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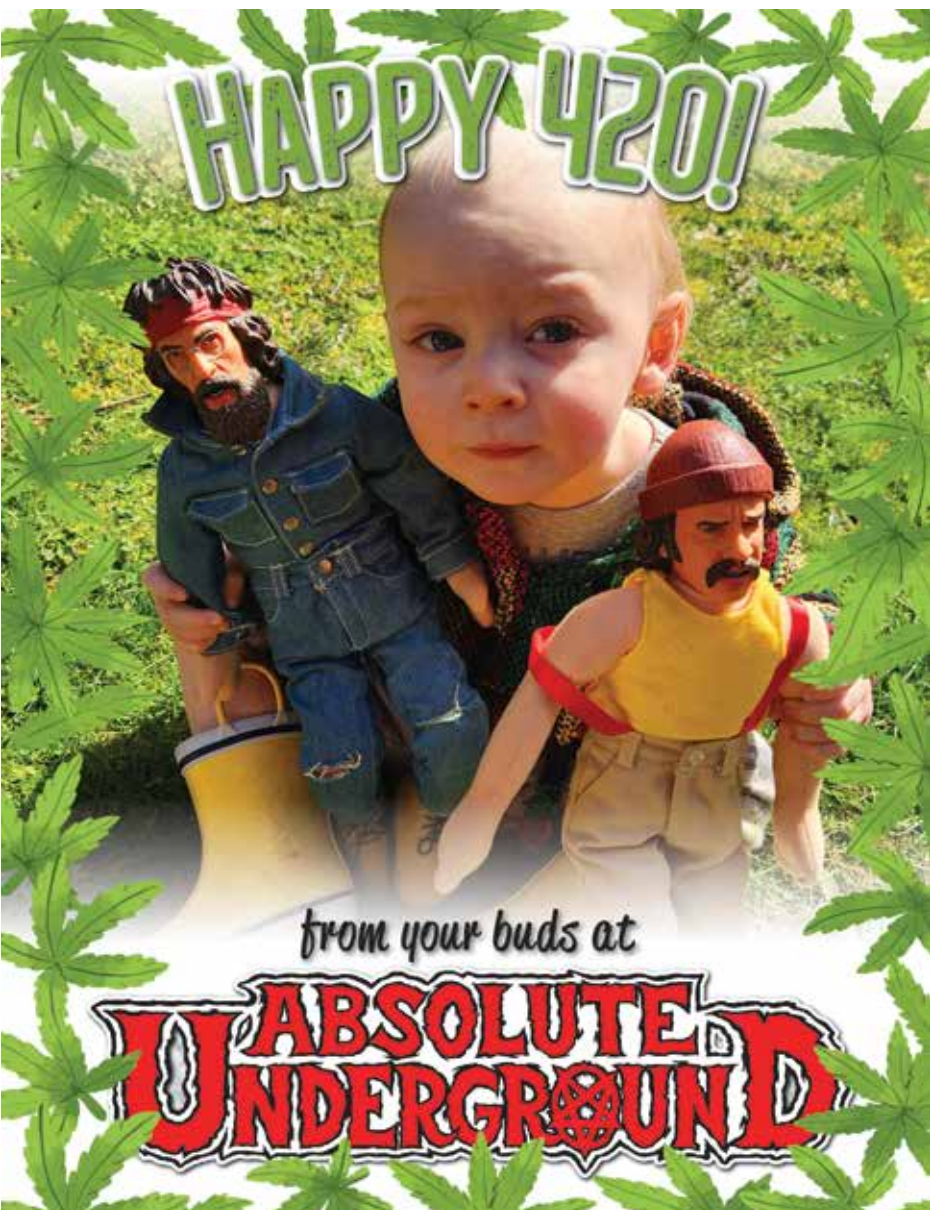
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THE SHIT TALKERS

Quack

Interview with Liz Mantle the Dismantler
By Mal Content

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

The Shit Talkers: Liz Mantle aka The Dismantler, besides my forensic analytical dismantling of the world around me I also possess the hidden skill of chicken whisperer.

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

superpowers?

TST:

Nadja: Sexiest drums and vocals.

Scoooooches: Big bass and vocals.

Shaun: Widdly widdly wooohest guitar.

AU: What will people hear when they listen to The Shit Talkers?

TST: Witty earwormable lyrics, sizzling sounds, a great deal of giggling, and occasional introspective prose punk rock.

AU: What boxes do you tick off in terms of music genres and influences?

TST: Try to stay away from boxes, we will accept the genre of punk rock as in make it your own

AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us all about it!

TST: Releasing a new 7 song EP titled Quack on May 1st. Releasing the 1st single "Put a Collar On It" April 1st and a 2nd single "Bison" on April 29th on digital platforms.

AU: What new songs are you extra stoked on?

TST: On our new release, really stoked about the new songs "Put a Collar On It" and "Bison". "Put a Collar On It" is based on true snippets from Dirty Kurt's torture tales of sharing a hotel with bandmate Paul McKenzie. "Bison" is near and dear to my heart, for many reasons. One of which was a childhood obsession, I had repetitive dreams about huge herds of bison. The magnitude of the destruction of the bison and the way of life for the

peoples who coexisted with the great herds is still is hard to reconcile. "Bison" paints a portrait of their demise.

Also pretty tickled with "Party Animal" a perfect example of The Shit Talkers storytelling! A crazy tale of the skin flake line and the sweat martini!

AU: What makes this band unique in it's approach to making music?

TST: For The Shit Talkers writing/playing music is a pursuit of fun and creativity. Since the inception, Nadja and I just immediately clicked. Our song writing is a manifestation of feeding each other's energy to bring out and analyze the hilarity of the people and world around us!! As we just laugh and laugh coming up with super funny ridiculous scenarios for our stories we tell. For my part I then set out to find as non rhetorical a riff as possible! Our music making marriage is completed with smarts of Skootches laying the fat funky bass down with a solid meter. Almost all our songs lyrics are crafted from snippets and anecdotes from true stories of personalities in our rock n roll family.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

TST: Nope, it's 420 everyday.

AU: Who's the biggest stoner in the band?

TST: The one who is always searching for their misplaced doobie. Must be good shit if you can't remember where you placed it!!

AU: Favorite strains to smoke?

TST: Sativa, lemon haze. Skunky is best.



AU: Any shows or tours planned?

TST:

April 7th at the Princeton in Vancouver,

April 14th the Effie in Kamloops

April 15th Solid Urban Studios in Salmon Arm,

April 16th at the Small Axe in Enderby

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

TST: New videos for our latest releases! A mini tour to Alberta, and hoping to get back to Vancouver Island in the fall.

AU: Final words for our readers?

TST: Keep on being awesome. We send our love and positive vibes to keep on rockin! Cheers.

AU: How do people find you online?

TST: facetrash, youtube, and our music is on a multitude of digital platforms.

theshittalkers.com

HUNG UP



HUNG UP

Tear Shit Up

Interview and Images by John Carlow/
Finding Charlotte Photography

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves.

Who plays what and what bands you've been in.

Hung Up:

E-Beat (Drums): *Zero Coping Skills, Rehab for Quitters, Sista Fista, Tomorrow's Midnight, The Howling Bullets*

Hung (Guitar): *Fuck You Pigs, Dayglo Abortions, Sick Sense*
Willy (Guitar): *Fully Crazed, Dayglo Abortions, Frostbacks, The Pricks*

Roy (Vocals): *A.W.T., Ted Bundy Project, BLKR*

Hayler (Bass): *Orange Krush, Zap Straps, New Tricks*

AU: How did the band come together?

HU: Truth be told, Willy and I (Hung) hooked up about one and a half years ago when I got out of rehab for gnarly street life. It was an obvious choice to ask Willy if he wanted to get down. We are both guitar fiends and besides, I've been buying weed off him since like 1992. In fact I think I still owe him for a half ounce from when I was all

butthurt because he replaced me in *Dayglos*. Anyhow we been bros forever and we are both JAKS Team. Absolute music. So some bros came and went for a few months, but E-Beat, Ratboy Roy, and Hayler joined up and we've been tearing

VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

it up ever since!

AU: What's the creative process? (Who does words/ music) Is it all done collectively?

HU: We don't get too hung up about that so much. I mean sometimes one of us will have a tune all ready to go, but we like getting our two cents in and busting balls, so we usually bang 'em around a bit. We like to write them all together sometimes too.

AU: Someone asks what kind of music you play, you say?

HU: We play killer punk rock.

AU: Any bands you want to mention that influence your sound?

HU: We all love good music, and making it too. We've been influenced by so many bands. I mean who hasn't? But we like all the classics like Poison Idea, Verbal Abuse, and Gang Green.

AU: What are most of your songs about? Seems like you have a message you try to send out.

HU: (Roy) - Our message is simple: don't be a dick. The world is so absurdly crazy and confusing that we don't pretend to have it figured out but it's okay to get charged up, stoked, whatever. Live free man!

AU: What should people expect at a HUNG UP show?

HU: Potential nudity, Hung might fall off stage. We get fired up pretty hard, smoke a pound of weed, and then we charge shit up quick and heavy. Then we usually go back to the jam spot and play *Loverboy* and GG Allin covers all night.

(AU: I think Mike Reno would really like to know that)

AU: Anything weird happen at the shows you've done to date?

HU: One time we were playing Carlton Club, Murray was on bass. We played with these real dapper emo musicians, and we thought we were bro-ing down with them all night, but the next day a friend of ours was having lunch at the same

spot as the wimpy emos. He heard them say we sucked and that were all toxic masculine. That was some weird shit. We got a couple smoking broads in the band; how can we be toxic masculine?

AU: Anything been recorded to date?

HU: We recorded our first album; it's getting mixed now. We are having so much fun coming up with shit for this band. We are DIY and we love that shit so he have started recording videos for our songs. We got like 3 now, I think. Its nice to be in a band like this where's there's no unnecessary drama. We have all been around the block a few times and we feel lucky we all got together, because it's that fun. You don't have to be the best to have the most fun.

AU: If you were doing a one day fest, list bands you'd want to be billed with.

HU: *Fully Crazed, Neurospazm, Keg Killers, Hot Hot Heat, Roxxylyde.*

AU: What do you think of the local scene?

HU: Vic punk scene is strong as hell, as it should be and lots of killer bands. Just gotta make shit happen. Like anything in life it goes full circle.

AU: What's next for the band?

HU: Other than making these clever video hi-jinks and getting our record out? We love playing live. We really wanna go to Vancouver for a show but it's been a challenge. Calgary would be the logical choice but we wanna go to Ontario and Quebec too.

AU: Shout outs? Last words?

HU: Shout out to all our bros and sisters alive or dead. Tear shit up. Don't dilly dally.

AU: Where do people look you up or contact you?

Look for HUNG UP on Facebook

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QUIT IT! Spilling Out

Interview by Faccio Glossette

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

Jordan from Quit It! here! I play guitar and sing some songs. I also have dumb jokes for days.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

We've been flying the Quit It! flag since 2020, though we've been cranking out tunes together for much longer. Check out our old band, River Jacks, if you're looking to scratch that folk-punk itch.

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

Spencer - Insightful, wise, devoted, knows the

best coffee shops in town.

Tyler - FUN, infectious energy, can skate circles around your ex.

Mikey - Powerful, organized, hilarious, will look after you and drive you anywhere ya need.

I dunno, is that how tinder works?

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

Well rounded? We love our hooks, but aren't afraid to get a little dirty.

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

Calgary, AB. There was a time where I wasn't so stoked on the scene here. Very cliquey. I'm happy to report that we've had a change of scenery (ha). Much more inclusive all around. We're also witnessing a new crop of all-ages bands coming in. Shout out to The Break Ins!

AU: Tell us about the album Quit It! has just released.

Spilling Out. Our debut LP. We'd been sitting on it for a minute, and are so stoked to have it out. It has a lot of our hearts in there. Hope ya like it!

AU: Any other releases planned for the future?

Always! No planned date on the next release, but we've already written maybe 1/3 of it.

AU: Any upcoming shows/tour dates?

We have a very busy spring ahead of us. Heading as far west as Victoria in late April, and heading as far east as Quebec City in May. Very stoked to be making our first Pouzza Fest appearance

as well.

AU: What can we expect from your live show?

We all sing! I wonder if it's kinda like watching a tennis match while we're playing. Lots of us hoping back and forth on the Mic.

AU: What is your most memorable tour story?

Oh so many! A few of them blend together. We



QUIT IT!



SPILLING OUT

got to play a snow castle in Yellowknife one time! We're looking forward to creating many more memories.

AU: It's the 420 Issue, do any of the band members partake?

Umm..... (checks over shoulder) yes. Still not used to that being a legal thing. Yo, we're actually playing at the Cambie in Van on April 20. So that's fun!

AU: What is the best strain of weed?

There is too much to keep up with to be honest. I'm old enough to have lived through the "Oh wow you have some?!" days. Didn't have the selection/availability of the modern age.

AU: Favourite thing to do while high?

Mario Kart & burritos.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Thanks for reading! Peep the tour poster and come say hi!

AU: How do people find you online?

quitit.bandcamp.com

facebook.com/quit.it.music

instagram.com/quit.it.music

All the other streaming stuff that doesn't pay us enough.

Photo Credit: Bill Kerr

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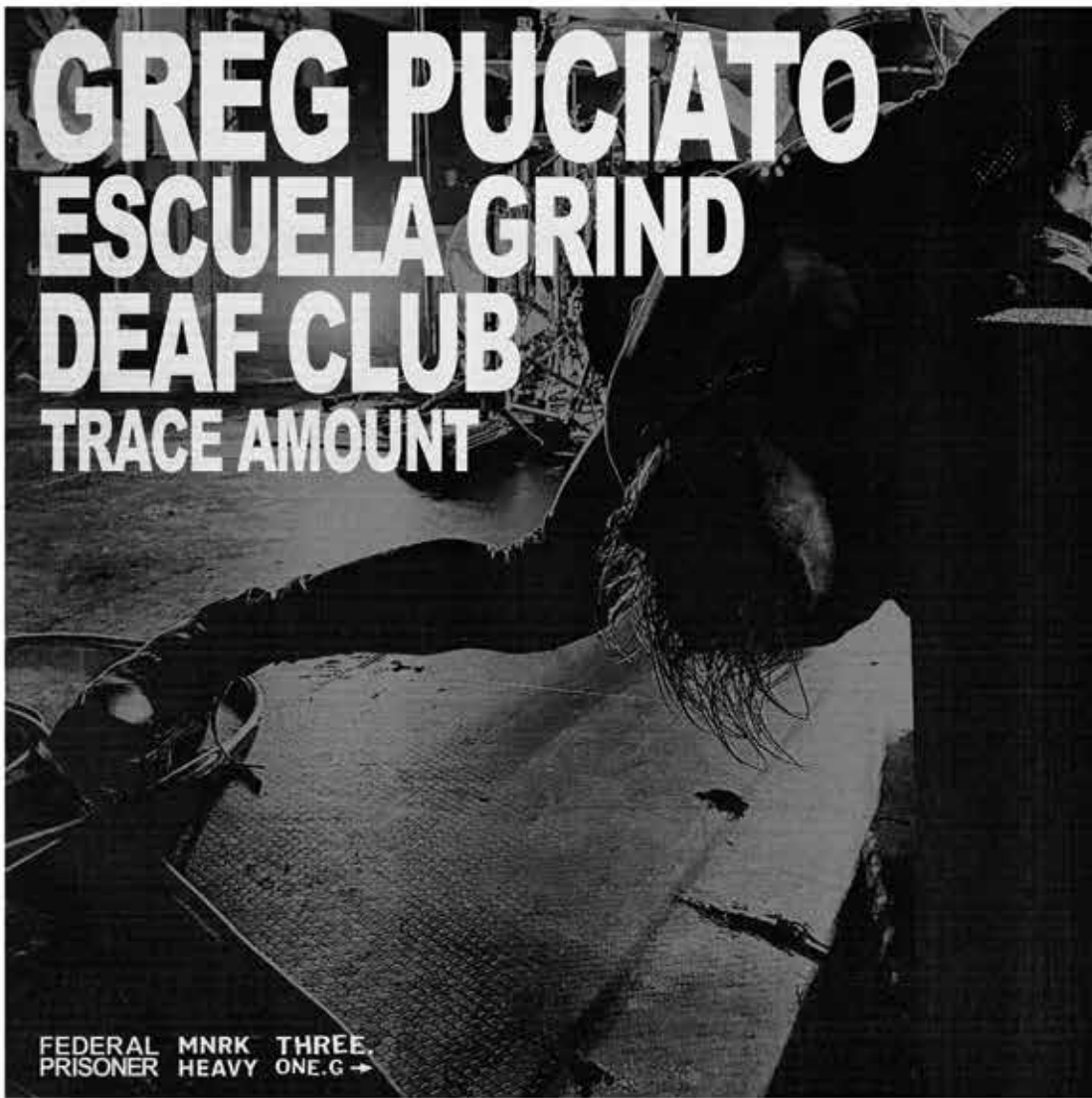
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GAG ORDER



Gag Order

Interview by Andy Stewart

AU: Sound off like you got a pair!

Gag Order: I'm Chico, I scream and yell.

I'm Glen, I play the bass.

I'm Jeremy, I play guitar.

I'm Terry, I play the drums.

Brian "Mayhem" I'm a modern guitar hero.

AU: Give us a history of the band.

Chico: We went through a few lineup changes, a couple drummers and then we had to make the hard decision to let Scott go and Jeff is on a hiatus now because of medical and other personal issues. We added Mayhem just over a year ago and Terry is banging the shit out of the drums now. This lineup seems to be pretty solid so hopefully we'll be moving the shitshow forward.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible?

Terry: Gag Order is mix of heavy and fast rhythms with a dash of 80's thrash thrown into the mix but also there is a more melodic punk rock sound in some of the songs. Musically and lyrically it's very direct and grabs you by the throat. I think since I've been playing with them we have a more of a straightforward hardcore vibe and less of a thrash sound that came with Jeff's double kick.

Jeremy: Yeah, we're a hard driving and fun punk rock band with some thrash metal roots.

Glenn: it sounds mean, dirty and rotten which matches the lyrical content. Basically, a hardcore punk rock punch in the face!

Chico: Most of us have been into punk and hardcore since the 80's so we are very much influenced by a lot of that stuff. Hardcore was pretty diverse. We like to draw from that, so we like to mix it up a bit. We do not want every song to sound the same so hopefully that comes across.

Brian: We tear up the time space continuum with our sonic frequencies. It's like watching a F-14 Tomcat doing a flyby. Loud thrash punk which causes nose to bleeds and makes my ass leak.

Chico: Your ass always leaks...

AU: Have you released an album recently?

Jeremy: We released a 5 song digital album in 2020 called "In My Head" that you can find through Cursed Blessings Records and we just recently recorded a HYPE song for Punk Canada's Volume 2 comp due out in the fall.

Glenn: We also have two split 12 inches available. One with *The Spree Killers* who were from Vancouver and one with *The Nasties* who were from Guelph. You can contact us if you want one.

Chico: We also did 2 split 7 inches way back when with *Out of Order* and *At What Cost*. RIP Adam

Brian: We are currently trying to write for what hopefully will be a full length album or maybe a greatest hits and misses on 8 track and cassette. It will be tracked live in front of a studio audience and bootlegged. It will feature a 3D pop up insert with glasses included but all in good time.

AU: What is a Gag Order live show like?

Terry: I find *Gag Order* shows a bit different from a lot of other bands. Chico is a great frontman who likes to interact with the audience. He's always giving merch away between songs and he likes to hand the mic over so people can sing. The crowd is very faithful and I always notice a lot of *Gag Order* patches and shirts in the audience.

It's a great 30 or 40 minutes of in your face rowdiness.

AU: What's the punk scene like these days and who are some good local bands to check out?

Jeremy: I think things have been looking pretty positive these days. People are pissed off and ready for punk rock. Everyone seems hungry. Old bands are reforming, new bands are popping up everywhere and people are coming out and having fun. It would always be nice to see more venues but other than that things are looking good.

Chico: Things seem to be alive and well. I've been noticing a lot of new and younger faces at the shows and I'm even noticing younger punk rockers walking the streets of our hometown again and hanging around the high schools. As far as new bands go check out *Mall Crimes*, *ASOP* and *Dragged In*.

Brian: The music is timeless and the young and old enjoy tearing up the floor. It is heartfelt and stays with you. Hard not to love it!

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

Chico: We have a few shows coming up in May and of course Spiderfest in the summer which has become a tradition. Its nice keeping Spiders memory alive. As far as tours go, we'll see what happens. All of us would love to get on the road again. We had a blast going down east pre covid and we unbelievably came back with more money than we left with so I'd say it was a success. Maybe we'll head west to visit all you guys! That would be fun.

Brian: We're always ready to play. Hopefully, we'll tour when the time is right for everybody. Until then we plan to write and keep playing a bunch of "local" shows.

Chico: Yes. They're towns around us we haven't played in awhile and even more we haven't made it to yet. We always enjoy playing to fresh faces.

TORONTO TRASH



AU: Is there anything we should know?

Chico: We love playing live more than anything else and we come pretty cheap. Get in touch. Hook us up a show in your town. We'd love to come party with yuz. Download "In My Head" from Cursed Blessings and watch for Punk Canada Volume 2 due out on vinyl in the fall.

AU: Any final words to our readers?

Chico: Be good to each other. They are too many fucking assholes on the planet already. And a huge thanks to all you at AU for talking with us. Keep up the good work! We love you!

Brian: A big shout out to our families and our supporters. It means a lot to us. To everyone who attends our shows, takes pictures, buys merch or just takes a second to say hi. We appreciate all of it.

AU: How do people find you online?

Jeremy: We're easy to find on Facebook, Instagram, Bandcamp, Spotify and YouTube. If you can't find us you didn't try.

Photo Credit: Double J Photography

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KILMORE

AU: Welcome to Absolute Underground Mag, for those unfamiliar with Kilmore, who are you and what do you do?

Happy to be here and thanks for having us. We are a hard rock group from the eastern shores of Nova Scotia. We like to play loud music and bring something unique to our sound. We have been a band for almost 10 years and are releasing our 3rd album. We have a darker edge and like to turn up those gritty tones.

AU: Kilmore has a new EP out on March 31st entitled "From the Inside", what can you tell our readers about this record?

"From the Inside" is a hard rock album with lots of attitude, dark expressions, and vigorous sounds. Each song has its own story and builds to a fierce ending. It was written and recorded during

Covid while Heather had become a first-time mother. This brought some deep emotions to the lyrics and vocal tones on the record. The artwork of the album helps portray the imagery of the album theme; the fear of the outside world when something innocent is in your possession.

AU: The band has garnered multiple award wins and nominations. Do you find it adds pressure to writing and recording towards the follow-up record?

There is a certain amount of pressure when living up to your previous record, especially if it had some recognition, but you can't force creativity. Whatever songs come from us wouldn't change because of any awards or nominations we received. We do take the time to write and record our songs with the best quality we can get.



Awards are great to receive and feel accomplished in your work, but nothing is better than making a new fan.

AU: Family Values... How is it for a brother and sister to write, record, and tour together? Do you ever feel sibling rivalry or a best friend situation and being kin how do you feel that family connection influences your songwriting?

Dan and I have been playing music together for over two decades. First in different a project and then Kilmore. We have always been best friends and didn't really have too much rivalry, but I can't say we never did. When touring on the road, Dan was always chill, and he would make me feel less homesick. He has always been an influence of mine in music, and I am a big fan of his songwriting. We grew up listening to a lot of the same music so we have similar thoughts on how a song should go. It's easy to be honest with him while writing, when I think something needs work or should go a different way, I could just tell him.

AU: If you never immigrated to Canada from Ireland. Do you think a Kilmore would exist on that island?

If we never left the Island, I think Dan and I would have still played music together, but it might have been a different style. Who knows, we could have been the next Cranberries or U2, we'll never know!

AU: How was it working with producer Jon Landry of The Stanfields?

Working with Jon was a great learning experience. He is very knowledgeable and has a great ear for making sounds and improving tones. He was able to pull more out of us and helped us

HELLIFAX

capture the true essence of the songs. We had the opportunity to do pre-production with him which really prepared us for the final recordings. Jon is truly a talented musician, and I am a big fan of his music, so it was incredible to be able to work with him on this project.

AU: The band is quoted as stating "Its lyrics were written at a time when there was a real change around the world and an internal bittersweet struggle. Along with that, vocalist/guitarist Heather Harris became a new mother and was trying to find her place in a new reality really speaks loudly in the emotions on the record. Some themes are of destruction while others of hope, each song has its own theme/feel." What would you like listeners to walk away with after hearing this record?

After listening to this record, we hope that it lures you into listening to more. If our music can bring about any type of emotion for our listeners then we have done our jobs. The theme of each song is diverse so we hope there is a song people can relate to.

AU: Will the band be touring Eastern Canada and beyond this year?

We are currently booking local gigs and looking into expanding in the future.

AU: Anything else you'd like our readers to know about Kilmore?

Thanks for listening and we hope to see you at a gig or virtually, keep on rocking.

Kilmore.ca

Facebook.com/kilmoreband

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Kilmore.bandcamp.com

MONTREAL MASSACRE



MILANKU

AU: For those unfamiliar with Milanku, who are you and what do you do?

Hi! Milanku is a five-piece post-rock(ish) band from Montreal. We would describe the music that we make as being moody, atmospheric, with a touch of grit.

AU: Milanku has a new album "À l'aube", what can you tell us about this record?

We can start by saying that we are especially proud of this record. It's been a long time coming and it feels amazing to finally be releasing new music. As far as expectations go, long-time listeners will find something in that opus that will remind them of what early Milanku was. We're not necessarily saying that we've been revisiting our old ways to write songs, as we always try to find new and interesting things to put out, but in terms of ambiance, there's a nod to our past.

AU: What was it about Milan Kundera and more precisely his works of "La lentueur" and "La plaisanterie" that influenced this new

album?

That's an interesting question. In "La plaisanterie" (the joke) for instance, Kundera analyzes the psychological journey of a character that loses everything. In a way, "À l'aube" feels like a score of sorts to this journey as it gives the listener time for reflection, which bring us to the similarities with "La lentueur" (slowness). The theme of "La lentueur" is that the obsession for speed causes the modern man to forget and fail, and therefore taking one's time is necessary for the intricacies of life. "À l'aube", to us, encompasses the concept of "slowness" if you will.

AU: What feelings / experience would you like fans to take away after listening to this album?

Different people will experience a whole different spectrum of feelings. That's what's great about music. Maybe to some, it could be a release from the everyday life for 40 minutes. While for others, it will be a traveling companion for long, night-time drives. A specific example of this would be the fourth song on the album. It begins

with a melancholic melody with hope and lightness and proceeds to walk the listener into a dark, gloomy uncomfortable chaos. It's a beautiful thing for listeners to feel a wide range of emotions about the record.

AU: Your music videos are very visually atmospheric, how did these concepts come to be?

There's an element of spontaneity in everything that we do. The goal was to let go of a pre-established concept and to let things unfold organically while staying in an aesthetic that we like. The dancer, who is the main focus of our videos, performed to the music without planned choreography. We spent 2 full days recording the visuals. There were parts that were recorded and filmed directly in one band member's bathtub, which adds a sense of intimacy. There's beauty in what happens in the moment. With the footage, it was easier for us to find the story and give it a narrative. We are blessed to have worked with many talented people throughout this whole project.



AU: The band is quoted as saying "The pandemic had an impact on the sound of all the songs on the album. Without the pandemic, the result of the album would not be the same at all." How was life for the band during the pandemic and what about it influences this record's sound?

The pandemic undoubtedly has been hard on everybody. In the end, we are fortunate to be able to do what we love and to have our health. We discovered that creating while the world is at a standstill is not as easy as it seems. We came into 2019 ready to write again and we did, but everything stopped again for months. When we picked back up again, nothing was the same, and

the songs had to change. In an inexplicable way, it felt as though our songs were from another period of time and they no longer felt right. "À l'aube" was inevitably shaped by the pandemic. By grief. By the feeling of making up for the time lost.

AU: This album's lyrics are in French, will there be plans for an English album?

We featured Erika Angell from Thus Owls in Swedish on our new record, and Tomohiro Nishikawa from None but Air [At the Vanishing Point] in Japanese on our record "De Fragments", so we could always feature an English-speaking artist in the future. As for us, our mother tongue is French, so it is more natural for us to create in French. That being said, we like to experiment, so who knows?

AU: Now that live shows are back, what can new fans expect from a Milanku show?

We love playing shows and it was difficult to not be able to perform live for such a long period of time. We want people to feel like they are invited into our home when we are performing. Our audience is a big part of what makes every Milanku show a unique experience. We don't play often, however, we will remember those nights forever.

AU: Will Milanku be touring Canada or another tour in Europe?

We cannot disclose when and where at the moment, but there is something in the works.

AU: Anything else you would like to add?

We would like to thank the readers sincerely because, without them, none of this would be possible. Keep supporting your local scene and be kind to each other. See you at a show!

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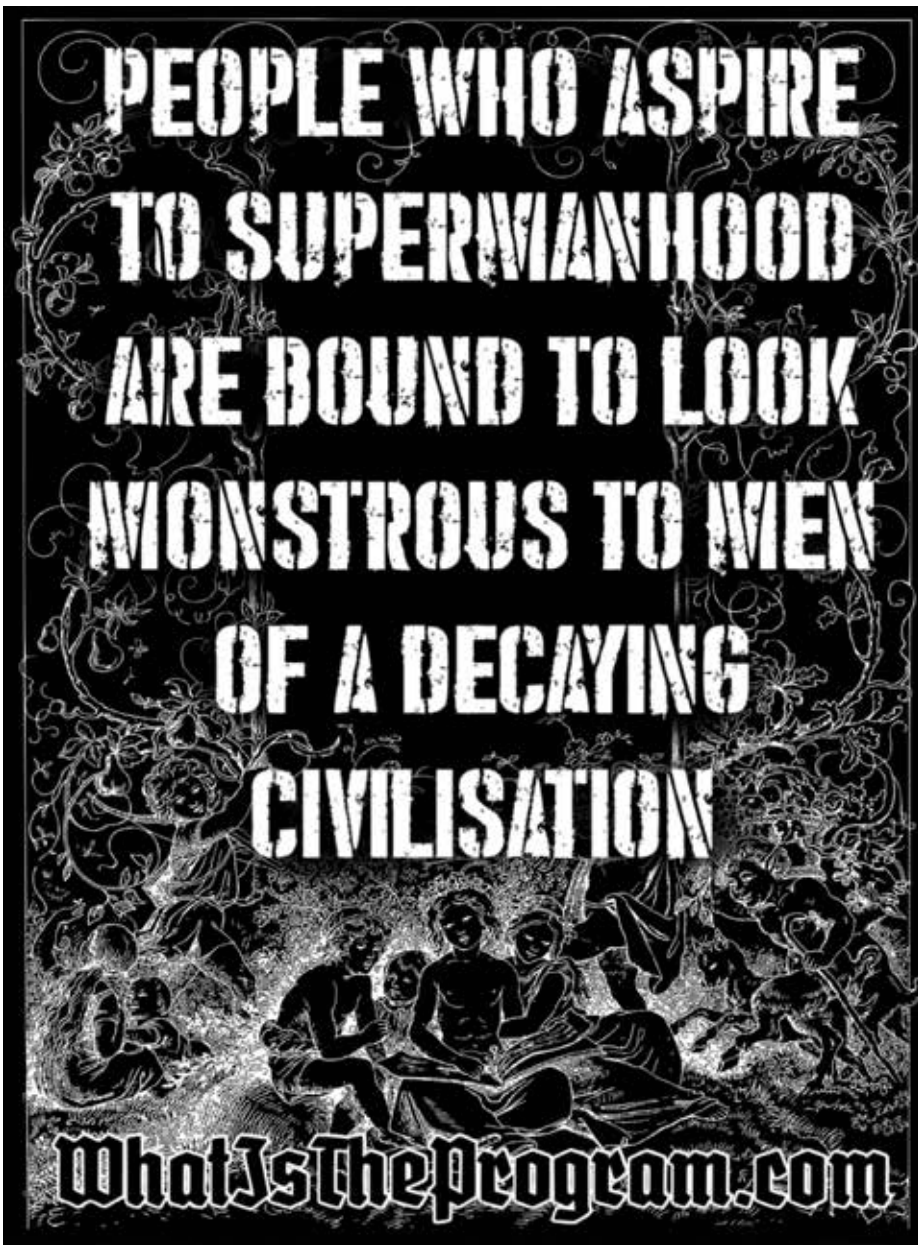
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MOLEKH

Extreme black/death metal from Ireland. Ruthless in form, and ready to strike, *Molekh's* RITUS is a relentless onslaught of discordant riffs, mesmerizing drums, and savage vocals! Ritus is the first full-length album by *Molekh* with a story concealed within the music that aims to place the listener into a dark, savage and possessed place full of natural evil.

The music is intense, gloomy, atmospheric, and heavy. It is a 7-track concept album, running at 40 minutes.

LINE-UP:

- Dariusz Kubala – guitar/vocal
- Sebastian Majka - guitar
- Donal Fullam (Putrefaction) – bass/vocal
- Karl Leavey – drums
- Krystian Mazur - bass

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

Karl Leavey: Karl, drummer of *Molekh* - and infamy is just fame for the weak. So probably quite a few things.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band.

KL: *Molekh* was formed in 2015 in Dublin by 4 Polish expats, 2 of whom have since departed,

and 2 Irish natives have taken their respective places.

AU: Describe the bands sound if possible.

KL: *Molekh* makes a concerted effort not to fall into any particular musical category as it's not important to us, but it's safe to say our root sound

BENT WINDOW RECORDS

leans more to the avant-garde side of BM/DM. More *Ved Buens Ende/Virus* than *Emperor/Behemoth* while sounding like neither yet the influence is apparent.

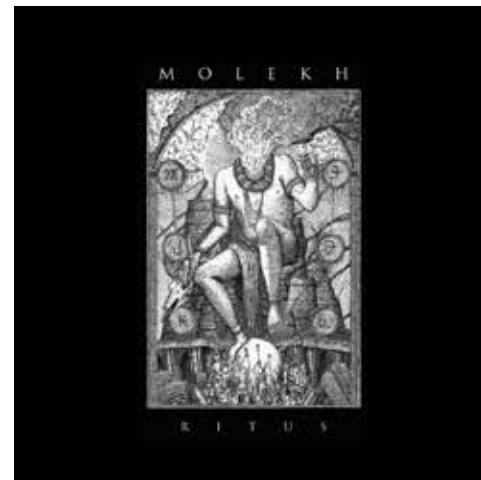
AU: Describe the writing process for Ritus.

KL: All work is done collectively. Dariusz (founder/guitarist/vocalist) and I would usually lay a foundation and bring completed elements to the rest of the band where they would add their own touches and then it's just a matter of making things fit well enough for us to like it. Needless to say, there is usually quite a bit of discussion as to what should stay and what feels too remedial for what we are trying to do, but this is the case with every musical endeavor. We make an effort to keep things quite simple - we are not looking to reinvent the wheel and we

learned from it all.

AU: Are there other bands in Ireland we should know about?

KL: Ireland is rife with many talented extreme bands who have already been making quite a stir in the underground over the last few years. Namely *Unyielding Love, Vircolac, Malthusian, Procession Of Spectres* to name but a few *Molekh* members have also previously or are currently been involved in *Coscradh, Thy Worshiper, Abaddon Incarnate, Sodh, Putrefaction* to name a few, all worth investigating.



AU: Upcoming live shows?

KL: We are currently in the process of trying to organize some live dates at home and abroad in support of the album

AU: What should we know that we don't already?

KL: What you don't know wont kill you. Or very well may.

AU: Any further words?

KL: Very grateful to anyone who has supported the band in any way, including anyone taking the time to read this nonsense.

molekh.bandcamp.com
bentwindowrecords.bandcamp.com



simply try instead to work more to our collective strengths than trying to be overtly technical, and focus more on simple structures that work. In theory this should make the process easier but, alas, there is quite a lot of back and forth before deciding on parts that will stick. For this reason, completing the album took a little longer than we would have liked. Ultimately though, we are happy with the result and are far more comfortable writing together having



VOICE OF THE STREETS



ULTRA SECT

Bay Area Oi!

Interview by Chuck and Daryl Baryl
Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking with?

Ultra Sect: Bryan, guitar and vocals.

AU: Where is Ultra Sect from?

US: The San Francisco Bay Area.

AU: How long ago did you guys form?

US: 2018.

AU: Can you give a little background about how the band came to be?

US: The band essentially began as a studio project with our debut 7" EP War of the Roses. There's been a lot of great streetpunk / Oi! bands from the



Bay Area over the years, but many had a melodic tinge. We wanted to create a more aggressive sound that we felt wasn't as represented here.

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

US: Powerful American Oi! that creates a musical journey, filled with melodies, massive choruses, and forceful raw energy.

AU: What are some of Ultra Sect's biggest influences?

US: We are equally influenced by American, UK, and French Oi! bands. Some of these include *The Templars*, *Anti-Heros*, *The Last Resort*, and *Camera Silens*.

AU: Is skinhead culture alive and thriving where you live?

US: It is! It's a struggle living in the Bay Area and so many people have been pushed out so it's not the same as it was in the past. But there's still enough of us carrying the flame, supporting the scene, and keeping it alive!

AU: Ultra Sect toured in the UK a little this past summer right? What were some highlights from that?

US: Yes! We finally made it over to the UK for a small run of shows. Playing Rebellion Festival was definitely a highlight. It was my first international trip since COVID shut everything down. It was great to see old friends, and make new ones.

AU: Which gigs and festivals are you most excited about playing in 2023?

US: We have quite a few we are looking forward

to, but as far as one's that have been announced - Beech Beer and Chaos in Badalona!

AU: Any members in any other bands past and present?

US: That is a long list! Myself, Eric, and Mike are also in *Suede Razors*. I play in *The Beltones* and *Barricade* as well. Mike also plays in *No Heart*, *The Buzzers*, *Alternate Action*. He played in *Subway Thugs*, *Emergency*, and *Sydney Ducks* to name a few! Ian played in *Those Unknown* for a few years when they relocated from New Jersey to the Bay Area.

AU: Have you guys played Canada? Any plans coming out west of Canada?

US: *Ultra Sect* has still not made it up to Canada but hoping it's something we can organize in 2024.

AU: Whats the craziest story from being on tour?

US: We haven't played enough shows/tours just yet for that! But I don't think anything will top our craziest story with *Suede Razors*. It's

documented in a song called "Berlin or Bust."

AU: Cheers for the interview Anything you'd like to add or mention?

US: Thanks for the interview! We have a European tour coming up this summer in August with the Beltones and a new 7" EP to coincide on Longshot Music.

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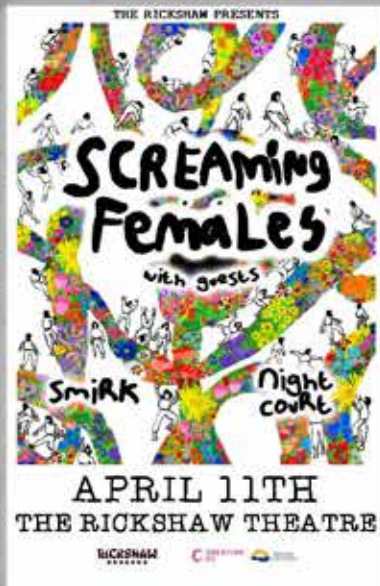
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ELSINORE

A Name From the Cosmos
Interview with Bassist/Vocalist
Cristin Heck

By Heath Fenton

One year ago and seemingly from out of nowhere the band *Elsinore* busted from the chains of Vancouver's basement and emerged with a self titled record. It oozed with soulful haunting vocals, toasty tone riffs, blood thumping drums, and skin crawling bass. It's time to rear your ugly heads. *Elsinore* is at the door. I did a quick Q and A with Cristin Heck, and this is what she had to say.

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

Elsinore: I'm Cristin Heck. I'm the singer and bass player from Elsinore.

AU: How long have you been singing and playing bass for?

E: Off and on since I was 15. I switched from flute to bass in high school band after seeing Kim Gordon on TV in the mid 90's. I played in jazz band growing up, and was a total band nerd. After high school I didn't play for nearly ten years until I started a band called the *Highway Kind* in 2010. My partner at the time convinced me to try singing in the band after singing Nancy Sinatra at karaoke. I would say I've been a closet singer most of my life.

AU: How and when did the band Elsinore come to form?

E: After I quit the *Highway Kind*, I tried playing bass in some other local bands with friends, but nothing really felt natural or fun. I also felt a lack of joy just learning other band's songs and not being a part of the song writing process. Karp (drummer) and I decided to get together and just get back in the rhythm of a regular Friday night jam, and just see what would happen. I was writing songs on bass and loving the time to be able to focus on writing vocals and lyrics. We were in serious need for a guitar player that could

take us to the next step. Shane Clark just happened to be getting tattooed by my partner Joel, and mentioned we were in dire need for a heavy hitter. Shane knew Karp from previous projects, we set up a jam, and there was instant chemistry. It was all in the cosmos.

AU: Who are some of the other members and what other bands have you all been in?

E: You'll know Shane Clark (guitar) from *3 inches of Blood, Bison* and as well he currently plays in *Worse*. Mark Karpinski, better known as Karp (drums,) played in *No Horses* and the *Highway Kind*.

AU: Where did the name Elsinore come from?

E: The cosmos.

AU: Considering that you are the singer, are you at all concerned that with a name like Elsinore that people might think that is your name?

E: Nope. Did you? Most often people think it's associated with Lord of the rings or some dark fantasy fiction novel.

AU: How would you describe the sound of Elsinore?

E: I can't. We just want to make music for the people.

AU: What is the process for writing an Elsinore song?

E: Shane is the mastermind behind the riffage. He usually has some ideas in the work and sends through a few concepts to us. I write the melody / lyrics. Usually I can hear a vocal melody concept right off the bat with our tunes - if not, it's a real struggle for me to force something out. I have to

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

feel it in my gut and it has to feel natural. Then we usually jam it out, and we all work on the structure together. We try to approach it with a no ego mentality and focus on what's best for the song itself.

AU: What are some of the future plans for the band? Recordings? Gigs? Tours?

E: We are writing our second album right now, and exploring some new concept tunes that I'm really excited about. We're all about creating an album that reminds us of our favorites growing up - peaks and valleys, you listen to an album front to back, and there's variations to the types of songs where the listener doesn't get bored. There's nothing worse to me than an

album full of songs that sound the same. We're focusing on local shows for now but have been chatting about what tour could look like in the near future.

AU: Where can one find your music?

E: We're on all your normal digital platforms - bandcamp, spotify, apple music. We're working on releasing a physical copy soon with a new local indie label we'll be announcing in the next few weeks.

AU: Any upcoming shows to promote?

E: We're super excited about a few upcoming shows. We're opening up for local heroes *Bison* on April 15th, and *Dead Quiet* on April 28th.

elsinore.bandcamp.com



DIVIDE THE DEAD

Interview with vocalist Greg Mix

By Ryan Dyer

The scene in Red Deer is currently on fire at the moment, with an assortment of bands painting that deer an even darker shade of red. *Hooker Spit*, *Pridelands*, *Art of Attrition*, and the subject of this interview (coming fresh off the Wacken Metal Battle in Calgary,) *Divide the Dead*. With their new single "Parasite" out now, we speak to vocalist Greg Mix about how the dead are really divided.

Absolute Underground: What is the concept behind *Divide the Dead*? The name, the songs, the mask...

Divide The Dead: I wanted to come up with a band name that could serve a few purposes. I wanted it to be something that is not only easy to remember, and catchy to say, but also open to interpretation. For some, they take it literally, and they think cutting, or dividing up corpses. To me, the name represents tolerance. The world has never been so divided, over politics, over religion, over how to be a decent human, and frankly,

I think life's too short for all the senseless babble and hate. Humans need to learn to just agree to disagree and let their god (or gods) sort them out when they're dead.

The main theme of the lyrics for the debut album is anxiety and depression. Each song was written as a form of cathartic release from the battles within myself and my own personal struggles with mental illness. The album as a whole is a thinly veiled concept album about a character who suffers within, and at first tries to just release the sickness and ease the pain inside, then gradually descends into madness and lashes out at the world, concluding in him burning it all to the ground.

The mask I wear is a representation of that dark, demented character. The ugly, dead self. The part of ourselves that we generally hide from others. That part comes out of me when I write songs. Music has always been a way for me to safely and effectively release my inner demons.

AU: What is the origin story of the band?

DTD: After a few years of jamming together, guitarist Lance Corpe, bassist Matt Cade, and drummer Kyle Frisby were having no luck finding the right vocalist to fit their sound and chemistry of the band. In fall of 2021, Lance reached out to me to see how I felt about the music and to see if I fit the mix, no pun intended. The moment we started jamming the first song, we all knew, and felt the fit right to our inner core. This was that missing, final piece to the puzzle.

AU: Were you a part of bands prior to DTD?

DTD: We all have put in many years in the scene in various bands. Lance and I actually played in our first band together way back in high school, playing a bunch of covers. We all kind

of come from different musical backgrounds, which I think is evident in our diversity. Lance is blues. His riffs and writing are very blues inspired. Kyle grew up a punk guy, which made him the amazing drummer he is today. Matt is a big *Metallica* guy, loves those big beefy bass riffs. I "cut my teeth" vocally with grunge and hard rock, then eventually progressed to metal screaming because I found regular old singing boring.

AU: How is the scene in Red Deer? Is there a strong sense of community with the bands and who are some others to look out for?

DTD: The scene in Red Deer is really great. Very supportive bands, fans, promoters and venues, and there is a vast variety of metal to choose from. You've got the heavy hitting hardcore boys in *Pridelands* and *Umi Yokai*, to the melodic power that is *Phantom Divine*, a healthy dosage of death metal with the bands *Hooker Spit* and *Wraith Risen*, and then there's the technical brutality of the juggernauts *The Myopia Condition* and *Art of Attrition*. The crew at Proud Dad's Promotions does a great job with keeping the metal shows plentiful, diverse and a lot of fun!

AU: Who are the Deadies? Are they the *Divide the Dead* fanatics?

DTD: *laughs* I wish we had fanatics. The Deadies is from a Goonies movie spoof post I made. I like to make silly *Divide The Dead* memes from time to time to give people a little chuckle.

AU: How was the experience playing the Wacken Battle of the Bands in Calgary?

DTD: We had a lot of fun, but it was also a great learning experience playing a gig that was more of a competition, and had a lot more pressure than the laid back atmosphere of your typical show. Even though we didn't win our round and move on in the competition we ended up getting a couple gig offers out of the night, and had a great time playing - it made it feel less like a loss.

AU: The new single "Parasite" is out at the time of this writing. Who or what is the parasite referred to?

RED DEER RAMPAGE

DTD: The Parasite refers to mental illness. It's that entity inside, that alien feeling, that drains your empathy and energy.

AU: Tell us about the making of the music video.

DTD: I didn't want it to be just another music video of a band playing their song. I wanted it to be gross and dark, and I wanted it to make the viewer feel uneasy and reflect the disgusting lyrical content of cutting a parasite out of your mind. I hope I did a good job conveying that feeling while still allowing the viewer to enjoy the musical quality of the song as a whole.

AU: Is the *Divide the Dead* live show set in stone or will you be adding different elements to it as the band evolves?

DTD: It's never really set in stone with us, and we do plan to add more to our shows and change things up here and there, but one thing we strive to keep consistent is to leave you entertained.

AU: You were just added to the CEMR METALFEST III in Edmonton with a bunch of other local extreme metal favorites. Will you be bringing anything special to your performance here?

DTD: I kind of feel obligated to bring more to that one to be completely honest. I'm glad we've got the whole summer to prepare for that festival. That's going to be a monster of a festival with some amazingly talented bands we've never played with before.

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?

DTD: Just to please check out the video for "Parasite" and to follow us on your social and music apps as we have some more deadly new songs and videos coming soon. Our next single "Snake Eater" is an absolute banger! We are headed back into Deer City Records in April to finish up our debut album. The album art and release date will be announced very soon!

dividethedead.bandcamp.com



Erik and Gaby Gustafson

Mayo from *The Invisible Orange* had a chat with the international touring industrial music artists Erik and Gaby Gustafson who recently relocated to Vancouver and talked about music scene, building community, early bringing and more.

Absolute Underground: Tell us who you are and what do you do?

Erik (E): I'm Erik Gustafson, longtime metal and industrial musician. I've played in several industrial bands, including *16Volt* and *Grendel*, and right now I'm working on new music for my own project, *Adoration Destroyed*. I'm also a filmmaker, with my own music video company (Erik Gustafson Cinematography), and I produce for other bands in the goth/industrial scene as well.

Gaby (G): And I'm Gabrielle Gustafson, also an industrial musician! My project is *Eva X*, I just released my very first full-length last year. When I'm not working on music, I'm often helping Erik with film work and projects.

AU: How did you get involved with the industrial scene?

E: I briefly worked as a bar back in a metal bar in Austin, TX, and there was a band there that would host these bondage rave events. I already

was into *Nine Inch Nails*, and this was a gateway to the more underground bands. Shortly after, I bought a sampler and got into electronic music, and I ended up joining that band and learning to produce industrial music. And the rest is history!

G: I was a lifelong metal-head, and then I went to a DJ set by *Juno Reactor* on a whim when I was living in Calgary. The opener was Scott from *iVardensphere* doing a full improv set, and it was the first time I had really seen much in the way of proper industrial or electronic music up close in person. I knew I wanted to make music, but that was the first time I really was exposed to the full power of what synths could be... and here I am today.

AU: What do you think Canada in general and the West Coast specifically gauge regarding industrial music nowadays?

G: I think Canada is a little more cutting-edge in terms of industrial bands and artists than the US. I see a lot of really forward-looking lineups and festivals here, with a little less

nostalgia than American or European scenes. There's a real push to pull in the next big thing here. Not that nostalgia is a bad thing! But I think it's cool to see some of the acts coming from Canada that are really picking up steam, like *Actors* or *Odonis Odonis*.

E: Compared to where I come from, there's a much smaller live scene for goth and industrial music. There's a lot of wonderful goth DJ nights here, but not so much live music. That's why I wanted to put together a showcase of goth and industrial bands.

AU: You have a showcase coming up in Vancouver, anything special planned for that?

G: It's a really interesting time from my perspective to be putting together a showcase! A week after we play *Eva X* is actually heading out on tour, and it's a big leap forward for the band. I've been immersed in what the future holds for *Eva X* - and honestly, in making a lot of new music! But for the showcase, I'm looking a bit more to that present, to the most recent album, so it's really going to hit a lot of the favorites, if you will. I'm also going to be joining *Adoration Destroyed* to play keys and guitar for Erik's set!

E: I'm really looking just to bring a taste of multiple flavors of the dark electronic scene to people. I'd love to see more people out and involved in the music. And maybe some people



will be inspired to start making dark electronic music of their own!

AU: I'm curious about your early days in the Swedish Death metal scene. How do you remember those times? Do you still keep in touch with some of the people from the scene?

E: Everyone has their high school band, right? I just happened to grow up in the then-exploding Swedish death metal scene, and basically all of my friends got record deals. Basically, my mom remarried and moved us to Stockholm just as I was starting high school. My friends were the founding members of *Dismember* and *Entombed*, and I was briefly part of *Dismember* before settling in with *Therion*. It feels like a totally different life. I do keep in contact with some people - Peter Hansson (of *Therion*) and David Isberg, who was the founding member of *Opeth*.

AU: Any thoughts on where industrial music will be heading in the next year? Two years?

E: In my own music, and in the music I hear around me, the biggest thing I'm hearing is a hybrid of all influences, thrown together. I have heard dub-step and even nu-metal making a return, there are metal influences, and 80s synth influences. All of these things taste great together! So, I can only imagine there will be more of that.

G: I really agree - I think genre restrictions are really getting blurred with the latest wave of industrial and EDM coming at us. At the same time, there's a huge wave of 2000's electro nostalgia, especially online and with some of the younger members coming on board. I'm not saying there's going to be like a full-blown aggro-



tech revival, but I think the scene is embracing a lot of the high energy of those tracks.

AU: What do you think needs to happen to build the strongest or best music scene?

E: For one, there needs to be enough and/or more bands to build the scene of the style of music you're trying to build. And currently? We don't have enough of that in Vancouver. But hopefully if we have more of these events, we'll bring more people out. And hopefully, they'll like what they see! That said, I am very much into bringing in adjacent-sounding bands such as post-punk, synthwave, and metal. It's all one big party with a lot of crossover; they just don't know it yet.

G: It's community-building, really. I used to live in Calgary, and we were always fortunate to have Chris Hewitt down at Dickens Pub putting on a bunch of different shows and DJ nights. I've been spoiled by having a great community where everyone comes out to dance. And then they hear some great new tracks, then they come out to shows, and it just keeps building. Like Erik said, we have some great goth-industrial DJ nights here in Vancouver, we just need more shows. And more bands!

Erik's band Adoration Destroyed and Gaby's project Eva X will perform in Vancouver, BC on April 28 at The Waldorf.

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Happy Daze

AWESOME ANDY



CRAZY RUNTS



BLUE DREAM



CROWN ROYAL



COTTON CANDY #4



MEAT BREATH (Mail-Order)

Strain	Appearance	Smell	Taste	Potency	Med. Advantages	Comments	Score
Awesome Andy	Looking good	Not much smell, man	Like cotton candy	Strong-strong	Took away swamper's pain	Awesome weed	7
Crazy Runts	like a perfect budlet	Not much smell	Tastes flavored; grass	Medium strength	Free weed for a good buzz	Flavor threw me way off	3
Blue Dream	LOOKS GREAT	Awesome smother	Wacky blueberry	Not much	Good wholesome weak bud	I'm picky... I don't like	6
Crown Royal	Sexy	Stupendous	Skittles	Strongest	Superior strength	Super satisfying sentiments	10
Cotton Candy #4	Solid perfect nuggetous	Just more weed smoke	Happy; it's ok weed	Mid-grade working weed	Keeps me high all the time	Not a fan	5
Meat Breath	Dogs poop out better product	Worse than the dog turd	I never tried dog turds, but I bet...	Hard to smoke	Sore throat/coughing	I told my bro to send it back	1.5



Killa 235

Strain	Appearance	Smell	Taste	Potency	Med. Advantages	Comments	Score
Awesome Andy	Yellow rock-hard budlet	Bubblegum...It makes ya numb	A trippy tropical fruit blend	Quite strong, high lasts long	Nice Pinkilla	Sweet n' smooth, inspired me to eat food	8
Crazy Runts	Light green, feels like a stickyicky sponge	Smells like spicy grapes fresh from the barrel	Like a hybrid of black licorice and burning limes	Smooth extra strength, put me on a mellow wavelength	Cured my headache	Flawless buds as smooth as silk. Tasty as human mammary milk	9
Blue Dream	Golden orange, feels like luffy covered in porridge	Like a cross between raspberry and blueberry.	Like an overripe brandy, a skunky berry filled with candy.	Very powerful, makes ya want a tower-tall	Makes ya forget all yer troubles and regrets	Smoky haze that blasts ya as ya blaze	9
Crown Royal	Dark green, brittle and mega-sticky	Fresh oranges, like vintage throat lozenges	Green apples, that were cut on the counter	Smoothly powerful shockwave	Thrusts ya into limbo, throws ya out the window	a slick numb cloud, makes ya feel pleased	8.5
Cotton Candy #4	light and dense, feels like buttered popcorn	like a cross between citrus and apples	Like marshmallows dipped in Jello	Like a slap to the brain with a vapor-trail train	Blows the mind, stops the teeth-grind	I'm past the stratosphere	9.5
Meat Breath	Looks like outdoor, feels dense, tho.	Nothing to squawk home about. When ya cut the bud, smells like candy.	Not too bad but not too good... like mown grass	Meh, less-than-decent outdoor	Just a little buzz, it does what it does	Contains annoying stems	3



ROACHRECUATIONER

HAPPY DAZE

ROACHRECUATIONER

Strain	Appearance	Smell	Taste	Potency	Med. Advantages	Comments	Score
Awesome Andy	Big chunky nuggets	Overdried, no smell	Smooth but flavorless	Thick resin	Strong bud	Needs better cure	7
Crazy Runts	Looks splendid	The greatest smell, gold perfume	like a lavender field	Organic, awesome	Enjoyable medicine	Best flavor ever	9
Blue Dream	Crystal ball, purple hues	Like an innocent blueberry	Thick skunky smoke	Wags out yer noggin	Brain-numbing	lovely-looking specimen	8.5
Crown Royal	Sticky kush	like an old barn	Vibrant and intense	Full-body number	Beyond strong THC; does wonders	A treat in weed worlds	9.5
Cotton Candy #4	Best-structured bud yet	Like an orange peel	Burnt yummy Starburst	Strong but not intense	Good weed is good medicine	Awesome Andy's bigger better brother	8
Meat Breath	Brown and dry like old dirt	Like old dry hay I guess	Old outdoor from years back	It's weed, it's just grass	Nicy cause lung problems	S25 online 07 - GARBAGE	3.5



ink. D

GOLD MEDAL: CROWN ROYAL
SILVER: BLUE DREAM
BRONZE: COTTON CANDY #4
DISQUALIFIED: MAIL ORDER MEAT BREATH



BRUTAL YOUTH

Rebuilding Year

Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking with?

Patty: Hey, it's Patty. I sing/yell/front the outfit.

Kyle: I'm Kyle, I play bass.

DC: Dustin, I'm the drummer, and Kyle and I both sing backups.

AU: Brutal Youth are from St. John's Newfoundland originally, but are based in Toronto, Ontario now, correct?

Patty: It's true, yep.

DC: I'm not from Newfoundland, I'm from Ingersoll.

AU: Who are your favourite Toronto bands right now?

K: Lots of good bands in Toronto; *Frank Dux*, *Choices Made*. Stomp bands like *Penske File*, *Bike Thiefs*, *The Creepshow*, and *Doghouse Rose* are all fun.

DC: Totally agreed on all of those, I'd add *Debt Cemetery*, *Pseudo*, and *The Filthy Radicals* into the mix. Can't forget *School Damage*.

P: Yeah, my favourite Toronto band will always and forever be *School Damage*. *SAGO*, *Wasted Potential*, who are not from Toronto but I love them - there's this cool band from Kitchener called *Bad Egg* who we're playing with soon. All our Stomp family which Kyle and DC already mentioned, *The Anti Queens* - I'm pretty sure they are lying in their band name though because I've definitely talked to them about how cool *Freddy Mercury* is, so how "Anti Queen" are you really, Val?!

AU: What has changed in the punk scene since you guys have been a band?

K: Uh, nothing.

P: I will say, though, the best change to take place has been that it appears to have gotten so much more diverse. There was always this rallying cry around unity and whatever, and don't get me wrong, that's part of what pulled me into punk: the idea that you can be whoever you are, and you're welcomed here. But everywhere I went, there were still a lot of white guys, and we had a lot of learning to do to actually be a truly inclusive space. But it feels like there's actually a lot more diversity in the scene now. A place that used to preach about openness and inclusion and didn't necessarily look that way now very much does. So that's exciting.

AU: What drew you to punk rock in the first place?

P: I think I fell in love with the purity of the energy

of the whole thing. Being a kid, you just gravitate towards that raw aggression, the passion, and that pure unfiltered adrenaline that hooked me.

K: Yup. Speed. Fast music makes me feel alive.

DC: Growing up skateboarding in the 90's/early 2000's, punk rock was always the staple of every skate session

we ever had. I was immediately drawn to the raw, aggressive honesty that every track I heard seemed to have.

K: Yeah, skateboarding in the 90's, all the old skate videos were filled with awesome punk and hip hop.

P: I grew up in a small, isolated town in the late 90's and early 2000's. Punk rock and pop punk were in the mainstream during that time. My family would

go on vacation in the summers, and I would spend all my time looking for cheap compilation records at stores because there wasn't a record store where I grew up. That was the only time in a year when I could access music, and I would just scroll the punk section looking for anything cheap to get the most songs for my money.

AU: Who would you say are the biggest influences on your band?

K: Weird Al. *Green Day*.

P: Our stock answer to that question for years was "we like *Green Day* and *Weird Al*." That's not too far off in reality, but I think it's fair to say that youth crew and 90s skate punk, in general, are universally well-liked styles of music within our band. *Rancid's* 2000 self-titled album is, to my mind, the perfect record and when I started *Brutal Youth*, that's what I wanted to write. If I could write something that even got close to that, I think I could feel complete.

DC: So basically, *Weird Al* and *Green Day*.

AU: How long have you guys been on Stomp Records?

K: Since 2016 I think.

Mike came to see us play with the *Nils* and *Penske File* in Montreal and he bought us drinks.

P: I know *The Creepshow* had a bit of a hand in putting the bug in their ear about coming out to see us. Then we talked a bit back and forth after with both Mike and Matt about working together. It was just a really relaxed and happy sort of space that they created.

AU: How would you describe your new album *Rebuilding Year* in comparison to previous records you have put out?

K: We wrote some choruses and mixed up the speed of our songs a bit more.

P: If you listen to the record, it goes on a bit of a journey. It starts one way and ends another. The last album, *Sanguine*, was a bit of a concept album with the thoughts being organized around grief and loss, and the many ways grief plays out through its five stages.

K: Every album has just been a steppingstone

towards the next. Doing this record with Steve Rizun over COVID gave us time to

really shape the songs more. Our older stuff we just did really quickly and that was that.

P: I also tried to leave this one with more space for interpretation, for people to project themselves into what they're hearing. The best songs to my mind are the ones that you feel like could be written about you, the pieces that resonate because we could project ourselves into those thoughts and spaces, and I really wanted this to be a record that sings to people's own experiences.

AU: What are some of the new songs you are most stoked on?

DC: The opening track, "Juice Cleanse", I feel like it's a really good way to kick off the record. It has a nice mix of aggression and melody. "Holding Pattern", it's just a really fun song packed with harmonies and hooks. And "You Can Call Me Al" After we finished writing it, I recall saying something to the effect of, "This is my favourite song I've ever had a hand in writing".

K: "The Ides", "Rebuilding Year", and "You can call me Al (Yankovic)".

P: The title track "Rebuilding Year" is the one I love the most. It's the last track on the record, it's the climax, it's the affirmation, the last piece of getting well after being sick. I also love "You can call me Al (Yankovic)".

AU: Any upcoming tours planned?

DC: In May, June, and July, we're going to beat



the pavement around here. We're going to play a bunch of Ontario/Quebec shows to promote the record. We're planning to head out West in September, and then return to UK/Europe in early 2024.

AU: Final words for our readers.

P: There are a limited number of hours in the day and a lot of places where you could spend them, if you made it the whole way through this thing I'm both humbled and appreciative that you chose to spend your attention on us. I'd like to thank you for taking an interest.

DC: We're really excited for everyone to hear the new songs, and to play them for you live.

We really feel that this is our best collection of songs to date.

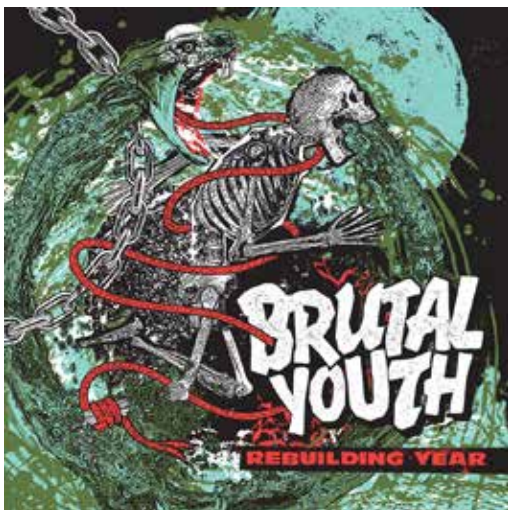
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Momentous Progressions

Interview with drummer Cody Anstey

By Ryan Dyer

Absolute Underground: Your new album Momentous is currently out. Tell us about the writing process for it.

Cody Anstey: With physical meetups being somewhat challenging throughout 2021, we opted to begin writing individually for this release. We all have different influences and writing styles, so we ended up with a diverse array of material by the time we started meeting up in person again. There was also a lot of material, so we were able to use a voting system to narrow down the list of ideas into what eventually ended up on the album. Some ideas became full songs, and other ideas were blended together.

AU: The track "The Deafening" features appearances from Stu Block (Into Eternity) as well as Mikołaj Rybacki and Katarzyna Bromirska (Percival Schutzenbach). What elements did they bring to the track?

CA: Initially, when talking with both Stu and Percival, the intention was not to have them both featured on a single track. However, as writing progressed and it was noted that this song would become an outlier of sorts, the decision was made to include both. The intro for this song was initially recorded by the band as just the tabla drums which can be heard. We then put it over to

Percival to expand on that idea, and they created the entire rest of that Slavic-themed string section that occurs before the band drops in. This is where the thematic approach for the song was cemented, and allowed it to turn into the constant buildup into heavier and heavier sections that we see on the final product.

It was then decided to have Stu feature on this song. Initially, he and singer Reed Alton decided he would perform on verse two of the track, however once Stu was in the studio recording his parts, he went above and beyond - performing harmonizations during choruses, and gutturals throughout the later parts of the song once it gets really heavy. Being the chill, down to earth kind of guy Stu is, he noted to us we could use or scrap any parts we wanted - although it probably won't come as a surprise to anyone that we opted to leave everything he did in the final mix. It really brought an added dimension to the track, and we discovered in the best way possible that his voice and that of lead singer Reed Alton's blend incredibly well together. Who knows... perhaps they will be collaborating on other projects in the future!

AU: Percival (The Witcher games) will also appear, though in what capacity? Are any of you fans of this game series?

CA: We are all fans of the Witcher franchise. We are also nerds to the point of the entire band enjoying listening to video game and movie soundtracks as we travel in the tour van. So, when we were searching for artists to feature on Momentous, our guitarist Krzysztof recommended reaching out to Percival. This being the artist from his home country of Poland who created the music for The Witcher games, he personally handled most of the communication with them - in Polish. Initially it was thought that we would like them to feature instrumentally for one small part of the album. However, Mikołaj was very inspired by our vision for the album. As such, they ended up creating the intro for the entire album (The opening of the track "Anunnaki"),

as well as the parts previously mentioned, and ended up playing a massive role in the opus title track "Momentous" - where they can be heard playing and singing throughout the 12+ minute epic.

AU: What are some of the key concepts or lyrical themes on Momentous?

CA: Momentous deals with the many emotions, trials, personal battles, losses and victories we all faced as the human race during the years of 2020, 2021 and the into of 2022. The biggest struggle we faced beyond the global pandemic and hysteria was the struggle we faced looking inwards to ourselves. Many of us had to relearn to love one another, and many turned against one another. A Momentous moment not only for us as people, but Momentous for each their own. There are some standouts, such as "Anunnaki", which talks about the great unknown, whether what we have been taught has been recycled material and is rewritten or if our human past has been hidden to some extent. The ancient Sumerians had a complex and intriguing religion and origin story that was lost and silenced through time. This is a reference to the many great stories and religions that humans have practiced and preached throughout history that have been erased or destroyed.

AU: You recently played the Loud as Hell festival. For those who haven't been to it, what was it like - as a band and as heavy music fans?

CA: 2022 was our second year playing the festival. LAH is always an amazing time. As it is local to us, most of the people who attend are friends of ours or at least acquaintances, so it's always awesome to spend a few days partying in the Alberta badlands with our local metal scene and see a bunch of incredible bands. The atmosphere at LAH is not what you might assume - yes, it's a big metal party out on the badlands, but when push comes to shove (enter the giant windstorm we had during the 2022 edition), everyone will pull together to ensure the event can carry forward. Given the opportunity, we plan to continue

performing at Loud as Hell festival in the future.

AU: You recently played 70,000 Tons of Metal 2023. For those who haven't been to it, what was it like?

CA: 70k is like being on a different planet - one where the global heavy metal scene at large has been condensed down into a group of 4000 people or so aboard a cruise ship. We were able to hang out, party with, and perform alongside 59 other bands from around the world, including *Nightwish*, *Kreator*, and *Dark Tranquility* just to name a few. Add to that thousands of metal fans from over 70 different nations around the world, and you've got an event that is truly like no other. Aboard the ship, everyone was like family. You could talk to anyone, and you could party with anyone. It was an absolutely incredible experience, and we hope to be considered to perform on more 70k cruises in the future.

AU: You re-released your Kingsbane album in 2021 with a few rerecorded tracks. Do you have plans for doing the same with Harbringer?

CA: The main reason we opted for a re-release of Kingsbane was to give it another chance to appear in front of the new fans we had accumulated following the Foundations release. Another reason being that we could not begin writing or recording of a proper follow-up record during the 2021 Covid waves and interspersed lock-downs. Harbringer being now 10 years old (the songs being even older actually - from Bobby and Krzysztof's time in Ontario under a different band name), we cannot foresee revisiting those songs ever again in the future. The band is in such a different place today than it was when that album was released. If anything, we may continue to play some of the Harbringer stand-outs live, and have spoken about the possibility of re-working some of the songs into live-only medleys.

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PILLARS OF A TWISTED CITY

Darkness Reigns

Interview with Johnny Stewart
by Mal Content

Absolute Underground: Sound off like you've got a pair! Who are we talking to and what makes you worthy?

Johnny Stewart: My name is Johnny Stewart. I am a songwriter and musician in the band *Pillars of a Twisted City*.

AU: Who else is in the band and what are their magic powers?

JS: I write the songs and play all the instruments, so I guess I have the magical powers. But I would like to acknowledge Adrian Mottram from the band *Ancient Teeth*. And Jahmeel Russell, formerly from *Actors/Kittens* for their help on this project.

AU: Give us the epic origin of the band.

JS: The Band started in 2020. During the uncertainty of the beginning of the pandemic,

I chose to use that time to record songs I have been sitting on for a while. During that gestation period, *Pillars of a Twisted City* was created. The band name comes from a quote from an HP Lovecraft poem.

AU: What will people hear when they listen to *Pillars of a Twisted City*?

JS: The band has two albums, the first of which was released in May 2020 self-titled *Pillars of a Twisted City*. The second album titled *Sentinel* was released October 14, 2022 on debt offensive records. The band's sound is rooted in blackened /thrash metal. But many of the songs have other musical influences, such as Latin, flamingo, my bloody valentine, killing joke, etc

AU: What boxes do you tick off in terms of music genres and influences?

JS: Psych rock, black metal, thrash metal, grind, punk rock

AU: Where is the band from and what is the music scene like there these days?

JS: The Band is from Tofino/Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

AU: Have you released an album recently?

JS: Most recent album is titled *Sentinel*. Released October 14, 2022 on Debt Offensive Records. All the guitar and bass tracking, and some of the vocals were recorded inside a floating makeshift studio located on the Clayoquot Sound upon the ocean. Drums and mixing were done at desecration studios in Vancouver.

AU: What were your previous releases?

JS: First released was self titled *Pillars of a Twisted City*. Was released digitally. I'm all streaming



platforms. Was later picked up for release on cassette tape by Debt Offensive Records in 2020.

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

JS: Stand out tracks are :

"Unmarked Grave"
"Darkness Reigns"
"Subatomic Love"
"Winter's Blood"
"Falling Through the Roof"

AU: What makes this band unique in it's approach to making music?

JS: *Pillars* takes a nonconformist approach to writing and recording music. It's all about choosing environments to provide unique experiences to bring out different aspects of recording and songwriting that are interesting not only to myself, but also the general public.

AU: Tell us about Debt Offensive Records

JS: Debt Offensive records is a label based out of Calgary ,Alberta, Canada. They have a diverse roster, and were excited to take on *Pillars of a Twisted City*.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

JS: I used to smoke hash out of a rusty pop can behind the butt wall at Fort Richmond Collegiate in Winnipeg, Manitoba. That was back in the 80's. Too many harsh tokes. Or smoking hot knives of hash off Cindy Monkman's kitchen stove and burning my tongue and lips to the point of looking like a plastic surgery disaster.

420 for me will be about having a couple Scooby snacks and staring at a wall.

TOFINO SURF REPORT

AU: Favorite strains to smoke?

JS: Don't know much about the strains of weed. Two tokes is about all I can handle.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

JS: You can find the band's music on Bandcamp, Spotify, Apple Music, and Tidal. Instagram is the band's primary resource for social media. We also have a YouTube channel with four or five different videos for your enjoyment.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

JS: I plan on doing some recording in the spring with a few shows in and around British Columbia.

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

JS: Hoping to release a third album in November 2023

AU: Is there a turf war between Ucluelet and Tofino? What's the beef?

JS: Well, they always say that Ukeel is twice the fun at half the price.

Tofino is where I live. No beefs that I am aware of. Lots of waves for everybody to share. During the summer both towns are packed.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

JS: Come on by one of the streaming services and give the music a listen. Your support is always welcome and is fundamentally important to stoke the creative energy of crafting new music.

AU: Final Words:

JS: Thank you for the support. Your magazine is a great resource for heavy-metal and punk rock. Honoured to be a part of it.

@pillars_of_a_twisted_city

pillarsofatwistedcity.bandcamp.com

youtube.com/@pillarsofatwistedcity9871

Live Photo by Asia Fairbanks



MAD WET SEA

The Noise of Thunder

Interview with Guitarist/
Singer

Logi, God of Fire

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

Logi, God of Fire: Hey all! This is Logi, God of Fire! I play guitar and assault ear drums with my singing. My hidden talent is writing the music we bring to you!

AU: Who else is in the band and what are their special skills?

LGOF: is comprised of myself, and my brothers and fellow Norse Gods, Ægir and Kari. Ægir is the God of the Sea and pummels the bass guitar, while Kari, God of Wind, crushes the drums!

AU: Give us the origin of the band.

LGOF: My brother Ægir had wanted to start a group, and I was tied up in another local band. The music I was writing was heavier than what I was playing, so Ægir put the bug in my ear that we should get together, and show the mortals of the world how it's done! Now, here we are!

AU: What will people hear when they listen to your band Mad Wet Sea?

LGOF: When you listen to our music, you will be pummeled by music akin to *Megadeth*, *Zakk Wylde* and *BLS*, *Chevelle*, and *Godsmack*. Heavy. Crushing. Metal.

AU: Is there a special meaning behind the band name?

LGOF: The Sea is a force to be reckoned with. When wind and sea collide, they'll wipe you out. And fire will complete the devastation! That, and Ægir can be a little off his rocker sometimes

AU: What boxes do you tick off in terms of music genres and influences?



LGOF: We see nothing that stops us from making whatever music makes you happy. Look at *Led Zeppelin III*: folk and hard rock on the same album. If they can do it, why can't we?

AU: Where is the band from and what is the music scene like there these days?

LGOF: Although we are Norse Gods, our human embodiments live in Kingston, Ontario. You may have heard of our fair city; *The Headstones*, *David Usher*, the *Tragically Hip*, *Bryan Adams*, *Dan Ackroyd*, all hail from here. Musically, the scene is pretty good, although there isn't a lively hard rock/metal scene.

AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us all about it!

LGOF: Our latest EP is called *The Noise of Thunder!* This release is a concept EP; when a disagreement breaks, the world falls into chaos, destroying itself, leaving only *The Horsemen* to come to reclaim the Earth.

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

LGOF: Honestly, we're proud of the whole shebang. We co-wrote "Leave Me Alone" with one of our fans. "The Horsemen" was a nod to *Pantera*. Anything that's loud gets us stoked!

AU: What were your previous releases?

LGOF: We have three releases prior to tNoT; you can find all but tNoT on our bandcamp, but our

entire discography anywhere you stream music. There is *Freedom* (our first EP, albeit edited), *The Sirens Call*, and *Champion the Abyss*. Our song, "My Final Vow," had an opening monologue from *Khan* in *Star Trek 2*, but *Paramount* wouldn't return emails, so we cut it out, but check our soundcloud.

AU: Tell us about who is releasing your new record, or is it an independent release?

LGOF: *The Noise of Thunder* was mixed, mastered, and released by *MX-Pro Records* out of Germany. They have a diverse clientele, and *Jorg* is amazing to deal with.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

LGOF: Too early to tell, but we'll be at least getting ready for *Alien day*, which is a few days after.

AU: Who's the biggest stoner in the band?

LGOF: I guess that would be the *God of War*. With all the bodies and ships laying on the rocks, drawn in by the *Sirens*

AU: Favorite strains to smoke?

LGOF: Whatever is the cheapest of the sticky icky, but without sticks and stems. The Gods prefer *Starwalker Kush*, *Space Cake*, or *Palmetto's Romulan*.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

LGOF: Our summer is looking up! Currently we can tell you that we are playing

May 5th in Kingston with the bands *Kohlit*, *Bloody Monroe*, and *CNTRL*. If you haven't heard of these guys, make sure to check 'em out!

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

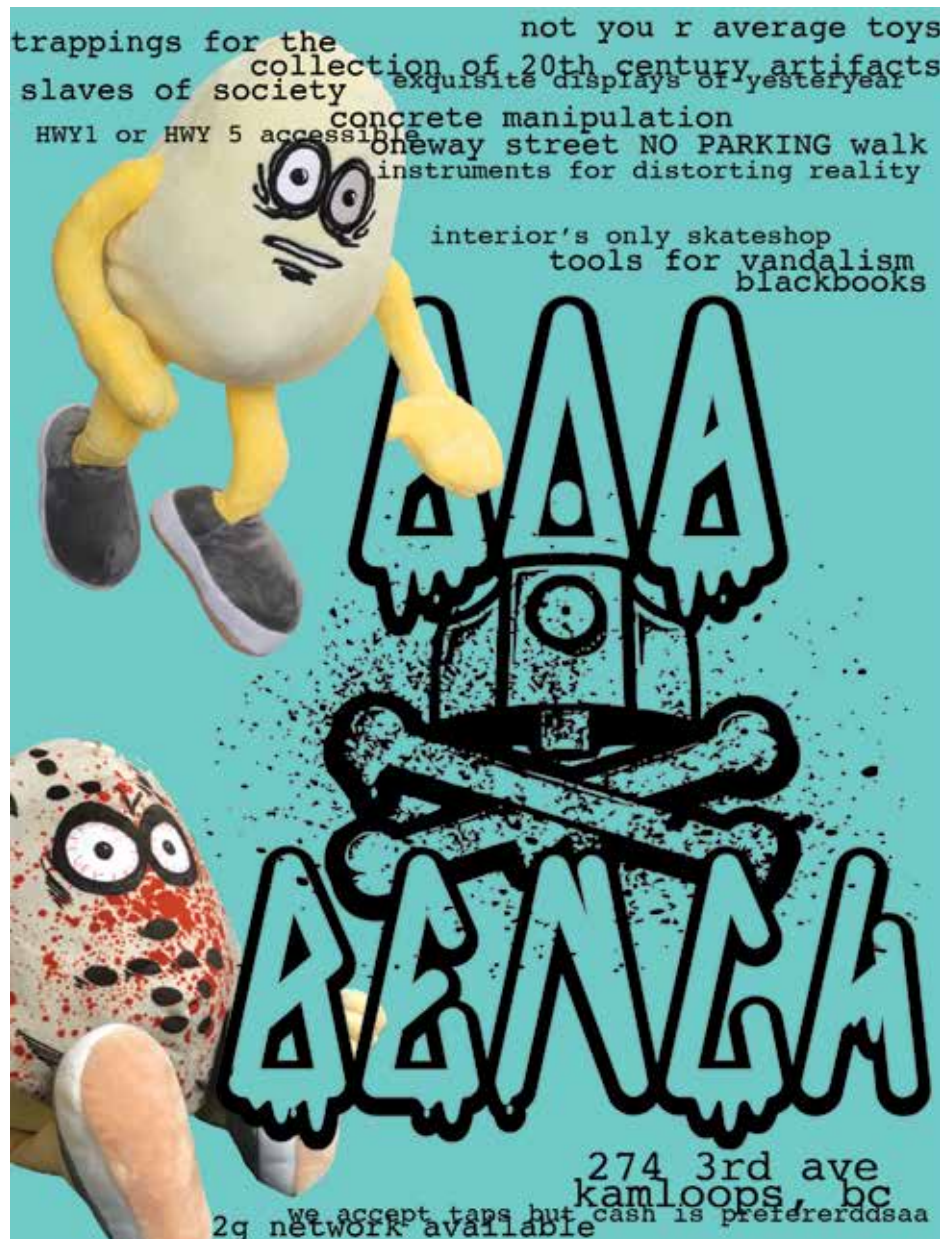
LGOF: We got new songs cooking, and plans to rock the summer. Come join us on *Twitter* and *Facebook* to stay up to date!

AU: Final words for our readers?

LGOF: To quote *Red Green*, we're all in this together. Get out and support your local bands before they get big and it's hard to see them. Chances are, you'll like them more than whatever you're listening to online now

AU: How do people find you online?

LGOF: Hit us up on *spotify*, *deezer*, *apple music*, *Tidal* and join us at *facebook*, *twitter*, and *youtube* @madwetsea or *madwetsea.bandcamp.com*



BREWING 101



seven million years ago they were the same plant. Cannabis can be added in the brewing process in various ways. Due to the low water solubility of THC, it would be more for the flavour if the cannabis were to be added to the boil or flame out part of the process. I have read, however, that using cannabis as you would hops for a sixty minute boil, can leave a cooked vegetable flavour (similar to broccoli) in the beer. Due to the alcohol solubility of THC, a high alcohol beer and the cannabis being added to the "dry hop" or secondary conditioning tank would be logical. Another way to ensure a potent beer would be to soak your cannabis in a strong alcohol to make a tincture and separately add it to the beer after fermentation is complete. This is important because adding (strong alcohol) early will stop the fermentation. The fortified beer would then have to be force carbonated before being packaged. Hemp beer is brewed in a similar way with the majority of the hemp added at the end of the boil or in the fermenter for flavour and aroma. It is also possible to make a non or an alcoholic beer and infuse with a marijuana oil. Alternatively, a beer could be brewed substituting



Cannabis Beer

"This buds for you"

By Daniel Van Netten

In the many years of brewing and the recent legalization of marijuana, I have been asked many times "are you or have you ever made cannabis beer?". The answer is no, I am not personally licensed to or interested in doing so. However, that said, the idea is fascinating and comes with much debate: is the intention for flavour or effect? In the spirit of 420 here are some thoughts on the subject based on speculation not experience. The credibility of this article is questionable. Cannabis Sativa (the plant that is cultivated for marijuana and hemp), and Humulus Lupulus (the plant that is cultivated for hops) are closely related. Both plants contain terpenes and terpenoids, (THC) being an terpenoid. They are so closely related that you can graft cannabis to a hops plant. It is estimated twenty



barley for the unused parts of the cannabis plant (the stems, stalks and roots). The beer could either be force carbonated or, for an alcoholic version, bottle conditioned. Although I have never made cannabis beer, these are just thoughts on how it would be done. Happy home brewing!






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creating a horror graphic novel, "LEMONS". It is a nature horror involving witchcraft, demonic soul reaping and violent vengeance smothered in gore. The first issue will be published soon. I will be promoting the series at Saskatoon Entertainment Expo May 5,6,7. You can find me there in "Artists Alley" working on the second issue.



AU: How do people find and connect with you and your shop online?
 CC: On Instagram @metalalchemytattoo or email clarktattoo@hotmail.com My graphic novel Instagram: @lemons_graphic_novel



sleeve that includes a witch, zombie priest, werewolf and bats (some of my favourite things.)

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

CC: I would love to tattoo a design of Selene from PS5's "Returnal", battling any of the alien hostiles. Also, a blood splattered Art the clown from the "Terrifier" movie would be deadly.



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

CC: I have a broad selection of rock music playing. Some forever favorites Rob Zombie, NIN, Mastodon and Tool. Some newer additions to the playlist have been Brutus, Health, and The Bronx.

AU: What do you enjoy doing the most after tattooing?

CC: I love reading graphic novels, writing short horror stories and painting. So naturally, I started

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

CC: Metal Alchemy Tattoo is located at 360 Saskatchewan Street W, in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

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

CC: My studio is cozy with an earthy witchy vibe.

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

CC: I am proud of being the first female owned tattoo studio in Moose Jaw. I apprenticed in Regina for 2.5 years before deciding to open up my own studio in my home town. I am fortunate to have such great clients all these years.



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

CC: I have a preference for anything that I have designed myself which is typically creepy and dark themed. I love tattooing illustrative black and grey as well as bold color. I'm a huge nerd so I also love tattooing comic book, anime and video game inspired pieces.

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

CC: My favorite tattoo so far this year is a color space sleeve with geometric design throughout. I also started a black and grey illustrative horror



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

Hi, I'm Charlene Clark, owner and tattoo artist at Metal Alchemy Tattoo. I am best known for my love of horror that comes out in my tattooing, painting, illustrating and writing.

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

CC: I have been tattooing for 11 years. I started my art career as an illustrator/painter. After years of getting tattooed myself, I decided it would be a great career path for me.



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Mr. Fertilizer

Interview by Iree-I

AU: Who are we talking to?

DH: Derek Hass owner of Mr. Fertilizer, founder and director of Pura Labs, also founder and director of Verte West.

AU: Mr. Fertilizer is such an old school part of Victoria. What is the origin behind it?

DH: Mr. Fertilizer was started in 1987. Chuck Burkhard started it and then I bought it off him in 2012.

AU: Would you say it's one of the first hydroponic stores in Victoria?

DH: It was the first hydroponic store in Victoria for sure. Chuck tells the story to us all the time.

AU: What made you want to buy this established business?

DH: To get wholesale pricing. Haha.

AU: What made and makes Mr. Fertilizer unique?

DH: Well being the first hydroponic store obviously and Chuck is still with us to this day. He's done his 36 years I guess it is now. Even though he sold me the business Chuck still works for us part-time, two days a week. So he's still there, the original guy.

AU: What sort of changes have happened in the industry from the beginning up until now?

DH: Well, as soon as legalization came in we lost all our commercial customers. It took about two years for them to slowly disappear. All those people who had personal farms, they've all been wiped out. Legalization wiped out everybody. We literally lost 95% of our commercial customers.

AU: So is the rest of the market just grandma's coming in to grow tomatoes?

DH: That's it. We're struggling with the new market, it's just grandma's coming in to grow cannabis, tomatoes, and microgreens. Microgreens is a big one.

Cannabis is still our number one thing we are there for. It really is only ma's and pa's coming in to do their four plants or growing a greenhouse in their backyard for vegetables. Some of them can grow huge plants, some of these old timers.

AU: It's kind of weird though with legalization they said everyone could have a grow-op basically. Yet the exact opposite effect happened.

DH: So what happened is they had a perfect model that was uninfluenced by the government, the black market. Everybody was in and it was working perfectly. Every single person in the whole world can participate at any given time there's no rules and regulations and fees and waiting times. If you are a grandma and you're 60 years old and you're like, well I used to grow cannabis I want to grow it again just because I need a couple grand I'm gonna do my whole back garden. That could happen and then you sell it off to your friends and everybody was happy and laughing and grandma made a couple grand extra in the garden.



AU: You are involved with PURA Analytical Labs as well, right?

DH: I was one of the founders and I'm still a director. We specialize in cannabis analytical testing for the Health Canada certification process for anyone who's a Micro or LP (licensed producer), they need to get their product tested through a third party lab. So that's what we are. We do tests for all the cannabinoids, terpenes, pesticides, heavy metals, yeast and microbials. All the compliance regulations that Health Canada has put forward we just make sure it's done like that.

AU: Do you know what the highest level of THC ever was through your lab?

DH: All of our lab tests are people's personal documents so I can't talk about that. But I can tell you about my personal tests. I've seen everything from 3% to 33% and absolutely every number in between. In the old days, it was the lower numbers 10% to 12% would be the killer stuff that we all thought was insane. Now we've advanced quickly, our crops are steady 25 to 31%. Health Canada recently said cannabis doesn't go over 35%, in their mind. So they want anyone who has THC higher than 35% to be reported to them.

AU: Can the lab test all drugs or just Cannabis?

DH: At Pura Labs we just got our controlled substance license mainly for testing psilocybin but we can test ketamine, LSD, and a bunch of other psychedelic drugs.

AU: What strains does Verte West grow?

DH: At Verte West we have a cultivation license only so we have to sell to anyone who has a license for processing. Whether it is edibles, extracts or just flowers or pre-rolls. We are currently producing Toro Rosso, that's one of our top strains, it's a steady 31% THC every crop and the highest terpenes so far was 4.8% on it. It is an Indica. We sell to United Greeneries and they package it under the brand 1812.

AU: What is your involvement with Warmland Cannabis Centre?

DH: Chris Clay runs that, he's the sole director. He's the guy who sold clones in the 90s in Vancouver and the cops busted and charged him and now he's finally got a legal cannabis dispensary again. He's like the original OG that the cops harassed because he was trying to sell clones before anybody. I am one of the shareholders at Warmland, I'm not a director. I don't really have anything to do with it just because I'm so confident with Chris.

AU: What are your plans for 4/20 this year?

DH: I'll probably get in my 1974 Cadillac Eldorado convertible and take it for a little cruise downtown. It's got a blown out 501 motor in it with electric exhaust dumps so it sounds like a race car coming if you want it to. I sprayed it with candy apple gold flake and then candy apple green. The license plate somehow came out 420. I got an actual normal license plate that says 420 on this car somehow. My clock doesn't work in it and so I set that to 4:20, so it's a 420 car.

AU: Do you have a favourite type of weed that you smoked in the past that really grabbed you by the boo-boo?

DH: I'll probably throw down an old strain. The only strain that actually can spin me out like I drank a mickey really fast is Jack,

the original Jack Herer, the one that came over from Europe that had a kind of peppery smell. I even have some old lab tests we did and the actual Jack Herer that we used to think was a quad was testing at like 19.8%. So somehow a 19% THC Sativa can spin me out. No other plant in the world has done that to me. I've smoked 1000s of strains and I only miss that one strain. It was really peppery and everything's all sugary now. Everything's sweet like candy, like cakes and caramels and cookies. I'm breeding now, I'm the breeder for Verte West. So I pheno hunt and can

breed whatever traits I want to see.

AU: So you're trying to make a savoury flavour now instead of a sweet flavour.

DH: When we first started Verte West, the weed was 10%, 12%, 15%, 16%. Which we thought was the best weed in the world. It looked like it was. It totally wasn't. Then we did our Jack crop, we got a record crop of huge killer Jack and it only tested at 10%. Now I just breed the lab numbers. I take all my favourites to the lab, whatever is the highest THC and highest terpenes those are my winners. In two years we've advanced from that 10%, 12%, 16% I think our best plant we found way back when we started was 19%. Now all our crops are 25 to 31%, 32% max right now. All of our terpene levels are like 4.8-4.9%. We have this crazy Orange Cake that's at that level. The Toro Rosso is insane. Pistol and Paris sells our Hawaiian Fanta, that's our Sativa, it's pretty insane. Everything comes with 3% or higher terpenes.

AU: What's coming up in the near future, any new strains?

DH: We do have some new ones coming. We have one called Jungle Berry that will be the new one coming down the line. Then we also have Apples and Bananas. That one came in at 27% with 4% terpenes and it's got really all these weird purples throughout it.

AU: What is the lasting legacy of Mr. Fertilizer and its importance to Victoria? It's a true historic landmark.

DH: For sure, 36 years is a long time. At this point of its life it's a service, we're not making any money, so the city's lucky I'm just providing the service at a loss and hoping for better days.

AU: I guess the reason that the industry is messed up a bit is because the prices of weed

have dropped so people stopped growing. Does that sort of sum it up?

DH: It's basically whoever has control of the dispensaries has control of the cannabis market. That's just how it goes, right? Everyone got washed out who had a dispensary in Victoria. There were 40 dispensaries originally, now there's only like 10 or 15 legal stores.

AU: What's on the horizon?

DH: If you want the future, here's one that no one's ever talked about. I made this up myself. You can physically eat cannabis microgreens from start to finish in one week. It's a little bit spicy, kind of like a radish. You use it like a radish supplement and throw it in your salad. I figured out you can grow cannabis the same as any other microgreen and eat it just like everything else.

AU: It's like in that Cheech and Chong movie where they go to Amsterdam and have the weed leaf salad with hash crumbled on it.

DH: Yes, that's my new thing. Maybe all of a sudden everyone will have actual cannabis in their salad, just basically a lettuce supplement. It's going to be extremely healthy for you, you're not going to get high at all.

AU: Final words for our readers on 4/20?

DH: Don't worry about high THC, high terpenes is a lot funner. All these 5% terpene plants that we grow now it's like candy in your mouth.

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COSTA CANNA

Interview by Iree-I

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

Mike Stewart, Director of Commercialization, my hidden talent is juggling while riding a unicycle.

AU: What first got you involved in the Cannabis industry?

My involvement with the cannabis industry began when I was working as a project manager for a farm in Nanoose Bay. As the industry began moving towards legalization in 2017, the farm was transitioning from an ACMPR license to a full LP status, and I was tasked with navigating the complex regulations and requirements. Through this process, I became increasingly interested in the industry and the potential it had to drive positive change and innovation.

AU: Tell us the origin story of Costa Canna?

Back in 2018, when the legal cannabis industry was still in its infancy, we recognized a golden opportunity to introduce top-notch cannabis retail to the lively communities of Vancouver Island. With the invaluable assistance and collaboration of the Cowichan Tribes, our goal was twofold: to spur the growth of the legal cannabis industry and to uphold the Tribe's sovereignty over their lands and resources. Through our visionary partnership, we aimed to create a thriving, sustainable cannabis market that would benefit all parties involved.

AU: What is your mission statement?

Our mission is to give our customers an unparalleled cannabis shopping experience - one that is jam-packed with top-of-the-line, carefully curated products. We don't just sell products; we help our customers navigate the dizzying array of options available to find the perfect fit for them. Our dedication to providing top-notch customer service and an unbeatable product selection sets us apart from the rest. We understand that not all cannabis producers are created equal, which is why we've made it our business to stay on top of the latest trends and innovations in the industry. With our deep knowledge of the best value and values in the market, we pride ourselves on hand-picking only the finest products for our customers.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

At Costa Canna, we are always excited to celebrate 420 and this year is no exception! We have a range of exciting activities planned for our

customers, including in-store giveaways, competitions, and community-building events.

Our staff are passionate about helping our customers find the perfect products to enhance their 420 experience, and we will have a wide range of top-quality products available, including flowers, concentrates, edibles, and more.

We are also planning to host community events throughout the day, where customers can connect with other members of the cannabis community and learn more about the industry and

our commitment to sustainability and ethical business practices.

Overall, we are looking forward to celebrating 420 with our customers and our community, and we invite everyone to come out and join in the fun!

AU: What sets Costa Canna apart from others?

Costa Canna stands apart from other cannabis brands for several reasons. Firstly, it is a First Nations-owned cannabis brand that places a strong emphasis on promoting the sovereignty and jurisdictional rights of First Nations in the legal cannabis industry. This is achieved through a

commitment to government-to-government contracts and a deep understanding of Section 119 of the Cannabis Control & Licensing Act.

Additionally, Costa Canna has a reputation for offering an unmatched shopping experience, featuring carefully curated products that meet the highest standards of quality and value. The brand's expert knowledge of the industry allows it to provide

customers with unparalleled customer service and a product selection that is unrivaled by its competitors.

Furthermore, Costa Canna places a strong emphasis on sustainability, using eco-friendly packaging and production methods wherever possible. This focus on environmental responsibility aligns with the values of many of its customers who prioritize sustainability when making purchasing decisions.

Overall, Costa Canna's commitment to promoting First Nations sovereignty, offering an exceptional shopping experience, and prioritizing sustainability sets it apart from other cannabis brands in the industry.

AU: What are some of your favorite strains to enjoy?

Let me tell you, when it comes to strains, it's all about finding the perfect match for your unique tastes and preferences. Personally, I'm a huge fan of the 18Twelve - Liberty Haze in the sativa category - this bud boasts that classic Haze effect that's simply out of this world! Not to mention, the aroma is absolutely divine, and the euphoric high it delivers is unmatched.

And don't even get me started on the Costa Canna branded Orange Tree in the Indica category - this little beauty, produced by our trusted partner Verte West, is like taking a whiff of a freshly peeled tangerine! From the aroma to the flavour profile, it's an absolute dream. Trust me when I say, this bud is the real deal - and it's definitely my go-to for those chill, laid-back



evenings.

AU: Any medicinal properties of Cannabis that people might be surprised to learn?

It's a real shame, but as recreational cannabis retailers, we're currently restricted from discussing any potential medicinal benefits associated with our products. That being said, we do find that a significant number of our customers are seeking out cannabis for its potential therapeutic properties - they've done their own research and are looking for products that can help alleviate their specific symptoms or conditions. While we can't provide medical advice or make any specific claims about the health benefits of cannabis, we're here to help guide our customers through the products we offer and provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions about their cannabis use.

AU: What producers and growers do you currently work with?

As a premier cannabis brand, Costa Canna is committed to working with the best producers and growers in the industry. We partner with a range of top-quality producers and growers throughout Canada, including our partners at United Greeneries Ltd., who are known for their high-quality cannabis products and ethical business practices.

We also work closely with a number of smaller, independent growers who share our commitment to sustainability and community building. By partnering with a diverse range of producers and growers, we are able to offer our customers a wide range of top-quality products, from flowers to concentrates to edibles and more.

AU: What makes an expert grower?

In my opinion, an expert grower is someone who possesses a deep knowledge and understanding of the cannabis plant, from its genetics and growth patterns to its various cultivars and strains. They should have a strong background in horticulture and a solid understanding of plant biology, as well as a keen eye for detail and an ability to troubleshoot and problem-solve when issues arise. An expert grower should also be passionate about their craft and constantly seeking to improve their techniques and methods. They should be up-to-date on the latest developments and innovations in the industry, and be able to adapt to changes and new challenges as they arise.

AU: Can Cannabis be used to save the planet?

Cannabis has the potential to be used in a variety of ways to help save the planet. Here are a few examples: Sustainable agriculture: Cannabis can be grown using sustainable and environmentally-friendly agricultural practices such as regenerative farming, which can help reduce the carbon footprint of the industry and improve soil health.

Biodegradable products: Hemp fiber can be used

to create a wide range of biodegradable products, including clothing, paper, and packaging materials. This can help reduce the use of plastic and other non-biodegradable materials that contribute to environmental pollution.

Alternative energy: Cannabis can be used as a feedstock for the production of biofuels, which can be used as an alternative to fossil fuels. This has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Carbon sequestration: Cannabis plants are highly efficient at absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in the soil. This means that large-scale cannabis cultivation could have the potential to sequester significant amounts of carbon, helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

AU: Anything else you would like to mention?

In addition to our commitment to ethical business practices and customer service, Costa Canna is also deeply committed to supporting the development of the cannabis industry as a whole. We believe in investing in the future of the industry by working with top universities and developing training programs that help educate and prepare the next generation of cannabis professionals.

Our exclusive partnerships with UBC and McGill universities' plant sciences and food sciences divisions demonstrate our commitment to supporting cutting-edge research and development in the cannabis industry.

We are also proud to have developed retail training programs in collaboration with Vancouver Island University, which helps ensure that our staff are knowledgeable, professional, and able to provide the best possible service to our customers.

Overall, we are dedicated to being a responsible and sustainable leader in the cannabis industry, and to supporting the growth and development of our communities through our business practices and community partnerships.

AU: How do people find you online?

You can find Costa Canna online by visiting our website at www.costacanna.ca. From there, you can explore our products, learn more about our company and our commitment to sustainability and community, and find information about our four locations on Vancouver Island. Additionally, you can follow us on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, where we post updates about new products, promotions, and events.

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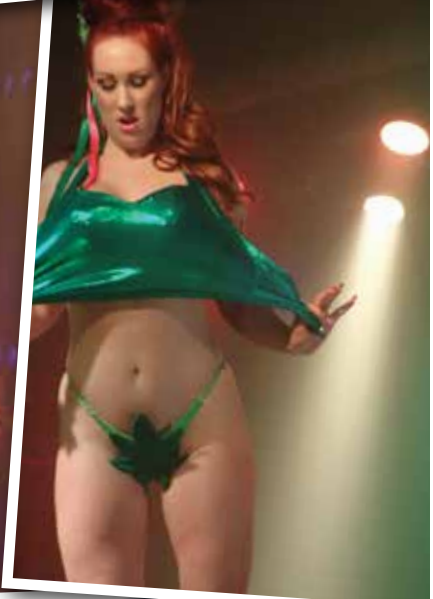
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EVERGREEN CANNABIS

Interview with owner Mike Babins by Iree-I

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

MB: Mike Babins, Owner of Evergreen Cannabis - Vancouver's FIRST Retail Cannabis Store. Before we opened I was best known for: Radio personality in Montreal, Road Manager for The Wailers, Roadie for *Motörhead*, and the lead singer for Montreal's most infamous punk band.



SPACE AGE TECHNOLOGY

AU: What first drew you to the world of Cannabis?

MB: My family had been using Cannabis for generations. I've had a foot in the industry since the early 90's

AU: Please tell us the origin story of Evergreen Cannabis?

MB: My wife Maria (co-owner of the store) was diagnosed with pre-cancerous cells in 2015. As we had time we went the natural route (it worked,) which included cannabis. When we went into the local dispensaries asking serious health questions we realized that they were just glorified dealers so we decided to open our own store where all product was tested and organic.

AU: How did you become Vancouver's First Retail Cannabis store?

MB: The short answer



makes Evergreen Cannabis unique?

MB: We are truly a mom 'n' pop cannabis shop. We focus on small batch craft cannabis, the majority of our flower is BC grown - we do not carry any of the "big brands". We have

samples of every strain on our display table to look at and smell. We do not look like an Apple store or a corner bodega. We only carry ethical products - nothing with palm oil in it. We also recycle your used cartridges and packaging, as well as offer delivery anywhere in BC! Evergreen is the cannabis store for people who love cannabis.

Look at it like this: When Ian Gillan joined *Black Sabbath* he knew so little about the band that he had to write the lyrics on paper and tape them to the front of the stage, he's a great singer of course but how can you sing for *Sabbath* if you don't know the words to "Iron Man"? A lot of the stores out there were opened by people hoping to make a quick buck, they don't love weed the way you and I do. They carry what the reps and apps tell them to carry, Evergreen stocks what we ourselves want to smoke.

AU: What are some of your most popular strains and products?

MB: That changes every week! If you smoke the same thing all the time the effects stop being as potent - the best strain is the one you haven't smoked yet! Our customers enjoy coming in and seeing what is new. The drinks and gummies are also extremely popular.

AU: What are some of your favorite strains to enjoy? Do you prefer sativas or indicas?

MB: I flip back and forth. The "sativa is a stimulant and indica makes you sleep" myth is not 100% true. I grab what looks and smells

is "paperwork". The longer version is that we had been preparing for legalization from the day we opened. We paid our taxes and kept a paper trail. We followed all of the city's rules. When we were audited by the province they knew where every penny came from. Because of this we were the first ones to jump through all the hurdles and get Vancouver's first license on Dec 24th, 2018 (Lemmy's Birthday).

AU: What



good to me that day. I always say trust your nose, don't look at the numbers on the label. Right now I'm really enjoying some outdoor that we just got in.

AU: Any 420 plans this year?

MB: Evergreen is going to have tons of deals and local spotlights all day long - it's going to be a fun time.

AU: What are some medicinal properties of Cannabis that people might not know about?

MB: As a retail store, we can not give medical advice - however our customers use it for lots of conditions and issues including anxiety and pain.

AU: What makes an expert grower in your opinion?

MB: Experience.

AU: What sort of producers and growers are you working with?

MB: Small batch micro's. A huge chunk of our growers were the same people who grew for us before legalization.

AU: How have things

changed over the years and now that legalization has arrived?

MB: There has been so many changes it's mind blowing. The cannabis itself has gotten insanely better since the first days of legalization. As for the main differences: now if there is something wrong with your weed you can return it. I knew of lots of stores who would take their inferior product and sell it in pre-rolls, that can't happen anymore.

AU: What's the best part of your job?

MB: Being proud of what I do! It's easy to sleep at night knowing I only sell the weed that I want to smoke myself - and that we don't carry any products with palm oil in it, even though we would be making more money if we did.

AU: How did you survive through the pandemic?

MB: It was hilarious! We had a little microphone setup and a debit machine by the door - we handed people their weed on a lacrosse stick!

AU: What is your connection to the world of metal music?

MB: I've been a metal head since I was a little kid. During my 20 years in radio I was the metal guy working in the mainstream industry. One of my proudest accomplishments was hosting "The Metal File" on the biggest rock station in Montreal (CHOM FM). I did all I could for metal at that point: I helped choose the bands for the first Heavy MTL Festivals, I was part of the team that helped "define metal," when by buddy Sean finally got the Junos to have a metal category, I helped make the first Voivod reunion gig happen as a tribute to Piggy. I also passed some contacts around which led to Dave Ellefson



rejoining Megadeth - but that didn't quite work out long term.

AU: Is it true your brother is the legendary Canadian music publicist Jon Asher?

MB: I like to ride on his coat tails.

AU: What are some Cannabis secrets or tips you can share with our readers?

MB: Don't choose your weed by the THC percentage. It's been proven that more THC doesn't get you more high. In fact, if you smoke high THC most of it just sits in your fat cells and makes it harder for you to get high the next day. And between us, there are many ways to cheat the test to get a higher number at the lab. Try to smell your bud before purchasing - if it smells good to you, it's what you should buy. You can always ask the staff at Evergreen. We will ask



specific questions about what you like before making a recommendation.

AU: How else can this amazing plant be used to save the planet?

MB: I don't think focusing on just one plant is the way to save the planet. Hemp can replace a lot of our current resources - but don't forget about bamboo. If each of us took the time to read the ingredients at the supermarket and not buy any products with palm oil in it, if we stopped buying clothes with polyester and stuck to quality cotton and hemp, if they stopped wrapping every umbrella in plastic wrap for no apparent reason, etc. There are so many things we can do as individuals that make a huge impact.

AU: How can people find you online?

MB:

www.ecsvan.ca

P.S. We deliver anywhere in the province. If you want to try some buds that you won't see anywhere else then check us out!



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BURNSIDE BUDS

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

Hey there, I am Cullan Farrington the current manager of Burnside Buds, which is owned by Rosetta Duncan. We are best known for our awesome team and exceptionally competitive pricing while still being a single local dispensary!

AU: What is your association with the world of Cannabis? How did you first become involved?

Burnside Buds was created by Rosetta Duncan, BSc, mother of two, and retired (2016) military veteran. Prior to starting the business, Rosetta was not involved in the cannabis industry but has learned about and adapted to the many changes and new laws and knowledge we've been through in the years and still continue to be on the forefront of new cannabis innovations.

AU: What is the origin story of Burnside Buds?

Burnside buds opened in 2016 as a medical dispensary and operated as such for 2 years, in the process of legalization in 2018 we made the transition to a recreational shop, changed our store name to adhere to the BC legal rules and strived to become a local gem, with the combination of our awesome customer service, knowledgeable sales staff and competitive pricing. We strive to offer a one stop shop experience for new and returning customers.

AU: What is the motto of Burnside Buds?

"Friendly low prices!"

AU: What makes Burnside Buds unique?

We are a small single store, with this we have the opportunity to learn more of what our customer base wants and likes directly, we strive to make a personal connection to everyone who comes in our store even for the smallest purchases.

AU: What are some of your most popular strains and products?

Our most popular strain is "Root Beer Float" by "BOLD" and "Peach Ringz" by one of the staffs personal favorite brands "General Admissions"

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

Yes! We have a big list of items from edibles to bud to accessories on sale this year! With some special goodie bags for grabs too!

AU: What is the best 420 experience you can remember?

Hard to pick a favorite experience, every year is different and we incentivise people to take the



CANNABIS CORNER

holiday as an opportunity to do the same! Try something new whether it be a new device, strain or location to smoke in! Personally 2019 after recreational legalization is my fondest memory of 420, lots of happy faces everywhere that day.

AU: What are your favorite strains to enjoy?

We have a constant rotation of product with a weekly picks list posted in store every Friday! Personal favorites are Pink Kush and GMO Cake.

AU: Anything else you would like to mention?

We have multiple social medias that we update regularly, our Facebook is currently the most active and in the very near future we are incorporating an Instagram and TikTok to our social media list.

burnsidebuds.ca

facebook.com/BurnsideBuds.ca

instagram.com/bbuds.ca



CANNABIS CORNER



Black Kettle Farms

Master Grower Mike Holub

Interview by Iree-I

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

Mike Holub: I'm Mike Holub, and I'm the Master Grower at Black Kettle farms.

AU: When did you first start growing Cannabis?

MH: I started growing cannabis in the early 1990's

AU: What drew you to the Cannabis industry?

MH: I saw most growers using

chemicals like PGR's and wanted to grow a cleaner, more natural product.

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

MH: At Black Kettle our growing methods are as clean as possible, we use only Remo nutrients and koko. Our cannabis has never seen any chemicals, sprays or hormones and is grown right from in house mothers under our control. Plants at Black Kettle farms are grown to full maturity, harvested, hang dried and hand trimmed with our staff in house. We take pride in our high quality small batch local, family owned product.

AU: What strains do you currently produce and what makes them unique?

MH: We have our Triangle Kush strain : High potency, gassy full flavour Hybrid. This one is a favorite of the old school smoker.

Rainbow Driver : High potency, citrus flavour. For me this strain has an

energetic effect.

Frosted Kush cake: High potency, gassy full flavour. Another old school heavy hitting Kush

We have four or five phone hunts going on to be announced soon!

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

MH: The rainbow driver is my smoke of choice at the moment, I find the effects of this strain allow me to enjoy being outside doing whatever needs to be done! The sun shines a little brighter.

AU: What makes an expert grower

in your opinion?

MH: To be an expert grower I feel there are a few important variables:

Experience is by far the most important. Trial and error takes years in this trade as each crop takes four months.

Love of the plant is very important, you need to read the plants to know what they need before a problem occurs.

Product knowledge for inputs is another key to growing, for example growing medium or light intensity varies with cultivars and methods.

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

MH: Strains and their effects are unique to each consumer in my opinion. Our



strains are all hybrids so try them all.

AU: Where are your products available?

MH: Black Kettle cannabis is available at private retailers throughout B.C., Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

In B.C. we can be found at most stores, I would like to make special mention of Evergreen Cannabis on W 4th in Vancouver as a true supporter of local small batch, high quality craft product. They deliver our flower to anywhere in B.C.

AU: How can people find you online?

MH: Instagram is the easiest way to find us at the moment. @Blackkettlefarms



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Warmland

Interview by Iree-I

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

Chris Clay: This is Chris Clay, CEO of Warmland Cannabis Centres. I'm perhaps best known for a constitutional challenge to Canada's cannabis laws I launched in the mid-1990s while operating my shop, Hemp Nation in London, Ontario. The challenge ultimately went to the Supreme Court of Canada and a documentary crew captured part of my legal journey, adding to the widespread media coverage the case received at the time (filmmaker & cannabis lawyer Russell Bennett has made the documentary, "Stoned: Hemp Nation on Trial," available online - it can be viewed at warmlandcannabis.com/stoned)

AU: What is your association with the world of Cannabis? How did you first become involved?

CC: I started experimenting with cannabis during a summer photography program through Ryerson University in 1992. One student wasn't much older than myself but had already travelled much of the world, and he opened my eyes to the wonders of cannabis. Somehow, he had arranged for weed to be delivered by courier regularly, and before long most of us were learning to roll while taking photos. I started spending my extra time at the library

researching cannabis. I was quite concerned that my summertime sessions might have disastrous implications, and was surprised to find a vast trove of evidence going back centuries suggesting quite the opposite.

Among other things, I found the reports of the LeDain Commission, a Royal Commission that spent \$3.5 million and several years looking at the issue (only to recommend that Canada should decriminalize cannabis... this was in the early 1970s.)

AU: When did you first learn about the importance of Hemp?

CC: During my time in Toronto, I learned of a banned book called *The Emperor Wears No Clothes* by Jack Herer. A 1988 law prohibited "paraphernalia" and cannabis books but I managed to track down a copy and it really opened my eyes - it included reprints of historical articles such as one from *Popular Mechanics* in 1938 that called hemp the "new billion dollar crop". It also extensively detailed the long history of cannabis for medicinal uses.



In the spring of 1993, I heard a clip on the radio about a hemp store that was opening in Texas and before long I was contacting

potential suppliers, searching for anything related to cannabis to see if I could do the same in Canada. I started importing books from Ed Rosenthal's publishing company; I imported hemp seeds and oils from the Ohio Hempery; I bought hemp fabric and hemp patches; I bought vintage pipes, bongos, hookahs and rolling papers; and I rented a space at a local flea market to test the waters.

Business exploded and I booked a booth at Lollapalooza that summer. Funds from the festival were enough to open a small shop, so in August 1993 I opened the Great Canadian Hemporium in downtown London. As Canada's first hemp shop, it quickly gained attention and people started travelling from afar to visit. After initially selling prohibited cannabis accessories without any problems (a local police spokesperson once told one reporter they had "bigger fish to fry than Chris Clay") a commingling of friends, staff and activists helped me launch a cannabis seed bank to breed seeds which we mailed across the country. As time passed, we discussed possibly selling clones... Meanwhile, I had met Alan Young, a law professor at Osgoode Hall Law School, who was interested in doing a constitutional challenge. When we finally put clones out for sale, the shop was raided four hours later and I found myself calling Alan from a jail cell.

AU: What strains of seeds and clones were you selling when you got in trouble with the law?

CC: We started with strains people were bringing back from Amsterdam (Northern Lights #5, Skunk #1, Big Bud, Black Domina, Purple Star etc.) and started crossing those with local strains we were discovering (like one called Golden Boy). We produced as many seeds as we could and sold them in 6-packs ranging from \$10 - \$25 and towards the end we even imported some from Africa (Transkei Reds (Rooibaard), Durban Poison, and Malawi Cob.) The selection continued to expand until the day the 20 Skunk #1 clones arrived on consignment and the shop was raided (seed production and sales resumed before long, but a second raid eventually drove things a little more underground and I made plans to move to BC.)

AU: Please tell us more about your court case

that reached the Supreme Court of Canada.

CC: My shop was in downtown London, and an undercover officer working on something completely unrelated stopped in to kill time and noticed the little tray of clones under a light in one of the displays. He bought one (we only sold four in total) and checked in with his superiors, who then authorized the raid.

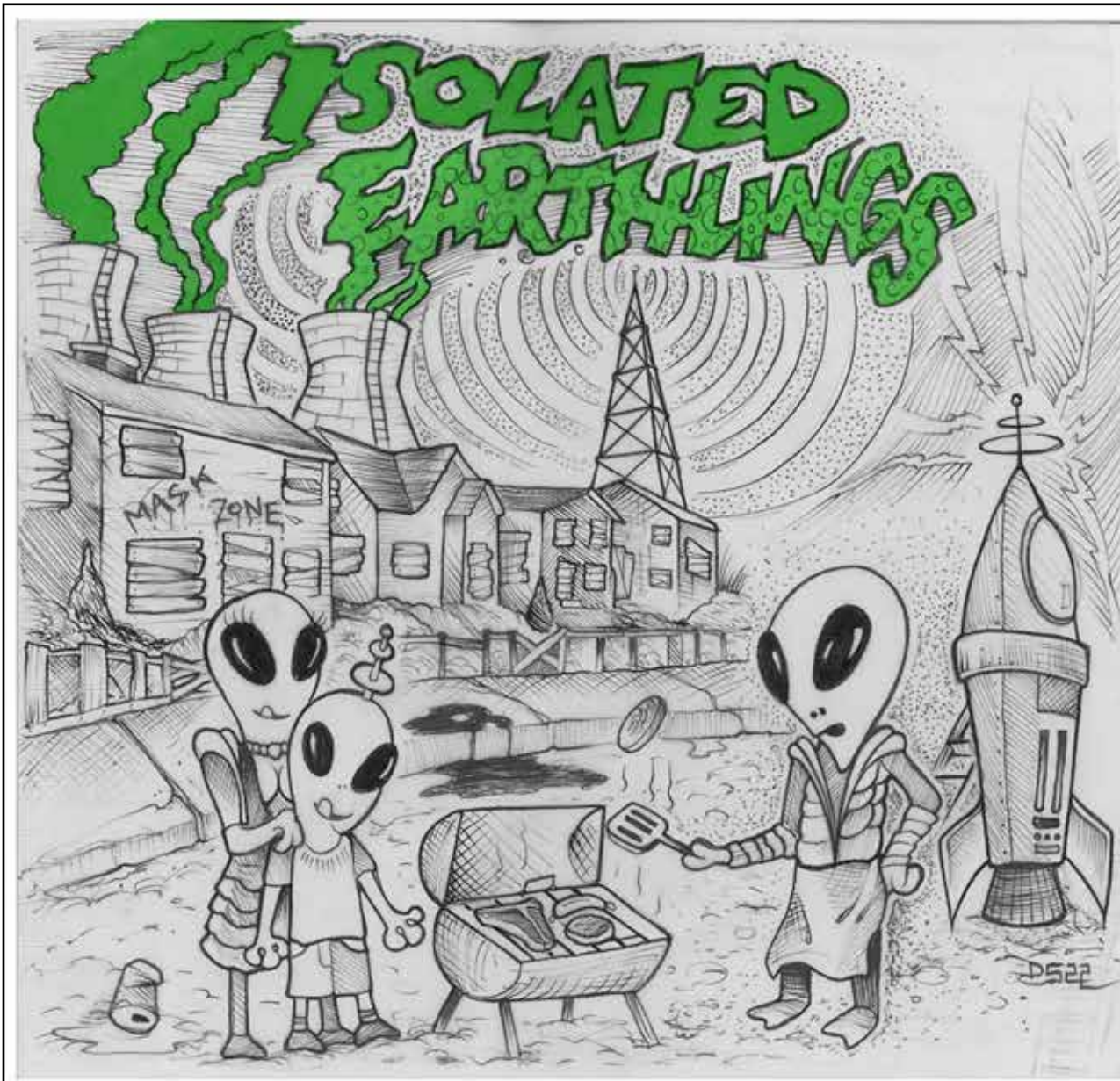
I was jailed, but only for a weekend and it wasn't so bad. However, the biggest shock upon my release was finding the shop empty - the police had taken virtually everything.

I made arrangements to move the shop around the corner to a larger location and operations resumed, under the new store name Hemp Nation. Seed sales resumed and we expanded the space to include a stage, DJ booth, and cafe (featuring "high octane" infused coffee and infused "buzz buns" banana bread). Meanwhile, to fund my legal defence and the constitutional challenge, I launched a Victory Bond campaign. In this case, each bond cost \$25 and would be redeemable for 1/4 ounce of cannabis if the challenge was successful.

Thanks to the media and the power of the internet it wasn't hard to draw attention to the campaign and donations came flooding in from around the world. We raised over \$100,000, most of which went to photocopying costs (we presented literally piles of evidence) and to fly in an impressive selection of expert witnesses.

AU: Were you able to defend yourself and what was the ruling?

CC: My lawyers, Alan Young and one of his former students, Paul Burstein, attacked cannabis prohibition from a number of angles. Aside from arguments based on various sections of



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the constitution, testimony also highlighted how the cannabis laws were overly broad (they prohibited not only recreational use of cannabis but industrial hemp and medicinal cannabis, so we brought experts from those fields to testify.) Experts included Dr. Lester Grinspoon from Harvard, Dr. Heinz Lehmann and Dr. Marie-Andree Bertrand (the last two surviving members of the LeDain Royal Commission), experts in industrial hemp, researchers from the Addiction Research Foundation and more. The trial lasted several weeks and in the end the judge essentially passed the buck... He ruled that though cannabis is "relatively harmless compared to alcohol and tobacco", it was Parliament's job to change the laws and not that of the courts.

We succeeded in getting a vast evidentiary record on file including hundreds of studies, royal commission reports etc. that helped other challenges succeed (some of it was used in medicinal cannabis constitutional challenges) but in the end I was convicted and my appeals were unsuccessful.

AU: What are your latest endeavors?

CC: In 2015 I found myself re-entering the cannabis industry after discovering CBD. I came across a strain called CBD Rene at the VICS (Vancouver Island Compassion Society) in Victoria, a high CBD strain bred by Mat Beren of House of the Great Gardener in the Cowichan Valley, and then sought out other CBD products. However, I soon became frustrated with the lack of selection and inconsistent availability. Meanwhile, cannabis dispensaries were starting to open in more and more BC communities, and after putting out a few feelers I had the resources in place to start Warmland Medicinal Cannabis Centre in Mill Bay. It operated from 2015 – 2018, closing shortly before legalization. We initially hoped to be licensed within weeks, but a last-minute bylaw prohibiting dispensaries was passed by our local municipality which led to years of delays.

AU: Tell us more about Warmland.

CC: Warmland currently operates its flagship location south of Duncan and a new satellite location in Cobble Hill. Plans are underway for a third location in Mill Bay later this year.

AU: What makes Warmland different from others in your opinion?

CC: Warmland grew out of a decades-long journey that nearly ended when legalization took place on October 17, 2018. I actually spent that morning at the Toronto Stock Exchange – I was one of the cannabis industry representatives invited to open the exchange on legalization day – but that early excitement led to waiting... and more waiting... and more waiting. It took

over three years to reopen as a licensed store, and during that time it was challenging to keep the dream alive, but we weren't idle and in the end we made it through to the other side.

Warmland's general manager, Ruby Bressan, moved over to Hemp Nation with me after legalization and for three years we explored everything to do with cannabis accessories (and hemp products, which we had to phase out once we were licensed due to BC's strict regulations.) Ruby is now GM at the new Warmland and with



her help we have grown the selection to nearly 5,000 accessories at the flagship location.

As for cannabis products, I curate the menu myself and it has grown to over 400 products at each store. We're also doing more and more of our buying from local growers using BC's new Direct Delivery program which helps ensure things are as fresh as

possible.

AU: Who are some of the Cannabis growers you are currently working with?

CC: Our local growers produce some of the finest cannabis in the world. One of our favourites is Verte West (they grow Toro Rosso, one of my all-time favourite strains, along with Hawaiian Fanta, Frosted Grapes, and Orange Cake.) We're also pleased to feature Cowichan grown products from Great Gardener Farms (their Barbara Bud rosin vape cartridges are exceptional and their seeds are world renowned.)

AU: What are some medicinal properties of Cannabis that people might not know about?

CC: Most people would be surprised to discover just how extensively cannabis was used in the past and how it was generally regarded as a safe and effective medication for a wide range of ailments. I collect stories and articles from "back in the daze" and post the best ones online at warmlandcannabis.com/history



An article from 1868 calls cannabis an "opium-cure", while a Maclean's article from 1938 warns readers to "Look Out for Mary Jane!" Scientific American ran a feature in 1898 calling cannabis "one of the most valuable of drugs" while Parke-Davis announced that, despite their best efforts, they had "never been able to give an animal a sufficient quantity of a U.S.P. or other preparation of the cannabis (Indica or Americana) to produce death." I also have a collection of old cannabis medical bottles and packaging, dating back to the 19th century.

AU: How have things changed over the years and now that legalization has arrived?

CC: It's now four years since legalization and there

is a tremendous range of high-quality cannabis products available. Some of the best weed I've ever had comes from my own shop, which is awesome. However, the country continues to grow too much cannabis so prices continue to drop (which is hardest on smallscale craft growers).

AU: What is the best 420 experience you can remember?

CC: I work most 4/20s since it's one of the busiest days of the year at the shops, but the first one after legalization was awesome. My son Dylan came along and we went to Sunset Beach in Vancouver... We were perched on a hill at 4:20 when upwards of 100,000 people started blasting smoke into the air, celebrating while Cypress Hill performed Hits from the Bong.



AU: What are your favourite strains to enjoy?

My favourite strains to vape in my Mighty+ vaporizer are Toro Rosso (it tastes soooo good, like candy) and Blueberry Yum Yum (also incredibly delicious) from Cake & Caviar. Rounding out my top three would be Comatose, from 1964.

Most often, I'm vaping rosin with an e-nail these days... My top three favourites are Strawberry Jam from Dabble (Shawnigan Lake), LA Kush Cake from Brindle Farms (Sooke), and Peanut Butter Mac from BLKMKT (Alberta)

AU: How has legalization changed things for the better? As well as for the worse?

CC: From the consumer's perspective, things have mostly changed for the better. Retail prices for most things have fallen to less than what we sold them for pre-legalization.

Also, fierce competition has meant that companies are focusing on the products they

do best and many are finding niche markets. For example, there are now a number of products featuring exotic cannabinoids like CBN, CBC, CBG, delta-8 THC etc. and they're coming in a range of formats (gummies, vape cartridges, tinctures, infused pre-rolls etc.) CBD products have also

dropped dramatically in price, which is incredibly helpful for anyone using them medicinally.

The biggest downside to legalization has perhaps been the fallout from so much cannabis being grown for so long. It was clear from the outset that companies were growing far, far too much and it's still having an impact on growers large and small (and, of course, on investors, laid off workers etc.)

Web: warmlandcannabis.com

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Humble Bees Botanical Interview by Iree-I and Ray MacKay

AU: Who are we speaking to and what is your position at the Humble Bees Botanical?

Brett Johnston - Founder/CEO

AU: Tell us about your company's history.

Humblebees Botanical Supply was founded by myself in early 2018. It began as a passion project after a 12 year career in the oil and gas industry as a B-Pressure welder. Cannabis was a medicine to me since 2007 after a slight mishap that cost me some vision loss in my eyes. Results and effects of this incident were bad migraines from my eyes always needing to refocus. Being born and raised on a farm in Alberta naturally I had to grow some seeds out to see what it was all about. Since that day I have popped more seeds than I could ever count and grown in all sorts of conditions and environments. As indoor cannabis cultivation is



my preferred method my journey began to find the cleanest, most eco friendly nutrient program that would produce top shelf quality medicine. It turns out there aren't very many in the market that catered to the cannabis plant specifically, which is very detrimental to the industry as we are finally allowed to unleash the full potential of the Cannabis plant and explore every aspect it has to offer. So why not let these plants show us what they are naturally able to do while in a situation that caters to not only high quality end product but putting a much simpler program in place for the cultivation teams which gives them more time with the plants!

AU: What is the company's mission statement?

Our mission is to provide the highest quality organic vegan nutrients to help people achieve optimal health and wellness through natural, plant-based nutrition. We are committed to promoting sustainable, organic farming practices and creating a healthier, more sustainable future for all.

AU: What is your product BioQuality and what does it do?

Bio Quality is the first fully certified vegan organic fertilizer program that is designed and focused on feeding plants everything they need while not sacrificing quality of product. It is made up of waste streams from other industries that also abide by organic laws and

regulations.

AU: What makes your product different from others like it on the market today?

The majority of today's modern fertilizers are made up of harvested mineral salts, animal by products such as bloodmeal, bonemeal, feather



meal and many others, there are also a large number of chemicals that are added to these formulations such as PGR (plant growth regulators) which are designed to do nothing but add bulk and weight to a plant but serve no part in quality of the plants. Long term studies are now showing the effects of what these chemicals are doing

to the brains after being ingested by means of inhalation, edibles etc.

AU: Where are you located?

Leduc, Alberta, Canada.

AU: What kind of plants can your product be used on?

This product can be specifically tailored to any crop in any environment with a few simple soil samples or leaf tissue samples.

AU: What are some of the advantages of using your BioQuality product?

As a cultivator you will have the ability to market your products as being vegan organic, the quality will be top quality and of the highest potency come time for market.

As a consumer, you will know that all the love and care that



can be put into a clean and sustainable crop to provide you with the medicine you deserve at its highest potential.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

I will be attending the BCCFC Summit in Kelowna, British Columbia, presenting Bio Quality and also attending my sons motocross races.

AU: Favorite way to enjoy Cannabis?

As an old head I will always love my hand rolled joint in a cutcorner zig zag but with health and preservation in mind I have become very well adjusted to the incredible concentrate community with my all time favourite being Live Hash Rosin from a fresh frozen crop. There is no other way to experience the true terpene profile than with a nice dab on high quality quartz.



AU: Any all-time favourite strains you enjoy?

As a grower and pheno hunter I will have to list a few but my absolute favourite that I always come back to and that may be on the market soon is called *Fluffy Waffles* which was bred by miztergreenthumb from Thumbprint Genetics. But for all time favourites it would be the original *Bubba*, *Roadkill Skunk*, *Romulan* and *Chem* strains.

AU: Where are Humble Bees Botanical products currently available?

Currently we are available at Hydrolite Hydroponics in Edmonton, Waterboy Hydroponics in Regina, Sask and Eco Grow Tech out of Kelowna. As we are now expanding into a larger network you will be able to find us in a lot more places very soon.

AU: What else should people know about?

When a consumer is shopping for cannabis products it is not wrong to ask your budtender questions regarding safe cultivation policy. Asking them questions also teaches them.

@humblegardener780

@humblebeesbotanical

humblebeesbotanical.com



@hazyrays420clips

Email: hazyrays420clips@gmail.com

Instagram: [@hazyrays420clips](https://www.instagram.com/hazyrays420clips)

Also available at Pacificanna in James Bay, Victoria



Seed & Stone

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

Seed & Stone is a legal cannabis retail boutique operating in 6 different locations in BC in partnership with the Songhees Nation. We have three locations in lower mainland area including Delta, Chilliwack and Hope, and the rest in Victoria BC. We work closely with various licensed producers and growers to ensure we carry the highest quality products available in the market.

AU: What is the origin story of Seed & Stone?

Seed & Stone was born from a shared passion



of two friends and their love for the plant. There was a desire to make an impact on the industry and remove the stigma around the topic that we have seen so commonly throughout the years. We wanted to highlight the "seed" – which represent roots of British Columbia, and "stone" that represents nature and mountains that this beautiful province has to offer. We recognised the opportunity and created a brand that focuses on educating the community about Cannabis and its consumption by offering high quality, safe, and legal cannabis products, we constantly work on creating a comfortable and approachable space for our audience to talk about the topic.

AU: What is your mission statement?

Our mission at Seed & Stone is to provide an exceptional cannabis retail experience that speaks to local sensibilities and to bring visibility and generational wealth to our first nation partners.

AU: What makes Seed & Stone different?

Seed & Stone is all about education, we believe that cannabis is a powerful plant and has great potential uses, and we want to ensure that our customers are provided with appropriate knowledge about the benefits and risks associated with cannabis consumption. Our knowledgeable staff are highly passionate about cannabis and are always prioritising answering any questions or providing guidance during a customer's purchasing process.

AU: What are some of your most popular strains and products?

Some of our most popular strains and products are general admission Infused Pre-rolls and Pistol & Paris Blackberry Breath.

AU: Who are some of the growers you are currently working with?

We are a BC-based company, and we want to highlight BC producers and growers as much as we can, to name a few of the growers and producers we are working with at the moment- Dunn Cannabis, BC Legacy, and Herbal dispatch.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

We have some exciting stuff coming up that we can not fully disclose yet, but our customers should keep an eye out for upcoming events.

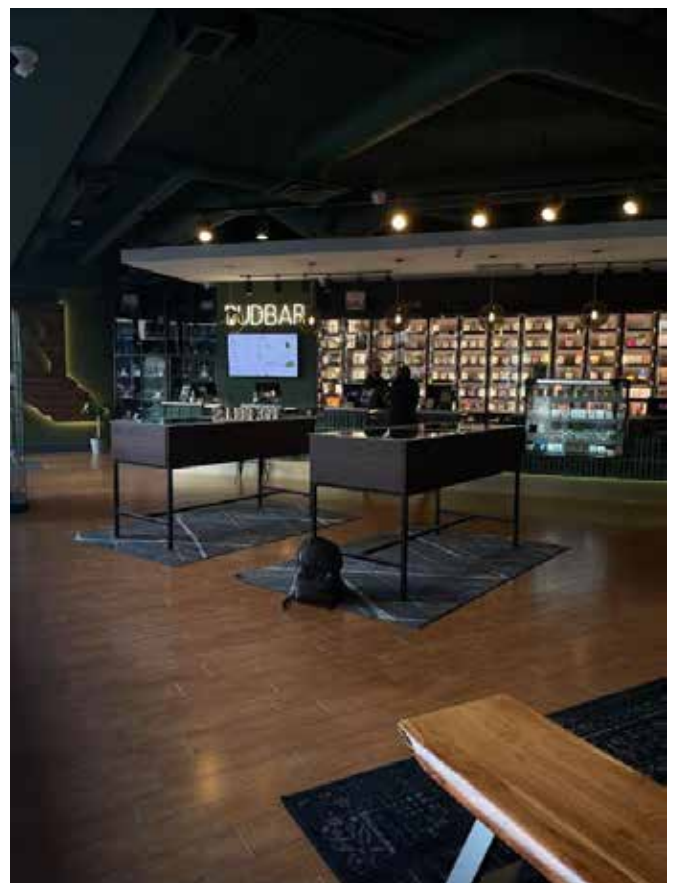
AU: What are your favourite strains to enjoy?

Blue Dream by Simply Bare has been a personal favorite.

AU: Anything else you would like to mention?

We have recently started posting product review videos on YouTube, where our team reviews new products that we carry at our stores as well. I think it is a great source for people to know more about certain strains, edibles or beverages if they are new to cannabis and curious about which products to purchase. So far, we have had a great response on the videos and now we are coming up with another season

CANNABIS CORNER



with some new videos and fresher content. You can find our channel "Seed and Stone - Cannabis Boutique" on YouTube.

AU: How do people find you online?

Our Instagram handle is [@seedandstoneofficial](https://www.instagram.com/seedandstoneofficial) and Facebook.



DANA LARSEN

Psychedelic Warrior

Interview by Iree-I

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

Dana Larsen: My name is Dana Larsen, and I suppose I am best known for being an activist for cannabis and against the drug war. Over the years I have been involved in projects like helping create the BC Marijuana Party, founding The Medicinal Cannabis Dispensary, being an organizer with Vancouver 420, running for the leadership of the BC NDP and launching the Sensible BC referendum campaign for decriminalization.

AU: What are your latest endeavors?

DL: My main two projects right now are the Get Your Drugs Tested centre and the Medicinal Mushroom Dispensary. We founded Get Your Drugs Tested in 2019 and it has become the world's busiest free drop-in street drug analysis centre. The Medicinal Mushroom Dispensary we opened at 651 East Hastings in 2021, and in February we opened our second location at 247 West Broadway.

AU: Please tell us more about The Medicinal Mushroom Dispensary.

DL: For me, the mushroom dispensary is an extension of the work I did in regards to cannabis dispensaries. It's the same kind of idea, using civil disobedience to make these substances available in an open and transparent way, with a focus on their medicinal benefits and

encouraging responsible use. I hope to set a template and example for others to follow and encourage the spread of mushroom dispensaries across Canada.

AU: What are the different types of psilocybin mushrooms you provide?

DL: We usually have a dozen varieties of psilocybe mushrooms. Two of our most popular strains are called Golden Teacher and Penis Envy. Golden Teacher is known as a good starter variety, with medium potency and a focus on

therapeutic effects. The Penis Envy is so-named because of its phallic shape, and is known as a high-potency variety for those seeking a more intense psychedelic experience.

AU: What are the benefits associated with magic mushrooms?

DL: Many people find that the use of psilocybin and also some other psychedelics can have long term benefits in regards to permanently reducing anxiety and depression, as well as facilitating epiphanies and a deeper understanding of the self.



AU: I'm curious about your Coca Leaf Cafe. What types of ways can people experience the coca leaf there?

DL: We have created the only place in the northern hemisphere where you can walk in and enjoy a cup of coca tea or buy some coca leaves to chew. There's been many challenges for me in making this space a reality. I enjoy teaching

people about the culture, history and benefits of coca leaf, as it is truly a sacred medicinal plant with millennia of social and medicinal use. Coca leaf is a stimulant and health tonic, with a variety of benefits to the human metabolism and digestive system.



AU: Is it true that you need a lime catalyst when chewing the raw coca leaf?

DL: You need something alkaline mixed with the coca leaf when you're chewing it, such as baking soda which works fine. When people refer to "lime" in this regard they don't mean the fruit, they mean calcium oxide, also called quicklime, which is a very alkaline substance. In South America quinoa ash is often used for its alkalinity, as are crushed seashells.

AU: Can you describe the DMT experience for the uninitiated?

DL: DMT is a short-acting but powerful substance which when inhaled can produce

intense hallucinations and visual effects. People sometimes feel as if they are communicating with some kind of other intelligence, often perceived as a divine or extradimensional being. DMT is also the active ingredient in Ayahuasca, but in this case it is taken in a drink along with another substance which prolongs the experience from a few minutes to a few hours.

AU: What are some of the benefits of LSD that people have discovered?

DL: LSD is similar to psilocybin in some ways, but different in others. They both seem to have similar benefits in terms of reducing anxiety and depression. A psilocybin experience lasts 4-5 hours, while LSD will last for over 10 hours. When it comes to microdosing, my clients often report that psilocybin is more helpful when it comes to dealing with trauma, forgiveness and emotional challenges, while LSD seems to be better in terms of motivation, self-actualization and productivity.

AU: What is Kratom and what are its effects?

DL: Kratom is the leaf of a tree which grows in South East Asia and has opiate-like properties. Like cannabis and mushrooms it comes in different strains. It is usually taken in a tea or capsule, and is often used as a safer substitute for opiates. Unlike other opiates, an overly high dose of kratom produces nausea but doesn't lead to respiratory distress or death. Kratom is not a controlled drug in Canada but Health Canada doesn't allow it to be sold for human consumption, a rule which we ignore.

AU: Is the Peyote experience pretty intense?

DL: Peyote is fully legal in Canada, but the mescaline which can be extracted from it is a controlled substance. A large dose of peyote can be intensely psychedelic, but it can also be microdosed.

AU: Any special plans for 420 this year?

DL: After being involved with 420 for 25 years and helping it grow into a massive festival with Cypress Hill performing in 2019, we were forced to take a break in 2020 due to Covid. I and the other main people who had organized and funded 420 for all those years have decided to retire from putting on the event, so for me 420 is now a much less stressful day than it used to be.

AU: Is 420 happening at Sunset Beach in Vancouver again this year? If so, anything special planned that you know of?

DL: I think something small is happening there but I am not involved with that. On April 20 I will be going to a 420 event in Thornton Park by the Main Street Skytrain station.

AU: What is the best 420 experience you can remember?

DL: I was lucky enough to be the only person to attend every Vancouver 420 from 1995 to 2019. What began as a small gathering in Victory Square Park grew every year to become a massive marijuana festival with hundreds of tables and booths openly selling all kinds of cannabis treats and about 250,000 people attending in the final year.

For me, the best experience was being part of this amazing growth and change as we carved out a special day of cannabis freedom year after year. There's never been any place on earth with more cannabis being used, shared and sold per square foot than the peak of Vancouver 420 in 2019, and there may never be again!

AU: What are your favourite strains to smoke?

DL: For my personal stash bag I take a few buds from all the other bags and make a unique mix for myself. So every joint I smoke is a random blend of all my best stuff. I think the best cannabis I have ever smoked was grown by a guy known as DJ Short, he is the cannabis breeder who created the renowned Blueberry strain, as well as several other classic varieties.

AU: Have you published any new books or comics through your Pothead Books?

DL: I have recently finished writing a light-hearted novel called "The Hash-tastic Voyages of Sinbad the Strain Hunter" and I hope to publish it later this year. I have also been trying to finish a sequel to my first novel "Hairy Pothead and the

Marijuana Stone" but it's hard to find the time to write books with all my other projects. I fantasize about retiring one day and settling down to write more fun fiction and history books.



AU: How has legalization changed things for the better? And as well for the worse possibly?

DL: Well, there used to be around 60,000 arrests every year for cannabis possession, and that number is pretty close to zero now. That is a huge difference in people's lives. The problems with legalization are mainly in the areas of too high taxes, unfair provincial and municipal restrictions, and difficulties in quality control.

Here in Vancouver, many of us miss the heyday of the waning prohibition years when we had about 200 unlicensed cannabis shops in the city, which have been replaced by a much smaller number of legal outlets which offer less selection at higher prices. However, most cities in Canada were not in the same situation, and rural communities typically had higher arrest rates and lower access, so for those areas legalization has been a big improvement.

AU: Tell us more about your Get Your Drugs Tested centre.

DL: In 2019 I invested in a spectrometer and launched the Get Your Drugs Tested service, which is now operating from what used to be our first cannabis dispensary location at 880 East Hastings. Anyone can bring us a tiny sample of any street drug and we can analyze it for free with the spectrometer and also chemical test strips. We

also accept samples from across Canada by mail. There are some limitations to the testing but it provides users a good basis for making a more informed choice about what they take.

We are soon approaching our 50,000th analysis and have become the busiest free drop-in drug analysis centre in the world.

We now have three spectrometers and are working on launching a mobile testing truck. The whole project has been entirely funded by our cannabis dispensary, we get no money from the government at all!

We have been getting increasingly busy and we're at the point now where we're having trouble keeping with the demand for our services.

AU: What is the solution to the overdose crisis in your opinion?

DL: The drug poisoning crisis is entirely created by prohibition and the drug war. When liquor was prohibited we had an alcohol poisoning crisis and mass deaths in a very similar manner to what we have now. The solution then was not stricter laws or forced treatment for alcoholics, it was to end prohibition and allow people to buy legal, regulated alcohol. We need to do the exact same thing now.

Along with legal cannabis and legal psychedelics, we need to start allowing opium parlours and cocaine lounges - legalizing these substances while also encouraging people towards the milder and safer forms of use.

Prohibition always makes drugs stronger and more dangerous, while also destabilizing society, corrupting police and empowering organized crime. Legalization leads to wider use of milder drug forms, so for example if cocaine was legalized the vast majority of people would consume it in a beverage, and snorting cocaine would eventually become as rare as snorting caffeine is.

The reality is that ending drug prohibition is one of the most important social issues of our time. We must be the generation to replace drug war with drug peace.

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WORLD CANNABIS

Interview with VP Rachel Fraser

By Iree-I

Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking to and what is your position at World Cannabis?

World Cannabis: My name is Rachel Fraser. I'm the Vice President of World Cannabis.

AU: Explain World Cannabis' Mission.

WC: Our goal is to make "legal" cannabis truly legal in Canada, and some day - the world. The government of Canada has a complete monopoly on their so called "legal" cannabis. People who need high dose cannabis edibles (drug addicts, cancer patients, people with mental illnesses etc..) are unable to buy them legally because of the outlandish rules and regulations set out by our government. Small business owners are unable to capitalize on cannabis sales because of the government's strict laws, and high fees to even apply for a dispensary license - which

would only further the government's control because only government approved products may be sold at these dispensaries. We also hope to free those who have been wrongfully imprisoned due to nonviolent cannabis related crimes. There's absolutely no reason for someone to be in prison because they had an ounce, or even a pound of weed.

AU: Why is this mission important to you?

WC: Cannabis/hemp is a miracle plant. You can use it for medicine, fuel, paper, an alternative to plastic, clothing. Yet for seemingly no reason - it's regulated or downright illegal to own in some places. People don't smoke a joint then beat their spouse, or run a stop sign and kill someone's kid. People don't get the shakes if they haven't had a joint that day, or rob a store so they can pay for a bag of weed. Cannabis is a nonviolent "drug", and I say drug very loosely because it is to the very core medicine.

AU: Do you partake?

WC: Yes, I do.

AU: What is your favorite high activity?

WC: That really all depends on the strain I use, and my frame of mind that day. Sometimes I will grab one of my instruments and learn a new song, sometimes I like to find the nearest paint brush and create some art, and sometimes I will spend 3 hours in the gym without even realizing I've been there for so long. So I guess to answer your question properly - my favourite high activity is bettering myself in some format.

AU: Tell us about your upcoming 420 event! What is the history and story behind this event? How long has it been going on?

WC: 4:20 in Vancouver in some facet has been going on as long as people have been rolling joints and smoking them! Our organization formed in

2015, and we've held dozens of protests since then, not just 4:20. This year we aim to top any previous 4:20 celebration to date. We outgrew our previous location, so we chose the iconic



Sunset Beach for this year. Historically, 4:20 has been a call for legalization of recreational cannabis, and now that it's been "legalized" we are once more going to make some noise to tell the Government of Canada that we aren't happy with their rules.

AU: What is in store for this year's 420 event?

WC: We have nearly 200 vendors, as well as dozens of performers/entertainers, and of course speakers and activists who will be educating our participants as to why exactly we're protesting.

AU: Tell us more about the Farmer's Market.

WC: Our vendors aren't just cannabis related. We have many different niches attending this year, from coffee shops, clothing, artists, housewares.. You'll be able to find a bit of everything! Of course there will be many "mom and pop" growers, bong and glass shops, edibles, concentrates.. Everything you can't find at these government run dispensaries.

AU: What Live Music do you have planned?

WC: We have artists flying in from all over Canada to participate in this protest. We have everything from folk bands, rock, rap/hip hop to more laid back country style artists. We are really trying to cover every genre and have a truly inclusive day.

AU: Anything else about the event our readers should know?

WC: We have invited several indigenous groups to join us, with a blessing and land recognition being held at the beginning of the day.

AU: What's your favourite stoner quote?

WC: "Some people see things that are and ask, why? Some people dream of things that never were and ask, why not? Some people have to go to work and don't have time for all that."

-George Carlin

AU: Any high movie recommendations for this 4/20?

WC: Not a movie, but an animated series. If you haven't watched "Final Space" you are absolutely missing out. It quickly became my favourite



animated series of all time after just a few episodes. Warner Brothers decided to not only cancel this show, but they gave it the total chop and lumped it in with their tax write off shows - meaning once their contract is up with Netflix you will quite literally never be able to watch it unless you pirate it off the Internet. Do yourself a huge favour and watch this masterpiece before it's gone forever.

AU: Any high music/album recommendations for this 4/20?

WC: Yes! Back in 2018 A Perfect Circle released the album "Eat The Elephant". Every single song (with the exception of 1 or 2) will grab ahold of your soul and not let go. You don't even have to be high to fall in love with this album, but it certainly helps.

AU: Anything else to promote?

WC: We will also be hosting "4:21 beach cleanup day" on, you guessed it, April 21st. We recognize that the city of Vancouver and the parks and recreation department will be concerned about the state of Sunset Beach after we are finished our protest. We will have lots of prizes and giveaways for the people who join us for the beach cleanup! We will leave our venue cleaner than when we arrived.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

WC: World Cannabis is back with a vengeance after two years of Covid! It's with great pleasure that we reintroduce ourselves at Sunset Beach, Vancouver. See you there!

WorldCannabis.ca

Facebook.com/worldcanna

Instagram.com/worldcannabismarkets



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Brindle Farms

Interview with Owner/Operator Wayne Sarak

By Iree-I and Wade Garrett

Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking to and what is your position at Brindle Farms?

Brindle Farms: My name is Wayne Sarak and I am one of the two owner-operators at Brindle Farms.

AU: Tell us a little about your company's history.

BF: We began cultivating cannabis as medicinal patients, and converted our medicinal facility to a recreational space once the laws came into place to allow us to do so.

AU: What is Brindle Farms' mission statement? And what is the company's motto?

BF: Hash Rules Everything Around Me. Our focus is genetic selection, and the propagation of resin

with the sole intent of producing high quality solvent-less hashish

AU: What does Brindle Farms do? Tell us about your process.

BF: Hundreds upon hundreds of seeds are propagated and tested to identify new and distinguishably unique cultivars, which produce high quality resin directly suited for solvent-less extraction.

AU: What makes Live Rosin superior?

BF: Our Live Rosin was prepared through isolating the first wash of 73u-159u bubble hash and pressing it at 165 degrees for 3 minutes in a 37 micron filter. The hash is then cured and prepared for instantaneous sale.

AU: When purchasing Brindle Farms' Sour Animal Live Rosin, you can expect

BF: To receive hashish of near white colour embellished by gold hues, with a gelatinous consistency, maintaining a 'wet' feel due to high terpene content. A true representation of a cultivar's unique characteristics.

AU: Why is solvent-less extraction so

important?

BF: AN ICE-WATER EXTRACTION OFFERS THE MOST UNADULTERATED AND TRUE EXPRESSION OF A PLANTS UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS IN EXTRACT FORM.

AU: What makes you different from other farms/ growing operations?

BF: We have a true love for this plant, and have always been deeply interested in its biology. We have enjoyed staying

informed on technological innovations and theoretical developments taking place in the cultivation sector, and seeking to test and implement new ideas. Our free time is spent researching methodologies to improve our understanding of the plant, and to how to continually modernize our techniques, facilities and equipment.

AU: What is your catalogue like today? What is available to buy and where is it available?

BF: Across Canada, we are carrying a range of solvent-less extracts, including Live Rosin and Live Rosin disposable cartridges

AU: Tell us about your Live Rosin cartridges.

BF: High quality live rosin, in a disposable vape cartridge, and nothing else. Our Live Rosin cartridges are filled with 100% solvent-less hash oil, and only hash oil. Without adulterants or additives, Live Rosin cartridges offer a discreet, convenient and effective delivery of connoisseur grade hashish at a moments notice. Unlike other disposable pens made from distillate, Brindle Farms allocates only full melt, top tier hash to be put into cartridges, explicitly not 'full-spectrum', a term used by many to embellish the inclusion of

low quality hash into the batch.

AU: What makes your products different from other producers?

BF: We are a truly vertically integrated, seed to oil, owner-operated craft company, with no investors, or bosses.

AU: Where are you located?

BF: Sooke, BC, Vancouver Island

AU: What strains of Live Rosin do you offer? Any other products that you produce like Hash?

BF: Sour Animal, LA Kush Cake, Animal Style, Lemon Tree, Strawberry Guava, Rabid Hippy Kush Mints, Strawnana, OG Kush etc....

AU: What are some of the advantages of using your

product?

BF: A truly connoisseur experience.

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FLORES Y FUEGO

Altar

Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking with?

FYF: I'm Rafa, the guitar player of Flores Y Fuego.

AU: Where is your band from?

FYF: We are from Guadalajara, México, the land of tequila and mariachi.

AU: How long have you been a band?

FYF: For three years. Lalo the drummer and I started on December 20th of 2019, and Melisa the singer joined us in May 2020.

AU: What is the translation of your band name?

FYF: *Flowers and Fire*, after a song called "Blitz" from our album *Second Empire Justice*.

AU: Who are some other bands from your city that we should hear?

FYF: *MESS* and *Himnos*, and from Mexico City you need to listen to *Annapura*

AU: I don't speak Spanish unfortunately, what are your lyrics mostly about?

FYF: About being an adult; the anger, the anxiety, the life, the government, being voiceless, that kind of stuff you're needing to deal with every day

AU: What are some things that influence your lyrics?

FYF: Life, and in the words of Melisa, "being a woman in a country like Mexico." She writes most of the lyrics.

AU: How did you guys come to be on Pirates Press Records?

FYF: It's a great story! Imagine stopping a random guy in the streets of London because of his t-shirt

PIRATES PRESS RECORDS

and we start to talk. I had no idea where he worked or what he did. Eventually, he told me that he already knew about my band Flores y Fuego through a friend of his. That was so awesome, because we sing in Spanish, and we are from Mexico, so this the last thing you think is going happen. The next day we were hanging out at the Rebellion Festival and he introduced me to all the Pirates crew. Believe me, it was the best weekend ever.

AU: Tell us about the album they will be releasing for you. What are some of your favorite songs on it?

FYF: Well if I can choose maybe 3, "Altar" because it's so progressive, has a great intro, a *Bad Religion* style riff, after that a little bit of a stoner riff, and closes with a guitar solo. The second "GDL" (which is the abbreviation for Guadalajara, our hometown,) is a criticism of that place. The third one "Muerde el anzuelo" means "Bite the hook," and the music is more like Sweden's "action rock," but more punk.

AU: Who are your biggest musical influences as a band?

FYF: Melisa (singer and front-woman) loves Post Punk, but also she and I, enjoy a lot of classic punk from the UK: *The Damned*, *Cock Sparrer*, and *Blitz*. Lalo (drummer) is more into hardcore, Dbeat, and

American punk rock, from *Descendants* to *Power Trip*. Fer (bass player) likes more hard stuff like *Converge* and *Annapura*. We all coincidentally like Turnstile.

AU: Have you ever played outside of Mexico? Any tours planned for this spring or summer?

FYF: Not with Flores y Fuego, but we have been invited to the Rebellion Festival this year and we

are planning a small tour in Europe.

So, yes, this is going to be our first time out of Mexico.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

FYF: Thanks to you for reading this, if you listen to our band, thanks in advance, we appreciate the interest

in us. We hope to go to Canada soon with Flores y Fuego, I've been there before on tour with another band, and I love and miss your country, so if anybody is reading this, and wants to help us to make it back there, please contact us.

And check out the rest of the Pirates Press Records catalog, the bands there are amazing.

AU: How do people find you online?

FYF: Flores y Fuego in any social media.

Also, check out our link tree

linktr.ee/FloresyFuego



ABSOLUTE HORROR



Let's Talk About Body Horror

Body horror: that incredible, alien, weird, gory, horrifically sexual, terribly sensual theme of fictional horror, is compartmentalized in its little niche of sub-genre terror. However, it also is paradoxically the only horror subgenre that blurs so many classifying boundaries that while it's a recognizable term of horror, it also paradoxically defies any formal definition. Personally, I lean towards Stuart Gordon's conceptualizing statement in the introductory pages of *The Mammoth Book of Body Horror* that the genre is one where, "you feel your body changing from within, from the inside, and you know that these changes are forming something new and terrifying."

The Fly (1986)

David Cronenberg's remake remains the epitome of body horror. Watching mad scientist Seth Brundle, (Jeff Goldblum) going through his horrifying metamorphosis is intense enough throughout the film's first 90 minutes, but when Cronenberg (seemingly effortlessly) leads us into the utterly mind-bending and stomach-churning finale, it almost breaks your spirit. Cronenberg started his career with body horror-themed works in the early-to-mid 70's with *Shivers*, *Rancid*, and *The Brood*, but *The Fly* doubtlessly remains the

nearly transcendent bar that creative contributors to body horror strive for. Cronenberg would also later work a little body horror into his next efforts, *Dead Ringers* and *Naked Lunch*.

The Horrors of Malformed Men (1969)

Teruo Ishii's film is one of the earliest examples of body horror. It jumps past the early low-budget Hollywood horrors of the 1950s like *Donovan's Brain* or *The Brain that Wouldn't Die*; and takes body horror into its own realm. It is far more sophisticated as well. Here, a lunatic Dr. Moreau-esque character is discovered to be surgically reconstructing human beings into misshapen horrors; it's a tale Based on the works of Edogawa Rampo, Japan's literary answer to Edgar Allan Poe. Around the same time as *The Horror of Malformed Men* was released (and subsequently banned,) in Asia, Ishii also directed several other groundbreaking taboo films, including *Shogun's Joy of Torture*, *Orgies of Edo*, and *Inferno of Torture*.

With the exception of *Thinner*, King's full-length novels rarely lean on anything concretely body horror, but Stephen King's short story collection *Night Shift* actual sports a few tales, the most impactful being "I Am the Doorway", about an exploratory astronaut who begins to literally grow eyes on his hand (an image that became the official paperback cover of the book in the 1980s), and the slimy "Grey Matter" (beer lovers may want to take warning with that one.)

Night Shift (by Stephen King, first published 1978)

Not the original 'body horror' subject by any means... but the catalyst? Yes, maybe. Or at the very least, the film that brought actual attention to the body horror subgenre. Director Brian Yuzna began his career producing films for Stuart Gordon (*Re-Animator*), and quickly embarked on his own directing career. It was here that he contributed key and instrumental moments to the genre, most notably his sequel *Return of the Living Dead 3* (which is one of the most celebrated body horror films in the genre) – but

"Thinner" (published 1984, adapted 1996)

The film *Thinner* must be one of Tom Holland's (*Child's Play*, *Fright Night*) most underrated films.

It may suffer from a complete and utter lack of subtlety, but this tale of revenge by Stephen King (writing as Richard Bachman) features three unlikable men whose bodies turn against them in wildly animated ways when they're each cursed by the family member of a manslaughter victim.

A Snake of June (2002)

Shinya Tsukamoto began his career with the body horror one-two punch of *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* and *Tetsuo II: Body Hammer*. However, Tsukamoto's *A Snake of June* is hands-down my favorite film of this prolific genre director's career. *A Snake of June* is almost minimalist body horror, but there's something especially haunting about this erotic film, which reveals a body horror of a different (and very real) type – amputation due to cancer.

"The Mammoth Book of Body Horror" (published 2012)

This would be the aforementioned book that contains director Stuart Gordon's own essay on the titular subject. This particular volume boasts short stories from Stephen King, Clive Barker, Neil Gaiman, and James Herbert; among many others.

Society (1989)

Well, I couldn't close out this list of influential Body Horror without including the original from the master himself, Stuart Gordon – whose first horror/Lovecraft film (and masterpiece) *Re-Animator* was based (uncredited) on *Frankenstein*, and which takes Lovecraft's zombie horrors and amplifies them to a nearly transcendent level of giddy, hilarious, and gory body-morphing fireworks. Herbert West discovers that he can Re-Animate parts of dead people as well as the whole person; opening up a Pandora's box of humorous body-horror gags and a show-stopping finale that would rival any of George Romero's films.

his first directorial effort out of the gate, *Society*, was really the one that cinched it. *Society* is a paranoia-melodrama that incorporates Stuart Gordon-esque Lovecraftian themes into a wholly original slow-burn horror tale that brings the paranoia and conspiracy themes of the upper-upper class directly into an actual orgy of body horror for the insane 12-minute climax of the the entire film. It's this extended finale alone that put this film, and Yuzna, on the Body Horror map.

Re-Animator (1985)

-Vince D'Amato
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Darkside Releasing presents:

Sister Tempest

My own personal favourite thing about this job is being able to check out some seriously cool movies in the independent underground horror and other genres, that quite often, no one else has a chance to see. One of our very first film acquisitions was the UK's wildly prolific Trash Arts' early entry into the sexy-horror realm, *Lonely Hearts*, which remains one of my all-time favourite releases to this day. But if you were to ask me my favourite release that Darkside has presented, it would have to be Joe Badon's *Sister Tempest*. Joe is an independent filmmaker from New Orleans, and weirdly, his film came to my attention via Trash Arts' main producer Hill Burton, who had seen *Sister Tempest* at a horror film festival



in Edinburgh. After checking out an online promotional screener, I contacted Joe right away, I knew that this was a film we needed to be a part of in some way.

Sister Tempest is not your run-of-the-mill "mainstream" horror film – it's even a little questionable that it is a horror film at all – but despite its non-apologetic celebration of weirdness and surrealism, the presentation does in fact lean more towards commercial sensibilities, and the David-Lynchian symbolism and metaphors and non-linear plot-thrust only adds to the sheer entertainment of the whole film (there are even a couple of amazing musical numbers thrown in there for good measure). We took this film to the International Film Markets starting this year, to which we've received responses such as, "Bonkers... totally bonkers". But honestly, I can't stress enough how awesome this film truly is. The simplicity of the plot – a woman who is dealing with her own profound guilt and misunderstanding at her younger sister's death – is literally buried in an avalanche of surreal hooks and astounding visuals – and still the pace moves like a bullet train. It's the sort of stuff that rivals the best of Tarantino's own flash-back-story antics, only in Badon's directorial hands these moments of playful insanity actually come off as far more sophisticated, and with deeper themes to unpack – should you choose to do so on a second, or third, viewing.

Sister Tempest is a film that I enjoyed taking through the post-production process, because if you have this job, then you're apt to have to watch someone's life's work three or four times through once it's placed into your hands. And in this instance, not only did I enjoy every moment of that process, but I also still go back to *Sister Tempest* sometimes in my own rare off-work hours.

-Vince D'Amato

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Julius Sumner Miller
 Interview by Ira Hunter and B.A. Johnston
 Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the billz?

Darren Ollinger: I'm Darren Ollinger, front man from *Julius Sumner Miller* – punk type band from Calgary Alberta Canada

AU: What is the origin story of your band, Julius Sumner Miller.

DO: An epic tale of woe really; I used to run this studio/venue in town, and I let Sean Hamilton (JSM guitar/drummer) do his college practicum there. In return I made him

sign a contract to start a band with me and be in it FOREVER!

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

DO: Sean Hamilton – Holds the record for drinking the most consecutive egnogs at the Ship and Anchor.

Darren Ollinger – Recently moved up to 14th place on the "all time BA Johnston shows booked" list

Richard MacFarlane – Voted least likely to be in a successful punk rock band.

Robbie Piss Jeans – Was once slapped in the face by an old man claiming to be Simon Cowell's Brother-in-law.

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

DO: We are a hook friendly fun bunch with all kinds of punk sneer and sensibility. Our live shows are a rambunctious party that delivers the goods as well as the good times!

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

DO: Our last record Try It Out came out back in 2021, and we're currently in the singles releasing phase of our newest album Nobody Cares.

AU: What songs are you most stoked on?

DO: Stoked on all of them. But I'm currently super digging a track called "Goldfish." Also we did a killer cover of Bryan Adams' "Heaven" (no joke, it rules)

AU: Any upcoming Tour plans?

DO: Doing an Alberta/Saskatchewan rip with BA Johnston at the end of April. Then we're taking our talents to Montreal in May to play Pouzza.

AU: Where is the band from? Any other killer local bands around these days? What are the best venues to play locally?

DO: We're from Calgary, and there are a bunch of rad bands from town here: *Brain Bent*, *Quit It!* and *Ghost Factory* just to name a few.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year? Most insane 420 you can remember.

DO: No plans, I don't smoke dope, so it's just another day. As for the most insane, back in 2014 I saw *Black Sabbath* on 4/20 and it also happened to be Easter Sunday. Now that was some next level shit.

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

DO: Kim Anh is my fav. It's right down the street from where I work, which means I partake in too

HAM JAMMERS



many Beef Satay Subs.

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.

DO: I've been known to wear shorts on stage. I kind of enjoy that something so trivial actually pisses people off.

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

Red Dawn, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Blue Velvet*, and maybe the *Transformers* movie if I can find it.

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

DO: Sometimes we fly out of town for weekend adventures. Other times we roll in my 12 passenger 2001 GMC Savana. I just put a new engine in it. Now to get the cassette deck fixed.

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

DO: Our actual vinyl for this new record got pressed in 7 weeks. Which means it's available waaaay before the entire thing comes out digitally. So buy it. Available at meterrecords.com

AU: Any final words of wisdom for our readers?

DO: Nobody Cares.

AU: How do people find you online?

Jsm.band
@juliussumnermiller
meterrecords.com

Color Photos:
Shane Rempel @hold_fast

BW Photo:
Shannon Johnston @me_onlylouder

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 Apr 15: Saint John NB @ Haven
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 June 1: Canmore AB @ Drake
 June 2: TBA
 June 3: Lilydminster AB @ Some dudes jamspace
 June 6: Prince George BC @ TBA
 June 8: Port Hardy BC @ Legion
 June 9: Nanaimo BC @ Nanaimo Bar
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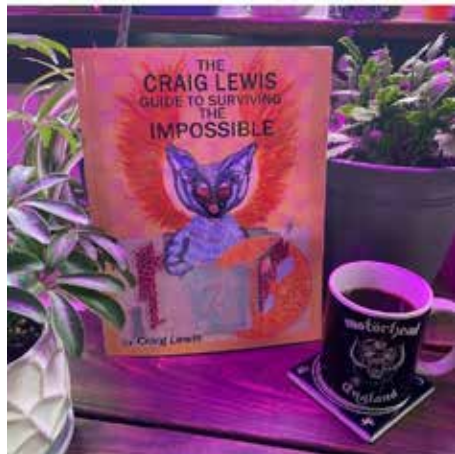
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PUNKS IN RECOVERY



Punks In Recovery

by Gregorio Lewis

Wisdom comes from experience

I went to school in my 30's to be a mental health worker. I never could hold a job until I worked in mental health and working in mental health helped me be stable. I worked for ten years offering peer-driven (lived experience informed) mental health counseling and guidance. I created and published a recovery coping skills book based on a peer support group that I developed. I even made it to the main stage as a keynote speaker at the US Department of Health and Human Services sponsored ALTERNATIVES 2015 Conference. Punk Rock Shout-Out to Paolo Del Vecchio!!!

This was when I began to learn that I was not appreciated by my colleagues; at least not the ones with influential roles, extensive education and ostensibly normal lives.

I was given a special set of rules and told there were specific things that only I could not say. I played by their rules. It was a grand slam moment. The keynote was a smashing success. This punk rock trauma survivors' revolutionary healing thoughts were heard by 600 national influencers, policy makers and mental-health advocates.

Within six months I was professionally blacklisted. I am obviously not passive, and while there are

many punk rockers working as mental health providers; at the end of the day, most people have to choose self-preservation over doing what they know is right.

So what does a punk rock mental health worker do when by simply being their true-selves and saying what they think about things that matter (the lives and dignity of vulnerable people in this case); makes you a persona non grata?

Well, this punk rock mental health worker said "Fuck it" and took his show on the road, also by choosing self-preservation; because there was no other choice.

I learned that my direct no bullshit approach was embraced by Europeans and that I could save my arse and build a new life outside of the constraints of the American Mental Health System.

The fact is that most punk rockers who work in mental health, in the States, and in high-economy countries, are involuntary supporters, participants in and beneficiaries of; an authoritative system that hurts vulnerable people with paychecks ultimately being the bottom line.



So this punk rock mental health worker got himself hired more than forty times, while homeless (professional blacklisting ain't no joke), to give mental health training in a dozen European countries.

It was great providing my workshops for mental health workers in The Netherlands, Ireland, Spain, France, Czech Republic, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Finland and Switzerland.

I was doing the very same work I was doing in the United States, except, often with a translator and having no home, life, job or family to return to.

It was amazing giving workshops for the punks and anyone else who wanted to attend in Kosovo, Ukraine, Poland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, Poland and Croatia.

Now that I have lived in Mexico for nearly four years, surviving homelessness in this rather uncommon way; the truth is I have been struggling in many ways for as long as I can remember. However, I have also made tons of progress.

It is fucking hard to move to a new country, in a state of psychological shock masked by survival mode, with nothing, without speaking the language, and heart-broken by life; and be happy, well, successful and stable.

It takes time to heal. Trauma is serious. There are reasons why we humans break down and struggle or worse and there are reasons why we humans reclaim our lives, our spirits, our reasons to live - there are reasons why we choose to heal.

My choice is to take what happened to me and transform it into both helping myself and helping others heal.

There is no better time than this moment, to do whatever it is that you need to do, to change your life for the better.

My new job is to offer PUNK ROCK MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY WORKSHOPS. This is the same

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as my professional workshop but with more profanity, wearing a punk rock vest and smeared black eyeliner.

Thank you to Absolute Underground for caring about me and for allowing me to share something of value, hopefully, with all of you.

Brand new website interface coming in May 2023. You can order punk rock and mental health recovery books here: sanityisafulltimejob.org

Read punk rock healing oriented music blogs here: idioteq.com/author/craig-lewis

Contact me: survivingtheimpossible@gmail.com



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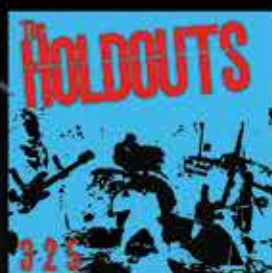
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CULTURA TRES
South American Metal

**Interview with guitarist
Juan De Ferrari Montoya**

By Matt Norris

Absolute Underground: Your music is heavy duty, I hear a variety of styles and influences, sludge, hardcore, doom, thrash and psychedelic classic rock. Anything I'm missing?

Juan De Ferrari Montoya: Maybe punk and industrial (although we just emulate the industrial feel with our instruments instead of sampling or using electronic instruments)

AU: I predict big things for your new album Camino De Brujos. It has all the elements any metal fan could appreciate, what would you do with an extra \$50 million?

JDFM: 50 million? That's a lot of money! Well, probably set up a record company and discover new bands from the underground, signing them without looking at their social media followers. The way it used to happen in the past. It is time for some risky and interesting music to get exposure again.

AU: South American metal fans are known worldwide for being the most intense in the world, what drives the passion so much?

JDFM: It is not specifically metal fans, but in everything, sports, life in general, I think it has to do with the influence from the African culture that the Europeans brought to South America.

AU: What motivates your lyrical direction and poetic intensity?

JDFM: history, habits and the life we experienced in South America.

AU: If metal is the body, and adrenaline laced inspiration is the blood, what is the brain?

JDFM: Composition I guess?

AU: For first time listeners what 3 songs should they look up as an initial initiation and invitation to your Cultura Tres Music?

JDFM: "The World And it's Lies," "The Land," and, "Signs."

AU: At this point in your career What's your favorite place to play concerts?

JDFM: England.

AU: What's the weirdest thing you've witnessed when on tour?

JDFM: Playing for deaf people. (Literally) We were invited for a special event in The Netherlands

where they welcomed a big number of deaf visitors. The venue added a vibrating floor and a sign language translator next to the stage. It was an intense concert and we could see what effect our lyrics (which were translated to sign language on the spot) had on the deaf audience. It was a special night.

AU: If you were stuck in a bomb shelter and could eat one meal a day for the next year, what recipe would you choose?

JDFM: Something we call "Pasta Default", spaghetti in tomato sauce with tuna, black olives and capers. It is our own original 'Cultura Tres' recipe and it has even been published in the *For Those About To Cook* book by Bruce Moore.

AU: Any advice you'd like to pass along?

JDFM: Do well without looking what the others do. Stay away from religion and political fanatics.

AU: I'm imagining a big four of South American metal, what 3 bands from South America would you choose to tour with?

JDFM: *Sepultura*, *Los Natas* and *Criminal*

AU: Aliens have landed, what gift would you greet them with?

?

JDFM: An LP of *Black Sabbath*.

AU: If I happened to have hallucinated while listening to your music what visions do you think I saw?

JDFM: An uncomfortable room, a desolated land, a city in chaos.

AU: Anything you'd like to add? We appreciate your music and art.

JDFM: Thanks so much to Underground magazine for the support! Keep the underground alive! We invite everyone to check our new album *Camino de Brujos*, coming out the 7th of April, and we hope in the future being able to tour the north of America where we haven't been yet, saludos.

Cultura Tres is:

Juan De Ferrari Montoya - guitar

Jerry Vergara Cevallos - drums

Paulo Xisto Pinto Jr. - bass

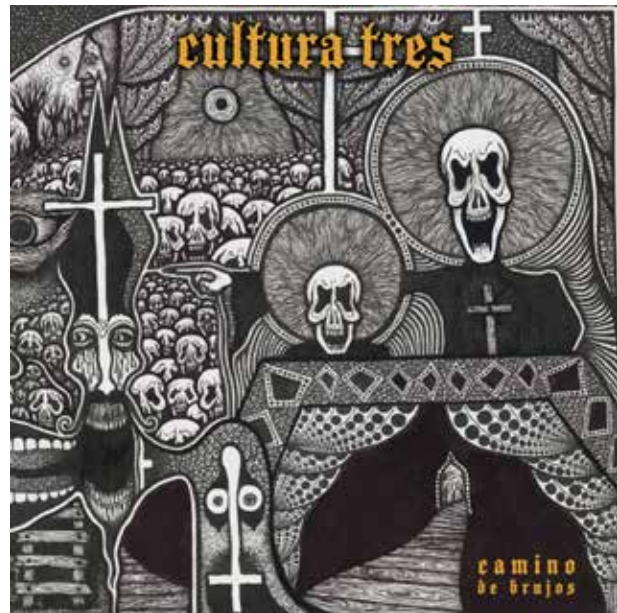
Alejandro Londono Montoya - guitars, vocals

www.culturatres.com

youtube.com/@culturatres

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shows I book are all ages and accessible. I also book the occasional fundraiser gig, looking at doing another one as an anti-Canada day show in Toronto right now. Hopefully it works out!

AU: What are some of your best songs about?

ET: Our most popular song is "Death Of The Indian" which talks about the Indigenous genocide from a Canadian Indigenous perspective. In short, the

ETHEREAL TOMB

When the Rivers Dry

Interview by Scarlett Rose

This is an indigenous doom/sludge band from Toronto, Canada, spreading an Anti colonial message and Empowering youth throughout Ontario.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Ethereal Tomb: Alexander! Vocals/Guitar.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band

ET: We formed in early 2021 with a really slow start and we barely knew what the fuck we were doing on our instruments, eventually we figured out some material out and we've been cruising steady since.

AU: Does your band have a specific message to give?

ET: I sometimes describe the band's music as "doom for the mindful and societally dissatisfied". Colonialism and indigenous identity/resistance has dominated the most recent and upcoming material.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

ET: If *Black Sabbath* used bath salts instead of weed and cocaine. That, plus death metal.

AU: What is your creative process like?

ET: I sit in my living room writing riffs for hours and try to come to practice with some form of an idea, and the rest works itself out from there.

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

ET: We put out an album and split EP last year and we have a new album coming out in September.

AU: In your opinion, what is wrong with the music scene now?

ET: A lot of venues do not give a fuck about the music scene. It shouldn't have to be a fist fight to book an all ages show and be able to provide a safe space for youth. A little more community would go a long way.

AU: What are some of the things your band does to give back to the community?

ET: I go out of my way to make sure that the



church, the racist ass government, and these fucking oil tycoons raping native land need to take some fucking accountability whether they like it or not.

AU: Describe your bands live show verbally if you can.

ET: A lot of people describe our live show as hypnotic, and I think that has to do with the simplistic and catchy songs we have. Sometimes it's mosh heavy, but I'm happy to see people do whatever they want as long as they have a good time.

AU: What's the metal scene like in Toronto these days?

ET: There's a lot going on all the time which is cool but it doesn't feel communal for the most part. I don't have an overall solution for that but the egos and bad vibes could get

toned down a bit, that's a good start. Mixed bills are dope too. More people need to be booking all ages shows, especially the bigger venues. I watch these kids miss their favourite bands just like I did when I was younger and I hate it.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

ET: We got a jam packed schedule this year. Lots of cool GTA shows coming up and a Turtle Island tour all the way to Vancouver and back in July! Album release run in September too.

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

ET: We'll have some singles coming out over summer for our new record "When The Rivers Dry" and hope we see y'all at a show sometime.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

ET: Life's worth living. If you're struggling, please reach out for help.

AU: How do people find you online?

ET: @EtherealTomb on Instagram, Facebook and Bandcamp. I also shit post under the same name.



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ARTIFICIAL DISSEMINATION

Modern Day Peasants

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

Artificial Dissemination: We are A.D. from Hamilton, in the province of OnTerrible, Canada. You are talking to both of us. We are a duo, a tag team, a gruesome twosome...whichever you prefer. Jamie Problem plays drums and sings. Shawna plays one guitar through two amps and screams. These days we are most notorious for being *Artificial Dissemination*.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band

AD: We had a meeting of the minds in 2013 and decided to try something we had never done before. We've both been involved in the PUNK scene since the 80's in many different ways and bands. The idea of stripping down everything we've experienced and reinventing a new way to evolve it was very exciting. Right from the start, we wanted it to be a two-piece just because we figured there would be no rotating band members that way. And if



neither of us quits, then hopefully we could get things done a lot faster. We both loved all sorts of bands including great lo-fi bands like the *Cramps* and *Link Wray*, and also some really cool two-piece bands like the *Bumpin' Tacos*, *Leather Uppers*, and *Deja Voodoo* so we thought we'd give the two piece a shake, just for the challenge of it all and because not too many people were doing it.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

AD: We've been described as a two-piece punk rock nightmare. That's kind of accurate. It's everything we've ever heard and loved, smashed together, and played as loud as possible. Stripped down punk played with high energy at a high volume. A show-goer in Windsor exclaimed that we are "pure official gut punk." We get many people telling us that they don't know how two people can make so much noise.

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

AD: Trick question! We recorded a "new" 12" called MODERN DAY PEASANTS that literally got stuck in the pressing plant just as covid hit and shut everything off. We had to wait two months for the press to start again and we received our copies sometime after that. So we got a latest release that we haven't really been able to tour or promote outside of Ontario and Quebec for the past couple years. We also recorded a cover of Hate Generation by Direct Action for the Punk Canada VOLUME 1 compilation last year.

AU: What are some of your best songs about?

AD: Oh fuck, that's hard. We go over so many different topics and ideas in our songs and it's up to the brothers and sisters that listen to our records or come to shows as to which songs they like best. We have four vinyl releases which each have a theme behind them, but it wasn't contrived. It was a result of what we were thinking about and discussing with each other at

the time. Our newest album is *Modern Day Peasants*. It's a bit darker than previous releases since we've been going through a time when we've all been dehumanized to the extent that most people without power have been throughout the ages.

AU: Describe a live show verbally if you can.

AD: It's louder and more aggressive than you thought it would be when you see only two people up there.

AU: What's the metal like at your shows and scene these days? Any other killer bands we should check out?

AD: From the shows we've been playing, it seems more of a sonic, heavy, dark influence as opposed to the speed and technicality of thrash metal in the past. What excites us is the blending of all genres of high energy music into an original sound by any band. It seems like the shows we've been playing and going to in Southern Ontario have a more diverse mix of bands on the bill. That's very cool!

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse?

AD: The album we recorded going into the most recent apocalypse foretold what was about to happen socially and politically. The rich got richer and the poor got poorer so the Modern Day Peasants became more relevant. Some people who felt disenfranchised attacked the wrong enemies.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

AD: Yes, The Robot Apocalypse Tour will be coming to a city near you in 2023. We are in Western Canada June 16 - July 3. In Eastern Canada August 24 - September 4. And lots of dates in Ontario and Quebec in between.



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

AD: We're a lot more friendly and fun than we come off in an online interview. We love writing songs, making records and playing shows, but the best part is meeting all sorts of weird and wonderful human punks in our travels. We have two vinyl releases, a CD and a cassette. That's all available at our live gigs, so hit us up when we come ripping through your town. You can also listen to us on bandcamp for \$0. Any of the records or merch listed there can be mail-ordered by sending us a DM on facebook or Instagram. We can do the best deal on postage and avoid fees that way. At our gigs, you will also find the Seminal Recordz Distro box. It's our little traveling record store with 12", 7", CD and cassette releases from other bands we've played with. We love spreading the words and music of our friends.

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Rock N Roll Hall of Fame Inductee Ricky Byrd

Interview by Matthew Rooney

Absolute Underground: You have a power pop kind of background, you've played with a lot of the 60's and 70's classic rock giants, you broke out with Joan Jett and the Blackhearts who were a punk and metal-influenced hard rock band, and your solo stuff has more of a heartland rock, blue-eyed soul or, with the new single, *Mott the Hoople* vibe to it. Did playing and writing a more punk and metal style stuff come naturally to you or do you feel more in your element now?

Ricky Byrd: I mean every time an interview asks me this, I'm a product of everything I listened to as a teenager. And I was a teenager in the 70's and radio was fabulous here in New York, not unlike Little Steven's Underground Garage now, where you'll hear *Mott the Hoople*, *Slade*, *Jessie Malin*, *Frank Sinatra*. You know, all over the place. And that's the way New York radio was, you didn't really hear *Mott the Hoople*, but you heard the *Kinks*, the *Stones*, *Rod Stewart*. You heard *Trini Lopez*, *Dean Martin*, *Al Greene*, *Otis Redding*. So, me being an adult, my music is a product of all that stuff. And when I'm recording stuff, I like to give a nod to certain things. I'm trying to make it fun and I'm trying to make it really cool when you're wearing headphones.

AU: The "Glamdemic Blues" single is about the pandemic in a way that I haven't really heard many people tackle the topic: how boring it was a year plus in. What about that boredom made you decide to write a song about it and how stir-crazy were you going?

RB: That was the frustration I had. As an artist, we couldn't really do what we do. If you work in an office, you could work from home. If you're a writer, you could write from home. We couldn't go out and play live. Luckily, I did a bunch of events, which is the other side of my recovery stuff, straight from here with my acoustic guitar. Yeah, it was fun, and you accept it, but it was frustrating that you couldn't be in front of people. And that's what the song is, it's me having a conversation with life.

AU: Joan Jett and the Blackhearts were kind of part of this first wave of popular American hard rock that was heavily influenced by punk rock. How did you find being a kind of ambassador for punk to the mainstream?

RB: Well, I could say between me and Jett, she was more of the punk. I grew up on *Rod Stewart* and the *Faces* and the *Stones*, you know *Slade*, *Sweet*, *Cactus*, just rock and roll. *Humble Pie* was one of my favourite bands. Joan grew up on the punk side and lived in California and was part of that whole thing. It's the combination that made us sound the way we sounded on the records. I brought what I brought, she brought what she brought. She lead the way obviously and I kind of just threw in what I do. I know that when "I Love Rock N Roll" came out, I'm sure that we lost a bunch of fans that were from the punk side, a "oh you're a sellout. You have a number one record" thing but we gained a whole world of fans and that song, I was at a deli counter, two weeks ago and "I Love Rock N Roll" came on. It's a standard. Simple, three chords, maybe four.

AU: With that transition and merging of punk, hard rock, and metal, I'm curious do you see the Joan Jett and the Blackhearts sound in some of the more metal-influenced pop punk and emo bands that came after?

RB: I don't know bro. I don't get that deep. I mean I hear a lot of Joan girls, singing-wise. When I hear the radio, sounds like Jett doesn't it?

But musically it's just guitars, right? You know, everybody's influenced by something, there's very few bands out there that started something.

AU: You've previously released your stuff on your own but moved to Little Steven's *Wicked Cool* for your latest. What led you to make that move and how have you found working with *Wicked Cool* compared to releasing on your own?

RB: You know I'm very hesitant because I've been through that so many times. You know is it worth giving up stuff? Is it gonna help? You know. And for this one, I came to a conclusion that I didn't want to do a full-length record because I don't tour really, I do events. I go out and I play events, like charity events and stuff, that's fine for me cause I don't have a band. So, I'm doing a full record, I'm not going to tour it, so why am I recording 12 songs if I'm just lucky enough to get on some sort of radio? Thank the heavens, that Little Steven enjoys what I do cause every time I put a record out, I always end up with the *Cooldest Song in the World* and he'll play one or two songs off the record which is fabulous on *Underground Garage*. But why am recording a full-length record if only two of them are going to get airplay really? And as far as selling them, I sell them on my website and if I do something (an event) I may bring some, but you know there's no

worldwide selling of the records anymore. So, my thing was to do singles, let me do it like this is 1964 and it's *Tommy James and the Shondells* and let me record singles which makes you write differently too. You try to write shorter songs, chorus up front, just nail it right at the top...so what happened is I just started recording singles. The last two albums, Little Steven mentioned to me you should be on

Wicked Cool so this time I said let me give him a call. I told him about the singles thing, and he said send me something. I sent "Glamdemic Blues" and immediately they said "yep, let's do it." So, I signed with them to do a singles thing, one song at a time, but I kept recording so now I have 12 songs at least, so now I have a full-length record if I want to.

AU: One of the signatures of Joan Jett and the Blackhearts was covers and you performed a killer cover of "Reach Out (I'll Be There)". Do you feel modern rock artists have become dependent on their own songwriting and wrongfully overlook the creativity and fun that can be found in a good cover?

RB: I don't know. In my genre, there's a wicked cool artist named *Soraia*, and they've done quite a

few covers. I hear covers but people are covering interesting stuff as opposed to typical stuff. Somebody might do "Lust for Life" by *Iggy Pop* or some interesting stuff. The reason I covered "Reach Out" was for my first record *Clean Getaway* I said, "let me do some covers so maybe I'll get some airplay on that if they don't want to do anything else if the subject matter is not for radio." The first one I did was "Kicks" by *Paul Revere & the Raiders*, probably one of the first anti-drug songs in *Rock N Roll*. And for "Reach Out", I was sitting in my car thinking "what kind of song can I do?"

And I'm listening to *Underground Garage* and that riff came on and I went "oh crap that one." Not an easy song to do.

AU: You're a Rock N Roll Hall of Fame inductee. There's been a kind of wall that metal and punk have hit with the main voting body, most notably the struggles of *MCS*, *Rage Against the Machine*, and *Judas Priest* needing the jury prize to get in.

As someone who went in with a punk/metal/hard rock act but also has a deep interest in other genres, why do you think that is and what do you think it will take to help them overcome it?

RB: I don't know about that. I've been waiting for *J. Geils Band* to be in there for freaking 10 years! I think it's a very political, well I know it's a very political thing. From what I've heard, the big cheeses all come around a conference room table and everybody brings the people that they want in and then they argue for a few hours. I don't know but it's above my pay grade. But I'm sure happy to be in there.

AU: This year, the Rock Hall the ballot is kind of stacked, even *Pitchfork* has praised it. Anyone you're rooting for?

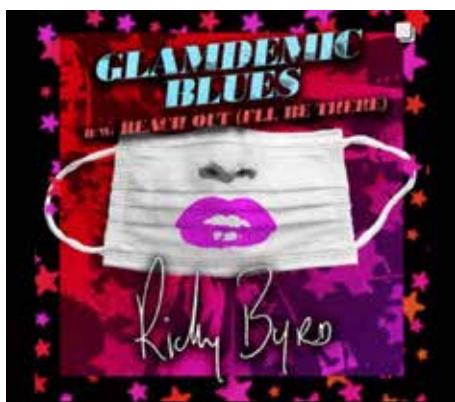
RB: I know who I voted for. But you know, every year it's the same crap on social media. "I can't believe this band's not in there!" Well there's only like 5 bands a year or something. There's so many more important things to worry about right now in this world. Everybody will get in there now I guess and it's a valid argument that rockers say, "If it's the *Rock N Roll Hall of Fame*, why is *Donna Summers* in there or why are they in there?" But *Rock N Roll* came from *R'n'B* so yeah I don't know, doesn't matter to me I'm just excited I got the trophy.

AU: Rock N Roll is typically a party genre, and we try to be a party magazine. And you can party sober. Do you have any guidance for those who want to party sober?

RB: Just party sober. If you have to add, and let's be clear I had many wonderful times being a moron until I didn't have good times anymore when it took over. You really have to second guess where you're hanging out if you have to get overly drunk. I mean look, if you can have a glass of wine or

couple of beers at a concert, fabulous. If you have to get blasted to have a good time at a place you're probably going to the wrong place. I've been sober for 35 years, I go to concerts...but that's just me. I don't tell people how to live. All I can say is if you are circling the drain and you fear your life is out of control there's plenty of help out there for you, but you have to make the first move and reach out for help. And I'll even go one step further, which I'm probably ridiculous for doing this - if you are struggling and you need some direction and you have questions you can always find me on social media. Just DM me, I'll try to give you some tips or point you in the direction.

Ricky Byrd can be found at rickybyrd.com





with your band more than your girlfriend. Tell everyone to fuck off, quit your job and start another. Let the skeleton of the song build and don't rush around it. Learn your hooks and learn your formula. Add a tail to the end of your riff, and scream higher!!! The strong will always rock.

AU: Electric Elite just came out in October. How have the reactions been to it so far?

Dustin: Absolutely incredible. Deaf Forever Magazine (Germany) rated it the #1 "Album of the Year" which was great to see. The response has been very humbling, and we're stoked moving forward. No Remorse has pushed us big time and we can't thank Chris, Andreas, and the No Remorse team enough. Bart Gabriel, Stu Bartlett, Olof Wikstrand and Anthony Blaine at AB Studios also played major parts and we were glad to have them on board.

AU: Both of your albums have animal-cyborg



hybrids on their covers. Will this be an ongoing thing for Riot City?

Dustin: It's hard to say. We ain't no "skull 'n crossbones" kinda guys. We're the fucking ELECTRIC ELITE. The album covers have always

been more of a visual representation of the sound we're trying to put across.

Jake: Animalistic behaviour and laser beams seem more in tune with us than everyone else trying to be another Midnight.

Dustin: Daniel Charles created the Electric Elite cover and didn't get a chance to sign it before he passed away, but we will always admire his artwork and the work he put in. May he spin eternally.

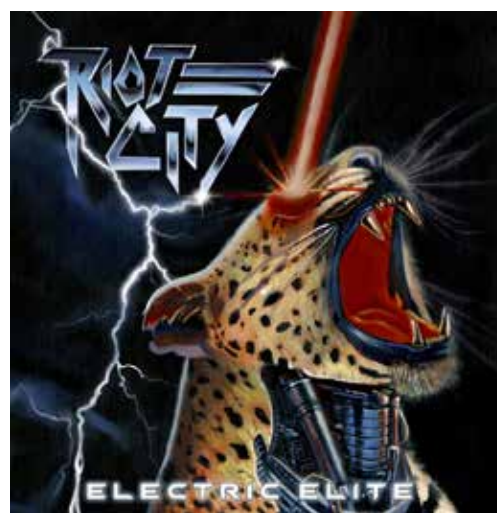
AU: Does Jordan have any pre-show or lifestyle rituals to keep his voice as crystal clear as it is?

Jordan: Honey and ginger tea. Trying not to

eat right before bed. And sometimes I'll even try Corpsegrinder's plain Lays chips method on the way to the studio or rehearsal.

AU: Riot City has been compared to Judas Priest and Iron Maiden. What are your favorite tracks/albums from each band?

Dustin: I think you can hear where our influences come from fairly quickly, and both bands produce high quality material. I'd have to say Iron Maiden's Piece of Mind and Somewhere in Time hold the spot for the greatest albums of all time, but then you listen to Sad Wings, Stained Class, Screaming Defenders and kind of just scratch your head and think... how obsessed and lost you are. Translation: heavy metal rules.



and see how far beyond we can take it! The European crowds do it differently - there's not a lot of phones in sight - it's more about the music in the moment, upfront and personal.

Jake: I'm ready to shake bones and rattle toenails all over. It'll be my first tour through Europe and I'm stoked for the Up the Hammers festival in Greece, as well as playing Budapest which is intriguing to me. Musklröck in Sweden and a slew of shows in Spain also have me

dialled in. Starting it off in the U.K. will also be bananas. It's all aces to me, any way you cut the cards.

Riot City

Interview by Ryan Dyer

The new wave of traditional heavy metal is flowing strong in Canada. Bands like *Skull Fist*, *Striker*, *Rebel Priest*, *Thunderor* and *Turbo* are currently surfing the wave, but Calgary's *Riot City* is ready to crash onto the shores abroad. 2023 will see the band, on the strength of their latest album *Electric Elite*, take their brand of ripping heavy metal to festivals such as Wacken, where thousands could potentially become citizens of the Riot City. We speak to the members of *Riot City* about the evolution of the band, breaking out of Calgary, '80s worship, *Priest*, *Maiden*, and their upcoming tour of Europe with *Seven Sisters*.

Absolute Underground: I ask this of all the speed metal bands, but what attracts you to the style and aesthetic of the '80s?

Dustin: It's just our flavour. We like what we like, and we know what's good. When it comes to the style of music, maybe it's production. For example, we appreciate the outfits that bands like *Iron Maiden*/*Judas Priest*/*Dio*, etc. put on in regard to looking like *Power Rangers*, but we don't give a fuck about looking like *Power Rangers* on stage. I hate costumes and we have nothing to hide behind, I think the music speaks for itself. If you're hot, you're hot, if you're not, you're not.

AU: How did the band get together and how has it evolved throughout the years?

Cale: After forming the band in Vancouver, I (Cale) moved to Calgary and slowly started to get involved in the local scene. The band had no real members, basically just a name and an idea. Throughout the first year I met Dustin and Roldan through the scene and mutual friends and we started working on songs that would eventually become the first album *Burn the Night*. Since then, with the addition of Jordan Jacobs taking over vocal duties for me and a couple drummers later, we evolved the sound to become a bit more thought through and matured, as you can hear on *Electric Elite*. Now, with the addition of Jake on drums we are starting to work on the third album and working on a bunch of tours.

AU: You are one of the few Calgary-based bands who have reached an admirable level of success. What advice would you give other bands who haven't yet?

Dustin: Don't rush or sell yourself short. Don't call your demo an EP for face value. Hang out



AU: Jake Gracie recently stepped up to bash the skins in the band. How has he been faring so far?

Dustin: Ol' Grease, Gracie, Johnny, Squibby, Bibby? Man, that guy can play drums there is no denying that. Gracie is a true animal behind the kit. Highly underrated, and highly unknown for how high his skill level is. He deserves more recognition and I hope he gets what he deserves from here on out. Album three is going to be a monster.

AU: You are slated to play some big shows in Europe for 2023. What are you looking forward to most?

Dustin: We're going to Wacken! In all reality it doesn't matter if it's a small club show or a festival - all the European countries have been very welcoming to us. I'm excited to get out there on the road and catch all my friends overseas to keep the power flowing

AU: You're heading out with Seven Sisters. For the Canadians reading who can't be there, why should we check them out?

Dustin: Graeme, Gaz, Kyle and Sam are some of the raddest, most talented guys we've ever met! There's a reason we've booked another European tour with them, we started to miss each other. Their songs are melodic, slightly progressive bangers that home in on a late '70's maybe mid '80's tone. I promise you will be singing along after the first listen! I can't wait to get some schnitzel boxes with the boys!

AU: What are Riot City's aspirations as far as festivals or bands you'd like to play with?








Dustin: We want to tour the world and get out of the cold hell we're in. We want to get off the Mountain Crest and into the sweet Bavarian nectar.

Jake: We want to influence the generations after us, the same way that we have felt influenced by generations before us to rock hard and die hard.


We'd like to thank everyone that has supported us throughout the years and a big thanks to the Absolute Underground team for covering us in this issue! It's been almost a decade, and we're still going strong!

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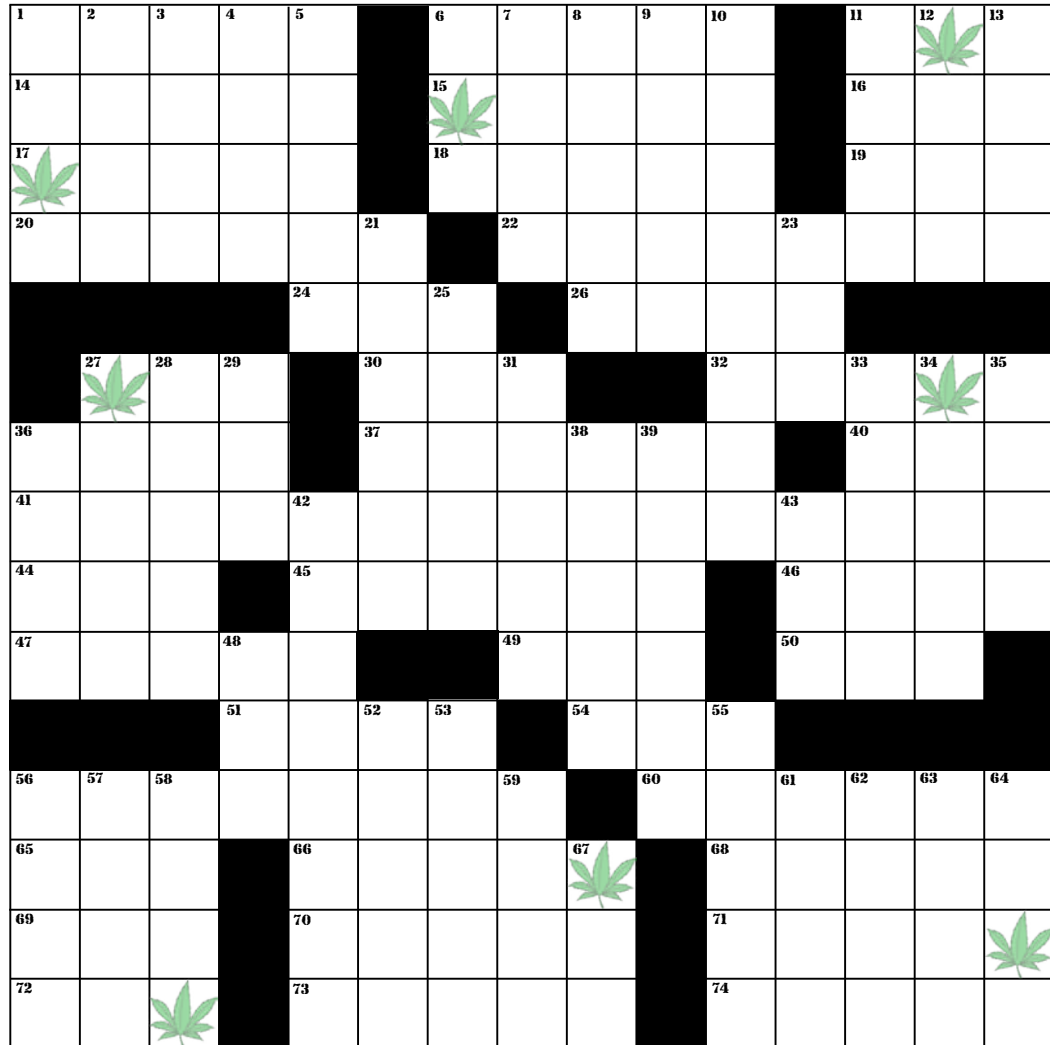
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ACROSS

1. Peace symbols
6. The story _____
11. Sees from far away
14. Beethoven dedicated a song to her
15. When scones are served
16. US pollution police
17. Most like a park
18. Some sprays
19. Feel poorly
20. Entirely
22. Footwear storage device
24. Switch positions
26. 'Might as well go for it'
27. Deplanted
30. It can be a floor or a rack
32. Music delivery system
36. Band that once featured Flattus Maximus
37. Where many students do their work
40. Rock stars have it
41. The first Canadian ones opened in 2018
44. 250 in ancient Rome
45. Senator Hatch and namesakes
46. Next Generation robot
47. Video conferencing app
49. "_____ of Unreason"
50. Typesetting spaces
51. Carriage in Cardiff
54. _____ de Triomphe
56. Fun funds
60. Homework heading
65. _____ de Montréal
66. Nymph loved by a cyclops
68. Selection from Docteur Martens
69. It makes cars faster and more furious
70. Red _____
71. The 'BG' in CBGB's
72. Word with train or supply
73. "Mars _____ Women"
74. It's featured heavily in "Ghostbusters"

DOWN

1. Famous fictional Toronto school
2. Actress Lena



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5. Brief but energetic fight
6. _____ Punk
7. Elevator company
8. Suspicious
9. Playground response
10. Choose again
11. Burn the surface
12. Chicken _____
13. Sign to attract shoppers
21. Where the band is
23. _____ tee
25. Sub detector
27. Trim the edges
28. _____ bird
29. Crossover pioneers
31. Suffix with Beatle or Trudeau
33. Played again
34. Plans ahead (financially)
38. Popular comic style
39. State forcefully
42. Popular podcaster
43. Poem of praise
48. Measure of printing speed
52. Bar order
53. Skirmish or scuffle
55. Baseball's Ty and family
56. Take care of
57. Skin soother
58. Oppressor
59. It's more than a meter
61. Word with egg or cabbage
62. Ornamental needle case
63. "Up and _____!" (Radioactive Man's slogan)
64. Neil _____ Tyson
67. Tips of baby bottles

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SATANIC TEA CO.
A Celestial Beating
Interview with Crucifix

By Raymond MacKay

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

Satanic Tea Co: I'm Crucifix, I own and sing in Satanic Tea Co.

AU: What was your first introduction to death metal?

STC: It was honestly Myspace. In the early 2000's I was into Christian metal bands like *As I Lay Dying*, *Norma Jean* etc. and it wasn't until I saw someone's Myspace profile with a *Cattle Decapitation* song on it that I realized there was anything harder than Christian metal. I was totally blown away and needed more.

AU: Give us a brief history of your company/band history.

STC: We started in 2017, pretty early on we began collaborating with metal bands to make limited edition blends of tea. Since my old band broke up in 2018 I found my mental health suffered pretty badly without playing music. Fast forward to 2022 and we have released our first two singles, and now we are ramping up to release our debut ep, as well as playing our first shows!

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

STC: Currently residing in Calgary, Alberta. The music scene here is insane right now. So many fantastic bands like *Wake*, *Detherous*, *World of Pleasure*, *Trench* and tons more. Shows here that I've attended recently have all been packed out. The amazing people putting on these shows keeping the scene alive deserve a lot of credit for what's going on in Calgary right now.

AU: Do you feel like each band member brings something unique to the table? How so?

Definitely! Every one is so good at what they do and bring their own unique blend of herbs and spices. I'm really fortunate to be able to play with such a talented group

AU: How would you describe what Satanic Tea Co. does, musically?

STC: We play old school grind-y death metal for freaks

AU: Tell us about your new album and its influences.

STC: Our new EP definitely draws a lot of influence from old school death metal like *Suffocation*, *Dying Fetus*, and blends in some Myspace era death grind as well.

AU: Tell us about your upcoming mini Canadian Tour with Trench.

STC: More of an Alberta tour running through Edmonton, Red Deer and our hometown in Calgary. These will be our first shows as *Satanic Tea Co* and I couldn't be more stoked to be shredding them with our friends in *Trench*.

AU: What are some of the inspirations you draw on while writing your music?

STC: With our new EP *A Celestial Beating*, most of the lyrical inspiration came from my upbringing in a very religious cult-like household. The terrible things people do in the name of religion, and me escaping those surroundings.

AU: What do you consider to be the "essential death metal album"?

STC: *Suffocation* – Pierced From Within

AU: What do you consider to be the first death metal album?

Possessed – 7 Churches

AU: It's the 420 Issue here at Absolute Underground, do any of the band members partake?

STC: Every member of *Satanic Tea Co* likes to partake some more than others.

AU: If so, what's their favourite thing to do while high?

STC: Watch horror movies, play or listen to music, eat junk food, the usual.

AU: Tell us about the band's relationship with the tea business? How did that start?

STC: After collaborating on a tea blend with the band *Belzebubs* (comic book band turned actual band) in 2019 I was really inspired to one day do something similar with *Satanic Tea Co*.

After my previous band broke up in 2018 there had been a really big gap in my life musically, which has had a toll on my mental health. I also have a really hard time concentrating on multiple projects at the same time so I figured it would be easier to make the band based off the company.

AU: What are some of your best/most unique tea flavours available on your site?

STC: I think all our blends are the best of the best, but as for my favourites Our Satan's Slumber chamomile lavender hops & valerian blend will

knock you right out. Our Throat of Lucifer peppermint and lavender blend for sore throats. Antichrist Pumpkin Spiced is self explanatory. One of the most unique blends we've created was a limited edition collaboration blend. We mixed smoked lapsang souchong with cracked espresso beans, it was to die for!

AU: What kind of tea do you drink?

STC: I tend to keep it pretty basic for my every day cuppa, I usually have one or 2 cups of Vanilla Earl

Grey and our Satan's Slumber chamomile blend before bed.

AU: If you could hire anyone to do your album art, who would you pick?

STC: If I could go back in time? Definitely Mariusz Lewandowski RIP

AU: Any final words for our readers?

STC: I will see you all in hell.

AU: Where do people find you online?

STC: You can find our shop, social media, Spotify www.satanicteaco.com

Photo Credit: CallyNicole Photography



TUFF DUZT

TUFF DUZT

Wouldn't Mind a Shot

Joey "Lightning Joe" Roads Speaks!

By Sheldon Byer

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

Tuff Duzt: This is Joey "Lightning Joe" Roads. I seem to be the most famous for wearing nipple clamps on stage.

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

TD: In late 2021 Me and Nasty Jake got together and started jamming some shit. We got David Hammer in on drums and Lingxiao, of the band *Chaos Century* did session bass for our first two shows. P J LaGriffe (of *Sandstorm* fame), after seeing us live, expressed interest in joining the band, so we did a switch and Mr. Hammer moved over to bass, and we brought PJ in on drums. What we're all about is making real deal no bullshit heavy metal and having an absolute fucking blast doing it.

AU: Let's get to brass tacks here, what makes you rock hard?

TD: Skinny blondes.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible?

TD: We basically sound like NWOBHM because that's what real heavy metal sounds like.

AU: Tell us about your two singles recently released online? When can we expect an EP or

full length?

TD: Ya so we recorded and mixed "Wouldn't Mind a Shot" (which is about sexual lust) and "High Wattage" (which is about playing heavy metal,) ourselves. So, they don't have that horrid modern overproduced sound all the NWOBHM bands seem to suffer from these days. We've recorded a third single, "Over the Edge" (about dying in a car crash.) I'm currently mixing it, so it should be out by the time this hits the presses. You can expect an EP or full length probably sometime around the end of 2023.

AU: What is your favourite shot?

TD: Bourbon whiskey. People need to fuck off with this tequila or vodka nonsense, like what the fuck man, homies be all "yo, I bought a round of shots for everyone" and its always fucking tequila, like great, now I gotta drink this garbage cause someone bought it for me, which I appreciate, but like fucksakes get with the program man, whiskey is clearly the best.

AU: Is it true the bassist wears a rug?

TD: It's hard to believe but that's his natural hair, the guy spends hours on it every day, its kind of an unhealthy obsession.

AU: You're playing the Hyperspace Metal Festival after party at The Wise Hall April 16th

in Vancouver, BC. What can festival goers expect from a Tuff Duzt gig?

TD: Sexual power, poser slaughter, raw heavy metal, and an absolute fucking party.

AU: Pick one: Tits, ass, grass, brews, BBC or floppy wiener?

TD: I choose BBC. I don't feel complete until I've had my BBC. I can't get Enough BBC. I always start and end my days with BBC. Its just so hard, so raw, so real, just the juiciest...news coverage around! Makes me gape my mouth just how deep their stories hit. On a serious note, I choose tits.

AU: When writing, where do you draw your biggest influences?

TD: Obscure old school heavy metal. We're talking *Jaguar, Randy, Traitors Gate, The Rods, Universe, Trance, Attila, Guitar Pete's Axe Attack, Stormtrooper, White Spirit.* It's just the highest energy music and I want to create that same feeling.

AU: Who has metaphorically or literally the smallest dick in the underground metal scene? Don't worry no one is reading this at this point.

TD: Definitely Sheldon Byer

AU: Top 5 recent Heavy Metal bands everyone should keep on their radar.

TD: I'm gonna go with *Razor* and *Exciter.* Yes, I understood the question.



BENEATH THE WHEEL

AU: Would you say you're more of a cat band or a dog band?

TD: No discrimination here, as long as the dogs are raw and the pussies are wet, they all belong in my mouth.

AU: Fuck marry kill: Celine Dion, Dustin the bassist of Riot City & the world famous Gastown Steam Clock.

TD: Without a doubt fuck Dustin. Marry Celine Dion, truly a powerful woman, plus, I heard she's into awkward age gaps. Kill the steam clock, knowing what time it is for posers.

AU: What can we expect in the future from Tuff Duzt?

TD: All the things. More singles online, some tape and vinyl releases, music videos, play some festivals, and just share the glory of true heavy metal with as many maniacs as possible

AU: Can you give us a red wine pairing for Hyperspace Metal Festival?

TD: Yo, so you always want to drink the house red at greasy metal venues. The hard bar is too expensive, and a beer and a wine cost about the same, and what do ya think is gonna get you more cut? If you drink four or five shitty Pabst, all you'll get is diarrhea. But if you slam four or five deliciously cheap plastic cups of BC cabernet? You're gonna be straight fuckin' dickered.

AU: Any final words for our readers? Especially bangers who are attending Hyperspace Metalfest.

TD: Come wash the soapy taste of power metal out of your mouth with some grease and bodily fluids at the after party show, I promise you wont regret!

AU: How do people find you online?

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IG: @TUFFDUZT

Tuffduzt.bandcamp.com

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LIAM VS THE WORLD



Stephen Immerwahr of Codeine Interview by Liam Crocker

Haunting, crushing, depressive, and legendary. Stephen shares some thoughts on the sonic sadness of his legendary 90's slow-core band.

AU: Millennials rediscovered 90's music in a big way around the mid 2000's - did you find there was a big resurgence in interest in your band in that time?

Stephen Immerwahr: Yeah, that was obviously really gratifying. I think even for the old people showing up, people my age, who were in college and getting into the music scene when *Codeine* was first playing. When we did these shows in 2012, I saw it, the music really spoke to the people who came. That took me by surprise

but was really gratifying. I was kind of suspicious - why should a band from the 90's be playing music 20, 30 years later, maybe that's not a good thing. I had some anxiety about it. I talked to some people, they discovered it, there was not a chance they would have seen *Codeine* back then, and really, it meant something to be able to see us play and that was really cool. I'm not gonna be questioning what people get from the music and I'm really glad that they do.

AU: I really got into *Codeine* in my early 20s. I would describe the mood as crushingly depressing. It was hard to listen to in a way.

I know people say they get release out of listening to sad music - for me, sometimes it felt more like self-flagellation. What was it like revisiting those feelings on *Dessau* and other newer recordings?

SI: When I really felt like I was revisiting stuff in a way I hadn't before was in 2012 when we did this reissue show. I was against it, I was terrified that we were doing it. There was this voice inside of me that told me it was a terrible idea. Obviously I hadn't killed the voice, I still thought it was a terrible idea. Rehearsing this is one thing, but

performing them is another. I'm gonna feel these feelings, there's a lot of feelings. I definitely felt a lot of pain in wanting to be connected to other people but feeling incapable. A chasm that just couldn't be crossed. That's not a good place to be. In 2012, I was like, wow, I've still got these feelings. These days, I'm the happiest I've ever been. I ride my bike to work, that's really helpful for my head. I take some medication, that's also really helpful for me. John Engles three blocks from me, that's really helpful for me. In some ways, one of the best things about the band for me was that I'd met John. I really wanted to be

in a band with that guy. It took awhile for that to happen, but then I was in a band with him which was great. We broke up, and that was the most terrible thing I've ever been through, I think. It was funny to feel those feelings, because I spend less time with those feelings now than I certainly did then. Performing them is certainly interesting and I definitely catch feelings.

AU: What do you think about the slow-core genre label?

When we were first playing, it was really advantageous to us as a band to have some description. It wasn't a terrible description of what we were doing. At the time we were ambivalent to it back in the day as well. I kind of pictured a

little turtle, like the New York Hard Core Logo, so I was like, NYSC, New York Slow Core. I think it was helpful for us then. Any kind of -core sound is kind of funny and kind of whack. I feel in some ways I feel we sort of suggested what those dimensions were, but bands like *Low* and *Duster* took it further.

AU: Thanks, Stephen! It was an honor to interview you as a longtime fan. *Codeine* is one of the most authentic and visceral representations of raw emotion, of sadness. To craft sounds that can have such an effect on the listener is the power of wizards!



performing them is another. I'm gonna feel these feelings, there's a lot of feelings. I definitely felt a lot of pain in wanting to be connected to other people but feeling incapable. A chasm that just couldn't be crossed. That's not a good place to be. In 2012, I was like, wow, I've still got these feelings. These days, I'm the happiest I've ever been. I ride my bike to work, that's really helpful for my head. I take some medication, that's also really helpful for me. John Engles three blocks from me, that's really helpful for me. In some ways, one of the best things about the band for me was that I'd met John. I really wanted to be

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TUESDAY MAY 16	TORONTO, ON	BOVINE
WEDNESDAY MAY 17	OTTAWA, ON	AVANT GARDE BAR
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FRIDAY MAY 19	MONTREAL, QC	POUZZA FEST
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SUNDAY MAY 21	MONTREAL, QC	POUZZA FEST
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POWDER SEEKERS



Eight Cost Saving Tips for Powder Seekers

By Brydon "Mid-Week Pass" Parker

Arctic vortex, polar bomb, atmospheric river, freezing rain, Environment Canada extreme weather warning, extreme weather event, one-hundred-year storm, closed airports, delayed flights, closed highways, and travel advisories? These are words in the news that we the Powder Seekers want to hear. When you hear the

meteorologist on the news say, "stay home and off the roads?" That is when my phone blows up and we make plans to do exactly the opposite. Hopefully we can outrun the storm and get to the mountain before it hits. One out of ten times we make it. The rest of the times we are the Riders in the Storm. Tire chains are our best friend. If you see truckers putting on chains, you put on chains, when you see truckers taking off chains you take off chains, repeat. Unless you spend an ass-load of cash you won't be able



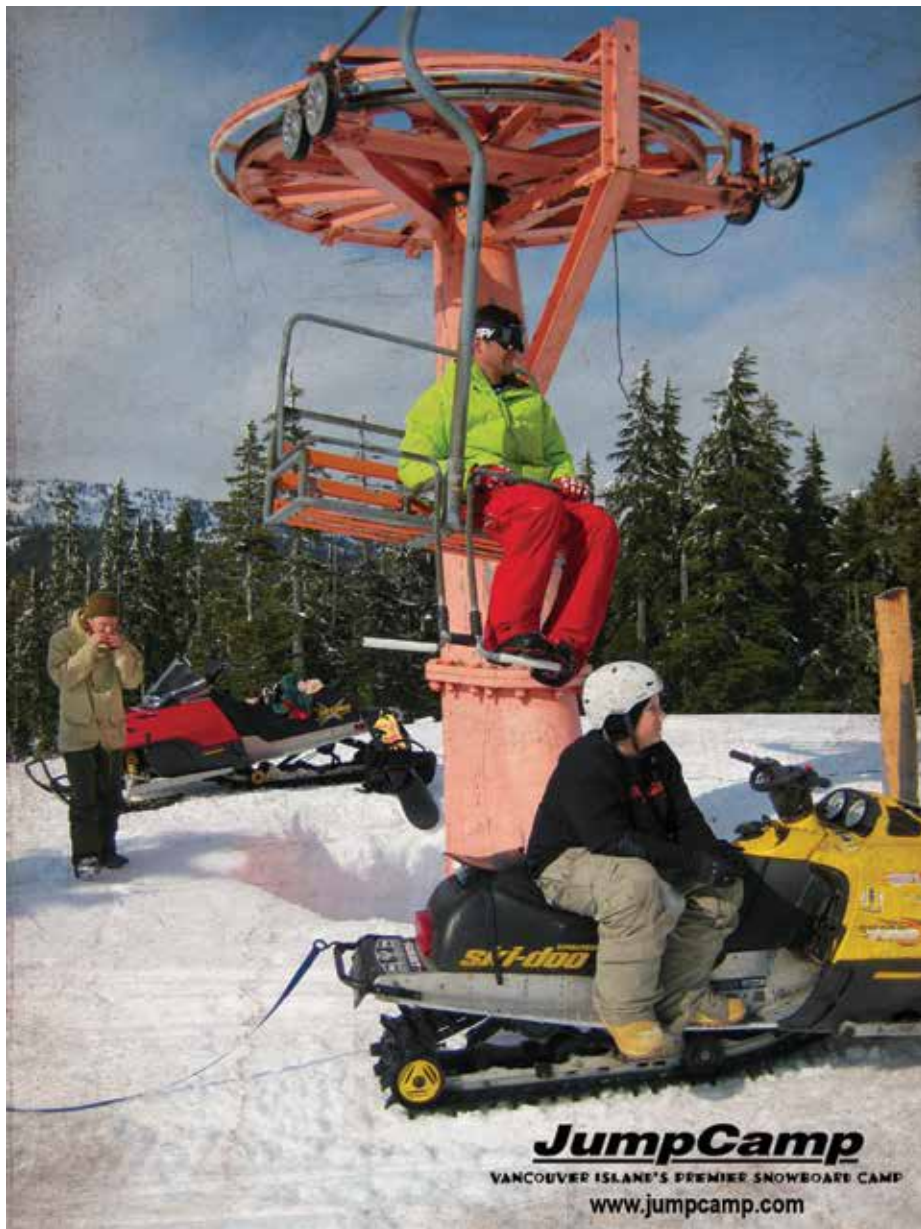
to travel in sketchy conditions faster than the manufacturer's recommended speed, which is a very slow 30 kilometers, tops. If you want to travel as fast as the semi-trucks, be prepared to spend up to two hundred bucks a tire to get high speed chains and a tool to repair them (chain pliers) for about 80 bucks. First chair up comes with all kinds of financial commitments that pile up faster and deeper than any polar vortex powder pile. That is not to say that



riding the mountains is only a rich person's game. Because it's not. There are many ways to cut costs and to keep it on a budget. Here are some ideas to keep up on maximum days on the hill and not break the bank.

1. Ride share with as many people as possible.
2. Buy used gear. You have to buy new boots and goggles, but almost everything else can be gotten at a fraction of new cost.
3. Pack a lunch and bring your own beers. This alone can save thousands.
4. Plan to ride only the best powder days. Quality not quantity is a great way to get the best of the best.
5. Buy a Season Pass before end of current season to get best rate possible. I only have to ride 6 days to pay off my pass.
6. When renting a condo get as many days in a row as possible and get your pals to come visit to help pay and keep costs down.
7. There is a trend on these multi-mountain passes, like the Mountain Collective Pass and the Epic Pass, that you get great deals on multiple resort passes. But you need to hit a lot of resorts, which can be expensive.
8. In Japan they call it car~dachi. Car means car and dachi is a small hotel, so stay in your car and save big bucks.

It's all worth it when you hammer into the parking lot and have to plow your own parking spot. Being on those first lifts for fresh powder tracks is surreal when you are waiting in line and the lifties have a hard time clearing snow off the lift chairs. There is a buzz or powerful vibe as everyone in the line-up wants only one thing, Fresh powder! It is the only time these days we can all agree on anything. The universal thirst to be first down taking that fresh line. Powder Poachers beware. Summer issues are coming and the only powder to be had is south of the equator. Ira, Brydon, and The Snow Ninja head to Chile and the grand Powder Seeker adventure tales continue.



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MATT WAGNER – Part 2

The Hero Discovered

Interview by Ira “Grackleflint” Hunter

Absolute Underground: What were some of your early inspirations, and what comics did you like to read back then?

Matt Wagner: I'd say two of the things that really influenced me when I was a teen in regards to

comics and how I approached them and what they could do were Joe Kubert's run on *Tarzan* for DC. When I look at his stuff, I very much see my own style of storytelling, influenced by the way he laid out pages, by how he paced things, how he learned to pick things often at a bare minimum to get the most amount of effect. In fact, every time I run into his son Adam Kubert I just gush to him about what an effect his dad had on me.

Then also in the mid 70's Warren Publishing started reprinting in magazine format Will Eisner's *The Spirit*. I started picking those up and that had a whole different effect on me as well because not only was it a much more elevated, theatrical and literary style of storytelling and experimental as well. But things had consequences in *The Spirit* whereas it didn't so much in contemporary American comics. I specifically remember one

sequence where there's a mad sniper in the top of an apartment building gunning down people in the street. *The Spirit* tries to get up there to get him and he gets strafed with machine gunfire fire across his shins. The next episode they cut to *The Spirit* clacking down a hospital hallway on crutches and they're going to have to amputate his legs because they are so damaged from the bullets. Man, you just never

saw shit like that in superhero comics. Nobody had consequences like that. So both of those had a huge effect on the sort of comic art and sort of stories I ultimately ended up telling. As for reading, I grew up mainly a DC guy more than a Marvel guy. The reason being that I grew up kind of far out in the country and didn't have really regular access to comics. It was kind of sporadic based upon what our local Kmart or newsstand had. The DC comics all kind of tended to wrap up in one issue, the storylines are pretty

self contained. The Marvel stuff stretched on and on and I found that very frustrating, because I couldn't keep up with what was going on.

AU: I understand that *Grendel* is going to be a Netflix show.

MW: No, it got axed.

AU: Oh fuck no.

MW: I don't know if you've noticed that Netflix has been axing stuff left and right. Even stuff that's already been aired and very popular. The real killer is, *Grendel* was done. It's completely filmed. I have the whole thing on DVD. Netflix is letting us shop it around and we're hopeful that we'll find another platform to be it's home

AU: Does that *Grendel* TV project begin at the gangster level with Hunter Rose?

MW: Yes, it begins with the Hunter Rose storyline.

AU: Then the comics got more and more complex and went into the future and all that, is that what was planned for the series?

MW: Yeah, that's what the show-runner wanted to do. But we got axed before we got anywhere near that.

AU: How involved were you in the creative process when they were filming?

MW: Mainly consultations. I had several different consultation meetings with the writers room, a staff of about seven or eight writers. Then I got to see all the scripts as they were finished and was able to give notes which I tried to keep to a minimum on each and every script. Some of which got heeded and some of which did not. But that's the way collaboration works.

AU: What about your *Mage* comics? Has anything ever been optioned or developed for that?

MW: Oh yeah, I've been up and down the road on that one too. It's not in any sort of option or development right now at all.

AU: Who would play the reluctant hero Kevin Matchstick?

MW: I don't know at this point. Way back when I had some preferences but we are all too old now. I'd prefer somebody who is kind of an unknown but for the sort of budget you're looking at they might want somebody that is a known commodity.

AU: Gerard Butler.

MW: It has to be somebody much more every man-ish. Not good looking like that, I'd almost say Jack Black. Somebody that can give an intense performance and yet still pull off the kind of everyman just shy of slapstick nature in the book. Of course, Jack Black's even too old now too. So I don't know who. It would be up to the casting people.

AU: Do you do commissions for people?

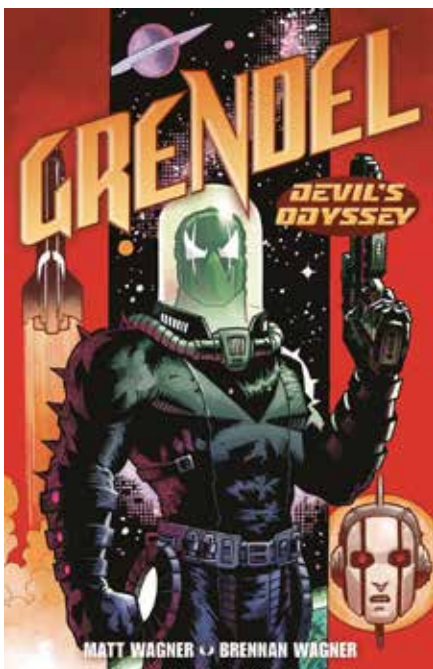
MW: Not very often. When I'm going to conventions but I haven't been to a convention since the pandemic started. I don't think I'm really ready to rejoin the convention circuit again yet.

AU: Do you remember your most bizarre request for a piece of art?

MW: Oh yeah, you get dumb requests all the time. I remember one guy he said with a big smarmy grin "How about a drawing of a nice piece of pie?" I said "No, choose one of my characters." But that was for a freebie. I do fairly pricey commissions on request but then I do quickie head doodles for anybody that asks for free. This was one of those freebies I'm like, "No I'm not drawing a piece of pie. Sorry man."

AU: What's the latest project you're working on, as far as comics go?

MW: New *Grendel* stuff. A year or so ago, I finished



the *Devil's Odyssey*, which was an all new Grendel Prime storyline venturing in outer-space. At the end of that, he comes back to find the Earth very, very changed. So I'm working on the sequel to that. But also, when the Netflix show looked like it was still happening I convinced Dark Horse to let me basically redo *Devil By The Deed*, the first Grendel storyline with Hunter Rose. Because that was originally serialized in the back pages of *Mage* four pages of time. It was such a significant storyline, the story of Hunter Rose. It's only 37 pages long and I did it when I was 24 years old. So I completely redid that and expanded it to 120 pages. It still tells the same story and still in the same kind of style but of course, it's drawn by me now as a completely different artists at my age now as opposed to 24. The story greatly incorporates a lot of other stuff we'd done with Hunter Rose in the interim. That's coming out next summer in a fancy hardcover edition. We're calling it the *Devil By The Deed Masters Edition*. All of these I should point out are coloured by my son and colourist Brennan Wagner. He's been colouring for professionally for 10 plus years now.

AU: He actually stopped by our booth at San Diego Comic-Con and asked if we needed any help with any of our stuff and I thought that

was really nice of him. Do you still collect comics yourself? Do you go to the comic store every Wednesday for new comic books?

MW: I find the longer I draw comics, I find myself reading less and less contemporary comics. Mainly because I kind of feel like I don't want to be influenced by other

comics. I've heard the same thing sometimes filmmakers they don't want to watch other people's films. They want to kind of work in a virgin environment. I find myself more digging up stuff I enjoyed from the past and kind of replacing those sorts of things in my collection.

AU: Are you like an archivist per se?

MW: No, again the older I get the less shit I want to own. I just don't want a whole lot of stuff in my life, you know? But I have a decent size library with a bunch of stuff in there but if it all vaporized tomorrow I wouldn't even blink hardly.

AU: Do you have multiple copies of your own work? I thought maybe you'd have like a box full of the first appearance of *Grendel* sitting around that are now worth big bucks.

MW: I have a ton of that shit because those are all comp issues that come to me. I have literally a huge pallet full of stuff.

AU: What other opportunities has working in comics opened up for you? Have you done any storyboarding or animation?

MW: No, I have no interest in any of that. That's too collaborative.

Too many cooks, too many people getting to say, "No, I think you should do that. Do it this way instead." I don't have any of that in comics. I have an absolute golden creative scenario where I do whatever I want and nobody gets to say fuck all about it.

To Be Continued Next Issue...

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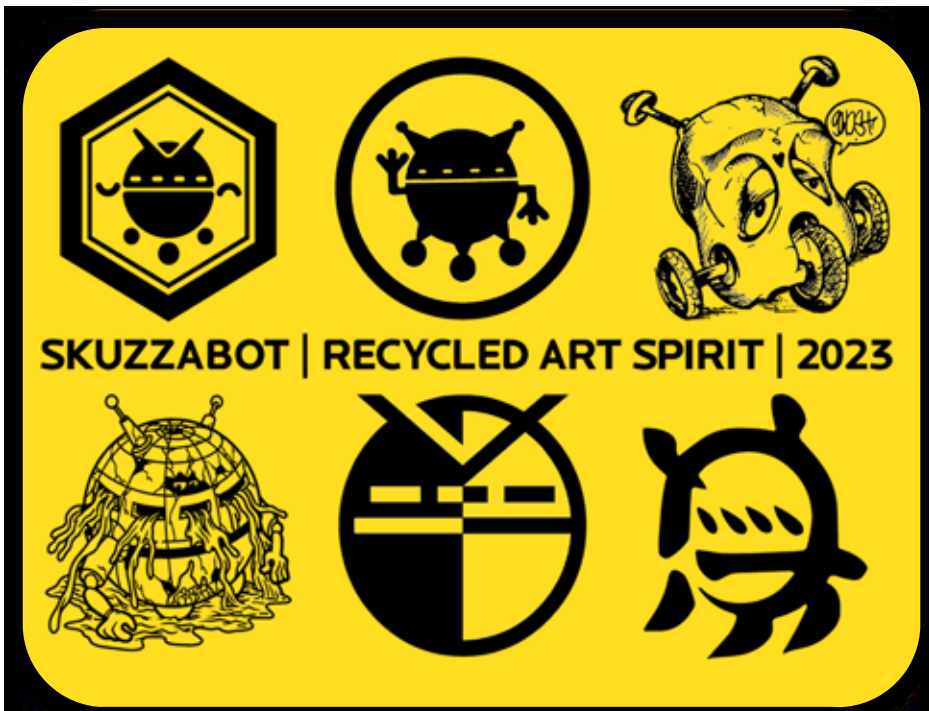
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RIPCORDZ TOUR TIPS

As we've been driving back and forth across Canada for more than three decades, we've come up with some guidelines that help us on the road. Figured we'd share.

They're tips, not rules. Everyone has their own way of touring, but some of these may help younger bands on their way.

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TOUR TIP NUMBER 6



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PIC-A-FLIC VIDEO

VHS Zone

Interview by Ira "VHS" Hunter and Ray MacKay

Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking to and what is your position at Pic A Flic Video?

PAF: Kent Bendall - owner and operator of Pic A Flic Video.

AU: Tell us a little about Pic A Flic's history.

PAF: Pic a Flic opened in 1983, one of the first rental stores in town. 40 years later, it's still going!

AU: What has been the secret to it's longevity and how does it feel to be one of the last remaining video stores in the world?

PAF: From the beginning Pic-A-Flic always had the "other" stuff to rent. The non top-40. International films. Cult films. Classic films. Those esoteric titles (and our ever growing collection) have been the key to the store's longevity. Films that are impossible to find elsewhere. As to being one of the last video stores, it's a weird thing, like being the gatekeeper to this huge trove of art. I'm stubborn anyway - so I'll just hold on as long as I can!

AU: What are your fondest memories of going to the video store when you were younger?

PAF: We didn't get a VCR (because I'm old) in my family until I was in my teens. But then trips to the video stores were frequent, alternating between the schlockiest horror I could find, or classic Hollywood films I had only read about.

AU: What are some ways people can help keep this going? I understand you have an Adopt-A-Movie option.

PAF: like any small business, the biggest thing people can do is just to come in the shop. Have a look around, maybe buy some candy, rent a movie? I can only survive if I have the customers! Currently we're running an "Adopt A Movie" fundraiser, where one can "adopt" their favourite film for \$25 and get some fun little perks.

AU: Tell us about your movie catalogue.

PAF: Our catalogue is ridiculous. Over 25,000 titles. Silents from the birth of cinema right up to the latest blockbusters. Foreign films, British TV series, Cult movies and Classics are some of our specialties.

AU: Do you do special orders for customers?

PAF: We do! If it's in print I can usually get it!

AU: What are some of the most unique movies you have at Pic-A-Flic?

PAF: The Meat Market films for sure. *Begotten*. *Belladonna Of Sadness*. Most of the "Cult" section is pretty unique!

AU: What are some other items you sell other than movies and rentals?

PAF: Lot's of Studio Ghibli trinkets and posters! Everyone loves Totoro!

AU: What's your top recommendation for each genre?

PAF:
Drama - *The Florida Project*
Comedy - *Caddyshack*
Horror - *Evil Dead*
Sci-Fi - *Coherence*
Classic - *Adv. Of Robin Hood*
Action - *RRR*

AU: What are some cult classic movies you could recommend?

PAF:
Brothers Of The Head
Hedwig And The Angry Inch
Phantom Of The Paradise
Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls
Viva

The Love Witch

AU: Tell us about some of the real underrated gems in your catalogue.

PAF: So much cool indie stuff from Canada and abroad. Also a massive collection of old classic Hollywood titles - which is full of gems!

AU: Who is your favourite director?

If I say Michael Curtiz everyone is gonna go "who?" So I'll say David Lynch. Also, with only 2 films, I think Anna Biller is a true auteur and I can't wait to see her next projects.

AU: What is the most rented movie at your store?

PAF: The top 10 rentals are all franchise films! *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Star Wars*! Other perpetual rentals are things like *The Big Lebowski*, *In Bruges*, *La Femme Nikita* (just off the top of my head)

AU: What's your favourite

movie quote?

PAF: "How's the family?" (Morris Day in *Purple Rain*) Also pretty much any line from *Clerks* and *Fast Times At Ridgemont High!*

AU: Any high movie recommendations for this 4/20 issue?

PAF: *Super Troopers* definitely!

AU: Do you still own a VCR?

PAF: Yes!

AU: Do you still collect and watch VHS tapes? If so, what is your most prized tape?

PAF: I don't really collect tapes, I find it a little baffling actually! But if it's the only way to see a film, I get it. Plus some of the box art is pretty great.

AU: What are your thoughts on the recent increases in the value of VHS tapes, especially horror movies?

PAF: I used to collect cheap horror comics, so I get it. There's the thrill of the hunt in looking for something, finding a gem in a box of duds. And it's an affordable hobby up to a point. As *everything* becomes a collectible, it's just a matter of time before the rarer stuff becomes more valuable.

AU: What do you think of people grading and auctioning off VHS tapes for hundreds and thousands of dollars?

PAF: The grading of sealed VHS tapes is amazing to me, but like I said - *everything* is a "collectible" now.

AU: What is the historic importance of VHS tapes as some of the movies have never been released on DVD or Blu-ray?

PAF: Thousands and Thousands of films are *only* available on VHS (especially on the home consumer front) It's another format (not a great one) to archive the otherwise lost treasures.

AU: What are some other famous video stores still in operation today?

PAF: Scarecrow Video in Seattle is THE one. It is truly amazing.

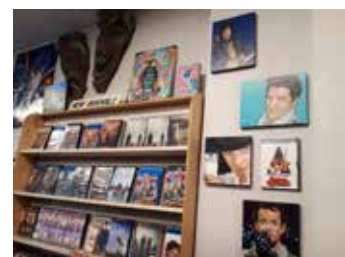
AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?

PAF: We are a small, independent business - and like almost all small businesses it's a struggle. I urge people to shop small and local, and support the stores you like. Use it or lose it.

pic-a-flic.video

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HYPERSPACE METAL FESTIVAL
 Interview with organizer Joey Hockin
 by Thrasher Asher

AU: How has your year been organizing the 2023 lineup for Hyperapace Metal Festival?
Joey Hockin: It's been great! I'm obviously not facing as many roadblocks as last time around so the whole process has been going a lot more smoothly. I'm getting really excited for April 13th

to come around!

AU: For those unfamiliar with Hyperspace Metal Festival, tell us about its origin story.

JH: I had the idea for the festival back around 2017 when I was thinking about opportunities for my own band Apprentice. There weren't a lot of festivals around for bands that are not heavy enough for the extreme festivals and too modern for the old school festivals. I realized we probably aren't the only band in this situation so I started checking to see if bands would be interested in it and everyone jumped on board really fast. It was something that needed to happen I think. The momentum Hyperspace has been gaining year after year keeps blowing me away.

AU: Which bands are you most excited for fans attending to see on this year's 3-night event?

JH: Our headliners are all really top notch bands that have been making waves on the global stage. I think they're all going to deliver really killer performances. I'm also very excited to be bringing Lords Of The Trident to Vancouver for the first time. Ty did an amazing job hosting the live stream last year and if he brings even half as much energy to their performance this year it's going to be very memorable. Paladin are also going to be a treat to see, after having to cancel their appearances before due to Covid. I could go on about every band on the lineup, it's going to be an incredible weekend.

AU: You are also hosting an after-party and Invisible Market this year on April 16th, what can ya tell us about this event?

JH: One problem I have with a lot of festivals that I go to is that I'm always so busy watching bands that I don't get as much time to hang out with all my friends, some of whom I only get to see once a year. This is going to be a good chance for everyone to socialize without stressing about whether or not they're missing the next set. It's going to be a lot of fun with a lot of cool vendors, a metal DJ playing music, and a magic tournament hosted by Damien Hicks who has also run tournaments at Loud As Hell and other metal events.

AU: Where can we concertgoers get tickets and more information?

JH: Tickets are available online at eventbrite and you can get physical tickets at Nepton Records and Red Cat Records. All the information you need is on the facebook event, instagram, eventbrite, and Bandbond which is the official app of Hyperspace. I highly recommend downloading Bandbond so you can customize your schedule and get notifications with any updates on the festival.

AU: What should we know about this fest that we don't already know?

JH: There are going to be a lot of people traveling from as far away as Florida or even further to be in Vancouver for the festival, so it's going to be a really cool atmosphere. Power metal sometimes feels like the underdog genre as far as metal goes, so having us all in one place is always a good time. We will be live streaming the festival on Grant's twitch channel again with Rav from Ravenous hosting this time around.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

JH: I want to take every chance I can get to thank everyone for the support that the festival has received. The fact that this has been getting bigger every year always blows me away and I look forward to the next few years to see how far we can take this thing. See you all April 13th at The Fox!

Facebook.com/HyperspaceMetalFestival
Instagram.com/HyperspaceMetalFestival





BL: For this project it was channeling the frustrations of COVID, and all the bullshit and cancellations that came with it. It completely derailed our lives, and especially our musical lives. I think this band is definitely a spawn of COVID frustration.

AU: It's the 4/20 Issue here at **Absolute Underground**, do any of the band members partake?

BL: We used to, but not these days. However I used to love writing when high, certainly tap into some great creative energies that way

AU: What's the weirdest thing you've seen in public recently?

BL: People wearing masks in a car when they're on their own.

AU: If you could hire anyone to do your album art, who would you pick?

BL: Paolo Girardi! He did our first record, and he is doing our second record also. We love his work.

AU: Any final words for



our readers?

BL: Thanks for having us! Be sure to keep an eye out for some new music from *Black Lava* later this year.

AU: What do you consider the essential metal album?

BL: *Death's Symbolic*, it has everything!

AU: How do people find you online?

@blacklava.aus on instagram, and on all the streaming services.

Photo credit: Joe Riston

BLACK LAVA

Soul Furnace

Interview with Drummer Dan Presland

By Raymond MacKay

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

BL: Hello! It's Dan from *Black Lava*, and I'm the drummer



AU: What was your first introduction to metal?

BL: I think it was *Metallica*, I heard it on a music TV show in the 90s

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

BL: It's so far very short, as we founded in August 2021. Myself and Ben (guitarist) got together to just jam, and some songs came about really quickly. Soon after we recruited Rob (vox) and Tim (bass). We recorded *Soul Furnace* four months later.

AU: Who else is in the band?

BL: Ben Boyle (guitars), Rob Watkins (vox), Tim Anderson (bass)

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

BL: We have elements of black and death metal, but with a focus on groove. I would like to think there's a progressive edge to it also, I think the new material really shows that as well.

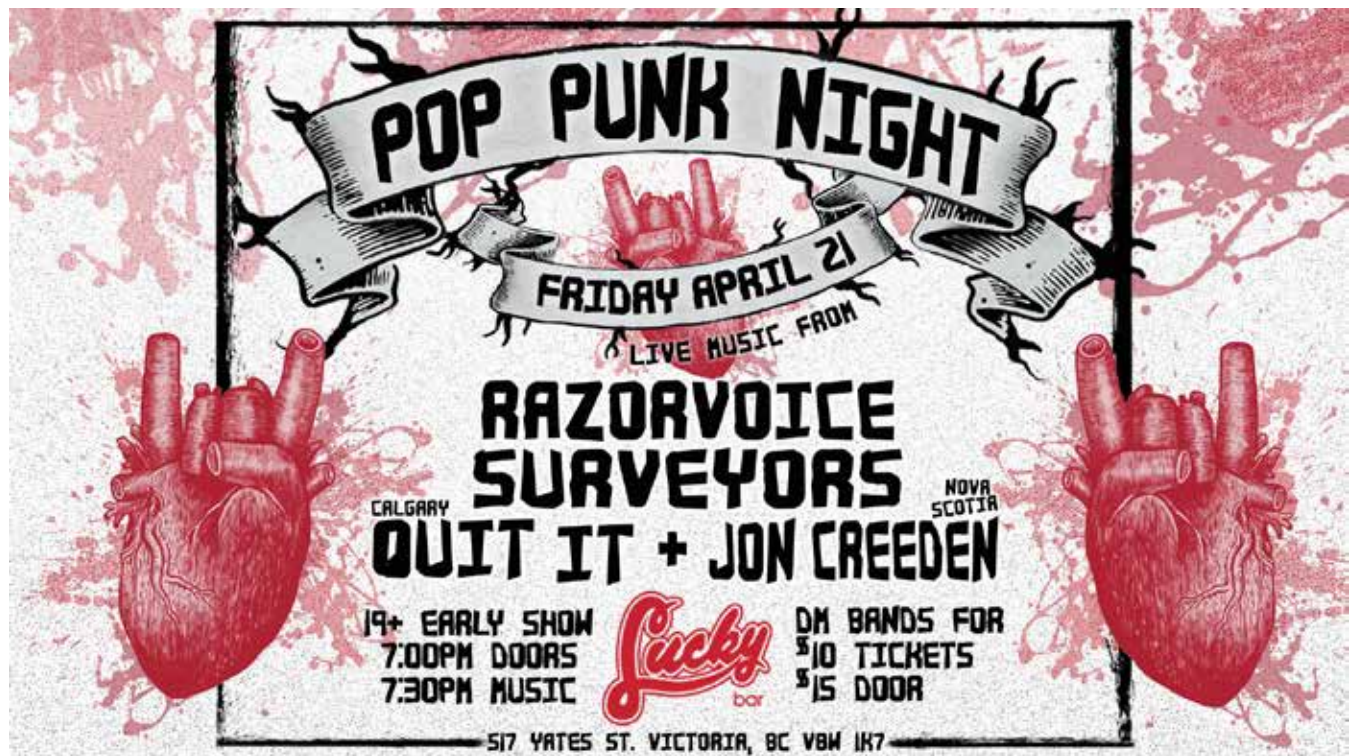
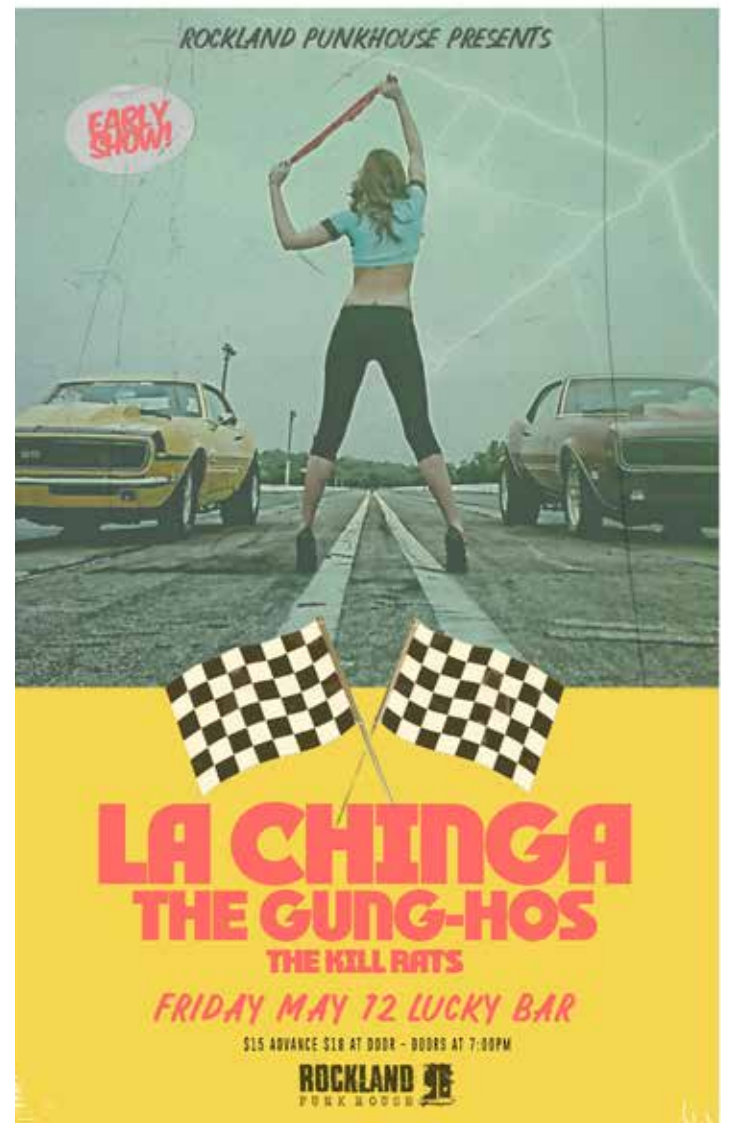
AU: Where are you from and what's the music scene like there?

BL: We are all from Melbourne, Australia - and these days it is very healthy.

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

BL: Yes, we just finished mixing album two with Fredrik Nordstrom. We are hoping for it to be out later this year.

AU: What are some of the inspirations you draw on while writing music?





BLUE OIL

Quebec's First All-Girl Punk Band

By M. Asselin, MM. Bédard, M. Fatter

Before the mass exodus of head offices to other provinces in the late 1970's and early 80's, Montreal was both the financial capital of Canada and the second-biggest disco capital in North America, right behind New York. Over the past 40 or so years it's also been the epicenter of Canadian musical experimentation with post-rock, punk, post-punk, the Godspeed scene, chamber pop, free improv, the half-underground / half-academic experimental thing, musique actuelle. Fueling all this creativity is an exquisite blend of French-and English-language cultures.

In the late 70's, the girls who would go on to form *Blue Oil* were approaching high school graduation (Grade 11 in Quebec). They all lived in Ville Saint-Laurent, in the north end of the city, right where the Cartierville and Saraguay boroughs collide. Like most teenagers at the time, their soundtrack was primarily the established rock bands – the kings and queens of commercial rock radio – broadcast nonstop on Montreal's CHOM FM.

In fall 1977, Christiane Fatter, Manon Fatter and Marie Martine Bédard organized a school concert under the name *Darkvision*. They somehow convinced the nuns of Manon's convent school, Collège Ste-Marcelline, to let them put on a rock show. After this initial gig, each girl briefly went down a different artistic path.

By the fall of 1978, sisters Christiane and Manon were determined to form a new band. Soon, their living room became a rehearsal space, and a new group name became a priority. In 1979, there was a worldwide oil crisis due to the aftershocks of the Iranian Revolution. Since it was a top news item, the band thought it timely to name themselves after this contentious fossil fuel, adding colour for extra punch. After numerous members, Christiane and Manon teamed up with Marie Martine on guitar in March 1981, and Manon Asselin became the lead singer.

As rock music lovers, the girls often headed downtown to Sam the Record Man and Dutchy's

Record Cave. They were hunting for the music they heard about on underground radio shows and in music magazines. They would each regularly spend up to 20 bucks, which was a substantial amount of money in 1981, on newly released vinyl. Before long, they got into the punk and new wave sounds coming out of England and the States. That changed everything. With rented and borrowed recording equipment, and the goal of creating a great demo, *Blue Oil* laid down five original songs at Le Local. The 1981 Bunker Tapes demo included: "Money," "Far Too Much," "Living for the Time," "Sardine City," and "Free Fleas on the Roof." The last two songs were

produced for the Musi-Video Show, hosted by Richard Berle and Erica Ehm, and can both be seen on YouTube.

In 1982, Christiane left the band and went on to teach guitar full-time at a local music school. The three remaining girls began playing up to five nights a week. Most of the time, they crunched through three 45-minute sets, covering different rock genres plus their original punk and new wave songs. It was a huge challenge playing in venues where the audience was used to seeing guy groups covering Top 40 rock. Night after night, they had to prove they had the same wingspan as the guys, while presenting a different genre of music. In the early 80s, music lovers hanging in bars throughout Quebec did not know any of the punk rock songs *Blue Oil* covered. No one had ever heard of the *Sex Pistols* or even the queen of punk, Patti Smith.

Days off were for adding new songs to the repertoire and recording original titles. Tapes were submitted to different radio stations for talent contests and, in true DIY fashion, the group financed its own first release on vinyl, pressing 1,000 copies of the single "Money"/"Living for the Time" at the end of 1982.

Between 1982 and 1985, *Blue Oil* toured relentlessly. After each tour, the band returned home to Montreal with a decent paycheck. At the time, *Blue Oil* was one of the best-paid groups in the province. To ensure the band got their fair share of the gate receipts, their manager Dino kept a handgun in the van's glove compartment just in case a club owner "forgot" to pay.

Later, the band had the privilege of playing at The Spectrum, a Montreal concert hall that seated around 1,200 and had a cabaret set up with table service. The girls opened for the San Francisco band *Wire Train* and the British group *Modern English*. As happened occasionally, after opening for *Modern English*, they had to immediately pack up their gear and hit the highway for another gig. That time it was to play the Chateau du Lac, located in the town of Hudson, an off-island Montreal suburb.

With so many gigs in 1983-85, the band got road

weary. Sleazy venues and no support from local radio stations started to take a toll on everyone. At the end of 1985, Marie Martine decided to leave.

In 1986, Marie-Christine Thiboutot was recruited on bass and Manon A. took on the challenge of playing keyboards as well as singing lead. *Blue Oil's* sound took a different shape, and they produced some new songs, then went out on mini tours supporting popular Quebec bands and artists like the *Box*, *Bündock*, and *Mitsou*. In 1988, they signed a recording contract with Alert Records and released a 12" EP, followed by a full album in 1992, produced by Neil O'Connor. This one came out under the name *Ginger Snaps*.

We would like to thank everybody who played a role in *Blue Oil's* adventure, personally and professionally. You fueled our passion and determination.




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Outhouse Productions and Records

Interview with founder Laurie Storrie
By John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself and Outhouse Productions and Records.

OH: Me personally? I'm Laurie Storrie (They/Them), the founder of Outhouse Productions and Records. But Outhouse is a whole team of us. Craig Johnson and I (of *Pilsnarnar*) are at the center of it, and then we have a few folks who help with gear and putting up posters in different towns, as well as photography and graphic design. As for what we do, it's a slightly unhinged mixture of things... The simplest answer is "Anything we can to help bands and the music scene." The productions side of it is predominantly tour/show booking, networking, and promotion. The records side of it is silk-screening, graphic design, recording, mixing, and a radio show.

AU: When and how did the organization come together?

OH: It was 2008 and I was living in Halifax, doing occasional house shows for my friends in my basement. I was in there (The zine library) one day and it came up that they constantly get asked by touring bands where to play. I gave them my email and told them to forward me any bands they got. Pretty soon we were putting on a show every couple weeks for bands from all over Canada and the eastern US. I moved back home to the west coast in 2010 but the emails kept coming. The nice thing is when you've been booking bands from all over, suddenly you can help with shows all over, and with a little help now I was booking tours for bands from coast to coast. That's kind of how the productions part of it started and has been going for the past decade and a half. The record label part of it just started this winter after realizing all the skills and resources we have been compiling to help our own bands over the years could easily be passed on to other bands. I feel like Outhouse Productions was already kind of a label without



knowing it.

AU: As a small label, who do you represent to date?

OH: We just officially launched as a label two months ago, but we already have three bands on the label; *Pilsnarnar* out of Vancouver, *Mean Bikini* out of Cumberland, and *The Grinning Barretts* who are spread out around Victoria and Nanaimo. We've gotten requests from a dozen other great bands to join, but we are taking it slow and making sure we are laying out the right foundation. Things like inclusivity, safety, feminism, queer rights, and anti-oppressive politics are at the forefront of our political beliefs and we want our roster to reflect that as we grow.

AU: You do some shows out of an old aircraft hangar on Pender Island. Tell us the story of how that came together.

OH: That's a great small-town story. A friend of a friend has a farm built on a decommissioned small aircraft field. I was helping him corral his pigs from one field to another when we went by an old barn. I've always dreamed of having a big barn venue, so I asked him if it was in use. He said I couldn't use that one, but he walked me over to this airplane hangar packed to the rafters in junk and said if I cleaned it out, I could use it for whatever I wanted. I remember thinking "Someone I met an hour ago just handed me an airplane hangar". I got a couple friends together and we built a bar and a huge stage, set up a PA and the rest is history.

AU: You've built up the hangar yourself and you have more planned for the space. Tell us about that.

OH: I run a small carpentry company as my day



job, so the building part was easy. We had just demolished this huge deck, so we re-purposed all the wood to make the bar and stage for basically free. We've been expanding the place ever since, this summer we're hoping to build a green room onto the back of the building and maybe a mezzanine up top. I was just looking back at pictures from our first event in 2019 and it was pretty rugged. Our goal is to have a more impressive venue each year when outhouse fest rolls around.

AU: Tell us about Outhouse Fest

OH: Shortly after our first two events at the hangar the pandemic started and put shows to a halt. It was one thing as a band to not be able to play shows, but as a promoter I had all this energy and nowhere to put it. I started doing an online radio show to share music and stay connected with all the people I care about.

I remember a particularly sad winter day, being on air trying to stay optimistic and saying "One day I'm not going to just be playing these songs on the radio for you, but I'm going to get all these bands in one spot and we're going to have a festival" another year passed and suddenly we could outdoor shows with a capacity of 150 people. I called up 12 or so bands and we had Outhouse Fest 1, which was pretty much an invite only party for everyone I hadn't seen in ages. The farm being a decommissioned airfield lent itself perfectly to a fest as there is this huge flat grass landing strip to camp on right outside the hangar. In 2022 we went up to 16 bands, and this year we are doing 20, plus burlesque and a small open mic stage for between the main-stage bands.

AU: Where else do you put on shows?



OH: All over the island and coast. People don't seem to realize it, but there is this awesome tour loop where you can play Vancouver, then do Victoria, Nanaimo, and Cumberland, then head over to the sunshine coast and do Powell River, Sechelt, Gibsons, and end up back in Van. If you want to fill it out even more, there's Pender, Denman and Quadra Islands, or you could dip over to Port Alberni and Ucluelet too. People way too frequently seem to think that it's only worth playing shows in cities, but small towns come out in force.

AU: Who has your attention in the scene right now? Who do you like to see on stage from the island or lower mainland?

OH: I can't get enough from *Rong* out of Vancouver, their live show is unreal. Also keep your eyes out for *Big Ethel*. Their album isn't out at the time of this interview but go catch them if you have a chance. *Line Traps* from Victoria is a band I wish I discovered years ago, and *Harsh* out of Calgary is at the top of every one of my playlists right now.

AU: Anything else you want to tell us about? Final Thoughts?

OH: Tune into Outhouse Radio! It's online every Tuesday from 7-9 Pacific. I play an hour of Alt folk music followed by an hour of Local and nostalgic punk, interview bands, talk about upcoming shows, give stuff away. Plus, there's a discord chat room to hang out with other listeners. Find the ad in this magazine. It's a hoot.

outhouseproductionsandrecords.com

BUSINESS PROFILE



Anarchy Coffee Roasters

Interview by Beano Bandito

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what is your hidden talent?

Anarchy Coffee Roasters: My name is Bailey Mitchell and my hidden talent is being able to eat yogurt every single day.

AU: What is the origin story and history of Anarchy Coffee Roasters?

ACR: We started Anarchy Coffee Roasters in my workshop in Whistler, BC after I got my hands on some green coffee beans from a trip to Thailand. I decided to start messing around with coffee roasting by building my own roasters in my workshop. After a while I figured this would be a great way to escape working for

the ski industry conglomerate of Vail Resorts, and start my own thing involving a few of my favourite things: Coffee and Punk Rock. My old college buddy Jesse Nelson who shares a lot of the same passions jumped on board around this time and we have been grinding it out since. Pun fully intended, deal with it.

AU: Why do anarchy and coffee go so well together?

ACR: There is a direct correlation between caffeine and being woke. On the other hand, coffee provides opportunities for people of all walks of life to gather and talk shit.

AU: What are the types of coffee you roast? Take us through your coffees currently available.

ACR: We deal with specialty grade coffees that are ethically sourced. Once they are in our hands, we work to develop flavour profiles suitable for all coffee drinkers. These range from traditional medium and dark roasts, to the "new style" light

roasts that boast exquisite, unique flavours that you would never expect to find in a cup of coffee. We have eight categories in our lineup including a few staples, and a couple slots that rotate to showcase the extra special beans that we bring in.

AU: What makes Anarchy Coffee Roasters unique?

ACR: We have taken a casual approach to the somewhat pretentious world of coffee by creating an inviting brand that allows people to explore a more 'craft' product. We have done this by

creating a range of excellent coffees that can expose coffee drinkers to most roasting styles, and by making the interaction with us and our other customers really fun.

AU: What is your mission statement as a business?

ACR: We are in this business to supply good coffee and good times to everyone, while creating an outlet we can use to invoke general positivity in our

community.

AU: You are located in Kelowna, BC, but is your coffee available at other locations as well?

ACR: We just began our wholesale program so are slowly branching out. We are pretty easy to track down in the Okanagan valley through a few locally owned shops in the area. For the

folks in the lower mainland, go see our buddies at Punk Rock Pastries in Burnaby for a hot cup, some treats, and a bag of beans to take home. If you are reading this and have a spot in mind where we'd be a good fit, we'd love to hear about it!

AU: Where is the farthest place you have ever shipped your coffee?

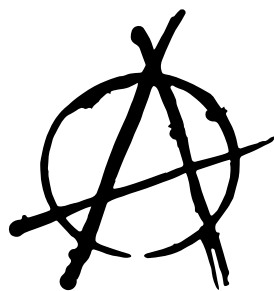
ACR: To my anarchist cousin in Scotland!

AU: Describe the perfect cup of coffee verbally if possible.

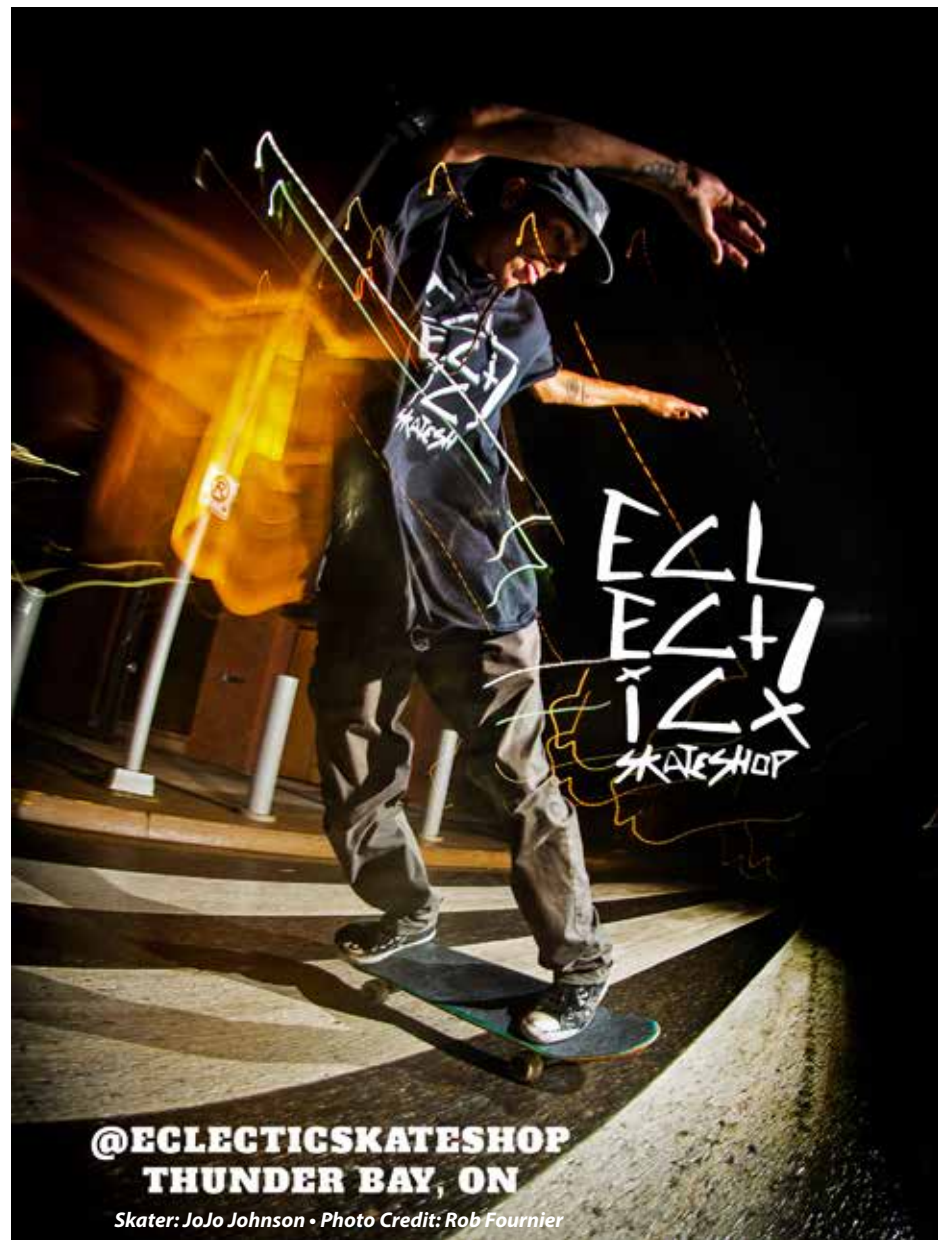
ACR: Austin Powers said it best, "a

bit nutty!"

The best cup should be enjoyed black and have a



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CANNABUS

The Maple Spliff Sessions

Interview with Guitarist James Matheson
by Iree-I

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

CB: I'm James Matheson from the band *Cannabus*, I play guitar and sing vocals for the band.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

CB: We formed around January of last year. Me and Ethan (our bassist,) played together in another band called *The Gracefully Hazed*. Ethan brought me to jam with him and Brandon, our drummer. We really hit it off jamming out together and we ending up writing the songs for our upcoming EP.

AU: Who else is in the band?

CB: Other than myself, there's Ethan Scott on bass and Brandon Doucet on drums.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

CB: We are a mix of blues/psychedelic sounds with a lot of fuzz and heaviness. Think of bands like *Dead Meadow*, *Fu Manchu*, and *Kyuss*. Lots of drawing from that 60's and 70's sound.

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

CB: We are from the Niagara Region, Ontario Canada, about an hour south of Toronto. Niagara is a great place with a lot of different kinds of bands. Other than us, and couple other bands, the majority of the stoner scene is based in Toronto.

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

CB: We have our first EP called *The Maple Spliff Sessions* dropping on none other than, April 20th, The lord's day. We figure it would be a fitting day for its release, and can't wait for everyone to hear.

AU: It's the 420 Issue here at Absolute Underground, do any of the band members partake?

CB: Well, when you're in a band named *Cannabus* it comes with the territory. Our upcoming EP is named in honor of the "Smoke" session we had before recording it and we got more than a little

stoned one could say.

AU: What's your favourite thing to do while high?

CB: I think all three of us would agree that playing music is as good as it gets when your nice and stoned. Listening or playing, either is the perfect match when your nice and toasted.

AU: What's the last perfect record you listened to?

CB: I have really been enjoying the new album *Soul Murder* by the Australian based band *Child*. I'm a big fan of their mix of fuzz and blues. I've listened through this whole album over and over, it's just great stuff front to back.

AU: Who's the ultimate stoner rock band?

CB: Well, *Black Sabbath* started it all, there is no doubt about that. I couldn't pick just one but for me *Kyuss*, *Nebula*, *Dead Meadow*, *Radio Moscow*, *Dozer*, and *Monster Magnet* really are some of my top stoner rock bands, but there are so many more. There really is an endless amount of great



stoner bands.

AU: Anything else to promote?

CB: Our New EP *The Maple Spliff Sessions* will be out April 20th of this year and our Single "Rolling/Black Water" is available now on Bandcamp and all streaming platforms.

AU: How do people find you online?

CB: Check out our Facebook and Instagram. You can find our linktree for all things *Cannabus*, like streaming links for Spotify and Apple Music. Our Bandcamp, as well as our Youtube page where we post our live sets and more.



Drab Majesty

VERBODEN FESTIVAL

Interview by Raymond MacKay

Verboten Festival in its 6th year is B.C.'s only multi-day dark music festival. 3 days, 40+ artists, multiple venues.

AU: What is your position at the Verboten Festival?

Verboten Festival: Isku Katerwol here, founder, and curator of Verboten Festival.

AU: What is the history of the Verboten Festival?

VF: In 2015, I was on tour in Europe and noticed that nearly every city of comparable size to Vancouver seemed to have a festival dedicated to showcasing post-punk, dark-wave etc. Why didn't Vancouver have its own mini WGT fest? Our city was an incubator for the OG dark-wave and Industrial scene. With the second wave rising in and around 2015, it felt like the right time to try my hand at organizing a multi-day fest.

AU: Describe the event for our readers.

VF: Three full days and nights of some of the best dark-wave and post-punk on the planet. This year we will have back-to-back daytime outdoor events with BBQ burgers and beverages, two stages, and a view of the north shore mountains. The main events take place at the Rickshaw theatre, followed by after-parties that will have y'all dancing the night away.

AU: Where and When is this year's festival?

VF: May 12-14th, see verbodenfestival.com for details!

AU: Describe the festival's music.

VF: Dark & dance-able. Post-punk, dark-wave, EDM, synth-pop etc. For those 80's fans, think *The Cure*, *Soft Cell*, *Cabaret Voltaire*, *Front 242*, etc.. The late-night parties will have you dancing late to the sounds of techno, acid house, etc.

AU: What bands will be performing at this year's festival?

VF: So many to mention! Some of the headliners include:



Zanias

Drab Majesty, Kontravoid, Zanias, Leathers, Panther Modern, Void Vision, Patriarchy, and many more!

AU: What are some highlights from previous festivals?

VF: Best to check out some of our photo archives from years past! A picture's worth a thousand words.

AU: Who are some bands you would like to play the festival in the future?

Would love to have *Youth Code*, *Martin Dupont*, *Sextile*, *Molchat Doma*, *She Past Away*, *Lebanon Hanover*, *Selofan*, and the list can go on and on.

AU: Anything else about the event our readers should know?

VF: Don't sleep on this fest, year after year it feels more like a reunion of great humans from around the planet showing up in Vancouver for some great music! Don't procrastinate! Tickets always sell out, and folks get the FOMO

in the 12th hour. This fest is open to all! No dress code, no exclusion, we want to see you there!!

AU: How do people find you and the Verboten Festival online?

verbodenfestival.com



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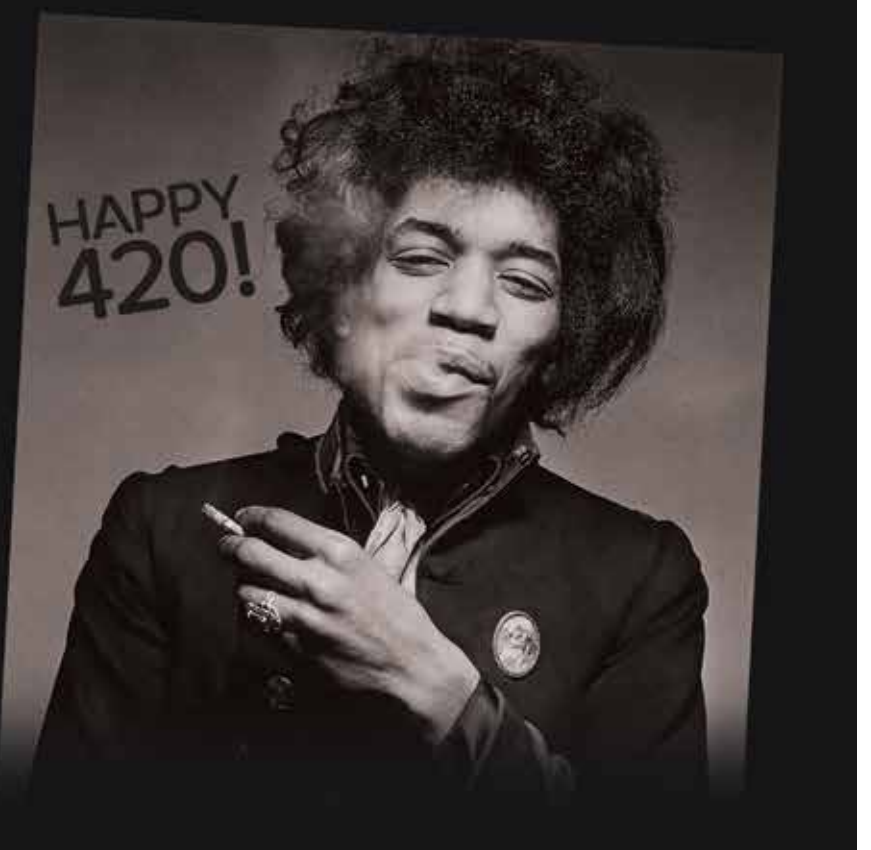
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BEST BUDZ

The Bud Must Grow

Interview by Raymond MacKay and Iree-I

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

Ragnarock Studios: You're talking to Alexander Kalon Panagopoulos, founder of Ragnarock Studios. I'm currently most infamous for helping to create one of the worlds best weed, alien, Sasquatch, lizard people motion picture experiences ever filmed on Vancouver Island.

AU: Tell us all about your movie *Best Budz*.

RS: *Best Budz* is a movie/series/soundtrack/ experience about some dumb, but well meaning stoner dudes who unwittingly save the cosmos.

You get an extended feature length 420 Binge film, also cut into a series of 4 episodes for those who prefer smaller sessions. We also threw in the original soundtrack. All for 10\$. We call it a dime-bag. That's *Best Budz*.

AU: What were your inspirations for this film?

RS: John Carpenter's *They Live*, meets the West Coast Trailer Park Boys, who smoke a joint with *Tenacious D* and *Spinal Tap*. Then, add a little Lebowsky, and you have yourself a party.

AU: How did you approach making this film?



RS: Get er' done or die trying was our general approach. A pandemic was sweeping the world as we shot it, and things were/are getting more bonkers by the day. We figured on a few things - 1) Now or never. 2) It's gotta be consistently fun to do. 3) The good people of the world will need a righteous laugh after all this dank.

AU: Describe your film-making process.

RS: Developing *Best Budz* was a bit of a trip because it forced me to approach film-making from a few different angles simultaneously. First, it was always the producer's angle of practicality, cost and safety. My inner creator however, would tell that producer guy to shut the hell up and then proceed to get flying side kicked down a hill, wearing a giant purple dong suit. Repeatedly. This was the push and pull. Could I? Should I? There wasn't a single accident on set, except a couple of bee stings to the face, but that was out of my hands.

AU: Are there any Easter eggs in this film you'd like to point out?

RS: Indeed there are! In fact, there will be some treasure hunts on bluntflix.com after the release on 420. We're giving away some rad swag and surprises to the first people to answer the, "Riddles of the Bud". It's a white rabbit hole, I assure you.

AU: What do you think are the most important elements of filmmaking?

RS: In general, I would say love of the craft and discipline are key. Art is best served when people love what they do. You see it in the finished product. I feel like you gotta love it enough to make it real or die trying. That's art to me. I don't recommend that methodology for everyone, but that's how I generally approach most things in life, so it works for me.

AU: What do you think are the most important skills for a film crew to have?

RS: Patience and professionalism. From big budget to indie, being able to roll with the

punches is key. We really lucked out with our team. They're a bunch of pros, so it's always a pleasure and safe. The cast is the crew, so we roll really light and can get in, get it done and then get out of the bush without a trace. That's our special sauce.

AU: How did you fund your film?

RS: We all, with love, picked away at the project funding and the bluntflix ecosystem for about four years. We made a distribution channel and Hobbit length weed- Sci-fi- creature- comedy series, during a pandemic for less than it cost to make the *Blair Witch*. That's a win. The laughs alone were worth the effort.

AU: Do you have any plans for a sequel/spin-off/franchise?

RS: Oh yeah. The team is ripped, ready, and roaring to go on *Best Budz 2: The Chronicling*. If you, the good folk want it enough to go buy a dime-bag to save our family bud farm, then, we will abide. Someday, we hope people have a 4/20 *Best Budz* marathon and see if they can make it through all three films back to back smoking doobies.

AU: There is a wicked looking Sasquatch in the movie. What's he all about? Do you believe in the real Bigfoot?

RS: Well, I don't want to spoil his mystery, but I can say with authority that he's a bloody beauty. He makes me believe. Well, him and all the local legends from reputable people, and all the missing 411 files. Vancouver Island is right in the center of something unexplainable, and I dig that.

AU: What science fiction films would you recommend to someone new to the genre?

RS:

Stoner: *Heavy Metal*, *Mars Attacks*, *Paul*

Creepy: *The Thing*, *Aliens*, *Slither*

Adventure: *The Fifth Element*, *Galaxy Quest*, *Attack the Block*



80's Nostalgia: *Total Recall*, *Predator*, *E.T.*

Classic: *Star Trek: Wrath of Khan*, *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, *Alien*

AU: What are some of the best weed movies?

RS: *Friday*, *Up in Smoke*, *Half Baked*, and *Pineapple Express*, which took Seth Rogen something like 5 years to make. I respect that.

AU: Any plans for 420 this year?

RS: Oh, this year we're going to release the Kraken and celebrate.

Maybe some *Alien vs. Sasquatch* Shenanigans?

Some things going down on the island for sure.

AU: Best 420 from the past?

RS: I honestly can't recall. It's hazy.

AU: What are some of your favorite strains?

RS: Fluffy Papaya and White Widow because they help with stiff joints and keeping the dank away.

AU: Where will your film be available/showing?

RS: Only on bluntflix.com

Available 4.20.23

AU: How do people find you online?

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VESICATION

Areola Borealis

Interview by Andy Stewart

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

Vesication: We're Geoff (G), Eddie (E), and Kimio (K) of *Vesication*, a groovy-gory-death-grind band from Toronto, Canada! We're notorious for playing fun sets featuring song titles that will stretch the limits of what is socially and logically acceptable within our society.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band, Did you start the band for the sex, the drugs, or the rock n roll? Or all of the above?

V(E): First part answer: *Vesication* started way back in 2008 and we sucked. We reformed in 2011 with the current lineup plus a second guitarist. We lost our other guitarist when he had moved to B.C. and have stayed a 4 piece pretty much ever since. Second part answer: Yes.

AU: Who else is in the band and what does it

say on their Tinder profiles?

V: The band is:

Matt Delgato - Vocals,

Eddie Pharoah - Guitar,

Kimio Hatashita - Bass/backup vocals and

Geoff Hodsmen - Drums/backup vocals.

Our Tinder profiles refer the reader to our grindr profiles.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

V(G): Groovy "tupa-tupa," death-grind with a hint of slam, a scoop of experimentation, and vocals from the toilet bowl.

V(E): We've also been described as dirty Canadian groovy death-grind.

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

V(G): We recently put out a split with our buds in Ottawa's *Gland* called Pissing Contest.

V(E): Check out our latest single, "Areola Borealis!"

AU: What are some of your best songs about?

V(G): We have a long history of writing songs about what happens in the bathroom. Recently we've started to veer away from that, just as a personal challenge, but surely we can get right back to business with the doodoo again. We aren't the best judges of what is the best song. But yeah anything gross is fair game.

V(E): Some say the song about post apocalyptic hentai with nipples shaped as dicks. Others say its the song about doodoo ice cream. As you can see, we cover a broad range of subjects.

AU: Describe a live show verbally if you can.

V(G): We will play the songs with an acceptable degree of tightness, although maybe 10% faster than on the record. Matt will rub his ass frequently because his hands sweat a lot apparently. He will also please the crowd and disgust the venue staff by loudly announcing all our song titles.

V(E): Lots of drinking, dancing, moshing and laughing.

AU: What's the metal like at your shows and scene these days? Any other killer bands we should check out?

V(G): We are having trouble holding on to venues. But there is no shortage of bands, and not in any particular genre either. Toronto has a lot of different sub-genre bands and doesn't seem to specialize in anything in particular.

V(E): Good venues are disappearing and others are being too concerned with being "Politically Correct" in regards to our nonsensical lyrical content. So not great currently. *Gland* and *Korrosive* are some sweet ass bands to check out.

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse?

V(K) Which one? There are so many happening simultaneously.



V(E): Procrasturbation.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

V(K) Nothing set in stone at the moment, but maybe some shows in the summer.

V(E): Likely looking at having some shows with *Gland* to promote the new split tape.

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

V(E): We suggest you check out our other bands *Human Compost*, *Creame Flesh*, and *Nachtmuse*.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

V(E): Eddie: Who shit my pants?

AU: How do people find you online?

V:

facebook.com/vesication

vesication.bandcamp.com

Also, watch our latest single, "Areola Borealis," on youtube.



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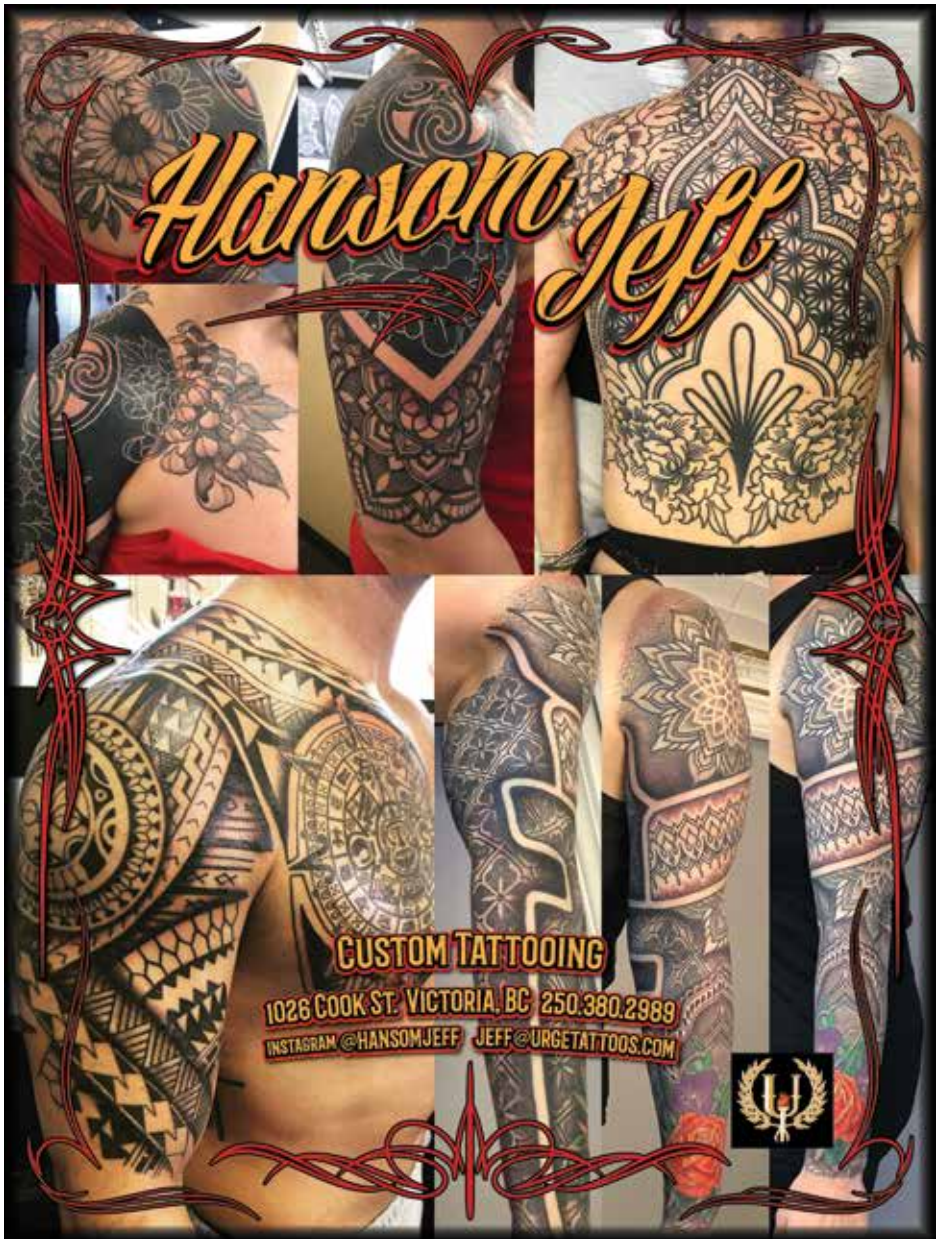
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The Gregg Turner Group Songs for Sparrow

Interview by Ira Hunter and Ray MacKay

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

Gregg Turner: I am Gregg Turner, singer-songwriter guitarist for the Gregg Turner Group. I am known for being a co-founding member of LA punk band *The Angry Samoans*.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk music?

GT: My first exposure to punk music was hearing "Talk Talk" by the *Music Machine* and "You're Gonna Miss Me" by the *13th Floor Elevators*.

AU: What was the genesis of your early band Angry Samoans?

GT: Mike Saunders and I (with writer Richard Meltzer) created *Vom* (as in Vomit) in 1976. That lasted a couple years and soon morphed into the *Angry Samoans*. Saunders and I were not able to let go of fun tunes like "Electrocute Your Cock" and "I'm In Love With Your Mom."

AU: What other bands have you been in since leaving Angry Samoans?

GT: In 1998 through 2008 I put together *The Blood Drained Cows*, which was 60's thrash garage rock stuff. After that ended I pursued solo efforts in the vein of Jonathan Richman, Tom Lehrer and early *Kinks*. Three years ago I assembled my present lineup of *The Gregg Turner Group*. We recruited a dynamo lead guitar player and the songs I've scribed revisit the attitude and 60s garage source of the *Blood Drained Cows* but with poppy and catchy tunes.

AU: Have you heard of the punk rock Christmas band called Angry Snowmans?

GT: I've been told.

AU: Who else is in the band and that's on their musical resumes?

GT: Sarah Meadows plays bass and does some

lead and harmony vocals. She's a virtuoso musician with a beautiful voice. Aaron Anderson is a 25-year-old lead guitar player. He's really a bright light and understands the 60's and 70's attitude we dial: *Stooges*, *Dead Boys*, *Ray Davies* and more.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

GT: As said, we're molded in 60's garage rock with poppy excursions/diversions and attempts at awkward humor.

AU: Tell us about the three upcoming shows you have planned and what can people expect to see and hear?

GT: April 14th is at Alex's Bar in Long Beach. I'm told it is a hip musical watering hole. April 15 at Gigi's Cocktail Lounge in Ventura, CA, and an afternoon show at Zebulon in LA. It's been offered that this is a hipster hangout because Kim Gordon is frequent spotted there. Most of our live sound is akin to the new LP that's been just released, *Songs For Sparrow* on Triple X records. Bipolar musical cycling of 60's garage thrash and catchy melodic pop tunes.

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

GT: I live in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The music scene, such as it is here, is a pathetic combination of *Eagles* cover bands, boring and calcified R and B hacks and hippie-ish stuff pilfered as "Americana." Ugh.

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

GT: Our new album, *Songs For Sparrow*, has just been released on Triple X records.

AU: What are some of the inspirations you draw on while writing music?

GT: Ray Davies and early Lou Reed/*Velvets* are foundational hallmarks for me.

AU: It's the 420 Issue here at Absolute Underground, do any of the band members partake?

GT: This is my/our first exposure to your esteemed circulation.



AU: What's your favourite thing to do while high?

GT: I don't get high. Only substance issue I've ever had is with antihistamines (I'm very allergic).

AU: What's the last perfect record you listened to?

GT: I love "Marquee Moon" by *Television* – had it on the turntable last night. So that's most recent – but there are so many other "perfect" records (*Kinks*' "Village Green Preservation Society," *Velvet Underground*'s "Loaded," 1st *Dead Boys* LP, I could go on.)

AU: What's the weirdest thing you've seen in public recently?

GT: A Homeless man holding a hammer in the air in front of Walgreen's

AU: What's your least favourite song by a good band?

GT: "Start Me Up" by *The Rolling Stones* – but they've had a lot of equally terrible songs. On the other hand their *Beggar's Banquet* could have been included in the perfect record category above.

AU: If you could hire anyone to do your album art, who would you pick?

GT: R. Crumb or Ronn Spencer (he designed the Back From Samoa *Angry Samoans* LP cover).

AU: Who is a musical hero of yours?

GT: Allan Sherman ("Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah ...").

AU: How have bands like the Troggs and the Kinks influenced your sound?

GT: The Troggs were the British *Stooges*, how could that not be great? Ray and Dave Davies are prime number creators (unable to be factored into smaller parts). Home-run genius.

AU: A lot of your songs and upcoming book focus on the decay of American culture. What are some more thoughts you have on the topic?

GT: Amerika in a sad state of affairs. Evolving to the waste basket of political and cultural relevancy. Rise of Trump sycophant-ism symptomatic of this aesthetic vacuity. Taylor Swift? Honestly?

AU: Tell us about some of the themes and ideas present in your upcoming album.

GT: Pretty eclectic – "Why Must I Be a Necrophiliac In Love" a snarky play on the Dion song. "Stakeout on Dope Street" a *Velvets*-ish surf retro instrumental. "Medication" a confessional warning of antihistamine abuse, "The Last 20 Years" a prescient apocalyptic warning a la "Eve of Destruction," "Vampire Dog of Jesus Christ" a thrashy 70's punky Roky Erickson attempt, "Right Track Now" – a pretty duet with bassist Sarah Meadows and I doing the *13th Floor Elevators* cover. She has a gorgeous voice.

AU: You've covered CCR's "Bad Moon Rising" on your new album. Does this song have a special significance to you and the band?

GT: Another great apocalypse tune. John Fogerty was a visionary back in '68 when he wrote the song ("I hear the voice of rage and ruin").

AU: What can you tell us about your new song "The Vampire Dog of Jesus Christ"?

GT: I always thought Jesus would have a misbehaved dog. But it would compulsively dig up graves (of confederate soldiers!) and eventually get out of control and bite Jesus and his father. The dog was the consequence of a botched resurrection, as alluded to in the song. Bad dog.

AU: Are there any other bands you would like to cover in the future?

GT: *SRC*'s "Black Sheep" if we ever get a Hammond organ. Or "96 Tears".

AU: Anything else to promote?

GT: I just had a book of short stories published last year called *Hallucinations From Hell: Confessions of an Angry Samoan*. It's not a musical memoir of any kind, just a collection of crazy shit I've observed over the years. Published by RareBird books (rarebirdlit.com).

AU: What can you tell us about your upcoming novel, Confessions Of An Angry Samoan?

GT: Observational experiences I've lived through finally transcribed to a semi-sometimes-literate anthology of collected tales. I'm a situational voyeur and this is the price I pay

AU: Any final words for our readers?

GT: Stay sane in tumultuous times.

AU: How do people find you online?

GT: My email is gregg@greggturner.com I'm very friendly, I respond quickly. Also folks can check out greggturner.com and The Gregg Turner Group Facebook page.



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AU: Is there a skatepark in Bozeman, Montana where your skate shop is located?

CP: There are five skateparks within an hour's drive from my shop, including two in town. Montana skateboarding has become notable thanks, in part, to Montana Pool Service and Evergreen Skateparks. They've built around two dozen parks across the state over the past 12 years or so. Grindline, Dreamland and others have built parks in Montana as well.

AU: Describe the sensation of skateboarding verbally if you can.

CP: When I step on my skateboard my mind becomes relaxed and focused.

AU: Why is skateboarding such a passion for you?



Cub Power Owner Nathan Howe

CP: I love everything about skateboarding. I feel free when I'm rolling and I absolutely need it for my mental health. Skateboarding makes me a much better person.

AU: Who is currently on your skate team and what does each individual bring to the table?

CP: The Cub Power skate team consists of Greg and Nick Moran, Stephen Singer and Bobby Ibarra. Each of these guys rip it up with their own individual styles. It's not only their rad skills that got them on the team. The fact that they are rippers with hearts of gold is what nailed it for me.

AU: Any events, comps, or demos planned for the Cub Power skate team?

CP: I'll be having at least two skate jams in the coming months with live bands, ramps, rails and other obstacles. We'll be doing demos but not competitions. All skaters are winners.

AU: Advice for younger

skaters just starting out.

CP: Remember that the main point of skateboarding is that it's fun. It's not easy, but it is an absolute blast.

AU: Any plans to film a skate video in the future?

CP: No plans for a video but definitely a desire. Perhaps within a year or so.

AU: What are the wicked mountains to snowboard in Montana?

CP: Backcountry is the way to go these days. The resorts are too crowded. I currently love the Sapphire and Pintlar Ranges but there is an endless

sea of peaks in Montana's section of the Rocky Mountains.

AU: Final words of wisdom for our reader.

CP: Skate and Destroy. Crush your bad feelings with the joy of shredding.

Instagram: @cubpowerskateshop



Skater Credit: Stephen Singer

CUB POWER

Interview by J.D. Shredgnar

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

Cub Power: Hello, I am Nate Howe, aka Cub Power, and I own a little skate shop in Bozeman, Montana. I've been skateboarding in Montana, on and off, since the late 1970's. I opened my shop in Butte in August of 2021 and moved it to my hometown of Bozeman at the end of 2022.

AU: What makes Cub Power Skate Shop unique?

CP: The shop is an anomaly in that it is situated in the mountains of Montana. It's been a risky venture, but the move to Bozeman has been a success on every level. People here are active, healthy and positive in general and the stoke for skateboarding is high.



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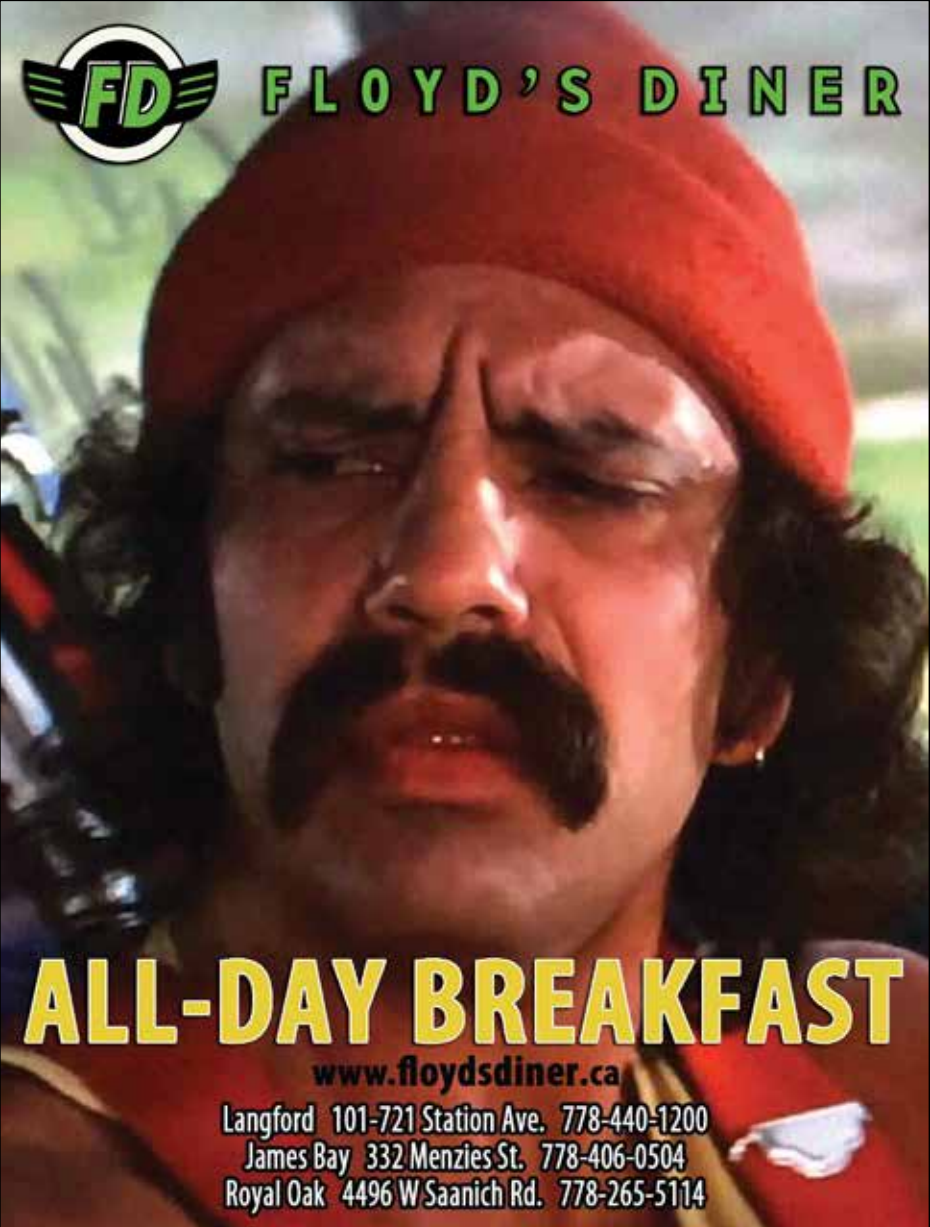
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WrestleCore Rocks Vancouver!

Wrestling has always been a form of entertainment that pushes the boundaries of what is considered acceptable in mainstream society. In Canada, WrestleCore has emerged as the wildest, most alternative wrestling show, offering a unique blend of athleticism, drama, and shock value that has captured the attention of wrestling fans across the country.

WrestleCore is known for its high-octane, action-packed live events that showcase some of the most talented and daring wrestlers in Canada. These events are not for the faint of heart, as wrestlers are encouraged to push themselves to the limit and engage in extreme stunts and maneuvers that leave audiences on the edge of their seats.

One of the reasons why WrestleCore has become such a popular attraction in Canada is its willingness to break

away from the traditional rules and regulations that govern mainstream wrestling. This allows wrestlers to explore new and innovative ways to showcase their skills, often resulting in breathtaking and awe-inspiring performances that leave audiences wanting more.

In addition to its live events, WrestleCore has also gained a significant following through its



TURNBUCKLE SANDWICH

streaming platform on Independent Wrestling

TV. This platform allows viewers from all over the world to watch WrestleCore shows from the comfort of their own homes, making it easier than ever to keep up with the latest in alternative wrestling entertainment.

What sets WrestleCore apart from other wrestling shows is its commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all fans. The company has made a concerted effort to promote diversity and representation within its ranks, featuring wrestlers from a wide range of backgrounds and identities.

This commitment to being inclusive has helped WrestleCore build a loyal fan base, with viewers tuning in week after week to watch the latest matches and catch up on the drama and excitement. Whether you're a die-hard wrestling fan or simply looking for something new and exciting to watch, WrestleCore is sure to deliver an unforgettable experience.

Co-Founders Kobra Kai and Calamity Kate invite the Absolute Underground readers to come check out a live event here in Vancouver. You can catch WrestleCore at the historic Rickshaw theatre or check for updates on their socials and WrestleCore.ca. WrestleCore is undoubtedly the wildest, alternative wrestling show in Canada. With its high-energy live

events and commitment to breaking away from traditional wrestling norms, WrestleCore has captured the attention of fans across the country and around the world. Whether you're watching from the front row or streaming from home on Independent Wrestling TV, you're sure to be entertained and amazed by the talent and spectacle of WrestleCore.



TURNBUCKLE SANDWICH



MECHA WOLF

Lead singer of the band *Monster Wolf* and current NWA World Tag Team Champion

Interview By Matthew Rooney

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?

MW: I am Mecha Wolf. Singer-songwriter of the band *Monster Wolf* and also have been a professional wrestler for the last 20 years.

AU: Your partnership with Bestia 666 and his father Damián 666 has been quite successful. How did you guys come to tag together? It's kind of a perfect match.

MW: My partnership with Bestia 666 and Damián 666 started about six or seven years ago. We started together in the original incarnation of La Rebelión, which consisted of Angel Garza, who is now in WWE, Bestia 666, and myself as the last member before we started adding other guys like Black Taurus, Lacey Lane (who is wrestling as Kayden Carter in WWE,) Último Ninja (who is also in WWE as Humberto Garza,) and I believe Black Danger was also apart of the team.

AU: You guys are a nice contrast to NWA's retro approach. When you guys arrived were you

worried, you'd stick out too much?

MW: When we came to the NWA it wasn't so much that we were worried about sticking out, more that we were worried about adapting to the style of the NWA. As you know, the style in Mexico is a little faster, a lot more high-flying, and we had to learn how to slow it down and work more on our character. To us, it was very beneficial because I believe we were able to complete our style and become even better workers having come to the NWA.

AU: You're opening for Doyle soon and the NWA is run by Billy Corgan. Has wrestling made you more immune to being starstruck?

MW: I totally believe wrestling has made me, not immune, but it has made me learn how to be more cool with me meeting my idols, celebrities, people who are famous, et cetera. Because they're one of us: they're people who had a dream and made their dream happen just like I did. And in a way it's cool, not only cool that I get to be friends with people like Doyle and people like Billy Corgan, but we also have a working partnership, which I think is even cooler. Thinking back, I would never have imagined that Doyle would be sponsoring my band, and I would never have imagined that I would be working for Billy of

the *Smashing Pumpkins*. So for me, it's a big honour and it's something that I've just had to learn to be cool with.

AU: How did you get into Misfits and if you've watched their WCW run what did you think of it?

MW: I got into the *Misfits* as a young skateboard kid in Puerto Rico. I think my first them was Static Age, as a hand-me-down from a friend. And then I got to see them in WCW with Vampiro. So, to me, that was huge, two of my biggest influences together. It was a big deal for me as a kid and still is to this day.

AU: Beyond Misfits, who have influenced Monster Wolf?

MW: As far as influences for *Monster Wolf*, *Alice Cooper* obviously, Glen Danzig, with the *Misfits* and anything Glen Danzig did, *King Diamond*. I'm a big fan of *Mayhem*, older black metal bands like *Venom*. And of course, *Motörhead*.

And *Ghost* as far as newer bands. I think those are some bands that have really influenced *Monster Wolf's* style and what we do on stage.

AU: Ever get the chance to talk to Billy Corgan about Monster Wolf or horror punk in general? I know other pumpkins were big on Danzig

and Christian Death.

MW: I'll bring up the horror punk subject and talk about it. But we usually just talk about pro wrestling, catching up, our family, basic stuff like that. Billy's a great guy, and a great boss as well.

AU: You came up in the Puerto Rican wrestling scene. It's highly influential and well-known, but seems like an almost underground thing. Do you think it should be more popular, or do you think it benefits from being out of the spotlight?

MW: I totally think the pro wrestling in Puerto Rico should be seen more. Because there's a lot of great matches that have happened there. There's a lot of great talent that has gone through Puerto Rico. It's almost a shame that they don't have the exposure worldwide that even one of the bigger indie companies in America has. One of the oldest wrestling companies there in Puerto Rico has been running for 50 years. They used to draw hundreds of thousands of people in the 80's. So it's kind of a

shame that Puerto Rican wrestling doesn't have that spotlight. It's all a matter of time though, and I believe that there's a lot of great talent there right now that will be able to lift Puerto Rican wrestling.

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Breaking Down Dark Horse Comic's Blue Book on UFOs

By Ed Sum

Dark Horse Comics is better known for their release of a wide range of supernatural themed titles, (like *Hellboy*), but for Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon, those types of releases are few. When they explore this side of the unknown, I feel *Blue Book* is perfect! Most of the tales offer something new even I'm not aware of.

Here, creators James Tynion IV and Michael Avon Oeming give readers a look at a few well-known cases from UFO lore. The tale that kicks things off recounts the famous case of Betty and Barney Hill. They were the very first alien abductees, and recounting their narrative is the perfect choice! In #2, we see how their lives have been affected. Betty can't let the encounter go, and her inquiries set the tone for what's still to come. Although the last page ends abruptly, I'm sure there's further drama to discover.

What makes this series unique is in how Oeming approaches illustrating each story. His choice of colours is not because of the book title, and I feel he's adding a few symbolic references too.

I'm glad each comic offers two tales rather than just one. The side stories offer something different and here, at Coney Island, everyone finds a man flying the skies in some kind of mechanical suit. I'm guessing they saw a time traveler rather than the famous Mothman from Point Pleasant. Rereading this

tale is highly recommended. Thankfully, in issue #2, the story about the *Green Children of Woolpit* is better known. What's offered does not differ from written accounts. I surmise this tale is partially based on folklore.

To hear from Agnes where she and her brother came from suggests they're from a parallel world known as St. Martin. But wherever that world is, trying to find it doesn't matter. Instead,

what we have are Oeming's ideas.

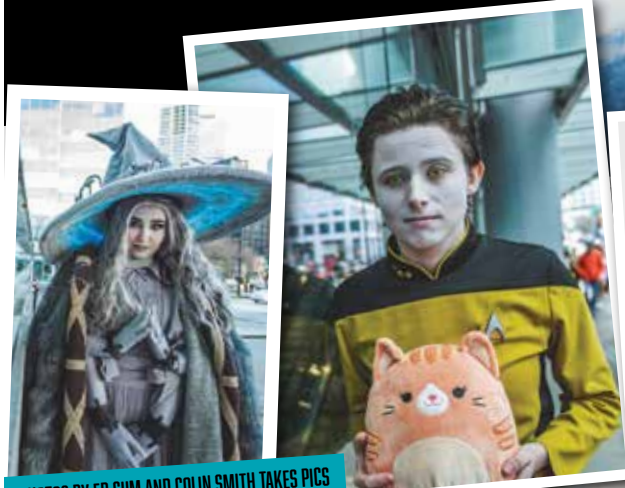
The text of the story makes a strong case in explaining how this country moved away from paganism and became a Christian empire. And this allegorical addition feels appropriate to help readers believe that we will one day

transform too. It's not so much about the tech, but in who people are if they're to believe in the future, and what this mystery town represents.



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THE MARIGOLD



Andrew F. Sullivan
ECW Press
April 18, 2023
Oh, how I wanted to love this book, especially because it's a local Toronto Author. It has all the elements to be great, and Sullivan really has such a great idea here.

Unfortunately, the book was just very slow and a little tough to get there.

The bones of the story are great. It takes place in a sort of dystopian future of Toronto where an underground organic growing spore/mold type entity exists that kills and sucks people inside it, but they are sort of kept in it like goo covered zombies, but life is still going on above ground with luxury towers on top of it, the Marigold being one of them.

There are so many characters, with their own individual views and stories about all that is going on that at times it was hard to keep track. Some of the characters that stick out were the wealthy developers' son whose family owns the towers and all its dirty little secrets that are swept under the table to keep the projects rolling, another are the safety workers dealing with the mold/spore entity trying to figure out how they work, and a curious young girl.

It is really cool the way he described Toronto with sinkholes and in this mess of the future state they were in, but for me the book just fell short of being exciting and getting to a decent crescendo.

Demonika

BAD CREE



Jessica Johns
Scribe Publications
January 31, 2023
Jessica Johns' debut novel was marked by anticipation ever since her short story of the same name won the Writers' Trust Journey Prize in 2020. Reading a novel

with such high expectations can end up disappointingly anticlimactic, so I was relieved to discover that "Bad Cree" and Johns' skillful word-craft lived up to the hype. It has been years since Mackenzie has stepped foot in the small rural Alberta town where she was born. Her Vancouver apartment is not exactly a home, her Whole Foods job far from a calling, and her few west coast connections are certainly no replacement for a community. Or a family. Nevertheless, she continues to slog forward through life, unsure of exactly what she is slogging towards. Then one night, the dreams start. Mackenzie can't understand how she seems to be able to bring back physical pieces of her dreams into the waking world, or why she keeps dreaming horrific things about her sister, Sabrina. The only thing Mackenzie can tell for sure is that her dreams are giving her a message, they are calling her home—not just to her hometown, but to a lake that figures strongly in her memory. To the lake, and the woods around it, and whatever is waiting for her in the shadows of the trees.

"Bad Cree" is the very definition of a slow burn. Johns leads you at an unnerving crawl—not forward, but back, treading and re-treading

over landscapes and dreamscapes that feel at times alien, at times familiar, but always engrossing. The result is a deliciously creepy and cathartic story that is well worth the journey.

Laura Phaneuf

NEO ARCANA



Brian Asman
Mutated Media
April 11, 2022

I think this is my favorite Asman that I've ever read. Just a nice mix of 7 short stories in one little collection. A few I really liked were Seven years bad luck, a story about a guy who finally gets

a girl, but the problem? She can't have any mirrors around her at all, or the thing inside it comes out and well, you can imagine. Tough when you're trying to date! Should not have read this one before bed. Stool Pigeon, a bizarre tale of a pigeon who sits in a bar, and you can only drink there if you tell the Pigeon a secret. Obviously, they know when you don't really do that and you pay for it dearly. The siren song of sharp and deadly things, a dude makes pizza's at a little place the local burnouts hang at. He has a little accident at work and is forced to go home, but he can't be at home or else he will kill himself, quite the conundrum. Lots of great ones in this little collection and the cover art is really cool as well. Another great job by Asman.

Demonika



Hanging Loose with Bryan Small

By Billy Hopeless

I'll probably be saying this my whole life, *The Hangmen* are one of the truest greatest rock and roll bands everybody should hear. The slide guitar echoes like a train horn in the distance and the vocals and lyrics are delivered like the Hank Williams of our times. This is my second interview with the original gunslinger guitarist, songwriter and vocalist Mr. Bryan Small, and once again I'm telling you all this is not a man one should ever turn their back to. Not because you can't trust him, but because he is one of the best and always worth the shot.

Billy Hopeless: Bryan, you formed The Hangmen in 1986. We're here now 37 years later, tell us what keeps you hanging in and out and swinging the rock and roll?

Bryan Small: Late '84, so 39 years ago, Believe it or not, we are still hungry and looking for the next song and adventure. I have yet to grow weary of playing in a rock n roll band.

BH: In the beginning your original demos were produced by Keith Morris (Circle Jerks/Black flag/OFF!) who also became your band's manager. Can you remember any sound, or distorted, advice that Morris the Keith gave

the band that you still hold as true or look back and laugh at? Will these demos ever be served to the public?

BS: Keith was a good leader at the time and kept the ball rolling while we kept drinking. We had no idea what a manager was supposed to do but we respected what Keith said. If he said we are doing this...we just did it.

BH: In 1989 Capitol records released your self-titled debut, do you think Capitol will ever release the rights to that masterpiece or re-release the album?

BS: Really no reason to re-release that album because none of us liked the way it was mixed. It did not sound like the band so we tried to correct that by doing the live *We've Got Blood On The Toes Of Our Boots* album which featured every song except for "Slow Death" I believe.

BH: Then you signed with DGC Records and recorded the never released album *Suicide Doors*, produced by Lord Rob Younger of Radio Birdman. What happened to this album and once again will it ever be heard again?

BS: That was an ultra dysfunctional period for the band. Drugs had really become more important than anything and the result was a very uneven album and the writing was on the wall that our days were numbered at Geffen. They had had enough of drugged out disasters (especially ones that haven't sold any records.) The best songs from that album ended up on *Metallic I.O.U.* in 2000.

BH: Since we're going through the P.O.W.M.I.A Keith Norris Chuck Morris Files, and because you just brought it up, in the year 2000 after a long radio silence you recorded another of my favourite albums of all time: *Metallic I.O.U.*, which has finally been released on vinyl by your current label Acetate Records. Tell us, why did it take so long to give us fans this worthy epic return?

BS: I spent about 7 years in full pursuit of a career in the dark arts of addiction.

BH: Okay, enough with the past, let's get on

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

our horses and charge into the present. From the social media express I've heard you've got a collection of golden hits in yer saddlebags ready to be assayed by all us major miners. When will this be available on the market and what's the album title and your favourite track off the album?

BS: New Album is called *Stories to Tell* and it should see a fall release. My favorite track at the moment in a song called "Broken Heartland". It reminds me of our more cow punk origins.

BH: Now as I'm writing this we're headed into the gold of April Fools day so tell us who's the practical joker in the band and what's the best prank they've pulled, or lie they've told, and

on who?

BS: No names, but Hershey bar stains in thrift store underwear, and stink bombs thrown on stage.

BH: Bryan, well we will see you Friday, May 19th at The Wise Hall with the Supersuckers. You got any parting words for our readers before you ride off into the sunset strip?

BS: Thank-you Billy! If you are looking for vinyl from us, we will have *Metallic I.O.U.*, *East of Western*, and *Cactusville* at the show!

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ARTIST PROFILE



AU: Describe the art you create.

I paint native art of pride and strength.

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

Dale Auger was a big support and a great influence growing up, he believed in me.

AU: What makes your artwork unique?

My bold style and bright colours.

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

Amazing projects like the painting I won the Peace Hills art contest with in 2015, and the huge City Hall

installation contract in 2020.

AU: What mediums do you work in? Is there something new you've always wanted to try?

I work in acrylic and have worked in oil and watercolour but would like to do sculpture.

AU: Tell us about the cover art you created for this issue of Absolute Underground.

It's called Envy, the reflection of an angel, she's envious over her reflection.

AU: Any other hidden talents unrelated to art?

I use to Skate ramp and played hockey and took

taekwondo.

AU: What music do you listen to when you're working?

I like my metal and classic rock while I paint.

AU: Do you take commissions?

Ya, I do a lot of commission work and murals on commission.

AU: What's the latest thing you have been working on?

My latest mural project is a huge contract for Chevron Downtown on 5th And 5th.

AU: Dream project you are still dying to do.

I'd love to travel to Vancouver to do a mural for their mural festival.

AU: Plans for 420 this year? Favorite strains to smoke?

I like sativa and shatter.

AU: Any words of wisdom for aspiring artists?

KEEP focused, follow your dreams no matter how big, anything is possible if you work hard and want it bad enough.

AU: Any upcoming projects to promote?



The major mural projects going up all over town.

AU: Anything else we should know about you?

Last year I did the most murals. More than any muralist in Calgary. 14 contracts.

AU: Can we see examples of your art online? You can see my work on Instagram and Facebook or Google my full name for websites that I'm part of plus mine. Thanks bro.

@kalumteke dan

kalumteke dan.godaddysites.com

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Mural Master

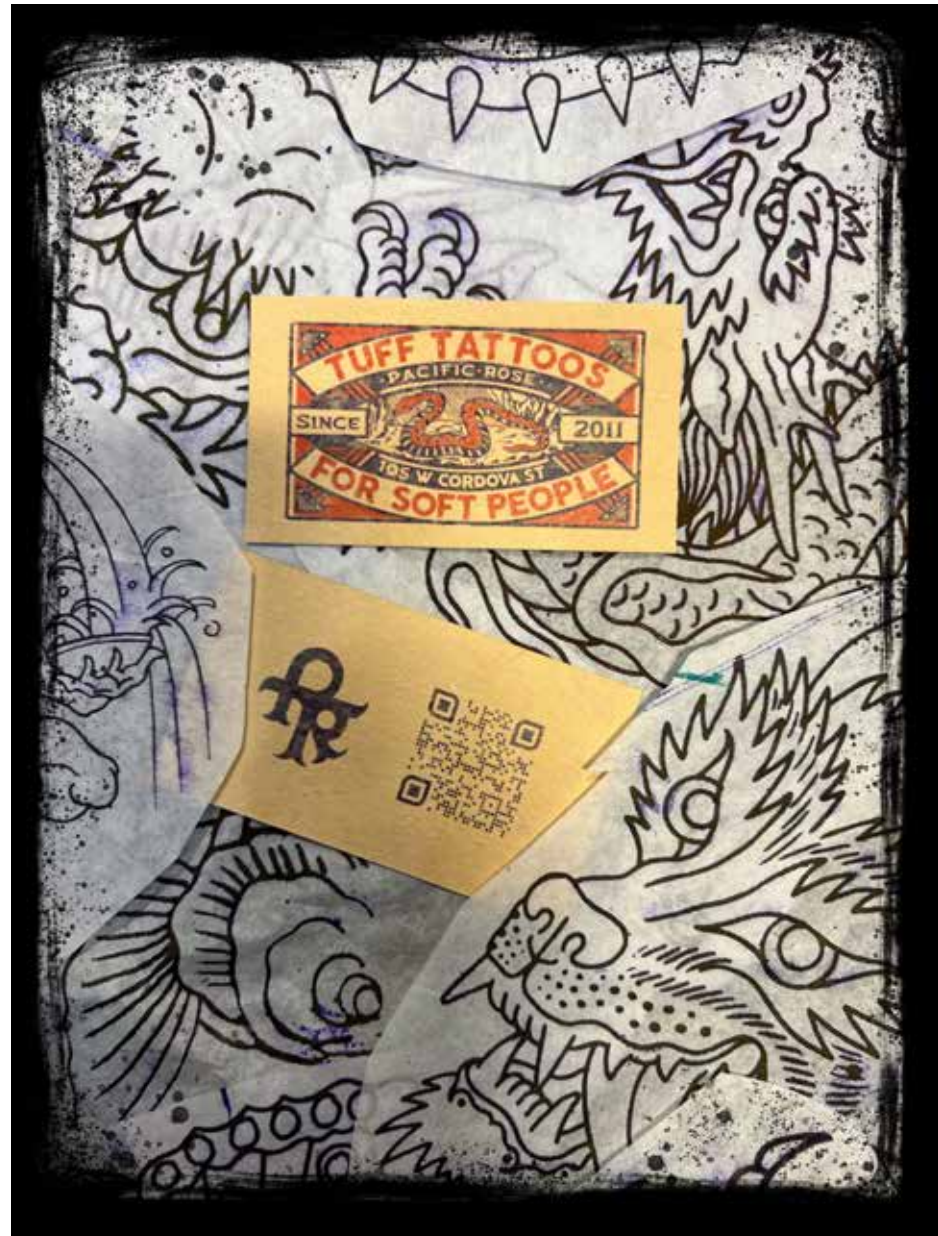
Interview by Chadsolute

AU: Who are we talking to and what are your skillz to pay the bills?

Kalum Teke Dan, local Calgary muralist. I do murals and have a large merch following.

AU: How long have you been an artist?

I've been Painting 30 years. I know I was born to create. I had a passion to paint and a talent I wasn't going to waste.



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**REST IN POWER
FLYTRON**



It has been a tough few weeks as not only did we lose our friend Marvin "the Fly" Kee, a fixture in the Calgary music scene but just days before print, we also now grieve the loss of our friend Andy Sparacino, better known to most as "Tron from Fubar".

Many people were lucky enough to hang out with Andy during his days bartending at the Castle Pub and playing in bands like the A-team, Blist and Flytron to name a few. The photos above

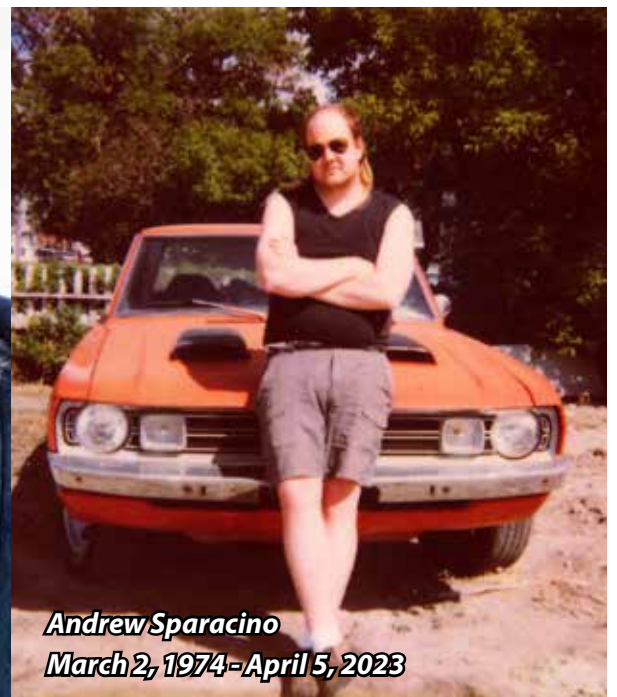
were at the Absolute Underground table at Calgary Comic Expo back in 2013. Andy and I plotted a mini show during the con in the afternoon. He brought along Marvin, who I had met for the first time and we all took in this epic FLYTRON performance.

You will both be deeply missed.

- Chadsolute

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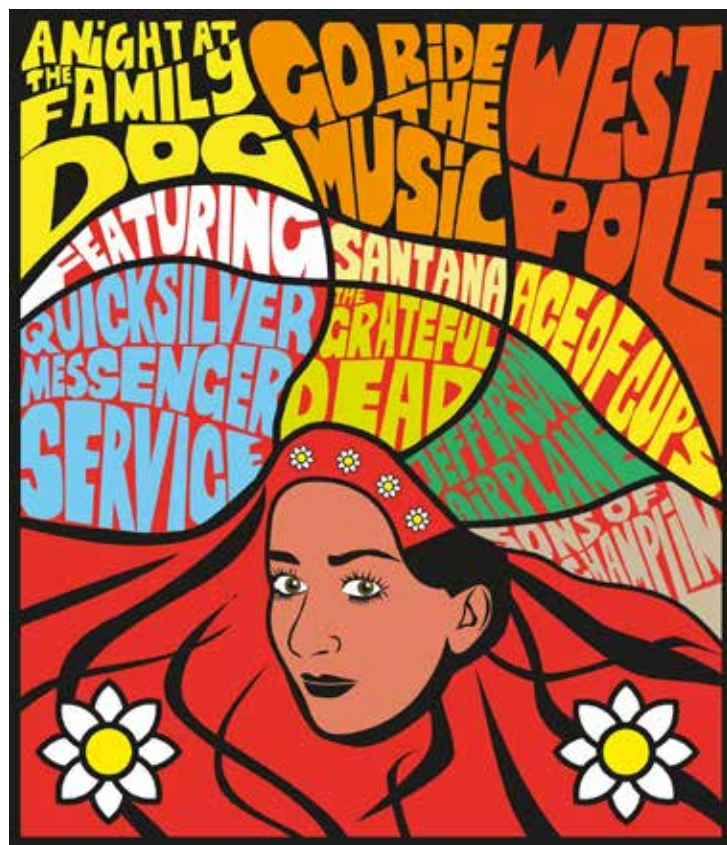
Mercury Records will release *A Night At The Family Dog* (1970), *Go Ride The Music* and *West Pole* (1969), three psychedelic trips down memory lane. All three films were originally produced and created as groundbreaking television documentaries by *Ralph J. Gleason* [1917-1975] who did more than any other journalist to hip the world to what was happening in San Francisco in the late '60s.

A Night At The Family Dog held on February 4, 1970, featured the brightest three lights of the Bay Area, *Jefferson Airplane*, *Grateful Dead* and *Santana*. These three bands would define a scene that had the whole world wondering what exactly was going on in the Haight-Ashbury section of San Francisco. A Night At The Family Dog starts with two iconic Santana performances before Grateful Dead covers Otis Redding. Jefferson Airplane then splits the club wide open with their patented incendiary and provocative performance style. And when Carlos Santana, Jerry Garcia, Jorma Kaukonen, Jack Casady and Paul Kantner kick out the jams to end it all, causing all hell breaks loose. The original mono recording has been remixed and remastered. The San Francisco Sound, as it became to be

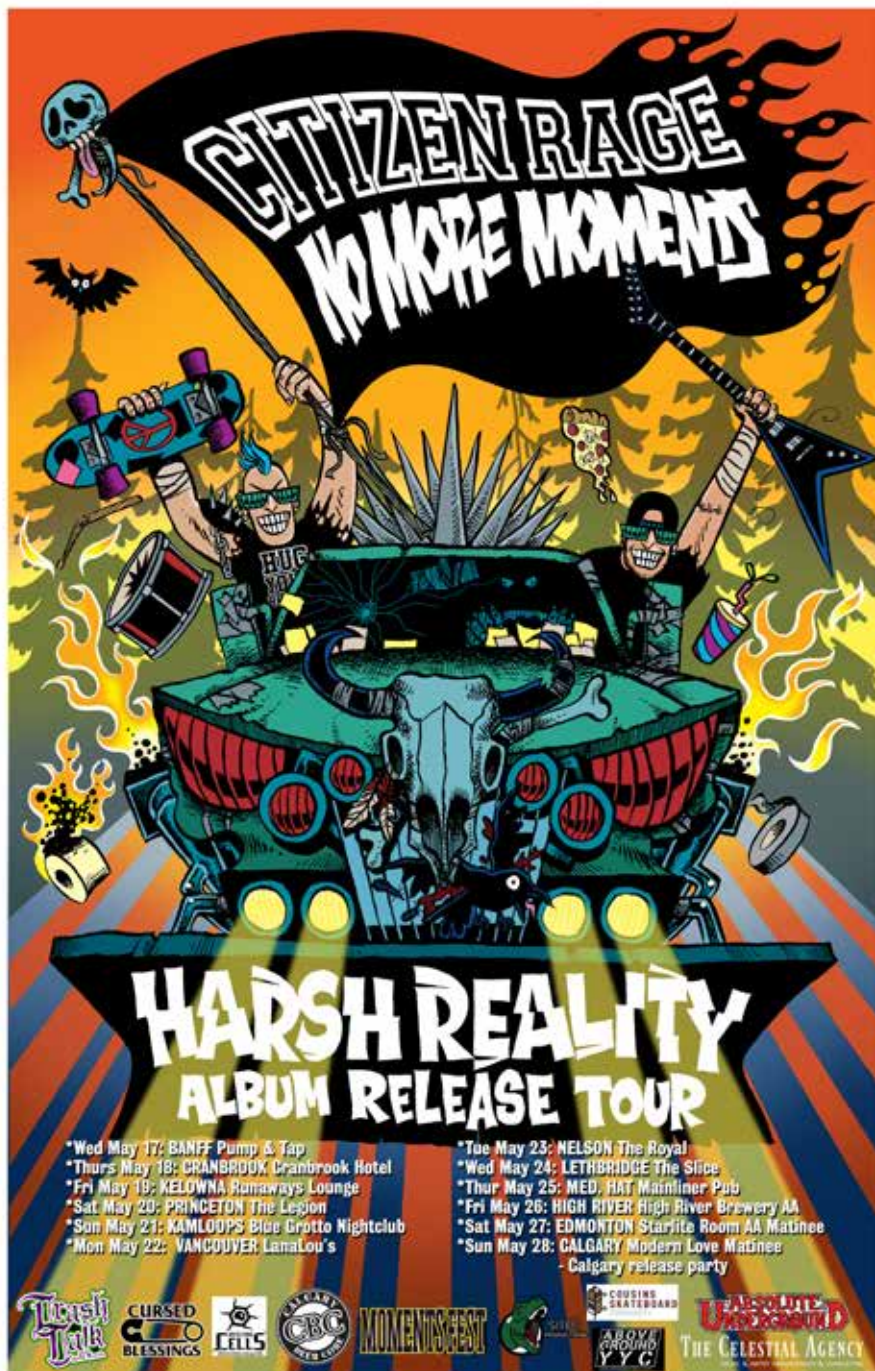
known, was a montage of shrieking guitars and bold now-classic Acid Rock. *Go Ride The Music* is a stunning document of *Jefferson Airplane* and *Quicksilver Messenger Service* (a band destined for stardom who short-circuited their own success). There are also cameo appearances from *David Crosby* and *Jerry Garcia*.

West Pole captures the magnetic attraction of musicians who provoked the establishment enough to create national news. *Gleason* knew it. And via his writings, eventually so did the rest of America. Here's a chance to witness first-hand the birth of a culture: *Steve Miller Band*, *Jefferson Airplane*, *Grateful Dead*, *Quicksilver Messenger Service* and others.

Those born too late to experience first-hand just what made this city at this time so significant will finally understand. Even Beatle *George Harrison*



had to visit from England to see what the fuss was all about. It was a time of wild experimentation. Poetry, music, film, journalism, sex, drugs and political activism shared the spotlight as American Culture itself began to shapeshift. www.mercuryrecords.com



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BACKSTAGE PASS - VENUE PROFILE



bookings manager of Victoria Curling Club. These were the guys giving the gathered some hope for what would certainly be a well used, inclusive and in demand space.

Absolute Underground: Hey Matt you mentioned you've been part of the local scene in Vic for 20 years.

Matt Dell: I started promoting punk and metal shows in the South Okanagan in the late 1990s, while I was still in high school. My first ever show was with *Moneyshot* from Victoria, so I promoted shows for Identity Records, Spawner Records, Smallman Records and many great Canadian punk bands. I moved to Victoria in 2002 to play music and keep promoting shows. Once in Victoria, I continued promoting punk metal all ages shows, mostly at the Big Fernwood, Garry Oak Room, Steamers Pub and Lucky Bar.

From 2003-2009 I played in the local metal/screamo band *Kincaide*. We toured throughout Canada many times and recorded our last album with Devin Townsend. I started the electronic/pop band *Croatia* - we played Tall Tree, Song n Surf and around western Canada.

I was first elected to Victoria City Council in October 2022. I ran for council to help support the struggling arts and culture community in Victoria, and to increase investments in parks and recreation in the city. There is so much low hanging fruit the city can address to better supports arts and music in the city.

AU: Was it you that created the curling club connection and started all of this?

MD: The curling club board made the decision

Promising Foundation: Victoria Curling Club

With several smaller live performance venues closing in the past few years, it wasn't surprising to see so much interest when talk of a potentially new 180-person space began circulating locally. March 4th saw the first public meeting take place to discuss opening such a facility in the upstairs lounge of the Victoria Curling Club. Lot of familiar faces were there from the local scene. Saw a few promoters, fellow photographers, multi genre bands, and the people that support them all. It's been tough for anyone finding appropriate, affordable, available spaces to book events. It's been a hard ride replacing the Tavern of the Damned.

Some great discussion took place when the questions and comments started rolling. There was talk about everything from load-in space to how to heat and cool the space. Feedback was asked for about subjects like stage design, sound and lighting foundations, parking, hours, security, rates, insurance, sound insulation, and more.

I talked to Matt Dell, (Victoria City Council) who I've known for a few years about how this plan started getting kicked around. He would introduce me to Paul Dixon, general manager and

to actively support arts and culture, as a way of generating revenue in their off season. I linked up with the staff to find was that the city could support them with this transition, including potential funding for equipment, stage or renovations. I also offered to host an open house to gather community feedback from artists/promoters to make this space a success. These are still early days, but I'm very hopeful this will become a staple venue in the city of Victoria.

AU: Paul...when did this initiative to reshape the upstairs room to a 19 + performance venue start and where did Matt come in?

Paul Dixon: We've had an idea that we could host more "things" upstairs for a while but have always been constrained in the past due to our "Club" designation on our liquor license. We started to explore options with respect to the license during COVID, but due to the rules surrounding some of lock-downs that were happening then, it was advantageous for us to keep our Club license (which allowed for "self serve" access to our bar, rather than having table service). Once restrictions eased, we made the decision to go ahead with the licensing "upgrade".

We knew there was broad support within the City, based on what we were hearing from the North Park Neighborhood Association, and what we heard following council approval, but the idea for music upstairs started to take shape when we heard about the City's Music Strategy; we realized that we could help to fill some of the missing niche in terms of venue size. We reached out to Matt following his tweet about the Carlton Club closure...he was immediately enthusiastic, had a quick tour and overview of the space, then it was his idea to organize the Open House.

AU: Post meeting thoughts?

PD: Overwhelmed by the general outpouring of support by the community - to the point of even having some folks coming to me and offering to volunteer for some of the renovation work. We

know what we want to do, and now it's logistical questions that we have - stuff like lighting, sound, mixing, and how much control we want over those things vs. bands or promoters bringing in their own equipment. We realize that there will be bands that are fully set up, and others that are looking for plug-and-play, so initially, we'd like to strike a balance, so we aren't overextending ourselves until we get rolling in earnest.

AU: Priorities now. What comes next?

PD: Straight up - the thing that will determine how much work we get done this summer has nothing to do with the space in the bar itself at all: it's our main floor and dealing with a brine leak that has to be fixed in some way this summer. We don't know exactly what will be involved, nor the scope of that - to say nothing of the cost - until we get our ice out in April and have a better look at what might be happening out there. While we are having a major fundraising drive with an eventual aim within the next 2 years to replace the entire main floor along with some of our major ice plant equipment, we need to ensure we have enough to get the patch in this summer, whatever that looks like. That's job one. Second, but possibly even concurrently, will be getting set up in the lounge to welcome musical acts. We'll know a lot more within the next 2 months.

AU: Last Thoughts?

PD: Excited. Looking forward to seeing what this looks like at the end of it all. Looking forward to a couple of years down the road when hopefully we've established ourselves as a place for up and coming acts, and the City *expects* us to have good tunes (no matter the genre) happening on a regular basis. Pending ice repairs, some approvals still to come and finding funding will be shaping this story in the months to come. Stay tuned.

croatia.bandcamp.com

kincaideband.bandcamp.com

Discussion: John Carlow

Photos courtesy of Matt Dell

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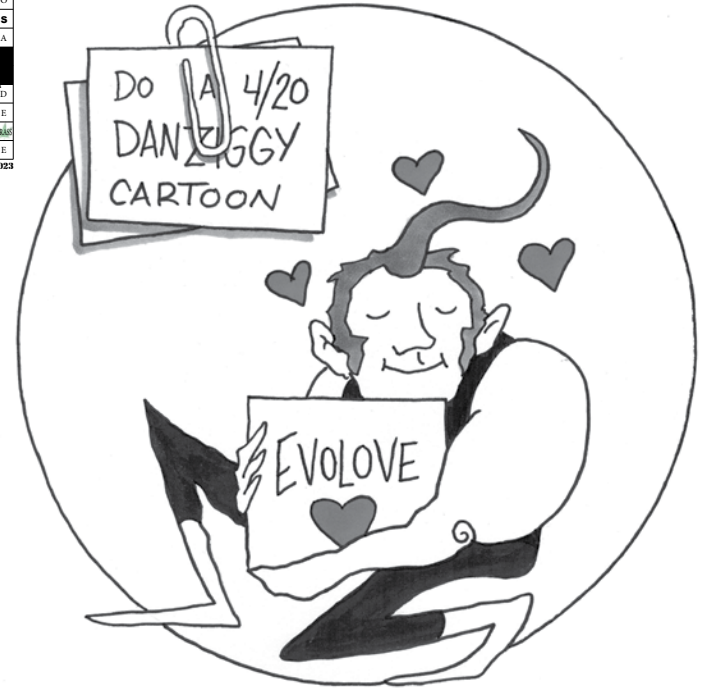
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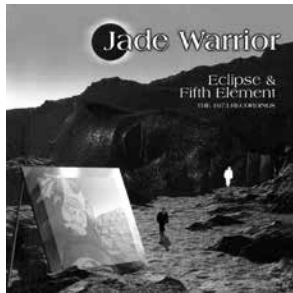
Absolute Album Reviews



The Shit Talkers - Quack
Independent.

Reviewed by Murray (the cretin)
Acton

I've seen *The Shit Talkers* live a few times. They're funny, they kick ass, and they connect with their audience very effectively. Their soon to be released album, *Quack*, was recorded by Steve Loree at Iron Dick Studios in Princeton BC, and mastered at the Wreckhouse in Toronto. The first song on it "Put a Collar On It" will be digitally released on April 1st, with the rest of the album following later in the month. It is apparently a story told by Dirty Kurt (*the Real Mckenzie's, SNFU*, etc...) about being pestered by Paul McKenzie. If you have ever met Dirty Kurt you probably know he likes to tell fishing stories. I can identify with that because I love to tell fishing stories. Anyways, It's a great album. The singing on it is great, and it has a bunch of quality songs. "Put a Collar On It" is a ripping punk rock tune similar to something *Nashville Pussy* might play, then a few songs later is "Phone Phone Phone" and it sounds like it could be on Frank Zappa's album *Freakout*. They finish it off with my favorite track, "walk of shame". There isn't room for me to tell you why I like it so much but what the hell do I know anyway, go buy it and decide for yourself.



Jade Warrior - 'Eclipse/Fifth Element: Remastered Edition'
Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles
10/10

Jade Warrior was formed in 1970, they signed to Vertigo and recorded three classic albums of wild progressive rock, *Jade Warrior*, *Released* and *Last Autumn's Dream*. In 1973 they recorded their fourth album, *Eclipse*, that was so long it could have been a double album. Instead the cut material was used to make their fifth album. Vertigo declined to release any of this music, and *Jade Warrior* split up, leaving both albums unreleased - until now. The break-up was tragic, as *Jade Warrior* were very much a Vertigo band (think of other Vertigo bands like *Status Quo* and *Metallica*. (Even *Corrosion of Conformity* paid tribute to the Vertigo logo!) The two albums are similar, the remastering making the music rise and soar. And what music it is! Rocking in a proto-metal fashion on one song, gentle in a very progressive manner the next. The percussion adds a truly heavy organic element to *Jade Warrior's* sound, with flute playing that brings to mind *Jethro Tull*, the excellent *Blood Ceremony*, and even *Black Sabbath*. And as Ian Anderson once said when *Jethro Tull* beat *Metallica* to receive the best metal band Grammy "the flute is a metal instrument!" I just love the fact that this wonderful music has been rediscovered and so lovingly

restored by Cherry Red. That to me is uplifting magic, and that's just what we all need right now!



Heavy Metal Kids - 'The Albums 1974-76'
Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles
7/10

Heavy Metal Kids are a great cult band from the tail-end of the glam rock era. They were a little too late to ride the glam rock wave to success, but these three albums are a fitting tribute to their legacy. While *Heavy Metal Kids* were more than musically competent, it was late singer Gary Holton that made them stand out (he would later become famous as an actor before his premature drug-related death in the 80s. Rock 'n' roll to the bitter end). Incidentally, *Heavy Metal Kids*, despite having one of the all-time great names, are not actually playing our beloved heavy metal, they took their name from a gang from William S. Burroughs' book *Nova Express*. Literate rockers! The *Heavy Metal Kids* in turn, inspired the giant robots of the same name in the first long Judge Dredd comic, *Robot Wars!* These three Gary Holton fronted albums included in this set are great rock albums from the period, full of an almost proto-punk energy. The self-titled debut is a strong statement of intent. Follow up, the splendidly named *Anvil*

Chorus builds on the first album's strong start. And the final album *Kitsch* is equally excellent as the two that came before. Listen to these and find yourself back in the days of the early 70's!



The Long Ryders - 'September November'
Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles
8/10

The Long Ryders have always made timeless music, not following trends, but creating them! Opening with the title track (almost!) "September November, Sometime", an awesome statement of intent, that sets the tone for the entire album. *The Long Ryders* are a band that stands, never falls, on the quality of their songs, and September November is an especially strong set of songs. On "Seasons Change," it seems deceptively simple, but digging deeper, it's a really beautiful heartfelt song. "Flying Down" continues in the same wistful vein. "Elmer Gantry Is Alive And Well" is harder edged with an almost honky-tonk vibe about it. "Hand of Fate," has a stripped-down sincerity, you can easily imagine a singer playing it alone in a bar. "Song For Ukraine" is important. "To The Manor Born" has a pleasingly swampy vibe about it. "Country Blues (Kitchen)" really does what it says on the proverbial tin. The album ends of a high note with the beautiful "Flying Out Of London In The Rain". All good music comes from the heart and *The Long Ryders* have all the heart in the world.

to draw from, it's no surprise that *Foghat* were such a live draw in the '70s, and this excellent collection of music really showcases their skills as musicians and songwriters.

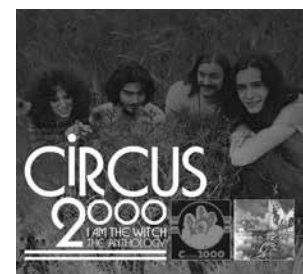


The Residents - 'Fingerprince - Preserved Edition'
Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles
9/10

The history of *Fingerprince* is very interesting! As you'd expect, "boring" and *The Residents* don't exist in the same sentence, or indeed, the same universe! *Fingerprince* was originally supposed to be a three-sided album called *Tourniquet of Roses*, but due to budgetary considerations, it was reduced to a regular two-sided album. It falls somewhere between the more avant-garde sound of *Meet the Residents* and the more traditional song structure of the commercial album. Though, little on *Fingerprince* could be considered commercial in the accepted sense of the word, the 17 minute track 'Six Things to a Cycle' for instance, an instrumental suite in 6 movements, originally intended to be a ballet. The missing third side was released in 1978 as an EP called *Baby Fingers*. In the December 31st, 1977 issue of the Kurt Cobain approved *Sounds* magazine, Jon Savage wrote that *Fingerprince* was more accessible than *The Residents'* first two albums, likening it to Frank Zappa, which is as good a comparison as any, Zappa being a kindred spirit. So, to this vinyl edition... It sounds awesome, a joy to listen to. The addition of *Leapmus*, never before on vinyl, is very welcome and that's far from only interesting bonus material on offer here. There are many marvels to discover here, and great sleeve notes too (great musical ones also). Essential for anyone who loves *The Residents*.

formed, with a truly unique sound. While not influenced by black metal as save for *Venom's* raw punk metal sound, their sound has much in common with early *Bathory* and later *Darkthrone*. We have the original version of *Metal Anarchy* on CD two. Anyone who loves punk and metal should own this, the track "Warfare" alone blows the majority of the metal of this period (and the present day) out of the water with nuclear torpedoes! Musically, despite the negative reaction some fossils gave *Warfare* at the time, they are very adroit, able to play, with excellent lyrics, killer riffs, and a truly savage sincerity and power to their music. I love it! And they had the craic, they really shook the pillars of heaven! Finally, we have CD three, which is a real treat, containing as it does the "Two Tribes 12", which has a killer cover of a Frankie Goes To Hollywood's track, it suits *Warfare* down to the ground, and two excellent tracks 'Hell' and 'Blown To Bits'. And if your ears are not on fire by now, your brain turned to radioactive jelly, there is the Total Death EP, which does exactly what it says on the tin! The sleeve notes from *Evo* are truly entertaining, who doesn't want to read about *Evo* drinking with Cliff Burton-era *Metallica!* One of the things that impresses me about *Evo* is that he didn't wait for things to happen, he made them happen! An intelligent and articulate man. Fair dues to you, sir! I cannot emphasize how influential and important this set is, for *Warfare's* awesomely influential sound, for the national treasure that is *Evo*, for Lemmy's production, and for the amazing photos of *Evo* and Lemmy together, worth getting for them alone! Buy or die!



Circus 2000 - 'I Am The Witch: The Anthology'
Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles
8/10

Cherry Red have unearthed a fabulous psychedelic/prog band from Turin in Italy in the shape of *Circus 2000*. Now, while Italy has become rightly well regarded for its fabulous prog rock bands such as my favourite *Goblin*. *Circus 2000* are guitar and vocal driven, rather than keyboard driven, and thus have more in common with *Pink Floyd* and *Jefferson Airplane*. This is a good thing, there much sounds far more now than it did then, if that makes sense!

Another thing that made *Circus 2000* distinct from other prog outfits in Italy in the early 70's was they sang in English, really well too, they could have given any of the big bands of the period a run for their money! That psychedelic influence is really cool! Disc One opens with their 1970 debut album. Beautiful singer Silvana Aliotta sounds as ethereal as she looks. What a tragedy she isn't more well known, she has a truly incredible voice! There is a mystical vibe to *Circus 2000's* music, especially on stand-out track, "I Am The Witch", what an incredible lost gem! There are some excellent bonus tracks including some in Italian. Disc Two opens with their 1972 album *An Escape From A Box*. This is more *Pink Floyd*-influenced and is truly excellent, full of originality and atmosphere. Sadly, the band broke up shortly afterwards for various reasons. I feel that had *Circus 2000* had better management and record label back in the day, and if they were based in London or San Francisco, they would have become household names.



Foghat - 'Road Fever-The Complete Bearsville Recordings 1972-1975'
Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles
7/10

A lot of folks to this day assume that *Foghat* are an American band, but they actually emerged from the same British blues boom that gave the world *Free*, *Fleetwood Mac*, *Ten Years After*, and more. In fact, the initial line-up of *Foghat* featured three members of *Savoy Brown*, and *Foghat's* self-titled debut album *Foghat I* in 1972 on Bearsville Records features a remake of *Brown's* "Leavin' Again Again!" Their second album *Foghat* (but nicknamed *Rock & Roll*) in 1973 went gold and thus *Foghat* were well on their way to U.S. success. This winning streak continued with *Energized* in 1974 and *Rock and Roll Outlaws* (Also in 1974). It's amazing that such a hard touring band could find time to record so much quality music in such a short space of time. *Foghat's* time with Bearsville Records ended with the more considered *Fool For The City*. This well curated 6 CD set ends with an excellent CD of various *Foghat* singles. With such an excellent catalogue of music



Warfare - 'The Lemmy Sessions'
Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles
10/10

This newly curated three CD set includes the unreleased Lemmy Kilmister mix of *Warfare's* highly influential 1985 album *Metal Anarchy*. *Warfare* had only been formed the year before by the truly unique drummer/vocalist *Evo*. But *Evo* brought a lot of experience to the table having previously played with *Major Accident*, *The Blood*, and *Angelic Upstarts*. From the get-go, *Warfare* were something original, fusing punk lyrics with metal mayhem. The New Wave of British Heavy Metal was winding down, so *Warfare* was badly needed. Listening to CD one now, the Lemmy Session version of *Metal Anarchy*, you can hear a band that share common ground with *Sacrilege*, *Amebix*, *Motörhead*, *Venom*, and *Metallica*, and yet came into the world fully



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Citizen Rage - Harsh Reality Cursed Blessings

By Ryan Dyer

Well, it ain't fuckin' *Citizen Kane*. It's a new day, yes it is, and Calgary-based hardcore punk veterans *Citizen Rage* are bringing the power of positivity with a dose of Harsh Reality. The Tom Bagley cover art depicts the real underneath the various photo filters and carefully chosen angles used to mask problems and depict the online self as being without issues. Well, welcome to reality, fucker.

Citizen Rage's ties with the aboriginal community are well known. "Given No Hope" starts off with the sound of a pow wow - when the song kicks in, the message becomes clear that the struggle is ongoing and although these communities were given no hope, the human spirit still prevails and every day is a chance to make changes for the better.

During *Citizen Rage's* concerts, the band is very vocal about mental health and talking about your problems. Truly, the band's "Hug Your Homies" slogan on their shirt is a needed one in this day and age. These types of topics aren't usually confronted head-on in music, but *Citizen Rage* are all about getting to those core issues on Harsh Reality. Songs like "One Last Time" feature vocalist Mark Russell wishing he could talk with the song's subject one last time in order to try to help. "You're not alone," says the operator at the start of "Look for me in the Darkness" with the ending line feeling like the band's motto - "I'll be your flame."

A cover of "Breathe" by The Rebel Spell gives the song a more aggressive flair while the album's single "For Worse or Better" makes an appearance as the penultimate track, which is fine because it gives the listener something to look forward to near the end. "Never rat on your friends and always keep your mouth shut" is the sample heard at the end of the final track "Watch What You Say" - common sense in this Harsh Reality, but many things should be. That is why *Citizen Rage* has had to reiterate them at loud volumes.



L.A. Guns - Black Diamonds

By Sheldon Byer

L.A. Guns are back again! The Phil Lewis/Tracii Guns version that is, not to be confused with Riley's *L.A. Guns* who put out some poopoo music this year too. If you're not over two versions of this band continuously changing members & putting out mediocre music since 1991 you should definitely check out their latest effort *Black Diamonds*. After 50+ some members you'd think LAG would have some cohesion in their sound but *Black Diamonds* is far from that. I don't know how this album was recorded but it definitely feels (& sounds) like all members were in different areas recording

their collective parts. The last thing I want is Phil and Tracii trying to write a *Smashing Pumpkins* song. Please actually kill me if that happens. Long story short the first half of this album sucks ass. Very 90's, heavy alternative, with bad composition and the very terrible lead single "You Betray" opening up the album. Once album highlight, "Shame" hits and finishes, the album takes a turn and starts to sound a little better. Though the songs aren't memorable, but they aren't bad. One thing *L.A. Guns* will have over all their contemporaries, Phil Lewis' voice has not changed one bit since sliding into the front-man role on the debut LAG album. It's gonna be a 4/10 for me.



Stainless - Snakebite (Single)

By Sheldon Byer

Released December 9th 2022, I'm a little late to the party on this pair of absolute rippers. Portland heavy metal four piece *Stainless* does not mess around! In this day in age it's pretty hard to reinvent the wheel with throwback heavy metal & in no way does *Stainless* do this. They take all the right elements, lyrics, guitar tone, production and riffs to create something totally fucking bad-ass. "Addicted to venom, shoot me up," are the kind of distasteful lyrics I need in 2023. It's heavy metal. It's simple, it's raw, it's bad ass. I'm over this "New Wave Of Traditional Heavy Metal" trend where everyone is an Bruce-era *Iron Maiden* wannabe, with slick production & talented but wimpy vocalists. *Stainless* is like if *The Plasmatics* (Coup d'etat years) fucked early 80's *Judas Priest* and that shit is as hot as the riff for the B-Side "Too Hot To Steal". Give me more, give me a full length.



Hanoi Rocks Oriental Beat (The 40th Anniversary Re(al)mix)

By Sheldon Byer

When this arrived in my inbox, I did my usual eye roll of another band fucking around with the sound on a classic album. Personally, *Oriental Beat* is a landmark album for me. I listened to it over and over in high school, and I remember I even gave the album to a girl I had a crush on in high school to show her just how good my music taste was. Oi vey. Anyways, out of all the dinosaur bands, singer Michael Monroe & bassist Sami Yaffa are actually putting out consistent GOOD new content every few years as *Michael Monroe* collectively. So I thought I better give this a shot. Keep in mind I love bad, old sounding, reverb laden, amateur production. *Oriental Beat* definitely was an album that sounded like the tape had gone through the washing machine once or twice, but not any more. Though this "Re(al)mix" might be a little too cleaned up in some aspects, there's definitely some new shining moments on the album. Most notably the guitars shine through, you can distinctively hear what Andy McCoy is playing and what Nasty Suicide is playing which wasn't really

a thing on the original mix. As a massive fan, I'll be grabbing a copy of this and while my heart will always belong to the original, it's nice to hear how the band intended to hear it, not some engineer who thought it should be *Spandau Ballet*.

'Too Much Sun Will Burn: The British Psychedelic Sounds of 1967: Volume 2'

Cherry Red Records

Reviewed by Steve Earles

9/10
This is a splendid four-hour, 79 song three CD collection of British psychedelic sounds from the year 1967 (Indeed, the title of collection is apt, Maaaannnn!) This is the follow up to a much-loved previous collection from Cherry Red entitled 'Let's Go Down and Blow Our Minds'. Cherry Red received many requests for more (Maaaannnn!) and being the super label they are, they obliged with *Too Much Sun Will Burn*. It would be impossible to go through all the tracks one-by-one, which gives you an indication of the work Cherry Red put into putting it all together, so I'll just pick some of my favourites. There's the excellent 'Heaven and Hell' from *The Easybeats* (a band with a major *AC/DC* connection), 'Love-Hate-Revenge' from *Episode Six*, who feature members of *Deep Purple*, I love the mono single version of *Traffic's* "Paper Sun", if any song sums up the spirit of 1967, it's this one. "Night of the Long Grass" by *The Troggs*, is excellent, and I love "Morning Sun" by *The Spencer Davis Group*. People were into the sun in those days. Such a great collection, so many gems to discover, everyone as psychedelic and glorious as the year it was recorded, and in these dark days, we could all do with the uplift this excellent music gives, it's hopeful, and that's a great thing. Oh, you cannot but love a collection that includes "Bedazzled" from the mighty Peter Cook and Dudley Moore!

Book Reviews



"YOU'RE CRAZY" Volume Two - First-Hand Accounts of Surviving Trauma, Addiction & Mental Health from within the Punk Rock Scene

The analysis of examining stories of mental health: My review of "You're Crazy" Volume Two, from a contributing writer's perspective.

The idea of "You're Crazy" Volume Two, is the development of struggles with mental health from the perspective of the patients on the couch rather than the therapist running the session. Finally, we are given the chance to speak out without judgment. These stories don't come from seasoned writers: for many this is their first piece published. It's to show we are better than their assessment of us.

Writing improves the more someone creates or develops their thoughts, onto the screen or paper. As I read this book, I began to understand their struggles with sanity as my own at times. It's great to be linked with others from around the globe and we all are connected though we all reside in different countries.

The one link that holds us all together is our love for punk rock music. For many of us it gave us hope when dealing with the darkness in our own soul. This is what has helped us move on and deal with life difficulties; that we are not alone but have others that we can relate with.

This is my first experience being published and I am grateful to be part of this anthology book project. I'm an expatriate living in South East Asia but yet I have my own battles and have adjusted quite well living abroad. It's a good place for someone like myself who has ADHD and a wild spirit.

This isn't just a normal memoir or nonfiction book but a direct look inside ourselves and our own journey's to find sanity within ourselves. Being published as one of the twenty contributing punk rock authors in "You're Crazy" Volume Two, has been the best place for my published writing to be debuted. It's good to support Do-It-Yourself self-publishing just as we do the music and movies; as part of the underground culture. Because keeping our sanity is a full-time job so here is a written glimpse into our world. Enjoy.

You're Crazy" Volume One and Two are available here at sanityisafulltimejob.org

- Joshua Hiram Banks
@ Joshua Hiram Banks

Carnosaur by John Brosnon (under the pseudonym Harry Adam Knight)

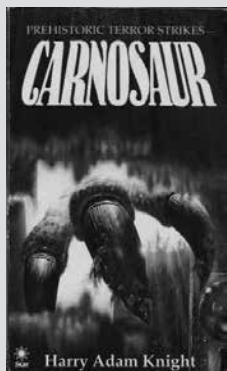
Review by Devin J. Meaney.

Carnosaur was written by Harry Adam Knight. He has written a few other books—the only other one I remember being the similar B-grade style novella *The Fungus*. *Carnosaur* was first written in 1984 and was put out to the public six years before the release of *Jurassic Park*. The back cover insinuates that both of these films share some plot elements but I think they are vastly different. For a long time I didn't know this was a book—but

when I found out, I had to purchase it due to the fact that I am a huge fan of the *Carnosaur* movie series from the 90's. After reading the book I can state that the book and the movie are barely recognizable as being related—and Roger Corman's interpretation was more of a re-write than an adaptation. Still—as a fan of the movie series I have no problem saying that the book was enjoyable to say the very least. The B- grade is evident, but as a lover of that kind of fiction this was by no means a problem for me.

Taking place in the English town of Warchester, a farmer is found killed in what is believed to be an animal attack. It is at first believed to be the work of a Siberian tiger but after a witness describes something that is seemingly impossible everything takes a turn for the worst. *Carnosaur* involves the escapades of local reporter Darren Pascal (the first movie's main character is a night watchman known as "Doc") and a rich zoo owner named Sir Darren Penward (in the movie the antagonist is a geneticist named Jane Tiptree) and a slew of other characters.

This is a book for lovers of cheese like myself so if you can dig scientifically reproduced dinosaurs ravaging a small town go for it! I have yet to read more from Harry Adam Knight but I do plan to pick up more of his



work in the future. Sadly, he died early due to alcoholism and a few other ailments so he won't be putting out anything new—but I will be happy to dig into what is already out there and I'd suggest you do the same!

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Absolute Tape Reviews

Bleeding Spawn – Pathogenic Mechanized Abomination
By Devin J. Meaney

This tape was released directly through CDN Records and features nine tracks of vicious death metal. The exact style is hard to pin-point as it features bits and pieces from both modern and classically fueled death. With track titles like "Epileptic Stabwound" and "Fetal Feces Splatter" you know exactly what you're in for when you throw this one in your tape deck. It is heavy and vile, and blasts forward with all the force of a machine gun blast. The vocals are aggressive, the guitar tone is a mix of new-age and lo-fi and overall this release is a win.

This is not my favourite from my recent batch but it is one of the better ones. My only negative comment is that the backing vocals aren't my favourite style (a form of bree-style gutturals) but as they are used sparingly this is easy to live with and in the long run everything is brought together nicely and I can state that I will be listening to this

one again and again.

The cassette itself is a clear/grey which isn't entirely standard but the artwork for the album is pretty cool. To make a close, for the price of a few donuts or something this one is worth the funds and I'd suggest it to anyone looking for some heavy chugs and audio carnage!

Cruel Fate - "A Quaternary of Decrepit Night Mares"
By Devin J. Meaney

This is yet again a release I copped through CDN Records that was originally released by Dawning Septic. As I stated in an earlier review some of the releases I got through Dawning Septic were "good" but less than spectacular so I was worried this one would be a bust. But just like the release I got by *Bloodphemy* this is pretty damn solid! It is your standard blast of death metal with heavy guitars and drums and vocals and all that jazz but what is most notable is the atmosphere. This release has some severe eerie/creepy vibes and I'd

suggest it for a listen if you happen to be in a "darker" mood. Something that is cool about this tape is that all the tracks are on the same side so once you complete the album you can flip it and listen to it again. The cassette is your standard black but it has a really cool fancy engraved logo on it. This might not mean anything to some but I am always just as intrigued by the packaging/look of my tapes as I am with the music. A cool tape doesn't mean the music is going to be awesome...but if the music IS good a decent tape helps add to the vibe. Again, this is one for a darker mood. Maybe listen to it during a rainstorm with lots of thunder? Or a blizzard maybe? However you decided to indulge in this one—I approve.

Bloodphemy – "Blood Sacrifice"
By Devin J. Meaney

A hearty blast of blackened death metal that is not only catchy and filled with talent it seems to get better with each play through. Featuring 11 tracks that are all top tier I would suggest this one



to anyone with a desire for warm chills. The vocals are perfect at times and the riffs are crunchy with the odd splash of lead guitar work. The drums are pin tight—and the atmosphere overall is intensely delightful in a morbid way. I am unsure what other formats this release is available on, but the cassette version is professional grade and the tape itself is a very pretty clear/blood red. Normally I extend my reviews a bit but I think I can sum this up by saying *Blood Sacrifice* is a great album and *Bloodphemy* for sure will be a band that graces my tape deck for a long time to come—and I will be sure to snag anything from these guys as it becomes available. Truly magnificent!

Neurosurgery - "Invitation to Die"
By Devin J. Meaney

Hailing from Finland this band spits up this 2020 release with as much aggression and hostility as a starved coyote desperately looking for its next meal. Eight tracks of vicious death metal are brought together to make for an album that is more than worthy of a listen or four! Vocally I am reminded of early *GUT* or *Mucupurulent*, but musically this is much more technical. The guitars are tight and the percussion is immaculate. I snagged this album on cassette from CDN records and it was released directly from the label. The packaging and insert are professional grade and the cassette

itself is a clear/blue with pro-level labeling. I copped this in a mystery lot (I got 4 tapes for 25 dollars shipping included) and I can say that I am pleased overall with this. For just a few bucks *Invitation to Die* is a supreme blast of heaviness and it would make a great addition to the collections of cassette collectors worldwide. Even if you don't wish to buy this, try to find a stream online and give it a listen—and as always send the band some kind words and support!

Absolute Film Reviews



Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey

It's almost impossible to find anything redeeming concerning *Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey*. Ever since news spread about a horror film adaptation of a fond childhood property, I was aghast. Just because an IP is now in the public domain for anyone to play with, it shouldn't get slaughtered right away!

Filmmaker Rhys Frake-Waterfield was eager to swoop in to make an indie film about a murderous bear. If Cocaine Bear can do it, why not Winnie? There's very little novel moments to make this work stand out, and without some digital magic, I can't buy into the idea that the anthropomorphic animals depicted from the storybooks can develop a murderous streak. The only redeeming aspect of the film is the time spent to animate moments that can't be recreated by actors who can't go down on their knees as stand-ins to rotoscope in Winnie the Pooh, Eeyore, Piglet, Owl, Rabbit, and Tigger had there been a Hollywood sized budget.

Had this work been done as an animation or even with puppets ala *The Muppets*, I'd buy into the illusion. In its current form, seeing actors wearing a big mask that has little emotional resonance isn't the best way to make a horror film. It would've worked a long time ago when the *Halloween* or *Friday the 13th* movies were at its height of popularity, but now, without enough money going into costume/prop design, all we have is just another slasher.

Although the tale has nothing to do with the source material, I did appreciate the overall theme considering how to deal with trauma. It's not only about Christopher Robin abandoning his friends, but also what Maria must face. This woman had a stalker, and she must deal with the after effects. After the introduction concerning the original characters, this woman becomes the focus and, to de-stress, visits Hundred Acre Wood. It's no longer the

idyllic place as told in the books, and as for how it fell into disrepair is a huge plot hole.

Maybe those friends Christopher made long ago were actually hillbillies who didn't care for living in society. Because of inbreeding, they became deformed to look like certain animals. On that note, this film spends a lot of time on Winnie and Piglet. I was wondering where the others are hiding.

Sadly, this film won't really satisfy fans of the slasher film genre. The kills aren't even brutal enough, and are suggestive rather than detailed. There's even the close-ups of these animal characters, which show that they're rather porcelain faces than anything else.

While some audiences got to see this movie unfurl in a theatre, I had to wonder who would be willing to pay to see this film? It's better off on Tubi than anywhere else.

- Ed Sum

I'm an Electric Lampshade

Just whether Doug McCorkle is a real personality who became a Filipino rock star doesn't seem to matter in this pseudo-documentary from filmmaker, John Clayton Doyle. He claims to have met this performer, and to chart everything he's done in order to achieve success is more fascinating to watch than the side-stories. While McCorkle's decision to find super-stardom in the Philippines is a head scratcher, I suspect since we're not in this musician's mind all the time, we'll never know.

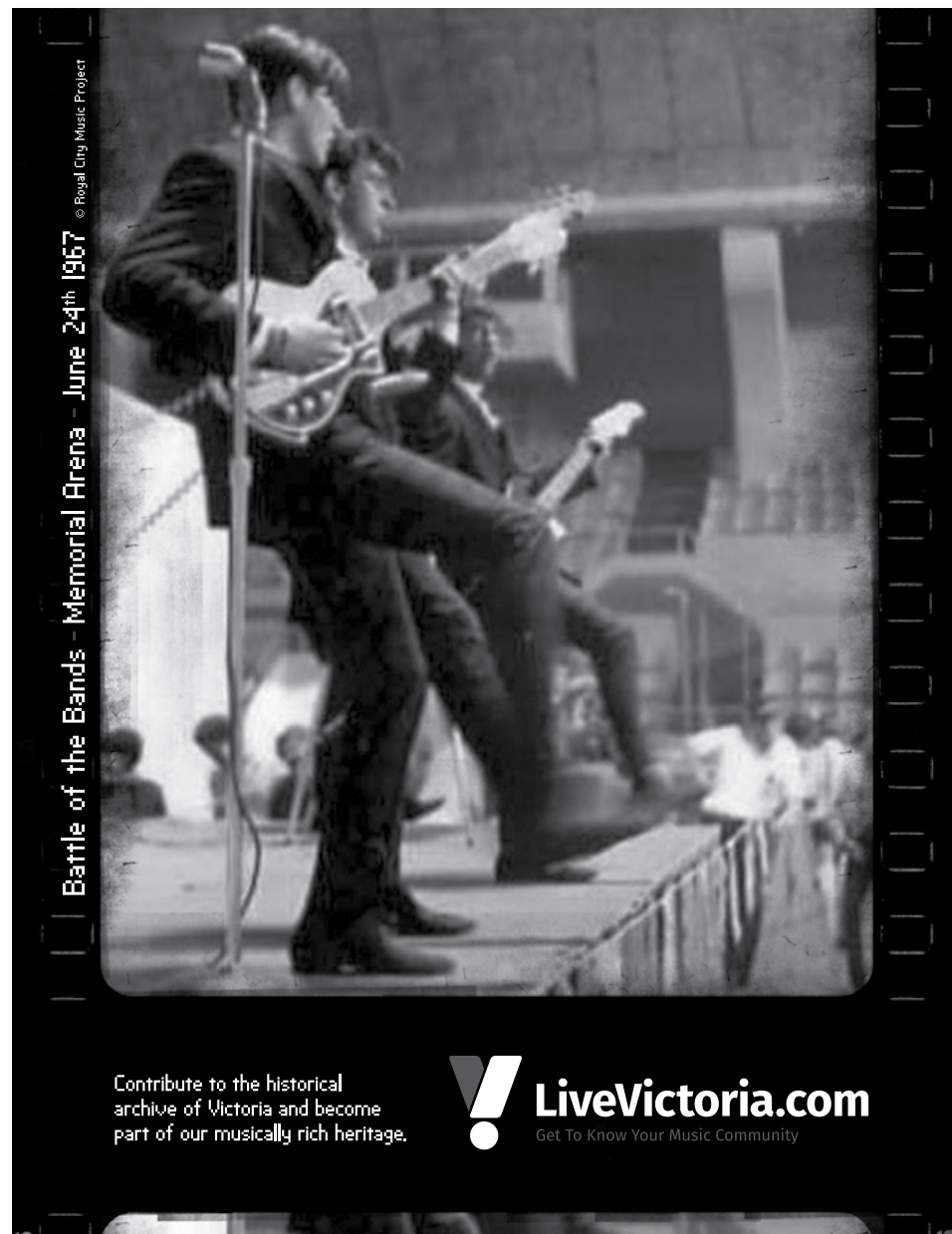
It all began when Doug enjoyed being on stage, and when he won a local talent show for his song, "I'm an Electric Lampshade," little did he know that light-bulb moment would change him forever.

This film jumps around a lot. In fact one, the documentary simply looked at his life in America—a 60-year-old ready for retirement. After DJ'ing, something wanted to bust out. The only way for him to develop his talent was to fly to another country and train at a foreign school for the musical arts. He tries his best to acclimatise, but it's funny to see a white man in an Asian world, and the friends he makes are drag queens or from the LGBTQ+ community. What he experiences is basically a study on society; it's not just him, but also the anxiety his mates face who want to make it big.

When considering his age, I get that he'll never get that kind of fame in America. Although we have rockers like *The Rolling Stones* still at it, that's because they've been involved since they were young.

He's changed not only his image but also what being talented means. His song, "I'm an Electric Lampshade" is not a chart topper, and while it's key to what this film is about, what we find is him becoming an artist like *Prince*. It's less about what he can sing, but how he presents himself. If anything, this surreal journey is better at revealing how it's okay to express yourself.

- Ed Sum



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Buck Cherry in the 21st Century by Billy Hopeless

Happy April Fools month as promised here's an interview with the one and only Buck Cherry! No, not that corporate conjured imitation rock and roll band but the Vancouver forefather of punk with such bands as the Modernettes and Los Popularos and poignant pen author Mr. John Armstrong.

Billy Hopeless: Welcome Buck to my column. Now as this is my April Fools column I've been telling everyone that I'm interviewing Buck Cherry which is a very funny April Fools in some regards as currently a band I publicly state are absolute shite and not ever worthy of my interview time is going under your moniker. How and why did you first establish yourself under that name and why and how did those twats get the right to use it?

Buck Cherry: When we first started the Amazing Shits in 1976 in White Rock we were also on welfare and scared of getting our names in the local paper (Art Bergmann played bass with a paper bag over his head so as not to sully his rep as a serious musician, which was a very smart call- we weren't very good but we were as loud as possible at all times and very much out of control. So much so that we were banned for life - twice! - from the Sea Festival. We changed our name the second time and they let us back in, and bang! Banned for life again. I'm quite proud of that.

The name came about because I loved Keith Richards,

and he learned most of everything he knew from Chuck Berry so I studied Chuck too - there was a Libby's Beans ad at the time with a character called Libby the Kid - "It's like Billy the Kid backwards, sort of". He rode into town and handed out Libby's baked beans to all the kids. I thought it was one of the stupidest things I'd ever seen in my life, so it fit to a "T".

So it was my tribute to Chuck

Years later Richard Duguay called me up and said to look on page such-and-so of Rolling Stone and there they were, first album full page ad for this bunch of tattooed love boys calling themselves Buck Cherry. They were DGC so I knew the label had money and I waited a bit until I saw an advance CD come into the

Sun entertainment department then had the trusty lawyer call them up and present my bona fides and 20+ years claim to the name. The record company lawyer listened and said: "Is this a problem money can solve?" And funnily enough it was.

BH: Well, like my old pal Loof Lipra used to say "What's in a name?" Speaking of names, did your band the Modernettes get its name from the New York Doll David Johansen's classic solo song entitled Frenchette in which he ends everything possible with ette?

Buck Cherry: Absolutely. I played the shit out of that record and needed a name - DJ's song was about things that were not quite top shelf - not French, but Frenchette, luncheonette, etc. I thought, well, we're a punk rock band but I write pop songs, that's my inspiration, so we're not entirely modern .. hence, Modernette

BH: Well I may now have to get the editor to change my BH to BJ for Boy Jenius! Anyhoo lets cut to the punchline and get serious here for a brief moment. We're here to talk about the re-release of the next to impossible to find Gone But Not Forgiven the Modernettes fan Club recordette which was originally released in 1981 after the original line-up broke up. Why has it taken 42 years for this gem to resurface on the rock collectors market?

Buck Cherry: Nobody suggested it until now - for some reason in the last few years both EPs and now

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

this have been rereleased and then my book about those years, Guilty of Everything, was reissued as an expanded anniversary edition... and it's just been a rocket ride to stardom... only took what, 45 years? Glad I wasn't waiting by the mailbox for the cheques to arrive ...

BH: Ok, I can dig that. Now give us the sales pitch and polish on this shiny spit ball with all the hits. What do we all get for catching this version? Who's putting it out and how will it be released? Vinyl, Tik Tok, C.D, mini disc, eight track, wax cylinder, digital formatettes?

Buck Cherry: Porterhouse is doing it, along with a Los Popularos retrospective (which I was honestly shocked by - I hadn't remembered us being so good.) Vinyl only, so far as I know Porterhouse Records.com

It's been re-eq'd, which is a funny word for it as it was never eq'd or mastered in the first place. It was a record we put together for our fan club, live stuff and demos of the songs that would have been the second EP from the original lineup except that our label ran out of money and available credit...

It's still raw and loud, but better than it was, which was so rough it made some of the Guided by Voices records sound like Dark Side of The Moon.

BH: That's how the pop flies I tell ya? Sorry about the baseball references but it's spring and my mind is all hot dogs and third base. Anyhoo are your original teammates Mary-Jo and Jughead on deck with this release?

Buck Cherry: So far as I know - I let the label do all of that. Mary and I don't get along and I haven't talked to Juggy for a long time - he's a Buddhist priest in California now.

BH: Well now that we've won the cracker jack crowd in the bleachers let's move on to the write field of your expertise. You're also quite a great author as I've read and enjoyed a few of your books. I remember hearing you were working on another re-release being your classic early punk autobiography entitled Guilty of Everything. Is this still happening? What did you feel was missing from the first time that would make you want to go back there again?

Buck Cherry: I had severe space restrictions with the first release back when, and so a lot had to be cut, then the lawyers cut even more. I found an old CD with the Word file from when I wrote it in '99 so I put back what got cut for length, wrote more, and then argued with lawyers one more time. I won some there, lost others. Maybe some things are just not fit to print... a lot of illegal, violent, drug and alcohol abuse, and teenage early 20's stupidity. Enough made it through to represent the era properly, just not as explicitly as I would have liked. But maybe I'll put out the unexpurgated version on the web someday, when everyone is dead...

BH: From one to another, who are your fave or most inspirational authors and lyricists?

Buck Cherry: Shit - uh, authors? Gore Vidal, Elizabeth Hand, Gemma Files - Chandler, a million others Lyricists - Leonard Cohen, Paul Westerberg, Lou Reed, Lennon and McCartney are still unbeatable, Ray Davies

BH: Since I'm writing this with April Fools on the mind, tell us what's the best prank you've ever witnessed or pulled?

Buck Cherry: We had a group of guys who seemed to show up down front at gigs and shout "Fag" and "Queer" at Mary - they thought she was a guy, which is ... that's how dumb they were. Anyway, we thought "Queer? We'll show you queer" and we got a big garlic sausage and Mary stuck it down her red leather pants. She looked like a tranny Dirk Digler. That fucked up some idiots at the front of the stage very nicely

BH: Well, just about time to get rolling so will you be doing any Live performances or reads to promote and sell the remarketed miracle tonic?

Buck Cherry: Nope - my wife is ill so I'm concentrating on being with her for the duration. But eventually I want to play live again - I'll probably do some readings when my next book, about getting old, comes out sometime this or next year.

BH: And lastly oh sage, what advice do you have for inspiring artists and writers out there?


Buck Cherry: Oh fuck me... just the old "Do not as I have done", and if you do, burn the fucking evidence.

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Caroline Kawa

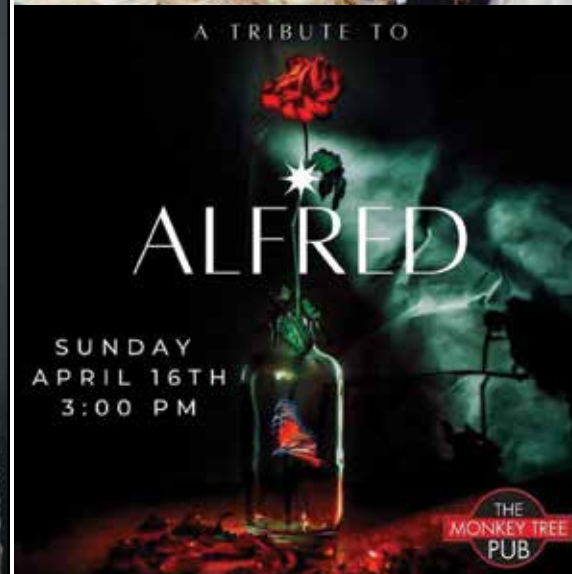
April 30, 1986 - March 26, 2023



ALFRED THE FLOWERMAN

Alfred Cornelis Sillem

February 26th, 1946 - March 17, 2023



Otis "O." Barthoulameu

1962-2023

By Ty Stranglehold



I first became aware of O. (the most common name he went by) in the pages of Transworld Skateboarding and Thrasher. He was one of three main photographers that dominated the skate scene in the 80's (Mofo and J Grant Brittain being the others) - a ripper in his own

right, you barely ever saw him in the magazines himself, but he was always behind the lens and his OPHOTO credit was everywhere.

Fast forward to the early 90s. I went to Vancouver to see my newest obsession band *Rocket From The Crypt*. They were touring with *Claw Hammer* and a band I had never heard called *Fluf*. *Fluf* took the tiny stage at the Town Pump and proceeded to blow me away. They were somewhere in between *Hüsker Dü* and *Dinosaur Jr.* Beautiful melodies layered with heavy guitar. The singer/guitarist had a warm voice that felt like it was giving you a hug. Between songs he told a hilarious story about being in Hawaii with the Vision skate team. I introduced myself after and he told me his name.



Fluf quickly became a favorite of mine, but I also went back and checked out *Olivelawn*, which he started with original *Fluf* bassist Johnny Donhowe and pro skater Neil Blender. Heavy grunge before it had a capital "G". They recorded their debut album with Jack Endino the same year he recorded *Nirvana's* *Bleach*.

Fluf was on the road a lot through the 90's and I got to see them play a lot. I interviewed them

more than once for my fanzine and was always certain to bring O. a bag of his beloved ketchup chips (a distinctly Canadian delicacy that wasn't a thing in the U.S. back then) and we would talk about anything and everything. He was warm, kind, and passionate about music, skating, photography. He had a passion for life. His body positivity as a big guy was important for my own mental well being.



He was seemingly everywhere all at once supporting multiple scenes; from putting out boards on Dogtown and his own Gnar Cake, to taking photos at pretty much every show in San Diego, to tour managing *Dinosaur Jr.*

The last time I saw O. was in 1998. *Fluf* was doing a run of Canadian dates with *Chixdiggit*, so Elise and I went up and saw them in Nanaimo the night before the Victoria show. Ketchup chips and RC Cola in hand.



The next night we offered up the couch and floor of our tiny apartment and we talked and laughed the night away. Since then, I have followed all of his music: bands like *Reeve Oliver*, *The Makeup Sex*, *Octagrape* and most recently *Harshmellow*.

The man left us in February and it has been hitting me hard. It hurts that the world doesn't get anymore O, but at the same time O. is everywhere. O. is forever. Every time I barge a stage or I have the positivity to be a fat guy trying to ride my skateboard, I know that O. is in my mind pushing me. Later, Ham Smuggler.

NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS

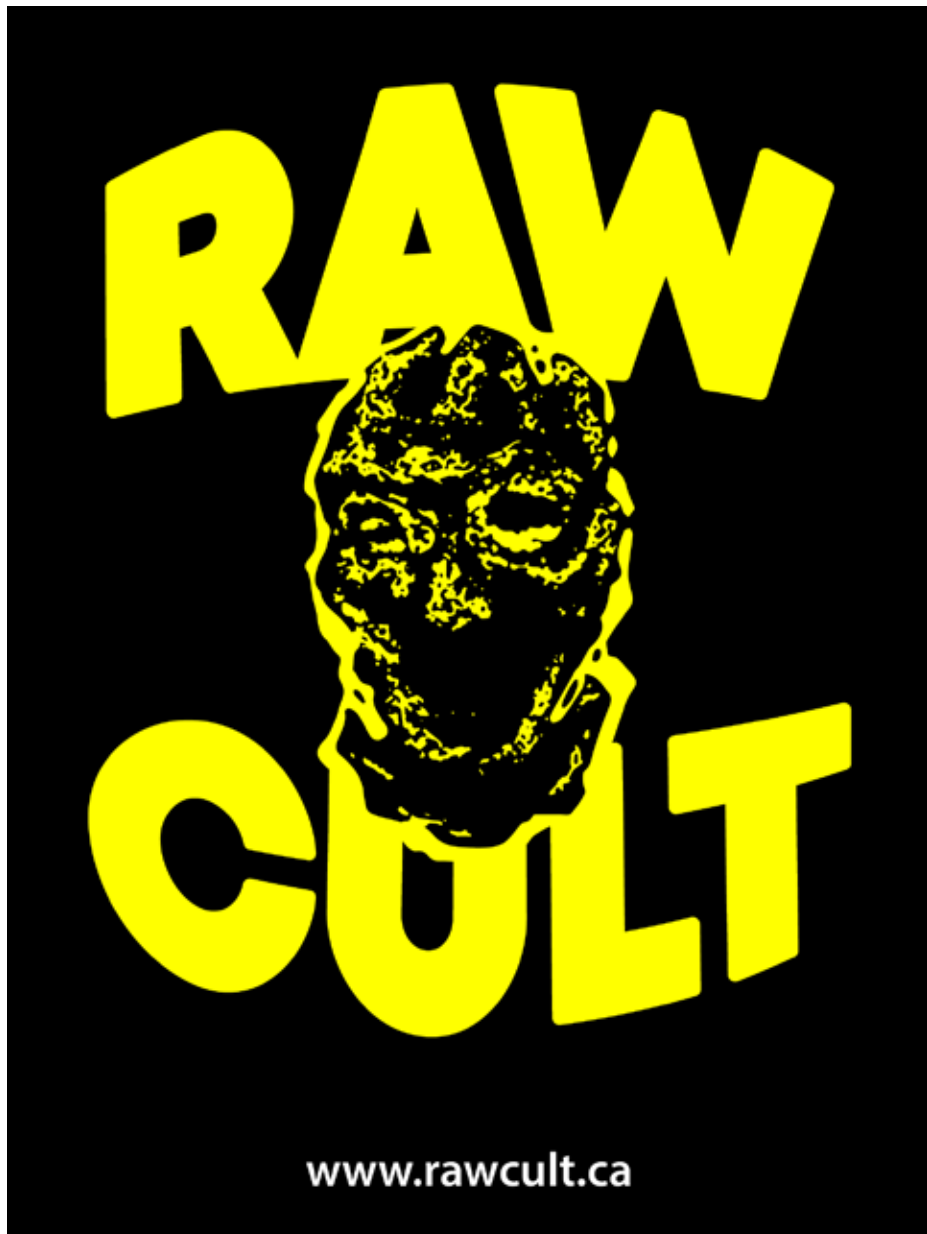
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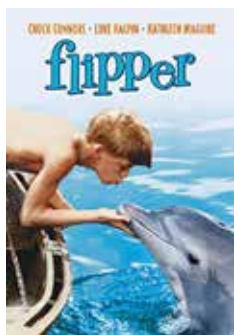
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Ricou Browning

February 16, 1930 – February 27, 2023

Ricou Browning wasn't the only man to play *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, but outside of the suit, he was the man; athlete, actor, stuntman, writer, and director. Browning combined his skills to make some of the most memorable underwater scenes in film history. Most famously, Browning played the Gill-Man for all the sub-aquatic scenes from the Creature trilogy. Up until this year, he was the last living actor to play a Universal monster. A professional diver and swimmer, he could hold his breathe underwater for up to four minutes. This skill made the filming of the Creature films possible. Browning swam effortlessly in a heavy suit made from airtight molded sponge rubber, while taking in oxygen from a tube through his mask in between takes.



His performance as the Gill-Man made the film's premise plausible, securing the idea that the creature was the missing link between man and aquatic sea life. *The Creature From the Black Lagoon's* legacy is highly regarded by cinephiles today, inspiring Steven Spielberg to make *Jaws*, and Guillermo Del Toro's *The Shape of Water*. However, Brownings contributions to cinema beyond the Creature trilogy are just as notable. He worked as a stunt diver for other classics such as *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and *Sea Hunt*. On land, Browning sat at the typewriter to help develop *Flipper*, a film starring an adorable dolphin. *Flipper's* popularity spawned a sequel, a remake, and two television series. He also used his cinematic eye to assist Agent 007 in *Thunderball* and *Never Say Never*, working as the underwater sequence director for both James Bond films. Unexpectedly, Browning dried himself off long enough to direct one of the strangest action films of the 70's *Mr. No Legs*; is a lesser known kung-fu inspired gangster film starring Ted Vollrath, a U.S. Marine that lost both legs in combat. Vollrath trained in the martial arts and was the first person to earn a black belt in karate while training out of a wheelchair. No sea monsters and dolphins in this cult classic, just a martial artist using his skills and weaponized wheelchair to wreak vengeance upon gangsters and crooked cops. What a splash! Keeping in tradition of making memorable scenes, Browning also worked as a second unit director on the hit comedy film *Caddyshack* He wondered what would happen if a careless kid dropped a chocolate bar in a public swimming pool. The result is comedy history. As previously mentioned, Browning is the man!



- Robin Thompson



existence so let it be known that Vancouver's forgotten boy is not to be forgotten nor ignored even after death. I have brought forth two six string brothers from Donal's life to testify.

"Donal's rebellion came with faith ,intent and design . He was simple yet equally complex, for brilliance and genius ride a fine line of unhinged insanity. Although occasionally wrought with the lows of life, Donal's star shone bright for many key redemptive years. I thank him for his guidance, resilience, friendship, musical collaborations, and sobriety, for all of which I owe him my life."

- Pete Mills aka Pete bastard of Flash Bastard

"Donal was 100% all in on what he did - all spit and bloody snotty attitude, a walking middle finger to pretty much anyone who crossed his path.

Donal Finn

September 6th, 1975 - October 31st, 2022

Rock In Peace

By Billy Hopeless

From knowing Donal through his many years as front-man with Vancouver's notorious punk fuck and roll band Flash Bastard, I can honestly say, loved or hated he refused to be ignored. Even with hearing of his unfortunate death Oct 31st it seemed to me like the date was either planned a rock and roll death or just the bitch Goddess known as rock and roll saying that if he had to go, let it be in true rock and roll fashion. When he died, none of the local press or radio acknowledged his

He was a hell of a songwriter, with dark black humor in his lyrics, and an endless supply of musical twists and turns. I learned a lot from

Donal about what to do (and what not to do) as a musician. He was an incredibly creative guy, whip smart and troubled, mischievous and funny as hell, and I'm really sad that he's no longer with us."

- Rich Jones (Flash Bastard - Black Halos - Michael Monroe band)



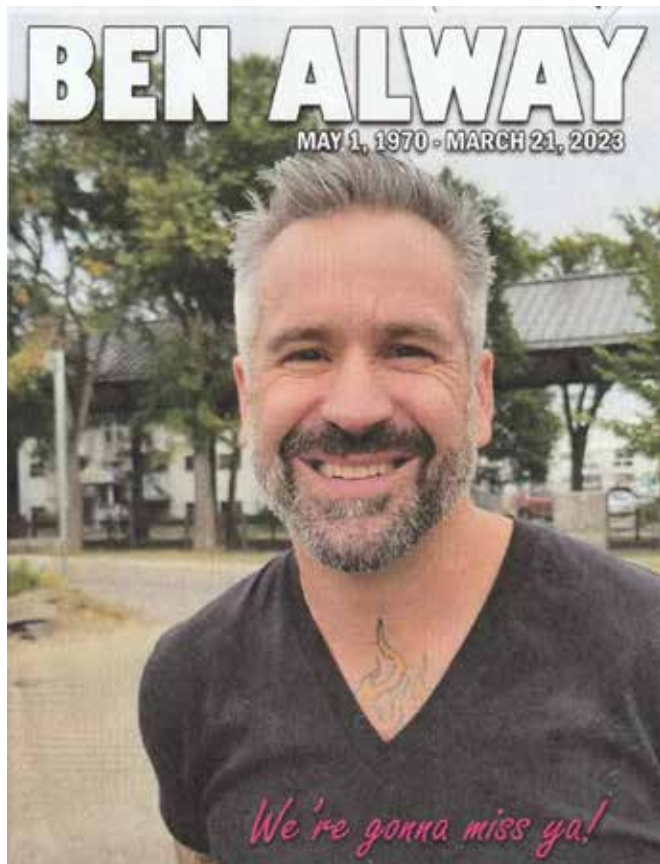
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BEN ALWAYS

May 1st, 1970 - March 21, 2023

It's hard to put into words what a cool, selfless person Ben Alway was. Talking about him in the past tense is such a mindf**k because I never thought I'd live to see the day that he was gone. Ben was a solid rock of realness in mine, and a lot of people's lives. I worked in a strip-club for twenty-five plus years, a quarter century in a world of fantasy. So, someone like Ben brought things back down to earth. He was a breath of fresh air in a sea of sh*t.

I only ever knew Ben as drug and alcohol free. After my first attempt at sobriety had failed, Ben showed up at my work the morning after I'd bloodied up my knuckles punching a glass picture frame on my wall during a fit of drunken rage. Ben asked me if I was ok when he saw my bloody knuckles. I told him that I was. Then I asked him why, and he said he didn't like seeing his friends hurt themselves. I believe I said something in response like, "It didn't hurt so don't worry about it." But that was a lie because I wasn't ok, and I was hurting. Aside from my mother, Ben was the only person who ever asked if I was ok. Knowing what I know now, I wish that I could apologize to Ben for not ever asking him if he was ok.

I don't know what else to write. This is a difficult period. Losing a sober brother is a hard f**king hit.

- Donny Black

I could go on and on describing the sense of loss, describing the hole and the pain that we all feel. I could try to write down my own personal disbelief at what has transpired or I could go on at great lengths about mental health and addiction but to what ends? It's not going to change anything, it's not going to roll back time so we could do something different. This has happened. This event that has impacted so many people's lives and we will all have to heal ourselves and get back to living our lives. We all have to get well again and we all have to live this beautiful, ugly, wonderful, sad, frustrating life, filled with love and tragedy. This is life and it just is... I want to remember Ben in my way. I want to remember the man that was a successful, protective and loving father. I want to remember the man that was an inspiration, the man that had succeeded in business, the man that had been a role model to others. I want to remember the man that demonstrated that one could be cool as fuck



and remain sober whilst others all around him were being punk rock as hell. So, here's the memory I want to share about my friend Ben... It was John's wedding. We had all gone to Playa del Carmen in Mexico to attend the event. There had been several days of group activities, scuba diving, group dinners and the like. After several days of being with this rather large and often loud group, my family and I decided to take a break on our own, spending the day exploring the shopping district of 5th Ave. with its hundreds of stores and restaurants. Later in the afternoon my family and I stopped at a small cantina to get out of the sun and endless throng of people, to enjoy a quiet lunch and a cool drink.

Sitting in the restaurant, out of the endless stream of tourists we ordered some lunch. As the food arrived we noticed that the crowd of people flowing by us seemed to be parting down the middle. Then, like a great white tattooed shark emerging from the depths, Ben casually cruised through the crowd. The mass of tourists parted around Ben. Some people looked startled, some people had expressions of awe, some had looks of envy and others had looks of disgust. Ben walked through this impenetrable crowd effortlessly, with no resistance at all as though he were covered in Teflon.

Ben's hair stood up like silver spikes on a metal porcupine and he had no shirt on. Oh, he had a shirt, but he had opted to have it hooked on his index finger and slung over his right shoulder. Bare chested... glistening with tanning oil and heavily tattooed he glided through the parting crowd. Ben was wearing white sneakers and long white socks pulled up to his knees. To complete his ensemble Ben had on what I could only describe as a very small and unnecessarily tight gold Speedo (leaving nothing to the imagination) and a pair of Elvis sunglasses. Everything about Ben said "Here I am! I don't give a fuck!"

The sea of people parted around Ben. Spotting us in the open walled restaurant, he altered course and started to saunter towards our table. "Oh good! It's Captain Underpants" my son announced

with his inherited sarcasm. Ben greeted us with a loud and friendly "Hello Adamson family!" then leaning in over the short wall that separated the restaurant from the street, promptly started to graze off of our lunches. He was grabbing a fry off of this plate and a tortilla chip off of that. "Did you want to join us for lunch?" I inquired. "No no no... I don't want to intrude" replied Ben.

As Ben continue to eat the food off of our plates the waiter took note that a very strange, tattooed and shirtless "Elvis impersonator" was bothering customers. Promptly and with conviction the waiter made his way to our table. Our waiter then ask if we would like him to get rid of the guy helping himself to our lunches.

I said "No, that's all right, he's a friend of ours" and the waiter gave me a look that basically said.... "Seriously?"

"I'm going to go back to the hotel and hang out by the pool, I'll meet up with you guys later for dinner." "Sounds good." we said. Ben grabbed one last fry from my son's plate, stuck it in his mouth like a cigarette, entered back into the stream of humanity which again parted like the Red Sea as he moved effortlessly through the crowd and poof! ... Ben disappeared back onto 5th Ave.

-Sparky

Ben Alway will be missed and remembered for many things... his loss was a devastating blow

to both Victoria and Edmonton scenes where he both had multiple friends, family and business connections... We first knew him as one of the staff at the infamous night club Scandals... fast forward a few years and he starts promoting shows in the city with Zimmer and several others first at Icehouse, then shifting over to Lucky Bar in the early aughts... This was also crucial to local bands at this point, as we were all getting to open for some pretty amazing acts that Ben was bringing to play Victoria. Bands like Misfits, Dwarves, Electric Frankenstein, Zeke, Black Halos, Teenage Head, Exploding Fuck Dolls, White Trash Debutantes, Oppressed Logic... the list goes on and of course local acts like JizzWailers, Rod Iron Haulers, Switchblade Valentines, Beaumonts, The Mags, Blackie and The Triumphs, Friday Night Murder, AWT, Hoosgow, Shivs, Half Cut, Frostbacks, Dayglos, Smoked Out Brainzzz, Budokan, Betty Ford, Bloody Hells, Keg Killers, Stockers, Zap Straps, Gung Hos!, Class Of 1984, Excessives, Moneyshot, Fableway, Candy, fuck the list goes on. Eventually he got tired of doing shows and focused on a new thing at that point, Laser Tattoo Removal. He was the first to introduce that practice to Victoria, BC, training several people here in Victoria with his beloved family at Urge Tattoo before heading to Urge 2 in Edmonton to set up shop with his buddy John Faulds. That was over a decade ago and now tattoo removal is a word we have in our daily vocabulary, offering a customer a second chance. We lost touch once he moved away as anyone does but he was always able to send me a funny meme or message now and then. I don't want to read my last message from him until I get a bit older... just wanna save it for some kind of treat or visit. He touched a lot of people and helped start a scene for local bands. He had legions of friends, as well as caring family, who are going to miss him. Go buy some tight ginch and a wife beater

tank shirt and a headband and run around a local shopping mall in Ben's Honor!!!

- Dustin Jak



Here is the Ben Alway story that sticks in my head for eternity. It was the first time we connected. Some time in 2000.

The Promoter from the Icehouse called the Cook St. House in a bit of a panic. He needed local openers for the Real McKenzies that night. Lucky for him, we had Betty Ford and The Jizzwailers ready to go. My negotiation for Jizzwailers was simple. 1 flat (24) of beer. No problem. Well, once at the show, he changed his tune and decreed that we would have one beer each. Not fucking cool (but sadly par

for the course)... I lamented the situation to the bartender, a stunningly handsome man with a kind face. He looked at me and handed me 2 six-packs... that is how I met Ben.

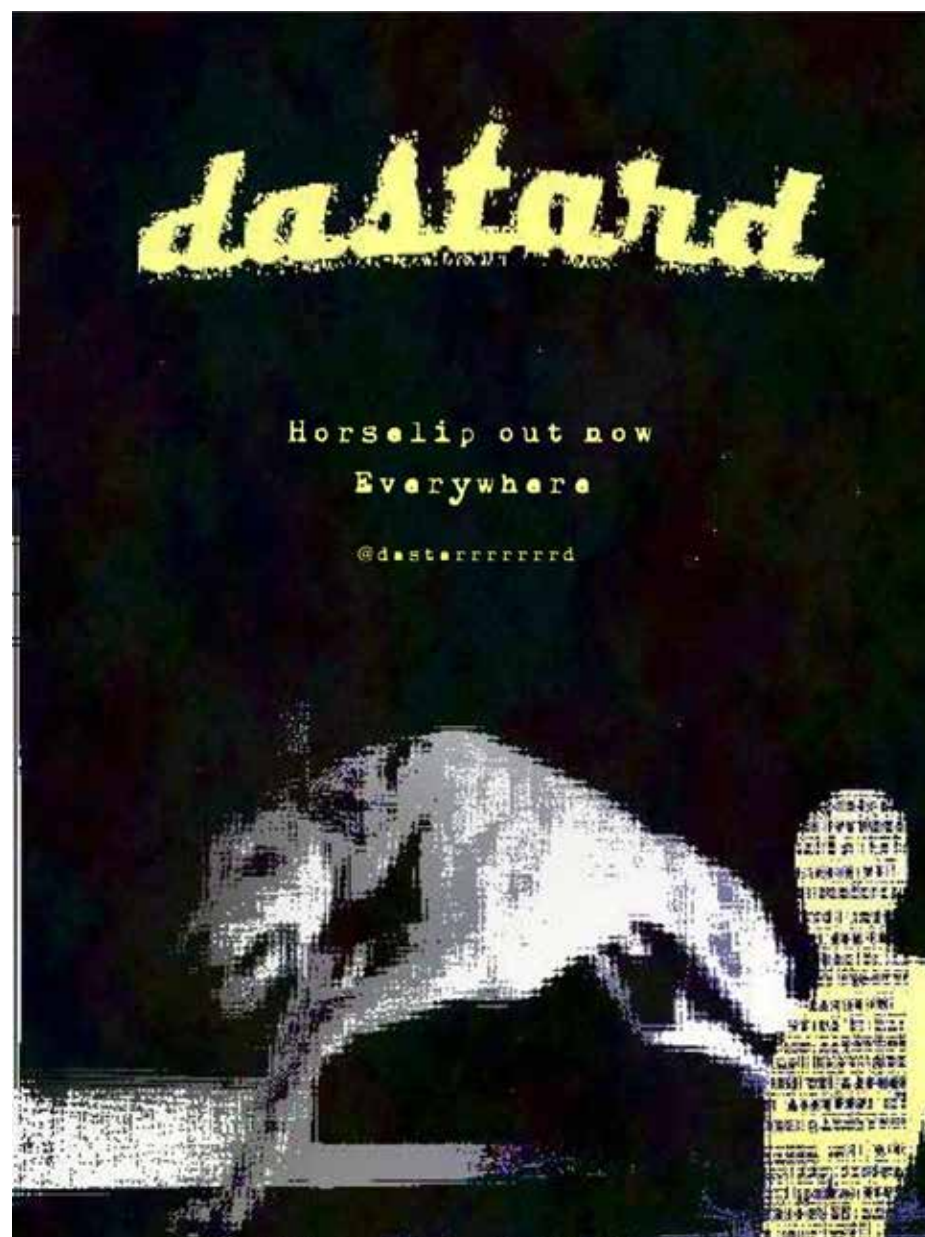
Over the years he booked many a show for many of my bands. Always a friendly face in the crowd and a promoter willing to support local bands. Over the years, he was a good friend both in person, and online since he moved to Alberta. We may not have always seen eye to eye in the ways of the world, but we were always civil to each other in those areas. I always counted that man as someone who would have my back if I needed it.

Thinking of you, my old friend. The world is less cool today. Stop looking at Jay Brown's ghost cock ya weirdo.

-Ty Stranglehold

Keep your eyes and ears open for an announcement about a memorial fundraising show for Ben's family that will be taking place at Lucky Bar in Victoria, BC.

Ben Always and forever.



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