

BONFIRES BURNING BRIGHT, PUMPKIN FACES IN THE NIGHT, I REMEMBER HALLOWEEN

# ABSOLUTE UNDEAD

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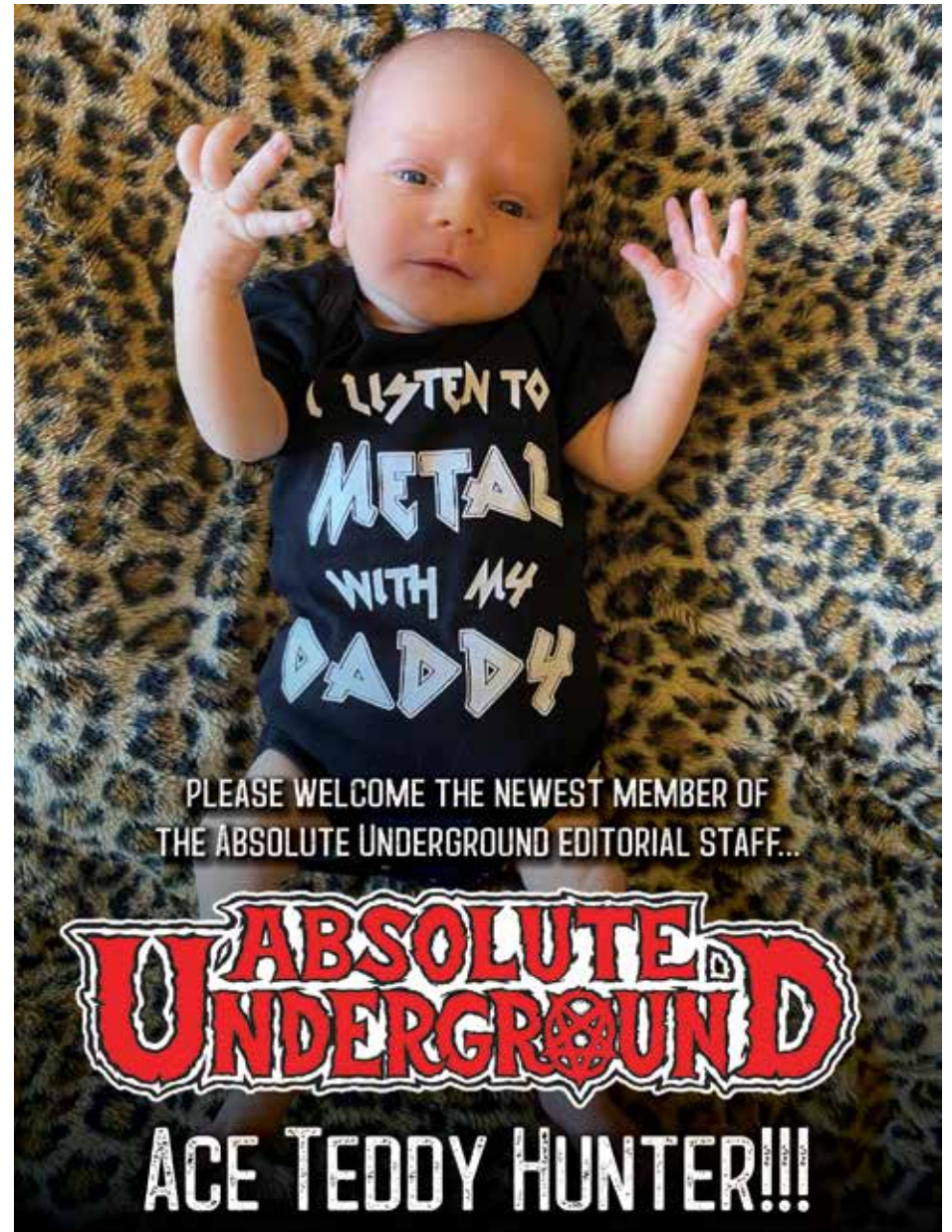
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# VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

MB: I started writing the material probably 8 years ago after Four Defy reached its end. I wanted to play heavier shit. Real fucking metal. Something darker, heavier and moody. I first hashed out the songs with Fraser Patrick who played drums with Four Defy. It kinda fizzled out until one day I saw a post on Facebook. Nick Rees wrote something along the lines of, "Any guitar players out there wanting to casually jam some metal?" I thought, sure I've got some good songs and just opened a restaurant so maybe this would be good for me right now. Turned out we loved playing together. We had good chemistry and rocked out like six or seven tracks. We played a couple times as an instrumental two piece. We figured this shit deserves to really be heard so we started to fill the void.

melo-death.

**AU: Have you released an album?**

MB: We recorded the one three song EP titled "Frozen Wars." It was going to be named *From the Abyss* but UTA had to go and name their Juno award-winning "Heavy Metal Album of the Year," *Abyss*. (My song was written and named long before, fuckers. ;)

**AU: Do your songs explore any particular themes?**

MB: Ya, we kinda have a thing. It all starts with the name "Tiberius Merge". The Tiberius Merge was an event that happened in our fictional universe that changed the natural course for everything. In this place all planets and all stars are just embryos for "The Great Wyrm". The creator of the universe but with no care, spewing fertility with omnipotence and carelessness. Stars were the true power of life and with every dying star was a Leviathan born and black hole behind. The black hole being the wormhole the offspring took to the "Byârrii". The Byârrii is the place beyond the universe called the Crystal Realm where the celestial wyrms live.

In the song "From The Abyss", there is a different timeline of Earth which is affected by our anti-hero "Göestjæll

## Tiberius Merge From The Abyss

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

MB: Marshal Barnaby aka. RA1DR0CK3R

I was in a "drunk rock" band in Calgary for six years that went by the name of Regalia. This was in the late 90s and early 2000s, and although we played a lot and had close to 30 originals we only started to record an album close to the break up of the band. We finished it just before I left for Victoria. That kinda led the whole thing to maybe not getting the notoriety it deserved.

I also played in a (believe it or not) Iced Earth tribute. We were just a three piece. I sang and played the guitar. Finally, I recorded vocals for a project named E.O.N.s with members from Thorazine and Occam's Razor. In Victoria the first band I joined who was instrumental at the time

was the somewhat recently reformed (sans myself) Iron Strike, which has had members from Horde of Anachron, Traitorr, Enchanted Fairies, and the brother of Oli Peters from Archspire.

After that I played in a Children of Bodom and 80s rock inspired band called Four Defy. I did a very quick stint as the vocalist at the end of the life for the band Acolytes of Impurity.

**AU: Who else is in Tiberius Merge?**

MB: Our second guitarist and original bass player Kyle Kim played in Crimson Witch. This is Mat's first band but he's been putting in the work to be a really killer vocalist. Our first drummer Nick Rees was in Lesbian Fist Magnet, Archon Legion and Traitorr. Our current drummer Matt Steele hails from the southern States and was in the band Atrous Leviathan here in Victoria.

**AU: Give us a history of the band, and let us know what you are all about.**



We got Kyle Kim on bass and Mat Blak on vocals who both worked for me at Sült Pierogi Bar. After a short time we were playing shows. Our first one landed us on a bill opening with Pound, The Convalescence and A Feasting Beast. Pretty good gig for our first. At this point we had recorded our three song EP with Andrew Saunders from Unleash The Archers, a long time friend. We had hung out in the scene for years and he had worked for me at a number of restaurants over the years including Sült.

After Andrew played some insanely ripping leads on our EP we felt we needed another player for the Pound show at the "late" Logan's Tavern of the Damned. So knowing our material Andrew agreed to make an appearance. It was a good time and we had a chance to shine. The show went well and we were well received. We played two more shows after and booked a show at Lucky Bar opening for Gross Misconduct and Neck of the Woods. That was gonna be THE SHOW! It was set for April 19th, 2020. That show did not happen...

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

MB: In the conceptual days I wanted to write material that would be accessible. I wanted to be heavy as fuck but I wanted to be heard. I guess at first I was going for something like Gojria, Arch Enemy or Amon Amarth. I originally thought I would sing and scream a mix of vocals. When showing the material to Mat Blak with the intention of getting him to partake, his first comment was, "I'm only in if there's no clean parts." So that's where we went, I had faith.

Now with Mat's gruesome screams and Matt's blasting drums we have a sound that is closer to Rivers of Nihil-meets-Black Dahlia Murder with a touch of the Swedish

Grinndfäll" (or ghosthell) who comes across a magical like dust that can manipulate time. At first, he uses it as a drug, not knowing exactly what it did to him but diluting it heavily for profit whilst becoming quite the intergalactic god. Then very quickly the Davey Jones of outer space. When he travels for his first bending adventure to Earth this dust is sold to some elders of Earth in the ancient days. These elders have a vision of the beginning and with knowledge set to release the fetus within earth. They succeed. When this happens the leviathan is born but without the power of a sun a black hole is not formed. That is when the crack in time and dimension happens, Tiberius Caesar in their time 37 AD and Tiberius Kirk in 2233 Ghosthells time share a consciousness. That is the TIBERIUS MERGE. This concept has turned into the driving force behind all of our writing. We write about the past, the future, this dimension and the other. We have planets, characters and races that all in time will appear. It's truly epic to say the least.

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

MB: "Frozen Wars," tends to be the fan favorite at this point. I am personally really stoked on a couple we haven't recorded just yet.

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

MB: Dress up and get fucking weird. That's a constant for me. I've got a tickle trunk.

**AU: Any upcoming live shows in the works?**

MB: As it stands we are set to play with Unleash The Archers at the Rickshaw Theatre in Vancouver on November 19th and at Capitol City Ballroom in Victoria on Nov 20th. With the way things are right now you need a rebreather to maintain faith that all of this is going to happen.

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

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## SHATTERED THRONE

Interview with Mister Nasty

by Mal Content

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

My name is Mister Nasty and I can't get you pregnant.

**AU: Give us a history of the band.**

We came together over the last year, piece by piece as our previous projects ran their course. With the addition of each new member the band got stronger and more focused. We established our style quickly and the chemistry in this crew is sick as fuck. It feels awesome to be in that room. We are firing on a cylinder and chomping at the bit to get our shit out there...

**AU: Who is in the band and what other bands have you guys been in?**

Vince Borden - bassist/founder.  
Aidan Adamson - drums.  
Phill Henri - guitar.  
Shaun Johnson - guitar.  
And myself Mister Nasty on vocals.  
Our previous bands include Tyrants Blood, Crackwhore, Burialkult, Bad Fist, Muspellheim, Weapon, Cocaine Moustache, Craters, Saints of Death, Snaggletooth and many more. We're a bunch of geriatrics who have been playing in bands since before the internet existed.

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

Crushing, dark deathmetal but the riffs have tons of variety. We've got our own thing going on. A lot of the sections are really catchy and stick in



Everyone brings their own ideas to the table. We like everything from Disavowed to Wesley Willis.

**AU: Incongruous was the original name of band, is it staying the same or are you planning to change it?**

That's changed. We are Shattered Throne. It goes a lot better with what were doing. And Incongruous was taken

**AU: Have you released any recordings yet?**

We are getting ready to record a track or two in Shawn's home studio to get something out there. The front runners are "Legion of Corpses" and "Stench of a Coward/Enemy Mine". Then we will take our time working on a proper album. The engineer we wanted is out of commission for a year so we are on the hunt for the right 6th man. If there are any deadly engineers

my head long after I leave jam.

**AU: Where does the band draw its influences from?**

with a solid resume reading this, hit us up and lets talk..

**AU: What is the current state of live venues in Vancouver? Is there hope for the future?**

It seems like shows are slowly coming back but maybe Horgan and Henry will save us from some new donkey variant and shut everything down again. Who knows anymore. Music is my therapy and keeps me from going postal, but if you're asking about hope for the future, I have very little.

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

We're gonna hand out razor blade apples to children

**AU: Craziest Halloween you can remember?**

My threesome with Saddam Hussein and Smurfette

**AU: Any upcoming live shows in the works?**

We are very close to being stage ready. Polishing the tightness, sharpening the fine details. The plan is to play live this year or very early 2022, barring any more government mandated bullshit.

## VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

**AU: Who are some other wicked local Vancouver bands people should check out?**

Loverboy and Skinny Puppy

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

Aiden can lick his right nipple but not the left.

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

I answered these questions exclusively on the toilet over the course of four bowel movements.

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

Hopefully we have a FB page up by the time this literature hits the streets. If we don't were idiots. The focus has been solely on music up to this point but more effort will start going towards online shit. You caught us a touch early into our existence to be honest, but when AU comes knocking, you answer the door.

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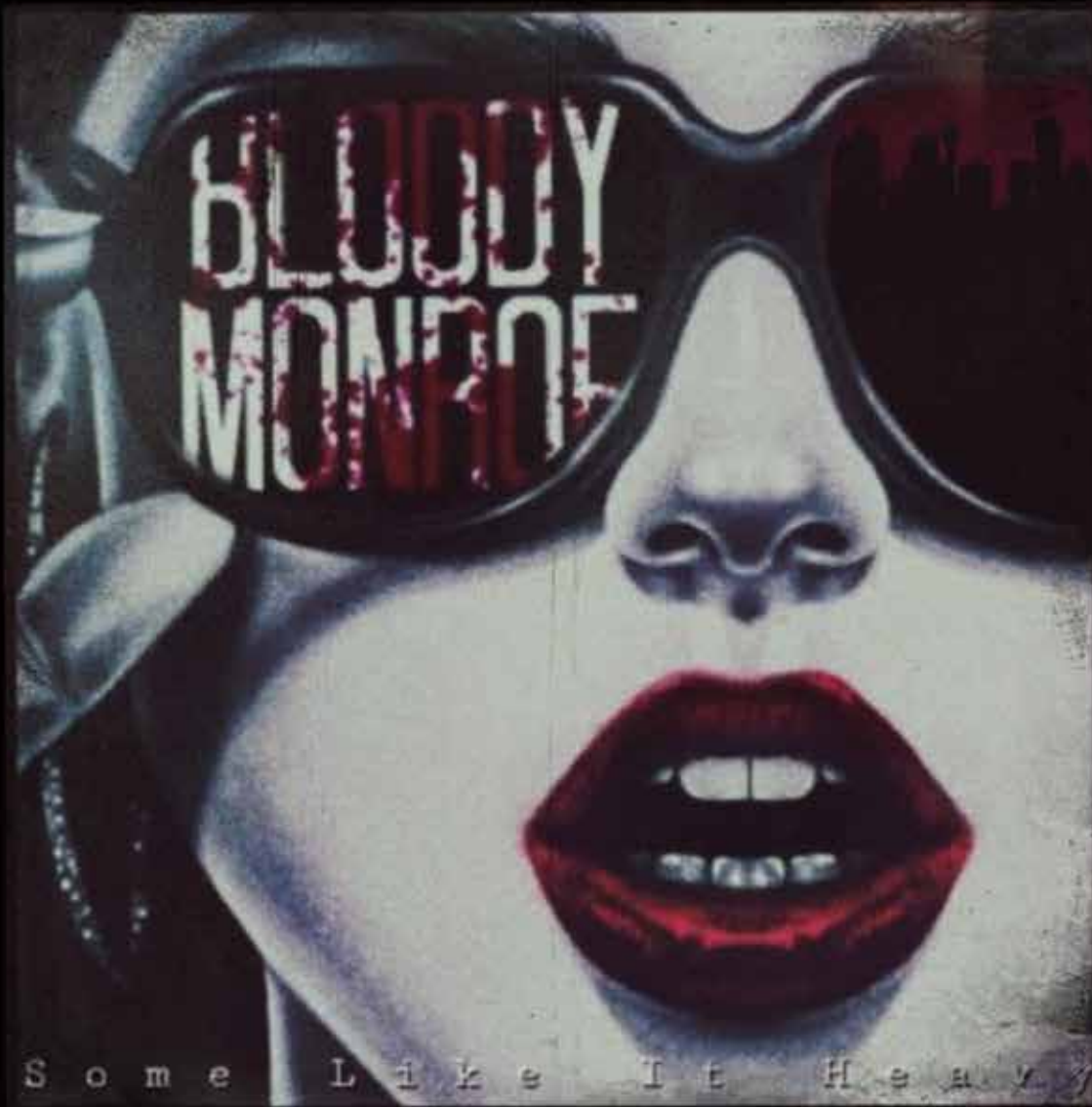


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# WRETCHED WINNIPEG



## Solanum And their new record "Ruled By The Cruel"

by Erik Lindholm

**Fighting out of Winnipeg, Manitoba // words with drummer Anders Land and vocalist Cam McFee**

**Absolute Underground: Good day sirs, and where are you now! What is going on outside your window?**

AL: Hey Erik and *Absolute Underground!* Currently? Just sitting in the back of my 1990 turbo wagon sporting a massive hangover with cup of coffee in and out of WIFI signals before I help my friends clean up the carnage from the night prior.

CM: Standing in my kitchen preparing dinner. Not much going on outside the window, the dogs are running around and generally acting like big dorks.

**AU: What do you do with the band?**

AL: There's Lee, the guitar player, riff writer, arranger and lyricist. Anders, the drummer, riff writer and arranger. And Cam, the vocalist and lyricist.

**AU: Most recent album is *Ruled by the Cruel* released 2021. Feeling the old school thrash vibes! This is a blitzkrieg thrash sound, full**

**of energy with gang vocals and hi-tempo! What are your influences and approach for this record? What do you want to get across to the listener?**

AL: Thank you! We're always psyched when people can get into what we do! First, and foremost, we would like to get enjoyment across to the listener. We really enjoyed writing and recording these songs as well as playing them live. We hope when people listen, they enjoy themselves, be it a riff that sticks out, or a drumbeat and fill that makes them

bang their heads, or a gang vocal that makes them wanna shout along. We just hope to get people stoked!

**AU: Is there a social cause or observation you have for your area, Winnipeg, that people should know about? So they don't get cruel rulers!**

CM: About the only thing I can think of is to encourage people to stay informed when it comes to elections and make their voice heard. Especially considering the bozo who is currently premier closed emergency rooms, cut healthcare and education funding and raised hydro rates right before COVID hit.

**AU: You've been running since 2013, built camaraderie in the band and scene. How have the changes of the last year and the pandemic affected you, and how have you dealt with it?**

AL: Unfortunately, our jam space is located on the top floor of a heritage status government building. So, like most bands around the world we were unable to get together, let alone practice, for a very long time. We even considered busting out the electronic drum kit, and the practice amps for a deck jam in one of our backyards when only outdoor hangouts with no more than 5 people were allowed. But Cam and Lee made the most of it, and would do online Zoom meetings every Friday, and hash out lyrics together for the new songs we had pieced together previously.

We almost got tight enough musically to hit the studio, but then got blindsided by a third wave. Not being able to do what keeps you sane is definitely tough. But we made the most of it. The three of us have a baby or toddler at home, and having them around gave us a sense of purpose, and was also a very nice distraction from the hectic world around us. It also gave us the chance to learn something new as I hope a lot of you were able to realize, you suddenly had the time to either work on yourself, or something you never had any chance to find the time to get into prior to the pandemic. So with that being said, it was tough, but hopefully we all try to make the most out of shitty situations.

**AU: How did the band get started? What are some of your influences in playing music?**

AL: The band got started in Lee's basement in the winter of 2011 using a whole bunch of garbage gear. My "drums" were left behind from an old roommate and I used stacked milk crates as a drum throne for the first couple years... There was a real tight knit group of us going to shows who loved certain types of thrash and we started hanging out and messing around with some covers for fun. Think we covered bands like Destruction, Razor, DRI, Evildead, Cro-Mags and Excel. None of us thought starting this band would bring future opportunities to one day share the stage with some of those bands.

As far as influences go, it's hard to pin down outside of old style thrash and crossover. Generally when we've seen reviews of our material, the person doing the reviewing comes to their own conclusions and lists artists that we hadn't even thought of! Ha!

**AU: What are touring and show goals looking like in the rest of 2021 for your band? Is there someone you want to reach to, to play with?**

AL: Honestly, with shows not happening as of yet, we really want to focus on getting our next recording all finished up. The three of us (Cam, Lee, and myself) wrote five brand new songs for a

new E.P. in between lockdowns. I feel it's probably our strongest material to date. So, having not jammed with a five piece in almost two years due to parting with our previous bass player and guitar player after recording *RBTC*, and having a successful first jam with two new members just last week, we think we'll focus on getting them comfortable and seeing what they can add to our sound. It's so exciting to be able to get together and have that full sound going again. Our goal is to sound more pissed off than ever before, shouldn't be too hard after you, me and the next guy have all been affected by the global situation in one way or another. Hopefully we can get back into the swing of things by the start of 2022 and share the stage with our friends and some of our favourite bands once again!

**AU: What else did you want to focus on today, this is the freeplay zone!**

AL: The pandemic has done a number on a ton of good hardworking people. If anyone reading is financially able to, try to support people, businesses and artists you love! Something as simple as ordering a T-shirt on Bandcamp or leaving a nice tip at a local food truck goes a long way. Much love to everyone out there, and be sure to take care yourself, both physically and mentally.

**AU: Final words to readers of the magazine today, what do you want to let them know:**

AL: There's been lot's of obstacles over the years but just know there's no chance of us slowing down anytime soon. As of last week, we're a five piece again and set to record our new E.P. "MAD RACKET" this fall 2021 and then getting straight to writing new riffs for our third album. Thanks to everyone for taking the time to read this interview, and thanks to Erik from *Absolute Underground* for having us be a part of it!

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## Megadragon

**A Beer Guzzling Megazord is on the Loose!**

Interview with Nathan Paul (vocals)

By Ryan Dyer

A monster has been terrorizing the coastal city of Qingdao and drinking all of their beer for the past while – a dragon made up of Irish, American and British appendages – who have come together to form the Megadragon. Wearing dripping corpse paint and performing metal which is part black metal, part death metal, part storytelling metal, ala GWAR, the band just finished their cross country tour of China. With no time to rest, and build their strength for the next show, I tracked down the dragon to give up an interview for the fleeing peasants.

**Absolute Underground: How did you all get together to form the megazord known as Megadragon?**

NP: Short version – drinking beer (no need to read further). Longer version, Peter (lead guitarist)

and I (vocals) were roommates for a several years until spring 2019 when we happened upon a lost looking man named Josh who claimed he was skilled in the ways of the bass. Not long after that and much to our relief, a metal drumming god named Nabil came out of the woodwork. Lastly, our rhythm guitarist Daniel joined the ranks last spring, and the megazord was complete.

**AU: Every Megadragon song tells a different story - how does the band decide what topic to turn into a Megadragon track?**

NP: Normally the band first writes the music and the theme and lyrics of the song come second. We aim to achieve variety of emotions from our music, from ominous to awe-inspiring, from tragic to comical, so we meditate on what stories can achieve the emotional tones we're looking for. Typically, we look for these narratives in history, mythology, or sci-fi. Then we write lyrics and fuse the two together. Boom.

**AU: I particularly like "Pulgasari." Do you have any more quirky song ideas along the same lines?**

NP: "Pulgasari" is one of our personal favorites too (at our shows in Qingdao, we even have a one of our friends dress up in a full body Pulgasari suit we made from left over packaging and old yoga mats enter the mosh pit). At the moment, we have what I guess could be defined as a quirky song written, but we have settled on a theme for it yet. Our next two tracks we aim to release soon are about the black hole in the center of the Milky Way and Dante's Inferno. Not particularly quirky, but hopefully they'll have their own unique charm.

**AU: What are your current plans - a full length album, more music videos?**

NP: Well, we just finished our first official tour last month, so apart from releasing the music videos and songs I mentioned above, we wish to write some new music. Our tastes and talents as musicians have evolved, so the plan is to update our set list with some more technical rhythms and melodies.

**AU: Wearing stage outfits always makes bands**

**stand out, as seen with Scare the Children, Zuriaake and others. What is the concept behind Megadragon's stage wear?**

NP: Haha, to be honest, we don't really have a concept. We just want our audience to enjoy our show, so we leaned into it. I think we wrote some half-baked lore behind it at one point, but for now it's just for the hell of it.

**AU: Do you feel a sense of kinship from the other foreign bands in the country?**

NP: We have had the honor of sharing the stage with epic foreign bands such as Scare the Children, Rat King, Deprive, Round Eye, and Chimera Cult, but we thoroughly enjoy bringing the brutality with the legendary local bands as well, i.e. Impure Injection, Armed Conflict, Dream Spirit, Eternal Power, and Many Faced God. Being a band completely comprised of expats, the guidance and support from these other bands, regardless of where they are from is always treasured. So in nut shell, we feel a sense of kinship, but it's not limited to just the expat community.

**AU: How have they helped if at all with the feeling out process of being a serious band in China?**

NP: Well generally, the other bands have been very helpful in providing us with feedback on our performances, helping us find new communities and new venues to perform in. The local bands have been incredibly helpful in assisting us to get our music on the Chinese based services, such as Bilibili and Netease, helping us in getting our merch designed with quality, and helping us to find places to record and practice. I'd like to give a special shout out to Gore of Impure Injection, who has invited us to perform with him in Zibo many times and has consistently promoted our music.

**AU: What is a touring frustration that people may not know about?**

NP: I guess people can imagine how battling your hangovers throughout the day while lugging all your gear and merch around can be, but organizing the entire thing can be a mountain of

## ABSOLUTE ASIA

a task – finding the venues, contacting the other bands, making the flyers, finding the hotels that can accept foreigners, figuring out the trains, the list goes on and on. Praise Cthulhu, our drummer's wife had joined us for our tour – having her on the team to help us figure out all the logistics was a game changer! Thank you Yoki! Also, last summer was hotter than hell itself, so washing our stage clothes... well, that definitely didn't happen as much as we would have hoped.

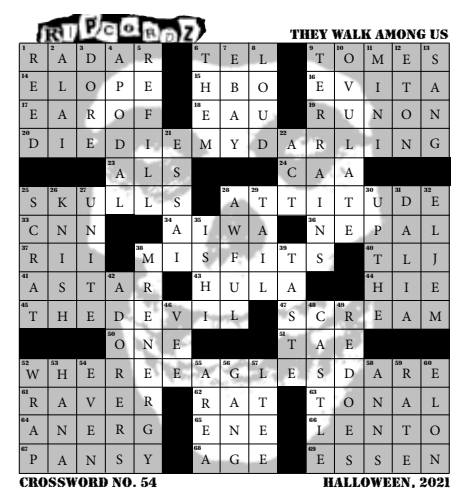
**AU: You just finished a pretty big tour. Once this COVID shit is a complete memory, where would you like to fly the Megadragon?**

NP: We are hoping to tour our home countries once we can, so the UK and US, but hitting up the region would be pretty sweet as well, such as Japan and Korea. Southeast Asia is pretty appealing as well.

<https://www.instagram.com/megadragonofficial>

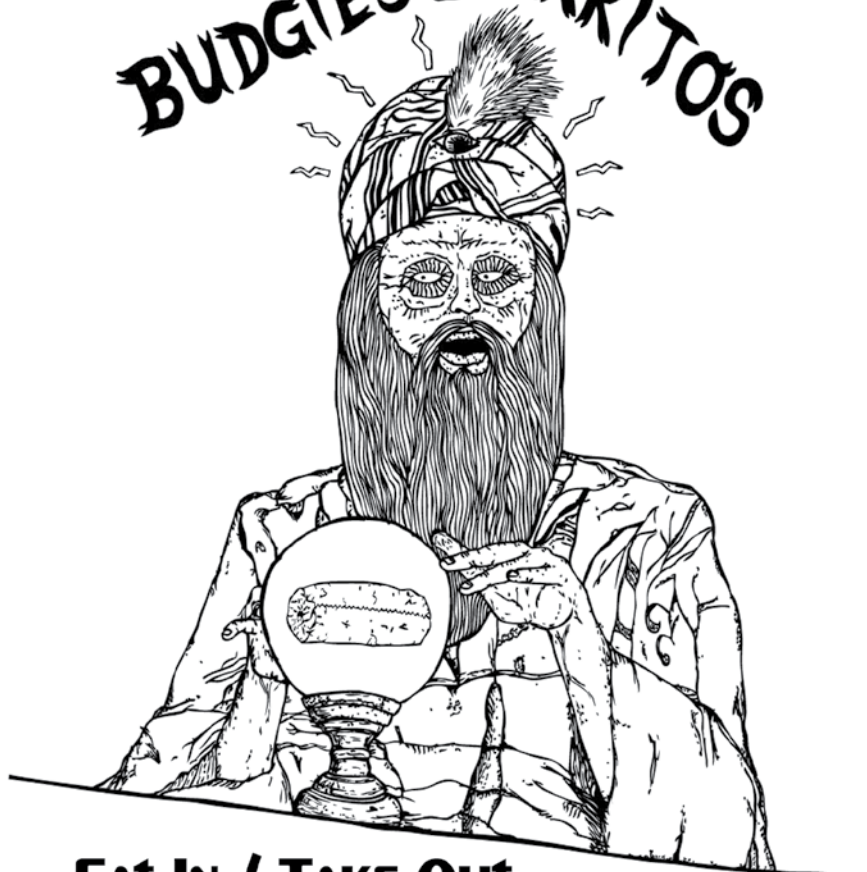
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## Bishops Green

Interview with drummer Orville Lancaster and vocalist Greg Huff

By Chuck Andrews

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

Orville Lancaster: You're talking to the drummer.

Greg Huff: And you're talking to the singer of Bishops Green. Troy Zak - Bass & Rob Switzer - guitar were not able to make the interview today.

**AU: Are Rob and Troy new additions to the band?**

OL: That's right, Rob and Troy are our new guitar and bass player. They've been in the band for like two years now. They're really awesome people.

**AU: What's the band's mission statement?**

GH: I would say, to keep writing, staying relevant, putting out music and trying to tour. Write good songs and good lyrics that people can relate to.

OL: Sing about things one observes in their every day.

GH: Yeah, write songs that are relatable to people and easy to sing along to. We want people to have a good time at our shows.

OL: To add, Bishops Green provides us with an opportunity to see things, travel and to learn



about other people. You learn so much when you go to play different cities. It's a little different everywhere you go, and a little bit the same, all at the same time.

GH: Lots of parking lot talks. I always go out into the crowd in the parking lot and just chit chat with people and say, "How's your life going?", "What's it like?" "What do you do for work?" "Are you doing ok?"

**AU: What countries and continents have you guys played and how many times?**

OL: It's actually our 10th anniversary this year. We first went to Europe in 2014, and we have been back

at least twice a year since then. We've toured the East Coast and West Coast of the States. We've played Texas, Mexico, Colombia to a variety of really big crowds. I think the biggest crowd we played was maybe 7000 people, which are really pants shitting, scary experiences.

GH: Fuck ya! I remember looking out at the crowd and I said... "Fuck!, You go first Orv." and Orv.'s like "No you go Greg," "No, you go."

OL: Chuck you've known us since The Lancasters, and you know we haven't really changed all that much, it's been a crazy journey, Greg is basically a rock star in Germany! I'm not kidding, it's been crazy.

**AU: I know, I've seen pictures of people with tattoos of Greg on them.**

GH: I know it's weird. It's pretty flattering but weird.

**AU: They look up to you guys. They look up to**

**your music, lyrics and the fact that you're good people.**

**Where do you plan to go in the future?**

GH: We are just planning our May 2022 tour for Europe. Then we will go back for pretty much all August for the festivals, and then maybe back again in November. To answer the question, our future is, we want to record, release new music, videos, singles, seven inches, albums, and tour as much as we can, until we can't.

OL: As long as viruses don't fucking mess everything up!

GH: We just finished recording seven songs of brand new material.

OL: We've just released a video for "Waiting" [a song released last year through Pirates Press Records] and a new video for "We Decide."

GH: That's right, those songs are from last year.

OL: Ya, we finished those in 2020, it's been so fucked up because of COVID, like everything else, things are just all backed up. Then as Greg just mentioned, we have a whole new series of songs to be released.

GH: That's right, seven new songs.

OL: Seven that are just being mixed now or just about ready to be mixed. And then on top of that, we're going back into the studio again. So when we're talking about music now, the stuff that you haven't heard is old to us. You know what I mean?

**AU: Yeah, I see what you mean.**

OL: There is a lot going on, the re-issue of our first three releases, new material in the cue for pressing, and new recordings ready to be mixed. We run as an independent band, we have built a really strong relationship with Pirates Press Records, and the people who take care of our bookings for North America, South America and Europe. So many people that work with us. Those relationships are really important, they allow us to focus on playing live music and being creative.

GH: We have the "Waiting" 12 inch coming out,

## PIRATES PRESS RECORDS

"We Decide" was on last years Garry Bushell comp, and "Working Poor" was released on a Pirates Press compilation. All three of those songs are going to be on the "Waiting" 12 inch on the A-Side, and on the B-side there will be three live songs that we did at the Rickshaw last June.

GH: We also just finished recording seven new songs with Jay Solyom, we are just starting to mix. And we will be going back into the studio in early November. "Waiting" will be the first to be released, it is new to our followers, but it's old to us.

**AU: I hear that the self-titled EP and both LPs that you guys put out are getting re-released. Are there going to be any new features about any of these three? Expanded liner notes, perhaps?**

GH: Gold. The re-released cover art will be kind of bronze, gold. There's no special art, nothing like a zipper on the box that opens up that reveals something creepy, or squirts out tuna oil!

OL: They are just being repressed and circulated, we've done really well with those records, they've been repressed a bunch of times.

GH: I think the self-titled has five or six pressings, *Pressure* has four or five.

OL: *A Chance to Change* is three. We've done really well as an independent band. We also have a pretty good following on Spotify and different streaming sites.

OL: All three have also been re-released on CD by Rebellion Records. Those will be available on our website.

[www.bishopsgreen.ca](http://www.bishopsgreen.ca)

[www.piratespressrecords.com](http://www.piratespressrecords.com)

**Black and White Live Photo Credit: Kirby Cam To Be Continued Next Issue...**



## RAVENOUS

### AU: What are the origins of the band?

The band came together in 2016 as R. A. Voltaire's "brainchild" after backpacking across Europe to several festivals and feeling inspired - the idea was to blend the best parts of Thrash/Speed Metal, Power Metal, Black Metal and Progressive Metal into anthemic Metal bangers.

### AU: How would you describe your music?

We would describe our music in five words - Canadian Symphonic Speed Metal, eh?

### AU: Ravenous has a new album "Hubris" out Oct 22nd via Feast Beast Records and Spiritual Beast for Asia, what more can ya share with us?

Musically, the album is the marriage of European Anthemic Power Metal and American Speed Metal. The casual Power Metal listener will be satisfied with a tight album chock full of catchy hooks and fun themes, while those that dive deeper into the album will discover the hidden layers.

### AU: How was it working with the albums guests Vincent 'Jake' Jones and Heinrich Yoshio of Aether Realm, Mathias Blad of Falconer, Nina Osegueda of A Sound of Thunder and The Dread Crew of Oddwood and how did you get them to be involved on the full length?

Every guest was amazing to work with - Nina from 'A Sound of Thunder' performed phenomenally, Mathias Blad blew us out of the water by layering

his own harmonies and dynamics into the track, the entire 'Dread Crew of Oddwood' had a lot of fun putting their pirate stamp on our song 'Claw is the Law' (as well as a tasty accordion solo...), and Jake and Heinrich of Aether Realm were professional to the max!

### AU: We understand that your new album is a concept record?

Literally, the album tells 10 stories from various sources all surrounding Hubris, the notion of arrogance and the hunger for power, resulting in the

demise of the story's main characters - beneath the surface, hidden messages are scattered throughout various lyrical lines that pertain to the band's real-life experiences.

### AU: For your Japanese version of "Die 1000 Deaths" ft. Heinrich Yoshio, how was singing in Japanese for your vocalist R.A. Voltaire?

No one in the band is fluent in Japanese, however, we enlisted the help of our good friend Pete Klassen from Striker, who lived in Japan for several years and is fluent! We showed the song to our label in Japan 'Spiritual Beast' and they said the pronunciation was perfect!

### AU: You had the album mixed and mastered by Fredrik Nordstrom (In Flames, Opeth, Firewind), how was it working with him?

Freddy was a gem to work with, in his own "Surly Swedish Uncle" kind of way! He doesn't sugar-coat things. He originally contacted us, as we had our friend Robert Kukla from Obsidian Studios working on our vocal editing next door to Studio Fredman. The story goes... Rob was editing our song 'March of Hunger' and Freddy walked by, asking "Who is this?" - when Rob told him, Freddy replied, "This is the cheesiest thing I've ever heard - I HAVE to mix this!" And the rest is Canadian-Swedish Heavy Metal history!

### AU: You have toured with bands like Alestorm, Hammerfall, Delain, Powerglove, and Striker, were any of them a favourite?

There's always stories when playing with bands

from various countries, each one with their own set of personalities and antics. Striker are childhood friends, so touring with them was like being on a family road trip, whereas Powerglove are newer friends, so it was more like hanging with homies from out of town! Hammerfall and Delain were both very early in our musical career, so we didn't have much contact, but the Alestorm tour was very significant, both in every show being sold out, and hitting a certain caliber of rapport and professionalism. They made us feel very welcome as "the local band that didn't suck and got the fuck off stage on time".

### AU: Any plans to tour Canada or Japan to support the new album?

Our Japanese tour plans have been put on hold thanks to COVID-19, and it isn't making it any easier for us to tour Canada either. We have opted to play locally and focus on our online marketing, and make a run of the festival circuit for 2022. Our only confirmed appearances are our listening party and beer release (we have a beer coming out...) at New Level Brewing in Calgary, our live DVD filming in Edmonton at the Starlite Room, and our local CD release in Calgary at Dickens.

### AU: Your live set is a full costume and theatrical presentation, what can the first-time fan expect from a Ravenous performance?

Our outfits are an accentuator, but don't actually play into our show like GWAR or Alice Cooper. First-time fans can expect it to be akin to going to a Queen show in their early pub days, but with fast-riffs, blast beats, and more crowd-singing than you can shake a claw at!

### AU: How did you find it working on and releasing this album during Covid?

Absolutely horrible, and amazing. Let us explain... COVID-19 has not only decimated our ability to book shows, tour, and even physically write together, it also backlogged all the pressing plants, pushing wait times for vinyl over a year. On the other hand, it also opened up several doors with guest musicians because they all had nothing going on! It was easy to simply ask for their involvement. It also gave us the time to

# CALGARY CARNAGE

write, and most artists will tell you, they write their best material when distressed, angry, in a bad place, etc... The lockdowns were a labyrinth of emotions, mental health breakdowns, and poor dietary choices... what better time to channel all of that into a new album!?

### AU: How would you sum up 2020 and how do you think 2021/2022 will turn out?

2020 was essentially a blackout in our mental hard drives, as we spent it just surviving like most others. With 2021 wrapping up, we have hope and faith in the future, and are already seeing signs of a promising future for the band and our industry! Despite restrictions, we managed to sell \$14,000 in pre-orders, almost sell out our local release parties, hit a 9.8/10 average rating on all reviews, get radio play in several countries, and kick off new side-projects and collaborations with other international artists. We believe we'll be ready to kick 2022's ass on the festival circuit, and we hope to see our industry and the other bands in it doing the same - now is our time to rise!

### AU: We read that a Grizzly Bear crashed your Hubris band photoshoot and you scared it away by bantering THE CLAW IS THE LAW!?

Luckily the bear didn't think we were tasty enough of a snack, but it certainly brings ideas to mind of bringing in a wider variety of animalities into our music.

### AU: Any final thoughts you'd like to share?

If you really want to support our industry and the bands you love, buy things off BandCamp instead of streaming them on Spotify... Go to shows and buy merch... Hell, even if you can't go, buy their merch online! Streaming services are slowly but surely devaluing everything we do. Feed the scene, it's a hungry beast! But one that'll embrace you and build you up like none other.

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

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## Real Sickies

Interview with Ben Disaster  
By AU Editorial

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

Ben Disaster: Hi my name is Ben Disaster, infamous huh... that's a good one. Like the evil side of it? Or positive side? Either or I'm not to sure.. maybe swinging the mic around? Otherwise

THIS IS POP!! Oh I also chew my nails a lot. That and my catch phrase...YEAH!!

### AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?

BD: The band has been around for a while now, this will be our fourth LP in the last four years. Before that we just kinda made demos and had some down time due to health issues.

Since our first LP we've been working hard and touring when we can. Our friend Sarah named the band, Rob asked me to sing. He had some demos he was working on but couldn't really figure out

the notes, I guess. He hummed them through the phone and Evan learnt the part. That was the start anyway. After that we moved from jam space to jam space setting up temporary recording stations and recording new songs as they were written. The band just kept forming to what ever situation we found ourselves in really.

### AU: Tell us about the album you released in July! What will we hear on it when we check it out?

BD: This one I'm pretty happy with, it's definitely been in the works for a while. We sat down in a circle before recording it and talked about what we wanted for sounds and where we wanted to take it. It's a fairly diverse album that somehow relevant to its self. We typically get a lot of Ramones comparisons which is not a bad thing at all. We also stepped out side of our wheelhouse and put a few country "ish" ballads on there. There's some rager tracks as well and some nods to acts we like such as T. Rex and a Easter egg of Bowie.

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

BD: *Love is for Lovers* explores the ranges of emotions when connecting to oneself and other individuals. It touch a base on equality for all and excepting faults at the same time.



### AU: Does *Love is for Lovers* represent an evolution in the sound of the band?

BD: I would say so? I mean each album is an evolution of sorts. Sometimes you evolve moving forward sometimes you evolve moving backwards. All I can really say is we didn't make the same album and we hope our fans enjoy it.

### AU: Tell us about the music video you released recently! What's it all about and where can we watch it?

BD: So far we released two videos for this LP. One for "Love Is For Lovers." That one is about the oppression that can sometimes surround love and couples. It's about the

uncomfortable conversations you have to have with family members over holidays I guess. It's a little tongue and cheek to show how ridiculous it is to not be able to accept ones love for another. "Communication Breakdown" - this one is about things falling apart when you can't properly converse with someone. It's two pilots stuck in this weird time travel loop where things constantly go wrong. There's and outside person trying to fix the situation but not being able to actually get in touch with them they have to travel to the future and send them back to the correct course. Spoiler alert.. they die.

You can check both these out on YouTube

### AU: Do you have any plans for more music videos?

BD: For sure, we like to make a few videos for each album. We have another one coming out called "Destructive Nights / Love Degenerate". I'm pretty excited for this one, it's got two new Sickies in it that we hired from the Edmonton actors guild. They re-discover

themselves and the love they have for each other and their favourite band The Love Degenerates. That one will be out soon actually. I'm also playing with some other ideas for other tunes as well. We will see.

### AU: Do you have any live gigs or tours in the works? Where and when can we see you play?

BD: We have a few things coming up in the near future and then some things coming later on. For immediate shows we have Calgary, Sept 3rd at Palomino, Edmonton Sept 4th at 9910, Hinton Sept 5th. Rossland and another City the following weekend.

After that just a few things scattered here and there till May, June and July 2022. Maybe a western Canada tour this March but who knows how things go this day and age?

### AU: Do you have any other projects or groups you want to hype?

BD: Alex and I both have radio shows at CJSR 88.5 fm. "Big A little a" and "THIS IS POP!" We'd also like to give shout outs to Sister Suzie, Sorels, Smelters (we like "s" bands apparently.. also Languid and No Problem!

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

BD: That you like us?

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

BD: Be kind and let Rod sort them out.

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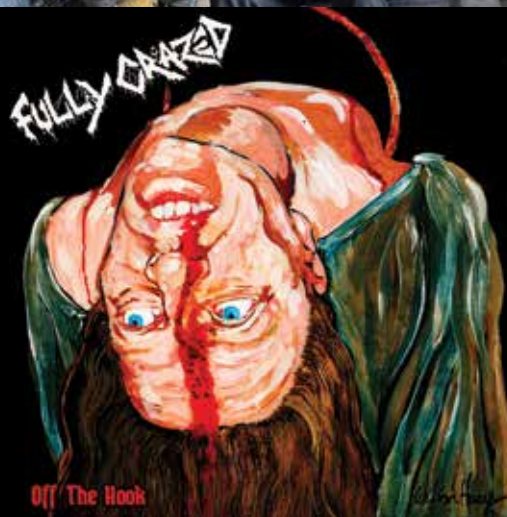
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## White Cowbell Oklahoma

**AU: More Cowbell... How many times have ya heard that line?**

**Clem C. Clemson:** Well, yeah... we get a lot of that Walken meme posted on our social media. Funny, the thing is, you ought to be asking us what the origins of that SNL skit are in the first place. WCO pre-dates it by a while, and we were hanging with a lot of top comics at the time, and well, you'll just have to wait till the next interview for that answer. We like to think it's our contribution to civilization.



**AU: Who is White Cowbell Oklahoma, and how do you milk the crowd?**

**CCC:** White Cowbell Oklahoma is a quantum-headed beast from deep time and space. It first appeared on this plane in 1999, manifested as a nine-guitar, two drummer toting monstrosity

in Toronto. After that crash course in economics (also known as the "first tour") we realized that we should pare it down. It became a 20-fisted rock monster that has toured across Europe and North America countless times. We have eight albums of genius music. The band core is smaller now, but we send out the Bat Signal to the alumni when their powers are required to vanquish evil. As for milking, we use the old-fashioned stool and bucket method. Anything we do, we first ask "what would they do in 1973?" So stool and bucket it is.

**AU: You have a new and first rarity album of unreleased music entitled "Textos Raros - Vol. 1 - 2001-2011", what more can ya tell us?**

**CCC:** Like everyone else, WCO had some downtime to go down to the secret underground laboratory (not the BDSM basement, that's another place) to dig through the old tapes and archives. We found all manner of genius music. Early recordings from 2001, out-of-print b-sides, studio jams, live tracks from

Europe's biggest hippy freak fest, plus a bitchin' cover of Deep Purple's "Black Night" that had been done live in one take in the last ten minutes of a studio session. All from 2001-2011. We'll have a Vol. 2 later for subsequent gems.

**AU: You use power tools as instruments on stage? How did that come to be? Which power tool is the best for music-making?**

**CCC:** Well, as genius as we know ourselves to be, we weren't the first to use power tools on stage - Wendy O Williams did it with the Plasmatics, as did Einstürzende Neubauten and many more I'm sure. Our guy Chainsaw Charlie decided (unsurprisingly) to specialize in the chainsaw to decimate props, but he also employs a grinder on his cowbell. There is also a leaf blower filled with faux-caine. You'll have to come to the show (and/or check YouTube) for more details.

**AU: Ever get a fan quote or sing the Oklahoma musical to band members? Has the band ever considered covering Oklahoma!**

**CCC:** I did find a soundtrack in a dollar bin once, and it did cross our minds once. However I never actually got around to listening to that record. However, I recently watched a movie called Topsy Turvy, about Gilbert & Sullivan, so we're now adapting some of their works for the stage.

## TORONTO TRASH

Maybe. It depends on how much the adult film stars cost.

**AU: Any plans for live shows? How is Toronto's live scene at the moment with Covid?**

**CCC:** We do plan on having our annual X-MESS in Toronto this December. I guess we'll see what we're allowed to do - we're used to having several hundred drunken maniacs enjoying bedlam with us. Toronto's scene is picking up, but it's still sit-down table shows. I'm not sure how much I'm into that kinda cabaret stuff. But we'll see. THINGS WILL GET WEIRD AGAIN! In a good way.

**AU: Opinion on Covid passports for events?**

**CCC:** Yeah we're all for whatever. Take my blood. Let me offer a urine test at the venue door. I'm weird that way.

**AU: Any final thoughts to share?**

**CCC:** We're less about thinking and more about doing. BUT WHITE COWBELL OKLAHOMA SHALL COME TO GET YOUR EYES AND EARHOLES OFF AS SOON AS WE CAN, CANADA!!!!

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## CroMagnum

**AU: Who is CroMagnum and what do you do?**  
CroMagnum is a Heavy Metal band from the frosty bowels of Montreal, Québec, Canada!!!

What we do is slay the ice giants that threaten our land with brutal, heavy and melodic metal!!! Live crowds seem to enjoy it as well...

**AU: You just released your new EP "Born Free" what can you tell our readers about it?**

Years in the making!!! Through trials and tribulations, from the muck of the bottom of the bog to the top of the mountain, it's finally here! A definite remedy to the insanity of the world right now... *BORN FREE* is basically a simple philosophy: Now, more than ever, we must assert ourselves, follow our own path, and hold strong on our true convictions, even in the face of all the adversity that gets thrown our way... That's what this EP is all about!!!

**AU: You're offering a self-produced comic book with "Born Free" entitled "Bigg Baby: Tales**



**From The Id", what can you tell us about this?**  
The story from issue one is also entitled "BORN FREE", and it deals with the same concepts and philosophies as the EP... I was creating both at the same time. BIGG BABY serves the same basic purpose as when I compose songs: It's just a much more healthy way to channel my rage at the indignities of the world...

**AU: What inspired you to add a comic for fans?**  
Rage. Pure rage.

**AU: Speaking of Comic Books... Is there an ultimate comic book character that should be read while listening to CroMagnum?**

Literally, the first guy that comes to mind is LOBO!!! Yes!!! Anything by Simon Bisley, the Keith Giffen mini INFANTICIDE is great too...

**AU: Random Rapid Fire vs. Comic Heroes, who would win?**

**Wolverine vs Batman:** Wolverine  
**Spider-Man vs Wonder Woman:** Wonder Woman  
**Thor vs Colossus:** Thor

**AU: CroMagnum is based out of Montreal. Besides it being a mecca for Metal in Canada, let's go off-topic and talk about what readers really enjoy... Poutine!**

There are a lot of great poutine places to choose from, I would definitely recommend Poutineville!

**AU: How would you sum up 2020? And how do you think 2021/2022 will turn out?**

2020 sucked for shows, but was great for recording our EP... I think that unfortunately, all of 2021 will be more of the same... I'm keeping the hope alive that things will get better in 2022, but I'm not holding my breath.

**AU: We read that unfortunately CroMagnum has a "Spinal Tap level change of musicians"**  
The Tap have had their multiple drummers, but CroMagnum never ever expected to have such a revolving door for the bass position. To date, CroMagnum has had eight bass players! Gino

LaPosta has withstood the longest...

**AU: What's the secret to keeping Gino around?**  
I have no idea, most people tell me I'm too demanding (Maybe they're not demanding enough?), so it must be my scintillating personality. Yeah, that's it.

**AU: Any plans for live shows? How's Montreal's live scene at the moment with Covid?**  
Still complicated, limited numbers are imposed, and I honestly don't like the idea of playing for vaxxed people and supporting a place that would

# MONTREAL MASSACRE

keep the unvaxxed out. That stuff is despotic... Time will tell, but not for now...

**AU: Opinion on Covid passports for events?**  
Any system we use to discriminate and separate people is wrong, no matter what the reason, and I do not support it one bit.

**AU: Any final thoughts to share?**  
Check us out at cromagnum.ca for songs and merch! Thanks y'all!!!

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# BLAST FROM THE PAST

## APRIL WINE



### Welcome back Past Blasterz to AU issue#102 Harlequin/April Wine Canada Tour 1981 part 2 by Clark Mantei

We return to the floor of the Memorial Arena in Victoria B.C. July 31, 1981.

It is the intermission prior to April Wine taking the stage.

Having played a stellar set of songs, the band Harlequin set the mood for more.

Pour it on... Next up... APRIL WINE, a band from Eastern Canada formed in 1969.

Here in '81 they are touring in support of their 9th studio LP *The Nature of the Beast*

As I was roaming and prowling the open floor (in my leopard skin sleeveless silk shirt...

ladies?) amongst rock-ready locals out for a good time, a funky fragrance in the air added to the ambience of the pre-show vibe. With houselights up and the P.A. blasting songs of the day, the audience readied themselves for a summer journey to the stars (with rock'n'roll guitars).



I knew very little of April Wine at this time in my 14 year life, yet I had memorized their new album and it was surreal to be there on that special nite. The air felt electric as I was about to experience April Wine alive in concert. I was animalized.

When the lights went down a vibe of high anticipation flowed through my veins like an adrenaline surge.

I was in front of stage-left looking at the amazing drum set from the hi-hat side. Purrfect spot for a budding drummer.

The band entered the stage in the darkness and I saw the drummer take his seat. 'Showtime'

"GOOD EVENING VICTORIA - Please welcome APRIL WINE!"

I was awestruck with the opening song as the drummer started banging on a 'firebell' as siren style lights simultaneously spun around in multiple colors as I came to grips of the sonic attack on my senses within a song I'd never heard that was kicking my skinny ass. *Oowatanite* was the song as the stage came alive in Memorial Arena for a memorable night of sound and spectacle.

That initial song etched into my rock n roll soul as the band had just begun. The crowd roared as the second song hit the speakers. *Future Tense* was the song that started side 2 of the new LP and I sang along loudly. Next was *Crash and Burn*, a speedy rippin' rock'n'roller that let everyone know the 'Beast was out of the cage,' They were here to

play Rock and Roll for us. Naturally too!

The ringleader of April Wine is guitarist/singer Myles Goodwyn, an original member from 1969 until today in 2021. He leads the band and is the main songwriter too.

By 1981 Myles had mastered the craft of writing and performing with April Wine for over a decade and this era was in fact 'Harder/Faster' in terms of songwriting. 1979 thru to 1984 was a great time to see April Wine as their popularity was at a high in the Canadian music industry. I'm thrilled I was able to embrace the band during this period. What a Blast, eh?

A great drummer, bassist and 3 guitarists too. Jerry, Steve, Myles, Gary, and Brian.

I had stared at that LP cover front and back for a couple weeks and all of a sudden they were right here right now and kicking ass in my hometown. Myles introduces the band announcing the new LP and they play the opening track *All Over Town*, as epic as the vinyl. Then came the big radio hit *Just Between You and Me* which was in heavy rotation on local stations This was the only slow song of the night.

I had yet to discover their past albums and how diverse they truly were, yet this was my initiation to sheer rock and roll brilliance. Then guitarist Brian Greenway performed his own composition *Before the Dawn*, a bluesy ballad type rocker which has a slow middle section that finds him belting out a howl like no other echoing Robert Plant and lifting the song to a massive pyro explosion that blasted my ears and eyes and shook my bone marrow to the core. One song in particular showcased the outstanding musical skills this band could perform. It was a song called *21st Century Schizoid Man* (originally from King Crimson) and to this day that song remains a showstopper.

Another memory that strikes me was the song *Sign Of The Gypsy Queen*, also a radio hit during that summer. To me this song made the night as it started with Gary Moffet doing a guitar solo leading into it. During the middle section a slow hypnotic change happens for a blissful bluesy guitar solo by guitarist Brian Greenway (a member since 1977 when April Wine became a 5 piece unit). The music slows as the dry ice flows over the drum riser to the stage and through the crowd. Draped in dry ice, the strobe lights along with the solo transfix the audience into a hypnotic state as the solo peaked into a blistering climax... and then kicked back into the chorus. Fantastic memory.

Another highlight was the solo by drummer Jerry Mercer (a member since the 3rd LP). He wore a kimono and gloves with a shiny bald head and arms like Popeye. His drum solo featured him also draped in a strobe light timed perfectly to his solo as he lifted one stick at a time high up above his head and altered each arm, along with his body standing up and down, matched in time to the lights he started slow on the snare and gradually sped into a fury of speed adding his double bass drums in an audio/visual frenzy until it exploded into bright lights as he stood up to embrace the adulation. "Jerry Mercer on the drums" then back

into the song *I Like To Rock* as all 4 members on guitars and bass are standing high up on a stage above him. At this point a giant APRIL WINE logo appeared brightly behind them. So cool. What showmen! What a stage! What a band!

A natural high that brought out a beast within me that night. I was dosed by April Wine and I wanted more as the band left the stage. No one went away as lighters flicked on as we cheered aloud awaiting more of their musical magical energy.

Alas the encore... taking up their instruments again they kicked into *Wanna Rock* (a Ramones type rocker) which is one of my faves from that summer. Finally they ended with *Roller*, a boogie woogie style showstopper showcasing their 3 guitar wizardry and style. Seeing all three guitarists trading solos was truly something special. The song comes to an end as

Myles shrieks and screams awaaaay those last high notes and the band lands the final chord!

They raise their guitars and they come together with the drummer for a bow as his sticks fly into the crowd. The logo APRIL WINE shines above.

What a great concert for my memories and I'm glad to share this night with you all.

The *Nature of the Beast* LP is all in all a hard driving sheer musical attack on the senses. End to end a great album to this very day. After the performance I started to buy album after album by April Wine. The band play a wide variety of styles in the decade up until 1980 when they put out an LP called *Harder Faster*. That LP set the tone for this

great 5 man lineup. Then came *Nature of the Beast* and this is where I discovered them. The band put out 2 more LPs and toured in 1982 and '84 with this heavier style and I went to both shows... Row one each time.

Yet let's not forget what happened in Part 1 of this story...

It started with a Jukebox in Whitehorse at a band camp. Three songs for a dime too, including that Harlequin song *Thinking of You*, I was young and innocent too.

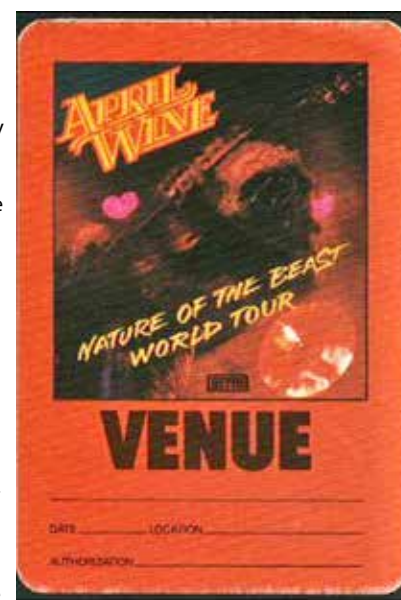
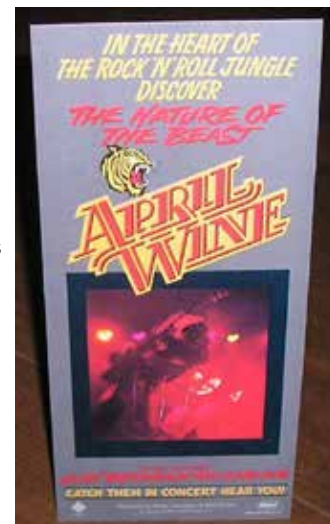
I never did finish the tale of leaving on the plane to Victoria did I? Ya see... as we were all winding up and saying goodbyes as the airport time drew near a young beautiful teenage lady pulled me out into the stairway corridor and said she'd liked the songs I played on the jukebox and said she had a gift for me. I asked "What do you have?" All I can say is she gave me the biggest and greatest KISS I had never had in my life up until that most amazing moment of my teenage life. What a great trip this turned into. And to

think "One dime was all it cost me!" The nature of the beast indeed.

Like fine wine time encapsulates great memories. Until the next issue when we blast back once again... Keep holding on and remember to Rock out and Roll on.

- Clark 'Super' Mantei

[www.aprilwine.ca](http://www.aprilwine.ca)

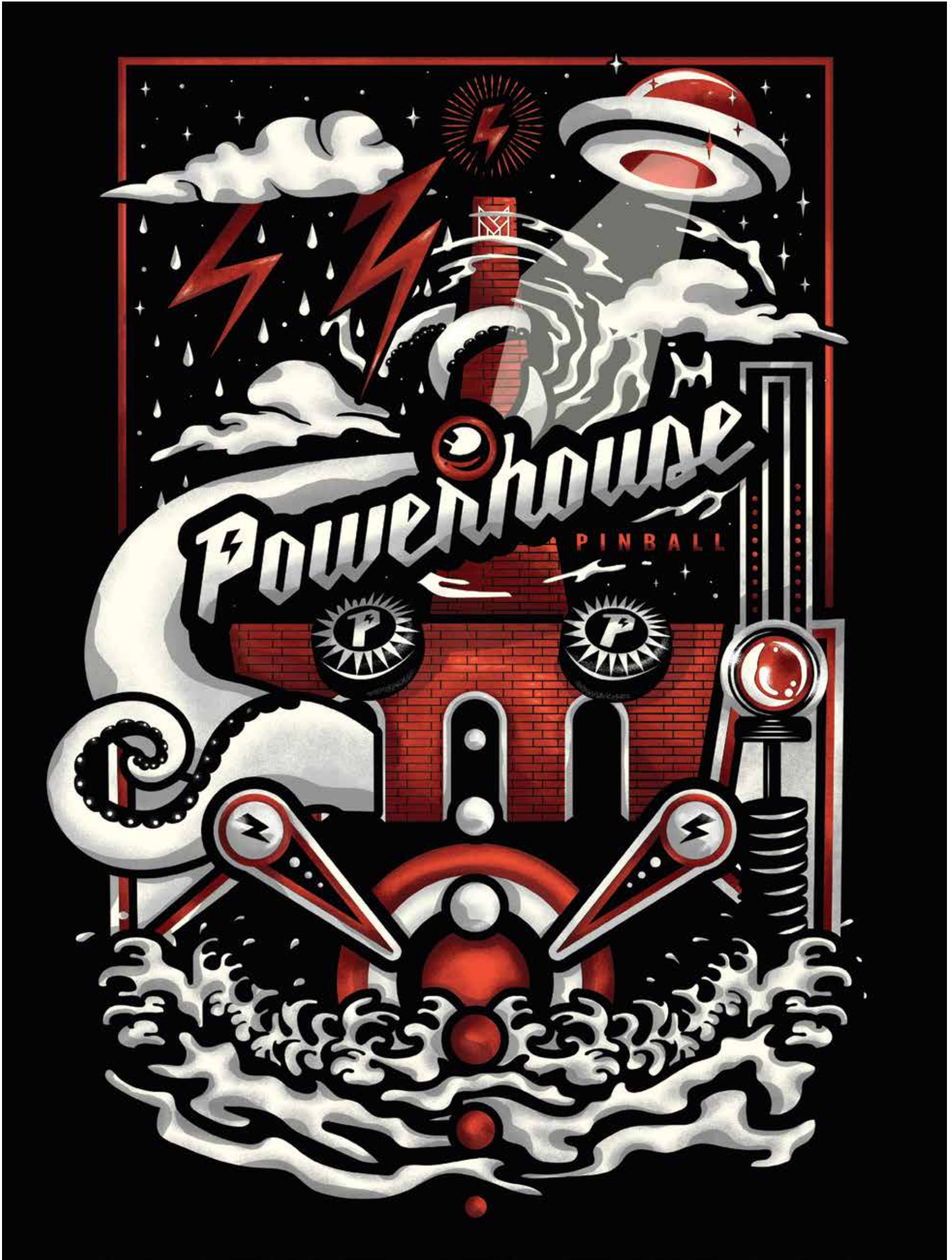


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# POWDER SEEKERS



## Ross Rebagliati Still Going For Gold – Part 2

Interview by Ira "Irocker" Hunter and Brydon "Panda Face" Parker

We continue our interview from the previous issue with Olympic gold medal snowboarder and cannabis activist/entrepreneur Ross Rebagliati.

**Absolute Underground: Tell us about your cannabis brand Ross' Gold? What makes it unique and what are some of the strains that you will feature?**

Ross Rebagliati: So, we are coming out with our own proprietary Ross' Gold strain that's going to be an Indica. Then we will probably have a Sativa as well. We are currently just working on genetics and the phenotyping. We're working on like a 30% THC strain. But the real kicker that sets us apart is that we're putting together a full proprietary package to produce our strain. So we'll have our own Ross' Gold lights, Ross' Gold nutrients, and our own Ross' Gold genetics growing in our own Ross' Gold grow medium. So that way we get a proprietary product, that if it's not grown with all that stuff, then it's just not Ross' Gold. And we'll sell all the lights and all the gear to anybody who wants it. But for any micro-grows that are at a commercial level, if they want to grow for a known brand, they have to use that for that total complete system.

**AU: What are some of your favorite strains to smoke?**

RR: Mostly Indicas like More Cowbell, MKU, and GCG is one of my favorites.

**AU: Green Crack God?**

RR: Yeah, it's one of my all around favorites, it's great! It's an unbelievable medicine, but it's also a great plant to grow. It's super resilient to powdery mildew and pests and just produces like heavy weight with high THC. It's a fun plant to have.

**AU: You seem to be an Indica guy. Do you still get motivation, inspiration, and creativity from Indicas?**

RR: Yeah, well, I only smoke Indicas because I'm too creative. I'm a high level thinker. I'm a big picture guy. So I have to keep the Indicas coming in. Otherwise, I can't sleep.

**AU: What was your early connection to pro snowboarder Craig Kelly?**

RR: In the summer of '87, Craig Kelly had his first camp on the Horstman Glacier on Blackcomb. Both T-bars still hadn't been put in yet so there was just the one T-bar. And they were building the Horstman T-Bar that leads to the Blackcomb Glacier. The 7th Heaven chairlift was brand new, so you would go around, come up 7th Heaven and ski down the glacier and then go up and down that T-bar that brings you back up to the top of the chairlift on the other side. So my mom put me into this snowboard camp. I didn't know anything about it, but I knew who Craig Kelly was just because my friends were so into snowboarding. In '87 you couldn't snowboard in Canada so my dad was driving us to Mount Baker, and that's Craig Kelly's home mountain. And then when my mom put me in the summer snowboard camp I was 15 at the time because she knew I was into it because I was a ski racer, right



like I was saying and I was getting into the snowboard contests already. And anyways, I met Craig at the camp and there was a bunch of other people there like Tim Windell from Sims Snowboards and reps from Kemper Snowboards and K2 Snowboards, and by the end of the camp I had a contract from every single company. But because Craig Kelly was the world champ he offered me a deal from Burton and I took the Burton contract from Craig. And he introduced me to Jake Burton.

**AU: Who else coached at Craig Kelly's snowboard camp back then?**

RR: All the pros like Keith "Duckboy" Wallace was one of the coaches. And then

so the following year, I was a coach at the camp, and then I became head coach at one point. We had guys like Damien Sanders and Mike Jacoby coaching for us. Jeff Brushie and Terje Haakonsen came out to ride. Adam (MCA) from the Beastie Boys was in the camp and I taught him how to snowboard. We had Tommy Chong's kid come to our camp. This was back in the day when people

didn't know if we should use hard boots or soft boots or what shape the board should look like. There was still boards with like wild shapes back in those days. But anyways, that's how I met Craig and then Burton sponsored me through my amateur career here in BC. And then when I was 21, I went on the World Cup Tour, but they just didn't think that going from BC amateur to World Cup that I was gonna have the same results. And they already had a full-on pro team with like Peter Bauer, Jean Nerva, and Craig Kelly. So I got dropped by Burton when I went on the World Cup Tour and eventually got picked up by F2 Snowboards out of Germany and I started cleaning up, beating all the best guys. I was winning races, won the US Open, won the European Championships, won lots of World Cup races. I got ranked top three in the world three years consecutively just leading up to the Olympics in Nagano. So over the years of course, when I got more serious about World Cup, I couldn't do the summer camps anymore and so I sort of lost touch with Craig and he retired.

**AU: Was it a case of instant success for you or were there still some struggles early on?**

RR: I'll tell you what, my first year on the World Cup circuit, I didn't do that great on my first race, I got 80th place. Then I had a couple races in Austria and it was kind of like a giant wake-up call, and that's what Burton had been talking about. I came back a little bit, you know, bummed out about it. But my mom entered me in the Mount Baker Banked Slalom, pro division, as it was my first year pro. And the goal I had set for myself was that if I can't win a pro race in my first year pro, then I'm not good enough and I'll go to university instead. This is my dream of being a pro snowboarder at this point, even though I had been on the cover of magazines, and it was kind of like crumbling. Because on a World Cup level there was no such thing as free riding for a living back then. So I went to the Mount Baker Banked Slalom and beat Craig Kelly by two hundredths of a second for my first pro win against my mentor and idol of the time. And that really set me on my path basically.

**AU: Did you use a secret wax or anything? My friend used to use Lemon Scent Pledge and he always won these boardercross races.**

RR: Yeah well, there's some logic to that. But I was sponsored by Briko at the time, but I'd use whatever wax was free, basically. You know, we had a lot of like special powders and things that we would put on the boards that would make water roll off, like water off a duck's back.

**AU: I remember, like you were saying before, nobody knew what kind of bindings or boards were good. I was 12 years old and I had a Kemper Freestyle 165, which is probably still too big for me now. I had those torturous blue hardback bindings and the Sorel boots. I**

**caught edges for like the first five years when I started snowboarding. What was your initial experience when you jumped on a snowboard from skis? Were you wiping out a lot or was it a natural fit?**

RR: Well, for me it was a little bit different because we started going to Mount Baker before snowboarding was actually allowed in Canada, like in 1985 or '86. My buddies went to the states and brought home boards, the summer of '86, or



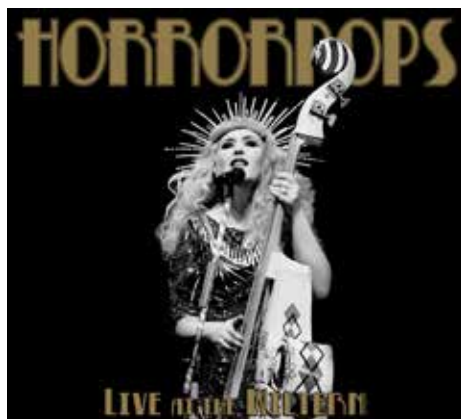
whatever it was. And that's when I had to go get one too in the middle of the summer and look at it for months before the snow came. But before that, in high school, our woodwork teacher saw that we were trying to make snowboards. First of all he taught us how to make a mold, and then taught us how to laminate our own plywood into the mold so it would have a tip. And so we started making snowboards in our woodwork class in like grade eight or nine. And so that's how we got into it. We were just taking the toes of ski boots and cutting them off with a hacksaw, screwing that to the board, then you would kick your toe with your Sorel boot on into that plastic toe that was screwed to your board. And then you would have a bungee that would come up on your heel that was screwed to the board on each side at the back. And so that's how we got going even though you would just break them like in the first turn. And then we'd go back to the drawing board. But then the next year, I bought a Burton Elite 155 that had three fins and a swallowtail. That was my first real board that I used. That season where my dad started driving us down to Mount Baker, it was really just powder days. So the board worked great and it was the most fun I've ever had ever in my life, it like changed my life completely. I guess it would be like if you'd had a subscription to *Surfer Magazine* for 20 years and never seen a real wave in your life. And then you just jumped on one and then got a barrel on your first wave.

That was kind of how it felt.

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## HorrorPops They Live!

Interview with Kim Nekroman  
By Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

### HorrorPops Release Their First Ever Live Album.

It's been over 12 years since HorrorPops have released a full-length album and almost as many years since they've performed their blend of '80s new wave, punk, rockabilly, surf and ska on stage. So it seems especially fitting that the Copenhagen natives, still led by the powerhouse duo of Patricia Day and Kim Nekroman, have marked their return with a spectacular full-length, multi-media concert album.

Filed and recorded in early 2020, *Live At The Wiltern* features supercharged performances of the band's best-loved tunes including "Walk Like A Zombie," "Miss Take," "Freaks In Uniforms," "Where They Wander," "Hit 'N' Run," and "Psychobitches Outta Hell."

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

KN: You are talking to Kim Nekroman and I am probably known most for my coffin bass.

**AU: What was it like growing up in**

**Copenhagen? What was the music scene like there?**

KN: Well, Copenhagen, Denmark is a very small town. So we are sort of isolated, it's like one of those places where bigger bands always play on a weekday and not a weekend, if they even stop there. Everything there is kind of niche. But that did not keep us as hardcore music fans from travelling all over Europe. We didn't just want to stay in Copenhagen, so we went where the sun shined.

**AU: I've been to Copenhagen before and I went to Freetown Christiania. I was wondering if they ever had concerts there?**

KN: Oh, yeah, there have been several venues there. We played there. In fact, the first HorrorPops

album was recorded there.

**AU: So it's a place where there is no law?**

KN: Yeah, you can say that, it's a place that was occupied by or squatted by the hippies back in the day in the 70s. It was part of the old Naval Station, which was right next to it. When I was in the Navy, I worked there every day. They have their own little rules and sell weed in the main street.

**AU: You were in the Navy? Working on submarines correct?**

KN: Yeah, I was in the Navy for eight years.

**AU: Give us a history of the bands you've been in and what's on your musical resume?**

KN: So after the Navy, I started my band Nekromantix. Fast forward to '95 or '96, we were playing at this industry thing in Germany, we were representing Denmark. And there was another band also representing Denmark, which was Patricia's former band. That's kind of how we met. She was playing in a punk indie rock band. And I said we should put a band together.

**AU: What was it her band called again? Peanut Butter something?**

KN: Peanut Pump Gun, she's laughing in the background. Not peanut butter... So I asked her if she was interested in starting a band, she was, and we were kind of like, okay, so how do we approach this from a different angle than what

we already are doing? So we decided to swap instruments. I taught her the basics on upright bass, and she taught me the basics on guitar. That's how it all started.

**AU: What other differences are there between the Nekromantix and HorrorPops?**

KN: Oh, there's a lot of differences. First of all, I'm not on lead vocals, Patricia is. We are a little more open to influences. One of the ideas behind that band was no labels, no limits. We do what we want. We like everything from Dolly Parton to Motörhead and Depeche Mode. We have a very broad taste in music. We wanted that to be part of our influence without any rules or restrictions. Nekromantix is a little more streamlined psychobilly and faster paced.

**AU: Tell us about the resurgence of the HorrorPops and the new live album you have coming out.**

KN: Yeah, we had an almost 10 year hiatus and in 2019 we decided to get back out on the road to tour again. At around the same time, we were approached by Cleopatra Records that wanted to do a live DVD, and we thought that would be a great way to celebrate our return to the stage.

**AU: What made the show so special?**

KN: It was special because the show was recorded at The Wiltern in Los Angeles, which is a huge venue. We had no idea if we could pack that place or not, but we sold it out. So that was a fantastic feeling. The last time we played on that stage, we were the opening act for Tiger Army and Rancid. So from that to actually be the headliner, that was kind of awesome too.

**AU: So it's on Cleopatra Records and it's a vinyl release as well as a Blu-ray and DVD?**

KN: That's correct.

**AU: Do you think HorrorPops will tour Canada once the pandemic is over?**

KN: Yeah, of course. We love playing in Canada. Even Victoria, actually.

**AU: Yeah, you did play Victoria. Thank you for not skipping us over. We're kind of like the Denmark of Canada!**

KN: Oh, yeah. Because it's sort of out of the way. Canada is a huge fucking country, but there's not that many cities.

**AU: Are you still playing with Nekromantix?**

KN: Yes, we actually released a similar live album a couple years ago.

**AU: In your opinion what is the history of psychobilly, and what were your early influences?**

KN: In the UK in the late 70s, there were a lot of punk rock bands mixing old 50s music with punk rock. My first experience was with a British band called The Records that toured Denmark, they played my youth club. They were the typical late 70s Rockers, punk type. But they played all the 50 songs, just faster. This was before the Stray Cats hit the scene. At the same time, The Cramps from the US, which wasn't really categorized as psychobilly either, though they did have



one of their first posters in '76 using the word psychobilly, but I mean, they later denounced that terminology. At the same time, in England in the late 70s early 80s, there were a lot of, I guess you would call it neo-rockabilly bands now. A lot of people give The Meteors credit for the psychobilly thing, but I don't think that's accurate. I mean, they were definitely part of it, but there

was a whole scene with a lot of people with different tastes. It all started and was concentrated at the Klub Foot nightclub in London. I went to these shows in the early 80s in London, and it was a big mix match of goth people and psychobilly guys and the music was a very broad with everything from surf to Alien Sex Fiend to all the old school psychobilly bands. That's kind of how it originated and evolved. It was sort of like all the rockabillys that were not authentic 50's; they needed a place to belong.

**AU: Has psychobilly evolved into what would be called Horrorbilly?**

KN: Well my philosophy is that there is no musical style called psychobilly. There is a subculture of people listening to several

types of bands, everything from softer rockabilly to hardcore metal-billy, and all that to me, is included in the psychobilly umbrella.

**AU: With the HorrorPops you wanted to be a little bit different, and maybe a bit more accessible to more people?**

KN: No, it wasn't about accessibility. I mean, you can just take our name, HorrorPop, which means we are playing 'horrible pop'. That's kind of the play with those words. I mean you could take

it as "a horror popsicle", but originally it was 'horrible pop'; I guess I'm the only psychobilly in the band. Patricia came from the punk rock and indie rock scene. Niedermeier, our drummer, was punk rock. So I think what happened was automatically because of my bass, and because of me, we were tagged psychobilly. We are definitely not psychobilly but that doesn't mean we don't have psychobilly fans.

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

KN: Keep an eye out for when we're touring up there. That will hopefully be sooner than later. I hope everybody buys this DVD, Blu-ray and vinyl,

because it's pretty awesome. It sums up what we do and what we stand for pretty good.

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## GWAR 30 Years of Scumdogs

Interview with lead vocalist Blothar the Berserker

By Ira "Slaughterama" Hunter

Transcribed by Jared "Sick Of You" Amos

**Absolute Underground: Is this Blothar? It's Absolute Underground Magazine up here in Canada.**

Blothar: I'm sorry for you that you're in Canada. Terrible. I'm in America where we have all the vaccine. You can't have any.

**AU: Yeah, I was wondering if Gwar was pro-vaccine or anti-vaccine?**

Blothar: I don't know if we're pro-vaccine. I mean, we're pro-human suffering, but we're not anti-vaccine because we're not stupid.

**AU: What is the origin story of Blothar?**

Blothar: Blothar was actually already on the planet Earth when Gwar was banished here. Gwar are a group of intergalactic space warriors called the Scumdogs of the Universe banished in a sort of a Gilligan's Island situation. But Blothar was already here, because he had previously been banished to this planet for acts of indiscriminate blundering of his own. Essentially, Blothar is a space viking.

**AU: I was wondering about your gender.**

Blothar: Blothar is what you call the ultimate non-binary. That is, I have both four wieners, that are actually udders, and then I have a sideways vagina, that's the toothy maw.

**AU: What's new and exciting in Gwar's domain?**

Blothar: Well, we're getting ready to go on a tour for the first time in a year, which means we have to be around each other, which is perfectly miserable, we don't really want to be around each other. But it's okay because we get to play some humans, and that's a pretty good time.

**AU: This tour is the 30th anniversary of the album Scumdogs of the Universe, what's gonna make this tour special?**

Blothar: Well, we're playing the entire Scumdogs

record, and we're gonna have some special guests, and the stage set from when we were doing this tour back in the early 90s.

**AU: What can you tell us about the upcoming Gwar documentary entitled This Is Gwar?**

Blothar: *This Is Gwar* is coming out pretty soon, and it's great. It really tells the story of Gwar, it's always been the most interesting part, which is the reality behind it. There's very few people who understand that Gwar is a collective of artists, and musicians. And this film tells that story.

**AU: When you go to a Gwar show, it's almost like an intergalactic soap opera. Do people need to know the backstory for this tour?**

Blothar: Well no, because it's the Scumdogs tour, we're kind of going back to the old Scumdog storyline which is Gwar out there having fun being a rock and roll band, and then along comes their archenemy Techno Destructo, and he tries to call us to return to the Master. When Techno shows up, he's returning to Earth after a long time, and he's looking for Gwar, and he finds us, and he doesn't really recognize us as being the original Gwar, so there's that added wrinkle.

**AU: So spoiler alert, Techno Destructo is back!**

Blothar: Oh yeah, for sure. That's the whole thing, we are really bringing back what the original Scumdogs tour was like and he was really at the heart of that.

**AU: And Techno Destructo is a professional wrestler now, so you've got to look out for some new moves.**



B He is, yeah. -laughs-

**AU: What was the fate of Mr. Perfect after he killed Oderus?**

Blothar: After the battle with Oderus, he was defeated by the rest of Gwar. But he's one of those characters that you can cut him up into little pieces, and like the liquid Terminator, sooner or later, he's going to reform, so we're just waiting to see if he comes back.

**AU: Going back to the Scumdogs tour, will you be killing people from back then, or will there be new people that get slaughtered?**

Blothar: No, it's pretty much the classic experience of a Scumdogs show, so you have the characters from that era that we would parade out on stage and execute. It's the kind of enemies we had from that era, right? The Bad Biker Bitch, the Redneck from Hell. All these kinds of characters that were sort of archetypes in the Gwar universe at the time.

**AU: It was before you started killing all the celebrities?**

Blothar: It definitely was. And in a lot of ways, Gwar has tried to get back to more of the narrative aspects where we're not just killing celebrities.

**AU: Did you ever get any flak for say, like, ripping Hillary Clinton's tits off?**

Blothar: Not as much as you would expect. I think people understand it's more comedic than it is sinister. I mean, Gwar is outrageous in the way South Park and Monty Python are outrageous.

**AU: It seems that Gwar is very bipartisan, you don't care who's President, you'll still kill and butt rape them.**

Blothar: I've noticed that people kind of graft their own politics onto Gwar. I will say that nobody cried, quite like the fans of Donald Trump when we started killing him. We never heard that when we were killing Obama, but the minute that we started killing Trump, there was definitely some tension around that. Actually they didn't really mind us killing him. It was when he gave me a blowjob that they got really upset.

**AU: And you've got six udders to suck too, so it's not an easy job.**

Blothar: Yeah, it's not. Well, only four are really suckable

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

Blothar: Probably the only one of us who actually has an active Tinder profile would be Pustulus, even though he's married and has 7000 children. He's still active on Tinder, and I haven't looked to see what it says, but I'm pretty sure it's something like "Chronic masturbator, heavy smoker, alcoholic, will move in."

**AU: What was the latest album you released?**

Blothar: The latest one is this *Scumdogs XXX Live!*, which is a live recording of *Scumdogs*, reimagined. We also did a remix and remaster of *Scumdogs*, the original.

**AU: Is there a new studio album in the works as well?**

Blothar: Yeah there is, we're working all the time on making a new album, definitely. We're probably going to be tracking it at the beginning of next year.

**AU: Have some of the events that have happened to the band caused others to re-evaluate their drinking or partying?**

Blothar: That's an interesting question. I don't really know, because I'm not in people's brains. But I mean, certainly the remaining people in the band don't really have that level of involvement with drinking and drugs. And I don't think that too many folks in the band really knew what was going on with the members that we lost either, so it was kind of a surprise.

**AU: What are the best and worst parts of this pandemic?**

Blothar: I think the best part is just that it has allowed us time to work on being Gwar, without just going out and playing live shows, and sort of running in front of the schedule, making live music, which allowed us to be a little more creative and a little more thoughtful, to do some things that we probably wouldn't have done otherwise. Like, we've been working on a graphic novel. We've been getting back into some filmmaking stuff. Things like that.

Probably the worst is just that everything feels a little diminished, doesn't it? Everything sucks



now, it's horrible, and it wasn't before. Well, it was before, but you didn't notice it as much.

**AU: Tell us about Gwar getting into the cannabis industry with the Bud of the Gods.**

Blothar: Yeah well, we're in the cannabis industry. We've got cannabis, and we just had a chance to work with the people from Consequence, and we know that our fans like to get wasted, so we're trying to help them get wasted.

**AU: I was wondering if the gummies were made from the flesh of your fallen?**

Blothar: No, but they are made from the hooves of minotaurs.

**AU: Any special plans for Halloween?**

Blothar: You know every year for Halloween, we don't get to dress up. Just once I would like to be a fairy princess and walk around collecting candy in my little plastic pumpkin.

**AU: Do you remember a particularly crazy Gwar Halloween show that stands out?**

Blothar: All of the best Gwar shows have been on Halloween. Back in the early days of the band, when our costumes were still made out of paper mache, we would play these insane shows and really go full out for Halloween.

**AU: You mentioned a Gwar graphic novel earlier, what was the origin of getting your tales told in comic books?**

Blothar: Well, Gwar has always been very involved with comic books, and the very first live performance of Gwar outside of Richmond was at a comic convention. Right from the beginning we had comic artists in the band. I mean, the guys who started this band were people who drew underground comics, so we've always been very connected to the art of the comic book.

**AU: You've also got Gwar skateboards out from Creature. How did that come about?**

Blothar: We did the Warped Tour and it seemed like a match that was meant to be, because they like to have sort of Creature-esque boards, and Gwar produces cool art, so it just made sense that we would team up with them and make some boards.

**AU: Anything else you want to promote?**

Blothar: We're not quite KISS, but we have really opened up our marketing savvy lately. We also have a sex toy that's in the works. We have a new album that we're working on that we're excited about, and we've got some new video stuff that's coming out.

**AU: Is the sex toy based off of your udders, or off of Oderus' Cuttlefish?**

Blothar: Well, I can't say. I cannot, it remains a mystery.

Gwar.net



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# HELLOWEEN



## Helloween Rise Without Chains

Interview with founding member and guitarist Michael Weikath

By Dustin "Walls of Jericho" Jak and Ira "Reptile" Hunter

\*please read the following interview answers with a German accent.\*

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

Michael Weikath: I'm Michael Weikath of Helloween, which is kind of a not so unknown metal band. A power metal band with lots of melodies and anthemic tracks. I pretend to play one guitar in that band and I write songs.

### AU: Where are you talking to us from today?

Michael Weikath: I'm in the Canary Islands, which is at the left upper side of Africa. There's a few little islands next to Morocco.

### AU: How did you end up there after starting off in Germany?

MW: It was because it was possible with the little money I've got, I was able to buy myself an apartment here. If I would have tried that in Germany, you just can't compare prices. Prices here were not as high because Spain was just

recovering from getting rid of Franco.

### AU: Can you give us a history of your band Helloween?

MW: Well, we started around 1984 as a four piece with one of the guitarists being the singer. Later we acquired a serious singer then we were five. We did some albums called *Keeper of the Seven Keys: Part I* and *Part II*. Which were considered landmarks and breakthroughs for European and melodic metal. Then we ran into trouble with losing band members. We fucked everything up because we didn't like each other anymore. We were undergoing ego problems with each other. Then we took on a different singer. Everything seemed fine for a while, because he wrote so many great impressive songs. We went on and on but never as we were before. Then the same new singer suggested we should bring back Kai Hansen and Michael Kiske to the band and try some concerts and shows. That happened to be a huge success and went on to be of biblical proportions even. Headlining the Wacken Festival, in front of 200,000 people. Then we did Rock in Rio, which was also like 300,000 people. We did a record afterwards that happened to be so good sounding in the end that everybody goes like, "Oh my God, who would have thought and now we



### AU: This new album has three singers. How did that come to be?

MW: That's because one of the singers is the guitarist who used to sing in the beginning, Kai Hansen. Also we took on Michael Kiske, a really good like operatic singer who was deemed to be one of the natural talents among all singers. Then we have that replacement singer,

Andi Deris, who came afterwards, from Pink Cream 69 in South Germany, who wrote all these amazing tracks. He also was a very impressive singer in his own right. So these are the three guys. We also have a special guest on the guitar, but he can also sing quite extraordinarily well. I can croak and shout a little bit for maybe half a minute. Then we have a drummer who doesn't really sing at all and a bass player who can also croak a little bit and make some woo-woo if necessary.

### AU: Who did the album artwork for the early Helloween albums?

MW: These artworks they were all my ideas. No, that's not quite true. But I did come up with the idea for *the Walls of Jericho* and for the *Keeper II*. We were looking for these romantic fantasy realms. The logo, actually is kind of like an important part of every cover. I designed the logo and I took maybe the band Magnum's logo for it, kind of like, this is something it could look like.

### AU: Who were some of your influences growing up in Germany in the late 70s and early 80s?

MW: Well, for me it was more the early 60s and 70s and 80s. That was like the Beatles, The Who, The Kinks, Ted Nugent, Kiss, Uriah Heep, Deep Purple. Any of the teeny rock bands of the 70s like the Bay City Rollers, Sweet, Suzi Quatro, Mud, and Kincade.

### AU: Did you like any of the punk bands too?

MW: Yeah, we were kind of into the Sex Pistols and The Clash. I mean, one of the reasons I have a white Les Paul is because the guitarist in the Sex Pistols had one and claimed that he had stolen this white Les Paul somewhere and used it ever since.

### AU: Who were some memorable fellow German bands that you guys shared the stage with back in the day?

MW: The Scorpions and then Accept later on. At

are so impressed, and we love this so much." So that is the point where we are now and now I'm having an interview with you.

### AU: How would you describe Helloween's sound?

MW: It's kind of anthemic melodies over distorted guitars

with a bit more of an uptempo.

### AU: What can you tell us about the new record that you have coming out on Nuclear Blast Records?

MW: Well, we have been called Helloween ever since 1984 and we've done lots of things under that name. This 2021 album, is also called *Helloween*. We're pretty confident we've done good work. We're there with Nuclear Blast who are rabid supporters of the whole thing. The record company boss is very excited with what we've done and he wants to go out and create some kind of explosion with it. It surely looks like that could happen.

the same time you had the Michael Schenker Group. Then there were other progressive rock bands, like the Nina Hagen band. Then there were bands like Lucifer's Friend, with John Lawton on the vocals, who would later sing in Les Humphries Singers and Uriah Heep. He was kind of famous and that old band of his, Lucifer's Friend, they were entirely unfamous, even though they were doing amazing records. So because of them, we also had to consider what we were doing on our recordings in order to reach people, to make ourselves kind of memorable.

### AU: You guys have a loyal fan base after almost 40 years. Is it cool to see some of the younger crowd sporting Helloween patches on their vests?

MW: Yeah, totally. There's fans from three years old up to 90. I mean we luckily have all these fans from all kinds of generations, but that's probably just because of our wacky lyrics and the nice melodies that we bring about somehow.

### AU: What do you think the band's and heavy metal's role in general has been during this pandemic? I know music has saved a lot of my friends.

MW: Possibly, nobody told me specifically they were saved because of our music in the COVID times. But possibly because I mean, it really matters what you want to give away as a message lyric wise, right? You can give some hope and some strength to people, or if you're merely putting out some aggressive stuff and telling people to kill whatever they don't like, or whatever, there's got to be a distinction in between those things. What you want to put out as a band, I think you have a certain responsibility when you're doing that, that's the way we see things at least. So it's quite possible that one or the other track or lyric or album we've done has saved someone, at least I would hope so.

### AU: What was the Pumpkins United tour? Was that when you had the three singers?

MW: Yes, and about three hours of showtime with all kinds of tracks from all eras of the band, that were maybe the most well known and most beloved. So we just presented them with three singers at the same time and three guitarists.

### AU: When did the newest album come out?

MW: The 18th of June.

### AU: The first single was for the song "Skyfall"?

MW: Yes, because it kind of presents the type of music that you would also expect from this album. It was the sole composition of Kai Hansen who worked on that until we had like pre-production time at the studio in Hamburg. It represents all the three singers and most of the different genres we can possibly go through in one song. "Fear of the Fallen" was the second single. Then there will be another one, which is a more easygoing, called "Best Time." Possibly there will be another animated video made for a track called "Out for the Glory".

### AU: Are there any new bands that you'd like to bring out on tour with you?

MW: We're supposed to do the next tour with the Hammerfall guys. Which are not exactly new, and not exactly young anymore. But that seems to happen to almost everyone.

### AU: Hopefully, you'll be able to come and tour Canada.

MW: I hope so too. I want to go to Vancouver again. We did that only once and it was so great, it was crazy. I've never seen anything like it so I eventually want to go back to Canada.

### AU: Any last words for our readers?

MW: Yes, thanks for all your support over the years. We've had amazing reactions, be it in Quebec or elsewhere, and so that was always nice being there. Guys and girls, great thank you.

[www.helloween.org](http://www.helloween.org)

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### The Little Shop of Horrors Barbershop

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

D: I go by Daryl AKA Mr Daryl Baryl, Dez or D man. Best known for cutting hair and talking your ears off.

**AU: What was the genesis of the idea for the creation of your own barbershop?**

D: Well to be honest I've worked at a lot of shops and I've got kind of burnt out by the stale atmospheres and mediocre service and flat out

shitty egos that most shops and barbers have. I wanted to start a shop that offers affordable service that you would get at a more higher end barbershop but pay a quarter the price. The idea was pretty much an old school traditional barbershop with a punk rock attitude.

**AU: What inspired you to become a barber?**

D: I've always used to cut my friends' mohawks and shaved heads growing up in the Montreal punk scene. When I got older I thought, hey this is way easier than trying to learn how to tattoo, haha. I just genuinely struggled finding something I loved doing for work and when I started becoming a barber and taking it more seriously I just fell in love with it more and more. But I guess you can say my determination to become a happy successful human being drove me to become a barber.

**AU: What makes The Little Shop of Horrors Barbershop unique?**

D: I think what makes us unique is we are not just some barbershop, we are a community. I also offer local bands to sell records here because I already have my huge collection of punk records playing all day. I also always say it's everybody's shop, once you get a haircut you are a lifetime member and this is our clubhouse. All my patrons are welcome to stay as long as they want to hang out listening to records and watching horror movies

on the big screen. I really don't know of any other shops like this so I think that's what makes us stand out.

**AU: What sort of free beer comes with each service?**

D: So every customer is welcome to a free beer with every service as long as they are 19 plus. You'll get whatever is cheap that week, haha, mostly Sneaky Weasel or Lucky.

**AU: Do you offer services for women as well?**

D: I do offer services to women and everyone who has hair. I get a lot of messages

about if I offer haircuts to transgender or women and my answer is if you have hair I will cut it! As long as the haircut you want is something that falls under my skill level. No discrimination of any kind here.

**AU: What sort of music do you usually play at the shop?**

D: You will hear a mixture of punk rock, Oi!, ska, reggae, soul, funk, mod rock /power pop, hard-core, and some old school country. I really love music and I really love all kinds of music. If a patron wants to hear something different I'll put it on YouTube for them. It's always about the customer, they are the most important.

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

D: Well since I'm way too old to go trick or treating and Covid is going on I won't be doing much. Although I am super short so I can probably get away with going out trick or treating, just put on a mask so you don't see my old mug. Usually on Halloween my gf has a few close friends over for a little Halloween dance party in her basement. She decks it all out with lights and decorations. She gets a little crazy with it but I actually love it too, haha.

**AU: What are some of your favorite horror movies?**

D: Oh man, that is a hard question for me. I tend to be guilty and literally say every movie is my favorite. So many to choose from! I'm a huge 80s horror fan, I absolutely love anything from that era. Besides the obvious Freddy, Jason, Myers, Pinhead, and Bruce Campbell, I love *Puppet Master* (1989), *Maniac* (1980), *Return of the Living Dead* (1985), *Near Dark* (1987), *Re-Animator* (1985). I love comedy horror, cheesy B-Rated horror, campy slashers, or anything with punks in it.

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

D: If there's any homeless people or anyone who can't afford a haircut, I offer free cuts at Our Place Society in Victoria once a month.



**AU: Final words about your business for our readers.**

D: If anybody reading this has a skill or passion or dream I encourage you to just go for it! Don't hesitate because you are only gonna achieve what you put out there. Also wanna mention that I'm starting a production company for Punk /Oi shows and DJ nights here in Victoria. So watch out for that. Also if you haven't heard of The Choice Few ex No Heart band I recommend buying their LP. Best Oi! record to come out of Victoria, BC. And look out for the new band Split Arrows new mod revival band and go buy the new Fully Crazed - *Off The Hook* LP, it will blow your socks off. Support local and respect the scene and it will respect you. And Garden City Soul rules!

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

D: Google the shop name Little Shop of Horrors Barbershop or search us on Instagram.

**AU: How do people set up an appointment?**

D: Call or text 250 216 1731 or direct message me on Instagram.

[instagram.com/littleshopofhorrors\\_barbershop](https://www.instagram.com/littleshopofhorrors_barbershop)

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## PUNK ROCK BOWLING 2021 FESTIVAL REVIEW

The punks have finally reunited in Las Vegas after what felt like an eternity of silence and sorrow. Closed venues and cancelled tours amidst the global pandemic became a plague in itself. Inevitably, these circumstances led to continuously pushed back dates for the ever so beloved Punk Rock Bowling Festival. The Stern brothers went through hell and high water to make their festival happen in the safest way



possible, as soon as possible, and it was executed with such care this year. They showed perseverance to once again bring us an amazing festival with well thought out procedures it took to let the guests, musicians, and everyone simply enjoy their time at PRB. Travel restrictions and continuously

changing regulations resulted for a mostly U.S. lineup, but with headlining acts such as Descendents, Circle Jerks, and Devo there was no room to complain.

There was so much love and unity in the air all weekend long on Fremont Street in Downtown Las Vegas where punks were hugging each other left and right, a crowd that was clearly so grateful to be back together watching iconic acts all weekend long. There's just a great feeling that cannot be described while walking down Fremont street seeing tons of obscure band shirts and Doc Martens once again. This is the same excitement that



The Monster stage hosted a variety of epicness which included sets from The Queers, The Bronx, Municipal Waste, The Dwarves, Pears, English Beat, and so many more. Headlining acts all took place on the main stage along with sets from bands such as Urethane (skateboarding legend Steve Caballero's new band, who absolutely killed their PRB debut set), Youth Brigade, Leftover Crack, Streetlight Manifesto, ALL, Lunachicks... way too many to keep typing!

keeps party-goers coming back year after year. This year the festival ran Friday through Sunday the weekend of September 24-26, unlike its usual occurrence during Memorial Day weekend in May. We still enjoyed the hot desert sun during the daytime pool parties and gorgeously warm weather at night during headlining acts and after party shows.

PRB Kickoff started on Thursday September 23rd with a few late night shows headlined by Dillinger Four at the Fremont Country Club, FEAR at Place on 7th, and D.I. at Backstage Bar & Billiards. I caught the FEAR show where The Besmirchers frontman Lenny Mental started the night off with a bloody mess by slicing his own face open with a broken beer bottle, delivering total chaos on stage. The following acts playing at Place on 7th that night were Las Vegas locals, M.I.A. and an extremely rare performance by Chicago's very own Pegboy which consists of former members of Naked Raygun, The Effigies and Bhopal Stiffs. FEAR finished out the night and absolutely killed it once again with an epic performance.

The festival was held at the Downtown Las Vegas Events Center and bands performed on staggered set times between the Main stage, and the Monster stage. While walking between the two separated stage areas party-goers and punks were warmly greeted by various vendors, merch booths, and non-profit organizations such as Punk Rock Food Drive, Punk Rock Saves Lives, and the Sidewalk Project who was handing out NARCAN for free. Punk Rock and Paint Brushes also had an art gallery set up under a tent that featured art from professional musicians, skateboarders, surfers, and other figures in the punk rock scene.



for four days was more gratifying than any of us could have imagined. I want to shout a major thank you to the Stern brothers, all PRB staff, and all the bands that played for all their hard work and dedication to making this event come to life. Thank you so much, and I can't

18 months without live music took a toll on many of us and being back in a safe environment where we could enjoy live performances together

fucking wait to do it all over again!!

- Beatrice Chavez

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## Punk Rock Bowling Descendents

Interview with former molecular biologist and frontman of the punk rock band the Descendents, Milo Aukerman

By Beatrice Chavez

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

M: (chuckles) My name is Milo, I guess I'm most famous for being in the Descendents.

**AU: And you're also a scientist?**

M: Yeah, I guess it's ex-scientist now because I'm not really working in science, but I got my degrees in genetics, biology and that kind of stuff. I worked in the field till 2016 and then once I got laid off I just decided, yeah, I don't think I'm needing to get rehired anywhere. I'll just stay in music, and that was my decision to become a musician at age 50 whatever.

**AU: So it was molecular biology, am I right? What exactly is that?**

M: Yeah, it's kind of like the nexus of biochemistry and genetics together. If you could boil it down to one thing, it would be studying DNA to inform biological mechanisms. I got interested in DNA as a high school student and just kind of continued my fascination with it.

**AU: Do you still study science as a hobby at home?**

M: No it's not really something I can do at home, but I still kind of keep tabs on what the current research articles are saying. During COVID there was a brief period where I thought I'm not playing any music right now, I should maybe go get some kind of gig back in science... and then I thought, nah.

**AU: Was that when you decided to revisit the 9th & Walnut recordings?**

M: Yeah, I spent the year doing YouTube recordings. A lot of times people contacted me and would say, "Hey, let's do cover songs and put them up on YouTube" and a lot of that happened during COVID. It keeps you somewhat busy, but we started recording for a new Descendents record and I got most of the way through that with brand new songs and I wanted to keep going with it. So I told Bill (Stevenson) "Hey, remember that stuff that you did with Frank (Lombardo) and Tony (Navetta) back in 2002? It's just been sitting around waiting for me to add vocals."

**AU: But those songs were originally from the late 70s?**

M: Yeah around '78! It's a really wild journey because they were originally written by Frank and Tony in the late seventies and then by the time I joined the band, they weren't playing many of them anymore. About half of them they still were. So when I revisited these songs, I could recognize

half of them but then the other half I'd never even heard before and that was really exciting to me.

**AU: I've noticed through the years with each new recording you guys definitely evolve as musicians yet you still stay true to the Descendents style. Would you agree?**

M: Yeah. So what you hear on the *Walnut*, that's kind of the bare bones beginnings, because Frank was into

this band called The Last from Hermosa Beach but he was really into punk rock too. So his songs and had a good mix of what I feel is like the seventies and sixties influenced kind of stuff with the punk rock in there. I think Tony was pretty similar. That's where you hear embryonic versions of what we would become later.

**AU: It is really cool to see how unique this whole recording process has been for you guys... where did you record your vocal tracks for the record?**

M: I have a little studio in my basement, basically a vocal booth, and normally Bill would fly in and a cheerleader for what I was doing to get good performances. So because of COVID it was like "I'm just going to do it by myself."

So I was just down there by myself and I just ripped through it in a few weeks. There's probably

the most exciting thing I did during COVID.

**AU: Did you write the lyrics for these songs?**

M: No, those were all Frank and Tony's lyrics. They were all fully formed songs. Even when I joined the band in 1980, they had a whole set list that was none of my contribution. I'm fairly comfortable singing other peoples lyrics. Especially Frank's lyrics because he was the punk in the band. He was the guy that hated everything. So in adding my vocals to these recordings, I just channeled Frank again.

**AU: You recently released a solo ukulele album too, it was a bit more political than what we are used to seeing from you...**

M: Yeah, I think we dabbled with politics like "M-16" or "Merican" was another one,

but a lot of times we'd shy away because A- it's so kind of been there, done that. Punk bands have been doing political songs forever and B- if you write something that is political, it has a short shelf life, as did those songs because they were very tailored to what was going on with the 2020 election.

I thought about that... I don't care if these songs fizzle away in six months. It was what I wanted to say. I also don't care if we have fans out there who don't agree because that's punk rock man. Punk rock is all about stating your opinion, others be damned. So I went down the basement, took my uke and bashed away.

**AU: What does it feel like being back at Punk Rock Bowling?**

M: This is great, my favorite thing about festivals is all the different bands you get to see. It's much more of a party atmosphere and I've always had fun at PRB. I think everyone's just so ecstatic to be back at it and to be back seeing all their friends. I think part of it also is the way that the Stern brothers are doing it. They can be very proud of the fact that they're taking all the right steps. This can work. You just gotta be careful. You can't be just kind of lackadaisical about it because if you're not careful, you won't be seeing music much longer.

**AU: I'm guessing someone with your background really understands the**

**importance of taking care of your health.**

M: Yes, I try. That was part of when I left my science job in 2016 and said, well, the new challenge for me is that I want to do this for a long time. You can't be doing the whole sex and drugs and rock and roll thing. I'll just do the rock and roll, clean living means that I get to do this longer and it's worth making that sacrifice, and being more of a teetotaler. Bill has been through all of his health scares and came out the other side and he's living as healthily as possible... because we all realize that if we want to keep doing this thing that we love, that we have to take care of ourselves.

**AU: Do you guys still drink extreme amounts of coffee before shows?**

M: Oh yeah. In fact, the older we get, the more coffee we have to drink, but there's some good studies saying that at least some coffee is good for you. For me, it's everything in moderation. Even with coffee. I'll have like a couple of cups before I play and that gets me in the right zone.

**AU: What's your perfect cup of coffee?**

M: For me, espresso, but it's gotta be lungo, as opposed to ristretto. Lungo is an espresso shot that's got more fluid, more volume. I'll do three or four of them before I go on stage.

**AU: How do you prep your vocals before a show?**

M: I drink lots of fluids and I try to take a nap before I play. Then I start doing some coffee and some vocal warm-ups, and then I do sit-ups. I think it helps engage my core for singing. So, it's a whole routine.

**AU: So Chris Shary has been the Descendents main artist for a while now, how did he first get involved with the band?**

M: I think he was a huge fan of All back in the day, and Descendents, but I think he first started working with All probably in the nineties and did much of the All art from that period.

I think I probably met him in the mid nineties. He's been our go-to person for all art related to the band. Lot of times we'd go out and do these tours where we want to play 5 or 10 cities and each city gets their own event shirt. Whenever we

get involved in making event shirts, we rely on Chris. We do a lot of brainstorming, Bill, me and Chris. It's kind of a fun little add on to the music part that we do, because obviously we can be creative with music, but really we can also be creative with the art in the sense of what silly thing is Milo going to be doing on the t-shirt or what kind of abstract art concept can we come up with that involves that stick figure.

**AU: How does it feel when you see Descendents fans rocking shirts and tattoos of a character based on yourself?**

M: Well, I guess I'm used to it but it was really weird to begin with.

**AU: Do you feel a close association to the Milo character?**

M: I think he's a little character on his own, but if we have him doing goofy stuff, he probably does describe me back when I was a teen because we used to say that I was the king of the flail. I look at that period and want to celebrate my personality back then because I'm somewhat of a different person now and I liked who I was then even though I was a bit of a nerd and a dork. It's also good to poke fun at yourself and I feel like this is a good way for me to do that.

**AU: So what's next for the band?**

M: We're going to put another record out, I hope in 2022. We just always write songs. I've written a bunch, Stephen (Egerton) wrote a bunch and we're just waiting for Karl (Alvarez) and Bill to contribute. We all four have to contribute.

So my goal is to not have it be five years between each record at this point. Now I don't have my science gig, I want to just keep playing because part of why I do this is to feel young. I'm not young anymore, but I can at least feel young. And that's the beauty of what we do. It's like no matter where we are, no matter who's in the audience, I just always feel like that 17 year old kid still and it's been great.

[descendents.tumblr.com](https://descendents.tumblr.com)



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## PEARS

Interview with bassist/back up vocalist Erich Goodyear  
 By Beatrice Chavez

### Absolute Underground: Who are you and what are you known for?

E: I'm Erich and I play bass in the band PEARS, we're a punk rock band from New Orleans and we're on Fat Wreck Chords.

### AU: When did you guys form?

E: The band formed in 2014 and I joined the band in April of 2016. Since then we've toured with bands like NOFX, Subhumans, Rise Against, Dag Nasty, Descendents... just like lots of



really great bands.

### AU: Did you ever see yourself working with these iconic bands when you first started?

E: No, but I also grew up playing music in the New Orleans punk scene with Zach and Brian, and we just knew we were always going to play in a punk band no matter what.

### AU: How would you describe your style of music?

E: I guess in the punk world you could say we're like old school 80's hardcore/punk, but this girl once told me that we sound like Slipknot and Blink 182 combined. I like it and I think that's actually a really accurate description. There are definitely elements of both those bands in our music.

### AU: How did you guys come up with that sound?

E: It kind of falls more on Zach and Brian. They

were in pop punk bands before we started Pears, but wanted to do the hardcore thing and still keep the elements of singing and stuff.

### AU: How'd you come up with the name Pears?

E: It actually comes from a really shitty mushroom trip because we had a joke going that everything was 'bananas' when we were tripping on mushrooms, meaning things are awesome. One day Zach had a really shitty mushroom trip where he was basically in a time-loop and couldn't snap out of it. I had to help him but after he was good again he was like, man, the banana-sphere really let me down. I was like that wasn't a banana-sphere that was the pears-sphere, because I just was trying to think of a shitty fruit, and to me pears are kind of the shittiest fruit out there.

### AU: How many people play in your band?

E: There's four of us- our singer Zach, Brian also sings and plays guitar, I help with backing vocals and play bass, and then our drummer Eric who actually lives in Philadelphia.

### AU: What's it like being back at Punk Rock Bowling this year?

E: One thing that makes this whole experience great for me as someone who's playing music and creating it is seeing how people really are enjoying it. It's just like a lot of love going on all around.

What's also been sick is that it seems like we have been a lot of people's first shows back since quarantine, and I'm just really honored to be someone's first live show back. We've all had our own struggles but it's really nice to get together again and listen to the music.

### AU: What has it been like in New Orleans since the pandemic hit, did everything shut down?

E: Yeah it was very very shut down. Our mayor was trying to do all these extra precautions but it was getting very scary as far as employment in the city and especially the service industry... everything

is still like a shadow of what it was. We're trying to do this the best way we can. I feel like in New Orleans everyone's mindful about wearing masks and doing whatever we have to do to just kind of cut this thing back, you know?

### AU: Absolutely, and you guys were also hit with that terrible hurricane recently...

E: Yeah, but it was really cool to see the community getting together and showing up to help each other. There was so much more support



and communication than when Katrina hit, help wasn't really there for about a week before.

As a band, we're just trying to have a good time and treat everyone with respect, that's what it's about I think.

**PEARS will be playing The Fest in Gainesville, FL late Oct.**

[www.pearstheband.com](http://www.pearstheband.com)



## Mourning Noise

Interview with Steve Zing  
By Ira Hunter and Trevor Lawrence Reid

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

Steve Zing: If I think about my life, I guess I've been in a few iconic bands. Starting out with Mourning Noise, my band that started when I was in high school, and then being friends with Glenn Danzig and forming Samhain with him. Years later, I joined Danzig, which I have been part of now for 15 years.

### AU: What was it about growing up in Lodi, New Jersey that birthed horror punk in your opinion?

SZ: It was definitely Glenn Danzig. Growing up across the street from where the Misfits rehearsed was a big influence in my life. I was just a kid and if Doyle wasn't around to bring me in the garage to watch the early Misfits rehearsals back in 1978, I would sit out on the roof of the garage next to where they practiced, just sit there and listen. All the other kids were out doing stupid things and I was listening to the Misfits rehearse. It was a big influence on me and my friends. So obviously, we wanted to be the Misfits, and we couldn't do that because there's only one Glenn Danzig. I don't think we were really trying to be like Glenn but we were emulating and definitely influenced. I think that birthed the whole thing for us.

And then across the nation there came these horror punk bands that all took something from the Misfits, like 45 Grave. A lot of the English Batcave bands were becoming an influence as well with the whole Gothic movement. I think in the United States they took what Batcave was about and we made it more aggressive and we called it horror rock, or horror punk.

### AU: When you were going to high school, you were in the same age bracket as Eerie Von and Doyle. Were Glenn Danzig and Jerry Only like the older kids you looked up to?

SZ: Yeah, Glenn is nine years older than I am and Jerry is seven years older.

### AU: Was Jerry's little brother Doyle already lifting weights back then?

SZ: Absolutely. Doyle and I are each other's oldest friends. I met Doyle in kindergarten and we went from there through high school together. We have a long history and I blame him for everything.

### AU: Tell us more about your early band



### Mourning Noise and this new deluxe package that's coming out on Cleopatra Records.

SZ: Before Mourning Noise, we had a band called Implosion. We were like this pseudo punk band trying to be Misfits like in a way. But then Implosion broke

up and I wound up going to some punk rock jam in someone's basement and I met Tommy Koprofski who would become our guitar player. Tommy was well versed in all things punk rock, and surf rock. So he joined the band and we formed Mourning Noise.

He gave the band its sound. With Mourning Noise,



we took our influences definitely from the Misfits, but with Tommy's guitar playing in his style and sound, he created what became the Mourning Noise sound.

### AU: Any chance of any reunion shows?

SZ: Recently we got together for the first time in 24 years since last playing together. Thankfully we're

all talking again so hopefully we'll do some shows.

### AU: How many albums did you release?

SZ: We put out a '45 back in the 80s. Then back in 1997, there was an indie label out of LA who put out the stuff from Mourning Noise that never came out. I broke the band up. I didn't have time for it because I had joined Samhain. Mourning Noise had an album's worth of material that we recorded but that label folded so it never really got its due. Then a few years back, I started talking to Cleopatra Records and it finally gets to see the light of day.

### AU: How did you come to be in Samhain?

SZ: Well, Glenn had been talking to a few guys in Washington DC about forming this super group but it didn't really work out. I had become friendly with Danzig through a mutual friend of ours and we were hanging out and stuff. After the last Misfits show in October 1983, Glenn called me to tell me that the Misfits had broken up and that he was done with that. I'm like "Alright?" and he's like "How would you like to start a band?" I said, "Of

course! Sure!" and that was that. We got together in the bedroom of my apartment, wrote some songs and took it from there.

### AU: What are the differences in your opinion between the Misfits and Samhain and then between Samhain and Danzig?

SZ: Everything. [laughs] The Misfits were, I don't want to call it pop punk because it's not that, the Misfits had its own sound. It was very much more melodic than Samhain, which was much darker, with a lot of tribal drumbeats that the Misfits didn't have. The Samhain songs were something different. Glenn, as you know, was always reinventing himself musically. So if you listen to the first Danzig album, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, all the way to the Elvis covers. These are all different sounds. That's the direction Glenn wanted to go with the Misfits but it was impossible. I think we filled the void in Samhain with the way he was writing at that point. If you look at Danzig, it was more straight-ahead rock in your face. Very guitar, bass, drums, vocals and riffs because Rick Rubin produced that album who also produced AC/DC. The difference being Glenn went from punk rock to Samhain, which had darker gothic elements, then you go to the Danzig, which was more hard rock or metal. So there were drastic differences between each band.

### AU: Originally, in all the early bands you were playing drums. How did you come to play the bass?

SZ: In 1999, Glenn said "Hey, it'd be cool if we did a Samhain reunion." We reached out to Damien, who was the guitar player but he was busy touring with Iggy Pop so we ended up with Todd Youth who was in Danzig at the time, and then there was me and London (May). When I left Samhain, London took my place. So I said, "Okay, so how are we going to do this?" Glenn said, "Why don't you play bass on the stuff that London played drums on and we'll get London to play bass on the stuff where you did the drums." That's exactly what we did and then again when we had our 30 year anniversary in 2014.

### AU: So now you play bass in Danzig as well?

SZ: Correct. For the past 15 years.

### AU: We were curious if you were on the Danzig Sings Elvis album?

SZ: No, that's all Glenn, he did everything. He's a talented motherfucker.

### AU: Did Eerie Von ever do any photo shoots for Samhain?

SZ: Eerie did some stuff for the Misfits but I don't remember him ever doing the Samhain stuff. It was Glenn. Glenn was an avid photographer as well and went to school for it. So he knows his way around a camera. He's got a great eye for things and for thinking visually too, aspects of album covers, and the lighting. He's got that knack that a lot of people don't have.

### AU: Then Danzig started directing his own music videos and now making his own feature films so that makes sense.

SZ: Yeah, exactly.

### AU: When you were in Implosion or Mourning Noise, were you ever able to open for the Misfits?

SZ: Unfortunately, no. I wish. We did a lot of local things but to be honest I don't know if we were taken that seriously back then. We were just a bunch of kids and the Misfits didn't play a lot. They did sporadic shows around the area and not often.

### AU: What's this project called Blak29?

SZ: Blak29 is my new band. That's coming out on Cleopatra as well. That's me and my friend Dan Tracy, who is my writing partner. We do everything ourselves and we have a special cover song that we're doing featuring Johnny Kelly on drums, Tommy Victor on guitar, and singing with me is Jyrki from The 69 Eyes. We don't write for a genre, we write for what we like. At the end of the day, as Glenn taught me, you have to be true to yourself cause whatever you put out there will live forever, whether someone likes it or not, that doesn't matter because it's your art. Otherwise you're just hopping on a bandwagon that's already left the station.

### AU: You were also in the super group Son of Sam.

SZ: That was a project that was myself, Todd Youth, London May, and Davey Havok from AFI that we formed after the '99 Danzig/Samhain tour. We put out one album and then another one after that but London and Davey couldn't be involved with the second album. I got involved, which I shouldn't have because it didn't have the same impact as the first one did.

### AU: Were you excited to hear that the Misfits were going to be doing the reunion shows?

SZ: Yes and no. The Misfits are so big now and it was very personal to me back in the day. They weren't this huge band and there was this mystique about them. It's a little different now, but it's still great, obviously, to hear Glenn sing those songs. When we were doing the Danzig/Doyle runs around the world, it was amazing to play those songs and listen to him sing. He's the voice. Without him, there is no Misfits.



It was never the Misfits without Glenn Danzig. But, yeah, of course I was excited. Everybody gets to experience that thing on a grand level now. When you're a kid and watching it in a garage, it's got a whole different meaning. And it's a special thing that you hold near and dear to your heart and in your mind, of what it once was.

### AU: What else can you tell us about the release of this deluxe collection for Mourning Noise?

SZ: There's three color vinyls and then there's the CD which includes a live show that we did in 1982. I'm just glad it's seeing the light of day and for people to hear it.

[blak29.com](http://blak29.com)

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

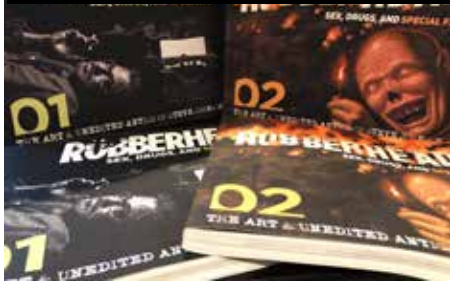
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# SPLATTER GODS



## Steve Johnson Rubberhead: Sex, Drugs, and Special FX

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

Steve Johnson: Easy answer, for designing and creating Slimer from the first *Ghostbusters* film.

**AU: Did you have anything to do with also creating the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man?**

SJ: What happened was Randy Cook, who was my partner on *Ghostbusters*, and has gone on to receive three Oscars for Best Visual Effects, he uses them for doorstops and butt plugs now I think he has so many Oscars. So Randy and I ran that studio, we art directed it, we hired the crew, and we made whatever the hell we wanted. So yes, Randy and I art directed everything you see in *Ghostbusters*. The way we worked together was we would split up the work in the beginning when we got the script and I'd say, "I want to take Slimer" and he'd go "Okay, I'm going to take the Terror Dogs," and then, "We'll work together on Stay-Puft," and then I said "I'm going to take the Librarian and the Subway Ghost." So we would split the work up and be in charge of our separate characters that way, but the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man was mostly Billy Bryan, he wore the suit and he performed it. But it was all

under the umbrella of our art direction.

**AU: Did they want Slimer to be a tribute to John Belushi?**

SJ: You should read my book *Rubberhead: Sex, Drugs, and Special Effects Volume 1*. It has a great story in there about it. You can pick it up at Amazon or Dark Ink Publishing.

**AU: Yeah, tell us more about your books. Is it true it's planned to be five books in total?**

SJ: It is planned to be five books but getting into the publishing industry been a tough mountain to climb. I liken it to climbing Mount Everest with two broken legs and blind while on acid. But yeah I've written all five books and obviously Volume One came out and Volume 2 is now out and the other three are ready to go. What this series of books is, is it's half memoir, half art book. So there's tons of pictures in the books. But there's also stories that happen in present tense, and they put you on a wall like a fly as if you were really there. So Volume One really kind of sums up the entire career and brings you to the crashing devastation that I had at the end of my career. Well, somewhat the end. It's a very bizarre story.

But Volume Two focuses on the greatest hits of the 80s. We cover *Fright Night*, *Big Trouble In Little China*, *Poltergeist 2*, and even the horrible debacle, for me anyway, that was *Predator*, because we made the original Predator suit and got fired for it. So, yeah, Volume Two is pretty interesting. It's not what you would expect for a makeup effects book.



**AU: How did you first get interested in doing special effects? Were you a Famous Monsters kid growing up?**

SJ: Yes, absolutely. It was in the early 70s, I was very young and I saw a movie called *Little Big Man* where Dustin Hoffman ends up playing like 110 year old version of himself. And I just couldn't believe the scientific accuracy of the make-up effects by Dick Smith, who was known

as the godfather of our business. He did *The Godfather*, *The Exorcist*, so many things. And I was just blown away by it. And then one day, I was reading *Famous Monsters* magazine on the curb when I was like 12 years old, and in the back magazine there was an ad for a little book called "Dick Smith's Do-It-Yourself Monster Make-Up Handbook", and I got that book and that's what really got me started and there was no turning.

**AU: What was the first professional movie you did Special Effects for?**

SJ: Well, my first professional movie was not a professional movie at all. It was a movie called *The Galactic Connection*, and I'd love to see it, it's a lost gem that was never released. It was financed by a bored retired optometrist who wanted to make a movie, and he had no clue what he was doing. So he called up Rick Baker to handle the effects because this movie was kind of ahead of its time. It was basically *Clan of the Cave Bear*, except a shitty low budget version of it years before *Clan of the Cave Bear* came out. So it was a bunch of primal men just wandering around with no dialogue, shot all just making it up, cinéma vérité. It was a complete disaster. The suits weren't finished the night before we had to go up. Greg (Cannom) called Rob Bottin up and we all furiously tried all night long finish these things. And of course the we didn't finish them so we had to put off shooting. Greg sent me up there alone because he knew there would be hell to pay. I'm 18 years old, never worked on a real movie in my life. I had no idea what to expect and I go up there with a bunch of unfinished monkey suits. And I'm standing around on set looking at this tiny crew, like six people, none of them knew what they were doing, and I'm thinking, "Wow, I had a bigger crew on my Super 8 home movies back in Texas, where I grew up. This is what the film industry is about? Is this what I came all the way to California for?" It was a very weird experience.

But I think the next movie I worked with Rob Bottin on. Again it was a movie that Rick Baker was going to do but he referred our way instead.

Just like when he didn't want to do the shitty ape suits for the optometrist's film, he got Greg to do it. And in this case, he referred Rob Bottin to do the *Tanya's Island* baboon creature. So I worked with Rob on that, and that was more professional. And then I worked with Rob on several other movies including *The Fog* and *The Howling*.

**AU: Who did you work with on Ghost Story?**

SJ: *Ghost Story* I worked on with Dick Smith and Rick Baker.

**AU: A really good early 80s horror is Humanoids From The Deep.**



SJ: I did that with Rob too. And I was actually a humanoid from the deep, I played a humanoid. The director, Barbara Peeters, loved how I took explosive squib hits so much that every single time that you see a humanoid get a shot, that's me! It's my claim to fame besides making Slimer. Haha.

**AU: And Highway to Hell. I see you worked on The Howling and An American Werewolf In London. How did that work? Did you take any secrets back and forth across the line?**

SJ: No, it was a really unfortunate thing because *The Howling* was the last project that I did with Rob Bottin. And Rob, as I think anybody that

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**AU: Did you do all the effects in Highway To Hell? There's so many gags like the living handcuffs, and so many wicked characters like Sgt. Bedlam the Hellcop, Beezle, and the extra hideous Succubus.**

knows anything about this industry knows, he can be a very difficult person to work with and so it was time to go. I basically contracted with him for 16 weeks of work. Rick Baker had been calling me about *American Werewolf* and by the time *American Werewolf* got funded my 16 weeks were up at Rob's. And so I said, "Hey Rob, I'm gonna go work on *American Werewolf*" and he became enraged. He didn't even give me a credit on the film, and I was very instrumental in *The Howling*.

**AU: You worked on the film Videodrome, what was it like working with director David Cronenberg?**

SJ: Cronenberg would go into his trailer at lunch and rewrite what we were going to shoot that afternoon, so it was pretty harrowing because we never knew what was coming. I had to do make-up effects on the fly, like that whole scene where we see the gun stretch out of the television through all the static. I did that on location. I just figured out a way to do it with a bellows, airtight seals, and front projection with filmed static on a very thin stretchy rubber screen. And don't get me started on James Woods and Debbie Harry... but I love the movie, it really is one of my favorite movies I've worked on.

**AU: At what point did you go from assisting other special effects guys to being having your own company? What was the turning point when you became the Big Dog?**

SJ: Well, it was very gradual because I was certainly nothing more than a lowly shop-rat when I worked for Cannom and Bottin. And certainly when I started with Rick Baker, but as we did project after project, Rick started trusting me more and giving me more and more responsibility. And at some point the apprentice always leaves the master. It was actually Rick that suggested I go over to Boss Films because Richard Edlund had just opened up his studio with *Ghostbusters*. We had just all come back from a year in London working on *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan*. So Rick suggested I go work with Richard, because it was a very simple way of getting rid of me. Because me and Rick had started to butt heads because at some point the master tells the apprentice, "This is how you do it" and the apprentice says, "Oh, thank you, Master." But then after a while the master tells the apprentice, "This is how you do it," and you know how to do it and you say, "Fuck you. We're doing it my way, because my way is better."

So it started getting a little bit difficult. But then it was great when I went to Boss Films. I had all the freedom in the world, Richard Edlund did not micromanage me. He is the best boss I've ever had. He's a genius. I did a bunch of projects there like *Fright Night*, *Big Trouble in Little China*, *Poltergeist 2*, and *Predator*. Then eventually I just went "Hey, I'm gonna go off and start my own company."

**AU: What was your company called?**

SJ: The first one was called XFX and then later Edge Effects.

**AU: How did you get the job to work on one of my favorite horror films, Highway to Hell?**

SJ: Randy Cook suggested me. I had just finished the very first film I did with my own company. When I first opened XFX in 1986, I did a film called *Night Of The Demons*. I had just finished that and Randy got the call to do *Highway to Hell*, and he didn't want to do it for whatever reason, too busy probably, and so he recommended me and I got the job.

SJ: Yeah, and that was Ben Stiller's first movie. It was a fun movie to work on. Yeah, me and my company did it all. I had a lot of people working on it.

**AU: And C.J. Graham, Jason from Friday The 13th Part 6, played Hellcop?**

SJ: Yeah.

**AU: Who played the Succubus? Was that Linnea Quigley or no?**

SJ: No, Linnea's got much nicer tits.

**AU: How did you first meet Linnea Quigley? You are one lucky son of a gun because you snagged every horror fan's dream girl. She was the first naked lady I ever saw on screen when I watched The Return Of The Living Dead.**

SJ: Oh yeah, I know. It was so funny because believe it or not when I was working on *Night Of The Demons*, I believe in 1986, I was still a shy kid from Texas. I wasn't a sex, drugs, and special effects guy back then. But I would be doing her makeup, and normally the actor will shut or avert their eyes, and I'd be inches from her face doing her make-up and I would just see that she's staring directly into my soul and I was thinking "What the hell is going on here?" Also the whole movie was filmed at night so I would pick her up and drive her home when the sun was coming up, and eventually one thing led to another.

**AU: I'm also obsessed with author and director Clive Barker, and I know that you worked on his film Lord of Illusions. You also have a section in your new book Rubberhead Vol. 2 called The Ones That Got Away and you mention a The Mummy project that you and Clive Barker had tried to work on. What is Clive like to work with and what would his The Mummy project have been like?**

SJ: Well, first and foremost, I love Clive to death. I've always loved him. The first time I met him businesswise I went down to his offices for *Lord of Illusions* on Sunset Boulevard. I just said, "Look Clive, let's get this over with. You're a genius. I'm a genius. We can make some cool stuff. Give me the job." And he did. But I worked on more movies that never happened with Clive than any other director, ever. I mean, so many movies, so many design sessions, so much stuff that never happened unfortunately.

We have plans to rule the world. On *Lord of Illusions* I did all of the hero effects, like I did the Nix makeup, the bad guy. My favorite effect on *Lord of Illusions*, and there's tons of effects in there, is there's a full body of the antagonist Nix when he's brought back to life, and his body goes from black to fleshtone. No one would ever attempt this these days but we took a normal fleshtone fake dummy and we pumped it full of all this black ink to get it to turn black in a reverse camera move and then we printed it in reverse and I was very pleased with that shot.

**AU: What's the craziest Halloween you can remember?**

SJ: Oh God. When Rick Baker got fired by Steven Spielberg from what ultimately ended up being *E.T.*, it was a originally a movie called *Dark Skies*. So Spielberg fired Rick and Rick said, "Okay, we're getting out of the building but I'll keep you on payroll to build your Halloween costumes first. So I did this gorilla suit with a huge ogre face and little hanging shrunken heads everywhere. After our whole crew went to a Halloween party



at Ve Neill's place, she is an Oscar winning make-up artist who worked on *Batman* as well as *Beetlejuice*, so anyways all of us Rick Baker kids got all suited up and went over to her party and did magic mushrooms and it was unfucking believable. I mean, I'm inside this fucking rubber troll head, just snot pouring down my nose, I didn't care. I was in character and everybody else was in great costumes. If you've never done magic mushrooms at a Halloween party, I highly recommend it.

**AU: Which book will have your stories about Highway To Hell in it?**

SJ: So far, none of them.

**AU: Maybe Volume 6?**

SJ: I've done like 200 movies and millions of things, I can't cover all of them. It's really hard to encapsulate your life and that's why there's five books and there's a lot of photo pages too. So when I started mapping this thing out I didn't want to go with a chronological order. I wanted to make it really exciting, more like Hunter S. Thompson. What I decided to do is concentrate on the movies that I have the funniest stories about because there is a lot of humor in these books, even though Book 2 has a lot of horror and drama in it, there's some very funny chapters. So I wanted to go with the most famous movies, actors, directors, and the most funny stories. I can't cover everything, Jesus Christ is five volumes not enough for you?

**AU: How about a whole book just about Highway to Hell?**

SJ: I could, I can't shut my mouth, there's some great stories from *Highway To Hell*. I could write a whole book about *Highway To Hell* actually, I'd probably get sued though.

**AU: And there's also a graphic novel as part of**



**the newest Rubberhead book?**

SJ: There is, it's a 20 page graphic novel because in each volume of *Rubberhead* I want to give the readers something they wouldn't expect so there's all kinds of cool stuff to interact with as well. So in Volume One, there's a chapter written in script format. And in Volume Two, there's the graphic novel.

**AU: Any upcoming projects other than the books? My vote is for a Highway To Hell Part 2.**

SJ: There is a documentary version of the *Rubberhead* series being filmed. We've been working on it for about two years and it's turning out fantastically. I'm really pleased with the footage and the edited sequences I've seen so far. So that's something I'm focusing on.

**AU: Where can people buy your Rubberhead: Sex, Drugs, and Special Effects books?**

SJ: Either on Amazon or google Dark Ink Publishing. I'm also recording the audio book for Volume 2 right now and it's turning out really fun. We did an audio book for Volume 1 and it just turned out so hysterical because I get high and I go off script.

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## ARTHUR BROWN The God Of Hellfire

Interview by Ira Hunter and Clark Mantei

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

**Arthur Brown:** My name is Arthur Brown, the God of Hellfire. The original public perception of my existence was to do with the band called The Crazy World of Arthur Brown. Our first album was very popular, it was in the top 10 albums in both England and America. It was also very popular in Canada. The single from that album "Fire" was number one in England and number two in America next to Hey Jude by The Beatles.

**AU: The song Fire has such a theatrical video for 1968. What brought that video together?**

**AB:** Well, it was a lot of things actually. I was

playing at the time at the underground club, The UFO Club, which featured pre-big publicity Pink Floyd, Soft Machine, and David Bowie occasionally played down there. It was a very creative coming together of people where bands would influence each other. In my case what led to my theatrical experiments was that the audience there were willing to accept experiment as part of the entertainment. So I could make a costume out of newspapers or whatever.

Some of these things came about by accident, like the first fire helmet, which was the hallmark of the God of Hellfire. I found the crown in the hotel that I was living in after somebody had a wild party. Before that one of the children who came to those concerts with their mother said to me "You should blackout your teeth." So I thought well wisdom from the child, let me try this tomorrow. People liked the teeth blacked out and then a few days later, I found the crown and wore a flaming headdress. Now the flames are five feet tall when I do it, but in those days it was candles. But even so it was part of the beginning of theatrical rock.

Apart from that, I had a friend who was doing the lighting for the Crazy World in its early stages. We had lots of conversations about the primitive, pagan, and shamanism approach to things. So out of that came our costumes with ancient mystical symbols on them. I think the masks came from my acquaintance with early Japanese theatre. My dancing in the video, some of it I got from watching travelogues of African witch doctors

dancing but worked it into a kind of rock and roll, funky type thing. There was the theatrical lighting. There were the technological inventions of the

day. I had a handheld sampler, which was the first that was brought out, and I had the first radio mic. Suddenly you could appear from different places, and synthesizers were just coming in.

**AU: What led you to incorporate theatrics into your music?**

**AB:** I remember as a child, when I was about eight, being at school and sitting on a throne and being I think it was King Alfred. That was the first time that I wore a garment and was playing a character. Also there were other plays where they used specific lighting and I became fascinated with how you could change a location into any other location if you wore costumes and if you altered the lighting. Also in my case, I took classical opera training for a while. In the operatic tradition, you also have theatre.

**AU: You were one of the first musicians to wear make-up, now known as corpse paint, this seems to have influenced many performers that followed from Kiss to King Diamond.**

**AB:** One of the nice things about it is that there's a kind of kinship. The fact that somebody else had seen it and thought, Oh that's a good idea. I think that's a lovely thing in a music community and it kind of stretched throughout different genres. Even Peter Gabriel used some of those ideas. It's nice to be recognized but I do feel it's all sort of a long tradition. The corpse paint of course came from way beyond that back in history. Originally it wouldn't have been the kind of grease paint style. But painting the eyes with black dust and stuff is ancient.

**AU: What keeps you going? You're now 79 years old and still playing festivals.**

**AB:** And still writing new stuff, we've got a new multimedia show now. In order to engage people at festivals, it kind of resumes a lot of the styles that I've used throughout my career and some of the tunes. But at the same time I just love producing new things.

**AU: Cherry Red Records is releasing a lot of your previous material.**

**AB:** They are an interesting record company. They operate in various different ways. They will sign the back catalogue and will also put out new albums. Iain McNay, who founded it, has a wide musical taste. I think at this current stage, it's the largest independent company.

**AU: Any memories about recording your first album you could share?**

**AB:** Yeah, we did the original demos with Pete Townshend, who was managed by Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp, who did Track Records. So Pete went back to them and said, "Look I've seen this guy singing and he's got a great operatic approach." They said, "Well, we're kind of interested." So Pete took us down to his studio and we did some demos of the songs that I'd put together for The Crazy World. We were a pretty outrageous band. The visuals were not particularly normal in those days and the sort of topics that I was singing about were not normal. We'd never had any experience of a big studio so he was very helpful and he played guitar on some of the tracks. Of course, when it came to the final recording of it, Kip Lambert, who was an amazing producer and had become our manager. He decided that it shouldn't have a guitar on it. We should just come out with the drums and the Hammond organ, full stop. The keyboard player played bass pedals and it was the early days of playing one of the small Hammonds that

had the original kind of valves with gas inside a glass bulb. I remember one gig we did in a place called Bognor, in the middle of the set the valves exploded and caught fire and the organ burned and there were green flames coming out.

**AU: Later on how did you become involved with The Alan Parsons Project album titled Tales of Mystery & Imagination inspired by the works of Edgar Allan Poe?**

**AB:** I got contacted by Eric Woolfson, who did the lyrics on that, and when it came to this track The Tell-Tale Heart that I was on, Alan got the studio together. I walked in, having been given the lyrics and a rough vocal guide. I think we did it on either the first or the second take. We just relied on the feeling of it, it needed to be sort of an almost insane person. Then we did one long scream separate from that take and that was it.

**AU: You performed with The Doors. Did you ever speak of mysticism with Jim Morrison?**

**AB:** Separate from that concert, Jim came to London and did that Lizard King concert. Kit Lambert managed to persuade him that it was a good idea to meet Arthur Brown, who was also doing a different kind of theatrics in music. So we met up in a drinking club at 11:30 in the morning. It was all right, we didn't really say anything except for Hi to each other though.

**AU: Why was your second Crazy World album Strangelands put aside for 20 years until 1988?**

**AB:** Well, it was done when the original drummer of The Crazy World, Drachen Theaker had been asked to leave the band on the American tour because he got so out of control. But he came back to England and we met up and everything seemed a lot better. So by this time, Vincent (Crane) had gone off and formed Atomic Rooster. But Drachen and I did an improvised session with some chosen musicians and that was Strangelands. The music was very expressive and very exploratory. But the thing is, as an artist you go into things and you explore them and then you go and explore something else. So after that first band disintegrated, I needed to form another band which was Kingdom Come. As a result when Marmalade Records wanted to put it out. I said, No I'm going to have to wait because I've got to do this new band. So Strangelands was put on the shelf for quite a while.

**AU: Any new projects you are working on?**

**AB:** What has just come out is the box set of all the Kingdom Come material called Eternal Messenger. Kingdom Come was the first band ever to use the drum machine as the root rhythm for a band without any drummer. Then Prophecy Records are putting out an album of material that's never been released. It was with a great musician called Rick Patten. Then there is a horror album with Cleopatra Records. I've also got a track coming out on a Peruvian album with a kind of metal band who play a wonderful flute amongst all the heavy metal.

**AU: What is the horror one about?**

**AB:** It's revisiting some of the horror hits of the late 50s and early 60s, which tended to be funny. But the way Cleopatra works

on these things, is that they bring in all these different people to work on the individual songs. So they have people like myself, Alan Davey from Hawkwind, Jürgen Engler from Die Krupps, Mark Stein from Vanilla Fudge, Brian Auger from The Trinity, and all sorts of great musicians being brought together for a fun album. It has turned into a musical exploration and some of the tracks are quite amazing.

**AU: Have you had any fire related accidents when performing with your fire helmet on?**

**AB:** Oh yeah. In fact, in the first major concert I did at the Windsor Jazz and Blues Festival in 1967,



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this was kind of the very early days of anything to do with theatricality of a large nature. So I had a crane that was lowering me from the heights onto the stage and the helmet had to be alight when I got in the bucket so I could come through the heavens as a flaming meteor. So the lights man was putting the fuel in and he got over enthusiastic and spilt it down me and it all caught fire. So my robe was burning, the helmet was burning. I managed to throw the helmet off but I was still standing there on fire. Thankfully Zoot Money was nearby holding two glasses of brown ale so he poured them over me and managed to get most of the fire out. I eventually arrived on stage looking like a wet rat. There's been all sorts of accidents like that in the early days with stages catching on fire and scorch marks on the ceiling.

**AU: What do you remember about sharing the stage with Jimi Hendrix?**

**AB:** Well, I was very fortunate. There was a week where Jimi and I were put together by Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp because Jimi wanted to have a large theatrical band. He wanted me to sing and there would be Vincent Crane as the keyboard player and from the Experience, Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell, that would be the band. He was going to have large projection screens, it was going to be multimedia and he was going to have tapes of Wagner playing in the background. So it was a very exploratory thing. Previously I had once been brought together by Frank Zappa, with Hendrix and John Lee Hooker. I played with both of them on stage. But this one Jimi and I improvised together for a week. The actual playing was amazing. Just the amount of energy that came out of him, the ideas musically. If the musicians are free, you find yourself going all over the place musically. When I was singing with him there was this energy that came up and there was a great joy. At that time, Jimi was still thinking that he didn't like his own voice and he wanted someone else to do the singing. I think it was obviously a thing where Chris Stamp and Kit Lambert were thinking, Okay we'll make a supergroup out of The Crazy World and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. It was all together for me a beautiful, positive exploration.

**AU: You recently played Hawkfest. What's your association with the band Hawkwind been?**

**AB:** I'd been living in America and I had not realized that Hawkwind, who had been quite revolutionary for their music when they first came out, had actually managed to rise and rise. They had decided at that juncture that the following year they wanted to do a tour and get back to the theatricality that had been their hallmark with Robert Calvert before he died. He and I had been friends. So for about 6 months I toured with Hawkwind. We did one big concert in

London, at which Lemmy came too and did Silver Machine and I sang backing vocals.

**AU: What was the incident at the Palermo Pop Festival where you stripped naked and were arrested and deported?**

**AB:** Well, the human body is as beautiful as any tree or flower that you put in a pot and look at. It was in those days when people were more open to seeing nudity, I think it was probably post Hair. So yeah it was just like, Okay I'll do that.

**AU: You should have used the excuse that you were on fire and had to strip off your clothes.**

**AB:** Haha! Yeah.

**AU: Any memorable Halloween performances?**

**AB:** I did one in England where I got taken in a throne and they carried me through town and they've all got strange make-up on. Then they stopped under a bridge and proceeded to light off a 100 cannons, the big bangers. So by the time I came out of there my head was singing and I was partially deaf. Then we got to this big green near the sea and all the town were out there and my function was to press this big button. They were having a problem with seagulls pooing all over the place.

So I press this button and this enormous seagull they had built exploded.

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

**AB:** Yes, we're heading hopefully towards Canada. So keep an eye open.

**AU: You predate the term Shock Rock, but saying I Am The God of Hellfire in 1968, that was probably considered pretty shocking?**

**AB:** It was, and it is interesting the number of different people who were affected. George Clinton said that was what gave him the clue for all of his stage shows. Also of course Alice Cooper and King Diamond and lot of other people.

**AU: You can play these festivals and fit right in beside Kiss or any of these other bands just simply for the influence you've had.**

**AB:** Yeah, I mean we can do electro rock because Prodigy used that line 24 times in their first single. So I've got the young Prodigy audience and then some world music fans, it goes into all the markets. Because Fire was a hit in the mainstream charts so we spread right across. In the early days some of the religious groups burned copies of Fire but on the other hand some of the gospel singers thought it was wonderful. So it hit right across, depending whether you thought it was a bit of a comic fun, insanity, theatre, something spiritual, or something just for a laugh. It depended, different people took it different ways.

**AU: It spread like fire.**

**AB:** Ha Ha! Yes and it has not been put out.

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# ARCHSPIRE

Interview with vocalist Oli Peters  
By Erik Lindholm

On returning to European stages – lockdown isolation creations – new record *Bleed The Future* (dropping 29 October 2021) – and the joys of Halloween...

**Absolute Underground: Hey, good day. This is Erik with AU in Victoria. How's it going?**

Oli Peters: I'm good, How you doing?

**AU: I'm doing great. Where are you now?**

OP: We're all in Vancouver. Yeah, I'm in Renfrew. It's alright, I live in a co-op. It's a big family run compound type of housing. So, you pay in and you become a partial owner, but then you go to shitty meetings. But, my whole family's here. I got my mom here, my brother, and his kids, my girlfriend, so it's kind of a cool little setup we got.

**AU: That sounds amazing. When you first described it, thought you're living in like a Co-Op brand supermarket or gas station.**

OP: I would be living in the egg section.

**AU: Let's shift to the new Archspire record, *Bleed The Future*. What was your aim with the album? What did you learn during the process?**

OP: The overall aim for us, the aim for anyone that's kind of doing our style of music, is to try to top the last album. And that sounds cliché, because every artist will be like, "This is our best work to date." And then you listen to it, and think "I know you're lying, it's not." I think our aim for it was just to try to push ourselves past our last album *Relentless Mutation*, which we got a really good response from. And before that album, we had a very small kind of niche fan base. We still do, but it's bigger, but with *Relentless Mutation* coming out, our fan base grew quite a bit more than we had expected. And that was exciting for us, but also daunting, because we knew we'd have to go in and write another album that would hopefully push us to the next level past that. So,

that was our aim technically, is to take what we learned in *Relentless Mutation*, and then apply that with even more focus to this album. How do we be faster and still be insane, but actually have some memorable riffs? So, that was a big goal... how do we make catchier tech death songs?

**AU: It sounds like such a surreal math problem to try and solve: "If the blast beats are leaving Chicago at 300 beats per minute, and the vocal melody is leaving Wichita, where will they collide"?**

OP: Exactly. That's what we were doing, when we were writing and it took us a fucking long time to write, because we were touring when we started writing it. Then we managed to hunker more. A pretty nerve wracking writing process, because you want to hit the next bar, and you don't want people to say, "It's just okay, but their last album was better," - we never want that. What that actually meant for me writing the lyrics, I would try to put the name of the song in the song so people can remember at least the chorus, even if they can't take away a lot of the crazy shit that's happening. You don't want to be too formulaic, we focused on having riffs and lyrics to revert back to. When we're writing riffs, learning when



to chill out, and when to let something breathe. And you know, we all want to go crazy fast all the time. Our producer Dave Otero helped us with that a lot too. Him basically schooling us and saying, "Alright, this sounds awesome, but it will sound more awesome if you hold off to do it."

**AU: Sometimes the other ear in the room asks, "have you thought of this?" a new perspective.**

OP: For sure. He was a lot more hands on with this album. He recorded our last album and I think that one, he was trying to suss out the dynamics of the band. This one he had a better understanding of that. He could be take more initiative in producing. He'd say, "Go rewrite those lyrics at lunch, and then we'll re-track it." So it put a lot of pressure on, but I think from that kind of pressure, you get really cool stuff that you wouldn't normally get if you were writing in a more relaxed setting.

**AU: Certainly, and given the style of music that you're delivering, it's very fast, intense, technical - it feels like that would produce results. You're under pressure for music that is under pressure. If you sounded like Neil Young it would probably be the wrong approach.**

OP: Well, definitely the solos. I grew up liking Neil Young, but have you ever checked out one of his solos?

**AU: Oh man, he gets it done. I got mad respect.**

OP: Yeah, yeah! He's trying his hardest.

**AU: The studio process for "Cortez the Killer" is probably different than your tracks, is all I'm trying to get out.**

OP: Yeah, we're not getting hopped up. That's the main thing. When we recorded the first album, we wanted to bring friends by and we were drinking while we were finished recording for the day. This one, I didn't drink anything until after my tracking and we were in the studio for about six weeks. Everyone was kind of on that page. We're

here to just work. We recorded it in Denver. We were isolated. Music jail, basically. We couldn't go out because it was COVID. So we were living in a music prison for six weeks. And working on the album every day, all day.

**AU: Speaking to prison, speaking to COVID, something that's always enjoyable with your band is that you're great on social media. There's those things like guitar lessons, there's vocal challenges. There's lots of cool interactions and funny comments. Most recently you were leading some cooking lessons, with a segment called "Good Morning Handsome", Tell us a bit about the cooking lessons and how you kept busy during COVID?**

OP: I wanted to do that for a really long time, because I was a chef and cook for ages. In the last five or six years, I got out of cooking because the band became a full-time gig. But I always wanted to do a cooking show that where you actually saw how to cook something. Not the Vice kind of shit where it's a fat tattooed guy showing you how good the food is that he's eating, that you can't afford. Or the Food Network shit, where it's just this stressful, competitive kind of cooking scenario.

So it really just started from me wanting to watch a show with someone that actually acts and cooks like you'd see in a restaurant. If you just walked in on a line and saw a normal guy cooking, it would be some dirtbag guy, but he'd be making something that you can understand and then you could cook at home. That was the premise for it.

**AU: Do you have a crucial piece of cooking equipment? A favourite kitchen item?**

OP: A handheld Cuisinart, like a blitzer. Because you can just fuck up any sauce with that. But I also have a fetish for old school chrome toasters. Basically anything chrome looks really sick.

**AU: There was a few years ago, a wonderful piece of footage that came out of Oak Bay, on local CTV News. They did a special on Spencer, your wonderful drummer. And they had a "on the street" segment where they were showing some of the folks who are walking by, who were often a bit older, some Archspire tracks. It was a magical piece of family oriented footage. Any feedback from new fans?**

OP: I'm sure there's a lot of his mom's friends now, that want to come to a show, whereas before they probably definitely did not. It gives them a different impression of the music because there's validity. We also got a Juno nomination so it gives you some credibility. It was definitely cool to see that segment because it's very contrary to what they'd normally broadcast.

**AU: The first time I would have run into you at a show would have been with a band called Enchanted Faeries. It was a mighty metal band in Victoria. Do you keep up with those guys?**

OP: Yeah, I mean, what a fucking fun time. We had such a good time playing those shows. I think I'm the only one that went on doing it full time as a career. But it was just a cool point in time when you didn't have to think about the career aspect of playing shows and being in a band, and you could just basically do whatever you wanted on stage and write whatever you wanted and really enjoy yourself. My brother was the drummer, we see each other a lot, but I don't really see the



other guys. But it makes me miss Logan's.

**AU: It's feeling pretty weird. A lot of the venues from that era have closed.**

OP: I hear what you're saying. My band has this inside joke because I always want to do dumb shit. I always want to do something stupid on-stage: a gag, or dress up. So my band has this phrase, whenever I have a dumb idea. They say "Oh yeah, why don't we just dress up and play Logan's? Cuz that's what you want to do!" That's their dig on me all the time.

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

OP: We have an October 30th CD release show Halloween party at The Rickshaw, in Vancouver. We're really stoked. It's going to be a really awesome show. We also just shot our biggest video. A horror sci-fi themed video that has a shitload of gore effects in it. We hired two effects artists that work on major movies, so they did a bunch of crazy graphic effects for us. And that's going to be in our Halloween themed video.

**AU: Do you have a favourite pro wrestler?**

OP: Randy Savage, because he's all fucking blown out. And it's hilarious to watch. I can say my favourite wrestler is Mickey Rourke in *The Wrestler*.

**AU: What's the feeling you have as you embark on your European world tour?**

OP: Scared shitless. Yeah, not because we're worried we're gonna get sick. It's just so problematic right now. You booked something, and then last minute anything could happen, or could get cancelled. And we've seen it happen to other bands. So for us, it's just really scary going back out. There's a lot that needs to go into the tour before it happens. Financially, and just with our lives, so getting all that in order to go out on the tour knowing that one person catches COVID and then the whole tour is fucked. We just encourage everyone to do whatever it takes to go shows so we can tour again.

**AU: It's got to happen. We can't all sit in our mom's basement watching YouTube forever.**

OP: Yeah, I definitely fucking can't wait. I want to get back to playing. And that means people got to show up, and that means that they got to make sure that they're allowed to show up.

**AU: Last shout-out to our readers?**

OP: Thanks for the interview! Shout out is just straight up: STAY TECH!

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## Pale Torn Sky

### An Introduction to Necron

By John Carlow

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

BG: My English name is Bradley Charles Glendale. Translated name: My Kwak'wala name is Kasalas. I live in Coombs and grew up in Courtenay. I am a tattooist (not 'tattoo artist') at Wanderlust Tattoo Company in Parksville.

**Absolute Underground: Necron is a solo venture. When did you start this project?**

BG: Necron is likely to remain a solo project. The real momentum started in 2018, however due to a computer crash and destruction of material in 2020, the current incarnation of Necron really started spring 2020.

**AU: Where did you learn to write and play?**

BG: I took up guitar as a teenager (2003-2005). I was the only one in the house who really knew how to use the Internet, so just guitar tabs online from riffs I liked. Picked up bass and drums in 2020 with pretty much the same trajectory. Writing, I developed the habit of writing every little thing that came to mind, collecting these notes and culling out the duds left me with a lot of material.

**AU: Always been metal for you? What else do you collect and listen to?**

BG: Headbanger for life. Since I was the age of three GNR has been my favorite band. It wasn't long before Maiden and Megadeth came into the picture and then all the gateway bands in middle/high school. Aside from metal I really like the blues (John Lee Hooker, Albert King, SRV)

**AU: Define Black Metal**

BG: Sonically, I break it down into two major camps; what I call the Norwegian

Sound: think blast beats, double kick, high shrieking vocals, lo-fi production, and Black n' Roll: wider range vocals, close to clean vocals sometimes, and rock n roll beats. Many modern acts fit somewhere in the middle, though a ton of sub genres go extreme in many directions. Philosophically however, it is much harder to define. In a word, hate, but that's much too simple. Perhaps it would be easier to list the things that Black Metal is not.

**AU: You just released your debut EP, "Red Demo," on cassette and Bandcamp. When did you start working on that album?**

BG: Red Demo began recording in winter 2020-2021. The recording process was elongated as I'm teaching myself music production while doing this.

**AU: Tell us about the songs on this recording**

BG: "Black Fires of the Grave Ones" is somewhat of a call to attention pertaining to residential school deaths and traumas. "I Want to See Violence" is personal statement for the staff of these residential schools who have escaped justice. "Pale Torn Sky" started being about a bombing. Once I peppered in the occult imagery however, it migrated into the same issues as the previous songs. "Resister" is exactly what it states, resistance to the colonial regime. You can expect this song to have a sequel.

**AU: What can people expect when Necron hits the stage?**

BG: Abrasive urgent fanaticism. Truthfully if Necron were to perform live I would do vocals, wearing a mix of west coast big house regalia and spikes with corpse paint. I would hope an uncomfortable yet informative experience for the audience.

**AU: What comes next for Necron?**

BG: "Grey Demo" is set to arrive this fall, three songs. Available at necronbc.bandcamp.com and cassettes at select Vancouver Island stores such as Cavity in Victoria.

**AU: What's in the future for Necron?**

BG: At this point there is talk of a split with a punk band, crust punk being a major influence for Necron. As well as at least two more demos. With three demo tapes I believe I can harvest a handful of songs, re-record them and begin work on a full-length album, though that remains on a distant horizon. Listeners can expect 2-6-minute headbangers covering a wide range of topics, with Satan peppered in all over the place. Not all Necron themes will stay so serious, after all the band is named after the ice wizard from Fire and Ice.

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

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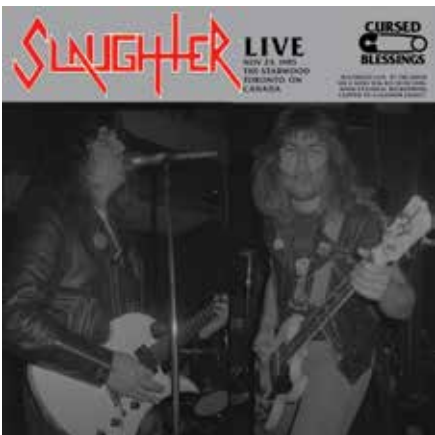
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## Cursed Blessings is Taking You Back to the Beginning

Every scene seems to have had some of "those nights." You know, the night that came out of nowhere and changed everything. The bar holds 200 but 2000 say they were there. THOSE nights. Toronto, Ontario has had no shortage of legendary occurrences on its stages (see Alice Cooper v Chicken 1969), but on two consecutive nights in November of 1985, the underground metal and hardcore punk scenes in Toronto met under the same roof... and nothing has been the same since. Scene pioneer Jill Heath (Jill JIII Productions) broke all the rules and tore down the old walls of separation by booking hardcore icons Corrosion Of Conformity and DRI at the storied Starwood Club (aka Ildiko's, The Bridge) with a young up and coming thrash metal band from the Toronto suburbs opening. As Sacrifice took the stage November 23rd, 1985 they were unsure of what

to expect from this hardcore punk crowd. The end result was a night that has all the stuff of legend! Thrash metal and punk rock, coexisting happily in a frenzied mosh pit that took more than a few casualties that night. "Back around this time, we were going to a lot of hardcore shows, so to get asked to open for two bands we looked up to was great for us," said Sacrifice guitarist/vocalist Rob Urbinati "I remember being a little worried if we would be accepted by their crowd, but we were. This was the beginning of metal and hardcore coming together in Toronto." As luck would have it, both COC and DRI had an off day the following day and decided at the last minute to do another round at the Starwood, but this time with emerging thrash heavyweights Slaughter opening the show. Another night of legend followed.

What nobody knew was that a young fan named Ray Burkis had a Sony walkman in his pocket with an external mic clipped to his leather jacket and he recorded BOTH shows! Rumors and stories persisted about these fabled recordings for years, and now they will be made available for everyone to hear! Cursed Blessings Records has obtained the rights and permissions from the bands to release live recordings of Sacrifice and Slaughter from these two legendary nights on 12" vinyl! "Being trusted by bands of this calibre with their music is an honour," said Cursed Blessings president and owner Al Nolan (who was actually in attendance at the first night of these shows). "This was a really incredible night, it changed everything!" Remixed but still raw and real, these recordings capture the ferocity of these legendary performances.



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# ARTIST PROFILE



## Sun Khamunaki

### Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your talents?

Sun Khamunaki: My name is Sun Khamunaki. I'm a comic book artist and illustrator best known for my Lady Death, Vampirella and Zenescope covers.

### AU: How long have you been an artist?

SK: I can't remember a time when I wasn't drawing. It's something I've always done. Semi-professionally about six years but completely full-time about three years.

### AU: How would you describe the art you create?

SK: I like to paint strong, sexy women. Bad ass bitches. I guess my style could be categorized as semi-realistic "airbrush" but I'm always trying to push my boundaries and style.

### AU: What are some of the major influences on your artistic style?

SK: I'm obsessed with art. I have so many influences because I'm constantly looking and collecting new art. My early influences were definitely Olivia, Royo, Boris, Chichoni, Bisley, Serpieri & Sorayama to name a few. Most of the artists featured in 80s-90s *Heavy Metal* magazines made a huge impact on me as a kid.

### AU: How do you create your artwork?

SK: I do all forms of media but the majority of my current work is done digitally. I'll sometimes use textures for after effects but everything is hand drawn and done from scratch.

### AU: How did you get started professionally working in the comic book industry? What projects and publishers have you worked with?

SK: I just sent some fan art to publishers I wanted to work with. The first one to notice me was Brian Pulido, creator of *Lady Death*. He gave me my first cover jobs and I've been lucky enough to work with him ever since! It was really the convention circuit that helped start my career. It was meeting other artists and doing odd jobs that got me noticed with other publishers.

Zenescope started hiring me for covers and things snowballed from there.

### AU: What are your career highlights so far?

SK: Getting to paint *Wonder Woman* for the 80th anniversary was a big honour. Being able to paint iconic characters like *Lady Death*, *Vampirella*, *Red Sonja* & *Purgatori* for the first time was amazing, and still is. The album cover I did for *London May* of Samhain stands out for sure. Getting an email from him saying "Danzig thinks your art is very cool" was pretty fucking awesome. The monthly movie club cover I get to do for *Zenescope* with Brian O'Halloran and Marilyn Ghigliotti from *Clerks* blows my mind every time. We've had amazing guests like Sam J. Jones and Kevin Greivoux. Doing some work with *Sideshow* was cool too!

### AU: How have you seen your artwork progress over the years?

SK: I look more towards where I'm going versus where I've been stylistically. I'm always trying to improve but I try to have as much fun as possible. I used to paint more loosely and with a more muted palette. I realized I wasn't having fun so I started painting bright, in your face art. I found my artwork progressed when I wasn't trying to create a certain style, putting limits on myself or worried about how it would be received.

### AU: Any plans to produce a full length comic one day or do you mostly do cover art?



SK: One is in the works! I'm about half way done the first issue of my comic book *Ormus*. It's a story I've had gnawing at the back of my head since I was a teen. The amazingly talented writer Garth Matthams of *Witch Creek Road* is co-writing with me. We're working really hard to make it as epic as it

is in my head. Really looking forward to holding that first issue in my hands.

### AU: You are known for your sexy sultry ladies. What are some new pieces you are working on or really want to work on soon?

SK: I'm working on some horror themed pin-ups for this month's Patreon members.

Getting pages done for my comic *Ormus*. Some new pieces for *Zenescope*, *Coffin*, *Dynamite* and some more store exclusives for the big two that I can't reveal yet. I have an increasingly long list of sci-if and horror characters that I can't wait to do.

### AU: Do you take commissions? What's the strangest thing you've ever been asked to draw?

SK: My commissions are closed for now as I'm busy with cover work and my comic. As for the strangest thing, that would be the detailed labia of a reptilian woman with extremely sculpted abs.

### AU: Favourite Horror films?

SK: It's too hard for me to pick a favourite. I'm always looking for a horror movie I haven't seen. The *Chucky* & *Hellraiser* franchises stand out to me. I'm also obsessed with found footage horror movies.

### AU: Do you enjoy exhibiting your art at comic book and horror conventions? Have you given any horror guests the art you've drawn of them?

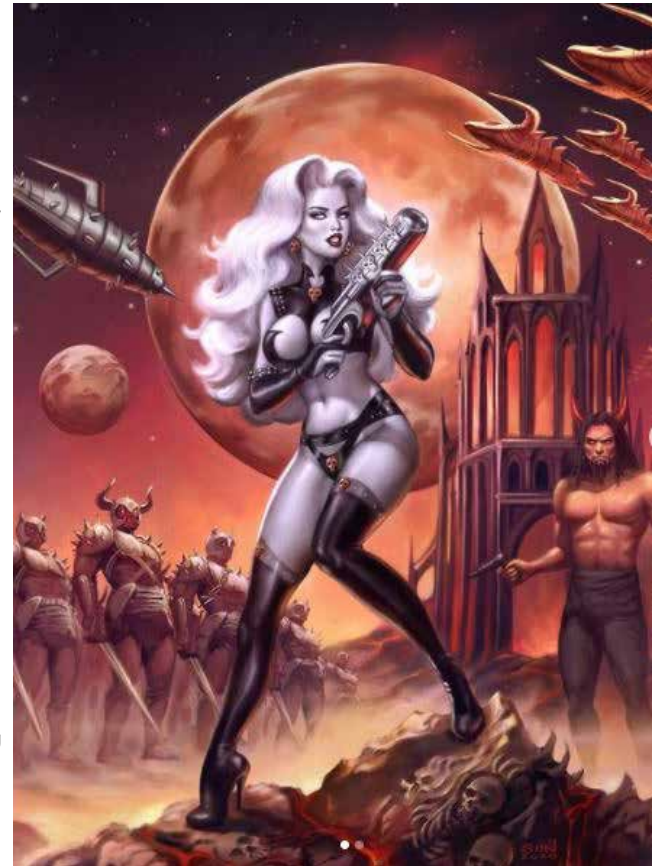
SK: Does Justin Trudeau count? Haha. Yes, I love conventions. I miss them. I haven't been able to do conventions the last couple years due to Covid.

### AU: What are your aspirations as an artist? Long term goals?

SK: Long term goal #1 is to survive and never have to get a real job again. I want to publish stories and art books until I croak.

### AU: Upcoming projects/art shows?

SK: Besides my comic I have my first art book coming out in the next few weeks. It'll be super limited, so if you're interested in grabbing one make sure to sign up to my newsletter to be notified when it goes live. I do a livestream every month with *Zenescope*. This month we are reviewing 1985's *Fright Night* and we'll be releasing my cosplay homage cover for it. No actual art shows or conventions until 2022.



### AU: Can boobs ever be too big?

SK: I mean, yeah. Sometimes MY back hurts just looking at huge boobs. I think there comes a point where it takes away from the art. I'm not shy with them but I won't go far as her needing a wheelbarrow to carry them around. That being said, I have a couple pieces out there where I may have gone too far.



### AU: Any special plans for Halloween this year?

SK: I assume most parents won't be sending their kids out this year, but I want to have the scariest house on the block. The one you always remember scared the crap out of you.

### AU: Where can we see examples of your art online?

SK: My website has a gallery, prints, books and collectibles at [sunkhamunaki.com](http://sunkhamunaki.com) You can follow me and get the most up to date info on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @sunkhamunaki. If you want to help support me, I offer monthly nsfw versions of my pinups in high resolution for my Patrons at [Patreon.com/artofsun](http://Patreon.com/artofsun)

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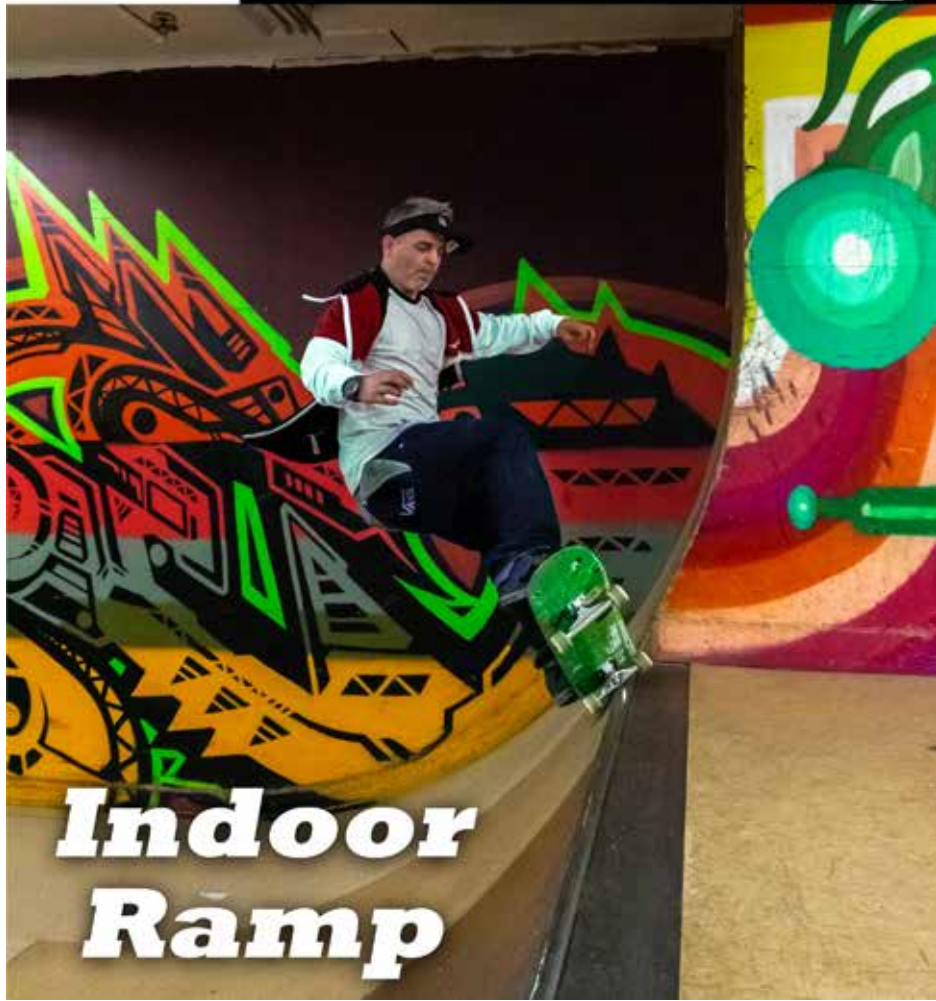




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## Every Hour Kills

Interview with Alan Sacha Laskow  
by Jon Asher

**AU: You've stated Every Hour Kills is a musical experiment? What's the story behind that?**

The story is I don't want to stick to a template of what the band 'should' sound like, or keep writing the same song over and over again. This is an expression, not a job, so I'm going to always be trying new things and letting it flow in a different direction, if that's what feels right. I've been into progressive genres my whole musical life, and part of what makes me love Metal is how it can span all kinds of different influences, moods and ideas.

**AU: How many hours can be killed listening to Every Hour Kills new record "Vacua" and its past discography?**

I see what you did there, you little scamp! You could kill every hour until you literally fucking

die, if you want. If you only listened to every song in the catalogue once, you'd be looking at a solid couple of hours of time killing.

**AU: For this new record, Every Hour Kills has recruited a new batch of musicians and has gone heavier and was stated that it was inspired by the shit year of 2020. Please fill in our readers on what this record means to you and what you're trying to express?**

I think everyone knows the last year and a bit has been pretty dark and fucked up in many ways, and we're still in it really. Although I'm lucky enough to have work now and have my basic needs met, I went through a life rollercoaster in 2020 with being suddenly unemployed, as well as the isolation and uncertainty that we all faced. As I've always done, I tried to channel that darkness into something creative and Vacua is what came out. As the record coalesced it didn't make sense to keep the same melodic vocal direction we'd mostly had in the past.



**AU: You wrote this EP with AI creation tools, and 95% of the instrumentation is programmed MIDI. Who do ya prefer working with Machine or Human? Why the choice of the use of AI tools?**

Songwriting is very rarely, at least for me, some kind of inspirational lightning strike where I just magically poop out something golden. Sometimes ideas do just appear in my head, but many times it's experimentation and grinding that gets it there. Using AI for inspiration is just another avenue to spark ideas; I can very much get in a rut if forced to always write starting on an instrument or physically playing something. MIDI gives me the freedom to create things I might not be able to play, and AI can send me in directions I might not have thought about.

Other humans can certainly do that too, so no preference really, whatever works at the moment. I'm very much into technological advances in music, that's what allows me to do what I do and basically create a huge 200+ track Metal orchestra in my bedroom. I started with a 4 track cassette and a drum machine and never looked back, the tools out there today are incredible.

**AU: How was it working with humans... Jei (Abiogenesis, Despite Exile) and co-writing some of the music with Calle Thomer (Vildhjarta, Humanity's Last Breath) and Chris Wiseman (Currents, Shadow of Intent)?**

It's always an honor to work with people you admire and respect. I do my best to trust them and let them do their thing as artists, and I'm always amazed at what they come up with. I think our styles meshed really well; since we all share some common influences, even though we might have very different approaches overall. I couldn't be happier with everyone's contributions.

**AU: As the producer of the EP too, what was your favourite part of the process creating it?**

My favorite part is hearing everything come together into a cohesive thing that started from nothing. There can be times when it feels daunting or like a grind, and it just isn't 'there' yet, but eventually, you keep working at it until something clicks into place and you know when it's right. That goes for all aspects from the songwriting to sculpting the sonic aspects like the tones and mixing; they all ultimately have to make sense with the whole picture and come together to elevate the vibe. Finding that balance is both incredibly challenging and rewarding.

**AU: You call yourself not a band but a musical collective? Will the next release have different members?**

I'm always seeking out new collaborations and trying out new ideas and directions. I don't have a crystal ball and it's still early in the process, but there will likely be some surprises like usual. Winky winky.

**AU: Will Every Hour Kills be performing Vacua live in the coming future?**

No plans to return to playing live at this time, but Wacken has my phone number.

**AU: Will Every Hour Kills be the first to birth robot musicians?**

Well, I was waiting for the right moment to tell you this, but, I'm pregnant.

**AU: Any final thoughts you like to share with our readers?**

All the variety, all the charm, all the beauty of life is made up of light and shadow.

[everyhourkills.com](https://everyhourkills.com)



## Bloody Monroe

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

Michael Green - Infamous for "taking this shit way too seriously."

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band, and get us up to speed - what have you been up to since we talked last?**

MG: Bloody Monroe is something I've been trying to get off the ground since 2011 roughly. This

is my third attempt. I started this up again in late 2017. In late 2018 I met Nathan Raboud (drums). We have been rehearsing and gathering material together for just about every weekend since. Our bass player Max McFadyen joined in November of 2018 and helped us record our first EP in December of that year. Bloody Monroe released its first EP in October 2019 entitled "How To Bury a Billionaire." At the time I was living quite far from Calgary and had to commute a long way to get to Calgary just to record or practice. I finally moved to Calgary in December of 2019 just as the band started to get the ball rolling the pandemic hit. Since then we have played as many shows as we could, released a few singles, and have now finished a full length album.

**AU: You just finished recording your debut album, is that right? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?**

MG: Yeah it's done, we are just going over all of the minor details at the moment with our producer Kyle Hedley (Acoustic Resolution) and then it will be sent to Los Angeles (Evan Morgan Productions) for mastering. You can expect to hear what I have said to myself while listening back to our tracks in the studio as "ferocious." Hooks, grooves and melody wrapped up in a hard rock-heavy metal package. Although, it's difficult to define. I call it heavy metal, but no one agrees with me. There are definitely elements of

punk, thrash, nu-metal and grunge, whatever you want to call it is up to you. We just call it Bloody Monroe.

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

MG: That's a good question. It explores a lot of personal observations and struggles. It also comments a lot about the world we live in, past and present. There's a lot in there lyric wise, it would take me a while to go through every lyric and explain it all. There is something I have noticed about my writing so far, at least in this album. I have taken two popular movie references/ themes and used them to explain how I feel about the state of the world we live in, or at least my perception of it. Those films being Christopher Nolan's *Dark Knight*, and John Carpenter's *They Live*.

**AU: When and where will it be released?**

MG: We don't have a definitive date as of yet, but we're looking into late fall for its release. It will be released on all major streaming services iTunes & Apple Music, Spotify, Tidal, YouTube, Amazon Music, Deezer, Napster, Pandora, I Heart Radio and more. Physical distribution will come in the following months and/or upon request.

**AU: Will you be playing any live shows or booking any tours to promote it?**

MG: Of course! It's difficult right now as there are still many ups and downs with this pandemic, but we are currently booking a tour of Alberta and BC with our friends in Diamonds on Neptune for this November. We hope to be booking a North American or European tour in the summer of

2022.

**AU: What else has the band been up to? How have you stayed sane over the course of the pandemic?**

MG: No we haven't stayed sane. The pandemic has been a struggle for everyone, Bloody Monroe included. It hasn't been fun. As for myself all I really do is work on Bloody Monroe, not much else really matters to me. Nate keeps busy with his daughter, and Max has moved to Montreal to complete his degree in music. He is still very much part of the band and on the record but as of now we have a fill-in bass player (Toryin Schadlich) to help us out for live shows in his absence.

**AU: What's next for Bloody Monroe? Anything else exciting in the works?**

MG: We plan to keep playing live and hopefully tour the Us and Europe. We're also planning to release multiple singles and film several music videos for this album. We still have other songs written and

plan on getting those together sometime in the new year.

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

MG: I don't know yet. I usually just dress up as Batman.

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

MG: You'd never believe me...

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

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## Johnny Bandura and the 215

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you currently all about?**

JB: Hi this is Johnny Bandura.

**AU: Tell us about the latest art project you worked on.**

JB: I created a mural out of 215 individual portraits to honor each child that was found at the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

**AU: Describe the art you created and the meaning behind it.**

JB: I used 11"x14" canvas to match as close to an actual human face as I could and used bright oil paints to really bring the images to life. It is a memorial but also a celebration of life. Instead of painting them as children I decided to give them a life they could have lived. To show how we lost a large piece of society.

**AU: Why was this such an important project for you?**

JB: It actually started out very simply I just wanted to paint something to honor the children. It wasn't till after I had completed the second portrait that I decided that I would do a portrait to honor each of the children. As well the Kamloops residential school was where my grandmother went as a child and I couldn't help but imagine

some of the children found could have been her friends and classmates.

**AU: What do you want people to understand about what really happened in Canadian residential schools?**

JB: I think the unmarked grave sites speak for themselves. But we as the public need to listen to the survivors and their families. Really understand and believe the abuse and trauma they suffered as well inter-generational trauma will continue until we address the issues.

**AU: How can this ever be resolved in your opinion?**

JB: Well my opinion I don't believe there's a simple fix for this. To start people need to be held accountable. The federal government has funded and overseen operations of the system since they created them. The Catholic Church ran the schools on the governments behalf. Both organizations have to admit guilt to the genocide and mistreatment of the Indigenous people of Canada. Individuals on both sides of the system committed crimes and were never charged or investigated that needs to change arrests need to be made. More needs to be done to treat the future generations of First Nations people. To honor the victims of genocide we need to honor the decedents of these victims; their families should be given justice. Finding clean drinking water on an Indian reservation in Canada is a rarity. Helping First Nations with providing them with the basic necessities of life is a start to healing and honouring the victims of genocide. That's what I can say to start with resolving this but again that's purely my personal opinion.

**AU: Any plans to keep exhibiting these 215 paintings you created?**

JB: Yes. After the first showing in Edmonton I hope to bring them home to Kamloops to be displayed. As well I'm working on a book because I would like to include some of the stories

residential school survivors shared with me with the paintings and use the the book as a way to educate people in a simple short story formate about what happened at residential schools from the people that were there, as well as to give access to the portraits to people who can't make it to a gallery.

**AU: You have been getting a lot of media attention, what has been the message and story behind this artwork you have been sharing?**

JB: I think the message is that these were children that were killed for no reason other than that they were indigenous and they could have gone on to be anything.

**AU: Anything going on with your music or bands these days? Any new projects in the works?**

JB: Well I'm always writing music and needing that release. I'm

trying to bring back a style of music that was popular in the 30s. "Hobo folk" or Hobo rock as I call it. It's basically just telling a story with acoustic guitar accompanying. It's easy to do during Covid as well because it's typically played solo. I'll share some songs later this year

**AU: Any updates on the planned documentary on your early band Sip Yek Nom?**

JB: The Sip doc was suppose to launch filming at PRB 2020 but we all know happened there so it's on the back burner again until the time is right

**AU: How can people find you and support your cause online?**

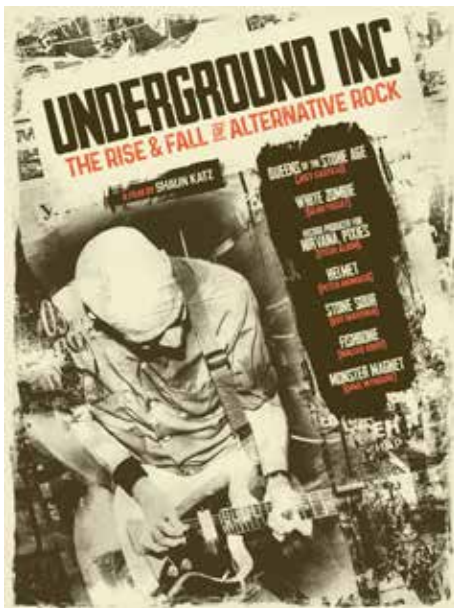
JB: I'm pretty easy you can find me @ johnnybandura on FB and Instagram, and my brand new web page just launched <https://johnnybandura.trubox.ca/>

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

JB: Who knows what tomorrow will bring, be prepared to improvise. Thank you.

@johnnybandura





## Underground Inc The Rise & Fall of Alternative Rock

Interview with director Shaun Katz  
by Lawrence Denvir

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

SK: This is Shaun Katz - the director of *Underground Inc*

**AU: How did you first become a documentary filmmaker and what were some of the earlier projects you've worked on?**

SK: My ambition was to make fiction films, but in my own love for music, I was fascinated by following this story of these underground bands, who, for a few years got that 'one big shot'. So you could say my love for the subject matter forced me into making a documentary. Previously I had worked on short films and music videos.

**AU: What was the genesis of your documentary film project *Underground Inc: The Rise & Fall of Alternative Rock*?**

SK: I was helping manage a record store and the owner introduced me to one incredible album after the next. These were bands that the music buying public had never heard of. Very often these bands were better than the household names. The strange thing was that a lot of these bands never got to put out more than one album. This is how I discovered that there was this big gold rush in the music industry during that time to find the next big thing after Nirvana became huge. Yet if you didn't sell 500,000 copies right out the gate you were done. While the tales of industry were intriguing to read about, it was the music by these bands that made me want to make the film. I wanted to get in there and find out why these bands that became the soundtrack to my life never got that second record out!

At the same time, I had been collaborating with Peter Mengede from Helmet, who had helped make some music for some of my short films. This meant I was in a position to get an interview quite easily with him, which helped to get the ball rolling and get other musicians involved.

**AU: Please share your elevator pitch/synopsis for this movie if possible.**

SK: *Underground Inc* tells the story of the rise and fall of the alternative rock scene, in the wake of Nirvana's success. Going behind the music industry's scramble to find the next big thing.

**AU: What bands and people are featured in the film?**

SK: The film features Steve Albini (producer: Nirvana, Pixies, Jesus Lizard) ex/members of Queens Of The Stone Age, Helmet, Only Living Witness, White Zombie, Fishbone, Jets To Brazil, Failure, Quicksand, Corrosion of Conformity, Red Fang, Bad Religion, Ministry, Brad, Clutch, Biohazard and more.

The bands that really excite me though are the ones who are ripe for rediscovery. There are some f\*\*king brilliant bands out there that NOBODY knows, but they're awesome and I was really excited to have them be a part of the film;

bands like Sugartooth, Cop Shoot Cop, Course Of Empire, Handsome, Sensefield, Jawbox.

**AU: In the documentary, Matt Tecu stated that when Conservative reign happens, anger in music emerges. Do you believe that occurred as a result of the Trump Administration and if so, why (or if it didn't why not)?**

SK: I think that the music landscape now is too different and splintered to draw the same analogy. I do know, however, that last year especially there were a phenomenal amount of great underground rock/metal albums.

I think the main difference between now and then, is that the 90s were that great period where bands started combining all kinds of influences together, and not restricting themselves to one genre only, this seems to really capture the spirit of how those bands have influenced current artists who do whatever they want now. I know a lot of new bands were inspired by Fugazi. I've noticed a bit of a resurgence with industrial music as well, bands like Youth Code or 3Teeth. I'm also noticing bands like IDLES and Ho99o9, who have these really vital voices which seem to be what made some of those late 80s/early 90s bands seem special. I don't know if politics is or isn't an enormous driving factor in the music, but it probably is a way of putting the music of its time into context.

**AU: In your mind which 90s alternative band should have broke big into the mainstream?**

SK: I'm really surprised that Brad never became a household name at some point, as Shawn Smith was an incredible singer. I also think that if Sugartooth and Course of Empire had received better support from their label they could have crossed over in the same way that RATM or NIN did. There are obviously so many factors that effect this from happening, timing being the most crucial. Many of these bands, like Failure, I think were definitely the victim of poor timing, in the wake of certain trends that were happening back then. I also think that the politics of the radio industry hurt a lot of bands, I know that this was definitely the case with Brad.

**AU: Were there any bands that you wanted to interview and include in the documentary, but weren't able to?**

SK: I had planned an interview with both Mark Arm (Mudhoney) and Tommy Victor (Prong), which would have been amazing to do, but unfortunately both of these never happened at the last second. As far as other people I wanted to interview, there were many that I contacted. I ultimately was thrilled with who I did get.

**AU: Do you think there will ever be another era of music similar to the alternative 90s music scene?**

SK: I feel like that period may have been the last gasp of individuality before things got really corporatized. As far as underground bands are going there are many vital bands now, just like they were then, but I can't really see how that weird blend of underground sensibility and corporate rock will ever meet again.

**AU: What do you think was the biggest contributing factor to the downfall of the 90s alternative music scene?**

SK: Well the first generation of bands that became hugely successful were legitimately under the radar, playing because they loved it. They were following in the footsteps of other bands who broke their back and blazed trails. Suddenly getting on MTV and getting a huge record deal became a real possibility for them, and it landed up polluting the music scene. This isn't because musicians stopped caring about music, but it was because once the music industry realised that they could make money from these bands it became dictated by industry. There was this weird contradiction of, "Well we're really underground and authentic so we're going to be the next big thing and get on MTV." So the statement that you mentioned probably speaks to how the whole thing became really fake at a certain point because the underground scene went from being driven by a grass roots foundation to being driven by corporations who have to recreate this perception to the masses.



The popularity that came with bands like Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins, Primus, Soundgarden etc, developed in a very organic way initially when they were being ignored by the industry. These bands had time to develop in this very big and vibrant way, so by the time 1991 came, a lot of these bands were poised to explode. Suddenly these bands got big and the industry wanted to sign every noisy guitar rock band they could find, but most of them weren't inherently suited to compete in the mainstream, they were awesome but only a few of them had a certain pop-like song craft that would sell at the same level as Whitney Houston or whoever.

**AU: With the advent of technology, we're seeing the trend of the artist in isolation, recording in their home studio and going direct to market. Do you think this is detrimental to contributing/developing local music scenes? And is success received through this method, cheating the paying your dues from constant touring?**

SK: I don't know if it's cheating, in many ways it's gone back to the way Indies were in the 80s, which I think is a great thing, but I do think that what Joey Castillo said in the film about how you HAVE TO tour if you want to be successful, still stands. The great thing about local scenes is that when they really thrive the bands not only can inspire each other, but there develops a one-up-manship; this need to outdo one another, and that's when you tend to see it break through commercially. It happened in Chicago to a degree with Industrial. It happened in Seattle, and also in Manchester and Liverpool obviously. That kind of thing.

I will also add that the one thing major labels do is allow bands to make big, glistening sounding albums. I think that can be an important part of the process of development for a band. I'm not talking about being overly commercial or being

over produced. I mean in the way way a band like Soundgarden used those resources to create a truly incredible album like *Superunknown*.

**AU: Is the possibility of a local scene getting promoted and changing the sound of mainstream music dead and gone?**

SK: I wouldn't say that. I do think that with the lack of gatekeepers and that big structure of labels not deciding what gets heard anymore, it'll happen in a very different way. I do think we're due again for another 'Golden Age of Rock'...and there will be one or two bands who will most likely spearhead that. It might just take a while, like another generational shift for it to happen.

**AU: Are there any current local alt music scenes that we should be paying attention to?**

SK: This isn't really one local scene, but more so a genre that had too many good albums out in the last year to keep track of. I discovered a psychedelic band from France, called Slift who released this incredible album called *UMMON*. I tried to see if there were any other bands like them in that region of France and discovered all these other space rock bands from all over the globe, some from the U.S. some from Greece...but a lot of great bands in that genre. Some of them include; Elephant Tree, Forming The Void, Rezn, King Buffalo, Psychlona, 1000mods and many others. It's a good time to get into space rock!

**AU: Have you ever been the assailant or victim of the tour van gassing?**

SK: Haha, no. I've never had the pleasure.

**AU: Any other projects you are working on?**

SK: I'm writing a horror movie!

**AU: Any advice for aspiring filmmakers?**

SK: Find the one thing that you have to make, no matter what. If you love it enough and are willing to make sacrifices to get it done, no matter what the obstacles are, it will probably happen.

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

SK: I have an email listing on the *Underground Inc* website, and the full list of where the film can be seen is also there. [www.undergroundincfilm.com](http://www.undergroundincfilm.com)

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## Helix

### The Golden Age of the Canadian Bar Circuit

Interview with lead singer Brian Vollmer  
By Ira "Gimme an R!" Hunter

#### Absolute Underground: What are you most famous or infamous for?

Brian Vollmer: Geez, well, probably for the song "Rock You," on the album *Walkin' the Razor's Edge* which is the biggest selling album the band had. That album went double platinum in Canada, almost. We toured Europe with Kiss in 1983. We were the first band to play with Kiss with their makeup off. Infamy...probably having a missing tooth in front of my face, but now I don't.

#### AU: That's very Canadian to have a missing tooth.

BV: I used to tell people it got knocked out in a fight. But in actuality, I think we were drunk one night and I was chewing nuts or something. Everybody said that looks really cool, man. So we left it like that.

#### AU: We just did a whole issue dedicated to Canadian punk rock and hardcore. And of course afterwards, in the back of my mind, I'm thinking we need to do a whole issue about Canadian metal and hard rock. Tell me what your involvement in that early scene was?

BV: Well, Helix is really the first heavy metal band to come out of Canada. We toured from coast to coast through the bars. We had that label slapped on us; we weren't really a metal band. We didn't even know what that was. You're essentially a travelling jukebox when you want to be successful and play the bar circuit. So we went out there but we always gravitated towards heavier music, Aerosmith, Ted Nugent, Ian Dury's "Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll". It wasn't until 1983 when we were trying to get a deal with Capitol Records that we changed our clothing. We went from wearing cloth shirts, cloth pants, and we went down to a place on Yonge Street that was an S&M leather

store and we got jock pads with spikes in them. Some of our fans were horrified. I think that was when people started slapping the label on us, so in fact, that played a prominent role in us getting signed to Capitol Records, once we switched to that heavier garb, to that image. But the music hadn't changed.

#### AU: What other bands would have been around at that time on the hard rock circuit? And did you run into Rob Halford at the S&M store?

BV: \*laughs\* No, I didn't run into Rob. I ran into some of the other guys in the band I think later on down in Phoenix, Arizona because they're all golfers. Some of the other bands on the circuit at that time were Coney Hatch, and Anvil. Funny thing was our girlfriends went out to see Anvil at Fryfogles in London (Ont.). They didn't realize they were our girlfriends and asked them what they thought of Helix, they said "We use their albums to line the bottom of our bird cages." So thanks Anvil. But back then there were two kinds of bands, show bands and rock bands. The show bands were stuff like Dublin Corporation, they wore suits and did choreographed moves and they played all the latest stuff on the AM radio. Then there was the rock bands and they dressed



in t-shirts and jeans. They just went out there and half of them were drunk and stoned. Helix was a combination of the two, we became a rock show band. Which, back then in those early days of the bar circuit people had never seen anything like that. We moved all over the stage, stood on top of the PA and that set us apart. We were a top bar band, and we were able to

entice people, to get extremely drunk at times, especially with our beer drinking contest.

#### AU: What was the origin of the band, just four dudes hanging out?

BV: It was actually five dudes, we didn't really hang out, I was in high school in this little band called Homegrown...

#### AU: Is that a weed reference?

BV: Well, actually, none of those guys ever smoked weed, they were all really straight. There was no smoking weed or doing acid or any of that. But the one guy got us into this Central Ontario Exhibition battle of the bands down in Kitchener. So we went down a day earlier to watch the competition, and some of these guys were really pro. I had this fear all of a sudden inside me that we were going to be laughed out of the place. Well, we went and did it anyway, and yeah, we did get laughed out of the place. We were not that good. But some Kitchener musicians came up to us, and they asked us to join their band. Me and Don Simmons, who incidentally just died recently. But anyway, me and Donnie went down to Kitchener and we joined these guys, and we were called the Helix Field Band. We started playing and we met a manager named William Seip. We got on the road probably around '75, and immediately a couple guys left. They didn't like being on the road. It was tough work and

little pay but I was attracted to the lifestyle and I became what you call a lifer. At school, when I came across books like *Huckleberry Finn*, I just couldn't get that image out of my mind, of going down the river. I just thought that was the greatest thing going to faraway places. The first time I ever went out on tour, I remember looking down the street in North Bay, and I could see where the lights went into the blackness and I thought, I wonder what's down that road? I still think that and I still feel that way.

#### AU: In grade six, we had an air band competition and I did "Rock You". My dad made me a wooden guitar and everything. What was the first Helix album?

BV: *Breaking Loose* was released in 1977 and it cost us \$24,000. We borrowed money from everyone you can imagine. It became a big hit for us in Texas, especially the songs "Billy Oxygen" and "You're a Woman Now." This DJ in San Antonio, Joe Anthony, he just loved that song and played the shit out of it.

#### AU: Next you released the album *White Lace & Black Leather*.

BV: This came out a year or two later. This album was produced by Lachlan MacFadyen, and he was partners with Jack Douglas. At the time that we were doing this album, Jack Douglas was working on the *Double Fantasy* album by John Lennon in New York City. We were doing pre-production and we stopped after a couple hours of work for supper. Lachlan was telling me how he had just been to New York City and been out for supper with John Lennon and as we're sitting there over the radio, it's announce that John Lennon was murdered and he just totally lost it of course. I felt like I was on the peripheral edge of rock'n'roll history. So that is a little sad history around this album. But is also became a number one import in England.

#### AU: Then your third album, *No Rest for the Wicked*, which came out in 1983.

BV: That is my favorite Helix album, we wrote this just as we were coming out of the bar scene. So it was a very special time in my life and I thought the songs were really good. We went to Europe and we toured with Kiss with this album. We'd see Gene Simmons every morning at the breakfast table. I remember there'd be hookers on the rider, and everyday we'd see all these hookers show up in the little leather jackets, very European. Then you'd see them that night in the lobby all dolled up with the Kiss guys.

#### AU: Your next album really cemented Helix in rock history with the song "Rock You".

BV: Yes, *Walkin' the Razor's Edge*. It all happened over a song that we weren't even too hot on recording in the first place because our logic was that we already had two songs with Rock in the title, "My Kind of Rock" and "You Keep Me Rockin'" we didn't need another 'Rock' song. Bill Seip and Tom Treumuth to their credit, they just kept pushing for that song and it became a huge hit for the band, as you know. We ended up playing



with everybody from Quarterflash to Motörhead.

#### AU: It was such an anthem, and gave kids a lesson in spelling.

BV: Well as Ricky says from the *Trailer Park Boys* says, "Helix had great lyrics, they say give me an R O C K and everybody yells ROCK. None of this shit about trees like Rush".

#### AU: Were you ever on the the *Trailer Park Boys* show?

BV: I was never on the show, but I was in their movie *Countdown to Liquor Day* right at the very end. I'm being picked up by Randy, who's prostituting himself for cheeseburgers. I'm in the scene with Alex Lifeson from Rush and we just had a hoot that weekend.

#### AU: You'd been touring the bar circuit, working your way up and then you have a hit song that goes global, how did it feel?

BV: Well, it happened so fast that it was breezing by and you tend to dwell on negative things sometimes like how am I going to eat, pay the bills. We still weren't making a lot of money. We had to keep pouring money back into the band.

#### AU: Tell us about the solo you put out??

BV: It's called *Get Yer Hands Dirty* with some of my favorite cover songs and a couple of original songs. We also have *Old School* from 2019 and *Eat Sleep Rock*, those are the newest Helix albums.

#### AU: Tell me about the documentary series that you're currently working on. You're here in Victoria and you just interviewed Jesus Bonehead of the Dayglo for it.

BV: It's called *The Golden Age of the Canadian Bar Circuit*. The idea came to me two years ago. I started transferring my old Super 8 film footage to digital. I always had the idea that someday I was going to put all this stuff together so it made sense and so people wouldn't forget this era of music. It's was talking about how one-nighters morphed into the bar scene, there was no bar scene before 1965. I started around 1974 and when I started talking to people that were in before that, then I discovered that I really didn't know the whole story. We're basically trying to make a big production on low dough, so we need help. Just sign up for the Patreon site, it's only \$3/month. It'll help us get this job done, which should document this very special time in Canadian musical history.

[www.patreon.com/gacbc](http://www.patreon.com/gacbc)

Photo: John Carlow  
Band: Poor Choices

## Breaking Down the Monsters Blu-Ray Collection

By Ed Sum and Ira Hunter

Gilles Penso and Alexandre Poncet are two creative minds behind the documentaries released in a massive *Monster Collection Blu-ray Collector's Edition*. This package has their two previous works, *Creature Designers—The Frankenstein Complex* and *Phil Tippett: Mad Dreams and Monsters* put into one package so cinephiles can learn about why certain movie monsters are so iconic. Anyone who's ever read *Cinefex* magazine will be ahead of the game.

The talents who worked in Hollywoodland, as it was known back in 1923, really brought the horror film genre into the public consciousness. Early works like *The Golem* (1915) emerged from Europe to introduce us to the terror, but it was Universal Studios who led the charge with *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* to make this style of film mainstream.

From there, the evolution of how to craft these creations ranged from simple prosthetics (and the amazing talent of Lon Chaney) during the Silent Film age to stop-motion animation (*King Kong*) as the talkies became prominent. But the list didn't end there. As technology improved to allow for even more sophisticated illusions, with or without the camera, so did the talents from other departments who learned what they could do special effects-wise.

We spoke to these two directors about their work, and what they plan to produce next.

**Absolute Underground: So what did you work on before *Creature Designers—The Frankenstein Complex* and *Phil Tippett: Mad Dreams and Monsters*?**

Before making those two films, we produced *Ray Harryhausen: Special Effects Titan* in 2012. That took four years to make. His work is very striking. We had known him for years. So, we were in a very comfortable situation, to get very specific and detailed, and have an intimate look at the world that is his life.

For our other one, we wanted to close out a kind of trilogy. We also wanted to be very more specific in what we wanted to show and met with Joe Dante, Guillermo del Toro, and many other filmmakers. We dug deeper into



this subject of monsters and that became *The Frankenstein Complex*.

**AU: Please tell us about the *Monster Collection Blu-ray Collector's Edition*.**

People asked us to release *The Frankenstein Complex* for years, but we had little control. Three years ago, Arrow Films, a UK distributor, showed interest and said it would be great to offer both this work and *Phil Tippett: Mad Dreams and Monsters*, and as filmmakers, connect the dots.

So we worked really closely with them. We created new special features, 12 hours worth, for the bonus disc. There's an improvised feature which is a one hour long conversation with Joe Dante and John Landis. We also have a master class with Guillermo del Toro. Other pieces include a full commentary with Phil Tippett and us. There's also Inside the Lair of Tom Woodruff & Alec Gillis along with Paper Monsters: The Art of Charles Chiodo. We even have a mini documentary Meeting the Monsters.



**AU: And who else did you talk to?**

Included are interviews with effects geniuses Rick Baker, Greg Nicotero and Chris Wallas alongside such directors as Guillermo del Toro, Paul Verhoeven, Joe Dante, John Landis, Kevin Smith, and Phil Tippett. To name a couple more, we also have Dennis Muren, Steve Johnson, Richard Taylor, Alec Gillis & Tom Woodruff Jr., Mike Elizalde and Matt Winston (son of the special effects wizard Stan Winston).

**AU: We see from the list of bonus material offered are the short films Phil Tippett made, *Prehistoric Beast* (1985) and *Mutant Land* (2010).**

There's even an interactive museum, where you can see and turn around the sculptures and stop motion puppets. We have a lot, and yes, we love Phil.

**AU: So where can we buy this collection?**

Doppelgänger Distributing has a web page where they list where you can buy the film. There's Amazon USA and other online shops.

**AU: Regarding honouring Phil Tippett with his own documentary instead of prior luminaries, namely Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen, what makes him so special?**

Phil handled the stop motion in all the *Star Wars* movies. He invented the chess set in *Episode IV* and helped bring to life the Imperial Walkers in *Empire Strikes Back*. He then returned to Lucasfilm to help make *The Force Awakens*, because they're



recreating the chess game. Phil was also involved with *Solo*, *Rise of Skywalker*, and *The Mandalorian*.

Most people, directors and artists, who remain working in this industry are emotionally connected to the creatures they've designed. They've invested a lot of time in them, and the movies that really talk to us as a viewer, shows the relationship between the creator and their creation is often special. In movies like *Frankenstein*, to be

a father to those creations, they have an emotional connection.

**AU: We can certainly understand that relationship since in the novel more so than the movie. Victor Frankenstein feels horrified that his creation is fully sentient and rejects him. However, in the course of the story, he eventually learns about all that he's suffered, and tries as he simply wanted to belong. All that torment turned this otherwise good natured son to evil. Scholars believe the monster's desire to be a normal human is what drove him. It's not so much to cause grief in others, but to understand how society perceives certain acts as ugly.**

**Changing subjects, why do you think we, as audiences, love monster movies? Not everyone reads them as allegories or even as a statement about a certain fear from a bygone era.**



In my opinion, there's something that talks to your side of childhood. When you

feel that there's a monster in the closet, your imagination goes wild. Everyone has seen the shadow of a tree cast on a wall, and everyone has imagined a creature out of that. When I watch *Gremlins*, I'm like that kid too. When I see a man transforming into *An American Werewolf in London* or *The Howling*, I'm amazed at what's going on.

**AU: Is there anything new you have in the works?**

We have shot an entire documentary about the legacy of *Starship Troopers*, and we are developing a piece that looks at classic 2D animation, like *Akira* and *Ghost in the Shell*. We're using the same approach in talking to the people like in *The Frankenstein Complex*. This work will be titled, *Animate This!* and I hope to finish it by next year.

**AU: What do you have to say about the new talents that are currently making waves?**

There are thousands of artists working in makeup effects and stop motion (using computers, electronics, and traditional). These days, it's more about committees handling the details. It's tough to say. There's also a lot of talented women trailblazing this field, and that's a documentary in itself.

[musicboxfilms.com/doppelganger](http://musicboxfilms.com/doppelganger)



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# VIDEO DRUNK

2021

## FILM FEST

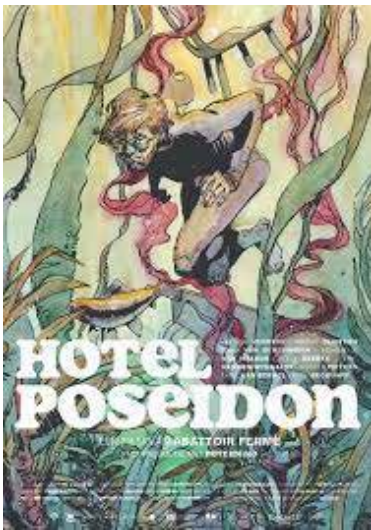
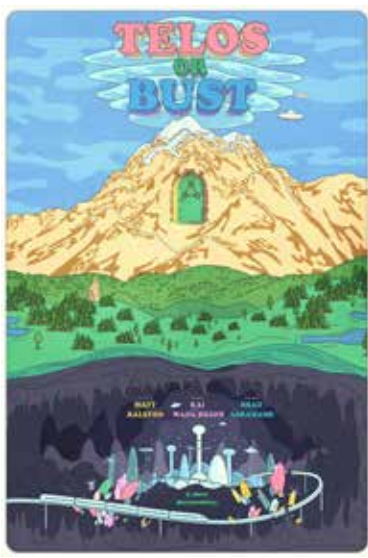
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## The Best of Fantasia 2021

By Ed Sum

It's a wrap at Montreal's 2021 Fantasia International Film Festival. The blend of in-person with online events also helps bring in fresh blood for those shy in attending because of a certain pandemic.

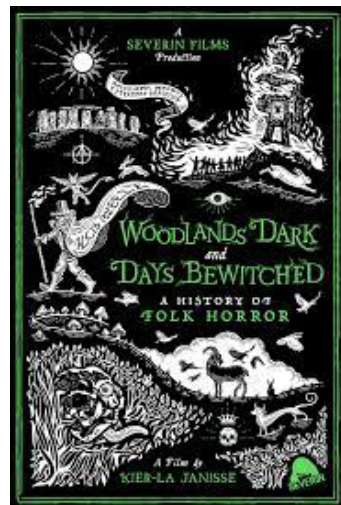
Last year, the organizers started up a Discord channel and while that can be hard to maintain, this year used Gather.town to offer a virtual chat space to which people can wander around in, meet people, play retro video games and chat. It's a nice switch from a text only interactive space, and the hope is that the organizers find a forum to allow both worlds to blend in.

This all-genre event maintains an outstanding

a love-letter to the old Japanese films of yore. It's a return to the basics instead of high budget effects audiences are too used to these days.

*Hellbender - Mother* (Toby Poser) comes from a long line of witches and keeps this secret. However, when Izzy (Zelda Adams) learns that there is more to life than seclusion, this coming of age tale turns dark when mamma becomes demanding as she tries to teach this youngling the power too. Is mama right to be demanding? Or is she fearful of what her girl can turn into? The mystery is sweetly explored.

*We Are the*



*Menstruators* - This documentary looks at the life of Nadia G, who was once a celebrity chef (she fronted Bitchin' Kitchen) and now a rock n' roller. Technically, she's never fully left the latter, as she'll make the random cook show appearance, but to see her dedication to become another Joan Jett is tough.

This work is candid about her transition from one world to another. The ultimate question is, though, is she happy? To answer would ruin the need to check out this film.

*Hotel Poseidon* - This dark comedy feels like an acid trip through the life of Dave (Tom Vermeir), who manages the aptly named hotel with no care or attentiveness that a normal attendant would. The rampant decay visible throughout the film serves as a quiet metaphor for this individual's life. As for why anyone wants to buy and restore this place drives this film towards a rather amusing end.

*Mad God* - Phil Tippett's magnum opus is more than a simple exploration about how to survive in a post-apocalyptic world. It shows us the depravity of the mutants that's come to rule in rich detail, and somehow, also sweetly shows that there's also hope as it shifts from stop-motion animation to practical effects. This movie draws from this animator's own vices, if not fears about humanity. There's elements from Dante, Milton and Enoch mixed into this apocryphal work, and I'm barely scratching the surface!

*Prisoners of Ghostland* - Sion Sono's film set in a crazy post-apocalyptic wild west is perfect for Nicolas Cage to lie down the law. When he gets mixed up in the local politics, we don't know who is worse. The people from Ghostland, or The Governor? The lawless makeshift camp Cage has to survive makes up part of the fun, and as for who he kills, you just have to watch it.

*The Spine of the Night* - This

rotoscoped fantasy is comparable to He-Man and the Masters of the Universe as there can only be one guardian of The Bloom. Anyone who wears it has a great responsibility. This flower will grant its wearer powers of immortality and strength. However, the cost is great. Many nations have fought for it. We have stories within a story to explain how the latest protector got it...

*Telos or Bust* - Mount Shasta is not about UFOs or Bigfoot. Although both helped make this mountain famous in many conspiracy books, Brad Abrahams' look offers a fresh look, and the powers of communing with nature and absorbing the healing energies that permeate. It's an excellent short offering a more grounded look at why this national park is sacred.



*Woodlands Dark And Days Bewitched* - This documentary about Folk Horror is more than just a primer of an underappreciated subgenre. It serves as a best of what films must be watched from countries that are not as well known for its output in this category.

While what's offered is only skimming the surface, the massive home video release hopes to fill in the gaps. This package will be released December 2021 by Severin Films, and the ultimate box set includes more than a dozen movies that have been referenced!



balance of all forms of sci-fi, documentaries, fantasy, horror, drama and comedy. The standouts from this year's event include:

*Frank and Zed* - This touchy feely horror comedy about a ghoulish team of misfit monsters is at the heart of a Faustian drama, which drives the core of the tale. The titular Frank (based on Frankenstein's monster) and Zed (a ghoul) are blamed for a coming apocalypse. What happens next is nothing but an orgy of blood, and the filmmakers ensure viewers get what they are coming to see—blood, guts and gore being delivered muppet style!

*Giant: The World of Filmmaker Jeff Leroy* - This hilarious look at what drives this movie-maker is simply perfect, and it explains why kaiju movies are fun to make. He makes budget films on the rooftop of his apartment in Long Beach, CA. and the reveals are



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## Lyle's Place Dustin Schwam

### Absolute Underground: What was your involvement with Lyle's Place?

This is Dustin Schwam from Fully Crazyed and Keg Killers / 477 Tattoos. I have been shopping at Lyle's Place since I was at Torquay Elementary School.

### AU: What was the origin of Lyle's Place?

The original store was next to the James Bay Tea Room for just a short time before moving under the Odeon in late '82.

### AU: Describe the store.

The store had every style of music imaginable. Owners were always super nice to me, pretty quiet laid back folks who didn't really know too much about Venom or Deep Purple... so they had dudes working there who fucking did!! Jamie Fulton, you owe me a pizza.

### AU: What made Lyle's Place such an important part of the Victoria music scene?

Lyle's was an important part of the community because they had gig posters up on a board, and

allowed bands to sell local cassettes (which sold great there). This was long before any form of internet or social media. This would be the first place I would see actual punk rock flyers... Black Flag/Red Tide/House Of Commons/D.O.A. I met Mike Anus there who had just joined the Dayglo when I was 14 and lost my fuckin' mind. He told me to buy a thrash album so I did... so it was more than just buying records. I couldn't wait to bus down after school on days when new shit was supposed to be out!!

### AU: Do you remember any special events taking place in the store?

No special events... Just a fucking killer Boxing Day Sale once a year that eventually edged out A&B Sound for the number one spot. I actually liked Boxing Day more than X-Mas Day when I was 16!!! So no frills really. like I said they were super chill, not the types to put on crazy gigs.

### AU: Any crazy stories to share from your days hanging out there?

Not too many crazy stories. That is pretty much why it lasted so long. They had Heavy Metal Karl working the door one day in like 1988 to make sure dudes weren't stealing shit... and Mark Morrison and me tried to steal Karl. I still keep in

touch with him. I remember the Atrosity tape sold out over a weekend, we made all copies by hand and had to go back out to Gordo and rattle off a handful more. Once again they were so good with the local bands.

### AU: What were some of the best records you scored there?

My favorite record I ever scored at Lyle's Place was either Celtic Frost's "Morbid Tales" EP in 1985... or Sick Pleasure/Code Of Honor Split LP in 1988... so it's a tie between those two. Also SNFU's first LP... all my Venom records etc... so hard to choose.

### AU: What were your initial thoughts when you heard Lyle's Place would be closing down?

I was sad to hear Lyle's Place was closing... but then I was happy it lasted as long as it did. There was a time in the early 2000s when I thought they would for sure be toast but they hung on. I knew Rod had been having health issues so I am happy for him and his wife now, they can enjoy some rest. I had a small record store for a bit back in the late 90s and it can be a hectic job for sure!

### AU: What will you miss most?

As funny as this sounds, record stores have a

certain smell to them, mold and vinyl mixed with the old bar smell from where the store was located during the last decade. I don't know why I'm just really gonna miss that smell... almost like a tattoo shop in the 90s before it became all a bunch Noodle Box assholes.

I'm gonna miss Rod too, he was always super nice to me and always gave me stuff he thought I should have. I really appreciated that.

### AU: Final thoughts on the legacy of Lyle's Place.

Keep Lyle's Place going by playing your records loud!!! I am gonna try to go through my collection (5000 plus) and try to see what ones I scored there... may take me a bit. Thanks Rod and Janice for all those awesome years.



Lyle's Place Logo Illustration by Glen Mullaly (glenmullaly.com)



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Lyle family and all the best for the future.

- Jason Flower

A&B Sound and Lyle's were my go to places. Thanks again for my music for my teenage years. Getting old blows.

- Mike Jones

1984... Getting a little bored with *Ride The Lightning* and *Show No Mercy* so I go down to Lyles to see if I can find something a little heavier. Guy working the counter comes over to me and introduces himself as Jamie. I said "I'm looking for something heavier, any suggestions?" He said, "Yes I have just the band and I have their new tape in." So

## Lyle's Place Everyone is going to... miss Lyle's Place.

"It's been an incredible four decades, but the time has come to close our doors. We'll see you at our store closing sale on til mid October.

- Rod and Janice Lyle

Thanks again for all the good memories guys you will be missed. You should be able to retire on the money I spent there... lol

- Dustin Jak Schwam

Like losing an old friend. Thank you for being part of my musical growth and helping and supporting our scene for so many years... BEST record shop EVER!!!! Horns to the highest.

- Darren Kitson

Farewell to Lyle's Place.

I started shopping at Lyle's Place in 1982-83. It was second to none in Victoria's pre-internet social media days; a cultural mecca, meeting place, and incredible resource for all genres. Truly a phenomenal record store. Over the years, countless peers worked there but I must tip my hat in particular to Jamie Fulton who did three decades there and imported incredible worldwide titles. Rod Lyle himself supported local underground groups such as Red Tide, Armoros, and many more. Victoria would not be the city it is today if not for Lyle's Place. Thanks to the

he hands me Destruction - *Sentence of Death* and says, "Check out these cool German thrashers." That might have been the one tape that changed my musical direction the most in my whole life. I wore it through and was waiting at the door for *Infernal Overkill* when it was released. I also

went on to buy thousands and thousands of tapes and CDs and tickets and shirts and records. And I made a lifetime friend in Jamie. An absolute institution in this city that will be missed forever.

- Bram Harvey

I was born here and Lyles has always been there. I'm sad to see another icon of Victoria go.

- Cassandra Irene Zilinsky

Thank you very much, Rod and Janice, for what you've done for the past 40 years!! It was the

first place to find my first Metallica record, *Ride The Lightning*, and selling our CDs, *Severance*, to

the patches for my jean vest. Here's a BIG FUCKING CHEERS to you two and all the staff over the decades!

- Chris Flintoff

This is a sad day. My favorite thing to do was to drive from Port Alberni and go to Lyles. Jamie Fulton was always the best

to talk metal with all those years. 90% of my collection came from there. I guess nothing lasts forever. Glad so many people had such a great

connection to the place like I did.

- Krystal Köffin Terepocki

A happy and well deserved retirement to Rod and Janice! Harpo's would have had a much harder road without the support and presence of you both.

- Marcus Pollard



I worked at Lyle's Place 94-96 while at University and all the money I made went straight back into that place. All the best to the old gang.

- Jeff Vander Werf

I remember the old Beatles commercials for Lyle's Place... I visited when I lived in Victoria circa mid '90's. I'm in shock of the news.

- Ray Ang

I sang the parts and was the Supremes "lips" on "Stop! And go to Lyle's Place!" in the TV commercial years ago!

- Irene Jackson

Sorry you're closing down. Thanks for all the great music over the years. You will be missed but never forgotten.

- Jack Danyalls

Sorry to see you go Rod and Janice. I thank you for all your great service throughout the years. I spent a lot of my time there, always searching for something, and usually finding it. I even remember stopping in at your James Bay location before you went big!! And thank you to all your lovely staff that has worked there over the years.

Too many to mention. But you all know who you are.

- Mark Wallace

I worked at Lyle's Place around '97-'98. Great memories working the buying table and going next door to buy chips for everyone with Jamie and Noel and Yen Lane! End of an era.

- Michael Lane

Victoria is losing a part of its soul.

- Robert Mitchell

Not just another record store, but part of the local music community.

- Jamey Martin

My most prized albums were bought here. Thank you for always having the best selection and for all the rarities you coveted for us. Thank you for 40 years

- Des P Douglas

I loved shopping at both the Goldstream and Yates stores.

Thanks to all the staff there over the years for helping me out.

- Jody Rice

I am proud to have been a former Lyles Place employee - in my little world it has given me a lifetime of cred and some really cool people I know.

- David Forsythe

I have purchased my whole music collection from Lyles. Over 400 CDs, two a paycheck since I was 16. This hurts the soul.

- Jacob Walker

Definitely thought of as one of the staples of growing up in Victoria.

- Ellie Brindalf Martin

Have fond memories of the downstairs location and Metallica picture discs galore. I always made an effort to visit when I was in town, it will be strange not going now.

- Rob Shaw

Worked there for 11-12 years, so many good memories. Truly the end of a Victoria landmark, part of so many memories for tens of thousands.

- Mike Smith-Knutsen



Lyle's Place Logo Illustration by Glen Mullaly (glenmullaly.com)

This place is part of my story growing up here in Victoria, contributed to much of the soundtrack of my life - a local legacy that will not be forgotten!!

- Colm O'leary

Bought just about all my favorite CDs here. Loved this store. I will greatly miss your great selection in blues, jazz, metal, industrial! They never judge you, it's all music

at Lyle's.

- Jeff Mason

Lyle's Place has always been there to supply tickets for the scene and support cultural diversity!

- Gabriel Bettye

My all time favorite record store.

- Aaron William Parkinson

I was remembering my first visit to Lyle's. I was new to town and exploring the downtown. Lyle's was underground at that time. A forest of spinning cassette trees. Had my satchel filled with cassettes and walkman. Dude working the counter asked if I needed any help. I told him I needed something new. He said 'Let me look at your cassettes'. After reviewing a bagful of DK, Bad Brains, Butthole Surfers and other weirdness he said, 'Oh, you need Meat Puppets!'. The counter dude was Scott Henderson. When punk rock makes you cry.

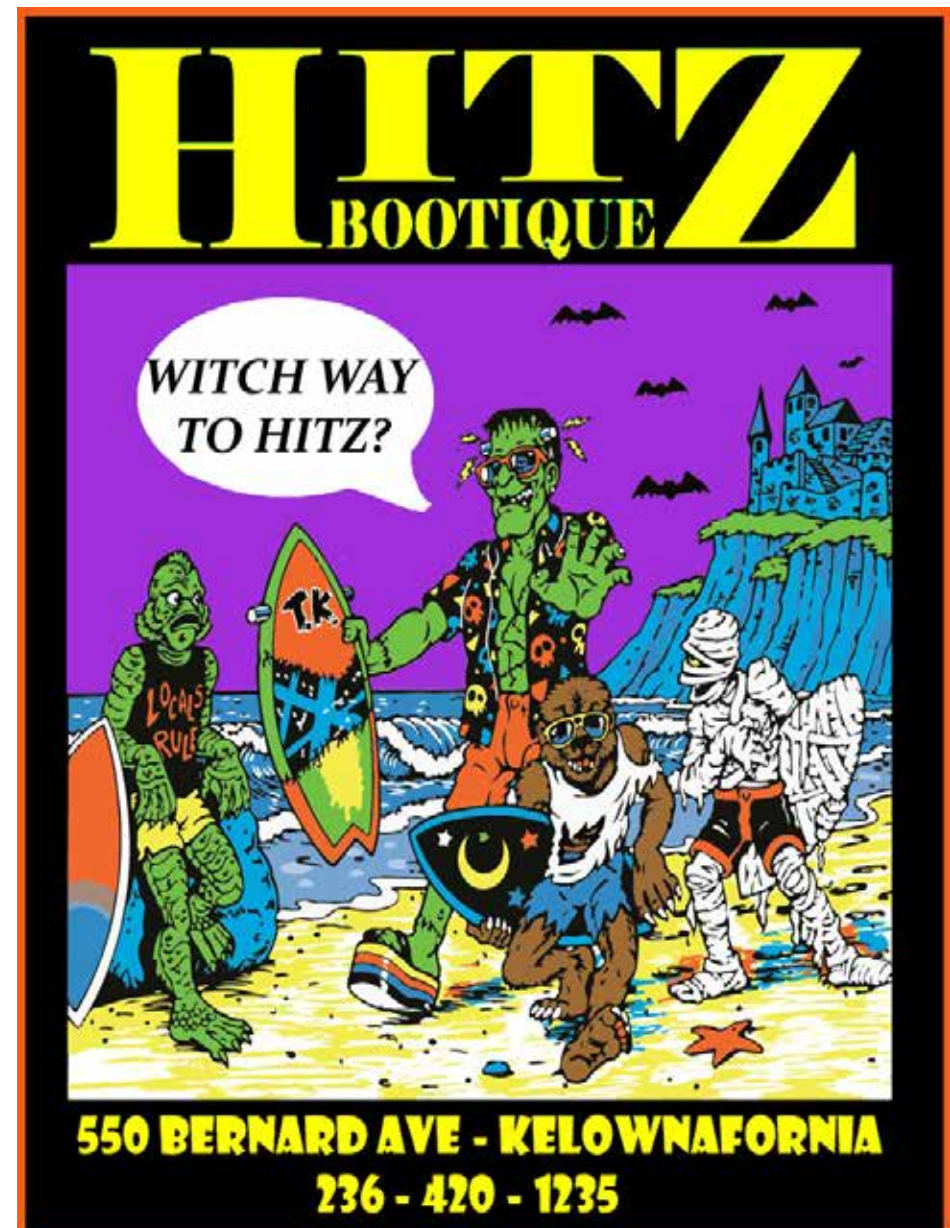
- Jim Poole

I went to Victoria in August 1986 looking for a place to live. Didn't find anything, so headed out on the last bus. The bus missed the ferry somehow, and there was no money for hotels. Lyle's entrance was under street level and warm.

- Nora Floritto

Waaaay back in the early 1990s, when I was a starving artist concentrating more on my punk / garage band than my work, I talked the owners of Lyle's Place Records into letting me redesign their logo, and adding a spaceman mascot I created. Almost 30 years later and they have kept him and the logo right to the end. I look at this art with a pretty critical eye, but I'm happy it lasted so long.

- Glen Mullaly (www.glenmullaly.com)





## Lyle's Place Jamie Fulton

### Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement with Lyle's Place record store?

My name is Jamie Fulton and I was the store's longest term employee (aside from the owners obviously). I worked there full time from the Summer of 1985 until January of 2012 predominantly as the store manager and main

indie music buyer.

### AU: What was the origin story for Lyle's Place?

It started originally as a bookstore in the shopping mall at the corner of Menzies and Simcoe in James Bay back in 1982. The owners, Rod and Janice Lyle started bringing in a small selection of import records and realized there was a market for them. Before long, they would move the store to 768 Yates Street which is below the current location. After a number of years and a renovation in that location, the store would move down the street to a much larger location at 726 Yates Street. After a fair number of years at that location, the landlord for the building would sell it to a developer and the store would move back up the street to its current, and final location at 770 Yates Street.

### AU: Describe the store for someone who was never able to check it out.

The original downtown location at 768 Yates St was a very cool yet small spot with a lot of exposed plumbing coming down from the ceiling that was painted up in bright yellow and red paint. It was a somewhat dark location due to minimal natural light making its way down below the street level. This location definitely had

the coolest "underground" vibe to it and a good number of the punk kids that would hang out in the alley just upstairs would frequent the store looking for the latest European import LPs that had come in. The store had tons of posters, flags, t-shirts, patches and buttons along with lots of cool records and tapes (and eventually CDs). The location at 726 Yates saw the store expand dramatically space wise which allowed there to be more walls to display things on, and a warehouse area to process stock and store extra copies of titles. The final location would see the store taking over the old Scandals Nightclub location and

was a quirky spot with super high ceilings, and the owners chose to keep the old bar from the nightclub for work counters which added to the charm in my opinion.

### AU: What made Lyle's Place such an important part of the Victoria music community?

I think it was partially to do with the store taking the time to support the local bands, clubs, and promoters through selling local concert tickets while taking no service charge for many years (before it became too labour intensive to do so). The store also carried any local band's independently released tapes, records, CDs, shirts on a consignment basis and only taking a very small mark up above what the band was asking for them. Over the years, the store would also be involved with putting out the Random Thought double cassette of Victoria alternative bands plus assist with getting shirts made for a few local bands. It was at one time, very much a meeting place for local musicians.

### AU: Do you remember any special events or band signings taking place in the store?

Early on, band signings seemed to largely be cursed. Henry Rollins was supposed to come and do a signing at the downstairs location once when Black Flag were in town, but somehow failed to arrive at the store after leaving the O.A.P. Hall to head to the signing. Duotang from Vancouver were also a no show for a live performance which made me question whether it was worth bothering with these events, but in the larger location down the street there were successful in store performances by artists like Alison Crowe, and Roots Roundup.

### AU: Any crazy stories to share from your days working there?

Far too many crazy stories to choose from. Maybe

one day I'll write a book if I ever have the time.

### AU: What were some of the perks of the job?

For the staff, there was the ability to get into a lot of the local shows for free as well as be able to buy music, and other merchandise at a discount.

### AU: What were your initial thoughts when you heard Lyle's Place would be closing down after four decades in business?

There was definitely a feeling of sadness to hear that the store coming to an end, but I'm also happy for Rod and Janice to finally get to enjoy a well deserved retirement and be able to spend more time with their family.

### AU: What will you miss most?

I will miss being able to walk into the store and browse through the bins. I also miss being able to talk with customers and make music recommendations to them as well as hear about the latest musical artists they're enjoying.

### AU: Final thoughts on the legacy of Lyle's Place.

I think the store will be remembered as an important piece of the Victoria music scene. It was a meeting place for people that shared a love of music and where for me personally, a lot of friendships (with co-workers and customers) were made that

remain with me to this day.

Photo Credit: Jeremy Robinson



Lyle's Place Logo Illustration by Glen Mullaly (glenmullaly.com)



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## Lyle's Place Janice Lyle

**Absolute Underground:** Who are we talking to and what is your involvement with Lyle's Place record store?

Janice Lyle, co-owner.

**AU: What is the origin story for Lyle's Place?**

Started out as a bookstore in James Bay in 1978 (the Book Shelf) and records started selling better than books.

**AU: Describe the store for someone who was never able to check it out.**



An eclectic mix of music and pop culture related items - LPs, CDs, books, band shirts, posters etc

**AU: What made the store and staff so unique in your opinion?**

Employees were all music lovers.

**AU: What made Lyle's Place such an important part of the Victoria music community?**

Sales of tickets to local music shows.

**AU: Do you remember any special events or band signings taking place in the store?**

Angelic Upstarts signing ("I'm an upstart, Oi Oi Oi") The drummer from Roxy Music appeared with them but wasn't supposed to be touring with them so hiding behind a cassette spinner, but Stuart McKinnon recognized him. Alison Crowe performed live.

**AU: Any fun stories to share from your days working there?**

Burton Cummings was standing in line to pay. A guy behind him said "You've got a Burton Cummings sort of thing going on." To which Burton replied, "I get that a lot."

**AU: What were some of the perks of the job?**

First access to movies and music traded in.

**AU: Why is Lyle's Place closing down after four decades in business?**

Rod's health, and I would like to spend more time with my Mom.



**AU: What will you miss most?**

The regular customers who have become like family.

**AU: Any special plans for retirement?**

Gardening, sewing, decorating for Christmas, spending time with grandchildren and my parents.

**AU: Final thoughts on the legacy of Lyle's Place.**

We never appreciated how much people felt the store was an important part of their lives until we announced retirement and people came in and told us their stories.



Lyle's Place Logo Illustration by Glen Mullaly (glenmullaly.com)



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Lyle's Place Logo Illustration by Glen Mullaly (glenmullaly.com)

## Lyle's Place Makyta Simms

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement with Lyle's Place record store?**

Makyta Simms: I worked at Lyle's Place between September 1985 and November 1994 (when my son was born) then part time for a while.

**AU: What was the origin story for Lyle's Place?**

MS: Rod had a book store in James Bay. He noticed the few used records he had sold better than the books. He moved to the downtown location in the early 80s.

**AU: Describe the store.**

MS: This is difficult because it's a time as well as a place. Downtown was the destination for lots of young people and Lyle's was in a great spot. The Odeon, the English Sweet shop, A&B Sound just down the road and a cool alleyway. Who didn't want to hang out downtown? The 80s and 90s was an interesting time in the music industry and Lyle's bridged the gap between top 40 and alternative pop/punk/metal.

Where else could you buy a Black Flag record, a Springsteen die-cut picture disc, issues of Maximum RockNRoll, an AC/DC black light poster, or a Madonna textured t-shirt? (don't even get me started on the Duran Duran buttons or Sam Fox merch)

**AU: What made Lyle's Place such an important part of the Victoria music community?**

MS: Rod would let indie bands put their music in the store on consignment with very little markup. Ticket sales were also a big part of what Lyle's offered and back in the day he didn't charge a dime. Lyle's was a hub to find out what was going on in town.

**AU: Do you remember any special events at the store?**

MS: Not so many special events but lots of bands would walk through the doors. The nicest was the guys from Spirit of the West. John Mann would come in whenever they were in town and buy stacks of records (Rod always gave him a killer price). It was always great to see

musicians that loved music.

**AU: Any crazy stories to share from your days working there?**

MS: Too many to list but one that stands out was when S.N.F.U were playing town. We were selling tickets and the show sold out. An hour



before closing the night of the show a kid asked for the gig flyer. I gave it to him and five minutes later Mr. Chi Pig came in and was most displeased that the poster was not up. I got the most punk rock talking down ever. He did not disappoint.

**AU: What were some of the perks of the job?**

MS: Concert promoters would usually leave us a few comp tickets and Gary and Marcus were very generous with putting Lyle's employees on the door for Harpo's. Another perk was working with some pretty cool people and many amazing customers. It was an exciting atmosphere where music was everything. Rod also gave very thoughtful Christmas bonuses. One year he and Janice bought a bed for a staff member that didn't have one.



**AU: What were your initial thoughts when you heard Lyle's Place would be closing down after four decades in business?**

MS: Rod and Janice are the hardest working people I have ever met. It would have been wonderful for the store to continue but they deserve a relaxing retirement.

**AU: What will you miss most?**

MS: I'll miss finding Dustin under a record bin with grill marks seared into his back.

**AU: Final thoughts on the legacy of Lyle's Place.**

MS: On a personal level Lyle's was enormously important. I met my ex-husband there, my current partner was involved in the Victoria scene, my son is in the music industry and Rod Lyle taught me many skills that I still apply to my working life today. The relationships that were formed at Lyle's are some of the purest of my life. We were in our late teens and early twenties. We grew up in a really cool record store.



## Lyle's Place Rob Nesbitt

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement with Lyle's Place record store?**

My name is Rob Nesbitt and I was hired as a general clerk, eventually moving to cashier (and even more eventually, almost assistant manager), at Lyle's Place in the fall of 1987.

**AU: What was your origin story with Lyle's Place?**

Well, I moved to Sidney from the Mainland in the summer of 1984 and I was just discovering punk rock. I travelled to Victoria by bus and wandered all over the city looking for a record store that...felt right. It's difficult to explain since I had never been in a

great record store up to that point but I knew I would know it when I saw it. When I walked into the downstairs location of Lyle's Place and there were thousands of band buttons, and magazines from England, and hundreds of T-shirts for bands I'd never heard of but was instantly intrigued by (like "The Smiths") I knew I had found my place.

**AU: Describe the store for someone who was never able to check it out.**

When I first encountered it, the store was down these dark stairs, so it was kind of dim in a way, once you were inside you were overwhelmed by the massive amounts of ephemera--like I mentioned before: pins, patches, picture discs, posters--crammed into

every available crevice, all pertaining to music and youth culture. It felt exclusive to young people. Cutting edge. It felt far away from the record stores at the mall. And to me, it felt a little dangerous, because I was new



to town and it felt like this was where the REAL punks shopped.

**AU: What made Lyle's Place such an important part of the Victoria music community?**

First and foremost for the artists, it was a place that supported you--they took your dopey demo tapes and sold them on consignment so people could actually go to an actual store and buy your music--just like if you were a real band!

They sold tickets for ALL the shows in town. The bigger shows at Harpo's where major label acts would play and the grimy punk shows put on by kids at the OAP hall or Rat's Nest--side by side, promoted equally. It was astounding...

For me, it was important to the scene because it was where I MET people. The Mods, the punks. The kids not from my high school who took me to my first punk shows and would eventually become members of the bands I played in. It was THE social hub of the music scene.

**AU: Any crazy stories to share from your days working there?**

The insane stories from the store--and there are a multitude--usually involved the kooky characters who shopped or sold record there, but they are so full of nuance and information I could never adequately share them here.

Dave Poulter caught on fire once while working behind the counter though. He'd have to give you the details though. We were too busy instantly making up songs about his plight and laughing to really dig into the whys and wherefores...

**AU: What were some of the perks of the job?**

Getting to be known by bands and promoters meant getting into some shows for free, which was great. Discounts on records etc. (though it was fairly low, I would take anything to help offset the cost of the amount of stuff I was buying.)

I remember that occasionally, Rod would just give you a record or some object he knew you wanted-

-like this GIANT Belinda Carlisle promo poster I swooned over. He saw how much I wanted it and handed it over. It just thrilled me.

**AU: What were your initial thoughts when you heard Lyle's Place would be closing down after four decades in business?**

I truly felt like a gut punch--like someone I know had died. Suddenly. That may sound hyperbolic, but that is honestly the way it felt immediately after hearing the news.

**AU: What will you miss most?**

I miss the "back then" of it all. Meeting my friends--who I still love and talk to to this day. The fresh, kinetic potential of everything I was discovering at the time. I miss being able to get a record I want RIGHT NOW.

(I've been trying for almost three weeks to get two CDs by a band who is in the top 30 and cannot seem to get my hands on them. There are too few places trying to cover not enough bases.)

**AU: Final thoughts on the legacy of Lyle's Place.**

The impact of the store on the Victoria music scene, socially and culturally, cannot be overstated or accurately measured.

More personally, working there changed me as a person. Some bad but mostly good. I formed BUM with Andrew Molloy in Lyle's Place. I met the most remarkable people and through the store became a living, breathing part of a scene that seemed like an almost unfathomable dream to me. I was elevated...



Lyle's Place Logo Illustration by Glen Mullaly (glenmullaly.com)

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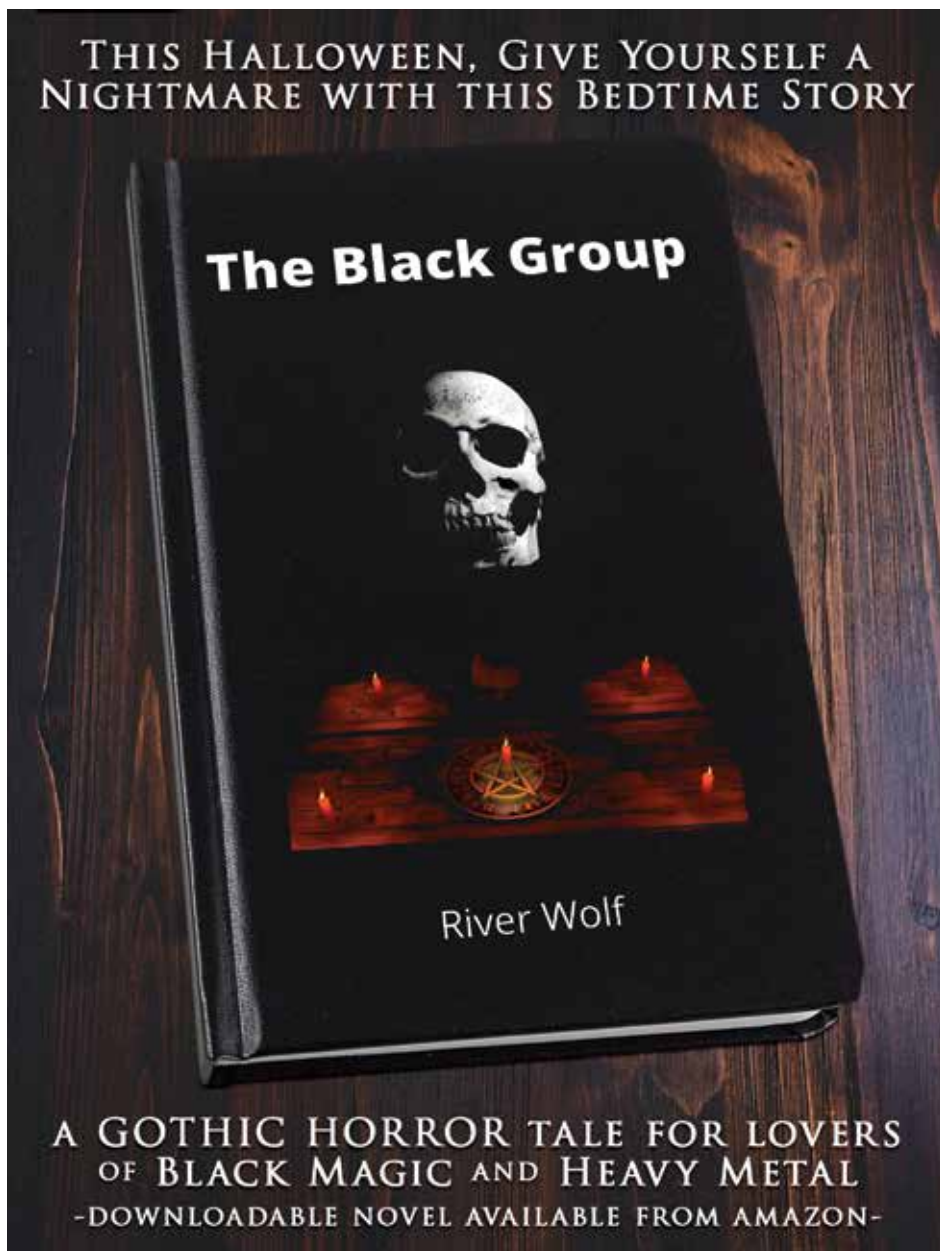
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## Wine Lips

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

CH: This is Cam Hilborn, in Wine Lips I'm known for playing guitar and singing but in the real world I'm best known for having a moustache? I don't know, I get told I look like a 70s porn star a lot.

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

CH: Aurora Evans plays the drums, Jordan Sosensky Plays guitar and Charlie Weare is on bass. We actually all share a dating profile and it says wine me, dine me, sixty nine me.

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

CH: I would say that it's very loud, very fast, energetic and like aggressive but at the same time very sweet and melodic and easy on the ears. It's good party music, you can move around to it!

**AU: Who are your collective biggest influences?**

CH: Stuff like the Kinks, Dead Kennedys, Patsy Cline, Iguana Death Cult, Johnny Cash, Ty Segall, Frankie And The Witch Fingers, The Hives. We listen to everything haha Lots of cool stuff going

on in Toronto from bands like Hot Garbage, Roy, Kali Horse, The Effens, Bad Waitress, Bike Thiefs, Possum.

**AU: Are there any good stories about how you guys met and came to be a band?**

CH: Me and Aurora used to live together with our original bass player! We would drink a lot of cheap beer and play board games and listen to records all the time. We all liked the same music so we just started jamming and ended up writing a bunch of songs pretty quick.

It was a total side project at the start that felt very natural and fun and eventually grew into what it is now!

**AU: What would you say are your biggest accomplishments so far as a band?**

CH: We did a tour in China in 2018 that was a total chance meeting type of thing! All the touring we did on our own across the US and Canada was super cool and we met a ton of great people along the way! I think any time we put out music and people care enough to listen or buy a record that's a pretty nice feeling! Signing with Stomp was also exciting for us. We've dreamed of having a team to back us up. \*

**AU: Have you guys managed to play any shows in the last 1.5 years?**

CH: No, we had a couple get canceled on us because of Covid so we've just been busy jamming and writing! We did a live stream "show" in Guelph for a festival last September but I wouldn't say it was a show. Our release show on December 3rd in Toronto at Lee's Palace will probably be our first legit show back!

**AU: Are you managing to stay creative throughout the pandemic?**

CH: Ya for sure! We kind of have to because there's not much else to do! We've been busy shooting some really cool music videos and we're still jamming at least once a week so there are some new songs already started for the next record!

**AU: Your new album *Mushroom Death Sex Summer Party* is coming out in October on Stomp Records, is it a natural continuation of your sound from your second album, in your opinion?**

CH: I would say it was very natural! We didn't necessarily do anything different from the last album aside from demoing a couple songs beforehand, I think we were a little more prepared and I had some better ideas for songs that kind of came naturally. We also spent a bit more time getting it to sound the way we wanted it to in the end!

**AU: Where does the name for the new album come from?**

CH: It's basically a lot of the recurring themes throughout all the songs on the album. A lot of these songs were written during the lockdown so its whatever I was doing or feeling around that period, weird times haha!

**AU: What's the best part about being on Stomp Records?**



CH: Stomp is great, they are super cool people that are always available to help out with whatever we need a hand with! It's the first time we've had like a team of people chipping in so it's super nice!

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

CH: Hopefully we can go out to a show and dress up and party with our friends but I guess we'll have to wait and see what the pandemic is saying.

**AU: What's the craziest past Halloween you can remember?**

CH: Our first show was actually a Halloween show back in 2015 which was fun but we ended up getting pretty drunk and smashing everyones pumpkins on the walk home, there was a nice jack o lantern trail for a few blocks.

**AU: Any favorite types of wine that pair well with punk rock?**

CH: Anything cheap is pretty punk rock! Those big boxes of wine that are like 40 glasses, that's punk rock, but make sure it's red, duh.

**AU: How do people find Wine Lips online?**

CH: You can find us on Instagram at @winelipsband, Spotify, Facebook, winelips.bandcamp.com

Photos by Alex Carre





## Getting Behind the Scenes with Frank & Zed's creator Jesse Blanchard

By Ed Sum

Filmmaker Jesse Blanchard loves comedy and horror. Based out of Portland, Oregon, his short films have garnered attention, and to make a feature length work would require more than just a bunch of friend's and industry help.



When he decided to transition from live-action to using puppets, the choice wasn't easy.

The challenges of handling regular shoots is sometimes fraught with the random problem on set. There's no one to really blame. It just happens. When this filmmaker thought he was at the end of his ropes, a what if moment helped him change course.

He made *Shine*, a hilariously grisly film about a barbershop quartet trapped within a murdering spotlight, as a way to unwind, and he really had fun with it. From there, he knew he'd stick with using *The Muppet Show* style approach mixed in with ghoulish ideas that only Tim Burton would love. This filmmaker cites the usual top directorial talents of today, from James Cameron to Peter Jackson to Edgar Wright to Robert Zemeckis, as inspiration. Even Spielberg comes into play in how to approach movie-making. These talents

have a reliable pool of people to make their films, and this independent film group is the same.

**AU: Who are the people behind Puppetcore Studios?**

JB: The core team is five people: Jason Ropp is my lead puppeteer. He makes all the soft puppets and is also a phenomenal voice actor. He taught me a lot about the craft. Erin DeBray does key sculpting. Steve Overton is another puppeteer. Patrick Blevins and Taylor Stump are my camera people. We had over 100 people working on other bits of the film.

**AU: Did you consult well-known works like *The Dark Crystal* or *The Muppet Show* to get that right vibe for *Frank and Zed*?**

JB: I always said this is a film made with puppets. It's not a puppet film. I was aiming to make my best version of *Lord of the Rings*, and that's honestly what I was going for. You don't see a movie made with only puppets that often. There's just so much amazing practical effects you can do, and add on top, like all the fog effects we came up with during the shoot.

**AU: Not everyone knows Peter Jackson's second directorial effort was *Meet the Feebles*, a puppet movie. Was that an influence?**

JB: That was actually a film that me and my friends found in high school just randomly at the video store and would watch long before he made *Lord of the Rings* or even *The Frighteners*. I've owned a copy for as long as I can remember; I think the influence was just already baked into my mind. One of the biggest inspirations for the film is how it draws from traditional Romanian folklore. We looked at a lot of the stuff [in pre production]. And the music in the film is directly inspired by it. *The Moroi* [the villains in this film] is a vampire necromancer type of monster from traditional Romanian folklore.

In terms of the *Brothers Grimm*, I was making parts of the fairytale not all nice. There's some edge to it and it's scary. To honour Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is to have the monster, Frank, be real—somebody who does these awful things, and yet somebody that you hopefully still like.

There are two tales in our film. The story of

Frank and Zed came to me overnight. There's lots of stuff in the ethos that I was pulling from—including having over one God, which was a very direct reference to the *Dark Crystal*.

**AU: One thing I really love is how this Zed looks all gooey. Even the set design is fantastic, and it feels like you're there. I wanted to jump in and interact in that space.**

JB: Thank you. Yeah, I mean, texture is a big part of the film. It's something that I really worked very hard at. We made seven different kinds of slime just to get the feel of the slime right.

The fog effects give a lot of production value. We used it so frequently to bring the floor to life. There's actually a shot in the end credits where you see it coming out to a bowl of ice, and that's how we would control the fog. And then we would also just sometimes fill a garbage bag with fog. You can hold it and let it slowly flow out.

**AU: How much of the six or seven years was spent in actual filming?**

JB: We filmed 90 or 80% of that time in one big eight month chunk. Part of why it is so slow to film anything, build the set and then tear it down. We spent a lot of time experimenting. A big part of what takes so long is in discovering innovative stuff we can add. We had a big converted garage space before we turned into a studio. We also used two smaller ones for other work.

**AU: What's next for Puppetcore Studios?**

JB: I'm working on it right now and am very close to finishing. It's going to be about this gigantic monster, a Groux, as identified on our webpage, in Southern Oregon. I'd love to have it done a year from now. I don't know if that's possible. Our goal is to make a more traditional film in a proper studio space, but we're still working on that.

**AU: Or do you have a dream team to provide the voices for this film, or any future project?**

JB: A lot of my favorite vocal performances in movies come from people I did not know are voice actors. I think one of my favorite examples is Jerry Orbach as Lumiere in *Beauty and the Beast*. This is the guy from the NYPD television show. He did such a great job. I'd love to work with Keith David, Bruce Campbell, Jamie Lee Curtis, Alan

Tudyk, or even Mark Hamill. It would be amazing to work with Jim Carrey, and what he would do.

**AU: Yes, I can imagine him wanting to play with the puppet as he's recording. Where can horror movies go with an all out puppet film? It's not simply about including them with live-action, like in *Full Moon's Puppet Master* series, or the original *Chucky* films.**

JB: *Chucky*, for instance, if you want a scary little doll, you can have a scary little doll, or *Gremlins*—you can offer a lot of fun kills and practical stuff to put on screen. I think you can build more different compelling worlds and characters.



**AU: And the sky's the limit for your imagination, because it doesn't have to be constrained to the human shape, correct?**

JB: Exactly. One of my goals was to make things very different. I have characters that are only a foot tall and characters that are eight feet; I get to put them all together. Now, part of the fun.

**AU: When can we expect a home video release?**

JB: We're just trying to find the right partner. So I mean, I've been telling people like, email, Netflix, or Amazon, or, anywhere that people would want to see it, one of the best things they can do is just send those platforms a message saying please get *Frank and Zed* out.

**AU: What would you like to say in closing to the readers of *Absolute Underground Magazine*?**

JB: Thank you so much for reading, and looking for something that's more different, and hopefully more compelling than your usual slasher type of movie. If you're into that kind of stuff. I really hope you take a chance on *Frank and Zed*. I think you'll dig it.

[www.facebook.com/puppetcore](http://www.facebook.com/puppetcore)


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**AU: Where do you live and where do you work?**

We all live and work paycheck to fucking paycheck in Victoria B.C. Canada

**AU: Please list your discography**

Assorted splits and compilation appearances on every format. More recently a seven inch EP released on Velvet Rut Records and the Modern Horror

cassette on Northern Gothic. We also had 2 songs on Almost Halloween Time Records (Italy) compilations. Forthcoming will be *The Horrifying Sounds of...the HEX* to be released on Surkeus Records this October. Its jagged and desolate and doesn't offer any answers only more questions.

**AU: Who recorded your upcoming release?**

The new album was recorded between 2019 and 2021 during several blackout nights and early substance abused mornings with Myke fucking Hall deep in the black heart of Fernwood. The Richie Rich motherfuckers were forced succumb to our racket. Any noise complaints would have

resulted in their money stuffed skulls being torn from their pale lifeless bodies and skewered on a stake to ward off the foul land developers who stalk this now dark land.

**AU: How did The HEX come together?**

This latest incarnation of the HEX came together about seven years ago. The roots of the band go all the way back to the mid-nineties when members David and Scott formed a fuzz punk band in Summerland British Columbia.

**AU: Death rock. What exactly is Death Rock?**

Because death is the only thing in life that is for certain and because every single song we've ever played dies the second we finish playing it. At the end of the day everything and everyone is just worm shit and our sole purpose for existence is to feed the earth.

**AU: Who writes the songs and music?**

David Chenery will always be our principal songwriter but much like the human centipede what goes in is quite different than what comes out. We all contribute ideas.

**AU: Future Goals?**

Our future goal is to do it all; we wanna play country, we wanna play Motown, fuckin Grindcore...all of it.

**AU: What's your dream collaboration?**

We're obsessed with an idea that one day we will tour a variety show called the Rolling

Blunder Review. It'll be an unholy union of local comedians, artists and musicians that we adore. To drop a few names, we'd love to travel with Crom/Dam, Bonnuitt, David P Smith, Necron, the Daisy Stranglers, Mar Mar and the Grits and comedy podcasters The ill-informers! We'd also like to provide a soundtrack for a spoken word album by Powell River based artist Luke Ramsey.

**AU: Shit gets thrown on stage sometimes. If you had a preference, what items would you like thrown on stage at a HEX gig?**

For starters more than two fucking drink tickets. Also the decapitated bodies of every politician and religious head of state.

**AU: Do you have a favourite hex?**

Yes, as a matter of fact we have a few... Perpetual Hangovers

Fecal incontinence and an innate compulsion to purchase and fawn over every last recording by Irish shit lords the U2.

(Also a sexual attraction to Wolfgang Van Halen )

**AU: Is there a Great Pumpkin ?**

We sure as shit hope there is because we wanna gut it and roast up all those yummy seeds.

*Exposure to The HEX / photographs: John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography*

## Feed the Earth. Moments with The HEX

**Absolute Underground: What are your names and what instruments do you play?**

**The HEX:**

Andrew Bandelow - Bass Guitar  
David Chenery - Gibson SG/vocals  
Scott Stuart Dunlop -drums drums drums



## Videodrunken Film Festival

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

MR: I'm Matthew Rooney and I'm the founder and programmer of the Videodrunken Film Festival in Durham. Also briefly ran for school board trustee.

**AU: Tell us about the origin of Videodrunken Film Fest.**

MR: It was born out of the ashes of something called King Alt. That festival ran for two years before imploding and causing me to launch a more "professional" festival. Both were oddly inspired by the guy that made *Joker* cause he made New York Underground Film Festival when he was 25 or 26 and I wanted to best him and founded King Alt at 22 and Videodrunken at 25.

**AU: What makes Videodrunken Film Fest unique compared to other film festivals?**

MR: We exist in an odd place. We're not quite horror or underground or indie or experimental just a mixtape of stuff. One minute the audience is shown a woman stitching a moth into her vagina

and that's followed by a robot who works at the roller rink and that's followed by five minutes of flashing lights. We piss off horror bros and we piss off video art fans. We also bring in stand-ups galore and embrace using non-cinematic settings to present the films in.

**AU: What are your plans for this year's Videodrunken Film Fest?**

MR: Due to COVID we're hoping to do a small-scale live event for maybe 20 people a night with an online component that'll be hosted on Festivee. It'll run from November 18th to 21st.

**AU: Do you encourage drinking games during the screenings?**

MR: For features, we try to find one, but outside of that, no. We do encourage people to be social and active and if they can find a game they should let everyone know that game.

**AU: What are some films you are especially looking forward to screening this year?**

MR: Can't say. All films are created equal.

**AU: What are some highlights of the craziness from previous years events?**

MR: There's always a tech issue. Every single year. The first year our projector just outright fucking died. We end up replacing it with a tower of four TVs and made everyone sit around it in a circle. That went shockingly well. We also once spent like five hours trying to correct a blur and only got it corrected like two minutes before the doors opened. Other than that we ran the QnA from hell one year, during which the subject of the QnA advocated mutual combat to resolve issues. There was also the year there was a massive police manhunt on the street we were screening at and there were maybe seven or eight



cops out front armed with machine guns while everyone was smoking during intermission.

**AU: Do you have any alcohol and beer sponsors to mention? Where is this year's event taking place?**

MR: I want to thank Whitby's 5 Paddles Brewing Company. Not only are they our beer sponsor but they're our host this year. They've got a lovely little space near the Whitby-Oshawa border.

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

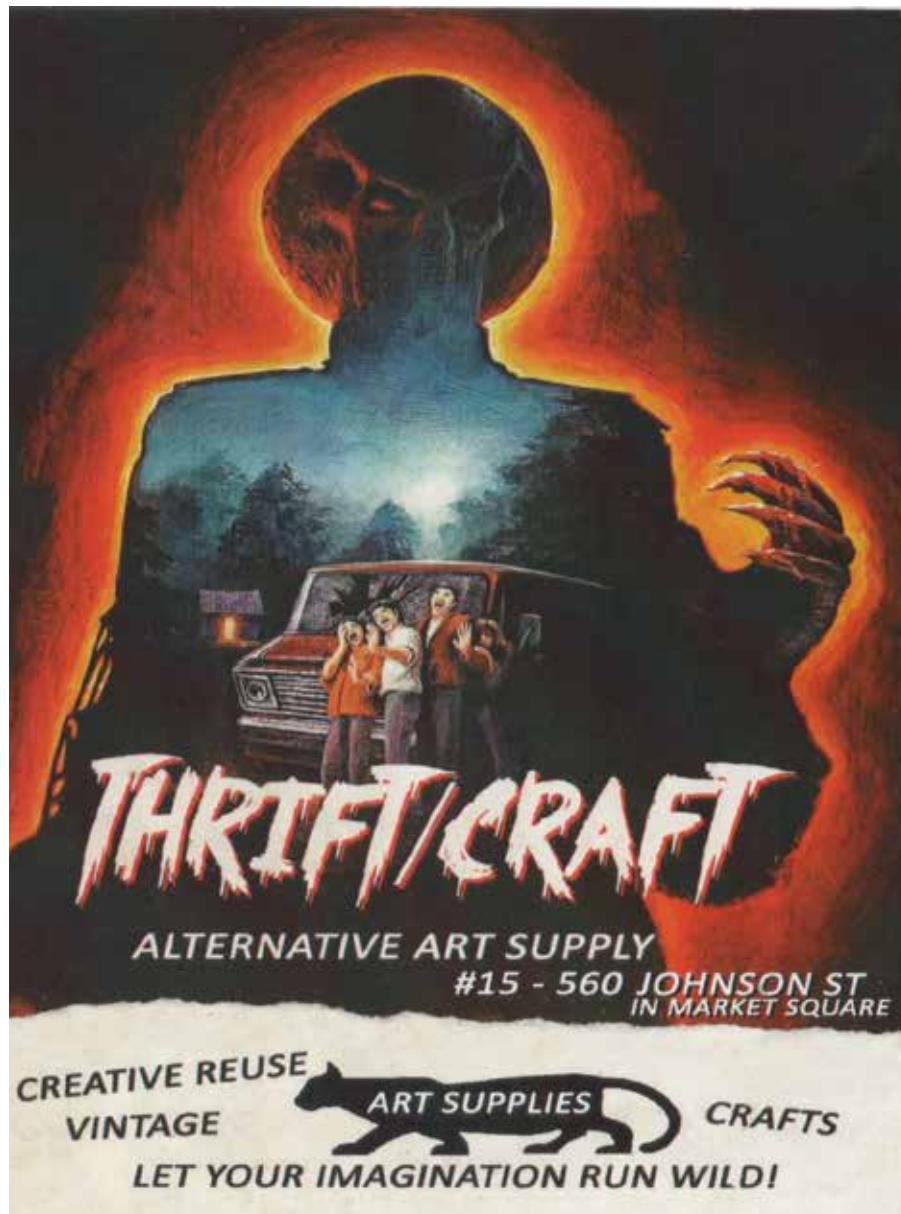
MR: I want to give a shout-out to our graphic designer Joe Zambri. He's been doing posters for us since 2016 and his work is great. If you're a punk or metal act and you want a solid album

cover give Joe a shout cause he's really passionate about design and music and I think he'd give you 110%. His website is josephzambri-design.com. Aside from Joe, if you want to watch or do something different give the Sick N Wrong Film Festival's 72 Hour Film Debacle a look.

**AU: How can people find out more info online?**

MR: We have all the socials but mainly videodrunken.com and filmfreeway.com/Videodrunken. Also if you want to watch online videodrunken.festivee.com is where you wanna check out.

[videodrunken.festivee.com](http://videodrunken.festivee.com)





"How romantic you are, Carmilla," I said. "Whenever you tell me your story, it will be made up chiefly of some one great romance." She kissed me silently. "I am sure, Carmilla, you have been in love; that there is, at this moment, an affair of the heart going on."

"I have been in love with no one, and never shall," she whispered, "Unless it should be with you." (Sheridan Le Fanu, *Carmilla*; retrieved from web)

## Carmilla

### Birth of the Lesbian Vampire

Carmilla is the story of how a young woman of mysterious origins and noble birth visits another in a Gothic mansion. It is one of the first notable appearance of lesbians in English literature and set a tone that would be repeated in Gothic works to come. For fans of modern vampire horror film and fiction, the idea of the bisexual or lesbian vampire has become a cliché, but in 1872 this was new idea. In Victorian times it was the sexuality of vampires combined with their drinking of blood which inspired both arousal and terror in the reader. Carmilla is one of the most important characters of that time.

What could be more terrifying than an undead monster who feeds upon blood? Sheridan Le Fanu had the answer: a pale and sickly but beautiful woman who was not only a vampire but an "insane" one. The interesting thing about Le Fanu's *Carmilla* is that the love is portrayed as mutual in many parts of the novella. He reserves judgment about the love of the two women.

And while Laura is hesitant in expressing her affections physically, she is vocal about her love.

Le Fanu also provides other hints to the relationship and the complex nature of it, however, I don't want to give away any of the tale. When reading you will immediately recognize Carmilla as the archetype of the female vampire we know today. Carmilla echoed the discomfort with the "abnormal" in Victorian society. However veiled it was, homosexuality remained an untouchable subject well into the 1950s. One can only imagine how a story that included women kissing in bed must have been received in the late 1800s. Another gothic work *The Monk* by Matthew Lewis published in 1796 certainly stoked fears about female sexuality. Yet the romance was still based largely in heterosexual interactions. Carmilla, on the other hand, was overtly gay.

Possibly to avoid the obscenity charges, Lefanu clothes much of the horror and eroticism in dreamlike description. Connecting emotionally with the waking dreams of the vampire in literature is essential to understand how Victorian sexuality underpinned these tales of blood drinking. Homosexuality was considered a mental illness by the doctors of the 1800s. This was medical stance that would remain until 1973 when homosexuality was removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.

We can see the spread of this idea of the vampire as homosexual in today's media, but the influence stretches back to LeFanu's time. We can safely assume he influenced the creation of Dracula's brides. Stoker very likely had access to the novella as his novel was not published until 1897. In the 1992 film adaptation of the book, the bedroom scene makes very blatant allusion to bisexuality as well as lesbianism. This is a modern mirroring of the text with the subtext amplified. A film adaptation of *Carmilla* was made in 1970 under the title *The Vampire Lovers*. And Carmilla has been referenced in *Castlevania* video games and animated series. She lends her name in part to the Camarilla of *RPG Vampire the Masquerade*. The

*Vampire Chronicles* by Anne Rice are influenced by this story but with gay instead of lesbian overtones. *Vampire Hunter D* also nods to the story. Even in shows like *Adventure Time*, we see the influence of Carmilla in "Marceline The Vampire Queen." We will continue to see dark-haired, pale, thin lesbian and bi vampires grace the screen and we owe the prevalence of these characters at least in part to LeFanu and *Carmilla*.

Read it here: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10007>

Audio Book here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Cvuiq6J3dY>



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## Dark Ink Books To Kill For

Interview with author and publisher Michael Aloisi

By Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

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

MA: Michael Aloisi, the author of eleven books including horror legends like Kane Hodder and Tom Savini's official biographies and the gory thriller *Pieces* written with Rebecca Rowland. Skills to be the bills... writing and publishing!

### AU: How did you first become an author?

MA: I came upon writing by accident. Originally, I wanted to make movies and went to film school in NYC at The School of Visual Arts. While I was there, I quickly found that I was good at helping everyone with their story concepts. I started to gravitate to writing and thought I would write screenplays. I gave that a shot, but got stuck on the first draft, so I decided to write it out as a story to flesh it out. Once I started writing, I fell in love and never stopped. I still loved film, but my main focus will always be books now.

### AU: What was the first book you wrote?

MA: The first book I wrote came from that script I got stuck on. It is called *Fifty Handfuls* and is a weepy drama/thriller about a woman who feels guilty of the death of her husband, so she sets off cross country to fulfill his final wishes. The book has a lot of fans, but sadly they don't want to read my horror because it is drastically different!

### AU: What is on your writing resume to date?

MA: Oh boy, three novels, three short story collections, three biographies, two non-fiction essay collections, short stories in a variety of collections and few film and television credits. You can find them all on my website.

### AU: What projects have you worked on since we spoke to you in our last Halloween issue?

MA: This November I have the tenth anniversary edition of Kane Hodder's biography, called *Kill*, which includes a lot of bonus material and what has happened in the past ten years coming out.

As well as a sequel to *The Killer & I*, which documents Kane's and mine crazy book tour through five countries!

### AU: Tell us about your publishing company AM Ink, and also about your different imprints including Dark Ink and Spooky Ink.

MA: Here at AM Ink and Dark Ink, we are now celebrating our eleventh anniversary of independent publishing! AM Ink publishes Children's books and mainstream novels, short story collections and biographies. Spooky Ink puts out "Spooky" children's books and Dark Ink publishes anything that is horror or "dark" based. We have put out almost a hundred books, had movies and television shows made out of our properties, sold translation rights and we have done numerous celebrity biographies and books.

### AU: What are some of the books Dark Ink has published so far that might interest our horror fans reading this?

MA: We have TONS of books that horror fans love. Everything from film-based books like *On Location in Blairstown: The Making of Friday the 13th*, to celebrity biographies like Kane Hodder, Tom Savini, William Butler and others. While the big books like those get the attention, our fiction is what is really killer. We have four amazing horror anthologies edited by Rebecca Rowland, numerous short story collections, novels and more. No matter what type of horror you like, we have something that will entertain you.

### AU: We spoke with Special FX legend Steve Johnson in this issue. How did you get involved with helping him publish his two *Rubberhead: Sex, Drugs, and Special FX* books?

MA: When I was working with Tom Savini on his book, I was at his house one day when he started to go on and on about how insane and amazing Steve's biography was, which intrigued me, but we were deep in to Tom's book so didn't do anything at that time. A while later, I saw that Steve was doing a Kickstarter for his book but that he didn't have a publisher yet. I asked Tom for his contact and reached out, the rest is history.

### AU: Any interesting experiences working with Steve Johnson on the project?

MA: The first phone meeting I had with Steve I sat in my office and leaned back when something caught my eye, my life-sized Slimer sculpture. In that moment I realized that I was talking to the guy who created one of my favorite childhood characters. It was a surreal moment.

Though it wasn't until I read the manuscripts did my head explode! Steve's writing is absolutely enthralling, and his life story is insane. Add that into all the never-before-seen photos and behind the scenes stories of some of the best films ever and you have something that is pure magic.

### AU: I understand you guys have plans to publish five *Rubberhead* books in total?

MA: Yes! There are plans for more, but they are a massive undertaking with the amount of writing and photos and research, so I'm sure it will take some time to get them all out. But in the end, those five books on a shelf will be a beautiful addition to any library

and an important piece of film history.

### AU: He mentioned in our interview that he has worked on over 200 films and television projects. Do you have some favorite films Steve Johnson has worked on?

MA: *Species* was a really big film to me, it came out when I was fifteen and really getting into horror and films. I remember being in awe of Sil's effects and the aliens in the film and really researching it and trying to find out more. Of course, I could also go on about *Big Trouble in Little China* for hours!

### AU: Can you please convince him to do a book dedicated to one of my favorite horror movies, *Highway To Hell*, he worked on? He mentioned that it doesn't even get a mention yet in the first five planned books.

MA: Haha, I'll see what I can do, I am the publisher, so I have some pull!

### AU: Can you tell us a little bit about what makes each of the Special FX artists unique that are featured in the books you've published? You have books by Tom Savini, Steve Johnson, and William Butler. Also what are the best examples of their work in your opinion?

MA: Special effects make up to me is the most interesting and fascinating part of movies. They are what gross us out and make us believe what we see and the people who create them are pure genius. It is almost impossible for me to pick out there best work as there is just too much.

Tom's work in *Day of the Dead* is insane, Steve's work in *Species* is unreal. We have some of the best effects artist in history with our company, which we couldn't be prouder of and now we have more coming out! *Monsters, Makeup & Effects: Volume 1* by Heather Wixson comes out in October. The series is in depth conversations with over eighty of the best artists to ever work in the industry. When all four are out, it will truly be the most definitive look at the craft ever.

### AU: What is new on the Kane Hodder front?

MA: Lots of exciting things! We have the anniversary edition coming out and a sequel to *The Killer & I*. Outside of books, Kane has a bunch of movies AND he is working for two years on a new video game that is going to be amazing! He is doing all the motion capture work for it... for another horror game, that you all know, but I'm not allowed to say anything yet!

### AU: Any upcoming writing projects or any upcoming books you plan to publish in the near future?

MA: I have five short stories coming out in various anthologies in the next few months as well as a new short story collection, a novel, a

celebrity biography and film-based book all coming out next year! As for the company, we have a killer line up of books next year, dozens of fiction titles and a whole bunch of film related works that fans are going to go nuts over.

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

MA: This Halloween I'll actually be spending with Kane and my family. He is doing a signing near our office and then he is going to be signing stuff for our company and hanging out!

### AU: Crazy past Halloween you can remember?

MA: Oddly, I never had a crazy Halloween! It has always been trick or treating and horror movies. Which are also the best things ever.

### AU: Any advice for young horror writers? What is the best way to get their voice heard?

MA: It is hard, over a million books come out a year, so getting seen in the crowd is exhausting and extremely hard. The best thing is to write something scary and original and then get out there and promote it all you can.

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## Blood In The Snow

The Blood in the Snow Film Festival is a unique and imaginative showcase of contemporary Canadian horror, genre and underground cinema that exists to challenge social boundaries, explore artistic taboos and support and exhibit independent Canadian genre media artists. BITS takes place in Toronto, Ontario and brings together audiences, media coverage, community partnerships and the filmmaking industry to exhibit and celebrate Canadian genre film.

Super Channel and Blood in the Snow Film Festival are pleased to announce that they have joined forces once again to bring a hybrid edition of the upcoming 2021 BITS to Canadian horror film fans across the nation.

Five festival features and select shorts will premiere exclusively on Super Channel Fuse on Halloween Weekend.

This year's festival is sure to shock and delight horror lovers with the virtual portion running on Super Channel Fuse over Halloween weekend from Friday, Oct 29 – Sunday Oct 31, and the in-person festival returning to the Royal Cinema November 18 to 23.

"We are proud to be partnering once again with Kelly and the incredible team at BITS to bring another round of exceptional Canadian horror films to our viewers," said Don McDonald, President & CEO, Super Channel. "The virtual edition is a great way to introduce these films to Super Channel's national audience and perfectly timed for horror fans over the Halloween weekend."

"This has been a fantastic experience working with Super Channel. I can't think of another broadcaster that has championed Canadian

independent genre cinema like they have," adds Kelly Michael Stewart, Festival Director and Founder of Blood in the Snow. "Last year we were able to take over the TV airwaves with the biggest Halloween party across Canada, and we look forward to doing it again."

The Blood in the Snow Film Festival presented by Super Channel will showcase five harrowing horror features and a variety of hair-raising shorts programs across three nights of terror-ific programming. In addition to exclusive Canadian film premieres, the virtual film festival experience will include pre-recorded film intros and Q&As with filmmakers.

Below is the BITS lineup of features and shorts programs scheduled to air on Super Channel Fuse:

### FRIDAY, OCT 29

**9 pm ET – Don't Say its Name (director Reuben Martell)**

The quiet of a snowy Indigenous community is upended by the arrival of the mining company WEC who have signed an agreement to drill the land. But before drilling starts, WEC employees begin to turn up dead, attacked by a mysterious force. As a local peace officer and a park ranger investigate, they come face to face with the vengeful spirits that have haunted the land for generations.

Opening with the short film "Giant Bear" (directors Neil Christopher, Daniel Gies).

**11 pm ET – Mournful Mediums**

Not too short, not too long! New for 2021, a shorts film program of the best in Canadian medium length shorts.

### SATURDAY OCT 30

**7 pm ET – A Series of Web Bites**

A feature length shorts program highlighting the best Canadian horror and sci-fi digital programming.

**9 pm ET – Motherly (director Craig David Wallace)**

Single mom Kate will do anything to protect her daughter Beth from a dark and disturbing



past that haunts them both. They have started a new life in an isolated farmhouse in the middle of the woods, far from the prying eyes of other people. Over the course of one day, Kate begins to suspect that something sinister is happening around them. As the danger becomes clear, Kate's motherly instincts are put to the test. How far will she go to protect her daughter?

Opening with the short films "The Child With No Name" (director Chad Costen) and "We All Dream" (director Daniel Stark).

**11 pm ET – The Righteous (director Mark O'Brien)**

A burdened man feels the wrath of a vengeful God after he and his wife are visited by a mysterious stranger.

Opening with the short film "Promises" (director Jim Morrison IV).

### SUNDAY OCT 31

**9 pm ET – Funhouse (director Jason William Lee)**

When eight celebrities from around the globe

are invited to compete in an online reality show, they soon realize that they are playing for their very lives as those voted off suffer horrific consequences, broadcast live to the entire world.

Opening with the short film "That Halloween" (director Mike Hickey).

**11 pm ET – Tin Can (director Seth A Smith)**

As the world enters quarantine, a front-line parasitologist is imprisoned in a life-suspension chamber. To escape she must destroy the last of her kind.

Opening with the short film "Disquietude" (director Michael Marino).

Films and scheduling details for the in-person festival and Deadly Exposure industry events will be announced at a later date.

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## Chazzy Bangers - What, how, and how not to do it

By Julia Veintrop

It's quite appropriate that I am writing this article, in fact, it's sort of ironic and funny. In the past, I've had friends designate a 'Julia' rig and keep it aside for when I come to visit. Up until a year or two ago, I had a bit of a reputation for chazzing bangers. But, I learned a better way of doing things and if I can, so can you. High heat likes to make a mark, eventually affecting your dab experience; that's what this article is all about, charred aka chazzy glass bangers.

### What is a chazzy banger?

A 'chazzy banger' is the term used to describe a quartz nail that has lost its clarity. Usually caked in black, sooty material, a chazzed banger steals a lot of the flavor from your dabs. So what exactly is that black gunk? The answer is carbon. It comes from residual plant material such as waxes and fats.

### How does it happen?

How exactly does one chaz a banger? In a word, temperature. Essentially, a quartz banger is meant to vaporize cannabis concentrates. In order to facilitate this process, it has to be heated to the right temperature. If it's too cold, it won't work but if it's too hot, you end up with a black carbon build-up.

### Find your perfect temperature

If you want to avoid chazzing your banger, you need to figure out the perfect temperature. While this may sound easy, every piece is different and each person has their own preference. Regardless of what you like, most people will heat up the quartz until it's glowing red and then wait for it to cool down. A hot dab might be a bit

rougher because terpenes will combust at a lower temperature than other cannabinoids. But, some believe you have to 'cough to get off' and those people tend to dab hot. Cooler dabs keep most of those terpenes intact, equating to a lot of flavor but sometimes less vapour.

Hot tip - If you have a new banger and are trying to figure out how long to wait, ask your local bong shop. Usually they can tell you based on the thickness of the bucket. However, if you plan to just go for it, start off waiting longer and

letting it go colder than you usually would. Otherwise, you run a high risk of chazzing that brand new banger.

### The Puddle

If you took your dab at the right temperature, you should get a solid hoot and see a small amount of residue in the bottom of the banger. The size of the puddle depends on the size of your dab. You can tell how intact the remaining cannabinoid content is by looking at the color. If the puddle is a light colour, you might be able to put the carb cap back on, feather it with a torch and hit it again. If it's a darker color, your dab is basically done.

Getting this puddle out of your banger before you re-use it is essential for keeping it clean. The moment a torch hits it, that puddle of residual dabs will start to burn and char. Have q-tips handy so that you can swab out the bowl.

## CANNABIS CORNER



Hot tip - Swab out your banger with a pre-roll before you use a q-tip and make the most of your dabs.

### What to do when it's too late

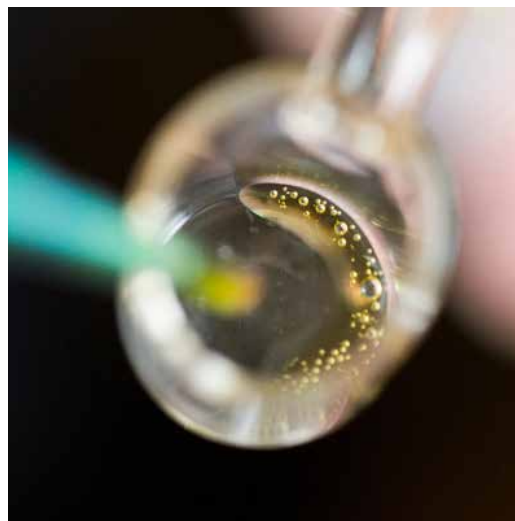
If your banger is already charred to hell, do not despair because hope remains. It's never going to be clear as brand new quartz but you can get the crap off. There are a couple of ways to remove the caked on carbon from a chazzed banger:

Fire clean it - Turn your torch on your banger and make it flow red. You will know that you have heated it up enough when you see the charred carbon literally start to glow red. Once the black spots have all burned red, they will disappear. Keep in mind, this method will still leave your banger with a cloudy colouring but, your dabs will taste good again.

Water and fire - Note - This technique should be only used with high quality bangers because cheap ones can shatter and crack. Using a q-tip, wet the inside bucket of the banger, leaving a small drop in the bottom. Turn your torch on the banger and watch that drop start to boil and steam all that carbon off.

If you have never had a fresh banger, low temp dab experience, you owe it to yourself to give it a try... Then again, to each their own!

[vbc.ca](http://vbc.ca)



# CANNABIS CORNER



## Why We Celebrate Halloween An Origin Story

By Julia Veintrop

Halloween is almost here and everybody's getting excited. Providing the ultimate excuse to get scared, we dress up in costumes, go trick or treating, and party for the dark side... it's kind of weird when you think about it. These are strange activities and it begs the question, who came up with these ideas? Bobbing for apples, why would we do that? Have you ever wondered? To help you get into the spirit of the season, here are the origin stories of our Halloween traditions.

### Samhain

Halloween originates from the ancient Celtic holiday Samhain (pronounced sow-in) and is celebrated on the day before Celtic New year. A



very superstitious people, the Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the veil between the living and the dead was thin. Spirits could crossover into our world and we could cross over into theirs. To the Celts, this was a catastrophe. They believed that spirits were responsible for causing a great deal of mischief and could wreak havoc in the coming year. However, the Celts also believed that this time of year could be used to predict the future. To protect themselves, they would sacrifice animals and wear the skins, then light bonfires and tell fortunes.

### Bobbing for apples

By 43 A.D., The majority of Celtic territory was now a part of the Roman Empire. Rather than wipe out the holiday, Samhain was combined with Feralia, the ancient Roman Day of the dead, and Pomona, a holiday to honor the goddess of fruit. According to Roman mythology, Pomona was the goddess of orchard fruit and protected cultivation. Symbolized with an apple, she was celebrated at the end of October, in appreciation for another year's harvest. Bobbing for apples is the way we say thanks. If you've ever stuck your face in water and tried to pick up an apple with your teeth, Pomona says you're welcome.

### All Saints Day

At a first conservative Christian glance, Halloween could look like devil worship. For some reason,



it's not taken that way. The reason is that Halloween is the night before All Saints Day. November 1st, the day after Halloween is a church-sanctioned holiday to honor all Christian martyrs and Saints. Created to replace the Celtic celebration, people

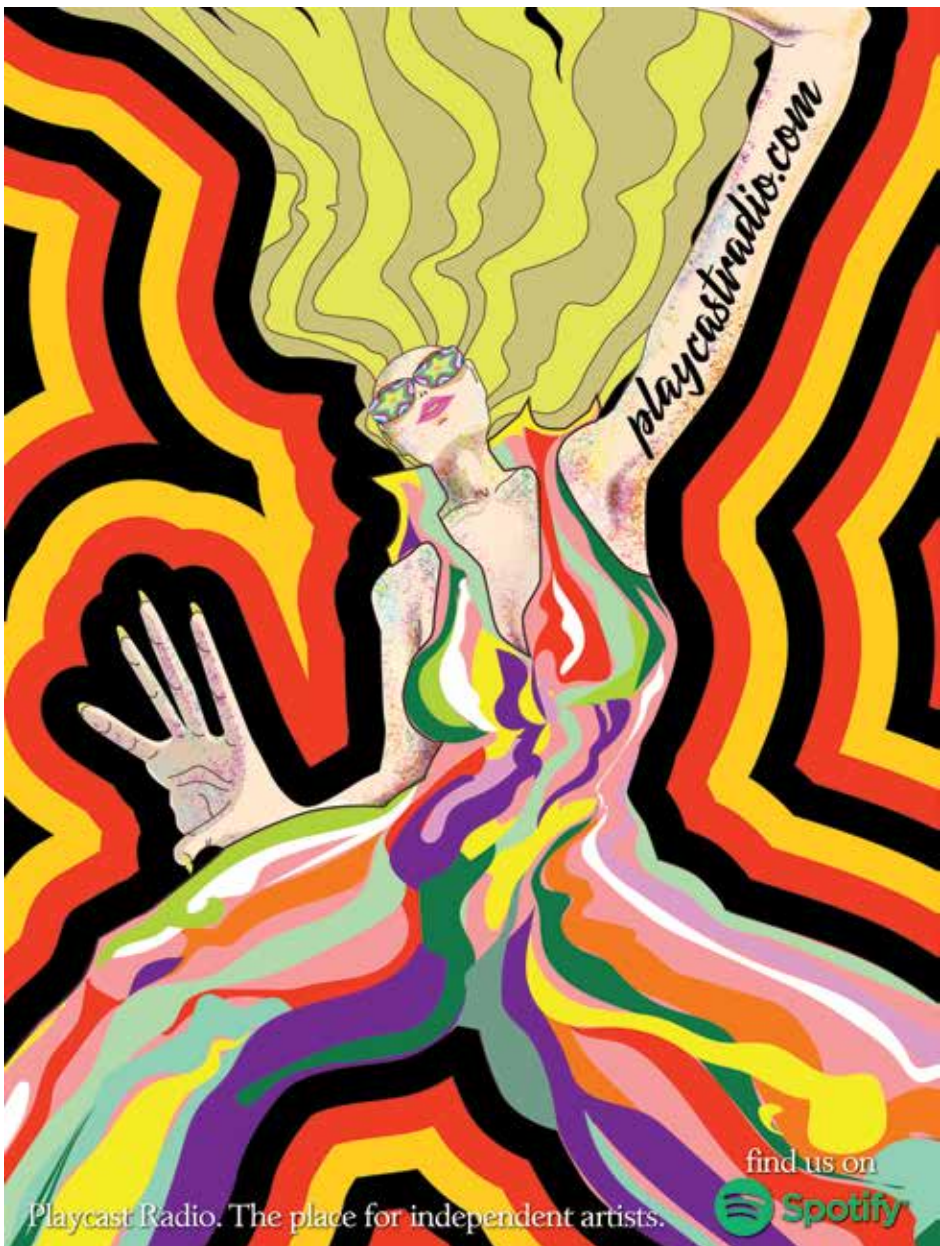
lit bonfires and dressed up as devils, angels, and witches. They would honor the dead in the darkness of evening and celebrate the church in daylight. All Saints Day became known as All-Hallows, from The Middle English word Alholowmesse (translates to All Saints Day). The night before All Saints Day was known as All-Hallows Eve.

### Trick or Treating in costume

According to ancient folklore, a ghost's favorite

pastime is making a mess. Nothing is more satisfying to a spirit than vandalism. Did you work hard growing all those crops? If a ghost comes along, consider them destroyed! That is unless you bribe them... this is the essence of trick or treating. Back in the day, a pagan farmer would slaughter livestock and leave out offerings as a sacrifice to the spirits. To many, the food left out was irresistible but so were the consequences of stealing from a ghost. To avoid any trouble, they dressed up in costumes, trying to scare away any suspicion. The tradition has evolved over centuries but albeit, not by much.

Celebrate Halloween by paying your respect to a good crop harvest of cannabis! Roll up a joint as an offering to the spirits and smoke it to get them high off your fumes; bonus points with the goddess Pomona if it's apple kush strain. Regardless of how you celebrate, enjoy this season and have a Happy Halloween.





maintain control of the content, lest the studio should get involved to change the film's famous ending. This struggle got to the point that even co-star Brad Pitt got involved in the fight to keep the original ending. Written by Andrew Kevin Walker, *Se7en* is undoubtedly his horror masterpiece, he'd previously had some experience in the horror genre with *Brainscan* and after adapting Dean Koontz' kidnap/torture thriller *Hideaway* for Hollywood; which

this "atypical" scope. In *Clean, Shaven* there is a constant, unspoken threat of pending violence which drives the narrative -- and with this being the case, *Clean, Shaven* easily maintains the atmosphere of a serial killer movie without actually being one. The closest example I can come to a parallel this aesthetic would be John McNaughton's *Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer*, which is actually a movie about a serial killer on a strictly literal level, but it's clearly about many other things in the subtext of its

# Absolute Horror



## Serial Killers from Transgressive Cinema to Hollywood

By Vince D'Amato

Kim Jee-woon's 2010 *I Saw the Devil* might actually be the ultimate serial killer movie. It's *Se7en* on steroids, it's like Kim Jee-woon took the trope characters of the serial killer and the investigating detective and turned them into super-intelligent and whacked-out superhumans who just - won't - stop. Bizarrely, Jee-woon would move on from *I Saw the Devil* to Hollywood to direct Arnold Schwarzenegger's 2013 comeback vehicle *Last Stand*, which is actually a pretty good and somewhat funny shoot-em-up picture. Going back to *Se7en*, one of the most famous serial killer films of all time, it was the movie that put director David Fincher on the map following his failed *Alien 3* debut. And yes, *Se7en* was itself a Hollywood film, but it was so thoroughly dark in tone and content that the producers and director had to fight to



admittedly had its moments, though it was nowhere near as sophisticated as *Se7en*. Later on, director Fincher would then tap the literal mind of Andrew Kevin Walker again to ghost-write scenes for *Fight Club*, which was based on the celebrated transgressive literature of author Chuck Palahniuk (and check out his novel *Haunted* if you really want to devour some transgressive horror).

Years after *Se7en* and *Fight Club*, director Fincher made *Gone Girl*, which could be seen as his attempt to get back into transgressive cinema -- the problem here is, unlike his *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* remake, *Gone Girl* suffers from a too-clean aesthetic overall and a somewhat awkward constraint when it comes to the film's potentially edgier scenes. Undoubtedly the sexual scenes would have benefitted, and would have been edgier, with some of the genre's traditional nudity, à la fellow transgressive filmmaker Paul Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct* or his more recent *Elle*.



Of course the cathartic inclusion of either sex/nudity or bloody violence depends on the content and context of the movie itself -- transgressive cinema as a whole does not really need to contain any of those things to still be transgressive. For instance, Lodge Kerrigan's 1994 film *Clean, Shaven* (screened in the Un Certain Regard section at the 1994 Cannes Film Festival) is completely void of any kind of sexuality, instead it focuses on the deep darkness of mental ill-health and the absolutely cringing effects of that on the individual, and their relationships through



poor or "lower-class" parts of the American story. John McNaughton went on to do the intriguing *Mad Dog* and *Glory* which reverse-cast Robert DeNiro as a quiet lonely cop and Bill Murray as the mobster heavy. McNaughton later hired Murray again for a hilarious role as a lawyer in his murder sex-thriller *Wild Things* (with Kevin Bacon and Neve Campbell of *Friday the 13th* and *Scream*, respectively). But it was the star of *Clean, Shaven* that initially had more success in Hollywood than that film's own writer-director; actor Peter Greene was soon after cast as "Zed" in Quentin Tarantino's palme d'or-winning *Pulp Fiction* at the Cannes Film Festival in 1994.

Aesthetically, a far-more bizarre and transgressive film that came out of the early 90s was E. Elias Merhige's experimental *Begotten* (1990), a starkly dark black & white horror film that attacks the viewer's emotions on a strictly visual level -- owing at least part of its uncomfortable and



somehow transcendent low-budget aesthetic to the likes of *Clean, Shaven* and on some level even Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Director Merhige made a swift move

to Hollywood following his low-budget horror debut, where he would direct Willem Dafoe in the semi-biographical pic *Shadow of the Vampire*, which he'd quickly follow-up with his own serial killer movie *Suspect Zero*, starring Aaron Eckhart and Sir Ben Kingsley. Stylistically, Merhige's two Hollywood films differed from the other directors who had made that same leap, because Merhige maintained quite a bit of his natural creative filmmaking aesthetic in his Hollywood films. Unfortunately, these are the only films he has made to date; he seems to have disappeared from Hollywood and filmmaking altogether without explanation.

Paul Verhoeven, the director who almost single-handedly brought the idea of transgressive cinema



into the Hollywood mainstream in the 1980s, left Hollywood of his own accord in the 2000s after he was offered the director's chair on one of the *Fast & Furious* sequels following *Starship Troopers* and the somewhat uncomfortably rapey *The Hollow Man*. David Fincher went on to produce the edgy and popular Netflix serial killer profiler show *Mindhunter* for two seasons until he had to abandon the project at the height of its popularity due to other Hollywood high-demand commitments. *Clean, Shaven's* director Lodge Kerrigan also made a move to TV series with *The Killing*, *Bates Motel*, and *The Girlfriend Experience*. Kim Jee-woon continues to direct content in South Korea, his six-part series *Mister Robin* became Apple TV's first-ever Korean-language series in 2021. Paul Verhoeven stuck with making transgressive cinema in his native Netherlands, winning multiple prestigious industry awards for his existential rape-revenge film *Elle*. So far, he appears to have no interest in returning to Hollywood.

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## BEYOND REFORM



**Aron Beauregard, Jon Athan, & Jasper Bark**  
Independent  
September 15th 2021

I'm not usually that big of a fan of short fiction or collections but this one was pretty damned good.

Jasper Bark was undoubtedly the star of the show. I really hope this has reignited his passion for writing horror because his stories are always so damned powerful and unique.

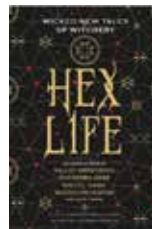
Bark's "Midnight Glory" is the most damned twisted and perverse Monkey's Paw story that I've ever read. And his "A Most Chemical Wedding" reinvents the ghost story. I absolutely loved both stories.

Jon Nathan struck gold with his "Dead but Alive." There should be a big trigger warning here --> contains graphic necrophilia <-- but my God is this a messed up story. While his "Tortured Until Proven Innocent" was not as strong as "Dead but Alive," it was still a very entertaining read and I'm looking forward to reading more material from this author as this was my first taste.

Strangely, Aron Beauregard takes a back seat in this Collevction. While I thought that "The Martini Club" was a decent read. It's ending was kind of cliché and I saw it coming. I've never been a fan of his when he writes in this style. The only saving grace was that I kind of enjoyed the ending. Aron's work is usually much stronger than this.

Michael Cushing

## HEX LIFE: WICKED NEW TALES OF WITCHERY



**Christopher Golden, Rachel Autumn Deering, Kelley Armstrong, Theodora Goss, Rachel Caine, Sherrilyn Kenyon, Jennifer McMahon, etc.**  
Titan Books  
October 1st 2019

*Hex Life* is a mixed bag of witchcraft and witch stories written by a wide variety of female fantasy authors from a feminist perspective. Sounds great, looks great, but this one missed the mark for me. Not to say someone who enjoys more whimsical magical stories wouldn't enjoy it, I'm just used to more extreme books.

If you are into it, it would be a cozy read for October, it has that spooky fall vibe complete with some modern stories, some fairytale, paranormal, LGBT, historical, and post-apocalyptic. There are 18 stories packed within this collection, some that stuck out were 'The Memories of Trees' which takes place in a dystopian world with witch trails.

Something of intrigue for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fans is Amber Benson who played Tara Maclay in the show also has a story, 'This Skin,' in the collection. 'Where Relics go to dream and die' was pretty gory with some horror edges. 'Widows' Walk' was kind of cute, and would make a great bed-time story for a youth. Touches on domestic abuse with young girls and has a unique twist that ends up being pretty feel-good. Not my style, but I think if you

are into this type of writing, it would be a really nice addition to your collection because it's so diverse.

Demonika

## INSANITY COSMIC COMICS



**Kevin O'Neill**  
Hibernia  
2019

Based in County Mayo, Ireland, Hibernia have been publishing beautiful collections of some classic comics. *Cosmic Comics* showcases the work of one of the all-time great comic artists, Mr. Kevin O'Neill. Kevin is justly well-known for his work with Pat Mills, a decades-long collaboration that has yielded such outstanding stories as the *A.B.C Warriors*, *Marshall Law*, *Nemesis the Warlock* (on its fortieth anniversary this year, it would have been nice to see a special edition of the first book in the series), and not as well-known but excellent, a creator owned project called *Metalzoic*, which is one of the best things either creator has ever done, and really deserves to be reprinted (I recently saw some of the 2000ADs it appeared in, Kevin produced some beautiful covers for them). *Cosmic Comics* reprints artwork, comics strips, covers for annuals and summer specials, posters, and so forth, as well as art from Kevin's personal collection, which has never been seen before. The sheer beauty and audacity of Kevin's work is a joy to behold. I wonder how many more gems remain unseen?

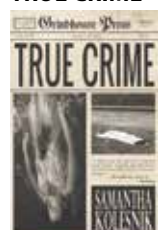
On top of the artwork, this fine book gives the context of the art within, what it was for, where it appeared and so on. Most importantly, Kevin himself provides a great deal of commentary and comes across as an extremely likeable fellow, as well as been talented.

Anyone interested in this fine book, and other Hibernia projects can contact Hibernia at [hiberniagn@gmail.com](mailto:hiberniagn@gmail.com)

To conclude, I couldn't recommend this beautifully illustrated and produced book more, it is a thing of beauty and joy forever.

Steve Earles

## TRUE CRIME



**Samantha Kolesnik**  
Grindhouse Press  
January 14, 2020

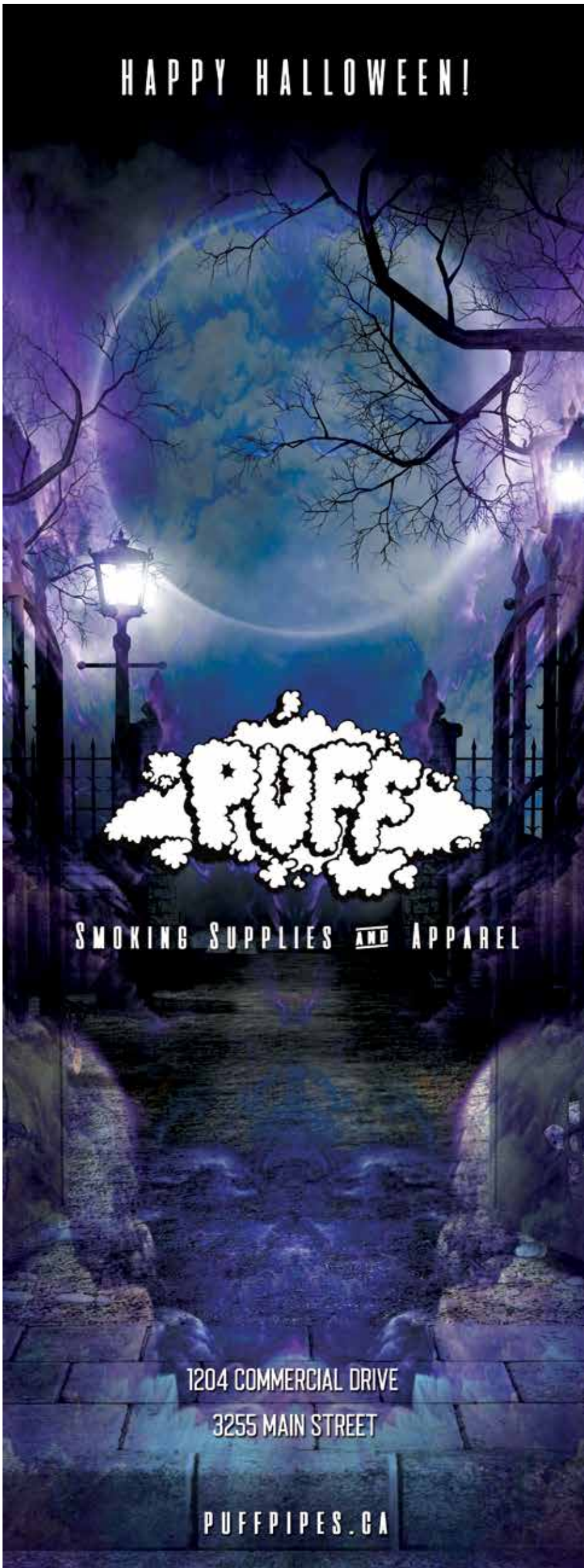
Winner of Best Novella in the Splatter Punk Awards 2020  
Several months after reading this book, I'm actually ready to sit down and discuss it. This isn't your average "extreme horror" novel. You won't find yourself laughing out loud at how over the top it is. You won't be tearing through the pages like a chainsaw following a maniac on their path of destruction. This one will simply make you go numb.

Miss Kolesnik places you into the head, and the life of young Suzy. Do you ever wonder how people become serial killers? What broke inside of them that caused them to do the things they did? This is probably as close to the truth as you're going to get inside of a work of fiction.

Michael Cushing

**"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 [demonika@absoluteunderground.ca](mailto:demonika@absoluteunderground.ca)



# Absolute Album Reviews

## Motorhead - Everything Louder Forever

Motorhead...a life force, an energy, an attitude and the loudest, meanest, dirtiest music to smash the 20th and 21st centuries. With a bastard sound comprising an unholy synergy of rock, punk and heavy metal, Motorhead comes coated in relentless, ear-curling power. The 'off' switch was never employed in Motorhead and they became legends as a result.

Leading the charge for their entire 40 year career was the cultural icon Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister, who swashbuckled around stages, streets and overseas like a glorious Mad Max pirate truthsayer, roaring for the good and screaming at the wankers. With his propulsive sound and lyrical might leading the charge, Motorhead released 22 studio albums over those four decades, amassing chart topping records worldwide, a Grammy award and racking up around 20 million sales. Their hit song "Ace Of Spades" became Motorhead's anthem, perfectly capturing their attitude for millions, and punching giant holes in stereos worldwide to this day. Nothing was harder, nothing was faster, nothing packed more raw attitude and certainly nothing was louder!

This collection is the definitive assembly of Motorhead songs and represents the first time all eras of the band's recorded history have been represented in one place. And in this mad world we're living in, if some aliens from outer space decide to drop by your house for a whisky and demand an explanation as to, "What the fuck is this 'Motorhead' that we keep hearing about?" you could play *Everything Louder Forever* and know that the question will be thoroughly answered. *Everything Louder Forever* will be released October 29th via BMG Records.

www.iMotorhead.com  
- Mal Content

## Nektar - The Other Side

Cherry Red Records  
Nektar are an English band that made a number of well received,



psychedelic space rock albums back in the 70s (like Hawkwind, the visual side was very important to the band. Well, it was the 70s!).

The band, interestingly, were based in Germany, and indeed Nektar is German for Nectar. The various musical adventures and line-up changes the band had in the past would take up more room than we have, and in any case, there's *The Other Side*, a truly excellent new studio album from the band.

*The Other Side* would very much appeal to fans of Opeth (of which I am one), I can easily imagine they were an influence on the band.

What I like most about this album, apart from excellent songs and performances, and a truly great production, is that it's very uplifting, and let's face it, that's exactly what we need right now.

- Steve Earles

## Seven Sisters - Shadow Of A Fallen Star Pt. 1

Cherry Red Records

I saw Seven Sisters a few years ago at Dolans Warehouse with my good friend Damien Mullane of Iron Mountain fame. We were both impressed with the bands excellent songs and stagecraft (and that wasn't just down to the Guinness!). So impressed was I with their performance I bought the band's excellent self-titled album, and again, I was impressed.

Cherry Red are showing an excellent level of commitment to heavy metal, not just with excellent versions of worthy classics, but also with excellent new bands like Toledo Steel and Seven Sisters.

What strikes me most about *Shadow of a Fallen Star Pt. 1* is just how much of a progression it is. We are into Iron Maiden territory here in the best possible way, with some Helloween influences too. Excellent songs



and performance, played with the degree of sincerity and commitment that all good heavy metal needs.

- Steve Earles

## Toledo Steel - Heading For The Fire

Cherry Red Records

Heavy metal! This is what we need as we emerge from our bunkers into a post-plague world! Toledo Steel plays traditional heavy metal. It comes from the heart and you can feel it.

Toledo Steel's influences are wide though. For instance, their splendid metal anthem 'Smoke And Mirrors' is as catchy as covid, but much nicer, with it's anthemic chorus, it comes across as something like classic Skid Row or Van Halen. This is a good thing!

Elsewhere, Toledo Steel take cues from such gods as Metallica, Judas priest, Iron Maiden, Saxon, Angel Witch and Diamond Head, and give it their own twist. For all fans of traditional heavy metal, this is a must, fans of Striker would find much to love here too!

- Steve Earles

## Watchtower - Control & Resistance

Cherry Red Records

Watchtower (love that name, it conjures up images of strange and dangerous worlds conjured up by Stephen King) are one of the great cult metal bands, and *Control and Resistance* is one of the great cult albums. Indeed, one of the great lost albums, so kudos to Cherry Red for doing such a fine re-release of it.

I remember as a kid having a traded tape of *Control and Resistance* (I was recently going through my late Dad's possessions and I found a childhood picture of the two of us at an air display at Shannon Airport and I'm wearing a Watchtower t-shirt, a strange but happy coincidence) and absolutely loving it's



strange and energetic musical twists and turns. Rush meets Metallica it was described as, and that's not an unfair description in some ways, but Watchtower are very much their own unique creation.

Not for nothing is this album in the mighty Decibel's Hall of Fame. It must have been a huge influence on such bands as Dream Theatre and therein lies a sad twist of fate. In some alternative universe, Watchtower are as big as Dream Theatre, they were more than capable of it. So, in conclusion, not just one of the great metal albums, but a great album period. I couldn't recommend it enough.

- Steve Earles

## Vitriolic Sage - Ascension

Pest Productions, known for its extensive catalogue of black metal releases in China, presents the debut album from Zhejiang China's scholarly shredder, Vitriolic Sage.

The record is another fine example of how a single vision can at times achieve greatness. The Giger-esque cover art accompanies an album entwined in swirling melodicism and cursed rage under the progressive black metal banner. Partly inspired by Junji Ito's *Uzumaki*, *Ascension*, like that malevolent spiral of clouds spread over two pages in the manga, is a spinning vortex where everything is perfectly balanced - music, concept, storytelling, and emotions. The production of the album is particularly nuanced, with the guitar clearly being the tip of the spiral, leading the backing instruments and derangedwhispers into majestic madness.

The young sage majored in French and linguistics, which in turn gives the album, with its French song titles like "Lumière" an international feel - a Chinese musician, playing a genre founded in Norway with French song titles. How is that for connect the dots? By the end of the seven tracks presented on *Ascension*, that spiral may be imprinted on your brain permanently.

-Ryan Dyer



## Horror of Pestilence - Illiterate Construction // Inaudible Deterioration EP

Guangzhou, China's Horror of Pestilence are a group of metallic conductors who specialize in creating tech-deathcore savagery blended with symphonic elements, taking the genre beyond its preconceived limitations. Their new EP *Illiterate Construction // Inaudible Deterioration* marks a pivot for the band. The four songs (with an additional four instrumental versions of said songs) could be considered a pit stop before we go full speed into the next chapter of Horror of Pestilence's career, as the band has acquired a new guitarist in the form of Mr. Mustard from the Hong Kong band Massacre of Mothman, who will take part in the writing duties the next time around.

The band have always been cutting edge, and with this EP, along with crushing symphonic deathcore, new ear-worms wiggle into the fold such as Middle Eastern elements leading into the snarling "Exiled Revenant". A tasty saxophone solo also shows up, bringing to mind the brass attack used by Japanese black metal masters Sigh.

Lyrical themes of the EP are best exemplified with the track "God Given. Hell Risen", proclaiming "I now know hell is real so I know there's a heaven. I believe, and I shall. That I exist in this mortal shell" which the band says refers to there being no ghosts or gods at all. The finale of this track features some ear-catching dual vocal melodies - another surprise from the plague ragers.

The album artwork, designed by Kiryu, depicts a monolithic entity. Like those apes in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, listening to this album should prepare us for the next step in the evolution of technical deathcore - something you might hear on the star child's personal listening device.

- Ryan Dyer



## The Cult - Born Into This

Cherry Red Records

*Electric* is one of my all time favourite albums. Everything about that record is as it should be, and *Born Into This* is the best Cult album since then. Great songs, great attitude and a terrific production from Killing Joke legend Youth, who also plays bass on the album. The Cult are a truly great band, one that truly has that great rock n' roll spirit.

This 'Savage' edition includes an extra CD of unreleased material, including three excellent demos.

If you already like The Cult, this is a great album, if you're not familiar with them, this is a great starting point.

- Steve Earles



## Hawkwind - Somnia

Cherry Red Records

Hawkwind are the great underground institution, and *Somnia* is, amazingly, their 34th album! Created during the pandemic we've all suffered on, *Somnia* draws influences from the world of dreams. A good influence, after all, if we don't dream it first, it can't become a reality.

Musically, *Somnia* is typically Hawkwind, melodic and adventurous, music to spark the imagination, music to inspire. Hawkwind have always looked to a more optimistic future, let us hope they're right.

- Steve Earles



# Absolute Film Reviews



## Linnea Quigley's Paranormal Truth is Not Out There

Horror icon Linnea Quigley doesn't always get to the Paranormal Truth in this new series that's on select streaming services. It's available on Tubi TV and Vimeo. This series is decent enough to reveal the realities behind why we love these supernatural entities on film but as for offering something that diehards don't already know, about their history or their folkloric origins, it's tough to be current. Not even the latest studies have answers—including why some ghosts choose to remain instead of move on.

Plus, thirty minutes is not enough time to give these topics the proper love when it's supposed to offer answers, if not theories, on why certain types of terrors continue to haunt

the public imagination.

Quigley is not like Zachary Quinto when compared to his series, *In Search Of*. Her opening and closing statements offer little information, and Patrick Allyn is the genuine star. He has a few thoughts.

The only pleasant episodes are those which look at notable Californian haunts, like the RMS Queen Mary, and a few unknowns—namely the Verdugo Hills Cemetery, Curse of St Francis and The Clown Motel. The Cecil's dark history is just that. A handful of past residents died on site by suicide!

The least favourite concerns a Los Angeles team of paranormal investigators trying to connect with long dead celebrities. I don't think suggesting Kurt Cobain and Michael Jackson are not at rest is respectful to these incredible talents. The funny part of this series is in the fact they're as jumpy as Yvette Fielding's *Most Haunted* team.

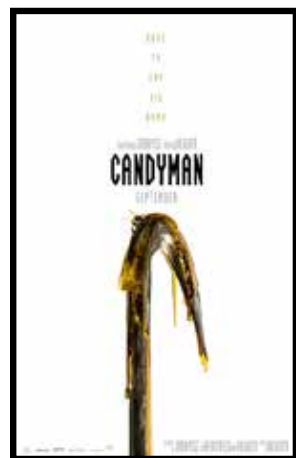
This series is odd because it lumps the extraterrestrial in. Even the cryptozoological gets one star, a county specific version of the Bigfoot, to stand up and wave his arms. But the short series format can't delve into this particular lore properly.

Specific topics deserve several episodes rather than just one. Broader topics—especially concerning UFOs and Bigfoot—are deserving of its own series. The possibility exists of the researchers delving into more of the lore if a series two gets greenlit, but

when considering where this product

is streaming, the chances are highly unlikely.

-Ed Sum



## Candyman

*Candyman* is one of those movies I watched often as a kid. It was one of those 90s films which actually felt dreadful and horrifying at that early age. For me, it was due to a few factors - the realistic, poverty stricken buildings it was set in - which kind of mirrored my own. The urban legend/mirror stigma - as kids, Bloody Mary was a real test, and although I consider myself pretty unshakable, I didn't fuck with things like that.

And then of course the score - Philip Glass' *Candyman* score is like force of its own in the movie - it enhances it much like Carpenter did with *Haloween* or whichever other example you'd like to use. The notion of being attacked while on the shitter was also horrifying.

As for this new version, it takes a lot of these elements from the original film (ignoring the sequels) and manages to pay respect to the lore while adding a few new elements which don't totally bastardize the original film or Clive Barker's short story. Puppet shows demonstrate the history of Candyman and then we are shown a grimy bathroom in Cabrini Green, where a boy is spooked by a man with a hook for a hand climbing through the wall. He isn't Tony Todd, but he is a version of Candyman. Keep that idea in mind, because this is what the movie builds upon. Then the opening credits hit, and the new score is unveiled as it shows Chicago's buildings upside down, which are like beehives full of people. The music itself isn't as chilling as Glass', but it works. The continued story from the original works better the more you think about it after viewing this version.

For creepiness, scares and gore, these scenes were shot well, and the film did keep some of the mystery alive until the end. I didn't particularly find any scene scary or evening unnerving, compared to the original, which had a few parts that left me shaken, such as the boy getting attacked on the toilet, the beheaded dog and Helen's friend getting split from groin to gullet. What this ver-

sion also lacks, and may or may not be missed, depending on the viewer, is the romantic nature of *Candyman*. The supernatural awe is there, but it felt like a different flavor of candy.

-Ryan Dyer



## Ditched

*Ditched*, directed by Christopher Donaldson, begins within the aftermath of an ambulance crash.

One man is still strapped to the chair while a female paramedic is awake, though injured. The not knowing how or why they are in this predicament brings to mind the original *Saw* - what secrets are hidden and what games will be played?

It doesn't take long for the man to reveal himself as being a malicious

type, but unlike Mr. Myers in *Haloween 4*, he is not the one who has caused this ambulance crash. After another character, a heroic type with a gun, reveals himself, we see the outside of the wrecked vehicle with more injured paramedics and a man in a crashed police car who is being transported to the Drumheller Correctional Facility, and from then on, the cautious female paramedic looks to discover what caused this drive into the ditch.

At around the 20 minute mark, the film's threat reveals itself, and from then on it is a fight for survival against this malicious force with only the crashed ambulance as a form of refuge for this crew of paramedics, a cop, a patient and a convict. What is this beast? Well, "it looks like it was covered in hair..."

Like an episode of *Tales From The Crypt* or another serial of the same genre, *Ditched* has its twists and the characters do hold dark secrets which may come back to pull out their guts. The synth music throughout is that low-key Carpenteresque synth stuff all too familiar to these films, acting as a blanket of comfort. The color palette is also an appealing aspect of *Ditched* - the ambulance and police car lights are exaggerated and make the characters, villain and woods glow a hellish red for a lot of the film. For a new entry into Canadian horror film history, don't ditch this one.

-Ryan Dyer



**Hawkwind- Warrior On The Edge Of Time**

**United Artists**

Reviewed by Steve Earles

Ten out of Ten

Hawkwind are without a doubt the ultimate underground band, seemingly indestructible, constantly mutating. They introduced Lemmy to the world. No Lemmy, no Motörhead; and the music we love would be very much poorer without him, and indeed without Hawkwind. In terms of musical adventure and a refusal to accept restricting labels, Their music constantly mutated and changed. Belonging to no particular time or genre but rather existing in their own musical dimension.

*Warrior On The Edge of Time* is the fifth album from Hawkwind. It reached number 13 on the UK album charts. Their three previous albums, *In Search of Space* (1971), *Doremi Fasol Latido* (1972) and *Hall of the Mountain Grill* (1974) had all reached the Top 20 in the UK, this at an unprecedented time of quality music. The double live album *Space Ritual* and the single 'Silver Machine' all contributed to Hawkwind's ever-increasing profile. Add to that an incendiary live show and here we have a band on the brink of major league success.

At this point in space and time Hawkwind consisted of founder Dave Brock on guitar, vocals and synths. Lemmy on bass and vocal. Nick Turner on saxophone, flute, and vocals. Simon House

on violin and keyboards. Simon King on drums and percussion. Alan Powell, also on drums and percussion. And last, but by no means least, the magnificent and ethereal Stacia, their dancer.

Prior to the album's recording Hawkwind had been touring their excellent *Hall Of The Mountain Grill* album. Hawkwind often debuted unrecorded material on tour but this time they didn't, having had little time to write due to their

relentless touring schedule. It wasn't until 1975 that new material was recorded, with a single 'Kings of Speed'/'Motorhead' being released. 'Motorhead' was written by Lemmy.

Despite musically being on fire, tensions were high within the band. Lemmy was taking different drugs than band main-man Dave Brock. Brock was the usually stoned on weed, whereas Lemmy's drug of choice was speed. There was friction over this between the two. Of course, Brock was resentful at Lemmy's growing status as frontman. The press and the fans loved him, and his biker image made him very much a part of the band's visual identity (though not as much as their dancer Stacia!).

The band had signed to Atco in America and they needed an album to promote on tour. In under two weeks, in March 1975, at Rockfield Studios, Hawkwind managed to write and record *Warrior On the Edge of Time*, an incredibly short period of time for such a superb album.

Hawkwind would tour hard as always to promote the album, they also headlined the Reading Festival and made an appearance at the Watchfield Free Festival.

The standout track on a very good album has to be 'Assault and Battery'. The lyrics quote from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life'. In later years it became part of the show promoting 'The Chronicle of the Black Sword', and appears on the album 'Live Chronicles' recorded on that tour.

The sleeve could only have been designed for vinyl as it unfolds into the shape of a shield. The titular Warrior stands on the lip of a bottomless chasm. On the far side of the chasm is a mirror image of the opposite side. The reverse of the cover featured the 8- rayed emblem of chaos featured in Michael Moorcock's writing.

The first recorded influence of Moorcock on Hawkwind's music was the album *Doremi Fasol Latido*, which was inspired by his book *The Black Corridor*. Moorcock's body of work is truly impressive. *Warrior on the Edge of Time* incorporates three poems written by Moorcock.

The first poem was 'The Wizard Blew His Horn'. Here Moorcock recites his words with a Ring Modulator being used to treat his voice, making him sound not unlike a Dalek! This was followed by the instrumental 'Opa-Loka, which Lemmy didn't like, most probably because he didn't actually play bass on it. In the spirit of Hawkwind's music constantly warping and mutating. Opa-Loka was combined by Robert Calvert with his poem 'Vikings On Mars' to become the song 'Uncle Sam's On Mars' which featured on the *PXR5* album.

Side One of the album closes with the evocative 'The Demented Man', a track that truly showcases Dave Brock's own particular brand of musical genius. For the opening track of side 2, the superb 'Magnu', Brock again took inspiration from poetry, drawing here from the Romantic poem 'Hymn of Apollo' by the 19th century poet Percy Shelley. 'Standing On The Edge' was Moorcock's second poem on *Warrior On The Edge of Time*. But Moorcock didn't recite it, Nik Turner took his place here. This is followed by the excellent instrumental 'Spiral Galaxy 28948'. 'Warriors' is the third Moorcock piece and Moorcock himself returns to recite the words here. Moorcock would collaborate with Hawkwind again, and also with the excellent Blue Öyster Cult.

'Warriors' is followed by Nik Turner's 'Dying Seas'. The demo version was the one used on the album, and it really shows the magical chemistry of this particular line-up of Hawkwind.

The final track on the album is the now classic 'Kings of Speed', which features lyrics written

especially for the song by Michael Moorcock.

One of the notable things about *Warrior On The Edge Of Time* was that it featured two drummers. Alan Powell had been a temporary replacement for an injured Simon King. When King returned, the band also kept Powell.

Lemmy wasn't happy with two drummers, 'the drum empire' as Brock referred to them!

Now, *Warrior On The Edge Of Time* is rightly regarded not just as a Hawkwind classic, but a classic in it's own right, as fresh and inspirational as when it was recorded.

However, as is always the way in life, with great highs come great lows. On tour in April 1975, Lemmy was busted on the Canadian border. A gram of amphetamine sulphate was found on him, and misidentified as cocaine. Lemmy found himself in custody and Hawkwind ruthlessly replaced him Pink Fairies guitarist Paul Rudolph. The hypocrisy of this is galling. Being sacked from Hawkwind from drugs is, to quote from *Apocalypse Now*, like 'being busted for speeding at the Indy 500'!

But every cloud has a silver (machine) lining, and Lemmy would soon form Motörhead, and we are all in his debt, for he indeed changed the musical world. He would name his new band after the last song he wrote for Hawkwind: *Motörhead* (aptly, a slang term for a speed freak).

Sadly, the splendid Stacia would shortly follow her old friend Lemmy, departing Hawkwind following their headline appearance at the Reading Festival on 22nd August 1975. On the positive side, Reading saw the return of Robert Calvert.

Hawkwind toured hard for the rest of 1975, and released their compilation album *Roadhawks*.

At the beginning of 1976, Hawkwind signed to Charisma Records and a new age of the Hawklords began, one that continues to this very day! As for *Warrior On The Edge of Time*, it stands proudly as a timeless, daring and inspiration piece of art, a landmark album from a time when bands were praised for being original. Where are the Hawkwinds of the future?

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# Absolute Live Reviews

## Loud As Hell Festival Drumheller, AB July 30 - Aug 1

The return to music festivals in Alberta was definitely a surprising one. Loud As Hell usually has an almost year round promotion cycle so to see Geoff Bourrie (festival organizer) and his crew pull together the biggest fest they've had in terms of attendance was an incredible thing especially when their talent pool was drastically reduced. Bands this year were mainly from Alberta with some BC bands peppered in for good measure and a few bands came out as well. With the travel restrictions in place the ability to access international acts was just not there. I did an interview with Geoff that can be found across all the Trash Talk with Nate Trash pages. When asked about booking bands for this year's festival he had this to say, "We started by asking all the bands that were booked for 2020 to see who would respond and be able to play the show." He definitely tracked down a very solid set of headliners and support. Loud As Hell always kicks off with a show at Neighbor's Pub in Drumheller. Geoff said this tradition started in the festival's infancy and was in a way bred entirely out of necessity as a way to keep the early birds entertained while the crews set up the stage and venue.

This year's lineup at the pub was an absolute slammer that I was disappointed to have missed luckily there was some video coverage and my crew who we camped with assured me that Flashback (Calgary) In/Vertigo (Calgary) Osyron (Calgary) And the painted monsters in Cell from Winnipeg all played their asses off and brought the house down!

### Thursday

Half of the crew were able to get to the grounds early on Thursday to get us a good spot to camp and park the trailer, the rest of us arrived in the thick black of the night around 11:00 p.m. We set up our tent and some lights and I proceeded to power drink myself straight into Friday morning.

### Friday

Friday kicked off with high temps and a heavy hangover but with the right breakfast both liquid and solid I was back on track (sort of) and ready to go for a wander to the stage. The first day of performances starts with one of my favorite bands Dethgod hailing from Morley Alberta this band brings straight death metal right to the forefront with ease. They recently restructured and got a new bassist that fills her position perfectly with just the right amount of ferocity. Other mentions go to the Edmonton bands that ruled the day for sure, Black Friday, Tides Of Kharon, and Eye Of Horus all destroyed the open air stage and broke 1000 necks in the process. Friday was brought to a close that almost seemed premature. when Planet Eater took the stage it was 11 o'clock and finally cooling off. This band is a great group of people and their work ethic is off the charts. They closed on Friday with a ridiculous hard hitting setlist that cracked the badlands wide open! If you haven't heard of Planet Eater yet I suggest you change that.

### Saturday

No Hope For The Lost out of Medicine Hat kicked the day off with an erratic blend of nu-metal and metalcore that was both catchy and entertaining, not a band to be missed in the future. Next step was Calgary's traditional style heavy metal rockers LunAttack. Faith Danger who fronts the band and plays guitar surprises me with her skills every time I see her. This was also the first Loud As Hell to have an open air stage which I hope to see continue in the future. Some more notable performances from throughout the day include Owls and Eagles (Calgary) and Forsaken Rite (Edmonton). No More Moments from Siksika was an especially punk rock surprise in a primarily metal based metal festival. Iron Kingdom from Surrey absolutely ripped the place to shreds in direct support of Into Eternity. This was a super unique performance for Into Eternity as it was the triumphant return of Stu Block, their original vocalist and frontman of headline grabbing band Iced Earth. This was my first time seeing Into Eternity and they were definitely a killer band to witness. They don't exactly play my flavor of metal but they should be held in high regard for their performance standards and abilities. All the members were directly on point and Stu has some crazy wild pipes!

### Sunday

The last day of the fest was physically painful. On top of one million beers consumed, I feel like there was a level of dehydration and heat stroke that also added to the agony but no matter how haggard I felt the music was still there to bring back the power. Sunday was another full day packed with bands. Arrival Of Autumn headlined and blasted the crowd with a one of a kind light show. This day was absolutely stolen by Snakepit AB from Calgary and Anarcheon from BC. I saw a lot of tired faces on Sunday which was no surprise but I also saw a lot of happy and satisfied ones. I was blown away with how well this weekend was pulled off considering how short of notice everything came together. Shout out to Lewis Mayhem for bringing the coolest threads to the vendor booth and to ALT Cosmetics and Celine for the penis soap! Thanks Geoff! From Absolute Underground and Trash Talk with Nate Trash, we will see you next year!  
-Nate Trash

### Decimate Metalfest High River, AB Sept 11, 2021

The day started cold and wet but spirits were high as we drove South through the city towards High River for the day's festivities. We got there as they were setting up and luckily the rain stopped so the bands didn't have to risk their gear. Although it looks bad-ass

in a music video from time to time, rain and expensive music gear don't mix. Hell rain and cheap music gear don't mix either. These are the risks you take playing open air though and I never heard any complaints. Sloan Voxx owner of Voxx Promotions and organizer of the fest says High River Brewing is a very hospitable venue and they will be doing a fundraiser show for next year's event there as well. Decimate 2022 will be a weekend event that takes place in Alberta in June. Decimate fest also plans to keep all their shows all ages moving forward so they can keep engaging the next generation of young rockers. Sloan goes on to say, "We always strive to bring communities together and make great memories," I always enjoy Voxx shows and Sloan always does a great job. This was a wicked diverse lineup with lots of young guns that were surprisingly good to say the least. There were some familiar names on the lineup like Me Three which I haven't heard in 10 years, and this time around was only two with a drum machine. As well as some unfamiliar like Mixed Blame which is a spunky group of young guns that didn't disappoint. The School of Rock South Band was really good as well, doing back-to-back covers of Alice In Chains and Periphery all while worrying about whether or not they will finish their homework in time for class on Monday morning. Very impressed by the young talent of the day. Another set of impressive acts on display were Balroghath, (Calgary) Bloody Monroe (Calgary) and Syryn (Calgary). Balroghath is a Lord Of The Rings/folk themed metal band donning black war paint and a cowl and Cape for good measure. This band skillfully handles 7 minute songs with ease and their new vocalist, Gray, did a great job and is a welcome addition to the band. Bloody Monroe is a new band that I took notice of through their posters and social media promotion. These guys work hard and want to go all the way with their music. With a solid sound close to late 90s to early 00s dark alt rock. They were really entertaining and I'll be looking forward to seeing them again. My interview with them can be found on YouTube and Facebook. Syryn was also another treat of the night. This band is air tight and place some wicked

good power metal. The Next awesome band of the day was Outlaws Of Ravenhurst. This band sees themselves as a crew of medieval knights dressed in matching tunics with shields on their chests, all unique to their individual character. They play a mix of rock akin to Jethro Tull cross with Thin Lizzy and they're damn fantastic! The night was capped off by tech thrashers Illyrian. They managed to get faster with every listen and I'm not sad about that, they're releasing a new EP titled "Aegis" on October 15th and I'll be grabbing it for sure you should too.

5 bands to check out for October:

- Mace - Calgary
- Snakepit AB - Calgary
- Mixed Blame - High River
- Sionis - Edmonton
- Luminosity - Calgary

### A Lesson in Violence:

**Execution Dressed to Kill Mortality Mr. Lizard**  
Sept 19, 2021, The Lotus Club, Tianjin, China

At the Lotus Club, the out of the way venue located in the far east end of Tianjin, a few lessons would be given to the metal community of the hulking sister city to Beijing. A lesson in thrash. A lesson in hard rock. A lesson in speed metal. A lesson in old school death metal. All together, it equated to a lesson in violence.

It was a day of incessant rain, which continued until the evening and carried over throughout the show. Thinking back on it in retrospect, the rainy city at night could be compared to the aesthetic of *Blade Runner*, which fit the 80s theme of this concert. The soaking wet audience packed into the club and got dry enough while wetting their throats with beer in order



### Larval at The Phoenix/ Victoria BC August 27, 2021 (photos John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography)

**Larval is:**

**Old Goat Amphetamine: Vocals**

**G. Von Staaf: Guitar/FX, Vocals**

**Havoque: Drums & FX**

**Confound Eternal: Bass, FX**

Larval formed in 2019 with the intention of summoning otherworldly extreme music

with an improvisatory approach. Shortly thereafter they recorded their debut full-length "Black Metamorphosis," released on cassette by Serpents Head Reprisal. It has been called "An exceptional output of dark, deranged, twisted black death doom immersion. An improvised trance journey of twisted luscious darkness - at times as if The Birthday Party sought to add a Black Metal flavour to a heroin fueled jam, following a horrifying confrontation with the abyss." larvalmetamorphosis.bandcamp.com

to get ready for the show at hand. Mr. Lizard were the first to take the stage. This Tianjin band have been hitting the live houses around the city for the past couple of years. The singer spent a lot of time in Australia and is heavily influenced by the likes of Metallica, but musically, they sound similar to Canadian rockers Danko Jones. They were a suitable opener for the rest of the visiting bands, who all came from Beijing.

Mortality is a new four piece band who worships at the alters of madness, bringing an old school death metal attack with nasty riffs and contaminated vocals. Like newcomers Crimson Flag or stalwarts of the scene, Ready to Die, they utilize female vocals to bring a different dynamic to brutal song structures you've likely heard many times before, but never get sick of.

The speed metal mania of Dressed to Kill has been revamped with a new singer, who brought a different

dimension of power and dynamics to the songs recorded on their debut album *Midnight Impulsion*. This stop was somewhat of a homecoming, as many of DTK's members were originally from Tianjin. A new song, "It's Over" made an appearance tonight, which was originally written by their

furious slab of Bay Area thrash with enough fury to make any Vio-lence, Exodus or Slayer fan jump in the pit without any second thoughts. Their twin guitar attack brought both the beef and the beef shredder, with solos heavily influenced by Slayer (check the eagle tattoo on one of their arms). Two



old singer about COVID, and reworked by the band to what it is now - a half ballad/half rocker. Other song highlights were the infectious "Midnight Comes Around," "Rose of Kowloon," and their anthem "Speed Metal Mania." For fans interested in a little speed metal done with an oriental spin, pop in a Dressed to Kill tape.

Execution are the new prodigal sons of thrash in China. Their "Bloodline" EP is a

guitars can make the difference between Mr. America and Mr. Universe. Doing double duty tonight, the Mortality guitarist sat behind the kit for Execution, and rattled those skins like they owed him beer money. After playing through every song on their EP, the band brought out a surprise Metallica "Creeping Death" cover, which sent everyone home very happy thrashers.

- Ryan Dyer

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# GLOBAL STREET ART

## Global Street Art

Interview with street artist iHeart  
by Claude Montreuil

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

iHeart

**AU: What is your profession?**

Street artist.

**AU: You are from?**

I live and work out of Vancouver, BC, Canada.

**AU: Can you explain your art?**

I like taking visual elements from digital and social media platforms and repurposing them for use on the street. I tend to focus on how kids interact with these elements and try to draw parallels with deeper social meanings.

**AU: How did you get into graffiti?**

I began tagging when I was around 16 or 17 years old. During that period I played around with stencils but wasn't overly excited about them. However, by the time I was about 21 I dedicated all of my down time to

designing, cutting and painting stencils.

**AU: What artists inspire you?**

I'm inspired by a lot of street artists. Jef Aerosol, Faile, Banksy, Shepherd Fairey, C215, Pejac, Os Gemeos, and Ola Volo.



**AU: I hear you've done some art with Banksy. False or True?**

False.

**AU: Who are the best graffiti artists around right now in your opinion?**

Pejac and Helio Bray.



**AU: Can you name some truly talented graffiti artists that are still mostly unknown by the public?**

Miss Me, James Knight, Taka Sudo, Scott Sueme, Ali Bruce, Tierney Milne, and Ola Volo.

**AU: What inspires you to create?**

I'm inspired by work that engages people. My creative drive comes from engaging people on several levels at the same time. The sensation can be a little overwhelming but I'm

**powerful tool to express artistic freedom?**

I think both street art and graffiti can be powerful outlets of expression but it's about the artist's intention. Every city is dealing with gentrification and homelessness on some level. I think both, Street Art and



Graffiti, are correlated with the extremes of that spectrum.

**AU: What other things bring you joy in life?**

Music is

omnipresent in my life. I have an ever-changing library so it's hard to pin down specific artists. But Bonobo, Jungle, Tycho and Boogie Belgique. Then there's Food. I love everything about food.

**AU: What has changed with you as an artist over the years?**

My life for the last 10 years has been a creative blur. Always working on multiple things at the same time. Travelling (pre-Covid) and painting as

much as I can in as many cities as I could. When I was younger I would fantasize about how to get to the point I am now, and I couldn't be more grateful.

**AU: Where do you see yourself in the near future?**

I have no idea what the future holds. I just hope



that when I die I'll be happy with the last painting I did.

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

If I wasn't making art full-time I would be in the mountains, on the ocean or in the forest.

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**SPLIT**

High Horse Ruiner

..(High Horse BC) caught me off guard time and time again. I never quite knew what was coming next...I hope we can get them out to the Ranch.  
 -Dave Catching (Producer & musician)

..Ruiner is so angular yet so fluent and danceable, it's feel good punk rock without any cheesy modern pop twists.  
 -Dale Boyd (Journalist)

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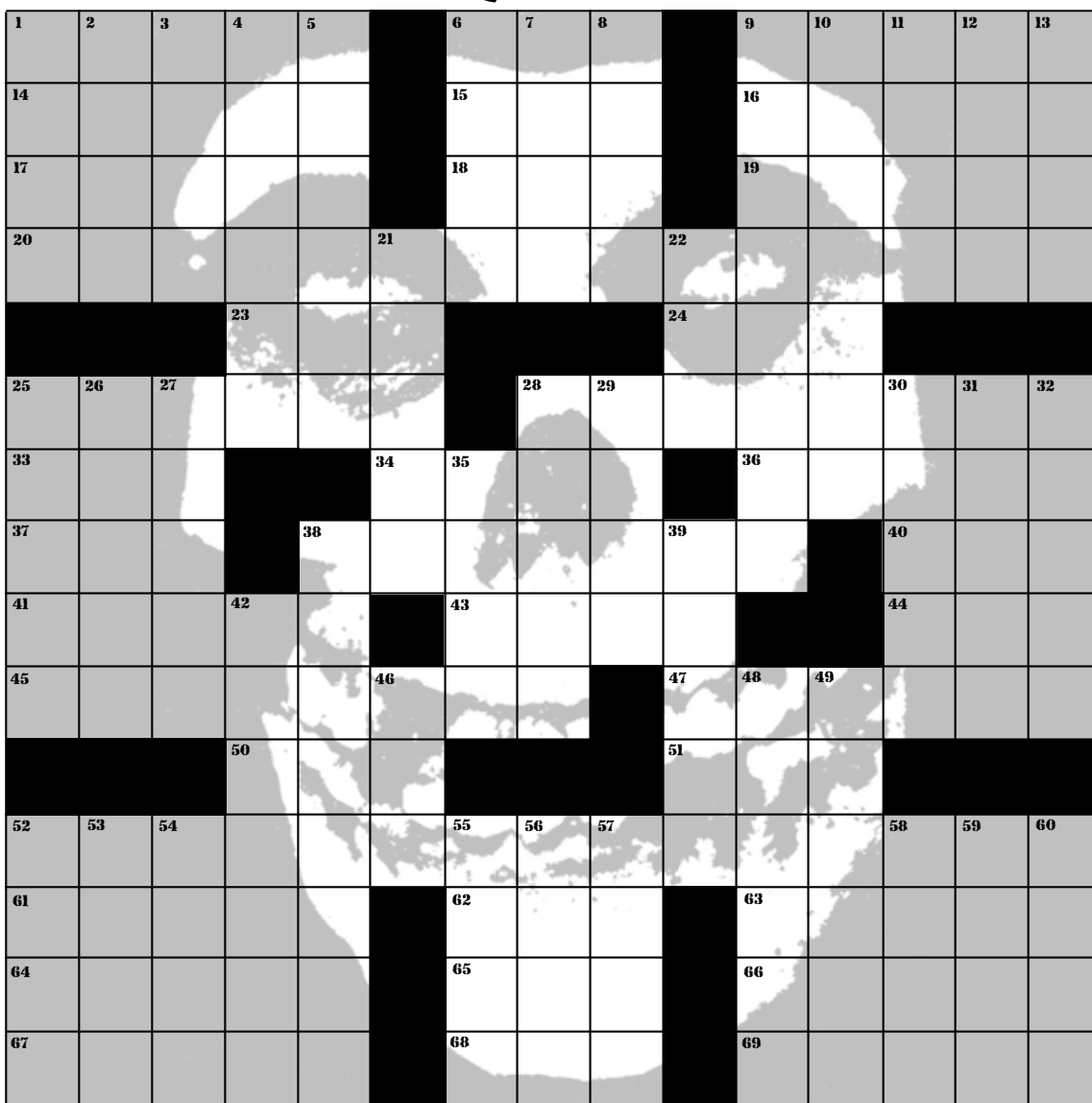
## THEY WALK AMONG US

### ACROSS

1. MASH's O'Reilly
6. Abbr. on a business card
9. Hefty reading
14. Avoid a big wedding
15. Home of Oz and Westworld
16. Role for Madonna
17. \_\_\_\_\_ corn
18. It makes up la mer
19. A sentence can be this
20. \*Valentine's Day card from a serial killer?
23. Bundy and Roker
24. You call them when your van breaks down
25. \*Headpieces
28. \*Antagonistic behaviour
33. Atlanta-based network
34. Company that sold the first cassette tape decks
36. Home of the Himalayas
37. Gamer keyboard maker
38. The theme of this puzzle
40. Star Wars VIII: Abbr.
41. The Cockney Rejects' "I Wanna Be \_\_\_\_\_"
43. It's a kind of dance or hoop
44. Go quickly: Archaic
45. \* "Speak of \_\_\_\_\_"
47. \* Self-aware horror movie
50. \* "We Are \_\_\_\_ Thirty-Eight"
51. \_\_\_\_\_ Bo fitness system
52. \* Eastwood/Burton war film
61. Person at a warehouse party
62. \* "\_\_\_\_ Fink"
63. Adjective for music or colour
64. Energy equal to  $10^{-7}$  joules
65. Direction to travel from Montreal to Asbestos
66. Play slowly
67. San Fran Punks \_\_\_\_\_ Division
68. \* "Static \_\_\_\_\_"
69. German city on the Ruhr

### DOWN

1. Richards of the Fantastic Four
2. Jai \_\_\_\_\_
3. Golden in Grenoble
4. Footless
5. You can do this to a glass or a prescription
6. \* 1854 sci-fi horror film



### CROSSWORD NO. 54

### HALLOWEEN, 2021

7. E-commerce giant
8. How Punk LPs should be played
9. Landforms
10. Release an egg
11. Type of skirt
12. College with a collar
13. Did vocals
21. Test: Fr.
22. Play division
25. "Ice Age" animal
26. Doughy Jewish snack food
27. Ripcordz' "\_\_\_\_\_ and Destroy"
28. Very unpleasant
29. You can turn this
30. The Casualties' "\_\_\_\_\_ Punx"
31. Indian cracked wheat
32. Tunisian colosseum
35. WADA doping standards
38. Nickname for a guy who just won't quit
39. The Cramps' "You Got Good \_\_\_\_"
42. Lovers
46. Canada goose formation
48. TV Detective dramedy series
49. Starts again
52. Director's cry: "That's a \_\_\_\_\_!"
53. Tennis player Mandlikova
54. Not odd
55. 51 is a famous one
56. Word with street or busters
57. It follows many Que. Co. names
58. Bancroft and Wilson
59. Deserve
60. Mr. Musk

\* songs by this puzzle's theme

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## Absolute Comix



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So many anti-vaxxers out there now.



-DICK KNIFE '21

I guess the "Sexy Umbrella Corps" is going to be the popular thing this Halloween.



## Lyle's Place Mixtape

By Dustin Jak

Iron Maiden - "Murders In The Rue Morgue"  
Deep Purple - "Fools"  
David Bowie - "Panic In Detroit"  
Ozzy Osbourne - "Flying High Again"  
Alice Cooper - "Caught In A Dream"  
Judas Priest - "Breaking The Law"  
Black Flag - "My War"  
GBH - "Gimme Fire"

Yes - "Machine Messiah"  
Mercyful Fate - "Evil"  
Metallica - "Metal Militia"  
Ramones - "Mama's Boy"  
Schoolly D - "Smoke Some Kill"  
Suicidal Tendencies - "Memories Of Tomorrow"  
Destruction - "Mad Butcher"  
The Cars - "It's All I Can Do"  
Led Zeppelin - "Heartbreaker"  
Venom - "1000 Days In Sodom"  
Mission Of Christ - "Lovelust"  
Celtic Frost - "The Usurper"  
Sick Pleasure - "3 Seconds Of Pleasure"

D.I. - "Nuclear Funeral"  
Fang - "You Suck"  
Devo - "Snowball"  
Adolescents - "No Way"  
Descendents - "Get The Time"  
Meatmen - "True Grit"  
Dwarves - "Fuck You Up And Get High"  
Kraftwerk - "We Are The Robots"  
Ice-T - "High Rollers"  
Agnostic Front - "Blind Justice"

All these songs are from records I scored at Lyle's Place.

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## Horrifying Reads For Halloween

By Ed Sum

Put together here for your reading pleasure are my picks of this 2021 season of reads to put on your bookshelf. They range from anecdotal tales, graphic novel trade paperbacks, mini series and even a study of a man who made *Dracula* famous. No, we're not talking about the author who gave rise to the legend, but the actor who introduced cinema to horror in his amazing portrayal of *Dracula*. This title starts my list:

### Lugosi: The Rise & Fall of Hollywood's Dracula

Lugosi, the tragic life story of one of horror's most iconic film stars, tells of a young Hungarian activist forced to flee his homeland after the failed Communist revolution in 1919. Reinventing himself in the U.S., first on stage and then in movies, he landed the unforgettable role of Count Dracula in what would become a series of classic feature films. From that point forward, Lugosi's stardom would be assured...but with international fame came setbacks and addictions that gradually whittled his reputation from icon to has-been. Lugosi details the actor's fall from grace and an enduring legacy that continues to this day.



### The Dead Hand Book: Stories from Gravesend Cemetery

Tales of warning, the deepest loves honored by surviving paramours and the indifferent cruelty of life in the 17th-20th century are all recorded in the *Stories From Gravesend Cemetery*. The purpose of this book is to educate the casual cemetery wanderer about how to read the old stones they pass by and to excite the #deathpositivity movement enthusiast or morbidly curious. This book aims to help honor those who have come before us by opening the door of understanding the strange records inscribed in old cemeteries; many of those interred below have only that record of their life existing on a crumbling stone.



### The Amazing Screw-On Head & Other Curious Objects

When Emperor Zombie threatens the safety of all life on earth, President Lincoln enlists the aid of a mechanical head. With the help of associates Mr. Groin (a faithful manservant) and Mr. Dog (a dog), Screw-On Head must brave ancient tombs, a Victorian flying apparatus, and demons from a dimension inside a turnip. This new collection of oddball Mignola creations also includes "The Magician and the Snake" from *Dark Horse Maverick: Happy Endings* and nearly fifty pages of brand-new material, all as weird and hilarious as the beloved Screw-On Head.



### Edgar Allan Poe's Snifter of Blood TP

Edgar Allan Poe's *Snifter of Blood* continues to cheaply exploit the great Edgar Allan Poe's reputation! The collection combines 6 issues' worth of anthologies including a take on how the 1% would fare in "Masque of the Red Death" by Tom Peyer and Alan Robinson, Sherlock Holmes's investigation of murders from two Poe stories by Paul Cornell (Doctor Who) and Greg Scott, an update on the "Tell-Tale Heart", and more. Oh, and did we mention the new Cereal Monsters story from Mark Russell and Peter Snejberg?



## COMIC-GEDDON

### The Winchester Mystery House #1

Source Point Press is excited to bring to readers a tale inspired by the history of the Winchesters, and no, we're not talking about the brothers from the CW series! This take looks at the life of Sarah, the heiress to a vast fortune of a weapon her father made, and also her madness.



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# FALLEN SOLDIERS

## RIP - Garnet Kulhavy

Unfortunately our original O.G. drummer Garnet Kulhavy has passed away due to Covid. We parted ways back in the mid 90s but eventually made peace and remained friends. Life is precious and you will always be remembered Garnet.

-Brant New Unit



## REST IN PEACE GARY LAVALLEE 1969-2021

Flex Your Head was a key radio show for Hardcore and Punk Rock in Vancouver during the mid to late 80s on CITR Radio. Long before the internet this was a go to for bands like 7-Seconds, Cro-Mags, N.O.T.A., Poison Idea, Minor Threat, and was run by Eric (ex- Abortions On Toast and Fratricide) and his trusty sidekick Jinx. Fast forward to 1988... Thrash is selling out and punk bands are playing lame funk. Then I hear Eric and Jinx have a band modelled towards Dag Nasty, Verbal Assault, Uniform Choice, and Gorilla Biscuits, which was more or less new out this way. They started as Head First but had to change their name to Head Start in 1989/90. Their singer was a tall kid from the Delta scene named Gary who had killer charisma, a killer voice, and great taste in music to boot. After 2 songs on Thrasher Skate Rock Vol. 7 they changed their band name again to BNU (short for Brand New Unit). BNU played multiple shows with my band Shutdown and we were on 2 comps together. After Shutdown split up, Brand New Unit went on to be on BYO Records. BNU were going to play Punk Rock Bowling in Vegas a few years back, it would have been great to see.

got news of Gary "leaving the scene for good" last week and have not been the same since... He was the kind of guy that would make you smile just looking at him.

-Dustin Jak

25 years ago I heard this band out of Vancouver that had all the energy and amazing musicianship reminiscent of bands like SNFU, DOA and Personality Crisis. There was a standard in that region and it had been a while since a band came out of Western Canada with that same attitude and stage presence. But Brand New Unit was a band you couldn't ignore. I met Gary, Jinx, Ben and Gabe and we instantly became friends and released one of their albums on BYO Records.

I had the pleasure of touring together with the band and Gary was a force on stage that you just couldn't ignore. His presence brought back memories of Chi Pig or Ian MacKaye and to this day, their album Looking Back Again, is still one of the strongest Hardcore Punk albums of that time.

Gary Lavallee has left us and I feel his talent was never fully realized, but I always saw it and appreciated him.

Rest in Power old friend.

-Mark Stern



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But I remember him saying "Hey ah... if I leave the mic in the stand, it means I'm nervous. If I take it out and walk around, I'm comfortable and enjoying myself, you know?" I was blown away... ME TOO!! I do that!

The show went well and we went our separate ways and then we did it again the next night at the McPherson Playhouse in Victoria. I killed, like really killed. It was awesome. Of course, so did Norm. After the show in the dressing room, he said "So... ah... whattya think? Should we, ah, get something to eat or something? What's good around here?" So I got in his limo with him and his manager and we drove the four blocks to the Canoe Club, where we ate fish n chips and chatted. I had a few beers, so my wife Louise came to join and drive me home. Norm paid for my dinner. He was the nicest, most down to earth guy, and just as (if not more) funny offstage than on. He

## Norm Macdonald

### R.I.P.

By Jason Lamb

I did stand up comedy for nearly 20 years, and while I never got that good, I met some incredible people and had some very cool experiences. BY FAR the highlight of my stand up 'career' was getting to open for Norm Macdonald for shows in Nanaimo and Victoria in March 2010. I don't remember how I got the gigs, but I remember being so incredibly proud and nervous. Norm is one of the absolute cream of the crop, funniest fuckers to ever hold a microphone.

The Nanaimo show was mostly a blur of nerves and felt not even real.



treated me with complete respect - this nerdy, nervous opener whom he'd never met. I loved him, and it remains one of the absolute highlights of my life.

And he took the mic out and walked around at both shows.

You will be so dearly missed Norm - thank you for making the world a funnier place. Rest well.



## CHARLIE WATTS

June 2nd, 1941 - August 24th, 2021

Starting with the Rolling Stones in 1963 this guy never missed the beat. Charlie was easily the most reserved member of the band who put up with Absolute mayhem over his 58 year stint with the band. Also a lover of big band and jazz he was the perfect fit for the perfect band. Watts decided to keep to himself rather than constantly be in the tabloids and that's why we loved him. Charlie didn't care.

He once said "A proper drummer gets the room dancing!" and fuck did he ever mean it. At the same time can you possibly imagine Keith Moon trying to play "Under my Thumb?"



This guy kept the beat going that nobody ever thought would stop... but it did. Add to the mix that unbeatable snare sound and we have ourselves a Rock and Roll veteran who will be sadly missed.

Any drummer will tell you they played along to the Stones seeing as most of our parents had those records. My kids have my dad's Stones albums now.

Hopefully the other guys stick around awhile, pretty sure every human on the planet was pretty shocked this quiet man who once punched Mick Jagger in the nose was the first one of the original guys to pass after Brian Jones, who

has been "Waiting On A Friend" since 1969!!! Farewell Charlie and thanks for being there for us... The Foundation of Rock and Roll.

-Dustin "Midnight Rambler" Jak



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**Police Break Their Own Laws at Fairy Creek**  
By Aeryn Shrapnel

When I set off for Fairy Creek back in June, I didn't know what to expect. With my camera gear strapped to my back, I arrived at the gates of HQ. Those first few weeks, I mostly stuck around HQ – all satellite camps that saw a police presence at that point were a treacherous hike away and I'd been stuck using a cane for the past five years. By late June, I grit my teeth, stuffed my bag with as much food as I could and hit the trail. From that point on, HQ was just a pitstop. I brought a camper up to store my supplies, but I mostly slept on the rocky ground at varying points of the two-kilometer-long camp known as Waterfall. Wherever the police line was, I would be. At least until they raided HQ.

The next day I arrived at R&R Camp, a camp outside of the injunction zone previously meant for rest and respite for arrestees. A sizable group of us decided to bushwhack in, and four hours later I found myself at my camper, covered in bramble scratches. Over the next few days, I remained at the police line, camera on and tears held back. Mostly, I watched as they endangered arrestees by falling trees mere feet from people's heads. As they assaulted teenagers who linked arms, grabbing them by their throats. As they demolished the iconic HQ kitchen. I watched as they taunted and heckled and forced us up the mountain, yelling at us to move faster in 40-degree heat, despite

the need for mobility devices for a few of us. I watched as they lied to us repeatedly, making up various excuses as to why their promises suddenly changed or why they were placing media in arbitrary zones without clear views of arrestees; something Justice Douglas Thompson had condemned on more than one occasion. For four days they denied me access to my bag on the other side of the police line, eventually insisting nobody knew what I was talking about. A week later, I found charges on my credit card that weren't mine.

As I did most weeks, I left for a short rest and came back as soon as I could. This time, I came up in the morning with other media. After showing up a half hour late and illegally asking for identification, the Media Relations Officer finally let us up the mountain. Arrests were already underway at Red Dress, a haunting art installation where dozens of red dresses were displayed across the mountainside to symbolize Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Two-Spirited, and Girls (MMIW2SG.) Of course, the irony of arresting Indigenous land defenders at such a location was lost on the police. We could hear screams of pain and violence but were forced to an area where we couldn't clearly see anything. When we asked arrestees what was happening as they were carried off, we were quickly reprimanded and told we would be removed if we tried to speak to anyone. One woman was removed for praying, another for standing off to the side of the group to get a better shot. Over the next few days, media

repression continued. When one journalist asked an officer what his orders were, she was told she would be removed if she was not silent.

The police line eventually made it to the other side of River Camp, a stronghold about 6km from the highway that protected two different roads leading to approved old growth cut-blocks. I asked about the people who had locked down

on the other side of the kitchen, as there was an excavator dangerously close to them. I was (wrongfully) told that because they weren't under arrest, media access was not required. I bit my tongue and watched as police demolished the kitchen and packed it up into nets to be carried off by a helicopter. Tens of thousands of dollars worth of personal belongings taken away, just like that. When I left that day, I checked on the land defenders who I had not been

allowed to see and noted that there were excavator tracks two feet from their heads.

In the month that I've been away, more camps have been lost and trees have started to fall. Endangered plant and animal species that live in these cut-blocks are at immediate risk. Police continue to lie and abuse land defenders. The injunction allowing police enforcement has been

temporarily extended while the courts make their decision to either end it or extend it for another year. I don't know what's going to happen, but I do know that Horgan is lying. I do know that trees are falling. I do know that this isn't over, and I do know that you can make a difference.

**For more information and directions to camp visit: [laststandforforests.com](http://laststandforforests.com)**

**Fairy Creek Addendum: The Fight Isn't Over**

By Aeryn Shrapnel

On September 28 th , Justice Douglas Thompson denied Teal Jones' request for an extension to the six-month injunction that had been plaguing blockaders at Ada'itsx, a.k.a. Fairy Creek. The reasoning cited in his ruling was because of poor police behaviour and how it reflected on the courts. While this was satisfying to hear, especially



after seeing the RCMP's blatant disregard for the law, I knew to hold my breath.

A few of my colleagues brought up the fact that there are several injunctions across this country that the Community-Industry Response Group (C-IRG), an RCMP response team dedicated to industry matters, might now have the resources to respond to. The fact that Canada has a policing unit specifically to protect industry might not come off as a little messed up to some, but when you find out that they are specially trained in pain compliance and have managed to secure lethal overwatch over on Wet'suwet'en Territory, things start to look a little stark.

The Wet'suwet'en have been watching another round of police flood the local hotels and are preparing for the C-IRG to invade once more, this time to allow CGL access to drill under the Wedzin'Kwa River for a natural gas pipeline. There is also the TMX pipeline, with land defenders stationed in treehouses across Burnaby Mountain. As for Ada'itsx, the possibility of another injunction looms in the air, since the logging has not ended. These aren't the only cases of Indigenous land defense across the nation, and they will not be the last. Industry, no matter how unsustainable, seemingly has more right to unceded land than the living heirs to it. This country has a systemic problem, the root of which is buried deep in our colonial history. The time to dig is now.

PHOTO CREDIT: Colin Smith Takes Pics



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