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Vol. 20 - #5 - Issue 119 - August/September 2024

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Published by Ira Hunter

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The Last Piece of Bacon

Minutes with ZERO COPING SKILLS

By John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves:

Zero Coping Skills: Jordan (Vocals): BOLOC, ex-Rehab for Quitters, Crash Kelly, Tomorrow's Midnight, The Howling Bullets

Elena (Drums): Hung Up, Baxter and The Coagulators, Pepper Spray, ex-Rehab for Quitters, Sista Fista, Tomorrow's Midnight, The Howling Bullets

Neil (Bass): ex-Freebase, Set Against (UKHC)

Kevin (Guitar): Safe Decisions

Russ (Guitar): ex-Form 10, Next In Line

AU: How did the band come together?

ZCS: Jordan had a batch of songs for a new project and recorded some demos with Elena during the pandemic. When the lockdown ended, he put an ad up on the local musicians' boards. Everyone who answered was on the same page, so we got together and started jamming.

AU: The name?

ZCS: We were having the requisite naming discussion over drinks and were kind of mocking some of the longer, convoluted emo and post-punk band names of the past. But then Neil threw out "Zero Coping Skills" and we had to pause and

admit that really fit with the kind of topics we were writing about as well as our pedestrian skateboarding talents, so it stuck!

AU: Genre or who would the sound remind us of?

ZCS: Skate punk and melodic hardcore influenced by Bad Religion, SNFU, Descendents, Pennywise, Gorilla Biscuits. ZCS is the sound of two old opera singers fighting over the last piece of bacon at the buffet.

AU: Creative process?

ZCS: Jordan is the primary songwriter and formed the band with a batch of finished songs. Neil has also contributed several songs since, and the entire band contributes riffs and arrangements. Everyone puts their stamp on the sound and then we conduct a mystic ceremony around the oracle cantaloupe to hear if the song is ready to be unleashed.

AU: How important is it for listeners to know and understand your lyrics?

ZCS: Very. We tackle a number of bigger topics like mental health, unity, individuality, corruption, and what it means to be a punk as you age with more experiences and responsibilities. We always try to offer a positive outlook and be solution/support based as opposed to simply falling back on blind anger at social issues and personal struggles.

AU: Funniest thing to happen at a show?

ZCS: One time on the road there was a huge fight in the pit while we were playing, and we were waiting for the guy that started it to be bounced. We were confused as to why no one at the venue seemed to be doing anything and then half an hour later that guy was on stage fronting the headlining band. Every town and gig is a new adventure!

AU: What's in the future?

ZCS: We just released our new EP in July, so

we're focused on getting the word out— as well as our endless pursuit of promoting the world's greatest breakfast fruit.

AU: Where would you like to tour?

ZCS: We'd love to book a world tour of hardcore brunch gigs. The flamenco guitarists have held that slot for too long; It's an idea whose time has come. We can't play IHOPs though cuz Russ has a lifetime ban for a whiskey puking incident.

AU: Thoughts on the local scene?

ZCS: The Vic scene kicks ass and is pretty diverse. We all originally come from other places (Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, and Coventry UK) so we're super stoked to be part of the Island punk community. Smaller cities have a DIY all-hands-on-deck mentality that fits our aesthetic perfectly. There are lots of younger and older bands all doing their thing and supporting each other. Everyone usually ends up at a late night rehearsal space after gigs, all jamming together, so the party never stops.

AU: Any last words?

ZCS: Cantaloupe. Also, Elena got shit on by a

VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

seagull while we were answering this.

AU: Where can we find your music?

ZCS: We're on Facebook and Instagram and our music is up on all the usual streaming sites— but proper HD tracks can be downloaded on Bandcamp where the money goes to the artists, not the pockets of a soulless platform CEO.

AU: Thanks for the chat. Gotta go hunt down some cantaloupe. Craving suddenly came on.

zerocopingkills.bandcamp.com

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Squander

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

Squander: We are Squander from Halifax. I guess we would be infamous for playing fast and loud and for our guitar straps falling off mid-set.

AU: Give us a brief history of Squander; who's in the band and what are you all about?

Squander: Squander is Greg Hatt on guitar and vocals, Don Hynes on guitar and vocals, Ron Haigh on drums, and Simon Fraser on bass. We are all veterans of the Halifax punk scene playing in various bands over the years, including Napalm Raid, Get Wrecked, System Shit, The Chitz,



Talk Sick and Spew to name a few. We started jamming sometime in 2020. Greg, Don, and Ron started the band with another bass player and then they left and Simon joined. Our songs are about war, greed and political corruption and anything that really pisses us off. The ignorance and apathy of corporations and the way people in power are squandering the future.

AU: What's the music scene like in Halifax?

Squander: The Halifax scene is definitely in waves. Over the years there are good periods of lots of good bands and gigs and then lulls where it seems like nothing is happening. We'd say the scene is in an upswing now, especially the all ages scene. There was a long while where a punk kid was a rare sighting. But lots of good music coming out of Halifax and the Maritimes for that matter, bands like Black Dog, Ritual Warfare, Suspex, Cell Death (PEI), Hard Charger (NB) and Snarler, are some of our favourites.

AU: You released your first EP *War Crimes* in 2022 and your second EP *The Western Nightmare Continues...* in 2023. Do you have any new music on the horizon?

Squander: We just released an EP split with World Bastard from Berlin in July 2024. We're already working on something new but nothing concrete enough to announce. Stay tuned.

AU: Any new songs you're stoked on?

Squander: All of the new songs, haha. "We are the Wasteland" and "They Want Slaves" are on the new split with World Bastard and we also have a new single that we released online called "Hidden Reality" which is streaming basically everywhere.

AU: What's your songwriting process like?

Squander: Usually someone comes in with a riff and we all kind of contribute and have input to make the songs what they become. Or we're at jam and someone plays something that sounds good, as long as we don't instantly forget the riff, we just go from there. We actually do our best not to have a formula for songs! That would make writing repetitive and boring instead of fun and spontaneous.

AU: What was your first intro to D-beat?

Squander: Bands like Discharge (surprise, surprise), Halifax locals Disabuse and System Shit, Broken Bones and most of the UK scene from that time. Later on, albums like Wolfpack's *All Day Hell* and Skitsystem's *Enkel Resa Till Rännstenen* expanded the sound.

AU: What's the most essential D-beat album?

Squander: Doom's *Police Bastard 7"*, Electric Funeral's *D-Beat Noise Attack*, Disclose's *Yesterday's Fairytale*, *Tomorrow's Nightmare*.

AU: What's the most memorable show you've played and why?

Squander: Well, the most memorable show is probably when we were playing with the Ripcordz in Halifax and Greg did a bunch of shrooms (not privy to the rest of the band). He was having a tough time to begin the set, but about 3-4 songs in they hit him hard! We could tell something was up when Greg was playing like Marty McFly in *Back to the Future* when he's fading away. Eventually, he just leaned his guitar on his amp for another song or two looking overwhelmed and eventually walked off the stage, haha. The rest of us had no clue about his fucked up state of mind and figured he was sick. However, the show must go on, so we finished the set as a three-piece and found Greg outside afterwards tripping balls!

AU: If you were in a gang like in *The Warriors* what would it be called?

Squander: The War Bads

AU: Any shows or tours coming up?

Squander: August we have some good shows

HELLIFAX



we're very happy about. Opening for The Circle Jerks in Halifax August 27th, still in disbelief about that one. August 29th at Traxide in Montreal with Who Killed Spikey Jacket? and Ballistix. And Quebec City for Punx Make Noise Fest 2024 on August 30th.

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?

Squander: Most of our music is available on most bullshit streaming apps.

AU: Final words for our readers?

Squander: Humanity's obsession with power and greed will be the catalyst for annihilation.

squanderpunx.bandcamp.com

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MOODY GOODS

Interview by AU Editorial

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

We are Moody Goods, we're the most famous new band to hit Canada! You've got Jimi on bass and vocals, Addy on guitar and vocals, Liam on guitar and T pounding the drums.

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

We come from Brighton UK, where we can honestly say has one of the most thriving punk scenes in the country. We're extremely lucky to live in such an amazing place filled with like-minded people. The UK is pretty shit right now so to be

MOODY GOODS

amongst the best it has to offer is something we don't take for granted.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

The big sound of Moody Goods can only be experienced, never described. If you enjoy a little jaunt on some mushrooms and a relentless wall of sound, you'll be in the right place.

AU: How do you approach writing music?

We are lucky to have one of the greatest songwriters of our generation as one of our guitarists. He never lets us down and is the true engine of the band.

AU: Planning to release new music soon?

Very, very soon! We've been sitting on the main guts of an album for a while now but as always, life has thrown some things our way causing a few delays. Keep an eye out for the first single being dropped and we

will be playing most of the new record on our upcoming tour in your amazing country.

AU: Most memorable live show you've performed and why?

One of the wildest shows we have ever played was on a boat in Hamburg, Germany. It was sailing around the port with 300 people stuck on board whilst we slammed through a ripper of a set. We kept having to look up and take it all in to savour the moment, shit like this doesn't happen every show!

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

We have a ten-day tour all around Vancouver Island and the greater Vancouver area starting on September 10th in Victoria. Next year were coming back to conquer the whole country.

AU: What do you listen to in the tour van?

There was one tour where we watched nothing but Kitchen Nightmares. Every ten seconds was old mate Ramsey kicking off and us pissing ourselves. That and Split System from Melbourne,

Australia. They go hard, cut the shit and absolutely rip it live!

AU: If you were in a gang like in the movie The Warriors, what would it be called?

Funny you mention The Warriors, we would 100% be in a wrestling stable called the Todd Warriors - It was a close contender for the band name.

AU: Anything else you'd like to promote?

Go follow Jimi's Barbershop and if you're in Brighton come and get a haircut!

Also check out our side hustles: Top Left Club, Skinny Milk and Young Francis. We all share the same members - a family that plays together, stays together... right?

AU: Famous last words?

Who forgot to pack the bear spray?

roughguts.bandcamp.com

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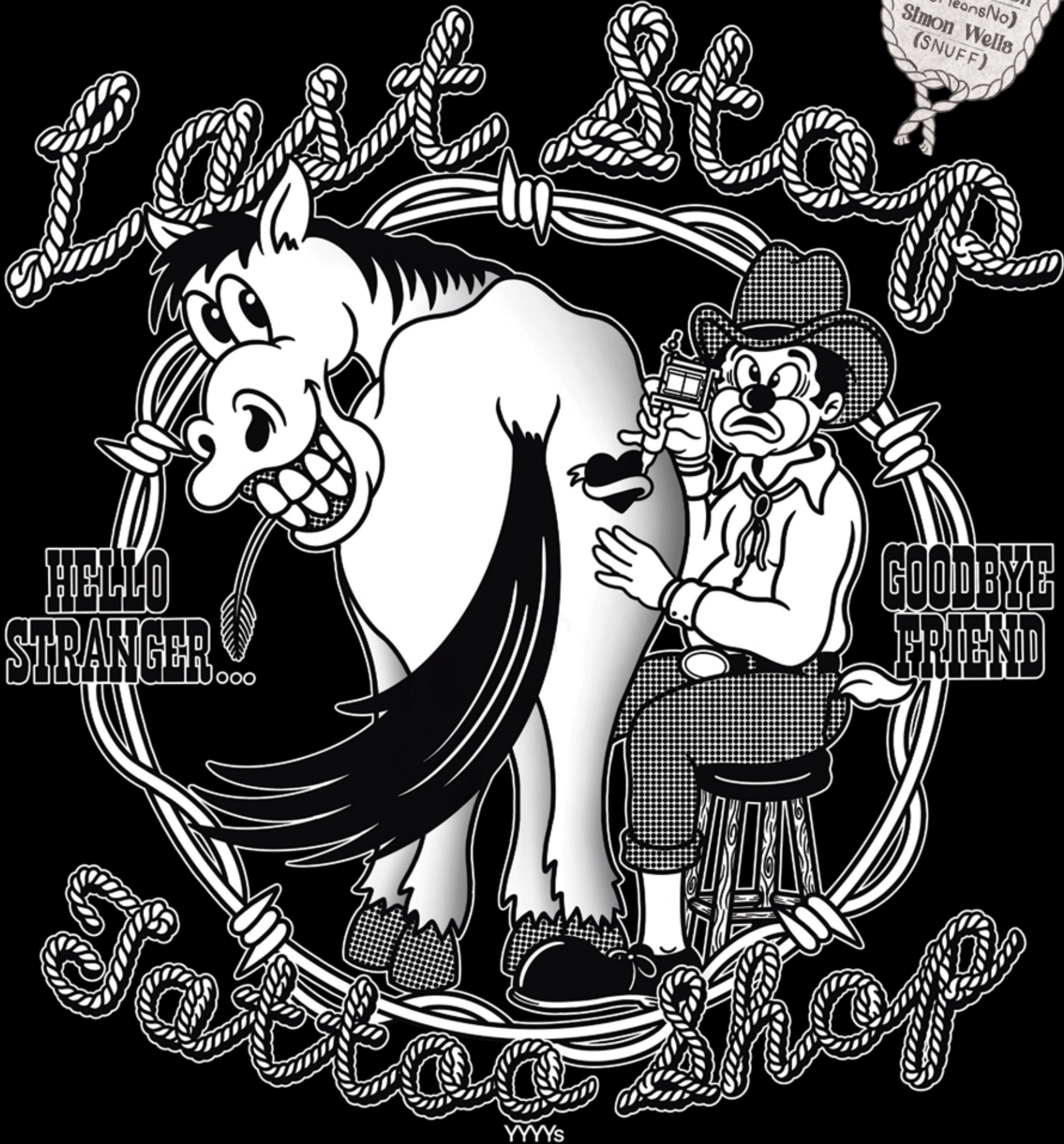
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Asspatch

Interview By Martin Splatterpants for Poached Records. Currently incarcerated at an undisclosed government facility.

Asspatch is a five-piece punk band, featuring members of Savage Henry and The Infamous One Pounders, The No Goes, and Miserable Tradition. Formed in the aftermath of COVID in April 2021, their first album is set to be released on Poached Records later this year.

Absolute Underground: Okay, I just finished watching *Back to the Future*. Marty McSplat, here with Asspatch, Saskatoon's answer to "What ever happened to the Speedhammers?" Anyway, who we all got here?

Graeme: Guitar, vocals, smoke shack.

Repper: Bass.

Rich: Lead guitar.

Steve the Metronome Karugula: Drums and rubber boots.

Chud: Vocals.

AU: Good stuff. Briefly describe your musical style, keeping in mind Greg's recent disappearance and what I said about pistol-whipping Steve.

Graeme: The first riffs you think of when you pick up a guitar.

Rich: You know how it's hard to read a doctor's handwriting? Well, it's kinda like that, with some messy guitar solos over top.

Repper: The perfect soundtrack to a midlife crisis.

Chud: I just don't wanna get pistol-whipped and go missing like that Greg guy.

wanna get pistol-whipped and go missing like that Greg guy.

AU: Influences— let's have 'em.

Rich: Dwarves, Ramones, Misfits, AC/DC, Van Halen (DAVE ONLY), The Cars, lots of '80s hard rock and metal... but I don't write the songs around here, so we sound like NONE of that.

Graeme: TV jingles and speed.

Steve: Bands, sounds, and humans. I like Devo.

Chud: My answer is the same as Graeme's. Not just because I wanna be like Graeme, but because I also enjoy television and even more specifically, the work of Keanu Reeves. That was a crazy bus ride.

AU: How do you feel about putting pictures of your friends or yourselves on your band shirts? I'm in favour of it. Remember Chip and Pepper?

You guys could do tie-dyed Chud and Repper shirts. That'd be so great.

Chud: Fuck you Marty you son of a bitch... that's actually a funny idea. Still, fuck you. I needed the money! You know that.

AU: The Poached crew is stoked about the upcoming album. I thought your decision to go with used CD-Rs for the physical release was intriguing and fit well with your other climate change initiatives. Tell us about it and, in particular, how the vocal recording process went. Smooth sailing— am I right?

Chud: First of all, anyone that knows Marty, knows he has a serious problem with various inhalants. The used CD-R thing isn't happening. We threw the idea around for a bit, but we had all done a significant amount of peyote that month and a lot of things happened. A lot of things. Some things we can't take back, some stuff that you can never unsee... Anyway, the recording is sounding tight. We had a couple minor bumps along the way, but I mean, at least we all got fucked up and had a good time. That's the real goal. My vocals were way too horrible for the first studio, so we had to switch spots and have LaFrenchy finish me off (he has had to deal with my incompetence his entire career). There will be a physical release once the mix is good to go. Get off the glue, Marty. Your family misses you.

AU: Any big shows with headliners who achieved modest commercial success in 1992 coming up?

Chud: That's all we ever wanna do. We had our big shot. We wanted to open for Wheatus but we fucking blew it. Application got lost in the mail. But we are opening for Green Jelly in August at Black Cat Tavern. Also, if you're in the Saskatoon area, a bunch of our friends are playing Punks For Pups, a three-day punk fest at the end of August, featuring bands from all over Canada and the states. Speaking of bands that will never achieve moderate success, how's your new project going Marty? Find a bass player yet?"

AU: I'm allowed supervised day trips but will probably skip that one. I heard Tag Team is

playing a basement show in Humboldt with Johnny Cash Money that night, so, you know. What's the plan for the rest of the year?

Repper: What plan?

Steve: If I planned things, I probably would be hanging out under a bridge more often than not.

Rich: Party, dude.

Graeme: Get some sleep and make more songs.

Chud: Me and Repper are taking hot yoga classes.

AU: Between the five of you, there's over seventy years of local music experience sitting here. Any advice for young bands aspiring to follow your pay-to-play template well into their 40s and 50s?

Graeme: Don't make friends, and always play with the same people.

Repper: Practicing is for jerks, it's a necessary evil, but keep it to a minimum.

Rich: If you can manage to get the band to practice at your house, it's a win. The other guys often leave their leftover booze behind.

Steve: Strive to play first or second so you can borrow someone else's stuff.

AU: Sage wisdom. What's with the rubber boots, Steve? Any last words?

Rich: Taxation is theft.

Steve: Include vegetables in your diet.

Repper: Never rub another man's rhubarb.

Chud: I lied about the yoga classes.

Graeme: See you in the parking lot.

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Razorvoice at the White Eagle Hall opening for the Real McKenzies and Brutal Youth, "Coasty, Alex Campbell, Ben Wittrock, Saul Sitar." - Photo by Colin Smith.

RAZORVOICE

Interview with frontman Ben Wittrock

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

You can call me Ben, and I am chiming in as chief songwriter and front man of Razorvoice. People are surprised to see me scissor kick performing live if I'm first introduced to them as the well known sound tech (amplifying whats already awesome) in the local punk, rock and metal live music scene in Victoria, BC. I do what I can to serve the community around me that I have a deep care about, but songwriting is my number one passion; and that's where my focus will be shining for this next chapter with an amazing team.

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

Razorvoice began in 2014 when I was living in LA, then moved around with me as I experienced life. Razorvoice is all about engaging in community and raising our voices together to serve an uplifting energy through connection, truth and transformation. Appreciating the beauty of the West Coast and the weirdo music scene history of Victoria, I am happy to call BC's capital city home as of the past 6 years. The current lineup in 2024 is composed of some amazing brothers; Coasty playing lead bass guitar, co-writing new songs and singing harmonies with lead vocals he wrote himself (who has a rad rap project, CoastyGxd, worth checking out to fulfill your inner darkness). Then jumped on board Alex Campbell who is one of the most sought out drummers and drum techs in the city slamming the skins making them sing! Alongside the rad rhythm section came solid Saul Sitar from Hawking shredding lead guitar and additional harmonies with hunky stage presence. We are lucky to have Fin Edwards (a legend in the making) from Danger Box stepping in to take on bass and entertainment duties for the next Pop Punk Party this September 1st at the infamous Lucky Bar.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

Grunge Punk Popsicles dripping in distortion. Melodic live authentic rock n' roll baby! Would love for you to listen and tell us what it tastes like to your ear buds.

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

Razorvoice is dropping a new single called "Follow It" on August 26th, 2024! Produced by Theo Goutzinakis from Gob and studio king of The Armoury, Paul Silveira, with mastering done by Ted Jensen who is known for American Idiot and Hotel California... I am honoured to have worked with this team to bring this song to life and I am so happy to share it to allow for the next songs to come along and follow it. This song has opened a lot of doors for Razorvoice, and I'm looking forward to it's sonic energy knocking down doors for others to follow their own intuition, visions and actions we can all be thankful for. Get ready to hear some amazing live drum tones from one of my favourite drum rooms in BC, and in Canada; the Armoury Studios.

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

"Follow It" is an anthemic dopamine hit of fuel to

move past our human experiences of darkness towards a passionate light that can pull us through the hells we put ourselves through. The song has a beautiful badass female character leading by example, guiding us towards our reason to be alive and to follow it. By letting our passions spark a light in us to guide our path towards speaking and acting upon our intuitions is what this song is serving ourselves to remember. I'm thankful for pop punk music and community that has a future so bright we've gotta wear our sunglasses while rockin' towards it.

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

I love the last song I released, "Cut My Teeth" and "Moving On" from the Unmute record, especially since I got to dive into expressing my ego by writing and playing every instrument, engineering the songs and mixing them to fully understand the craft and skills within multiple perspectives of song production. But I was elated to surrender some production hats to some legends I respected on the song "Follow It" alongside some more to be released from that project.

AU: Tell us about the Pop Punk Nights you put on at Lucky Bar in Victoria?

POP PUNK PARTY is next up on Sunday, September 1st at Lucky Bar. I've been hosting Pop Punk Nights at Lucky Bar in Victoria to reignite the "scene" and community. I began doing Pop Punk Nights pre-pandemic and on a tour I did in 2019, but post pandemic, I placed more integral focus on developing a quarterly consistent show to keep people coming out for "Pop Punk Nights" without needing to know who was even playing them. Pop Punk songs had a huge influence on my-self growing up, and so many others, that they are a timestamp of our sonic DNA in a nostalgically positive memory. Pop Punk was a great gateway genre to get into hardcore, the history of punk, straight edge lifestyle, DIY ethos, alongside the uplifting melodies guided towards positive outlets of connection and community. So I encourage even non Pop Punk Bands to play along and be part of the themed night by playing at least 1 pop punk anthem we grew up on for the audience to sing along to for an engaging evening of bringing community together. We've also gotten to do an all ages show at Little Fernwood. It's amazing the buzz we've made with labels and touring bands reaching out to join the evening and community. Come on out, meet some new friends and be apart of it. Community is for you to come-in-unity and engage in the positive movement! So show your face and be welcomed into the network!

AU: What do you love most about live music?

Connection. Energy. Authentic personalities not stuck or fabricated behind screens. Spontaneity and rawness. Humorous mistakes, well practiced skill paying off in shared unity of visions. Again, live music always comes back to connection; XLR cables to sockets, voices to voices, hearts to hearts, fist bumps to fist bumps, and new unexpected connections that lead to collaborations in bands and other relationships whether they are with audio engineers, art designers, new potential band members, friends, romances and new stories.

AU: What should we know about you that we

don't already? What don't you want your mother to know.

Part of releasing this new song is sharing a lot of what I've been silent about. I've been pretty silent about being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, which had it's worst attack on the right side of my body from my nipple down going uncontrollably numb in both of my feet to a point where drumming wasn't possible at it's peak symptom. However through ocean dipping, clean diet, a strong focus with a positive mindset I have been able to minimize symptoms remaining drug free to continue enjoying this life. (With the early exception of a heavy hit of Prednisone to stop my immune system from doing too good of a job defending my body). Tell my mother I told you not to tell her the amount of writing+recording sessions, live sound gigs and ocean dips (even during the biggest of waves on the coldest of days) I pushed through without feeling my legs and balance correctly at risk of further injury, but

continued through with a vision and belief to accomplish it safely anyways.

AU: Any hidden talents unrelated to music?

Moist talents come to mind... Making a deliciously moist chicken confit dish has been a surprising highlight lately alongside leading some Qi Gong sessions. It's all about finding what fuels the flow to serve the songs and reaching the climax dynamic within them!

AU: Anything else to promote?

I am honestly so proud to invite you to September 1st Pop Punk Party! It's not just a Pop Punk Night, but a POP PUNK PARTY! We have local boys Poor Sport performing an eagerly anticipated set as they just released a new song and video called "Last Call" which has such killer sing along gang vocals for us to all join in on live. We're bringing in touring band Calling All Captains from Edmonton who have been blowing up on social media with a new EP called "e(motion) sickness", so it's our job to show them how sweet of a scene we have here in Victoria, and if you're not in the

area, make it out to the show to be apart of it! We also have King Bob; one of my favourite new local amalgamations of creatives in a Recess themed band... do YOU remember that cartoon? Razorvoice will be performing again as your hosts, but with a new lineup and a new song release for you to sing along to coming out on Aug 26th, "Follow It". Last but not least with alliteration we have Little Lightning, who have been pouring illuminating intention into some new releases working with a hero of their own that I am stoked for them to share with us! See you at the POP PUNK PARTY! If not this one, lets bring the party to you!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Go check out one of Pop Punk Night's bands "Electric Jane", of whom singing drummer, Nick West, passed away on an unfortunate kayak trip while in the middle of recording 4 songs. Fortunately with care and whole hearted intention we were able to finish the songs in their raw form with what we were able to capture from our time together while I was honoured to engineer our second project together. With his amazing energy, Nick's heart beat will ripple on forever in those songs and our community remembering his upbeat go getting energy and infectious attitude. Remember to allow your art to be expressed so it doesn't stay only in your mind or on a hard drive. If your art goes unexpressed it can show up as a symptom in your body, or a blockage in your life's story from moving forward in alignment with your purpose. Share "it" with those around you, learn from your mistakes and apply your passionate learning towards the next project. Thank you to Electric Jane and all the support that brought them to life which continues forward in a new life. Stay Electric!

AU: How do people find you online?

Find "Razorvoice" anywhere you can type it. You can see any recent links you're curious about at linktr.ee/RAZORVOICE. Spotify or any other tool we can use as an opportunity to connect is great, but sharing energy at our live shows is THE BEST way to find us and the local heart beats around your own community.



Flat Black

Interview with Guitarist Jason Hook
By Aeryn Shrapnel

Guitarist Jason Hook introduced his new band Flat Black last year. The former Five Finger Death Punch guitarist teamed up with a trio of young and talented musicians and signed with Fearless Records. Now, they are gearing up for the release of their debut album, *Dark Side of the Brain*, which was produced by Hook and Chris Collier (Korn).

Absolute Underground: It's been a few years since you left FFDP to pursue your own project. You've got singer Wes Horton, bassist Nick Diltz, and drummer Rob Pierce by your side. How did you connect with these guys? What about them stood out to you most?

Jason Hook: Well, I went out looking for really good musicians. I knew I was going to start with the drummer, and that took a little while. I went through many different drummers, and eventually, sort of by accident, was introduced to Rob Pierce through a mutual friend of ours. Rob was in Las Vegas doing a session and the producer called me to come down and check this guy out, so I did and pretty much no one could come after the guy. He's just that good. And then I filled in each guy one at a time, based on what

I believed we could do musically together. That was really the most important thing to me, is that there was some kind of chemistry or connection musically.

AU: What's your approach to songwriting?

Jason Hook: I always have my periscope up as far as if I hear a good groove, while I'm in the mall, or if I think of a title or a catchphrase

or something, I'm always writing it down. What inspires me is hearing something that I like.

Whether I play it on guitar or I hear it on the radio or something— if I go, God, that's such a great chorus or chord progression, or what an interesting vibe... Those are the kind of things that make me want to try to recreate a similar sounding thing. Certainly, from my favorite bands as well. Going back and taking bits and pieces from the things that I loved when I was growing up. That's always sort of built-in inspiration.

AU: How does the rest of the band contribute to the songwriting process?

Jason Hook: I like to work on my sketches by myself. So I'll sketch out music ideas without anyone being able to chime in and then we pass things around, get some feedback, make

changes, ask anyone if they have any ideas, arrangement changes, lyric changes... It's definitely a collaboration.

AU: *Dark Side of the Brain* is out now and has been a long time in the making. Did you have any difficulties during the production?

Jason Hook: Yeah. I mean, not from a technical standpoint, but just the uncertainty as to where it was headed and did we have the right material and is it ready for everyone to hear and not knowing and second guessing and all that stuff. That's always a little bit of a difficulty. As far as recording and stuff, there was plenty of time and space to make sure we did everything the way we wanted to do it.

AU: I know you designed the album art yourself. What medium did you use?

Jason Hook: I love software and I love playing around with Adobe stuff. It's very powerful and I actually started taking Photoshop lessons because I knew that heading into this campaign of promoting Flat Black, I knew that we were going to need tons of graphic stuff and visuals and everything now is essentially image-driven. The internet, the phone, all the social media, everything



is image-based so the more skills you have in that department, I think the better. I was really excited to learn more about Photoshop and Illustrator. The cover was done in Photoshop. The entire packaging for the vinyl has imagery all throughout. That was a lot of fun.

AU: Flat Black will be touring with Godsmack during the summer and fall. Do you have any plans to come to Canada in the future?

Jason Hook: If I had it my way, yeah, we'd be up there next week. Being from Canada, I certainly recognize and appreciate the importance of working that market. I think there's a lot of starvation up there as far as heavy music goes. Whenever I'm in Canada, it seems the audience turnout and enthusiasm is just a little bit bigger and a little bit more than normal. I think Canadians appreciate when American bands come up there because it's not that frequent. So, I love it. I love touring up there and I would anticipate we'll be back soon.

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?

Jason Hook: I think it's worth noting that the physical album, meaning the CD and vinyl, has a bonus disc— live from Edmonton. We recorded all of the shows from last year and I wanted to put some bonus material on the physical versions. So to drive some interest to the physical, I mean, nobody really has any reason to buy a record but I like to make things special and make them sort of a collectible, so we decided let's put aside four live from Edmonton. So that's kind of cool and it will be out in October.

AU: Any advice for young musicians?

Jason Hook: I would say don't listen to your friends. Do what you feel is right for you. Practice, practice, practice writing songs. Practice playing with other musicians. I don't think it's a bedroom sport the way it sort of has turned into a bedroom sport. I really believe you should get together with people and play in person.

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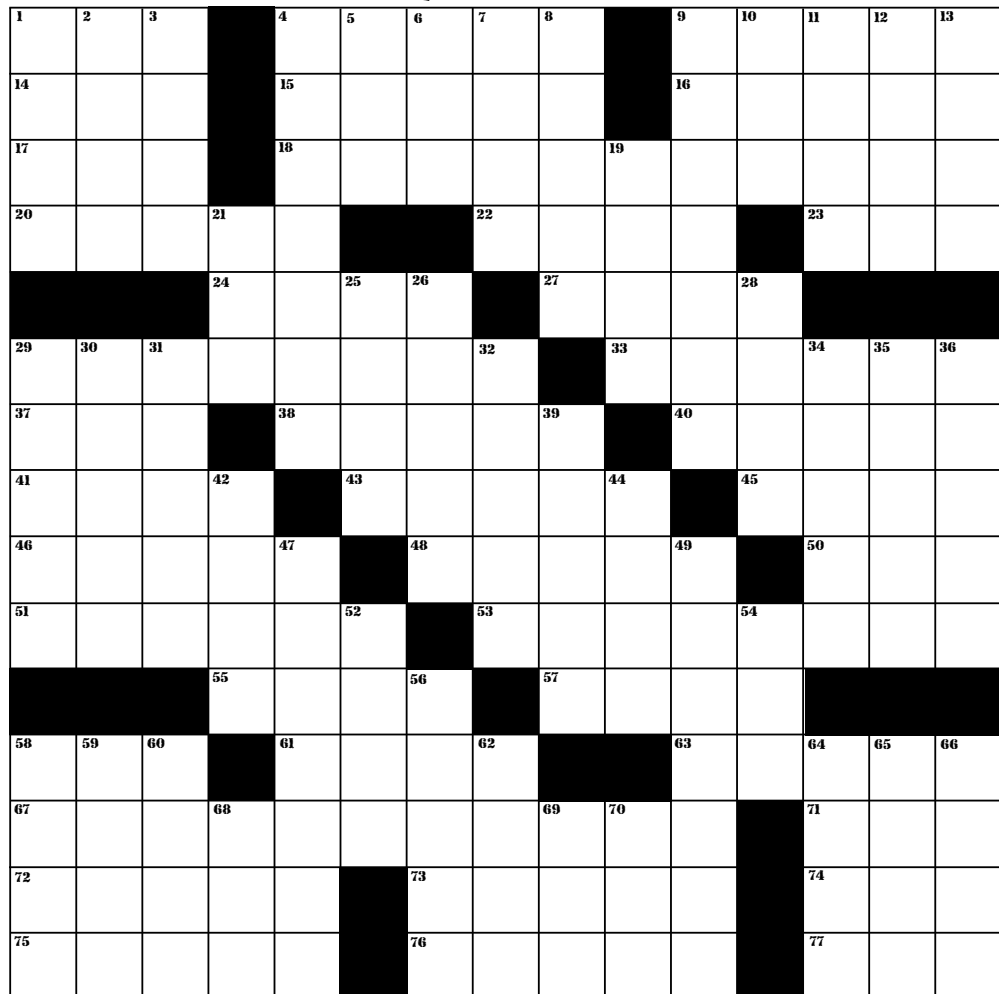
GANG SIGNS

ACROSS

1. Pig palace
4. Controversial ad mascot Joe
9. One of them was Terrible
14. Distributor of The Talking Heads and The Ramones
15. US President born in Hawaii
16. Beethoven's "Ode _____"
17. Airport info
18. Old Punk club in New York's East Village, _____ High
20. Symphony # of 16-across
22. Al Italia destination
23. _____ out (erases)
24. Typesetter's measure
27. Puts the bracelets on
29. Longing for
33. Vandals' "I Want to be a _____"
37. Scoreboard letters at the United Center
38. Suffix with bat or boom
40. Duo behind "Oh Yeah"
41. In type, it can be en or em
43. Robert Browning poem about an Athenian General
45. "_____ Rider"
46. Group of scouts
48. Climactic prefix
50. Car co. until 1975
51. Rats, for example
53. Gets harder
55. Loonies
57. Enamoured with
58. Foolish person
61. "The Tonight Show" host before Carson
63. They're a wheely good idea
67. It includes 1-, 4-, 11-, 54- and 66-down, plus 33-, 43- and 51-across
71. Author of "The Joy Luck Club"
72. Popular online
73. No longer on deck
74. Plastic _____ Band
75. Fights in a gym
76. Innocent, in a way
77. Word before School or Wave

DOWN

1. Ballet bird
2. Hatcher who played 65-down
3. A grand tale
4. Famous Apache leader
5. Blood typing system
6. Staff (a job)



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7. Hosp. area
8. _____ hands (heal)
9. Maternity ward shout
10. Amp button
11. Sum 41's home town
12. Bar _____
13. Pink Floyd's Barrett and namesakes
19. Apple product
21. Rubberlike plastic: Abbr.
25. Important fig. for magazines
26. Einstein quote: "_____ and modest life..."
28. First name in "Popeye"
29. Popular home electronics choice
30. 4th busiest airport in the US
31. Golfer's accessory
32. Where femurs and tibias meet
34. Make a loud, harsh sound
35. Mary-Kate or Ashley
36. Kids' toys with ups and downs
39. The Teflon Don
42. Most milk
44. No in Nuremburg
47. Homer Simpson's bowling team
49. A matter _____ (style)
52. In the area
54. Dana's partner
56. Wrap star
58. Off-road options
59. Transport
60. When doubled, part of a hit song for Doris Day
62. Actress Moreno
64. British school started in 1440
65. Kent's crush
66. Coke
68. Kids' card game
69. Kimono sash
70. Toyota's _____4

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practice, going into it not thinking anything was gonna happen. After playing together it all made sense, and here we are.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

Cute: Standing in a microwave with a bucket of forks

AU: Sex, drugs, or rock n' roll? Or all of the above?

Cute: just drugs

Cute

Interview by BA Johnston

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

Cute: Cute; our live shows

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

Cute: There are four of us; our name and a biography.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

Cute: Started in 2022 not knowing much about each other. We all met for the first time at the first

probably

AU: What's the current music scene in Hamilton like? Any other wicked bands for people to check out?

Cute: Fresh and hungry. Look out for Public Health

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

Cute: Glow Variety: meatball with extra cheese. Bonanza: hot bonanza sub. Anytime Convenience; assorted with almost everything on it. Big Bear at King and Holton: assorted with everything, no tomato, extra mayo.

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.

Cute: Nah.

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

Cute: *Freddy Got Fingered*, *Salo*, *Ciarán's Trip to Disney World '99*, *White Chicks*.

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

Cute: A 2010 Dodge Grand Caravan on a 2/3 full tank of gas. Referencing media until we get out of the car

HAM JAMMERS

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

Cute: Check out our website for more info!

AU: Have you released an album recently?

Cute: She came out a year ago

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

Cute: Wouldn't you like to know

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

Cute: "Lost My Nerve On Purpose"

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and adding the lyrics to the songs en route to the venue.

Boasting the ability to accomplish much as musicians in a band in a comparatively short amount of time, the members seem to inevitably be getting to know one another as people in the same band concurrently. During the course of our conversation, it was discussed that keys may be added to their existing songs and that each individual in the room had a unique attitude towards song lyrics in general and a unique take on Rocky's song lyrics specifically. Maybe it's that clumsiness that always accompanies a new band as the members settle in

that leads to this but I can't be too sure: this band seems a bit too mature to trip over that BS. I'd guess instead that the band as an entity is moving and developing a bit faster than expected and even its own members are now playing catch-up.

I will admit that in spite of myself I asked the band three questions knowing them to be lame, all of which I will mention here, and the first of which I was genuinely more curious about than the others. Being a female in the scene seems a bit easier these days, according to Rocky, especially when thinking about past experiences with hindsight. Though the other members of the band were quick to point out that they themselves were not particularly "bro-y" and as such could not be in a band with somebody who

was, hopefully they're indicative of a positive change within musicians and music crowds overall, one less chauvinistic and toxic even when stepping outside of your own bubble. I will add that I did stay on this topic longer than required, probably looking for some kind of angle from which to profile the band— my bad. I am however grateful the band took it in stride gracefully and let the conversation flow from this to the next topic because in the end they were, of course, correct: the band is not a good female-fronted band, they're a good band that happens to be female-fronted.

When asked to describe their sound, I was met with the appropriately-strained answers that a dead-end question like that deserves, so I will take the liberty of proclaiming that maybe we can cut the crap and remember that rock n' roll bands are either good or bad and it really is that simple. Lushclot, to be clear, are a damn fine one at that.

As new as the band is, know that it would be worth your while to go check them out as soon as you can, so that you can witness a band grow so genuinely you would be forgiven for thinking it was easy to do. And maybe, if you're lucky, you will be able to see how hard it actually is because of course, like my last lame question confirmed, growth is always a mix of extreme highs and lows. As Rocky was nice enough to indulge me, the name Lushclot invokes something "kind of deadly, kind of gross, but it's...luscious."

Lushclot are: Raquel "Rocky" Mann (vox), Tom Kerr (guitar), RH (bass), Nathan Marshall (drums).

lushclot.bandcamp.com

lushclot@gmail.com

Photo by Levi Manchak

Lushclot

Stringing you up like a pre-soaked beaver rat.

By Dre Calderon

Considering the members of Lushclot have a cumulative total of oh, 60 years of playing under their belts, their current approach to music strikes me as effortlessly though consciously youthful or, better yet, refreshing.

Consisting of what can safely be called veteran players, the band seems to comfortably walk a thin line of being both planned out (in ways both calculated and responsible) and completely spontaneous and reckless. Note please that "comfortably" is an intentional word choice as there is no other way to describe a band that

navigates these opposite ends easily, so easily in fact that I would dare to claim they may be a wonderful blend of contradictions.

Playing a sum total of only four shows to date, the band nonetheless developed their music over the course of just under a year before debuting, the songs built primarily off of pieces written by the guitar player, Tom. When the time came for a singer, a female one was initially hoped for and subsequently accomplished without much panic or distress, which is in keeping with the band's confirmation that this particular grouping has been notably easy and/or organic in its development and growth. This specific claim is evidenced arguably by the fact that they completed full-band rehearsals a whopping seven times before playing their first show, completing

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Failure Trace of Human Race Interview by Ryan Dyer

The Thailand-based "Multi-National ADHD Nihilistic Grindcore Band" Failure Trace, or Failure Trace of Human Race, has been through many changes since 2003. The band is currently the vision of drummer/vocalist Rayn, who keeps the band alive as a solitary grindcore entity somewhat outside of his home country, Thailand's musical scene. Rayn took Failure Trace to the big stage of Obscene Extreme back in 2013, and aims to get the band on similar platforms within the next year.

AU: Tell me about Failure Trace being invited to Obscene Extreme back in 2013:

Rayn: I was in a car accident in the middle of 2012. I lost my consciousness but was alive for three months within this comatose state. I had many major injuries just like a brain hemorrhage, a cut liver and punctured lung and my left arm was broken all because I didn't put a safety belt on— I thought it wasn't too far to reach home. I was also in an argument with my ex-girlfriend on the phone during the drive. I got my consciousness back, and woke up in the middle of November the same year. I started to check

my messages and found the Obscene Extreme Festival invite, held in Jakarta Indonesia in 2013. I decided to play with my 50% recovered body—it was crucial to do it regardless of how much I recovered.

AU: How did you feel the show went?

Rayn: The show was successful but after that I found that I had problems with my behavior and nature as a side effect of the brain surgery from the accident. It led to different behavioural side effects like vandalizing things, hitting people and becoming an asshole after getting drunk.

AU: How did your musical journey begin?

Rayn: I was in the first year of study in my university, and I knew my friend that was also a member of a music club there, MxAxD who went on to drum for Failure Trace. I accompanied him to a music club he used to go to have a rehearsal with his band that time called Sperm. I then suggested Sperm to cover the songs from bands I like, if they would be interested to play. We changed the name to Sperm X and started to cover songs from the band's like Korn, Linkin Park, Coal Chamber, and SOAD. At this time, my intention was just to be an audience member with no desire to be in the band, or become a singer. I just wanted to try the drums as my

father used to play traditional drums (Indian traditional drum) and meet new friends. Then one day I sang "Blind" by Korn since the singer was too lazy to study the lyrics, leading me to becoming the co-vocalist for them. We played different events at the university, shocking the audience, as they weren't used to seeing music like this. Then change came as I was listening to different types of extreme music. I introduced the members to Children of Bodom and we covered their song "Downfall." More changes came when we entered a contest. I renamed the band as Neo Blood Stream Of Asia. During the contest I wore handcuffs and painted my face with corpse paint, surprising the judges. We didn't win but didn't give a shit because it was an accomplishment for us rookies students, winning the semi-final round.

AU: How did Failure Trace form after this?

Rayn: During my second year of university in 2002, I met an older Japanese guy who told me that he knew a band with a singer that sounded like me. It was Brutal Truth. I was listening to Napalm Death and Carcass. This Japanese guy's name was Shuichi Sano, a co-founder of FxTxHxRx. Sano persuaded me to start covering songs from grindcore bands. But without a drummer and bass player who were too busy studying, we used a drum machine. Sano composed our first song, "Continue Or New Game" which was never released until now. The most twisting matter is I already forgot the lyrics as well. We found another bass player and drummer, but they eventually left due to inner-band issues and we shortened the band name to Failure Trace because we thought the full name was too much of a mouthful for Thai people. Then I decided to play the drums myself and invited my friend to play the bass. Sano eventually left while a few other members shifted around until



progressive death grind music, of which I'm preparing a full-length album of now.

AU: What are your plans for Failure Trace right now?

Rayn: This summer, we were booked for Japan's Brutal Fest, but we had to cancel. I am still committed to bringing Failure Trace of Human Race to the world, though. As for the 23rd anniversary of the band next year, it would be great for the band to play shows and festivals in different countries. I have members

ABSOLUTE ASIA

2003, when we released our first demo containing three original songs of the band. This demo was a groundbreaking phenomena in the underground musical scene of Thailand. Later, the band continued to play many gigs and put out our first full-length album named *Wholesome Song*.

AU: What's new musically for Failure Trace?

Rayn: Lots, we did a cover for Extreme Noise Tribute— this featured Nan Li from China's Deathpact on guitar and bass. We also did a "Smells Like Teen Spirit" cover and even a post-grindcore album. I am going to bring the Fear Factory sense of electronic sounds into

ready to play in Mexico, but I am looking to bring the band to the US and Canada in 2025 as well as countries in the Asia Pacific area. The band needs supporters for this new chapter in our legacy, so please reach out if you want to be a part of this journey— either through cyber-collaborations (we are currently putting together a new song, "Neo Holocaust Extermination Mankind" in which we are looking for string and drum parts) or live performances.

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failuretrace.bandcamp.com



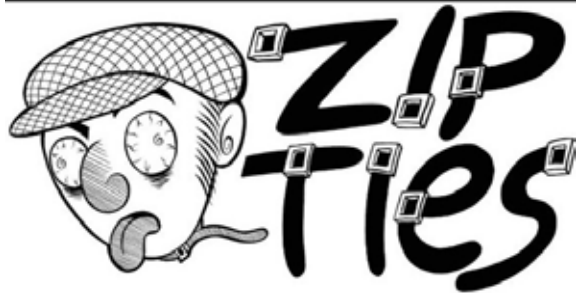
Zipties

Interview by AU Editorial

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

Zipties: We are Zipties. A five-piece punk band based in Calgary. Zipties consists of Misty Bangers (vocals), Zippy D (guitar/vocals), Chris the Baker (guitar/vocals), Jimmy Wanker (bass/vocals), Kehoe (drums).

There are two things that come to mind when thinking of what we might be famous/infamous for. Our frontman always puts on quite the performance. He's always got a different/weirdo outfit for every show. The rest of the band has no idea what he'll be wearing and we get to find out with the crowd when he comes out on stage. We've all burst out laughing on more than one occasion when we see what sort of getup he's put together for the show. The second thing that comes to mind would be R-17, our mascot. We



found her discarded one day, took her home and immediately pulled out the drill and some zip ties. She's been by our side and to every show since. Also, our guitarist Zippy D won a colouring contest at a drug store when he was eight years old. You should have seen the sweet A-Team back they gave him as a prize! Probably the highlight of his life

(followed by playing in this band, with his wife and kid tied for a distant third).

AU: Give us a brief history of The Zipties; what are you all about?

Zipties: Zipties got together in late 2018. It started out as something to do for fun. Hang out with your friends, have a couple beers, rockin' out and writing a few tunes. We put out our first self-titled album something like six months after getting together. Then released our second album *The Ties That Bind* last November. Zipties are all about friendship and fun mostly. Zipties gives us the opportunity to hang out, play music, and be creative. If the day

ever comes that it feels like a chore or we aren't enjoying it, that'd be the day we pull the plug.

AU: What is your songwriting process like?

Zipties: Not sure how unique it is or not but every member of the band contributes to the songwriting. Sometimes someone will come with a song totally ready to go, music and lyrics.

Or, someone presents the music and either someone will come back next jam with all the lyrics or we work on lyrics together. Other times we'll be sitting around the table laughing about something ridiculous and next thing you know it has somehow turned into a song. We think it's to our benefit that we all write and will play whatever anyone presents; because we have five people contributing, it gives our sound some variety. Sometimes if you have one person writing everything, you can hear one song and know what the entire album will sound like— we don't think that's the case with us.

AU: Who or what inspires your music most?

Zipties: We're all over the place. From the classic rock giants, to the certain punk bands of different eras, to classical, to jazz to the local bands we go see. It may not be obvious to us how certain genres or artists, especially outside of the punk world, have influenced our music but the different music we've listened to all our lives has to influence us in ways we probably don't realize.

AU: Who are Mr. Polar Bear and Mrs. Parrot?

Zipties: Haha... Zipties are not by any means a political or activist type band. There is no message we are trying to get out there. The Parrot and The Polar Bear is maybe the closest thing to that type of song... which is more of a love song. A polar bear and parrot meet and fall in love. Their love for each other was only able to happen because of the changes to our environment and climate. If the ice didn't melt and the climate didn't warm up they would never have met and fallen in love. Love always finds a way!

AU: Any songs in the making you're stoked on right now?

Zipties: Yes! We are in the process of writing

songs for a new album. We've got four or five pretty much ready to go and will be working on more over the next few months. Realistically, we are hoping to be recording by the end of the year or early 2025! We are really pumped about these new tunes. Like any craft or trade someone does, the more time and practice someone puts into

something, they can't help but get better at it. We're seeing the results of time put in and practice coming to fruition in our live show and songwriting. It's a little ways out but we are super excited for the writing/recording process and ultimately to get our next album out there!

AU: Are you planning on touring or doing any shows in the near future?

Zipties: We just did a run of shows in Alberta with some killer bands like Motherfuckers, Random Killing, Total Wolf, Pagans of Northumberland, amongst others. No tours coming up. Wish we were twenty and not middle-aged punkers. We'd probably quit our jobs and take this show on

the road. The next show we've got on the books at the moment is a bit down the road but is gonna be a gooder! October 31st at The Reagle Beagle in Calgary. Halloween is always a great night for a show. We are really looking forward to that one!

AU: If you were in a gang in *The Warriors*, what would it be called? What would your backpatch look like?

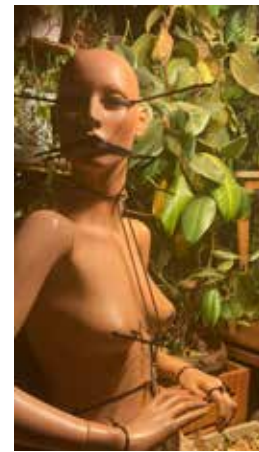
Zipties: The Dicktits... use your imagination.

AU: Famous last words?

Zipties: Thank you... good night!

zipties1.bandcamp.com

Spotify: Zipties



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RAVEN'S END BOOKS

Interview by Demonika

Absolute Underground: Who are you and tell us briefly about your shop.

I am Chelsea McKee. I opened up Raven's End Books: The Horror Bookshop officially in January of 2024.

We are the second horror bookshop in Canada and the first in western Canada. I started Raven's End because I love horror but I could never find what I was looking for. I devoured what horror books I could find near me but struggled to find ones that fit my specific niches. If I wanted a really good horror novel, I'd go to the internet and find a great list of options but then none would be available near me – either in store or at the library.

AU: What has surprised you the most about opening a shop like this?

CM: Even though it shouldn't be surprising, the stigma people had about horror was difficult to counter. I have been told so many times that people aren't into gore – even in professional business mentorships. I was told repeatedly that people don't like horror and that it doesn't sell well at other stores. I really had to prove the viability of my idea. It has been an exercise in educating people about the nature of horror and that gore is such a small part of the genre! Since opening, I have loved seeing the diversity in my customers from toddlers who love spooky stories to senior citizens wanting to find the newest



I wanted to create a space where horror fans could go and say whatever weird trope they could think of and walk away with a book about which they were excited.

AU: What was your favorite bookstore before you opened one?

CM: Truthfully, prior to opening a bookstore, I relied more on the library. I read so much that I'd quickly go broke if I bought every book I was interested in. But when I wanted to explore and treat myself to a book, I would go to Willow Press. Meghan, the owner, has a great collection of feminist and fantasy books and is great at recommendations.

zombie books.

AU: Most bookshops have sections, what are yours like?

CM: Because of our size, I can't really divide the store but I have lots of different tropes listed on the website and in my computer. We have them divided from slasher, summer camp, splatter punk, creepy children, and more. I try to capture as many different themes and tropes as I can in our books. I want to be covered for the day someone comes in and requests a slumber party slasher with an alien dealing with mother issues.

AU: What is your favorite section or part of the

store?

CM: I love books where people are feeling stranded or there's some overwhelming sense of being trapped. I think it's because I hate obligation (said the sole owner of a bookstore) and, thus, I love leaning into that discomfort. If we're looking at the actual sections of the bookstore (fiction, non-fiction, novellas, short stories, etc.) then I would have to say novels. I love getting settled in with a really good book and not coming up for air for a few days (metaphorically speaking).

AU: How do you feel about technology and its effect on book readership or purchasing (especially in the younger generation)?

CM: If you're talking about ereaders and audiobooks, I'm loving the new ways that people can get to read. A lot of people's ideas of what constitutes 'reading' can actually be really ableist. It's fantastic that people with motor issues, sensory concerns, disabilities, etc. can enjoy books however suits them best.

If we're talking technology in general, I don't

very collaborative. When I'm looking at different publishers and authors, I pick books based on the plots I'd most want to read. But I also get books based on customer suggestions and interests. That's how we ended up with such a large splatterpunk collection is people coming in and asking for Aron Beauregard, Daniel J. Volpe, and other darker story lines. I also like to look at what Reddit is suggesting and if they mention a title I haven't heard of, I immediately investigate to see if it'd be a good fit for the store.

AU: Is there a novelist that you think deserves more attention that you carry?

CM: Such a good question. My favourite author is Adam Nevill and I always describe him as the most prolific author you've never heard of. He recently went the indie route despite having publishing success and having two of his books turned into movies (The Ritual and No One Gets Out Alive). I would love for more people to get to know his writing as he's really heavy and atmospheric. He's also a great pick for those readers into folk horror.

A couple other authors I love are Jon Cohn (Slashtag) and Chris Kuriata (The Sacrifice of the Sisters' Lot). Both were great reads that I recommend to everyone.

AU: Apart from selling hard copy books, what other activities or events does your store participate in?

At the store, we have a monthly silent book club, board game social night, and regular craft classes. Our objective is to build a strong horror community and these social events are a great place for people to meet other fans and indulge in the dark and scary side of themselves.

We also do regular events with authors including signings and readings but we'll be venturing into even cooler activities with authors in the fall.

AU: Do you have a favorite regular?

CM: Oh tough one. I mean, I hired one of my regular customers to be my first employee so I would guess she'd be up there. However, I have to say Hippy the mini Shar-pei is my favourite. Her mom was my very first online customer and is now a regular visitor to the store. However, Hippy is also the reason I've had to put a strict 'no book-licking' rule in place.

AU: If you weren't running a bookstore, what would you be doing?

CM: I don't even remotely know. I've done so many different things now that I have no clue where I'd be. I'd hope still doing something with community building and books but those things are few and far between. So, probably something corporate again or maybe I would have gone back to teaching.

AU: Tell us about the website and plug anything else you'd like the readers to know.

The website is www.ravensendbooks.com and our social handles are @ravensendbooks. We have \$15 flat rate Canada-wide shipping and can do custom orders.



know if I have a lot of thoughts about it. I know people are getting sucked into new tech all the time but I'm not concerned about it affecting readership levels.

Reading is an experience unlike anything else – the reader gets to fully engage their imagination and escape in a way that you can't get with apps, television, or the like. Regardless of how intense the technological world gets, reading will always find a way to stay relevant.

AU: How do you select the books you carry?

I would say the process of selecting books is

BRENDAN + CHERYL

brendanandcheryl.bandcamp.com



Cloak

Interview by Sheldon "Wears No Masks or Costumes On Stage" Byer

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

Cloak: This is Scott from Cloak and the fans or enemies will have to determine that second part.

AU: For anyone who hasn't heard Cloak, describe your sound.

Cloak: It's hard to pinpoint because although it's black metal, it's not traditional all of the time. It blends many elements of the metal and rock genre. It's anthemic, melodic, dark, and aggressive.

AU: You recently signed to Metal Blade Records. The label has had ups and downs in terms of the quality it was putting out in the '80s, but bringing you guys on clearly shows someone has their finger on the pulse. If you were to hop on tour with any other artist on the roster right now who would it be?

Cloak: Cannibal Corpse would be a good one.

AU: Your most recent album *Black Flame Eternal* (released last year via Season Of Mist)

has had some pretty rave reviews and you've had nothing but badass tours to promote it, are you guys gonna strike while the iron is hot and get its follow-up on Metal Blade out ASAP? I guess what I'm asking is when can we expect more Cloak?

Cloak: We haven't even begun to dig into the demos that myself and Max have been working on. It will probably take a year or so to write. We take our time with these things, as our music is very detailed.

AU: The sewing machine was the death of cloaks, but the birth of AC/DC. Do you hate sewing machines?

Cloak: No, I love AC/DC.

AU: You're currently in Europe but when this hits the press we'll be on the cusp of your September/October tour with the mighty Deicide, Krisiun, and Inferi. This kicks off in your hometown of Atlanta. You expecting a

straight barn-burner from the start?

Cloak: Absolutely. This tour will be a crushing blend of bands. I worship early Deicide and want to channel that energy of the early footage I've seen.

AU: If Glen Benton said "Yo, let's burn inverted crosses into your forehead" would all four of you do it?

Cloak: Of course.

AU: Gatekeeping rules and posers are annoying. Should Glen Benton be checking IDs for these shows so only people he deems cool looking can come and keep it as legit as possible?

Cloak: Obviously.

AU: Your van busted down on the Uada tour last year when you guys were supposed to pull through Canada. For those who missed out, what can we expect on this run with Deicide?

Cloak: Pure fucking Armageddon!

AU: Prior to the Uada tour you said, "No masks, no costumes, no laptops on stage, no drum triggers. Just raw fury and pure allegiance." Was this an insurance policy in case Uada got too hot and had to cancel a show? Like assuring the concert goes Cloak doesn't get too hot in costumes and can play in 90+ Fahrenheit / 32+ degrees Celsius?

Cloak: This wasn't a comment towards them, but the things I mentioned are too overused in metal these days. We're assuring the audience that they will see a real rock n' roll performance, and not a pre-planned computer paced show.

AU: What's the grossest thing you've had to do on tour to keep on track?

Cloak: Everyday on tour is gross and dirty. Nature of the beast.

BENEATH THE WHEEL



AU: We're at a time when a lot of bands are just recycling a lot of the same old shit and not really doing anything different or interesting, whether people eat it up or not. Can you give us three up-and-coming bands that are killing it and our readers should check out?

Cloak: The Night Eternal, Dool, Sarcator (a young band we just toured with).

AU: What's Cloak's opinion of Canada? Anything stand out to four boys from Atlanta?

Cloak: Canada has a great metal audience, we love playing there.

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

Cloak: It's hard to say. So many countries in Europe are great to play. Germany obviously has a huge metal audience, but then again so does Mexico.

AU: Any final words for your Canadian fans new, old, and upcoming?

Cloak: Come out, bang your heads, and feel the darkness.

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Dishrags – Four

Interview by Jason Flower

Jade Blade: Guitar & vocals

Sue MacGillivray: Guitar & vocals

Kim Henriksen: Bass & vocals

Scout: Drums & vocals

Jade: My recollection is that we all happened to meet on a bus one day, Scout and I on one side of the aisle and Sue and Kim on the other. We kind of eyed one another and struck up a conversation that led pretty quickly to us deciding to at least get together and jam to see if this combination might work. I have a note in my datebook that we had our first meeting with the four of us on January 8, 1980, and our first practice on January 10.

Kim: When Dale left the band and I was approached to join, I said I could not without Sue (my bestie) and the rest is history.

Jade: I think the quartet took itself a little more seriously, probably because it felt like we were making more of a commitment to be a band with a potential career; we formed quite differently from the three-piece, being four musicians coming together specifically to be a band, as

distinct from three best friends who initially got into it to have as much fun as possible at ages 15-16 (and to escape high school and rural Central Saanich— all of which we did). The four-piece, while short-lived (we were only together for eight months), spent more time rehearsing and writing, and with Sue joining it made a huge difference to our sound, as having two guitars

opened up more musical possibilities. Sue also wrote songs that were quite distinct in style from mine, so our sound became more a hybrid of the Dishrags and the Devices.

Scout: Another bonus was richer harmonies with a fourth voice. We were always big on the background vocals.

Jade: Our first gig was likely with DOA at the Smilin' Buddha in February 1980 (we played there again with Black Flag in April 1980), but I remember our Edmonton and Calgary tour dates best. This is mainly because we'd never played in either place before and it was also the first (and only) time we'd ever had a kind of "residence" in any one place for a period of time: we played at the Calgarian Hotel bar for six nights and stayed in the hotel for the duration. It was really weird, but also kinda fun and very good practice— I think we did 3-4 sets a night. I don't remember how we went over— it definitely did not feel like a natural fit for us— but we got paid, housed, and fed, which was pretty great! Mike Normal of the Subhumans rented a station wagon and drove us and our gear to Alberta and back, which was super nice of him (I think he was Sue's boyfriend at the time). The other gig that was memorable for me was playing at the Cave (opening for the Pointed Sticks)

because it was such a fantastic venue.

Scout: I remember The Calgarian was a real dive with a lot of regulars, some of whom lived there. We would meet people in their bathrobes while riding the elevator. This crowd was very disdainful of our music and the volume. I seem to remember jeering, haha! But, the weekend brought out the local punks and they were a great audience. Mike Normal drove because none of us had a driver's license.

Susan: On Thursday, April 17, 1980, we drove in Heather's Volkswagen Golf to Seattle; all four of us crammed in with our equipment in the boot (trunk). We were playing at Seattle's famous Showbox, opening for the Ramones. Needless to say, we were super excited— all four of us being Ramones fans.

We went onstage to play our set surrounded by the Ramones' wall of equipment; tiny Susan and Jade were overshadowed by the headliners' tower of Marshall stacks. The set was recorded live off the board and "Gang War" on this album is included.

Just as we finished our set, someone came on stage and whispered that Johnny had the measles and couldn't perform. Jade had the unenviable job of announcing this to the crowd. Had we been in Vancouver, there would've been a riot, but we were surprised when the audience calmly and diligently marched out, getting a rain-check for the gig. What a good bunch.

Backstage, we pounced on the Ramones' catering tray, which was much superior to ours, gobbling down as much of it as we could. Squeezing back into the car, Kim had a cup of boiling-hot tea and managed to spill it on her arm as she tried to wedge herself into the back seat. On reflection, she was the tallest of us at six foot one, so she should have been in the front seat.

When the Ramones were well enough, we were promised a support gig, this time at the SUB Ballroom at the University of British Columbia (UBC). The most memorable incident was Zippy



Pinhead (William Chobotar) coming to us carrying a guitar with no strings saying he had to get backstage as he had one of the Dishrags' guitars. He seriously just wanted to hang with the Ramones. Honestly, which Dishrag would not have strings on their guitar?

Jade: I think we broke up shortly after recording the single (whose title track is, coincidentally, about the breakup of the three-piece). I've got a note in my datebook that we recorded at Ocean Sound on July 19-20, that Scout quit on July 21, and that (I guess) the rest of us returned to the studio on July 29-30 (presumably for overdubs) and then we mixed it in August. I think the rest of us didn't see the point in continuing; the Vancouver scene was changing, and I know that I just wasn't into it anymore— the scene or the band. Things were getting to be too "new wavy" and the Vancouver music scene was getting bigger (more diluted), increasingly ambitious, competitive, and drug-ridden. The four-piece band finally broke up for good in August 1980.

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Caveman & The Banshee

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

AU: Who are we talking to?

Banshee: My super hero/super villain character is



The Banshee, my alter-ego is Valentina Cardinali. I'm known for my glorious opinionated mouth.

Caveman: This is Dave Read, I play bass/guitar/synth/drum machine in Caveman & The Banshee. I have also played in the bands Moths & Locusts, Anunnaki, Death Militia, Sing Along with Tonto and SubStack, to name a few. I love it loud.

AU: Archaeologically speaking, which came first— the Caveman or the Banshee?

Banshee: Who are you? When are you? Remember who you were when you were who you are. Part of everyone is very old. Part of everyone is very young. I do very much believe we're all connected, and timeless. Advice for young people: put your music on a record. It is called a record for a reason. If you don't... Did it even happen? Advice for old people: Come out and support live music. You aren't dead yet. Advice for everyone: Dance like no one is watching. Bounce those titties. Bounce that ass.

Caveman: I am Stone Age so do the math.

AU: How did you two become a band?

Banshee: The Caveman and I have been a couple for 30 years. We have an incredible 22-year-old son named Nicolas Read. He is in a band called Butcher BC and before that, one called Hexenbane. Before Caveman & The Banshee, we performed together in a six-piece psychedelic rock band called Moths & Locusts. During the first years of Moths & Locusts I did not perform onstage as much because our son was young. I

did, however, start an art collective called AEIOU (Art Ensemble Initiative Of the Universe). Then Covid hit. Dave and I had time on our hands and Caveman & The Banshee was born. Pragmatically, it is much easier to say "yes" to gigs as a duo. We are both 100 percent "in" on this project and it is now our primary artistic focus.

Caveman:

We gathered around our drum machine and wrote some songs to pass the time. Pete Vizvari from Awkward AC/Lords of Apathy asked us to perform a show, we accepted et voila, Caveman & The Banshee was born and 40-odd shows later there's no stopping us.

AU: How would you describe your music?

Caveman: We are a psychedelic punk band with incinerator rock riffs and wild and theatrical vocals over old school electronic drum machine beats.

Banshee: Kozmic Atomic Punk! It is a very postmodern experience in an old school kind of way. We're unapologetically strange. Our live show is a visceral experience. We aren't really metal, but the Caveman certainly draws from his OG metal cred, we are totally too punk to be indie, we are too simple to be proggy.

AU: You had not one but three releases last year; what can you tell us about those?

Caveman: We released our self-titled debut album on LP, CD and cassette on our own label NoiseAgonyMayhem Records. The other two releases are limited tour CD EPs: *Galactic Butterfly* is four older, more ambient recordings, and *Fun With Teeth* is a bunch of jam room

recordings, song sketches and live tracks.

Banshee: Every spare second we have we are working on something creative. Lack of material will never be a problem. We are also working on video mixing and a YouTube channel.

AU: Any new music on the horizon?

Caveman: New EP *Zen Revolution* coming soon, and we are currently busy recording our next full-length LP *Born To Kill* with Rob The Viking here in Nanaimo. Sounding unbelievably deadly so far!

Banshee: Our new album is yummiier than a dildo-shaped corn dog.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours planned?

Caveman: In August, we're doing shows in Ucluelet and Port Alberni. Then in the fall we'll be doing a couple festivals in BC as well as heading down to Washington and Oregon.

AU: Anything else you'd like to promote?

Caveman: When in Nanaimo, come see us at our record store/rock shop NoiseAgonyMayhem, 183 Commercial Street downtown, specializing in metal/punk/psych.

Banshee: Our brick-and-mortar record store NoiseAgonyMayhem is totally wholesome... for a Satanic cult. (I'm kidding! All religions and ages and genders and economic backgrounds and races are welcome.) We do things like teach people how to sew and encourage individual expression and art. It's actually about building community and making real human connections.

You can listen to Caveman & The Banshee on all streaming platforms.

cavemanandthebanshee.bandcamp.com
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Kafirun

Post-Tour Interview with Guitarist Hanephi & Vocalist Luzifaust

By Mike F.

Kafirun are a four-piece atmospheric/dissonant black metal entity hailing from Vancouver, BC recognized for their powerful otherworldly sound and cathartic live performances. The name "Kafirun" roughly translates to disbelievers or infidels in the context of the Islamic religion; thus imbuing the music with a strong sense of the occult and rejection of divine order. I caught up with them after their short but potent four-day Western Canadian tour to chat about their experience on the road, new music,



and creating the right stage presence for the music.

Absolute Underground: This was your first Western Canadian tour in a while, what was the reception like from the metal scenes in BC and Alberta?

Hanephi: We jumped on as headliner for this tour after our original headliner dropped off due to some visa issues; however, I think the tour was successful. Of course, there were some challenges we faced in each city like last-minute venue changes, limited reach due to promotional errors, and PA issues. Regardless of all that, I am glad we still made it all work, 'cause in each city the crowds

were very supportive and the responses we received were quite positive.

AU: What was your favorite moment on tour and where would you like to play next?

Hanephi: For me, each live performance is special in some way because I consider them a transitory and unique realization of our vision and hard work. Besides that, driving through the majestic mountains to reach interior Canada was epic as always. As for the future gigs, we want to make our way to the big cities over in Eastern Canada and also hopefully play at some festivals over in Europe.

AU: Kafirun's music is densely layered and composed with deep intention, how has the creation of your new album been going?

Hanephi: We currently have about six songs written and a few other ideas in the works. Earlier this year, we did a few recording sessions at Devouring Audio Works as a pre-production effort and we are also experimenting with some new elements and ideas to put into the record, but nothing is set in stone yet. So, I think now is a good time for us to start scheduling the recording sessions for our next full-length album. Once we start tracking the songs, I will have a better idea about the possible release dates of new music.

AU: Luzifaust, it's been said that your lyrics are tied to philosophy, the occult, anti-religion, and death worship. How do these themes inform your live performance and stage setup?

Luzifaust: I try to channel dark energy through



the burning of a combination of specific natural herbal and physical offerings. I do however, use my own methods of invocation that do not follow a specific formulaic tradition as those rites and ceremonial practices associated with the left-hand path are usually not meant to be performed in front of an audience. The music itself has been written and captured so we try not to deviate too far from the recordings. I do have to simplify the vocals slightly during live performances in order to be able to perform the combined throat singing with the more aggressive vocals. I use a combination of human and animal bones attached to a trident which for me symbolizes three points: "Tohu Bohu Chasek." I also wear a human left hand around my neck as the symbolic recognition of the finite physical realm and the Left-Handed Reaper.

kafirun.bandcamp.com

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Deathwish

Interview with Vocalist/Bassist Bitty

By Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?

Bitty: Bitty. I play bass and I yell and scream.

AU: Tell us about *The Fourth Horseman*.

Bitty: It's heavier, it's hard-hitting. I think my vocals are better. I started shouting on the first record, and then I could kind of do the metal thing on *Out for Blood*. I was almost yelling, like a hardcore voice. I kind of got a metal voice once I did *Empty Shell*, and I really perfected it on *The Fourth Horseman*; it's exactly what I want to be doing with my vocals. It's a raging record.

AU: What's it like touring with DRI?

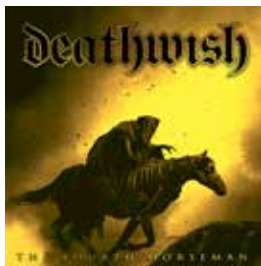
Bitty: Oh, awesome. They've always been nice. We got lucky because we got on Beer City and they had all these bands that are like classic bands. I was pretty stoked, and then I got a call from them one day and they're like, "Hey, can you take out Raw Power on tour?" And I'm like, "Okay," and then that led to "Hey, MDC needs to go on tour, can you take them?" Okay. "DRI's looking for another band to fill in— you cool with that?" So, it's been amazing being on Beer City, touring with all of them and then becoming friends.

AU: You must have some crazy tour stories.

Bitty: The craziest one was when we were driving back from Minneapolis, and we drive by St. Paul, Minnesota, and we slow down because it's snowing and a bit foggy. I remember you couldn't see very well, and I almost hit a dude that was almost in traffic, waving like crazy with a flashlight. I'm like, "Well, I don't want these people to freeze to death." So, then I pull over and their car is on fire. I'm just like, "Holy shit, dude, you

want me to call the cops?" And they're all like, "No, no, don't do that." I'm thinking they got weed, which was totally illegal everywhere. So, I was like, "Yeah, no problem. Need a ride to get out of here?" And they're like, "Yeah, can you give us a ride back to town? We'll give you \$20." I'm like, "Okay, no problem." I get in my van, and turn around. All of a sudden four of them are piled in my van, so we got seven people all together, plus the gear.

We're driving back to St. Paul and I said, "Hey, can I get the gas money?" And they said, "Oh, we're gonna give you \$50 when we get to our house," and I'm like, "I don't need \$50, it's like 20 miles, \$20 is fine. I'm not gonna steal from you, that'd be wrong," and the moment I said that the whole van got silent. I was like, "You got to be kidding me. Here we go." And around my neck came a cord and he cranked me into the seat and leaned forward and said, "Pull over motherfucker. I'm gonna kill you." I was into amateur wrestling, Judo, Jiu Jitsu, and Taekwondo and I'm the only trained one in the van; thank God I was driving.



As I'm getting strangled, I think another dude in the back put what could've been gun to the back of the bass player's head, and said "Don't move motherfucker." He had no idea if it was a gun or a pipe or what the fuck it was, but he wasn't exactly gonna turn and look. So, I slammed on the brakes. The cord came forward and then I hit the gas and just floored it. We're in the city limits of St. Paul in kind of a suburban area, and I was like, "Okay, this dude's gonna crush my head." They're all screaming once I floored it. I hit the brakes and then the gas and I was just like, "These dudes are gonna kill us if we stop," so I fucking drove 70 miles-per-hour into a parked truck and that launched us like an entire yard into some other yard. Then 5-10 minutes went by and I finally woke up and our bass player's all "Are you dead? Are you dead?" And I'm like, "Not unless there's an afterlife, because I can hear you talking!" And he's like "Oh my god! You're not dead!" And he's freaking out. I'm like, "Yes. This fucking sucks. I think I'm fucked up, though, dude." And he started telling me what was going on. One of my amps flew off the back and hit the dude in the head that was on top of him and smashed him into the front console. There was blood everywhere and gear was destroyed. We have an anti-carjacker missile guitar amp head that took the guy out— like just smashed the dude. Our bass player took the guy, put his feet into the guy's chest and shot

him out of the van once he woke up. Well, then the cops showed up. Of course, cops being cops, they accuse me of drunk driving when they see all this shit wrecked, and I'm just like, "I'm not drunk, I'm sober. I'm very injured. Can you send an ambulance or something?" They're like, "No, you can call a cab."

So, it gets even goofier. Cab picked us up, took us to a hospital. I hobbled in because I could barely walk— I was pretty messed up. I ended up breaking open my abdomen and had to have surgery and everything. They treated me like shit while I was in the hospital because they thought I was a drug addict or a drunk driver lying about the whole thing and they kept acting like jerks. Finally, one of the people in the ER comes in and goes, "Hey, I actually won the bet that you weren't lying because the cops are here and they want to interview you about what happened. Everyone here bet that you were lying about it, but I paid attention to your story, and I noticed your story was the same story no matter how you were asked, so I won the bet." He did say "We'll be nice

from now on," but yeah, that was crazy. I had to have a bunch of mesh put in my abdomen and have my intestines pushed back in.

AU: Oh my god. That's probably the most violent tour story I've heard. Wow.

Bitty: We actually played the night I got out of the hospital. I had a cast on my arm and was all messed up. I could barely stand, but the whole place knew what happened, so they went nuts.

AU: That's metal! What's next for Deathwish?

Bitty: We play a fest in Wisconsin, then we wait until tours build up for next year and we tour way more. It's crazy because we toured for almost four months last year. Next year will be full again.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Bitty: Rock n' roll is one hell of a drug and I hope to see you on the road!

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Photo by Matt Lombard



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ARTIST PROFILE



seriously in my 20s while I worked with pencils then started picking up digital painting after being inspired by MTG artists. It wasn't until April 2018 when I had a nightmare and woke up with an overwhelming, alien urge to paint it. But I never worked with paint! Didn't matter. It had to be done. It was such a primal feeling and I haven't put down a brush ever since.

AU: How would you describe your art?

Charlotte: My paintings incorporate dark surrealism, horror, macabre, and sometimes occult themes. At the same time, there's a balance to this imagery. Bright colours or hopeful underlying

messages of strength and transformation. There is darkness in beauty and beauty in darkness. One cannot live without the other. There is no life without death. There is no pain without love. It's the very special and strange reality of how our abstract existence functions. The gift humans have of being emotional creatures and the curse that comes with that. I believe to live a fulfilling life; one needs to find peace with this dichotomy. Animals are often the central piece of my paintings and I will pair their spirit or their unique behaviour with an emotional concept that either intrigues me or troubles me. I'm vegan and

sometimes those principles play a part in my story-telling as well.

AU: What inspires you most? What are you trying to say with your work?

Charlotte: My artistic vision is to "bleed" out my dreams into a visually communicative form. To transcend the boundary between the unconscious dreamworld and the conscious "real" world. Right now, it's through painting— but it may not always be. I'll eventually be looking to expand into other artistic mediums to effectively accomplish my goal. Simply put, my paintings are conceptual commentaries on the human condition. Representing intense emotions to make the abstract tangible. To learn and discover what it means to be a human, and what it means to be a monster, and where that boundary lies.

I am heavily inspired by the works of the great Swiss artist H.R. Giger. His beautiful mind would craft these expansive alien worlds built of both pain and pleasure— where the beings appeared to be so serene even under the most apocalyptic circumstances. I was especially inspired by his intricate biomech work— merging flesh with machines in layers upon layers of micro-details and small holes with infinite patterns. It's mesmerising to gaze at. Similarly, I'm also inspired by the Polish artist Zdzisław Beksiński, who also had plenty of organic flesh patterns in his work while also using beautiful warm earthy tones— a stark difference from Giger's cold, mechanical tones. I'm also artistically inspired by various dark psychological and horror-themed media. Movies (*The Cell*), books (Clive Barker and Stephen King), and video games (*Silent Hill 2*).

AU: Your art represents an interconnection between humans and the planet.

Can you tell us more about that?

Charlotte: Animals are the pure souls of our planet and I believe feeling more connected to them and our planet will allow us to feel more connected to ourselves. They have been symbols throughout history, as commentary and discovery into different aspects of the spirit. For instance, my painting "Musth" represents a very unique behaviour in elephants; a natural phenomenon where a spike in hormones causes intense unpredictable energy and aggressive,



dominant behaviour. I painted this with fiery colours to express to the viewer relatable human feelings of blind rage or the thirst for passionate dominance. Another example is my painting "Gore Breaching" which represents yet another unique animal behaviour. Breaching is the act of whales when they jump out of the water as a form of communication. I envisioned a whale eating plastics instead of krill; becoming poisoned and malnourished that its flesh becomes weak and discoloured. Then when it emerges from the water, with a belly heavy with garbage, its thin stomach rips open which spills the trash back into the ocean. I painted this as a commentary piece on ocean pollution to call attention to our dying planet which desperately needs our collective

love and support.

AU: Anything else you'd like to add?

Charlotte: I am open for commissions - provided the project allows for the lengthy time it takes to complete an oil painting. In this day and age, with the rise of AI art, it's more important than ever to represent your project with artwork from a human artist. Us absolutely underground enthusiasts must stick together! I'm primarily interested in doing

album covers for dark music, but I'm open to other creative projects like film, novels, or games. If you have a conceptual project and a dark mind, I think we'll get along just fine! Otherwise, if you enjoy my artwork, high quality prints can be purchased from my online shop and I will ship them to you. Otherwise, you can catch me as a vendor at various markets.

linktr.ee/dreambleedarts
@dreambleedarts

Dream Bleed Arts

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Charlotte: You're talking to Charlotte! I'm a surrealist oil painter focusing on dark subjects portrayed with deep, bright colours. Some of my paintings have suggestive themes, although perhaps too subtle, as not everyone sees it.

AU: What got you started as an artist?

Charlotte: I had an on-and-off relationship with art while growing up. I started taking it more

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PC: The way it works is each band puts in \$650 towards mastering (by Rene from The Brains) and pressing (Clampdown Records in Vancouver, run by Billy Bones of the Vicious Cycles) and gets 60 copies to sell. We have a chance to make back our money if we can hustle sales, though I think everyone in a local band knows that selling 60 records isn't quite as easy as it sounds! But it'll be rad, so everyone should (please) get a copy from us when it comes out!

AU: How did The 'B' Girls song get selected?

PC: The rules are you must cover a Canadian punk song recorded before 2000. We really wanted to cover a song from an all-female (or mostly female) band, preferably from the first wave of punk rock. Obvious west coast choice, The Dishrags and The Modernettes had previously been covered, so we went deep into Canadian punk rock history and discovered Toronto's The 'B' Girls, who were Canada's second all-female punk band in North America, after The Curse. We really liked their pop sound, more reminiscent of girl groups from the 1960s like The Crystals than the usual loud, fast punk sound of the era. We chose the 1977 song, "Mystery" because it had a dark, moody sound and the lyrics are great.

AU: Were you girls 'B' Girls fans before all this stirred up?

PC: No, but we are now!

AU: How did contact with 'B' Girls come about?

PC: We had to get permission from the band to cover the song for the compilation and to publish the lyrics. Dana did some cyber stalking and successfully contacted songwriter Cynthia Ross in September '23 who still lives part time in Toronto.

AU: Who did the song design for the cover version?

PC: It came together really quickly and organically. We knew it had to be fast, so we started with Bobbi playing the main riff and we each worked out our respective parts. Then we tweaked things together. We recorded with Dave Coish of Wax Moth records in November '23. In December it was complete. Mastering was done in March 2024 and record and cover were sent to the pressing plant.

AU: What did Cynthia think of your version for the record?

PC: We had a max of 2:30 minutes for the song and the original is over 3:30, so our cover is a lot faster and has a different feel. Here is what she said: "I like it a lot! It's fun. I never imagined it as a punk rock song, but it totally works. Sounds great. Reminds me of The Sex Pistols meets Joan Jett. The playing and vocals are cool. You got my bass riff, and the guitar hooks right and made the song yours."

AU: Thanks for being part of this, Cynthia. Have other bands covered 'B' Girls songs?

Cynthia Ross: Yes. The Riff Randells from Vancouver covered and recorded a few of our songs a while back. I can't remember which songs. And a band from Japan called Banana Erector covered "Fun at the Beach". Other bands that have covered our songs live include The Melvins, The Fadeaways and The Let's Gos. I'm sure there are many more.

AU: I know you had provided the girls some feedback on their version of "Mystery". Now that you've heard it a few times, anything to add to that?

CR: I really liked it. At first it was odd to hear it interpreted as a "punk" song, but then I just listened to it without thinking of how I wrote it. It's a whole different take on our original, but the song stands up to the test of time and why just redo the original? It has a great feel to it.

AU: Can you talk about the song itself?

CR: The song (words and music) was inspired by



and written for my close friend, Johnny Thunders. The lyrics speak for themselves. It's a minor key sad song about addiction. It was produced by The 'B' Girls with Robin Brouers as the engineer at Phase One Studio in Toronto in 1979.

AU: I've read about and noticed a "recent" re-interest for first wave bands in Canada. Have you noticed new 'B' Girls fans emerge or seen people searching for your early catalog?

CR: Yes! That's why we released *Bad Not Evil* on pink vinyl 2017 on Bomp! Our original 45 is coming out on an Italian label soon.

Cynthia released her first words and music solo album *The Secret Door* on Tarbeach in May. The 12-track LP is a collaboration with esteemed multi-instrumentalist Tim Bovaconti. Cynthia's recent projects include contributing "Vagabond Ways" to *The Faithful: A Tribute to Marianne Faithfull* (In The Q Records), poems featured in the Far West Press anthology *Pretty Obscure*, and a poetry book coming out in 2025. She also appears in NYC Underground documentary films: *Looking For Johnny*, *Sad Vacation*, *Stiv: No Compromise No Regrets*, *Nightclubbing*, and *Ghosts of The Chelsea Hotel*. Cynthia is currently on a *Spring Poetry Tour* that takes her to Toronto, New York City, and Paris.

Photo of 'B' Girls: Rodney Bowes, 1977

Photo of Dana (Poor Choices): John Carlow / Finding Charlotte Photography

Mystery

Poor Choices / 'B' Girls

By John Carlow

For the summer release of *Punk Canada 3*, Victoria punk trio Poor Choices are covering a classic 'B' Girls track. I caught up with Dana from Poor Choices and Cynthia Ross from the infamous 'B' Girls to talk about this project.

Absolute Underground: Who contacted Poor Choices about being on this upcoming release?

Poor Choices: Paul Gott of the Ripcordz contacted us in April 2023 and asked if we'd like to be part of the compilation and be reps for the Island. This is Volume 3 of the compilation and it's a passion project for him. He's been super supportive and told us the whole point of the project is for the bands (and listeners) to discover punk music they've never heard. He helped introduce us to some great bands like Ten Days Late from Vancouver and The Moaning Lisas from New Brunswick. Paul has played with everyone over the years (and sent us some really cool photos from past shows)!

AU: What's the process for being a part of it?



Category 7

A Moment in Time with... Guitarist Mike Orlando

By Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: What do you do with the band? Where do you find yourself today? What's the view out the nearest window?

Mike Orlando: Mike Orlando here— the guitarist, producer and recording/mixing engineer for our debut album. Today I'm home enjoying a beautiful 80-degree day and my nearest view out the back glass doors are of the backyard gazebo and our two cats underneath enjoying the day.

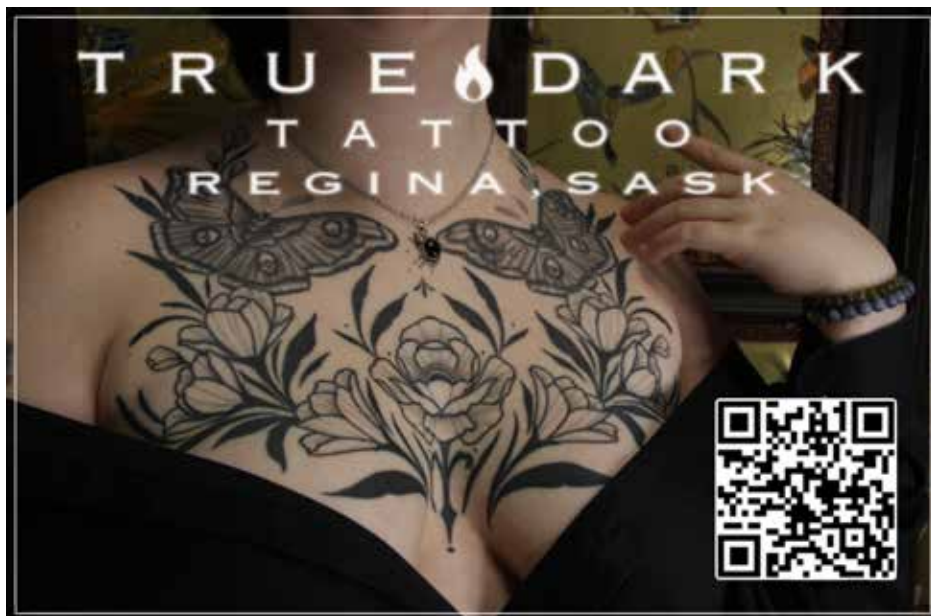
AU: You've come together from a variety of disparate bands to make a super-group! What's your aim with this new project?

MO: Thank you. Yes, this is an incredible collection

of talent from great bands in the metal genre! The aim for this new band Category 7 was most importantly to make a great album of material and collection of songs to grab listeners with aspects of each and every song. We also wanted a strong powerful production approach yet that is our own sound as well. We are extremely excited to take the band out on tour around the world and hit as many places as we can!

AU: Category 7... this would be a monumentally violent storm! Have you ever been in a nasty windstorm or tornado? What was the inspiration for this band name?

MO: Yes, a Category 7 is a storm of epic proportion and destructive power. Yes, we had a horrific storm hit the town I live in called Hurricane Sandy, it was absolutely horrifying and sadly left a path of destruction like I've never seen. We just wanted something we felt matched the music in power and strength among other



aspects the guys had visions for.

AU: What are some topics you're exploring and singing to on this debut album? What topics make the band tick, and want to express?

MO: The topics of exploration are solely left to our fearless leader who in my opinion is one of the greatest vocalists and lyricists in rock and metal, John Bush. We stand by each and every topic he wants to explore and express.

AU: As America wanders into an election year, is there any advice for listeners, or piece of media that has moved you that you want to share?

MO: My honest opinion on the current situation of this election year is to try and put aside both sides of the fence for once. Vote for what's truly going to make this country flourish again and make life better and easier on all our citizens.

AU: You've got an incredible roster of experience on this lineup... what advice to young musicians coming up in the metal and rock world do you have? Is there a lesson you wish you knew and had to learn the hard way?

MO: Thank you for that and I'm absolutely honoured to be part of such heavy-hitters in the band! My advice is always to try and concentrate on the song writing first and foremost. Forming a cohesive album of material that speaks throughout the 10 or 11 songs on that vision you have; having it speak in all the same musical language so to say. Try to find your voice as a band and sound of production not following a trend from another but creating your own fresh sound, production, vision, and voice.

AU: Big roster on Metal Blade Records to be a part of... what's your dream lineup to share Category 7 in a live setting with? Tell us about touring plans!

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MO: Having Category 7 on such an iconic label as Metal Blade Records is an absolute honour! The great thing about C7 is we're hard rock and also metal and can team up with so many different types of touring acts. We absolutely plan on touring as much as we can and for as long a cycle as we can. Our manager and longtime icon in the business Larry Mazer of Entertainment Services Unlimited has a great plan to role out for us for the upcoming album cycle!

AU: Best Black Sabbath album to your ears and why?

MO: Absolutely no wrong answer, but also no one album to pick, haha! *Paranoid*, *Master of Reality*, *Mob Rules* to name a few

Why, some of the greatest Sabbath songs... "War Pigs", "Fairies Wear Boots", "Electric Funeral", "Sweet Leaf", "Lord of this World", "Into the Void", "Mob Rules"... just an amazing collection of some of my favourites! Life-changing musically in this genre.

AU: Thank you kindly for taking the time today to connect. Last words to metal warriors across this soon to be forest-fired province of BC?

MO: Thank you for having me on here to talk Category 7 and more! Last words is we hope to see you all soon out on tour and we really hope all the metal warriors out there spread the word of Category 7! Thanks so much and all the best to you all!

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"My love and rage all rolled up into one", he was an artist that remained true to his core beliefs of rebellion against a failing political system, and unconditional love and camaraderie among his fellow man. Erik became obsessed with music at an early age, and all throughout his teenage years, spent hours upon hours in his bedroom practicing guitar, and jamming with his brother and a close circle of friends. Although she wasn't a fan of his heavier tracks, referring to them as "punk crap," his mother recognized his talent early in life and always supported his endeavour to make a living creating music.

1994 brought about the formation of Petersen's first band, The Orphans.

Erik's own idea, calling his brother Drew from across the street one day saying "Hey Drew, come over, we're gonna start a band!" After rehearsing together for some time, the tight-knit group consisting of Erik (vocals and guitar), Drew Petersen (vocals and bass), Tom Johnson (guitar), and Andrew Baxter (drums), began touring heavily and performing songs found on the *Lost*

Songs EP, prior to the release of the band's first studio album *Raise The Youth*, 10 years later in 2004. The band rapidly gained popularity in the underground scene, becoming known for their fast-paced, anarcho-punk sound, with die-hard fans attending live shows all over the country. In the midst of touring as The Orphans, the new band Mischief Brew was formed, immediately gaining a significant amount of attention in both the punk rock and folk punk circles. The project began as a solo endeavour for Erik, and he would frequently attend and perform at hardcore punk venues. Surrounded by people with spiked and coloured Mohawks, tattoos, chains, and leather, he would courageously take to the stage in gym shorts, with nothing but a microphone and an acoustic guitar, leaving the crowds captivated, and uncontrollably rocking out to his performances. Mischief Brew remained a solo project for some time, before finally giving way to the new band's official formation.

Many well-known tracks spanning across their career of over eight studio albums and 11 EPs include only himself singing and playing an acoustic guitar. His lyrics were inspired by subjects such as economic inequality, outcasts in society, alcohol, homelessness, corrupt practices by authorities, and more. He soon became known as a bold and uncompromisable voice for America's lower class, whose needs, he believed, were being blatantly ignored by people in positions of power and the general public, and at times being met with violent disregard by authorities. Over the years to come, the band would go on to perform at many political activism rallies, hosted by organizations such as Food Not Bombs, Veterans Against the War, ABC No Rio, and Occupy Philadelphia. This was evidence of his support for folks living in sub-par conditions, and an understanding of people, once innocent in childhood, becoming somewhat oppressive as adults can be found in his song "Dirty Pennies", from the album *Bacchanal 'N' Philadelphia*, with lyrics such as:

"It's against the law to peddle, it's against the law to eat, it's against the law to have nothing more, than the shoes full of holes on your feet, now they put bars across the park benches, so I guess it's illegal to

sleep, they buried something inside of you officer, into your cold heart dig deep".

Songs such as this expressed the natural ability, and the cleverness of his storytelling. It was plain to see in his lyrics, and occasionally from his demeanour in videos taken at events, that Erik struggled greatly with a variety of mental health issues, and showed potential for some alcoholic tendencies. Other lyrics written in relation to suicidal ideation can be found on the bands famous song "Bury Me in Analog", singing "and if before my time, I decide to take my life, you can take these treasures and hold them up into light". The lyrics appear to indicate an understanding of his own mortality, and an essential knowing that his music would indeed carry on long after his death, and someday be worth more to his family, his friends, and his fans. The deep, rawness of his songs allowed people all over the world to connect through their own struggles, and their own triumphs.

Tragically, in the year 2016 at the age of 38, just prior to the bands scheduled European tour, Erik committed suicide, leaving behind a wife and two pugs, his family, his friends, and countless fans from all around the world. His untimely death meant that many who knew him, and even more who loved and cherished his music and spirit, though having not having met him personally, would be left to grieve for many years to come. A devastated fan left a comment on one of his music videos saying that Erik had seen him fumbling for pennies at one of the band's live shows, and bought him a beer, just one of his many, simple acts of generosity and kindness. His mother, Jan, still regularly comments on their songs and videos, showing strength and inspiration to the world.

It's hard to find the words that capture the true essence of such a poetic and talented young artist such as Erik Petersen. He will continue to be dearly missed, and live on through an incredible music collection which he dedicated his life to.

Photo by Rik Goldman

Erik Petersen

Mischief Brew/The Orphans

By Michael O'Connor

Erik Peterson. A shining hidden gem within the vast and ever-growing world of the underground punk-rock scene in America. With lyrics such as

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Evan Mumford

Interview by AU Editorial

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

Evan Mumford: My name is Evan Mumford and I'm mostly known as one of the greatest swimmers in North America. I also do stand-up comedy.

AU: How did you get into comedy?

EM: My teenage years were mostly spent obsessing over music but at a certain point I found stand-up. My brother is a huge *Seinfeld* fan so I think that's probably where it started for me. I then found Mitch Hedberg and those albums were largely transformative— I started collecting stand-up records and DVDs and reading everything I could about it. Years before I ever thought I would do comedy, I would obsess over it and the history of it. From trying to understand Lenny Bruce to watching Roseanne Barr and everything in between. I did my first two years

of university in Halifax and they have a Yuk Yuk's there that I would go to every week just to watch. I did this for a couple years. It wasn't until I moved out to Victoria that I started comedy— at a place called Ratfish on the Gorge. My friends back home are funnier than me. I just think I have the right amount of damage, autism, and anxiety to get on stage and tell these little jokes.

AU: What's your creative process like?

EM: It varies depending on what I am doing. That's kinda why I like stand-up or at least my loosey goose version of it. I can just hop on a stage and say some dumb things. As far as jokes go, they come to me randomly and often when I'm out and about so I'll just be sure to quickly jot things down. Sometimes I text jokes to myself and it looks completely insane. The most productive writing sessions happen when I smoke some MARIJUANA and put on some pink noise (look it up), but usually what comes out of that are video ideas and script stuff. I have so much random bullshit piled up and scattered about because of these sessions. Someday I'll figure it out. This all

sounds so pretentious. My creative process is my brain thinks of funny stuff sometimes and then I say it on stage.

AU: Do you have any new material you'd like to share with us?

EM: What's the deal with airplane food? Also, what's the deal with crippling depression?

AU: Why does Ira's baby look like you?

EM: I still don't know how to digest this. People say I look like a baby. I guess I kind of look I have a baby face that's been through war.

AU: What's the funniest thing about life in Victoria?

EM: There's a lot of funny things about this place. The different neighborhoods and the personalities attached to them. I live in Fernwood and it's hilarious— twice a week I get hit in the face with bubbles. People take themselves really seriously here sometimes too and that is also super funny. Peace and love, folks.

AU: What's your drug of choice?

EM: Ideally, none but I'll say marijuana for creative purposes.

AU: How did your trip at Ska Fest go?

EM: I forgot about that. You're right— I did take a small dose of mushrooms at Ska Fest before The Suicide Machines played. I think the amount of beer I drank outweighed whatever magic those may or may not have had. That being said, The Suicide Machines were fantastic.

AU: Did you see anyone wearing a v-neck there? Do you have any in your wardrobe?

EM: I don't think I saw any V-necks and I was also disappointed in the lack of checkered clothing. I have had V-necks in the past and they do me absolutely no favours. I think you're hinting at the joke I have in my act about them. I can't tell it here— you'll have to wait until my special *Evan Mumford Burns Everything* comes out this fall!

AU: Tell us about Turbofest; what did people miss if they weren't there?

EM: Turbofest was incredibly fun. I can't recommend it enough for those looking for a punk rock fest during the summer. This was the second one ever and it's held on the Sunshine

Coast. Jake and his crew who put it on work incredibly hard on it and it shows. I met the coolest people and had a blast watching fantastic bands. I got to open up for The Ramones who were doing a complete album cover of *End of the Century*, which is one of my favourite records ever, so that was rad. I performed at two shows and the first one I had a blast and the second one will be shoved down where all the other repressed memories go. I'll be there next year, fingers crossed— come say hi!

AU: What are your thoughts on the movie *The Warriors*? What would your gang be called?

EM: Fantastic movie. I first saw that and *Taxi Driver* around the same time and I thought I was a very cool mysterious guy watching these movies taking place in that era of New York. My gang in that movie would be called "Don't Touch Me or I'll Tell Your Parents That You are Staying Out Late So Leave Me Alone and Everything Will Be Cool."

AU: You'll soon be performing at a secret location for Rifflandia; tell us more!

EM: One could say I am technically opening for Cro Mags as they are also playing Rifflandia. So yeah, come watch me tell jokes about how my penis looks like Noam Chomsky then get in the pit. Also, Ja Rule.

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?

EM: I have a comedy special and documentary coming out titled *Evan Mumford Burns Everything*. It is directed by Taaron Gorbahn and it shows some insight into my frustration with my comedy and also it has jokes in it because, you know.

AU: Any advice for aspiring comedians?

EM: Do it or don't. There's a lot of dumb rules and traditions in stand up, feel free to break them as long as you keep the main rule— be funny. I don't understand the bucket list thing personally. That's like saying it's on my bucket list to light myself on fire until my skeleton shows. Do as many open mics as you can starting out, don't be a dick to people, and again— be funny.

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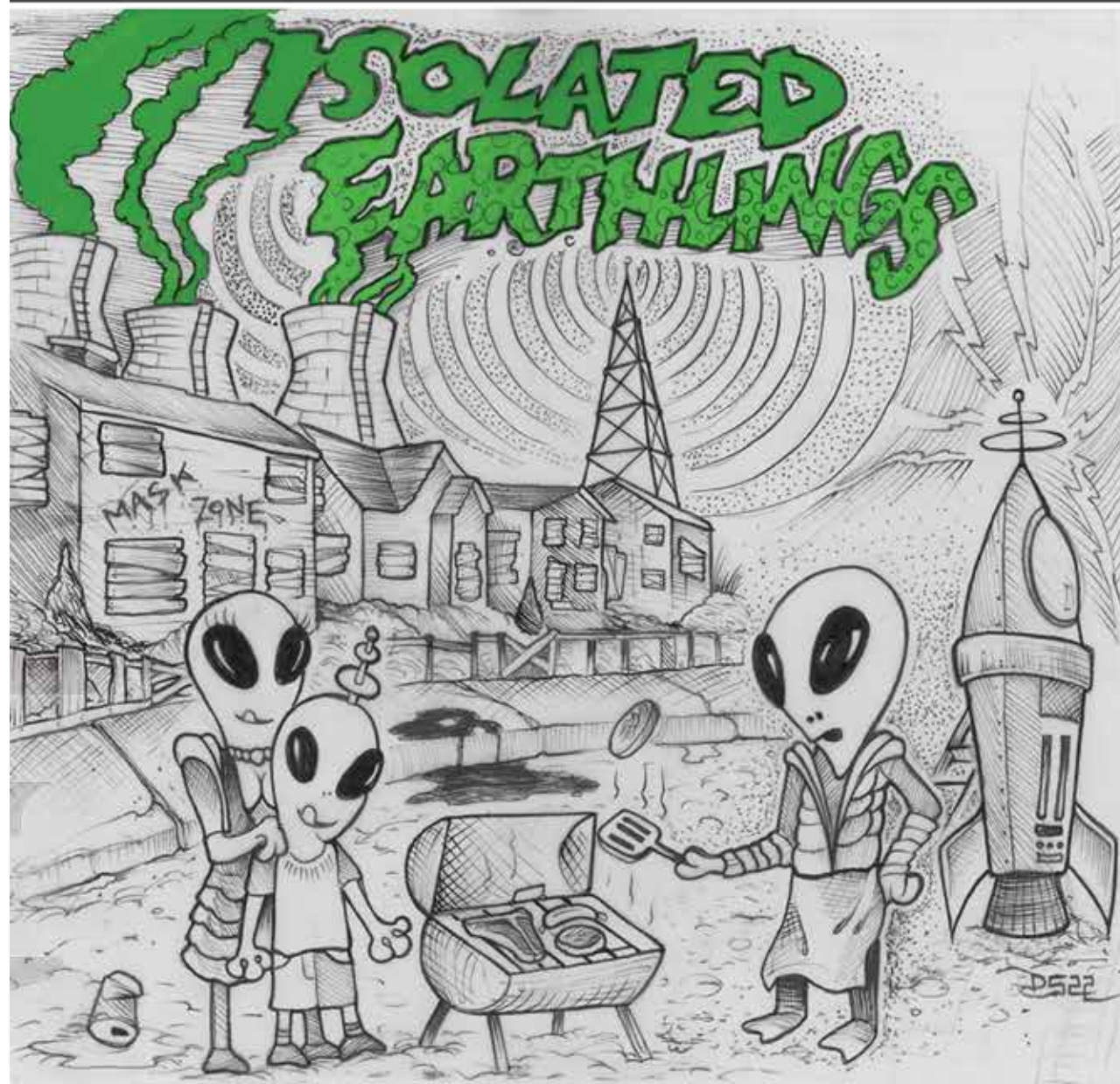
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The Hidden Horrors in Sony's Back Catalogue

By Vince D'Amato

My wife recently brought back a copy of the 1999 action/horror flick *Bats* from a library sale, it was the Unrated "Restricted" version that Columbia/TriStar Pictures had originally released on DVD in a pretty weighty Special Edition way back when DVD was still in its infancy and trying to compete in a VHS world. Columbia and TriStar Pictures are both distributed under the Sony umbrella, as has been the case for more decades than I can recall, going way, way back to the start of the VHS rental days. In fact, Sony was actually a key pioneer in the direct-to-video market back in the late eighties, if you can believe it. Sony created a sub-label called SVS, abbreviated from Sony Video Services, which would produce in-house cheap genre films, usually under \$1 Million, sometimes even half of that. Sony would release these low-budget films to theatres in New York's Times Square over a single weekend (or maybe a whole week, if the film was lucky), before packing them off to the video rental store shelves.

SVS's first film was a bit of a blatant rip-off of Stuart Gordon's *Re-Animator*, titled *Rejuvenator*. As far as I know, *Rejuvenator* was never re-released after its original VHS video store release, and this has somehow become the unfortunate ongoing story to a lot of Sony's back catalogue of horror and low-budget genre films, which is honestly a little weird, because Sony was front-and-center when VHS gave way to DVD— they were one of the first companies to start releasing their bigger genre films as widescreen VHS tapes (*Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *I Know what You Did Last Summer*, *Starship Troopers*) followed closely by their back-catalogue hitting DVD right when that format was first introduced to store shelves, with titles like Tom Savini's *Night of the Living Dead* (1990) and Tsui Hark's *Knock Off* (1998). And let's not forget that just a few years after that these guys invented Blu-rays— so what happened to all of these genre films? Streaming, sure, for some... mostly for the bigger titles.

Sony has now shifted its physical media focus to releasing and maintaining Disney's catalogue of films (in a huge contractual move that was completed just last year), and why wouldn't they? There's projected to be a lot of money in this, and Disney is clearly no longer interested in doing physical media themselves. But in the middle of this it seems like Sony is letting a lot of their own catalogue fall out-of-print, low budget

or otherwise, as they're turning their attention over to Disney and *Star Wars*? The bigger of Sony's own Hollywood films that were good enough to get a mass-market Blu-ray release in the past decade are no longer being printed, and those smaller films from

the SVS days never even saw the light of day during the DVD boom, nevermind Blu-ray or 4K UHD. And these films can well be worth seeking out, if you can find them, on out-of-print discs, thrift store VHS tapes, or via a few (possibly sketchy) YouTube uploads.

Bats (1999)

Directed by Louis Morneau, who was no stranger to direct-to-video genre movies through that glorious period between 1998-2003. *Bats* stars Lou Diamond Philips and Dina Meyer (*Starship Troopers*) and it did receive a decent theatrical release, probably due to the fact that it was dragged into the cinemas on the coattails of *From Dusk till Dawn*, utilizing that film's vampire-bat-attack sequence and expanding it into the entire plot of *Bats*. That being said, Louis Morneau's take on the material is honestly pretty fun in a horror-popcorn sort of way, and *Bats* leans heavily on the action, which was Morneau's style at the time, no matter the genre he was working in. His previous film, *Retroactive*, was a low-budget time-loop film that got a single-week theatrical release before its mainstream video release, and is honestly one of my favourite fun-action-flicks to this day. *Bats* was a good follow-up to that one, showcasing director Morneau's ample style back in his genre heyday. Quick note: after writing this article, I did discover that *Bats* is in fact available to stream on AppleTV and Prime, for the weirdly curious.

The Forsaken (2001)

This one is a low-budget but very well-produced sexy vampire thriller from director J.S. Cardone, who, like Morneau, was no stranger to the direct-to-video world between the '90s and 2000s, getting his start with the independent horror feature *The Slayer*, which was recently re-released on Blu-ray by Arrow Video, before he moved on to Full Moon Entertainment, where he directed *Shadowzone* and wrote *Crash and Burn*, the pseudo-sequel to *Robot Jox*, for Charles Band. Back when *The Forsaken* first came out, I thought this was going to be Cardone's breakout film, as it spent a few weeks in the theatres and got a pretty good push from Sony/Columbia during its theatrical release, as well as a really wide video release. But the big break didn't end up happening, which is a shame, and I don't think it was the film's fault— it's a really entertaining vampire/road-movie that starred some young up-and-coming actors of the era, including Izabella Miko (*Coyote Ugly*) and Brendan Fehr (Roswell) who both, like Cardone, failed to get their rising stars shot further in Hollywood past this unfortunately short era.

Lunatics: A Love Story (1991)

Directed by Josh Becker, this is the least sought-after and most elusive of the early Sam Raimi/Josh Becker/Scott Spiegel/Bruce Campbell indie genre films, which is really too bad. It's way more comedy than horror, with Sam Raimi's brother Ted playing an introverted, anxiety-ridden paranoid recluse who ends up in a meet-cute situation with shy neighbor Deborah Foreman (*Valley Girl*, *April Fools Day*, *Sundown: The Vampire in Retreat*), and what follows is a sweet and quirky romantic pursuit filled with utter weirdness (as opposed to horror), though Becker's *Lunatics: A Love Story* rides a razor-thin line across horror-comedy, but it's actually too charmingly oddball to veer completely into that lane, despite the *Psycho* references. Still, it's really good-humoured and some ultra-weird fun, and I'd call it a bit of a '90s gem, if you're willing to hunt for it.

Night Life (1989)

Not to be confused with *Nightlife*, the low-budget vampire movie from the same year; I'm honestly shocked to this day that this amazing zombie horror-comedy never picked up more of a cult following, or any post-VHS releases for that matter, in the last 35 years. I'm still waiting for both of those things to happen, as I occasionally bemoan the loss of my own VHS copy in one of my moves over the past couple of decades. Starring Scott Grimes (*Critters*), John Astin (*The Addams Family*), and Cheryl Pollak (*My Best Friend is a Vampire*), *Night Life* is about a high school nerd who thinks he's rid of his bullies when they all meet their collective demise in a car accident— only to see them all come back as zombies during a corpse-transporting gig where they continue to terrorize him, in one of the wittiest horror-comedies to come out of the '80s — an era that was abundant with excellent horror-comedies.

Deceit (1990)

This one is my favourite of the bunch, but I have to warn you, this movie is not going to be for everyone, and it has suffered its share of bad reviews, so fair warning. The entire film is four characters in a warehouse (check out the pre-*Reservoir Dogs* release year, too) who are trying to figure out which one of them is the outer space alien-in-human-form who may or may not be trying to detonate the entire planet. When I first saw this film back in the '90s, I thought the front-credit Special Thanks to Jean-Claude Van Damme was just a weird joke, until I discovered that Van Damme had previously starred in director Albert Pyun's 1989 sci-fi actioner *Cyborg*. Like fellow directors Louis Morneau and J.S. Cardone, Albert Pyun was mainly a direct-to-video filmmaker throughout the '90s, but unlike his peers, Pyun was wildly prolific, often helming several films per year, with some real standouts like *Mean Guns*, *Nemesis*, and *Omega Doom*. Like Cardone, he even did a short stint with Full Moon Entertainment during that period as well, creating one of Full Moon's most iconic films of the era, *Dollman*.

Severed Ties (1992)


This one's another tongue-in-cheek gorefest inspired by Stuart Gordon's *Re-Animator*; produced by Fangoria, who were just getting into the direct-to-video horror game in the early nineties with *Mindwarp*, *Severed Ties*, and *Children of the Night*; sort of above-par horror schlock for the DTV market. When Fangoria first launched their horror film production company in 1991 (Fangoria Films), they signed a wide video distribution output deal with Columbia Pictures with the intent to produce and release one new original genre film per year, somewhat following in Full Moon Entertainment's footsteps— unfortunately, this only lasted for those first three films. Fangoria eventually re-launched their film company in the decade after those VHS days, but they were no longer distributed by Columbia, closing a brief but important chapter in DTV horror from the video store days.



U Turn (1997)

Not exactly a horror movie (okay, not a horror movie at all, really), Oliver Stone's dust-kicking dark (dark-dark) violent crime comedy sees Sean Penn as a low-rent con artist on the run, recently missing a couple of digits from his right hand, whose car breaks down in a small, sweaty Arizona town where his broken radiator snowballs into the utter epitome of bad luck days as he tries to evade the town's off-kilter sheriff, half of the town's seemingly insane characters, and the gangsters who are after him for a huge gambling debt (and who already have a couple of his fingers). Based on a novel by John Ridley, who was kicked off the set after some heated conflicts about the script that prompted Oliver Stone to offer ten thousand dollars to anyone in the crew who could come up with a better ending. Stone's edgier, violent films from the '90s (like *Natural Born Killers*) do maintain some horror elements and a definite creep factor, even if the man hasn't actually directed an honest horror movie since 1981's *The Hand*— which, incidentally, is one of my favourite '80s horror movies, and *U-Turn* is hands-down my favourite Oliver Stone film. But I included it here because like all of the others on the list, Sony/TriStar never released this one on any HD physical format themselves, although the specialty distributor Twilight Time did release an extremely limited Blu-ray disc of the film nearly ten years ago, which is also now long out-of-print.

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Tales from the Darkside: The Weird Wonderful World of James Edward Newton...

By Vince D'Amato & Kevin L. Williams

James Edward Newton is an extremely talented horror/surrealist filmmaker based in the UK who works exclusively with Darkside Releasing (thank you, James!). His first two films, *Black Lizard Tales* and *Katernica*, are at their hearts a series of haunting, edgy, neo-gothic visuals that build structures of satisfying and existential horror cinema using surreal building blocks, and are somehow effortlessly reminiscent of early David Lynch. *Black Lizard Tales* is shot in a wildly striking black-and-white style, it's an internalized horror story that both evokes and transcends the nunsploitation and religious-horror subgenres. In James' hands, his films are art over exploitation, with heavy influences of both. *Katernica* switches gears dramatically from his first film, but without swapping out his style nor artistic intent, a testament to James' talent as a filmmaker—*Katernica* is shot in muted yet somehow striking colours, the environment for the existential/cerebral horror in *Katernica* is literature, stage

performances, artists, academia, and actors. Certainly different, but no less brilliant than *Black Lizard Tales*. Driving both films are deliberately heart-pounding sound designs and audioscapes. If I may offshoot for a moment here, while our new copywriter Kevin L. Williams was researching



TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE

the underground cinema blog and podcasts *366 Weird Movies* and *Pod 366*, he found that Giles Edwards and his partner Greg Smalley have over 70 episodes of their podcast and "seem to be really plugged into weird cinema," as Kevin wrote to me. "Please listen to this fantastic interview with the director of the cerebral horror film *Katernica*, James Edward Newton on the *Pod 366* podcast—James [Edward Newton] is a lecturer in Media and Film Practice at the University of Kent and provides fascinating insights into the creation of his film, as well as touching on filmmaking in



general. I promise you will not be disappointed!" In addition to all this, the British filmmaker and lecturer is scheduled to deliver his third feature film to us at Darkside Releasing this summer for a late-2024/early-2025 release. James is something of a surrealist maestro when it comes to his gothic compositions and camera angles on his less-than shoestring budgets. (*Black Lizard Tales* was shot for £500— but that's a whole other story!) We're looking forward to working with James for a long time to come, and we thank him for his collaboration and talent. Here are the interview links below. Enjoy!

Full YouTube episode: youtu.be/vSYNnfz7lic

Interview only: [youtube.com/watch?v=nnYCg7dJenM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnYCg7dJenM)

Podcast Episode: podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/pod366/episodes/Episode-74-Joined-by-James-Newton-Katernica-e215hpo/a-abcj8p4

Blog post: 366weirdmovies.com/pod-366-joined-by-james-newton-of-katernica

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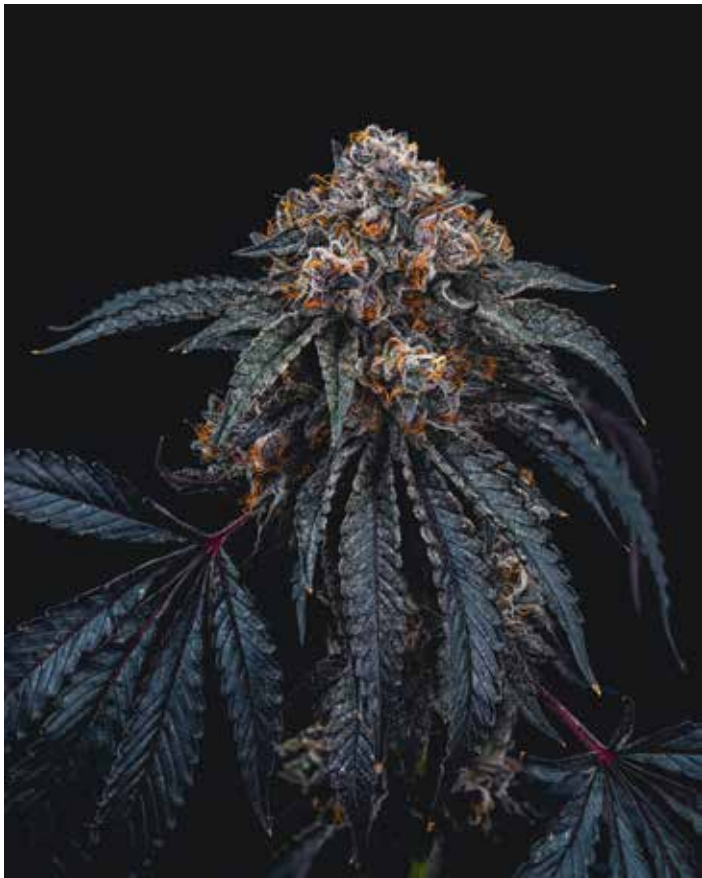


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Sweetgrass

Interview with Marketing Manager & Photographer Naasko Wriggle

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

Naasko Wriggle: My name is Naasko Wriggle and I'm the media and marketing manager/photographer at Sweetgrass Cannabis here in the Kootenay region of BC.

AU: When did you first start growing cannabis?

NW: Sweetgrass has been federally licensed as a micro-producer since 2020, but the many members of our team have been growing for 20+ years during the legacy era. For myself, I started growing cannabis outdoors in 1998.

AU: What first drew you to the industry?

NW: Personally, I stepped into the industry as a trimmer back in 1998 and came out to the Kootenays as a 'trimmigrant' during the heydays when outdoor weed was going for \$3000/lb. I was drawn to the culture and community of people who chose to live outside of societal conventions at the time. People in the Kootenays were living a good life and raising their kids on the proceeds of guerrilla gardening and, at the time, I found that really inspiring. I also enjoyed the outlaw nature of the racket and the freedom it could enable.

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

NW: Sweetgrass produces flagship cultivars

aroma. It's a heavy indica with high terpenes and people across Canada love it.

AU: What is it like being a licensed producer?

NW: It's been a wild ride! Being in the position I'm in as the story-teller and photographer, I get to see the team's efforts from a few angles. There are highs and lows, trials and errors, wins, losses, and everything in between. It's a challenging game in regard to the cultivation side, the regulatory/compliance side, and the sales/marketing side. It's also pretty rewarding to have made it this far after jumping through so many hoops to make the dream a reality.



There's a satisfaction in employing a team of 20 people who live in our community so that's been awesome—we have an amazing crew!

Coming from such a renowned cannabis growing region, we've been able to leverage the knowledge, culture, and reputation of the Kootenays into what we do. This definitely helps tell our story and to promote our living

soil organic flower. Despite being somewhat constrained by our geography out here in the mountains, we're still able to connect with people across Canada and internationally via this "legacy."

AU: Why is it important to support local?

NW: Supporting local growers means you're supporting small teams who really care and are passionate about cannabis. You're likely helping them stay afloat in a tough industry with a lot of overhead expenses. Taxation is huge and profits are not what everyone assumes. A lot of producers are stretched thin and are "all-in" to live their dream, so supporting small growers

means the world. At Sweetgrass, we pay a living wage to our employees and we all live in a small community around the grow facility, which is important to us as, it feeds into the local economy and culture.

AU: What makes an expert grower?

NW: Seeing our two "master" growers in action, I would say that expertise lies on a continuum. Neither of them would call themselves experts, but they're both extremely well versed in soil science, plant anatomy and the stages of cannabis development. They're always learning and discuss various aspects of indoor cultivation with each other and other members of the team to find solutions and to make improvements to our living soil system. An expert understands all aspects of the growing environment, the ins and outs of the required equipment, the function of various nutrients, the sub-surface soil medium and the interaction of all the various biology involved. It's complex and ever-changing and you need to adapt and troubleshoot when necessary.

AU: Where products do you have available?

NW: We have flower and pre-rolls available across Canada in BC, AB, MB, ON, and soon QC. We launched in BC first though, and gotta say that Evergreen Cannabis in Kitsilano always carries our products; they even have exclusive options and you can order delivery to anywhere in BC from ecsvan.ca. You can also find our flower overseas in Australia and Germany.

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

NW: Photographing freshly harvested plants is



probably one of the best parts of my job. It's a cool little niche to be in cannabis photography. Designing marketing materials using those photos is a rad creative process and finding inventive ways to talk about our products and tell our story on social media can also be pretty fun too.

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

NW: This plant is amazing for sure, but let's be real, cannabis won't save the planet. It might however help us realize that we're all in this together and it's us that needs to change if we have any hope of working collectively to save the planet. It is a great tool but, like anything, how it's used comes down to the person wielding it.

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Ill Defined

Calgary Metalcore

Interview by AU Editorial

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

Ill Defined: We are Ill Defined, a metalcore band from Calgary! Ill Defined is known for our in-your-face high energy live shows. Whether you're at a show to mosh to breakdowns, or sing along to a catchy chorus, the energy is there and leaves no soul behind. Ill Defined is Brock Brown (drums), Josh Fry (vocals), Aiden Ogrady (guitar), Chase Bishop (guitar), and Jos Payn (bass).

AU: Give us a brief history of Ill Defined.

ID: Ill Defined has been a band for three years now, officially. At first, it was just me (drummer, Brock) and (vocalist, Josh) playing a handful of house shows with our friends. After finding our

way into the local punk and hardcore scene, we got a full band together and started up the project properly. Our release "Save Yourself" came out in August of 2021, and opened a lot of doors for us now that we were able to share our music online. Years later, with a few member changes, more music, and first tours, we're here today with our current band. Ill Defined is all about people coming together at our shows and sharing an experience. Everyone takes away what they want from it.

AU: What does the songwriting process look like? Who or what inspires you most?

ID: The songwriting process usually starts with trying to set a certain emotion that pairs well with where we are in the story line and what we're trying to have the audience feel. Then one of the band members comes up with a riff that fits it and then we all just sit down and build off of it. It's always tricky having to coordinate between

the whole band, so a lot of the time Josh and I just spend hours every day putting every single idea to a whiteboard and go from there. In the end, normally, it creates something at least a few people (besides ourselves) can enjoy, and that makes us happy.

AU: This year, you released *Wounded Memories From a Love Left Unpolished*. This EP seems to be full of stories with themes of despair and torment. Are these songs based on real life?

ID: Sadly, yes. Our lead singer Josh, when he was in high school, had a crush on a girl who, over time, spiralled and devastatingly

enough, took her own life. This created a bit of a "trying to figure out what the meaning of death is and what comes after" obsession with him, this mixed with the angst of losing someone you care about sort of created the beginning of our "lore." Josh more or less envisioned putting himself in her shoes and allowed his mind to run free. Grabbing every emotion she may have felt and trying to make sense of it all. Over time, he allowed himself to insert creativity and made an almost "what could have been if we were in a different world" kind of story, which is what the Ill Defined lore currently consists of. Since then there has been a few moments in our lives (good and bad) that have influenced lyrics or the evolution of the story.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you're stoked on?

ID: The first song on the EP "Few Said Words"; it was a new sound for us and the reaction we had from it was great. We open every set with it and it gets people moving right away.

AU: You've done a lot of touring in this last year. Any crazy stories you'd like to share?

ID: Back in March, we had a short run of shows with Guiltless and Penalty through Lethbridge, Calgary, and Edmonton. First show was in Lethbridge. Everything was going great until we had to drive home and we got hit with a snow storm. It got to the point where we were sliding all over the road and could no longer continue. We ended up in a cheap motel in the middle of nowhere at 4 am. The next morning, it was a very slow and careful drive back to Calgary. We, unfortunately, had to cancel our Edmonton show that day as well. While I think we all knew the roads were sketchy and were worried, Chase was driving and told me that he was fully convinced we were not going to make it back in one piece if we did not stop when we did.

AU: What do you listen to in the tour van?

ID: Lately, it has been Chase's metalcore Spotify playlist. When Josh is driving, we listen to '70s rock. It's honestly just whatever member is driving feels like listening to, or if anyone has requests.

AU: What do you consider to be the "essential metalcore album?"

ID: *The Opposite of December... A Season of Separation* by Poison the Well. I think it's just the most solid, classic album that contains all the elements of metalcore that you know from the early 2000s and even still to this day.

AU: Are you working on any new music?

ID: We will be releasing a three-song EP this September! It will be titled *Suspended in Animation*. I know all bands probably say this, but it's our best songs to date. It will be very heavy, but there's still a lot of dynamics getting a bit sad at the end.

AU: Any upcoming tours?

ID: This September we're hitting the road! Our Alberta dates will be with Abrupt Decay, and our BC dates (yet to be announced) will be with Seasons Worn and XCarrionX.

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Terror in the Square: The History of Skateboarding

Interview with Filmmaker Chris Gaetz

By Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are you, where are you from, and what is your involvement in the local skate scene?

Chris Gaetz: My name is Chris Gaetz, and I am a lifelong islander who makes local skate videos. I was born in Capital city, but I have lived in Qualicum Beach nearly all my life. I've been skateboarding since 1996. I don't skate too much anymore, but I do still love to get out and roll around and shoot video with friends old and new.

AU: How long have you been filming skate videos and what got you started?

CG: I have made seven full-length skate videos in the last 22 years. My friends and I have been messing around filming each other skate since we first started, using Trevor Ribeyre's family camera and my step mom Rose's Hi8 handycam as far back as 1998-2000. Jesse Booi lent Trevor 411VM Issue #18 and we watched that video everyday, it was the first skate video I saw, I believe. Soon after, I saw Toy Machines Welcome to Hell and I was hooked after that. The skating, music, and editing in that video changed my life. I was sure I wanted to do this forever. Making videos wasn't so easy back then, but it was improving; the digital age was just taking off. I got my own miniDV camcorder in 2001 and have been dedicated since. In 2004, I bought a Sony VX2100, which I still run to this day. We released our first full-length video, Rudy, in 2002.

AU: What first got you into skateboarding?

CG: I was always interested in skating. I used to watch the skaters in the parking lot across from my elementary school on lunch break way back in 1992- the small wheels and super baggy pants era. Skating wasn't too cool back then, but I thought it was! I got a mall board probably from the San Francisco store for my 7th birthday, it had pink wheels and a pink gorilla with a girl in a pink bikini on it. I learned how to roll and tictac around my driveway on that. I left it in our driveway like a stupid kid and it got ran over, it actually improved it for me though; breaking off the massive tail,

it was lighter and more symmetrical, like a twin tip board I wanted. I left it in the drive a second time... it did not survive. I didn't get a new board until four years later when I started middle school in 1996.

I made a new friend who lived down the street from me who just started skating as well, I first saw him skating up and down the street with his dog. We started skating flat ground in front of my house. That kid was Trevor Ribeyre. My childhood friends Justin Yarn and Katlin Toombs got into it too and we made new friends through skating quickly. There was a skate demo the school organized I guess, Ryan Taron and Ben Couves came and skated with the students one day, it was pretty cool.

AU: What can you tell us about Terror in the Square - The History of Skateboarding currently running June-Sept at the Qualicum Beach Museum?

CG: It's pretty funny to be in a museum, we are that old! Skull Skates and the QB Skaters organization did an awesome job putting it together. They asked me to round up some content and reach out to others. Some local contributed something long before my time, that was so rad to see something from the '80s in town. It's pretty cool to see it all. We did some brief write-ups to contribute, and some people supplied some hard goods to display. Our good friend Gordon Nicholas who has been shooting photos for more than 20 years came through with some gems. Thanks Gord. PD asked if I could edit my video series down to strictly local clips for them to play on an old TV in the exhibit in a corner made to look like a skate rat's bedroom. That was fun to work on and almost emotional looking back through 20 years of video of my close friends. The eventual decline of our abilities through the ages is apparent in the video, haha. Except for Daniel Higgins, he is still killing it.

AU: What sort of attitude does it take to be a good skater?

CG: You need to be dedicated that's for sure. Skating appears to come easy for some, but it is definitely not easy. I always over thought things, it wasn't that I was afraid to slam but it was hard to pull the trigger on things. That's why I started filming more I guess, I just did not have what it took to get too serious, you need to be careless in a sense but take great care at the same time.



SHRED SESSION

AU: Who are some skate videographers you admire?

CG: Fred Mortagne for sure. Josh Stewart and he's still making VX videos. Jacob Harris from the UK. William Strobeck, I love his old footage when he filmed for Alien Workshop and I like the Supreme videos he's done. Also gotta mention Canadians Jeremy Pettit, Ryan McGuigan and Zach Barton- love everything they have ever done.

AU: What's the best skateboarding movie of all time and why?

CG: Oh man that is the toughest question ever. I feel like Plan B Virtual Reality released in 1993 might be the one even though its before my time, I love the music, skaters, and era so much. I saw it in 2001 for the first time and I was so hyped, I ordered a Plan B dub tape from some guy on eBay, the next month Plan B ran an ad in Transworld that they were re-releasing the old videos, haha. Welcome to Hell, World Industries Trilogy, Es Menikmat, Flip Sorry, all the Girl and Chocolate videos, all the Zero videos and all the Alien Workshop videos, Aliens Mindfield from 2009 is def up there. Canadian videos like North and the Green Apple videos as well.

AU: If you were in a gang like in The Warriors, what would it be called?

CG: Probably The Dig Its or The Clip Stackers.

AU: Any advice for up-and-coming skateboarders or filmmakers?

CG: Embrace tradition, watch old full-length videos... if your attention span can handle it. Skating is so insane these days, the place the progression has brought us to is unreal. Its rad but almost unrelatable. Its fun to watch 30 something year old videos of pros skating curbs and skating blank decks and shoes they probably paid for themselves. Style is timeless, and its funny because so much of the tech stuff people do now was done more than 30 years ago but just on a



curb.

You can find some of Chris' work on Vimeo: vimeo.com/manage/videos/782601405

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Close-up colour photo by Matt Macleod

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LIAM VS THE WORLD



I Love Metal Gear Solid

By Liam Crocker

Hideo Kojima is a memetic warlock, a genius, and his games are high art. Gear not, dear readers, this is not a video game review. It's a love letter to the *Metal Gear Solid* series of games. Why? Because I'm doing nothing with my free time except playing these games and I couldn't be more content. I don't believe that games come anywhere close to movies or music when it comes to artistic value, but *MGS* does. It's simply the best.

If you aren't familiar with *MGS*, do a quick Google search to get the gist. Or you could watch a 50+ hour compilation of game cutscenes compiled from the dozens of entries into the series. Herein lies the genius and insanity of *MGS*—the story is more epic than any other game I've played, in the truest sense of the word,



and it has more twists, betrayals, tragic deaths and drama than the USA in an election year. To give you some idea of the insanity, *MGS4* alone has roughly 7 hours of cutscenes, with the final one holding the world record for longest video game cutscene at a beautiful 70 minutes. I know what you're thinking—no, you won't get bored. You'll be glued to the screen and using every last braincell you've still got to piece it all together. *MGS'* themes are what makes it truly unique and endlessly captivating. Beyond the melodrama and make-dudes-cry fare about duty, camaraderie and sacrifice, *MGS* sets itself apart by tackling some really complex and often prescient ideas. Nuclear war, terrorism, nanomachines, child soldiers, genetic engineering, the military industrial complex—the list, indeed, does go on. Want to have your mind blown? Right now, search on Youtube: "*MGS2* Colonel Speech". I don't have enough room to unpack how prophetic and

fascinating that monologue is here, but it speaks for itself. Watch that, and if everything I'm saying doesn't click for you, then I don't know what else to say. And consider that came out in 1999!

If you want your mind blown even further, do a Google search for the *MGSV* "head transplant conspiracy." It's a rabbit hole, but to explain quickly, it involves the game using the real likeness of a real Italian doctor who claimed to be working on head transplant technology. There's also some very strange synchronicity stuff concerning a Ted X talk in a location that is in the game and an anagram related to the game. It makes no sense. It's wild. It's so cool and definitely spooky. Fans of the series have a whole subreddit dedicated to unpacking the hidden connections and secrets in Kojima's games, and his entire body of work does carry the uncanny sense of some grand conspiracy.

My theory on the reason behind the quality of *Metal Gear Solid* is that it's the brainchild of one man. Like Kubrick, Hideo Kojima is a director in the truest sense of the word. He started as a programmer and worked his ass off to get where he is now, as the driving creative force behind *MGS*. He IS *MGS*—he writes the story and has his hands in every aspect of the series. Too often, the creative process becomes a democratic one, with writing rooms being ever more common and studios sometimes employing dozens of disparate creatives. Kojima has been writing and planning this game as a continuous story since the late '80s. He's a mastermind, a madman, and a singular artistic genius. No great painting or novel was written by more than one person. It's a blessing to have the privilege of getting to experience the imagination of an individual human being. Kojima's soul is contained in these games and they will stand as legends forever. I implore you to play them from the beginning—they are beautiful.



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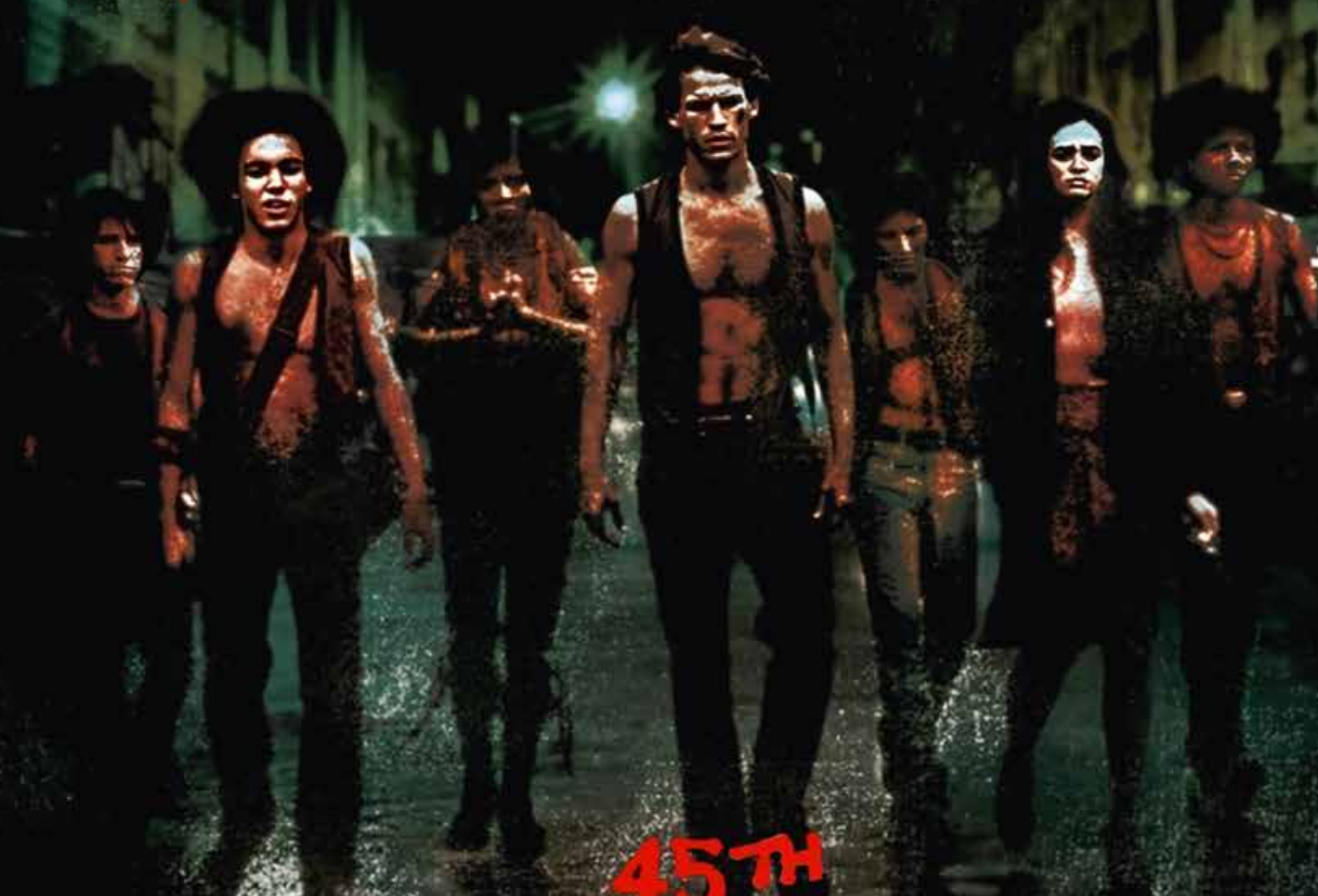

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Can You Dig It?

Celebrating the 45th Anniversary of *The Warriors*

By Ray MacKay

"Be lookin' good Warriors. All the way back to Coney."

An iconic line from an iconic film with iconic source material. We are referring, of course, to Walter Hill's 1979 cult classic film, *The Warriors*. *The Warriors* hit theaters in February of 1979, but its history goes back much further than that. The film is based on Sol Yurick's 1965 novel of the same name. Yurick's novel tells the story of a small gang of young men forced to make their way home through enemy territory. The book was eventually loosely adapted into a movie by director Walter Hill. Although there were many changes made from the page to screen, the most prominent change was the addition of a central antagonist in the film. This change made the main characters more heroic, and less juvenile. Additional changes shifted the story from a deep dive into toxic masculinity and the cycle of violence to an action-packed chase story full of martial arts and

flamboyant gang costumes.

The Warriors are a small gang from Coney Island who, along with every other gang in New York, are called to a meeting in the Bronx by Cyrus, leader of the Riffs, the biggest and most powerful gang in New York. Cyrus proposes that all the gangs in New York work together to overthrow the police and run the city themselves. Unfortunately, Cyrus' plans are cut off when he is shot by Rogues' gang member, Luther. Luther frames the Warriors for Cyrus' murder, and the rest of the film is about the Warriors' long, hellish trip to get back to their home turf and safety. The Warriors race through the streets and across the subways, encountering and escaping multiple obstacles along the way. They battle the bat-wielding Baseball Furies, escape the bus-driving AC Turnbolls and the switchblade carrying Lizzies, as well as evade the police and other gangs. Members die or are captured, and by the end of the film, only a few survive to see the shores of their home of Coney Island. It is on their home turf that they defeat Luther and clear their names, solidifying their reputation in New York as one of the toughest gangs in the city.

The film was immediately iconic. First off, the costumes are striking and memorable. The Warriors' leather vests are immediately recognizable, as are the white outfits and Kiss-style makeup of the Baseball Furies. Every single gang in *The Warriors* has a distinctive and unique wardrobe that makes them stand out from the other gangs within the film, and stand out in the audience's memory. At one point, there's even a mime-inspired gang, dressed in white makeup and black top hats. The film also boasts many iconic lines, including: "Can you dig it?"; "Send the Word!"; and of course the iconic "Waaaarriorrrrrrrs, come out to playyyyyyy!" The film's music is also iconic, with a great rock/synthesizer score by

Barry De Vorzon that fits the film's neo-futuristic tone and action perfectly. The film also has many great tracks, including Joe Walsh's "In The City"; Genya Ravan's "Love is a Fire"; and Arnold McCuller's hard rock cover of "Nowhere to Run".

With all of this going for the movie, it makes sense that it was an immediate success at the box office. The movie's legacy would live on, not only as a cult classic film, but as a hallmark of 1970s cinema. 45 years after its initial release, the movie still has fans, both casual and hardcore, who love the movie and return to watch it time and again.

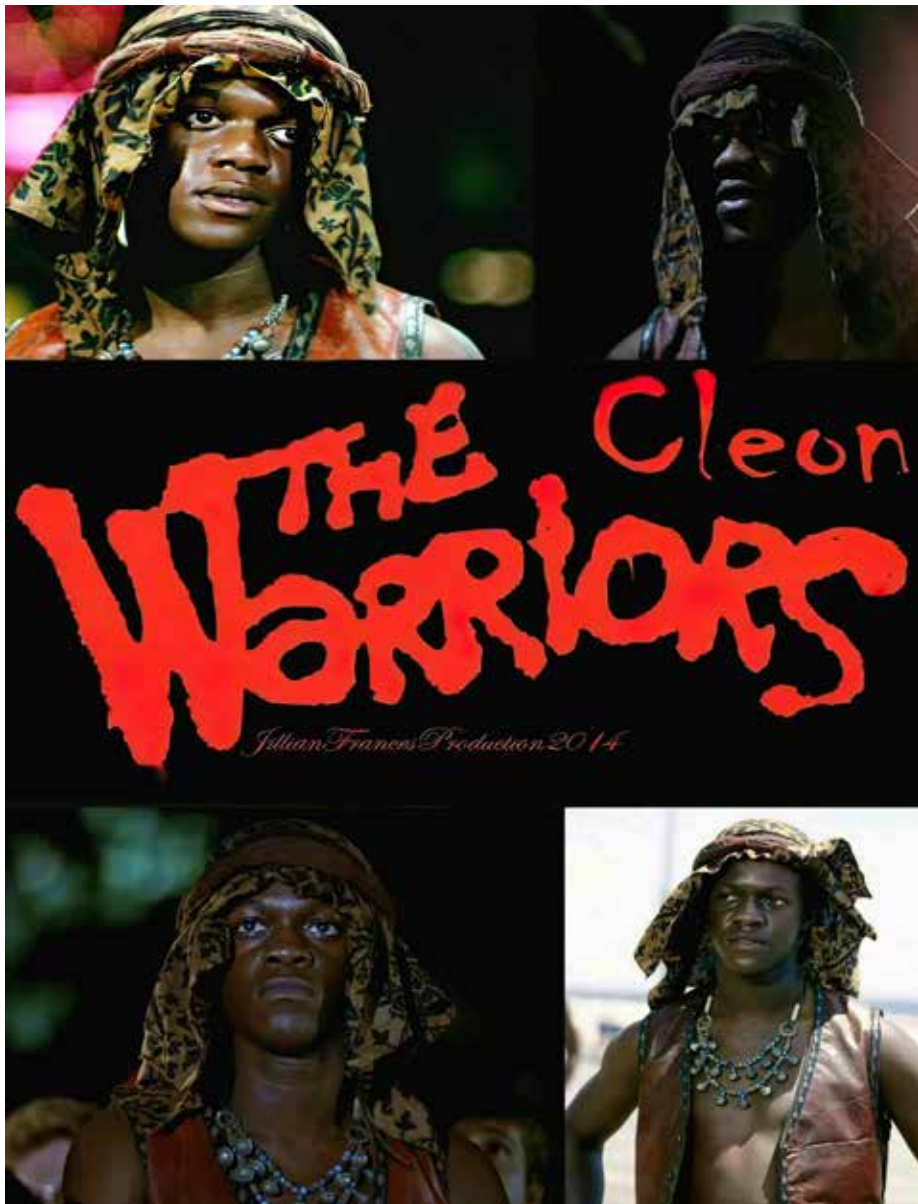
What few fans of the film realize, is that the Warriors' story goes deeper than just the novel upon which it was based. For his novel, Sol Yurick pulled inspiration from the 4th Century BC Greek epic Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Xenophon's ancient epic story tells the tale of the mercenaries hired by Cyrus the Younger as he attempted to capture the Persian empire. Cyrus was killed and the subsequent retreat by the mercenaries through enemy territory makes up the bulk of the *Anabasis*. It is the death of Cyrus and the subsequent retreat to home that both the novel and film iterations of *The Warriors* take inspiration from. *The Warriors* movie takes the broad strokes of *Anabasis* and adapts, updates, and stylizes

the story. One of the most notable elements *The Warriors* film takes directly from *Anabasis* is the character of Cyrus and how his death kickstarts the story. This idea is adapted so faithfully that even the name Cyrus appears in both the original text and the film (but not the novel). The themes of the original epic *Anabasis* and *The Warriors* film also fall in line, as both works focus on what is accomplished by the story's heroes, rather than their actual deeds. Another interesting connection between *Anabasis* and the film is the ending: in the film the Warriors eventually reach Coney Island and safety, which echoes when Xenophon and his mercenaries reach the sea, signaling their exit from enemy territory and resulting safety. Though the transition from 4th Century BC to futuristic 1970s New York is hard to imagine, Walter Hill and his film crew do a great job of modernizing the story and adapting it for 20th (and 21st) century audiences.

Walter Hill's film attempts to tie the story of *The Warriors* back to ancient Greece rivals some of the best adaptations of ancient Greek texts to date. *The Warriors* not only adapts and updates the ancient Greek epic *Anabasis*, but the film pays direct homage and acknowledges its Greek roots. Both Walter Hill's director's cut of the film and the graphic novel adaptation include a preface that tells the story of Xenophon and his mercenaries. This draws a direct parallel between *Anabasis* and *The Warriors* by describing both stories as tales of intense bravery. *The Warriors'* take on ancient history and myths is so well done it elevates itself from cult classic to classic film and deserves to be mentioned along with the likes of other classic film adaptations.

The Warriors is a terrific and iconic film, still culturally and historically significant 45 years after its initial release, adapting and updating an ancient Greek classic story, while still entertaining audiences with a plot featuring a perilous journey, and ancient themes of heroism and courage. In *The Warriors*, Xenophon's ancient mythical story is re-imagined into a modern day cultural touchstone. Can you dig it?





The Warriors 45th Anniversary Interview with Dorsey Wright (Clean)
Interview by Jay Maher

Absolute Underground: I'm talking with Dorsey Wright who famously played Clean in The Warriors. How are you doing ?

Dorsey Wright: I am doing fine.

AU: It was great to see you again at the recent Chiller for the 45th anniversary reunion. Did you have a good time there ?

DW: Yeah, I always have a good time at Chiller, it's one of the better conventions.

AU: Can you give us a brief history of how you got into acting and what ultimately led to your role in The Warriors?

DW: I was born in Philadelphia. I came to New York when I was about six. Fast forward, I got into acting with the theatre company here in the Bronx. They were holding acting classes. There was a young lady I wanted to talk to, so I followed her there. The director told me I couldn't just hang around. I had to either work with them or go home, so I decided, What the hell? I'll be a

stagehand. So that's what got me into it. It was called Theatre For The Forgotten. We did plays in New York state prisons. Eventually the guy who had the lead quit and I knew all his lines so they asked me to step in. What the heck, I wasn't doing anything else. From there, I got my first audition for Hair the Broadway play. Then when The Warriors came around that was Gulf and Western/Paramount. I went there and I met Larry Gordon and Walter Hill. I think they were more interested in me because I had also been in Hair the movie. They put a lot of stock in that.

AU: So you had already filmed Hair before you auditioned for The Warriors ?

DW: Yes, that was already in the can. What I try to tell people is once you get into the business, you don't have to be great if you're competent. You're a professional, you know when to show up, you hit your mark, you know your lines and you do the job. The



DW: I spoke to Walker Hill on the phone and

word gets passed around that you're a capable person and you can be dealt with. The talent thing is just icing on the cake. So when I went to audition for The Warriors, I didn't have a swelled head. It was like, "Okay, so you all are going to do a gang movie? Nah, I'm not really into doing a gang movie." I grew up in the South Bronx, I've seen gangs. Then they start pulling out the cast members and they wanted to keep me, so they brought in Sidney Poitier's daughter Pamela.

AU: They brought her in to try to get you to stay?

DW: Yeah, oh they got me with it alright, they got me hook line and sinker, I was in. For her I will do this movie, lol. We met, she was a real nice person, I was like okay I'm going to try and shoot my shot with her. So I got hired and then the casting started changing first. The movie was supposed to be an all black gang in the beginning but Paramount put the kibosh on that. It's probably for the better because an integrated gang, even though that really didn't exist in New York city, not in the 1970s. But looking at it now it gives everybody something to root for. But I came in with the understanding that this was more of a real piece, almost like a film documentary. So, all through the process I'm busy going if this is supposed to be real. Like really what the hell is going on here? When I saw the guys in make-up with top hats and clowns stuff on their faces. I was like "What the hell is that?" They tell me, "Oh, those are the Hi-Hats." and I said "Who the hell are the Hi-Hats? My man, I don't know what type of research you did? But if you walked around in New York City looking like that, you'd better have a gang." Haha.

AU: You just had no idea it was going to turn into this kind of fantasy, futuristic thing.

DW: Right and not until I saw the screening did I get it. I can't even bring myself to look at it now because I'm so out of place. I'm doing a whole different movie from everybody else and once Clean dies, to me, then the movie gets good, lol.

AU: The movie was so far ahead of its time.

DW: I don't have a huge body of work, but this is what I'm remembered for.

AU: Even though you're only in the movie for I believe 15 minutes and 55 seconds, your presence sure was felt. You commanded that role and showcased a lot of charisma and swagger. When I first saw the movie it just destroyed me what happened to Clean. I was like is Clean really gone? Is he dead? Nooooo!! But now I get it though, to kill off that character it kind of set up the film.

Walter says to me, he thinks he may have made a mistake, he wished he left my character in longer. I told him your job was to make a movie, not to please me.



AU: Can you imagine Clean fighting against the Punks and fighting against the Furies ? It's funny because Ajax (James Remar) who even Walter Hill kind of now regrets not making him last until the end of the film because he's a really popular character as well.

DW: To me, when we were going through casting and readings, out of everybody, I was like now that's a gang member. I mean his whole persona when I met James Remar was like, I'll go into battle with him, that guy has the look. I like Michael Beck, we are very good friends, but Michael Beck looks like he's straight from the Midwest raising corn. This guy is way too pretty to be in any fights.

AU: Did you initially audition for the role of Clean?

DW: No, you get to a point where people call you in because of past work. They saw something they liked and it was an audition, but it really wasn't, I got the sense that it was mine to blow.

AU: Once you got the role of Clean were you told right from the start that the character was written to actually be killed?

DW: No, I didn't know. As a matter of fact on my last day of shooting, when we were doing the conclave scene, they were trying to make up their minds if they wanted me to stay on the film set or if I could just be let loose because I was going to do another film at that time. They decided. We can let him go and I was like, "Okay I'm gone." I did come back and visit the cast when they were in Brooklyn. Just so I could hang out with them, to see how they were doing.

AU: Did you bring anything to the character's dialogue or the costume yourself?

DW: Yes, the headdress.

AU: The headdress was your idea ?

DW: Between me and Bobbie Mannix. My whole costume thing when they were putting that on me was like, what the hell? I wanted something like a security blanket in case stuff tanked. It was like, hey this rag would look good on the head, because it was like a durag back then. She came up with the ring to put around it so it could always be the same way for continuity.

AU: That's one of the things I loved about Clean, I just loved his look. I thought he was the coolest looking Warrior. Visually it's such a unique costume, with the headdress and the necklace.

DW: What actor is covering his face with a rag? It was me going Umm, I've got clowns around me, this might not work. lol.

AU: Do you still have that headdress or your vest or even the necklace? Any of the original stuff that you wore?



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DW: No, the headdress eventually wound up as a part of a pillow quilt for my son when he was born, and he teathed on the beads.

AU: So it became a pillow, seriously?

DW: Yeah, my mother thought it was appropriate. She was like "Oh, it was your first son so I sewed it into..." I'm like, "Excuse me?"

AU: We kind of touched upon this a little bit before, but seeing that Cleon was only in the movie for a total of 16 minutes. Do you wish Walter had kept in the daytime scenes where you would get to see more of Cleon? Do you think he was right taking out those scenes? How do you feel about that daytime scene with Pamela?

DW: Well, as far as my character or myself was concerned, I didn't care. It was more for Pamela because that was screen time for her. So that kind of threw me for a loop.

AU: Let's talk a bit about the conclave scene that was filmed in Riverside Park. What do you remember about that scene?

DW: A lot of chains jingling because I think after the second night the people who lived in the area, that's a very expensive area, they were like, "You need to stop that noise." So we would just mime the yelling, yell but don't yell and shake your fists. Which was strange, it was the most silent yelling I'd ever heard. But it was more challenging because the casting person, Sylvia Fay, who cast the extras actually cast real gang members.

AU: Was that scene filmed over multiple nights?

DW: Yeah, they filmed that for probably a week. Because the original guy disappeared who was supposed to play Cyrus. When they brought

Roger Hill in I was like "Yo, he's good!"

AU: Yeah Roger Hill just nailed that scene.

DW: On short notice too, a paragraph and a half worth and he just killed it! He had that snake charming effect.

AU: What would you say your favorite scene in the movie is?

DW: My favorite scene is the Baseball Furies, anything and everything. My second scene is when they are chased by the Turnbull AC's. The Baseball Furies because they're the most iconic. But for a real threat as a real gang the Turnbull A.C.s. First of all they had a bus, you had to be bad to own your own bus, lol.

AU: How was your experience revisiting the character of Cleon for the 2005's Rockstar Video Game of The Warriors?

DW: That was good, that was cool! What happened was a female friend of mine came over to my apartment and she had a GameStop magazine with The Warriors

on the cover. She's like, "Yo, they're going to do this Video Game." and I'm like "Wow, nobody told me." So I said, "Let me see if I can squeeze into this routine." So I emailed Rockstar and basically said, I saw you're doing this game, hopefully it will be great. All I want to know is why did you make me look so ugly on the cover? I'm a lot prettier than that. They immediately contacted me back and said, "Would you like to do the voice?" and I'm like, "Yes sure, you paying?" and they go "You kidding? Of course we are."

AU: What was it like working with Walter Hill?

DW: Ha ha ha. Walter Hill sometimes thought I was like the ultimate prima donna, lol. The shot in the conclave we kept jumping off that ramp. I would jump off the ramp and then jump over

the gate. After like the third take it was like "Yo, my man!" He was just like, "I thought you had more ability than that?" and I was like "You trying to punk me? I'm tired of doing this shit, my feet is hurting." But then I didn't realize until the SAG person came over and said "You know every time you do jump, that is a stunt and this is what we're paying you." Oh, that's an incentive now! Guess what, my feet don't hurt, let's go, we can do this all night long, lol. As a matter of fact I am going to miss the mark a couple of times on purpose. Keep this money going, ching-ching, lol. Walter started to realize, okay now he understands. He treated me like anybody else.

AU: It's funny, you were talking about Walter kind of screwing with you about jumping over the rail and the gate into the circle. I've gone to the conclave location at Riverside a couple times myself. We were last there in 2019 after The Warriors 40th at Chiller. There was me, a fellow Canadian and a couple of UK guys. We went to New York for about three or four nights and hit up all The Warriors locations with the Furies Revenge guys. And they're all dressed up, and I tried to recreate a couple shots from the scene and what not. So we went to the conclave and I get to the rail... and of course I wanted to do the Cleon jump.

DW: HA HA HA !!!

AU: And when I first saw it up close, I was like, Holy Shit this rail is higher than I thought, man. I don't know, lol? I was like 49 at the time and I was in all right shape. But I was like, you know what, fuck this shit man, I think I will pass, lol. Dorsey was 20 at the time or whatever and he was in fantastic shape. Then

I next walked up to the gate thinking, Okay maybe I'll try this instead? I immediately was like, "How the fuck did

Dorsey get over this?" Because the way you did it, you made it look so easy, you just kind of jumped over the rail and then jumped over the gate and I thought, oh I'll recreate that no problem. Then when I actually saw it, I was like, No fucking way am I trying this shit! I probably would have hurt myself badly, it would have been a disaster, lol.

DW: Try doing it at least five times, which is what I had to do, they was like "You didn't hit your mark." And I was like "Yo, my Man, C'mon! Ha! Ha! Ha! You know I haven't been down there for a while but I know I would not be jumping it now either, I'd just look at it and go Uh no, lol.

AU: Anything you would like to promote?

DW: Yeah, I'm getting into Independent Film now. I have a DP with me and a couple of projects we want to start. The first one that we're working on now, we're still in pre-production, is a script which is almost finalized. It's a Horror Film and its working title right now is 'Don't Die Tomorrow'. Tomorrow being a Girl, it's like Aliens meets the Walking Dead. All shot in an Inner City Housing Project. Another one is a screenplay that I've finished called 'Butt Naked' and 'Broke In Kathmandu'. That will take a whole lot of getting money together to even think about shooting it. But right now that's what I'm doing, I'm getting into a Directing end.

AU: Any parting words for the fans?

DW: Enjoy life at your best ability and do not measure yourself against anybody else's yardstick.



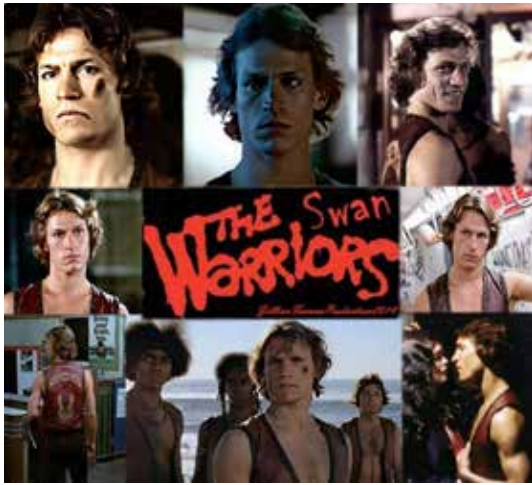
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The Warriors 45th Anniversary Interview with Michael Beck (Swan) by Jay Maher

AU: I'm speaking with Michael Beck, who famously played Swan, the Warchief in The Warriors. I recently saw you at April's Chiller Theatre event in New Jersey for The Warriors 45th Anniversary Reunion. I had a blast, how was your time there over the weekend?

Michael Beck: Oh, it was great, I've done Chiller, I think the first show was with Deborah in 2000, so for 25 years now. I bet I've done that show 15 times. I love it, it's a great show for The Warriors because it's in the Tri-state area, which is a hotbed for Warriors fans.

AU: So this year marks The Warriors 45th Anniversary, what are your thoughts on that milestone? And why do you think this film keeps on resonating with fans worldwide?

MB: So number one, Walter Hill made a really good movie that holds up and has become a cult classic. It's a real simple story, the falsely accused trying to weave past everyone out there who was trying to get them, and get back home where they're safe. It's a movie that I think was certainly shot cinematographically, Andy Laszlo did such a great job. It's such a wonderful movie to look at, with the wet streets and all. And the music is great in it, but still there's just something... you know? People come up to me all the time and say "I've seen this movie 200 times." People love it and they've passed it down to their kids and I think the video game when it came out too, brought a whole other segment of people to the movie. 20 years ago when that game came out, fans then discovered, "Oh, there's a movie?!" Then they saw that the movie was actually better than the game.

AU: The Warriors for me, it's been my favourite movie since I was 13 years old. I just had never seen anything quite like it, the film absolutely blew my mind as a teenager. It captured the whole feel, grittiness and look of NYC in 1978. Then you have to give credit to Barry De Vorzon's futuristic, surreal music score, which gave many scenes a very eerie feel. And

lastly, one who never gets enough credit for the success and longevity of The Warriors is costume designer Bobbie Mannix. Her vision, coupled with her gang logo designs and all the incredible costumes she created.

MB: She did a brilliant job. She's really talented.

AU: Let's go back to the beginning. Can you give the readers some history of how you got into acting? And what ultimately led to you getting the role of Swan in The Warriors?

MB: I got into acting quite by accident. I went to Arts College in Jackson, Mississippi on a football scholarship. Halfway through junior year I was at a friend's apartment and he had another guy there who had been the star in all the plays done there. They started talking about auditions for this next play coming up, which was Romeo and Juliet. We kept having some drinks and they said "You should try out for this play", and I'm going "Yeah right", lol. Anyway, they say again "You really should go along and audition." I just kind of said "Yeah sure, I'll do that.", really with no intention of doing it. So as we were leaving later on, not three sheets, but probably a sheet and a half to the wind, lol. My friend said to his friend "Don't count on it, Michael won't ever do it." And he did it purposefully knowing that would be the trapping for me. So I said Okay, now I was challenged, so I went on that Monday night and got up the courage and went onstage and read and ended up getting cast as Tybalt in Romeo and Juliet. The director and head of the drama department, he saw something in me. I played Brick in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, I played King Arthur in Camelot.

Later, I fortunately got accepted to the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. People like Laurence Olivier went there. Then spent two years after drama school working in repertory theatre in the UK before coming back to New York. That's how I got into acting.

I came to New York around Thanksgiving of '76 and ended up doing an independent movie in early '77 called Madman playing the featured role. Shot in Israel, it never saw the light of day but it was my first film and also Sigourney Weaver's.

So now cut to 1978 when they're casting The Warriors, and any actor in New York that was within the age range of 18 to 30 was trying out for that movie. My agent was trying like crazy to get me an audition. But the casting agency knew me and as this classically trained Shakespearean kind of actor, they would not submit me to

Walter, because they thought he can't play a New York street kid, that's not his thing. What happened was Walter Hill, who was a producer on the movie Alien, Sigourney was in that. So they had screened that movie Madman to see Sigourney Weaver for her role of Ripley. Walter saw me in the lead in that picture and said I want to see this guy. It's one of those things, had Walter not seen that movie, the casting agents were not going to let me be auditioned. So that's how it went, I went in and read for the role and luckily got the part.

AU: Were you always up for the role of Swan?

MB: Yeah, because Walter had seen Madman, and from that he totally saw me as Swan.

AU: Once it was determined, that you had more chemistry with Deborah Van Valkenburgh than Thomas G. Waites did, changes were made for you to have a more starring role. Was that an easy transition for you and Deborah to make?

MB: It was certainly easier for me than for Deborah as she was preparing for her part, that Fox and Mercy are together. I think the chemistry that we developed was not the reason that all came down. Tom Waites would be the first to tell you, he just did things that made Walter and Larry Gordon not want to work with him. And I think because they both saw, when they were watching the dailies, that there was chemistry between Swan and Mercy, they had a path to go on.

AU: What are your memories of filming the iconic Conclave Scene?

MB: We went there and that took at least a week, maybe 10 days to shoot. It was a long time. From my memory it seemed like forever. We were shooting night for night in New York City in the middle of summer, where nights are only six hours long. I know that there was some nervousness on set, I don't know whether this is true or not, but the word got around that there was real gang members mixed in with the extras. I remember I really enjoyed filming that scene because it was a pivotal moment theatrically. And I remember just sitting and watching it and marvelling at Cyrus, Roger Hill, I mean he did such a wonderful job. To me, Roger did Cyrus as a Shakespearean character, and when you think

about the gang movies then. His speech was so eloquent and so over the top, it was so perfect. I'm going, "That Dude is really good." so that was cool, but it was also pivotal. Because that's when all the stuff came down, that's when Cyrus got shot and we got blamed, so it was added excitement amongst us sitting waiting in boredom.

AU: It must have been challenging filming that scene with so many cast members and extras

all in there? I've been to Riverside Park and visited the Conclave location and seeing it on screen especially as a kid, it looked much bigger than it really is in person.

MB: You're right, it's not a big venue, so the toughest thing was when all hell broke loose and people were running in all directions. There was a lot of gangs, real gangs, but just logistically you could get hurt with people running in 10 different directions. But it made a heck of a great scene.

AU: Would that be Craig Baxley that choreographed that whole sequence?

MB: Yes Craig choreographed the Conclave scene.

AU: Can we talk a bit about the Baseball Furies, what did you think of them when you first saw them in full costume and makeup?

MB: I don't recall ever seeing them until we came out of the subway station and we looked at them on the street. That was cool, and Bobbie and the makeup, what a great concept.

AU: That's what makes the movie so much fun, is that it was shot in a very futuristic kind of way. With all these gangs that just didn't exist at the time. How challenging was it to shoot the chase and then ultimately the fight scene in the park against the Baseball Furies?

MB: That whole sequence from seeing the Baseball Furies outside the subway station to the final bat swing, took about 2 weeks. We ran miles and miles, and then after the running, we bopped for a few days. So it was gruelling in that sense. But Terry, myself, and a few others, we went to the gym because if you are wearing a vest and no shirt, you want to have something to show, lol. So that was part of my regimen. But all of us, if we didn't start out in good shape, we ended up in good shape, haha. Because we ran so much and fought so much. That was Walter Hill too, he not only cast people who he felt could play the role but he also asked people that were in his mind athletic enough to do what he was going

to demand of them. He knew that this was going to be a tough shoot, and it was, it was rigorous.



AU: I used to talk to Leon Delaney, the Orange Fury. He told me just how brutal The Warriors/Furies fight scene actually was to film and that you accidentally cracked a couple of his ribs. How did you guys trained for that fight?

MB: I didn't find out that I had broken Delaney's ribs until we were doing a convention together in 2015. He said, "You broke a few of my ribs." and I was like "No way." because he never told me at the time. But Craig Baxley flew us to California, a month before principal photography started, and several days a week we'd have stunt fight practice. I knew how to stage fight, but that's way different from fighting for a camera. So first basics, he taught everybody how to throw punches and how to take punches. Once we felt comfortable with that we moved into the choreography of the different fights. So that was really cool of him. Because none of us were veteran film actors, and especially not action film actors. On the nights that we did the Furies fight, Rob Ryder and I have that sword fight with baseball bats. When that part came up, we would go through it slow-mo 2 or 3 times. Then we would increase it to half speed, then we'd do a couple full speed and then cameras were set and shooting. That was true with all the fights, every little portion was heavily rehearsed. It wasn't easy, and some stunt guys got hurt and serious sprains and there were some cracked ribs and stuff, we all got bruised.

AU: Probably my favourite scene in The Warriors is the fight against The Punks. What are your memories of filming that scene?

MB: Yeah, the bathroom fight, I really like that scene as well. The exteriors were all in a subway station. But the interior of the bathroom, that was all shot at a studio in Queens. It was still a real confined space though so you really had to be hitting your marks otherwise somebody could seriously get hurt. All the fight scenes had to be precise. I think it's a tough ass looking fight. And of course I love at the end of it, with Swan and that throw-down of the Punk through the door.

AU: I have to say Sonny Landham was a pretty scary looking Subway Policeman in the film, did you have any interactions with him between takes when you shot with him?

MB: I would talk to Sonny on the set because we were both Southern boys. That was a precision scene too, because I remember practising and practising throwing that bat so that I could actually hit him. He was wearing like catcher's shin guards. So yeah that worked out okay, but the back end of it did not work out as well when Swan takes Mercy by the hand, pushes her back and she's got marks that she has to get on. I don't ever look back again, because those marks put her far enough away for me to swing that bat back. But something happened between us and she was in the wrong place. And then Bam!, I hit her right above her eyebrow and split it open. She had the most accidents of anyone on the team, I split her eye open and she broke her arm in another scene. She had stitches in her eyebrow and she was just covered in blood, so makeup and wardrobe took some Spirit Gum and some right over the stitches. And then they put a blue jacket on her for the rest. She's a real tough chick.

AU: Besides the deleted Coney Island Boardwalk Scene, do you remember any other filmed scenes that were cut?

MB: I am sure there were but that was the massive cut, that was the introduction of all the different characters. But then Walter and the editor both came to the same conclusion that daylight needed to be seen in this movie only at the end of it, not at the beginning. That it starts in darkness and ends in sunrise I think was a wise choice.

AU: What do you remember about filming the scene with the Turnbull AC's?

MB: With the Turnbull AC's, instead of just a walking scene it was a sprint scene. We came up and that bus was behind us. And we were running, shooting up those stairs running, knocking people out of the way to get on that train. Again not really any fights but a scene that built excitement because had we been caught, we most likely would have been dusted and it would have been a short movie, haha.



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AU: Another one of my favourite scenes in the film is with Swan and Mercy on the subway with the Prom Couple. Do you have any favourite scenes from the film yourself?

MB: That's actually my favourite scene in the movie because it is an example of where words don't matter. Everything that needs to be said in that scene is said, and nobody says a word, I love that. That's Walter direction.

AU: How was your experience revisiting Swan when you came back to voice the character for the Rockstar Video Game in 2005?

MB: Well, not being a Gamer, I didn't really know much about Video Games at all. To me it was a voice job and I did go back and watch part of the movie, just to make sure that I had my Swan voice down. I wanted to make it as accurate as I could, and I am sure all the other guys did the same thing. I mean who knew, I didn't really understand the power of Video Games, because it brought a whole new large segment of people to this movie.

AU: It became one of the biggest video games of all time, and fans still rave about it. I think between the Video Game and The Warriors action figures, that was the start of a massive resurgence in the film. What are your thoughts on all The Warriors figures that have come out over the years? There's been 5 Swan figures released so far, 4 by Mezzo Toyz and 1 by Funko Pops. Do you own any of them yourself?

MB: I have a suitcase full of the Funko Pops, I take them to the Cons for fans who want to get them

signed. I do also have one of the Original Action Figures that came out of Swan. My Son and Father went to the local mall and bought one and brought it home. And I didn't even know those were coming out, because no one ever tells me these kind of things, lol.

AU: Do you remember how many Vests were assigned to each Warrior for the Film? And didn't a Fan gift you back

your Screen Worn Vest a few years back at the Hollywood Show?

MB: Yes, as I recall, and I know that my buddy James Remar thinks we only had one, but that isn't true. We had a principal Vest that we wore mostly. But wardrobe had I think 4 or 5 Vests for each of us, every movie always has backups. I remember seeing at least 4, there was one that we all wore in that scene where the rain poured down on us. And that would come out every now and then. But there was a primary and secondary Vest, like there is in any show. But there was always backups that were in wardrobe to wear. So what happened at the end of The Warriors when we wrapped, the day we wrapped. We had a big Softball Game, Cast against Crew, and Walter loved Baseball, so he was playing in it. And for some reason, I will never know why. I just had that soft spot in my heart, and I took my Vest and inscribed it to Walter from me, and gave it to him, the one that I wore the most in the movie. And Walter, I asked him years later, "Whatever happened to that Vest that I gave you?", and he doesn't know. It's just one of those kinds of emotional things that you do, I look back and I

go, "Why in the world did I do that?" haha. But who knew you were going to have a big Cult Movie? But I want to say, probably about 7 or 8 years ago now. I was at The Hollywood Show, it's a Convention in Hollywood, and a young man came up to me and held up this Vest and said, "Do you recognize this?", and I looked inside and I saw where Swan was written in a Pen. So I knew what Vest it was, it was one of the four or five Vests that we had. He said "This was your Vest from The Warriors." and I said "Yeah, I know it was. Where did you get it?", he said, "Well I worked for Paramount and I had loaned some money to a friend, an older guy, who worked in the Property Department. So when it came to payback time, he said "I don't have the money but I can give you Swan's Vest", but now I just feel like this needs to come home" and he gave it to me and now I have that original Vest from The Warriors in a shadowbox in my office at home.

AU: What it like working with Director Walter Hill on The Warriors?

MB: I loved working with Walter. I think he's, certainly for me, the most acclaimed and probably the best Film Director that I had the privilege of working with. And I've worked with a few good ones, but I would say Walter is top of that list. He just makes iconic movies, The Warriors I think being one of the most iconic movies that he made. He has a great imagination. What I love about him too is he trusts the artists that he hires, at least from my experience on The Warriors, to do what he hired them to do. Walter was very, very sparse with direction. He read us and cast us in the roles, because Walter saw something there that told him, this guy can play this role. I don't have to tell him how to play this role, I cast him because I trust that he knows how to play Swan. That was across the board with everyone.



AU: Any memories or words you could share about our fallen Warrior, Marcelino Sánchez?

MB: Oh Marcelino, oh my gosh, I took it upon myself both as Michael and as Swan, and I think that it shows in the movie, that Swan is always a protector of Rembrandt. Rembrandt's not a Fighter, he's the Painter, the Tagger. So when I can find moments without overdoing it, I let my kind of brotherly or paternal instincts look after this kid, so that kind of dynamic was on screen. Marcelino was just great, the sweetest guy, funny, so many memories. Everyone was just devastated when he passed, he was way too young.

AU: With the recent releases of Can You Dig It? The Warriors Phenomenon and Rob Ryder's excellent Purple Fury Book. Have you yourself ever considered putting out a book?

MB: I do some writing here and there, but I've never had any desire to write an Autobiography.

AU: What are you most proud about the performance you gave in The Warriors?

MB: I loved that role. I was thrilled that Walter and Larry cast me. When I read the script I immediately had a strong idea as to who Swan was. I don't know if proud is the word, but I was honored and excited at the time, that how I saw that character and played that character fell into what Walter wanted. And that I got into a groove with him, that Walter also saw the character in the same way. So I think that probably is what I'm happiest about. We just came together on that without ever talking about it. That's probably what I take away most from the performance, is that it hit the mark with what Walter wanted.

AU: With all the talk about a Warriors remake or a TV Series, what are your thoughts?

MB: Well, I'll tell you, that I am not a huge fan of remakes of any movies, they tend to not to live up to the original. Especially if something is a Cult Classic already. And having talked to many people over the years, true blood Warriors fans don't want to see a remake made, and I tend to stay in that camp, and so far we've dodged that bullet.

AU: You can't better the original, it's become a cult classic for a reason. Any parting words?

MB: I will just say to my fans You're The Best!



The Warriors 45th Anniversary Interview with Terry Michos (Vermin) by Jay Maher

Absolute Underground: I am here talking to Terry Michos, Vermin from The Warriors on the 45th anniversary at Chiller. How does it feel to be back?

Terry Michos: Chiller is always a great show. We do a lot of shows and some of them are terrific, some of them are smaller than others. But Chiller the crowds just come in and they keep coming in. The fans know the movie so well, they love

the lines, and they just love seeing all of us. There's a lot of Warriors here today so it's been a real fun time.

AU: After 45 years, the film just keeps getting bigger, every year there are more fans. Why do you think that is?

TM: I don't have the real answer to that. But I know that there's parents that tell their kids and then tell their grandkids. There's a 1970s New York kind of vibe that is not around anymore. There's this classic camaraderie of the gang that is multicultural before multicultural was in. So there's just this kind of cool little thing that went on and then I think it was something subliminal. It just caught the people. There's a lot of great films but they don't have this cult following.

AU: How did you get your start in acting and how did you get the role of Vermin in the Warriors?

TM: I became an actor in college. I used to play a lot of sports and got out of

that and then I figured what can I do to be in the limelight? I just went into college plays. I went down to New York banged around and got an off-Broadway show with Theresa Saldana. She played Jake LaMotta's wife in Raging Bull. Then I got Grease on the National Touring Company on Broadway and then got The Warriors.

AU: How did you get that?

TM: Well they interviewed 1000s of people and they narrowed it down to a small amount of people. They brought like 11 or 12 of us up to Paramount. But they didn't cast me after they brought us up there, they cut me. I was crushed.

They cast Tony Danza. They said that Tony Danza was cast as Cowboy but me and Tony Danza are more similar body types than Tom McKitterick and myself, because he was small and Irish. But a few months later Tony Danza got the show Taxi and left and I became Vermin and made Vermin what he is today.

AU: Vermin originally was not supposed to last as long as he did but didn't you improvise some things?

TM: I did. There was an old cartoon called Hercules. He had this buddy that was a half man and half horse and the guy would always get excited and say things twice. He would say "Herc, Herc!" So I went and said "We are going to get japed here, we are going to get japed. Hurt me, hurt me. I like that, I like that. This is great, just great." and I started to do some comedic things. It seemed to work.

AU: Out of all the scenes you shot for the film, what was your favorite?

TM: They were all fun but you know, I'm a lover boy, the Lizzies was a great scene.

AU: What was it like working with Walter Hill?

TM: I was a young actor. I didn't have a lot of a relationship with him. Some of the guys were a little closer. He gave us freedom, he let us make choices. He was very much a gentleman. He knew what he wanted, but he wasn't screaming on the set and all that. If he didn't like it he would say do it again but pretty much he was great.

AU: For me the best fight scene in the movie is the Punks scene. Vermin famously got thrown into the mirror. Thank god you had a stunt man. How was that whole filming experience?

TM: It was about two weeks for I think it was 96 seconds on film. After every shot we had to turn the camera and shoot again. What they did was I jumped up on a trampoline and then they cut to a stunt person as he hit the mirror. That was

the only stunt I didn't do but they didn't want us to get hurt. Because Deborah had already gotten hurt a couple of times.



AU: Do you still have your original vest?

TM: I sold that a long time for a good amount of money. I didn't need it. People say, "Why would you sell the vest?" and I'm saying I am the vest. I was in the vest. I was the Warrior. I didn't need the vest. The fans wanted the vest.

AU: Can you give us the best Vermin line?

TM: There is so many. We are going to have to bop our way back. I'm sick of waiting for trains. I got the big one.

AU: I got the big one is the best.

TM: When I got off that subway and I saw you I thought oh baby, throw it my way. Coney Island must be 50 to 100 miles from here.

AU: Classic Vermin lines! That is why he is such a lovable character. Any final words for your fans worldwide?

TM: I just love that you love The Warriors. Come to the shows. Tell people about it. We don't know how it became so big. There's a lot of reasons why.

AU: It's arguably one of the biggest cult films of all time.

TM: People that don't know it, don't get that. But Warrior fans are radical. In 2105, I went to Coney Island Fest. The news said there were about 7000-8000 people there. I'm telling you there were 10,000 people there and some people didn't even get in.

AU: Anything else to mention?

TM: There is a book called Can You Dig It? That's a great book about the phenomenon of the Warriors and you can learn a lot of stuff from it.

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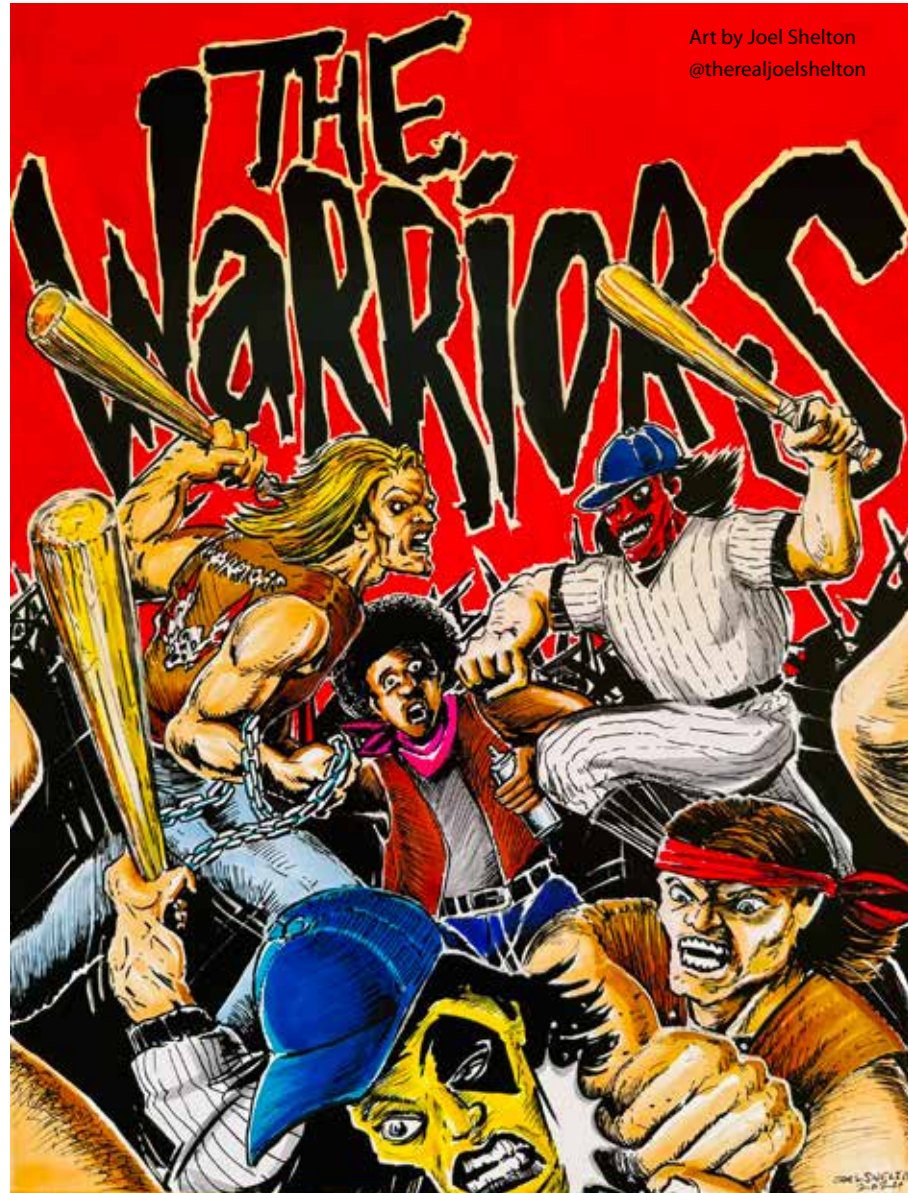
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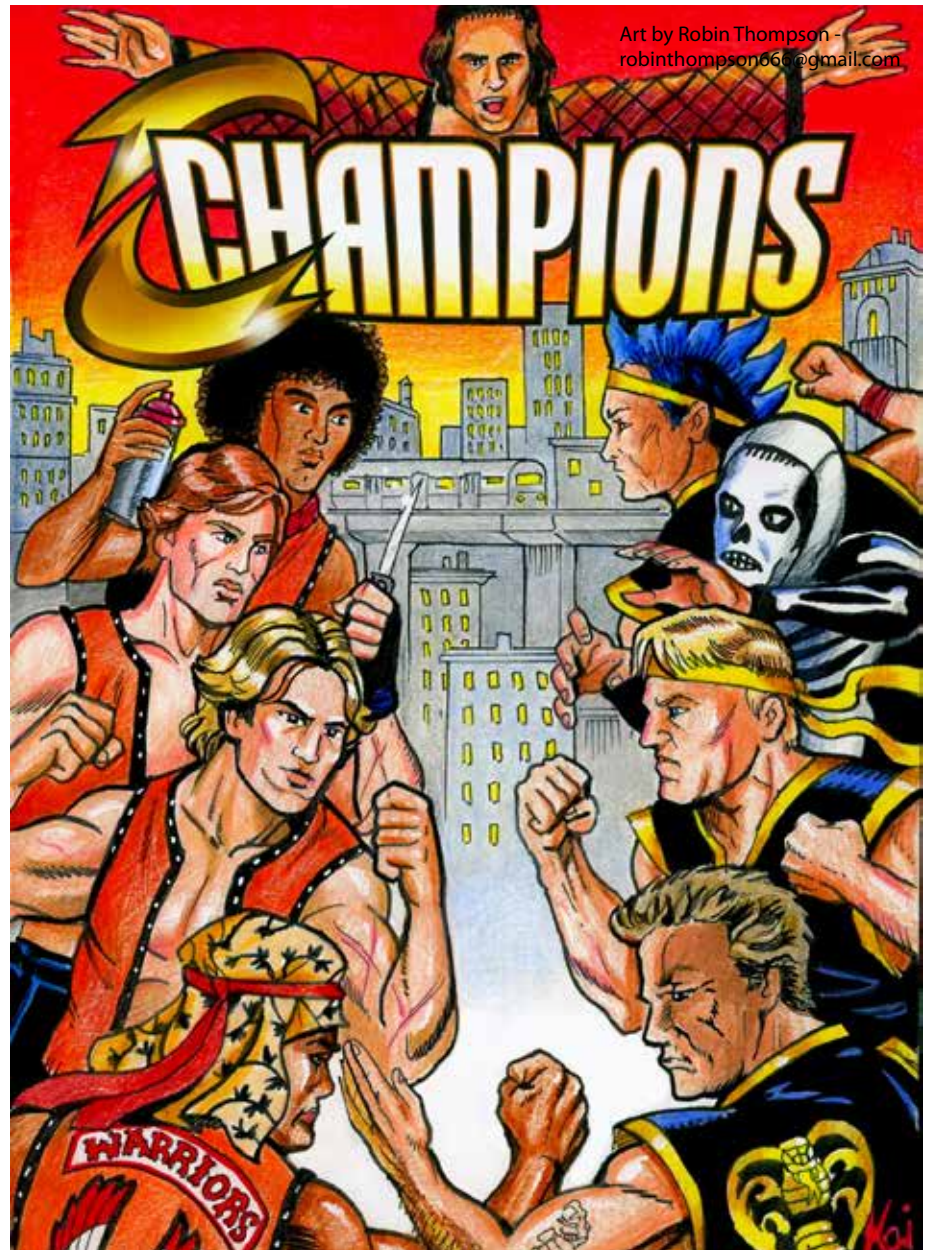
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Thomas G. Waites

Fox – The Warriors

Interview by Steve Roberts

We are here with Thomas G Waites at the 45th Anniversary of *The Warriors*.

Absolute Underground: What are your thoughts of the fandom of this cult classic?

Thomas Waites: It's really amazing. You know, you think that this thing is the gift that keeps on giving. We got a whole resurgence of new fans from the video game. Kids have been coming up 17, 18-year-old kids are like, "Man, I found the game first, then I heard of the movie. Now you guys are here, but the game is dead killer."

AU: It's almost 20 years old now.

TW: I know, Michael and I did the voices in the video game. I actually had to audition to play myself.

AU: When shooting at the Conclave, specifically the scene where Luther points the gun at you, do you remember what it was like?

TW: It was a big production, it seemed like thousands of people and it was a hot summer night. It was a long time to set up the shoot. I remember Walter capturing that close-up of me. I was impersonating the great Italian actor Giancarlo Giannini; he acted with his eyes. When something happened, he showed you with his eyes. So that's what I was going for in that scene.

AU: The Orphans scene with Swan, he picked you. It seemed you went there to help defuse the tension. Can you speak much of that?

TW: I love that actor Paul Greco (Orphans leader) Paul and I really connected as actors, we ended up doing another picture together many years later in Canada; a movie called *Clan of the Cave*

Bear. He was only on it for a couple of weeks but we got to hangout and catch up. It was exciting to play that scene because like you said, the chemistry was there. He had a lazy eye, but he used it-- he didn't pretend like he didn't have it.

AU: The Turnbull AC's scene, the running on the street and up to the platform looked very intense.

TW: There were lots of running up and down the stairs and it was hot. It was a tough shoot.

AU: It was filmed very well.

TW: I think its filmed brilliantly. Andrew Laszlo (Director of Photography) did an outstanding job with the wet streets reflecting the lights. That was Walter's idea. Laszlo did it stylistically.

AU: Do you remember your audition?

TW: Yeah, we auditioned four times and they paid you for the fourth time. It was 35 bucks and back then that was a lot of money. It was a long process. It was back and forth between myself and actor Alan Rosenberg... I ended up winning them over the fourth time, that was when Deborah and I read together. That's what sealed the deal.

AU: Did any opportunities come your way directly after *The Warriors*?

TW: No, actually quite the opposite because I got fired from *The Warriors* and it had a serious effect on my credibility. It was only because Al Pacino gave me a shot in a movie called *And Justice for All*.

AU: You have an acting studio you run and a new movie out. Would you like to talk about them?

TW: TGW acting studios, and I am an acting teacher. I have a new film I wrote and directed called *Target* available on Amazon Prime; I also wrote the music for it. I have a band called Heartbreak Waites, you can find us on Instagram. You can find me under Thomas G Waites Project.

thomasgwaites.com





The Warriors 45th Anniversary

Deborah Van Valkenburgh (Mercy)

Interview by Jay Maher

I am speaking with the one and only Deborah Van Valkenburgh, who famously played Mercy in *The Warriors*.

Absolute Underground: The film has grown into one of the biggest cult films of all time. Any thoughts on why you think that is and why it continues to resonate with so many fans worldwide?

Deborah Van Valkenburgh: We are truly fortunate, and so grateful for our fans all over the world. *The Warriors* is a vibrant depiction of NYC in the late-'70s featuring iconic imagery, an indelible soundtrack with loads of action, a wry sense of humour and plenty of quotable dialogue. Like the best thrill ride in the park, you just want to keep sharing the experience with everyone you know! Is this why *The Warriors* has become such a cult classic? I really have no idea, but its magnetism is undeniable.

AU: 45 Years ago, did you know you were acting in a film that was going to be this iconic?

DV: Not at all. Excited to be part of the cast, to be working with Walter Hill; it was an exhilarating experience from start to finish. Of course, one always hopes the project they're working on will be a success, but *The Warriors* went down in cinematic history, and that could not have been foretold!

AU: Let's go back to the beginning, how did you get involved in acting and what led you to this role?

DV: My creative interests covered the spectrum growing up. My dad was an artist, my mom performed in community theatre and they were both very imaginative, which inspired me endlessly. I attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, majoring in Painting/Drawing. Senior year, I also joined the theatre department. John Shea was my teacher there, and he encouraged me to continue my theatrical interests after graduation. This led to many auditions, some showcases around town, a gig in the Broadway revival of *Hair*, an agent, and the opportunity to audition for *The Warriors*.

AU: Do you remember anything about your initial audition?

DV: I loved the script. Sparsely written, it left so much to the imagination. I read with Alan Rosenberg at our first audition, which was very fun. I was hoping we'd both be cast, but he went on to play Turkey in *The Wanderers*.

AU: Do you own any of your original screen worn Mercy costume you wore?

DV: I think I may still have my outfit in storage on the east coast. Unfortunately, my necklace and ankle bracelet were stolen. Broke my heart.

AU: When the decision was made that you had more chemistry with Michael Beck as opposed to Thomas G Waites, and that changes were going to be made, was that a difficult transition?

DV: Thomas exited the film, and the adjustments were immediate. Since Michael Beck and I already had screen chemistry, the transition was seamless. However, my wrist fracture occurred at the same time, so technically there were difficulties.



AU: What do you remember about filming the iconic scene where the Warriors run into the Orphans and ultimately meet Mercy for the first time on the Staircase?

DV: That was my very first day of work. I had visited the set prior, getting acquainted with the gang and the tempo of the shoot, but I still needed to be up to speed when the guys approached, since they'd already been shooting for a while. Memorably, one of my brothers taught me to cluck like a chicken when I was a kid so I love that it was my opening "line" in the film.

AU: Was the Warriors vs. Orphans showdown and chase scene challenging to film?

DV: Yes, from the standpoint that we had minimal warning about the actual car explosion, which was much more robust than they had anticipated. It took us all by surprise as we ran past the car. Thomas and I were the last to clear it and I felt like I was in one of those dreams where you're trying to run away, but your feet are moving through sludge. I could hear the glass shattering through the air as we ran, and I had no idea whether we would escape the downpour. We all needed a little recovery time after that sequence.

AU: You also had a close relationship with Marcelino Sanchez (Rembrandt) while filming. Any memories you would like to share?

DV: Marcelino and I definitely bonded, and remained good friends. During the bathroom fight scene with the Punks, if you look closely, you might see us doing our impression of Isabelle Adjani from Walter Hill's *The Driver*. We loved her in that film.

AU: My personal favourite fight scene in the film is the Warriors vs Punks fight in the bathroom, what do you remember about filming that scene?

DV: My concern that I was hurting Gary Baxley when I grabbed his hair and yanked his head back, was apparently reading on camera, and the poor guy had to withstand even more head banging until I got it right. Needless to say, I felt quite guilty, but he was super patient with me.

AU: To the readers who don't know, can you please share what happened to you while shooting?

DV: I fractured my wrist running on the subway platform and when my cast was replaced with a splint, Walter added the scene about the jacket so we could disguise the splint and get back to work. I also sustained an injury above my right eye on the very same platform, and we had to snip a few extra strands of my hair to disguise the bandage covering the stitches. If you scour, you might see a glimpse of my splint when Michael hands me the corsage, as well as my "bangs" in various scenes.

AU: What was it like filming the subway scene with just you and Michael Beck?

DV: It was fascinating hanging out in the subway tunnel, and the timing of that JFK train during our kiss was impeccable, right?

AU: One of my favourite scenes in the movie is

when the characters of Swan and Mercy meet up with the prom couple on the subway. Do you have any favourite Mercy scenes or lines?

DV: I remember the first time I saw my face fade into the sunrise at the end of that scene, it felt quite special... such a beautiful segue. In certain ways, every Mercy scene is a favourite of mine, because my memories are so full of all that happened before, during, and after. It was my first film and a remarkable six months of my life. The phrase "dickhead" came from my dear friend, Bob... when Walter overheard me say it once off-camera, he never forgot it and added it to my post-production dialogue, which really made me smile.

AU: Looking back all these years later, what are you most proud of with the experience?

DV: I guess I could say I'm proud I was able to handle whatever was thrown at me, and that Walter was happy with my portrayal... which ultimately means the most.

AU: What was it like filming with Walter Hill like? Are you still in touch?

DV: I adore making films with Walter, and was so happy I got to work with both Walter Hill and Andrew Laszlo again on *Streets of Fire*! I found that Walter and his crew have a kind of telepathic relationship. Which makes the work really hum on set without a lot of hoopla. Yes, we are still in touch.

AU: Any projects you are currently working on that you would like to share, or anything you would like to promote?

DV: You can still see me as "Esther" in Hulu's streaming series *Helstrom*, a role I really enjoyed!

AU: Do you ever find yourself watching *The Warriors* anymore for nostalgia's sake?

DV: Every once in a while, a viewing occasion might arise with other people, and it is VERY nostalgic... but I have not watched it by myself.

AU: With all the talk of *Warriors* remakes over the years, I think

you could never recapture the magic of the original. If they ever do it, the only way I could see it possibly working is to make a prequel or TV series, where you see all young actors play the characters and the premise is all on the origins of the different gangs. What are your thoughts, is that something you would like to happen?

DV: I've generally not been excited to see another rendition, but Lin-Manuel Miranda is working on a musical version. And I'm titillated at the prospect, I must admit!

AU: Besides Mercy, one other character you played that I loved growing up was Jackie Rush in *Too Close for Comfort*. Any thoughts or memories of filming that series?

DV: As I told one of the producers back in the day, Mercy was my nighttime persona and Jackie Rush my daytime persona. An exemplary experience with everyone, and again we all became family too.

AU: Any final words for your fans?

DV: Thank you for your incredible support over the years, we are very grateful, indeed!

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The Warriors 45th Anniversary Interview with Apache Ramos (Warchief of The Orphans)
by Steve Roberts

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?

Apache Ramos: Hi, this is Apache.

AU: What are your thoughts on the 45th anniversary of The Warriors?

AR: It's been amazing, the crowd loves The Warriors. Last night we worked late until 11:30 at night and this morning I had a blast because it was hard for me to get up and when I finally got up and downstairs the first six people in line were wearing Orphans T-Shirts, that made me feel really good. As soon as I got out of the elevator people said "Apache!". The fans have been wonderful. I got a new Orphan cup from a fan. What's really funny is that Dorsey Wright and David Harris, they always say, "Nobody gave a shit about the Orphans until Apache showed up." Now the Orphan nation



went to audition, I had a pair of shorts, blue suede Puma sneakers, a black T-shirt that said Bronx in silver letters. I had my resume, an eight by ten head-shot, and a bottle of Rum. I was sitting there at Paramount on 59th street and it looked like the Conclave, there were all these guys. I was sitting there sipping my Rum and there was this white guy sitting next to me and I offered him a taste and he said no. We started chopping up

the shit and talking to each other and then he disappeared. Then they finally called my name, Apache Ramos. I got up and then I went into the room and that white guy was Walter Hill. I didn't even say anything, Walter said I have this small part and you are a very real person, I like you as Apache Ramos. It's the

Orphans, it's a small part but I think you'd be good at it.

AU: There were a lot of Orphans in the movie, do you think you guys could have taken on the Warriors?

AR: We would have definitely crushed the

Warriors, but by numbers only.

AU: What was it like filming with that amount of people and did you yourself come up with any lines?

AR: Well, it was 1978, I was like 24 years old, a bit of an attitude. We were doing improv, do we're standing around, they put some sort of glue or something on the car and then it's on fire. We were doing improv and I came up with "We're gonna rain on you Warriors!". Walter liked it and kept it. I have now written it maybe a million times, I've said it maybe 2 million times and I think it'll be on my tombstone.

AU: For the few scenes you did with Paul Greco (Orphans leader) what was it like to work with him? The two of you had a very believable chemistry.

AR: It was fast, we were both surprised to be cast in a motion picture by a big studio like Paramount. We just hit it off right away but it was no problem, we got along really good. He was a great guy to work with.

AU: In the movie overall, what is one of your favorite things?

AR: It's gotta be the Furies, everybody loves the Furies. You know, if you think about it, he says, Okay, I'm gonna write a script. I'm gonna have this gang in baseball uniforms with KISS make-up. It sounds ridiculous. Now when you see it on screen visually it's really something, and

my heart really feels good when I see a little kid on Halloween dressed up as a Fury. It really really cracks me up.

AU: What did you think of the Rockstar video game, and the portrayal of you as an Orphan?

AR: I have a little pet peeve about the video game. They refused to pay me and refused to acknowledge me. They said it wasn't me, they even have my tattoo on my arm. I am the only Orphan with an afro. They claimed it was a composite of a Puerto Rican which you could say would be racist. Years later I met someone from Rockstar and they apologized to me.

You can see Apache in a recent movie he did titled *The Automat* on HBO Max and *Merciless* Christmas coming soon.



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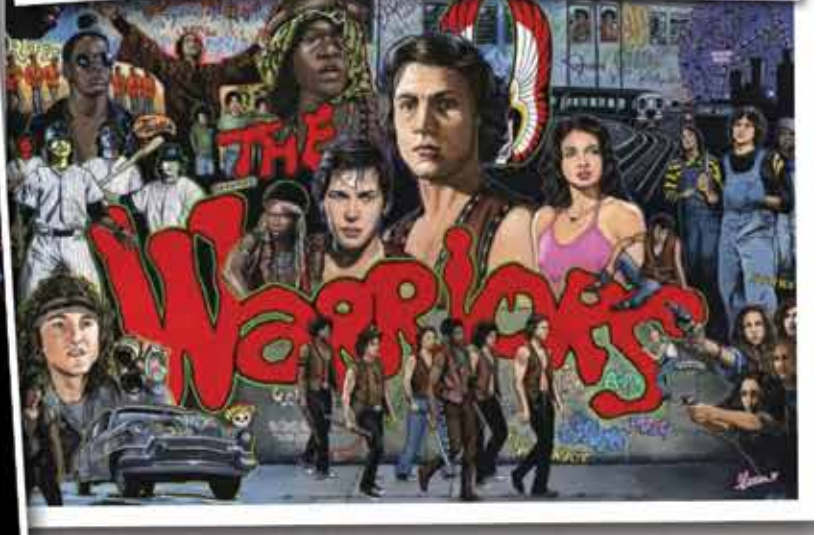
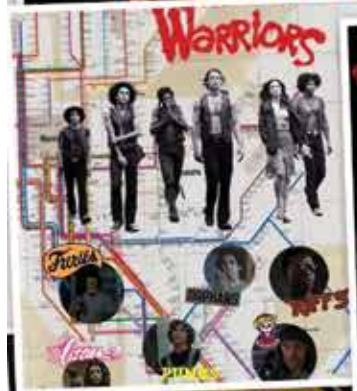
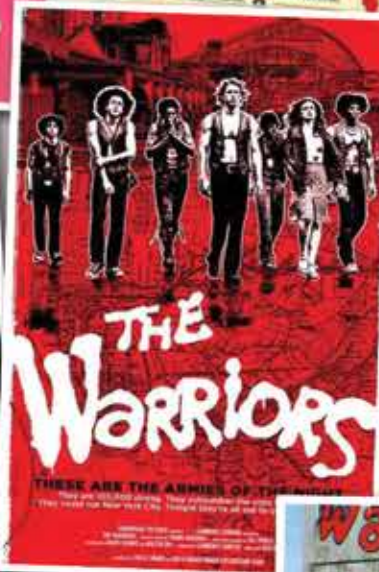
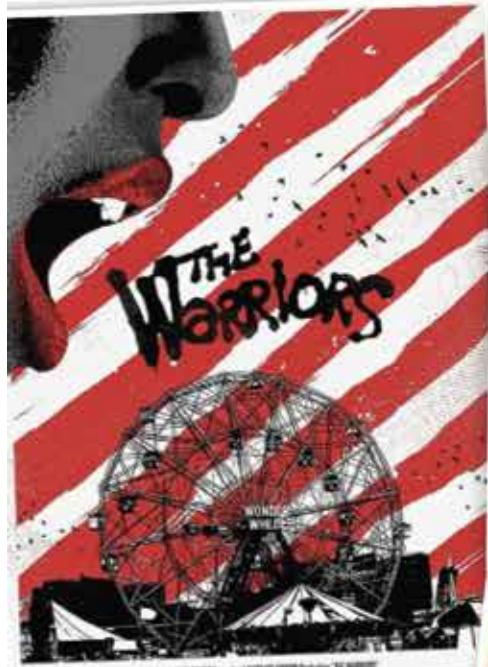
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The Warriors 45th Anniversary
Interview with Joel Weiss (Cropsey)
by Jay Maher

Absolute Underground: I'm here speaking with Joel Weiss. Cropsey from the Rogues in The Warriors. How you doing Joel?

Joel Weiss: Oh, excellent.

AU: Happy to be back with the gang for The Warriors 45th Anniversary?

JW: I love seeing the old faces. There is much love here.

AU: Can you give the readers a little history on how you got into acting and how you got the role of Cropsey?

JW: Well, it goes back a long time. My father was an actor and I always wanted to be an actor. Then I started doing the plays and then college. I always had the bug in me. I loved it more than anything in the world, next to sex. How I got The Warriors was I was trying to get on the movie, The Wanderers, so I dropped a lot of names at the Gulf and Western building. Got up to the wrong floor. But it was the right floor because Tom McKittrick and Marcelino Sanchez were there. I knew Tom because of auditions and stuff. I went up to the secretary and said "I have an appointment with Mr. Walter Hill." She said "I don't see your name on here." I said "No, but he wants to see me." So she called up the casting director and they said "Joel what are you doing up there?". I said "You only go around once in life and you've got to grab for all the gusto." There was a big pause and he said "Good luck." So then Martha came up to me. She was the assistant to Walter Hill. She said "You have to leave." I said "I'm staying." So they left, shook my hand and said "Good luck to you." So I sat in a chair and all of a sudden I hear Walter Hill's voice say "Martha can you come in here? We've got to do this." So they went to another office. So as she walked by, I stand straight up and go right up to Walter Hill and start yelling at him, and Frank Marshall was in the room too. I then cooled it I said Mr. Hill and in one minute I changed everything. I said



"You have a basketball scene in this movie I would be perfect for it." He looked at Frank "There is a basketball scene? I wrote the script, there is no basketball scene." He said "Calm down, I like you. We are going to bring you in to read." I said "Don't bullshit me." He said "I've never seen you in my entire life, but you are definitely coming into read." I shook



his hand. Two days later on Monday I went in to read. I got there three hours early. I wanted to look at the sides. I'm an actor, I did a lot of plays I wanted to be on top of it so I got there early. My appointment was at 3 o'clock and it's quarter to 12 and all of a sudden

Jeremy Ritzer comes out asking, "Are you ready?" I said piece of cake. I got up and walked in. Walter is there and Jeremy and Larry Gordon. Walter is doing his thing with the eye thing (mimes operating/looking through a camera), I'm making faces and I didn't know the script. So Larry is going to read with me, not the casting director. We are looking at each other and he goes "You have the first line. I said, "Oh shit." He said "Calm down." Walter goes "He looks like Bob Tessier." I said "Tessier-smeshier."

AU: I always thought you looked like Joe Perry.

JW: Anyway, I was in there for 3 hours. I muffed up the lines. Then we read it again and again.

The character was named Butcher Boy in the film. So a day later I got the phone call "You got the job as Butcher Boy." When I got into meet with Walter he said, "You are now Cropsey." I said "Great." I'm really cocky I said "Walter, you directed Charles Bronson in Hard Times, the second best performance he was in." He asked, "What was the first?" I go "Death Wish!" So I was in the movie. Then we had the reading with the cast and every character would come in. Like James Remar came in and he would bend the chair. I made friends

with him. We were sitting next to each other and someone said he is signed already. Because a lot of us didn't sign contracts yet. Then Michael Beck came in and David Patrick Kelly sat with me. We met for the first time there and we were trained differently. We were both into doing it, we did the reading, it was sharp and we'd do all the lines. Same thing with the movie. Once they say action we were like no rehearsals, we just did it. Every scene you see I did in the film, one or two takes. Well I got punched in the face, they had to do that again. What happened was it was a roundhouse punch by Craig Baxley. They changed it to a straight arm punch when Dorsey punched me in the face. I fell on the floor and I didn't get up for a moment. I was so mad at myself, not because I got hit.

AU: At the Conclave?

JW: At the Conclave. I had already filmed a little bit before this. He goes "We need a replacement for Cropsey." I jumped up saying "No, I'm alright." There were a lot of other actors there and that

is kind of how I got the part. I've done four for Walter. I stay in touch with him all the time. I always liked him. He loves baseball and rock and roll.

AU: What other films did you do with Walter Hill?

JW: I did Brewster's Millions, Another 48 Hrs. and Undisputed. But two got away from me like Last Man Standing and Streets of Fire. But still there will be another one in the wings soon.

AU: Yeah, I heard you might be coming back to do more.

JW: There will be more movies. This one is more up Joel Weiss' alley because it's not a Western. He won't put me in one. It's got to be urban. This one's more of a Noir so there's got to be something for me in it.

AU: Speaking of that iconic Conclave scene, any memories from that?

JW: My memory was that I got 162 people in the film as extras. People from junior high school, high school, actors that were non-union, directors of student films. The crew guy he brought me a package of Oreos as a surprise and I was sleeping with it. I fell asleep, during the conclave scene, we were off a lot.

AU: What was it like working with David Patrick Kelly?

JW: Well, the thing is he didn't talk that much, a few words. Then when the movie wrapped we talked a lot and everything. Oh, he's great.

AU: You guys had great chemistry in the film all though he picked on you a little bit.

JW: You know, when something happens you've got to go with it. The candy scene when he hit me, it's real. You want the real reality.

AU: What's your favorite scene in The Warriors?

JW: I like the beginning of the film. I love that scene. "Are we set?" "We are set alright." But my thing is always the next movie, the next job. I didn't get a movie for like two years after that. I was doing plays and then I got a movie called Senior Trip with Scott Baio, Jason Alexander and Robert Townsend. That was great because I got Robert in as an extra in The Warriors. We've known

each other for 46 years and I've done five movies with him. He calls me his good luck charm.

AU: Now about the famous hearse the Rogues drove. There were no seats in that were there?

JW: None. They had us sitting on boxes. Also I couldn't drive.

AU: You didn't have your license?

JW: I only had a written one, not a real one. So they took me for private lessons. Not to drive but to hit the marks. If you fall short of the mark it sucks. If you go over the mark it's ok but you can kill the cameraman. So they trained me for that and I did great but I almost killed the Warriors too. Haha

AU: What's your thoughts on the longevity of The Warriors?

JW: It's amazing because the way New York was. The music, the cinematography, the clothing was amazing and Walter Hill and Andy Laszlo. But the feeling of it, the dialogue. There is no changing things, this is 1977 straight to the heart. I remember James Remar said some derogatory things in the film and in the movie theater, oh my god, we got the biggest laughs. Nowadays you can't say that shit.

AU: Did you get to keep your original Rogues vest?

JW: No. You know what? A lot of people took their wardrobe. I was so afraid that they would come after me for the money that I didn't do it. When I did Quicksilver I kept the socks, the vest, I kept everything.

AU: Any upcoming projects you'd like to talk about?

JW: Well I finished a movie called Finals. I play Principal Barnes in a high school shooting. Other things are out there. Something will come, I make things happen.

AU: Any parting words for the fans?

JW: Never give up. Never listen to anybody, or just listen to the good things they say, never negative things. If you have a dream just keep going for it. Because you got nothing to lose. You got 125 years on this planet. If you fail, you can always smile that you did all you can.



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The Warriors 45th Anniversary Interview with Konrad Sheehan (Leader of the Punks) by Jay Maher

Absolute Underground: We're talking with Konrad Sheehan who played the leader of the Punks. How is going on this 45th Anniversary, are you enjoying the weekend?

Konrad Sheehan: It's so nice to be here with my brothers, the people, the fans and especially at Chiller. There is a group of people like you, we've become family. It's like coming home. It's great.

AU: The Warriors has become one of the biggest cult films of all time. What are your thoughts on why it resonates with so many fans?

KS: Well first of all, it's Walter Hill. It's Andy Laszlo, it's Bobbie Mannix, it's the cast, it's the time that it was shot and it should never be remade. Although Lin-Manuel Miranda is all about bringing it to Broadway. Also with the video game and the Funko Pops there are now children coming to these conventions. So no joke I show them this (picture of him in character holding a switchblade knife) and I say do you know what this is for? They're like "I don't know." and I say "It's for cutting vegetables."

AU: Can you give us little history on how you got started acting and how you got the role in The Warriors.

KS: To bring it back just a little, I wanted to be a psychologist. But when I went to my first year and I found out that you had to inject the mice or rats and then kill them to collect the data, I went into a midlife crisis. Then I thought maybe, I don't know why I thought of that, I will go into acting and I'll be able to work with Al Pacino. So my dream was to work with De Niro, Hoffman and Pacino. So to make a long story short, I got to do a scene with De Niro in Raging Bull with Joe Pesci doing stunts for Joe Pesci. I did stunts for Dustin Hoffman in Ishtar. So I got two out of three.

AU: How did you go up for the role of the Punks leader?

KS: So I literally fell into stunts. I moved to this

city and because I had a background in gymnastics and karate my old gymnastics coach found out they needed a guy to do a stair fall for Rose Gregorio in Eyes of Laura Mars. I met the casting director and I got the gig, so I literally fell into stunts. I got another film and then you start getting a reputation. In the stunt world, it's harder to get into stunts than acting. Because we have to trust our lives with each other. So I literally just got booked to do the fight scenes in the Warriors.

AU: So initially you were not going to be up for the role of the Punks leader?

KS: Essentially yes, because we were going to do the fight scenes. Not the Punks leader. So we go and we all met Craig Baxley at Astoria Studios and Walter sees me I guess. He looks in on me and says "Can you roller skate?" I was like "Yeah." and I couldn't of course. So I got skates and I practised in Central Park. He gave me the whole summer to practise and also he said "Grow your hair." I didn't have long hair. Sol Yurick had no skaters in the book. Anyways, I practised all summer and then even before we did the close ups, I guess Walter knew that I was going to have close ups in the Punks, I was also hired to do the explosion scene for the Orphans.

AU: A lot of people out there probably don't know that you also played an Orphan in the film. They know you as the leader of the Punks, so tell us about that.

KS: So I was hired to do it, Billy Anagnos and myself. Billy was great with cars, even though this wasn't a car stunt. So when I get to set that night Walter has Bobbie put me in an Orphans shirt and put a cap on my head. He kept me on the far right. The scene was Michael throws the Molotov cocktail and then Billy and I are supposed to run and when I get to my mark, special effects is going to push the button and then the car blows up and then I have to sell it into the camera. So what happens is, I get to the mark and nothing. So I ran through it, you just keep the action going. This happened maybe 11 times and for some reason they kept putting a little more gas each take. It was a gas explosion.

So finally we get it and I didn't have to sell it. Leon Delaney was on a U-Haul truck maybe a 100 yards away and he felt the impact of it.

AU: I think debris went on the rooftop.

KS: The trunk blew off onto the roof. The car door is hanging on by just a hair of metal. Otherwise it would have just blow right off.

AU: Did you ever work with Walter Hill again?

KS: No but he's the greatest guy in the world, the greatest director. The best in the world and I mean that. It's greatest to work with the best in the world. It's just pure, great energy, no ego. Just really simple and no emotion, it just set the mood. He knew what he wanted. I did Brubaker a while later with Tom Bronson, he was the wardrobe designer for 48 Hrs, and then Walter invited me to set but I didn't go. They were disappointed that I didn't make it and what I found out later from Joel Weiss is when he would invite you to set he would usually put you in the movie.

AU: Yeah well Marcelino Sánchez had a small part in that. Of course David Patrick Kelly had a part in that, Sonny Landham too. So you could have been in it.

KS: I think that was a missed opportunity, but just to have worked with him. I've been to his house. We were at his house to film that video opening. Walter did a video and he was so cool because he made it a point that he wanted to have everybody who passed away listed. So before we filmed his assistant Hope got

a poster board and we listed every name. I held it and Walter read the list down as he was being interviewed. He really cared about those who are not here anymore.

AU: For me hands down the best fight scene in the movie was the Warriors vs the Punks. Can you tell us about that scene.

KS: The first establishment shot was at Patsy's (pizzeria) in Upper East Harlem. Then the subway

scenes were in Union Square up until the point where I opened the door. When I opened the door now we're in Astoria studios. We did that so Walter could pull out the stalls and set the camera and have more control over the angles. So that's why we shot that in the studio.

AU: It looks like Marcelino Sánchez got pretty close when he spray painted and punched you.

KS: What I'm really thinking about first is the scene when I had to put my foot through the door with Tom McKitterick at the back. I had to put my foot through and then he punches me and I flip. It was pretty funny because Tom is right near the door when I did my first kick it was like this far away from the door (holds hands 2-3 feet apart). I didn't even get close. It turned out Tom had to be like this (leans back pulls arms in tight to chest). Because I had to literally get my foot through up to my ankle. If my ankle and the whole skate got locked in the wood I would have twisted my knee. So I couldn't get the shot. I couldn't deliver this shot and it was affecting me. Marcelino said calm down and we went to his motorhome and he sat me down, calmed me and we had orange juice. I calmed down and then went back and got the shot. We became dear friends ever since. But the opening shot it's like the calm before the storm. Down the ramp, the dialogue, the escape, and then I open the door and boom. Marcelino was the type where he would punch me and then cut and "Hey, are you okay?" Like the greatest guy in the world. Then when I took the shot he didn't hit me but I didn't pad my right hip before. Oh my goodness I took the full impact with the skates. It hurt for years.

AU: How was it to get your own Funko Pop figure?

KS: At Chiller 2019, I think it was Michael Beck who came over and he goes "Hey man, you have a Funko Pop." Then my daughter calls me, she found out and then our neighbour knocks on the door "Hey, you are a Funko Pop!" They were freaking out. The coolest part of it is that my daughter would say, "Hey my dad's a Funko Pop." or my grandson "My granddad is a Funko Pop."

AU: Besides being a Ducky Boy in The Wanderers what other opportunities came your way after the Warriors?

KS: I've been blessed because of stunts and I also studied acting. I got to do stunts for Joe Pesci, Michael J. Fox, Robin Williams. I acted with Robert Redford in Brubaker.

AU: Do you own the original overalls, jersey, or roller skates?

KS: I remember specifically, we wrapped and we did a group shot together and I asked Bobbie Mannix "Can I take the overalls?" She said "I really can't because we may do pick-up shots." So I didn't get the overalls but Walter Hill was into punk rock at the time and the Punks were supposed to be punk rockers so Bobbie made an original leopard jumpsuit for me. It had a diamond in the crotch because she knew I was going to kick through the door. But after they shot the Furies it was so colourful, that is why they put us in the overalls. So I do have the leopard jumpsuit and I do have the skates.

AU: Any parting words for fans worldwide?

KS: I just love you. It's like a love fest. It's so nice being here. Thanks so much. Appreciate you for everything.



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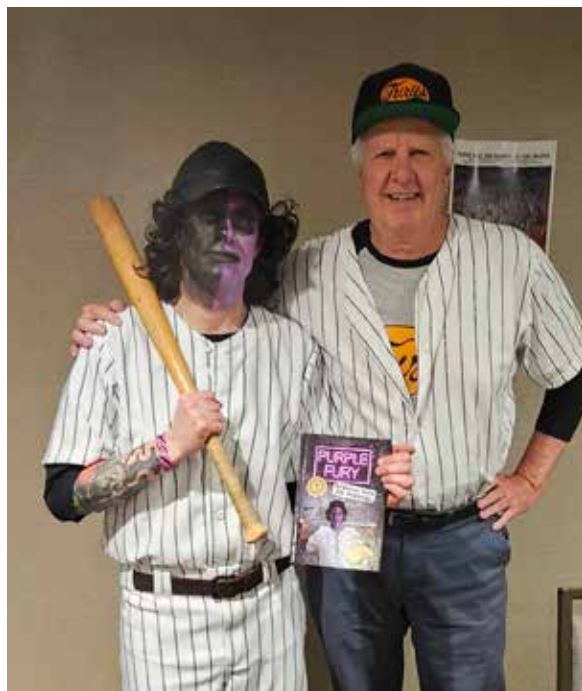
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Delaney, it's a very short scene. Do you remember anything about that?

RR: Not very much, only that I was glad to get hired and all I had to do was sit there and try to look mean.

AU: What led you to becoming a Punk?

RR: Well, I became a Fury first, then a stunt man got hurt and Walter asked me to replace him. Then I was done, because they didn't like me double-dipping with my production job. The SAG rep had me thrown off production side and I thought I was done in the movie, then Walter called me and said "I want to put you in my bathroom fight scene," so suddenly I was a Punk.

AU: The bathroom fight with the Punks was incredible.

You threw someone in that scene, correct?

RR: Yes, Terry Michos, aka Vermin.

AU: You physically picked him up?

RR: As high as I could, then we cut and replaced him with a stunt man.

AU: Can you touch on the fighting in that? I think it was the best fight scene in the movie.

RR: Yeah, people really dug it. It was a lot of different pieces; a lot of bodies flying around and Craig Baxley the stunt coordinator did a really nice job. He broke it all down for us, and so we just bounced through it shot by shot and sequence by sequence and got it done.

AU: Tell us about being the Purple Baseball Fury. All the running, fighting, especially the fight with Swan; what was that like?

RR: Yeah, that was pretty intense. You know, we had it all choreographed. There were maybe eight pieces to this sequence; I would swing he would jump back. He would swing I would block; I did get hit in the ribs and end up on the ground. We went through it the first time, and we just nailed it. We looked at Walter like, all right man, we did it; let's move on. He's like, "Do it again." So, we did it again, this time Michael, instead of jumping back at one point he ducked right into my swing, and I swear to God, I checked my swing and just missed his head.

AU: How did you become the Purple Fury?

RR: I was running around like a maniac doing locations, and I got to know Walter Hill pretty well. He liked me, he knew I was a college athlete, he likes athletes. So, Steve chambers, the original Purple Fury, banged up his knee or legs in an early running sequence. So, Walter called me over and said "Hey, I want to put you in my movie," and suddenly I was the Purple Fury.

AU: Do you have a favourite scene?

RR: I love this scene when Swan and Mercy are in the subway. They're all exhausted and beat up trying to get back to Coney and those two prom couples are across the way. Swan gives Mercy a pat like, "You look great babe, just the way you are." I love it, it was real tender moment.

AU: Tell us about your book.

RR: I start it out and go back and forth with *The Warriors*. It's mostly about *The Warriors*. It's also about my trip to Hollywood. My life as a screenwriter, and a sports director. It's all the crazy stuff that goes on in Hollywood and hanging out with Walter Hill, what that was like over the years, he's a great man, by the way. It's a down and dirty book; I drop a lot of F-bombs, so you're aware. I needed to tell it the way it really happened. There's a great response to it, because it's real; it's for guys who don't read that much. You will read this book and dig it. You can go to purplefury.net and buy



Rob Ryder

Purple Fury & The Punks

Interview by Steve Roberts

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Rob Ryder: Hi, this is Rob. I started out as a location scout and a stunt man, got hurt, and Walter Hill made me the Purple Baseball Fury.

AU: How did you get started in films?

RR: I just met a guy playing basketball in Central Park in New York. He was putting some money into a low-budget movie. I was always interested in movies, so I got a job as Production Assistant. That led to more production work. Then *The Warriors* came into town I got hired on to that.

AU: So, you're a Fury but you are also one of the Punks. At the beginning of the movie, there's a little scene in the bar. You're sitting with Craig Baxley, Konrad Sheehan, and Leon

it directly from me. I'll sign you a copy or go to Amazon or Barnes and Noble and buy it there.

AU: Any other up-and-coming projects?

RR: I am working on a really cool project for all of the *Warriors* from the movie, but at the moment, it's top secret, so stay tuned.

AU: With the original cast members, that is exciting. How will people find out about it?

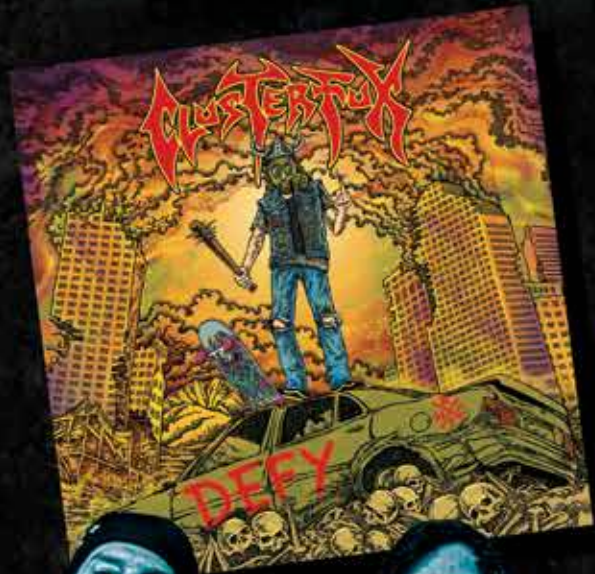
RR: I post to some of the *Warriors* groups on Facebook. So, you'll find it there.

AU: Any parting words for *The Warriors* fans?

RR: Yeah, take care of yourselves and take care of each other. We live in a really crazy world. You gotta be kind to each other. No matter what your political persuasion, whatever. Show some kindness and love. That's my message to *Warriors* forever.

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Craig Baxley Stunt Coordinator, Punk, & Turnbull AC

Interview by Steve Roberts

Absolute Underground: My understanding is you were a stunt coordinator. Can you tell us about the Turnbull AC's scene? My understanding is that you were the driver?

CB: Actually, that wasn't planned; they had hired extras to be on the bus. The bus driver insisted that he drive the bus and he was kind of a large guy with a beard, sort of portly, but it didn't quite work out. He wouldn't let anybody else drive it. We were basically shut down, and Walter said talk to the guy. So, I explained to him I was the stunt coordinator. He then said, "well I'll let you drive it." But I obviously had some hair on my head, so I went and put a skullcap on and sunglasses and jumped in. Five minutes later, we did the shot and moved on.

AU: It looked pretty crazy, the running up this staircase.

CB: Yeah, they wouldn't let me bring any stunt men back from California until the Punks fought, then I brought a couple of guys back. I had to utilize all the guys here and at the time, the stunt guys in New York are a little long in the tooth. Nobody wanted to hit the ground, they wanted to know how much money they were going to make. So, I went and found a bunch of young guys by nucleolus of stunt men. There were like 10 of them. Walter wanted to utilize the cast to do their own fights, not double anyone, which we did double Vermin, as he was thrown into that mirror in the Punks fight. I took the cast and these young guys and taught them all how to do a picture fight.

AU: Let's go back to the meeting at the Conclave. To me, it seemed like an organized chaos. Can you tell us anything about that?

CB: Hundreds of extras, but there were a lot more gang members at the time. My issue was that I had hired Alan Oliney, who doubled Eddie Murphy in *Beverly Hills Cop* hanging off the back of the truck. He was gonna double Cyrus because he was a world class gymnast. It was about a 15-foot fall through a platform onto a judo mat. You really had to have complete body control, or you could really get hurt. Two days before, the unit production manager John Starke said "I can't afford it. I can't bring it back." Walter wanted to keep the stunt in; he said, "You sold it to me, I want you to do that stunt." So, I put the wardrobe and makeup on and I did the stunt as Cyrus.

AU: Let's talk about the Baseball Furies; were there any challenges orchestrating all that?

CB: I actually wrote everything in script form for the cast and stunt men. In fact, I have a copy here of everything. It's every punch exactly how

it was done in the movie. If you watch the movie, you'll see every move that's in on this list. When I got to do the Baseball Fury fight, [Walter] wanted me to direct the fight and set the cameras, which I did, I did the same thing for the Punks fight. So, this was a lifesaver, because the budget for the movie was under \$4 million dollars; it was a really fast shoot. The fact that everyone knew exactly what they were going to do... I rehearsed it days before we walked on the

set and just did it.

AU: The running scenes with the Furies were very fast-paced, how was it working on them?

CB: I love the shot of the Furies coming over the hill, but my new stunt guys would run out of gas because they weren't marathon runners. We actually brought in a running club and my stunt guys would then step in. Jerry Hewitt, the Yellow Fury, was giving balloon tours when I got here in New York. He didn't even have a SAG card. He took to it like a natural; he could hit a trampoline like nobody. He did the best picture fight of any of my guys including my stunt guys I brought in for the Punks fight. Jerry became my point man for everything, he was the one Fury who did all of his own running.

AU: Another great scene was the Lizzies. I thought it was cool to see the actors brought inside to give a different element. Were the girls fun to work with?

CB: Absolutely, everybody was young and inexperienced. It was nice, and my thing was to set the cameras for Walter. Andrew Lazlo was a brilliant DP, but to set the angles to really make them look better in the action- that's what I did.

AU: You played another role as one of the Punks. How challenging was that fight scene in the bathroom?

CB: That's the only set we had in the film. I was kind of caught off guard because I sold Walter on the leader being on roller skates. Walter had seen me in a previous movie, *Rollerball*, and he was going to put me in roller skates and cast me as the leader of the Punks. Then as we got closer, Walter said, "After what you did with the Furies, I want you to direct these fights and set the cameras for the Punks scene." I said "Sure, but I can't do it on skates." He said, "Well, somebody's got to be on the skates." So, I went and asked some of the guys and nobody skated. I found Konrad Sheehan, and he said "I can skate." I found out afterwards that he went two days before we did the shoot to Central Park with a guy to learn how to skate. When we did the sequence, I said to Konrad, "I want you to go straight down the ramp," and Konrad looked at me and said, "I don't know if I can do that." He came up with going side to side, back and forth slowly from one side of the ramp to the other. Oddly enough, it made more tension. When we did it, Walter said, "What the fuck was that?" I said, "I think it's pretty good, it's pretty intense and I think it's what were going to do. Walter said, "Why?" I said, "Because it's what Konrad is comfortable with."

AU: Overall, was there anything in the movie you really enjoyed or disliked working on?

CB: It was a quick shoot. It was all nights, and at that time in Manhattan, it wasn't a great place to be. The '70s, it was pretty intense. I think the only

thing I regret that we didn't do is I was gonna jump the Rogues limousine 15 feet off the ground onto the beach. We released all the stunt guys and they kept me for three weeks to do that. The day we were going to do it, Walter came up and said "We're losing daylight, I got a little behind. I really have to concentrate on my work, so I can't do the jump." I said, "No worries," so they released me and I flew down to Georgia. Two days later, I did the first two jumps in *The Dukes of Hazzard* 18 feet off the ground.

AU: What was it like working with Walter Hill?

CB: The guy is absolutely brilliant. He wrote the original *Alien*. He is just a wonderful guy to work with. Actually, after I did *The Warriors*, I went and did *The Long Riders* with him. Walter's a wonderful guy to work for, aside from that, he's a wonderful human being. Not only is he a good director he's a filmmaker's filmmaker.

AU: Any favourite scenes in the movie?

CB: I like the Punks fight. It had so many

dimensions to it. I put cameras in the wall so you could see the body crashing through. It just had so much energy to it. It's 1978, things now are very different. First three movies I directed *Action Jackson*, *Stone Cold*, *I Come in Peace* had no CGI. Now everything is CGI and some of it does not look real, like fire, for example.

AU: The fire on the Orphans car was insane.

CB: Well, that was a mistake. They made a mistake with that because I walked up to the guy and I said you have a lot of whatever they used for pyrotechnics at the time. I said I think you should cable off the door and the hood and this guy was like, "Listen kid..." because I was young. I was younger than most of the *Warriors* and he said,



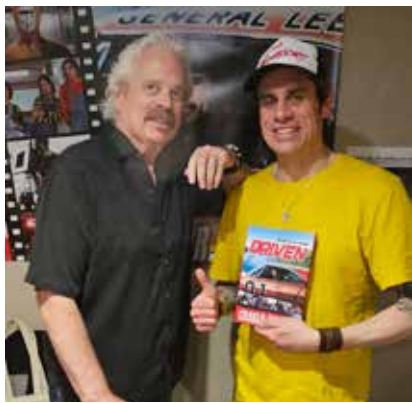
"You don't tell me what to do and I won't tell you what to do." When it went off, he almost killed some of the crew and some of the cast because he didn't cable off the doors and the hood ended up on the roof of a building.

AU: Any projects that you're working on?

CB: I have one that Stephen King wrote as a short story. Then I wrote the screenplay and our names on it. We've shopped that, we had it set up and then Covid hit and went away. Then we set it up again, then the actor strike. So, they're trying to set that up now. Steve's writing another movie I believe, and Netflix contacted us; they wanted me to direct a pilot and do a limited series like I directed *Kingdom Hospital*. We're waiting to hear back from them. The regime changed over there and the dynamics have changed, so we're not sure what's happening.

I'm also writing novels now. One being a memoir titled *Driven* which is about 45 years in the business. I've also got my first novel that Stephen King read years ago and he said, "Why don't you flip it to a novelist?" It's called *Last Exit to Hell*. I've got *Scalp Dance*, that comes out in August and *The Last Wave*, and like three more.

Craig's books can be found on Amazon.



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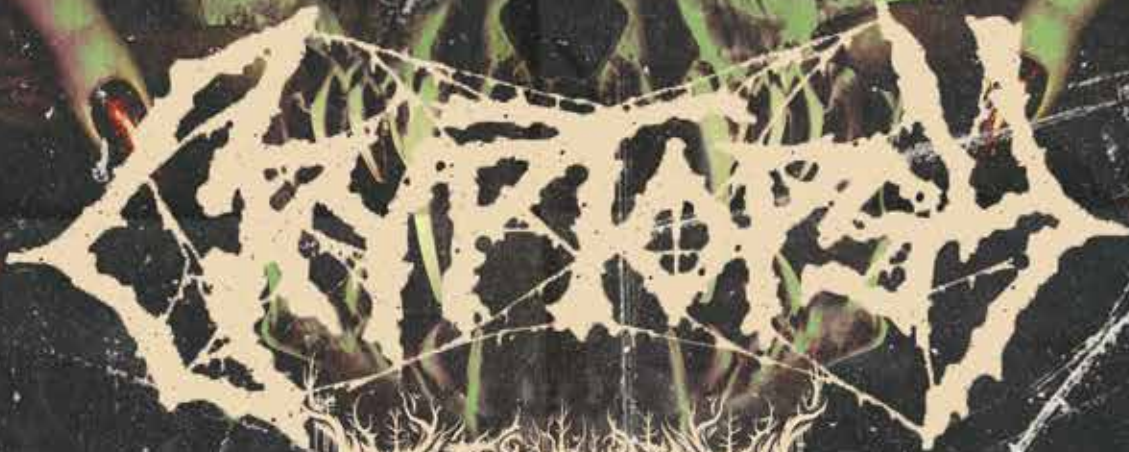
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Laura Delano

The Lizzies

Interview by Jay Maher

I am speaking with Laura Delano, who played one of the Lizzies in *The Warriors*.

Absolute Underground: *The Warriors* has grown into one of the biggest cult films of all time. What are your thoughts on that?

Laura Delano: I think it might have to do with the theme of the underdog and the wrongly accused Warriors rising to all the challenges that face them. The Warriors are different from all the other gangs; they are diverse and individual and yet seem like a family. Maybe they represent what we wish the world could be. The film is so timeless in its appeal, so classic, a journey back to home turf through a hostile landscape, facing many dangers. Plus, the fact that it was shot in New York City in 1978 when things were gritty.

AU: How did you get involved in acting?

LD: I started out as a dancer mostly in small modern dance companies here in NYC. I was cast as one of the dancers in the film *Slow Dancing in the Big City* which starred Paul Sorvino. The lead dancer got injured and they put us all on salary to

keep us committed because we were already established. It seemed like a lot of money at the time because modern dance companies hardly ever paid the dancers in those days, so you always had to do something else to pay the rent. So, I decided to join the Screen Actors Guild to be able to do background work to support my dance habit. Then I thought, "Well, maybe I should study acting too, just in case I get a role someday."

AU: How did you become join the Lizzies?

LD: Sylvia Fay, who was the main background actor casting person in those days, called me and asked me to go to an audition for the part of a Lizzie. It was really more a "look-see" as there was no script dialogue involved in the audition. I went into a

room where Walter Hill and Frank Marshall were sitting at a big table, they looked at me, smiled, said thank you and I left. Later, Sylvia Fay called me and said "My producer and director loved you. You are going to be one of the Lizzies."

AU: Do you remember why the original Bobbie Mannix Lizzies costumes were changed?

LD: I remember those shirts... tie-dyed see-through t-shirts. We wore them on set, but the decision was made (my guess is by the producers with maybe some pressure from the Lizzies), for us to wear something over the shirts so that the sale of the film to cable and television wouldn't be so tricky. You would have to check with the other Lizzies, but I have a vague memory that some scenes with the Lizzies might have been shot two ways, once with the revealing shirts and once with the cover-up shirts, but with the final edit, they went with the less revealing version.

AU: The Lizzies Clubhouse is thought to be located at what is now Patsy's Pizzeria on 1st Avenue in East Harlem. Does that sound right?

LD: I am quite sure that is correct, every once in a while, I go by there on my way somewhere and it always brings back the memories of the time I spent there during the filming. There were campers out on the street for make up/ hair/costumes, but our holding area was in the restaurant and bar areas of Patsy's. The scenes were shot in a back room of the restaurant where they created the Lizzies Clubhouse. The set design was well done, the place looked used and gritty with worn furniture, pinball machines, a pool table, old magazines, and grime all about on the walls, with nothing pristine or new looking.

AU: What do you remember about filming the iconic scene at the clubhouse?

LD: It was filled with the good kind of tension that one gets on the best of sets. I really got the sense that everyone was very invested in this project and having an exciting time filming it even with all the challenges. We shot the scenes in the clubhouse during the day, which was a big shift for the crew and actors because up until that point I believe they had been doing outdoor night shoots. The Lizzies were new to the crew, so I think that brought an infusion of energy in to help with that shift. There had not been too many women around up until that point and in those days, crews were mainly men and most of the gangs portrayed in the film were men. I also remember the dance scene really well. I am the brooding Lizzie watching from the comfy chair. Jordan Cae Harrell and Donna Ritchie did a great job with that. I remember Frank Marshall, the producer, and Walter joking that it was the first time some of the crew looked awake that day. As they were still suffering from the schedule change to day shoots. Somewhere on the cutting room

floor, is the extended version of the dance scene where I and a few of the other Lizzies join the dance. My featured scene was taking a big toke of marijuana, so even if you don't get to see me dance, you can see me getting high! The scene where all hell breaks loose was really dynamic and

it was thrilling to watch Walter do all the segments that became the flow of action where the Warriors struggle to escape. Of course, it was all broken down into segments and different angles so it took quite a while to complete.

AU: What was it like filming with Walter Hill?

LD: Walter was great to work with. I learned so much from the experience. He was very calm on set, always seemed to know what he wanted but also was open to ideas from others.

I also got the sense that everyone working with him really respected and liked him. It was a good atmosphere. The other person I really enjoyed spending time on set with was Frank Marshall, one of the producers. He was supportive of Walter and the whole team, finding solutions if there were any problems, and doing it all with a great attitude of "we can do this, we can find a way."

AU: Any projects you are currently working on?

LD: My producing partner, who is also my husband, and I have a short film that is making the rounds of the festival circuit right now. It's called *Because I Love You*. It is a thriller/romance/mystery; a sort of classic Shakespeare tale of jealousy with a Hitchcock twist. We have a couple of other films in the development stage as well as a feature script we are shopping around.

AU: Any parting words for Canadian fans?

LD: Thank you to all of you, I am thrilled that there is still so much enthusiasm for *The Warriors*.

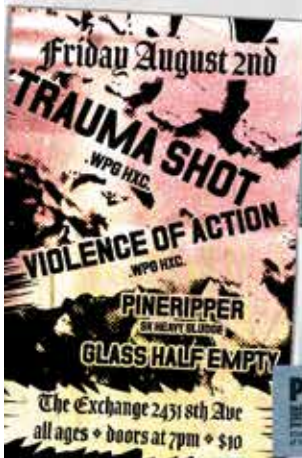
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Iris Alhanti Klein

The Lizzies

Interview by Jay Maher

I am speaking with Iris Alhanti Klein, who played one of the Lizzies in *The Warriors*.

Absolute Underground: The film has grown into one of the biggest cult films of all time. Any thoughts on why you think that is and why it's lasted this long?

Iris Alhanti: I just re-watched it after a long while and it's awesome. There are many elements that make this a classic. It reminds me of a Kurosawa film. It's certainly suspenseful and compelling storytelling with a rich exploration of human nature and the journey of getting home.

AU: 45 years ago, did you ever think this movie would become this big?

IA: I remember when the film was released, they were thinking of holding off on the release because there had been a wave of gang violence and it was feared that the movie would incite more violence and there were incidences. Joe Walsh's music helps to build on the energy of aggression, a living-on-the-edge lifestyle. I think the movie is timeless, so I'm not surprised it's lasted. I was told that Paramount made it as a tax write-off, but it was hugely successful and continues to be.

AU: How did you get involved in acting, and what lead you to *The Warriors*, as a member of the all-female gang the Lizzies?

IA: I got involved in acting very early on, as my mother was studying in acting in NY with Sanford

Meisner when I was a kid. It was what I wanted to do from a very young age. How I landed *The Warriors*, was I was living in NY and I was hired as an extra on a Friday and I came to work and we were shooting on the subway. I was young, cute, and solo on the subway train. While they were setting up the shot, James Remar and I were improvising on the train and the set photographer took a slew of pictures. When they were ready to shoot, the Warriors were in front of me and looking at me, so Walter asked me to move down so as not to be near them. Then he asked me to move down again and then again until he finally came up to me and said, "Do you want a part?" I said yes and he said, "Go home and come back on Monday, you're a Lizzie!"

AU: What do you remember about the Lizzies clubhouse scene shot with the Warriors?

IA: They had me rolling joints for the Lizzies. The dance was choreographed on the spot by the two actresses. Walter gave them the feel and the tone of it and they just danced. It was all worked out and very spontaneous and in the moment at the same time.

AU: Do you have a favourite Warrior?

IA: I think they were all terrific, but James Remar and I became friends and I think he is a terrific actor.

AU: Besides the Lizzies scene, is there another particular scene you love?

IA: I love the scenes with Mercy and Swan. There is something so touching about her; her vulnerability and her toughness are beautiful to watch.

AU: What was it like filming with Walter Hill?

IA: Walter is a wonderful person and a great director; he's a visionary.

AU: What other opportunities came your way after being in *The Warriors*?

IA: I moved to LA not long after *The Warriors* and worked with Walter Hill on *Crossroads* with Ralph Macchio and a film called *Partners* with Ryan O'Neal and John Hurt. I did a few roles in TV shows such as *MacGyver* and *Angel* and worked with John Cassavetes and Gena Rowlands in John's play, *A Woman of Mystery*. I just shot a role today for a film in which I play a much older woman. It's a comedy.

AU: I hear there's going to be a big Lizzies reunion happening at Chiller Fan Convention in October in Parsippany, NJ. Will you be attending?

IA: I am planning on attending; if it all works out, I would love to.

AU: Do you still keep in contact with any of the other Lizzies, if so when was the last time you saw any?

IA: I keep in touch with Doran Clark. We have remained friends.

AU: Any projects you are currently working on or anything you would like to promote?

IA: I teach acting and coach actors on lots of shows. I am working on creating a children's TV show.

AU: Any parting words for Canadian fans?

IA: Thank you for your love and support.

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Doran Clark

The Lizzies

Interview by Jay Maher

I am speaking with Doran Clark, who played one of The Lizzies in *The Warriors*.



Absolute Underground: We are celebrating the 45th anniversary of *The Warriors*, which has grown into one of the biggest cult films of all time. Any thoughts on why you think that is?

Doran Clark: First and foremost, happy anniversary to all involved in this film and to all those who still love it. Its staying power lies within the mythic quality of the journey. A clean, simple story told amidst the raw background of the streets and underbelly of New York, the underdog hero, and the strength of loyalty.

AU: Do you ever watch *The Warriors* yourself anymore to see your younger self?

DC: I watched it again recently and it was a blast, it brought me right back to 1978. Not many films were shot in New York at that time and this one had a lot of hype. My brother-in-law was the AD to Walter Hill and had a tremendous respect for Walter's vision, no sets, just NY in the deep night.

AU: How did you get involved in acting and what led you to a role in *The Warriors*, as a member of the Lizzies?

DC: I was fresh out of college, living in New York, having just gotten my SAG card with a TV movie. I went to the set in the first few days of filming to visit my brother-in-law

and I got to meet Walter Hill and Frank Marshall. I left that set with an audition for the next day.

AU: Do you remember why the original Bobbie Mannix costumes for the Lizzies were changed?

DC: Now we come to the costume, which, I believe, was the purpose of the audition. The audition was in a large cavernous room, with a conference table in the center and perhaps 15 seats filled by casting agents, producers, executive producers, and the director. We were asked to wear jeans and were given a very sheer, tie-dyed shirt to put on, without a bra. We were to walk around the conference table. If you were asked to walk twice (I was) you made it. We did shoot two versions of the Lizzies scenes. One without jackets and one with the leather. There was a valid concern re: ratings. That version may be hiding somewhere, but we did shoot it.

AU: What do you remember about the Lizzies clubhouse scene shot with the Warriors?

DC: I remember the shoot in the clubhouse as being a sea of calm compared to the challenges the crew and cast faced on the streets outside, both during filming and around all the honey wagons and equipment as the night got longer, darker, and more dangerous.

AU: Was the fight and shootout scene against the Warriors challenging to film?

DC: The entire movie was shot at night and the later it got, the more unstable the crowd became.

AU: What was it like filming with Director Walter Hill?

DC: I remember Walter as being calm, kind, encouraging, and incredibly precise with what he wanted. A treat for any actor, especially a new one.

AU: What other opportunities came your way after being in *The Warriors*?

DC: *The Warriors* and a TV movie gave me a great start; got me a great agent and I moved to LA. Here, I have made a wonderful life, a career that spanned decades, and two wonderful girls. The man that followed me to LA became a successful movie producer (*Point Break*, *Wedding Crashers*) and my husband.

AU: Do you still keep in contact with any of the other Lizzies?

DC: The gift of being a part of this iconic film keeps on giving in my long-lasting friendship with Iris Alhanti, who is a steady reminder of the movie and that time in my life.



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The Warriors 45th Anniversary
Interview with Bobbie Mannix
(Costume Designer)
Interview by Jay Maher

Absolute Underground : I'm speaking with Bobbie Mannix, the legendary Costume Designer on The Warriors. How are you?

Bobbie Mannix: I'm just great, thank you.

AU: This year we are celebrating The Warriors 45th Anniversary and very decade new fans keep on discovering this Film.

BM: I think it's a passed on generation to generation thing. It's also a situation where it's not an evil movie anymore. In it's day it was considered really bad and violent, but now it's kind of a good story. It's a fun picture, costume-wise especially. Let's face it, no Gangs really dressed like that, like Mimes or in fuchsia colored pants. I had 120 gangs and if everybody dressed like a real gang member, everybody would be in denim and black leather. I had to separate them somehow. So I did it by color, I was given the names of the gangs and from there I took off. It was 120 gangs with 9 or 10 members each. It was like 1200 people in talent, it was a lot and they had to be separated by color. That's how I did that.

AU: How did you get involved in Costume Designing, and what led to you becoming the Main Costume Designer on The Warriors?

BM: Not only did I do all the Costumes, I did all the Makeup too. My career started in commercials but one of my commercial producers went to do a feature film and they said "Hey, Mannix do you want to do a feature film?" I said "Sure, why not?" The movie starred Cybill Shepherd and Burt Reynolds. It was called At Long Last Love. It made the 50 worst movies ever made list, lol. One of my producers was an assistant producer to Walter Hill. So he said, "You come with us onto The Warriors." and I did, that was Frank Marshall. He's a big producer now, Frank was just a baby at the time. We went on to do The Long Riders together.

AU: So you just had a sheet from Walter with 120 Gangs and you basically had to come up with all the Designs and all the Logos ?

BM: That is correct, and in those days we didn't have a lot of money. It wasn't like a big wardrobe budget at all. So we shopped for most of the stuff. I think the Vests were the only things made.

AU: Why was the Vest changed from the way the original prototype looked?

BM: We didn't have any money, so we had to make them the best way we could.

AU: So it would've been too expensive to make them in that design that you originally had?

BM: It's the same design, it's just different fabric.

AU: How many Vests do you recall were made for each cast member ?

BM: I think about 6 Vests for each cast member, it was not a lot. It depended on the cast member.

AU: What was your inspiration for coming up with the Warriors famous Top Rocker and Warbird designs on the back of the Vest?

BM: I do believe that Walter gave me the Warriors logo and the Rocker was done by the art department. We found the bird wings and the skull in New York in a patch store, we just put it together and then ordered a bazillion of them.

AU: I'm guessing the East Gate Leather Vests, were something you just came across in NYC?

BM: Yes, and then we put the trim on them.

AU: So you put the piping on the Vest?

BM: Yeah, it came from the original prototype.

AU: You came up with all the different Gang Logos. Did that take quite some time ?

BM: It took about three months. I worked during the day and they shot all night. Every night for 4 months. I would be manufacturing the patches and stuff during the day. I had all the patches made and the embroidery was done by hand.

AU: What was your inspiration behind the Baseball Furies? Most fans seem to love them.

BM: For the Baseball Furies I used Yankees Uniforms and I don't know how to this day the Furies logo was changed? Because originally it was done in chenille and a different design.

AU: Right, from your original sketches, correct?

BM: Right, but it turned into a teardrop and was made out of I don't know what? A wardrobe members made that logo unbeknownst to me.

AU: Was the Furies makeup inspired by KISS

BM: No, I actually had no idea who KISS was. I just came up with Purple, Yellow, Green, whatever and Stars and half faces designs, stuff like that.

AU: So iconic. When I first saw the movie I was 13 and the Furies scared the hell out of me, lol.

BM: Everybody loves the Baseball Furies.

AU: Would you say that your favorite costume design from the movie would be the Furies ?

BM: No, The Warriors are definitely my favorite.

AU: Do you have a favorite Warrior ?

BM: Cochise, David Harris was my favorite one.

AU: What other films were you the main costume designer on?

BM: The Long Riders with Walter Hill. I did another film with Arnold Schwarzenegger called End of Days. I've done maybe 12 feature films.

AU: Walter Hill is maybe doing another film and you are going to work on that, correct?

BM: That is correct ! If we get another star that attaches themselves to it besides Pacino.

AU: Will this be Walter's final film?

BM: He says he has 1 or 2 pictures left in him. He writes the screenplays, so still a lot of fire left.

AU: Was it disappointing some of your designs changed on screen from the original concepts?

BM: No it wasn't. So little did change that it was fine. The one thing that was funny though, during the filming of the Conclave. I'd see some of the extras walking off with our wardrobe on their backs. They would wear just crap clothes to set, then they would change into their costumes and would just wear the stuff home. I would go nuts. It had to be close to 1200 extras and we had something like 40 costumers for 1200 people.

AU: When there was something changed from your original sketches, like the design of the Punks. Would Walter talk to you about it ?

BM: No, certain things just got cut out. The Punks were cut out so then they used that name on the next thing which was the Konrad Sheehan group of people with the overalls. Things got changed. I had little to no control over that. That's up to the producers and writers and Walter of course.

AU: What would you say is your proudest moment of your work on The Warriors?

BM: The conclave of course. You see everything and everybody, all the different gangs all at once, together. That was pretty impressive.

AU: I have always felt you don't get enough credit for your work on The Warriors. If you take away the costumes and all the designs...

BM: Then you've nothing, lol.

AU: Took the words right out of mouth. It would be a completely different movie. So from the bottom of my heart, thank you for everything that you created and brought to The Warriors.

BM: Awww, well thank you, I appreciate that.

AU: Do you still own anything besides the vest prototype? Do you own any original sketches?

BM: No, I sold all the original everything to a buyer in the UK. Because of my age, pass the torch. I don't need anything. I do still have a couple of patches that were used in the movie.

AU: Oh, wow. You still have a couple of those?

BM: Yeah, and I have all my original artwork photographed. So I can reproduce it.

AU: Was there some projects you were talking about doing with Dorsey?

BM: There are two projects happening with him. One is Warriors Then and Now. What have they done since the Warriors? What did they do? Where are they? Like Snowball, Snow. He was originally called Snowball. He went on to be a sheriff. Dorsey went on to do work for the NYTA (New York Transit Authority). Cowboy went on to do

photography. Vermin became a Newscaster. Thomas Waites is now becoming a Director. He was an actor and an asshole and he says that about himself. Now he says he's a good boy. Everybody went on to do something else.

AU: Except James Remar, Deborah Van Valkenburgh and David Patrick Kelly went on to quite a bit of TV and film.

BM: They stayed actors but some of them didn't stay actors. So we are thinking about doing this book because I have pictures of them and their original casting tapes and

all that. Dorsey and myself are thinking about reproducing a really good quality Vest too. We sent the prototypes out and are going to see what happens with that.

AU: I hope both come to fruition. I'd love to see a book with all your art designs and notes.

BM: That will be included in this book.

AU: Parting words Warriors Fans worldwide?

BM: Oh, Thank God we have those Fans. Because they keep us alive. The Warriors fans are the best!



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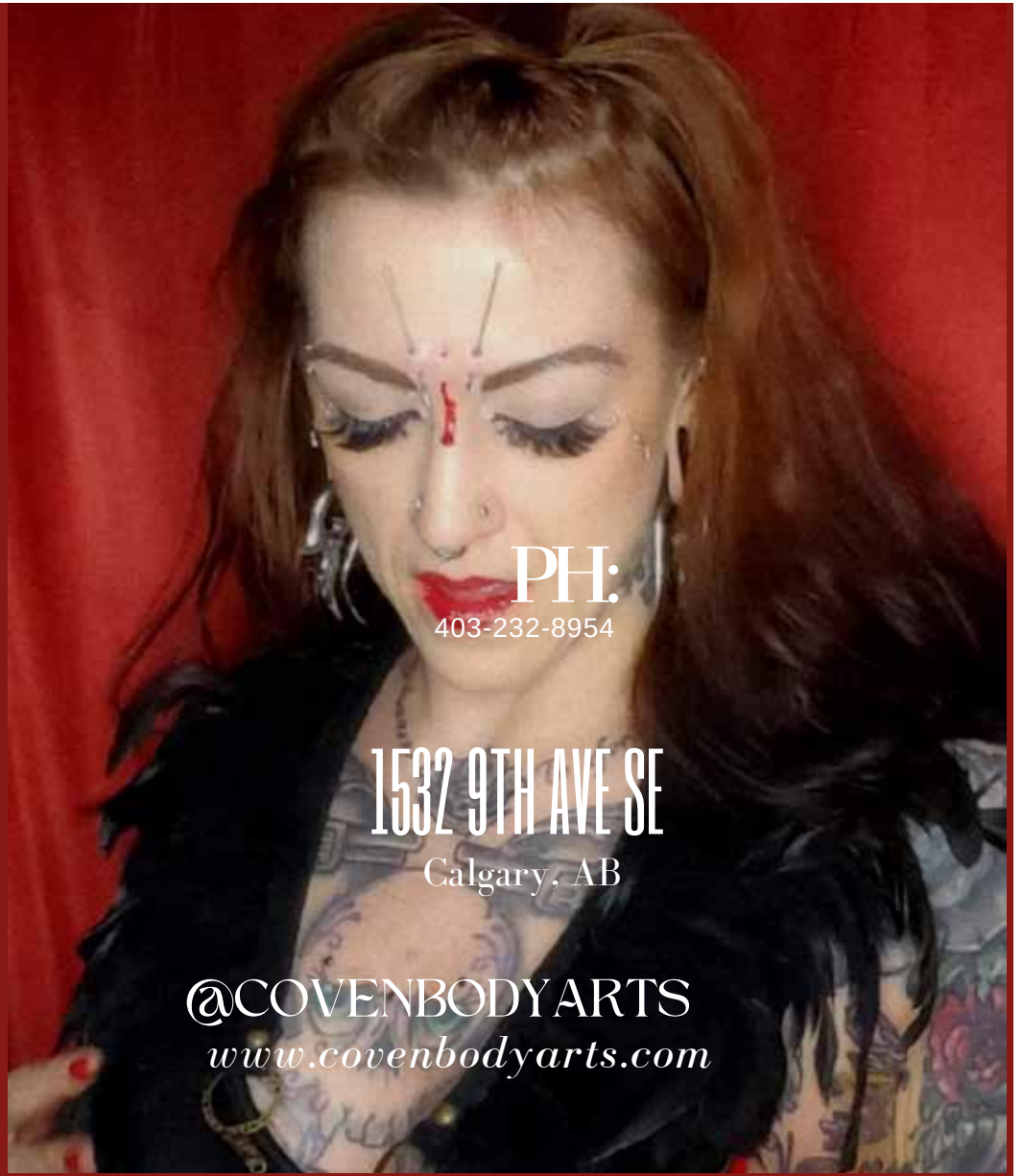
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The Warriors 1979 WPG

Interview with filmmaker Steve Roberts
by Ira "Tiger Gang" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?

Steve Roberts: Well, I am just a guy who likes Cosplay and loves The Warriors movie.

AU: What was your first introduction to the movie?

SR: Well it came out in 1979 and I think I saw it about 1984 making me 10 or so. At that time video rental stores were the place to go and that's how you could see so many old great movies, The Warriors being one of the best.

AU: Why do you think the film struck such a deep chord with yourself and the countless other fans across the world?

SR: It was the end of the 1970's in New York city and the film just captured that essence. Myself, I just love all the history and old buildings of New York. I think also the fact that most of the gangs in the movie looked quite different from one another, some very vibrant. It's almost like each gang was a different cartoon character, somewhat exaggerated, kind of bigger than life.

AU: Tell us about the recent 45th Anniversary of The Warriors - What convention did you attend and what did people miss who weren't there?

SR: It is called Chiller Theatre and happened this past April of 2024 in Parsippany, New Jersey. The Warriors cast members are often guests

there. This year we did video interviews with some of the cast members and that has translated to this Warriors 45th anniversary edition of Absolute Underground, a first of its kind ever in a magazine. The Warriors were meeting guests, you could pay for autographs of 8 x 10 photos they have available or even get your own item signed. They also

had professional photo ops available and for the first time ever they were doing some photos with the cast members in Warriors vests. I met them all back in 2019 at the 40th anniversary and I can honestly say they are all wonderful people and for the most part also fans of the movie as some of them will recite lines from the movie.



AU: If you could start your very own gang, what would you be named?

SR: A gang HaHa..... Maybe something like the River City Rats. I live in Winnipeg, Manitoba and we have two major rivers the Red River and the Assiniboine River that meet at a cool place called the Forks.

AU: What is the lasting legacy of The Warriors in your opinion?

SR: Well it's a timeless classic, the movie is now 45 years old and has fans of all ages. Some kids played the video game almost 20 years ago and it was a whole new audience that rediscovered the movie. Plus you have parent's who saw it young

and now show their kids. It really seems to get more and more popular year after year. In recent years you have had two companies Imprint and Arrow put out some great box set versions of the movie.

AU: Tell us more about The Warriors fan films you make.

SR: My fan films, well plain and simple, I am a huge fan of the movie and I'd like to think very knowledgeable of it and how it was made. I have about a dozen or so friends that work with me to make these films. We all like the movie, some more than others. What I am trying to do is emulate the original movie and make it seem like it is still 1979 or close to. I write and direct the films with some input from my fellow actors. We generally don't get much or any practice time at all. It is hard enough to get everyone together as is. Those that have speaking roles are given a

script about a week before. I tell people if there is anything you want to say or do differently please let me know beforehand and generally we make that work. At the end of the day, it's about having fun and paying homage to this timeless cult classic movie. I actually host a screening of the movie each year at the Park Theatre in Winnipeg and we play one of my films

as well if we have something new that year.

AU: What's the ultimate goal with your Warriors fan films?

SR: I would not say there is a goal I am trying to reach, although an investor would really help. That would give us many more opportunities to make them bigger and better. Really I just want people, including the cast members, to enjoy them.

AU: Where can people watch your movies online?

SR: You can view my films, "Supply run" Episode 1, "Brawlin' in the streets" Ep 2, and "Running for their lives" Ep 3 along with some shorts and the



interviews we did at the 45th anniversary on the YouTube channel The Warriors 1979 WPG. We also have a Facebook page under the same name. Please like and subscribe to both. The FB page has a few more posts that are not videos. There will be some info there by the end of October on a collectible cosplay Warriors card set we will be putting out for sale. There will be lots of different gangs in it. The one I look most forward to are the Baseball Furies cards. So keep an eye out for that.



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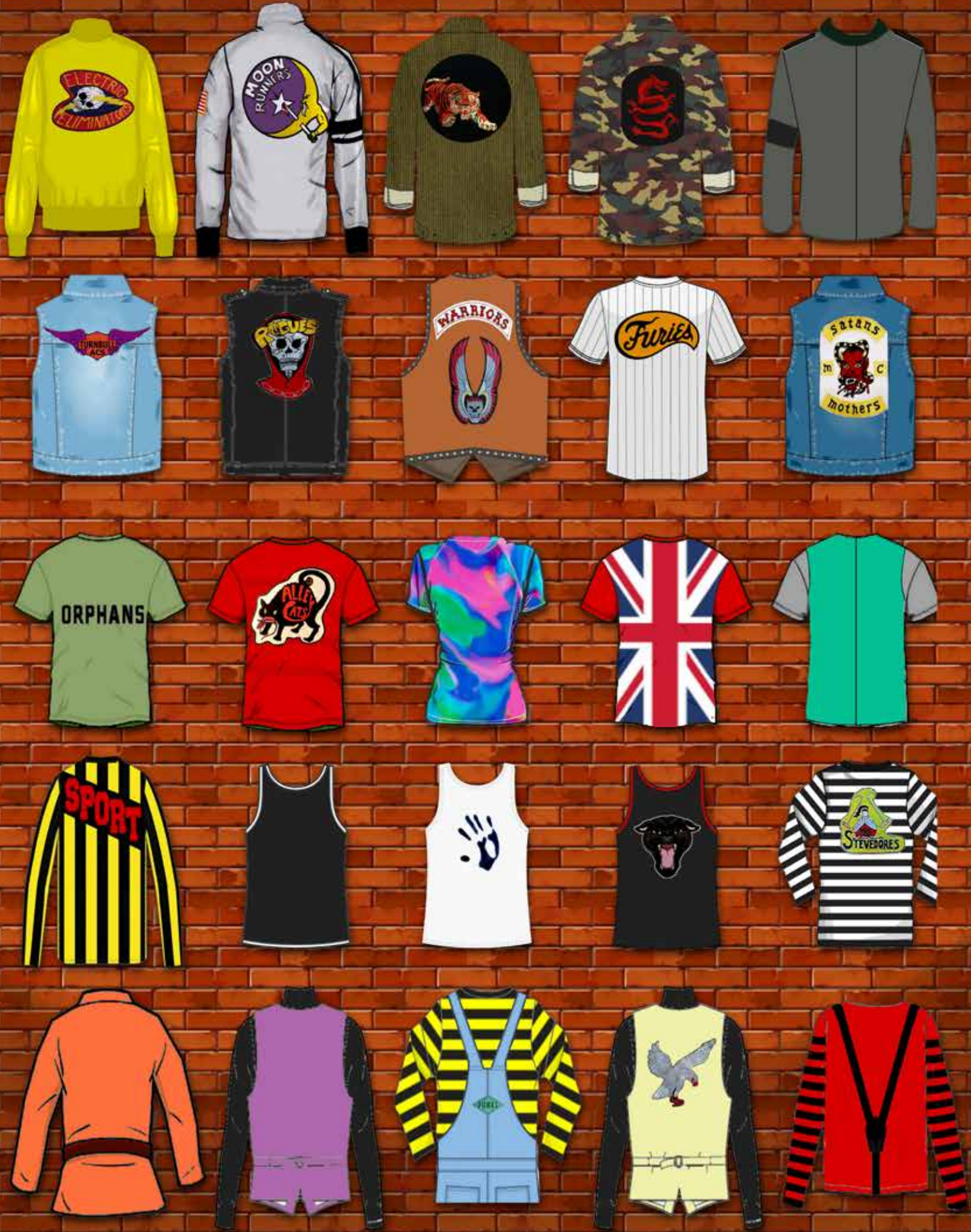
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COVER ARTIST PROFILE

Sam Gilbey

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

Sam Gilbey: My name is Sam Gilbey and frankly, my only real skill is illustration so it better keep paying the bills!

AU: How long have you been an artist for? What drew you in to begin with?

SG: I've been a professional artist for 20 years now. Initially alongside being a freelance graphic/web designer, but full time for the last eight years.

AU: How would you describe your style? Who or what inspires you most?

SG: I suppose my style is painterly and observational with a penchant for detail and realism (albeit not photorealism as such because I want that sense of it being painted by hand), and I've always just loved celebrating pop culture and channeling that inspiration I get from watching my favorite movies and TV shows, and/or playing my favourite video games into my work. Growing up, I was first obsessed with the *Spider-Man* comics drawn by John Romita Sr., then the video game box art by the likes of Bob Wakelin, followed by the iconic movie posters of Drew Struzan, and later when studying Fine Art, David Hockney's portraits and scenes from the 1960s and 1970s, that's where my love for pop culture and fine art— or low art and high art, to look at it another way— all came together.

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

SG: Since I was a kid, I've just drawn the things I'm into, such as *Star Wars*, *Spider-Man*, and *Transformers*, and I just never stopped really!

AU: What medium do you work in? Is there something new you've always wanted to try?

SG: My primary medium these days is painting digitally, but my background is in fine art, working

in oils, acrylics etc, so my painterly style probably stems from that. I work in traditional media from time to time, but can't deny that I like the advantages of working digitally, whether that's keeping objects on separate layers or being totally honest, to be able to undo mistakes!

AU: How did you get your first break? What was the first professional job you worked on?

SG: My bridge between graphic design and illustration probably first began when an opportunity arose via an online zine

SG: I've certainly been very fortunate that my hard work over the years has brought some amazing opportunities my way. Any time where I've had the chance to make official artwork for something I loved as a kid, such as the aforementioned *Spider-Man*, *Star Wars*, and *Transformers*, those always feel like the sweet(est) spot. But honestly, I love making artwork for anything else that's inspired me since then, across all sorts of pop culture genres and eras, whether it's for sci-fi and

BBC 6 Music which is an awesome station in the UK, and then later on it could be 90s hip-hop, rock, singer-songwriters or anything else, really. If I really need to get into the flow, then I do find that a hit of 'future nostalgia' from synth-wave does the trick. And lately I've been listening to a lot of Kiasmos, George Fitzgerald and Bonobo, because they're awesome, but also help you descend into that flow state. I always feel like,



(Pixel Surgeon) that I was writing and designing for, and I ended up writing lots of software tutorial for lots of different creative magazines (such as Computer Arts) after being recommended.

AU: You've done some massive projects for all sorts of international companies and Hollywood movies. What are some of your favourites you've been involved with?

fantasy or horror, or anything else. As a teenager, I became obsessed with Hong Kong action movies, so being able to make some Blu-ray covers for films I owned on video and DVD, including some starring the likes of Jackie Chan, Sammo Hung, and Yuen Biao (the 'Three Dragons') really means a lot. That and getting commissioned to illustrate three UK billboards for the BBC coverage of Glastonbury last year, featuring Arctic Monkeys, Elton John, and Guns N' Roses— I'm very grateful for all the amazing jobs that have come my way.

AU: You did the 40th anniversary cover for The Warriors, how did you come up with the composition? Where did you get your inspiration?

SG: This was a licensed print I worked on with Fanattik, a great UK company specializing in licensed pop culture gifts who I've been able to work with on a number of occasions. Sometimes when working on licensed prints, depending on the license, it's not always possible to paint the character's portraits, but in the case of *The Warriors*, this was on the table so I jumped at the chance. As a big fan of the classic movie, I wanted to make a strong character piece and include portraits of the whole gang, along with the wings from their gang logo. This is where the symmetry comes from, and then having the whole gang arranged in a strong triangle, which is complemented by the arms of Ajax and Vermin at the edges, and also with a smaller triangle from Cleon's headwear in the centre. I guess it's a pyramid scheme, haha. Then for other details, including their journey on the subway indented in the wings, and keeping that center alignment with the vanishing point established by the chase scene at the base of the artwork just ties it all together, along with the glows from the headlights and on the edges of the characters running and in the main layout up top.

AU: What would your gang be called?

SG: Seems very unlikely, but probably The Nerds. We'd have never made it past the title sequence!

AU: Any other hidden talents?

SG: If I had to give it all up, or somehow ended up with more spare time for other things, then I also enjoy writing, and in my youth I wrote a lot of songs. Mostly terrible, but maybe there's a good one in there somewhere! Or I might give some instrumental electronic music a try. I can't sing, so that's probably a better idea!

AU: What do you listen to while you work?

SG: I start the day listening to Lauren Laverne on

once you know what you're painting, being an illustration is basically meditation, because you get totally lost in it.

AU: What else have you been working on?

SG: I've started working on a few licensed football-related projects with a company called Historiart. It's another aspect of popular culture that I enjoy, and the 'movie poster collage' approach seems to translate well to that world. That and various licensed prints, t-shirts, pin badges, Blu-ray, and soundtrack covers for various classic movies and television shows, which all take a while, but hopefully will see the light of day before the year is out.

AU: Ever seen your art tattooed on people?

SG: Yes— a married couple have had my portraits of Clarence and Alabama from the *True Romance* steelbook translated into tattoos, which blows my mind. I can't imagine ever having a tattoo because the moment I've finished a piece of artwork, the new thing I'm doing is my absolute favourite.

AU: Dream project you're dying to do?

SG: I suppose it would be getting to do the key art for a new big studio movie and seeing it used worldwide. That's the stuff that my dreams are made of.

AU: Any words of wisdom for aspiring artists?

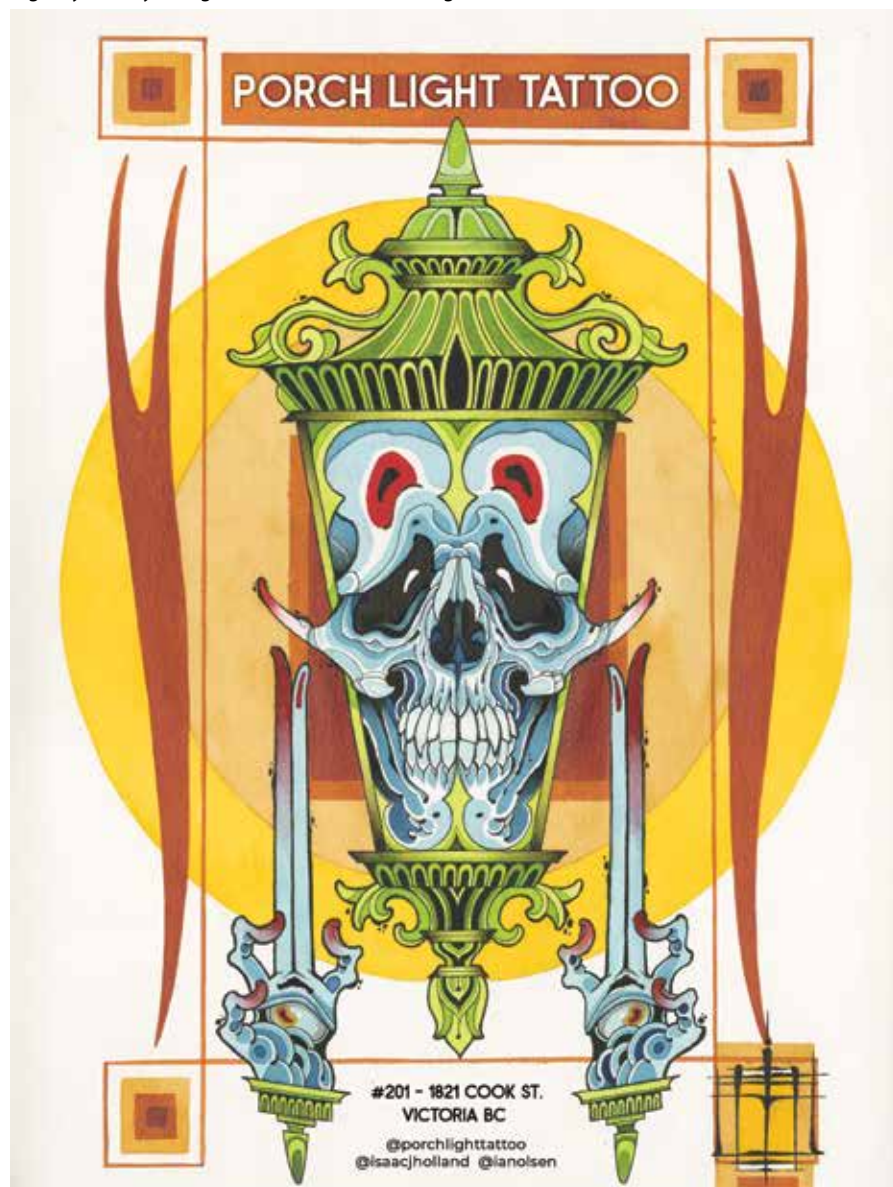
SG: Being an artist is tough, but I think if you can be consistent, and keep showing up, and keep making things, then it can also be incredibly rewarding. If you're not getting commissioned to make the things you know you could do, but don't have examples of those kinds of things, then make them as personal work. Generally you'll find that most clients (although not all) feel safer commissioning you to effectively remake/remix something you've already done. So fill your portfolio with examples of things you'd love to make 'again'.

AU: Anything else to promote?

SG: The lead times on licensed prints can be long, so there's not too much I can say at the moment, other than, lots (and lots) of new art is on the way. Following me on social media (Instagram in particular) is the best way to stay up to date. I'm also hoping to dip my toe back into the group art show scene. Between 2013 and 2018 I contributed to around 60 shows for the likes of Gallery1988 and Spoke Art. That was always a lot of fun and I'm in talks to come out of 'retirement'!

samgilbeyillustrates.com

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SAM GILBEY

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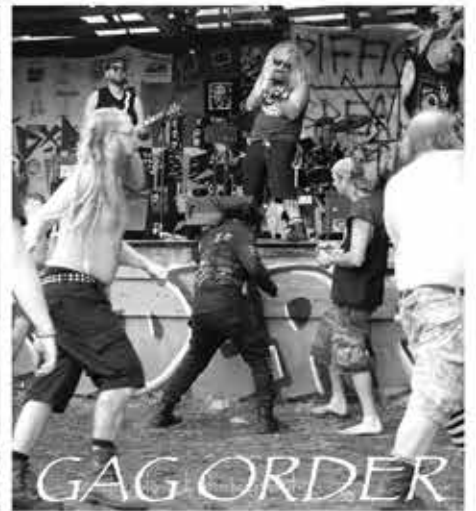
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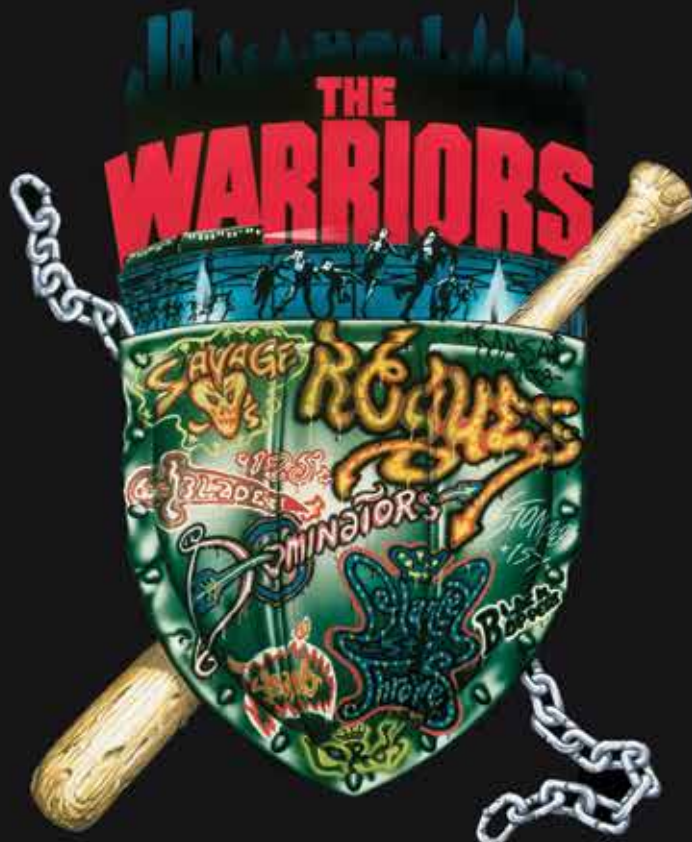
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Anarchy in the OK

First Annual Okanagan Punk Fest

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

Anarchy in the OK: Sarah Dudley and my business partner Carina Stokes! We own and operate the Small Axe Roadhouse in wee ole Enderby, BC in the beautiful North Okanagan. Small Axe is a restaurant with rad food, beers and cocktails. We also converted the upstairs living space of our restaurant into a small venue where we book live music acts, drag shows and stand-up comedy. There wasn't much happening in Enderby for the kind of events we enjoy, so we decided to create a space for the things that make us happy.

AU: Where and when did you first come up with the idea of Anarchy in the OK?

AOK: When I moved to Enderby five years ago from Vancouver, I was stoked to see the success of Armstrong Metal Fest in another small town. I thought it was incredible what they had started and created; I realized I'd really like to organize something amazing like that, but for punk music. We wanted to create something fun for the community and ourselves to look forward to every year and expand on over time.

AU: What made this the year to start it?

AOK: One year ago we moved our restaurant from a little hole in the wall dive bar to a larger location, which allowed us to hire more staff. So, we've been able to step outta the kitchen and out from behind the bar more often. We figured this was the year we start working on finally getting our own lives outside the Small Axe and stop putting off our own passion projects. You never know, we could get hit by a bus tomorrow— gotta do the things you want before you're gone!

AU: What can people expect from the festival?

AOK: A great mix of bands spanning from the '90s to today and a great time! We only had a few months to plan this and I think we did a pretty good job of booking some incredible folks. We're so happy with the line up. We also have sword swallower and danger thrill man, Neil E Dee, which if you haven't seen yet, you have GOT to check out. That guy is crazy! I once stapled a \$50 bill to an unmentionable place on his body (during his show, don't worry). We'll also have wood-fired pizza on site and everyone's favourite food: hotdogs! Regular and vegan, of course.

AU: Will there be camping this year?

AOK: No camping, but we hope next year will be the year.

AU: Tell us about Forever Home Sanctuary. What made you decide to donate a portion of the proceeds to their cause?

AOK: We love animals. A lot. Probably more than people if we're being honest... Plus, goats are punk AF. There are currently 43 furry and feathered rescued residents living their best life at the farm, but they need a helping hand to keep living this life. Forever Home's goal is to establish a safe sanctuary for abandoned, abused, neglected, senior, injured and unwanted farm animals. They do this through programs like Feed Me Friday, community support, and, now, of course... punk festivals (or at least this one)! We'll be selling stickers on site, filled with cute photos of some of the current residents of the farm! All proceeds from stickers will also go to the sanctuary.

AU: What goes into putting on a music festival?

AOK: For us as newbies... a lot of learning. We lost our first booked venue after a month of it being locked in when they learned it was for a punk fest. As the ball was fully rolling and some bands already booked, we had to scramble and recover. Plus, we didn't want to give up on this dream yet. Originally, we were planning just a small fest, 200 people at a local location with 5-6 bands. With the loss of original venue and everyone else in Enderby saying no to us for a place to rent out we decided to say fuck it and



rent the Creekside conference center in Vernon. They were more than happy to host us and have been incredible! Our little fest went from 200 to 700 capacity real quick. So, we thought, what the heck, let's book more bands and dive into our savings to make it a bigger, better time. Can't take it with ya.

We've asked some incredible bands we've hosted at the Small Axe Roadhouse over the years to play the fest and also reached out to some headliners we definitely thought would say no. To our surprise, they said yes! My mind is still blown, to be honest. We hit up Long & McQuade and they sponsored us for back line, and our great friend Kris Fuller, who has extensive experience organizing events in Vernon, offered her help when she saw how fast this beast was growing. We couldn't have done it without her. She knows all the right people in the right places.

We knew with a bigger show we really needed to focus on quality production for the fest, so the amazing folks at Local Losers Underground offered to step in and take the reigns on that one. Local Losers were originally an artist collective, grew into a community art studio, and quickly became one of the most feverishly exciting underground venues in the interior. In 2023, they decided to close our community space and focus entirely on supporting the local music scene by being a music company first. They now host some of the Okanagan's most exciting events and assists in producing the Sundog Festival, the Silver Star Summer Music Series, Lillyfest, and now Anarchy in the OK. So, basically, we got by with a lot of help from our friends.

AU: What's your long-term vision for the fest?

AOK: We want to morph into a multi-day fest with, of course, more bands. We also want to add some stand-up comedy acts to the mix, wrestling, more food trucks, and also set up stations for local artists and artisans to showcase and sell their stuff!

AU: Final words of wisdom for the readers?

AOK: YES. If you wanna plan a punk fest, don't try and do it in four months! Everyone will think you're crazy and you'll rely heavily on alcohol to get you through.

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Seized Up

Interview with Bassist Chuck Platt

By Chuck Andrews and Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: You have a new album out on Pirates Press Records called *Modify the Sacred*. Are there any different influences on this one versus the first album?

Seized Up: There's not many influence changes. I feel like we nailed down our sound a little more. We're still aiming for a "post-punk, sometimes gangly/sometimes not" sound.

AU: What comes first in the writing process—lyrics or music?

SU: Sometimes we will have a vocal pattern in our minds and then a riff that comes together. Also, [guitarist] Danny B, [Danny's dog] Rooster, and I get together and write; the band starts the song and then everyone contributes.

AU: How does the rest of the band contribute to writing songs?

SU: Everyone has past experience from their other bands, and I think we bring ideas from all of those into this one.

AU: Where have you guys toured since your debut album *Brace Yourself* came out four years ago? Who with?

SU: *Brace Yourself* came out right before the pandemic and we got screwed a little on touring for that album. We have played a lot of rad shows in California with Propagandhi, Quicksand, RKL, and Fear, to name a few.

AU: Where are you planning on touring for the new

record?

SU: Right now we have a tour set up in Europe for the first two weeks in August, and also a record release show in Santa Cruz. Hopefully everything will fall in place.

AU: Has touring gotten a lot harder since 2020?

SU: Seized Up haven't really done extensive tours yet, but yeah... touring has definitely gotten harder since 2020.

AU: Has Seized Up ever played in Canada? Do you plan on coming here any time soon?

SU: Seized Up have not played Canada, but we're sure hoping to in 2025. Next year! Fingers crossed.

AU: What is the

oddest thing that has ever happened at a show you played?

SU: Well... Once I had a tooth bridge fly out of a mouth towards me. It was pretty damn funny at the moment.

AU: Who are your favourite punk bands from the '80s, and why?

SU: The list would be massive, but...

Discharge, Subhumans, Rudimentary Peni... the music is brutal and the lyrics are spot on in many different ways.

AU: Any thoughts on the classic movie *The Warriors*? If you had a street gang, what would it be called?

SU: "Warriors... Come out to playyyyyyyyyyyyyyy!" Uh, how about no gang. I'm too soft for that shits. I'd rather have a dance-off like the Michael Jackson videos.

Ok, gang name: The Chucksons. A bald dance group that dances so fucking hard you just leave the situation, if there is one. Bam!

AU: Anything else you'd like to add or

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promote?

SU: I love playing in a band with these guys and getting the chance to blend all of our influences. If you see us coming out to your town, don't miss the show! Thanks!

AU: Famous last words?

SU: Yeah: Fuck Trump!
You can find *Seized Up* streaming on Spotify, Apple Music... all the normal places.

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Photo by Keith Meek

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ROBSE

The Beast from the East

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Robert-Martin Dahn, longtime frontman of Equilibrium, is back with his new band ROBSE and a truly massive firework of energy. The debut album *Harlekin & Krieger* will be released on August 16th.

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

Robse: Hello Canada. I'm Robse, known as the former singer of Equilibrium, and now the singer of my new band ROBSE, which spontaneously got its name from my nickname.

AU: How did ROBSE come to fruition?

Robse: It's been exactly two years since Equilibrium decided to continue their musical journey without me. There was neither conflict nor harsh words, but sometimes one side wants to evolve while the other prefers to stay old school and avoid the mainstream. So, I remain old school, haha. The formation of this band took less than two weeks. Drummer Marius and guitarist Dennis

have been good friends for many years, and we played together in the black metal band Malleus Maleficarvm. When it became clear that my time with Equilibrium would end after the festival season in 2022, I didn't hesitate for a second and contacted the two guys. Quitting was never an option, and I felt I owed it to the thousands of fans around the world. Dennis knew our second guitarist Ölle, who knew bassist Marco, who then brought along his wife Alina. We had a band

photoshoot, drank beer and whiskey, loved the idea of the band, and from that moment on, we became a solid unit.

What's great about the musicians in ROBSE is that each of us six contributes to the music, everyone writes songs, and this makes the band absolutely unique. The black metal influences from the drummer and Ölle's love for In Flames are wonderfully audible in *Harlekin & Krieger*

creating our typical sound. There's no boss in ROBSE, and everyone is free to do what they want. It's a great way to work.

AU: How do you approach writing music?

Robse: There's no real plan when it comes to composing. When you have incredibly talented musicians within the band who don't have to adhere to any rules and can just enjoy the fun of composing, ideas flow out of us. That's why our debut album was composed in just four months. We even wrote five extra songs that will go straight to album number two. Once the songs are finished, I calmly write my lyrics, and the metal fireworks are ready.

AU: Your single "Harlekin & Krieger" has themes of dispelling hatred and living a life full of meaning. What was your inspiration for this song?

Robse: Life presents us with huge challenges every day, and we constantly have to face negative things. That's where the warrior in us comes out, and we face the battles of this world. However, we must never forget our inner child, the fun in life, and never lose our laughter. This is where the harlequin comes in, reminding us of

the great things and that there's more to life than hatred, suffering, and misery. I find this message incredibly important.

AU: Any plans to come to Canada?

Robse: It is certainly every musician's dream to come to Canada. If you want us, we'll pack our bags and celebrate and drink with you until the doctor comes. We're ready.

AU: Anything else you'd like to add?

Robse: I definitely speak for the whole band when I say that we are incredibly grateful for all the positive feedback on our music and the trust from fans and organizers. We don't even have a CD out yet, and the whole world is booking us. That's really awesome and makes us happy.

AU: Do you have any advice for young musicians?

Robse: To all the

musicians out there: music is a great hobby, and drinking beer in the rehearsal room lets us escape from everyday life (or from our partner, haha). Keep at it and attack your instruments until your fingers bleed. But first, learn a decent job, and then you can become rock stars. Music should primarily be fun and not about filling your pockets with money. Don't sell your soul and stay true to yourself.

AU: Famous last words?

Robse: Warm beer is still colder than no beer at all.

robse-band.de

Photo by Anni Funk



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You Big Idiot

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

You Big Idiot: We are You Big Idiot and we are mostly known for our live performances. Our live shows combine melodic punk rock with ridiculous theatrics to create a unique and horrifying musical experience. Each YBI show comes complete with costumes, theme music, and comedic idiocy.

AU: Tell us about You Big Idiot— who are you and what are you all about?

YBI: YBI is a five-piece skate punk band from Vancouver, BC consisting of members Shafer Carson, Colin Pearson, Chris "Hogo" Hogan, Steve Pearson and the recent addition of Cyrus Lord. (Shout out to former guitarists Steve Duke, Kurt Anderson, and Andrew Pederson!) If the previous answer didn't make it clear, we are all about having fun and providing entertainment.

**YOU
BIG
IDIOT**

AU: Who or what inspires your music most?

YBI: Primarily our songs are pretty light-hearted and designed to make you laugh or smile. We reference some of our favourite movies from the '90s, events in television, local eateries, and characters within our local punk scene. On occasion you may find a song on the more serious

side with a track like "Green City". We've also been known to throw a cover song or two into the mix as well.

AU: How do you approach writing music? Lyrics or instrumentals first?

YBI: In the past, Colin or Shafer would bring a new song they're working on into the jam space and we would build around it as a band, but now with new technology available, that has changed quite a bit. Now we're building demos from home, and by the time we are back at the jam space, we have the majority of a song already put together. It's a huge advantage having a recording engineer in the band. Shafer has produced all of our albums and is the creator of our label, Kinda Cool Records.

AU: Who's the best skateboarder in the band?

YBI: That's an easy question because Cyrus is the only member of the band who still owns a skateboard. I'm not sure if he can do any sweet tricks, but I know he's taken some pretty gnarly

downhill spills— most recently while shooting some footage for his other band, Die Job. Kinda fitting?

AU: Your latest album *East Vanity* was released last August. Does it explore any particular themes or topics?

YBI: *East Vanity* is a collection of songs paying homage to East Vancouver. The major theme of it is focused around local venues, bands and friends within our scene. The album starts out with a self-deprecating song called "As Good As Rush" which is about how we will never be as good as the Canadian rock band, Rush. We've included a track about how terrifying and unsafe "The Wild Mouse" rollercoaster was, and songs that react to the local traffic and the negative changes we are seeing in the city. Even if you're not familiar with East Van, listeners can still connect with the songs as a whole. It's fast, it's fun, and it's dumb.

AU: Do you have any upcoming shows?

YBI: Our next show will be at Outhouse Fest IV. It's a two-day folk and punk music festival taking place September 6-7 on Pender Island, BC. Some of the band went for their first time last year and it was such an exhilarating weekend. We're really looking forward to performing and discovering some new bands!

AU: Anything else you'd like to add?

YBI: We'd like to encourage anyone reading this to stream *East Vanity*... (like right now!) and to watch our music videos on YouTube. We've got vinyl available through Kinda Cool Records, so we urge you to check 'em out and the rest of the sweet bands on the label.

KINDA COOL RECORDS



AU: Any final words?

YBI: The Vancouver punk scene is alive and vibrant. If you haven't been out to a show recently, get back out there and have yourself a time. It's full of so many amazing people. Unfortunately, we can't write a song about each and everyone of them, but maybe we could try?

You Big Idiot can be found on all major streaming platforms, and at youbigidiot.com

FB/IG: @youbigidiot
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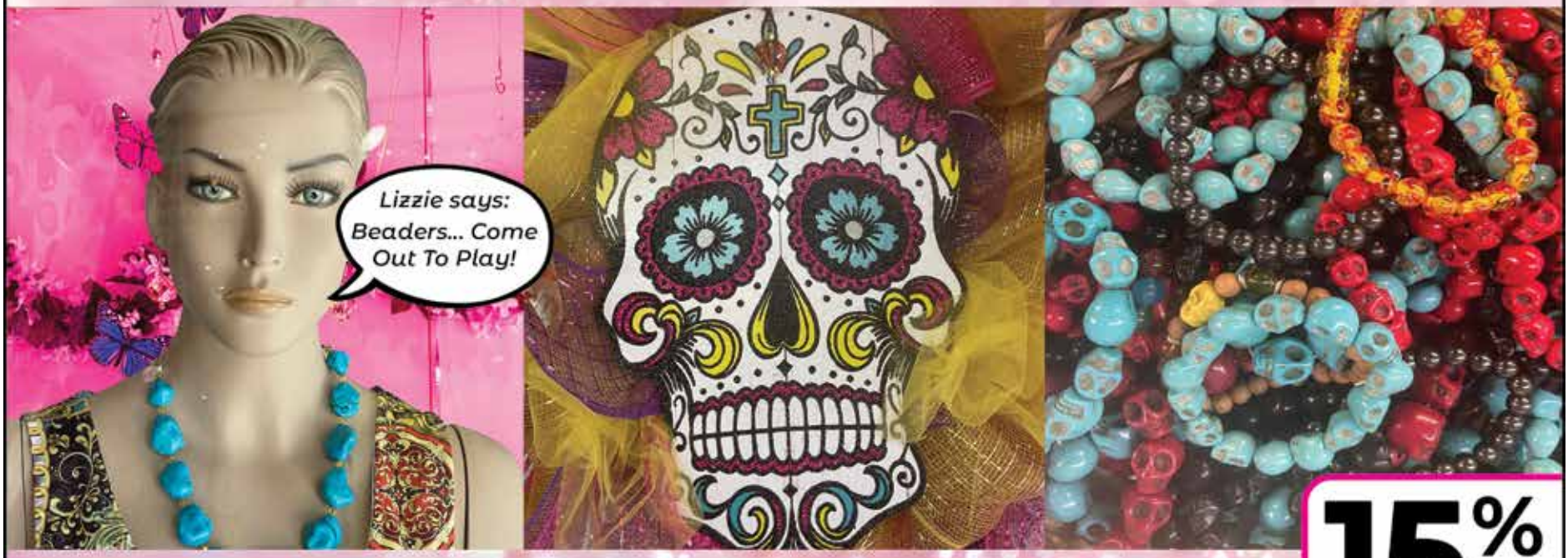
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TURNBUCKLE SANDWICH



Tara Zep

By Mike "Ring the Fucking Bell!" Croy

Welcome to another light tube smashing, thumbtack filled, barbed wire edition of Turnbuckle Sandwich. I recently had the distinct pleasure of sitting down and chatting with, as well as watching my first ever wrestling death match, featuring one of the fastest rising stars on the independent wrestling circuit. She is known as the anti-diva, the reigning princess of death matches, who is also a full time tattoo artist and a Juggalo. The one, the only "The Vile Villain" Tara Zep out of Vancouver, BC. What follows is our hardcore violence-infused, blood-soaked discussion.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Tara Zep: Tara Zep, but you already knew that.

AU: How did you get into wrestling?

TZ: I watched it with my parents as a little kid in the '90s, many moons ago.

AU: Who trained you to wrestle?

TZ: I train out of a facility in Vancouver called Lions Gate Dojo. My main trainer has been Nicole Matthews, I also train under Artemis Spencer and Tony Baroni. I've visited and trained at other schools in the US and Mexico, but Vancouver has been my flagship school.

AU: How long have you been wrestling?

TZ: About a year and four months.

AU: What companies have you wrestled for?

TZ: I've wrestled for 26 companies as of right now. By the time you're reading this, probably 28-30.

AU: What's your favourite weapon to use in matches?



TZ: Light tubes, gusset plates, and skewers.

AU: What skills outside of wrestling do you possess to pay the bills?

TZ: I've been a full time tattoo artist for 15+ years.

AU: Who inspires you the most?

TZ: This changes a lot, but always and forever Nick Gage. Right now I'm looking a lot to Jon Moxley's work as well as Tony Storm, John Wayne Murdoch, Masha Slamovich.



AU: If you could invite anyone for dinner, who would you invite and why?

TZ: Tony Khan, so we can talk about my hiring to AEW or ROH and process my visa.

AU: What do you enjoy about being the Vile Villain?

TZ: The fact I can finally be as unhinged as I want to be in a public setting, flip birds, say and do what ever the hell I want and get praised for it... that rules!

AU: Coolest venue you've performed in?

TZ: Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver has a pretty cool layout and vibe. It was cool to wrestle at the Showboat in Atlantic City as well. The Edmonton Rogers center was the largest venue I've performed in and it felt surreal.

AU: Who's your favorite wrestler?

TZ: I have like 15 favourites that circulate depending on what I'm into at the moment. Today, probably Will Osprey, Bryan Danielson, Jon Moxley. Of all time, maybe Cactus Jack, Hayabusa, and Terry Funk.

AU: Any big matches or shows coming up our readers should be on the look out for?

TZ: August 10 CWF is a huge one for me coming up. You also may be able to catch me at The Gathering of the Juggalos August 16-17.

AU: When you're not wrestling or tattooing, what do you like to do?

TZ: Gym ridding, beach chilling, drawing, or working on some sort of art project; anything with my Dog, Jun.

AU: What's the craziest match you've



had?

TZ: Maybe my ICW death match with JWM, simply because Mick Foley did a run in and its crazy I got to experience that.

AU: What's the funniest thing you've seen happen at a live show?

TZ: Maybe the time Matt Cardona won over Nick Gage a couple years back at a GCW death match tournament and the crowd lost their minds; they threw bottles and cans at Cardona and proceeded to chase him out of the building.

AU: Who is on your Mount Rushmore of death match wrestlers?

TZ: Nick Gage, Cactus Jack, Jun Kasai, Megumi Kudo.

AU: Who is your dream opponent?

TZ: Nick Gage!

AU: As we wrap things up here Tara, is there anything you'd like our readers

to know?

TZ: Life is hard, the world is absolutely fucked, trust no one, work hard, and do all the things that matter to you in your soul or slowly die with regret. Namaste!

IG/X: @villaintarazep

Photos by Darren Ho Media, Rob MacLeod, and Earl Gardner

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CYBORG OCTOPUS
New Album out September 27th, 2024
Experimental Genre-Blending Death Metal group to release 3rd studio album "Bottom Feeder"



Cyborg Octopus is establishing musical dominance in their recently announced 3rd studio album "Bottom Feeder". Since April, California's Cyborg Octopus have been releasing new songs consistently in preparation of their new release. "Dreamkiller", "Midas", and "Defective Immediately" are 3 of the new singles showing off the band's ability to blend genres and break conventions about what a metal band is capable of. With a dedicated member performing on Saxophone, Keytar, and additional Vocals - Cyborg Octopus is

able to expand their sound into wild directions. The band, while rooted in Death Metal and Metalcore, constantly blends and is influenced by countless other genres from Latin Dance and Electronic to Funk, Blues, or Jazz.

Accompanying each single have been standout music videos showing the band's sense of humor. Plots about the dangers of "Sax Addiction" or a Black Metal KvlT music video on a basketball court highlight the odd combinations of ideas that create Cyborg Octopus music.

A quote from the band - "We pick up ideas and run with them - what starts as a funny "what if" slowly becomes a fully fleshed out beast that we play together, and then to other people."

Cyborg is known for their high energy performances and is planned to be on the East Coast to tour on the release of their new album "Bottom Feeder" September 27th to October 12th.

@[cyborgoctopusband](https://www.instagram.com/cyborgoctopusband)
cyborgoctopusband.com
Band Photo Credit: Watkins Media

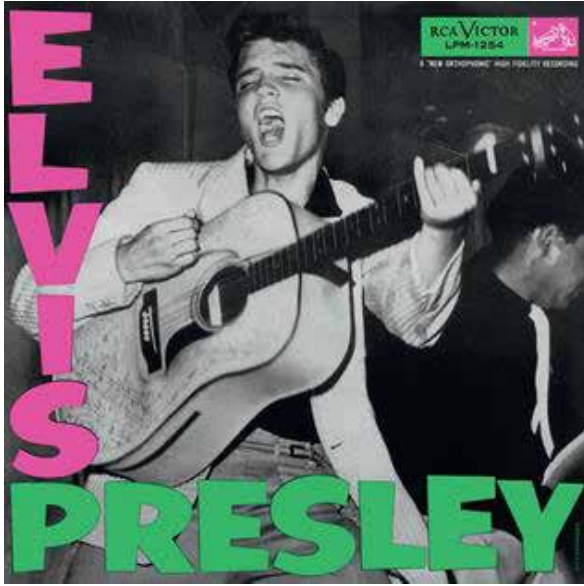


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BLAST FROM THE PAST



The 70th Anniversary of the Birth of Rock N' Roll Elvis Presley Makes Recording History at Sun Studios

By Clark "Super" Mantei

Hello again past and future past blasters. This issue had no choice but to celebrate the landmark recording of Elvis Presley's legendary performance of "That's All Right" which was recorded at Sun Studios in Memphis, Tennessee.

Sam Phillips, a disc jockey from Memphis who acquired the old automotive garage at 706 Union Ave in Memphis, opened the doors of Sun Studios on Feb 1st 1952. The logo designed by

John Gale Parker Jr (a high school friend of Sam's) had a rooster, as he felt his studio was at the dawn of a new era in music. Prior to that, he had cards made up as "Memphis Recording Service" and he often travelled to Nashville with a reel-to-reel recorder to search for the ultimate music of the black artists on Beale St into the wee morning hours. He discovered Howling Wolf, BB King, and Ike Turner, among many others. Sam was hoping to bridge the segregation gap between white and black folks to come together to appreciate music without boundaries. Essentially also looking for a white artist to actually play the black sounds of the south. He wanted to merge rhythm and blues with country music for all to enjoy. He knew what he was searching for too.

Born in 1935, Elvis Presley was keen on recording a two-sided 45 RPM record for his mother and entered Sun Studios in August 1953. The assistant to Sam and also his secretary was Marion Keisler.



She was the only one there that afternoon when Elvis strolled in shyly.

He told her he wanted to record two ballads for his mom. Those songs were "My Happiness" and also "That's When Your Heartaches Begin" and when she heard them performed, she asked him who he thought he sounded like to which he replied "Well ma'am, I don't sound like nobody." She played the recording for Sam and she thought Elvis might be what he was looking for. She said he was good looking and polite and wanted Sam to give him a shot. Well, Sam kept searching and 11 months later, Elvis was called in to try

to give Sam what he was looking for. The date was July 5th, 1954.

That evening, Sam brought in two session musicians he knew. They were Scotty Moore on guitar and Bill Black on the stand-up bass guitar.

They played many songs and styles into the late evening when Sam realized he wasn't hearing what he was looking for and began to stop the session and tell everyone to go home. At that moment, Elvis realized he needed to bring it. He immediately launched into the 1946 song by Arthur Crudup called "That's All Right" and history

was made. Scotty Moore recalled, "All of a sudden, Elvis just started singing this song, jumping around and acting the fool, and then Bill picked up his bass, and he started acting the fool, too, and I started playing with them." Sam began to record and said "This is the sound I have been looking for!" That version, that the whole world soon heard, was actually recorded unrehearsed. In one take too. Amazing!

Three days later, Sam took it to disc jockey Dewey Phillips (no relation) and Dewey played it on his Red, Hot, and Blue radio show. He interviewed Elvis on air and asked what school he was from as all callers assumed Elvis was a black artist. The single was played repeatedly for two full hours. A few days later, they recorded "Blue Moon of Kentucky" by Bill Monroe as a b-side and history was made. Many say that the first single is the invention of Rockabilly, putting rhythm and blues with country and bluegrass all into one. Elvis's first single was born.

On July 17th, the trio played publicly for the first time ever at the Bon Air club. This brought the

attention to bring Elvis to debut to a large crowd at the Overton

Park Shell, with Slim Whitman headlining. This is the show where Elvis debuted his "rubber legs" as they called them. His response came naturally to the rhythm and his legs would shake uncontrollably. He claimed he was nervous, yet it made the female members of that evening's audience scream and gasp in a feverish way unseen anywhere until that moment. Scotty Moore once said "During the instrumental parts, he would back off from the microphone and be playing and shaking, and the crowd would go wild. His movement was a natural thing, but he was also very conscious of what got a reaction. He'd do something one time and then he'd expand on it real quick."

Scotty and Bill left their other bands to become full-time members of the trio. From August through October, they performed many shows at the Eagles Nest club in Memphis perfecting their craft into a tight unit of magical music.

On October 2nd, Elvis performed at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. It was said at the time he was deemed unsuitable for the program. He would never play there again. During these months the trio kept returning to Sun to begin recording songs that would become Elvis's debut LP in November 1954, Elvis performed

on *Louisiana Hayride* and the show was broadcast live to 198 radio stations simultaneously in 28 states.

I have that actual record. The announcer actually says "Here he goes, he's winding up his legs. Here is Elvis Presley." It's a great recording too, I recommend it to anyone to discover. They were fantastic. Eventually the drummer D.J. Fontana from the Louisiana Hayride joined the group and became their drummer. During 1955 they finished recording the debut LP.

Disc jockey/promoter Bob Neil became the group's manager and he made Colonel Tom Parker who was a talented booking agent aware of Elvis. Eventually, Parker and Sam Phillips made a deal with RCA records to take over Elvis's recording contract on November 21st 1955.

On March 23rd 1956, the full-length debut album was released. Simply titled *Elvis Presley* it shot to number one on the billboard charts and stayed there for 10 straight weeks.

DJ Alan Freed stated on the air that "Here's Elvis and we are ready to roll." It is believed that rock n' roll was born. Tom Petty stated that Alan said the "rock" signified the beat and the "roll" designated the swing. I'll go with that. Colonel Parker made



Photo Press: Bill Black, Scotty Moore & Sam Phillips February 3, 1955



Elvis a worldwide phenomenon for the next 22 years until Elvis sadly passed away on August 16th 1977. I'll never forget that day. I became aware of Elvis in the summer of 1976. I was 9 years old and my mother let me buy my first record. It was the 1959 LP entitled *Elvis' Golden Records* and that LP played on my Mickey Mouse turntable in our trailer on Lake Ontario every day, I still have it. It now lives on the mantelpiece at Memphis Dan's house in Bartlett, Tennessee. I was also lucky to go to Sun Studios a few times and take the tour and even play drums there. I highly recommend it.

Now the legend of Elvis at Sun Studio is 70 years old. It is regarded as "the birthplace of rock n' roll" and Elvis soon became the "King of rock n' roll" forevermore.

I highly urge anyone to look up the documentary *Sam Phillips: The Man Who Invented Rock n' Roll* on YouTube and I'm certain you'll enjoy all the great insight.

Also, in this article I have a rare gem for all to see. This past July 30th was the 70th anniversary of the major debut performance backing up

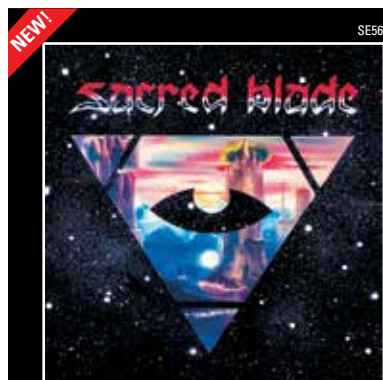
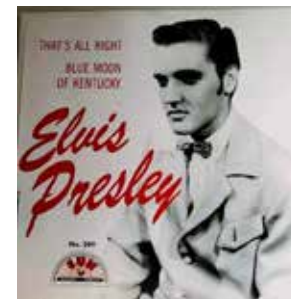
Slim Whitman and someone was offering to sell a ticket from that show actually signed by Elvis Presley himself. Since I couldn't afford the asking price of \$2,150,000 as it is the real deal, it is here for free for all to see.

I highly recommend anyone who hasn't listened to the early Sun sessions to do so.

In 2014 while I was at Sun Studios, I missed meeting Scotty Moore by a few hours, as he stopped by

for lunch from time to time. All four members are now deceased, sadly, yet the songs remain the same for all to enjoy. Elvis is also renowned as the most emotional interpreter of the American songbook. He recorded hundreds of songs up until 1977. His final hit was called "Hurt" and its a must hear. He captures his youthful incredible voice in that epic track.

I'm proud to be an Elvis fan. The best voice ever in modern music history is my thought. With that, I'll bring this issue to a close until next time and as I always say to everyone... Rock out and Rrrroll on. Enjoy the rest of your summer. Stay cool.



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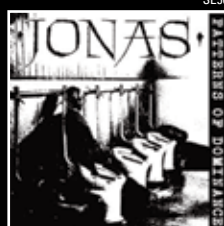
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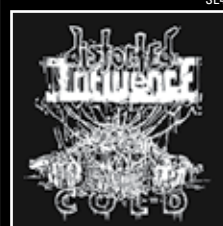
Blistering Fast Political Grindcore
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THE SCENICS

New Part in Town
12" LP | 1976

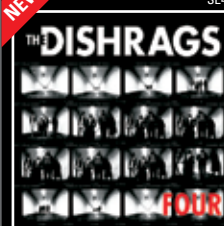
Proto-Punk / New Wave
Toronto, ON, Canada



DISTORTED INFLUENCE

Cold
12" LP | 1992

Crossover Thrash
Victoria, BC, Canada



THE DISHRAGS

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would say the music scene is in a pretty healthy state out here compared to pre-covid. The scene is very heavily hardcore orientated for the new bands emerging. There are still lots of tried and true classics still slamming the stage like Untimely Demise and Agony Spawn. The health of the scene is greatly brought on by our promoters in the scene. Scott Cressman has really helped the scene flourish.

AU: Describe the band's sound.

We don't try for any specific sound, we just try to write killer songs that we enjoy playing and listening to. We have been referred to as groove metal which I think is the best take on what we are doing.

AU: What are some inspirations you draw on while writing music?

For me I look inward for a lot of my inspiration for riffs. I put a little piece of me into my riffs that relates to how I am feeling at the time or something that I just need to get out. On the EP we have a song called "Positive Deconstruction" that I wrote at my parents farm while I was working there in the summer. I was just starting the band at the time and I was going through a lot of changes, dropping out of post secondary school to just work jobs and following my music dreams. We never really talk about what the riffs mean to each other in the band, we just pass it along and we innately can pick up on each other's vibe through the music. Dustin has a good knack for it when it comes to writing lyrics; he just gets it matching perfectly each time.

AU: Have you released any albums recently?
We have released two singles this year "Epica"

in April and "Love H8" in July. We have another single "Pills" set to release August 16th. Our full EP is scheduled to drop September 27th. We are so excited to drop our first EP. It has been in the works for a while but a lot of things needed to line up before it worked properly. The EP songs had a different line up than we have today. We had Dustin track the bass since he was playing it at the time, and we had Jordan Gall on the drums. Jordan helped extensively to bring this project to light. We recorded drums and rhythm guitar at his studio, The Powder Room, with AJ Rettger. The rest of the tracks for guitar, bass and vocals were recorded in my bedroom. We had the tracks mixed and mastered by the talented Christian Douglas at The Sound Castle // Toneshift Audio.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

At the moment we just have some local gigs in the works to support the EP release. Nothing finalized yet. We are hoping to hit the road a bit more in the early half of 2025 for sure. Watch out Alberta!

AU: What do you listen to in the tour van?

Pantera - Cowboys from Hell, Death - Symbolic, In Flames - a Sense of Purpose, Meshuggah - Koloss, Oceano - Depths, Nile - Greatest hits, Kataklysm - Waiting for the End to Come, and Children of Bodom - Halo of Blood.

AU: Where can people find you online?

FB/IG/YouTube: @pythonicband

PYTHONIC

Interview with guitarist
Vincent Kohut
by AU Editorial



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

My name is Vincent Kohut and I play rhythm guitar and create riffs for the band Pythonic.

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

We started out in December of 2015 with our first band practice. From the early days only three core members have lasted it out. Myself on rhythm guitar, Ryan Hunter on lead guitar, and Dustin Reiner on vocals. The band was founded on the ideal of having creative freedom for every member within means. We strive to bring original sounding songs driving powerful messages that you can slam into your friend while keeping a sick groove. Current line up consists of the core three and brothers Morgan (Bass) and Jayden (Drums) Warriner rounding out our rhythm section.

AU: Where is Pythonic from and what is the music scene like there?

We are based out of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I

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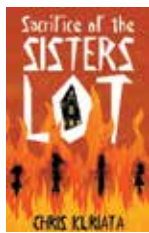
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SACRIFICE OF THE SISTERS LOT



Chris Kuriata
Palimpsest Press
October 16, 2023

A smashingly devastating coming-of-age story in 1988 out in Ontario's Niagara region. Canadian author Kuriata really holds his own and easily makes his mark with this one. Spinning a carefully detailed, often humorous look at a four-sistered family dynamic, even though the family is anything but average. Mom is tough and holds the family together, Dad is the hard-working, fun hero. We also have the eldest angst teenage daughter, Rebecca; the middle child, Emery (our narrator and leading lady) and twins Mary and Shelly who round out the family in suburbia.

The story begins with a kitten who manages to get stuck in the wall, which turns into a debacle for the family, but also gives us readers the first glimpse of the girls' powers. The 'purring' in the wall gives them whatever their desires are. Unoffending aspirations such as makeup and boyfriends until our raconteur runs into a real problem at her summer job that needs fixed. We learn the requests are not without consequence, however. The rising action unfolds for us dramatically through tough family issues as the girls' wishes become heavier and the ramifications dire. The family is torn apart as Dad bails mysteriously and Mom is too ill to care for herself or the girls anymore. We see their grandmother and uncle swoop in to 'save the day' but really do anything but. Uncle is a fraud revival tent preacher and sees his opportunity to use the girls to his advantage by bottling their powers—literally. The girls suffer greatly while the home is in dire conditions. The story comes to a horrifying, fiery, and sacrificial climax. We are left with so much to ponder and interpret. Such a wild and thoughtful book by Kuriata. Trigger warning: Animal cruelty.

Demonika

DOWN WITH THE SYSTEM: A MEMOIR (OF SORTS)



Serj Tankian
Hachette Books
May 14, 2024

System of a Down were among the LA-based bands who were impossible to ignore upon first impression. Their video for "Sugar" showed a band who were unafraid to be both heavy and kooky—the song was wildly original, though bizarre, talking about the Kombucha mushroom people, though as a whole made mathematical sense—the parts on their own perhaps didn't, but together they did.

From their first album, I thought they were too weird to be embraced by the mainstream. Serj Tankian apparently thought so as well, as he reminisces on those times in his memoir (of sorts)—Down With the System. And then one song that Daron brought into the recording sessions, originally titled "Suicide" and later renamed "Chop Suey!" (as it was "Suicide", though chopped up) was an undeniable force that brought the band worldwide fame along with their Toxicity album.

In the book, Tankian takes great care in

illustrating what made him who he is, explaining with the history of the Armenian genocide, his family's upbringing, his birth in Lebanon, and his moving to LA when he was seven years old. His Armenian upbringing didn't stop in America, as he lived in a largely Armenian-based community and attended schools mostly consisting of Armenian students in America. He was, naturally, always involved in political matters relating to the country, but he didn't get interested in music until much later. He talks about his first band, Forever Young, in which he played keyboards, then meeting guitarist Daron Malakian and starting Soil which later turned into System of a Down.

Tankian recounts System's initial days playing in a warehouse for friends, seeing Rick Rubin laughing while watching them in a club (perhaps he knew of System's future at the time), the early Slayer tour, and how Toxicity was number one just as 9/11 happened. The band dynamics are clearly addressed, with Serj even explaining a manifesto he wrote out to the members if they were to record a new record, which did not come to fruition.

Still, the band has agreed to continue playing the odd show, with the 2015 concert in Armenia being their apex. When watching it, it seems to be a culmination of everything System of a Down has ever stood for, playing for the people they were fighting for, within a rainy setting that's almost biblical in its meaning and impact.

Down With the System is a gateway into the mind and life of a groundbreaking vocalist whose passion for righting the wrongs of injustice matched his artistic integrity. When you can't help but think of the purpose of art and how music can in fact make a difference. We could learn a thing or two from Serj.

Ryan Dyer

CUNT-KICK THE WITCH BITCH



**EDWARD LEE,
CHRISTINE MORGAN**
Evil Cookie Publishing
November 6, 2023

Treasured contemporary horror juggernaut Edward Lee teams up with the absolutely underrated Christine Morgan for a ridiculously elementary horror short with the stupidest, yet most fitting title one could come up with. An absolute smash (literally and physically) to read.

Wealthy trophy wives carrying around egos as large as their diamond-encrusted jewelry don't take kindly to the beautiful gothic smoke show, Isobel (and her black cat), who lives in the neighborhood. They focus their suspicions on her when their prosperous lawyer husbands keep coming home late, spent, distracted, and uninterested in their sexual advances. She must pay, and oh my god does she. The title comes into play: it's probably the worst way a female could die. Talk about making the reader wince. Yikes! Our gothic beauty is no more... or is she? The plastic surgerized opportunistic bitch squad can't possibly get away with such a crime. Oh no, they sure don't. The ending is pure gross malevolence and order is restored. Excellent quick sick read by Lee and Morgan. You can't keep a good goth girl down.

Demonika

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LUNCHMEAT

Strange But True:

The Bib Video Alarm

By Josh Schafer & Al Moschetti

In the world of contemporary VHS collecting, the profusion of online auctions, explosion of internet-based collecting forums and extension of the "pick, post, and flip" trend with video tapes has seemingly provided an endless ocean of analog delights awaiting every Videovore courtesy of their world weird web portal. It's now easier than ever to clickity-click your way to a virtual treasure chest of black plastic gold, fire up the PayPal and then eagerly await your new slab o' analog to arrive, hopefully devoid of any bubble mailer disasters. But over here in Lunchmeat Land, lest the magnetic-crazed masses forget about the undeniable excitement and potential glory of rooting through thrift stores, dirt malls, and various other incarnations of the wild, we've cooked up a little mix of our classic "Strange But True!" with a short, yet so sweet anecdote of an exciting analog excavation from my fellow Videovore and all around groovy dude Al "Sauce" Moschetti. So, without any further ado, I'll let The Sauceman give you a little insight on how he ventured into the wild and uncovered one of the

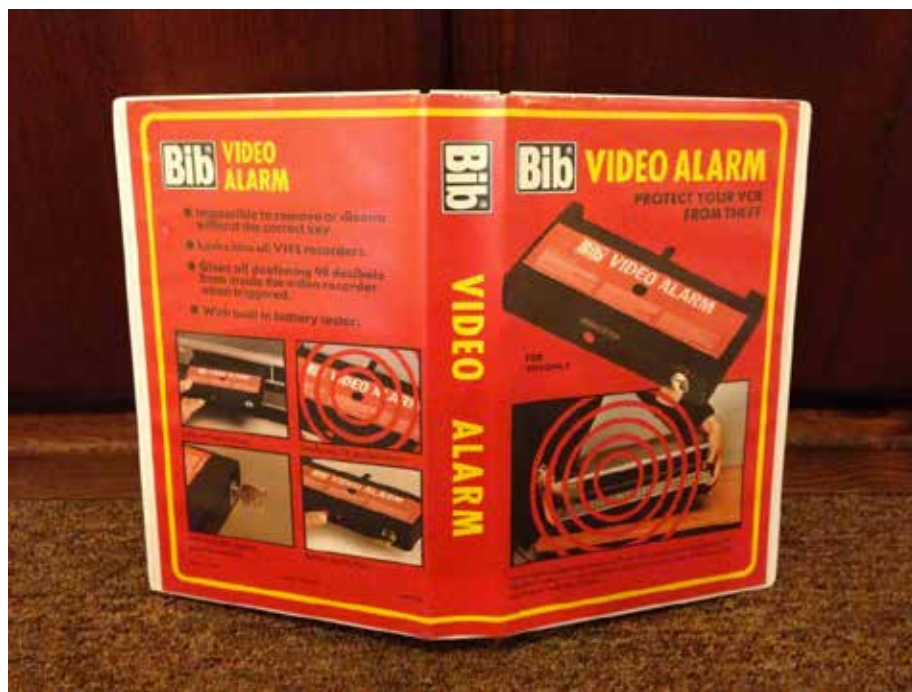


most outrageously radical video-era gadgets to ever be unearthed: the BIB Video Alarm! Take it away, my man...

"I got it at an estate sale with my friend the other day. The guy that owned this house must've worked for a movie distribution company or something. I raided his filing cabinet and he had catalogs for BFV Video and RCA all types of weird shit that hinted he had something to do with movie distro.

He had thousands of movies. I mean he stored them EVERYWHERE: in his kitchen cabinets, office, living room, and scattered throughout the house. We had an incredible hit there. All sorts of rare tapes. We even found some really, really rare porno tapes from VHL, Cal Vista, etc... He had these incredible hard plastic cases in which he protected every tape... all different types of storage. You could tell this guy loved film. He had high end DVD and Blu-ray equipment as well as cassette players, 8-tracks, etc. I mean this guy was INTO IT. The decor of the house was so '70s it ain't even funny. Rock walls

in the living room, chartreuse painted walls and everything. Among all these tapes I saw this! I went nuts when I picked it up. Made in England and the oddest gadget I've ever seen. I've never seen another and don't think I ever will, so it was a must to sit alongside my collection... the icing on the cake! I'm scared to hear it work... I might pop an eardrum! He also had brand new head cleaners from the same



BIB label, but I let those sit. My friend found a car tape rewriter and I know you collect those but he kept it..."

Aww, hey, that's a-okay, Sauce! Finders Keepers, mang! Plus, I gots plenty of rewinders, so more power to him! A-Rewind Racing he (we) will go! DIG IT!

But back to the Video Alarm itself, this bad boy is advertised to max out at a "deafening" 98dB (apparently from INSIDE the VCR), so we can see why The Sauceman would be hesitant to test it out. However, after a hasty internet search it seems 98dB is about as loud as a hand drill or some large farm equipment. While not exactly ear-shattering, this analog-oriented alarm is certainly loud enough to scare off any video bandits trying to gank your playback machine... or defy any unwanted watchers! And, to be fair, it is noted that prolonged exposure to anything at 98dB is liable to cause hearing damage and/

or loss, so the "deafening" gimmick sticks on this one, but only in that conditional sort of way. Isn't marketing grand?!

So, my fellow Videovores, there you have it: Just one more fast and fun story from the wild, bolstering the fact that there's just no telling what kind of groovy video era goodies you might find outside of that computer screen. Sure, you can point, click and obtain, but the thrill, the experience and the memories that are created from haulin' your caboose out into cluttered, crowded, crusty and ultimately unpredictable second-hand spaces, well, that's just something the internet can never offer. And that's pretty groovy.

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Sapporo Ichi-Bons!

By Billy Hopeless

As the band's current location, I've been spending a lot of time in Toronto the past few years and always looking for somewhere cool to hang out. When brudder Jay told me about a Japanese greaser rock n' roll bar called Black Dice I had to check it out and I'm glad I did as not only did I find a deep passion for Japanese whiskey, but I met Canada's top ramen rock n' roll band the Ichi-Bons. So come on let's lift the rim add the seasoning packet and boiling water, close the lid, wait five minutes and enjoy a warm bowl of conversation with the bar-tending ultra-bassman from Black dice and the Ichi-Bons, Hideki!

AU: I'm so honoured to finally have a chance to interview you, the bartender and bassist from the fantastic Japanadian rock n' roll band known as the Ichi-Bons. When I was first told of you cats it was through being informed of your awesome rockabilly bar in Toronto. Tell us the history/connection between the bar and the band and which came first?

Hideki: I came to Canada (North America) for love of '50s and '60s American music and style. I started Black Dice Cafe 15 years ago. The theme is American '50s rock n' roll and British Rockers. I was riding with a Cafe Racer group at the time and we used to hang out every Thursday night. Mamoru started coming to the bar about eight years ago. He also started coming to my DJ nights that I used to do at other bars in town. One day, I told him to start greasing up his hair and he did! Five years ago Mamoru said to me, "I'd like to start a band

with you." I was like, "Only if you show me how to play an instrument because I have never played one." Paddy started coming to the bar about nine years ago, but we had never acquainted until five years ago. I knew about him because of the slick-back hair and mod style he had at the time. Then, Mamoru found him at the Grease Marks show and asked him to join the band.

AU: How important is it to stay true to the style and aesthetic of rockabilly to you? Do you feel that the style must stay true to the past roots or can it mutate into the future and other new branches?

Hideki: I personally love rockabilly, but Ichi-Bons are a rock n' roll band; a mix of rockabilly, surf and garage. We all like to wear vintage clothing or reproduction of that era of clothing and such. We'd like to stay true to its era as it's a forgotten part of beauty of its era. I often wonder why the details of design and care died. We would like to revive not only the music but also the style.

AU: When did you first fall in love with this style of rock n' roll and who were the ones that first got you hooked?

Hideki: I got into this when I was 16 years old when my sister told me to watch *American Graffiti*. That blew my mind. The music, the cars, the styles. I was into whatever that was popular such as '70s-'90s punk and Japanese metal. Since then, I was telling my friends that I'm moving to US one day. People used to make fun of me saying that.

AU: When we first met over some delicious Japanese whiskey, I began an ongoing game with you of getting you to choose between two stars from the golden rock n' roll universe. Let's continue this tradition by asking you Jerry Lee Lewis or Little Richard?

Hideki: I cannot really choose, but Little Richard has moved me more.

AU: You've been scoring a lot of high-prestige dates with well-loved bands like The 5.6.7.8's and The Damned; what artists or bands are on your bucket or dream list to play with?

Hideki: Fortunately, we have played with so many bands that we respect and love. We would be thrilled to play with The Sonics and Stray Cats.



HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

AU: What makes a truly great rock n' roll or Ichi-Bons show for you? What is your favourite show to date?

Hideki: We enjoy shows the audience is enjoying. Sometimes it's hard to read if nobody is moving, but then they come buy merch after. Also, we like when the monitors work well so that we can hear and enjoy on stage. My personal favourite shows so far: The Damned, Jack White, The 5.6.7.8's at Hi-Tide Summer Holiday, Rockin' Race Jamboree in Spain, Japan and UK tours.

AU: You cats do quite a few instrumental numbers. Besides giving the singer a break, why do you love instrumental songs?

Hideki: I collect '50s/'60s rare and obscure records. All those songs didn't make a hit back then, but they are amazing in present time. They are ahead of their time. Ichi-Bons started with the covers of my DJ sets. All those songs are truly amazing and not many bands mix all those instrumental songs with singing songs. We find it's unique to do so and why not?

AU: Why did you choose an electric bass instead of a stand up bass? Can you stand balancing on your electric bass like every stand up rockabilly bassist does at least once in their set?

Hideki: As I mentioned before, I started playing bass five years ago and didn't know how to play. Honestly, stand up bass seemed intense. But

again, we are not rockabilly band. We are rock n' roll band. You know, Eddie Cochran (the father of punk) used electric bass in his band. We succeed punk spirits in us.

AU: What is the perfect example of a rockabilly song in your opinion, and have you ever covered it?

Hideki: That's a very difficult question. As you know, the word "rockabilly" comes from the unification of "rock n' roll" that was played by African Americans and "hillbilly" music that was played by Caucasians. The person who united that was Elvis. Early Elvis songs that were pressed on Sun Records are the ones. My personal one would be Johnny Burnett Trio songs, though.

AU: You've released quite a few killer 45s but have yet to release a full-length. Are they any plans for a full-length or do you feel that 7 inches is enough and 12 inches is too much for people to handle?

Hideki: We love 45s. It was the format back then to sell music. While we like pressing 45s, as we have more original songs, perhaps it's about time to press 12 inch when we have a chance to do so. We post our gigs and what's going on our Instagram and Facebook. Our songs are on Bandcamp and Spotify. Please follow!

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They're tips, not rules. Everyone has their own way of touring, but some of these may help younger bands on their way.



PART NINE

TOUR TIP NUMBER 49



FREE STICKERS ARE A GREAT WAY TO START A CONVERSATION

TOUR TIP NUMBER 50



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But that's okay coz they're probably a Punk too. Support the Scene.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 51



BRING TOILET PAPER

Duct tape is important. Toilet paper is essential.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 52



"MONITORS? WHAT MONITORS?"

Be ready to play without 'em.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 53



EATING OUT? BE POLITE AND TIP WELL

It's not just the right thing to do. If you go back next tour, they'll remember you as the funny looking folks who treat the staff well.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 54



YES, IT'S WORTH DRIVING 1,000 km FOR A SHOW.

...though you might have trouble explaining that to an American band on the bill.

Find more tips and other stuff on our facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/ripcordzpunk> and instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/ripcordz.punk>



CAVEMAN & THE BANSHEE



Photo: Jason Falke

Caveman Dave pounds his riff heavy bass lines over top classic drum machine block rockin' beats, while Banshee Valentina wails tales of childhood, time travel, burning bridges and wanton lust above it all.

Influences include the Plasmatics, Public Enemy, Nina Hagen, early Misfits, psychedelic horror films, underground house shows, Darkthrone & Atari Teenage Riot.

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The Mammoth Review

By Ed Sum

Paul Tobin and Arjuna Susini are the writing/artist team behind *The Mammoth*, a comic book about some terror who has terrorized Broke Tree Valley since the 1800s. Just what lurks here may well be the same evil that permeates Aokigahara in Japan. Although the cover paints this world as located somewhere in North America, no forest is as legendary as that! As for how huge it is depends on whom you ask, and what readers interpret from the first few pages. When what gets presented includes a grisly death of a person's head getting flattened, that's a good way to get my attention!



where this tale takes place! Oregon is ripe with a lot of wilderness mysteries, and I feel the choice is perfect to hide a giant Sasquatch (well, that's what I'm thinking after looking at the cover art). As for the illustrations within, Susini's style focuses on giving readers a sense of calm before the storm. The depth of her designs lean on just giving us a world that looks a little rustic, and as when the supernatural come wandering in, I like how they start to lack features. It's a neat way to present how ghosts tend to look when accidentally photographed. They rarely ever have any distinguishing features, and I have to give this artist high praise for delivering a look that even ghost hunters can recognize.

The people sent to investigate have other talents. Mason is a geologist who wants to figure out why strange seismic events are happening. Jess is a historian and Kokoro is a scientist. Her specialty is with being able to identify gaseous anomalies. They are an independent group that's probably different from the Office of Scientific Investigation and Research, but as for why they're here, their cover story seems relatively solid. As for what they're not telling is that they believe some kind of supernatural force has awakened. Whether it's from the Kalapuya people, at least a Google search has helped answer my question of

As a result, I'm looking forward to seeing how this mini-series will play out. When there's the possibility local Indigenous lore plays a role, my final query concerns whether the behaviour of this entity is that of a friend with some connection with a member of this group, part of nature acting on instinct, or a foe? When considering the Pacific Northwest is famous for its Bigfoot sightings, I hope the answer is not as easy as that. Oh, and I'm fairly sure this giant is not an undead version of Paul Bunyan either.

4 Stars out of 5

Poached Records

By Bluto

The summer is always a whirlwind in this town. You blackout for one long weekend and it's gone. So many shows, such little time. Pizza Coffin made a short appearance in July. Big love to Soul Mates, Lucy's Seduction and Macrodozer for coming out and killing it last month at Black Cat. Miserable Tradition did a set at Zakk Aid, a benefit for homie that got all burnt up in an apartment fire. Opening for Off the Top Rope, Krash and Spencer Jo. The night was a success, no one got hurt and we all did what we could to raise a little cash to help Zakk get back on his feet, and it was fun as fuck!



If you are in the Saskatoon area at the end of August be sure to check out Punks For Pups. It's a three-day punk fest with a stacked lineup. Then getting into September, Poached is putting on an all ages show at RCAF Hall in Saskatoon featuring BC grinders, Hacked Apart, and Powertrip with locals Pizza Coffin, Dead Shit Earth, and Abuse. September 27th. Save the date.

As far as releases go, the Bitter State/Pizza Coffin split LP, with studio recordings from both camps, is in the finishing stages and will be released on green wax later this year. Limited to 200 copies. Next on deck is the Trenchraid/Miserable Tradition split cassette. Live recording from March 22/24. Limited 100 copies. There will be an album from the geriatric punk unit, Asspatch (2025) format TBD. An Axed Up Conformist discography cassette is slowly being compiled, but won't see the light of day until 2025. It's going to be very limited on recycled tapes, all from the original recordings. It's going to sound hideous in the worst way possible.

Pizza Coffin is gearing up to record again in the fall with even more immature, 45-second mince punk ballads that no one asked for.

Now, to get to the important shit. Has anyone seen Greg? Seriously. At first it was funny, and even though most of us kinda hate Greg, we are starting to get concerned. He's been MIA for a minute now. We have checked all his regular spots. In the bushes outside the high school. Don't worry, he doesn't do creepy shit to kids, he just sells them drugs and loose cigarettes. He's not at the Burger King and he hasn't been seen in the VLT room at Winston's or outside City Hospital picking smoke butts for months. Please, if anyone has any info to Greg's whereabouts, contact Poached Records immediately, or, if you are reading this, you still owe Martin \$31 and we want the uniform back, Greg.

Yours for now, Bluto The Garbageman
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1876

Pow Wow Punk Rock Meets Hip Hop

Interview by Laurie Storr

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what's your role in the band?

Gabe: You are talking with Gabe, AKA Mr. StealYourGirlSomeHorses. I am the lead singer and guitar player for 1876.

AU: Your music combines elements of punk rock, hip hop, and pow wow music, what ties those together for you?

Gabe: For me, punk rock and hip hop come from the same main root. They just grew out in different ways. Pow wow music has a similar energy to punk rock, raw and in your face. At punk shows you are shoulder to shoulder with your people (punks) all singing together. You are celebrating each other as a community. At pow wows, you are shoulder to shoulder with your

people (your tribes) singing together. Celebrating each other as a community. Pow wow songs, and traditional ndngenous songs tell stories. Hip Hop tells stories. What I couldn't find in punk rock as a young ndngenous kid, I found in hip hop. In hip hop I found rappers who would tell stories that I recognized in my own community as an ndn kid. In punk rock I found the aggression and community that I craved, in hip hop I found the truth that I already knew, and in pow wow music I find my people. In punk rock, hip hop, and pow wow music, I find myself.

AU: Part of your mission is to spread light on narratives overlooked by the music industry, what are some of those stories?

Gabe: We as ndngenous people are ignored. We are often overlooked. We are often spoken over. We are often kept secret. But we are still here. Our women, our futures are under attack. But we are still here. We are human and we are still here. Just like you.

AU: Your songs are full of both rage and love, how do you find a balance between the two?

Gabe: I wouldn't describe it as rage. I'd say our music is full of passion. I think its important that we celebrate our people and our love for our people as much as we tell our stories and our histories. We love being ndngenous. We love our people.

AU: Despite its efforts to be inclusive, punk rock still pushes many people to the side. What are some changes you would like to see in an effort to create a more diverse community?

Gabe: In my experience, for as "open-minded and inclusive" punk rock talks about being, I have found a lot of heavy gatekeeping and unwillingness to change. A lot of punk rock cops feeling that they're entitled to decide what is and what isn't punk. They're deciding what uniform is the punk uniform. So I feel like one of two things needs to happen; either the old guard, the gatekeepers and the punk rock cops have to grow with the rest of us, or the rest of us have to grow beyond the entitled punks. That being said, I do want to recognize that punk is WAY more inclusive and tolerant than it has been in the past!

AU: Can you recommend some other bands to our readers who are looking to dive deeper into indigenous punk rock?

Gabe: No More Moments, Indian Giver, Lo Cash Ninjas, End Of Dayz, Dead Pioneers, With War. Also follow @indigenouspunxarchive on instagram to

UNDER THE OUTHOUSE



find even more ndngenous punk rock.

AU: What's next for 1876?

Gabe: We just want to reach as many people as possible! Play bigger and bigger crowds. We are also working on a new ep to be coming out near the end of the year.

AU: Anything else you want to tell us about?

Gabe: New music is on the way!

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SUPERFUCTION

Hawaii Punk Rock

Interview by AU Editorial

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

SUPERFUCTION: You're talking to David Corbin the lead singer, guitarist, and creator of SUPERFUCTION. We're not really famous yet but a few famous punk rock bands think we're good people and have a lot of fun when playing shows.

AU: How did SUPERFUCTION initially get together?

SUPERFUCTION: All the dudes in the band have already



been friends for years, we just finally united our music powers together.

AU: Who's in the band and what are you about?

SUPERFUCTION: David Corbin (lead vocals/guitarist), Matt Kato (drums), Rob West (bass), and David Garvin (rhythm guitar). We're all about having fun and playing fast punk rock!

AU: Any plans to release new music?

SUPERFUCTION: Yes, we have plans of releasing our second album *Degeneration* in the next couple of months. Stay tuned!

AU: What's the music scene like in Hawaii?

SUPERFUCTION: The music scene is small but awesome, with a

bunch of new up-and-coming punk bands that shred.

AU: What was it like playing with NOFX at Punk in Drublic in Portland?

SUPERFUCTION: Opening up for NOFX in Portland was amazing. Playing on stage, hanging with all of our good buddies like Bad Cop Bad Cop, Get Dead, Codefendants, and of course our bros NOFX and watching them shred their last tour. Thanks to Uncle Fatty for having us!

AU: Did you snort any strange substances with Fat Mike?

SUPERFUCTION: No, but Fat Mike's family to me; when he visits Hawaii we hang, surf, and chill together.

AU: What's one of your craziest touring stories?

SUPERFUCTION: New favourite was watching Fletcher go Big Foot, throwing Fat Mike over the drums on stage during the Portland show. Good thing I was there to save him. Love watching those dudes together play like they're still teenagers.

AU: Any plans to come to the Great White North?

SUPERFUCTION: No plans anytime soon to visit but I'm sure we'll get there and play some rad shows for you guys!

AU: If you were in a gang like in *The Warriors*, what would you call it?

SUPERFUCTION: We would call the gang The Propagandis.

AU: Is there anything else you'd like to mention or promote?

SUPERFUCTION: Thanks for having us, hopefully we'll see you buddies in Canada one day. Aloha and mahalo from Hawaii!

AU: Famous last words?

SUPERFUCTION: We'll be back.

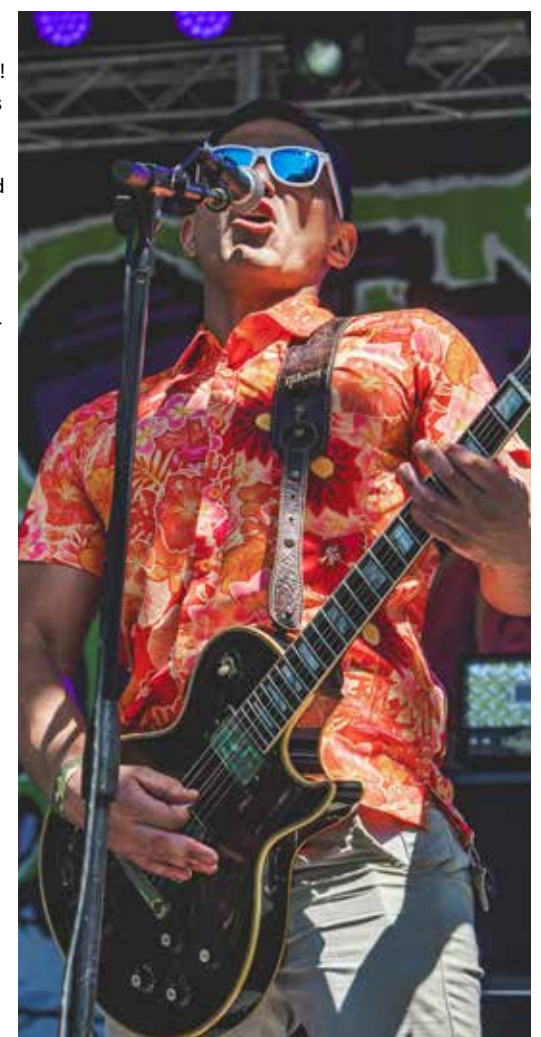
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punk in drublic

Photo by Colin Smith Takes Pics



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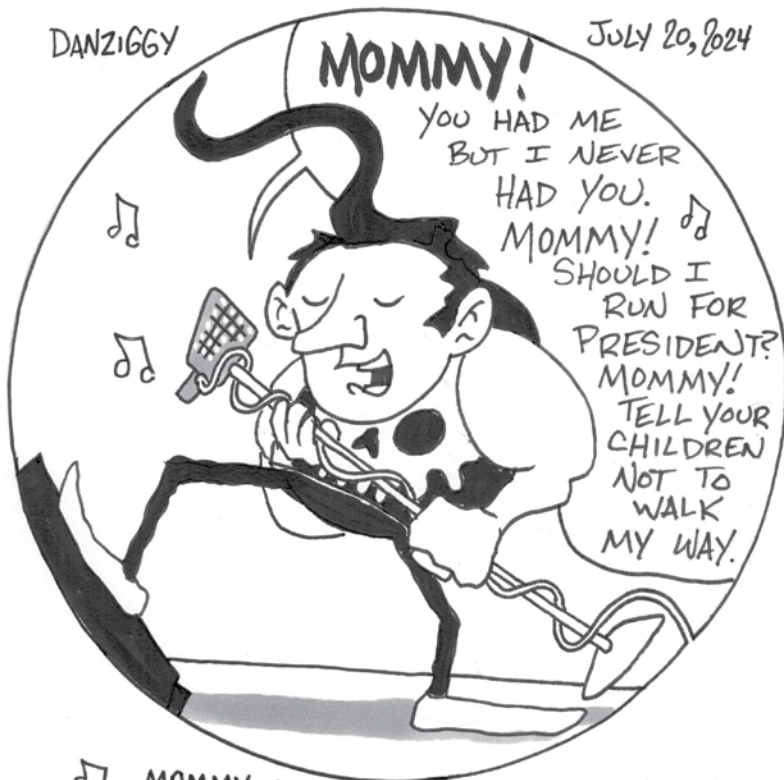
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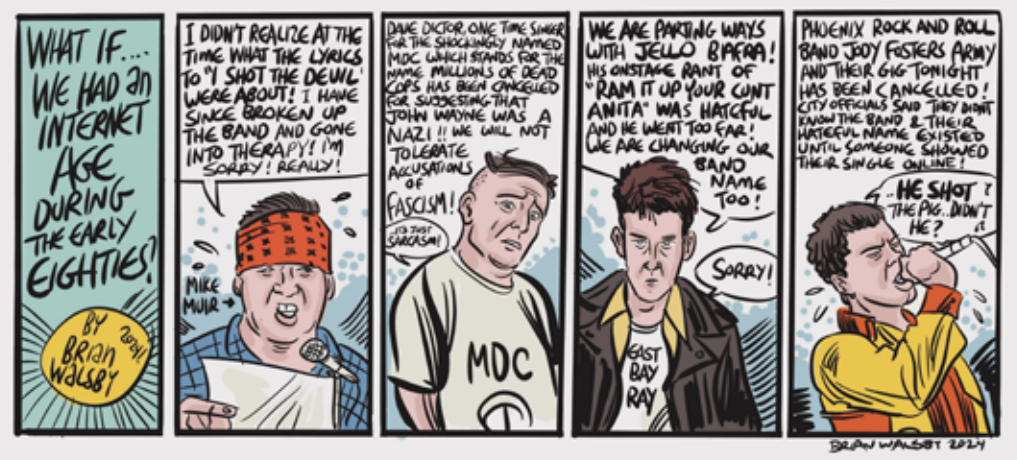
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ANONYMOUS CUBED



Art by ZAC ZEMANTIC - Words by HANK PATTISON



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KK'S Priest and Accept

2024 North American Tour

Tickets On Sale Now!

Heavy metal fans, prepare for the most electrifying tour of the year! Heavy metal frontrunners KK'S Priest- featuring Judas Priest alum K.K. Downing (guitar) and Tim "Ripper" Owens (vocals)- and Teutonic metal originators Accept will join forces this fall 2024 for an unmissable North American tour! Both bands are touring in support of their brand new albums, out now via Napalm Records.

The massive run will begin on August 31 in Los Angeles, CA, visiting a slew of major cities in the USA and Canada- such as Toronto, ON, Montreal, QC, New York, NY and Nashville, TN- before coming to an end in San Francisco, CA on October 7. Tickets on sale now.

This past September, KK'S Priest unveiled their blistering sophomore offering, *The Sinner Rides*

Again, to rave reviews! KK'S Priest double down on the ripping melodic force of their debut, *Sermons Of The Sinner*- which Metal Hammer UK dubbed "hugely enjoyable" and Metal Injection cited as boasting "catchy hooks and plenty of guitar wizardry". *The Sinner Rides Again* wields nine tracks of pure hellfire, produced and written by Downing and mixed/mastered by Jacob Hansen. The celebrated new album is a call for the classics while speeding full force into the future, delivered by some of heavy metal's most essential performers.

Accept just released their latest full-length, *Humanoid*, proving that even after over 40 years, they remain a leading force in the worldwide heavy metal scene. Metal Hammer dubbed the album "a new career peak", while Angry Metal Guy calls it "another successful chapter in the



second stage of Accept's eternal crusade". Once again finalized by leading metal producer Andy Sneap (Judas Priest, Amon Amarth, Testament, Saxon, etc.) at his Backstage Recording Studios Ltd. in

Derbyshire, UK, *Humanoid* is a towering musical achievement and another world class entry in the Accept catalog, certain to rally fans from around the world.

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Absolute Live



Osyron, Hazzerd

June 29, Dickens, Calgary AB

To send off Osyron for their European tour, the band took to the always accommodating Dickens to light the fuse for their upcoming days and nights on planes, trains and whatever other transport they'll be using during their six-show trek.

Prisoner were slated to open the show, but were crossed off the bill. Because of there being only two bands, then, Hazzerd and Osyron both played hour-long headlining sets. Were they too long for local acts? I'd say no.

Hazzerd were making their return from a four-year hiatus and it seems they spent every second of every day in hibernation practicing for this day. The thrash band recently recorded two tracks for author Julie Hiner's *Thrash Track* book— one of which was played this night, "Skin Peeler". The rest of the songs were certainly above average to great thrash songs— unique in a live setting due to drummer Dylan also taking on vocal duties. Having the singer in the back made for more concentration on the band's instrumentation and it was scorching.

Osyron are one of the handful of Calgarian bands who feel like a big deal when they play. The band have a hard time defining their own sound but I'll try— it's progressive power metal that doesn't play it safe on the heaviness. The band has a confident stage presence— with attention being set on vocalist Reed Alton— a towering, charismatic figure whose voice is like a silky sheet placed over a bed made of bones— okay, a black silky sheet. This warm up set included a new song performed, and if the shows in Europe are anything like this, the fans are in good hands.

-Ryan Dyer

The Black Halos, No Sunshine Collective, Barren Womb, Hollow Core, and Rat Parade

June 14, The Bovine, Toronto, ON

Summer comes rolling into Toronto in June, and with it the annual NXNE festival. NXNE has been in Toronto since 1995, and provides low-cost

tickets to music lovers to attend shows across venues in Canada's largest city. The 2024 NXNE festival did not disappoint with stellar punk and hard rock bands gracing the trash castle of Toronto, none other than the iconic Bovine Sex Club, home to many punk, metal, and hard rock bands over NXNE's many years.

No Sunshine Collective opened the evening with a raw and sticky sound pulsating through the crowd, leaving the Bovine's inhabitants roaring for more. Barren Womb graced fans with an international flavour in the unique sounds of Nordic Noise rock, brought to us from the duo formed in Trondheim, Norway. Hollow Core showed up to give the metal fans in the audience a moment in the spotlight with their flashy alt-metal style.

Rat Parade had the crowd bouncing off the walls with their garage punk set, moshing to release their inner demons. Gene Champagne and the Un-Teens were lighter than the other acts on the bill, but allowed fans to head bob to some hard rock riffs reminiscent of the '90s.

The Black Halos closed out the show with a well-balanced performance of debauchery and musicianship, clearing demonstrating years of experience, to the delight of many Canadian punk fans. Billy Hopeless riled the crowd up with the stage presence of a wild roving man, yet still managed to never lose a note as lead singer to the group, and Rich Jones serenaded us with his guitar riffs, anything but gentle to the ear yet with the finesse of a long-time master of the strings.

-Kip Phillips

Sled Island 2024 - 10 Highlights

Sled Island has come and gone. As with every year and every person attending, our paths will all be different. Was mine the correct one? Probably not, but it was another eye-opening year nonetheless. Here are 10 shows I witnessed which could act as recommendations for when these artists come to town again.

False Body

Wednesday June 19 (Dickens)

The Rolling Stones

July 5, BC Place, Vancouver BC

"Ladies and Gentlemen... The Rolling Stones"

That announcement came as the opening riff to "Start Me Up" rang out. Keith Richards appeared and within seconds Mick Jagger was beside him and kicked the band into high gear with all cylinders blazing. For two hours they had the attention of 40 thousand plus fans for a night of stylish performance from their now 60-year career.

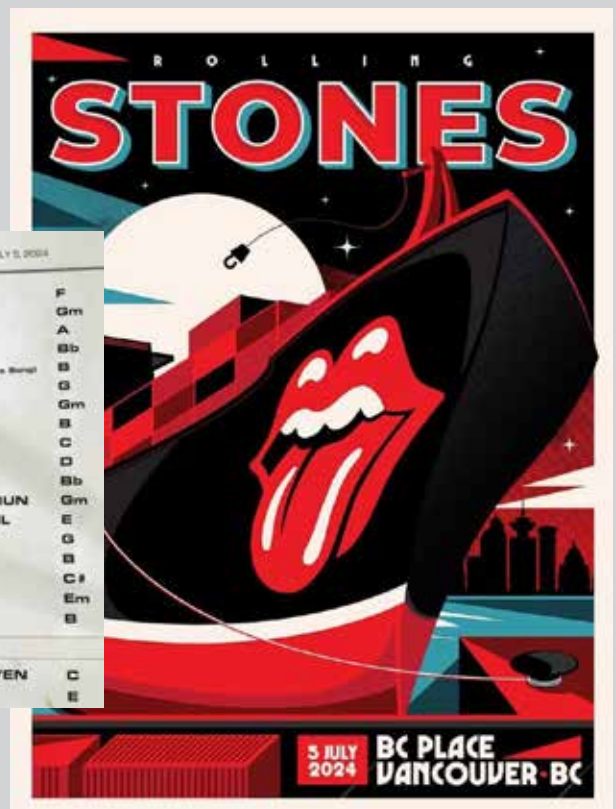
Highlights were "Bitch" with a fierce attack of sheer brass bliss, and the ever-gentle "Wild Horses". The audio/visual experience was well-designed for everyone in the place to have a great view. The venue's roof was wide open and that set for nice breeze.

A wide variety of songs made a stellar showcase with songs from their new LP *Hackney Diamonds*, sounding as good as ever. Then an outstanding version of "You Can't Always Get What You Want" as Mick turned the audience into a choir... He introduced each of the 11 members who together play so many different instruments that make up this well-seasoned band of orchestrated depth. The horn sections and back up vocals are unmatched in any band live today. Chanel Haynes was soaring in her duets with Mick. The rhythm section was chosen by none other than the late Charlie Watts. The late Brian Jones also echoed through Ronnie as his sitar skills on "Paint it Black" sounded as vibrant as it did in 1967. "Midnight Rambler" had Mick and the boys channeling Robert Johnson with "Hellhound on my Trail". Mick also played his harmonica like he had made a deal at the crossroads. The night showcased many different guitars from every era of their soundtrack.

The show ended with an all-out version of "Satisfaction" where at the climax, Mick was channeling the late Otis Redding with as much energy as Otis had at the Monterey Pop Festival in June 1967. The Rolling Stones are the greatest rock n' roll gospel-infused blues band in history. It was their 47th tour; 20 shows in 17 cities celebrating their 24th LP. BC was the only Canadian date. A legendary band like no other.

A rolling stone gathers no moss.

-Clark "Super" Mantei



fans." The Puppy barked as the rabid Dickens crowd bit.

Völur

Thursday June 20 (Loophole)

There is always that show maybe you went to alone, just reading the description of the band on Sled Island's website (or maybe not even doing that) and found it to be something extraordinary. The sun, moon and earth all aligned for this very show which fit the description at the tiny coffee house venue, Loophole. Maybe 20 people were put under this summer solstice spell of doom from Toronto's Völur when the clock struck 12.

Man Meat

Friday June 21 (Modern Love)

Sled Island day shows are good for venue hopping, and as Modern Love is in close proximity to Pin Bar and the Ship and Anchor, many island hoppers went from one place to another during this time. The Saskatchewan showcase at Modern Love took place on Friday and presented artists from multiple genres, ending with Man Meat at 5 pm. They treated Modern Love with a heavy, grungy, dynamic set and then had the nerve to tell us we deserved better (just kidding, that's their album title).

Radioactive Vampire Teeth

Friday June 21 (Pin Bar)

It was way too early in the day for this shit. When you hear the name Radioactive Vampire Teeth, what do you expect the band to sound like? Well, yes, you're right! They are fun, irreverent noise. This duo had a variety of tools and no matter how absurd the instrument, nothing seemed out of place. They encouraged pinball playing while they performed and asked for requests— The Beatles? They then morphed into Radioactive Vampire Ringo and Lennon before playing a second show later that night at the Palomino.

Culled

Saturday June 22 (Loophole)

We're back to the Loophole for an early, 6:30 pm show. The sun is out and the storage room of a venue becomes a hot box with it crammed with people. After Closetalkers opened the show, Edmonton's Culled obliterated the small room. The band members and audience left drenched in sweat.

Liminal Shroud

Saturday June 22 (Loophole)

After the audience went outside for some fresh air and to have a drink of water, I was hoping the black metal of Victoria's Liminal Shroud would be cold enough to chill the room. Well,

it certainly was the hottest black metal set I've seen, which made the set all the more hellish.

L4ZR GR1D

Saturday June 22 (Royal Canadian Legion #1)

There is always a contrast with the bands you see and the decor and history of this active legion, which also hosts wrestling events in Calgary. It is an iconic Sled Island venue which benefits any artist that performs here. L4ZR GR1D performed here on the biggest stage so far of their career and brought the place down with their electronic trash fire. WAKE's Kyle Ball accompanied the group which made for an especially harsh set.

Show Me the Body

Saturday June 22 (Royal Canadian Legion #1)

New York's Show Me the Body turned the Legion into a human ocean and were an instant Sled Island classic with their minimalist, banjo aided electronic tinged hardcore but I also have to give it to D. Blavatsky for turning the Legion's upstairs venue into another sweaty hot box as an all out mosh-rave broke out during the set.

-Ryan Dyer

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Absolute Movie Reviews

The Most Memorable Five Films From Fantasia

Montreal City's Fantasia Film Festival (July 18 - August 4, 2024) is the destination for all things wild in the pop culture movie scene. There's plenty to see, and every single genre is well represented. One stand out work was *Chainsaws Were Singing* (Mootorsaed laulsid) and it's deliciously awesome. When it's a horror musical, that's all anyone needs to know!

When there's over 70 films and tons of activities to take in the seventeen days this event takes place, it's sometimes tough to decide what was the best. To make this look back easy to sort, what I offer in review are my five most favourite films (including the aforementioned work):

A Samurai in Time

Even if you know nothing about Jidaigeki, a genre of Japanese action films set during the Meiji period, *A Samurai in Time* will make you a fan! It's twice as good as *Rurouni Kenshin* and as a modern day drama about what's worth fighting for, that's up to Shinzaemon Kosaka (Makiya Yamaguchi) to decide. After his warrior class got disbanded, he's a samurai without a cause. After a lightning storm interrupted a duel he was going to have with Yamagata Hikokuro of the Choshu Clan (aka Kazami Kyoichiro), just where he

lands is modern day Kyoto.

All those conflicts between the factions from his days are now the stuff of entertainment. And sometimes, the historical significance of who is in the right for the unification is explored, but what's more important is what this warrior class does, should any individual lose that stewardship.

Mononoke the Movie: Phantom in the Rain

When director Kenji Nakamura (*Gatchaman Crowds*) is making a movie, most anime fans are sure to take notice because his pop art style pretty much says it all. It's almost like experiencing an acid trip in some ways, but mostly, once you have seen *Mononoke*, you just have to ask how he can top it, and with this work, it's certain to be just as crazy.

Here, what we're wondering about is how Asa and Kame can survive working at a pleasure house, where Lord Tenshi keeps his harem. There's going to be more than the usual mash up of pleasures of the flesh and other odd desires being brought to the screen. Here, there's a paranormal element which caught my attention, and I hope these two boys can deal with it. There weren't ghostbusters back then.

Brush of the God (Kami no Fude)

Once a movie earns the label of a

kaiju film, I'll simply watch it, and here, it's about a young girl who wants to know more about her late grandfather. He's a model maker who's worked in many monster movies, and as for how she gets teleported into the worlds that her grandpa made, well, that's the mystery. I doubt this work will be like the *Last Action Hero*, but I'm very curious!

Dark Match

When Lowell Dean is the creative mind to this movie, it's certain to be a cult hit! Fans will know him for *Wolfcop* and this piece of Canadian horror has a classic supernatural spin wrapped around a classic 80s style sports-action film. I call this *Bloodsport* meets *Friday the 13th* meets *Fight Club*, and everything that happens cumulates to an epic fight not only at the wrestling ring but also perhaps elsewhere!

Here, Miss Behave (Ayisha Issa) is hardly satisfied with her life. She's one member of a group of small-time wrestlers who hope that one day, some media mogul offers them a deal of a lifetime. Unfortunately, when they are asked to bring their travelling show to a backwater town, they are none the wiser. They don't realise the ring-leader they're dealing with was a former wrestler himself, and that he fell from grace a long time ago! Only Mean Joe Lean (Steven Ogg) knows something about his past!

The person leading the charge (the venue where they're wrestling in) is a person named The Prophet (Chris Jericho). Also, he's nastier than a Cajun swamp rat.

What's presented isn't your typical WWE style eye candy. This is a horror movie, after all. And as for why this film has inter-titles like a classic boxing match on television, that's because everything is building up to something potentially world devastating. The Prophet is summoning something to this Earth, and as for why he's evil, for once there's a terrific backstory to explain his motives! This film is worth the watch for everything that gets built up, and after its world debut at Fantasia, Blue Finch Film will present it at a few more film festivals before distributing it to theatres/streaming services.

-Ed Sum

Sasquatch Sunset

I'm sure primatologists would say *Sasquatch Sunset* has the facts wrong. And when there's no conclusive study, to guess at how they survived for this long is anybody's game. But if you ask writer/directors Nathan and David Zellner about how their society works, what they offer is a movie designed to gross out rather than provide a proper look at.

The type of movie they made is a comedy of errors. The one positive thing I can mention is that it doesn't

intentionally try to scare. Had indigenous lore inspired this work and played more about the role between man and this culture, I'd enjoy this film more.

And the simple answer to how they managed to not be discovered is this: they avoid areas where no man can build bridges or roads while travelling. When they cross such a path, they're baffled, and that's where the suspension of belief falters.

As for those bits that are enduring, they're almost as human as us. The series of rituals they perform when one of them dies is heart-wrenching. However, if they cannot recover the corpse, I think they'll leave it to rot. I'm left to ask why haven't we found those bodies? When this movie comes to a finale, at least the irony is used to significant effect. I just hope things go well for them and hopefully they don't end up in a cage. It'd be sad, but appropriate.

3 Stars out of 5

-Ed Sum

The Exorcism (2024)

Russell Crowe must love playing priests. After *The Pope's Exorcist* and appearing in three other movies in between, he's now in *The Exorcism*. This latest is a slow burn which sees him as an alcoholic actor who thinks he can do what's right by trying to reconnect with his daughter (played by Ryan Simpkins) while at work. Unfortunately, he really does not

know what he's getting himself into! Casting this actor is the perfect choice, since he looks totally burnt out.

And as for blaming Moloch for everything, writers M.A. Fortin and Joshua John Miller (who also directed this film) really should have looked at the goetic grimoire *Ars Goetia*; it'd help make this work stand out when this genre isn't showing a lot of originality these days.

With recognizable names like Sam Worthington to help sell the film, I'm sad that this film isn't getting the attention it deserves. Unlike those other films where the directors love going over the top with showing the victim looking bent out of shape, this one keeps the ideas simple. Aside from those auditory and visual cues where we hear someone scream or witness those eyes going red, there's little else to be freaked out about.

Also, when I have fond memories of David Hyde Pierce as Dr. Niles Crane (*Frasier*) back when he was young, to see him play a different type of character is more welcoming than not. Besides, he's aged a lot. While he can still charm on a different level, there's more to like as he plays Father Conor. Without him, I doubt this film can stand well on its own.

3 Stars out of 5

-Ed Sum

Absolute Graphic Novel Reviews

POWERS: THE BEST EVER

Created by writer Brian Bendis and artist Michael Oeming, *Powers* is a superhero action comic disguised as a gritty cop-drama from HBO. There's creative cursing, graphic violence, and lots of nudity. It's also one of the best comic series I've ever read.



Powers has been coming out for almost 20 years and while THE BEST EVER is reportedly the final volume,

the creators have threatened that they could do more anytime they want. You probably shouldn't start here; You should start with *Powers* Volume 1. So why even review the final volume? Because sometimes it's nice to see how a journey concludes, to see if you'd recommend others take the trip.

Like a good fuck, *Powers* ends with a bang and several whimpers. It doesn't tie up two decades of loose ends, but it does make you feel like you experienced something real. It's got moments of surreal magic, and a lot of discussions about cum.

It makes me want to write my own superhuman neo-noir adventures—

so let's get started! "Fists of living steel clashed like lightning in the piss-soaked alley, while glass pipes shattered underfoot." Shit, okay forget that, maybe just go read *Powers*. It's fucking great.

-Hank at Golden Age

ALL STAR SUPERMAN COMPACT

DC Comics dropped a fresh dose of nostalgia with the re-release of



All Star Superman in a sleek, compact paperback. At almost half the size of the original, it's a good excuse to revisit this classic from nearly two decades back.

Written by Grant Morrison and illustrated by Frank Quitely, this comic is hailed as one of the greatest tales of the Man of Steel. But here's the twist: I ain't exactly Superman's number-one fan. Even with Morrison and Quitely at the helm, giving layers of depth and emotions that Supes usually lacks, I just can't get down with this cornball.

I'm not saying I need Clark to go all dark and edgy, smoking weed and quoting MF DOOM tracks. But this same ol' nice-guy farmboy routine just doesn't do it for me. As cool as the book looks, I simply don't want to hang out with this guy, or in his world. For all the wild action, Superman is still stuffy. Lois is outright unpleasant. Jimmy is smarmy and cloyingly cool.

Yeah, it's well-crafted, whimsical even, but it also feels uptight, and a little sanctimonious. Give me Morrison and Quitely on the X-Men any day.

-Hank at Golden Age

NEW X-MEN VOLUME 1, EPIC EDITION

Written and masterminded by Grant Morrison with art by Frank Quitely and a handful of other talented artists, originally published back in 2001.



Now this is my kinda comic book. Right from the start, the characters lay out a new take on the classic X-Men concept, with Cyclops expressing that he never understood why they dressed as superheroes, since they're really teachers, and rescue workers.

This ain't a superhero comic. It's a sci-fi odyssey about folks with superhuman abilities. These are stories about the world we live in, and the worlds we dream of living

in. Stories about freaks and weirdos and predators, exploring cultural evolution, self-discovery, and the power of working together.

The art creates detailed worlds you can walk right into, that have a surreal, fantastical vibe, rendering psychic experiences as mind-bending psychedelic trips and giving badass new takes on classic physical powers.

"You've been here before. You'll be here again. You were always here, waiting for yourself to arrive."

Some people are cool with the X-Men being kid's stuff, but this is what I've always wanted: mature sci-fi stories told about super-cool weirdos. These comics may be a quarter-century old, but they're as fresh as tomorrow's dawn.

-Hank at Golden Age

WATCHMEN COMPACT

What can I say about *Watchmen* that hasn't already been said in a million essays?



This is the compact paperback edition, about half the size of the standard, making it cheaper and easier to lug around. And after numerous adaptations and sequels, it's clear that the only way to improve on *Watchmen* was to lower the cover price.

I had to make sure it still worked at this new size, and thankfully, it does. If you're an elder like myself, you may require an ocular aid to properly delve into the teenier text, but the story remains just as impactful.

For the uninitiated, *Watchmen* is a superhuman murder mystery by writer Alan Moore and artist Dave Gibbons. With profound character depth and nuanced storytelling, it stands among the finest works of sequential art ever

made. It poses moral quandaries, and asks questions about the nature of existence that very few comics explore, making it profound, heartbreaking, and like true literature, capable of enriching your life in ways you didn't expect.

Yeah, it's that good. And this new edition? Just as exceptional, but a bit smaller and more affordable. If there's a downside to any of that, I haven't found it.

-Hank at Golden Age

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CROSSWORD NO. 108 SUMMER, 2024

Absolute Album Reviews

Bury Me On The South Shore

Unwanted Noise

Unwanted Noise, who appeared with their compatriots Destructive at the Punx Picnic in Paris, made quite an impression with their in-your-face street punk. Where crust can sometimes suffer from heaviness, street punk manages to bring more melody and sing-along.

Their new album *Bury Me On the South Shore* shows the vitality of the Quebec scene and contributes to the comeback of this musical trend, which has been losing ground since the mid-2010s.

Their themes are less political than other bands from the same scene. They deal more with life's obscure twists and turns, marked by the loss of a loved one on "Prevail" or closer to pogo punk on "Unstoppable".

-Arak Webzine

Carnage Craft

Flax

This is the second album I have heard from this guy and just like his previous offering, this is quite the extravagantly tasty morsel of slamming goregrind!

This is coined as a "slamming one man band" (fitting overall) by a guy named Tom from Wales! Music-wise I am highly reminded of the work done by Clay Lamanske of Cemetery Rapist (R.I.P. Cemetery Rapist)– though vocally, there is quite a dramatic difference from Clay's "cricket" vocals! The vocal work on this release is varied and quite enjoyable, and the instruments are well played. Just like the last release I heard from Flax the percussion is a bit weird, but I mean that in a good way. It is not uber-standard and the programming has a sound all of its own!

All 13 tracks on this album are spot on and although 25 minutes is a short release within most genres, in terms of goregrind this feels a bit more "full" than a lot of the stuff I have been perusing over the past little while! Overall, I just want you to check this shit out. It's pretty golden!

-Devin J. Meaney

Demo CERVIX

Scrolling through the underbelly of YouTube, I came to a demo by CERVIX! This is some very raw and primitive stuff! The production is very rough, but the music is on point and upbeat and leaves you feeling better off than when you initially struck up the YouTube stream! This short demo was released in 2024 and the band hails from Alabama, USA! I know very little about the Alabama punk scene, but if stuff like this is produced I can say I'd like to hear more!

Something worth mentioning is the vocals. They sound like they were recorded on a dollar store mic and it takes me back to my teenage years of making demos with friends. It wouldn't work with many kinds of music but with punk and crust and grind and stuff, this style of vocal works very well and actually adds character to the tracks!

Just check this demo out if you're into the raw stuff!

-Devin J. Meaney

EVA AvenueLie

The name "AvenueLie" may not be a household name as of yet, but after beginning their tour in 2013 as a group and rapidly gaining popularity, especially in both Japan and Northern Europe, they soon may become unforgettable. Nine years after the initial release of their first studio album *Genesis* in 2015, comes AvenueLie's second album *EVA*, released recently in June. Listening to the first few tracks

brings a sense of recognition, as the band have maintained their classic metal sound with a semblance of heavy guitar riffs and revolutionary lyrics inspired by love, death, the overcoming of hardship, and rock n' roll. The bands frontman, on guitar and vocals, Valerio Castiglioni, holds a strong stage presence while on tour, and expresses the vocal capabilities, and the lyrical complexities quite similar to M. Shadows from Avenged Sevenfold. The band's new album showcases their versatility in balancing heavy, singable choruses, with melodic, low-toned verses filled with lyrics built to inspire fellow metal heads all over the globe. Whether you're new to the scene, or a hardcore veteran, *EVA* is bound to get you out of your seat with a fist in the air.

-Michael O'Connor

Goop Goop

Once again, while scrolling the underbelly of YouTube, I landed on the Felopunk account! Literally the first demo I listened to in full was the S/T demo by Goop! It states on YouTube that this is Orange County hardcore! While the hardcore is evident, there is also a taste of an almost crusty/power-violence vibe. One might even say this is a tad "grindy" and is somewhat reminiscent of early SIEGE!

This was released in February of 2024 and is a pretty solid blast of head-banging goodness! Once again the Felopunk account has lived up to its name! I'd suggest anyone into this kind of noise checks out Felopunk on YouTube. This and much more is available for listening!

This is the type of release I'd like to hear on cassette! Owning physical releases holds a certain charm but I will always be thankful for streaming services like YouTube and Bandcamp for the mass availability of new bands to be heard and loved!

Listen to Goop!

-Devin J. Meaney

Insomniac Greenday

It has been a long time since I really listened to Greenday. Don't get me wrong– the odd time I hit up Youtube and listen to *Dookie*– mostly because it's a very nostalgic album for me as my cousin Jeff used to let me listen to his CD copy when I was a kid. I remember listening to *Insomniac* when I was younger, but it never was quite as home-hitting as *Dookie* for me. With that said, after listening to it again in my later years, I can state that *Insomniac* is just as good of an album as *Dookie*– and one thing I can state is that I really dig the production. It is a short album, but it is just long enough to get the motors running!

Is Greenday my favourite band? No. But do I enjoy them? Yes. One might call me "faux punk" for writing this review, but as an overweight 30-something man who lives with his mom and writes children's books, maybe "punk" isn't the best way to describe me anyway. With that said, I'm still not a fan of the "newer" Greenday– that "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" crap just ain't for me. There IS a lot of enjoyable Greenday though, with *Dookie* being my all time favourite, followed by *Kerplunk!* and *Insomniac*. *Insomniac* is the main focus of this review though, so put your jaded notions aside and give it a solid listen!

PS: I'm actually still punk as fark. Just don't tell my mother!

-Devin J. Meaney

Life's A Trap Pack Rat Drunken Sailor Records

Pack Rat is a progressive Patrick McEachnie (Chain Whip, Dead Boys) project , that has really jumped

into the pit triumphantly with new July 2024 release, *Life's A Trap*.

Two prior releases saw Patrick originally stepping out from behind the drums as a solo project, *Glad to be Forgotten* (2022). Additional layers of sounds and vocals were added for *Bite My Tongue* in 2023.

Life's a Trap is 13 lit tracks of pleasing garage pop punk, none ever cracking three minutes. It plays at a frenetic pace, with he/she vocal volleys, dual guitars, bass, drums, pure Ramones influences, and synths Johnnie Fingers would approve of. Without an overall theme, its more a musical translation of ordinary relatable thoughts felt strongly about at any given time. It's a record that makes you constantly keep switching favourites with every listen.

Highlights are the addictive "I Know You Know" that vaults right in between your ears. Catchy and a great sing along. "Sleepless" is silky, poppy standout track from Bella Bebe (Bratboy) whose vocals on this album add a whole other instantly appealing layer . "Neighbours" just seriously made me close the blinds more often. The scathing "Ask a Punk" caught my ear on the first pass through this record. Ode to promoters that take advantage of opening bands; there's lots of relatable thoughts here (read the lyrics) "You've got nine photographers on the guest list ". How many songs you know mention shows that have an overabundance of photographers shortcutting to the headliner? In the same way Joe Jackson's "I'm the Man" took a shot at selling you shit you don't need, "What I Need" I relate to strongly as I despise the advertising/influencer world. "Electrified" I could listen/dance to forever. What's missing? Song about rats? "Rat Trap".

Give *Life's A Trap* a loud listen. Pick up on what you relate to; the bands you know you can hear in its tapestry. Can't go wrong.

-John Carlow

No Songs Tomorrow: Darkwave, Ethereal Rock and Coldwave 1981-1990 Various Artists Cherry Red Records

After post punk was born, something strange and beautiful was born, something dark and daring; and this beautifully put together collection perfectly reflects this.

While we have more well-known acts like The Cure with "The Funeral Party", Alien Sex Fiend with "In And Out Of My Mind" and Cranes with "Focus Breath", we have a plethora of obscure gems to listen to, such as The Arms of Someone New with "Every Seventh Wave", Requiem In White with "A Prodigal Son", and Bushido with "High Rise".

All great art reflects the time it was created in and *No Songs Tomorrow* proves this adage in fine style. Essential!

-Steve Earles

Restless Death Disrotter

Vibing with a bit of the death/grind, I threw on *Restless Death*– the newest 2024 EP from the USA-based Disrotter! Hailing from West Virginia this is Disrotter's fourth release after a demo and two singles!

The vocals on this EP are force-filled and annihilating, the instruments bring forth both talent and heaviness– and when paired together, one can assume that what is brought to fruition is a sincere blast of underground mastery! This is a four track EP so I won't get lost in description. With that said, this is quite the little heap of shreds and gutturals and I daresay it is well worth a view or two! Just give it a listen!

-Devin J. Meaney

Servants of Darkness Nifelheim Cherry Red Records

Sometimes one gets a record to review that is so raw in its sincerity and power, that it requires little verbosity and hyperbole. Such a record is Nifelheim's *Servants of Darkness*, originally released on Black Sun Records back in the year 2000.

Building on the foundations of those that came before, such as Venom and Bathory, this is a lightning blast of true black metal, interestingly, it also displays an Iron Maiden influence! Essential for those that love the hellbound underground sound!

-Steve Earles

Severe Pulmonic Valve Regurgitation Pulmonary Fibrosis MELTAAARGH!!!! Records

After listening, I can state that it is by far a sordid little blast of nauseatingly delicious goregrind! The vocals are pitched (think Rompeprop and bands similar) and the guitars are deep and booming. The percussion is steadfast and vicious– and once these things are combined, what's offered up is abysmally delightful!

Nine tracks in just under fourteen minutes is what is on the platter and every minute is on par! Even the sampling is on point, although "sparse" in comparison to a lot of gore within this vein!

As stated in the YouTube bio, Pulmonary Fibrosis is a "goregrind band from Yzeures-sur-Creuse, France since 1998. This is their awesome single-sided LP released in December 2021 on 12" vinyl by MELTAAARGH!!!! Records." The LP is also available in digital format at the band's Bandcamp page and is available for streaming on YouTube. So buy it, download it, or at the very least give it a stream or two! I hope you enjoy it just as much as I did!

-Devin J. Meaney

The Epic Years 1976-1978 The Vibrators Cherry Red Records

The Vibrators go way back to the original punk rock explosion in the UK, even supporting Iggy Pop on his 1977 British tour. This is an excellent four-disc set covering the adventures of The Vibrators in the years 1976 to 1978.

The first CD is their *Pure Mania* debut. The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music credits *Pure Mania* as being one of the top fifty punk albums of all-time. Indeed, Stiff Little Fingers actually took their name from the song of the same name on this album. To my ears, *Pure Mania* is more raw rock n' roll than punk, and there is nothing wrong with that. It's excellent.

CD 2 is the equally excellent V2, the follow-up to *Pure Mania*. It features the track "Troops of Tomorrow". This was later covered The Exploited, and then subsequently covered by Vader, who I strongly suspect thought it an original by The Exploited!

CD 3 consists of excellent sessions recorded at the BBC with the legendary John Peel, and finally CD 4 is a live recording from the Marquee recorded in 1977, and in many ways, is the highlight of this collection.

Overall, a fitting collection of the legendary years of a legendary band!

-Steve Earles

Warrior Rock - Toyah On Tour Toyah Cherry Red Records

One of the things that strikes me as I listen to this sonic record of the majesty that was Toyah's *Warrior*

Rock tour is... why didn't Toyah become a huge star? I'd say her sheer originality was a big factor in this. She was, and is, no corporate cookie cutter android!

As an aside I have to say one of the very best things on this excellent 3 CD set is "Thunder In The Mountains", an epic slab of what can only be described as heavy metal. I would love to see a heavy metal band cover this, it would be huge for them, one of the best metal songs you've never heard.

Elsewhere, the hits keeping coming, "Good Morning Universe", "Warrior Rock", "I Want To Be Free" (don't we all! A great sentiment!) and "Brave New World". The live performances are electrifying, the warmth and rapport between Toyah and her fans is a joy to hear. I think there must have been some occult alchemy in the air in the '80s, as so much great art was produced in this decade.

A thing of beauty and joy forever!

-Steve Earles

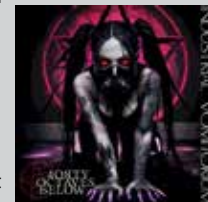
40 Octaves Below

It's Just A Little Splatter, Darling

By AU Editorial

Vancouver, BC's very own 40 Octaves Below has just released their fourth full-length album. If you like Skinny Puppy, Front Line Assembly, or Combichrist, your mom is going to hate this shit too.

Industrial Vomitorium is an auditory splattering of dark malformations. It is a celebration of



disjointed composition and experimentation and features a cover of Joy Division's "She's Lost Control".

Mastered by Anthony (H) and released on It's Alive Network Enterprises (Independent), *Industrial Vomitorium* is emergent, smashing, unapologetic, noisy, and relentless. You'll find it streaming in all the usual places. Look for the remix album soon to follow.

40octavesbelow.bandcamp.com

YouTube/FB/X: @40octavesbelow

IG: @40octavesbelow1 itsalive.net

PUNKS IN RECOVERY

PUNKS IN RECOVERY

Around 2500 years ago, Buddha suggested that "We Suffer Because We Desire".

He proposed that if we could eliminate our desire, we could possibly also eliminate our suffering. How? He believed that we could eliminate our desire through a practice of personal discipline, mindful living, and paying attention to the consequences of our choices.

Well, my friend Casey was very unfamiliar with the teachings of the Buddha.

Casey was one of my best friends, and had been missing for a few weeks. After a significant run at sobriety, he abandoned his house, wife, and responsibilities and fell back into using. Over 15 days, Casey had injected close to three ounces of cocaine, swallowed a steady stream of hard liquor, and a handful of painkillers. Hiding out in various locations, with "friends" dropping off supplies, he had barely slept.

When I finally met up with him for the first time

in nearly a month, Casey had been plagued by delusions of police and dead people stalking him. Window shades drawn, alone with his pit-bull, he had various weapons stashed all over his house. His feet were swollen, because had been pacing steadily for days.

Casey's forearm and hand were huge, swollen and tight, covered in cracking scabs seeping pus, from a missed injection. The hit had gone rancid, and turned septic. Eventually, doctors would need to cut his whole hand open, to forcefully relieve the pus and clean the infection from around the tendons. He almost died from blood poisoning.

I was trying to have a serious conversation about his actions and future, to no avail. Casey kept returning to how he was not looking forward to the next coming week or two of pain... both from the infection, and the withdrawals he knew were creeping in. He kept repeating that this relapse had still been a good thing. How nobody cared about him. How the drugs were the only joy he had. How the bender felt like heaven to him after a few years of sobriety.

As I looked at his body, wracked with track marks, blisters, and infection, I had to stop him mid-sentence.

"Often what feels like heaven in the moment is actually hell, man. Look at yourself. And now, what will feel like hell for the next while, will be necessary to actually get to any type of 'heaven' in reality. If you even WANT to be healthy again."

Casey started crying. He was in a lot of pain, internally and externally. It was obvious he was not sober enough yet for any of this to actually sink in. I was talking to his desire-deluded consciousness, not the rational man that I knew and loved. His hedonistic mind still saw sense-pleasure as the only good, and anything that wasn't pleasurable, was bad. Anyone who wanted him to stop using, was equally an enemy. The Buddhist concept of the hungry ghosts came to mind.

His wife was furious with him; their marriage had been conditional on mutual recovery and sobriety. His selfishness, and attempt at self destruction, represented an abandonment of her, their kids, and the home they had tried to build together. She sat in the next room glaring in cold silence, trying to find reasons why she shouldn't just pack her things and leave.

It was time for him to return to a self work Program, to take his well-being seriously. To

return to 12 step meetings to find a community of peers. Casey said that he had worked the steps multiple times, and knew them all by heart now. I suggested that if he had earnestly worked those steps just a single time, we likely would not be having this conversation now. He would still be clean and sober.

He just looked away back down at his hand, "I need to go talk to a doctor about this infection man, it hurts so bad. But I'm embarrassed."

I didn't have much bright news or hope to give him. Everybody's nerves were raw. It could end badly.

"Yeah man, that will happen. Shame is the consequence of making shitty choices."

We are still finding out where Casey's story will end. I just hope with time, sobriety will once again be an option. It isn't going to be an easy trip.

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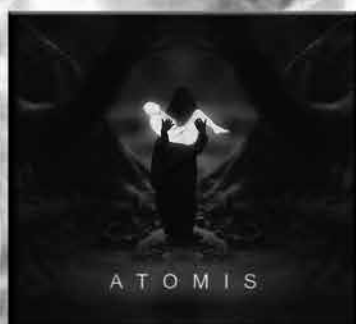
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STONER SNACKINGS

Musings on Munchies and Other Consumables

DORITOS - Cool Ranch

Like the internet and Pokemon cards, these have been around since the '90s, and have since become a fairly ubiquitous aspect of life, to the point that if you went into a shop and they didn't have Cool Ranch Doritos, you'd worry that perhaps there was some state of emergency going out that you were unaware of.



A bag of Cool Ranch tells the world a lot of things about you. It says, "I've got some friends coming over, and we're gonna get high and play video games." It also says, "I have no friends, but I'm still gonna have a damn good evening." That's the diversity of Cool Ranch chips. If some dude shows up at your house, you might be like, "oh great, this guy," but if they show up with a bag of Cool Ranch, you'll be like "oh great! This guy!"

Cool Ranch chips are a 10/10. There's no way around it. They're iconic in a way few snacks are capable of being. Of course, by the time you're done the bag your fingers and breath will stink like hot cat shit, but hey, that's the price you pay to touch greatness and glory.

-Hank Pattison

HAVOC - Smoky Nacho

Havoc is the newest kid on the block I've seen on the shelves of No Frills. I get the impression that the different flavours also come in different shapes and textures, but the ones I had felt more

like cheezies than chips. Heavily machine-processed, to the point where no original form could be detected.



The flavour was a bit obnoxious, with the spice being so intense that it almost blotted out the rest of the flavours. I've said this before and I'll say this again- I don't want to be challenged by my snack foods. I want to enjoy them, and not have them distracting me from the episode of *Bob's Burgers* I'm trying to watch.

When I eat chips I'm not entering into some macho contest so my taste buds can fistfight a sleazy biker gang of artificial flavours all vying to be the stinkiest and most repugnant guy at the party. I'm trying to relax, and have a good time.

3/10, and if this is as mild as Havoc chips get, I'm not all that interested in trying the others. It's hard to appreciate a treat when you're distracted by thoughts of forthcoming heartburn and rectal scorching.

-Hank Pattison

DORITOS - Baja Fiery Mango

This is a limited-time flavour only available in specialty stores. I saw people eating them online and I was fascinated; it's such a compelling jumble of words. Mangos? Fiery? Baja? That sounds like a good day at the beach.



To paraphrase John Waters from his episode

of *The Simpsons*, I just love the graphics on this bag. A wild wave of orange crashes against a big blue sky, with an exploding volcano in the distance, and a cartoon shark snapping at the Doritos logo. I wish every flavour of chip had its own cartoon mascot.

The chip itself is pretty gross. I was hoping it would taste like a corn chip dipped in spicy mango salsa, but instead it has a weird metallic ting to it, reminding me a bit of Sriracha sauce, but not in a good way. It's trying way too hard to be too many things, resulting in a confusing, disgusting mess.

10/10 for bag design, 2/10 for taste. A fun novelty item I would not purchase again, especially considering it was twice the price of a normal bag. It's more fun to talk about than to actually eat.

-Hank Pattison

MCDONALDS - Grimace Shake

You seen that online meme where folks buy Grimace shakes and then edit the video to look like drinking one leads to instant chaos and death? Well, after that viral madness, you know I had to try one. Besides the memes, I got a soft spot for limited-time snacks, especially when they're tied to some cartoonish character.



I grabbed one for myself and one for the guy sitting at the bus stop all day; gotta look out for our people on the streets, especially when it's scorching hot.

Now, I didn't lose my mind, but I did learn that the Grimace shake is real sweet. Not sweet like a gentle kiss, but more like a kick to the jaw.

Supposedly, it's got a berry flavour, but to me, it tasted more like cotton candy than anything that ever grew on a plant.

I didn't hate it. I drank the whole thing and would've had more if my cup was bigger. But will I buy another one? Eh, not any time soon.

7/10- I expected worse but hoped for better. I ain't rushing out for another, but if you ain't gonna finish yours, I'll take it off your hands.

-Hank Pattison

LAYS - Cool Ranch

You remember a few minutes ago when I was talking about Cool Ranch Doritos being one of the best chips ever? Well, Lays decided to get in on that game, with a potato variant on the classic corn chip.



I'm not big on Lays chips. I'm not down with their over-processed texture, and I always associate them with watery poops, ever since Lays tried to do a Lays-Light by accidentally including a diuretic ingredient. Look up Lay's Wow Chips and Olestra if you want a laugh and a warning.

My big issue with Lay's Cool Ranch, aside from their texture, is the flatness of the taste. These ain't Cool Ranch; they're more like a Lukewarm Farm, and without that Doritos logo blazing on the bag, I'd never guess the flavour they're seeking to emulate. It wasn't bad, but my taste buds were on autopilot, thinking I was munching on some plain old Sour Cream & Onion.

5/10- enjoyably edible, but fell short of the promise on the packaging. I'd really rather just have some Doritos, than these pale facsimiles.

-Hank Pattison

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