

Unfortunately, *Odnifst* and *Hrom* have had to pull out of HMF4. There will be plans to welcome them again in future years.

Festival organizer Joey Hockin of Journeyman Productions says, "we're excited to have our 2023 lineup complete. This fourth year of the fest is going to be another great gathering of metal's best and upcoming power and prog-influenced bands. We look forward to seeing everyone making the trek to Vancouver this April."

Hyperspace Metal Festival 2023 Lineup:

Thursday, April 13th (Fox Cabaret)

Riot City
Greyhawk
Atavistia
Medevil
Hyloxalus
Zack Brannon

Friday, April 14th (Fox Cabaret)

Striker
Traveler
Celestial Wizard
Thousand Arrows

Saturday, April 15th (Rickshaw Theatre)

Exmortus

Judicator
Lords Of The Trident
Paladin
Immortal Guardian
Lutharo
Hyperia

To follow updates for Hyperspace Metal Festival 2023, please visit the following links:

Facebook.com/HyperspaceMetalFestival

Instagram.com/
HyperspaceMetalFestival





EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS

Guardians of the Legacy

Interview with drummer Simon 'Basher' Bowley
By Ira "Fish 'n' Chips" Hunter

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

Simon Bowley: You are talking to Simon 'Basher' Bowley and I have been the drummer for *Eddie & the Hot Rods* for the last 26 years.

AU: Who else is in the band and what are their skills to pay the bills?

Dipster - Vocals

Richard Holgarth - guitar

Mic Stoner - bass guitar.

AU: What's the story of Eddie and the Hot Rods.

SB: Formed back in Essex in 1975 by Barrie Masters and Steve Nicol, *Eddie and the Hot Rods* quickly established themselves as one of the most energetic, hard hitting live bands around. "Teenage Depression" and "I Might Be Lying" proved that they could cut it on record too, but it was their Top 10 single "Do Anything You Wanna Do," that cemented their legendary status and still features on compilations to this day.

The band split in 1980 but appeared together on occasions over the years.

With the arrival of the Millennium, *Eddie and the Hot Rods* were invited to be on the Naughty Rhythms Tour which featured *Dr Feelgood*, John Otway and *The Hamsters*, this cemented a new fresh line up of musicians that included myself (nephew of original drummer Steve Nicol) on drums, Ian 'Dipster' Dean on bass, Richard Holgarth on guitar and original front man Barrie Masters on vocals while Chris Taylor would join as second guitarist in 2002.

Over the years, a heavy touring schedule saw them playing shows across Europe, USA, where they rubbed shoulders with *Green Day*, broke new

ground in Russia and Japan, as well as becoming firm favourites on the festival circuit. They opened for *Status Quo* on their 2012 winter tour that finished with a show at London's O2 Arena. The band also recorded a couple of well received albums "Better Late Than Never," and, "Been There Done That," in the mid 2000's.

In early September 2019 it was clear that singer Barrie Masters' long-term health issues were making it impossible for him to carry on performing, and with dates still to play opening for *Stiff Little Fingers* he gave the band his blessing to carry on without him and long-time bassist Ian 'Dipster' Dean took on vocal duties.

Sadly, Barrie Masters died a month later and the remaining members took time out to grieve.



As the weeks turned to months and the Covid 19 pandemic took hold, the remaining band members were constantly reminded by fans and promoters that they had all been *Eddie and the Hot Rods* fans for over 20 years and encouraged them to keep the legacy of both the band and of Barrie alive, this got them thinking" Could we? Should we?"

During those months of Covid lock down, *Chords UK* bassist Mic Stoner joined in place of Ian 'Dipster' Dean who became the permanent lead singer. In 2022 the band decided to write and record a brand new album, their first in 16 years. They signed worldwide record deals with U.S. labels to release "Guardians of the Legacy" in April 2023. And so begins the new chapter in the long history of *Eddie & the Hot Rods*.

AU: What are some career highlights and lowlights from the past?

SB: Lots of highlights including going back to the USA after 23 years, opening for *Status Quo* on their arena tour, breaking new ground in Russia and Japan. Low point would have to be watching our singer and best mate Barrie Masters getting worse in his health until finally it was impossible for him to carry on and he unfortunately passed

away.

AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?

SB: <laughs> over the years all the above...now more just the rock 'n' roll (mainly.)

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

SB: It's more English rock, but a few of the songs do have that punk edge. What made *Eddie and the Hot Rods* stand-out when they first came onto the scene, was that they were all teenagers and had that "don't give a damn" attitude, and they played loud, fast, and in your face rock 'n' roll which at the time wasn't happening in the UK.

AU: Who would you classify the band? Is it Punk, Rock, Greaser Music?

SB: Personally I say it's a rock band but it crosses more than one genre, put us with a classic rock band we fit, a punk band we fit, or an R'n'B rock 'n' roll band and we fit.

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

SB: We are about to release our brand-new album in April. It's called "Guardians of The Legacy," and has 12 tracks of guitar-driven punk-tinged rock'n'roll.

AU: How long was it between releases? Why such a long hiatus?

SB: It has been 16 years since we recorded the last studio album. We have always written songs but spend so much time on the road that they just never get recorded. Having those 18 months or so inactive because of Covid gave us the opportunity to get the ball rolling.

AU: What's the family connection to the original era of the band?

SB: I'm the nephew of original drummer Steve Nicol. I was six years old when the band first took off and a lot of the time the guys would be round my grandparents house. Being a close family meant I grew up around those original members.

AU: The album is called Guardians of the Legacy. What does that mean to you personally?

SB: I'm really proud of this album, *E&HR* is something that's close to my heart. I can't remember a time when it wasn't in my life in one way or another, and being part of the band for 20 odd years is incredible. "Guardians of the Legacy," was the first track written and it had to be the title of the album, it sums up exactly what we are doing

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

SB: No. We don't tend to write songs that send a message or explore certain topics, we just write damn good rock'n'roll songs

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



SB: I was asked by a radio station to pick 3 stand out tracks and I can honestly say they are all stand out tracks. Although, right now track 11, "Without You We Are No One," is my go-to track, but next week that will change

AU: What record label is the new release out on and how did that come about?

SB: Renaissance Records are releasing the digital downloads and CD whilst Outro Records are taking care of the vinyl. Both are U.S. labels and we are really happy to be on board with each of them. We felt by having two labels doing what they do best gives us the best distribution / release option.

AU: Any music videos for these new songs?

SB: Yes, we released three tracks as singles in 2022. Title track "Guardians of the Legacy," that hit number two on the Heritage Music Chart. "New Frontier," that hit number two on the Legacy Music Chart, and "Paradise," that made number one on the Legacy chart. Each of these can be found on our YouTube channel, just search *Eddie and the Hot Rods*.

AU: Any plans for Valentine's Day this year?

SB: None so far.

AU: Any dating advice?

SB: It's been along time since I was in the dating game.

AU: Any fetishes to share?

SB: No comment.

AU: Any upcoming shows, tours, or festivals? Will you be playing Canada?

SB: We have a few festivals in the UK and Europe, and we are in talks about coming back to the USA and Canada. So hopefully yes.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

SB: Only that *Eddie and the Hot Rods* are back to

their very best. Love the old material from way-back-when, embrace the new material, and join us on our journey into the future. We will have a pre-order link set up on eddieandthehotrods.com

AU: How do people find you online?
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facebook.com/TheHotRods
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instagram.com/eddieandthehotrods
and our YouTube channel

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JEREMY MICHAEL ERICKSON MAY 15, 1977 – JANUARY 6, 2023

Hi friends and family of Jeremy. This is Josh, his brother. For those of you who haven't yet heard the bad news, Jeremy passed away on January 6th. We have a service scheduled on March 11, 2023 at 2pm-4pm at First Memorial Funeral Services. 4725 Falaise Dr. Victoria BC. If you knew Jeremy, cared about Jeremy, you are invited and welcome. If you would like to be added to the evite list, which will include a web link to join and/or be a part of the service remotely, please email me at [josh.g.erickson\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:josh.g.erickson(at)gmail.com).

- Josh Erickson

I met Jeremy Erickson back when I was a booking agent in Victoria. I imagine these days are a bit blurry for everyone involved in this particular part of the music scene at the time. Jeremy stood out as one of the more

memorable characters, always having time for everyone. Always quick with a joke when shit went sideways, which was more often than I'd like to admit. The guy was an important part of making memories for fans and everyone involved in putting on some kick ass Speakeasy and Moneshot shows.

- Steve Blyth

Back in the Vernon days, I'll never forget you and Calvin coming into the Vintage clothing store I was working at, asking me to join your band. I'm sure glad you did. If you hadn't, I'd never of experienced the amazing friendship we began. Our evening excursions with all the gang, and paper bagging O.E's lol. Going to and playing shows, and all of us Speakeasy boys moving to Victoria. An apartment of five punkers. A bathroom stained with hair colours of the rainbow from ceiling to floor and dirty pots and pans everywhere, and just being a bunch of juveniles. Haha We played many shows from friends' basements to The Limit and beyond. As the years went on, we moved on to other bands and circles of friends. However,



despite that, I'm happy and thankful that you were always the glue that kept us all in touch. You always had the biggest heart, the best smile and laugh. True one of a kind! If there was anything I could ask for, it would be to have spent more time with you. I'm grateful for the times I did. If it wasn't for you and Calvin all those years ago, I would not be where I am today. You will always have a place in my heart

and thoughts. Rest well my friend and beat the crap outta those drums in Rock Heaven! Your loving friend Christian (Treebark)

- Christian Head

R.I.P - Suzie Que



SUZANNE BONNIE MCDONALD

July 17, 1970 - Dec 31, 2022

Photo Credit: Andrew Fedoruk



Tom Verlaine

December 13th, 1949 - January 28th, 2023

By Sheldon Byer

Born Thomas Miller in New Jersey 1949, raised in Delaware till 1955 & became Tom Verlaine in New York City in 1966. The visionary behind

the legendary "Marquee Moon" album with his band *Television* changed the face of music in NYC, and for the future to come. Exchanging punk stereotypes for more a "thinking man's" approach to song writing, Tom created a template and inspiration for indie and new wave, without ditching the legitimacy of the band's punk roots. *Television's* 3rd performance to an audience of Patti Smith & Lenny Kaye took place at the turning point of legendary venue CBGB & OMFUG, where Verlaine convinced owner Hilly Kristal to start booking more contemporary artists. *Television* released two more albums, "Adventure" in the 80's and a self-titled effort in 1992. Verlaine released solo works and collaborations throughout these decades as well. Verlaine was part of the *Million Dollar Bashers*, a supergroup also featuring *Sonic Youth* musicians Lee Ranaldo & Steve Shelley, *Wilco* guitarist Nels Cline, Bob Dylan bassist Tony Garnier, guitarist Smokey Hormel, & keyboardist John Medeski. Their work appears on the original

soundtrack to *I'm Not There*, a biographical film reflecting on the life of Bob Dylan. *Television* reformed in 2010 & continued performing until Verlaine died in New York City on January 28, 2023, after a brief illness. He was 73. Rest in Power.

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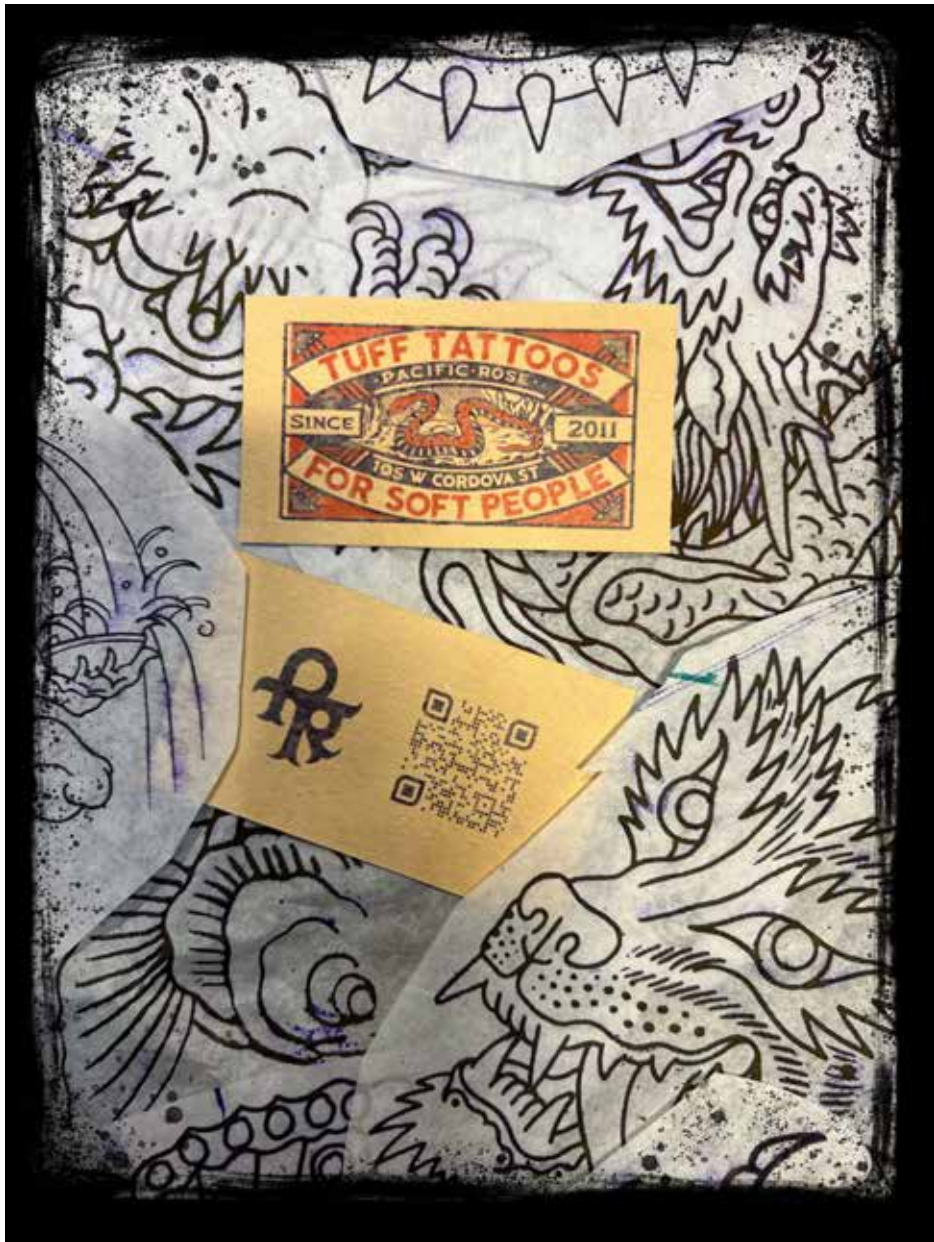
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home, which was lined with records. He asked what I wanted to hear, and I said the third Velvet Underground album and off he went in search of it. When he had been gone for a long while, we went to find him. The quest had proved too much for him and we found him passed out in a chair among a zillion albums.

Even without him having been a terrifically nice guy, he would still be a cultural treasure because of the massive volume of articles he wrote, about both the greats and those he felt deserved some ink and recognition. Tom gave a lot of breaks to a lot of musicians. He has made careers, mine included.

Tom Harrison

1952 -2022

The Vancouver Province's rock critic Tom Harrison had a stroke on Christmas Day and passed away in hospital two days later. His work and legacy helped define rock music in Western Canada.

I may have met Tom Harrison when we were both interviewing our mutual hero Lou Reed on his Rock 'n' Roll Heart tour.

Tom was always nice to me, immediately giving me gigs at The Georgia Straight when I got out of university in 1978. We shared beer at umpteen Commodore gigs. Tom always had a rock'n'roll heart and he has given to rock'n'roll as much as it has given to him. Rock journalism in Vancouver orbited around Tom Harrison.

He hung with the greats. I remember him at a Pretenders gig at the Queen E, He was ecstatic at having interviewed Chrissie Hynde that afternoon how they had finished the interview harmonizing on some old garage-rock tunes. While having dinner with him at his house one night he whipped out a picture of him and Keith Richards together. Another time, we were in his

Tom wrote incisively and honestly. He was a great journalist and a great entertainer. He was also a broadcaster on both radio and TV and was an accomplished drummer and singer in *The Explosions* and Bruno Gerussi's *Medallion*.

The greats in this business are known by the addition of an expletive adjective inserted as their middle name. He was Tom "Fuckin'" Harrison.

- Les Wiseman

"Without Tom I really doubt whether the Vancouver punk scene would have developed as it did. When it started nobody cared except Tom. If he had not used my photos (and there was no other interest) and had not run little pieces (and later long ones) and announced gigs in the Georgia Straight pages I don't think the early scene would have survived. While small punk zines did appear later, Tom's music pages were the only conduit to the larger greater Vancouver (and BC) music world."

-Don Denton

Photo Credit: Don Denton



Blade was a bomb blast of a recording! No one up to this point had heard anything close to this. One of the master minds behind these songs was Ken Wall who recently passed away. He started the band as White Noise, that would later evolve into Beyond Possession as we know it. He toured on their first tour and then took a back seat. *Tell Tale Heart* and *Creeping Eruption* are both great examples of his guitar work. Beyond Possession were the first band to have a full length LP on Metal Blade Records. Rest in Peace -Dustin Jak

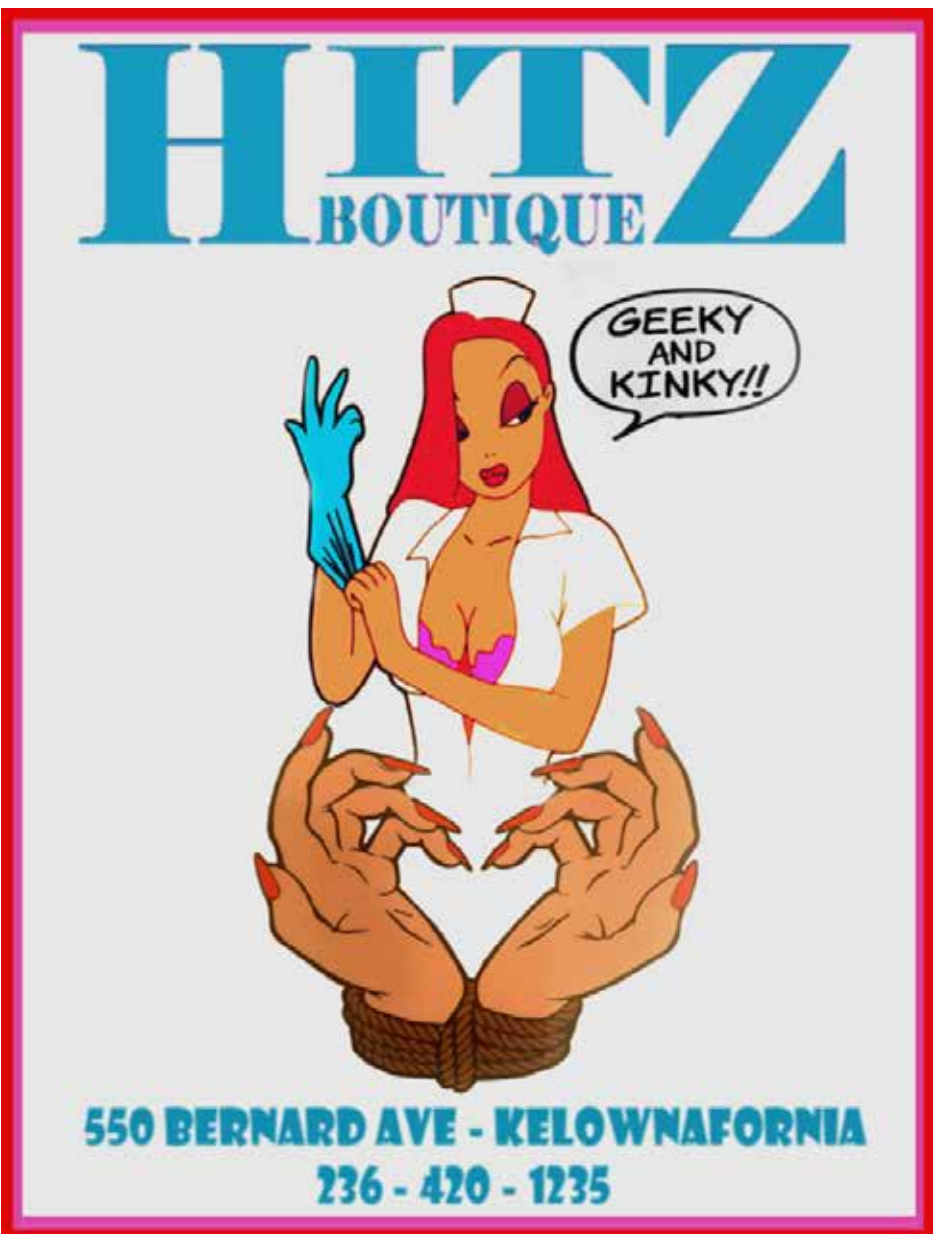


KEN WALL

Jan 1, 1966 - Jan 1, 2023

Guitarist in *White Noise* / *Beyond Possession* / *Joker*

If you skateboarded in the mid 80s chances are you listened to Canadian Thrash/Punk legends Beyond Possession. They released a killer EP and were then featured on Thrasher Skate Rock and the Death Records comp. Their infamous full length in 1986 on Metal



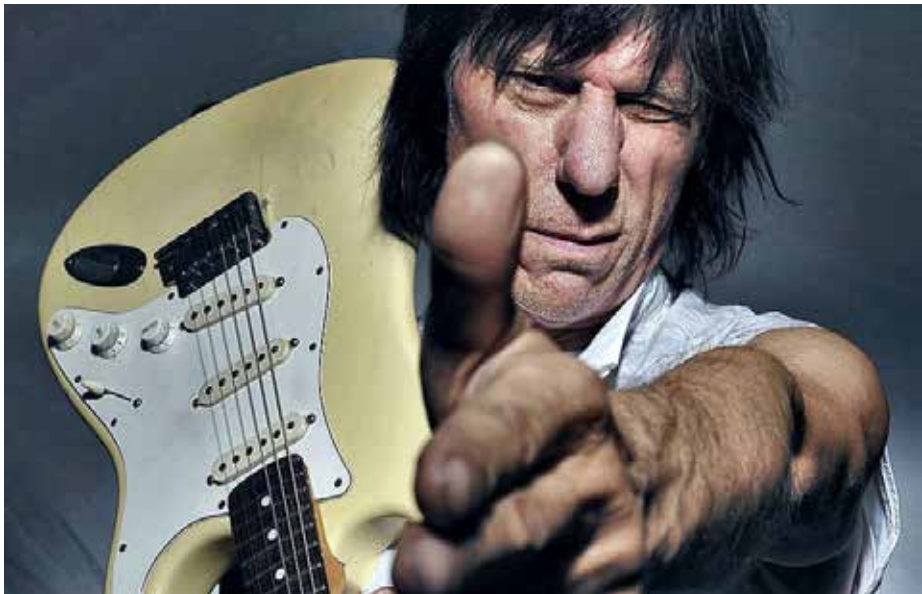


The earth doesn't feel like there should be a gravitational pull anymore. Everything has fallen out of sync and harmony for everyone whose lives were touched by Doug Smode. If you knew him, you loved him. If you didn't know him, you wanted to. People gravitated to Doug due to his charisma, kind heart and good time attitude. I first became to know of Doug from Facebook in early 2012, I remember this because his profile picture was the side of his face (no tattoos or horns back then) and showed off his long blonde dreadlocks. I thought "that guy looks cool". By the end of the year fate had us on the same suspension team but different divisions across Canada. We connected and chatted frequently until we met in 2013 at a body suspension convention. He suspended me at that convention, and every convention that followed. By 2015, we were so close I moved from New Brunswick to Calgary with a few hundred bucks in my pocket right into his room. Doug

cleared out a drawer in his dresser, and we had an extended slumber party with frequent \$9 bottles of wine, Jamesons, and so many dresses paired with heels. These were our "white girl" nights. Together with our family, Permafrost (Jon & Doug as the senior crew), he mentored and trained the permababies (Krystine, Chase, Dylan & myself), and we continued to travel to the U.S. for Suscons. Doug made hundreds of friends at these events, I swear some people just attending to see him and suspend with him. He was always the life of the party, and everyday he would be booked with suspensions from open to close at the convention centers. Sticking to his word and showing up for the morning suspensions for new friends, often he would show up on the convention floor in just ladies panties trying to air out the hangover. And everyone just loved him more for being exactly who he was. No aquamarine lace cut panty took away from his professionalism when it came to suspending someone.



When Doug facilitated your suspension he believed in you so truly and your success of that suspension, that it would convince you that maybe you could hang from the wildest of places on your body. For reference the guy convinced me to suspend from my ass a few too many times, once cutting me down to one cheek. How does someone make such things fun or spiritual? I have no clue. But Doug Smode did. He was supernatural. He gave that confidence and strength to his family, friends and relationships in all avenues of our lives. From the small stuff to the big stuff. He always told me "you got this lil baby." And after we fought like siblings cursing each other out, after a disagreement with anyone, it always ended in a hug. Doug always knew how to make things better. Doug lifted others up even when he was down. He was eternally optimistic about life and empathetic to everyone he met, making him amazing at his job and the best friend anyone could have. Doug continues to be an eternally cherished son, brother, partner, uncle, nephew and friend. The earth shouldn't be turning without him slamming his longboard to the pavement or his laugh hanging in the air. I'll be grateful for the rest of my life to have experienced his friendship and unwavering love. We all will. Thank you Donna for bringing Doug into this world so we could exist with your son at the same time. Love you always. Miss you forever; Grasshopper

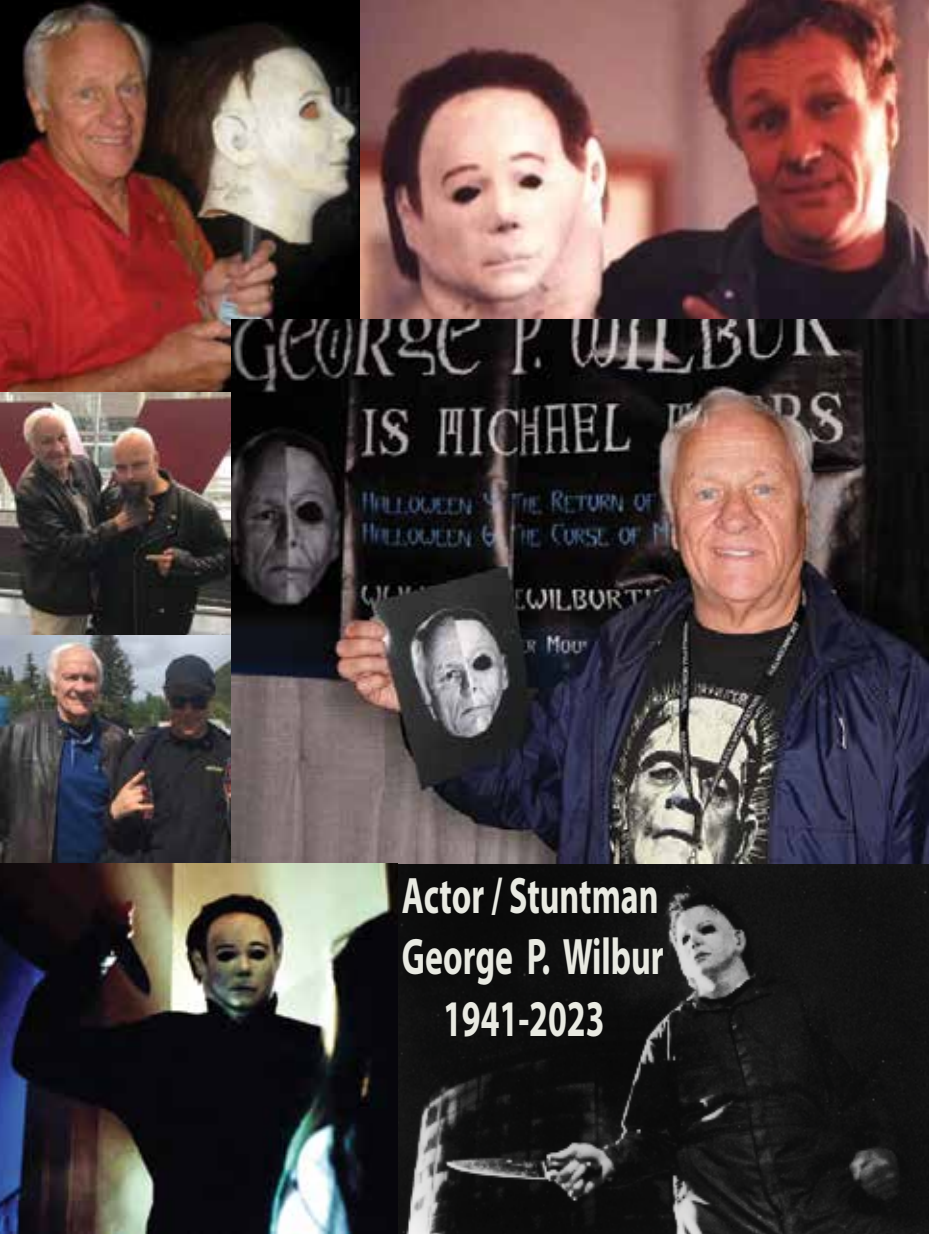


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