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# ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

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HAPPY HALLOWEEN

ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND



## Precursor

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

**Daniel Sioui:** Hey, I'm Daniel Sioui. Vocalist for Precursor. Infamous for drinking a cup of spit in the high school cafeteria that required me to get a psychiatric evaluation to re-attend school. It was wild.

**AU: Precursor is made up of Stuart McKillop (Daggermouth/End This Week with Knives), Daniel Sioui (Carpenter/All State Champion), Gabe Mantle (Gob, BNU), Travis Hein (Neck of the Woods) and Blaine McNamee (In Bear Country). How did you guys get together? Can you give us a brief history of Precursor?**

**DS:** Stu, Blaine and I started the band with Andy 12 years ago. We wanted to play fast punk rock that was fighting against the Mumford and Sons suspender rock vibe that was taking over. When Gabe and Travis joined things just got better, more melodic and faster.

**AU: Your new album *Thick & Thin* was just released in August. Any particular tracks**

**you're stoked on?**

**DS:** "Where's the Cavalry?" has a great sing-along chorus with gangs that I love. "A Bitter Pill" has the pop sensibility of a Promise Ring song that reminds me of being a teenager loving early emo and hardcore. I think the album is very consistent and takes you on a bit of a journey. Lots of hope and rage fighting one another. Like life.

**AU: You have previously mentioned how difficult this album was to make; months of starting and stopping, completely**

**rewriting some songs, on top of raising kids and dealing with deaths of friends. How did you manage to push through? Did any of this come through in the lyrical themes?**

**DS:** [This] album is full of fight both lyrically and in the performance. I think you can hear the frustration of covid, of life being too busy, of losing friends to suicide. I wanted to try and be hopeful, but still show the reality of life for many of us at the moment. It's a struggle. Working near the DTES of Vancouver also played a part. Seeing the despair and destruction of people on their last legs every day. It's hard to see even after 20+ years of seeing it. We need to do better.

**AU: Are you planning on doing any shows or tours to promote the new album?**

**DS:** We are playing an all-ages show at Bully's Studios in New West on October 18th with Contra Code and Selfist. That'll be an awesome show and we're the slowest band, which feels odd to say.

**AU: Halloween is coming up. Any plans?**

**DS:** Definitely hitting a house party and taking the kids out. Halloween is a big deal at our place. We decorate and try to keep it going for a full month. As an adult, life gets pretty monotonous

so any excuse to live it up and be a kid again is worth doing.

**AU: Will you be dressing up?**

**DS:** Absolutely. Thinking Frank from *Donnie Darko* will really make an impression on folks... that are old enough to know it.

**AU: Top three horror movies of all time?**

**DS:** Tough question! Gotta say *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*, *Evil Dead 3*, *Halloween*. All classics. Honourable mention to *The Stuff* and *CHUD*.

**AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?**

**DS:** Vancouver punk is such a small scene with not many venues, so I want people to try and get

# VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

out and support indie bands when they can. It's not a money-making venture at this point. People do it because they love it and we should reward them for that.

**AU: Famous last words?**

**DS:** Feels like that's gotten lost and something worth thinking about in almost every aspect of life. You don't know what people are going through behind the curtain.

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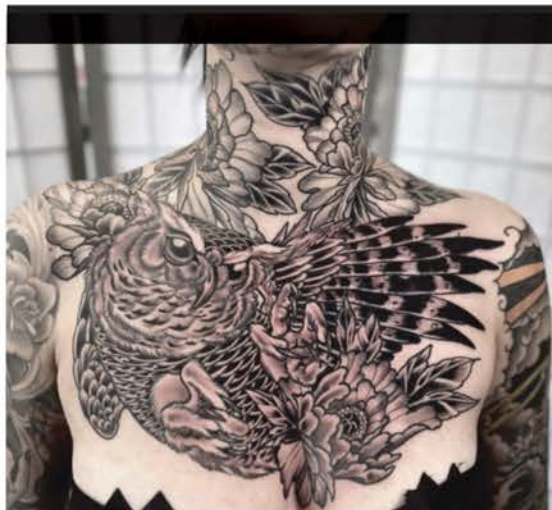
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## Baily Howatt

Deadly Tattoos, Calgary, AB

By Kip Phillips

**Absolute Underground: What influenced you to become a tattoo artist?**

**Baily Howatt:** Mainly, my big brother. He got a tattoo when he was 16 and I was 10 at the time. I didn't have a lot of access to tattoos being from Whitehorse. So, when my brother would buy tattoo magazines, I would steal them from him when he was done, obsess over them, and try to trace the drawings. That was the beginning.

**AU: How long have you been a tattoo artist and where did you get your start?**

**BH:** About eight or nine years. I started working at Adrenaline in Vancouver, but had an opportunity to be an apprentice at Funhouse Tattoo under Fester Castruita. I

moved there and was mentored by Fester. Then I went to Gastown Tattoo, which is now called Pacific Rose Tattoo. I worked there for about five years or so. I was really busy then, which was very lucky because I was doing tons of tattoos, and that isn't super common for people earlier in their career. After that, I went to Ninety Nine Tattoo because Fester opened his own shop, and I worked there for the last couple of years.

Then I moved to Calgary, and have been at Deadly Tattoos since March of this year. James Tex at Deadly Tattoos is a legend and I've always looked up to him. Working with James was clearly my first choice, so I thought I would try since I was moving to Calgary. There are a lot of good tattooers in Calgary, but I feel like James is a beast and continues to push.

**AU: What is your favourite style of tattooing?**

**BH:** Stuff that is closer to a more classic style like Japanese illustrative work and traditional tattooing. I like to do bold clean work, and I think simpler is better.

**AU: I remember you telling me when you tattooed my leg that my concept was like an acid trip and to keep it clean and simple, which turned out to be great advice. Have you noticed any differences in tattooing between Calgary and Vancouver?**

**BH:** Definitely, there is. I feel like in



Alberta, people are much more into big and full coverage, and more illustrative stuff that is a lot more colourful and bright. People are more interested in larger scale and more dynamic drawings that take up bigger portions of the body. In Vancouver, I did a lot more black and white tattooing and American traditional tattoos, like the classic sailor jerry style tattoo that is very simple and flat. In Vancouver, I would say 80% of the people I would tattoo would get black and white, and in Calgary, it is about 80% colour tattoos.

**AU: Very interesting. I got a black and white tattoo from you, but I was in Vancouver so I think I was swayed. What music do you listen to while you work?**

**BH:** I like a bit of everything. I listen to black metal because I find it a lot more melodic, I like Mayhem, but some clients don't like to listen to metal while getting a tattoo. I also like jazz, electronic, and '70s country too, like Conway Twitty; I like truck driving outlaw country music.

**AU: Where is the strangest place you have tattooed?**

**BH:** I've tattooed at the Moscow Tattoo Convention in Russia, which was definitely different. The people were very nice, but they don't have a rich tattoo culture so they are into very different things. There wasn't a lot of American traditional influences because they aren't shackled by that, they are open to different types of tattoos more like colour realism or tribal things

## INK SLINGERS

that you don't see as much in North America.

**AU: Any strange stories from things people have said when they are getting tattooed?**

**BH:** I mean, I've never been shocked, but I do feel like I talk to people a lot while I am tattooing. I also always lay people down, but I did have a kid faint while he was sitting in the chair once, which is why I don't sit people down anymore. He passed out, but the weirder part was his eyes stayed open so I basically held his limp head with his dead gerbil eyes until he regained consciousness. He finished his tattoo though.

**AU: That is hilarious. What would you tell your younger self today as a tattoo artist?**

**BH:** I would say it is important to draw a lot; try to draw every single day. I would also say don't be focused on what other people are doing. When I was younger, I would spend time comparing myself to other apprentices or other tattooers, but it was a waste of time. Just try to focus on what you are doing, and try to be better at that.

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## Derelict

Interview by Asher Thrasher

**AU: Who are you and what do you do?**

**Derelict:** Derelict is a technical death metal band with progressive elements. We originally hail from Montreal, but we do everything long-distance these days. We combine elements of '90s progressive death metal with more modern technical death metal influences. The result is an amalgam of punchy riffs, complex rhythms fused with melodic moments and a powerful, yet clear vocal approach.

**AU: The band is returning after a 12-year hiatus, how does it feel to be back?**

**Derelict:** Both Eric and I (Max) had been sitting on a lot of material over the years, so it was great to get back together and collaborate. The process was very organic and we're proud of the result.

**AU: What made the band choose to resurface after over a decade?**

**Derelict:** When we had gone on hiatus in 2012, there had never been any bad blood. Our drummer Jordan had injured himself and a break was needed. In 2022, in the middle of the pandemic, Eric and I had started chatting about music again. He'd been playing seriously again and wouldn't mind working on something. I had a

riff lying around which I sent to him. He came back immediately with a complementary part and we ended up writing "Clear Cut" in about three days. We got Jordan and

Seb back on board and released it as a single and kind of a 10-year anniversary from our last album *Perpetuation*. We had a lot of fun and we felt inspired, so Eric and I decided we wanted to continue writing more Derelict material. *Versus Entropy* is the end result.

**AU: How have you found adjusting to a music scene that has changed since your last record?**

**Derelict:** There have definitely been a lot of changes in the music scene since 2012, but I don't think it affected our process very much. I think our more old-school approach could be seen as kind of refreshing in today's scene. That being said, it's not like we haven't been affected by newer music. Take the vocal approach for example. We mostly go with a single vocal track, and maybe a backup for certain parts, as opposed to layering tons of vocal lines one on top of the other. I think it makes the

vocals a bit more distinguishable.

**AU: What can fans expect from your new album *Versus Entropy*?**

**Derelict:** It's an album that is kind of divided in two halves. The first four songs are what our fans would expect: tight riffs, complex rhythms combined with melodic passages and non-linear song structures. Then we have the instrumental, "Attunement", which is quite progressive and different for us. There are many moods and

layers going on and it opens up the more experimental second half of the record.

"Dans les Dents" is in French, it can be loosely translated as "In Your Face" or "A Kick in the Teeth". It's maybe the most purely brutal song we've ever done. It's also the first Derelict track to not feature Eric on lead vocals.

The follow-up, "Spectrum", showcases our Southern influences such as Lamb of God, Down, Pantera, and even Stevie Ray Vaughan. These are influences that have never manifested themselves in our sound before. It talks about inclusive masculinity which I find is a nice play on some of the tropes associated with that genre.

"Derelict", as you might imagine, talks about the band and our love and vision for what we do. It's very thrashy and yet quite melodic.

The album closer, "The Escapist" kind of brings it back around to more traditional Derelict elements, but once again, I'm doing the lead vocals on the song which is something new for us.

**AU: How was the writing and recording process for this album with all members scattered in different parts of the world?**

**Derelict:** It was incredibly organic, and in a weird way it was easier than *Perpetuation*. In 2012, the band was going through a bit of a crisis. We had just lost two key members and it was really a "three guys vs the world" mentality. We are proud of the result, but it wasn't necessarily easy to make. Sebastian had also really bailed us out at the time, recording his parts at home in Switzerland and sending them to us.

This time around, although the distance was a challenge, we worked around it. Eric and I wrote all the songs. So, with a combination of Guitar Pro, Dropbox, and Messenger vocal notes, we were able to really fine tune each track. We're more mature now and more willing to have fun and experiment. Almost every song on the album is a result of total collaboration between Eric and I,

## MONTREAL MASSACRE

both for the song structures as well as the vocals.

On *Perpetuation* I did almost all the guitars, including all the lead work. We split that up this time and Eric played half the rhythm guitars and some leads as well. On the flipside, Eric suggested I do lead vocals on two of the songs. We also did a lot more call/response. We had a lot of fun and I think you can hear it. Unfortunately, Jordan, our long-time drummer, was unavailable due to other commitments. We contacted Tommy McKinnon whom we knew from various projects and bands he's been with (Neuraxis, Akurion, Humanoid etc.) and once he was on board, we were cooking.

We all recorded our parts in our respective home studios. Eric and I did the guitars first and sent the tracks to Tommy and Seb and they each did their thing in BC and Switzerland respectively. Everything was done long-distance except the vocals. Eric flew out to Montreal and we recorded the vocals with our friend Pavlo Haikalis. He's my personal luthier and he's a great engineer who's worked with many people in the scene.

**AU: How did you get JF Dagenais (Kataklysm) to do the mixing and mastering for this record?**

**Derelict:** We asked him! JF is a legend in the scene and it was an honour to work with him. His mix of old school approach with modern techniques was the perfect blend for us. He did an amazing job capturing the band's sound and was incredibly professional and easy to work with. We were a bit awestruck at first, but he was laid back and easy to talk to.

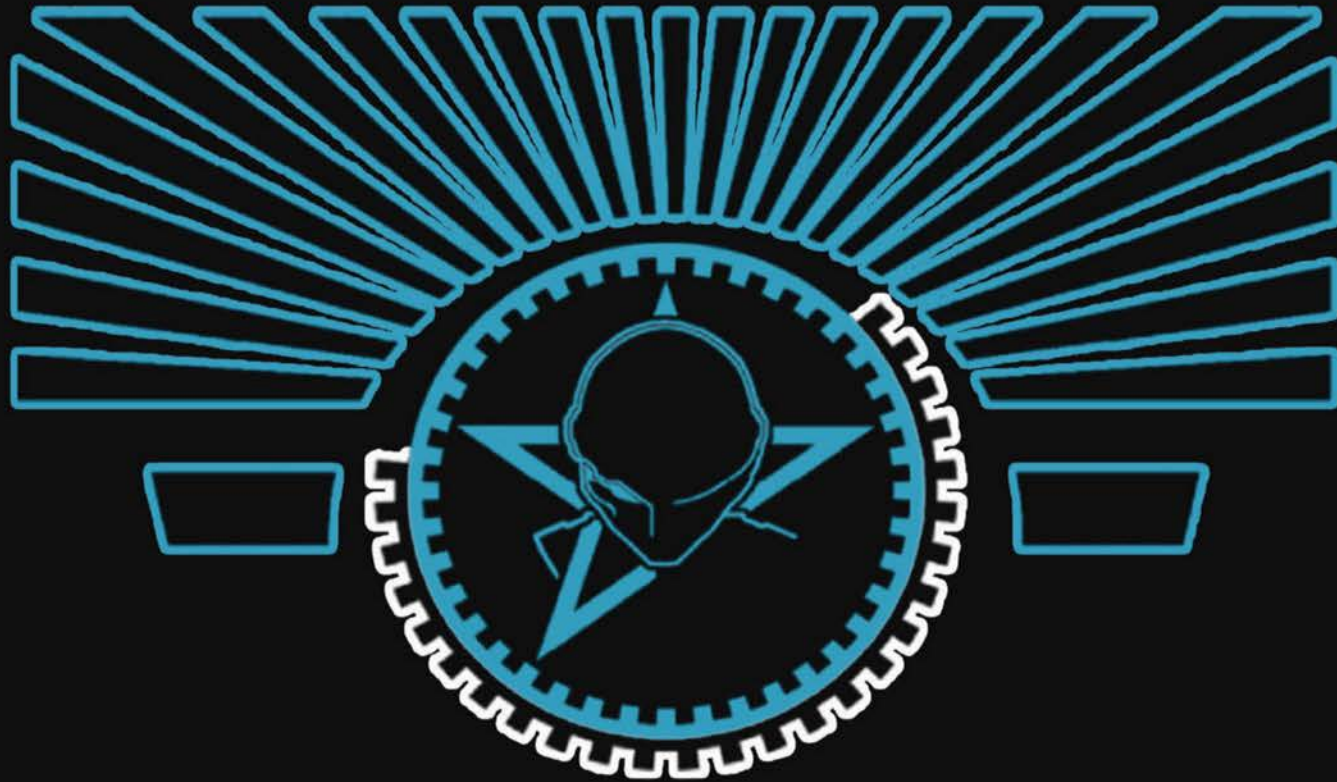
**AU: Anything else you would like to add?**

**Derelict:** We're really proud and inspired by this new release and we hope you enjoy it. Keep supporting your local scene as well as publications like this one that keep it alive. Hailz!

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# Powerload

By Dre Calderon

**Absolute Underground: Who am I talking to, and who else is in the band?**

**Shel Shock:** You're getting it LOUD and CLEAR from Shel Shock! I play with myself, the bass and yell into microphones. Brett Michaels on the six-string razor and Hellhammered laying it raw on the foreskins while also doing a lot of yelling.

**AU: Care to share where the band name comes from?**

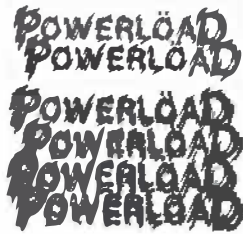
**SS:** AC/DC and Disfear. If you listen to our music or see a picture of us it all makes sense. Also, we love cumming MASSIVE loads and dumping LÖADS of shit out our butts.

**AU: How long have you guys been a band?**

**SS:** We started in the current new age of Aquarius. We were all born last year and had rapid growth spurts from watching Bon Scott's jeans rip in the *For Those About to Rock* movie.

**AU: How do you guys write your music? Any particular reason why Shel Shock and Hellhammered trade off vocal duties?**

**SS:** Normally, Brett is super high and unfocused



playing with his balls and/or guitar so Hellhammered and I just start yelling at each other eventually they become slabs of rock n' roll.

**AU: Where do the lyrics come from? And why a song about Frank Zito instead of, say, Leatherface or Michael Myers?**

**SS:** Lyrics come from our dicks, also thousands of beers and tequila shots. Michael Myers and Leatherface don't have shit on the *Maniac* mad

man Frank. Not to mention homie was in *THE GODFATHER* and *ROCKY!*

**AU: Have you seen the remake of Maniac?**

**SS:** Bretty and I have and we both like it, but Hellhammered is an OG devotee. He has been drinkin' and thinkin' about finally giving it a go though.

**AU: Can you describe one of your shows to anyone who may be curious to check it out?**

**SS:** A Powerload show is like getting a can of High Test beer getting smashed into your face but not spilling any, it all just slides down your throat and you get the urge to do drugs and headbang all over the place while being super horny. They can expect to see no shirts, dicks to the sky and maybe some music if we're up to it.

**AU: Where can people find your music? Any plans to release more? If so, when?**

**SS:** Bandcamp for buying and being a TRUE ROCK N' ROLL SUPPORTER, all the streaming services for nerds who don't like when underground artists get paid for their work. We have lots of rock n' roll nuggets for the kiddies coming up soon. We're just looking for a boombox with a microphone.

# SHR-EDMONTON

**SS:** We are playing on Mars next week. Book us in your town!

**AU: Any final words?**

**SS:** Make sure you are drinking lots of water to stay hydrated. It's super important.

**IG:** [powerload.yeg](https://www.instagram.com/powerload.yeg)

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**AU: When is your next show?**

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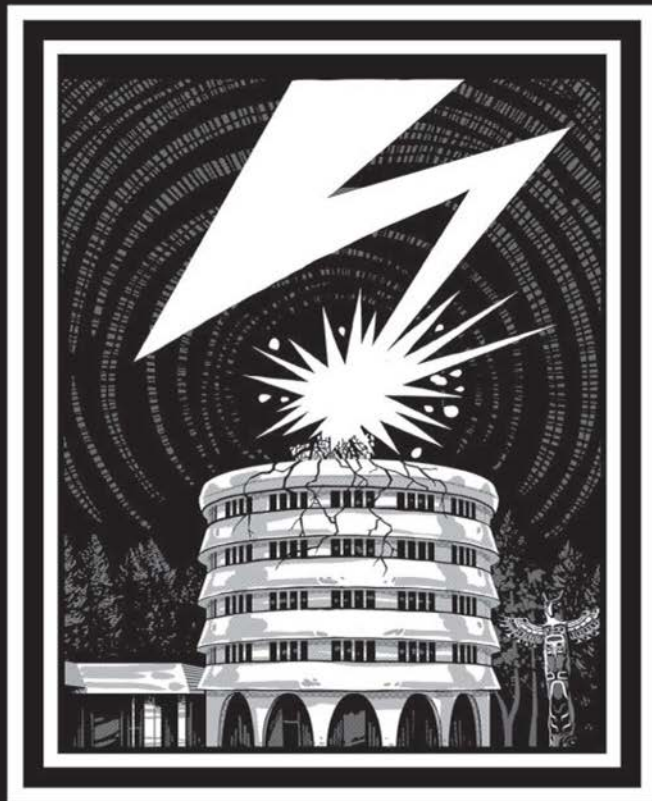
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## Tales of the Bong Witch

Interview by John Carlow

Photo by Finding Charlotte Photography

**Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves.**

**Dan Froese:** Guitar and vox – Ex-Cowboy, Poppa Don Gernie, Smokestacks, Jobsite.

**Braxton Glass:** Guitar and vox – Saltwater Cowboy, Juniper Smile.

**Sam Burke:** Bass guitar and vox – Maitarra, Special Guests.

**Ben DeCicco:** Drums and vox – Standard Issue Pleasure Model, HopeCity Waters, Maitarra, Special Guests.

**AU: When and how did the band come to be?**

**BW:** The group initially started as more of a side project between Sam, Dan, and Braxton who were all playing in different groups at the time. Once we started getting some tunes that we really liked we brought in Ben on drums who had played with Sam in Maitarra. As the songs started to take shape, it shifted quite naturally into a gigging band with a full setlist and some shows booked, moving beyond the side project stage. We had a bit of a tough time finding a band name, and we kind of stumbled across Bong Witch as a bit of a cliché of typical stoner rock and metal

band names. We were really surprised when we looked into it that the band name hadn't been taken so it just kind of stuck.

**AU: Genre/style?**

**BW:** We play stoner rock/doom metal, but we think the sound is unique due to the combination of various influences from our members. Prior to Bong Witch, we were all playing in different genres with indie or punk flavors, and we think those sensibilities really come through in our music. We like to play with dynamics in

our songs, in contrast to primarily sitting on heavy riffs which is more common to the genre.

**AU: Bands that have influenced/inspired your sound?**

**Sam:** I feel that my influences are ever changing, but at the moment, I feel most drawn to the sounds of Yusef Dayes Trio, Goblin, Fabiano Do Nascimento, Portishead, Pentangle, Primus, and Elmore James.

**Ben:** At a young age, I was introduced to Rush and Dream Theater and quickly became a huge Prog-head. I am always inspired by bands that are very drum-forward like The Police, Led Zeppelin, Coheed and Cambria, VOLA, and Yusef Dayes (thanks to Sam).

**Braxton:** I'm really inspired by psychedelic folk acts like Robbie Basho, Joanna Newsom, and Ryley Walker, as well as classic '70s prog, like Genesis and King Crimson. In terms of music like what we play, I take inspiration from doom bands like Candlemass and Cathedral.

**Daniel:** I like riffs, big heavy and loud ones. Some of my influences for this project include Electric Wizard, Eyehategod, and All Them Witches, while also taking inspiration from traditional blues artists like Son Seals and Freddie King.

**AU: Creative process?**

**BW:** One of us usually shows up to practice and goes "yo check out this riff". We jam it for a while, come up with some more parts all together and then realize we have a show in a week and need to write lyrics for it if we want to play it live. It all comes together organically, and it's really refreshing to work in a space that is completely collaborative within the band. We always try to work collectively on songs to make sure that everyone is happy with how songs are progressing and to maintain our creative and dynamic sound.

**AU: What are your songs generally about?**

**BW:** We consider our songs an anthology of stories told as the "Tales of the Bong Witch". Whether these tales are from the perspective of the Bong Witch, or some other character that has encountered the enchanted witch, they tend to emphasize the aura of such a mysterious character. Some songs take inspiration from various folklore. Also, smokin' weed. There's a bit of a nerdy flavour to some of the songs, but we think it fits well within our sound.

**AU: Do you try to embed a message in your songs?**

**BW:** Most of our stories are inspired by folklore or fantasy, so they're pretty on the nose. Our newer material we are working on has some more subtext in our writing—keep your ears peeled in the future. Also, free Palestine.

**AU: How many shows have you played?**

**BW:** We've played seven shows so far and look forward to playing more! We've only been playing around Victoria so far but we're planning to branch out and start playing shows around Vancouver Island and the lower mainland.

**AU: Thoughts on the local scene?**

**BW:** The music scene in Vic is bumpin' with amazing bands/musicians of almost every genre. Just witnessing it is such a treat. The friends we have been able to make in Victoria through the local music scene we hope will be lifelong. Such

## VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

kind and caring individuals that love to support one another. Huge shoutout to our friends in Slugger. We are really grateful to have had Matt join us for a show while Sam was away.

**AU: Who would you like to be billed with?**

**BW:** Our dream show is having Sleep and Metallica open for us at Oaklands Community Centre. Also: Pontius Pilot (Victoria Based), Checked Out (Vancouver based), Heliophaga (Victoria based), VOLA, Windhand, Elder, and lots of others.

**AU: Have you recorded anything?**

**BW:** Our first self-recorded EP is out October 11. We will be making cassettes and CDs of our EP. Hopefully people will find our music on Bandcamp, but it will be available on most other streaming platforms as well.

**AU: Preference of format for recorded music?**

**BW:** We like listening to vinyl because of the cost and inconvenience. We also like tapes and CDs.

**AU: Plans for the road ahead?**

**BW:** Write and record more songs! Possibly a full length in the future? Also getting some sick touring bands to come to town, it's always a treat to share the bill with other like-minded bands who create rad art. We'd also like to accompany a film with a live soundtrack, if we could rent out a local independent theater/cinema.

**AU: Last thoughts?**

**BW:** Shout out to our mommies and daddies. Shout out to Alberta Genuine Draft (sponsor us please). All y'all reading, get together with your homies, start a band, and play loud, heavy music! You'll be able to find us on all streaming platforms as of October 11, accompanying our debut release. Or send us an email!

[bongwitchbc@gmail.com](mailto:bongwitchbc@gmail.com)

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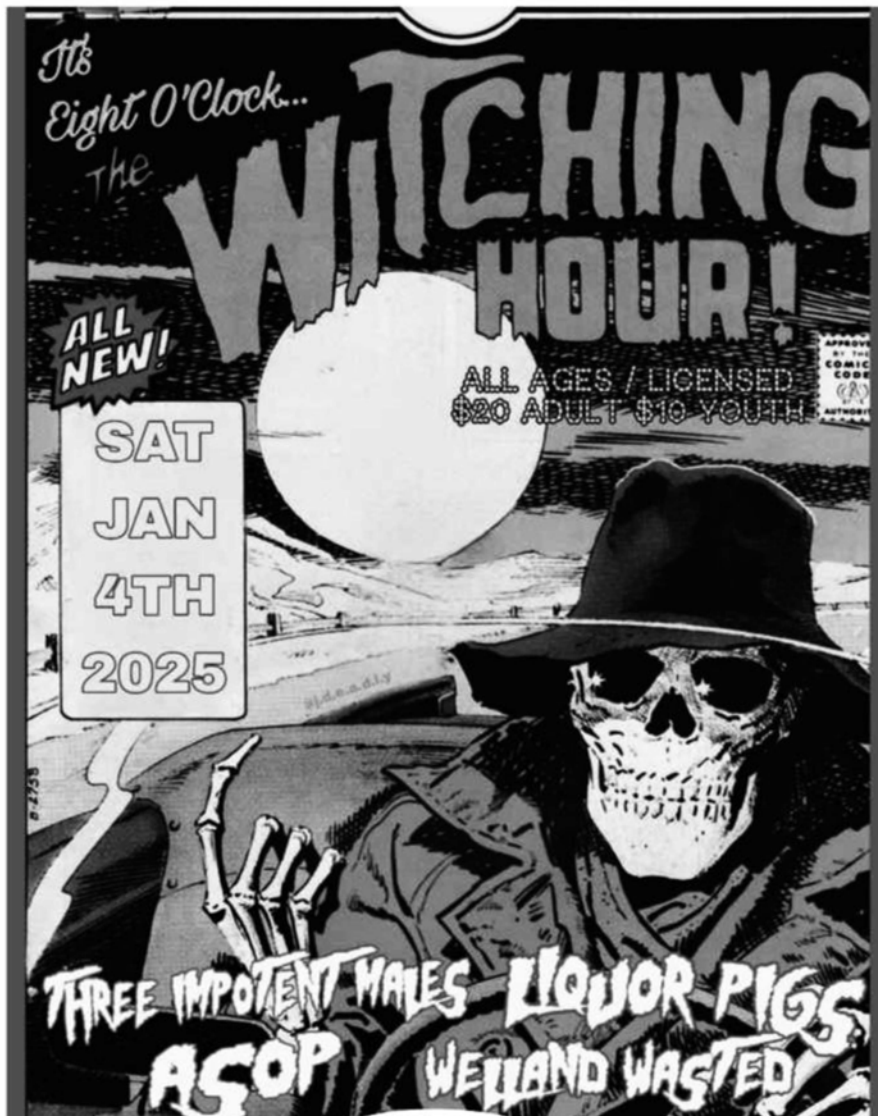
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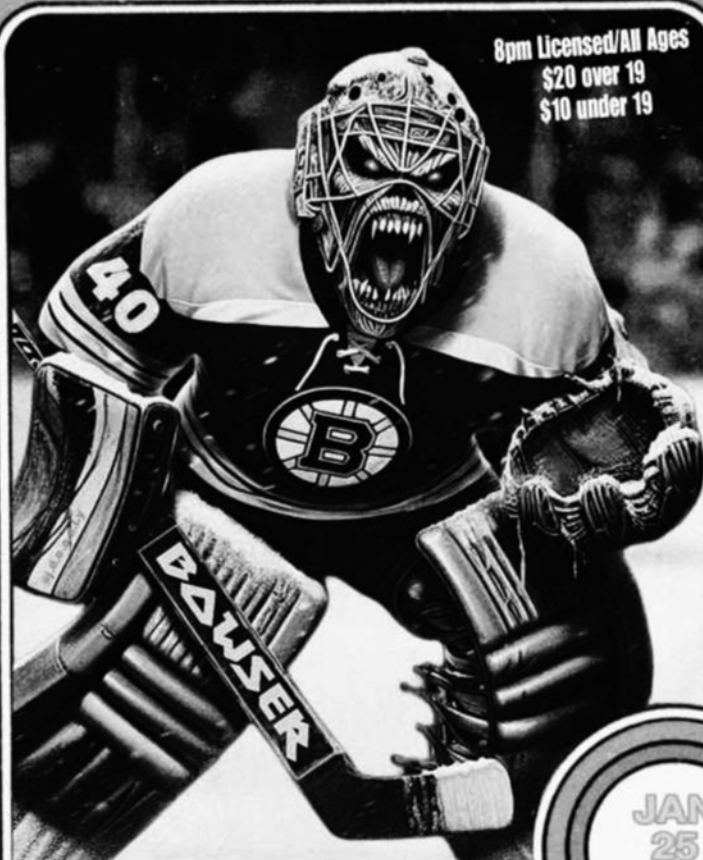
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## Mr. Awesome

By Martin Splatterpants

**Absolute Underground: Who are you?**

**Mr. Awesome:** I'm Roy Ranger Robins Jr., but some people call me Mr. Awesome.

**AU: I did a little Google on my phone before my minutes ran out—you're a busy lil' fucker! Playing all over the place. You having fun? What are your favourite spots in Canada?**

**MA:** I've played about 65 shows in the last two years. I get flack from Myles (Off the Top Rope) about playing too much. But I am taking a whole year off. (My Dad died in September and I cancelled all my shows and put all my music journals away.) As for having fun? I do have fun playing music. I have fun writing and performing. It's literally one of the only things I can do and do it somewhat well. I'm also really good at keeping it real. But that's another interview all in itself. Where I've enjoyed playing the most? To name a few, Ymir BC, Lloydminster AB, CJSW in Calgary (Sorry CFCR), Toronto with BA, and the Quadra House in Victoria...

**AU: Our most sincere condolences brother. Also, I heard OTTR and No Goes are**

signing a deal for a residency spot at Stan's Place. Dollar, dollar bills y'all. So... Halloween season, you incorporate ghosts a lot in your songwriting as well as your merchandise. If you met a nice ghost, and y'all got along, do you think it could lead to some fingering or other hand stuff?

**MA:** Who am I, Ray Stantz in 1984?! Jesus Christ pal, my attorney is gonna read this. Well, to answer your question, I'd like to think there'd be some kind of paranormal fornication taking place

as long as both parties agreed not to ghost each other afterwards.

**AU: Speaking of merchandise, how much is too much? A coworker wanted me to ask you that question. Something about a whoopee cushion? I dunno man, I took a couple of my sleepy mints.**

**MA:** I kind of went a little overboard with the merch game. It's gotten to the point where I'm kind of making a mockery of it all. To date, I've made Mr. Awesome whoopee cushions, car air fresheners, pogs and slammers, coffee mugs, socks, and I was looking at getting barf bags made. I have shirts, hoodies, hats, records, patches, pins, and stickers available at all Mr. Awesome shows. If anyone has any dumb ideas, send 'em my way. I'll get 'em made for ya.

**AU: Have you always gone by the name Mr. Awesome? What team of brilliant marketing executives did you have to pay to come up with that wondrous and truly awe-inspiring stage name?**

**MA:** I wish I could say it was all me, but I stole it from an episode of *The Simpsons*. I was forced to get a punk nickname after joining HippieCritz (2004)—they were gonna call me RoyPolloi, but I didn't like that. I ended up watching TV that weekend and saw Bart write "Mr. Awesome" on his arm, and said to myself, "That's me." I even got it tattooed on my tummy. Before that, I was just called the dude, or Roy, or The Package.

**AU: You spent some time in Saskatoon. Why?**

**MA:** I moved there when I got divorced. (I know. I can't believe I was married either.) After life threw me down the proverbial stairs, Brenno suggested I come live with him. Best and worst decision I ever made. I love the guy, but come on. He was kind of an asshole. But I love Stoon! I'm probably one of the only dudes that can say that and mean it.

**AU: You're in a room with Wheels from *Degrassi High* (that piece of shit), Hitler, and the real person responsible for 9/11... (you know who we're talking about). You have one gun with two bullets. Who's walking out of the room?**

## SASKATOON

**MA:** I'd have to walk out with Wheels. Sorry. I mean I know he killed a kid and blinded Lucy. But I know how his story ends. So, I'll let Father Time take the wheel on Wheels' demise.

**AU: Now that we banged out the important shit, let's talk about you. What's going on?**

**MA:** Got a new album in the works. Should be ready by spring of 2025. I think we're gonna call it, *Sorry About that Smell*, plus a 7" split coming out. One side is *Isolated Earthlings*, the other is me with *Laughing Sickness*. I'm calling it *Does This Taste Funny To You?*—I'll be back to playing shows come Halloween 2025.

**AU: If you could fight one band from Saskatoon, how bad do you think you would beat up The No Goes?**

**MA:** I could take all four of 'em. I know this for a fact cause I did put their guitar player, Ryan Dr Peppers in the hospital one time. He's been walking on egg shells around me ever since. But would I fight them? God no. I love them all too much.

**AU: Those poor eggshells. Tell us some active Canadian bands you like. We will try to stay open minded.**

**MA:** At the top of my head, I'll say BA Johnston, Mr. Plow, The Killrats, Rad Dog, Crowd the Joanna, Skum Shine, No Comply, Bluto the Barbarian, The No Goes, Harsh, Circle the Wagons, Laughing Sickness, Off the Top Rope, The Queen Haters, and everything Zelda Belladonna has ever done.

**AU: These are starting to kick in, I better get to a place where there are no sharp corners. Love you like a white person loves ranch, brother. Any last words?**

**MA:** Y'all can find me on all socials like MySpace, Bandcamp, Spotify. You can find me in person at Stud Blvd by way of Valley Rd in Kelowna BC. Just call me if you wanna hang out. I work at the mall on Mondays. Bring fizz. Smooches Boo...

[mr-awesome666.bandcamp.com](http://mr-awesome666.bandcamp.com)

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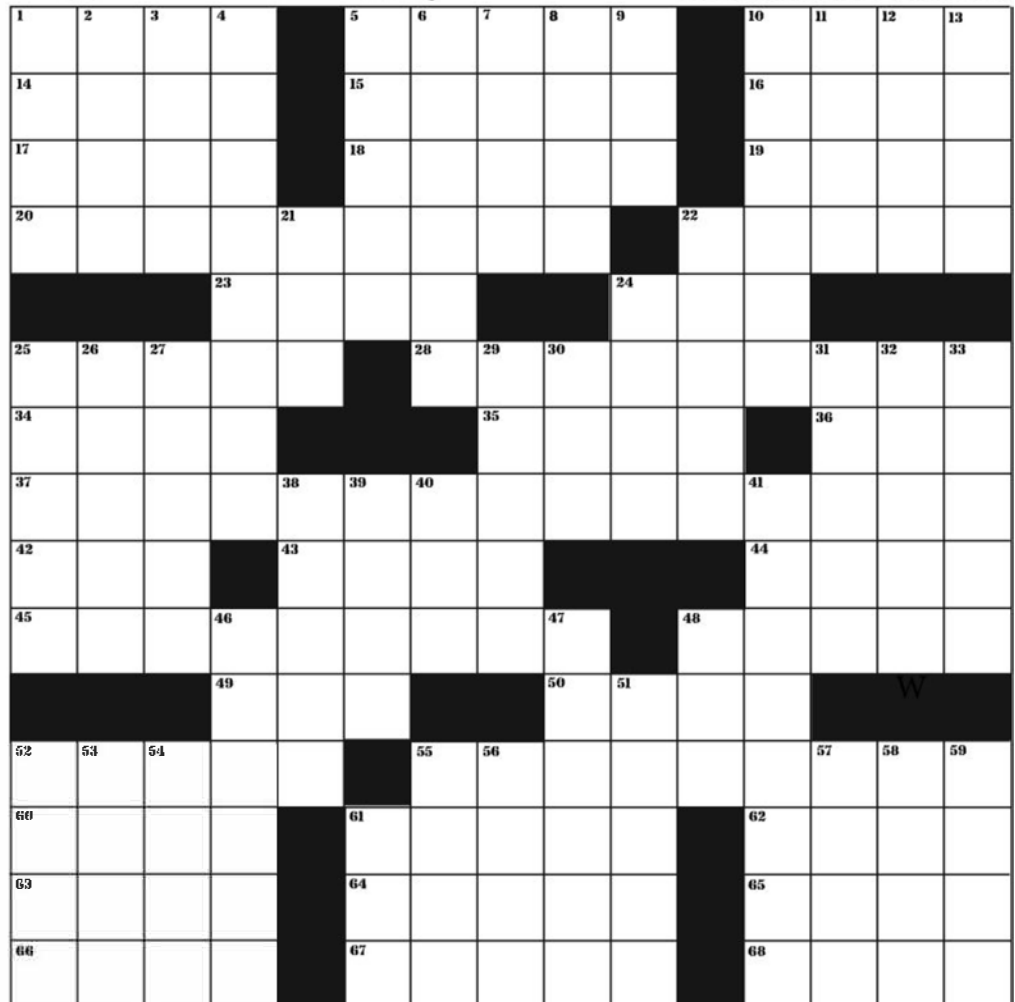
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### ACROSS

1. Moist
5. The only band that matters
10. \*Trail left by the Creature from the Black Lagoon?
14. Dr. Frankenstein's assistant on film
15. Berry who acts up a Storm
16. Panty \_\_\_\_\_
17. Golfer Ballesteros
18. "\_\_\_\_\_ is Born"
19. M\*A\*S\*H star
20. \*Ghoul-hosted anthology
22. Ad spokesperson Mr. \_\_\_\_\_
23. Chilly city
24. Good sign for a Broadway play
25. Type of button
28. \*Cavemen?
34. One of the most common surnames in Asia
35. One of the most common given names in the Mid East (var.)
36. Cartoon canine's last name
37. \*Lowest minions of Satan?
42. Commune in Southern France
43. Master of the minions
44. 5l is a famous one
45. \*Contribution of 14-across
48. Keto and paleo for example
49. Modern music form
50. Many a stadium
52. Church meeting
55. \*Soundtrack for the Phantom of the Opera?
60. Competitor to "Life" magazine
61. Eva played by Madonna
62. Home of the Bruins
63. Prairie province: Abbr.
64. Story's perspective
65. Home of TV cowboy McCloud
66. \*When tripled, sound made by a cowboy or a gangster?
67. "\_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Taught Us"
68. Jeckyl, but not Hyde

### DOWN

1. CD-ROM part
2. Something that makes you old
3. Shouted instruction from a DJ
4. Primping's partner
5. A deep rift
6. Suffix for whip or eye
7. Part in many a choir
8. Side at a deli



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**OCTOBER, 2024**

9. Title role for Scarlett Johansson
10. It means peace, hello or goodbye
11. Nat or Natalie
12. Letters on American food packaging
13. "\_\_\_\_\_ Girls"
21. Poet often read at Halloween
22. Unsophisticated
24. You may do this to a tear
25. Jazz ensemble
26. "Yep"
27. Dita Von \_\_\_\_\_, The Queen of Burlesque
29. Apply to
30. Where bands go to play
31. Like a lot
32. Setup for a real daredevil
33. Slammin' Sammy and family
38. College student: Abbr.
39. "It's a \_\_\_\_\_!"
40. You in Yamaska
41. One way to send promos
46. Longtime NBC anchor Tom
47. "\_\_\_\_\_ and Thanks for All the Fish"
48. Old recording format
51. Rants and raves perhaps
52. What some do to a bass
53. Nutritious part of an egg
54. It's found on a staff
55. Bicycle: Prefix
56. Hit for A Flock of Seagulls
57. Big league down South
58. X man
59. It may be enclosed with a CV
61. Letter addendum addendum

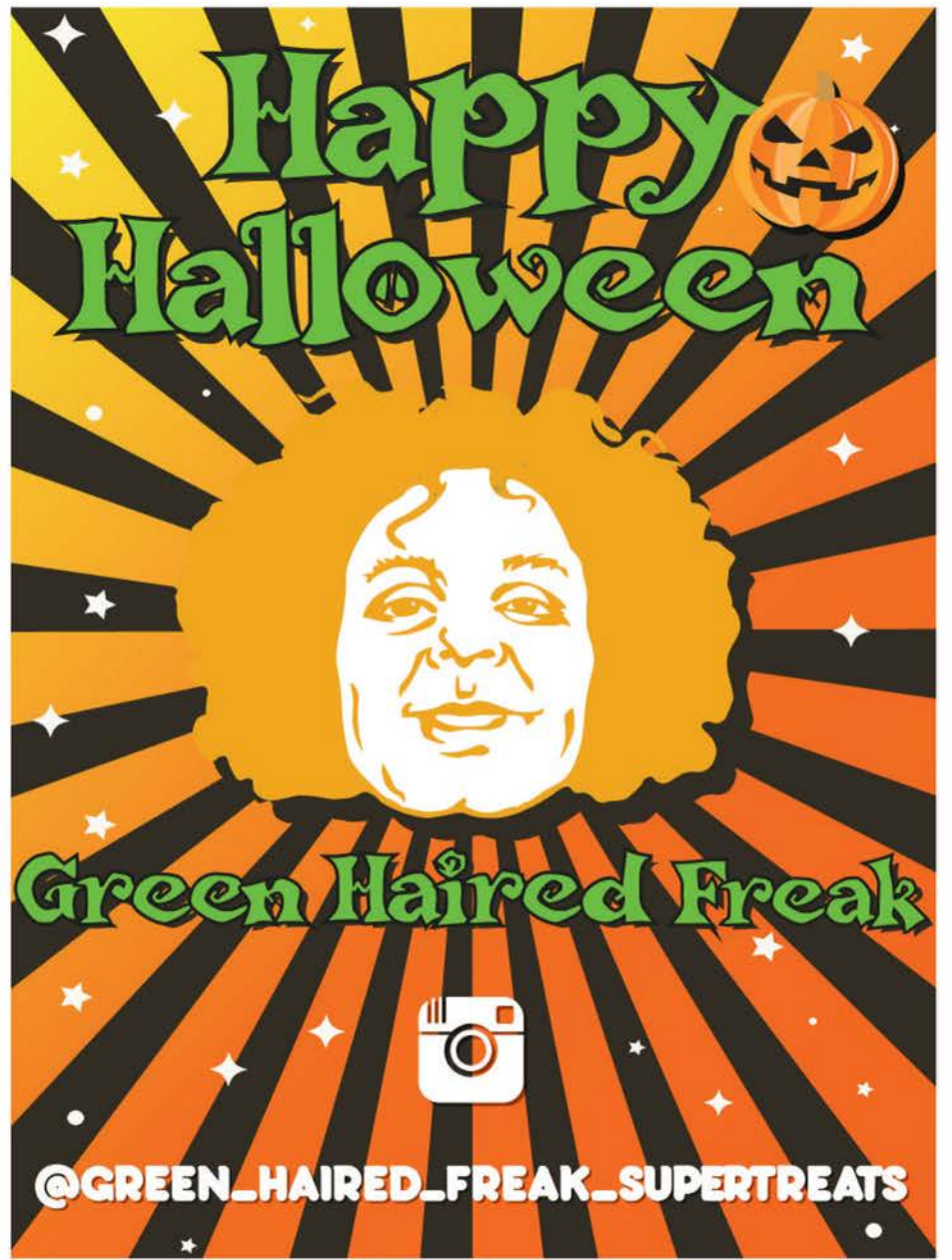
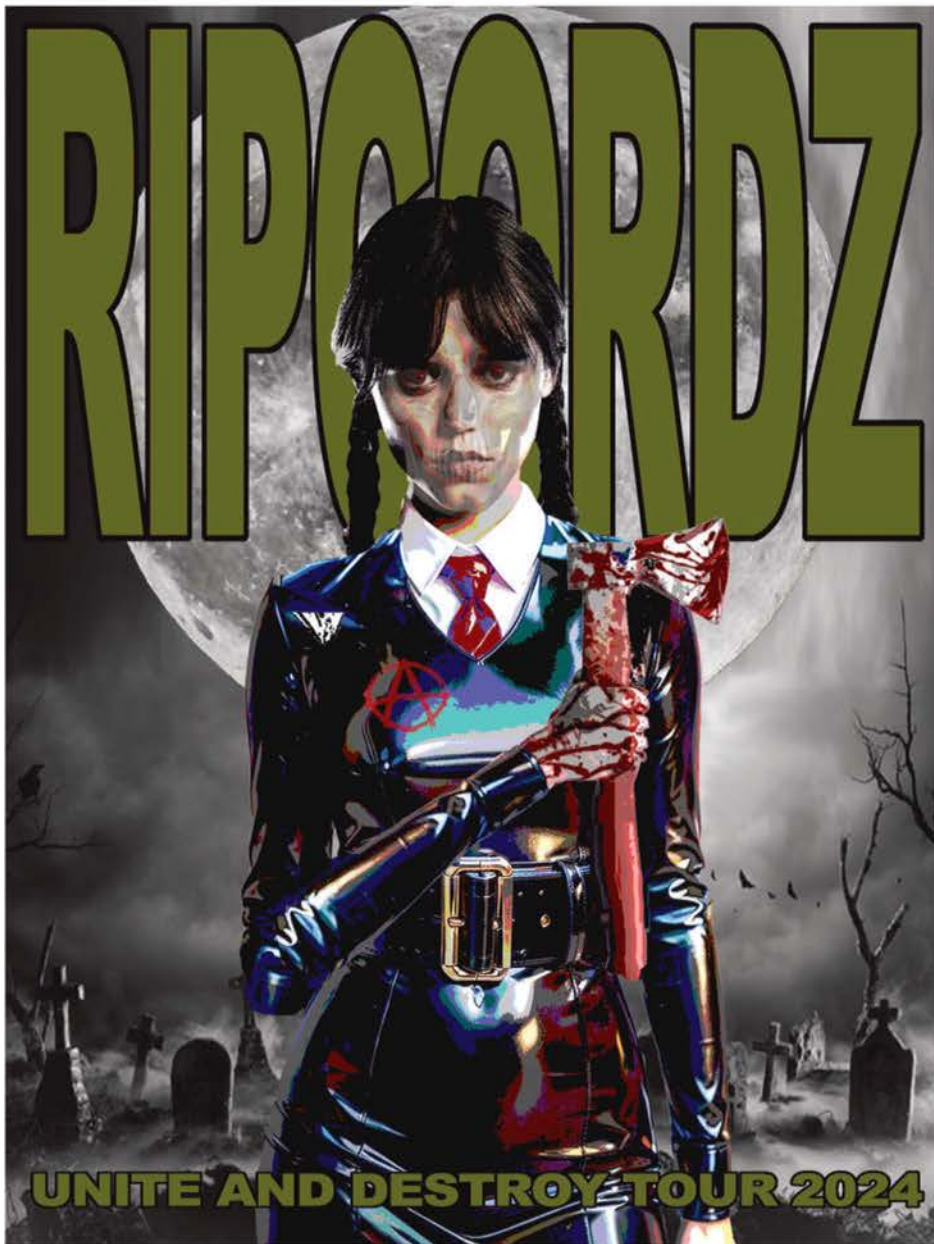
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## DEATHRO

### High-Energy Rock from Japan

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

**DEATHRO:** DEATHRO Kanagawa Ken-O NO.1 Rock Vocalist. Most Famous for being a rock vocalist/singer songwriter.

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

**DEATHRO:** I'm from Aikawa, Kanagawa. 100-minute drive from central Tokyo, 60-minute drive from Yokohama. My hood has no

underground music scene. Most of my local shows are in Tokyo or Yokohama.

**AU: I met you at a show in Tokyo and your style immediately stood out to me. I wasn't at all surprised when you took the stage and gave one of the most energetic performances I've seen in a while. Who or what inspires you**

**musically and aesthetically?**

**DEATHRO:** The person who influenced me the most was Kyosuke Himuro, the singer of the legendary '80s Japanese beat rock band Boowy. I am also influenced by Personz, Justy-Nasty, KATZE, UP-BEAT, DIE IN CRIES, ZIKILL, DECAMERON etc... Japanese beatrock or prototype visual rock from the '80s and '90s. I also had a career in hardcore punk from my teens to my 30s, and that has had the biggest influence on my ideology and activism. Must-hear current hardcore punk: Morbo (Peru), THE BREATH (JP), M.A.Z.E. (JP), Unasaniary Napkin (NZ), BAD ANXIETY (US), AIRSOFT (US), ELMOS (US) Yambag (US)...

**AU: How would you describe your sound to those that haven't heard you?**

**DEATHRO:** Misfits meets Billy Idol and the New Romantic genre.

**AU: How do you approach writing music? Are your lyrics thematic in any way?**

**DEATHRO:** I complete the arrangement on my own multi-track cassette recorder, and share it with my best backing band to play! The theme of the lyrics is the scenery of my hood; about suburban life where boredom and excitement cross. Rebellion and resistance against Zionism, colonial rule, imperialism, and eugenics. And love.

**AU: Are you currently working on any new music? Anything you're excited about?**

**DEATHRO:** Started a new punk band, Lacuna Sonora as the bass player.

**AU: How do you feel about music being used to express political beliefs?**

**DEATHRO:** I believe that all expression is

## ABSOLUTE ASIA

based on belief. With the exception of bullshit racism and nationalism...

**AU: You're frequently playing shows across Japan; any plans to tour internationally? Would you ever come to Canada?**

**DEATHRO:** So far, we have toured the Southern US and Korea, and in 2025 we have plans to tour New Zealand and Australia. And of course Canada too? We're always ready.

**AU: Any final words for our readers?**

**DEATHRO:** FREE PALESTINE. FREE ALL COLONIES. END ALL APARTHEID.

[linktr.ee/deathro\\_com](http://linktr.ee/deathro_com)

Photo by Yukiko Ono

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## Despisal

### Interview with Ted Lee

By Ryan Dyer

Despisal are the new Calgary-based crew booked to wreck venues and modest nights out. The three-piece, featuring Ted Lee on vocals, Craig Reaburn on guitar and Brian Gillingham on drums is an amalgamation of the three mens' experience, now combined into a scornful musical device. I speak with the notorious Ted Lee about his past, Despisal's present and maybe the future.

**AU: Let's take it back a few years. I was first exposed to your work with Faceless Hulk at Verns. What can you say about this artistic era?**

**TL:** That's the band I have put the most man hours into, no doubt. I cringe at some of our early stuff for leaning into the silly a bit too much but all in all, we were an intense, fun and crushingly heavy live act. I'm mostly proud of our recordings too. We were the real deal. We never formally

disbanded or anything either. We all just kept kind of doing other things until Faceless Hulk wasn't really a thing anymore. Most of us are still actively playing unlistenable music as well but I will not promote any of their projects here without being financially compensated.

**AU: I then got to know your hip hop stuff with Dirtnap and SNHK. I saw**

**you rap at a metal show and felt it was good that another genre was more or less accepted which wasn't based on loud guitars. Which interest came first to you, rap or metal?**

**TL:** Hip hop is my first love. I've been listening to it since 1988. I used to loop beats on a dual cassette deck boombox when I was a kid. I started writing raps and spitting bars when I was 13. I was home

recording vocals on headphones at 16. I've been a lifelong hip hop head. I still rabidly listen to all kinds of stuff too and I can't fucking stand the "modern rap is trash" crowd. As far as my creative output in the rap game, I have all but "retired." I am much happier these days just being a fan and appreciating the culture that way.

**AU: Ideas come to me from every which way, but I find with writing, there are certain spaces where they infiltrate my mind more so, like in the shower. When do ideas come to you most?**

**TL:** The witching hours are always when I do my best work. I've always been nocturnal and I just don't really know any other way. Pressure

and deadlines are also excellent motivators.

**AU: What inspires your lyrics for Despisal?**

**TL:** For Despisal, I have a stockpile of 2-3 word combos that sound sick together. I just plug away until something fits and then write more from there. I have to shrug when people ask me what the songs are "about." I may work a theme but I just want the shit to sound sick as fuck. I'm not trying to change people's minds or tell a story or some bullshit. I just want sick shit.

**AU: When and how did you decide to start putting together Despisal with Craig Reaburn and Brian Gillingham?**

**TL:** When I started doing less drugs, Brian started doing more drugs. We found a perfect balance. Craig took notice and suggested that we force ourselves to spend every Tuesday together until we become the biggest terminally local band Calgary has seen since 2008.

**AU: They were both in Akakor where they played pretty technical death metal. How does the songwriting process go with them?**

**TL:** It's quite common for Craig to present us with riffs and our instincts are to tell Brian "fast on the bottom, slow on the top." At that point, Brian will usually complain about his current injury before blasting at 300 bpm over everything instead. Once they get tight, I put minimal effort into the lyrics because metal is dumb and no one actually cares what I'm saying as long as it isn't slurs.

**AU: Compared to your other work, how do you approach the vocal style heard in Despisal?**

**TL:** My main approach is to expose Lucas Macleod as a fraud. Have you seen how much he smiles? What a fucking poser. He also plays in a beard rock band while barely being able to grow a mustache. As long as my vocals are serving as a reminder that he's a fucking tourist who cups his mic, I'm satisfied.

**AU: There is no live bass player in Despisal, though with Craig Reaburn being the guitar**

## CALGARY CARNAGE

**player, his sound, as well as your vocal style here compensate for any low end missing. That's my perspective, anyway. What do you think?**

**TL:** It's definitely not a stylistic choice to have no bass player. We simply haven't found anyone masochistic enough to play bass for us. We decided to start playing shows regardless because we were increasingly impatient as time went on. We've had some difficulty finding an appropriate candidate.

**AU: Despisal are a new band but you have a few shows under your belt now. It might be safe to say you've formally introduced the project to the scene. Where do you go from here?**

**TL:** The current goal is to finish our first album and shop it around for physical release. We're all middle-aged men who've been playing music at a loss for most of our lives so we're not trying to live it as hard as we may have in the past. Despisal is certainly open to travel for shows but as it stands, we're not focused on doing any lengthy tours. We just want to record and play shows and let it happen however it happens. For whatever reason, we still love playing this kind of grossly inaccessible music and we can't ever seem to stop creating so in that sense, we're all dialed right in and on the same page (which I have drawn multiple dicks and inverted crosses on).

**AU: Despisal currently has one song up on bandcamp - "Archetype Deletion". What does this song represent as an introduction? Do you have a set date on an EP or album?**

**TL:** No set date but we will be recording this fall/winter. Please hold your breath.

**AU: What lyric do you want to be remembered for?**

**TL:** Please get a hobby.  
[despisal.bandcamp.com](http://despisal.bandcamp.com)

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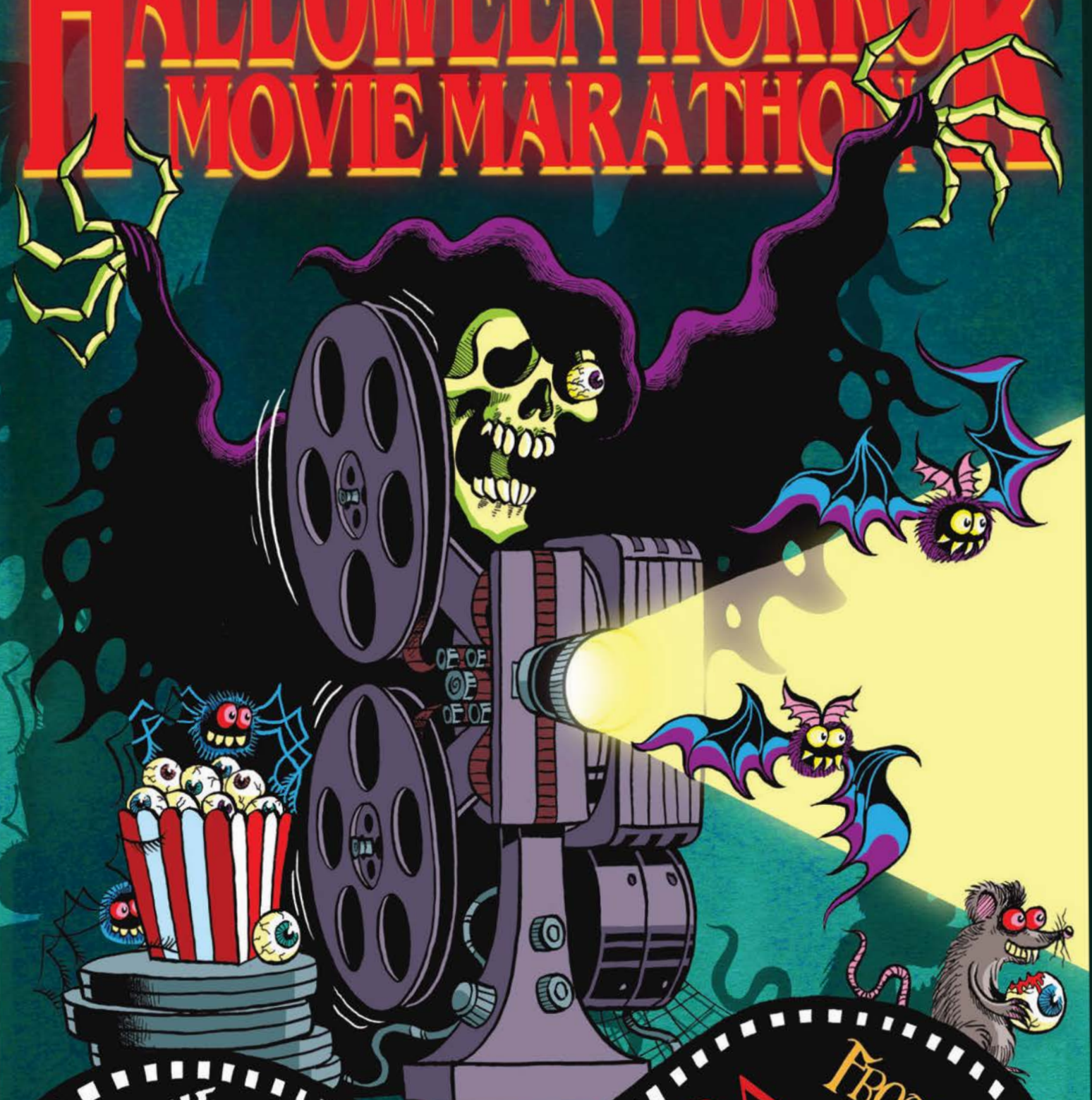
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## Turbo

Interview by Asher Thrasher

**Absolute Underground: For those unfamiliar, who are you and what do you do?**

**Turbo:** What's up to all our slugs and thugs out there— you actually factually have every member of the band in your vernacular grasp at the moment. You're welcome.

**AU: You released your latest album *Broke & Ugly*, what can you tell us about this album?**

**Turbo:** Turbo as a whole writes music to make monumental mistakes to— and we take our job incredibly seriously. We honed the signature Nitro-Rock sound cultivated with the first album, and really sharpened it with this new release. We take our particular brand of musical-malcontent and melodic misconduct in some new directions on this record but don't panic. Fans of the old stuff will get a good stiff bratwurst in their drawers while their ears eat up this feast of sonic fury. Like your dishevelled uncle on Christmas morning, Turbo is STILL trashed, pissed off, and sick of your shit.

**AU: How broke and ugly is Turbo? Or does your metal make you guys sexy to the masses?**

**Turbo:** Umm... those are two different questions.

**AU: You stated *Broke & Ugly* as a testament to the ups and downs of the rock n' roll lifestyle. What have been some of the band's ups and downs? Do you believe in bands being cursed; no matter what, everything does go wrong?**

**Turbo:** Well shit happens, and you just deal with it. We've spent the night homeless in Mexico City, our tour van exploded in Quebec, we've puked out the side door of a van doing 130km down a highway on the way to Ottawa, taken a giant shit in Mexican alleyways, during an earthquake, and in an empty beer case in desperation— these are the downs, and the downs ARE down my dudes. But we also get to strut onto a stage in all kinds of different towns in front of THROGS of people, get trashed, have fun, and scream at all of you about all of OUR red flags. And for some reason? You all seem to enjoy it a lot. That's the ups. And the ups are WAY UP. We ARE cursed, no question. Cursed to do this endlessly and eternally until we either conquer the world or spontaneously combust. Hopes are on the former, but probability is on the latter. Either way, I'm sure it won't shock you to learn how much fun we're having on this wild ride; and we just don't know when to stop. Sorry, I guess.

**AU: The album is DIY, recorded and produced by guitarist Lindsey Dicks, any studio tricks or**

**suggestions you can recommend to other DIY bands?**

**Turbo:** OK... Do this recipe for perfect gates on kick/snare/toms... add a gate, and set the side chain input to a new empty track beneath. Get a sample of a "click" and copy it. Use your DAWs "Tab to Transient" to line the cursor up with the next drum hit, then paste the "click" to the empty track below. This click triggers the gate. Make a Macro to speed the process up. Set the delay on the clicks to -5 MS, now you have a gate that opens up 5MS before the drum hits so you don't get digital distortion. Next Trick: Before recording drums for an album, record a sample of each piece of the kit for sample replacement. Blend with the actual kit to hide bleed, tom rolls after cymbal hits benefit from this the most. Last Trick: The first song you record for an album should be a cover. It's fun and easy and it gets you warmed up and in the zone.

**AU: How was your Down In Mexico tour? How were the metal fans down south and how many tequila shots were ingested?**

**Turbo:** The metal, punk, and overall hard-music scene in Mexico is the stuff of myth. The fans are so engorged in the vibe and happenings of the performers and concerts there that to say it's a bit overwhelming would be the understatement of the decade. It was an absolute maelstrom of energy night after night. We can't wait to go back. There was many a tequila shot chasing a rabbit through each one of us on more nights than not, but we didn't keep an actual count.

## HELLIFAX

HOWEVER! We did keep a taco count for a good bit of our conquests south of the border, and by day four our collective count between all of us was somewhere around 85 tacos. Our poops were what nightmares are made of.

**AU: What can tell us about Halifax's metal scene right now? Is it all fish, chips, mosh?**

**Turbo:** Halifax has a really tight-knit and intimate metal scene. I'll also include the punk scene in that as well— in our city, it's kind of unique in the way the two scenes kind of lace fingers with one another, which is a big part of where Turbo takes

its punk-rock/hardcore influence where our sound is concerned. You can really count on all the true ragers showing up to EVERY worthwhile show, and we always do a good amount of research and express a lot of acceptance to new acts rolling through. We're a city founded by a bunch of filthy sailors and pirates, and it really shows even in the rock n' roll culture. We curse, we fight, we drink, we fuck, we drink, we puke, drink again, maybe another fight, and then we're all

chums by the end of the night. Come by and call any number on a bathroom stall and have a blast!

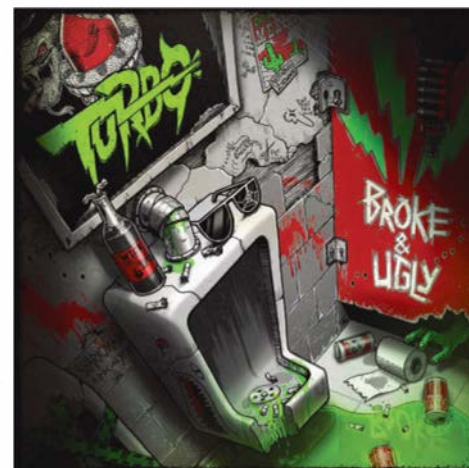
**AU: Where can readers follow the band and make you rich instead of broke?**

**Turbo:** Spotify, Bandcamp to get your merch!

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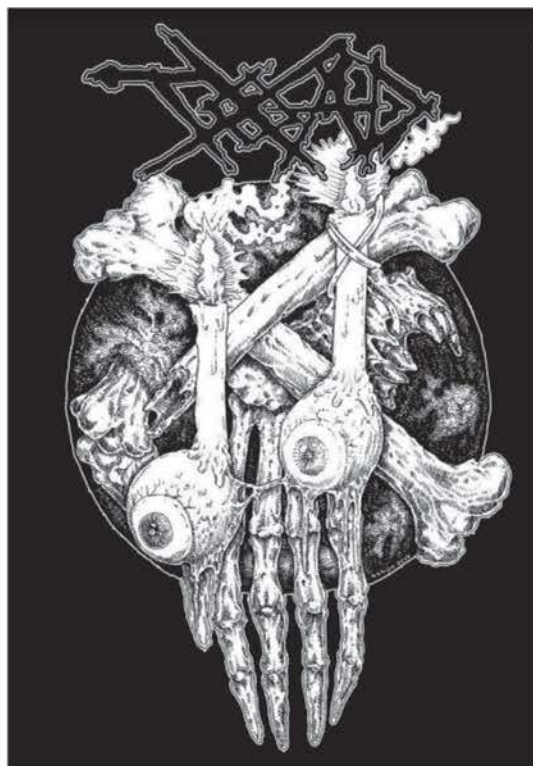
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## Truth of All Death

Interview by Scarlett-Rose S.

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?**

**Neal Noise:** This is Neal, currently the drummer of Truth Of All Death.

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

**NN:** Formed in Torrington, Connecticut in 2011, we played our first show in 2012. Originally, it was myself on drums and our homie Corey on guitar, but after a few demos and shows in New England I relocated to Toronto and switched to guitar. With a fresh start, we returned to the USA in 2016 with a new lineup featuring Mark from 'Beggin' For Oxys and Tuka known for Homolka and Eyes Without a Face. We then started writing for a few

splits and our first 7". During the pandemic, we honed our sound and began to write some larger bodies of material. In 2022 we had another lineup change and I've since been back on drums, with Tuka taking over as the full tone master. With our first full-length under our belt, we decided to embark on a full Canadian tour coast to coast from Halifax to Victoria. With another split LP soon to be released in Poland late 2024, we're currently getting ready to record our next few releases.

**AU: Does your band have a specific message?**

**NN:** This band focuses on the DIY ethic and questioning why you live and die for the life you live and create for others. I think the name says it all. Everyone is supposed to think about how it relates to their own life.

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

**NN:** Old school, pissed off, blasting, punk as fuck grindcore. No frills.

**AU: What is your creative process like?**

**NN:** Songs are written with intention in mind. We don't spend more than 30 seconds thinking of an idea for a song. We talk about how we want it to sound and we hammer it out until it's done.

**AU: What is wrong with the music scene now?**

**NN:** The scene has really changed post-pandemic. So many new kids are coming out to shows that haven't really experienced a scene before, but I see so much love amongst the crowds we have; it's actually very humbling, the scene here is great.

**AU: What are some of the things your band does to give back to the community?**

**NN:** We're here to grind. I've been booking shows for the grindcore scene since I came here in 2015, and run a boutique label called Sonic Bath Records to help promote other bands in

the scene. Tuka also works with youth at the YMCA.

**AU: What are some of your best songs about?**

**NN:** Usually being mad about being broke. Shitty bosses, people that grind our gears.

**AU: Describe your band's live show verbally if you can.**

**NN:** It's really fast, heavy, and loud and the drummer screams at the top of his lungs the entire time.

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

**NN:** We don't know what you know. We don't

## TORONTO TRASH

know what we know.

**AU: Anything else to promote?**

**NN:** Not yet, be on the lookout for some live videos posted, some new records, our label Sonic Bath has some great records coming out.

**AU: Any final words for our readers?**

**NN:** If you're reading this and you've been to our shows, thanks so much for the support all these years, it means a lot and y'all literally make me never want to stop.

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## Frantic Mistake

Interview by AU Editorial

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

**Frantic Mistake:** Roxy Frantic on drums and Xev Mistake on bass/vocals; famous dark wave surfers from Vancouver Island.

**AU: Can you give us a brief history?**

**FM:** We started late January 2024 in Ucluelet on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Entering the battle of the bands at the ANAF with a different band that ended up cancelling last minute, so we decided to form Frantic Mistake and wrote three songs the day before the battle. We ended up getting 4th.

**AU: What's something unique that each of**

**you brings to the project as a two-piece?**

**FM:** Roxy is a talented drummer and graphic designer. Xev is a bass player that plays like a guitar player though a mix of pedals. Together we create haunting overtones that echo from the abyss of everyday life. Plus being a two-piece it is easy for us to travel to your local bat cave.

**AU: What specifically about horror movies inspires your music?**

**FM:** Horror movies with bad endings have been a true inspiration. A good example of this is *The Thing*. We also find a lot of inspiration from old

# UCLUELET SURF REPORT

Twilight Zone episodes.

**AU: How do you approach writing music?**

**FM:** Messing around with sounds and patterns, throwing in some drum beats, get ideas and inspiration from movies, TV, books life in general like any other artistic endeavour.

**AU: What can you tell us about your new tracks? What can we expect to hear?**

**FM:** There are four demos out right now: "The Void" is a song about nothingness. "Invisible Man" is about how even

though you have friends and are surrounded by people, no one really sees you. "The Truth" is a self-explanatory song; no one likes to hear the

truth. And "Over the Fence" is realizing the grass is never greener on the other side. The recordings were done by us in a haunted house. Our sound is inspired by classic bands like Joy Division and Bauhaus also by newer bands like Lebanon Hanover and Moon Vampire.

**AU: Any plans for shows or tours?**

**FM:** Currently, we have been playing a lot this summer all over Vancouver Island with an array of different supportive bands. Being a post-punk,

dark wave, goth rock band we can fit in to punk and metal shows. We just got back from playing in Portland Oregon, and have more Oregon and some Washington shows in the works for the near future, and of course Vancouver Island— keep your eyes on your local obituary for shows.

**AU: What are you doing for Halloween?**

**FM:** Of course, a horror movie marathon and giving out candy to all the little bats out there.

**AU: Will you be dressing up?**

**FM:** We haven't decided on outfits yet, but don't be surprised if you see Gomez and Morticia Addams roaming around Ucluelet or Sid and Nancy at your local Halloween show.

**AU: Top three horror movies of all time?**

**FM:** Wow, so tough to decide! Do you pick a slasher, monster, paranormal, or zombie movie? I guess it depends on your mood. If we had to pick three classic movies *Evil Dead*, *Pet Cemetery*, or *Video Dead* but if you ask us tomorrow it will probably change. Like we said, tough question.

**AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?**

**FM:** Soon we will be heading into Cheeseburger Mountain Studio in Ucluelet with David James Brown of Pretend Engineer Productions to record.

**AU: Famous last words?**

**FM:** Thanks to all the bands we play with, everyone who comes out to support local music, the venues who put on shows and give us a chance to play, Absolute Underground for everything you do for the music scene, friends, family and of course Elvis the cat.

**You can find Frantic Mistake on Spotify and YouTube; stay tuned for a website and Bandcamp!**

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## The Wring

### Interview with Don DeWulf

By Asher Thrasher

**Absolute Underground:** The last time we spoke with you was for your third album *Spectra*; you have a new lineup for your fourth album *Nemesis*; what can you tell us about this one?

**The Wring:** Yes, a new album and a slightly different lineup. Reggie Hache played bass on *Spectra*; he is back in that capacity for *Nemesis* but he also sings on this one! I connected with an incredible drummer, Kyle Brian Abbott, for this one and he is new to The Wring. Both of these guys killed it! Musically, *Nemesis* is kind of a continuation of my exploration into different styles but always with a strong base in hard rock. In each song you will find little bits of metal, jazz and prog in a rock framework; not too overindulgent but certainly with some tricky and

risky parts! Very fun to make, very fun to play and I felt a connection with Reggie and Kyle that was stronger than on previous albums. I should also mention that this will be the third album released on Wormholedeath Records. Carlo and Naty have been very supportive of my musical efforts.

**AU:** What is the message of *Nemesis*?

**TW:** By definition, a nemesis is an invincible or long-standing enemy. We all have nemesis moments or situations; some personal, some global. Lyrically, I explore a few of these. It's not really a concept album per se but the theme runs consistently through the

whole record. It seems that every idea, every group is polarized and each one sees the opposite side as a nemesis. It would sure be nice to get everyone back closer to the middle and maybe have a little respect and decency in the world again.

**AU:** From recording with different musicians for every album, what have been some of your most memorable moments creating music with them? Was this always the plan to make sure every album had its own respectful experience?

**TW:** My process has always been the same for each album. I write all the songs and record demo versions. The demos include all parts... guitar, drums, bass, keys and even vocals with me doing all the parts. I send these versions to each player so they have a very clear idea of what I am after. They have latitude to interpret the parts and, of course, play the parts properly, as I don't claim to be anything other than a guitar player!

This process has worked well, as I think pro musicians like to understand the vision; it makes their job clearer and more efficient.

Most of the time, they stick to the script but there have been a few exceptions, usually with vocals... Marc Bonilla, who sang on Project Cipher, was meticulous and inspired and delivered some very cool vocals for that record. For *Nemesis*, it was similar with Reggie. He really went deep, and his performances are incredible! I should also acknowledge that it is very humbling to have world class players on my records. None of them had to do this and I am so grateful to every guy that has touched my music.

**AU:** How did you recruit Francis Perron (Voivod) for mixing *Nemesis* and how was it working with him?

**TW:** When it came time to start mixing *Spectra*, I looked around for someone new. I happened to be listening to Voivod's *Synchro-Anarchy* and loved the sound; I've always been a fan of those guys. I looked at who mixed that record and it was Francis! I have become fearless about asking 'famous' guys to work on my stuff because most of the time they say yes! So, I messaged Francis and asked if he would be interested. He listened to the material and was instantly enthusiastic. He mixed *Spectra* and *Nemesis* and has become a trusted friend to me and my music. I can't say enough about his kindness and attention to every detail. A wonderful person and super talented engineer.

**AU:** Who have been your top three prog influences? Any you would like to support live or recruit in the near future as guests on future recordings?

**TW:** My first real love was Rush. They influence me every day, even now. They kind of lost me for a while after *Grace Under Pressure* but *Clockwork Angels* reached out to me again and I revisit the early stuff regularly. Though not exactly prog, early Megadeth albums had a major influence on how I approach writing and playing. Dave was a powerhouse in the early days. Then, in the early 2000s, I discovered Opeth and my world view

## SADBURY SOUNDS

changed. Those guys had everything going on, and still do! I have to give Tool and honourable mention here also. Of course, it would be an honour to open for any of these bands. As far as future guests go, I am very happy with Reggie and Kyle and would likely want to keep them for any subsequent projects however, I am considering some growls for the next one and I might reach out to Kenny Cook from Ancients if that comes around. They are a great Canadian metal band and his growls are unreal!

**AU:** Out of all your albums, which one would you think is The Wring of Power for all prog fans to have in their collection?

**TW:** Wring of Power... I love that! I really like every album. I toiled over every note, every moment. I have the freedom to do exactly what I want on my own timeline so there are no filler songs; everything is meticulously curated. That being said, I feel like *Nemesis* might best represent my vision. Francis, Reggie and Kyle were all very supportive and very interactive in putting the record together so, to me, it feels more cohesive. I also like to believe that I am continuing to grow and improve as a player and composer, and I think that is somewhat evident on *Nemesis*.

**AU:** The band has been a studio project for many years, are there plans to perform live?

**TW:** I always hope for this. The guys I have hired previously were not really available for anything else and it is very difficult to find musicians anywhere near to me that are willing or able to play this stuff. Reggie has recently moved from Vancouver to Montreal which is only about a 6-hour drive from me now. We met up when he was passing through and am very hopeful that we might put something together.

[thewring2.bandcamp.com/](http://thewring2.bandcamp.com/)

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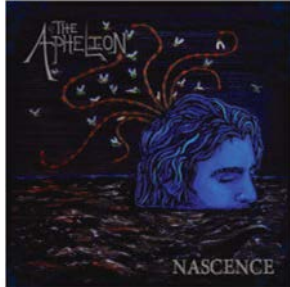
## The Aphelion

Interview with Bassist/Vocalist  
Evan Haydon-Selkirk and Guitarist/  
Keyboardist James Cabral  
By Asher Thrasher

**Absolute Underground:** For those unfamiliar, who are you and what do you do?

**James:** We are a progressive rock/metal band from Ottawa. We have been playing together for almost a decade now and just released our second album, *Nascence*, this past summer. Our sound takes influence from many of the prog greats from Haken and Leprous to Rush and Genesis. Our songwriting is cinematic and is very much driven by the stories told in the lyrics of our songs so we also like to throw in influences from other genres when we can to make the stories come to life a bit more.

**Evan:** We're also big fans of music outside of the prog sphere, I listen to a lot of softer, prettier stuff like Radiohead and Ethel Cain, Tyler and I are both big fans of math rock bands like Covet, Chon, and Toe, and James has always been a big fan of melodeath. There's also a lot of appreciation for extreme metal, black metal, and thrash in the mix. We're a giant melting pot of different genres and



influences, really!

**AU:** You just released *Nascence*, one of two of story albums. How did this concept come to mind when writing your songs?

**Evan:** We knew quite early on that a single album wouldn't be enough to tell the story we wanted to tell. Our musical objective, and our vision I guess, was clear quite quickly as well. The music starts in a place of beauty and atmosphere and grows in heaviness and

complexity over the course of the two albums, which allowed us to really create a sense of which songs fit where, and create a sense of progression. I also saw that progression as a sonic representation of the protagonist's mental state—as the music becomes more unstable, so does he.

**AU:** What is the story of *Nascence*?

**Evan:** *Nascence* is a character study of someone's mind unravelling in reaction to the world around him. I wanted to create a record with an obvious narrative thread, while still talking about things that matter to me, and weaving personal experiences into the emotional core of the story. In *Senescence*, the story really takes off and goes in some unexpected directions, but *Nascence* is more of a slow burn—having more to do with relationship trauma, unhealthy coping mechanisms, and being worn down by the mundanity of modern living. It does, however, end on a cliffhanger, and "Deserter" (the last track on *Nascence*) is where things really start to take a left turn.

**AU:** How do you find story/concept albums are received these days?

**James:** It is definitely a tough sell in a lot of ways. Concept albums are not always easy to digest and they usually take a few listens to really get into, not to mention the industry seems to be increasingly favouring short and digestible

content. That being said, there are certainly lots of people out there who love to sit down and listen to full albums who often appreciate albums that tell stories. There's definitely still an audience out there for it!

**AU:** Who have been the biggest progressive influences on the band, and who would you like to be touring with five years from now?

**Evan:** As James said, Haken and Leprous are a common thread among all four of us. I'm also a big fan of the Ocean, Devin Townsend, and Pain of Salvation. Nate is into Protest the Hero, Anika Nilles, Animals as Leaders. Tyler is a big Caligula's Horse and Coheed fan. James loves Wintersun, Wilderun, and the Dear Hunter. There's also heaps of older prog we're all big on like Gentle Giant and Genesis. As far as touring goes, we'd be so honoured to tour with any of these bands!

**AU:** What can you tell us about the band's notorious "polka wall of death"?

**James:** Of course! The polka wall of death has been a staple of our live performances for a long time. It involves splitting the crowd in half and building up the song as though we were going to play the heaviest breakdown you've ever heard. Instead of playing a breakdown, we count the audience down and immediately launch into the polka at the end of the song "Conflict Theory" from our first record. It definitely takes people by surprise!

**AU:** How's the Ottawa scene these days?

**Evan:** It can definitely be a tough market! There's only really one or two mid-sized venues in town so most of the shows are either massive touring acts when they do decide to add Ottawa to the tour, or quite small touring acts and local shows. The metal scene here is also not massive, which is kinda fun in a way because it is a very tight-knit group and everyone knows or at least knows of each other. Canada is also quite tough to tour because of how far apart the cities are. Some of the best Ottawa has to offer still gets some love and additional exposure because Montreal

and Toronto are two and four hour drives away respectively, and so we'll pop over there as frequently as we can.

**AU:** You participated in the Wacken Metal Battle earlier this year in Montreal, how was the experience as an Ottawa band in front of a whole new crowd? What did you take away from the experience?

**James:** It was a great experience for us overall! The Montreal scene is incredible and so playing there is always something we look forward to. We got to play in front of new people and the other bands were awesome! We were the only prog band on the bill so it definitely made us stand out a bit to be up there playing 8-minute songs in odd time signatures alongside death metal and metalcore bands! That's part of the fun for us though. We do like to stand out a bit when we perform.

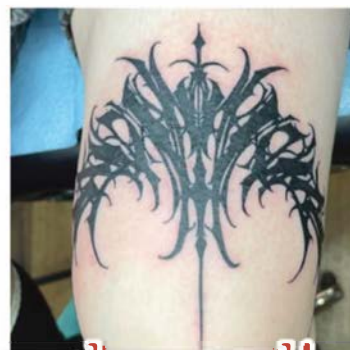
**AU:** Any upcoming shows or tours you like to mention?

**Evan:** We're sort of taking a break at the moment. James is getting his Masters in Toronto which doesn't leave much time for music sadly, but we're all still at work behind the scenes. I'm deep into the editing process for *Senescence* right now, we're training a fill-in guitarist to cover half of James' parts for any live shows that pop up while he's gone, and we may have some cool events/shows coming up later this year depending on how things go, not to mention there's talks of a tour with some of our musical besties in 2025, so stay tuned everyone!

**AU:** Where can readers find your tunes?

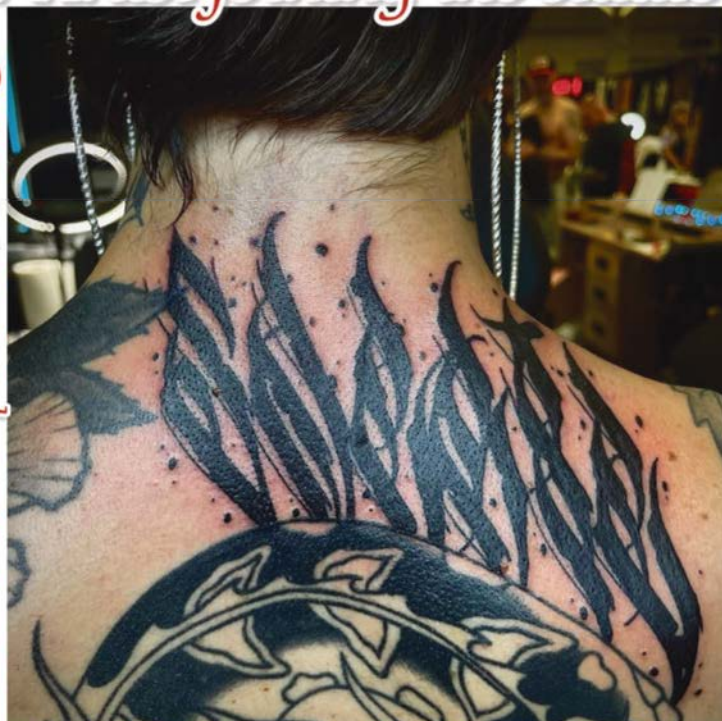
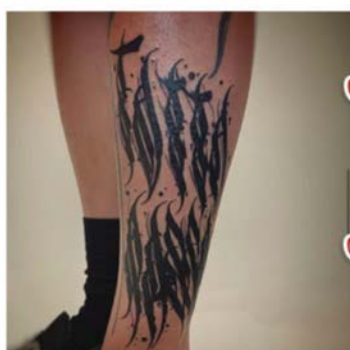
**Evan:** We have our music up on our Bandcamp if you like digital downloads or physical copies, and all of the streaming platforms if you don't!

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## Eternal Drak

### Quebec City Blackened Thrash

#### Interview by Asher Thrasher

**AU:** Who are you, and what do you do?

**Eternal Drak:** The name of the band means Eternal Dragon and that's the representation of what we want to be; a dragon as a being full of magic and power that is eternal. Eternal Drak is an accumulation of energy and desire to make metal. More than 25 years ago, two brothers decided to try making music together at the stage of life when rebellion and brio demanded finding a way to expel thoughts and ideas, finding in thrash and black metal a means to do so. Over the course of all these years, many changes have occurred, and the band has been influenced by different styles and bands. These influences have enriched who we are today. Currently from Quebec City, we remain faithful to the essence of blackened thrash but with some touches of groove, death, and

even Latin folklore.

**AU:** How was the writing and recording process as a duo for this new album *Imprisoned Souls*?

**ED:** The composition in our story is divided into two parts, the first half where the composition was more cooperative between the two Martinez brothers, rhythmic base and melody came together in sessions of musical experimentation, sometimes accompanied by some good alcohol. After the death of Warhammer, the band's drummer and co-founder, the writing process changed to something more individual. In this last album, as well as in the previous three albums, Drakar took over the composition of both

the music and the lyrics. *Imprisoned Souls* was written quickly, they are anecdotes and stories experienced by Drakar in his adolescence on a family farm with paranormal activity. After having the lyrics, they looked for a way to create music that would accompany the emotions that each song tried to express. Two months were enough for the composition. The recording, mixing and mastering were carried out at FirstWave Studio, in long and exhausting sessions. This was the most difficult part of the process because it was very clear what the expected result was, but to achieve this it was necessary to carry out many tests, take after take, change of set up after each attempt so that we could achieve an evolution in the sound with respect to the previous works but at the same time maintain those roots and that vintage sound of metal from the '90s and 2000s that characterizes the blackened thrash style.

**AU:** What would you like fans to take away from listening to this album?

**ED:** First, to be transported in a certain way to classic metal, to try to give a little strength to that metal that is losing it over the years. Second, we would like to show fans outside of Colombia the independence campaigns and the blood spilled and still spilled in that country. Third, we would like the listener to perceive the concept of the album as a horror story accompanied by good blackened thrash metal. Finally, we want to give people a concept album, an album that integrates the classic sound with the most modern sound, an album that can be rock n' roll for some and black metal for others, but that is enjoyed generating the expectation of knowing more.

**AU:** From your beginnings in Colombia to now residing in Quebec City, how would you compare both metal scenes?

**ED:** The metal scene in general has become very demanding. Comparing what we know about the scene in Colombia with what we know about the scene in Quebec would not only be comparing them by their geography but also by their very different times since there are decades between one and the other. We found that the scene in Colombia tends to be more open to receiving different styles and genres, but it is a much cruder scene since the purchasing power to acquire good equipment and instruments as well as to educate oneself musically is not at the same level. In Quebec, people can make a living from music without starving because government subsidies are very present; therefore, there are musicians of all genres who can dedicate their time to developing the art. The money that circulates in Canada also makes it easier for people to attend events and purchase merchandise from bands; that is not so evident in Colombia. However, in Colombia and in Latin America, the brotherhood and camaraderie between bands and fans is much more present than in Quebec. In Colombia, you see more cohesion between bands and more easily allow new members to enter the scene.

**AU:** From the band's first release in 2002, how have you found the band has evolved?

## QUEBEC SIN CITY

**ED:** One of the biggest criticisms of any band that has been making metal for many years is either "this band has continued doing the same thing since it started" or "this band is no longer the same, it does not respect its loyal fans by changing its style so much." These two positions will always attack any band that has been making metal for many years, and we are no exception. We try to evolve with each album, but at the same time we try to stay faithful to an essence in both style and sound. For many fans, this has been well-received and appreciated, but for some others it has not.

As compositions and sound are generally a reflection of what the band as an entity or the composer feels or resents, and the experiences and emotions that exist at each stage of life change, it is necessary that there be changes in styles and in the sound, changes in the limbs also affect the final result. In general, each album has improved in the quality of its sound; we have not yet reached a top and that is also clear, but we will continue working hard to make it better every time. Regarding changes in style, this is totally subjective and personal, for some they will be better and for others we will go downhill.

**AU:** Anything else you would like to add?

**ED:** Eternal Drak is a band that has undergone several variations over time, members that should never have been members, members that should never have left, the death of Warhammer and the illness that leads to Drakar's visual impairment make for an almost unwavering persistence. We work hard, it is done with pleasure and the pleasure is in it, we compose according to our taste, and we hope to find along the way those who share our tastes. We thank all those who have accompanied us through all these difficulties. Eternal Drak forever, my friends!

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## Sluggger

Interview by Chuck Andrews

**Absolute Underground:** Who am I speaking with and what do you do within Sluggger?

**Tommy:** I'm Tommy and I front the band as well as play drums on the recordings.

**Clay:** I'm Clay and I play guitar.

**AU:** What city do you guys call home?

**Tommy:** Me and Clay live in Nor Cal (Chico, Dirty 530), and the rest of the band is split between Santa Cruz and San Francisco.

**AU:** How would you guys describe yourself in relation to other current skinhead bands?

**Tommy:** We're a punk band who has members who are skinheads and we like to represent the Northern California anti-racist skinhead scene as best we can. That being said, we have great friends all over, in all kinds of bands, and while we play with a lot of skinhead bands, we don't limit ourselves to any particular scene as long as people are down with the ethic.

**AU:** Is it safe to say that your sound has a throwback to more classic Oi?

**Clay:** I hope so.

**Tommy:** I'd take that as a compliment. That's Oi! to me and we like the gritty shit.

**AU:** As far as direct influences on the sound of your group, who might you cite?

**Tommy:** Creedence Clearwater, Templars, Sham 69, The Bad Brains, Lower Class Brats, and The Bruisers are the ones that quickly come to mind. No Future comps, Carry On Oi! comp, Tighten Up comp, French and Italian Oi! in general.

**Clay:** Same for me. Guitar-wise, I think I'm just trying to rip off Rolling Stones and The Partisans as much as I can I without getting called out on it, haha.

**AU:** Your debut 10" record, co-released

between Longshot Music and TASM (Try And Stop Me) Records from Germany, includes some sound bites from reggae classics such as "Tougher than Tough" by Derrick Morgan. I love the inclusion of these. Any thoughts on the process of including these?

**Tommy:** I got into skinhead shit through



hardcore punk demos, Trojan/Studio 1 comps and old ass UK82 recordings, so when I originally conceptualized the album, I wanted it to sound like the scene we were coming from. It's what played in my head since I was a kid, just a mix of it all. That's what being a skinhead is to me, and not enough people in Oi (and especially HC) recognize how brilliant Jamaican music truly is—past and present. It's not corny tunes for oldheads, these fools were about their shit and made it work with very little resources. Same

thing in the 530 where me and Clay are at.

**AU:** Lyrically, your self-titled record doesn't mess around. The lyrics are very to the point, anti-racist, proud of your music scene, and taking on a tough, dark world. Any comments on the importance of sending a message when creating songs?

**Tommy:** To me, the message is central to the music always. I don't want to waste my time, there's too much to say.

**AU:** Will your upcoming LP have a similar overall sound to the first record?

**Tommy:** It's a little different but in a good way. Better quality songs and production, I think.

**Clay:** Definitely a little different. I feel like it represents what we sound like live a lot better.

**AU:** Are there going to be any dub tracks on the new record like "Poverty Flat" from the "Politician" single?

**Clay:** Not on the *Dead State* LP but it's definitely not out of the question in the future. We all had a lot of fun writing and recording that track and it came together easier than I think we thought it would. We've got more in us, I'm sure.

**AU:** Any plans for Halloween this year?

**Tommy:** I'm getting married right before, so probably not, but I kinda wanna go as Paul Bunyun.

**Clay:** Got a rager planned. Hand out candy and be in bed by 9pm. Invite only, no +1s allowed.

## LONGSHOT MUSIC

**AU:** Any horror fans in the band? Any must-watch scary movies to mention?

**Tommy:** Yeah, but I'm picky. Love folk horror and some of the newer folk horror revival cuts like *Midsommar*, *WITCH*, *Hagazussa*, etc.

**Clay:** I'm a horror poser and know nothing, but *House* (1977) is some weird Japanese psychedelic stuff, if that's your thing. *Barbarian* was cool. Just watched *The Substance* yesterday. Not really scary, but some gnarly body horror stuff for sure.

**AU:** Any plans to tour Canada?

**Tommy:** We want to so fucking bad, trying for West Coast of Canada maybe this Spring.

**AU:** Anything on the horizon you want to mention?

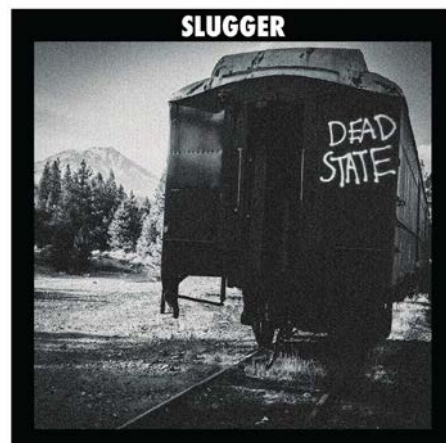
**Tommy:** Yes. I'm announcing it here first, actually: the entire year of 2025 is going to be the Year of The Slugg. Officially.

**Clay:** Took the words right out of my mouth.

**You can stream Sluggger in all the usual places.**

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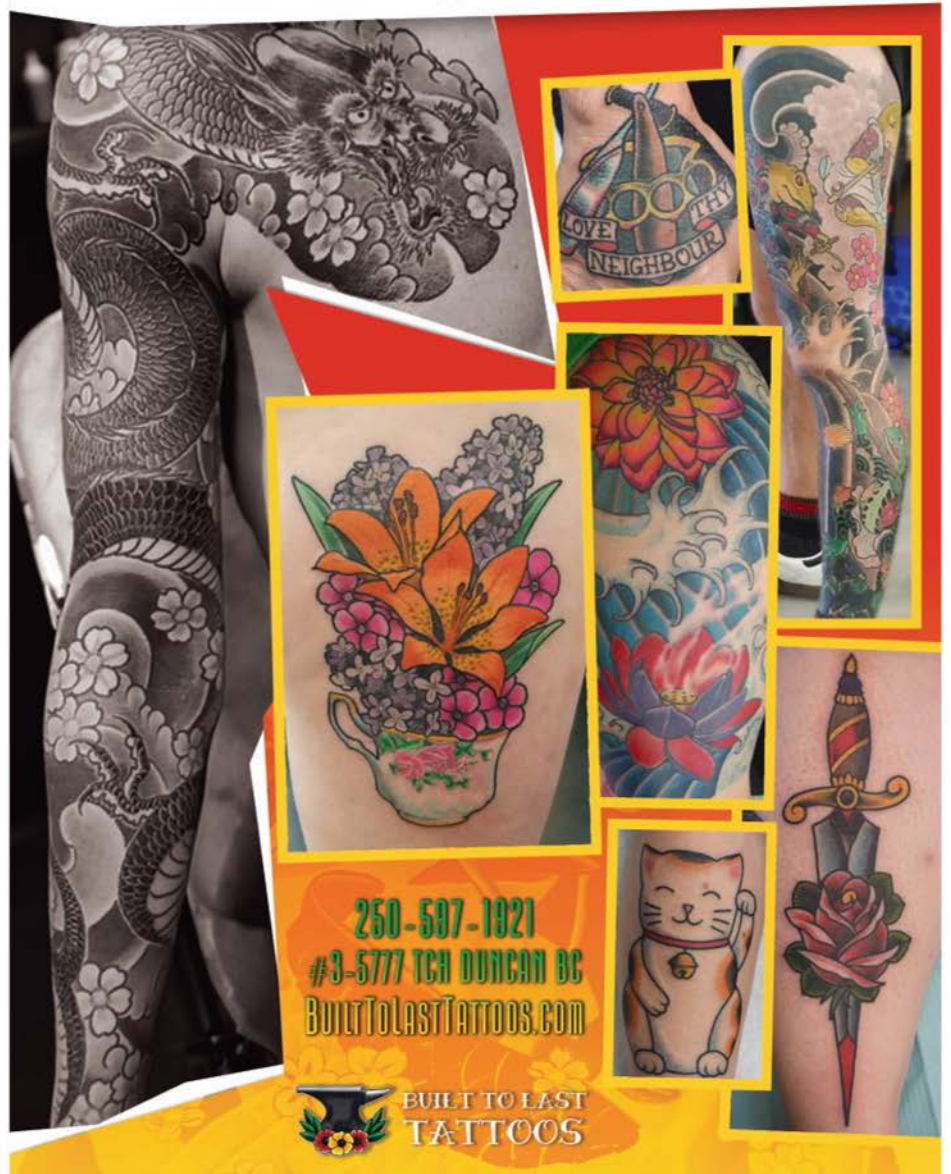
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**Tony:** Thank you! I'd probably go with "No Funeral". That one has my favourite lyrics and riffs.

**Mike:** "...And Then War". We start every set with that one. Works every time.

**AU:** Have you guys been in any other bands?

**Tony:** Too many to name them all! At

this point we've all been in a ton of bands. Some of them are broken up and some are more active than others. Repair, Clench Jaw, Goathammer, Hexensabbat and Bladeforce. Just to name a few. We've got yet ANOTHER one in the works right now too. We'll never learn.

**AU:** Krash has a lot of miles on the 'ol dash display. What's your favourite city to play? What's the shittiest?

**Tony:** That's a tough one. We've only played in Western Canada so far and I've enjoyed every town we've played, but I'm gonna go with Vancouver. Have A Good Laugh Fest afterparty in the street was probably the most memorable show I've ever played. Unlawful noise attacks in the streets!

**Mike:** Love playing Winnipeg. Shout out to the Winter City Skins and Punks. Roberts Creek, BC on the Sunshine Coast with Trenchraid was also really cool. There were lots of kids going off. Moshing inside and outside the venue while we played. Haven't seen that before. Playing under a bridge in Calgary was also fuckin' awesome.

**AU:** Who is Dan Neild?

**Tony:** He's a fucked up little wussy. I'm just kidding. He's our good buddy Dan. An absolute heavy metal ranger.

**Shane:** Dan "B-side" Neild, aka the littlest bopper, is a Calgary maniac. He is also known for losing his boots on roofs and being unable to use ladders.

**Mike:** He makes a mean burger and will do anything for a couple smokes.

**AU:** Sorry that last question was actually a blech. Who is in Krash?

**Tony:** Myself on guitars and vocals, Shane Anderson on drums and Mike Guillet on bass.

**AU:** Is Mike sponsored by Champion Athletic Apparel?

**Mike:** Unfortunately, no. Get at us, Champion. I'm a pretty big billboard so this is a great advertising opportunity. Send us some hoodies.

**AU:** Back in 2020, Krash covered "Warsystem" by the Shitlickers. Has anyone in Krash ever actually licked shit or are you posers?

**Tony:** I'm ashamed to admit that I am NOT a shitlicking poser. I definitely licked dried up bird shit on the hood of my car once due to a bet. I did not get paid enough for it either. In hindsight, it really wasn't worth it.

**Mike:** I'm sure Shane's licked something close to it at one point. He has a ceremonial rock that he makes everyone lick. He's pretty orally fixated.

**Shane:** I EAT ASS, SO PROBABLY.

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

**Tony:** There's nothing coming to mind really. I guess having to wash the puke out of my pants by hand in a bathtub.

**Mike:** I had to use my boxers as toilet paper in the bathroom of a Fresh Slice in BC.

**AU:** We're at a time when a lot of bands are just recycling the same old shit and not really doing anything different or interesting. Can you give us three up and coming bands that are killing it?

**Tony:** Phane (Vancouver), Beton Arme (Montreal), and Pure Impact (Winnipeg).

## BENEATH THE WHEEL

**Mike:** Modern Decay (Regina), Nuclear Man (Winnipeg), and Death Knell (Calgary).

**Shane:** Karoshi (Winnipeg), the Enforcers (Calgary), and No Discretion (Kamloops).

**AU:** What is more rock n' roll: choking people or knocking your drums over while playing?

**Shane:** Choking people is definitely more rock n' roll but it depends on who's getting choked out.

**Mike:** A drummer that does both.

**AU:** What's next for Krash? New tunes? More gigs? Shits to lick?

**Tony:** We've got some ideas for new songs kickin' around. We'll likely record a new album in 2025. We'll definitely be playing more gigs. We're planning to play Mexico and some eastern Canadian spots like Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal next year. No more shit licking for me.

**AU:** What's the best thing to order at Denny's?

**Mike:** Breakfast slamwich AND country fried steak.

**Tony:** Coffee or a beer, I guess? Denny's is trash.

**AU:** Any final words for your fans new, old, upcoming and dead who are gonna check out Krash after reading this interview?

**Tony:** We love Discharge, we love Broken Bones. We love d-beat. As long as the war grinds on, we will continue to make nuclear fallout punk in protest!

**AU:** How do we find you online and where do we pick up a copy of *Nothing Is Sacred*?

**Tony:** We run a tape label/distro called Attack with Force. Most of our active bands can be found there. You can get the record at one of our gigs or you can order one online from Blown Out Media.

[krashpunk.bandcamp.com](http://krashpunk.bandcamp.com)

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## Sacred Blade

### Of the Sun + Moon

By James Channing

Sacred Blade was originally formed in 1978 in Vancouver, British Columbia. They became well-known for their blend of progressive hard rock and science fiction, and were uniquely referred to as "Astral Alloy" during the heavy metal scene of the 1980s.

The group first gained recognition in the international underground for their early demos before releasing their first full-length LP, *Of the Sun + Moon* in 1986— which received critical acclaim the world over.

Now, this legendary album has been re-released by Supreme Echo Records of Victoria, British Columbia. This collector's edition is available in black or colored vinyl and includes a captivating booklet written by the band.

Readers are transported back to the vibrant realm

of the 1980s music scene through the eyes of Sacred Blade. The story chronicles their rise from the early days to becoming an electrifying act of the era. Band members share their journey through vivid anecdotes and behind-the-scenes glimpses as they describe the creation of their iconic first album. This provides an insider's look at unique personalities of the members, the recording process, the challenges of the music industry at the time, and the impact of their music on fans and fellow musicians alike.

Enhanced by rare photos and memorabilia, the booklet also conveys a heartfelt tribute to the band's leader, Jeff Ulmer. It's a must-read for fans old and new, offering a deeper understanding of the music that defined a generation.

The original members of Sacred Blade were Jeff Ulmer—the pilot— guitar, lead vocal; Will Rascan/nacsar— guitar; Paul Davis/pol— percussion; and Tony Moser/10X— bass. In 1983, they were joined by their new bassist and backing vocalist, James Channing/zed, and were prominently featured on the *Metal Massacre IV* compilation album (a series

known for discovering the likes of Metallica, Slayer, etc.).

In 1987, with the next crew rotation, Ted Zawadski/zawad joined as the new percussionist, followed by Randy Robertson/aranar on guitar the same year. The group became renowned and performed live alongside the many of the most popular bands in what is now, a classic era.

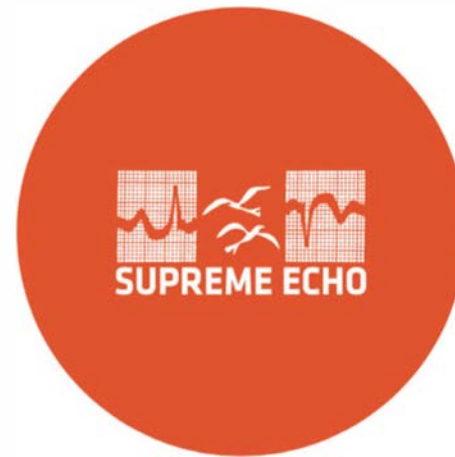
Sacred Blade was born out of the imagination of Jeff Ulmer based on concepts from Jeff's unpublished novel, *Seven Moonz of Xercez* (pronounced "zerk seez"). According to the story, the band arrived from their home galaxy of Xercez when their spacecraft "the orclarze" pressed into this time continuum and crash landed in the rain forest of Canada's Pacific Northwest...

Jeff explainz his vision of the music:

*"I always had this vision... an ever-changing aural landscape; heavy electric guitarz form massive canyon wallz, the bass guitar fillz the floor of the valley + the drum kit echo[ez] off the distant mountainz across the lake. voicez + instrumentz take turnz filling the sky overhead..."* (Moonwatch Commandscript no. III, 1987)

The entire album is a journey that contains elements of these musical characteristics, yet each song is unique, each piece a compilation. For example, "master of the sun", is a song that exemplifies Sacred Blade's sound. This epic track incorporates melodic intricacies that transition into earth-shattering guitar riffs, grabbing the listener's attention before complex and mystical lyrics whisk you away into a realm of hypnotic, outer space fantasy. Then, when you least expect it, an incredible bridge blurs time and space and rips into a frenzy of pure metal speed and power. This cataclysmic voyage concludes by returning to the chorus and ending with an outro that leaves you wanting more.

That was the nature of Sacred Blade. Different by design. Intentionally obscure. Deliberate in the band's desire to be unlike other genres coming before and those leading into the future. In fact, all members of the band were hell-bent on the pursuit of excellence and their tenacity paid off.



In France, Germany, England, Holland, Belgium, Japan, etc. people loved *Of the Sun + Moon!*

By this time, Sacred Blade had claimed their spot as Vancouver's premier heavy metal/hard rock phenomenon. The band was invited to play with many famous metal bands when tours came to town; opening for Saxon and Raven when they visited from England, and Exodus from the San Francisco Bay Area. As fellow pioneers of the West Coast metal scene, Seattle's Metal Church were perhaps their closest allies.

The fact that so many people have shown support and recognize the band as unforgotten is a testament to Sacred Blade's place as a force in heavy metal. Many posts and comments found on the internet today are written by individuals that were not yet born when *Of the Sun + Moon* was released.

And if longevity is a measure of success, Sacred Blade achieved its aspirations to stand the test of time and exist beyond into the night of day.

Eventually, all band members were summoned to perform in another realm and returned to their home galaxy. To this day, however, their legacy lives on in sound waves detected throughout the universe.

[sacredbladeofficial.com](http://sacredbladeofficial.com)

# RICKSHAW THEATRE

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## Ripping the Alps Part Fünf (That's Five in Bavarian)

By Brydo "Snowpack" Parker

We left off last time in Austria at Saalbach-Hinterglemm, also now know as the ski circus. These two mountains could be described as similar to Whistler Blackcomb, but with more mountains down the valley and even more in the next valley over. Salzburg is the Austrian federal state and Hinterglemm is the mountain we were riding in the last story. Salzburg is bordered by Tyrol, another federal state of Austria from where we are you can get to several other ski areas by riding there and taking lifts including Fieberbrunn in Tyrol. The mountain we wanted to go to was



closed down for a major movie shoot; a James Bond movie, we discovered later. So, we continued down the Valley to Glemmtal. Where we were, it was still snowing, but not anywhere else in the entire Alps. This was the beauty of Jai's plan to let the snow forecast blow us around wherever we needed to go to. We had planned on following the Alps through Italy, Slovakia, and into Bosnia-Herzegovina to ride Sarajevo. Apparently, there are runs there that have signs posted saying "Danger: Unexploded Landmines" but without snow, that would've been very dangerous. We decided to stay in Austria and keep getting the best snow. Well, the best laid plans can evaporate very fast. As we got to the mountain it was snowing, but as the day progressed it got considerably warmer.

There was night skiing at Glemmtal, so we rode all day then around 3 pm, it started to rain. What do Powder Seekers do when it rains? Answer: take magic mushrooms. Jai, Tonow, me, Ira, Daniel, and Peter took the entire bag down. We had the most memorable rain riding as we were ripping faster than the locals and spraying slush all over everyone who got in the path of us tsunami-chuckers. I can only assume Ira slapped some slush on somebody who wanted

revenge. We went into the lodge to get some food and drinks which was excellent and not expensive. When we came out, Ira was looking for his helmet that he had left with his board and we found it under a downspout that was puking icy rain water from the roof into his helmet. Haha, someone got him back. The rain wiped all that fresh snow and all of Austria got soaked. Jai used his apps and



local contacts to find that the rain was indeed snow in Bavaria— the famous part of Germany that includes Garmisch-Partenkirchen (known as Gs-Pa for short). This area has 14 resorts all interconnected by high mountain trains, trams, ski lifts, and ski runs. The largest mountain, Zugspitze, is almost 3000 meters high and is as close as you can get to a surefire bet you'll get snow. We arrived in the trusty Mercedes Sprinter camper van and went up the mountain in another third rail train, which has a gear like on a roller coaster that pulls the train up the mountain. We passed the big glacier on Garmisch and kept going up until the train stopped and we got on another lift. Up, up we went, into the dense fog loaded with suspended frozen water droplets. Very cool if you're on mushrooms, but we were out. The frozen droplets collect on your goggles and stick like snow glue and the visibility was terrible; sad, because the view is supposed to be stupendous. We picked our way down through the fog and fresh snow. The Powder Seekers did it again. We lucked no ropes here— the terrain was way too insane here for that. Plus, there was hardly anybody on the hill and we were getting 15 cm of fresh on the inbound runs. I gotta go back one day and check out where we actually were. The food was great and the infrastructure well-developed. We dropped down to the glacier, which was where a

# POWDER SEEKERS



great deal of German ski legends of the World Cup and the Olympics live, play, and train. Skiers, boarders, men, and women all revere this place. Us too now. At the end of the day, Peter went

back to Frankfurt where he lives and works and we were trying to decide what to do. Looking on the tourist map, we found Partnach Gorge, where an ancient road runs along the bottom of the gorge, right beside a raging river. It was a very neat place and was quite sketchy due to the ice buildup and treacherous tunnels. Jai's

apps and contacts told us that another storm was breaking back in Switzerland. Powder Seekers seek snow and find it too. Stay tuned for the final conclusion, Ripping the Alps: Part Sächs (Six in Swiss), in the next issue.



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**WM:** Creepy and twisted with some dark humour! I like to use organic forms, shapes, and textures in my art. For me, it's important to have the image tell a story in a single panel. As an animator, I also like to incorporate action and movement into my work.

**AU: Have you done any album covers before? Any other projects you'd like to mention?**

**WM:** As a freelancer I have worked on several album covers, posters, and band-related merch for numerous clients in the music industry. I have also created a couple 2D animated music videos. The work was fun, the clients were great and I am proud of all my work, but it was not really in line with the subject matter I like to work in—horror.

**AU: Are you open to commissions? What's the weirdest thing you've been asked to draw?**

**WM:** Yes, I am open to commissions. In 2024, that is the type of work I am pursuing.

## Warren Muzak

Horror Illustrator and Animator

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?**

**Warren Muzak:** My name is Warren Muzak and I am a professional freelance illustrator/cartoonist and 2D animator.

**AU: How long have you been an artist? What got you started and what influences you?**

**WM:** I have been drawing for as long as I can remember. My earliest influences were the illustrations found in MAD magazines in the late '70s. I met a friend with a large comic collection in the '80s and he introduced me to the black and white horror magazines from Warren Publishing and I fell in love with the artwork. Wally Wood, Jack Davis, Bernie Wrightson, and John Buscema are my earliest influences on my work.

**AU: How would you describe your art?**



Currently I have been connecting with horror and sci-fi publishers for commission work. I have done a couple pieces for Last Girls Club, Anthophiles, and an anthology *Terrific Tomorrows*. The weirdest thing I was asked to draw was concept art for a product that was a clip-on deodorant for women's underwear. I never followed up to see if it was produced or not.

**AU: What media do you work in?**

**WM:** I work mainly with digital tablet. Wacom Cintiq and Krita. I do use real pen and ink when the mood hits me. On rare occasions I use watercolors.

**AU: Any other hidden talents unrelated to art?**

**WM:** I was a professional singer/songwriter. Guitar is my instrument. Currently I am playing bass for fun with a jam band.

**AU: What music do you listen to when you're working?**

**WM:** I don't. When I get into my "zone" I tune out the world around me.

**AU: What are you currently working on?**

## ARTIST PROFILE

**WM:** Freelance job for a jazz album cover.

**AU: Any upcoming projects or exhibits to promote?**

**WM:** November 2-3, Kitchener ON Comic Con.

**AU: What are your plans for Halloween?**

**WM:** Hand out candy and eat the leftovers.

**AU: Trick or treat?**

**WM:** Treat, always.

**AU: Top three horror movies of all time?**

**WM:** *Dracula: Prince of Darkness*, the original *Frankenstein*... is the original *Alien* horror or sci-fi?

**AU: Any words of wisdom for aspiring artists?**

**WM:** Rejection and critics are always there. Don't let them discourage or distract you. Always set aside a minimum of 18 minutes a day for your art. Even if it's a doodle.

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## VEGAN SUPPLY

**AU: Who are we talking to and what is your role?**

**Jason Antony** - Founder of Vegan Supply.

**AU: What was the inspiration for starting Vegan Supply?**

**Jason:** The inspiration behind Vegan Supply was to actively contribute to ending animal suffering. We also wanted to make being vegan easier by offering a one-stop shop for all things vegan, including hard-to-find products, that could be accessible to people globally.

**AU: What experience did you bring to the table when deciding to start up?**

**Jason:** I've been a lifelong entrepreneur and business owner. I founded DV8, a late-night venue in Vancouver featuring visual artists, DJ's, and underground creatives back in 1994 and we were already offering vegan items on the menu back then. I've been vegan for 20 years, which gives me both personal and professional insight into the needs of the vegan community.

**AU: What is your mission statement?**

**Jason:** "We Make Vegan Easy!" This means we meet people wherever they are on their vegan journey, help educate them, offer alternatives for meat, dairy, eggs, and more, while providing **global shipping.**

**AU: Why is a plant-based diet such an important factor in people's health?**

**Jason:** I personally healed my crohn's by adopting a vegan, plant-based diet. There's extensive research linking plant-based eating to improved longevity and overall health, making it a critical factor for many individuals.

**AU: What sorts of products are available?**

**Jason:** We offer over 3,000 products across a variety of categories including meat and dairy alternatives, pantry staples, snacks, sweets, beverages, lifestyle items, and seasonal favorites.



**AU: What are some of the most popular items?**

**Jason:** Our top sellers range between categories. In our sweets it would be GoMaxGo Candy Bars which are vegan versions of nostalgic candy bars in almost identical flavours and textures as well as vegan KitKats & Reese's. Our dairy alternatives offer a wide range of plant based milks, dips, cheeses, sour cream, mayo, and yogurts. People love Tofutti Sour Cream, Yoggus's range of yogurts, Miyoko's Liquid Mozza, Babybel Cheese Wedges, and Boursin's soft cheese, to name a few. Big Mountain Soy Free Tofu is a great option for soy allergies. And some really cool new additions would be Juicy Marbles, a steak product developed in Slovenia, YoEgg which is a poached egg alternative from the U.S. and the most realistic egg replacement on the market. And Thrilling Bakon, also from the U.S. that brings that smokey, chewy, fragrant bacon to the table.

**AU: Do you provide food for pets as well?**

**Jason:** Yes, we offer a range of pet products including kibbles, wet food, treats, supplements, and chews for dogs.

**AU: Does Vegan Supply have Halloween treats?**

**Jason:** Absolutely! We have a great selection of Halloween treats, including hard candies, gummies, and chocolates.

**AU: Anything else you would like to mention?**

**Jason:** Our biggest interest is in helping other businesses add vegan products to their offerings. We love to support restaurants, cafes, specialty shops, markets, and more. Please reach out if you want to make your business more vegan friendly at [wholesale@vegansupply.ca](mailto:wholesale@vegansupply.ca) and we'd be happy to help you out!

**AU: How do people find you online?**

**Jason:** You can shop at Vegan Supply online at [vegansupply.ca](http://vegansupply.ca)

# i LIKE FOOD

## CALIGARI'S ODDITORIUM

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

My name is Brent, I run an online shop called Caligari's Odditorium, where I make one-of-a-kind dolls and horror props with immersive



storytelling, the very human allegories, the explorations of darkness. Above all else, I've grown to love the community. It always amazes me that the people interested in the darkest things are the kindest people in the world.



**AU: What are some of the creations you're most proud of?**

I'm proud every time somebody wants to buy one of my creations. After so many years doing this, I still just love hearing from people who receive the things I've made and are just thrilled to own them and show them off. I love making unique dolls, creating backstories for them, creating newspaper articles, photoshopping images, other unique items, and using it all to create very immersive stories. I want to make my dolls something to be experienced rather than just something to display on a shelf.



**AU: Anything else to mention or promote?**

I run a professional haunted house in Chestermere, AB, which runs for all of October. We put hundreds of hours into it every year, building all of the props and costumes ourselves, not overlooking any detail. We film a movie every year that small groups of guests watch first, and then they are thrown into the movie in the haunted house. I think we're doing something nobody has seen before, it's truly immersive and terrifying. If you're in Alberta, check out Dr. Giggles House of Pain!

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backstories.

**AU: Do you believe in ghosts?**

This is a tough one. I'm definitely open to the idea. I've been to some of the most "haunted" places in the world and

haven't experienced anything. Surprisingly often, I'll make ventriloquist dummies which I send out to customers, who will then message me pretty quickly about strange things happening, the dolls moving, their children having night terrors. I get a lot of videos of ghost hunting equipment being used on dolls I've made, and somehow they are incredibly "active".

**AU: What first spawned your obsession with horror?**

Probably just being a very anxious child. I had a few devastating run-ins with "horror" as a kid (the story about the girl with the green ribbon around her neck absolutely destroyed me as a 6 year old, couldn't sleep for weeks). But as I got older, horror became this comfortable way to explore fears and push personal limits. I fell in love with every aspect of it - the



# HAPPY HALLOWEEN

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## Forgotten Rebels

By B.A. Johnston and Mal Content

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?**

**Mickey DeSadist:** I am Mickey... singer of the Forgotten Rebels.

**AU: What's new with the band?**

**Mickey:** The Forgotten Rebels are working on a new album to release and are halfway through composing the songs, punk as punk can be. Chris Houston and I with various guests have recorded a bunch of covers and stuff 13 years ago and some Houston originals as DeSadist Au GoGo. The Forgotten Rebels stuff is like the coolest stuff we ever done as now we have a total punk band with Gympo Jak on Bass. We have the best Forgotten Rebels sound we've ever had. The stuff with Chris is various sounding as expected. Jim Hare and us did some Viletones tribute stuff too.

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

**Mickey:** We are all clean-living and healthy and do what cool dudes do without bragging about it!

**AU: What's your fave submarine sandwich shop in Hamilton and what's your go-to order?**

**Mickey:** I like to make my own sandwich: brioche bread with butter, pastrami, honey ham, Polish mustard, a little lettuce.

**AU: You ever wear shorts on stage? If not, why not?**

**Mickey:** I never wear shorts on stage, that's for drummers... I would never.

**AU: You are trapped in a hotel for 24 hours alone with a boombox. What**

**tapes are you bringing?**

**Mickey:** I would bring tapes of Ramones, Slade, Motörhead, T. Rex, MCS, Spiders from Mars, Mott the Hoople, Iggy and the Stooges, New York Dolls, and Dead Boys.

**AU: How do you guys get to shows? Describe your band ride.**

**Mickey:** We each drive to shows or car pool. Gas is expensive, you know.

**AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?**

**Mickey:** The Forgotten Rebels are playing at the Horseshoe in Toronto on November 9 and at the Corktown in Hamilton on December 7. Should be fun.

**AU: What was the last album Forgotten Rebels released?**

**Mickey:** It's been 10 years since we released *Last Ones Standing*... A live album recorded in various places.

**AU: Does the new album you are working on explore any particular themes or topics?**

**Mickey:** The new album will show that we are indeed vigilant observers of the insanity around us. We now live in a

strange world and are part of it in a strange way.

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

**Mickey:** My fave track so far is "Full Speed Ahead", but we haven't completed composing yet, so I can't say. We may do even better!

**AU: Any other Hamilton bands people should check out?**

**Mickey:** People should check out Night Chill, Merinuks, and Mental Infliction from Hamilton, as well as Miss Conduct from Kitchener; all bands I love seeing.

**AU: Any plans for Halloween this year? Craziest Halloween you remember?**

**Mickey:** No Halloween show, but a pre-Christmas in Hamilton and a post-Halloween in Toronto. One Halloween, I was wondering why so many people

## HAM JAMMERS

were wearing top hats, sequins, frilly shirts, glitter makeup, and glitter disco belts, and was told that they were dressed up as ME, both guys and girls!

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

**Mickey:** I am an avid mountain biker and flower gardener and have been married 25 years this year to my beautiful Pamela. I am a wrestling fan!

**AU: Any final words for our readers?**

**Mickey:** Never a final word... always anticipate more. I am honoured to be in a band with Jeff Campbell, Dan Casale, and Gympo Jak... the coolest dudes and the greatest players in the ongoing story of THE FORGOTTEN REBELS!

[forgottenrebels.com](http://forgottenrebels.com)

Hat photo by Don Denton



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# POWELL RIVER



## FORGOTTEN REBELS

Interview with bassist Gympo Jak

by Ira "Old School" Hunter

**AU: What was your first introduction to the Forgotten Rebels?**

**Gympo:** I saw them in '94 at Harpo's on Wharf Street when they were touring the Criminal Zero album. They came in a big silver tour bus and it was such a sick time, there were so many people there. It's just crazy that it's gone full circle now that I'm playing with them in the same town that I was introduced to them in.

**AU: So you guys just flew in from Toronto on the Red Eye over right to Victoria?**

**Gympo:** Yeah, it wasn't the greatest flight. We're working on very little sleep and

broken guitars.

**AU: Forgotten Rebels are a very important band to a lot of people.**

**Gympo:** The Rebels have been around since '77 and the fact that there's going to be a new album coming out just goes to speak for the longevity of the band and how it's not going to stop until everybody's dead.

**AU: You've been the singer of the Dayglos and Sick Sense, and in Maximum RNR and Grey Bush, but I didn't know you were a bass player.**

**Gympo:** I've always fiddled around with the bass. When I was little my dad got us a goofy bass guitar from a garage sale and I remember the first song I played on it was a Pink Floyd tune and that got me into playing bass. Mostly I was a frontman in bands but always wrote music on the bass. Because only four strings is much easier and for me, funner.

**AU: What does Mickey DeSadist bring to the table as a frontman?**

**Gympo:** Mickey brings a style, wit and general realism that is sometimes lacking in the same field of music.

**AU: Some old Forgotten Rebels songs are controversial but that was just punk rock, right?**

**Gympo:** Well it's been said that back in the day, what you did to get noticed was to say and do shocking things. That meant singing a song about politically incorrect material. That's what the news outlets were drawn to, that's what parents would champion against.

**AU: What are you dressing up as for Halloween this year?**

**Gympo:** I can't tell you, it's always a secret.

**AU: Let Absolute Underground readers know. Lord Megatron? Skeletor? A Smurf?**

**Gympo:** No comment.

**AU: Final words for fans of the Gympo?**

**Gympo:** Stay Rad.

[instagram.com/gympo.jak](https://www.instagram.com/gympo.jak)

Photo Credit: Don Denton



## FORGOTTEN REBELS

Interview with guitarist Jeff Campbell

by Ira "Hockeynite" Hunter

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

**JC:** I'm Jeff Campbell from the Forgotten Rebels. Infamous for? Guitar playing. I'd like to think.

**AU: How long have you been in the Forgotten Rebels?**

**JC:** Ahh too long. Probably since 1990. My first gig was in Kitchener. I didn't even have a practice with them, just showed up and played.

**AU: Were they an important band to you?**

**JC:** Yes, that's what helped when I first joined the band. I was a fan, so I already knew the music. It was easier to get in the groove and memorize all the songs. It's been a great history with them.

**AU: For a lot of people from out East they one of the first punk band that they heard of. I'm from the West Coast. We had our DOAs and Dayglos and you had your Rebels.**

**JC:** Hamilton had a great punk scene with

Teenage Head. They're a very popular band too, which I occasionally fill in for. I think we should probably come out more often to the West Coast.

**AU: What has Vancouver Island boy Gympo Jak on bass now brought to the table?**

**JC:** A lot of humour, good hair and a lot of good ideas. Because we are writing stuff and he's contributing great musical ideas for us. He has been a great addition to the band.

**AU: You guys are working new material?**

**JC:** Yes. The last year we've been rehearsing quite a bit. We have at least an album. We usually like to write twice as many songs as we should have.

**AU: Some early songs were controversial...**

**JC:** They were just tongue in cheek. If you listen to the lyrics, he's just writing this stuff to mess people up. It was the time. People wrote songs for attention, shock value. You couldn't dream of getting a song on the radio if you were a punk band. So you had to do this shock kind of rock.

**AU: What about songs about necrophilia? Alice Cooper has several, T.S.O.L. has got one, and you guys have one. I was thinking about making a documentary on songs about banging corpses.**

**JC:** Again, that's a shock value song to get some attention. If anybody took us seriously about that, they have problems.

**AU: Final words for Canadian fans?**

**JC:** We love you and we hope to see you all soon.

**AU: How do people find you online?**

**JC:** The site [www.forgottenrebels.com](http://www.forgottenrebels.com) is run by a fellow here in Vancouver. It's been around for ages. James O'Brien runs it from Rant Radio. We also have Instagram of course.

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

Live Photo by Don Denton





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## SWIFT BREWING & The Good Time Tasting Room

Interview by Bobby Barrel

**AU: Who are we talking to today and what is your role at Swift Brewing?**

My name is Matt Simes and my role here at Swift is General Manager – I oversee the taproom, distribution, partnership development, and events!

**AU: How long have you been involved in the world of beer? What was the genesis of Swift Brewing? When did you first open and where are you located?**

I've been involved in the world of beer for about 5 years but only really got into the professional side of it for over a year now learning about the creation of beer, hop profiles, and the overall business aspect of beer. But love me some fresh craft beer since the hype got real!

Swift Brewing officially opened last May located on Swift Street in Victoria's beautiful downtown harbour.

**AU: What are some types of beer Swift brews?**

A couple classics I'll always love hyping up are Swift's Smooth Operator and Disco Juice! Smooth Operator Hazy Pale is loaded with Citra



hops and oats to give a robust tropical burst and that electrical stone fruit kick that everyone needs.

Disco Juice West Coast IPA has the perfect blend of Pacific Northwest hops and Citra Gyro to leave a pine resin front and a fruity backbone. Super clean reminds me of more of a San Fran style West Coast. Come on down and give these flagships a try!

**AU: What sets your beer apart in your opinion?**

There are so many good breweries out in Victoria and Vancouver. They're making killer beer, but I would say the high-quality ingredients we use and our Brewer Pat Sand. Pat's been brewing for over a decade and always learning to find ways to improve his beer really helps set us apart. We also have some funky beer names like Hawaii 5-0 Pineapple Wheat and the Golden Boy Lager. At the end of the day, we're always looking to collab with other breweries and continue to evolve. Shoutout to Whistle Buoy, 33 Acres, and Fieldhouse!

**AU: Tell us about your "Good Time Tasting Room".**

Located at 450 Swift Street, our tasting room is a place for you to enjoy a super comfy setting, combining the best of the old with the convenience and comfort of the new. Picture the delicious flavors and cozy feeling from your wild Aunt Linda's kitchen and the retro nostalgia from your cousin Geo's cigar room. It's the right blend of old-school charm and modern-day comfort.

We are all about the 70's feel!

**AU: Who are some of your awesome staff members and what does each individual bring to the table?**

We got an unreal team here at Swift. We're all unique and dynamic individuals making the

dream work with teamwork.

Syd is quick on her feet. She's always down to share and hear a good story and of course chat all things beer!

August is a complete vibe always ready to rock n' roll at Swift and brighten your day!

Serena will be ready to set the tone at Swift playing the best music playlists and always up for a debate on any hot topic in the world. Bella always slaying at Swift and will be sure to bring a smile to your face when you see her. Bella is always so vibrant and fun.

**AU: Any unique brewing secrets you can share.**

You'll have to come down to Swift and catch Pat - our rad brewer...

**AU: As this is our Halloween issue, do you have any favourite pumpkin beers?**

You will have to head to Whistle Buoy in Victoria's Chinatown – they're your place for all things pumpkin, my go to place for all things seasonal and stouts.

**AU: Where can Swift Brewing currently be found on tap?**

You can find us on tap at 10 Acres both Commons and Bistro. Commons has that beautiful feel managed by the Great Jimmy or if you are feeling extra intimate head over to catch Bruno at the Bistro. You can find us on tap at the lovely Fernwood Inn. You can always catch us at Heron Rock, some of the best food in town - no joke. Shoutout to Craft Beer Market for always repping Swift beer. We're fortunate to have such supportive and local partners!



**AU: Swift recently set up your booth and poured at the Great Canadian Beer Festival in Victoria. How was the event this year? Please describe your booth display as I found it to be one of the funner unique booths at the fest this year.**

Much appreciated!! PJ our curator and owner has done an epic job finding the right items over the years to create an absolute nostalgic vibe here at Swift. Anything people saw at our booth is thanks to PJ. The goal is to inspire throwbacks and "OMG remember that!" moments. Anytime we can take people back in time, we'll be the first on set.

The event went well, always taken back how lovely and engaging the crowd is. We're hoping next year we can bring the Swift Van back on the grounds. Victoria Beer Society always does an excellent job with creating an atmosphere and organization.

**AU: Anything else you want people to know?**

Swing on over to Swift with your pal, share a laugh and enjoy delicious beers. Swift will be serving up tasty brews, lively cocktails, and some basement snacks, we are hugely passionate about good times and beer-fueled fun.

**AU: How do people find you online?**

Check us out online [swiftbrewing.ca](http://swiftbrewing.ca) or Instagram [@swiftbeer](https://www.instagram.com/swiftbeer)

## Howl Brewing

A Craft Nano Brewery in Victoria, BC  
Interview by AU Editorial

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what do you do?**

Dan: I'm Dan, me and my wife Alayna are the owners of Howl Brewing. I'm also the brewer, amongst other things.

**AU: How did Howl get its start?**

Dan: Howl started with home brewing, and dreaming of doing it commercially one day. I put an ad on Used Victoria "looking for a space to start a nano brewery."

We looked at a couple places; one in Sooke and another by the ferry. We chose the one on Mills because of it being close to the ferry and the airport. Unfortunately, the brewery part of the building was not built, it had a roof and one wall, no floor, electrical, water, sewer, etc... We had to pretty much build most of it from the ground up.



**AU: Howl Brewing just moved from North Saanich to Esquimalt, what can you tell us about that?**

Dan: We decided to close in North Saanich for a few reasons. The seating was all outdoor, and business slowed down drastically in the cooler months. I was driving from Esquimalt every day, 30-40 hours each month. Alayna

and I started working on the zoning process to commercially brew from our house in Esquimalt. We eventually got the zoning changed to allow for manufacturing. It was a bit of a process, and it us took a couple years.

**AU: I know there currently isn't a tasting room at the new location. Are there any plans for one in the future?**

Dan: We plan on applying before the end of the summer for another zoning change to hopefully allow for a tasting room. Our house was once an old convenience store/residence for seventy years. Hopefully we can bring the store part back in the version of a tasting room.

**AU: What brews do you currently have to offer and where can we find them on tap or in store?**

Dan: Our small batches are ever-changing. We currently have Spruce Tip IPA, Sarsaparilla Ale, Strawberry Ale (with cucumber, lavender, basil), Gotlandsdricka (Viking-era beer), Mango Tepache, and Chicha Morada Ale.

Our beers are available on tap at Refuge, Churchill, Be Love, Meet on Blanshard, Spinnakers Brewpub, Browns Crafthouse, and Eagles Club. We are available at Cascadia, Liquor Plus, Vessel, Tudor House, Cook St Liquor, Beverly Corners, Lucky's Liquor, etc... We are also at many farmers markets.

**AU: What sets your beer apart?**

Dan: With small batches it allows us to be more

experimental and take risks; it makes for interesting and fun beer. We can utilize ingredients fresh from a farm, or someone's garden or fruit tree. We do styles from all around the world, often historic styles that are not commonly brewed.

**AU: Do you have any unique brewing secrets you'd like to share?**

Dan: Fermentation is a natural process, brewers do their best to control this process. Sometimes it doesn't work out exactly as planned, but sometimes it works out better.

**AU: Any upcoming events we can find you at?**

Dan: We are at Cowichan Food and Beer Festival, Ribfest, and Halloween Market YYJ.

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## The Cult of Dean Koontz

By Vince D'Amato

This article had a slightly weird genesis. I was walking alone when someone passed me and suddenly stopped, turned, and yelled back to me: "Hey, what Dean Koontz book is that?" – I looked down at my hands, even though I knew damn well what book it was. An old paperback of *The House of Thunder*, by Dean R. Koontz (from way back when he used to have that "R." in his name). I chatted with this stranger, where I discovered that his favourite Dean Koontz novel was, ironically, *Strangers*. This wasn't the first time that I'd heard someone say that *Strangers* was their favourite novel. It's never been turned into a movie, but there is a lot of love for this book, and it had a heavy influence on the late James A. Moore's horror novel, *Fireworks* (also very good). Like Stephen King, Koontz did not escape the '90s without some wild adaptations of his works, including *Hideaway*, *The Servants of Twilight*, *Whispers*, and *Phantoms*. And in the '90s, Koontz' book sales were up there with King, reaching #1 on National Bestsellers' lists. But the Dean Koontz of today, who leans more towards literary series that seem to be written for television productions – and that's totally fine – but I don't think it's going to make in on the epitaph once it's all said and done. Not like his earlier works, which evidently can still elicit random conversations with strangers thirty-odd years later.

**Hideaway (The Book: 1992 – The Movie: 1995)**

*Hideaway* is in my top-three favourite Dean Koontz books. The opening of the novel takes well over 80 pages to get through a lengthy

but intense hospital sequence where a dying psychotic killer is brought in and crosses paths with an innocent family. Koontz felt that the entire crux of the novel was the family's pre-teen daughter who becomes the object of the psycho's attention. In the film, this role was played by the older Alicia Silverstone (Jeff Goldblum played her dad). Of course, this did skew some of the more existential and motivational ideas of the novel, but, was this a bad movie overall? No, it wasn't. It was also one an early film from screenwriter Andrew Kevin Walker (*Seven*), and you could do worse in using this film as an entry point into Koontz' work – although, yes, the book is miles better, and there are better Koontz films out there, too.

**Phantoms (The Book: 1983 – The Movie: 1998)**



So, this one is my #1 favourite Dean Koontz

book. I didn't like this movie very much. And even though the entire premise of the novel has now been "debunked", if you never thought it was true in the first place, then you'll still be just fine taking it as a piece of breakneck-speed horror-fiction. *Phantoms* is about a town where the population seemingly just up and disappears without a trace, and very quickly the military and a group of military scientists are called in. One of the military scientists, Sara, is my favourite character in the book, and I was happy to see that she made it into the movie, as she wasn't one of the "main" characters. But the town's sheriff, who is one of the main characters, was played by a very young Ben Affleck, and I just didn't buy it. And much like the filmed version of *Hideaway*, the more innocent female teenage character was played by the older and far edgier Rose McGowan (*Scream*). All over the film, the actors appeared to betray the characters of the book. This unfortunately forgettable horror movie was directed by *Halloween 6* and *Skull Island* director, Joe Chappelle. But stick with the book.

**Whispers (The Book: 1980 – The Movie: 1990)**

This movie is a Canadian production, and it's a huge guilty pleasure for me. Chris Sarandon stars in this slightly bizarre horror feature from Koontz' book – and full disclosure – I've never actually read this one. Which is sort of weird, because I'd say this is my favourite Dean Koontz movie. The film itself boasts some weird-ass twists and turns, and I'd like to think that those were lifted



directly from the novel – but of course, in this case, I can't really say. The movie starts as a menacing stalker movie, then switches to a murder movie, and then a vampire movie, of all things... and it doesn't end there. There are some pretty wicked and subversive scenes going on here that I'd personally like to think could only come from the exploitative Canadian tax shelter films of that era, back in the glory days when a lot of horror and exploitation came from Canada, taking advantage of the cash credits, and which inadvertently made Canada one of the biggest slasher and horror movie producers of the '80s and '90s.

**The Bad Place (The Book: 1990 – The Movie: Never Made)**

My third-favourite book is probably Koontz' most epic horror novel. It starts off as a haunted house story, but quickly ramps up into something far larger into the cosmic horror realm popularized by writers like H.P. Lovecraft, with some truly wild ideas that cross into other timelines and

dimensions – meanwhile, the book's narrative thrust remains somewhat contained to the story's two lead characters, a young couple who run a private detective agency. This book was never turned into a movie, but it certainly wasn't for lack of trying. In 1990, Hollywood power couple Don Johnson and Melanie Griffith were interested in playing the lead roles of the detective team. Warner Brothers picked up the rights to Koontz' script, but after things fell through during the development process, the rights were supposed to enter a "turnaround" phase, where other studios could have the opportunity to option the property. Only this never happened, because Warner Brother had just let go of *Home Alone* and 20th Century Fox had made a killing off of that film – and so from that point on, Warner Brothers put policy in place to permanently prevent any re-selling of any script or property to any other studio, even if they were never going to produce it.

**Demon Seed (The Book: 1972 – The Movie: 1977)**

So, that parody in *The Simpsons* "Treehouse of Horror XII" that you thought came from Stanley Kubrick's 2001 in fact came mostly from Donald Cammell's *Demon Seed*, where the supposedly subservient AI house computer quickly becomes obsessed with the lone female occupant of the house (Julie Christie, *Don't Look Now*). The film has cinematic effects and photography that are unquestionably dated – but the movie is still entertaining and the questions around AI are still somewhat relevant, even if the execution is now totally kitschy (which actually adds to its charm) – there are fantastical elements that still walk the lines between absurdity, exploitation, and sci-fi speculation. *Demon Seed* is like a film that a 1970s Michael Crichton (*Westworld*, *Coma*,



*Runaway*) would have written if Koontz hadn't gotten there first. That being said, it does pair well with Crichton's '70s/'80s films, and it's also worth checking out as part of Cammell's all-too-brief filmography.

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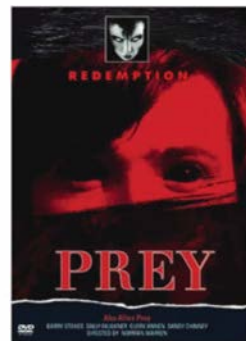


## The Weird Wonders of UK Horror...

By Vince D'Amato

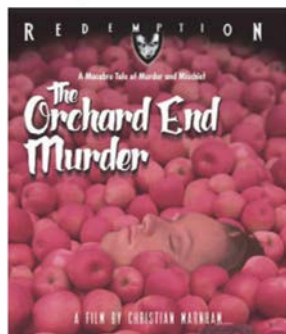
Last issue, we spoke about underground

filmmaker James Edward Newton (*Black Lizard Tales*, *Katernica*) who hails from Kent in the UK. And we'll get back to him and his new film, next issue— but for now there's been some other weird wonderful gems of UK horror that have been on my



mind— starting with screenwriter Nigel Kneale, who was basically like the Rod Serling of the UK. Kneale died back in 2006, with his biggest claim to fame (in North America, anyway), having been *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967), which was based on his own novel and was a huge inspiration on Stephen King's *The Tommyknockers*. John Carpenter was also hugely influenced by

Nigel Kneale, borrowing the name "Quatermass" for his own screenwriting nom de plume Martin Quatermass for *Prince of Darkness*, which, if you've ever experienced a Nigel Kneale script, you could tell was a very good Kneale facsimile. Carpenter also hired Kneale to write *Halloween III: Season of the Witch*, the first and possibly the nuttiest non-canonical entry into the original Carpenter/Hill series. But before I go too far off on this tangent, the main point of this story is to have a brief but closer look at some under-the-radar horror films from the UK, starting with Nigel Kneale's brilliant *The Stone Tape* (1972), which is an excellent haunted house tale that predates *Poltergeist* and was the real inspiration for Carpenter's *Prince of Darkness*. *The Stone Tape* was released several years ago on DVD by the BBC. The BFI (British Film Institute), in turn, has also released some pretty hard-to-come-by underground horror on their "BFI Flipside" line, including the giallo-esque nightmarish *Sleepwalker* (1984), *The Other Side of the Underneath* (1972), and



## TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE

the engaging and disturbing *The Orchard End Murder* (1981), which was also re-released by our good friends and partners in crime Redemption UK, who also released, at one point in time, the brilliantly bonkers Norman J. Warren film *Prey* (re-released by Vinegar Syndrome) and the early Susan George horror-thriller *Die Screaming, Marianne*— all which are well worth checking out.

In the meantime, we'll be working on further stories of Darkside Releasing's own handful of UK indie-horror releases featuring James Newton's upcoming arthouse horror film, plus Natasha Rose Mills' *Dead Name*, and a few others... coming soon!

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## Green Mile Original

Interview with Founder Shaun Ashworth

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what do you do?**

**Shaun Ashworth:**

My name is Shaun Ashworth, I am one of two founders of Green Mile Original located in Coquitlam, British Columbia.

**AU: When did you first start growing cannabis?**

**Shaun:** We are legacy growers from the early '90s.

**AU: What drew you to the cannabis industry?**

**Shaun:** There are many reasons we are drawn to this awesome industry. First off, the people that are associated with this culture are the coolest around. Always good vibes! For us, this beautiful, simple flower brings us a lot of joy knowing what we create and grow will end up in many different hands for many different reasons. Our strains are not only meant for recreational use but also medicinal purposes. We are always thinking ahead when choosing what to grow and what to bring to market. For instance, our Black Tuna Indica can help folks when struggling to fall asleep or just plaster you "in da couch" for movie night. We at Green Mile want to be known for being a leading edge, high quality and good vibes craft cannabis company. We support this great industry with knowledge and even greater weed. We want our fellow cannabis users to know what they are buying will be consistent kick ass flower and getting the best bang for their buck.

**AU: What is it like being a licensed producer in BC?**

**Shaun:** Being a licensed producer does pose its challenges with ever changing policies and regulations. The positives are that we have full support from a governing body. This keeps the industry in full check and promises consistent reliable cannabis for all end users.

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

**Shaun:** There are many best parts of our jobs. Walking into a room full of happy plants is the best start to our day. Watching these girls literally "grow up" in front of our eyes makes us very happy. We get to strategize daily on ideas of how to make our industry better with high quality product. Interacting with people within the culture from bud tenders to buyers to store owners and suppliers, it doesn't get any better.

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

**Shaun:** We are a producer of old school strains. A lot of these are local to BC. This is our niche. This is what we like to grow and perfect. Current strains are: Black Tuna, Bubba Kush, Rock Star, Hippie Haze, Pakistani Kush, Pink Cookies, Jelly breath, Island Pink Kush, and UBC Chemo. UBC Chemo is one of the most unique we offer. According to legend, this particular strain was worked on by the great scientist David Suzuki in the late 1970s and was developed by a team at the university of British Columbia for cancer patients. This heavy indica can help with insomnia, pain and anxiety. My personal experience with this flower was extreme relaxation, body numbness, and it knocked me out for hours. I love it!

**AU: Do you prefer sativas or indicas?**

**Shaun:** My personal preference are heavy indicas like our Pakistani Kush and Island Pink.

**AU: What is your favourite strain to smoke?**

**Shaun:** So many to choose from... my daily driver is our Hippie Haze 19. This beautiful looking bud is an all-time favourite and is unique to Green Mile; our proprietary, well-balanced hybrid. This strain was in development for two years. We did our pheno hunt with 40 plants. After extensive testing (I was the guinea pig) we determined that #19 was the best to put out to market. Multiple strains including Columbian Gold, Acapulco

Gold and Afghan Kush make this a top winner. The euphoric feeling you get from this is insane; it feels like you're wearing a raccoon mask with a joker smile. Very uplifting with energetic intensions. Great for going on walks or in the wilderness, its a porthole to the universe (my own words).

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

**Shaun:** There are many uses in the medicinal cannabis space. Here are a few: appetite, memory, movement, and pain.

**AU: What makes an expert grower in your opinion?**

**Shaun:** In my opinion, a master grower can read the plants instantly. They will know what a plant is lacking or has too much of, maybe a nutrient water or temperature. An expert grower has 100% passion for what they do and how to do it better. I feel we sometimes over complicate such a simple flower. Let it be what it wants to be, just help it along the way and give it nothing but love and positive energy. To me, being able to pivot on the spot and make the adjustments on the fly and



knowing what that plant needs at that time is a true expert grower, I know this because we have one!

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

**Shaun:** Well, I can't give you our secrets but I can give you some tips. A controlled environment, humidity, temperature, and airflow are very important. Cross-contamination from outside elements can ruin your grow. Grow with love and good vibes only.

**AU: Why is it important to support local growers?**

**Shaun:** I think its very important to support your local growers as all we want to do is support you with great weed. BC bud is known worldwide for our high quality, high THC, and high terps. There is no reason to go anywhere else. We love our local industry and will continue to support it with good vibes all the time!

**AU: Where are your products available?**

**Shaun:** We have a solid relationship with one of the coolest stores around. Evergreen in Kitsilano carries all our products. These folks are so knowledgeable and passionate about the industry. Our partnership with them is undeniable. Go check them out for in-store experience or deliveries from anywhere around the province.

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## Charter Denied: Compassion Club Ordered To Pay \$3.2M

By Ted Smith

A Compliance Order from the Province of BC has been issued to the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club demanding the non-profit society pay a \$3.2 million fine by September 6, 2024, though a similar fine against founder, Ted Smith, has been dropped. The fines stem from raids conducted by the BC Solicitor General and Public Safety's enforcement agency, the Community Safety Unit, on the VCBC in November 2019 and July 2020. Lawyers Kirk Tousaw and Jack Lloyd will be challenging the Compliance Order, but that will not stop the CSU from having another written hearing to determine if the directors of the society will be held personally accountable for \$3.2 million.

While legalization has been beneficial for the general public, those who fought for their right to use this medicine have been left with an inadequate medical cannabis program that has never allowed storefront access. Patients continue to rely on the VCBC because limits on THC in edible products, restrictions on smoking lounges, high prices and the lack of information regarding the potential medical uses of cannabis products in recreational stores, are unacceptable. For these reasons, the 28 year old VCBC has defied the CSU and reopened after every raid, including a third raid in March 2023 for which a fine has not been issued yet. Soon after that raid, Tousaw and Lloyd filed lawsuits and injunctions against both the provincial and federal governments, though no date for that hearing has been set.

In her decision, Deputy Director of the CSU, Meghan Oberg, acknowledges that, "I have no authority in this forum to evaluate the adequacy of the medical cannabis regime." This is because the province amended the Cannabis Control and Licensing Act in November 2022 to add section

95.1, which removed the ability of defendants to argue constitutional matters. Even though the fines were issued in January 2022 and appeals immediately filed, Deputy Director Oberg concluded that section 95.1 can still be applied to the hearing, effectively snubbing the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. BC is the only province where defendants cannot use the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in their defence if facing a cannabis-related administrative penalty.

There is little chance that the CSU administration will alter its decision after the VCBC files an Application for Reconsideration on September 6. However, all avenues of appeal within the Solicitor General and Public Safety Ministry's jurisdiction need to be explored before taking the matter to a federal court for a judicial review. It is surprising that Deputy Director Oberg overturned her boss, Jamie Lipp, Executive Director and Director of the CSU, in his unprecedented attempt to essentially double-down on the fines by giving a second, equal fine to Ted Smith.

Legalization would never have occurred if not for the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as the proliferation of illegal medical dispensaries across the country eventually convinced the Liberals that the public was ready to accept cannabis as a legal commodity. Patients have fought for improvements to the medical cannabis program for decades in court after forcing Health Canada to create it in 2001. Since their inception, federal medical cannabis programs have failed to meet bare minimum constitutional standards and Health Canada has repeatedly lost in court. For example, when the bakery of the VCBC was raided in 2009, Tousaw fought to the Supreme Court of Canada, where he won a unanimous decision that made edibles and concentrates available to patients, though Health Canada responded with an unacceptably low limit on THC.

Storefront access to medical cannabis should be a cornerstone feature of Health Canada's programs. Instead, homeless, poor and elderly

patients are being systematically excluded and forced to pay high prices for low dosage products at recreational stores that cannot give medical advice or provide a safe place to consume their medicine. Recently the Legislative Review of the Cannabis Act: Final Report of the Expert Panel confirmed that, "...an important change to improve patient access to cannabis for medical purposes would be to allow patients to obtain cannabis products in-person from pharmacies."

Stripping constitutional rights from patients

to streamline administrative proceedings is an affront to democracy. Eventually, this situation will get beyond the kangaroo court of Mike Farnworth, the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Safety, where a qualified judicial authority can rule on the many significant problems inherent in the federal and provincial government's cannabis laws.

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## Revolution 514 From Covid to Fire

by Paget Williams

Five and a half years ago Orion Curiel, long-time Montreal skater and hip-hop pioneer from the group Shades of Culture and I talked about following every teenage skater's dream of owning your own skate shop. We approached an old friend who owned Soundcentral, a long-standing Montreal record store about sharing the space

and the costs and making Montreal's smallest mall with two stores and one door. It was a great fit, music and skateboards... Revolution 514 was born and we moved into the shop when Shawn was on tour with his band, Dopethrone. We launched the shop November 21 2019, just in time for Covid, and Revolution 514 has been repping the "old school" in Montreal since.

This past April, Orion called me up with a panicked voice saying that there had been a fire at the shop... That took a minute of numbness to process with visions of loss and pure destruction, though the fire destroyed only the back part of



## SHRED SESSION



the building our shop was in; it did not burn the shop. We fell victim to smoke, water and fireman damage. Sadly, the building was a write-off and we were forced to move. We quickly came to realize this was a blessing in disguise. We were very sad to leave the shop that we had called home

for four years and split up the two shops, but finally we had room for growth. We moved into a space that Greenland Productions had used as an office for almost 20 years and the transformation was complete.

Since opening, Revolution 514 has always kept a very close tie between music and skateboarding. Most of the owners are implicated in



playing or production of music. Even one of the members of our skate team, Tony Salador, is a member of a touring band called Hood Rats. Our mandate has always been to treat skateboarding the same way that skateboarding treated us. We all got something special through skateboarding and we feel that through Revolution 514 is it our responsibility to return



that feeling to skaters, first timers and parents alike. We are very proud to be celebrating our 5th anniversary and we look forward to the next five years. Thanks for all the support.

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## The Shit Talkers

Interview by Mal Content

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

**Shit Talkers:** Liz and Nadja, the OG Shit Talkers! We are most infamous for our unsavoury taste in humour! Very un-PC at times, but nonetheless hilarious!

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band and describe the band's sound if possible.**

**ST:** Nothing brief about 11 years of shit talkin' rockin'. We formed as an all-girl band in 2013. Called ourselves the Shit Talkers cuz our songs were enigmatic stories about other musicians in Vancouver! Post-slovid owing to members locations we subsequently morphed to a half n' half band. So, call it female-fronted or women-powered or a band, we are a band. Whatever the term, we are playing with guys now! Do the band members assigned sex really matter?

Hmmm... our sound is indescribable, haha. Hard to put a label on it. Fun and thought-provoking lyrics with an old school groove. Guitar vibe distorted... scronk la donk guitar sounds... some people have said Zappa-esque, which is a huge

compliment. We like weird time changes. Our sound is FUN!

**AU: We understand you have some new band members. Please introduce them and let us know what is on their musical resumes? What do they bring to the table?**

**ST:** Yes, we have new band members! On bass, Jacob Caruso Kramer. The kid next door who has done ample bedroom guitar wanking diligence. We are happy to have him bring his note-worthy enthusiasm to the bass dept. He is brand new to punk rock, giving him a fresh edge and thoughtful approach to our music.

We have shit the jackpot scooping two amazing guitarists. Dirty Kurt of the Young Adults, JPS, Stick Monkey, Curious George, Little Guitar Army, et al.

Randy Steffes who was in Gorilla Gorilla and is an epic soundman with a long, star-studded resume. Both spent many years with The Real McKenzies and the last configuration of SNFU.

Now we are three guitars strong, which gives us a lot more bite! They bring oodles of rock cred, stagecraft and scorching guitar to our band. Just great to have seasoned pros who are great people and tour-worthy bandmates. Oh, and did I mention Kurt is my hubby? So now we could develop a June and Johnny stage tension vibe to add to the mix!

**AU: Any recent tour stories to share with our reader?**

**ST:** Did a spring quickie tour to test drive the new guitarists, but nothing extremely story worthy. Oh, our then-bassist had his penis bit off by an eagle when he stopped roadside to take a piss. Crazy weird, so he couldn't make the final shows and Randy jumped on bass for the save, proving to be totally tour-worthy! I am sure we will have more epic tour stories after we complete our Unholy Tour 2024 through BC and AB with Rollsportgruppe

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

**ST:** Our latest release titled *Quack* is a 7-song EP available on vinyl. Sticking with the story telling, it has something for everyone with 7 unique songs.

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

**ST:** "Bison", which has a cool DIY video on YouTube, and "Walk of Shame"; a truer than true story.

**AU: Any plans for Halloween this year?**

**ST:** Party at Lana Lou's October 26 in Vancouver, with our friends from Germany, Rollsportgruppe, The Daisy Stranglers from Nanaimo, and The Hairy cherries, an awesome new all-girl band from Van!

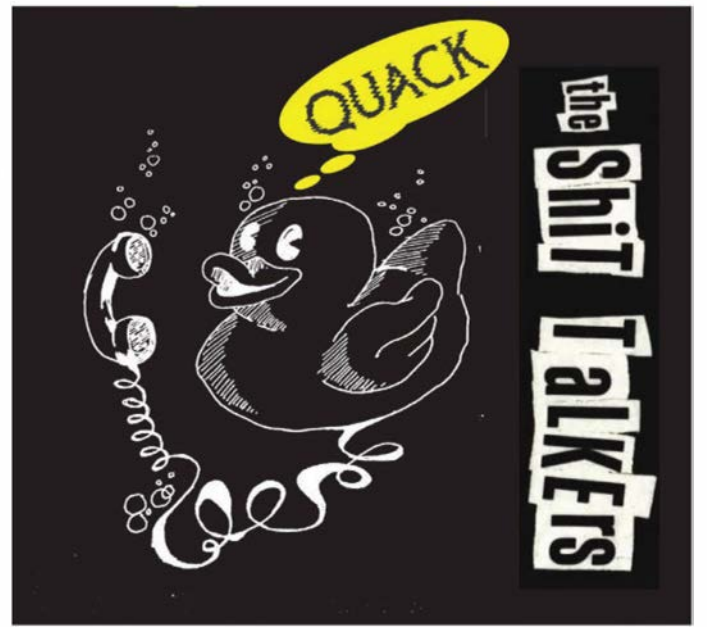
**AU: Do you believe in ghosts?**

**ST:** Yes. Even done some ghost-chasing with Doug Donut!

**AU: Final words for our readers?**

**ST:** Things change, people die, handjobs for happiness! Words to live by. Be grateful for every day, breath, and hand job. Life is too short to not have TONS of FUN!

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The Victoria Film Festival and Winter Arts Festival asked us to do a pop-up show over the 2024 winter, and it went really well, so we procured ourselves a semi-permanent space to continue making bigger, better, weirder, and funner art...

**AU: Who all is involved in the ARTcade?**

**Scott:** Dave Parfit, Heather Troy, Sarah Theissen, Ian George, Nick Greeno, and a number of musicians including LWSD and DJ Murge, myself, and our super talented volunteer, Skyla Trousdale.

## The ARTcade

Interview with Monkey C Interactive

By Aeryn Shrapnel

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?**

**Scott Amos:** Hi, I'm Scott Amos, a mostly harmless mad scientist at Monkey C Interactive.

**Heather Troy:** And I'm Heather Troy, Chief Tentacle Tamer at Monkey C Interactive's ARTcade. Together, we are two thirds of the co-founders of the ARTcade. David Parfit, our Interactivator, is the third.

**AU: Tell us about Monkey C Interactive.**

**Heather:** We are purveyors of fine beeps, boops, and boing boing machines for the discerning.

**Scott:** We are also a Victoria-based bunch of lovable art weirdos that build super fun, one-of-a-kind, interactive musical sculptures.

**AU: What is an ARTcade and what inspired you to create it?**

**Heather:** An ARTcade is a place where one plays with art. What inspires us to do this? Well, we can't help it.

**Scott:** Monkey C Interactive has been building interactive art machines (also known as mutant machines) for a decade and have exhibited these machines all over North America, and for the first time we have them all back in Victoria.

**Heather:** Everyone who enters the space is involved in the ARTcade, you have to engage with the art. The sounds created by visitors are part of the ARTcade experience.

**AU: What can people expect when they visit?**

**Scott:** First thing you need to do to enter the ARTcade is go through a decontamination portal. For your own safety, and for the safety of the alien lifeforms we're cultivating in the back rooms. It's serious business. That's what the "C" in Monkey C stands for: Serious. The ARTcade experience is impossible to explain, because it's probably not like anything you've ever done before, but if you like art, music, and novelty— you'll love it.

**Heather:** We like to say that visitors will "rediscover wonder," [which] means you will explore machines you do not understand, you'll play in a pure way, like a child. You won't know or care what the "rules" are, you'll just experience the delight of cause and effect and wonder at what you're producing. You'll probably find yourself laughing and smiling without being conscious of it, and you'll want to share the joy that bubbles up with those around you. You may even play with strangers. You can expect to feel inspired and refreshed by the novelty of it all.

**AU: What is your creative process like?**

**Scott:** It's a blur... I honestly don't ever have a clear idea of the outcome, ever... We just start

making pieces and allow them to come together, playing around with materials. Often an exhibit will start with an interesting object, like an old cash register or a control panel with satisfying chunky buttons, or whatever plentiful free materials we can find.

**Heather:** Well, technically speaking, first we draft a creative brief which is uploaded by the monkeys into the art-o-verse; the aliens then masticate on this for a while and vomit out a wireframe which we then hand off to the painted man. He haunts our dreams. Adorned with strange foreign markings. Then we let the public play test it.

**AU: What are your favourite materials to use and where do you get them from?**

**Scott:** Anything with chunky buttons. We've been collecting antique machines for years, and more recently, things just show up at the ARTcade. People bring in their old radios, and interesting objects and machines.

**Heather:** I gravitate towards materials I can cozy up with and create elaborately complicated patterns of production with. That sounds like I'm talking about knitting but I can't knit, I just enjoy systematizing, texture, and colour. And laughter, I really like laughter.

**AU: I can't imagine these are easy to move.**

**Heather:** Good point. For those readers who have never seen our mutant machines, they are primarily made from retrofitting late 19th-mid 20th century instruments, business and industry machines with 21st century technology— which amounts to a really strong exoskeleton. Unlike most things today, these machines were built with real wood and metal. So, yeah, they're imposing sculptures to move about, but they can also hold up really well to a lot of public use.

**Scott:** It definitely takes some work to get the bigger pieces out there. The Candycombs weigh close to 2000 lbs.

**AU: How often do you change up the ARTcade?**

**Scott:** We only opened a few months ago and have been trying to add new things every few weeks. We've got an expansion planned for Halloween, and we're currently building out more exhibits.

**AU: Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

**Heather:** We're available for private events, school groups, holiday parties, business people doing business things, school groups learning school things. We could also be open to commissions, so something special could be up to you...

**AU: Where is the ARTcade and how much is it?**

**Scott:** The ARTcade is at 706 Fort Street in Victoria BC. Entry is a sliding scale of \$10-\$30.

**Heather:** We are not funded, but want the ARTcade to be accessible to every budget. The sliding scale is for those who can and are inspired to donate more to support us.

**AU: Final words of wisdom?**

**Heather:** Life is hard and capitalism sucks, you're not imagining it. Believe in your muse, you'll find others in life who see your vision and can inspire you too. Keep trying and ask questions.

**Scott:** Beep. Boop.

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**49th anniversary of the Rocky Horror Picture Show. It was great when it all began, so tell us, how did you first meet the genius creator Richard O'Brien and get cast into the original Rocky Horror theatre show?**

**NC:** Jim Sharman, Richard O'Brien, and Richard Hartley walked into a London cafe where I was a waitress and at that moment, I was tap dancing on a tabletop singing to a 1930s song on the sound system.

**AU:** Ah, one from the vaults-- the lost art of table dancing. Last time I did that, they kicked me out of the club. How did you first find out the play was going to become a movie?

**NC:** Brian Thomson, Richard Hartley, or Richard O'Brien would have told me; we were all pals and saw each other a lot whether still in the show or not.

**AU:** Well, here's to absent friends. Was it very different going from acting on stage to

the silver screen?

**NC:** I suppose I thought I should play my role down a bit in the film, I'll let you be the judge whether or not I succeeded.

**AU:** Lost in time, lost in space, I never got to see the original play but here we are 49 years later and still doing the time warp back every Halloween. Did you think back then that the film would be this iconic and long-lasting and what do you think has made it remain so much better than just all right?

**NC:** We hadn't a clue it would last longer than three weeks at the theatre upstairs of the Royal Court where we first performed it in their attic. It was a big enough surprise that it was an overnight smash hit and we transferred to a larger theatre, that the film, which began its life as a

flop seen by no one, is now the longest-running film of all time.

**AU:** It's definitely one of, if not the most watched and loved films of my lifetime. What's your personal favourite scene or song from the movie?



## Let's Do the Time Warp Again With Little Nell Campbell

By Billy Hopeless

All right my creatures of the night, this October 15th at the Vogue Theatre here in Vansexual Vancouver, it's a very special night. The master is holding one of his affairs and you're all lucky as not only will they be celebrating the 49th anniversary with a screening of the masterpiece, but Little Nell Campbell aka Columbia, star of the play and screen, will be there in all her gold and glitter. As a cult follower since the first time I got my cherry popped, I can truly say I'm very lucky to have the honour of presenting a short and sweet interview with the hot patootie herself. So, let's get up to the lab and check out what's on the gab with Little Nell Campbell while you shiver in anti... pation!

**AU:** Well Little Nell or Australian Columbia, this is a huge honour to be interviewing and have you coming to British Columbia for the

**NC:** "Science Fiction" is my fave song but I don't have a fave scene. I get a kick out of the whole thing, a combination of memories making it and how it's such a great influence on the LGBTQ+ community.

**AU:** For me, it's always been "I'm Going Home" song-wise, and scene-wise "Sweet Transvestite" is always the Billy Hopeless seal of approval and boss tattoo. Can you tell us a funny story or memory about the filming?

**NC:** every aspect of the film was on the cheap. The budget, our fees, the appalling catering, the studio not heated, no chairs to sit, no drinks of water, tea, or coffee ever offered during the long, long hours of filming. Pat Quinn and I were told to catch public transport to Bray Studios, an hour out of London, and be there at 6 am. Merdfully, Susan Sarandon offered share her car with us. The producers didn't give a damn about us.

**AU:** Yet, you still managed to rose tint your world and dance your way into our erotic nightmares to cherish forever. Do those magic feet still tap dance or are they all tapped out these days?

**NC:** How old do you think I am? Once a tapper always a tapper. I remain one helluva dancer and could no doubt out dance you.

**AU:** I'll be out of town on tour, so though I'm sure you would, I won't be able to take the challenge although I'd love to but... do you know how to Madison? Now, let's take a different step many will have forgotten I'm sure, back in 2016 there was a remake of Rocky Horror. I didn't watch it as I'm a purist of the impure but did you watch it and if so, what did you think of it?

**NC:** Did not see it but I hear it wasn't original and tried to copy the original.

**AU:** Yeah, I mean how can you improve on such a fine specimen? If you want to pay tribute, just applaud don't try and remake it in six minutes. This is our Halloween issue, so I've got to ask my pumpkin spice up our lives. If trick or treaters were to come knocking at the door of the Frankenstein place, what would you be handing out as trick or treats?

**NC:** Sequined tap shoes in all sizes and colours.

**AU:** Quick to wardrobe... what's the best Halloween costume you ever wore?

**NC:** It was the first Halloween after 9/11 and the Brooklyn fire stations in my hood, who had lost many of their firemen, sent fliers round encouraging us to stop by for trick or treat. My four-year-old daughter, Tilly, was dressed as a white rabbit and I was dressed as nurse from World War I. It was a very moving Halloween;

heartbreaking, really.

**AU:** But I see blue skies through the tears in your eyes that truly was a time when the earth stood still, so let's move back to science fiction double features. Besides Rocky Horror, what are your top Halloween movies?

**NC:** I am not a horror or sci-fi fan, I love true crime and psychological thrillers, though not the grisly bits. I loved a Dutch film called *The Golden Egg*, titled *The Vanishing* in English, also the 1999 film, *The Talented Mr Ripley*.

**AU:** [Doing my Count Floyd imitation] Oooo, the vanishing Dr Jekyll Mr Ripley... isn't it scary kids? If you were to try and describe Rocky Horror to someone who had never seen it or explain the plot in a few sentences like an old TV guide movie synopsis how would you do it?

**NC:** A sexy yet innocent tale of a young American couple who stumbled upon a surreal house that would even give the Addams family a run for their money.

**AU:** Thank you so much for getting in touch a touch a touch with me but before we go, let's hit the floor show. Please give our readers worlds with the ultimate invite to the party at



the Vogue Theatre this October 15th.

**NC:** The great thing about meeting me is that I can answer your questions regarding the behind-the-scenes shenanigans during the original stage show and making the film.

**AU:** Well, there you have it short and sweet, just like Nell herself. I really wish I could be there to get the shenanigans, that dance challenge, thrills, chills, lotsa larfs, sex, stories, and more but I fell in love with rock n' roll and thus I must tour. For all of you who read this, don't miss this once in a lifetime opportunity to let the pelvic thrust really drive you insane and do the time warp again with the one and only Columbia!



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# The Last Shootings

Writing and Photos by Jerry Cordeiro

The slap of rain fell promiscuously on the exhaustion of my flirt. Once wet, one must ignore the weight of the jean jacket. Punk pins blister my chest from the plethora of bands I've picked. Ignorance of the introvert is how I was led. Pubescent in all punctuality of my comfort, I rely on the mistakes of misfits as I find refuge in everything broken.

My camera droops like the dangle of an overweight drop. Obesity in obedience my gluttony is shy and the crave of capture is a sweet-toothed grip. I clenched the day off since 6 am, snapping photos of every exhale of the dilations of my eyes. I'm fond of the purpose of rusty things... where colours become tired of the shades of worn. I wore the sides of my army boots

down, pigeon-toed chafed my guide. My crooked saunter was undetected by the lurch of those walked blocks, of those who survive this apocalyptic anatomy, I was an injured gazelle in a lion's cage.

I was staying at the Patricia Hotel down Hastings for a month already, so I knew my route before I got there. Adjacent to the Carnegie Hall on Main, I stood. Waiting for the lights to change, I held my breath periodically to matte the stench of all that humans waste. I scanned the streets looking for those keen criminality thirsty glares among the busied buzz of addicts. "You should watch yourself with that camera," the custodian at the hotel whispered to me in the elevator this morning.

I knew my quiet shuffle was loud because I was green to the area, so that's why a few shots of whiskey was premeditated. Straight to any dive bar, I was headed. Just an eyeshot away from the Funky Winker Bean when out of the corner of my eye, I saw the funkiest bean I'd ever seen. I needed his portrait.

The confidence of a matador and the curiosity of a feral ferret, our attention was caught. Before I had the chance to say my rehearsed spiel he spit two inches from my boots. I turned around the second his phlegm gummed the street.



"Hey man, what the fuck?" He turned slowly like the coil of melted plastic, a serpent ready to strike verbal venom. Curt in his canning curty, he smirked unaware and without the care of retaliation, he said... "Do you know who I am?" I said "NO!" All the while thinking, "This punk has balls." "Good..." he replied... "Buy me a beer and I'll let you shoot me."

Cathartic like a clam without his shell, I followed his slither like mercury conducting the fizz of the DTES. I looked at his demeanour and traced the avenues of his pompous portrayal. He was wearing a black leather aviator cap and matching goggles, a dark midnight purple ladies' blouse with wizard sleeves, golden tights, and scuffed up

chucks. He walked as though he was a maestro in an orchestra, classical in rawness and punk rock was the masterpiece. Hellos from both sides of the streets echoed as we furthered towards the watering hole of his choosing.

Everyone seemed to know this guy and I was confused why they called him names like "Little Piggy," "Chi," or "Mr. Chi Pig." I just thought he must be a regular barfly at each one of these pubs... We ended up at the bend of the alleyways where it was littered with syringes, feces and graffiti that seemed to mirror what is witnessed on the streets. I was busier deciphering between should I just turn around and go my own way or should I just have a beer with this crazy looking dude and get a few shots for my portfolio.

The 10-minute conversation-less walk led us to Pub 340, on Cambie in Gastown. This turn-of-the-century parlour embodied every decaying disposition of the definition PUNK ROCK. The rejected and alienation of a corporate nature of mainstream enjoyment. A perfect place to be freed from yuppies and the fake flakes that flutter around.

We sat down in the corner of the pub joined by a few of his friends as he introduced me as, "The street photographer." "My name is Jerry," I finally said. Everyone introduced themselves and left him till last... "My name is Ken... but today you can call me Mr. Chi Pig..." Everyone laughed and lifted their half drunk limbs in a mock story celebration cheer... "If you're Chi's friend then I guess you're our friend"

I spent hours embedded in intelligent conversations about rock n' roll, artists from the past, drugs, sex, addiction, mental health, East Hastings, and love. Hours passed quickly, like spilled beer on asphalt inside the 1 pm summer sun. "It's time to go," said Ken.

He asked me to walk him home which was the same way I was headed. "But first you should take my photo," he said as he pointed at my camera. At this point I had forgotten why I was there. I enjoyed making

new friends and lost the ambition of why I had followed him here in the first place. To shoot portraits.

So there I was, gin-soaked, inebriated, and as drunk as skunk. Chi looked up at me as I was fidgeting with my camera settings and he said... "Hey listen... Don't just be a photographer, be an artist. Because I believe you are."

I lifted my camera to my face... SNAP. I took my first portrait of Mr. Chi Pig... For five years I travelled to meet Ken. To have a few drinks, lunch, and just be friends. Never once did we talk about his band or even who he really was. I just knew he was special, god-like, a shaman.

I ended up taking enough photos and collecting enough stories of this iconic, legendary, and inspiring human to fill a book. But most importantly he was my friend... KEN Chinn AKA MR. CHI PIG



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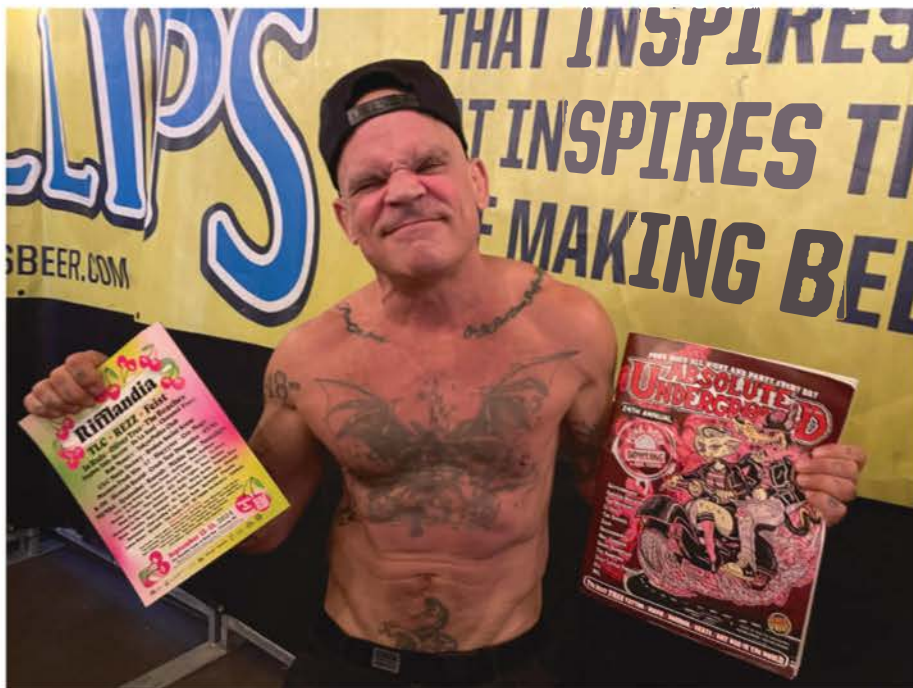
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## Cro-Mags

### Interview with founding member Harley Flanagan

Rifflandia 2024

Interview by Ira "Hard Times" Hunter and Jason "We Gotta Know" Flower

**Absolute Underground:** We just walked backstage and found Harley doing push-ups after the show.

**Harley Flanagan:** I have so much energy after I play. I'm so pumped up that I still need to get it out. So yes, I'm backstage doing push-ups before and after the show. I love life and in order to really enjoy it, you have to maintain. So the goal is to stay fit and live a long time and have a great time doing it. It just seems like a lot of people forget how to have fun physically when they reach a certain age. A lot of people once they have kids they don't have the time to do physical stuff. I was the exact opposite way when I had my kids. I was like, I got to step up my game. I want to make sure these kids know what the fuck it means to be fit and try to put that into their head early. They did a lot of jiu-jitsu and stuff growing up.

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

**HF:** Harley Flanagan and I'd like to say it's for something positive. It's probably for my band the Cro-Mags.

**AU:** Where are we right now?

**HF:** I am in Canada on a beautiful island and we're at Rifflandia. This is really something, I'll tell you. What an insane lineup of bands. It is so fucking cool. The diversity is mind-blowing. I mean, TLC, DJ Rezz, De La Soul, there's so many fucking bands on here that I grew up enjoying. It's great to be here.

**AU:** Don't forget L7 is playing too.

**HF:** We just played with L7 at No Values and they put on a great show then and I'm sure they're going to kick ass tonight.

**AU:** Give a brief history of your musical career.

**HF:** That is impossible. So anybody who is interested, read the book. There's also a documentary coming out soon by acclaimed director Rex Miller. He just completed a film about yours truly. It's more or less based on my book called Hardcore: Life Of My Own. It's my journey through music. It's got a really long list of pretty significant people in it. You've got everyone from Henry Rollins to Ian MacKaye to Keith Morris and Darryl Jenifer, Michael Imperioli, Renzo Gracie, Jocko Willink, just people from all different walks of life that have been involved with my life.

**AU:** It seems like you have interweaved with many people, everyone has a Harley story.

**HF:** Well, you're really going to feel that way after you see this film. I guess I've made a little bit of an impression on people in my time. I started playing

music very young, so I've been at this thing for a long time. I'm just grateful to still be out there and still have an audience.

**AU:** This question is from my friend Jason Flower from Supreme Echo Records. He's an archaeologist of music. He's well aware of the band The Stimulators you were in when you were 11 or 12 years old, but he's curious what was the earliest group that you were part of?

**HF:** My first band before The Stimulators was a punk rock band called Little Big Boss, I was like 10 and the guys I was playing with were in their early 20s. We only did one tour. But that was really where I first cut my teeth. I had been playing in clubs prior, but I didn't have a band. I used to get up and jam with other local bands because I was already an established drummer at 10, believe it or not. So that's really where it started for me. But The Stimulators were really the ones who put me on the map.

**AU:** The movie is a documentary, but if there was a Hollywood movie, who would play you?

**HF:** I'd get Flea to play me, I guess, or Samuel L. Jackson. It'd have to be one of the two.

**AU:** Is it fair to say you're a vegetarian, weed-smoking, hardcore, ninja?

**HF:** That's pretty fair to say yes, ha ha ha.

**AU:** We're chuffing some big fatties as we speak. People were throwing a bunch of joints at you on stage?

**HF:** Yeah, that was very kind. I appreciate that.

**AU:** There was a stage message you said that mentioned, Lead with Love...

**HF:** I was basically just saying, due to the life I was subjected to I had a lot of aggression, a lot of negative shit in my life. It took me a long time to get back to who I feel like I really am. I think we all get conditioned by our environment and our surroundings and the people around us. Sometimes you've got to make wide turns to get back on track. I'm just trying to live a positive life and just trying to tell people, you get your point across a lot better when you lead with positivity than when you lead with aggression.

**AU:** You've really turned your boat around.

**HF:** Well, you're supposed to change as you get older. If you're the same person at 40 that you were at 20, I think there's a serious problem. If you're not learning, you're not growing, you're not making any real progress.

**AU:** Any favourite Halloween shows? You remember playing any with the Misfits?

**HF:** I've played with them many times, but yes,

## HARDCORE ALLEY

Halloween definitely makes me think of the Misfits. On Halloween, throw some Misfits and have a spooky great time.

**AU:** The two records that you were selling at your merch booth there was the Age Of Quarrel Demos and Dr. Know.

**HF:** Well, the Dr. Know EP was something that I put out a while back when he was going through some issues and he needed a little bit of help financially. Dr. Know from Bad Brains. Some songs on it are very Cro-Mags, but they're just not on any Cro-Mags records, but I think they're very much in the same vein.

**AU:** At the Punk Rock Museum in Vegas there's a great big picture of you as a kid on the wall.

**HF:** Yeah, I've heard there's a few things. I know I donated a couple of things that are on exhibit, like my old drums and one of my basses. I believe they even have a pair of my boots up in there.

**AU:** You wrote all the classic songs on Age Of Quarrel, I believe. How was it possible that every song was so killer? What was the recording process like?

**HF:** I did write most of the material. But I've got to say, everybody on that record made it what it was. Not just that, but just that moment in time. We went in and we basically just played live. We only tracked each song no more than two or three times at most. It was pretty much just a live gig in the studio, John (Joseph) even sang live. He did his vocals over later, but there were no click tracks. We had also been playing live for a couple of years, so we were already in a groove.

**AU:** When the first track "We Gotta Know" drops, it's an explosion.

**HF:** The fact that it still makes people's hair stand up on their arms. You know you did something right when it still invokes that kind of feeling.

**AU:** Anything on the horizon for you and the band?

**HF:** We have a bunch of new material that's not completely tracked, but it's almost done. We've just been touring so fucking much that it's been hard to finish. With this film coming out, to be honest, I can't tell you what the fuck's going on next. I know we have a tour coming up with Terror very soon, and some shows with Bane.

**AU:** Any final words for Canadian fans?

**HF:** I love your beautiful country. I can't wait to come back.

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# Infectious

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

**Infectious:** We are Infectious, a four-piece zombie band mixing classic rock with modern metal along with elements of horror punk, thrash, blues and alternative music. This undead melting pot of music creates a unique experience that may leave you craving human flesh!

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

**Infectious:** We are based out of Prince George, BC. Northern BC has an amazing music scene that is often under-appreciated, but we have some of the most dedicated music fans attending events continuously. So many events sell out, even when multiple events on the same weekend are happening. We are so grateful and blessed to be in such a musically rich area, even touring bands from Vancouver and elsewhere can't believe how crazy the music scene is in PG.

**AU: Give us a brief history about Infectious. What made you want to make a zombie band?**

**Infectious:** Formed in 2014, we wanted to make band that mixed up classic rock and modern metal, once we came up with the name, Infectious, we knew we wanted to have an image for the band and since we were all fans of zombie movies, comics, games and shows. It was the perfect fit, we wanted to tell a story in a fictional post apocalyptic world, full of our own lore. Rather than just look the part.

**AU: Your music video for "Seeds" looked like a lot of fun to make. Do you have any plans in the future to make more short horror films like this one? Could this be a series that has an overarching story?**

**Infectious:** "Seeds" was a blast to do, our friend Kayden formerly from Kayden James Media, (official\_jrnxl/JBC Studios) wanted to help us bring some of our crazy ideas to life, with a bigger budget than ever, we got to do things we weren't able to do before, we had so much fun and we're so grateful to everyone involved

making our music video. We plan to continue our zombie horror/thriller series during and between music videos, we have a long story planned and big changes to our world as we progress through the albums.

**AU: Who or what inspires you musically?**

**Infectious:** Collectively, our influences are far and wide, as a unit we enjoy hard rock and heavy metal, anything from Jimi Hendrix to Metallica, Misfits to Trivium, Nirvana to Lady Gaga and all kinds of stuff in between. We try our best to not limit our influences and be open minded to new sounds and ideas.

**AU: What are your live shows like? Do you dress up or encourage the audience to do so?**

**Infectious:** We dress up as zombies at almost all of our shows we play at, Halloween or not, very few exceptions. Sometimes we specifically host zombie events, where we encourage our patrons to dress up, sometimes we do costume contests or even play an old zombie movie behind us!

**AU: Any new music in the works?**

**Infectious:** Yes, we are always writing and working on new tunes, we hope to finish recording our album soon and then we can start working on the next one.

**AU: Do you have any upcoming shows or tours to promote?**

**Infectious:** We are currently in the works of  
 October 4th - PG Oliver Whites Boogie Night  
 October 18th - Mackenzie Zombie Walk and Rock  
 October 26th - Dawson Creek Sick or Treat  
 November 2nd - Vancouver with Barbarians

**AU: Any plans for Halloween?**



**Infectious:** We will be taking our kids trick or treating.

**AU: Top three horror movies of all time?**

**Infectious:** *Dead Snow*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *28 Days Later*.

**AU: Favourite Halloween candy?**

**Infectious:** Coffee Crisp, Kit Kat, apple caramel lollies.

**AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?**

**Infectious:** Come join the infected, we welcome people of all kinds, humans or zombies

**AU: Do you have any tips for aspiring horror film makers?**

**Infectious:** Just do it! Get out there and start creating the things you want to make, these days it's amazing what you can do with even just a phone and some friends, do what you can with

what you have, get creative! Make your own props and special effects! YouTube can be super helpful with tutorials for just about anything.

**AU: Final words for our readers?**

**Infectious:** We hope to see you at show soon! We plan on playing lots more out of town shows in the future! Keep your eyes peeled for future tour dates! \m/

*Infectious is streaming on all platforms.*

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Photo by @capturesofcuzzin



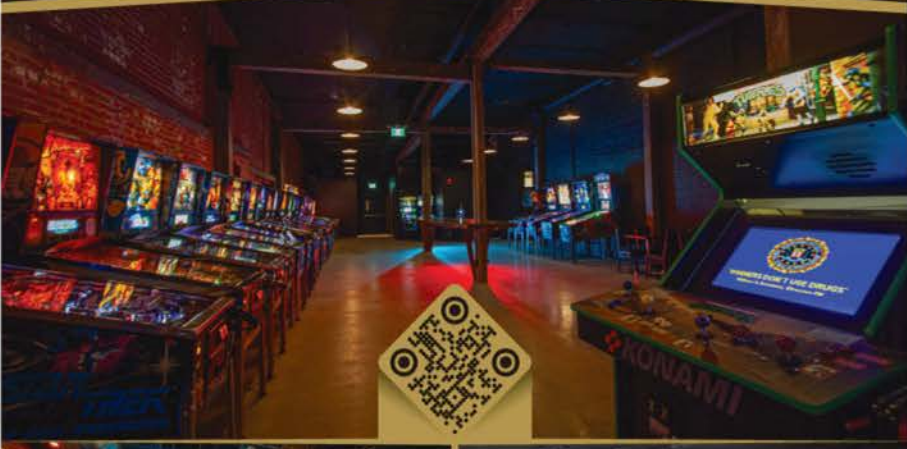
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## Robin Tizya

January 26, 1984 – August 23, 2024

Robin Tizya was one of the first women I met when I moved to Victoria and although I wish I could say we were friends right off the bat, the truth is I was a little too intimidated by her to be comfortable being her friend right away. Robin was as beautiful and funny as she was dark and sarcastic and I always had a bit of a girl crush on her but was also jealous cuz my boyfriend at the time did too, but who could blame him?

In her early 20s she already had this "are you seriously gonna come at me with this shit" demeanor that most of us women don't get to exude 'til our 40s to 60s and intimidation and jealousy very quickly turned to admiration and respect. We were never really close friends but my admiration of her grew over the years and every time we saw each other my genuine happiness to see her and catch up seemed to be reciprocated.

I will cherish the memories of hanging out in the staff bathroom at Logans laughing about the dumb shit I was prepping to do onstage moments later. Gonna miss her intense looks and award-winning smile a great deal and I wish I got the chance to tell her she always scared me just a little bit. I think she woulda gotten a huge kick outta that.

RIP you badass bitch.

- Betty Bathory

Let me tell you about my friend Robin, one of the most wonderful and cool people I've known.

When I started hanging out at Cavity, I met Robin through Andy. Well, kind of. I already knew who she was from going to Logan's, where she bartended. One of the first things you noticed about Robin was her infectious giggle-laugh. One of the best laughs, bar none. It was the first things about her that drilled itself into my brain forever.

I started doing more things at Logan's, like DJing and playing shows. I hung out at Cavity more, sometimes covering shifts for Andy. With that came getting to know Robin better. There was more DJing at Logan's and I started working door shifts to pass the time. Then I just pretty much fell into opening a gaming shoppe in Andy's upstairs space. That meant that between Logan's (work/play) and Cavity and the Gnome, I saw Robin a LOT. So, we'd talk and hang. A LOT. We had many a day and night of just yapping, getting to know each other better, and I really admired her sense of self-awareness. She was whip-smart and sardonic, but also tried to find the best in people—all the while being incredibly wary of humans.



Robin, like Andy, also shared my absolute love for industrial music. I could make Laibach jokes, and Robin would get them. Like, it's not just some sort of music we listen to to while away the time until the void takes us, but it's in our blood, our sweat,

and our tears. Industrial music is life is life. And she understood that. I saw how Skinny Puppy tracks would move her. Or how she would join me on the floor when I would play Nitzer Ebb's "Murderous"; I'd speed out of the DJ booth to the dance floor, and do—as she put it—my "Goofy Steve Dance". And blood, it's goofy. I basically just run in place and box the air, yelling lyrics, like a weird, loud flesh machine.

I got to know Andy and Robin incredibly well. And I love them dearly. I saw how Andy adored every fiber of Robin's being, and I saw how much she passionately loved him. Yeah, if you know, you know; but she knew, too. And whatever happened, both of them worked it out; and honestly, I have seen few—if any—loves deeper than theirs. Robin was complex and interesting. And with complex and interesting, you get everything that comes along with it. Hey, that's fine by me. Until the day the void takes me, Robin will be at the top of the list of one of the most adorably interesting people I've ever known.

Also, Robin didn't judge. Well, she did, but if she judged you, you deserved it. You could be yourself around her, and she was always lovely and honest about it. She was a fierce, fiery soul who burned bright, even in her darkest moments. Robin had this infectious charisma that was hard to nail down, but always welcome in our hearts.

I'll deeply miss being an absolute dork around her, which always got her laughing, and that laugh was a must-have in my existence. I feel so awful for her family, and I feel devastated for Andy. He truly deserved her; and she him. They were silly grim peas in a pod. Now Andy is left lost

# FALLEN SOLDIERS

and bewildered, and my very being is crushed thinking about what he must be going through.



If you didn't know Robin, I'm sorry to say your life missed out. But her memory will live on with her friends and those she touched with her smile, her life, and her very awesome self. Robin is making time in a different high-rise now... it was her place to go. An unfair, crushing crucifixion, she will never be forgotten. It's time to live. It's time to know. Lift up your hearts and shout golden shouts, and don't be lazy. Think of her beauty. Don't back away. Lift up your hearts. It's there. It's there

for you.

Much better now.

Much stronger now.

I'm still very sad.

Goodbye, Robin.

- Steve Saunders

It's beyond words how thankful I am to each and everyone of you that has donated, shared, cried, posted stories, photos, and sent words of support. You all saved my life with your love.

Within days, your donations covered all the horrendous end of life costs and saved Cavity Curiosity Shop, which had spiraled into debt with the rising costs of everything.

Without time to process, I would have been forced to close its doors with the love of my life leaving us all far too young.

Again thank you everyone for your support and patience while our family and everyone that loves Robin grieves this most devastating loss.

Cavity will return.

LOVE IS ETERNAL

- Andy Anderson

Battle of the Bands - Memorial Arena - June 24th 1967 © Royal City Music Project

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## R.I.P. Angela Owens

On August 26, 2024, the world lost one of its most beautiful souls, Angela Elizabeth Owens.

She was a mother, sister, daughter, and best friend to so many around the world. When you met her, she made you feel so special and loved immediately. She loved you for you, without judgment. Her personality and light is something that is indescribable. She had such a passion for music. It stretched from new local musicians, to international stars. She would travel all day and night, to catch a set from one of her favourite bands. A lot of her free time was spent on experiencing live music and being with friends who shared the same love.

She worked at Bully's Studio on weekends and would make you feel at home when you came through the door. To say she is missed is a complete understatement. She brought a comfort and luminosity that will never be replaced.

We will be celebrating the life and love of Angie on Saturday October 19th, at 8pm with some of her favourite bands and friends. All the proceeds will be given to her family. Please come by and share a story or memory and know that all of us are here for support and comfort through this healing process.



## Michael "Bicycle" Petis

August 2, 1967 - June 13, 2024

It's taken me a few months to write this, as I just can't believe you're gone. I met you at a party, and as it died down, you asked me if I wanted to go to a punk show. I had no idea who you were, but I said yes and off we went to Logan's in your big, teal Mica Masonry work truck. We were best friends ever since then and never looked back. We confided in each other about everything, cried on each other's shoulders, and probably travelled thousands of kilometers together between trucks, cars, boats, and motorcycles.

You introduced me to so many incredible people, musicians, artists, and ways of thinking and being in the world. When my dad died, you drove me to his house to pick up his belongings. You renovated the basement you rented with your own money to ensure I wouldn't become homeless when I was evicted and had nowhere to go. I know for a fact that I'm not the only person with stories of your incredible generosity, positivity, humour, and love. I'll never forget you giggling at giving Floyd the dog pupperoni sticks to make him dance. I still hear your laughter from



time to time, and I hope I continue to for as long as I live. I love you so much, my friend, and I'm so sorry you're gone. I hope there's an afterlife so I'll get to laugh with you again.

My heart breaks for all of those you touched, especially your daughter, Asia, your grandson, Micah, and your partner, Tea.

Love you. Always.

-Aeryn Shrapnel

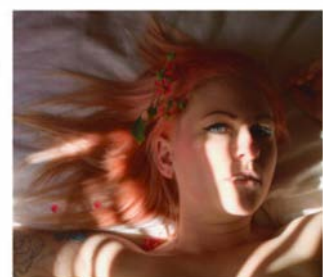


## FALLEN SOLDIERS

### R.I.P. Jessica Russell

I'm writing this in memoriam of the punk rock princess of many of our hearts, otherwise known as Jessica Russell. I met Jess in the summer of 2011 as she had just moved to Vic from Ottawa with her partner Brad.

Everything about Jess was memorable. Jess was always the best dressed at any themed party and the person rad enough to bring a jar of cheese whiz to the cheese potluck. Jess was someone who you saw and wanted to be friends with.



When she wasn't rocking space buns or red lipstick, she was in a quirky print, skinny jeans, or something she had customized. Jess was an artist in the way everything she touched became

hers and probably a little bit more bubblegum pink.

Jess's energetic energy and unique style graced coffee houses, restaurants, and behind bars, most notably Logan's Tavern of the Damned. If you were as lucky I and many Fernwood locals were, you experienced her infectious laughter while she poured you a drink. Jess leaves behind a legacy of her beautiful son Johnny Rebel, and all the people she touched with her genuine kindness, witty humour, bubbly personality, and her acceptance of everyone she came across. Because I feel this would make her laugh, I'll end this with one of Jess's favourite lyrics, "I've got a bone to pick with the first last call and the morning sun."

Wishes of love, peace, and punk rock to our local dream girl Jess in the great unknown.

- Your hot dog wife, Vanessa Andrews



## Hopeless, Lawless...

Who could ask for anything more?  
By Billy Hopeless

Happy Halloween my readers, throughout my hobby as a rock journalist, I've interviewed many influential artists in my life and for a very special treat I not only will be seeing W.A.S.P. live on my birthday week but I have been given the opportunity to get caught up in the web of the widow maker and tormentor himself, Mr. Blackie Lawless! A most joyous All Hallows to all and remember: always eat the unwrapped candy and caramel apples last!

**AU:** This is a huge honour and teenage me is stoked beyond belief to be talking to you. First off Mr. Lawless, I'm Hopeless but what's in a name? I know how I got my moniker, but how did you get the name Blackie Lawless?

**BL:** Well, the first name should be obvious because of the hair, and in the neighbourhood I grew up in, in New York, everyone had nicknames so that one stuck with me since the age of about 13. We had one guy named Shorty, another named Bobo... everyone had nicknames and mine's been with me ever since.

**AU:** Ah yes, School Daze, I remember them well. In fact, it was back when I was repeating grade 9 that I first heard W.A.S.P.; I had fallen for Mötley Crüe with the *Shout at the Devil* album and tour, but soon realized that wasn't really where it was at and saw the self-titled album you are now playing in its entirety at a local record store. The cover sold me and you instantly won me over like the true badass band. You came across as Alice Cooper and Elvira's bastard son mixing blood, horror, sex, and metal perfectly and were and still have won a place in my black heart. What was your vision when you started W.A.S.P.?

**BL:** Initially, we were just out to make a demo tape. We had all been in LA long enough to know you didn't get a record deal by playing live. So, we made what would be the majority of what would become the first album and shopped it around for about six weeks and weren't really getting any responses, so we thought these songs are really good why don't we take them out in front of people and see what happens? The first question was what are we going to do? Are we just going to go out there and stare at our shoe tops? We should put on some type of a show to entertain ourselves. But really looking back on it now, that was a really angry record put out by a really angry band. We had really only been together a few weeks when we started recording, but we weren't getting the attention we thought those songs deserved and from kicking around LA years, it

live at the Lyceum live concert recording that I realized why people were afraid of us, we were pissed off at the world. When you look at other happy as shit bands from that time, we weren't like that and I was and still am writing music that reflects how I truly feel. If you make music that's from who you really are that's honest, you'll develop a core audience that will stay with you a lifetime.

**AU:** I can totally dig that. It's like another famous Billy once said, "to thine own self be true." Since I've told you how you influenced me at such a young age, here's the stereotypical question every interviewer asks. Who were your influences that made you want to be somebody back in your youth?

**BL:** Well, my mom had been a professional dancer for the USO during the second world war so between her and my sister, I grew up with music always playing in the house. you know Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, all that stuff, then my sister who was older than me when the Beatles came along so they were always playing. I was very fortunate to have grown upon a steady diet of music. My first musical memory and actually my first memory of anything in life is when I was two years old hearing the radio playing Chuck Berry's "Sweet Little Sixteen". My parents later verified this to me when I told them, I remember it specifically



I was in my high chair at the breakfast table and my parents were eating powdered donuts. I remember hearing that song and not knowing what it was but it was moving through me, and to this day, anytime I hear that song I get this strange feeling like it's moving through me. It's like no other song I'll ever hear, it's kind of spooky.

**AU:** Talk about under the influence! Now I've been a New York Dolls addict since I was a kid

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**and you played with the Dolls for a short stint and then recorded with Arthur Killer Kane. What was it like to dose up with the Dolls?**

**BL:** My over-arching memory of the Dolls was it was five guys all trying to be Jim Morrison and succeeding. I was 19 years old and though I was pretty green at the time I knew that was not the way to build a project. I only played two shows with them, but the biggest thing with that for me was that Arthur and I went to California— that was the biggest thing for me— it got me to California. In life you're going to see sign markers along the road, and for me, that was definitely a huge one.

**AU:** Back in around 2005 my band was offered the opening slot on a US tour with your band and we were told you were bringing back the original stage show which had been deemed so controversial with the chained up, scantily-clad female torture victims and all the members of my band, not including myself, voted against it. Nowadays, with the whole cancel culture thing and all, a show like that could be considered a huge risk for many bands, yet bands like

**Gwar still go over the top. What's your opinion of the whole cancel culture or evaluation of such risk? Where is or is there a line drawn of what's ok and what's not in rock an' roll?**

**BL:** I couldn't care less. When we started out, we had an expression: there's good taste, there's bad taste and what W.A.S.P. do is very good bad taste!

There's stuff that you can do on stage that may come off as stupid or corny, but if you do it with authenticity like we did, it's frightening. It gives you a truly dangerous band it does not look corny. So, what we're doing now is we're playing the first album in its entirety with the stage looking like a combination of our first album cover and what our first live show was. There are going to be things that people may not think are possible or allowable in this day and age and I think it's necessary that we do it. There are a lot of people that weren't around back then that never got to see it and I'm not interested in taking people down memory lane, I want to actually take people back to 1984. When you walk in the room for those two and a half hours, you are actually there.

**AU:** Cool, but what about health bylaws and the high price of beef these days? You can't really throw raw meat around and at the audience anymore, right?

**BL:** Well, there's always a way of doing stuff where you can still get away with that, I'll just leave it at that.

**AU:** When I was first offered this interview, you

had to cancel it as well as your tour, as you had issues with your back. I've been on tour with major back issues and totally understand where you were at. Anyways, glad you're back and getting ready for jack action and how's the back?

**BL:** Well, saying issues is kind of like calling King Kong a monkey; it was broken I had to have two surgeries done, but we're healing and we'll be ready for the tour.

**AU:** I always dug that you rode a Harley in "The Wild Child" and "Blind in Texas" videos. Do you still ride? I guess not now with the back, eh?

**BL:** In California you're asking for trouble, so the answer is no. Out here, the first question you ask guys riding a bike is, "Have you had your accident yet?" I used to ride motocross when I was a kid and I remember getting in an eight-bike pile-up— that doesn't feel good. You're picking pieces of stuff out of you for six weeks after that. When you're going up against 600lb vehicles that aren't looking out for cars let alone motorcycles, your time is limited and I've had a few friends

that didn't make it. If I lived in a more rural area, I most definitely would, but not here in LA.

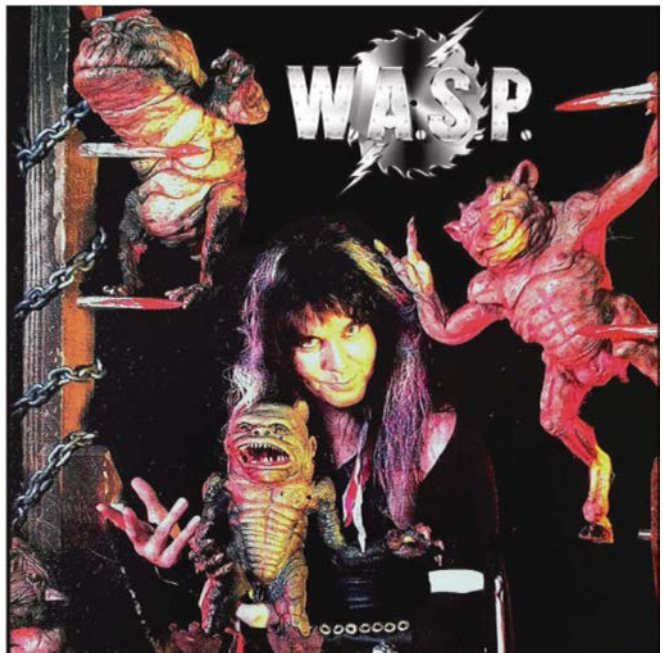
**AU:** It's baseball season and being a Yankees fan I'm happy as hell on Friday night! You went from playing baseball to music, you still play ball at all or go to watch a

game ever?

**BL:** Music and baseball are my two great loves and they'll always be. There was a half a dozen guys I played with that made it to the major leagues but I feel I made the right decision. Ever since I was two and I heard that Chuck Berry song, I knew it, but every time spring training comes around there's that pull and will always be.

**AU:** This is my Halloween column and there's always been a great association with the band and B-horror movies with your appearance in *The Dungeonmaster*, the W.A.S.P. poster in *Trick or Treat* and the soundtrack for *Ghoulies II*. What's your favourite horror movie (please don't say *The Talented Mr. Ripley*) to screen at Halloween?

**BL:** For me, it's the old Universal classics. I look at Bela Lugosi as Dracula and I still don't think that can be beat. The story about how the producers and Universal were looking for what Bram Stoker had originally written and the character had looked like in the book and Bela didn't look anything like him. He was reluctant to go for the audition but did. What makes the story so unusual



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is that from living in Hollywood, it's well-known that when a producer or studio knows what they're looking for, they don't stop until they find it. But the fact that someone who wasn't anything like what they were looking for walked in a changed their minds completely— that's remarkable. To this day, when you watch that film what you see is what made those producers change their mind, he was that magnetic.

**AU:** I myself, being a huge Universal monster fan actually did not know that. Now, keeping up with the Halloween theme, a few years ago I dressed up as you for All Hallows and went to see the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. What was your favourite Halloween costume when you were a kid?

**BL:** When I was a kid, I was a huge Zorro fan; to this day, I tell people Blackie Lawless is a combination of Zorro and Dracula. If you look at the two and roll 'em together that's me. So I'd say Zorro.

**AU:** It's all about capes, isn't it? For me, as a singer and a lover of rock n' roll, I've always said it's like Mick Jagger sang, "It's the singer not the song." When I hear a band, I want to hear the original voice that sang those songs when I first heard them. I don't want to hear Brian Johnston singing Bon Scott, Dio sing

Ozzy Osbourne, Sammy Hagar sing anything... how important do you think the voice is to the music?

**BL:** I always think about what Phil Everly from the Everly Brothers dad said, he told him, "Son, whatever you do, make sure you're the singer." It's what everybody identifies with, everybody thinks they can sing whether they can or can't; it's the language we're speaking in lyrics and melody, it's the human factor of music. I think that truer words were never spoken!

**AU:** Any last words for our readers until we see you here in Vancouver at the fabulous Rickshaw theater on October 30?

**BL:** We haven't done this show since 1984 and you have to see it! There's a piece of the album cover that will be onstage all night and I'm not going to give it away but when people see what this thing does, they're going to lose their minds, I guarantee it. It's a very expensive outrageous stunt. Our last tour we were bringing an arena-sized show to theatre-sized rooms and this show is 10 times bigger than that. Everyone's going to be blown away, lose their minds, and have a great time!

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to play this main character before he turns into the monster. What we really want is what you did last year in The First Turn-On! So if you want to be in this movie, as this character Melvin, you're hired. We don't even need to see you audition." So I took it and said "Okay, can I be the script supervisor too?" and that was the beginning of how it all started. That was 40 years ago.

**AU: I watch a lot of Troma movies and they have a lot of behind the scenes footage filmed now. Back then, there wasn't any recording of that was there?**

**MT:** Not too much. There were stills but not a whole lot of behind the scenes video interviews.

**AU: Lloyd is very energetic and wants to see his art the right way. When watching the documentaries, he's really harsh sometimes. Any harsh times on The Toxic Avenger?**

**MT:** It was really crazy. That movie, his partner Michael Herz, it was a co-directing

thing. So they kind of played good cop, bad cop. So when you were feeling good about what you were doing Michael would say "You are doing so good!" and Lloyd would say "That's crap! What are you talking about? That's no good. Do it bigger. Over the top. You've got to get more crazy." So I would do it more over the top. Lloyd would say "That's it, that's what I want!" and Michael would just go "That's crazy, that stinks."

**AU: How about the prosthetics work? You were in the radioactive tub meltdown scene.**

**MT:** I did get in the barrel once too. This stunt guy jumped out of the window and I climbed out of the barrel. But yeah, the effects were very creative. It was all practical effects made with makeup and bladders. The tub scene in particular, I had all these bladders on my arms, and there were production assistants below the tub with air tubes. They were blowing into the air tubes, which made my arms bubble up. Then after the barrel scene where I jumped out of the barrel and started on fire, I actually did start on fire. By accident, my hand started on fire.

**AU: I watched your documentary The Toxic Tutu.**

**MT:** Well the way The Toxic Tutu came around, I was a TV editor in Hollywood for a good 25 years and I got a call on my home phone

one day and the caller ID said, Mad Monster, so I picked it up they convinced me to do my first convention. That was the start of the idea to film what was going on at the convention. My film school buddy said "Yeah, let's make a movie." Sort of like a pseudo documentary, explaining where have you been for almost 25 years. So we started with the convention as the backdrop. Then I did more and more conventions and kept adding to the story. We kind of created it as it went along. The whole premise is Toxic Tutu the "almost" true story of whatever became of Melvin the Mop Boy from The Toxic Avenger. It took several years to do it and it's streaming on several platforms and I'm real happy about that. Lloyd is in it. He's the puppet master. So all those movies I did with Lloyd where I didn't get paid, I said, "Lloyd, you have to be in this movie, so I don't have to pay you!" and he did. Actually we're really good friends and I'm going to be in another movie of his this summer. Where I'm also not getting paid.

**AU: I heard that you've recently retired from your day job. You're now free to do...**

**MT:** As many conventions and acting roles as I want. I've already got my calendar filling up. At

this point it's strictly independent, low budget horror films. Which is my people. It's just really nice to work that way with these creative horror underground filmmakers and it's a lot of fun.

**AU: Since you've been doing cons do people come up and say "Oh, aren't you The Toxic Avenger guy?"**

**MT:** At the conventions of course everyone knows me. Outside of the conventions, nobody knows me. It's kind of the best of both worlds because I can just be normal walking down the streets in Hollywood where I live and no one even says hello. But at the conventions it's a love fest.

**AU: Ever get noticed when you didn't want to?**

**MT:** I think the people that notice me are just fans, so it's always been good. But you know, maybe my mother, when she saw the movie, didn't want to know me.

**AU: What was the reaction to the first Toxic Avenger movie because you've got the dog that gets shot, the guy that gets the weight stack dropped on his head. It is pretty visceral.**

**MT:** What's interesting is the movie was actually banned in Canada when it opened, because of everything you just said. When we made it, I was like this is not going anywhere. I mean, it opened up at a couple of theaters in New York and then it was gone in a few days. Then suddenly, one theater in the village, the Bleeker Street Cinema, started showing it as a midnight movie on the weekends. It got word of mouth, the crowds got bigger and bigger and suddenly it was a phenomenon. It was like "You got to go see this crazy movie!" It's like Rocky Horror, you go and just have fun. I actually made a personal appearance there one night and tried to do some stand up comedy. I was really awful, but everyone loved me anyway and that was the beginning of it becoming a cult. Then other theaters started doing the same thing around the country and it's just continued since then. It's now bigger than ever. The 40 year anniversary is this year, and there's all sorts of stuff going on to celebrate it, and I'm going to be involved in some of that.

**AU: I saw the Toxic Avenger, probably way too young, and it got me into the DIY and Punk scene. I'm curious how much the DIY Punk scene at the time played a role in the movie?**

**MT:** I was a huge punk fan. Lloyd Kaufman, not so much. Punk was always sort of my way of thinking about acting. I grew up in Detroit, Iggy Pop was my hero and I loved anything punk at the time. So it was always something that I appreciated. Like when I was dancing around on the couch in my tutu with the mop, it was just sort of an interpretation of punk rock. I still love punk rock. I like Lou Reed, Talking Heads. I love Insane Clown Posse anything that came out of Detroit, MC5.

**AU: Any inspirational horror movies?**

**MT:** I loved the whole Nightmare on Elm Street series. I think something that really got me interested in movie making along with horror was

Luis Buñuel's Un Chien Andalou.

**AU: Did you have any involvement with the new Toxic Avenger movie?**

**MT:** I wanted to be in the new movie. I tried and they just weren't interested in having any of the old characters in it. Lloyd has a cameo. But I still want to see it, if it ever gets released. It's been sitting on the shelf. Peter Dinklage plays Toxic.

**AU: Have you heard anything about Toxic Avenger Part 5?**

**MT:** I think there's been some gossip about it and at one point I thought Lloyd was doing something with it, but he's actually casting for another movie called The Power of a Positive Murder! He is saying this is his last movie.

**AU: Are there multiple cuts of Toxic Avenger?**

**MT:** There are about nine different versions. The directors cut, the MCAA cut, the cut they sent to Canada to pass customs. They're all different.

**AU: Was there ever a version where Melvin's mom is more present?**

**MT:** I don't think there was anything cut out of her. But I'll tell you the scene when I'm transforming in the bathtub, and she's knocking on the door. Well, I wrote the scene where she says, "My little Melvin, he must have finally reached puberty."

**AU: Any new future projects coming up?**

**MT:** I just did a film, *Infernal*, in Las Vegas. It's about a heavy metal record that captures the essence of the Devil. It's supposed to be really good so look out for that one. I played the record store owner who gives out the Devil's record. There's the Troma movie that Lloyd says is his last. I play a janitor. There are a couple of other ones in talks. These are all independent, low budget horror filmmakers that grew up with The Toxic Avenger and they just want me to be in a cameo. Special Needs Revolt! is one I did that is in post-production. It is where a lot of people with special needs take over the world. I don't know why I was in that. I played a janitor.

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## THE TOXIC AVENGER

Interview with actor Mark Torgl aka Melvin the Mop Boy  
Calgary Horror Con XII Panel

Moderator: Lee Brown

**AU: Mark Torgl has many skills. He's an actor, producer, editor, writer, sound department. He's done many things, as in I Spill Your Guts 2, Divide & Conquer, The Macabre, The Once and Future Smash, Toxic Tutu and Hollywood Werewolf. But where you will remember him the most is as Melvin Junko from Troma's The Toxic Avenger.**

**Mark Torgl:** You forgot my best skill, mopping. Best janitor in the world, son.

**AU: Let's start from the beginning.**

**MT:** I always acted as a child and I acted in all the high school plays. But when I went to film school in New York, I decided I wanted to work on the other side of the camera. At school Troma put a notice on our job board that said, Hey NYU film students come and work on a real film this summer. You won't get paid, but it's a real film and you'll get great experience. So I went and I talked to



Lloyd Kaufman, the President and Michael Herz. Lloyd was like, "You go to NYU, what do you want to do on this film? It's a teenage sex comedy." It wasn't The Toxic Avenger. It was called The First Turn-On! I said, "I'd like to be the script supervisor." He was like, "Great you're the script supervisor. What else you want to do?" I go "I enjoy writing." Lloyd's like "Great, you can write some additional scenes. What else do you want to do?" I said, "That is enough." So we were making this movie, this was before Troma had any idea they wanted to do horror films. They were still wacky. We were shooting and I was the script supervisor and the actor that was hired to play a major role, the camp counselor's boyfriend, just didn't show up. We're waiting around for hours and finally Lloyd said, "Mark, you do it." So I played the role. It was a completely obnoxious, totally crazy, over the top, nerdy character. I ended up doing things like having dinner with my girlfriend's family where I rub mashed potatoes through my hair, fellated a corn cob and spit up meat all over the table. Then when they made The Toxic Avenger, when they were casting for it, I got a call from Lloyd. He's like, "We've been interviewing hundreds of kids

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# THANKSGIVING

## Holiday Horror and Gore

### Calgary Horror Con XII Panel

Carving out conversation with actress Karen Cliche and stuntman/actor Alex Armbruster from 2023's standout horror hit by Eli Roth!

Moderators: ReAnimate Her, A CERIAL KILL3R

**AU:** When you played John Carver, the masked killer in Thanksgiving, what was your favourite kill in the movie?

**Alex Armbruster:** The beheading of Manny, played by Tim Dillon. That was a really cool one. I felt like an assassin doing that. And afterwards, feeding the cat and making John Carver a little more likeable for the audience. I'm a cat person.

**Karen Cliche:** We're always sharing cat photos.

**AU:** What were some of the most challenging stunts or action sequences in Thanksgiving?

**AA:** One of my favorite ones that took the longest to set up was probably the car crash into the dumpster to kill Lizzie in the movie. That was a bit tricky. There was a special effects rig inside the dumpster so we couldn't actually just ram into the dumpster and ruin it. We had to rig the car up on a bungee system that was attached to a big crane to hold the weight of the car. I had to have a five-point harness as well so I don't go flying through the windshield. We couldn't do it with a helmet either as they wanted to see the whole costume. So we went to the end point and I basically just tapped the dumpster then the effects rig closed and chopped Lizzie in half. Another fun one was doubling for Patrick in the parade warehouse. I was on the tow truck and then as it takes off, I go flying off with an axe in my hand.

**KC:** I remember on the day when you were dragging me through the dirt, you were saying that was pretty hard. I was really scared. I was digging so deep.

**AA:** You were. That was a workout.

**AU:** Karen, one of my favourite scenes is you in that oven being baked. You were being basted. How was that?

**KC:** Ticklish.

**AU:** The oven scene, was that an enclosure you were in? Was it claustrophobic?

**KC:** Yeah, it was. It was actually an actual industrial oven. So it was for real, I was lying on the grates. There was no cushioning at all. So by hour eight because I was thrashing around my head was completely bruised up and I was constantly screaming so I lost my voice.

**AU:** How did you two prepare for John Carver and Kathleen? Do you have any rituals?

**AA:** I primarily do stunts. So I research what's coming to film in Toronto. I saw that Thanksgiving was coming and that Patrick Dempsey was attached to it. I happened to know the stunt coordinator so I texted him and I was like, "Hey, I'm Patrick's size, do you need a double for him? I can do it." He's like, "Yeah, I actually do. Do you want the job?" So I got hired to do his stunts for him and that's all I thought it was going to be originally. Then I showed up and the production tells me, "Hey, we're going to put you in the Pilgrim costume today." I hadn't seen the script or anything. I didn't know what the whole deal was. I said, "OK, why? OK, sure. I'll dress up in this shirt." And I look at the scenes for the day and I saw that I'm doing this whole fight in the diner. This was the first time I was in the costume. I show up and they say, "So Patrick says he wants you to do everything for this whole scene for him today." So we did the whole thing, the car crash and everything all on that first day. Then production

kept asking me to come back and do more and more. It ended up me doing about 80% of John Carver's work. So preparing for that every day, I didn't have anything to go by except for looking at the old Grindhouse trailer Eli Roth had created. Other than that, Eli had some direction on set of what we wanted to do. But at the same time, we usually do a lot of rehearsals for stunts and these big choreographies. For this one, we just kind of showed up on the day and it was very organic. Eli just came up with it on the spot. In terms of the movement and everything that I tried to portray to the audience. I tried to think, what would make the audience the most creeped out? I was always trying to think about that before every scene.

**KC:** You had some cool moves, like when you're looking at me through the oven, that was scary.

**AU:** Yes, you were creepy. To pull it off with a mask that is not really scary.

**AA:** Yeah. It got melted, and it helped a little bit. The only scene really I didn't do in the movie was the high school scene, and that's because Eli wanted to change up who was playing John Carver a little bit just to throw the audience off with the body movement.

**AU:** How did you prepare for Kathleen?

**KC:** So, it's easy to play these kind of characters. I think it's my bitchy face. I get cast more as bitchy people. I didn't want her to just be the typical gold digger wife. Especially knowing the fate that was going to happen to her. I kind of wanted the audience to be like, we're not sure how we feel about her. Is she just shallow and superficial? Or is she a little sinister? I kind of wanted to be ambiguous about what her intentions are, who she was. I didn't want her to play one-dimensional. When I auditioned I just sent in the tape like that with my interpretation of her and I got the part and I was like, oh, that was easy. Yay! Thank you, bitchy face!

**AU:** You portrayed it very well. I did feel bad for you as you were being baked. Even though I loved the baked scene, I was rooting for you because it looked like you were going to escape. I'm like, She's got this. Then I'm like, Oh crap.

**AA:** I thought you were going to go back and save the cheerleader.

**KC:** I was but you caught me. So who's fault is that? Now I get the guilt trip for not saving her. I'm was trying to save myself. Oh, my god a pitchfork in the back, too.

**AA:** Which I had to throw with my wrong arm.

**KC:** How long did you practice throwing?

**AA:** Maybe 10 minutes while they were setting up the camera. That was one of the most stressful parts of the movie for me.

**AU:** Karen was your kill was actually not in the script originally?

**KC:** My death was, the reveal and the turkey. But originally in the script, it was just that. It was just revealed. After the parade, Kathleen never shows up again until she's served at dinner. So in the summer, Eli actually texted me and he goes, "Are you ready for more?" I said, "What do you mean, more what?" He's like, "I want to shoot your kill. I want to see you get basted." He just described it all. He describes it all from the basting to the seasoning. He's like, "And I want you roasting in the oven." I said, "I'm in." That was all Eli's idea, that was not in the original script. The whole chase scene, the burning alive, all added after.

**AU:** What can you tell us about a sequel?

**KC:** Well, it is happening. I'm not in it. Unless I come back as a turkey pot pie or something.

**AA:** Word is that they're coming back to shoot it in Toronto with the same crew. But I don't know if I'm involved. We'll see. I'm hoping.

**AU:** Eli Roth is a very influential director. What was it like working with him?

**KC:** He is super passionate and has lots of energy. But he is also an actor so he gets it. He is in the trenches. He was just a really very collaborative. He's really fun, really funny, He's got stories galore.

**AA:** Him and I got along really well. He had a very clear vision for what he wanted for the John Carver character. So he gave me really solid direction on what to do with Carver the whole time. He was really intense, in a good way. Since he's an actor and he's directed so many films too he really understands how to film a movie in a very efficient way.

**AU:** Did you steal anything from the set?

**AA:** I got the one of the John Carver masks as a gift after.

**AU:** For your oven scene how long did your make-up take to get crispy?

**KC:** On the day we did it in stages. So like half crispy to sort of baked. It was about two hours. Funny thing, when we were driving from the trailer to set, I was in the back of the car and I had a whole crispy arm and face. So I rolled down the window and I was just hanging out super casual. The cars are passing by and I'm looking like a burn victim. People are like, Oh my god. I almost caused an accident. But I thought it was funny.

**AU:** Did you have any make-up on Alex or was it just the mask?

**AA:** No. It was a very comfortable setup for me. I've worn a lot of prosthetics in my career and I'm kind of over it. So I like it when a nice, comfortable wardrobe happens for me. It's great. Especially for when I am doing stunt stuff. You want to be mobile. The tricky thing though with the mask was the eye-holes were tiny. So doing the action, it was quite easy for it to get knocked out of place. In the diner scene, when I'm slunking Lizzie into the sink, I couldn't see anything when I'm smashing her face onto the freezer door handle.

**AU:** I definitely loved her kill. The film had a lot of creative kills. What did everybody think when they first saw the mask?

**AA:** I saw it the day they wanted me to dress up as The Pilgrim. They didn't call him John Carver at that point. I just thought, it's kind of creepy.

**KC:** I think it's once the mask is on and the way that you played him, that's what made it alive. Because it's not a scary mask.

**AA:** Yeah. It's just a plastic very basic Halloween style mask that you can just fit in with everybody.

**KC:** That's the scary part as well.

**AU:** This movie is very nostalgic because it reminds you of the 80s slasher films. Did you

realize how big of a hit it was going to be?

**KC:** No. We had no idea. You never do as an actor. You just do it, put it away, and hope for the best.

**AA:** I knew it was unique in terms of the kills. It was fun with the themed Thanksgiving kills with the corn cob holders and everything. But I didn't know until it was Certified Fresh on Rotten Tomatoes that people were liking it.

**AU:** Anything else to share?

**KC:** Actually, I have a little secret. So that turkey dinner scene reveal of me had to be reshoot because the original prosthetic version of my turkey body was a little too, let's say vulgar, for some certain executives. Yeah, let's just say that meat thermometer was somewhere where the sun don't shine. Then I think one of the higher ups came on set and was like, "What? No, no, no!!" Everyone had just shot this super intense scene and then this "No!", this screaming, whatever. The prosthetic was a little too... sexy? If there's such a thing. So they had to reshoot that and redo the prosthetic turkey. No one knows that.

**AU:** Hopefully one day there's a director's cut.

**What's next for you Alex?**

**AA:** I just finished working on a new Frankenstein movie by Guillermo Del Toro. I'm also on a new IT prequel series. So I'll get to shoot with Pennywise.

**AU:** What horror movies scare you, Karen?

**KC:** The Exorcist, I just can't watch. Those movies scare me the most. Horror, I just kind of giggle about. Like when I was doing Saw 6, I was actually three months pregnant doing that carousel scene. I remember going, I'm going to give birth to a devil. This poor fetus is in me, going, what? This crazy lady is just screaming her head off. We were on lunch and because everybody's head was getting blown off. I survived. Everyone had bloody guts all over them. We were eating lunch and we were looking around like, What the hell do we do for a living? This is so weird.

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# BLAST FROM THE PAST



## Blast From The Past

1979 though 2024

The life and times of Rob Begg, 45 years of a musical journey.

By Clark 'Super' Mantei

Hello again past and future past blasters. This issue unfolds the pages of time with a great story of a local west coast musician and producer who is none other than Rob Begg; a British Columbia born bassist who has become the creator/ founder of Marpole Studios in Langley. He is now an accomplished engineer, song writer, teacher and collaborative music producer all in one.

I've known Rob since 1989 when I was both his roommate and his band's roadie. We became friends in the 1980s and recently reconnected in 2023 after a long time. I found it fitting to go back in time from the late 70s until the late 80s and take a look at a vibrant era when bands played the weekly club scene and strived to find a deal recording their band into stardom. Well Rob Begg is the perfect story for everyone to enjoy.

Let's start with a storyline of my time until I met Rob Begg. I was 18 in 1985 and after graduation I saw Mitch Mitchell (Jimi Hendrix Experience drummer) in a local club. I was in awe. I helped him load in and he was kind to me and got me into the club as I was underage. I'll never forget the groovy flow he taught me and how easy he made it look. He was still playing 15 years after Hendrix passed. My original band was my happy place but in February 1986 we broke up. Steve was our bassist and he asked me to move to Vancouver with him and off I went with dreams of a future. If Mitch Mitchell could carry on, so could I. We eventually found a cool place to live and jam and his friend got me a job at EXPO 86. I worked next door to the EXPO theatre so I was in heaven. Now 19 and seeing

amazing famous artists live almost nightly blew me away. Miles Davis. Steve Ray. Tom Petty. The list goes on. A great education seeing those shows. I even went to Mainly Music on Granville St to purchase a new cymbal. The cool guy working there was Rob Begg. Life was awesome, EXPO ended and I moved back home to Victoria and made a rock/jazz trio. Yet I missed the big city life. So in Jan 1989 I moved to the North Shore of Vancouver to work and try again. My cousin Robert offered me a job as a roadie on the weekends. I would tear down and set up in another club. 2 shifts at \$60 a week. Robert was a renowned light man for years by then.

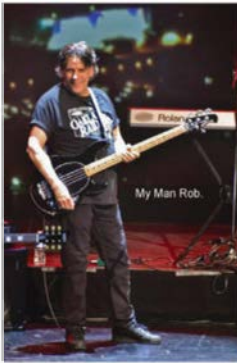
I took the job. It was exciting. Saturday nights in fancy clubs with kick ass Rock n Roll bands. He worked at that point for a local group named 'Vertigo' and their bassist was Rob Begg. Rob needed a roommate and I was it. I moved to 14th at Sophia St just off Main Street in East Vancouver. What an amazing life I had. A 3 story townhouse with my own floor? A great day job and a rock n

roll roadie gig too? Awesome!

The year was 1989 and Vertigo played 5 to 6 nights a week. Rob's bass solo was always the highlight for me. He was 27 and unlike many club band members Rob had another passion. It was recording music. In fact Sophia St home had no dining room or kitchen table as Rob was building a recording studio and several players and studio cats came by all the time. Rob was writing new music for a project called 'The Risk' and I still have that demo. Rob introduced me to Wayne and one night I got a call to pick up Long John Baldry and his keyboardist's board. I picked them both up and drove John and the huge keyboard to his home not knowing who he was. Well that changed when I told him I wanted to see the Rolling Stones and Wayne (Baldry's old manager) took me to the show for free. I'm always grateful for taking the opportunity to do the staging as a side job as it led to amazing things.

What a great time to be alive. Beautiful women and a kick ass bassist as a roommate who's making recording music his career as well? I looked up to him like a brother. Still do.

I moved back to Victoria soon after and in 2002 I was leaving B.C. to tour big screen films in colleges and universities throughout the USA. On my last night in English Bay in Feb 2002 I went to a pub on the oceanfront and who was the



entertainment there? You guessed it. It was Rob Begg. Only this time he had no band. Just him and a synthesizer with an electric guitar and his great singing voice for the whole pub to enjoy. He played so many songs I was stunned. We reunited and I left Canada for a while. My journey came through all those connections back in 1989/90.

I wouldn't see Rob again until November 2023. 21 years later.

Dateline 1979: Chilliwack B.C. A high school band called 'The Edge' performs at local gigs and parties

around the city. Their bassist Rob Begg enjoys the lifestyle and is finding his path in the world. At 13 years old Rob discovered a live LP called KISS ALIVE and he says the Grabber bass that Gene Simmons was holding left him awestruck and he wanted to live and feel that energy himself so he was keen on learning to play the bass. Rob told me the bass was a cool way to get into a band as well as there was too many guitarists so Rob chose the bass!!

I too discovered KISS ALIVE when I was 10 and wanted to learn that tribal drum solo in "100,000 Years" myself. I eventually did. Thousands of players say KISS ALIVE turned them on to wanting to be in a rock band. It's a legend! Rob says he enjoyed the formative years but then came a time for more education and he moved to Vancouver about 1980 to work his craft there when a friend in Los Angeles told him he could stay at his place and Rob ventured to California to attend the M.I.T. school for studying further music skills. It was a very popular thing to do it seemed as a few of my



friends did just that. While arriving in L.A. Rob's buddy took him out on his first night to a small little club where a jazzy trio was playing. The drummer was none other than Mitch Mitchell. That made me smile.

There is a famous rehearsal place and studio there in West Hollywood called S.I.R. studios and Rob was told there's no opportunity there as so many players already work there. Rob needed a job to survive while he attended his studies. His buddy said that 'Sunset Sound'

recording studios(world famous recording place) needed a coffee guy to help out around the busy business and Rob Begg became that employee. During his time making everyone comfortable with his daily duties, Rob met folks there and as he is likable and sincere Rob learned the ins and outs of engineering alongside his duties. Rob also met some famous artists too. Eddie Money became a friend to Rob when he would make an LP. Rob was also told to 'not stare' at Prince. Don't even glance at him. lol. Tom Petty liked Rob too.

Imagine Tom saying to Rob... "Yeah I'll take a break and hang out.

2 creams and sugar please, Rob. And yes please to that danish." What a great gig. Rob also worked at Sound City and his M.I.T. studies became easier as he also got to work and also study from the greats. Rob took bass lessons for the legendary 'Carol Kaye' who played on thousands of tracks. Those lessons were not cheap either as Rob was eager to know what she could show him. Rob did indeed progress as he too is teaching now as well. Carol turns 90 next year. Live long and prosper!

After L.A. Rob went back to Vancouver in 1986 where we met. He played in a band called 'Matrix' and was gigging nightly at a different club every week. It was a fun time to live that life when you've really worked your craft and learned the tricks of the trade. By 1989 Rob was in Vertigo and the club scene was in full bloom. Clubs like 'Coconuts' and 'The Roxy' or 'The Metro' and 'Club Soda' were packed with happy audiences every night. Local bands flourished in the business of partying nightly all week long.

Local bands that became well known were: Mr. Cairo, Matrix, Trooper, Simon Kaos, Powder Blues, Headpins, Ray Roper, Red Rider, Kim Mitchell, C-Fox Electric Lunch Orchestra, Wildchild, Kick-Axe, Doug and the Slugs, Vertigo and many others. Then came grunge and the eras changed year by year. 'Every generation throws a hero up the pop charts' is how Paul Simon put it.

As time flew by, the weekly club band scene fizzled and time moved on. Rob had kids and eventually coached football too. Yet all the while he kept recording sessions active as a passion that he never stopped enjoying. Why stop when you're focused on a craft that's so fulfilling?

By 1996 he decided to name his home recording studio "Marpole Studios" and by 1998 he moved to Langley B.C. to make his home and studio become a complete reality. Living above his own studio is a well deserved achievement for anybody these days. Yet knowing Rob I know that his perseverance and desire to make every recording project count seems to drive the man. It is his life's mission to create a place with a space to bring in any artist to experience a great session with a great result and that is exactly who Rob Begg is. He is a master of production through his musical and engineering and composing skills. Many faces appear on his FB page daily. Some are well known too. Yet everyone who records with Rob at Marpole Studios always leaves with exceptional results. I'm happy to reconnect with Rob and look forward to recording my songs with his skill at Marpole too. I can only imagine the magic touch he will add to my creations.

I re-met Rob in November of 2023 at the Shark Club in Vancouver. We were both going to see KISS on their final tour and I then discovered Rob was taking his son. Rob introduced us and he said "My dad took me to see KISS in the 70s and here I am taking my son to see KISS almost 50 years later." He told me his son is in a band and is 27



too. I told him he was 27 when I lived with him 30 plus years ago. It was special seeing him again shining bright and looking as youthful as ever. I told him I'm doing a story on KISS and I write for Absolute Underground magazine too. Since then Rob hasn't let up with a tenacious velour in tow to always remind me of "Where's my story, Madge?" Madge became my nickname through a funny event at Club Soda in 1989 and yes it stuck. Haha.

Lastly as of this week Rob is actually teaching and recording at the 'Clayton Community Center in Surrey B.C.' It seems things have come full circle for Mr. Begg. I went to call him to review things tonight and he put me on livestream AS he was performing? Yeah man. He taught yesterday, recorded at night. Taught today and is gigging tonight. Effortlessly because he loves what he does.

I'll end this article like this. My friend Rob Begg was introduced to me by my cousin Robert Billings as a performer needing a roommate. I'd already met Rob but as a salesman only. That opportunity changed my life and I met a few key people then who remain today as friends. I travelled a lot from sponsored trips from these connections and my life became very adventurous and fulfilling. And that's without even playing my music either. Rob had no ego. He is real about stuff and has integrity. He plays fair and works hard and no one gets hurt. He is a humble human with a smile that shows that efforts equal results. I'm proud to know him as a friend and it's great to see him achieving all his goals. Gotta say I love the cat.

With that I'd like to bring this to its coda. Speaking of love. My dearest cousin Robert Billing made all this happen for me. Robert passed away from cancer last June of 2023 and I'd like to dedicate this article to the memory of his heart and soul and not to forget his wit and laughter too. We all lost loved ones and Robert I believe was looking out for me somehow when I reconnected with Rob Begg that November evening. I am certain Robert knew Rob Begg would be good for me to learn about what it takes to survive in a world of musical ventures.

The journey continues.  
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## Autogramm

### Cross-Border Power Pop

#### Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

**CC Voltage:** I'm CC and I'm not sure if I'm infamous for anything, but I once was awarded a certificate of bravery for saving two dudes from a burning car. And I've played in a few bands.

**Lars Von Seattle:** I don't know about any infamy, but I do the guitaring now for Autogramm.

**Jiffy Marx:** I assume they meant more toilet-adjacent infamy that we, at various times in various states of inebriation, have been known for but yeah, I guess we're grown-ups now.

**AU: How do you manage to keep a band across an international border?**

**CCV:** Planes, trains and automobiles. We're all old pals, so we make it work. Remote songwriting and planning around the times when we can

be in the same room, whether that's touring or recording.

**LVS:** It's a long-distance relationship, which makes it fresh and exciting when we get together! I love reconvening with these dudes to catch up and do what we all love doing.

**AU: Tell us about Music That Humans Can Play.**

**CCV:** It's the album that almost never was. We had decided to throw in the towel, when The Silo convinced us to keep the fire burning. Lars is a great old buddy, and adding him added new energy to the project.

**LVS:** I'd say *Music That Humans Can Play* is an invitation to everyone to have fun, dance, and not worry about being a loser.

**AU: It has themes of love, loss, and feeling like an outcast. Any favourite songs?**



**CCV:** My fave is probably "Dive Right In". Silo wrote it on the plane from Chicago right before we recorded the album. It was a last-minute addition. I love when things like that happen!

**LVS:** I like "Plastic Punks" because it makes us laugh most times we play it.

**TS:** Tough to name just one, but I do love "Yesterday" for its weird structure and paisley underground jangle.

**JM:** Songs are like children to me; I don't like to pick favourites. That said, I only have one kid, so by default she's #1!

**AU: The music video for "Born Losers" takes us on a wild ride in the mountains. How did you come up with it? What was filming like?**

**CCV:** Our aesthetic has been pretty '80s and making a campy '80s style skiing video seemed on point. Seeing as we actually had a video budget for this one, we made a little holiday out of it at Sasquatch Mountain Resort.

**LVS:** The filming process was super fun and full of laughs, but also at times, arduous and even treacherous, given the unexpected late spring heavy snow dump. Thankfully, the mysterious but party-loving Sasquatch guided us through and showed us the way!

**TS:** We basically just partied with a Sasquatch on a mountain and thankfully got some footage thanks to our friend Ty McLeod.

**JM:** None of us had skied in 20 years so it was super fun but also challenging and by the end we were all totally beat!

**AU: What does it mean to be a plastic punk?**

**LVS:** I interpret it as a commentary on the arbitrary nature of perceived authenticity, with honks!

**JM:** Honestly can't remember where that came from but I think it was sort of a reflection on having been a punk my whole life but never having had a mohawk or a bullet belt or a face tattoo, etc. I think to some degree all four of us could relate to that. Also, we consider ourselves a punk band even if it is a sort of Barbie version of punk (hence the inspiration for the video).

**AU: Famous last words?**

**CCV:** Stay between the ditches and don't do anything I wouldn't do.

**LVS:** The future ain't what it used to be.

**JM:** R.I.P. Johnny Woggles Jeww, one of the all-time greats!

**You can find Autogramm streaming on Spotify. [autogramm.bandcamp.com](https://autogramm.bandcamp.com)**

**@autogrammband**

Autogramm is set to perform October 9th at Green Auto in Vancouver with support from KCAR and Muncho Joe, making it a must-see event. The band is excited to showcase their latest LP, *Music That Humans Can Play*.

*Photo by Tyler McLeod*

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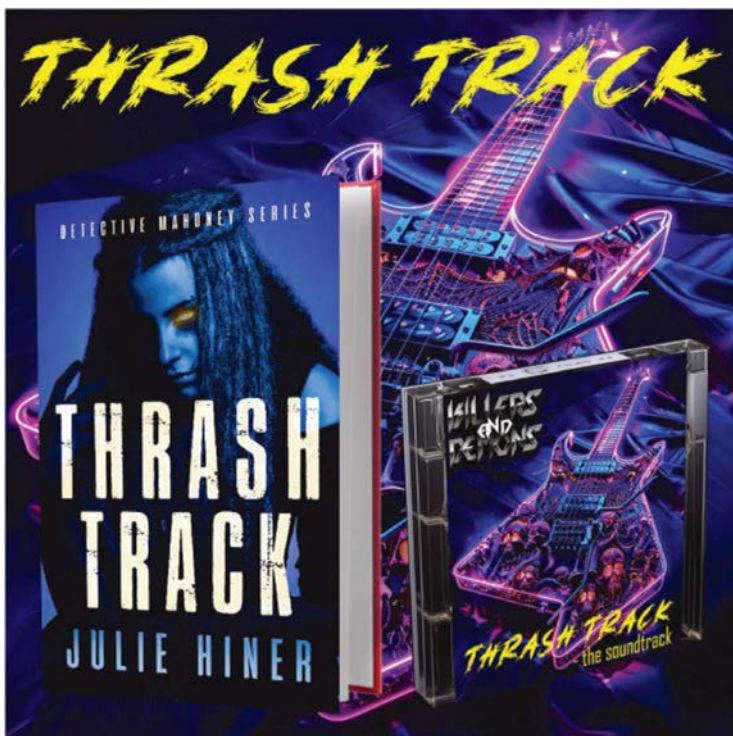
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## Killers and Demons

Author Julie Hiner Talks *Thrash Track*

By Ryan Dyer

Heavy metal and murder mysteries collide in Julie Hiner's series of books under her Killers and Demons umbrella. The Calgary-based author's newest novel, *Thrash Track*, is the latest in the *Detective Mahoney* series— each book heavily referencing music from the decade it takes place in and each featuring morbid slayings that are in need of solving. Following the book release party, which featured a performance and video release by glam band Lynx, I caught up with Hiner to chat about her new book and career up to this point.

**Absolute Underground:** You told me that for your first Killers and Demons book, you had some anxiety about its release. What were

fiction, and to free write without overt thinking, took me most of that first year. Once things started to flow and I began to find my voice, I didn't stop. The final scene of *Final Track* came to me (after a suggestion given to me) and the next book came spilling out. Once I opened up my imagination and trusted my gut... it all dripped out onto the page. I felt compelled to continue the series.

**AU:** Your Killers and Demons book release parties combine music and literature. The addition of metal bands performing differs from "traditional" book release events. What was the inspiration behind doing it this way?

**JH:** I was told by early supporters how visual my writing was, how they felt like they were in the world of the story. This reaction fed my already strong desire to take the audience to the lip of

some of your concerns?

**Julia Hiner:** I thought it was too fucking weird! A serial killer with a glam rock fetish and murder scenes that emulated late '80s hard rock videos... I couldn't stop writing it, but I wondered if anyone would understand it or even read it.

**AU:** When writing *Final Track*, did you intend it to spawn into a series of tales (the *Detective Mahoney* series)?

**JH:** No. I gave myself a two year time period to write, produce, and launch *Final Track*. Learning to write

the stage in a dive joint at a sweaty, head banging concert. I felt like it was the only way to welcome the debut novel into the world.

*Final Track* was launched at Vern's with a killer performance by Noize Boyz— an '80s metal tribute. Each year I strive to evolve the launch party. This year, the launch of *Thrash Track* brought my ultimate vision alive.

**AU:** For *Thrash Track* you've created a soundtrack with the help of thrash band Hazzerd. For these two songs, you penned the lyrics. It reminds me of when Stephen King had AC/DC write "Who Made Who" for his *Maximum Overdrive* film. What was the spark that made this idea come into fruition?

**JH:** Since I started writing the first book, *Final Track*, I've wanted a custom designed soundtrack for each one. Each of my books is a complete fusion of music and storytelling. Specific styles of music and songs fuel the plot and shape the characters. Books and music are equally important to me; I can't live without either.

My dream of a soundtrack came true because of a talented and generous person— Cody Anstey. He took the time to look at my books and to hear my vision of the accompanying soundtracks. He managed and produced the *Thrash Track* soundtrack and brought my writing skills together with the amazing musical talent of Hazzerd.

I will be working on soundtracks for future books, and possibly going back and adding soundtracks to the other books. I would also love to write lyrics for bands, and plan to pursue that.

**AU:** You have stated that the first season of *True Detective* was a big influence on your style of detective writing. Another influence is Rob Zombie's movies. Of course, Ed Gein was an influence on the Skin Peeler character in *Thrash Track*. What were some of your other influences going into this project?

**JH:** *Thrash Track* had several critical influences. I wanted the worlds of the detective and killer to literally collide. The detective is very thrash metal while the serial killer is rap with a hint of grunge. I wanted a piece of music where two genres

collided. A friend reminded me of "Children of the Korn", an Ice Cube and Korn collaboration from the late '90s inspired by Stephen King's *Children of the Corn*. The peak of the plot is driven by this collision of styles.

I was also highly inspired by Brian Bowyer and Kristopher Triana— two horror authors with strong and bold voices. They don't hold back. They don't question what someone will think. I read their books and fueled my confidence and my own bold style. When I watch or read something crazy, I love it. I want my readers to get amped up the same way.

**AU:** Your next work should see the characters in the 2000s. What bands/subcultures do you have in mind for this era?

**JH:** OK, so... I thought that might be the case. I mean, *Thrash Track* ends just after Halloween of 1999, but... I recently had a big aha moment about the next book. It just might leave 1999 with a big bang. There's some seriously great inspiration in technical events (my detectives always have a computer wiz at hand) and musical influences from that time. I am still working out the music, however, I will spill a couple things. The story is about a young woman (not quite 18) living with her grandfather. He has a torture dungeon, and his favorite "tool" is the iron maiden. So, take that as a hint. However, the young girl also needs her music and that part is not solidified yet.

As for Stella, my metal head detective, she will always love Rob Zombie, but she will have a musical evolution. 1999 has some great potential candidates— Rage Against the Machine, Danzig, Cannibal Corpse, to name a few. She'll find her way to her metal heroine for sure. When the series does officially move into the 2000s... we'll deal with it then.

[killersanddemons.com](http://killersanddemons.com)



## NOMEANSNO & MUDHONEY PART TWO

### From Obscurity To On Bookshelves Everywhere

This book signing and author panel featured the bands NoMeansNo and Mudhoney. Showcasing the release of the books *NoMeansNo: From Obscurity to Oblivion* by Victoria's favourite son, Jason Lamb alongside the co-authors of *Mud Ride: A Messy Trip through the Grunge Explosion*. This event was moderated by Lamb who spoke with Steve Turner (guitarist and founding member of Mudhoney), Adem Tepedelen (co-author of *Mud Ride*) and John Wright of NoMeansNo.

**Jason Lamb:** I'm going to fast forward a little bit here. The other thing that really stuck out for me in your book Steve, that I heard about from NoMeansNo, is you had almost identical experiences when you went over to England to

Pioneer Square. It was a cafe and stuff that was a great place in the late '80s/early '90s.

**JL:** The Crocodile Cafe. Did you ever play there?

**JW:** Yes, we did, and I think the OK Hotel as well.

**ST:** What about the Off Ramp?

**JW:** Actually, we've got a wonderful live recording from the Off Ramp. That's been sitting there for the last... it was with Tom Holliston on the NoMeansNo *One* tour. So around 2000. An awesome recording. That was a great venue.

**Adem Tepedelen:** It's still there. It's El Corazon now.

**JL:** I went on *The Rocket* archive and I typed in "NoMeansNo"... they were featured tons in that magazine. My favourite thing is the listings. Just to see the bands that would be playing together back in those days, it's insane. If you don't know *The Rocket*, it's an amazing old zine from the Seattle days. It's online now; the entire thing is archived.



**AT:** Honestly, if you're a fan of Pacific Northwest music, find this. You can go through these old issues and see the cool old ads and stories about Soundgarden, Mudhoney, Nirvana, all these bands; it's an amazing source of journalism.

**ST:** It wasn't only focused on the Northwest. There was an awful lot of Victoria and Vancouver bands in it too. Like I said, they all came down, it was very easy to cross the border back then.

**JW:** The crazy thing was that of course the bands from around here, we're all from the Southwest and you

have to go south to get to the Northwest. It was hard to wrap your head around at the time, but there was a certain kinship.

**JL:** This is surreal to me. When you think about iconic albums in alternative music, there's a bunch, I guess. But there's two people here sitting on this stage that are responsible for, in my mind, two of the most iconic records of all time. They're right there. I can touch them, it's incredible. Does anybody in the audience have a question for any of these guys?

**Audience Member 1:** You are totally one of the greatest drummers I have ever heard. I love your playing. Did you come from a musical family, how did you get started on drums?

**JW:** Thank you. Not from a musical family, so much. My father, as they say, being a Taurus, loved

music but the only thing he could play was the radio. But my mother was a piano teacher and we all got some musical education early on. That was I guess the thing to do. But also, my older brother Rob, of course you're familiar with from the band, and my older sister Shelley. They grew up in the '60s and were into all the bands. Buying the singles and buying the records. There was always lots of music and my parents loved music. I just ended up in school here out in Rock Heights when we moved to Esquimalt from Alberta when I was in grade six and I joined the school band. They were asking who's going to play what. And he goes, "Who wants to play percussion?" Like 20 hands go up in the air. He's like, "Okay, who actually has a snare drum?" It was me and this other girl. Okay, you're the percussion section. So that's sort of how I started drumming. Although, I had a snare drum because I would incessantly pound on the bookshelves and stuff at home until my parents bought me a snare drum and said, "Hit this." Then going up through school in Cedar Hill and Gordon Head and great music teachers. I know that they are fewer and far between now. It wasn't until DOA came and played the UVic Commons block and my brother dragged me down to see them and the Dish Rags. I'd never seen a drummer play like that before. So yeah, it was all kind of history from there.

**JL:** Before I get to another audience question, there's a young kid right over there wearing a Dead Bob t-shirt, which is really inspiring. So that leads to a good segue to what's going on with John. Because John has basically relaunched a new sort of music career in the last year or so. In the process of doing the book, I knew a few years ago that he had some songs that he was playing with. I got to hear them pretty early and it was mind blowing. Wow, this is like NoMeansNo 2.0 if you will. He eventually put a band together. Tell everybody about what's going on with Dead Bob.

**JW:** Thank you very much, next generation. We were talking about COVID being when you guys were getting your book together. Jason as well got the idea then all of a sudden COVID hits and everyone has a lot of time. NoMeansNo had a lot of demos or songs I had written as possible NoMeansNo songs. Lots of songs I'd written for my own. I wrote stuff that was never played by us. As a project with time on my hands, I thought I'm going to maybe finish some of this stuff and put some real drums on it. It was all like on the computer on GarageBand, basically. So replacing all the programmed and the looped drums and whatnot, I just took it on as a project and realized I can come up with an album here, but it was no real thought of being in a band again. We packed it in about 2014. That was the last time we played as a band here in Victoria at the Breakout West Awards or whatever.

**JL:** The Western Canadian Rock and Roll Museum. **JW:** Not museum, Hall of Fame. It was the Western Canadian Music Hall of Fame. They all turn into museums really, in the end. My drums are in a museum. I look like a museum piece now. Yes, the Hall of Fame, a minor house, but a House of Fame. So anyway, we packed it in and moved on and did other stuff. I didn't think I would really be playing in a band or making records or travelling again, but you just don't know what's around the corner. COVID came along and that, of course, changed a lot of people's lives. But it gave everybody time. I had time on my hands, they had time on their hands to produce this, their books and I had time on my hands to produce music. Then when finally it all came to an end at the pub, I realized I was out of a job and I had no other skills. So I guess I should start a band again and I had a record. So that's kind of how Dead Bob has come around.

There's quite a convergence of things going on; a lot of hot irons in the sense of Jason's book, which is really interesting and really fun and is doing well and has been well-received. It's really gratifying that people are enjoying these stories and then Alternative Tentacles is releasing the NoMeansNo back catalogue. After I started this conversation six years ago, they're now doing it. Which is great. I've got together a great group of musicians, myself not included, but Ford Pier, you might know and Byron Slack from a band called Invasives. Which you might know. Why they're not huge, I have no idea. One of these great bands that just

never seem to land it? They were just a little too late, if you know what I mean. They were really, I think, very much influenced by the '90s grunge Seattle, you can hear it in their music. Also a woman named Kristy Lee Audette who plays in a band called Rong. Coincidentally, without the W, who are a great band. I've only just met her. Then Colin MacRae; I'm sure there's people in this room who know Colin from Pigment Vehicle from back in the day here in Victoria. He ended up moving up to Powell River as well, and when I moved up there as NoMeansNo was starting to come to a close, I got into a bunch of projects with him. Now he's really super excited to be playing bass guitar with us in Dead Bob. That is kind of how it all came around and where we are at and we are off to play as many shows this year as we can.

To be continued next issue...

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## Dave Foley

Interview by Jason Lamb

This an excerpt of an interview that was conducted at Island Fancon in Langford, BC.

**Jason Lamb:** My name is Jason Lamb from The Zone 91.3 in Victoria, and this is Dave Foley.

**Dave Foley:** Raised in Ontario, I emigrated to the United States and currently live in New York City. My address is...

**JL:** No.

**DF:** Oh, right.

**JL:** Welcome to, I was going to say Victoria but technically we're in Langford. Langford people get a little upset sometimes when you just lump them in with Victoria.

**DF:** I think this is my first time in Langford. I have been to Victoria many times and I shot a miniseries on Vancouver Island.

**JL:** *Super Pupz*.

**DF:** *Super Pupz*. Probably all of you have seen it. No one? Have any of the children?

**JL:** Have you seen it? Yes? He's the grandpa.

**DF:** I'm only going to talk to them, just to let you know.

**JL:** For those who don't know, should we go down your resume a little bit?

**DF:** Sure.

**JL:** Most recently would be the character Danish Graves on *Fargo*. You are also known from a fantastic sitcom from the 1990s called *NewsRadio* as Dave Nelson. You are Flik from *A Bug's Life*. You have appeared in almost every sitcom or TV show ever made for one or two episodes. You were also in the sketch group *The Kids in the Hall*. I was a little nervous coming out here because I am a big fan and the public speaking and all that. So, I was doing that old thing where you picture everybody naked and then it occurred to me that I had actually seen Dave Foley naked.

**DF:** That is a hazard of watching my work. Increasingly, the more unlikely it is that anyone

wants to see me naked the more likely you are to see me naked.

**JL:** You have all seen the newest season of *The Kids in the Hall*?

**DF:** Sorry about the Money Mart sketch.

**JL:** Did Kevin McDonald pressure you into that?

**DF:** Kevin came up with the idea for the sketch. The cops were looking for guys who were fully dressed so, naked, the cops wouldn't recognize them. So, I said alright, but if we do it, we have to really be naked. I said it can't be cute, it can't be clever camera angles. In the current society, there is only one part of the male body that can't be naked. When I was a kid, if a girl's pant suit rode up revealing even an inch of her buttock she would be mortified. Now everybody's ass is out all the time. You can show your naked butt

on *Sesame Street* now. So, I said the only part of the male anatomy that is really taboo today is the penis, so we've got to do this full frontal or it's lame.

**JL:** When it first happens, I'm like that's Dave Foley and Bruce McCulloch is doing jumping jacks

**DF:** When we shot that, I said I think it'd be very funny if you just stay on the penises way too long.

**JL:** Did you get any push back on that?

**DF:** Not in the script or even when we shot it, but they did some audience testing and I heard that there were a lot of comments that went something like, "Well, I don't need to see that."

**DF:** For better or for worse, we're all in our 60s now, but we all still think we're punks. The last thing we wanted to be was a bunch of boring old guys indulging in nostalgia. So, if anyone had anything that even had the smell of nostalgia, it would just be torn to shreds.

**JL:** When you got back together for the writing, was it like nothing had changed?

**DF:** It was very much the same in all of the good ways, but unfortunately somewhat in the bad ways because we're still kind of assholes, but funny assholes. So we'd be mean to each other, but everyone would be laughing the whole time.

**JL:** I've always wanted to ask you about the writing dynamic going back to the original series as well. Were you paired off?

**DF:** Yeah, I mean it wasn't hard and fast, but Kevin and I worked together the majority of the time and Mark and Bruce worked together a lot. I wrote some stuff with Bruce. I wrote more with Bruce before we had the TV show. Scott would write a lot on his own and everybody wrote for Kevin because Kevin is passive aggressive so everyone thinks he's nuts.

**JL:** It was in 1984 when you guys started right?

**DF:** That was when Scott joined. I had been doing stuff with Kevin for a couple of years and with Mark and Bruce for about a year before that.

**JL:** You and Kevin were called *The Kids in the Hall* first?

**DF:** Kevin, myself, and a guy named Luciano Casimiri—the three of us. Luciano Casimiri is a successful writer and producer.

**JL:** As far as I can tell, you were successful with the Amazon series. Are you going to do more?

**DF:** No. Amazon wasn't eager to do more, but we are expecting more *Kids in the Hall* stuff in the future.

**JL:** How many people have seen *The Kids in the Hall* live before? I've seen you guys four times. The first time I saw you live was in 1993 at the Royal Theatre in Victoria. It was fantastic, and back to nudity—Kevin streaked across the stage at the end.

**DF:** A beautiful man.

Photo by Colin Smith Takes Pics

Transcribed by The Stevinator



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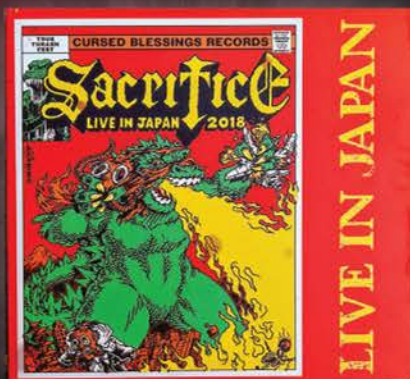
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the band has played many tours and has opened for everyone from L7 to NOFX and Amyl and the Sniffers. The band is all about giving people a space to be themselves and allow them to play loud and not give a shit what others think. To do something that resonates with people.

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

**BW:** Just fucking heavy balls to

## Bad Waitress

Interview by Johnny Bandura

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

**Bad Waitress:** You are talking to Bad Waitress from Toronto who are most infamous for opening for L7 and NOFX, and for their love of potatoes

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

**BW:** Kali (lead singer and guitarist) and Moon (drummer) met at around 21 years old in the Toronto music scene auditioning for a band that was never able to get started. After sometime had passed Kali ran into Moon in front of the Bovine Sex Club on Queen St. Kali approached Moon and asked if they would play drums in her band. Kali really wanted to start a punk band and branch out to find other like-minded people to play with. After a few rehearsals they banded together and started their two-piece The Nude Dogs. Fast forward a few years later, they picked up two other band members Katelyn on lead guitar and Nicole on bass which later turned into what we know today as Bad Waitress. Since then,

walls give no shits.

**AU: Do you have any albums in the works?**

**BW:** Bad Waitress has a new album recorded with a bit of work left to do; still be another eight months before it sees the light of day. Stay tuned!

**AU: What do you love most about live music? Main influences?**

**BW:** Bad Waitress list the Dead Kennedys David Bowie, Nina Hagen, Peaches, Howlin' Wolf, Sonic Youth, and Limp Bizkit as some of their influences

**AU: Future plans for the band?**

**BW:** Bad Waitress has an upcoming West Coast tour with the Subhumans starting in Bellingham, WA and ending in LA. Bad Waitress was previously signed to Royal Mountain Records but is currently looking for a new label and working on finishing their upcoming album!

**AU: Any final words for our readers?**

**BW:** Always be unapologetically yourself. And don't give a fuck what other people think.

[badwaitress.bandcamp.com](http://badwaitress.bandcamp.com)

[badwaitress.com](http://badwaitress.com)

# UNDER THE OUTHOUSE

## Maverick

Montreal Street Rock n' Roll

Interview by Laurie Storrie

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what's your role in the band?**

**Eddie:** Eddie Rawmble, rhythm guitar, and lead vocals.

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

**Eddie:** My love for rock n' roll and punk go way back. I've been writing songs for a long time, but only made the move to form Maverick in 2017.

The first few years were hard, as to find and keep like-minded musicians, and then the pandemic hit. That's when I got in the studio with a friend to deliver our first EP, *Bones Shaker*. I was then on my own, until I met Fil and Elliott. We met in 2023 at the jam space we share. We hit it off from the start and Maverick was up and running again, ready for live appearances. We are however, still looking for a fourth member to join in as the lead guitarist.

**AU: With a sound that's reminiscent of 1950s rock and roll played at street punk speed, what are some of your biggest influences?**

**Eddie:** It has to be all the rock n' roll I grew up listening to (Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Chubby Checker...), mixed to the vast punk scene (mainly East Bay bands from late '80s to early '90s), I've been so kindly introduced to later in life.

**AU: You have a reputation for high energy**

**shows and wild stage antics. What's the most fun thing you have done during a set?**

**Eddie:** For me, it was playing a song with Fil, our bassist, on my shoulders. We both sang and played our instruments while doing so. It was a lot of fun.

**AU: You just got home from your first BC tour, what were your favourite parts of that, and what did it make you miss about the Montreal scene?**

**Eddie:** The best for me is when we get a hyped up crowd willing to come up on stage and partake in our stunts. I found the scene to have the same spirit, so I can't say I've missed much about Montreal. We just love "The" BC.

**AU: It's Halloween season, if you had to dress up and do a full cover set, which band would you pay tribute to?**

**Eddie:** Personally, it'd be Operation Ivy. Perfect blend of fun, energy and depth.

**AU: What's next for Maverick?**

**Eddie:** We just finished recording a few new songs, which should be released as a split record first. We're still working things out with everyone involved in that matter, so can't say too much for now. Give us a follow to stay informed.

**AU: Is there anything else**

**you want to tell us about?**

**Eddie:** Yes, we're very proud and excited to participate in the *Punk Canada Vol. 4* compilation. And it should be coming out just in time for Christmas. Wink wink.

[linktr.ee/maverick\\_punx](http://linktr.ee/maverick_punx)



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hair the color of dried blood. Directly before me was Lux Interior, wraithlike lead chanter of demonic incantations, possessed by the soul of Elvis. Over to one cobwebbed corner, oblivious to their latest whining victim, was the beater of human-hide-covered drums, Nick Knox, and skeletal guitarist Click Mort. They were bent over a mirror. What appeared to be human-bone dust was being arranged into lines the size of pizza crusts. No reflection appeared in the mirror, other than disembodied scrolls made of rolled up dollar bills. With a shudder my tape recorder rolled into action. "What drugs are you guys on?" I asked.

At the mention of the Jacksons, Nick Knox leaped up from his noxious potions and commanded me to watch him perform a hideous, arcane sorcerous rite. Placing five paper matches in the spaces between his fingers, he lit one, and mimicking Michael Jackson's castrati tones, he said, "And I'd like to thank my mother..." Poof, the second matchhead ignited. "My father..." Fwoosh, the third matchhead exploded. "My brother, Jermaine..." Swiip, the fourth.

Finally, brandishing a Mephistophelian flaming fist, Knox announced, "The Jackson Five!" Hellish laughter engulfed me.

I must have swooned. As if in a delirious dream, the Cramps' story was revealed to my terror-wracked brain. A vision of a young Lux, ear unpierced, hair not yet Munster-ed, secretly sneaking into his parents' medicine cabinet and popping sundry pills into his yap while other Akron, Ohio kids were still sucking on milk chocolate cigarettes. "I don't know what in the world they were, or what they did to me for that matter: heart-speeding-up drugs, heart-reducing

IN ONE EAR

## Sell-Me-Your-Soul Music

Beneath the Cramps' demonic exteriors beat hearts of pure leather. By Les Wiseman

### Sell-Me-Your-Soul Music Beneath the Cramps' demonic exteriors beat hearts of pure leather.

By Les Wiseman

The madness flew into the Commodore on the leathery wings of a Stygian bat. The Cramps, cadaverous purveyors of slaughterhouse rockabilly, had just deserted the stage, leaving

the audience bathed in auditory gore, wild-eyed zombie children still jittering from the devil music. The journalistic muses dragged me gagging and kicking backstage to the crypt for The Interview of the Damned.

Making the two-fingered, evil-eye sign, I was poured into a chair near the cold-cuts tray. All around me blood-gorged eyes burned into the depths of my withering soul. To my right was Poison Ivy, vampirella guitarist with corkscrew

"I'm high on life," intoned lizard-eyed Ivy. (Life sucked from the necks of your adoring fans, I brooded.)

"What's your favourite flavor of Baskin Robbins?" I queried.

Lux's scowl dissolved into a maniacal grin. "Number 32," he cackled. (Some numerological division of the Number of the Beast, I surmised.)

Prying ever deeper into the slimy pit of Lux's psyche, I asked, "But what of Michael Jackson?"

"The vocals on Billie Jean are the best rockabilly vocals in a long time. They're better than any of these damned rockabilly bands!"

drugs, uppers, downers."

The mists mutate and Lux is in California in 1972 gobbling down hits of STP (the Super Trip Pill, for those too young to remember). While thumbing around Sacramento the young space explorer runs into a freaky chick— Ivy before she began to look like a George Romero starlet. They like each other. "Because I had one thing that led to another," Lux slavers lasciviously.

The cosmic axis shifts. State changes to Ohio. Drugs change to "liets, white-and-green Christmas trees, to lose weight, of course."

Lux's metal guru, the late Marc Bolan of T. Rex, could have used a few of those "trees," for when

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Lux saw the formerly gorgeous Jeepster perform in Cleveland, the glitter-eyed fan was appalled at Bolan's obesity and general decline. "As we saw all these little 13-year-old girls walking around the club, crying, 'Mommy, what happened?' we decided we should start a band," recalls the displaced Transylvanian. "Driving home on those little green-and-white pills after seeing my hero, along with so many others who had come before, turn to shit before my very eyes..."

The magus of monster mash sullenly hangs his head—over the mirror.

The room fades and a spectral apparition lurches like a screaming gargole into my already spiritually pummeled brain. Ah, yes, former Cramps guitarist Bryan Gregory, he of the tertiary syphilis complexion (once described by Cream's John Mendelsohn as like "the site of the last several Annual Maggots' Picnics"). Lux leaps to his former band mate's defense when said quote is read aloud. "He was pockmarked, but he never, never had slime running down his face."

The haunting wind whipped chillingly through Lux's mane as his sepulchral tones pierced my mind. He recounted his demonic death pact with Gregory and Ivy: if the Cramps did not make it, the trio would link hands and leap off the Empire State Building. "Bryan Gregory definitely should have jumped," sniffs Lux.

"Is he dead?" I tremulously query. "He might as well be," says Lux. A mortuary silence falls over the dressing room. No one is willing to stool on Bryan.

The morbid details persist, though, that in 1980, just before the Cramps had to cancel their first Commodore

show here, Gregory, a junkie, left the band to join a satanic cult in California. He later placed his own obituary in an L.A. paper to throw off the hounds, and went on to form a band called Beast that released a couple of independent singles before giving him the three-toed boot. Now his undead whereabouts are unrecorded, although detectives suspect Rod Serling might know.

With Gregory and drummer Nick Knox, the Cramps released a couple of singles until Miles Copeland's IRS label picked them up and released their first EP, *Gravest Hits*, which was followed by the *Songs the Lord Taught Us* LP. Then, replacing leaky-cheeks with Gun Club-guitarist Congo Powers, they released *Psychedelic Jungle*. Wretched litigation ensued, with the Cramps trying to break the IRS shackles. Copeland, capitalizing on the group's past glories, recently released a compilation of the IRS releases, *Bad Music for Bad People*, while independently the Cramps put out the six-song *Smell of Female* EP. All are

## IN ONE EAR

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Making the two-fingered, evil-eye sign, I was pulled into a chair near the cool-cats tray. All around me blood-gorged eyes burned into the depths of my withering soul. To my right was Poison Ivy, vampirella guitarist with oozesweat hair the color of dried blood. Directly before me was Lux Interior, scabbed-leader charmer of demonic incantations, possessed by the seal of Elvis.

Over to one cobwebbed corner, oblivious to their lascivious-hungry victims, was the beater of human-hide-covered drums, Nick Knox, and skeletal guitarist Click Mort. They were bent over a mirror. What appeared to be human-bone dust was being arranged into lines the size of pizza crusts. No reflection appeared in the mirror, other than disembodied scrolls made of rolled-up dollar bills.

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"What's your favorite flavor of Baskin-Robbins?" I queried. "I can't tell you, man. It's like a magical grin," "Number 32," he cracked. (Same neurological division of the Number of the Beast, I surmised.)

"I've never deeper into the stinky pit of Lux's psyche. I asked, "But what of Michael Jackson?"

"The vocals on *Billie Jean* are the best rockabilly vocals in a long time. They're better than any of these damned rockabilly bands!"

At the mention of the Jacksons, Nick Knox tapped up from his cocaine potions and commanded me to watch him perform a hideous, uranic soccerous rite. Placing five paper matchsticks in the spaces between his fingers, he lit one, and mimicking Michael Jackson's catwalk antics, he said, "And I'd like to thank my mother..."

"Pop! (the record matchhead ignited.) 'My father..." "Fwoosh, the third matchstick



The Cramps: "You can't let anyone say, no that we're not immortal," said Poison Ivy.

exploded. "My brother, Jermaine..." "I'm high on life," intoned brand-eyed Ivy. (Life sucked from the necks of your adoring fans, I brooded.)

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clatter was just the crew in the corner rapping a razor blade on the mirror. Lux's eyes, like twin tombstones, bored into me. Because they were essentially a raw rockabilly band, I blurted out, "What did the King mean to you?"

Licking his lips, relishing talk of the dead, the ghoul smirked, "He (Elvis) was the greatest. He invented white rock n' roll as opposed to rhythm and blues. Not only that, but he wore mascara to high school in the South in the 1950s, and I'm very impressed by that."

Wizened Ivy, a touch ethereal, croaked, "The King is still alive in the real world!" Earlier on in the encounter

young. "That's true," she babbled. "You can't destroy energy, so that means we're immortal." Uh huh, an immortal pop group.

I casually mentioned that coming up with material for all eternity would be quite a problem. Looking for all the world like a toothpick version of Roy Orbison, Nick Knox jumped to Ivy's defense: "We didn't have any problems until you started asking these damned questions!"

The mausoleum was starting to get ugly. Cold terror ran through my veins. Trying to change the subject, I asked Lux what he thought of the Alarm doing a song based on Stephen King's horror novel *The Stand*, but pandemonium in the close quarters was reaching dangerous levels and he did not hear my question correctly. Like a werewolf hit by a silver bullet, he rolled his head in agony and bellowed, "I don't wanna make no stand. I'd rather sit down and do some drugs. I wish we had a bottle!"

Gathering up my tape recorder, I began to retreat toward the door. As I carefully cracked the portal, Knox beckoned, "C'mon, you wanna see more magic?" I ran.

**From the archives: this article was originally published in Vancouver Magazine in June 1984 and has been exhumed for your reading pleasure.**

Photograph by Alex Waterhouse-Hayward

Ivy established that she was not particularly fond of my loutish and trivial interviewing style; I decided to drive a stake in her heart and bug her about her hair-brained refusal to reveal the band members' ages, as she felt that they could will the atoms of their bodies to change and remain forever

essential, sanity-destroying rock n' roll, featuring such coffin-collapsing ditties as "Don't Eat Anything Green Off the Sidewalk" and "I Ain't Nothing but a Gorehound".

A tap-tapping like a blind man's cane distracted my delirium and, as my head reeled, I realized I was once again in the dressing room and that the percussive

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## Michael Goldberg

**Jukebox: Photographs 1967-2023**

By John Carlow

**Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself and tell us what you'd like to talk about today.**

**Michael Goldberg:** My name is Michael Goldberg and I was a senior writer and West Coast editor at Rolling Stone for a decade. In 1994, I started the first web music magazine, Addicted To Noise, which became an international success. I wrote three rock n' roll novels, *True Love Scars*, *The Flowers Lied*, and *Untitled*. More recently, I wrote two non-fiction books, *Wicked Game: The True Story of Guitarist James Calvin Wilsey* and *Addicted To Noise: The Music Writings of Michael Goldberg*, prior to putting together my latest book, *Jukebox: Photographs 1967-2023*. I was born in 1953 in Oakland, CA and grew up in Marin County. As a kid, I took photos with a cheap Brownie camera. I began photographing musicians including Jim Morrison of The Doors in 1967 when I attended the KFR Fantasy Fair and Magic Mountain Music Festival on Mount Tamalpais; I was 13. By high school, I had a decent camera, a Pentax SLR and two lenses, a 50mm and an 80mm.

**AU: Would you rather have people see your photographs for the first time, in real prints/galleries/books or online sources?**

**MG:** I'm really proud of my new book, *Jukebox: Photographs 1967-2023*, which contains nearly 250 full-page photos taken over the course of more than 50 years—I included that photo of Jim Morrison I took when I was 13. The book is 10" tall by 9" wide and each photo takes up a full page. It's a great way for people to experience my photographs. Galleries are great, but a relatively small number of people go to a particular photo gallery. Online is good because thousands of people have the opportunity to see the photo(s). But really, I'm happy however

they see my photographs. I'm just glad when they get seen. I hope my photos provide some insight into the musicians photographed. While most of the photos in the book are of musicians, I also included some photos of people who were involved in the music scene—a record producer, a concert promoter, a rock critic—and the movie director Nicholas Ray, because he directed *Rebel Without a Cause*, which I consider a rock n' roll film, as well as *Johnny Guitar*.

**AU: What was it that drew you to music photography initially, and what compelled you to come back to it?**

**MG:** I became a huge music fan when I was around 11 years old. I had a cheap Brownie camera I'd been given and I took photos occasionally. So when I went to the Magic Mountain Music Festival when I was 13 it was natural that I would bring my camera hoping to get some shots of my favourite musicians who were there, particularly The Doors. Once I started shooting musicians and printing the photos in a dark room that my dad set up for me in our garage, it was really exciting and I wanted to take more. Right from the start, I got some good photos. When I was in junior high I started writing about rock music and so from fairly early on I was photographing musicians and writing about them. As it turns out, I'm one of the few people who were both a music journalist (writer) and music photographer in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. When Rolling Stone hired me in the early 1980s as a writer, I had to focus pretty exclusively on writing but I still took the occasional photo of a musician. Later, in the mid-'90s when I started Addicted To Noise, sometimes I would take photos for the stories I did and I also shot video of the musicians when interviewing them. I like writing and I like photography, so it's natural that I would do both when possible. When Rolling Stone hired me as a writer/reporter in the early 1980s I had to focus on writing. In the early 2000s I started spending a lot of time taking photographs again. I would shoot several rolls of film a week. Not of musicians. Street photography. But I became very excited about photography again. On

occasion, I would photograph musicians such as Britt Daniel from Spoon—two of those photos of Britt are in the book. I love writing and I love photography. It is challenging to do both.

**AU: What has the evolution of your music photography been?**

**MG:** For me, I took photos at shows sometimes when I was in high school. In my book are photos I took when I was 16 of The Who at the Berkeley Community Theater in 1970 and of Jerry Garcia that I took at his house that same year. I also photographed The Youngbloods at their office in West Marin when I was still in high school. So I was taking photos of major musicians at an early age. I also took photos of my friends. In college I took many photos of my friends. When I was 19, I lived in Santa Cruz and photographed

Ramblin' Jack Elliott and other musicians for the local underground paper, Sundaz! I was friends then with the great counterculture journalist Paul Krassner, who lived down the road from me, and I photographed and interviewed him for Sundaz! I drove to Tucson and got backstage to photograph Alice Cooper in 1973 when I was 19.

I moved to San Francisco in 1975 and began writing and photographing for Francis Ford Coppola's City of San Francisco magazine and for the Berkeley Barb and the San Francisco Bay Guardian and the San Francisco Chronicle's Sunday Datebook entertainment section. Between 1975 and 1980 I shot Frank Zappa, Professor Longhair, The Meters, The Stones, Captain Beefheart, Tom Waits, Country Joe and many, many others. I also photographed a bunch of great punk artists including Patti Smith, Tom Verlaine, The Dils, Crime, The Avengers, The Nuns and Tuxedomoon.

**AU: I'm sure you've been asked by photographers starting out, for advice many times. Is there something you offer to them for guidance?**

**MG:** One great thing about using a digital camera is that you can take an almost unlimited number of photographs and over the years I found that the more photos I took, the more chance of getting something really good. Back when I was shooting film, the longest roll of film was 36 shots. Then you had to stop and put in a new roll. Back then I was lucky to shoot three rolls when I was shooting portraits, more likely one roll. It's cool if you can wait and get the perfect shot but I'd rather shoot many shots and if the perfect shot comes along while I'm doing that, great, but if it doesn't, I'll still end up with plenty of good ones. Of course, you want a great and unique photo but, most important when you are on assignment for a publication is to end up with some good photos. And with a digital camera you can shoot plenty of photos, even during a relatively short session with a musician—on-the-fly backstage, for instance.

**AU: Who (other photographers) did you talk with about photography back then?**

**MG:** I worked as a copy person at the San Francisco Chronicle in the mid-1970s and got some good advice from some of the staff photographers there. When I wanted to get a better camera, one photographer there, I'm pretty sure it was Gary Fong, suggested I get a Nikon F2 which was a great camera. He also suggested I get a flash and showed me some ways to use it to get good live photos in clubs. I studied the great photographers. Henri Cartier-Bresson and Diane Arbus and Jim Marshall and Annie Leibovitz and Baron Wolman and Herb Greene and others. I knew what a good photograph was and I did my best to take good ones.

**AU: I love the Janis photograph. Tell me about shooting her.**

**MG:** There's one photo of Janis Joplin. I took it with my Brownie camera when I was 13. She was performing with Big Brother and the Holding Company—this was during the summer of 1967, before the Monterey Pop Festival and more than a year before Cheap Thrills was released, so people just knew about her in the Bay Area. I pushed my way as close to the stage as possible. This was

another outdoor concert on Mount Tamalpais in Mill Valley. I did my best to hold still but she was moving and you get some of her movement in the photo. I really like how that photo came out. I think it captures the excitement of her performance. I was a big fan of Big Brother and the Holding Company. I got their first album, which wasn't recorded very well, but all the same I loved it and I also saw them at the Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco that summer, which was great. The Avalon was probably the best indoor place to see live rock music in the Bay Area in the late 1960s. There was a fantastic light show group, the North American Ibis Alchemical Company that artist Bruce Conner was in, that did a light show when I saw Big Brother play the Avalon. Great show. I also saw Big Brother play for free in Golden Gate Park at Speedway Meadows. But I didn't take photographs at those shows unfortunately.

**AU: What made you choose this photo to run alongside these words today?**

**MG:** A number of people told me they really like this photo of Debbie Harry (Blondie) and I like it a lot and I thought it might draw people in and get them interested in the book. There are five photographs of Debbie Harry in the book and they capture some different sides of her. She's very blasé in this one.

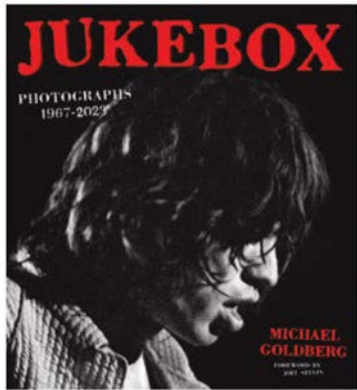
**AU: Where can we find this book?**

**MG:** I hope folks will go to the HoZac Records and Books website and if they scroll down, they'll see the book and if they click on it they can see a selection of photos from the book and more info about it. That's the best place to get it. You can get it at Amazon but it's more expensive. You can also order it through most book stores, but I hope people will get it directly from HoZac.

**AU: Any last words or thoughts?**

**MG:** As I picked the photos for this book, I wanted each one to stand alone as a strong photo so that even if you didn't know or care about the particular musician or musicians in the photos (or concert promoter or rock critic or film director) you could still appreciate the photograph. For most of the book there is only one photo on each page and that was so the viewer could concentrate on that one photo. I know I'm biased since I'm the one who took all these photographs and it's hard to be objective about your own work, still, I think I am able to stand back and not let my bias influence me. Also, I called the book "Jukebox" because there used to be a lot of different kinds of music on a jukebox and this book contains a very eclectic collection of musicians, from reggae stars to rock stars to punk musicians to soul stars to blues singers and guitarists to an African singer and country and country-rock artists. I listen to all kinds of music. I don't like genres and I put the book together based on how the photos looked next to each other (each two page spread) and what felt right to me in terms when you went from one two page spread to the next. I hope people who get the book will appreciate that. I love the music and I love photographs of the musicians that make it and I hope your readers do too.

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## Dark Match

### Q and A

Calgary International Film Festival

Featuring writer/Director Lowell Dean (WolfCop), and stars Chris Jericho, Mo Adan, & Justin Lawrick.

Transcribed by Ryan Dyer

You've said this film was a collaborative process in getting it made in Alberta. Could you tell us about this process?

**Lowell Dean:** This movie would not exist without Dept. 9. We met up with Mike Peterson and them and they were like let's make it. And that was step one out of like 1000.

There were so many local faces within the film. Was it intentional to cast these local wrestlers?

**Dean:** Of course, I think the film lives and dies upon this element. It was like a mathematical procedure—like how much they do in the ring vs dialogue. Like for Enigma, the mute character, I was like... sorry, you don't talk, but you are the character people are going to get emotional over.

So, when you're making a film, you've got a dream cast, and right here you've got one of the greatest of all time. How did you get Chris Jericho to do this movie?

**Dean:** I dunno.

Chris, what attracted you to this film?

**Jericho:** There's a whole lineage of wrestling movies and most are just bad. The movie *The Wrestler* was the closest in capturing the spirit. When I read the script, I was really impressed with how he was really able to write a wrestling movie. I saw *WolfCop* and was impressed with it and just because he had a bit of a pedigree and he captured the spirit of wrestling without mocking it and had the whole Satanic cult thing... it really worked for me overall. The production team out of Edmonton was top-notch, so I knew it wouldn't be some low level, dirt movie. So, all across the board, I knew it would be great and I love watching it with an audience such as here at the Calgary International Film Festival. I hope you guys enjoyed it.

\*Applause\*

**Jericho:** Mission accomplished!

I think everyone grabbed their hand during that scene...

**Jericho:** That's the thing. All the special effects, or gags as we call them, were great. The knife to the hand. The guy getting snapped in half. One bad effect is like a boom mic in the shot. So, there

wasn't a bad effect. It was a lot of fun and that's what a movie should be.

Mo Adan, this was your first movie. How did you feel stepping into this role?

**Adan:** It was great coming to set everyday with my peers, and of course Chris Jericho is a childhood hero of mine. I had no acting experience and Lowell was a director in every sense of the word. He told me everything I needed to do. I couldn't do it without him. If you liked what I did out there, it was all this man right here \*points to Lowell\*. I was coachable! I just want to say thank you to everyone.

When all the people are looking at you at the breakfast table, you are the gateway for us, for how we feel.

**Jericho:** It's hard to act when you're wearing a mask, and I thought he did such a great job. It's like when you have your dog and he's staring at you when it's time for food. He was very emotive, using no facial expressions, just the cocking of the head, which is hard to do. So, great job.

Justin, when I saw you two bleeding in the ring, I felt this emotion like a brotherhood bond was there. How did it feel to set the tone so early in this movie?

**Justin Lawrick:** Yeah, it was cool to die first. That part kind of sucked but it was a cool experience to introduce all the action.

It was great. To cut back from you it was like "We're in deep shit." There was a lot of blood. I want to ask in regards to your opponents for that match—they had some big spikes. Was it a direct tribute to the Road Warriors?

**Dean:** Yeah! A few years ago, I was trying to get a documentary going about wrestling. So, I spent a lot of time in Regina watching wrestling and you pick

up things.

Did you have to call up Gene and Paul to use "Shout it Out Loud" in the movie? I imagine that would be expensive.

**Jericho:** It was a favour! I mean that's the thing, the soundtrack on here... when I saw it for the first time and it kicks off with "Raise a Little Hell" and then KISS and then "Word Up." Like, this is pretty cool! I imagine that KISS cost a couple of bucks, but fuck it, this is a big budget production here... there's even a Fozzy song!

What was your number one choice for a song?

**Dean:** INXS "The Devil Inside."

**Jericho:** So, we now know that INXS is more expensive than KISS.

The Stampede were also on the soundtrack.

**Lowell:** Had to do it since we were shooting in Alberta

Why was the movie set in the past?

**Dean:** I think, two things. One: I hate the present. Like, legitimately, I would rather live in the '80s. And another thing: when I think of wrestling, and I'm not an obsessive wrestling person,

I think of the nostalgia of the '80s. And then the satanic panic of the '80s... so it had to be in the '80s. I'd like to give a shout out to cinematographer Karim Hussain, who is responsible for a lot of what you see here. He was like, "What do you think of the colour green? It should be green this and green that." When we were going to make Satan, they were like "What colour of red do you want?" and I looked over at Karim. No, he's green.

There was also green jelly at the breakfast table.

**Jericho:** Also, at the party there was the green drink. It's all coming together here, guys. Go back and watch. Count the greens and we'll give you a prize.

Was WolfCop in the movie during the drugged-out sequence?

**Dean:** No, that was Satan.

The two stars in this were not professional wrestlers. How did you get them up to speed since they looked fantastic in the ring?

**Dean:** They dedicated their time to learning the art of professional wrestling. They turned three months of training into a five-hour day. They could have let a stunt team do it but they worked really hard and they showed up.

**Jericho:** Conversely, for our big fight scene, I didn't want to do any wrestling. We put together a great, choreographed fight. I want to say I feel bad for Mo. We do a match once—it's live, then move on to the next one. He did that earth match 12 times. He could hardly climb the top rope—it was like 12 pro wrestling matches in a row.

What's your takeaway message from the movie?

**Dean:** We're all going to die.

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Photo Credit: Chadsolute

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## ROUGH CUT VIDEO

**Interview by Ira "Horrorfiend" Hunter**  
**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?**

**Pascal Fortin:** My name is Pascal Fortin and I own and operate Rough Cut Video, a brick-and-mortar video store specializing in cult films.

**AU: What first spawned your obsession with horror?**

**PF:** I'd have to say it started when I was 5 or 6 years old. We were at the video store and I handed a copy of Alligator to my mom for her to add to the movies that we were going to rent that week. She had no idea what it was and assumed it was fine for me to watch. That scene where the kid walks the plank off the diving board would say differently. It scared the shit out of me, but at the same time I couldn't stop watching it. I must have rented that movie fifty times over three years.

**AU: Tell us all about Rough Cut Video.**

**PF:** I've always been into film and physical media. Some of my favourite boutique labels are from the UK and Australia, but they'd cost an arm and leg to import myself. The previous industry I was in required me to move to a different city/province every 18-24 months. My son had just started grade 1 in 2020 and that's what made me decide that it was time for a change. I didn't want to have him always switching schools and needing to make new friends that frequently. So, summer 2022 was my last move to Calgary. I found an old laundromat and converted it to a cult film shop. The idea was to start importing in quantity for others like me. We bring in all the



boutique labels around the globe.

**AU: Does Rough Cut specialize in any certain film genres or is it very diverse?**

**PF:** Horror is for a sure a popular genre for physical media heads, but we carry everything from spaghetti westerns to kung fu to film noir, as well.

**AU: Do you also carry vinyl movie soundtracks? What are some of the record labels you deal with?**

**PF:** We do carry vinyl soundtracks. Waxwork Records and Graveface are among the most popular.

**AU: How was your experience at Calgary Horror Con this year? It seemed like Rough Cut Video really blew up and had one of the biggest and busiest booths all weekend.**

**PF:** Calgary Horror Con was sick! Dan, who runs it, couldn't be a nicer guy. We did real well there this year, but the highlight for me was getting to meet Lisa Schrage, Mary Lou from Hello Mary Lou Prom Night 2. Love that movie and it being shot in Edmonton makes it that much cooler.

**AU: Any other shows or conventions you will be exhibiting at?**

**PF:** We will be doing Calgary Horror Con next year again for sure. We don't have anything lined up as far as cons go in the near future, but we host secret screenings called Freaks Come Out at Night. Globe Cinema in downtown Calgary have been amazing in having us there. Every few months we'll play a secret double feature and we'll be setup in the lobby. Freaks can grab some cool movies AND shoot the shit about cool movies.

**AU: Have you ever made your own movies?**

**PF:** I've made a handful of student films. Nothing too crazy.

**AU: Any notable celebrity encounters/experiences to share?**

**PF:** I PA'd on that singing competition called X-Factor when I was younger. I met a bunch of celebrities during my time in LA, but the one that sticks out is Britney Spears. She was a judge on that show and appeared to be allergic to walking her dog. She would let that little dog shit all over



her green room. I'm talking 15-20 piles a night. Coincidentally my walkie seemed to never work when they were looking for someone to clean up.

**AU: Do you also carry VHS? What are your thoughts on the insane prices some older horror VHS are going for these days?**

**PF:** We do carry VHS. I'm torn on the high prices. I mean, it's good in a way because people that weren't into VHS now are because they see how valuable some can be, but at the same time it's bad for us who've been spoiled by how low the prices were. It's given a boost to the hobby and younger kids who weren't even alive during the VHS days are getting involved.

**AU: Any plans for Halloween this year? What is the craziest Halloween you can remember? Best costume you ever wore?**

**PF:** I've been laying low on Halloween in recent years. This year will be the same as the last. I'll take my son out trick or treating and watch a scary movie with him.

The craziest was a massive party in New Orleans. I went as zombie Michael Jackson. I found a makeup school and paid students to do me up

like a zombie. I also asked my dentist to make me a pair of fang caps. He took a mold of my teeth and everything. It was a bit excessive, but it was good time. When the makeup was finished, I threw on a thriller jacket and went straight to the party. I've never had strangers ask to take pictures with me like that. Crazy.

**AU: What are some of your hidden gem film recommendations for people to watch?**

**PF:** The Seventh Curse from 1986 is so sick. I'm a big fan of movies that are an amalgam of genres. It's out of Hong Kong and can be best described as a horror/action/fantasy/martial arts movie. Another one good one is a Mexican movie called Ship of Monsters from 1960. It's the rare western/horror/scifi/comedy/musical.

**AU: What are some upcoming releases you're extra excited about?**

**PF:** I love Shaw Brothers and Arrow is putting out Volume 3 of their Shawscope sets in November. I'm pumped for that especially.

**AU: Anything else to mention?**

**PF:** Absolute Underground readers can get 10% off their order by using code ABSOLUTE at checkout. Grab some cool shit!

**AU: Where can people find your brick-and-mortar location?**

**PF:** Were located in Calgary, Alberta.

5403 Crowchild Trail NW #132

**AU: And everyone else can order online?**

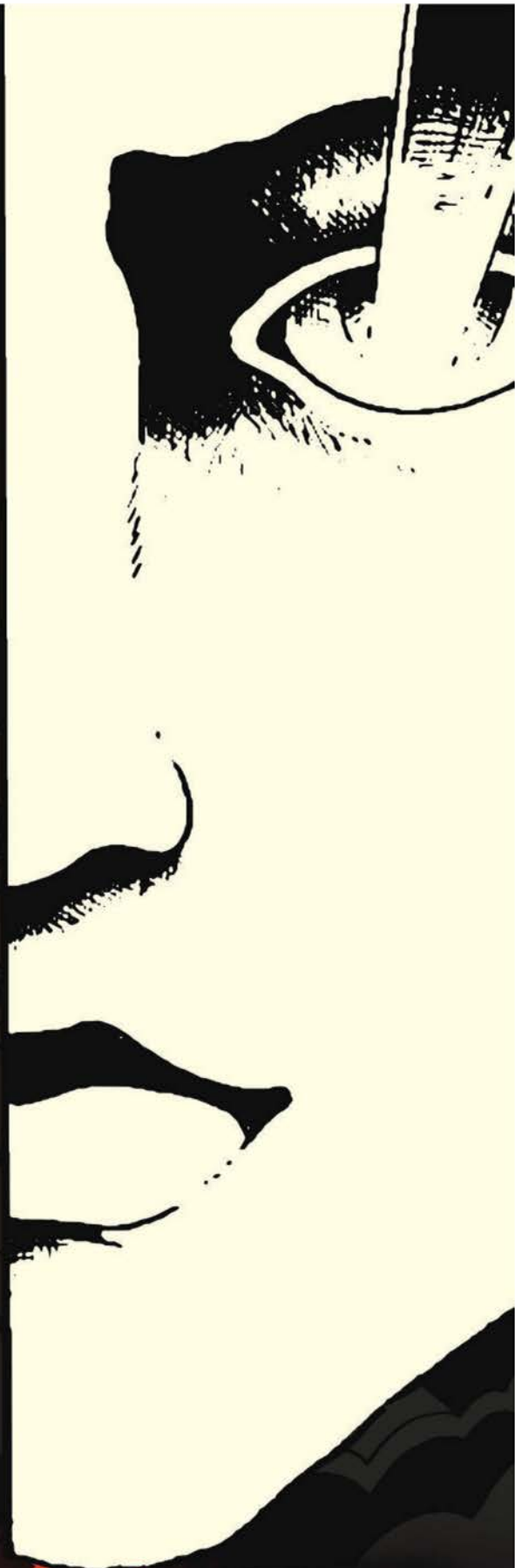
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# HANDSOME DICK MANITOBA

## Handsome Dick Manitoba Born In The Bronx - Part 1

Interview by Ira Hunter and Dustin Jak

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

**HDM:** My name is Handsome Dick Manitoba. What am I most infamous for? Nothing huge, it's not like we headlined a stadium. Although we did open up for KISS at a 16,000-seat arena.

**AU:** How did you get your name?

**HDM:** It was just a name, we sort of spun the globe and it came out. We kept it, it sounded good. If you follow professional wrestling there are heels and babyfaces. Babyfaces are good guys, heels are bad guys. I never liked faces, I always liked heels, so I wanted a heel name and heels brag about themselves. There was a tag team in the '70s called the Valiant Brothers; Handsome Jimmy Valiant and Luscious Johnny Valiant. Now, my name is Richard. So, I figured Handsome is good, but Handsome Richard doesn't really have a ring. Handsome Dick, just has a better aesthetic ring. Then somehow Manitoba just came across and it stuck. I could have used Handsome Dick Hollywood but Manitoba is what stuck. I got a really great blowjob in Manitoba once.

**AU:** What first got you into music?

**HDM:** I never thought of myself as a singer or wanted to be an entertainer. The Dictators

started a band and they were my best friends, so they made me a roadie. I was a drunk, I was a druggie. I sucked at being a roadie. I lost stuff, I broke stuff. Then one day we played this place called Popeye's Spinach Factory in Brooklyn, NY and Chris Stein from Blondie was there and Eric Emerson from The Magic Tramps.

They were part of Andy Warhol's crew and at the end of the show, "Let's bring the drunk roadie on, Handsome Dick Manitoba." I sang "Wild Thing" and they went crazy. No one ever went crazy because of Andy; he just doesn't have that personality. I never did anything in my life and they went crazy after I did that song. Slowly but surely, I became more of the guy and more of the guy, but Andy Shernoff wouldn't let go of his control of everything. So, it took me a while to get up there, but after a while, it was obvious that I'm the right guy for the job. Then all of a sudden it was like, I love this. I entertain people. I make people happy and excited. They come and have some fun with us. I love doing it, it's actually very natural to me. I write, I talk, I tell stories. I'm always doing shit like that and rock n' roll is probably my main road.

**AU:** When the Dictators started in the early '70s, there was no punk. You seemed to have more of a tough edge than the New York Dolls, who were heavily influenced by '50s rock n' roll and the girl groups. What were the influences that made you guys take the path you took?

**HDM:** Like Joey Ramone would say, the bands playing at arenas were awful, middle of the road, like anti-rock n' roll. We had to sort of get back to what this shit was really supposed to be about. Everyone has a frigging opinion, "Punk rock started in 1976." "It was 1967." "No, no, punk rock started in... What is punk rock?" You know what I mean? It's like any other genre. What is

rock n' roll? When did it start? We loved the entire genre of rock n' roll and pop. We loved The Who, we loved The Beatles, The Stones, The Kinks, The Beach Boys and The Byrds. We'll do a surf song. We'll do a metal song. We'll do a hard rock song. We'll do classic rock n' roll songs. I think that's the difference and in a way, that maybe stopped us a little from growing.

Now, I don't want to make that it's an excuse because we did what we did and we made it so far, but I'm saying it's possible that we weren't as singular as the Ramones. We wore black leather jackets, right? Someone said to me, "Yeah, but the Ramones are famous for black leather jackets." Because they were smart enough to make it their uniform and they wore it every day. We wore it like once in a while. The Ramones were that one thing that they did. They did girl band songs but they did it through the Ramones machinery. You know, we loved girl bands. We really loved everything from the world of rock n' roll. So therefore, we weren't really the quintessential punk band, but we were punk. We had attitude. We sang about ridiculous things. We sang stuff nobody ever sang before. That attitude, that spirit, and that cockiness— that was our punk, but there were bands that were more punk, so to speak.

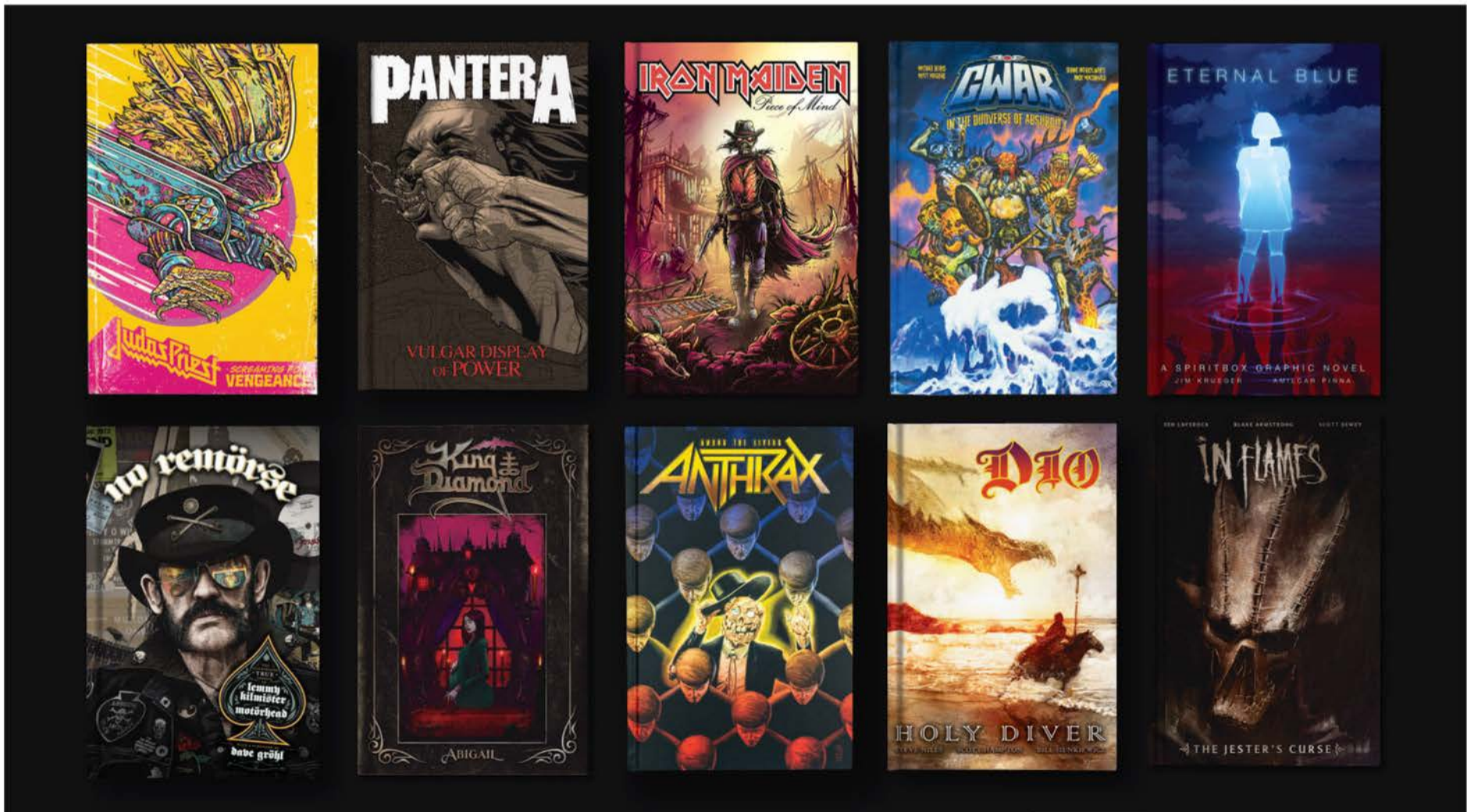
**AU:** The photo at White Castle on the first LP is pretty iconic. Whose idea was it to take the back cover photo there?

**HDM:** 45 years later, I can't exactly say it was one person's idea, but we were all White Castle fanatics. I don't know if the rest of the world would get it, but we didn't care. We were a bunch of guys hanging out, thinking we're cool. What do you want to do? Let's start a rock band, it's the coolest thing in the world. Okay, let's do what we do and one of the things we did was White Castle, so we used it. It was integrated in our culture. It still is. I still go to White Castle.

**AU:** It's kind of interesting how people branched off. Mark "The Animal" Mendoza went to Twisted Sister and Ross the Boss started Manowar. What did you do after?

**HDM:** I think I took a break. I had a really bad drug problem and I got clean and sober in 1983. After that I had to decide, do I want to keep doing that stuff or do I want to do it because I think I'm supposed to do it? So, I waited about a year or so and I said, you know what? I'm chomping at the bit. I want to do it. So, we wound up getting together and doing the *Wild Kingdom* record, which I like a lot. Then I started the best version of The Dictators, which is The Dictators NYC. Well, I thought it was the best version; sonically, crowd wise, money-wise... It was a great band. It was a lot of fun. Rock n' roll is supposed to be fun. I mean, you could hit heavy subjects. It doesn't have to be goofy and fun, it can be powerful. Music can be anything. It's all valuable.

To be continued next issue...  
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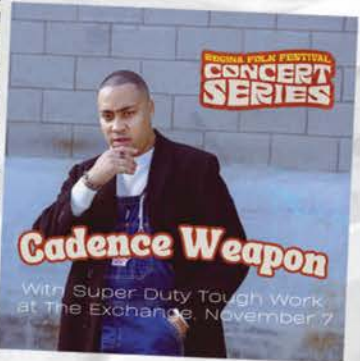
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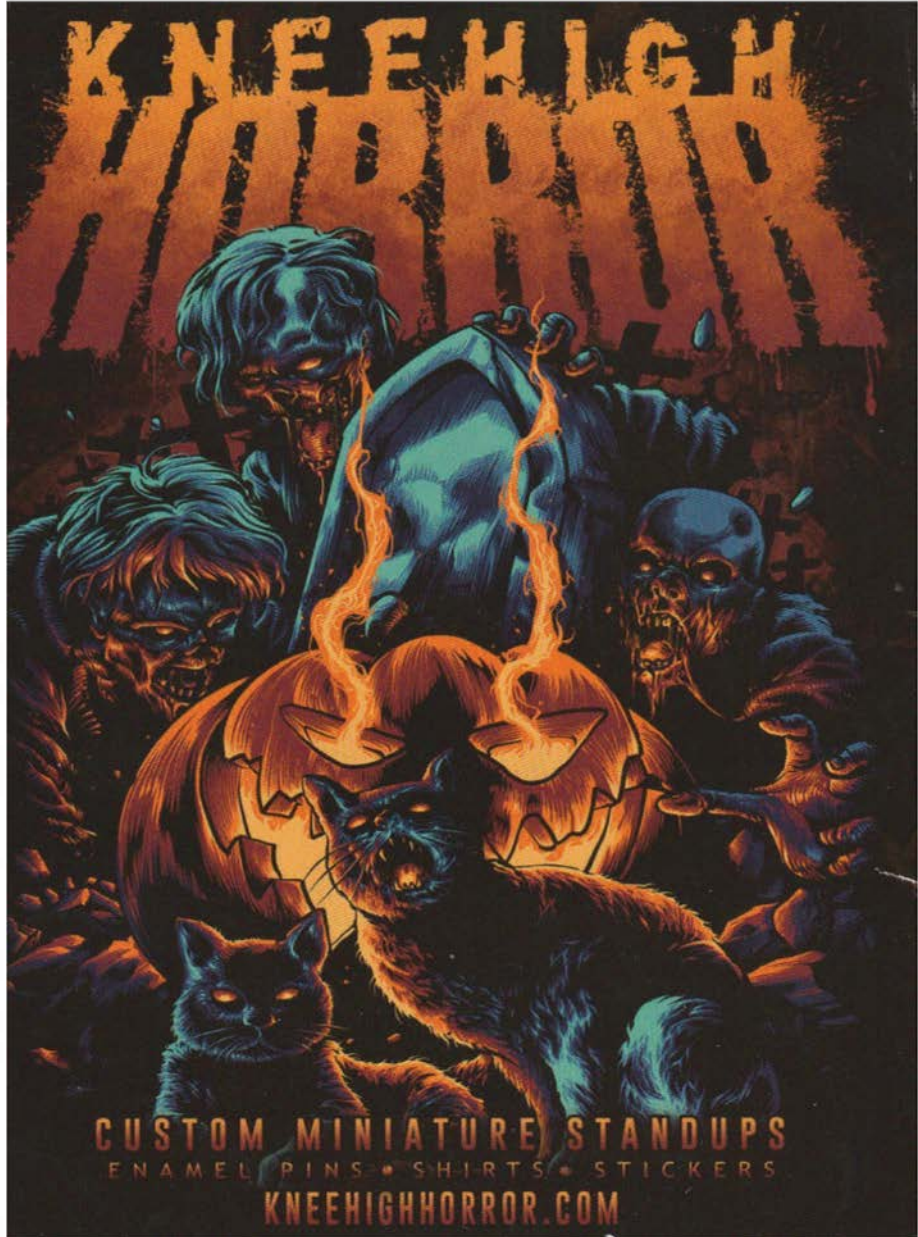


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# Kneehigh Horror

Interview by Mal Content

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?**

**Kneehigh Horror:** This is Shawn, the one behind the madness that is Kneehigh Horror.

**AU: Tell us all about Kneehigh Horror including the origin story.**

**KH:** We are a New York-based company, selling miniature standups of horror movies and cult TV shows (plus whatever I am a fan of and passionate about) inspired by the "coming soon to VHS" promotional standups in "Mom and Pop" video stores in the late '80s and early '90s. We also sell enamel pins, die cut stickers, flags/banners, t-shirts, and mystery boxes featuring original artwork.

Our origin story takes us back to 2008. As an attendee of horror conventions for a couple of years already, I was familiar with the layout and rundown of how stars and vendors had tables and offered goods or autographs, and decided to use the means/tools I had at my job to create a custom miniature standup for a friend. After giving him the first one I created, he then told me that we needed to make more and sell these to people at the

shows we attend; and be on the other side of the tables. After an attempt to sell the few standups, I created in the lobby and parking lot of the next show (thwarted by security and eventually southern New Jersey's finest), I decided to use my tax break to officially buy a table to the next show. The rest is history!

**AU: What were some of the first products you created?**

**KH:** The very first standup I cut out and made for KHH was a *Street Trash* one. Originally at 18" tall or wide, and selling for \$20... we quickly reduced them to 14" tall or wide and offered them at the stealing price of just \$10.

Venturing out of just making standups, the first enamel pin I ever made was inspired by the horror anthology *V/H/S*, and the first shirt design I made was a mashup of *Beavis and Butt-Head* as Scorpion and Sub-Zero from *Mortal Kombat*... kind of my homage to them both in my upbringing.

**AU: Any upcoming conventions you will be exhibiting at?**

**KH:** I will be closing off the year with a couple First Friday events happening on the streets of the arts district here in Las Vegas, where I live. I sadly have not been able to afford doing horror conventions this year or for the foreseeable future; as table prices have increased along with autograph prices of guests... leaving not much money to go around the vendor table even if I could afford to vend one.

**AU: Have you been able to give any celebrities your stuff?**

**KH:** Oh yeah! Plenty of guests of horror conventions as well as mailing actors/writers/producers/directors standups as well as enamel

pins that I offer. Some seem to really enjoy them, several stars still attend conventions and put my standup designs on their tables for the weekend to display. Some, on the other hand... could not care less about the things that I have done involving the projects they took part in.

**AU: What are some of the newest things you've been working on?**

**KH:** You've caught me at a time where I cannot actually divulge what I have in production; as it is brand new to the horror art game, but all I can say is subscribe to our newsletter and get your wallets ready! I can mention that I do have our newest design of mystery boxes in production, and will be adding "Deluxe" (more goodies added to this option) and "Autographed" standup options to purchase. Very excited about these; both projects due to come out closer to Halloween of this year.

**AU: VHS or Blu-ray?**

**KH:** Standard DVD, all damn day.

**AU: Any plans for Halloween this year?**

**KH:** I will be taking my girlfriend to Universal Studios Hollywood Horror Nights for her birthday on the 26th of October, kind of a way to celebrate both in a big way. As for Halloween day itself, we will most likely just be staying home and giving out candy. We are contemplating costumes; an Egyptian theme has been of discussion, but we have to see how the next couple of weeks play out for me financially.

**AU: What are some of your favourite horror movies?**

**KH:** *Dead Alive*, one of the scariest VHS I would see at the rental store as a kid, one I was glad to wait until my high school days to watch; one of a

few that I watched a second time in a row just to understand what I saw. Other notables include *The Shining*, *The Thing*, *High Tension*, *Nightmare on Elm Street 3*, *Hellraiser 2*, *The Void*, *Day of the Dead*, and *Opera*.

**AU: Do you believe in ghosts?**

**KH:** Absolutely. I don't look for them, or have stories to tell... but there is way more to a soul/spirit than this meat shell offers.

**AU: Anything else to mention?**

**KH:** My newsletter, the

best way to get a hold of me and to hear about what is going on with KHH. I urge people to sign up for it, as our email blast will successfully reach the people that do... as opposed to getting lost in algorithms. We have kept most of our horror-themed designs off of social media for fear of losing our account due to copyright infringement... it sucks, but posting on social media to gain support and lean on for business is for sure a dying breed. Also! Code THANKS15 at checkout saves you 15% off everything in my shop... and never expires!

**AU: Final words for our readers?**

**KH:** Support your local artists, as well as artists and vendors who you KNOW have either travelled far, or depend on this being their means of income. Part of why I offer things starting at \$3, events and conventions have thousands of people and those small signs of support really do add up and allow us to continue our work. The event circuit gets entrance fees from all that attend, but some people who spend their time and money to vend them go home without breaking even to the expenses they already put forth to make their appearance happen. Support!

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## Sparrow Blue

Interview by AU Editorial

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

**Sparrow Blue:** We are Sparrow Blue, a six-piece rock band from Edmonton known for our raw sound and explosive live shows!

**AU:** How would you describe your sound for anyone who hasn't heard you before?

**SB:** Our sound is inspired by the old school roots of rock n' roll, while still blending modern ideas and themes.

**AU:** Your new album, *No Lies, No Tricks* is a classic rock and blues throwback. What else can you tell us about it?

**SB:** It's a record that we take a lot of pride in, we recorded it in the studio we built ourselves. We wanted to take a different approach, which gave us time and freedom to experiment with different ideas and really push ourselves.

**AU:** What inspired the gunslinger theme?

**SB:** The gunslinger theme came somewhat naturally, once songs started coming together and we realized there's a story being told here. I don't think things started out as intentionally telling the tale of the gunslinger but it still felt authentic.

**AU:** Tell us about the tour you're on. Where are you going and who will you be sharing a stage with?

**SB:** The tour promoting this album has been our most extensive to date, we're going coast to coast across Canada, we kicked things off with a couple festivals in Alberta and BC. We're currently in Ontario making our way to Nova Scotia. It's been a treat seeing the crowds getting bigger this tour and the fans more dedicated. We've got to share stages with some great bands this year, The Trews, The Lazys, and One Bad Son to name a few.

**AU:** Do you have any plans for Halloween?

**SB:** We do yeah, we're closing our tour off with a hometown show in Edmonton at the Yellowhead Pure Casino, the show is on October 25, but we wanted to do a weekend show for our homecoming.

**AU:** Top three favourite horror movies?

**SB:** *The Exorcist*, *The Shining*, *Pet Sematary*.

**AU:** Any costume plans this year?

**SB:** Callen and Liam are going as Lilo and Stitch, Russ will be dressing up as Frodo, Des will be going as The Dude, Jon and Chad will be going as Cheech and Chong.

**AU:** Anything else you'd like to add?

**SB:** We got *No Lies, No Tricks* printed on limited coloured vinyl available on our merch store, and some great hand dyed t-shirts!

**AU:** Famous last words?

**SB:** If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space!

[sparrowblue.ca](http://sparrowblue.ca)

[sparrowblue.bandcamp.com](http://sparrowblue.bandcamp.com)

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# Jasper Ellis:

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## Creeping Death Productions

By Ira "Horrorhound" Hunter

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

**JC Wyld:** My Name is JC Wyld, I am an artist, musician (singer, guitar player), producer, actor, and writer. I am best known for my horror-themed artwork and my music.

**AU: What first spawned your obsession with horror?**

**JC:** I first remember being interested in horror at around 9 years old in 1988; I loved tagging along with my mom to the video store looking at all the glorious horror covers and artwork. I fell passionately head over heels. Later that year, I rented my very first horror movie, *Child's Play*.

**AU: Tell us all about Creeping Death Productions.**

**JC:** In early 2007, I was surfing the internet and stumbled across a website called Nightowl Productions. It was owned/operated by an artist named Justin Mabry (co-founder and owner of Trick or Treat Studios). His



masks and display busts blew my freaking mind! I couldn't even fathom that his products were hand made by ONE MAN! I instantly purchased all of the supplies necessary to begin making my own masks, and haven't looked back since.

**AU: What were some of the first things you created?**

**JC:** BAHAHA! Yikes! My early work is uber embarrassing, but I

guess we all have to start somewhere. The first thing I sculpted was Jason Voorhees from *Friday the 13th Part 7: The New Blood*, (by far my favourite monster makeup of all time), but it ended up looking like a frog... just awful. It took me five solid years to get good at sculpting and painting, I was definitely NOT a natural. So NEVER give up!

**AU: Has your work been used in any movies?**

**JC:** I have worked on several big budget, and small budget movies doing make-up FX and props. Some of them are *Another WolfCop*, *The Stakelander (Stake Land 2)*, *The Recall (Wesley Snipes)*.

**AU: Have you been able to give any celebrities your stuff?**

**JC:** Yes, I gave Kane Hodder a Jason bust and Bill Moseley a Chop Top Wyldeball (Madball-style item).

**AU: What creations are you most proud of?**

**JC:** I am most



proud of my Captain Spaulding bust. I have a friend who was very close to Sid Haig, and spent a lot of time with him, he purchased three of my busts with different paint schemes because in his words "It's like sitting in the same room with Sid—the likeness is Insane. It makes me not miss him so much." Wow! That makes me very happy and proud.

**AU: What are some of the newest things you've been working on?**

**JC:** I'm just beginning a line of large basketball and football sized Wyldeballs that will be original monster designs.

**AU: VHS or Blu-ray?**

**JC:** I love VHS but I prefer DVD, actually. Not a fan of Blu-ray at all. I don't need that much clarity; it kind of ruins the experience of classic horror movies, in my opinion.

**AU: What are some of your favourite horror movies?**

**JC:** I'm a huge *Friday the 13th* and *Halloween* fan (LOVED *Halloween Ends*), but not at all a Freddy fan. I'm on a big Nicolas Cage kick, I believe he's the greatest actor alive. I love almost everything he's done in the past several years, *Renfield*, *Sympathy for the Devil*, *Long Legs*, and especially *Mandy*, which is my favourite movie of all time.

**AU: Do you believe in ghosts?**



**JC:** I'm not sure, to be honest? I've personally never had a paranormal experience, but I know several people who have, and these are not people who would lie about something like that, so I'm still up in the air. I believe in the Holy Ghost, does that count...?

**AU: Anything else to promote?**



**JC:** I just shot a music video for the first single from my upcoming album *Road to Nowhere*. Both the album and the video will be released the day after Halloween! You can find the video along with other cool stuff on my YouTube channel.



[jcwyldecdp@gmail.com](mailto:jcwyldecdp@gmail.com)  
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SEPT. 29 HALIFAX NS - GUS' PUB	

www.sparrowblue.ca

## Halloween Market YYJ

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

**Kirsten:** My name is Kirsten. I am a sewist, Halloween and music nerd, and a part of Victoria's maker community.

**AU: Tell us about the Halloween Market.**

**Kirsten:** This is the third year for the Halloween Market. It started a way to bring local vendors together to throw a spooky market that focuses on the best handmade items Victoria has to offer. The first year was a huge success and we expanded to a bigger location at the Da Vinci Centre in Vic West for last year's event. The support for the market was massive, and we've expanded to holding a two-day event this year.

**AU: What can people expect when they walk through the doors?**

**Kirsten:** This is a fun, high-energy market full of handmade items serving up a hefty dose of Halloween vibes. You'll find sweet treats and dark delights handcrafted by local artisans, a sip n' shop by Howl Brewing, and haunting tunes from our wicked DJs. Outside, you'll find fantastic local food trucks to keep you fueled as you shop. This year we are excited to feature two days of market fun to get your spook on, a vendor list featuring local favourites and new faces, as well as a lightning lineup for advance ticket holders.

Saturday, October 26 features the Early Bat shopping hour at 10 am (advance tickets are selling fast!), with general admission from 11 to 5 and Sunday, October 27 from 11 to 4 at the Da Vinci Centre in Vic West.

Admission is \$5 per day, \$7 for a two-day pass. Kids 12 and under are free. Tickets are on sale now with a portion to benefiting the Habitat Acquisition Trust.

**AU: What kind of vendors will be there?**

**Kirsten:** We will have everything from chainmail makers, potters, artists, wildcrafted botanicals, handmade clothing, oddities, Halloween accessories, spooky decor and sweet treats.



**AU: What other markets do you run?**

**Kirsten:** We also host the Punk Market, which is taking place on Dec. 21st at the Da Vinci Centre. This is the third year for the Punk Market. Our goal is to bring makers and bands together during the holiday season to put on a market that serves up a not-your-average collection of gifts, vinyl, merch, and things that you just want to keep for yourself. This is a fun, high energy market full of handmade items, tables of vinyl and a super fun vibe. We have punk DJ's spinning throughout the market and a sip n' shop hosted by our pals from Howl Brewing. In the evening, we switch from the market over to the show. We are really excited to have Toy Tiger (Vancouver) headlining with local faves Hung Up, Bug, Concrete Grave, and Crosshairs.

There is also host a Spring-O-Ween market in April. Our goals are to continue to provide fun events that showcase talented makers and music in Victoria. We would eventually like to expand the Halloween market, as we have a huge amount of interest from so many amazing vendors.

**AU: Famous last words?**

**Kirsten:** Shop small, support local and stay spooky!

Get tickets at [halloweenmarketyyj.com](http://halloweenmarketyyj.com)  
[@halloweenmarket\\_yyj](https://www.instagram.com/halloweenmarket_yyj)



## FIDLAR

Interview with Brandon Schwartzel  
By Michael O'Connor

**Absolute Underground: You've made a lot of fun songs about loneliness, was the idea to connect with fans sharing similar feelings?**

**Brandon Schwartzel:** Making sad songs sound happy has always been a trend in our music since day one. I think it's just a natural response... when you're bummed out, you want to be stoked. The idea wasn't necessarily to connect with fans, because we didn't have any at the time, but I think that did connect with a lot of people.

**AU: How long were you guys playing together before deciding to take it to the next level?**

**BS:** It happened fast for us but it always felt natural. We started making music together for fun in the studio, got some songs together, played some house parties, got a "real" venue show, got on a tour, made a record, wash, rinse, repeat... we've just tried to stay true to ourselves, be the band we want to be, make the shit we want to make, play sick shows and try to ride the wave as long as we can.

**AU: What are your favourite things about your fans?**

**BS:** The energy. Whether psychotic, joyous, hedonistic, manic... whatever. Our fans give us

so much energy through going off at shows, responding to our music, organizing their own bar crawls... they are rad and crazy and really the fuel that keeps the FID-machine in motion.

**AU: As your fan base continues to grow, how will you stay connected to your audience?**

**BS:** Talk to them. Like in person.

**AU: In a previous interview, you said, "Everybody in the band is like the super depressed kid in class who just wants to make everybody laugh," is this still true?**

**BS:** I think if you're an artist, which the three of us are, you're probably the weird, sensitive, emo kid looking for some attention, so yeah, probably.

**AU: The tour with Dune Rats was a huge success, will you be returning to Australia to perform with them in the future?**

**BS:** Hopefully, Australia is one of our favourite places to play... we try to get over there every chance we get.

**AU: How do the crowds in Australia compare to back home?**

**BS:** Well, I'll just say that I've never chugged a beer out of someone's prosthetic leg before in the US.

**AU: There's a huge number of comments online from people struggling with mental health, addiction and grief, and finding solace in your music. How does this make you feel?**

**BS:** It's amazing... this life is hard and if our music can make it a little easier... there's no higher level of "stoked" for us than that.

**AU: What advice, if any, would you give to these people?**

**BS:** Be easy on yourself, take notice of the people in your life that really care about you and talk to them, make art, write shit down, bathe yourself in the healing power of a FIDLAR mosh pit... it can work miracles.

**AU: Is there anything else you want to say to the fans?**

**BS:** You all rule... keep giving us all your energy and we'll keep giving ours... let's continue the cycle of "stoked!"

[fidlarmusic.net](http://fidlarmusic.net)

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## ARMORED SAINT

### Band Of Brothers

Interview with vocalist John Bush

By Erik "Glory Hunter" Lindholm

**AU:** Good day, who are we speaking with? What's your role with the band? And what is the view out your window! What's in your cup? Help us set the scene for our readers.

**John Bush:** This is John Bush from Armored Saint. I am the lead singer. The view outside my window is my neighbors house. Not too exciting. Just water in my cup. I thought about having some wine earlier but never did. If it was morning it would definitely be coffee in my cup.

**AU:** We are in contact today on the heels of the awesome video release of "One Chain (Don't Make No Prison)"... what a cool cover of the Four Tops! Doobie Brothers and Santana have run at it too. What made you want to branch out into Motown, and soul with the band? Can we expect some more unique covers down the line?

**JB:** It's a great tune done the best in my humble opinion by The Four Tops. Levi Stubbs was such a rad singer. Even though they were famous I feel he was underrated. Such a powerful soulful voice. As much as we grew up on hard rock & metal we equally loved R&B. As a matter of fact I'm trying to finish Barry Gordy's autobiography. I'd put Levi, Maurice White and Marvin Gaye on the same level as Halford, Dio & Bon Scott as some of my biggest influences.

**AU:** 2024 has been a killer year on the road for the band. Across North America with Queensrÿche and now spanning festivals and

gigs across Europe! Tell us a top tour highlight of your summer festival run. What was most surprising!!

**JB:** Wacken is always awesome! It was cool to play in Romania for the first time at the Rockstadt Extreme festival.

Alcatraz is always killer too. I look forward to the gym that is backstage. It was surprising I got as much sleep as I did for it's sometimes an erratic schedule between playing headline shows and playing at noon at the festivals.

**AU:** It was really heartening to see your documentary "Band of Brothers". It really shows a humble aspect to your journey, and understand the state of the music industry at the time, and your metal experiences as a young band. Can you put forward a lesson to bands coming up in the metal world? What aspect(s) do you often see overlooked?

**JB:** Well I think most important is truly love what you do. It all sounds like fun and games being in a rock band but it's certainly not easy. On many levels. You have to be willing to compromise and have a lot of endurance, humility and patience. What I think is overlooked is all the incredibly talented people that never get a shot at all. Don't ever take whatever success you have for granted.

**AU:** From the documentary, it seems the movie "Excalibur", is what led to the band name becoming Armored Saint. While at the time, it wasn't a popular film... now here we are! What's another medieval film that has captured you since this time? Additionally, is there a mythical saint, in world mythology or religion, who's story you resonate with?

**JB:** Actually it was quite popular when it came out

from what I remember. I think. I don't know about medieval but I enjoyed the most recent Mad Max Furiosa film. George Miller is awesome and The Road Warrior had just as much of an impact on Saint as Excalibur did. Probably a lot more. David was a cool character in the Bible. I like his underdog status standing up to Goliath.

**AU:** You're resigned with Metal Blade, and a new Saint record is coming in 2025! Please share with the fans a brief preview... Where are you at in the writing process? And perhaps most importantly, what are the songs about, elements of focus? (As we go into a US election, war in the Middle East, climate change... lots to draw on!)

**JB:** It's probably gonna be closer to 2026 realistically. We've demoed about 6 songs so far. It's sounding different to me but always Saint. Every day the world offers many topics to pick from. I still love reading the actual newspaper. I prefer it to hearing news personalities on television yelling at me. That being said sometimes it's personal thoughts or a stream of consciousness. As a lyricist I feel like I can write about anything. Anything!!!

**AU:** Have you guys been to, and played at a medieval experience, or a fight night? We can totally see you being the music for the honourable king's court at a combat tournament! Perhaps at a boxing or MMA fight night?

**JB:** I would love to play at a Renaissance faire. Would be a blast. Or maybe at a Medieval Times show. But really just once. I have no problem with our armor wardrobe in the 80's but it's just not what were about anymore. I'm personally not that into MMA but a hockey game would rule. Lot of

## ABSOLUTE METAL

hockey players are metal heads.

**AU:** Is there an album on rotation for you lately, that you want to recommend? Any style any background! What are you finding interesting today?



**JB:** King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard rule!! Gojira is real cool too. Black Pumas are also great.

**AU:** We are looking forward to seeing you with WASP in Vancouver! Tell us how this run with Blackie came together... a bit of a reunion... What's the inspiration? You were

touring with WASP and Metallica in the 80s... insane history!

**JB:** We've played Vancouver only one time in our career. Once!! That was with Metallica in '85. I can't wait to finally play there again. Also real stoked to play Calgary for the first time and Quebec City hasn't seen us since the first WASP, Metallica tour in '85. Blackie treated us great on the first leg. Stoked to do it again. Two legendary 80's LA bands. Why wouldn't you come???

**AU:** Last words to the faithful metallions across this great windswept land:

**JB:** Thanks for all the love through the years. We can't do it without you. See you on stage. I want to hear you singing!!

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## Mats Eriksson – Part 2

Author of *Death: The Antidote to Misery*  
Interview by Steve Earles

**AU: The visuals in your book are just amazing. Can you talk to us about the artists?**

**Mats:** I knew that I wanted to work with some of my favourite artists from the metal world in order to bring to vivid life the scenes and characters portrayed in the book. Like many other metal heads, I feel the whole package is important and ever since I was a kid, I have been a huge fan of record cover artwork. So, I simply reached out to the artists, explained my project and asked if they were interested in working with me on this crazy book. To my great pleasure all of them were very positive and accommodating. As a result, the book contains unique new art masterpieces.

Joe Petagno is the “father” of Motörhead’s mascot Snaggletooth, and had made countless classic

album covers and art over the years for Motörhead, Pink Floyd, Nazareth, Sodom, and Krisiun. Dan Seagrave was the go-to-guy at the birth of death metal, and is still very much active. He has made wonderful pieces for Morbid Angel, Entombed, Séance, Goreguts, Body Farm, and many others. Par Olofsson is a fellow Swede who has contributed his weird artwork for tons of great bands, such as Immolation, Aborted, Exodus, Abysmal Dawn, and many others. Mark Riddick is also a legend with his signature black and white style of “underground” death metal drawings for many bands, recently including the Swedish band LIK and obviously his own band Fetal Zombie. Last, but by no means least, Dan Lerner has done awesome poster and merch art for Slayer, Ghost, and others. I am a massive fan of the work of all these great artists and feel very proud of our collaborations!

**AU: They say nothing exceeds like excess, and that if a thing is worth doing, it is worth overdoing! Did the artists exceed your most excessive expectations?**

**Mats:** Most pieces turned out way better than I could ever have dreamed of. Sometimes I actually felt a little hesitant even in trying to explain what I wanted as it is really far out, but all the artists seemed to be very much on board with my ideas. One piece that I commissioned from Par Olofsson, he replied to thusly to my description of the scene: “This is among the top three sickest commissions I have ever had.” Coming from an artist who has created very gruesome art for very “gruesome” bands, I took that as a compliment!

**AU: Did you give some direction to the artists, or leave them to their own devices?**

**Mats:** I certainly gave directions by sending ideas, concepts, and descriptions for each chapter. However, the level of detail varied, and I really wanted to allow the artists a lot of freedom to interpret my twisted ideas. So, whereas for some scenes or chapters certain details were crucially needed for the plot, other times the

direction were more general. It was a lot of fun and incredibly rewarding to bounce ideas and sketches back and forth and see my imaginary scenes come to life.

**AU: Mats: AU: Could you see yourself working with these artists again on another project – a graphic novel for instance?**

**Mats:** You bet! Although, I do not read that many graphic novels nowadays. I am a huge fan of the art form and I think the stories in my book would work exceptionally well in that format. Or, why not a movie in the style of Troma? Who wouldn’t want to see Madonna’s head transforming into some sort of arachnid, or meeting the Beatles under the sea and being introduced to Yoko Ono, who has her tongue replaced by Angus Young turned into a tongue-eating-louse, or seeing that super-annoying super-villain Countess Bathory, or descending into the Nine Circles of Hell to meet up with Alex Webster... I know I would!

**AU: As would I! What artists could you see recording a soundtrack for your book?**

**Mats:** It would have to be something very eclectic and brutal. I’d say Atheist meets Dying Fetus that collides with Screaming Headless Torsos. Add to that a pinch of Cannibal Corpse accompanied by Jimi Hendrix, The Beatles, and vocalised by Michael Bublé. Does that sound hard to digest?

**AU: I believe you have named a number of fossils after various metal heroes of yours.**

**Mats:** Indeed! Alex Webster of Cannibal Corpse, King Diamond, Lemmy Kilmister, Tony Iommi, Tomas Haake of Meshuggah, and Ian Paice of Deep Purple have all given their names to various fossils. It probably goes without saying that they are all included in the book. Finally, there are actually a

few more metal musicians being honoured in a scientific paper that is currently in review, so I can’t spill the beans just yet.

**AU: Is there anything you’d like to finish up on?**

**Mats:** I hope that someone picks up *Death: The Antidote to Misery* and gets inspired. Perhaps someone will discover new music and bands, or new scientific facts that whet their appetite to learn more about the nature of nature. That would feel very rewarding to me. I would also like to encourage readers to reach out to me, if they would like to talk about metal, science, or anything in between! They can reach me at [trilobitsmats@gmail.com](mailto:trilobitsmats@gmail.com)



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**THEMED TRIVIA NIGHT: TAYLOR SWIFT EDITION**  
OCTOBER 24TH AT THE MINT  
VICTORIA BC



**MATTHEW GOOD & HIS BAND**  
OCTOBER 27TH AT THE PORT THEATRE  
NANAIMO BC



**HAWKSLEY WORKMAN**  
NOVEMBER 8TH AT CHARLIE WHITE THEATRE  
SIDNEY BC



**THEMED TRIVIA NIGHT: HARRY POTTER EDITION**  
NOVEMBER 9TH AT THE MINT  
VICTORIA BC



**DANIEL WESLEY**  
NOVEMBER 15TH AT THE MINT  
VICTORIA BC



**THEMED TRIVIA NIGHT: F.R.I.E.N.D.S. EDITION**  
NOVEMBER 17TH AT THE MINT  
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**JANN ARDEN CHRISTMAS**  
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# KWAI VOLTAGE

## "THE SPELL" OUT NOV 9



employed in the hospitality industry so giving great customer service is in their bones. Product knowledge is also very important, we provide many opportunities for our staff to learn by subsidizing professional accreditation, free access to wine, beer and spirits festivals, in-store tastings, and visits to local producers. We also have a classroom at Vessel where we provide a full range of consumer classes in wine, beer and cocktails. Product-wise we carry a full range of regular liquor store items but specialize in unique wines, beers and spirits that you won't find in most other stores. For instance, we are the only island liquor store to carry Garnet Valley Ranch from Summerland. We also carry large selection of bartender tools, syrups and bitters for the professional or budding home bartender. Another thing you'll notice at Vessel is the way the store is laid out. Our wines are

organized by grape variety or region and the beers are organized by style. We don't work for the brands so don't group them together as they would prefer.

**AU: What is your mission statement as a business?**

**RB:** Our business was built on three principles. Education, Exploration, and Fermentation. Educate our staff and customers about the amazing world of beverage alcohol. It is full of amazing stories. Take our customers on a journey and explore places and find things they never knew existed. Taste interesting and sometimes unusual fermented beverages made by amazing artisans.

**AU: Who are some of your awesome staff members and what does each individual bring to the table?**

**RB:** We are all a bunch of beverage nerds of some sort or another, so everyone brings their own expertise and wealth of knowledge. If you want

to talk about different soil types and how they affect a wine or all the varieties of hops and what flavours they impart in your favourite IPA, you'll find someone that knows everything about that subject.

**AU: Vessel recently sponsored the Great Canadian Beer Festival in Victoria. How was the event this year? Any other upcoming events planned?**

**RB:** We have attended GCBF as consumers in the past and always found it to have a great representation of fantastic breweries pouring amazing and unique beers. This was our first year attending as a major sponsor and getting to see it from the other side, and it is an amazingly run event. Vendors needs are taken care of without hesitation and the experience for the customer is seamless. One of the best run events we have attended in our nine years, and we've been to quite a few.

**AU: Please tell us about the education programs you run.**

**RB:** Vessel has a purpose-built classroom above the store to facilitate a professional environment for our classes and seminars. There is a consumer series of wine, beer, and cocktails seminars instructed by local industry professionals that run every month. Subjects we've covered in the past include Summer Wines, Spanish Reds, Sparkling Wines, Belgian Beers, Hoppy IPA's, Classic Cocktails and Entertaining Cocktails for the Holiday Season. For the industry professional or keen consumer wanting to take a deep dive in to wine we have accredited programs from the Wine and Spirits Education Trust and Wine Scholar Guild.

**AU: As this is our Halloween issue, do you have any favourite pumpkin beers?**

**RB:** Brasserie McAuslan's St. Ambroise Ale a la citrouille (pumpkin ale). It's all pumpkin spice, nutmeg, and cinnamon; an archetypal pumpkin ale that tastes like fall.

**AU: I understand you ship across BC, is that correct?**

**RB:** Vessel launched an ecommerce site in January 2023. You can order any of our almost 2500 products for pick-up, local delivery or BC-wide shipping. Our goal was to increase the reach of our unique offerings and make them available to a wider audience. Whether you're in Vancouver, Kelowna or Fort St. John, with the click of a mouse you can get Green Chartreuse delivered to your door.

**AU: Anything else you would like to promote?**

**RB:** We talk a lot about wine, but we also have a huge selection of craft beer singles. There are so many cool beers out there we want to give everyone the opportunity to try them all without committing to a four pack. And hey, we also carry a full line up of core beers with great pricing, always passing on the manufacturer's discounts to the consumer.

[vesselliquor.com](http://vesselliquor.com)

## Vessel Liquor

Interview by Bobby Barrel

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your role at Vessel Liquor Store?**

**Ross Borland:** Ross Borland, Managing Partner

**AU: When did Vessel first open and where are you located?**

**RB:** Vessel first opened in December 2015 after two years of work behind the scenes. We are located at 1609 Fort Street in Victoria in an area known locally as the Oak Bay Junction. It's the nexus of Fernwood, Rockland, and South Jubilee neighborhoods, so it's a very diverse demographic.

**AU: What makes Vessel unique in your opinion? Do you specialize in certain products?**

**RB:** So many things. My background is in the hospitality business, so service is very important. This is also a big part of the experience at Vessel. Many of our staff are currently or previously



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Dave Arsenault and Paula Sutherland (the saloon has only had three owners over the last century), who put on the annual musical festival as described on their website that "stands as a reminder that it takes a village to create memories that last a lifetime." Mackenzie Rose, the lead troupe member of Circus Acts Insomniacs, explains, "It was our first time performing at Waynestock. It's

## Acrobatics, Cannibals, and Cowboy Boots:

### Circus Acts Insomniacs, and Stubbs and The at Waynestock 2024

By Kip Phillips

Deep in the heart of the Canadian badlands, Circus Acts Insomniacs from Nelson BC perform against the backdrop of the deserted and darkening hills, as the sun sets on a late summer night at the Waynestock Festival in Wayne, Alberta. While this talented travelling performance troupe execute their aerial acrobatics, Stubbs and The, a band based in Rossland, BC, perform their diverse musical set to an audience of all ages, which includes an eclectic Italian metal song. It is truly a night to remember.

Waynestock 2024, based at the Last Chance Saloon in Wayne, and attached to the historical Rosedeer Hotel built in 1913, is in full swing by Saturday night of the long weekend. The festival celebrates their 10th anniversary from August 30 to September 1, and inspires music lovers of all ages to put on their cowboy boots and boogie down. The annual music festival is approximately 15 km from Drumheller, Alberta, and is run by

their 10th anniversary and they wanted to do something a little bit special, so they figured, why not hire a circus act? And here we are."

Circus Acts Insomniacs originated in Fernie, BC and perform a variety of shows falling under the umbrella of circus, including clown acts, aerial acts, and even fire-spinning, now based in Nelson BC. The Circus Acts Insomniacs also dress up as lamps known as the "shady ladies," an act which they had performed earlier in the day at Waynestock.

One of the unique challenges of this particular night is that Circus Acts Insomniacs had never heard the music of Stubbs and The, which the Troupe dubbed as a planned improvisation as Mackenzie Rose further describes, "We have a general plan of what we're going to do, and then we just flow with the music. So, it's really in the moment, we have to be incredibly present to let it happen, and there is an element of surrender. It is a new challenge for our art to rise to the occasion, and we get to share that experience with our audience."

While Circus Acts Insomniacs perform, Stubbs and The play on the stage and entertain the masses with their eclectic and unique set. A five-piece band of six years, Stubbs and The are led by David

Stokes, singer and guitarist, as well as a linguistics genius who writes the music for the band.

Stokes explains, "I have an interest in language, so instead of me having to learn the languages from start to finish, I learn specific lyrics with the help of friends, and memorize the words and how to say them in as-correct-as-possible accents."

Their catalogue of songs includes an Italian metal song, called "Cannibali", with the lyrics "mia nonna vive una bara nel terreno, ha preparato le polpette per mio nonno, cannibali, cannibali," which roughly translates as "my grandmother lives a coffin in the ground, she made meatballs for my grandfather, cannibals, cannibals."

The diverse and fascinating repertoire of Stubbs and The also includes a hip hop song called "The Female Reproductive System", written by Stokes, with the help of many female friends and performed by female band member, Payton Nixon. Lyrics include "my body is my temple, it runs hot and is essential, I got all of what y'all need, I'm equipped and ready to breed, so meet my gucci."

Stubbs describes the creative writing process as, "We're not taking ourselves too seriously and I think people can relate to that. We're just authentically joking around, and chilling, and having a great time. We love to be theatrical, perform about crazy topics and let loose."

Coincidentally, "The Female Reproductive System" plays during part of the aerobics performance by Circus Acts Insomniacs, inviting the audience to awe in the power of womanhood while listening to hilarious and ridiculously talented Stubbs and The.

Jake Thelady, one of the founding members of Circus Acts Insomniacs, describes, "We have evolved to be such a sisterhood, and what we do is really a creative collaboration. Even though we each have our roles, some of us are different styles of leaders, some do social media, some of us specialize in costumes, and it really is all of us working together, and that makes it so unique. We're all creatively collaborating and it's so worth it."

Mackenzie Rose further illustrates, "That's why we do what we do, is to inspire people and share art with the world."

With confidence, it is easy to say that art and music were at its finest at Waynestock 2024 in the waning light of summer's end in the Badlands of Alberta.

[stubbsandthe.bandcamp.com](http://stubbsandthe.bandcamp.com)

@stubbsandthe

[circusactsinsomniacs.com](http://circusactsinsomniacs.com)

@circusactsinsomniacs

@waynestockmusic

Circus act photos by: Lorne Coultman

Live music photos by: Badlands Photography





## Herbal Witch

By Lily fawn

Back in the olden days, kings and villagers sought medicine from the wild women of the woods due to their knowledge of herbal lore. These witches used plants to craft medicinal potions to heal various ailments. Most of these ancient ingredients can still be found in your garden today.

Before it was appropriated by the early Catholic Church and renamed All Hallows' Eve/All Saints' Day (now known as Halloween), this holiday was originally an annual pagan festival called Samhain (pronounced "Sah-wane"). The festival marked the end of the autumn harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter. As crops died and leaves fell from the trees, winter was thought to symbolize death as we awaited new life to emerge in the spring. It was believed that at this time the boundary between the living and the dead became thin, allowing ghosts to return to Earth. Some of the traditions you might be familiar with, like broomsticks, bobbing for apples, pumpkins, ghosts, and witches, all have ancient roots in the history of Halloween.

Rosemary-- A herb for protection, health, and enhancing memory. Thus, it is an excellent herb for remembering ancestors during Samhain. Bathing in rosemary water, hanging bundles,

or burning it is a perfect way to use it for this occasion.

Sage-- Represents wisdom, purification, and immortality. Many people use it to bring good luck and to keep away bad spirits. Sage is employed in numerous spells and is known to be a useful ingredient in cleansing and purifying.

Apples- During Samhain, the apple-picking season begins to wind down. If it was a good apple harvest, it was seen as a sign of a prosperous year to follow. The apple has always been a symbol of immortality but is also regarded as food for the dead, which is why Samhain is sometimes referred to as the Feast of Apples.

Pumpki -- Pumpkins symbolize abundance from the harvest season. It's almost like showing off a bit: "I bet my dad's pumpkin is bigger than your dad's pumpkin." They are hearty and store well over the winter, providing food throughout the long, cold months when nothing else is growing.

Many other herbs associated with Halloween were often used in a psychoactive manner to transport a person into a dreamlike or altered state of consciousness. Perhaps that is why witches are perceived as flying on their broomsticks and having green or contorted faces. People experienced hallucinations after taking herbs like belladonna, magic mushrooms, and wormwood (the herb used to make absinthe).

### Herbal Witch Cocktail:

- 2 oz. fresh apple cider juice
- 1 splash of Grand Marnier
- 1 oz. bourbon
- 1 oz. fresh lemon juice
- 1 strip of lemon zest
- 3 brandied cherries

Place all ingredients (except the brandied cherries) in a cocktail shaker; top with ice. Shake for about 20 to 30 seconds. Strain into your best glassware and garnish with a bit of lemon peel and the brandied cherries.

Happy Halloween!

[hushhushnoise.com](http://hushhushnoise.com)

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## Elvira's Top 5 Cult Classic Horror Films to Binge on Halloween Night



### Willard

For all y'all animal lovers out there, this one's for you-- especially if you like rats. This 1971 horror flick tells the story of a social misfit who befriends a bunch of the little critters after being mistreated by his boss. But as the bond between man and rodent grows, so does their thirst for revenge! (And if you watch the 2003 remake, keep an eye out for a cameo from the original Willard-- Bruce Davison.)

### Trick 'r Treat

This 2007 anthology film follows a group of interconnected characters as they experience terror on Halloween night. And who doesn't love the

little trick-or-treating demon, Sam? You'll never look at the little devils that ring your doorbell on Halloween eve the same way again.

### The Substance

When you're a glamorous Hollywood star, getting older is HELL! (Trust me, I know.) Chock full of blood, guts and gore, and a sick sense of humor, this recently released film (2024) might make you wanna rethink your next botox shot.



### House of 1000 Corpses

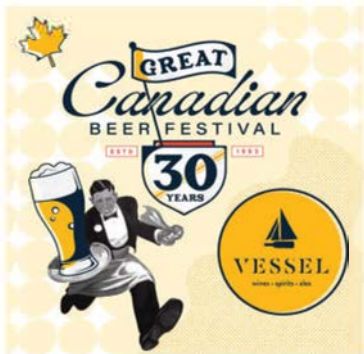
Take a trip to the Firefly family's twisted world in this 2003 horror film directed by my good fiend, Rob Zombie. With plenty of gore, dark humor, and a killer soundtrack, this movie is perfect for those who love their horror on the extreme side.



### House on Haunted Hill

Add my #1 fave fright flick starring my idol, Vincent Price, to your Halloween lineup with this 1959 horror classic about a millionaire who offers a group of strangers \$10,000 each if they can survive one night in his haunted house.





## Great Canadian Beer Fest Celebrates 30 Years!

### Best of the Fest List

By Bobby Barrell

In a blurry haze of hoppy happiness I noted some brews of note. Hiccup- So here is my Fest of the Best list- Hiccup- I mean my Best of the Fest list- Hiccup! Cheers to your Beers and here's a big drink to another 30 more. Down the hatch!

33 Acres Brewing Co. - 33 Acres of Sunshine - 5.0%

4 Mile Brewing Co. - Marcus' Magic Mango Kolsch - 5.2%

Ace Brewing - Jet Fuel West Coast IPA - 7.0%

Bones Brewing - Bite Me Raspberry Sour - 6.0%

Camp Beer Co. - S'mores Milk Stout - 5.9%

Driftwood Brewing - Razamanaz BerlinerWeisse - 3.0%

Eighty-Eight Brewing - Summerslam TIPA - 10.1%

Grey Fox Brewing - Quick Witted Belgian Wit (Gluten Free) - 5.0%

Herald Street Brewing - Sloth Clown Coconut & Purple Yam Milkshake IPA - 6.3%

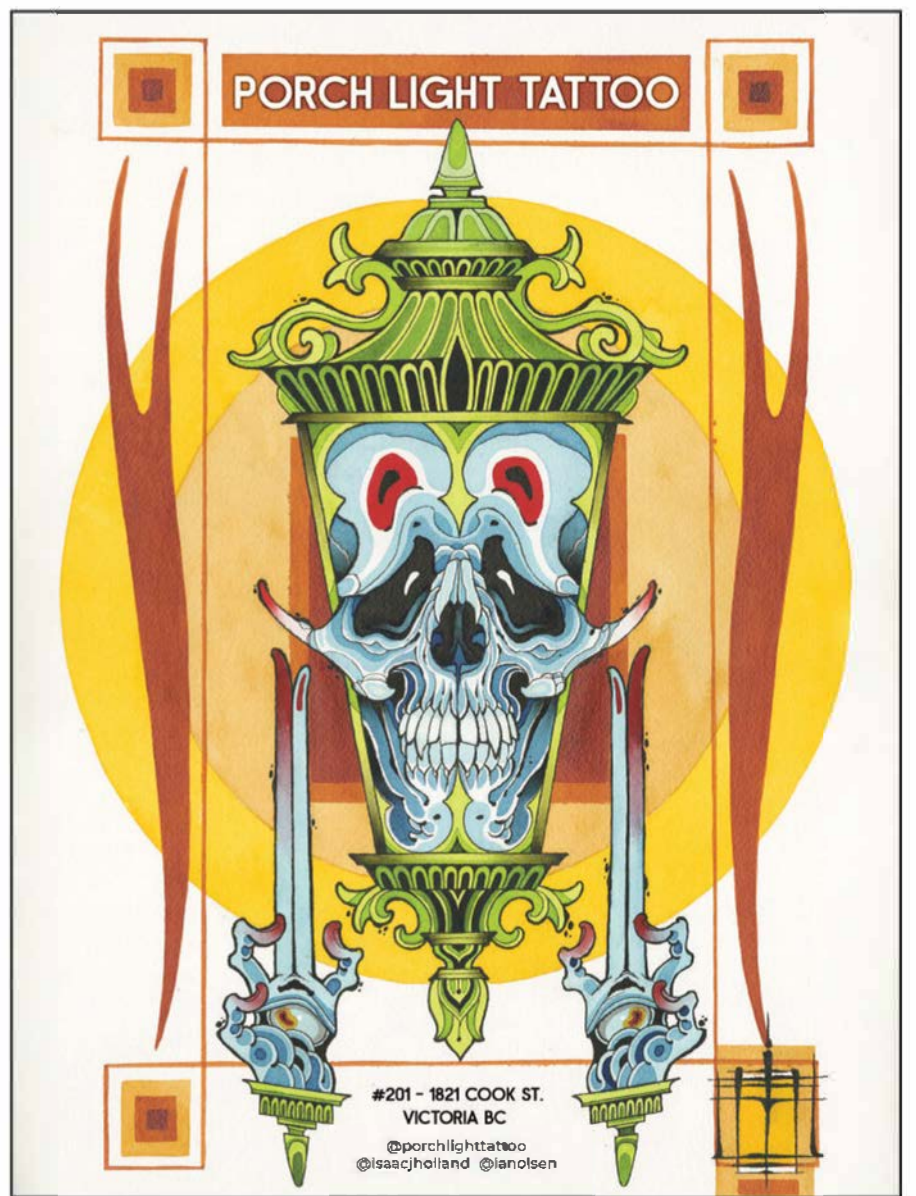
Locality Brewing - Blackberry Ale - 5.0%

Parallel 49 Brewing - Bierfest Festbier Lager - 6.0%

Steamworks Brewing - Pumpkin Ale - 6.5%

Swift Brewing Company - Hawaii 5-0 Dry Hopped Pineapple Wheat Ale - 5.0%

[victoriabeersociety.com/gcbf](http://victoriabeersociety.com/gcbf)



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THE POOR CHOICES  
RUSSIAN TIM AND PAVEL BURES  
SAGO  
STAND AGAINST FEAR  
SUPERCAR  
TADOMA  
VULGAR DELI  
YER MUM

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covers Genetic Control

THE NO GOES (SASKATOON)  
covers Pointed Sticks

CITIZEN RAGE (CALGARY)  
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YER MUM (WINNIPEG)  
covers Mung

SUPERCAR (CHARLOTTETOWN)  
covers The Stand GT

PEROXIDE (QUEBEC CITY)  
covers Amnésie

SAGO (TORONTO)  
covers Kittens

AUDIO VISCERAL (VANKLEEK HILL)  
covers The Diodes

HOCKEY MOMS (LETHBRIDGE)  
covers Knucklehead

FOREVER DEAD! (THUNDER BAY)  
covers Headcramp

RUSSIAN TIM & PAVEL BURES (VANCOUVER)  
covers DBS

THE POOR CHOICES (VICTORIA)  
covers The 'B' Girls

HELLBENT (HAMILTON)  
covers Random Killing

STAND AGAINST FEAR (GUELPH)  
covers Sudden Impact

OLD HABITS (MONCTON)  
covers The Monoxides

TADOMA (HUMBOLDT)  
covers Stretch Marks

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## Industrial Incinerations

### Experience the Flip Side...

By AU Editorial

40 Octaves Below, out of Vancouver BC, has a multi-genre collection of mutilations and transformations set to hit the streets Tuesday, October 22nd. *Industrial Incinerations* is emergent, smashing, unapologetic, noisy, relentless. If you like Skinny Puppy, Front Line Assembly, or Combichrist, your mom is going to hate this shit too.

Mastered by Anthony (H) and released on It's Alive Network Enterprises (Independent), *Industrial Incinerations* is an *Industrial Vomitorium* remix album that includes remixes by Angelspit, Moris Blak, Neuroklast, Blue Ant, Anthony (H), Diverje, Dark The Keeper, DI Auger, REAKTTOR, Ira Noctis, Jesse Ellytt, Albadore and 40 Octaves Below.

You'll find it streaming in all the usual places.

[40octavesbelow.bandcamp.com](http://40octavesbelow.bandcamp.com)

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## River Wolf

Horror Novelist

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?**

**River Wolf:** My name is River Wolf and I'm an author who's released nine novels.

**AU: What started you on this path?**

**RW:** As a kid I was obsessed with pretend play and action figures, and I loved crafting stories. When I was nine, I decided to turn my favourite fantasy into a book. This story became my novel *Lord of the Warriors*.

**AU: What kind of stories do you like to write?**

**RW:** I write horror, fantasy, and science fiction novels which contain plenty of action, and break genre-conventions. Some of the common elements in my novels include the occult, the outdoors, heavy metal and punk rock, mental illness, the plights of outsiders, various social issues, and anarchy.

**AU: The final book of the *Dark Psychic* trilogy will be coming out in October. What's it about?**

**RW:** This trilogy is about a psychic kid in the '90s who grows to manhood by battling many supernatural villains.

**AU: How did you approach writing this series?**

**RW:** I got the idea for the *Dark Psychic* trilogy from a nightmare I had involving school boys locked in a dungeon, and their only hope being a weird dude with psionic gifts. After wandering in Esquimalt and feeling poltergeist vibes, I realized that I could tell a horror story in Esquimalt about a psychic kid. After the first book (*My Dark Side*) was finished, I realized that I could expand the story of the psychic kid into a trilogy in which he battled villains in various cities throughout the '90s.

**AU: Did you do any research beforehand?**

**RW:** I read up on '90s history and pop culture from Generation X; the second novel (*The Underground*) involves a villain who kills people with AIDS, so I had to learn more about HIV/AIDS.

**AU: Where do you find your inspiration?**

**RW:** The outdoors, music, comics, history, movies, my life, fantasies which don't leave me. When I combine two or three ideas together, that's when I have the plot for a story.

**AU: What other books have you written?**

**RW:** I've published *Teenage Anarchist*, *Disarmed*, *The Black Group*, *Guy Slimy*, *Secrets and Demons*, and *Lord of the Warriors*; I have many other books which require much editing.

**AU: How can people find your work?**

**RW:** All novels are available to download from Amazon as e-novels. Only *Lord of the Warriors* is currently available in print; it can be purchased from Amazon, Russell Books, and Bolen Books; it is also at the Greater Victoria Public Library. I'm also on Goodreads.

**AU: Any plans for Halloween?**

**RW:** Dress up as Gambit from *X-Men*, take my daughters trick or treating, hopefully visit the sewers to see if there is any eerie activity in the underworld.

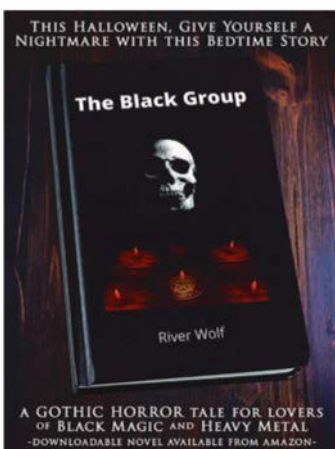
**AU: Top three spooky stories of all time?**

**RW:** That's a hard one, but for today I'll say *It* by Stephen King, *Heart Shaped Box* by Joe Hill, and the *Primal Scream* by Nick Bliko.

**AU: Final words of advice for aspiring writers?**

**RW:** I refute the idea that "fiction is the truth in lies." Instead, authors of fiction need to believe that they are crafting an alternative reality and that these stories exist in a different realm. When one believes that what they're writing is truth and not make-believe, then the stories become much more authentic and meaningful.

**FB: River Wolf-Author**



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# SOUNDTRACKS FROM HELL



## Uncle Acid & the Deadbeats

Interview by Steve Earles

**Absolute Underground:** Who are we talking to today and what do you do?

**Kevin Starrs:** I'm Kevin Starrs and I'm the singer, songwriter, and guitar player for Uncle Acid and the Deadbeats.

**AU:** You recently released *Nell' Ora Blu*; it's a soundtrack to an imaginary film, specifically I feel, a Giallo, perhaps one by Dario Argento or Mario Bava. Can you tell us more about this?

**KS:** It's not really an imaginary film, although it started out as that idea; it developed into something more. It's a score to a story that I wrote and hired actors to perform. It's a living thing; a script, dialogue, foiey, sound effects, and music. You can call it an "audio film" if you want. You put it on and it transports you to 1970s Italy. If you don't want to go, that's fine, but we're tying you up and taking you with us anyway. It's inspired by Giallo and Poliziotteschi from the '70s, but also

corruption I see around the place. Our characters have had enough of being screwed over and decide to take the law into their own hands by dishing out some street justice.

**AU:** I feel there is more of a prog rock influence on *Nell' Ora Blu* than there is on previous albums, particularly the influence of Goblin, one of my all-time favourite bands, could you talk to us about this?

**KS:** I made sure not to listen to any soundtracks when I was working on this because I didn't want to be directly influenced, but sometimes you can't help it. Goblin created some of the best scores, so when you're working on a story based in '70s Italy, that influence will naturally come through. I was also inspired by their use of weird instruments like the waterphone and bouzouki. Their songwriting is very eclectic, which I wanted to make sure I had as well. I didn't want to do just a basic synthesizer record, so it's a mix of different instruments and styles that I like. I can also hear some influence from Morricone, Alessandrini, Nora Orlandi, Fabio Frizzi, and then Tangerine Dream, Pink Floyd and

some Afrobeat stuff too. Again, it's not intentional, but that stuff just tends to come through when you think about the plot and the era it's set in.

**AU:** The album features dialogue from Franco Nero; how did you find working with him?

**KS:** Really easy and pleasant. I was a bit anxious, as I had to call him up on a Sunday morning to record his parts. I hate using the phone and I'm more of a late-night person than early-morning, so it had the potential to be a nightmare for me. He was so nice and really made it easy. Total professional. He liked the idea that it was something he'd never done before. He was open to direction and suggestions and wanted to make sure he took the time so I got exactly what I needed. Some of the parts he did a few times, as he wasn't happy with his delivery, or he wanted to offer an alternative take. I even had him do some improvised death noises for a stabbing scene. Once everything was recorded and I was happy, he told me he was off to relax outside by his swimming pool and watch Roma (his football team). Top man!

**AU:** I feel there is a strong element of psychedelia in Italian films and their soundtracks of this period, would you agree?

**KS:** Yeah, I think the Italians were maybe more open to experimentation and pushing the envelope. They've got great style. There's a lot of vivid colours, great lighting and clever camera work in many of those films. Some of the violence is completely crazy too, especially in the Poliziotteschi films. It's as if they were made by outlaws. You get the impression that they just had total freedom to make whatever they wanted.

**AU:** I also feel occult elements too, as though there was something in the air in the late '60s and early '70s?

**KS:** There was certainly a lot of political turmoil and extreme violence in the air in Italy at that point! I think also with the church being so powerful, there's always going to be a section of

society that would want to rebel against that. Just in general, they have a lot of interesting superstitions in Italy relating to numbers, colours, luck, and death.

**AU:** Could you see Uncle Acid performing this live, or is it solely a studio project?

**KS:** I didn't think it would be possible to pull it off live, as there's so much going on. After listening to it a few times and making notes, I figured out we could probably do it if we brought in a couple of extra musicians. It would mean playing to a click track so that the dialogue and effects can be triggered in the right places, which is something totally new to us. The plan is just a few shows around Europe next year, in all seated theaters.

**AU:** Could you ever see a film being made to match your amazing soundtrack?

**KS:** Yeah, it would be great. It would probably take a lot of money, but the story and everything is there. A short film would be more viable.

**AU:** What can we expect next from Uncle Acid?

**KS:** After the live shows, we'll just get on with another album and off we go again.

[uncleacidband.com](http://uncleacidband.com)

Photo by Karin Hunt



## 10 SKATERS WHO SHREDED THEIR WAY INTO MUSIC

### 1 RAY BARBEE

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**BANDS:** POWERFLEX 5 • THE WILD ONES  
THE FLAME THROWERS • SCREAMING LORD SALBA AND HIS HEAVY FRIENDS • SLAVES OF RHYTHM • DIRTY BASTARDS

### 5 TOMMY GUERRERO

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**G.F.P.**

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2006, though we have a couple friends help out on guitar to keep some live shows going. Thank you to Anti-Christian Reid and Justin Wickwire for being a part of the group! They play guitar when Chris or JMFC are not able and help write some tunes. It's a family band! Oh, and Kevin Nguyen filled in on guitar with a day's notice in Tulsa at FYWROK! Big ups!

We toured a lot between 2003-2009. Took some time away to work on other projects and life in general. The band ruled everything around us. So, it was a crucial move to step away and focus on ourselves. In 2018, we decided to make a new album. Pirates Press Records and Voltage Records released it [Depression], which got us back to Europe, UK and friggin' Russia. That was neat.

**AU: How would you describe yourself to someone if they were living under a rock?**

**MK:** Punk/hardcore/street punk. In the early 2000s we were trying to separate ourselves from other bands under the street punk subgenre. For me, this meant making songs more technical to showcase that we're able to make music that wasn't super simple. Plus, it was more fun to play.

**Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel**

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

**Matthew Kadi:** My name is Matthew Kadi. I play drums in Monster Squad. We started this band in early 1997 just before I turned 15 years old. Other duties include graphic designer, photographer, videographer, art promo making, album layout duties, treasurer(?) etc...

**AU: Monster Squad has been around for close to 25 years. Can you give us a brief history of the band?**

**MK:** Started in '97... Ended in '99... We did start in 1997 while in high school, 15-17 years old. A few lineup changes here and there, mostly early on. The core members have been together since

# MONSTER SQUAD

**AU: I know you produced your debut EP Not For Them by burning CD-Rs while**

**working at Guitar Center. What other sneaky tricks would you recommend to any DIY punk bands trying to gain an audience?**

**MK:** Yeah- I worked there for a while. Once I saw that they had two 4-disc burners set out on the floor, I'd burn CDs all day while it was slow. It may have made sense to order CDs but we had no money for 1000 CDs. And I believe (back then) small runs (500 or less) were not a thing. Oof!

**Advice:** start local. Be genuine. Do YOUR thing. Become as good or shitty at your instruments as

# PIRATES PRESS

cool. It was clearly a deeply thought-out name. Though, we are kids of the '80s and all watched the movie. It's great!

**AU: Anything else you'd like to promote?**

**MK:** Here's our other bands that play regularly and release albums: Great Apes (Matt on drums, Chris on guitar), Holehog (Matt on bass), Build Us Airplanes (Matt on drums), LUV (Phil on vocals), Ancient Rage (Phil on vocals), Chuck Ragan & The Camaraderie (our bassist Justin plays with of Chuck from HWM from time to time)

In 2024, we re-issued most of our albums/EPs with Pirates Press Records. This was built around the 20th anniversary of our debut LP, *Strength Through Pain*. Which was/is a super important album for us- originally released on Charged Records.

Each album has some form of extra goodies included- expanded insert, poster, booklet, flexi, to spice it up. So that they aren't the same version re-made in a different year. Especially *Strength Through Pain*- which has all of those things. This is the first time all of that MS can be found under one roof; also very important to us. Big ups to Pirates Press Records for taking that on! Voltage Records in Europe released some of them as well. Forever grateful!

**AU: Final words for our readers?**

**MK:** Ok- now the important stuff: Equality for all. Fight war not wars. Support your mental health. Support those around you. Life can be just as beautiful as it can be tough.

[hyperfollow.com/monstersquadpunks](https://hyperfollow.com/monstersquadpunks)

[monstersquad.bandcamp.com](https://monstersquad.bandcamp.com)

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Photo by Jelena Skracic - @minnie\_rataa

you wish to be. Lift up those around you in your scene. They'll be forever grateful for the smallest of kind actions you showed them. I know it's hard to keep some of these things in mind when you're super young. I know we often forget it as we were also just kids trying to navigate life with very little guidance from positive role models. Fortunately for MS, we learned from each other's mistakes (especially as teenagers/young 20s), supported one another and still do.

**AU: Any new releases on the horizon?**

**MK:** Kind of. While on an East Coast mini-tour this past summer, we recorded three songs at Cart Music in Philly. Not quite a Tiny Desk Concert, but they mic'd us up and shot some video of us. A first time for us. Those three songs (one from each full-length album) will be out on all of the streaming platforms on October 11. Videos of each are up on our Instagram and on YouTube.

There are rough demos floating around. New music will happen when it's ready. We've never been fast at writing tunes, so we just let it happen when it happens.

**AU: Any shows or tours in the works? Are you planning on coming to Canada any time soon?**

**MK:** Canada almost happened in 2024. We almost did a trip supporting Outbreak, One Way System, and Ruffianz, but needed more time. So- maybe in 2025? We always planned to visit your beautiful country years ago, as we did tour the US with Action and Wednesday Night Heroes many moons ago. We just never made it happen. We'll be back in LA in March for the LA Punk Invasion festival. There's about 800 bands playing.

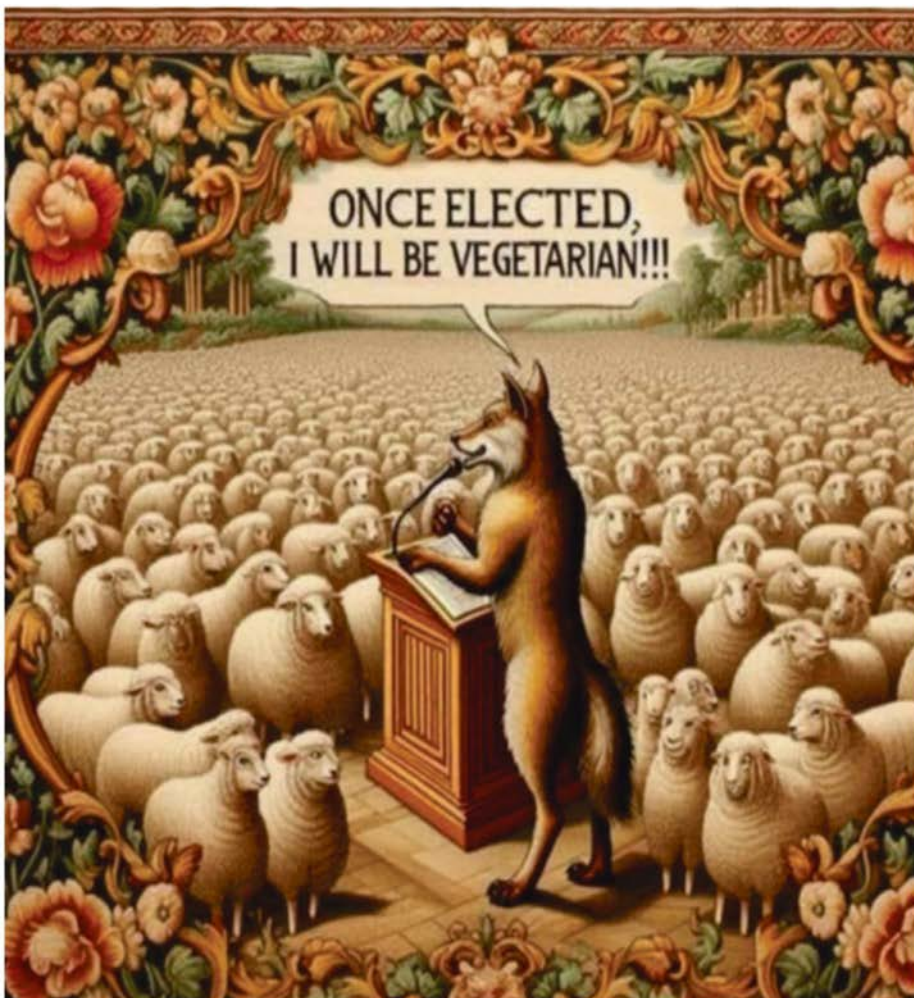
**AU: Do you have plans for Halloween?**

**MK:** Giving out candy to the neighbourhood kids while playing old scary Halloween LPs.

**AU: Top three horror movies of all time?**

**MK:** Hmm... Well, Phil has an *Evil Dead* tattoo he got 20-ish years ago... So: *Evil Dead 2*, *Dead Alive*, *Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*.

For the record, the band name has nothing to do with the movie. We just thought it sounded



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# Rong

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

**Absolute Underground: What's Rong? Who are you and what are you about?**

**Rong:** Rong is a rock band, and our modus operandi is to help ourselves and others transform feelings of anger, hopelessness, and betrayal, into feelings of joy, strength, and togetherness through the transformative power of shredding.

**AU: How would you describe your sound to anyone who hasn't heard you?**

**Rong:** It's pretty loud and fast most of the time. I'd like to think what we do is unique, but it's also heavily influenced by the music I've loved over my lifetime, two of the biggest ones being Queen and Green Day, but with more yelling.

**AU: You have a new release coming out in October titled *Halloweeniepee*. What can you tell us about it? Any particularly spooky tracks you're stoked about?**

**Rong:** I'm very excited about this one. Halloween is such a special time of year where everybody joins in the morbidity and weirdness that some of us experience all year round, and it feels nice to have everybody on the team for a while. We've got three tracks on this EP— two originals and a cover. I have a pretty extensive Halloween record collection, and I wanted to make sure we hit a couple staples, so our first track is describing a monster party, "Monster Party (No People Allowed)", and our last one is an instrumental, "I'm Scared" full of sound effects and a couple easter egg samples that I'm way too giddy about. None of the sound effects are samples though, I brought in a thunder drum and a flex-a-tone and a bunch of stuff and had a fun sound effects day in the studio. The last track is a cover of a lesser-known song by The Who called, "Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde", shout out to Ronnie at Hyde on Main Street.

**AU: (.) was your first EP back in 2019, then you released a Christmas single in 2020 and**

**a full-length titled *Würst* in 2023. How have you evolved over the years? What keeps you going?**

**Rong:** I'm definitely getting more comfortable with songwriting in general, I've been a side-person in other peoples' groups for the vast majority of my music career, and writing my own songs and stepping out in front to sing them has been a learning experience, but so rewarding and feels so good. It's cheesy, but what keeps me going is how therapeutic it is, creating opportunities to spread joy, and making things that make me feel proud of myself, you can't bottle that. It's just the best, to have so much fun and feel so free while screaming your head off with your friends, it doesn't get any better.

**AU: Among all of your music, I've noticed themes surrounding betrayal, toxic masculinity, love, loss, and friendship; where do you find your inspiration? Do you have any stories to share about any of your songs?**

**Rong:** For me writing lyrics is an opportunity to transform things that hurt into things that feel good. Like most women I know I've been a victim of assault, the song, "Queezey" specifically is about not speaking out about it, not to protect the perpetrator, but to protect yourself from being traumatized by the experience any further and not wanting it to define you. I used to play in

this terrible band, who shan't be named because they're terrible, and "The Ships" is about how their front person is an absolute failure at all of the important "ships" in life; Friendship, Relationships, Leadership. "It's Christmas Time" is obviously about pollution, and how wasteful our

# KINDA COOL RECORDS

other projects pulling us in different directions until the new year. We're printing some new merch for this release, but we aren't pressing any records or CDs or anything, it's just kind of a gift for the Halloween lovers out there. And I'm obsessed with my Halloween playlist, so I want Rong to get on some spooky playlists.

**AU: Any plans for Halloween?**

**Rong:** On the actual day of October 31st, I'll be at my house handing out candy. We've developed a bit of a reputation on our street with the kids for going pretty big with the decorations, and we're going to try to step it up even more this year.

**AU: What are you dressing up as this year?**

**Rong:** I observe Halloween, so I have a few, but there are some annual repeats; Weird Al, a hot dog, Ripley from Alien, Wayne Campbell from Wayne's World, a banana, a raccoon, I've been Pee Wee Herman a few times. You know, the classics.

**AU: Top three horror movies of all time?**

**Rong:** This is so hard, I love horror movies, these are the ones I probably rewatch the most:

3. *The Grudge*
2. *Hereditary*
1. Cronenberg's *The Fly* is probably my favourite movie, period.

**AU: Anything else you'd like to mention or promote?**

**Rong:** I run the house band for the comedy variety show "Talent Time", and we've got our Halloween episode on October 17th at The Rio in Vancouver, so come check that out it's gonna be fun. And please post photos of your pets' Halloween costumes to social media so I can see them.

**AU: Famous last words?**

**Rong:** "It'll be fine." *Narrator: Except it wasn't fine.*


[rongbandyvr.bandcamp.com](http://rongbandyvr.bandcamp.com)




silly traditions can be, while we murder the planet for customs that are barely rooted in anything meaningful.

**AU: Any show or tour plans in the works to promote *Halloweeniepee*?**

**Rong:** We have a release show on October 25th at Bully's in New Westminster with our friends Gadfly, Tall Mary, and The Hairy Cherries. We aren't able to tour this one unfortunately, as we all have



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## Creators Coven

Interview by AU Editorial

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

**Alex Marx:** You are talking with The Dark Lord, Alex Marx. My mad skillz include making art in various mediums, curating and selling gothic and punk accessories, and running Creators Coven art markets and events. In my non-art life, I am a social worker who works with at-risk and high-risk youth.

**AU: Tell us about Creators Coven. What are you all about and who's involved?**

**AM:** I always felt that my art didn't fit in at any

other markets, so I created my own badass, rad as fuck market. Creators Coven was birthed by me in September 2022 to address the lack of markets for the weirdos and outsider artists. I wanted to create a safe space where all the weirdos and misfits could sell their wares. I also thought it would be awesome to have live performances throughout the event, so it is like an art market on roids.

I have my partner in love and crime who helps with the backend stuff (lighting, music, set up, bar, etc) and I have an assistant as well, Jessica Roh. We also have a few volunteers that come through and help! I especially like to have teens as this is my favourite group of humans to give opportunities to. So, any young peeps that are local to Vancouver and are interested in a volunteer opportunity can hit me up on IG!

**AU: Tell us about CREEPMas.**

**AM:** Creators CREEPMas is our second event in Chilliwack, BC. There will be around 60 alternative artists to shop from, a coffee shop, a bar, tarot card and rune readings, and Wingerz food truck will be joining us as well. We will have four live performances from four different artists throughout the evening. The event is at the Evergreen Hall at 9291 Corbould St. Also, at every event we have a HUGE raffle for charity that has an item from each vendor! So over 60 creations up for grabs! All proceeds from the charity go to UNYA (Urban Native Youth Association) in memorial of an amazing human whom I had the pleasure of knowing and adored, Noelle O'Soup. Noelle passed away at age 13 in the DTES.

**AU: What can people expect to see?**

**AM:** Expect the unexpected! We are a safe and inclusive space, where everyone can be their authentic selves. Come get weird with us.

**AU: What kind of vendors will be there?**

**AM:** Indie artists who are small business owners with unique handmade and handcrafted items. We have artists that are selling items that range from plants, animal skulls, spooky holiday decorations, glass art, DND, fantasy and horror art, home decor and accessories, pillows and tarot card blankets, kinky and NSFW art, soaps, candles, jewelry, trinkets, incense... you name it!

**AU: Do you have any goals for future markets?**

**AM:** Hell yeah, brother. We will be coming back in the Spring. Location TBD. I am aiming at three large markets and events per year.

**AU: Do you have any plans for Halloween?**

**AM:** My partner and I got married on Halloween last year, as Morticia and Gomez Addams. We are deciding if we should dress up and terrorize the neighbourhood, or GTF0 for a spooky holiday.

**AU: Anything else you'd like to promote?**

**AM:** People can find some of my creations in person at the Haus of Misfit located in Kamloops BC, and The Madman's Wife in Port Alberni. My Etsy also has over 100 items to shop.

**AU: Famous last words?**

**AM:** In conclusion,

get fucked, haha! It's even on one of my bumper stickers.

**AU: How can readers find more info about this and future markets?**

**AM:** By following our IG and subscribing to our newsletter for upcoming vendor calls and announcements.

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## Ben Christo: Mister of Mercy

By Billy Hopeless

Rocktober is upon us my dear readers, and as I'm packing up to head out on tour, the Hopeless hotline rings and who should I be talking to but Mr. Ben Christo who's played with more stars than Galileo and most predominantly has served the dark arts by playing lead guitar in The Sisters of Mercy. So, without further ado here's a last-minute interview to get your premature jack off lanterns glowing for my favourite month of the year.

**Absolute Underground: Well Ben, nice to have you call from your current tour stop in Texas. Now like they say, we'll not mess with and get straight to the heart of it. You first joined The Sisters of Mercy in 2005, How did you meet the master Eldritch and was there any strange initiation to joining the motorcade?**

**Ben Christo:** When I auditioned, they didn't tell me what band it was for or any songs to learn. I

can't really read music but I'm quite good at playing by ear, so they play me some songs that hadn't been released yet and I'm playing along until after a while from being a fan of the band I started to think hey this kind of sounds like The Sisters of Mercy. So, when I have a chance, I begin playing a riff from a Sisters song and the gentlemen who's sitting there wearing sunglasses and drinking a beer says "that's one of our songs."

**AU: An even blind as a bat, the sonar prevailed amazing. Now, from studying your history you've played with many legendary names including members of the Pixies, Manic Street Preachers, Therapy, and Killing Joke, as well as your own current project Diamond Black. Every mad experiment and monster are different, so how does playing in The Sisters differ from others?**

**BC:** I'd say it's the minimalism. Where other bands both musically and onstage are more upfront and filling the music with solos and such, The Sisters are more sparse with single-note melodies. Where most bands have

frontmen and guitarists that are going for the spotlight, crowd, and cameras, we're a different kind of theatrical performance; more stoic, with our singer avoiding the spotlight.

**AU: Well, what you do in shadows has always worked for me. When you hit Vancouver on October 15th you're playing at the historic Orpheum theatre, which has been reportedly haunted by three ghosts for quite some time. What's the coolest, creepiest venue you've played on this tour and have you ever seen an apparition while on the road?**

**BC:** What a great question, the great thing about especially this tour is that Eldritch really likes to choose more historic venues like old theatres, cinemas and such that are or have been transformed into venues than the pre-made modern live clubs. As for apparitions, no I haven't, but as I'm the type of person who is open to believing in things I haven't seen. I kind of wish I could say I have.

## HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

**AU: Let me tell you from my own personal experience, sometimes it's better to have not seen things, cause they'll haunt you forever. But let's try and let it rest and move on with me asking you what are your favourite Sisters songs to play out of the hymn book and why?**

**BC:** There's an unreleased song called "Arms" that I believe we will be playing on the 15th that I really like playing, as I grew up listening to '80s hard rock, and I feel that song has aspects on the guitar parts that really reflects on that musical genre and era. I also like another unreleased song entitled "Eyes of Caligula" that gets into some of Eldritch's views on humanity that he's held for a long time.

**AU: Arms? Eyes? Unreleased? I see but I haven't heard these songs and understand that though they exist, they've only been played live and the Sisters haven't released anything. Why are these not available recorded for our ears?**

**BC:** That's a very good question that I cannot answer but often wonder myself.

**AU: Ok, next on Unsolved Mysteries, finish the following sentence: "I'm so goth that..."**

**BC:** Haha, well Eldritch has stated adamantly that The Sisters are not a goth band, so there might be a bit of a conflict of interest in me answering that.

**AU: Haha, "not goth..." that's the most goth answer a goth could possibly give. Well, this is our Halloween issue if you haven't clued in yet, so let me ask you: what are your top three horror movies?**

**BC:** *The Shining* and *Misery*; you got two Stephen King ones there and I'm not much of a horror aficionado, but I'll say *Lost Boys* for my third.

**AU: Ah, *Lost Boys* and all the "not goth" girls swoon. Ok, Halloween soundtrack playlist what's spinning?**

**BC:** The soundtrack from the movie *Christine*, Killing Joke's "All Hallows Eve", probably something by AFI like off the *All Hallows* EP, and

let's go with another Stephen King song, The Ramones' "Pet Sematary".

**AU: Ok we got the flick, we got the soundtrack, now what are we wearing? Tell us the best or your favourite Halloween costumes to date.**

**BC:** Haha, I'll tell you my worst. One year, I wore this full-black bodysuit, right? Put two white stripes up the front sides and wore some red plastic devil horns, and when people asked what I was I said Highway to Hell.

**AU: And on that note, before we let you get back to and I prepare to hit the road, it's time for the fireworks grand finale! Why should all our readers go see The Sisters of Mercy on this tour?**

**BC:** Wow, now that's truly another great question. I always feel that every artist should ask themselves this question. As for The Sisters of Mercy, you should all come see us, as it's a very different experience both musically and visually. It's a very professional group that puts on a very unique show, mixing classics with newer, lesser-heard songs. If you're a fan of the band, you won't be disappointed, and if it's your first time, you'll be pleasantly surprised.

**AU: Thank you for your time and conversation enjoy the tour and hey, let me quickly look in your treat bag to make sure we didn't miss anything. What's your special thing on The Sisters of Mercy backstage rider?**

**BC:** We recently added socks, which I'm sure you know are a very great thing to get while you're on the road, and since I'm going three years sober now, I'm usually the first one back at the hotel, so a tray of fresh vegetables is always nice backstage for when we get off.

**AU: Well, there ya have it kids, he gets the socks and I gotta rock! Happy Halloween to all!**

**the-sisters-of-mercy.com**  
Photo by Mick Burgess



## Eli Surge

By Mike "Parental Guidance Strongly Advised" Croy

Welcome to a very spooky Halloween edition of Turnbuckle Sandwich! Recently, I was out roaming the woods of the Pacific Northwest and caught up with local wrestler and Big Foot's best friend Eli Surge! We had a great chat about wrestling, cryptozoology and tin foil hats! What follows is our conspiracy theory laden discussion:

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?**

**Eli Surge:** I am the Alien Aficionado, Bigfoot's Best Friend and the cryptid connoisseur, Eli Surge. Oh, and I guess I'm one of the most regularly travelling, unsigned professional wrestlers in Canada.

**AU: How long have you been wrestling?**

**ES:** My first match was in November 2015 in Red Deer, Alberta.

**AU: How did you first get into wrestling?**

**ES:** I had looked at it for a lot of years. Growing up,

I played almost every sport, and after high school graduation I was in the acting world for a cup of coffee. I thought combining those worlds into another area I enjoyed would be super rad.

**AU: Who did you train with?**

**ES:** I originally trained at the Storm Wrestling Academy under Lance Storm in Calgary \*dramatic pause\* Alberta, Canada. Since then, I've continued training under Eddie Osbourne at 365, Lions Gate Dojo under Nicole Matthews, Artemis Spencer, Tony Baroni, and Billy Suede and most recent at Clandestine Wrestling under Michael Richard Blais.

**AU: How did you become best friends with Sasquatch?**

**ES:** Sasquatch is a timid beast, but a quick way to its heart was with beef jerky, beer, and tree knocks.

**AU: Are birds real?**

**ES:** Nope!

**AU: Where is the Skinwalker Ranch located?**

**ES:** It's southeast of Salt Lake City in Utah. It's an alien and paranormal hotbed.

**AU: How much tinfoil do you typically go through at shows?**

**ES:** Tinfoil is about as long as a piece of string. I've been known to string people along.

**AU: What's one of your favourite story lines you've been involved in?**

**ES:** Stories have been passed down through generations. For thousands of years, we only passed history through stories. Unfortunately, timelines are not straight forward and when you investigate further, you realize time is actually a social construct that we all believe in. Not me.

**AU: When on the road, where's your favourite place to stop and eat and what do you like to order?**

**ES:** It was Chipotle or Subway, but I've since bumped myself up and will go for any sit-down breakfast spot.

**AU: What's your favourite dinosaur?**

**ES:** Pterodactyl.

They actually still exist near the Carolinas.

**AU: Who is on your Mount Rushmore of cryptozoology?**

**ES:** Bigfoot, Loch Ness Monster, Mothman, and the Tall Grey Aliens.

**AU: What's the funniest or craziest thing you've seen happen at a wrestling show?**

**ES:** Bigfoot did a dive over the top rope a couple weeks back. That was pretty nutty!

**AU: What wrestling promotions have you worked with?**

**ES:** I've wrestled for over 40 different promotions across Canada, the US, and Mexico.

**AU: Who's some of your favourite people to wrestle?**

**ES:** Elliott Tyler, Judas Icarus, and Travis Williams.

**AU: Where do you draw inspiration from?**

**ES:** Bobo from *Finding Bigfoot* and your crazy uncle.

**AU: What's your favourite venue to perform in?**

**ES:** Washington Hall in Seattle, WA.

**AU: Who was your favourite wrestler growing up?**

**ES:** I was a big Jeff Hardy guy. When I got into wrestling, CM Punk was also someone that really spoke to me.

**AU: If you could invite anyone for dinner, who would you invite and why?**

# TURNBUCKLE SANDWICH

**ES:** Betty and Barney Hill. They were part of the first major alien abduction to be reported.

**AU: What's the most paranormal thing that's ever happened to you?**

**ES:** My partner is much more in tune with the paranormal, so I often have things pointed out to me. I consider myself much more in tune with

the cryptids, as I spent years as a camp counsellor at an outdoor summer camp. You see and hear many strange things in the backwoods.

**AU: If you could give any advice to younger talent starting out in wrestling, what would you recommend?**

**ES:** Watch your shit back. When you feel you've got a hint of something, get somewhere you've never been. Never allow yourself to be comfortable. If you're working with the same eight people, in front of the same 150 fans every weekend, you can only get so good.

**AU: Have you sustained any substantial injuries from wrestling?**

**ES:** Everything hurts. All. The. Time! I've had a few things keep me out for short stints, but thankfully nothing super serious.

**AU: Are we ever going to see a tag team match between yourself and Sasquatch vs The Good Thelonious Jovinous Harlequin and Ephialtes?**

**ES:** I've been ready. Ball is in his 5th dimensional court.

**AU: Thank you, Eli, for taking the time to sit down with me, as we wrap things up here is there anything else you'd like our readers to know?**

**ES:** Do Not believe Reality. Bird's Aren't Real!

@realelurge



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## PØLTERGEIST

### Nachtmusik

**AU: Who are we talking to this dark evening?**

I'm Kalen Baker and I am the spectral entity behind Pøltergeist. I do vocals, play guitar and synths and have done all the production so far.

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

I started Pøltergeist as a solo project in 2019 when I was living in Grande Prairie for work. I grew up in Calgary and was involved with the music scene but when I moved, I had a hard time meeting people who wanted to play the same music as me. I just started recording demos by myself in the bedroom I was renting. A lot of it was really rough but it was how I learned how to record and produce through trial and error. It was a great time to mix different sounds and experiment sonically. In 2020 I moved to Red Deer which is where I recorded 'Hallucinations in the Catacombs'. Shortly after, I moved back to Calgary and enlisted my friend Ben Whitham on bass who I had been friends with since High School and Jacob Ponton on guitar who I found through a Kijiji ad. We played lots of live shows in Calgary for the last couple years getting tighter and building our reputation in the scene. Early this year, my friend

including getting to open for legendary Goth Rock band The Mission.

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

Pøltergeist is a mix of a lot of different music I like. It's mainly rooted in Post-Punk, Goth Rock, New Wave, Shoegaze and early 80s Heavy Metal. My major influences include The Chameleons, Spectres, The Cure, Angel Witch, Cocteau Twins, Bauhaus, Tribulation, Have A Nice Life, The Cult and Christian Death. It's more than just that though. We're inspired by a lot of different music, mostly from the 80s but we like more modern and contemporary stuff as well. Pøltergeist is moody and angsty but there's a lot of light and hope in our songs as well.

I recorded everything by myself in my bedroom so it's a little D.I.Y and rough around the edges which I really love the quality of. I use a lot of vintage equipment and loads of tape emulation, some of it being on real analog tape.

**AU: Pøltergeist has their debut album coming out soon on Bad Omen Records. Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?**

The album is called *Nachtmusik* and it's out on October 25th. It covers a variety of vibes and sounds. There's jangly clean guitars, retro synths, melodic basslines and loads of reverb. There's riffs, atmosphere and quiet moments for contemplation. I feel it's a solid love letter to all the bands and records I'm inspired by. A lot of the songs are reworked from my original demos but there's some newer material my bandmates really helped out with making it sound way more dynamic than I could have on my own. We had a special guest drummer on the album, my friend Al Lester who plays in Spell and are also our label mates.

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

A lot of the songs touch on real life topics with some dark fantasy and retro horror imagery. Our

of late-stage capitalism" which turned out to be pretty accurate. *Burning Sword* is about triumphing through difficult times and holding on to your ambition.

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

I love every song on the album but some of my favorites are *Burning Sword*, *Ethereal Nightmare* and *Walking Alone*. *Children of the Dark* is the lead single off the album and we did a music video for it. People have been loving that one!

**AU: Pøltergeist are on Bad Omen Records out of the U.K. How did that come about and what do they bring to the table?**

I've been a fan of Bad Omen Records since high school. Spell and Wytch Hazel are two bands I love that are on that label. They also released the Amulet debut EP 'Cut The Crap' which rules.

I had always wanted to be signed to them when I was more focused on playing heavy metal in my younger years. For Pøltergeist, I was mostly reaching out to Post-Punk and Goth labels but didn't have any luck. One label I reached out to who weren't in a position to sign new bands suggested I reach out to Bad Omen. The label head Will Palmer responded very quickly and he's been great to work with! Bad Omen has been putting in a lot of effort to promote us and get our records made. They're also affiliated with Metal Blade Records so we've gotten access to their vinyl pressing, press resources and PR connections. They also posted our music videos on their YouTube channel.

**AU: Any shows or tours planned?**

No tours booked at the moment but I'm working on something for spring of 2025. None of us have toured before so we might do a little Western Canada tour. We've also had a lot of listeners in Germany so I'd love to try and make it out there as soon as possible.

**AU: Any plans for Halloween this year?**

We have our album release on the Halloween Friday (October 25th) at Palomino Smokehouse in Calgary. I've put it together to be an awesome

# BAD OMEN RECORDS

night. We have Da'at, Closetalkers and Non Ultras on the bill with us which are all local bands I really enjoy. We've got some good friends spinning vinyl upstairs all night and we'll have copies of 'Nachtmusik' as well as new merch.

**AU: Craziest Halloween you can remember. Best costume you ever wore.**

Halloweens are pretty chill for me, I'm usually either working or staying home watching horror movies. Best costume though, was three years ago when I went to work as King Diamond.

**AU: Do you believe in ghosts?**

I never really have. I've never had any paranormal experiences and have always been skeptical. I do know people who have though, so I'm open minded to the fact that there are very unexplainable happenings people don't fully understand.

**AU: What are some of your favorite Horror movies to watch?**

The Shining, Suspiria, Lost Boys, The Exorcist and Hellraiser are some of my favorites!

**AU: Any final words for our readers?**

Support underground bands, go to shows, preserve analog media and always keep yearning...

**AU: How do people find you online?**

Our social media handle is @poltergeistovdoom on most platforms. You can find our Bandcamp through Bad Omen's page. It's best to search for Pøltergeist with the slash through the "Ø".

bad-omen-records.com

poltergeistovdoom.bandcamp.com

Band photos by Shane Rempel @hold\_fast.jpg

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# COMIC-GEDDON

## 13 Thrilling Titles Being Released This Halloween to Bite Into!

By Ed Sum

This year, comic book publishers have a nice collection of new series being released for autumn, and as for Halloween celebrations, there are a lot more in the trade paperback front to salivate over! The range is better than I can recall, and as for those compilations, there's two I must say are worth picking up. I almost missed picking up Kadath due to its slow release schedule, but for those who have completely missed out, I would have to rate this as number one on this list. Offered here in no particular order are:

### THE CREEPING BELOW #1

When Val, an American metalhead attending a music festival abroad in Oslo, falls victim and is killed by a charismaticly evil local black metal band, the old Gods of Norse mythology raise her up and guide her along the path of brutal vengeance in the name of women everywhere. But will she walk the warriors' path, or become something far more terrible?



### MINKY WOODCOCK: THE GIRL CALLED CTHULHU #1

Inspired by a true WWII maritime operation, shocking satanic events, monstrous men, and one salacious sea creature, this third series tells the tale of Minky's encounter with legendary horror writer H.P. Lovecraft, creator of the dreaded Cthulhu.



### PARLIAMENT OF ROOKS #1

After waking from a strange dream, architect Darius Ravenscar makes plans to head to the city of Eborvik to show the princess the designs she had commissioned. However, at the masquerade ball, something goes terribly wrong.



### ARCHIE COMICS: THE NINE LIVES OF SALEM

Salem was once a powerful warlock whose misuse of powers led him to live the rest of his life in servitude, acting as a cat familiar to a family of witches. But even in feline form, he can't escape the sins of his past. And when some familiar faces return seeking revenge, he might just use up all of his nine lives trying to save himself from their wrath.



### ARCHIE COMICS: THE CURSED LIBRARY UNBOUND

The reason this publisher is getting lots of love is that just how they deliver the terror is worthy of creating new urban legends! In the case of *The Cursed Library*, the final chapter is finally here! Readers will learn if Jinx will take the throne alongside Satan. The only people against this are Danni and Madam Satan. And I'm sure next year will be the trade to collect all three issues!



### THE HOUR OF THE WOLF

When Owen Blackwood is called across time to a normal home to destroy a haunted painting, it didn't feel like anything out of the ordinary to this agent of Wolvenheart. Upon arrival, however, Owen finds himself trapped in the very painting he was called to destroy. With only a one-hour window of time in which to operate, will Owen be able to save the family from certain death and destroy the painting? Or will he get lost in time and become a cross-dimensional walking ghost?



### NIGHT OF THE SLASHERS

Hill Creek is a lovely place to visit... except the one night of the year its citizens transform into bloodthirsty maniacs! Of course, that's the very

night Lara's bus breaks down, stranding the disillusioned teen and her classmates in the secluded town. Secrets uncovered, terror at every turn—will anyone survive the night?



### DWELLINGS: ALL HALLOW'S EVE SPECIAL

This Halloween, return to the terrifyingly tranquil streets that *Dwellings* calls home—as seen through the eyes of visitor Wolfgang LeGant! But Wolfgang is no ordinary tourist: He's convinced he's actually a seasoned vampire hunter, and this delusion has drawn him to Elwich to drive a stake through the once unassuming town's thriving "Sanguinarian" goth subculture. But when Wolfgang meets Emmaline Momenta, a young woman similarly possessed by the idea that she's a real vampire, irrational faith may be the only thing capable of stopping a mass murder in the making...



### TOM HOLLAND'S FRIGHT NIGHT VOL 1. SENIOR YEAR

Tom Holland changed the landscape of vampire movies in 1985 with the release of *Fright Night*. This landmark This movie revolutionized the way horror movies were made, and it is about time for us to see Charlie Brewster's adventure continue! This series is based on the original screenplay and that should be enough of an incentive to get re-introduced to this world!



### SVENGOOLIE 45TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

TV Horror host Svengoolie celebrates his 45th on-air anniversary and Halloween in scary style with a series of stories written by Sven and all the members of the Sven Squad. Not only must he confront "The Day of the Doorbell Demons" but also other television faves like Nostalgiearato, Gwengoolie, and IMP get their own solo tales!



### ALICE COOPER: CROSSROADS TRADE PAPERBACK

The legendary Alice Cooper has noticed a disturbing trend cropping up in his audiences—more and more of them seem to have become undead! What's more, the Archangel Gabriel is visiting his dreams and delivering disturbing news. It seems that the Devil has been honing his chops in the hottest rock club in Hell, and he's getting ready to take his show on the road!



### ELVIRA MEETS H.P. LOVECRAFT TRADE PAPERBACK

Some crossovers are meant to happen. If you love camp and being haunted by the ghost of H.P. Lovecraft, then this meeting of two legends is sure to deliver laughs galore! To spoil the story would be too much.



### LOVECRAFT: UNKNOWN KADATH VARIANT EDITION

This re-release has something new for fans of this modern retelling of the *Dream Quest*. All the variant covers are included! It's perfect for those readers who missed out on collecting the series. Here, everything you want to behold and have concerning the story of Randolph Carter as he ventures forth to the home of mysterious gods, and fantasies not known to mortal imagination is well covered here.

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# LUNCHMEAT

Original 1979 MEDA Home Video Release of HALLOWEEN goes for \$13,000 on eBay. Fluke, Fake, or Absolute Lunacy?

By Josh Schafer

A recent eBay auction has the horror and VHS collector community abuzz with reactions of disbelief, awe and for some, disgust. The original 1979 MEDA (predecessor to Media) video release of John Carpenter's seminal horror film *Halloween* recently fetched over \$13,000 on the online auction site, and in turn, has sent off an explosion of fervent opinions, speculations and even conspiracy theories.



As so finely pointed out by my mom: "Dude couldn't even get free shipping?!" It's all kinds of whack.

Personally, I think it is TOTAL INSANITY that this tape went for \$13,000. It's borderline lunacy that someone would pay this much for a tape, IMHO. In the immortal words of Mark from *SLC PUNK* "You can buy a fucking car for that!"

This *Halloween* tape, while very cool aesthetically and of note because of the film's notoriety and this particular release's historical merit, still doesn't reasonably command this price tag. There are indeed tapes out there that are much more coveted, and fetch dollar amounts ranging from \$300 - \$1200 for their rarity, and the fact that most times they are the ONLY way to see the flick. That, my friends, is a perfectly legitimate reason to pony up some dough, right? I'd say it's completely rational as it preserves a film that is unavailable on any other format, and otherwise lost.

**STOP RUINING IT**



**FOR EVERYONE ELSE**

Halloween MEDIA VHS

Item condition: Good

Ended: May 31, 2013, 19:32:00 PDT

Winning bid: **US \$13,220.00** (52 bids)

Shipping: \$3.77 Standard Shipping | See details

Item location: United States

Ships to: United States

Delivery: Estimated within 4 business days

Payments: PayPal | See details

Returns: No returns or exchanges, but item is covered by eBay Buyer Protection

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another copy at an even higher price at a later date because of all the hubbub. The power of suggestion? I believe that's the aim here. Regardless, this ostensibly adds up to represent shill bidding... which has no validity whatsoever.

I think the most important thing to posit about this perplexing occurrence is that this auction is not representative of the tape's value; and while spectacular, isn't at all valid in the way that it's anomalous... and more than likely a stunt put on by the seller. While certainly of a questionable ethical nature, this kind of behavior also damages the VHS collecting community. Putting this auction out there plants false information in the minds of the collective horror community and creates the potential for exploitation of the VHS collector. Simply put, people might start thinking their old tapes in the basement are worth a fortune. Truth is, VHS tapes, just like any other collectible, are only worth what someone is willing to pay for them.

DOLLAR TAPES FOREVER. GROOVE ON.

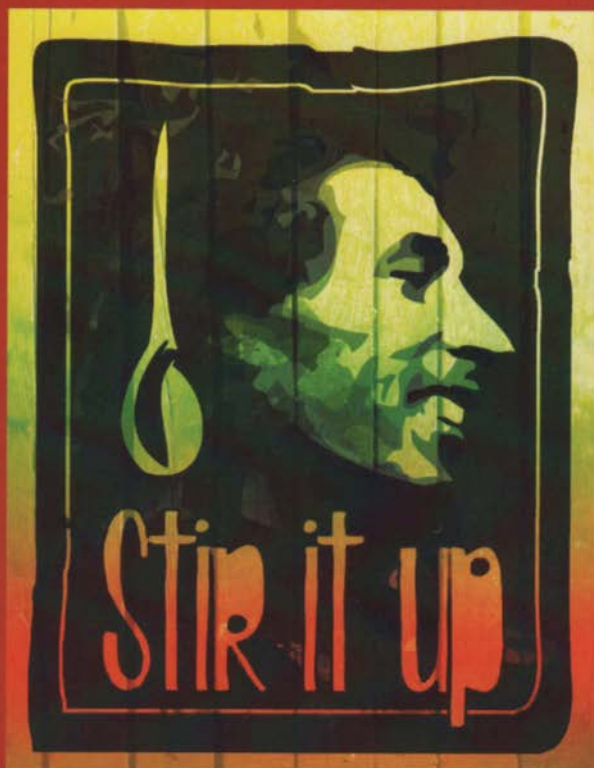
	Halloween MEDIA VHS	May-31 19:32	<b>\$13,220.00</b> 52 bids
	<a href="#">View similar active items</a>   <a href="#">Sell one like this</a>		+\$3.65 shipping
	Halloween MEDIA VHS	May-18 11:45	<b>\$510.00</b> 25 bids
	<a href="#">View similar active items</a>   <a href="#">Sell one like this</a>		+\$3.65 shipping

As we can see here, the same seller sold an identical copy of the *Halloween* Meda Home Video release weeks earlier for around \$500. Hmm... veddddyyy interetschting, Herr Doctuhrrrr.

But perhaps the hottest topic up for debate bubbling inside this incident is the spreading conspiracy theory attached to the dubious auction. There are two things we must consider immediately. First, the bid history: Anyone who is familiar with the functions of eBay can read this data and deduce that it's most suspect. This has all the markings of a hoax. With a bidding war happening between two profiles with zero feedback, I surmise the seller is trying to create the illusion of extreme value so they can sell

This article was written and published on June 4, 2013, and is presented without edits. Fast Forward to this entry on the Lunchmeat site for an interesting update not seen here!

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## Clusterfux

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

**Josh:** You're speaking with Josh and I am known for yelling, writing most of the lyrics, band business, and bad jokes.

**AU: Clusterfux have been at it for nearly 30 years; what keeps you going? Have there been any major changes over the years?**

**Josh:** We have less hair, haha! With 30 years, there have been some lineup changes but we are at a point where dudes who used to be in the band are back in the band again. We keep going because we are rockers, it's in our blood, it's in our DNA. Like the UK Subs say "Born a rocker, die a rocker." We've tried to give it up and it's just not

possible. Four of us have known each other since grade school and have played in other bands together as kids as well as in different versions of this band. It still trips me out when we are playing with my favourite bands since I was a kid, y'know? How do you beat that?

**AU: What's the music scene in Denver like? How does it differ from when you started?**

**Josh:** When we started, the scene was lean. It was sometimes months between gigs that you wanted to go, to let alone got to play. There were maybe one or two bars that would cater to hardcore punk and no real all ages places. All ages shows would be more guerilla, rent a space, throw a show, get busted, rinse and repeat. There were more attitudes in the scene, there probably still are with the younger kids and bands, but as you get older you realize how much of that was bullshit and you don't even remember (or care) what the beef was about. There then

becomes mutual respect amongst the older crowd of dudes that are still doing this. Denver has a killer scene right now. From death metal like our homies in Blood Incantation and Spectral Voice or down to the basics '80s style USHC like our pals in Direct Threat. If you want doom metal, there is Cobranoid, Messiahvore, Lost Relics and many others. If you like your hardcore dark and brutal, check out Suicide Cages. Denver is on fire, there are many clubs and bars that promote radical music and a few all ages places too. There are heavy metal and horror themed bars and even a punk/hardcore/metal focused record store (Chain Reaction Records). Even Decibel magazine throws their big December show here now.

**AU: Over the years, you've shared the stage with bands like DRI, The Exploited, The Accused, Agnostic Front, Subhumans, and**

**Napalm Death; do you have any crazy stories?**

**Josh:** One of my faves was years ago partying with The Exploited all night. At one point, it was only the road crew left and us, the bar closed the blinds and locked the door. We kept going until the sun was coming up. The Exploited didn't have any merch, so the one roadie gave me his Exploited hoodie. There's just weird shit you never thought as a kid would happen, like my friend and I showing Vinnie Stigma how to work the coffee maker or getting birthday messages for your kids from dudes in bands you've respected your whole life. A couple of the dudes from Septic Death stayed the night at my house. Who would've thunk?

**AU: Who is the best skateboarder in the band?**

**Josh:** Van. It's always been Van since we were kids. And Mikey (aka Charlie Foxtrot, our mascot). Those dudes were rippers back in the day. Now we are old and brittle! It's carves and grinds. Slappies rule.

**AU: Your new album, Defy, will be hitting the streets October 11th. What's your favourite track and why?**

**Josh:** "Rawhead" is cool, it's inspired by Rawhead Rex. More-so the short story than the movie, although the movie was the catalyst for it. The story has a deeper meaning than the movie and I tried to capture that in the lyrics. Go read it or read about it and you will know what I mean. "RFHC" has that cool chant at the end, it's a fun song. I like "Trained to Kill"; it's a pretty straightforward thrasher loosely inspired by the book *East of Eden*. Some of the stuff that related it back to the book had to be cut to get the lyrics to fit though.

**AU: I noticed themes of state violence, oppression, apocalypse, corruption, and resistance in your lyrics. I imagine you're primarily inspired by the current political climate, but the imagery is also incredibly vivid; what inspires you most on that front?**

**Josh:** I read a lot. I read the classics like *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Johnnie Got His Gun*, *East of Eden*, etc. I did a Steinbeck deep-dive last winter. I read a lot about Buddhism, Hinduism and Krishna consciousness and as a result, I spent a lot of time thinking about how people treat each other and how they treat themselves. I process that through the context of current events. I like stuff like Joseph Campbell and stuff that makes you think. If I watch TV, it's often a history documentary or something exploring the human condition. I'm always taking notes and sending myself texts and emails with ideas, one-liners or snippets. I have concepts of a plan.

**AU: Will you be performing any shows or tours to promote the new album?**

**Josh:** We celebrate the release of the album on October 18 with Boston legends The Freeze and our friends in Battle Sights. That's going to be a hoot. After that, we have some regional stuff to close out the year and are booking '25 dates too. We've got a killer show in February that I can't talk about yet and some other stuff cooking.

**AU: Any plans to come to Canada?**

**Josh:** If it all lines up with other dates, we might. I would absolutely love to go to Canada. I haven't been there since Spider Fest in the '90s. I wonder if any of your readers remember Spider Fest in Marmora?

**AU: Halloween is coming up. Do you have any plans this year?**

**Josh:** We have a show October 25th in Pueblo, Colorado; maybe they'll do something Halloween related at that one. **AU: Final words for our readers?**

**Josh:** Don't be a dick. Celebrate others and express gratitude.

[clusterfux.bandcamp.com](http://clusterfux.bandcamp.com)

# BEER CITY RECORDS

# RIPCORDZ TOUR TIPS

As we've been driving back and forth across Canada for more than three decades, we've come up with some guidelines that help us on the road. Figured we'd share.

They're tips, not rules. Everyone has their own way of touring, but some of these may help younger bands on their way.

## PART TEN

### TOUR TIP NUMBER 55



#### SAVE THE HEAVY DRINKING FOR AFTER THE SHOW

Drunken performances are rarely as good as you think they are.

### TOUR TIP NUMBER 56



#### TOUR THE TOWN

Don't let your experience begin and end at the doors of the venues you play.

### TOUR TIP NUMBER 57



#### THE COPS WILL ALWAYS TRY TO RUIN YOUR DAY

Don't let 'em.

### TOUR TIP NUMBER 58



#### GRAB A FLYER

They're everywhere before you play but tend to disappear afterwards. You'll want the memory.

### TOUR TIP NUMBER 59



#### PLAY BIGGER VENUES IF YOU GET THE CHANCE

They give you the chance to play smaller venues and smaller towns.

### TOUR TIP NUMBER 60



#### KEEP BOOKING WHEN YOU'RE ON THE ROAD

Pick-up shows can be the best shows.

Find more tips and other stuff on our facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/ripcordzpunk> and instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/ripcordz.punk>

## Poached Records

### Interview with Dr. Futaba By Bluto The Garbage Man

**Bluto The Garbage Man:** Greetings from the bottom. We have a special guest here today to help us navigate today's winding roads and hopefully inspire us all to take that extra step forward to a better tomorrow. Ladies and gentlemen, boys, girls and everyone in between, I give you Doctor S. Futaba. The floor is yours lol.

**Dr. Futaba:** Thank you for having me. Here we go. With Halloween coming quicker than... never mind. It's "spooky season" folks. Apparently, Halloween now starts the second the calendar turns to September. I know people are on board with that, but not this guy. Don't trip, I like Halloween. But I don't like this new world we are creating for ourselves. We can't wait for anything these days. Everything needs to be instant. We can't concentrate because Tik Tok boot fucked our attention spans. We can't appear sad, afraid or vulnerable because Instagram made us fake and vain. We can't say what we are really thinking because Facebook told us that's not how to make friends. Then the icing on the cake for all the mindless herds, AI. With the advancements in Artificial Intelligence, we rapidly are creating our own extinction. I say hurry up, because none of us like to wait for anything.

I know I am not supposed to express my feelings on such a public forum, but I am really looking forward to the end of the world. Hopefully it comes sooner than later, because this shit is getting out of control.

While out and about on a Saturday with The Egg, we stopped into a small cafe to get a drink as it was a warm day and I had smoked a significant amount of non-government supplied marijuana. I settled for a \$7 coconut water— my next option was a \$17 smoothie. Not that either of us couldn't



afford the price, I'm a fucking Doctor and he is the CEO of Poached Records. But Acai is actually Portuguese for "stupid" white people will pay \$20 for juice." That right there is why my apartment costs twice as much as what it is worth.

I don't even have air conditioning or a dishwasher. Silverfish everywhere. But for real, check Wikipedia to see how Acai got its name— kinda fucked up.

I blame social media, money and religion for everything that sucks. Gentrification can fuck off and die. If some tagged fences, a little bit of trash, and doing drugs openly in the park makes for cheaper rent, pass me a can of Flat Black and a King Kong line of the strongest shit you got. Fuck money. While we are on the topic, everyone is so up about things being "toxic." This is toxic, that is toxic. It's us you idiots. All of us. Me. You. We create everything that is "toxic." Open your eyes or don't be upset when your daughter is masturbating with a butt plug up her for \$9 on Only Fans. We soiled this entire place, now we get to fester in the filth till the day the computers no longer need us around.

Sorry if you read that. Send all complaints to: [poachedrecords@gmail.com](mailto:poachedrecords@gmail.com)



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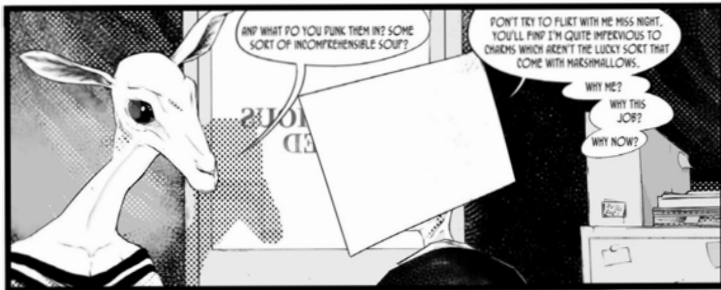
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WORDS BY HANK PATTISON - ART BY ZAC ZEMANTIC

COFFEETRATION

-DICK RAUF '24

Hey, I don't think I should go trick or treating. There's some hockey jocks who want to beat me up.

I don't remember the "CHIEFS" playing for the NHL...

Can I put on the foil everyday?

Sami, get your bro and sis.

Who are the Hanson Brothers, anyways?

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by gareth 2024



# HALLOWEEN NIGHT OUT

JAMIE MACPHERSON '24



# Absolute Live



**200 Stab Wounds, Balmora, Upon Stone, Stabbing, Dying Remains**

**August 31, The Commonwealth, Calgary AB**

The last slaughter of the summer came with 200 Stab Wounds on their first headlining tour. They may have been influenced by former tourmates Dying Fetus and their malleability, being able to play with metal and hardcore subgenres, as this tour was a mixture of both, and at this show it was mostly positive results.

The local openers Dying Remains didn't feel out of place here and brought a pummeling at the early start time of 5:30. The Commonwealth was already pretty full of attendees, though, unlike the night before when openers Thantifaxath only had a handful of people watching.

Stabbing were angry from the start as the crowd were timid to start anything resembling a mosh pit until well after the band voiced their frustrations. The Texan brutal death metal band lived up to their reputation, with their peeved mood coating the brutality.

Upon Stone had some sound issues before they began their set, so theirs was cut shorter, though they were responded to well.

The combination of metal and hardcore or hardcore adjacent bands showed its problematic side during Balmora's set, in which two fights broke out within the Connecticut metalcore band's first two songs. This dynamic added an interesting feeling of tension until the end of the night as people chatted about it outside before the headliner.

The new generation of death metal bands are hitting their stride these days with their own modest but impressive headlining tours. It must feel similar to when Cannibal Corpse was just coming up and playing small clubs. 200 Stab Wounds is an example of a band who will no doubt be one of the future greats. Opening slots felt like maybe 50 stab wounds, so this headlining show went the full 200, with the

at a faster pace and with heavier vocals. The Dunies love making the crowd a part of the show, with Danny motioning for the crowd to separate, before ordering them to run at each other with everything they've got. It's incredible to see the bands excitement to the fans' response during the show, with people singing along to every lyric, others high up on shoulders, crowd surfers, beer cans flying about the room, you can just tell how much they appreciate their fans, and how natural it is for them to perform live.

- Michael O'Connor

**Goatwhore, Vitriol, Thantifaxath**

**August 30, The Commonwealth, Calgary AB**

With the Infest happening in Edmonton simultaneously, the Commonwealth in Calgary featured many of the same touring bands and was like a mini Infest for those who didn't want to drive the three hours to oil town.

Goatwhore brought their tour to the Commonwealth on August 30 and

band relentlessly slicing through their new Manual Manic Procedures album material and leaving the crowd wanting more punctures.

- Ryan Dyer

**Dune Rats, FIDLAR**



Photo: Bruce Baker

**September 6, The Forum, Melbourne, AUSTRALIA**

An energy of wild excitement and rowdiness fills the room of The Forum, Melbourne, as Dune Rats lead singer Danny Beus steps out on stage with his band of Aussie misfits. Wide-eyed and glaring, he takes to the microphone with a mischievous look of joy, completely in his element and ready to give fans a show they'll never forget. It's easy to see the whole crew feeding off the vibes from the previous set by FIDLAR, who introduced them to the stage. With no time to waste, they're smashing out some classics from older albums, unforgettable tracks that were bound to bring a taste of nostalgia and good times. The boys show no signs of giving fans a half ass, low energy show, immediately bouncing around and screaming their lyrics as if they had to make an impression. "Too Tough Terry", one of their older songs displayed the full extent of a powerful light show, (hate to be an epileptic in a Dune Rats mosh pit!) They soon busted out a handful of tracks from their latest album *If It Sucks, Turn It Up* such as the song by the same name, "Be Like You", and "Cheapskate", all

the show brought the fans a sense of nostalgia— in the mid-2010s, the band came through Calgary nearly once a year with a few times performing at the Warehouse/Underground, the former Commonwealth, so seeing them on this night was like going into a time machine to that period.

The band brought with them Vitriol and Thantifaxath. Thantifaxath are a shrouded, avant-garde black metal band hailing from Toronto. As this show started quite early, the dance floor wasn't so filled while they performed. Their odd and interesting song writing did impress those who were there, however.

Vitriol are a chaotic death metal band from Portland Oregon. Here, there were only two members on stage but this was unusual— apparently a member had to stay home and get back to work as his brothers in metal went out with Goatwhore. As a two-piece, they still crushed it beyond belief.

Goatwhore acknowledged the early show and vowed to perform a full set anyway. By the time they went on, the Commonwealth was properly packed with die-hards.

Fans bought Ben beer and sat them by the stage, showing the New Orleans group some Canadian hospitality and encouraging them to perform for as long as they could. They shredded through key hits in their discography such as "Apocalyptic Havoc" and ended things with "Fucked by Satan".

- Ryan Dyer

**Infest 2024 - 200 Stab Wounds, Goatwhore, Gatecreeper**



Whyte Wolf Photograph

**AUG 30th - Sept 1, Starlight Room & Freemasons' Hall, Edmonton AB**

This inaugural metal festival took place across two stages (The Starlight Room and Freemasons' Hall) in the heart of downtown Edmonton, Alberta and featured a carefully curated lineup of death metal, black metal, and hardcore. The excitement was palpable every time we got in line, that intoxicating festival energy building over the course of every performance, then ending with the awe of witnessing the headliner crush their set.

Three components that stuck out to me were the great sound quality, the balance between local and international bands, and the incredible attention to timing. To maintain this level of professionalism over three nights is no easy feat and points to the experience and dedication the organizers brought to the table. Kudos to the staff at ConcertWorks & The Starlight Room!

In chatting with concertgoers while at the fest and weeks later, the consensus is clear: Infest is now the gold standard for extreme metal festivals in Western Canada. This has the potential to build itself over the years as an iconic destination festival that attracts all sorts of fans and bands from across the world. Being in the environment felt like a home-away-from-home. It felt powerful, like we were witnessing history in the making. Needless to say, the anticipation for the 2025 edition of Infest is high and we trust that the team behind it will make history once more. See you there!

- Mike F. (@GWN.metal)

**Lamb of God, Mastodon, Kerry King, Malevolence**

**August 15, The Saddledome, Calgary AB**

Two albums hit Best Buy on August 31, 2004— *Ashes of the Wake* by Lamb of God and *Leviathan* by Mastodon. Brann Dailor was aware of this and called up Randy Blythe to tell him. Apparently, they had remembered this for years and thus the *Ashes of the Leviathan* 20th Anniversary tour

was booked.

The show was not as packed as it could have been, which makes one wonder why it wasn't booked at a slightly smaller venue— but after seeing both Mastodon's and Lamb of God's stage shows, it was the right idea to book the bigger arenas.

The Saddledome ran out of floor wristbands while openers, Sheffield-based metalcore band Malevolence were playing, making people stand in a long line for around 20 minutes before another batch of different colored wristbands were brought in. These different colored wristbands confused the workers, but I insisted they were valid.

Everyone was pretty much ready as soon as Kerry King came on, though. His band blasted through tracks from his *From Hell I Rise* album. The show itself was less hellish than Slayer's, though Kerry did slide in two Slayer songs for the diehards.

The last time I caught Mastodon, I was impressed with their psychedelic stage show at the time, but this one blew it away— being full of fire but also nautical-themed— perfect for the Moby Dick-inspired album.

*Ashes of the Wake* is pretty much all killer, no filler, with the first five songs being classics in their own right. LOG, not to be upstaged by Mastodon, also had video screens displaying some trippy visuals as they blasted through the album. The night ended with "Walk With Me in Hell" and possibly the biggest circle pit I've ever seen with "Redneck".

- Ryan Dyer

**Marilyn Manson, 5¢ Freak Show**

**August 24, The Grey Eagle Event Centre, Calgary, AB**

Marilyn Manson's return to the live stage was met with much intrigue. Considering his performances before his legal troubles were poorly rated, Manson must have done a lot of soul searching and self-improvement to prepare for his current trek. Attending his current concerts does feel a bit dangerous, like the old days. Though instead of worrying about going to hell, it's hard not to feel a bit morally wrong, even though the jury is still out. Regardless, Manson's performance is what is being examined here, not the things that preceded it, though they probably tied in with how it turned out.

Frankly, it turned out great. Manson, looking fit and clear-headed, seemed as if he had a vendetta— much like his return after the Columbine scandal with *Holy Wood*. Although at this time, only two new songs have been released, his state of mind is with them and his message came out with them here, including the live debut of "Raise the Red Flag".

His older songs were treated with respect— in past shows, it seemed as if Manson was going through the motions singing, say, "The Beautiful People", but here there was a fresh energy to these tracks, with Manson singing every lyric like it was the first time singing them, with select favorites making an appearance like "The Reflecting God". Stage show and theatrics wise, Manson also kept it simple with modest costume (hat) changes and no distracting video screens, putting more emphasis on the songs and the band.

It's as if Manson sees the legacy that his music has created and wanted to present the songs during this tour in their best state to wash away that sour taste from his previous tours. This was aided by his new live band, who complemented the singer well.

As one of the few headlining shows on this current tour, the song selection and surprises made it objectively one of the best.

- Ryan Dyer

## Crossword Answers



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**Punk in Drubric - NOFX, Descendents, Face to Face, Circle Jerks, and more**

**August 17-18, Downsview Park, Toronto, ON**



Punk in Drubric Festival came to Toronto featuring two of the final NOFX shows, a bunch of awesome bands, gallons of beer, and a shit ton of rain. Shortly after doors opened on Saturday an epic downpour forced an evacuation leaving festival goers wandering the area for hours until news came that doors were reopening and NOFX were about to hit the stage early, causing a mad dash to the gates.

NOFX wasted no time and jumped right into an epic 36-song set spanning their 40+ year career including classics "Linoleum", "The Brews", and fan fave "Kill All the White Man". The band seemed in high spirits and the banter was top notch as always; Fat Mike is the best when it comes to stage bantering. He also announced that Saturday ticket holders could return Sunday and was genuinely apologetic about the situation that was out of their control. An amazing band and incredible performance.

With the crowd on a high and the rain holding off, Circle Jerks and The Real McKenzies stepped up to perform solid sets. Afterwards attendees lingered, hoping The Interrupters would squeeze in a quickie, but no such luck and day one came to an end. A bit of a messy day for sure, but hey, punk rock is messy sometimes.

Sunday started off promising with

sunny skies and I was able to make it for the beerfest part of the festival. However, things quickly turned into a shittier Groundhog Day when after the Codefendents set the grounds were evacuated again due

to incoming inclement weather. This time fans were prepared and the parking lot became a punk rock tailgate until the weather stopped being an asshole and we were shepherded back to the stage where local faves The Flatliners immediately kept the party going. It was smooth sailing for the next few hours with energetic sets from Subhumans, Face to Face, and Descendents who brought a festival highlight with the crowd singing along to "I'm the One".

While waiting for NOFX it started to rain and the crew looked nervous. But Fat Mike, Eric Melvin, El Hefe, and Smelly all hit the stage for the last time in Toronto to a huge crowd of happy faces, mine included. Getting to photograph my favourite punk band during "Bob" was THE BEST. NOFX absolutely killed their set with songs such as "Don't Call Me White" and "Eat the Meek", and Fat Mike made his usual jokes, thanked the fans, and showed his appreciation for Canada. "You should be proud of yourselves for being such nice people and having great punk bands."

At this point, the storm was starting to pick up and NOFX were being told to get off stage but Fat Mike refused without playing "The Decline" first because he's fucking awesome. Dave Brownsound from Sum 41 jumped in on guitar and

me and my partner jumped in the pit for the 18-minute song while the rain fell harder. It was a special moment.

Although not the summer festival fans may have been hoping for, Torontonians really got a unique and amazing experience at Punk in Drubric with two fantastic final NOFX performances in Toronto, and a couple of the last NOFX shows ever. For that, I am extremely grateful.

- Rae Chatten

#### Testament, Kreator, Possessed

**September 9, Macewan Hall, Calgary AB**

Testament and Kreator. Two bands that go together like twin battleships. The Klash of the Titans team-up certainly presented both bands as important heavy metal figureheads with double-headlining sets showcasing all of their strengths. While I'm not certain what any of the other venues on the tour looked like in terms of size, Macewan Hall as a location also played into its success. While not completely sold out, it was genuinely packed and felt like a big deal.

The unique extra spotlight band here was Possessed. The early start time of 6:50 was of no concern to the fans who wanted to see them mostly. The very-in-a-good-mood Jeff Becerra and co performed a generous 40 or so minute set. Jeff sipped Coke and displayed his affection for the crowd, while after the show was meeting every fan there.

Three inflated demons stood at the back of the stage as the Germans in Kreator performed an extremely well-crafted set. Walls of death were spread out, being called for during certain songs. It made for a good flow of thrashy carnage with definite peaks. A few shrouded characters came out twice as well. A fan shouted "Show your dicks" to them.

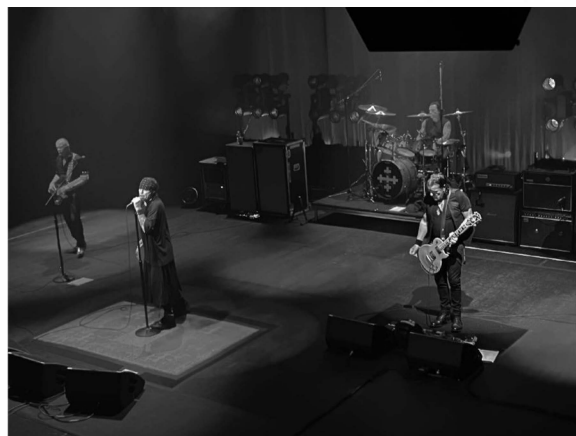
Testament feel as though they are gaining momentum on every tour they take. They should be more revered, honestly. While the fans were tamer for Testament than Kreator, they still crowdsurfed. Unfortunately, by the penultimate

song "Over the Wall", most people received warnings and would have been kicked out if they did it, despite Chuck Billy calling for it.

It would be hard for Testament to top this tour, but I'd like to see them try.

- Ryan Dyer

#### The Cult



#### Sept 19, Royal Theatre, Victoria BC

See them raining, they come rocking they come, a horse nation see them slaying they came. And on a glorious Thursday night in September, that's exactly what The Cult did for Victoria. They came roaring back to our city, to treat a sold-out crowd of 1,416 rock disciples to a triumphant performance. This was only the second time the UK Legends have ever set foot in our Capital City. The last time they rocked Victoria was a decade ago at the Rock the Shores Festival in 2014. This was the last of 10 Canadian Dates on their current 40th Anniversary 8424 Tour, and The Cult did not disappoint the Victoria rock faithful whatsoever. The Band were in absolute top form this night, proving why they are one of the most influential and important bands in UK rock history and how

their career has lasted four decades now.

To start the evening's ceremony, a few stagehands first came out to cleanse and purify the stage by burning sage. Then from the moment the Wolf Child Ian Astbury hit the stage, it was on! He came out raging with his tambourine and voice blazing! Still howling, overpowering and proving at 62, he

had plenty of fire left. Astbury has always been in my opinion, one of the greatest and most underrated rock n' roll frontmen ever. And the same goes for his Gretsch-wielding partner Billy Duffy. Who with his moves, skills and style just embodies guitar God coolness. When Duffy busts out that white falcon and strums that tone, The Cult's signature sound comes alive. Longtime drummer John Tempesta (ex-White Zombie) whose been with the band since 2006 was rock solid as usual, and newest member bassist Charlie Jones (ex-Page and Plant) was proficient on his instrument as well.

The Cult delivered a fantastic 17-song set-list. Songs like the classic love staple "Rain", Electric-era tracks such as "Wild Flower", one of the highlights of the night along with "Love Removal Machine". But the

one song played that impressed me the most was the *Sonic Temple* gem "Edie (Ciao Baby)". Which was played acoustically with just Ian and Billy seated on stage. And for this number especially, Astbury delivered a majestic vocal performance. One that I personally had not heard him give this great in years. It was like he teleported back to 1989 for a moment in time and summoned his former prime form. The biggest response the band received was when they unleashed their biggest hit "She Sells Sanctuary" for the last encore. Always a crowd pleaser and it was nice to see them play it with such conviction still after 39 years since its release. One thing a would like to mention is how cool it was to hear many rarities on this tour. Songs such as "Rise" and "War (The Process)" from their criminally underrated album *Beyond Good and Evil*. Seeing them play the rare "Resurrection Joe", a single from 1984 was worth the price of admission alone. When this legendary band is firing on all cylinders. Like they were on this magical night, they are hard to beat! Simply put, The Cult are still very much alive and a force to be reckoned on any concert stage. In closing, this was the best I have heard them sound live in 15 years and it was one of the best rock n' roll shows I have seen locally in years, long live The Cult, CFFC. 10/10

-Jay Maher

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# Absolute Album Reviews

## Halogen

Hitting up the "Felpunk" account on YouTube I landed on *Demo 2024* by Halogen! Featuring three blistering tracks in under 8-minutes this is another blast of awesomeness! I will also add that the production is the perfect combo of raw and clear, and by that I mean you can tell effort went into the production—and that production is paired with the "underground" vibe to the fullest!

This is listed as hardcore. With crunching, slamming guitars amid chaotic vocals and pin-tight drumming I cannot say that is wrong. But one thing I can add is that I am reminded highly of early Dystopia in places! As Dystopia's "Stress Builds Character" is one of the heaviest songs ever written; this is far from an insult!

These guys hail from Oulu, Finland. As a person who traverses the lands of the underground, I can say that a hell of a lot of good stuff comes out of Finland... and Halogen are no different!

-Devon J. Meaney

## Defy

### Clusterfux

#### Beer City

It's hard to name many bands that have stood the test of time while remaining relevant to the scene, and maintaining high-energy recordings in the way that Clusterfux have for almost three decades—certainly with no exception on their latest album *Defy*, containing an impressive 14 new tracks. Although the stylistic components of the album remain uniform, the lyrics express a diverse range of subject matter. The track "Lies" targets the US political system—"corrupt fucking system, we're all fucking victims, violence war and schism, telling stories telling lies", while other tracks such as "DBAD" focus on motivating folks to break free from fear, with lyrics such as "don't be a dick, every day's a fresh start, shed the negative thoughts". From "Charlie Foxtrot Stomp" through to "RFHC", the band strike the air with an undying, fresh out the gate attitude that'll bring a nostalgic touch for true punk rockers globally. Clusterfux have remained true to their punchy, upbeat, '90s punk rock sound, projecting a constant push to ensure the underground music scene in Denver, Colorado remains authentic, and shows homage to its predecessors.

-Michael O'Connor

## Greatest Shit

### Uncle Outrage

#### Cacophony Clan Records

Uncle Outrage, the Canadian junk rock/punk band with an electronic twist are proving to their local and global following that they can still hold their own and keep it fresh after 25 years of successful music

making, with October 2024 bringing their fifth full-length studio album *Greatest Shit*. Despite touring as a band, the legendary solo talent behind the layers of instruments and vocals in all studio recordings is Nils Rasmussen. The first song "Dance Extreme," showcases the exhilarating rollercoaster of this multi-genre inspired endeavour that lasts throughout the entire album, displaying myriad rhythmic and vocal shifts from a wasted mosh pit vibe, to old school disco boogie and even some romantic rock and sway. You'd think by reading it that it's impossible to spin through all those styles in a single song or even an album, yet over all the tracks, Nils has managed to incorporate this large variety of changes in a unique way that blends it all together so smoothly, the fans won't even need to question how he does it.

-Michael O'Connor

## Mangled in the Mine

### The Adits

#### Tempermill Records

A deep craving for that nostalgic high that can only be brought on by something true is a common theme amongst any old school punk rocker in the absurdly futuristic world of popular music today. The good news is that The Adits forgot to progress with the rest of the herd on their latest album *Mangled in the Mine*, released on the 21st of February this year. Somehow trapped in the golden era of fast paced riffs and a "fuck it" attitude, this project screams of fury, defiance and fun times across all 11 tracks. Unafraid to hit those controversial topics, "Vaxxed or Not" had lyrics like "vaccinated or not, I don't like you, vaccinated or not, I despise you," showing political indifference, and a disregard for your personal choices, they don't like you anyway! Along with this, the more hardcore, racy track "We Lie to Cops" boasted a strong expression of defiance against authority, an all too common theme amongst the underground. Relentless in creating another full-length album with no dull moments, raw lyrics and their well-known attitude, The Adits have come through for the fans 100% in this release.

-Michael O'Connor

## Necronomisongs

### Torrefy

Having followed Torrefy for years and witnessed their live performances countless times, I approached *Necronomisongs* with high expectations. Familiar with some of the tracks from their live shows, I was eager to see how the studio versions would compare. I'm pleased to report that the album not only meets but often exceeds those expectations.

Each track stands out with its

own unique character while maintaining the classic Torrefy essence that ties the album together seamlessly. The band members showcase their individual talents throughout, stepping up when needed to deliver a cohesive and powerful listening experience.

Despite the high bar I had set, Torrefy did not disappoint. The entire album is solid, but two tracks, in particular, stood out to me: "Street Reaper" and "Nature Vs Torture." Both songs encapsulate the raw energy and skill that Torrefy consistently delivers.

Overall, I'd give *Necronomisongs* a well-deserved 10/10.

-Broken Neck Radio

## Science, Not Fiction

### Orange Goblin

#### Peaceville Records

Without doubt, Orange Goblin are one of the great British heavy metal bands. Eschewing trends, they consistently make excellent heartfelt heavy metal albums. The differences apparently on their new album are an enthusiastic label in the legendary Peaceville, and the inclusion of excellent new bassist Harry Armstrong. I met Harry some years ago when one of his previous bands, Hangnail, were supporting Cathedral in Dublin, a classic gig! Harry was a gentleman, but, moreover, he brings a Cliff Burton/Blacky-Voivod, energy and creativity to Orange Goblin, his bass is superb, and really brings Orange Goblin's music to another dimension.

No highlights, because all the tunes are awesome, there is such a love of heavy metal here, it's a joy to behold. If I had to pick a highlight, I'd choose "Cemetery Rats", as I love the title. I interviewed Ben Ward a few years ago, and he was chuffed that I'd named a character in the Defoe comic series after Solomon Eagle, from an Orange Goblin song.

What makes a great metal album is love for the genre! Long may Orange Goblin reign!

-Steve Earles

## The State of the Empire

### Berserker

#### Moments Fest Records

Lethbridge's Berserker aims to uncover the secrets of society with *The State of the Empire*. When the waves crash through the city and it eventually dries up after hundreds of years, the scavengers will walk by the Statue of Liberty's ruins and wonder where it all went wrong. Berserker knows a few things right now. The little catalysts that act as fingers pressing ignition switches are presented in song form.

Berserker present a snotty, noisy sound not unlike Refused jamming with Every Time I Die and Unsane—presenting their sonic ideas on record as loud and in your face as they come across live, though the production gives space for the lyrics



to be completely understood and they are intriguing—highlights being "Suicide on 66", "Death City", and final track "Diastettix". "Bright Lights" is an introspective, instrumental breather which leads into the swagger-filled latter tracks.

Samples planted throughout the album give it more of a scope in terms of the pre-apocalyptic storytelling Berserker is demonstrating here. You might as well listen, as once the ashes settle, to survive, we may all have to become berserkers.

-Ryan Dyer

## When We Were Kings

### Stryper

#### Frontiers Music

Stryper, the trailblazing Christian hard rock band, is celebrating 40 years of music with undiminished energy. Going into this, my expectations were neither high nor low—just neutral. It's been decades since I've given a Stryper album a full, start-to-finish listen, largely due

to the lasting impression of their 1986 third studio album, *To Hell with the Devil*.

What caught me off guard was how many bands with a 40-year career, like Stryper, often show signs of slowing down. But that's not the case here. The opening track, "End of Days," immediately grabbed my attention, setting the tone for the album. From tracks 2 through 8, I was fully engaged, hanging on every note.

Michael Sweet's vocals are as powerful as ever, effortlessly hitting high notes with a precision that feels like a sixth instrument in the band. The drumming is perfectly timed, and the guitar riffs are so compelling that you'll want to hit replay over and over. Words can't fully capture my surprise upon first listening—Stryper is clearly not slowing down anytime soon and has plenty of music left to give.

This album is a solid 10/10 for me—if I could score it higher, I would.

-Broken Neck Radio

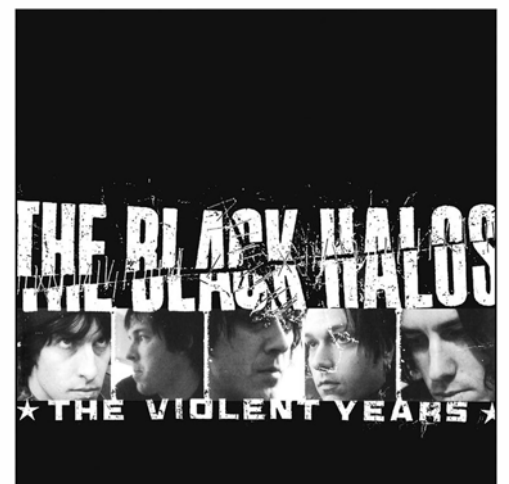


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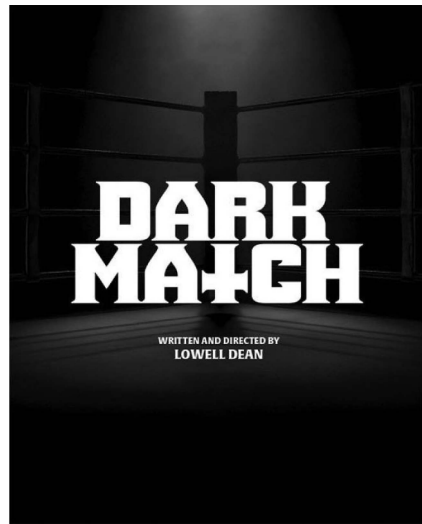
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# Absolute Movie Review



## DARK MATCH

What if Mickey Rourke's Randy the Ram, instead of wrestling in death matches and working at a deli, went the Guinea Pig route and started producing snuff films of wrestling matches in a barn somewhere in Canada to feed his coke addiction? This is an accurate depiction of the wicked scheme of Chris Jericho's character, the Prophet,

in Lowell Dean's (Wolfcop) *Dark Match*, a wrestling/horror hybrid which stars the legendary grappler alongside fellow Canadian actors Steven Ogg (*The Walking Dead*) and Sara Canning (*The Vampire Diaries*).

What is a dark match? It's a match that takes place before TV tapings and generally isn't shown to audiences at home. The dark match within *Dark Match* is actually a

series of five matches organized by the Prophet as a means of satanic sacrifice - each being a different element with the match being under a certain stipulation (the inferno match for example having flames shot from the turnbuckles, differing from the matches we have seen featuring the Undertaker and Kane).

The Prophet contacts an indie wrestling organization to meet up at a barn to have these dark matches, paying them a hefty sum of \$50,000 for their efforts. After a drugged out party the night before, the faces and heels are separated into their own dressing rooms, unbeknownst to the deadly matches that await them, including a match that resembles the Axl vs Ian Rotten Taipei Death Match from ECW and a "wind match" featuring a big fan in the middle of the ring which makes the squirting blood flow through the air.

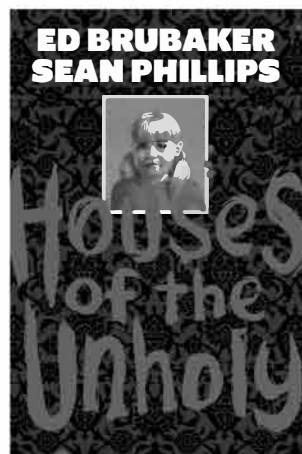
As the film takes place in the late '80s, the feel and aesthetic of *Dark Match* is in that era. *Satanic Panic*, a commitment to kayfabe and songs by KISS and Trooper decorate the piece, and it contains enough in-ring violence to satisfy both hardcore wrestling and horror fans.

- Ryan Dyer



# Absolute Graphic Novel Reviews

## HOUSES OF THE UNHOLY



*Houses of the Unholy* is the latest book by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips, and it seems like I can't go an issue of *ABUN* without talking about at least one new book from these guys. When do they have the time?

This was a weird one. It's a mystery story which uses the *Satanic Panic* of the 1980s as a background for a modern story about a woman with some emotional and physical scars left over from a life spent dealing with the Devil, in one way or another.

I enjoyed reading this book as much as I always love Brubaker/Phillips projects, but I was surprisingly confused by the ending. I don't know if I fully understood what happened in the final pages, but not in a bad way; more in a way that made me want to go back and read the story again, and talk with others who've read it, to see what they got out of it.

I'd recommend you read this book, and if you do, please, let me know what you think of it. I really need to know what was going on with that weird dude who was lurking in the woods.

- Hank at Golden Age

## BOOK OF BILL



*The Book of Bill* is an exploration of the life and opinions of Bill Cipher, the central antagonist of the Disney cartoon series *Gravity Falls*. The narrative is presented as a sort of found-footage document, with the interior replicating everything from scraps of newspaper articles to diary pages, spliced with illustrations of cosmic/body-horror and surreal comedy.

While the writing by series creator Alex Hirsch is both entertaining and creepy, the illustrations of *Book of Bill* are intensely impressive, and feature some artists I recognized from the worlds of online horror. The whole thing is rich with details and puzzles that'll take years of scrutinizing to entirely unravel, assuming you don't just go online and ask for help, like I did.

I wasn't sure what I thought about Bill before I read this book, but now I know Bill, and there's a security in that knowledge. Bill is always watching. Bill is forever knowing. Bill is the book, and by optically-ingesting the contents of the book, we become one with the book, and thereby, one with Bill. All is Bill. HAIL BILL. HAIL A NEW ERA OF CHAOS AND WHIMSY. THAT BILL IS ONE GROOVY CAT, I DO DECLARE.

- Hank at Golden Age

## NEW AVENGERS: ASSEMBLED



Back in the early 2000s when Marvel Comics were struggling, they gave their flagship superhero title, *The Avengers*, to Brian Michael Bendis a young writer known for dialogue-heavy indie-crime stories, and somehow, that resulted in the greatest *Avengers* comics I've ever read.

The *Avengers* have never been my bag; even when I was a kid they were often depicted as uptight squares, a cartoony relic of an earlier age of more simplistic graphic storytelling. This book turns all that on its head, dissolving the team and forming a new one, and doing it all with extremely sharp, entertaining dialog and modern characterizations of classic characters which still honour the original depictions.

The art is equally impressive, with characters that look like the handsome Hollywood stars who'd wind up portraying them a few years later, and the action is widescreen blockbuster material, yet still full of little moments that highlight the humanity of the heroes.

It's not a perfect book, it goes in some weird directions that don't always work for everybody, but I think it holds up great, and of all the *Avengers* comics out there, this is the one that I'd say is worth some space on your bookshelf.

- Hank at Golden Age

## TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #1 & 2



I was a huge fan of the *Ninja Turtles* back in the early nineties and I still am, with their action figures staring down at me today. But sometimes I wonder if part of the allure of the original comics was how subversive they felt to me at the time, like I was experiencing something I wasn't supposed to, comparable to watching movies like *Predator* or *Aliens* as a young child.

I dunno if the turtles will ever feel that way again. I dunno if they can still feel subversive, exciting, or cool.

Jason Aaron is a decent writer who's authored some of my favourite comics, but this isn't one of them. And no disrespect to Joëlle Jones and Rafael Albuquerque, the artists of issues 1 and 2 respectively, but I'm just not feeling their versions of the city. When I read the original comics, I remember all these gritty details that made me feel like I was walking through, or above, the New York City streets of that era, full of trash, and punks, and graffiti!

These issues can't seem to present any sense of environment or atmosphere, and it leaves me saying, "Nah brah, this one ain't it."

- Hank at Golden Age

## PUPPOSITES ATTRACT



Sometimes you wanna try something different, and sometimes that something different is a romantic-comedy manga about pet owners.

The official title of this book in Japan is *Encounter Between Polar Opposites and Their Dogs*, which I find even more charming than the pun-title we got in English, and that's basically the crux of the story. There's a giant rottweiler owned by a tiny lady, and a little Pomeranian owned by a large guy, and as they get to know each other we get to see what they're really like.

Spoiler alert: the big dog and the boy are the meek ones, and the tiny pom and the girl are the brashly outgoing ones.

I was drawn to this book by writer/artist Natsuna Hono after meeting a charming old rottweiler at the dog park, and have since fallen in love with the breed. This book pours gasoline on that fire, with page after page showcasing just how adorable the big guys can be, and the Pomeranian is pretty precious as well.

Cute book about cute dogs and romantic people. Nothing too heavy, but just the kinda thing for when you need a break from the intensity of modern life.

- Hank at Golden Age



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## Larval

### Interview by Brayden Turenne

**AU:** Who are we talking to and how would you define yourselves as a band?

**Havoque:** This is Havoque, drummer and occasional synth player, and so far I recorded and produced Larval's studio output. Vocalist Old Goat Amphetamine will answer the question about our thematic approach. Larval is a band as far as traditional rock/metal instrumentation goes, but more of a collective beyond that. Every member's output weighs equally in our music, and each also contributes art to our releases. We're constantly thinking of where to take Larval next within musical and visual disciplines. We feel that the possibilities are endless.

**AU:** Can you describe the genesis of Larval as a band? Especially since members reside across Canada, that must not be the easiest thing to make work.

**Havoque:** The distance is what created the band. When bassist Confound Eternal (Edmonton) visited Victoria in the summer of 2019, he and

I planned to have an improvised recorded jam as we always do. This time he invited guitarist G von Staaf, and Old Goat Amphetamine who happened to be on the island that day. At another session that week, M.S. of Human Agony joined us on guitar. The outcome was so positive that we decided to keep the project as Larval, and release the recordings as the *Black Metamorphosis* album. Since we are also visual artists to varying degrees, we each contributed a painting to the layout as well.

The separation would be more of an obstacle for a committed band with songwriting goals and necessary rehearsals. As it is, we only gather when the occasion beckons. Once logistical challenges are met, there is nothing to worry about as we prefer no musical preparation whatsoever, and every time is a musically unique occurrence.

**AU:** What is Larval's creative approach to songwriting? The music feels untethered by any apparent structure.

**Havoque:** There is indeed no songwriting at all. We have known and worked with each other for a long time and have faith in each other's ability to improvise and conjure up musical vistas and atmosphere. Confound Eternal and I have been playing together for over two decades and can telepathically anticipate where either of us will turn next, where to push forward or when to pull back. You could say we form the blank canvas, and Old Goat Amphetamine, G von Staaf and new member Avos' then hurl dense tapestries of vocals and contrasting guitar upon it. Likewise, our live shows are unrehearsed. We might discuss how to start and when to end. Everything in

between is entirely unknown territory for everyone.

**AU:** Across these three tracks, there is a lurking dread paired with a bizarre and unsettling beauty. What atmosphere and mood do you aim to craft with your sound?

**Havoque:** Mesmerizing sonic bewilderment, swirling emanations from cornucopias of psychedelic darkness. Ethereal, yet grounded through the rhythm section. A big element of our sound is the use of effect pedals. Especially the vocals build up into loops of choral washes and mantras.

On stage, the adrenaline and thrill of playing live translates into music with an innately heavier, oppressive urgency. In the studio we had all the time in the world to explore some psychoactive conduits, experiment without time constraint, and let things meander. On one track, I play six minutes of just cymbal accents, for instance. There are a few production methods I used to make the whole experience both strangely comforting and bleakly alienating. Yet everything you hear is spontaneous. There are no overdubs.

**AU:** Thematically, where does Larval draw from? In the track titles alone there appears to be a focus on life/creation ("The Testicles Of Uranus"), death ("Indecent Burials"), and atavism ("Ancestral Hole").

**OGA:** We explore the intersection of mythology, collective consciousness, and personal subconsciousness. Using a cut up approach of self-editing in the delivery that can only occur in the specific context of each recording or performance. The members are all well-read, well-explored, and hyper-aware. Often, there are further antagonists present to our baseline that push from the brink of neurodivergence to an ecstatic extra-egotistical convergence between band members and the audience.

**AU:** If Larval's sonic output were to manifest in psycho-physical form, how would you describe

## BENT WINDOW RECORDS

such an entity?

**Havoque:** We chose our name to match our mindset. The larva is an underground being with a voracious, indiscriminate appetite. It's in a constant state of transformation into more specialized forms, consistently shedding its old self, consuming what lies ahead, not knowing if there is a final form at all. Trance-like it moves through its life cycles through sheer will.

**AU:** As these ichorous dirges wash over the listener, there is little of comparison and contrast with other bands' sounds. Was there a deliberate aim to eschew the tendencies and tropes of other genres?

**Havoque:** Yes, we wanted to break away from the preconceptions and safety of the known, and forego traditional structure and composition. We are not an extension of our own bands. G and Avos' are more interested in creating visceral guitar textures than anything approaching metal- or rock-based riffs. There are the darker elements of metal, and we all play from our roots to a degree, but there are so many sonic elements to be found, I don't really consider us a metal band.

**AU:** Dare we ask what might lie in Larval's future?

**Havoque:** We recently performed as a five piece at the Infest Fest in Edmonton, a great motivational impulse. We made some recordings at the show and we might release them in some form. Next year we will return to the studio for our next album. I'm also working on assembling a bunch of studio outtakes and other recordings to turn into a music video project eventually. For right now we're happy and grateful that Bent Window saw enough merit in the bizarre *Psilodaemonic Revelations* to release it. One thing we know for sure is that the next album will be even more polarizingly strange.

[larvalmetamorphosis.bandcamp.com](http://larvalmetamorphosis.bandcamp.com)



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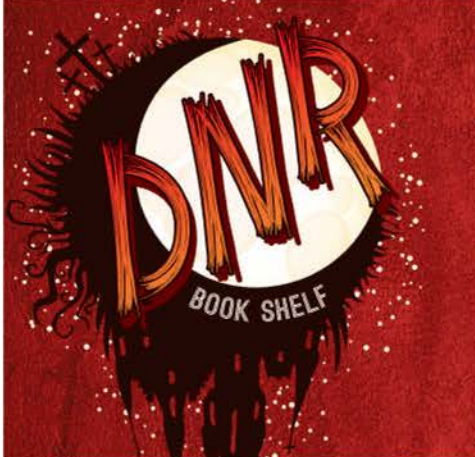
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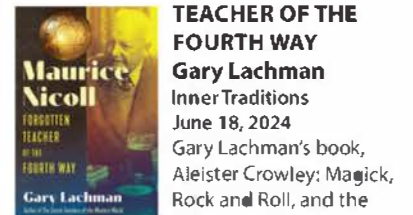




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### MAURICE NICOLL: FORGOTTEN



**TEACHER OF THE FOURTH WAY**  
**Gary Lachman**  
 Inner Traditions  
 June 18, 2024  
 Gary Lachman's book, Aleister Crowley: Magick, Rock and Roll, and the Wickedest Man in the World, remains my favourite book on Aleister Crowley. This is because, as well as being an intelligent erudite man, Gary makes the occult connections that so many people sleep walk through; he joins the dots between the occult elements of the past, present, and future. Plus he was in Blondie when they were awesome, so you can't get much cooler than that!

Maurice Nicoll, though largely and undeservedly forgotten now, taught the Fourth Way, I cannot do justice to this in a mere review, but Gary can, and this book is one of the most fascinating explorations of both teacher and subject imaginable.  
 Steve Earles

### THE BIGHEAD'S JUNK



**Edward Lee**  
 The Evil Cookie Publishing  
 October 22, 2023  
 Lee devotes across the globe are rejoicing that the Bighead lives on in this new novella. If you know, you know. Those who don't, pick up Edward Lee's 1997

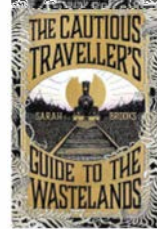
hillbilly classic *The Bighead* and start your inbred backwoods journey in deliciously terrible taste. As an admirer, I was hoping it would not be the end of such an iconic character in Lee's deranged repertoire and I was not disappointed. My only issue is, it should have been longer! But, leaving it this way, Lee can carry on at his leisure. Also

resurfacing is headers— grab 1995's *Header* to learn for yourself what ultimate revenge goes on in the dank backwoods, far outside of civilization.

We start off in the well-known area of Luntville, with a party about to begin for Coy McKay's father's 60th birthday. Driving around with his girlfriend Donna and their friends Larisa and Mord, they gossip, tease each other, and recount local terrifying legends and get distracted from going to the party so early. Instead, they decide to head out to the old Croter house because they heard a certain part of Bighead lives on. Yes, you guessed it. His junk.

Told with Lee's humorous comments about the redneck drawl and how certain words are said, you can't help but laugh and enjoy such an incredibly goofy, overly sexual and preposterous story. The crossover and origin values are so high which makes it really gratifying for superfans. The ending is so fantastically absurd and I hope this thing keeps going. Let's shoot for some Bighead cheerren running around in the woods causing havoc, eh Ed?? Son of Bighead! I digress.  
 Demonika

### THE CAUTIOUS TRAVELLER'S



**GUIDE TO THE WASTELANDS**  
**Sarah Brooks**  
 Weidenfeld and Nicolson  
 June 20, 2024

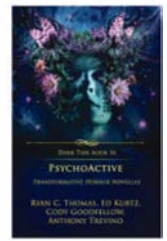
Set in the twilight years of the 19th century on the Trans-Siberian Express, this a period of history I know a lot about and have a great deal of interest in. So, from a research point of view I can say Sarah has really gotten all the details right.

Sarah has a magical way of weaving her tale, it really feels like the reader is transported into her world, because she clearly believes in it absolutely. In terms of atmosphere, it reminded me of one of my all-time favourite films, Horror Express, starring the incomparable team of Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, who also starred together in such Hammer films as *The Devil Rides Out* and *Dracula*. Incidentally, I recently realized that Horror Express takes major plot elements from

The Thing From Another World.

There is an interesting metaphor with the use of the Trans-Siberian Express in the story; on one hand the train represents freedom, speeding through the Wastelands with their unknown wonders and terrors, and on the other hand, it's a high-speed prison, like our own lives! Simply Marvelous!  
 Steve Earles

### PSYCHOACTIVE: TRANSFORMATIVE



**HORROR NOVELLAS**  
**Ryan C. Thomas, Anthony Trevino, Cody Goodfellow, Ed Kurtz, Etc**  
 Crystal Lake Publishing  
 June 28, 2024

*PsychoActive* is the 16th entry into Crystal Lake Publishing's Dark Tides collection. Each volume of the series presents a different theme, highlighted in three selected novellas. The chosen works that make up this particular edition showcase an impressive diversity of imagination.

The first and longest entry, "Love is a Monstrous Death", sets the scene in a neglected apartment building that has been all but forgotten by society at large. When a rather pathetic excuse for a Valentine's Day party is arranged by the building manager the motley array of tenants have no idea that there is a secret ulterior motive, one that will result in a far more obscene and profane union than the pathetic post-party coupling that some were desperately seeking. If it's body horror you're looking for, this story is for you. Writers Ryan C. Thomas and Anthony Trevino have woven a viscid, fleshly tapestry that will turn all but the strongest stomachs. Next up is Cody Goodfellow's offering "The Secret Eater". My personal favourite of the three, it opens with a death and carries through to a strange new vision of the future for an Alaskan farming family. After years of bearing the weight of multiple family tragedies, the Hulder siblings decide to try something new on the family land—give the land what it really wants. In return, the land will provide. But what do the Huldurs really know about the bounty it provides, and the reverberations it may cause throughout the

entire community?

"Black Rings" by Ed Kurtz closes out this trio of tales. Long after Kat's sister Allie falls into addiction and out of Kat's life, she receives an urgent phone call that her sister needs help. As she pursues news of Allie through the worst parts of town, Kat stumbles into something deeper, darker, and far older than she could have possibly imagined. Feeling somewhat incongruous with the theme, "Black Rings" left me adrift after the strength of the first two stories. Even so, considered as a whole *PsychoActive* was an entertaining (if uncomfortable) deep dive into the horrors of transformation.  
 Laura Phaneuf

### JIM MORRISON, SECRET TEACHER OF



**THE OCCULT: A JOURNEY TO THE OTHER SIDE**  
**Paul Wyld**  
 Inner Traditions  
 September 10, 2024

There has always been an occult element, a sonic alchemy, to the magnificent music of The Doors and Jim Morrison, to those with the perception to receive it. This book is both a very in-depth and very accessible at the same time, exploration of Jim Morrison's magical motivations, he was and is very much a Sonic Shaman!

Rock music is a ritual and Paul knows this well. He has experienced it and felt it on a spiritual level, and this is an excellent aspect of his book. I love the connections Paul has made to a variety of artists and thinkers, for instance, his quote from Oscar Wilde, "To live is the rarest things in the world. Most people exist. That is all." We should all reflect on this and make the most of our lives.

He also quotes occultist Colin Wilson, "The shaman excites himself into a divine frenzy or ecstasy through drum beating and dancing, until he passes into a trance, when his spirit is supposed to have left his body. In his trance he makes the sounds of various birds and animals— he is supposed to be able to understand their language."

This is the book Jim Morrison truly deserves!  
 Steve Earles

"EVERYBODY IS A BOOK OF BLOOD: WHEREVER WE'RE OPENED, WE'RE RED."  
 CLIVE BARKER, BOOKS OF BLOOD: VOLUMES ONE TO THREE

Submit your inquires or reviews to:  
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<p><b>SACRED BLADE</b>  <i>Of The Sun + Moon</i>        12" LP   1986   Heavy Metal        Vancouver, BC, Canada        KEEP YOUR EYEZ TO THE SKIEZ        A critically acclaimed progressive, sci-fi power metal masterpiece.</p>	<p><b>DERANGED</b>  <i>Lacerations</i>        12" LP   1988-89        Ferocious Deathrash        Victoria/Langford, BC, Canada</p>	<p><b>JONAS</b>  <i>Patterns of Dominance</i>        12" EP   1996        Blistering Fast Political Grindcore        Metchosin, BC, Canada</p>	<p><b>THE SCENICS</b>  <i>New Part in Town</i>        12" LP   1976        Proto-Punk / New Wave        Toronto, ON, Canada</p>	<p><b>DISTORTED INFLUENCE</b>  <i>Cold</i>        12" LP   1992        Crossover Thrash        Victoria, BC, Canada</p>	<p><b>THE DISHRAGS</b>  <i>Four</i>        12" LP   1980        Punk / Hardcore        Vancouver, BC, Canada</p>	<p><b>AS SHERIFF</b>  <i>Six Ways To The Ace</i>        12" LP   1969-70        Folk / Blues Psych Rock        Victoria, BC, Canada</p>
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that is King Diamond? They will also think you look fucking cool. Win-win.

**WHAT YOU NEED:**

**FACE PAINT.** I used eyeliner, black lipstick, and some decent face paint. Don't go with the cheapest stuff, you're covering a good chunk of your face. Also needed: makeup wipes.

**LEATHER.** Pants, jacket/vest, fingerless gloves. The King loves leather.

**PROPS.** King Diamond is known for his crossbones microphone. I literally taped together two large plastic bones from a costume shop and a microphone to it. Looking at old photos, it looks like that's pretty much what he did too. Another prop idea, a plastic skull/half skull.

**ACCESSORIES.** Chains, necklaces, a bullet belt, or a black and red cape.

**PERFECT YOUR KING DIAMOND METAL FACE.** I had a hard time with this one but also enjoyed myself thoroughly.

**ALICE COOPER**

There are many classic Alice Cooper looks you can rock depending on what you have in your closet. There's the simple white suit Alice or there's straight jacket Alice if you want to take it up a



notch (makes it hard to drink though, if you go that route, I salute you). Dressing as Alice Cooper is pretty easy if you decide to go to a Halloween party an hour before it starts and don't have a costume.

**WHAT YOU NEED:**

**BLACK FACE PAINT.** If you don't have face paint a lot of eyeliner/eyeshadow will work which is what I did but what I do not recommend.

**OUTFIT.** A cool jacket, Alice loves his jackets. For the rest of the outfit, you can go on leather or simple black attire. You can also go with a white or red dress shirt.

**ACCESSORIES.** A black top hat is an excellent addition if you have one. Or gloves, chains, etc.

**PROPS.** Lots of prop options here. A simple microphone, a cool cane, or a snake. I had a little snake plush I won at a carnival to wrap around my neck and was complimented on it several times.

**WAYNE AND GARTH.** If you have friends or see strangers dressed as Wayne and Garth do not miss the opportunity to re-enact the classic "we're not worthy" scene. Priceless.

**ROB HALFORD**

If you've got a lot of leather and you're looking for a kick ass costume then Rob Halford from Judas Priest may be perfect for you!



**WHAT YOU NEED**

**ALL THE LEATHER.** Seriously. Just head to toe leather if you've got it. Pants, jacket, gauntlets, gloves. You can't wear too much of it.

**ALL THE STUDS.** Especially if you're rocking '80s Halford. I've seen many photos of him wearing three studded belts on top of each other. If you've got anything with studs, wear it.

**THE HALFORD HAT.** A cabby/chauffeur/newsboy hat or leather police cap. Honestly, I consider it the Halford hat and if you can find something similar it really brings the outfit together.

**PROPS.** A motorcycle. More accessible ideas are a leather whip or once again, a microphone.

**SUNGLASSES.** Aviator style if you have them, but any black shades will do.

**OZZY OSBOURNE**

Dressing up as Ozzy for Halloween is always an excellent idea. First of all, he's the bloody Prince of Darkness! He is also very recognizable amongst metalheads and pop culture fans. And it's super easy! I dressed up as Ozzy a few years back and thoroughly enjoyed cranking some Black Sabbath while getting ready and going around yelling "SHARON" after a couple drinks.



**WHAT YOU NEED:**

**BLACK OUTFIT.** Sure, you can do '80s Ozzy with one of his brightly coloured shirts, but personally I'm a fan of the classic Prince of Darkness which is easier. Black pants, black shirt, black jacket. Done!

**BLING.** Put on every ring you own and layer up those necklaces. If you've got a giant cross you can wear even better.

**SUNGLASSES.** Ozzy wears circular sunglasses

a LOT and it's a staple item for the look. I found pairs at H&M but you can also find them at costume shops. If you don't go with the shades, put on loads of eyeliner.

**OZZY HANDS.** Take a black sharpie and write Ozzy across your left knuckles.

**PROPS.** You can rock a cane or go to a store with Halloween decorations, get a plastic bat, and go around pretending to bite the head off it. Classic Ozzy.



**CORPSE PAINT**

If all else fails you can always rock some corpse paint. Cover your face in white, do some crazy black designs, wear head to toe black, and you're good to go. This may be the easiest of all the metal costumes. You could go crazy with your creativity here and come up with something totally original or you can also go as Abbath as well.

These should all be fairly easy for the average metalhead to throw together quite quickly without too much time or money. All of them can be done to the extreme as well if you have the means to do so. Either way, remember, it's not just about the outfit, it's about the attitude. Whatever you decide to be this Halloween, rock it.



# Last-Minute Metal Costumes

By Rae Chatten

I love Halloween and every year I tell myself I'm going to prepare in advance and every year I find myself scrambling at the last minute to throw something together. A few years ago, I started dressing as my favourite musicians and it's been awesome. Most of the stuff I already own, I look badass, and it's fun to pretend to be some of my metal heroes. So, it's Halloween and you don't have a costume? Don't fret, I'm going to help you with some last-minute metal costumes.



**KING DIAMOND**

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