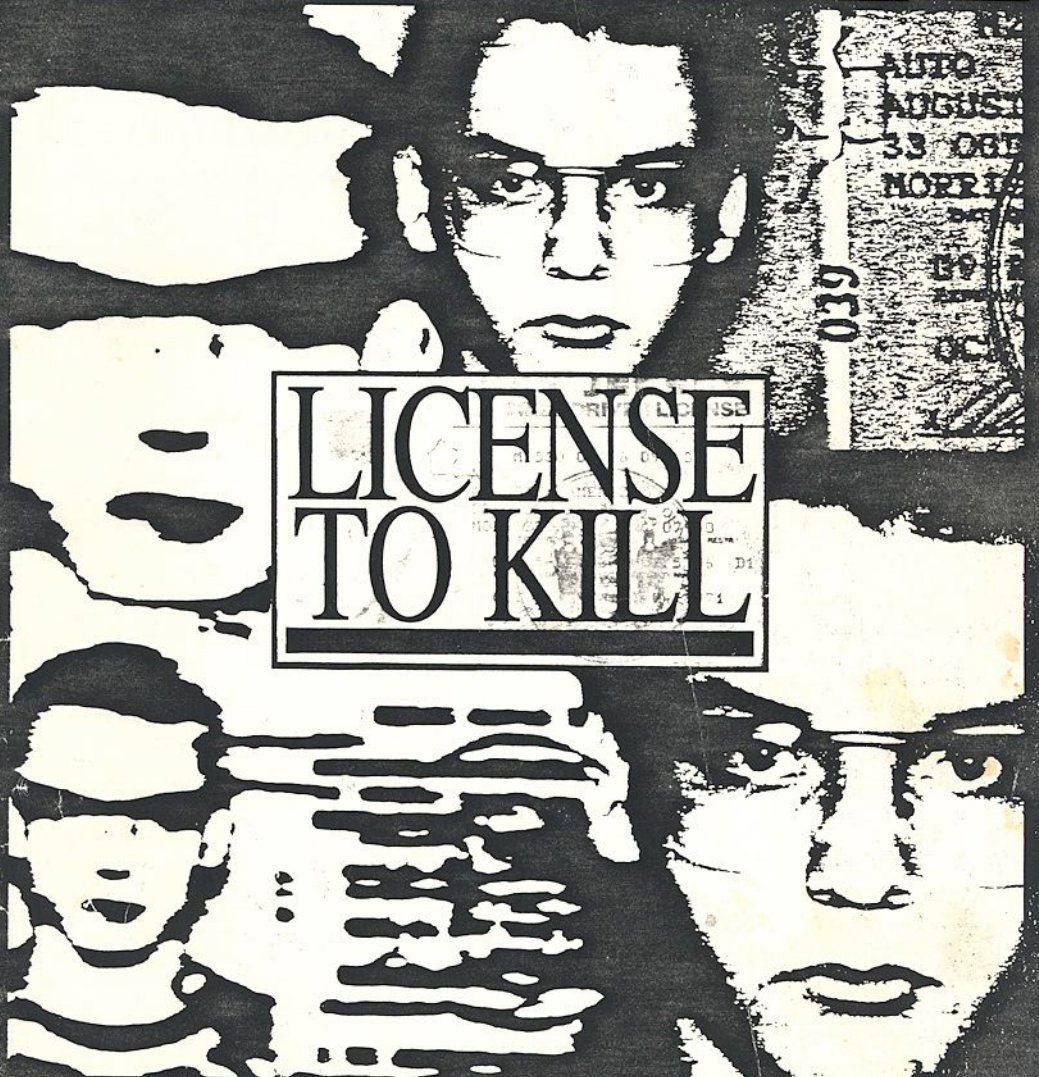


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O N F I R E

2



LICENSE TO KILL

SPIRAL JETTY * LEE RANALDO * ELVIS IN HELL

LUNAR BEAR ENSEMBLE • GUN CLUB • SWANS • THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS • J.G. BALLARD • RE/SEARCH MAGAZINE
PUSSY GALORE • SMITHEREENS • JOHN QUINN COMICS • P.E.D.'S BULGARIAN NIGHTMARE • STUPID LETTERS
NOTHING AT ALL ABOUT THE SMITHS

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ON FIRE

EDITOR / head foole

David Aaron Clark (You wish)

PRODUCTION / suffering

David Crozier (God-like, but with feet of clay)

WORDS

Mike Applestein
David Crozier
Scott Frampton
Eric Gladstone
Tracey Jayne Lubben

PHOTOS / ILLUSTRATIONS

David Crozier
Augusto F. Menezes
Gil Margulis
Kathy Ogle
John T. Quinn III
Cathy Wojcek

CHROME ON FIRE is published four times a year, which is more than a lot of rags can say. Consistency does count; like, if there was this chick (or dude) who gave great head -- excuse us, was "PHYSICALLY TALENTED" but they only came through once a year and spent the rest of the time whining in their beer and mourning the passing of Divine and quoting Morrissey lyrics and complaining that no body on the Crazy Eddie's loading dock really UNDERSTANDS them, would YOU be willing to wait around? Hey, worse yet, what if they quoted Morrissey lyrics at you while NOT giving you head? Grounds for murder, we'd say. Contact our legal department if you agree. Or if you want to whine to us about how nobody on the loading dock understands you; we can use the yocks. Just don't take anything too seriously in this rag, because we're way too fucked up to tell what real and what's not (WOW, man) but hey, write to: COF, 54 RAY STREET, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901 anyway. Subscriptions available for the foolhardy; \$5 gets you a year's worth, plus sublime giveaway cassette compilation featuring LSD, Spiral Jetty, John Richey, and a whole lot more!! Zines in trade fine unless they have big interviews with the Feelies or stuff about Morrissey's Angst and how the Godfathers are gonna save us all.

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AND YOU THOUGHT YOU'D

BE SPARED ONE OF THESE...

WE ALL KNOW that 99.99% of all fanzine editorials are worthless, boring pieces of shit, and Gerard Cosley writes the rest ... thus was the *Chrome* readership spared my useless meanderings in the virgin edition ... I decided the thing should, um, speak for itself. Consider then this cosmic fart a recap, a painfully gratuitous autobio, or a study guide for you slow learners out there ... if you don't want to read it, then turn to the capsule reviews now, DUDE ...

I come from the Philadelphia area, so these many years ago, which as any sane soul will tell you, is one of the shittiest, least-nurturing homes imaginable for any kind of rock and roll worth the guitar strings it's played upon. The radio stations suck, except for WXPX (univ of penn -- ivy bastards!) and its sporadic attempts at New Music programming. Lee Paris did it right in the late 70s, but he was an insufferable queen who sucked the scene dry for all the power he could, and now he's dead of AIDS anyway ... The Drexel radio station enjoyed a short period of punky euphoria but, as far I know, is no more the hip, freeform place it once was. The best clubs in town were run into the ground by owners who put the bar and door profits up their nose rather than back into the bands. Sure, a strong hardcore scene sprung up in the early 80s, but that's like getting handed a plate of toejam for breakfast and being told it's better than what they get in Ethiopia. Anyway, that was the Philly scene; hardcore knuckleheads & conniving scenemakers bloated on their self-importance, publishing 24 page zines that (in 1979 dollars!) cost \$4 a throw ... of course I'm only looking at the bad side here, but the point is, it all sucked to the max, and it certainly made me abandon music for a couple of years. If you were there & feel differently, write; I'll print it. Maybe I'll even read it.

ANYWAY then I discovered New Brunswick. Moved here for college, never left. Many of my fellow inhabitants know the sad story well, for yea, it is their own ...

AND I finally discovered how cool an actual "scene" can be. Sure it ain't perfect; as Jim Testa says, New Brunswick is, uh, "overly insular." Perhaps even to the point of being dangerously inbred (we know what parties we're referring to...) And sure EVERYBODY thinks they're about 50% more important/talented/hot than they really are. But hey: back in the supposedly hot-shit mid-to-late seventies, I could

count the Philly bands that were worth a good dump on one hand; now, in the supposed doldrums of the late 80s, in an area geographically miniscule in comparison, I can't even keep track of the worthwhile bands using every digit I own plus those of several volunteers; there truly is room for every kind of music here, from puke rock to hippe-dippie Grateful Dead acoustic noodlings; from neo-gothic deathrock to hermetic pure pop. And, amazingly enough, you will find heavy audience crossover at all these different shows ... due in no small part to the fact there's only one continuing, lucrative venue, of course. But that situation has become more an asset than anything else most of the time. The good old Court Tavern is, well, it's a fucking crucible, okay, it either kills you or makes you stronger, it boils you down to your essence and you find out if that essence is worth a damn. My.

And we also have WRSU, which is more supportive of the local scene around it than any other station I've lived within broadcasting distance of; WPRB in Princeton (more damn ivy bastards!) is a cool station, but their tendency to turn up their WASP noses at local bands' demos is reknown. WFMU in East Orange is a superb station, but runs too many stylized special-interest shows to really give much coherent coverage of the Central Jersey underground scene. And it took WRSU to release a comp album that, despite its flaws, is a reasonably fair and interesting representation of what's goin' on round here.

So, gosh, we all thought the guys and gals of NB/Central Jersey could all use a zine that came out on a regular basis (Dangerous Rhythms, Flesh & Bones, etc, come out less often than my high school yearbook did).

Chrome's emphasis, as you've surely noticed, is local, and I pledge a brave attempt to not play favorites in that respect. We're gonna get this thing out to the world at large, and I think everybody deserves a shot, after all, it IS Amerika, is it not, swine? Expect my own particular quirks to guide non-local coverage though (SY last issue, Black Snakes next one). And even though this will set off some bullshit meters out there, we're also gonna have LOTS of comics and fiction and poetry and shit like that, some from musician types (Lee Ranaldo, John Quinn, etc) some not; the reason being 'cause, well, 'cause I like it. So get used to it. News flash: There's more ways to put meaning in your fucking life than an electric guitar. Besides crack, even. -- DAC P.S. Look for shit like better printing and ads, starting next issue.

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AND look for upcoming releases from Catharsis, P.E.D., and False Virgins.

YES, TO FULFILL SOME BIZARRE RITUAL OF READER/MEDIA INTERACTION -- AND TO APPEASE ALL EGOS -- WE WILL PRINT YOUR LETTERS, IF THEY'RE NOT TOO PATHETIC. OR PATHETIC ENOUGH TO BE FUNNY. SEND TO 54 RAY STREET, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ, 08901. AND TYPE THEM, JERK.

SHIT FROM SHINOLA

Dear ll cool dave:

I'm writing in reference to the half-assed article you wrote about Sonic Youth. Man I hope you weren't serious. Comparing them to the beatles. you must be a flaming asshole. Any one with some knowledge about a fanzine is that it is to transmit articles on bands and events that relate to a certain type of scene in which the zine wishes to represent. I don't think you care aware of the dangers you can get yourself into by being a dick, natural the most feared total scene decay and the infiltration of the unaltemative world. Definately a crime that shall not go unpunished. you must report or out of common sensitivity a general air of kn owledge and un bias opinions (I'm creating a mounitn out of shit here) let the people judge for themselves weather something is good or not. It is a free country! Just don't be so opinionated.

Facts on Sonic youth:

1. Kim gets all her ability from the others. she plays what she is told.
 2. Thurston Moore first played in a band called the coach men a sixties pop band. then a band called evenmore which is heard on the NY thrash tape put out by Roir. he later was in a band called art. Art was a band Mykle Board put together. Then there was Artless (Mykle writes for Maxium Rock and Roll) See the point He also plays with G.G. Allin.
 3. Lee Ranaldo Was in the Glen Branca Orchestra. He proceeded to steel all Brancas ideas and moore joined the project later on.
 4. Together they put all the strange tunings and guitar remodeling to use and with a touch of rock format created sonic youth with all it's artness and Ny underground (what is now trendy) bull shit into a money making project. You see the sixties are dead but there is a lot more to it then just the music. this is almost the nintys here and it is up to is to progress and not stay stagnant understand.
 5. Kim gordon came from no where and that is obvious. she struggles with the bass as if it con trolls her and she not it. McCartney wrote songs and just didn't do what he was told. Nor did he bump kick run into fans. Sometimes I think she needs glasses.
 6. they have had three drummers and we'll just see how long this one will last.
- College Kids rule of not understanding but Exceping The mystery behind SY is that they were an art project. When I first saw them play nobody clapped untill the finish. It was like view an opera or something. It's what cultured people do they wait untill the end to clapp. but I forget that me at 22 is far more advanced than you at 22. Now I

RANDOM SCRAWLS



can expect you to understand the point of that. You wouldn't applaud in the middle of a play? My Advice to you is to OPEN YOUR EYES and Maybe you can realize when you being had. Or become a musician and maybe you'll learn to not be in awe of nothing. Just to like it and not make more out of it then nessecary. (Or maybe I should)

THOSE WHO REMEMBER THE PAST ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT

take care little one.

ANR

Paterson, NJ

("Little One"? Is that you, Mom? How do you like your only son's magazine this issue? But wait, I know you, you wrote the liner notes for Master=Dik! But seriously, ANR, old duff, I took the liberty of retaining your spelling, punctuation, etc, as I thought the letter might be your Art Project. Anyway, thanks for Deprogramming me from the Industrial Deathcult, etc. Have now (with your kind help) decided Sonic Youth suck; am waiting breathlessly to hear your latest album. instead...)

HEY! NO IN-JOKES!

Semi-bogus letter to the editor: Hey, LL Cool Dave, what the fuck? Just cause you botched up an interview with the Sonics does that mean we have to sit through your ridiculous rantings about how you want to shove it up Kim Gordon (Paul McCartney's butt)? I mean, talk about obsessions , dude. You're so obsessed with guitars you didn't bother getting a single quote from Steve Shelly, who's like the coolest drummer since Bob Bert!

Hey, man, I talked to Steve after the totally excellent From Here To Infinity set at CB's and he's the coolest one in the band. He doesn't walk around with that "Hey, I'm an underground alternative star and yer just a lowly pimple-picking fanzine moron" attitude.

Fuck it, I'm starting my own fanzine and it's gonna be the truth and not ahve an attitude and be cool. "Name & address withheld because we don't want to promote this shithead" P.S. Who does that song about raping Lydia Lunch? Who do they think they are?

(Ha, ha, ha. You really thought by being semi-witty I'd print your stupid goddam self-promoting letter. Why in hell would I want to promote YOUR sorry excuse for a band [Leathered Studded Diaphragm, "Stomp This Tape," on Red Ghost cassettes, available from CHROME ON FIRE for ONLY \$4, postage included]? Anyway, I'm not the one w/ the Kim Gordon obsession; for that check out previous letter. Geez, are all our letters gonna be this stupid?)

TWITCH

JON BON JOVI IS ROCKING OUT AT SOME LOCAL ARENA. HE'S PERFORMING HIS MEGA-HIT "WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE." DURING THE GUITAR SOLO, HE ATTACHES HIMSELF TO A HARNESS AND FLYS THROUGH THE AUDIENCE WHILE 50,000 FANS SCREAM IN LOVE AND ADORATION. YOU'VE MANAGED TO SMUGGLE IN A TASER PISTOL. THIS IS THE ELECTRIC STUN WEAPON USED TO SUBDUCE DRUG CASUALTIES AND OTHER UNDESIRABLES; TINY DARTS PIERCE THE SKIN OR THE CLOTHING AND A CRIPPLING ELECTRIC SHOCK IS ADMINISTERED.

YOU LET FLY WITH YOUR 5,000 VOLT FAN LETTER. THE TASER DARTS BURY THEMSELVES DEEPLY IN JON JON'S THIGH. HIS BODY JERKS; YOU CRANK UP THE VOLTAGE; HEAVY MUSCLE SPASMS ARE BECOMING EVIDENT ... CRANK UP THE VOLTAGE ONE MORE TIME, JON BON JOVI GOES INTO A VIOLENT CONVULSION, HIS YOUTHFUL BODY CONTORTED BEYOND RECOGNITION, WITH A SOUND LIKE A GUNSHOT HIS SPINE SNAPS. 50,000 FANS CHEER WILDLY BECAUSE THEY'RE SEEING THE REAL THING. THEY'RE ROCK N' ROLLIN', BABY. JON FUCKING BON JOVI'S BLOATED AND BLACKENED TONGUE DANGLES FROM HIS Gaping MOUTH. HIS FINAL BOLD STATEMENT AS AN ARTIST: NONE OF HIS FANS NOTICE THAT HE'S DEAD ... OR ALIVE, OR ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT JON BON JOVI IS THE ROCKINGIST DUDE AROUND ...

William Tucker
Lawrenceville, NJ

(What's this, the latest set of Cleft Palate lyrics? Still, I think we're on the right track now ... more Art Projects, please!! ... oh, but it seems that's all until next time, when we return you to ... the OUTER LIMITS!)

GOOD LORD, IT'S **ALIVE!**

OR, YES, THERE ARE THINGS TO DO OUTSIDE YR ROOM

PHOTO BY GIL MARGULIS



WHO NEEDS HENRY; WHO NEEDS MORE PSYCHEDELIA?

**FLAMING LIPS / DESTROY ALL BANDS /
MOBY DICK (Rutgers University, March 11,**

1988) I stand in awe of Swinger McRafter. Having followed this evil, bad-tempered dwarf and his band of merry shopping-mall dirtbags through about umpteen gigs, I can safely say that there are less than few bands -- not just locally, but nationwide, DUDE -- that kick more ass, massage more glands, and pulverize more brain matter into grey, smelly soup than DAB.

When I think of the summer of '87 I think of Swinger: Swinger, dressed as Mama Cass Elliot, spitting pork-product lunch meat all over hapless Tommy Sandino's drum kit; Swinger, pretending to fellate a mangy canine during "I Wanna Be Your Dog;" Swinger, the bewildered and disgusted recipient of a golden shower from a bleach-haired, peasant-skirted grandmother who quickly straddled him during a show and squatted above his chest; Swinger, closing every show with "You Raped My Kid," and allowing himself to be subjugated and defiled by whatever diseased neanderthals might be present in that night's "audience."

But don't get the idea we're talking about another G.G. Allin here; DAB is a razor-sharp working unit, a collaboration between the stinging, bright and shiny guitar work of Spider Webb, the nut-shaking bass of Bela LaKarloff, the thunderous double-bass work of the aforementioned Sandino. AND THE MOTHERFUCKERS WRITE REAL SONGS!! Hard songs, fast songs, nasty songs, stupid songs, smart songs, songs they don't want their mothers to listen to, songs you can attach to your skull like leeches to bleed out all the bullshit. "Hormone With Limbs," "No Time Left," and "I Gotta Lose" incorporate the best elements of metal, thrash, and hardcore into a seamless whole that makes sense AND sticks to your ribs.

At Rutgers' Cook College Student Center, the boys had access to a much larger stage area (and much louder sound system) than usual and they made full use of it, thoroughly unstaging (in these discerning eyes) yesterday's news headlines The Flaming Lips. DAB appropriated standards by others (Circle Jerks, TSOL, Gun Club) and left their own undeniable stamp on them; Swinger strutting, lunging, roaring like an out-of-shape Henry Rollins, while Spider looked at the floor and nonchalantly paged through the Book of Fast And Nasty Riffs. The crowd of mostly teeny-boppers went wild, forming a pit that kept the doe-eyed co-eds (male and female) safely towards the back, where they belong. Swinger's big bro Vodka Lee Kingsnake (of L.S.D. fame) pronounced the show "sloppy" but if that was so it was only in comparison to past stop-on-a-dime triumphs.

After DAB, The Flaming Lips turned on their smoke machines and flashing strobes, and jacked the volume much higher, but it was to nought. A "power-trio" from Norman, Oklahoma, the Lips seem to me a mishmash of forgettable riffs, mediocre (but very, very loud) guitar-playing, and utterly predictable tempos. Perhaps this accounts for their popularity around here; there's always a place for the band that promises not to surprise you in ANY way ...

REASONS TO FUCK BEING CHEERFUL

SWANS/FROM HERE TO INFINITY/ BLACK SNAKES (CBGB'S, Jan. 30) Hyperbole

fails me ... The Swans are as repugnant as coming across a fresh steaming pile of dogshit in the middle of a pristine suburban sidewalk on Fourth of July; they're as seductive as a clear peek beyond this Veil of Tears with no money down. One of the most overused, clichéd adjectives used to describe bands in that over-used, clichéd category of "post-punk" is *apocalyptic* (look at summa the contenders, and ruminate on just how lame and boring an apocalypse must really be). However, when we're discussing The Swans, we're talking a meltdown of a different matter indeed ... What Gira & Co. are selling is a Total Apocalypse of The Soul. If Jim Thompson, William Burroughs, Stravinsky, R. Gene Simmons, the entire grounds of Bergen-Belsen, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jim Jones, a pound of hemlock, and all the rusty razor blades in the world were stuffed together into a trash compactor AND you were to ingest the pure essence of the above, you would know an experience akin to the Swans at CBGB'S.

The Swans, like no other "gloom" band, make me confront despair and contempt, not as hip poses, but as incurable diseases. When Gira sings "Beautiful Child" from "Children of God," his face beet-red, spit drooling down his lips, a jungle beast caught in the body of a Puritan, he's expressing both the arrogance and helplessness of truly confronting the fact that we are Captains of our own fates ... at least as far as our next step. The Swans have never been known to be "safe," but their newest incarnation strips away every preconceived notion about both what the band means and what constitutes "entertainment": Opening the concert with Jarboe's half-acappella, perfectly-sung yet lifelessly-delivered religious hymn, and then following it with the pristinely desolate, sullenly haunting "Nothing Inside You Is Real," crowned by a seated Gira accompanying himself on acoustic guitar, constitutes a challenge of the likes that even Sonic Youth has yet to match. It was frightening, it was hypnotic, it was without a doubt one of the handful of live shows that measurably changed the way I think about things ...

Powerful mojo abounded that eve indeed: The two opening acts were Black Snakes and From Here To Infinity. The former, featuring R. ("Bertolucci? You mean the jeans?") Kern, and Jack Natz & Patric Blanc (formerly Undead), are the best new hard rock/blues/noise/grind band to form itself from the vapor in at least a fortnight, and despite a rough moment or three during the start, were grungier and more primal than any revisionist/revivalist band could ever hope to be. Lee Ranaldo has revamped From Here To Infinity since last year's semi-lackluster performance at The Ritz; Steve Shelly sits behind the trapset for a while; a consistent groove of a throb is established that insinuates rather than irritates, and words, yes, words make it all more accessible. This new Infinity is kinda like a more pure version of the Youth that did "In The Kingdom #19;" some assholes in fresh-scent gleaming Leather Biker Jackets were screaming out "Sonic Douchel" next to me ... is this the price of Sisterhood? Fuck 'em.

THAR SHE BLOWS

SINEAD O'CONNOR (City Gardens, March 21)

Soon to be queen of all College-Radio fags everywhere. Lots of money behind this irritatingly disingenuous cueball-head Irish bimbo who stole most of her vocal tricks from Kate Bush but little of the charm or otherworldliness: she has the ex-Smiths rhythm section to back her up, she has a huge tour-bus on her first American tour; new songs introduced during the show had real "earthy" lyrics, ("Put your tongue in my hole," "There was blood on the walls, you fucked me so hard," etc) but this babe is one big FAKE, if you ask me. And you did.



KATHLEEN OGLE

SPENCER'S PETER

PUSSY GALORE/LAUGHING HYENAS

(Maxwell's, March 25) Seeing Pussy Galore is like losing yourself in a delusion brought on not by drugs but viral illness. You lose your feet, your mouth, your mind. Hell, you could be fucked from behind if you're up there at the front, enveloped in the sonic surge, and not even know it. And not even care. It's like falling into your favorite story as a bedridden child.

Jon Spencer is Peter Pan; he'll never grow up. He just wants to shout and scream and play that shitty-great guitar Santa brought him. Unlike the other boys, he can't tell the difference between make-believe and true songs -- they're the same thing in his never-never land (TELL ME ABOUT IT! - Ed.) And he's doing it all for the approval of Christina, his Wendy, who these days of course isn't even on stage but is always lurking somewhere in the crowd with watchful eye.

Julia Cafritz is Tinker Bell, smarter always than she'll let on. Doesn't like Wendy, never really did, most of the time, tough, keeping her mouth shut. Her guitar sound floats in and out like a fairy song. She always seems to be the one getting into trouble (broken strings, lost tunings) maybe just to attract attention.

Bob Bert is one of the Lost Boys, maybe all of the Lost Boys, banging on pots and pans in the triumphal march through the wicked jungle. Following Peter instinctively.

And that new guitarist (whose name I swear I'll never remember even though I've met him 2-3 times already), well, he's Captain Hook. Standing very solid, feet always together, luring you, and Peter, too, into his trust with his array of Yardbirds/Watchband/Who licks that you know you've heard but that you never can place. Very often that ol' devil steals Peter's show. And just when you least expect it he'll jump out and snare you with his Gibsonhook.

And that, my friend, is God's own fucking truth. You just have to believe. You just have to! P.S. Laughing Hyenas are a scream. Check them out.

ERIC GLADSTONE

HAVE YOU SEEN THE MOMMIES, BABY...

SHOCK MOMMIES (Court Tavern, March 5)

Now it's 1988, there's no Next Big Thing in sight, which is probably just as well. One unqualified genius or two make some exciting music, allowing for a horde of bad imitations. I keep reading that rock and roll is dead, which is puzzling, since I continually find enough interesting music to keep me broke! must be another one of those rock critic devices to give them something to write about besides Sinead O'Connor. It's a living.

Punk is dead. It's easy to write that. Punk hasn't existed since the term was (re)coined in the '70s and used for exploitation purposes. Forget it. You can try, but it's hard, because the hordes won't let you. I saw a show recently where the crowd sarcastically called out for dinosaur rock anthems "Freebird" and "Stairway To Heaven" for encores. "They both suck," crowed a fan, and the band then launched into "Pretty Vacant," a punk anthem if there ever was one. My mind began playing with numbers; there's five years between "Stairway To Heaven" and "Pretty Vacant," but there's 12 years between "Pretty Vacant" and the present. Uh oh. *Who's a dinosaur?*

Would-be punks love the Ramones and the Sex Pistols and the Clash. Those guys were *geniuses* (No, Television was genius, the most original sound to come out of the late '70s, but we don't get hordes of eloquent, intelligent guitarists, do we? Three guesses as to why). What you have is a bunch of scruffy, post-post adolescent dudes making a minimal living off undisciplined third-generation Ramones songs, yowling about nothing in particular. Scruffy rock. Nothing alarming.

But I always go to see the Shock Mommies, because even though they never get outside this now-vast revivalist punk scene, they manage to be subversive about it anyway. They also have a number of advantages over their peers. For one, they're smart, and remember, intelligence is a rare commodity. Their brattiness is genuine, really annoying in a way designed to always be cruel, but never sinister; sinister is a word I save for old people, which brings me to their last advantage: they're young. Young enough that when they played the Court Tavern this past March, they drank soda (*Punks drink soda?*). Youth is a good asset, also a great weapon. Try using it on someone older than you.

Their smarts are usually overlooked due to the speed metal approach, but it's there. Their best song is "Shave Your Head," ripped-off hooks and all, which gains extra presence as singer/occasional guitarist Jim Norton commands at the song's finish: "Shave your head ... for Central America," which applies not just to the ex-football star in the song, but -- remember, he's young -- possibly himself, too. This and other prime stuff is available on their homemade, poorly produced but still worthwhile cassette, which unfortunately can only be obtained through the band. Good luck.

The Shock Mommies play a lot of all-ages shows, which makes sense -- their audience is made up of people in their age group, and their shows in the New Brunswick area tend to be benefits, played in lecture halls or dormitory basements. The Court Tavern crowd isn't the Mommies crowd. Not in the least. It is, after all, essentially a bunch of cynics who dress up in dark clothes, usually leather, and act glum, which is as hilarious as you want it to be. The Mommies' usual entourage -- kids who facetiously make like skinheads at a vintage Ramones show -- were absent, being obviously too young to get in. So the difference between group and audience was measurable, and you might even feel a little nervous for them but you'd probably just continue drinking.

And sure enough, the Shock Mommies did start out a bit on the rough side, kind of uncertain, and the crowd got on them in a hurry, showing

they have an enthusiasm for something. Norton took a moment to size them up. "I'm glad to see our audience is up to its *usual* level," he sneered between songs. It took only a few more songs before harassment mutated into crowd-bashing by Norton and guitarist/vocalist Marc Saxton (the bassist and drummer remain mute throughout performances). Norton took a look around the venue, at its broken ceiling tiles and graffiti, and snapped, "Court Tavern, 'Home of the Stars?' 'Pit of Death' is more like it," and proved his point soon after by nearly falling through the stage -- he's a little heavy, after all. Saxton, hearing a request from one fan, responded, "Why should I listen to you? You're just a loser amidst --" here he paused to assess his audience -- "amidst a sea of losers."

This is the Shock Mommies in peak form, probably only being the wiseasses they strive to be, but here, at the Court, it was more. Standing in the crowd, made up mostly of musicians much more seasoned than the act they came to see, in a bar that's virtually the only place left in Hub City to hear original, local music, you couldn't help but think Saxton was on to something. The Shock Mommies youth/speed/overkill is something sorely missing in N.B., a dying music scene. Oblivious to that fact, though, they put forth one headbanger after another, continually breaking their rhythm -- and the audience's -- to argue among themselves and taunt the crowd. It's a good play, stretching out the set while annoying the hell out of everyone. Then one song, "Peanut Butter and Jam," took a single line and reproduced itself as a dirge, a speed metal anthem, a reggae ("I like peanut butter and Jam"), and an even slower dirge, over which Saxton gurgled "I like peanut butter and jam ... I like getting away with this ... I like getting paid for this." This took nearly ten minutes. As a statement, it was brilliant, not retrogressive in the least, not half the joke it was meant to be, not an anthem, for sure, but somehow all very applicable and hilarious at the Court that night. It's what I'd call "punk."

DAVID CROZIER



PHOTO BY AUGUSTO F. MENEZES

JEFFREY LEE ...

GUN CLUB (Green Parrot, Neptune NJ, March 23) Shrewd move, whoever made it, booking the Gun Club's U.S. tour-opening date at this small club. After all, if the band is hot, the show becomes historic; if they're lame, no one really finds out about it. Luckily, as it turns out, the former was the case, but it just might as well have been the latter.

Even this small club seemed empty for the show -- couldn't have been more than 100 people there, and they were divided into two definite camps. About thirty packed themselves up against the stage and another thirty hung back at one of the three bars. As the band -- Powers, Mori and Sanderson -- took the stage and the two audience camps coalesced, my eye was caught by a sort of dopey-looking short skinny guy wearing greasy black hair and shades. "Who's this dude," I thought, "Roy Orbison, Jr.?"

Roy Orbison Jr. proceeded to get on stage and sing "She's Like Heroin."

Yes, Jeffrey Lee Peirce is back in shape. So is the band and his voice -- despite his refusal to talk inbetween songs. Kid Congo looked and played his part rather suavely -- a cross between Clark Gable & Desi Arnaz slashing his guitar through the 15 odd numbers and throwing in handfuls of eerie harmonics during the silences. Bassist Romi Moore and drummer Nick Sanderson earn their keep, a fluid, rehearsed rhythm section, if somewhat less inspired.

High points: "Thunderhead" into "Calling Up Thunder," "Fire of Love," "Bill Bailey." Low point: the rather pedestrian second encore (you guessed it) "Sex Beal."

The Green Parrot seems to refuse to have opening bands when booking national acts. This leaves fans with only about 45 minutes of live music for their 8 bucks. Hardly a full night's rocking and not the band's fault -- nevertheless this was the show to see -- allegedly their gigs at City Gardens and Drums later week were less exciting. **ERIC GLADSTONE**

...WE WORSHIP THEE

GUN CLUB (DRUMS, NYC, March 27) jim morrison howlin wolf hank williams robert johnson ted bundy elvis presley roy orbison james dean charlie starkweather william faulkner oh shit so many more ... jeffrey lee's got that snakesnap crackle POP when he takes a stage and his voice has gone from the early days of a hoarse blunt breathless howl to a domesticated hurricane AND he still writes songs like nobody else f-u-u-c-k i-i if he don't wanna talk between songs he's sayin it all DURING them; I don't want or need no Thank You Much's I need five more minutes of this transcendent thunder and lurch ... he and Kid Consummate Craftsman (who sucked in the Cramps but in the interceding years has become SHITFIRE BRILLIANT) on cheap japanese guitars making unearthly noise that bops and shakes and is like to wrench the pelvis right outa your flesh but jeffrey, jeffrey STOP doing "Sex Beal" I can tell you don't want to FUCK the idiots who don't wanna hear something new and hey, play these alternative music discos with four dollar budweisers if you must but i say trash the places just a little ... those stupid mirrors around you yes maybe survival x10 but you could have afforded to lurch into just ONE of them couldn't you? but ah, you're right no lurching this night only stalking and pouncing and goddam when you push the sunglasses up you look like Marilyn Monroe and when you slide 'em down you look like Hell.

And jeffrey oh please oh please oh please get a new rhythm section... guess a good band is hard to find

THEY MIGHT BE FUNNY

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS/SPIRAL

JETTY (Rutgers University, April 8) Musicians? Sort of. Rock and Roll? No. Tiring? Yes. Trite? Yes. Funny? Yes. Worth half of the \$5 ticket price? Sure, why not.

TRACEY JAYNE LUBBEN

Bile leapt to my palate the minute they walked on with these stupid-fuckin' three-foot-high fezes and started doing dance steps that got me called an asshole in seventh grade. Oh, the college crowd loved 'em, singing along with whatever that MTV hit is and laughing at all the politically-correct humor ("These hats fit kinda tight and cut off the circulation to your brain and make you vote Republican," A-yuk a-yuk a-yuk). Too stupid for words.

I've been told that TMBG are "entertaining," and I guess they are if you don't like music. I split to play pinball and talk to the large-breasted girl at the candy counter (and we talked about poetry, okay?). Be warned, They Might Be Giants is the most collegiate band in the world. It was about as fun as getting prank phone calls at five am, or cleaning up baby yuk. Bleh.

SCOTT FRAMPTON



PHOTO BY
AUGUSTO F. MENEZES

SOMETIMES THE BEAR EATS YOU

LUNAR BEAR ENSEMBLE (COURT TAV-ERN, May 7)

What makes Lunar Bear different than most Central Jersey Art-Fag congregations, you're asking? Well, point A is that they're talented musicians, point B is that they don't dress to impress, and Point C is they got John Richey in the front, who just happens to be my favorite local raconteur, even if he hasn't autographed my copy of *Alien Nation* for me yet. Richey reads his words in front of the sophisto-noise of Martin Atkins (Brian Brain, PIL), Sluggo (Pleased Youth) and several other dudes with a spewing bray that encompasses scatological glee and delicate tenderness all at once. When the band gets a semi-SY groove going on something like "Sarah Terminal" and Richey's haunting phrases start bouncing around your skull, it's, it's, it's not just Art-fagness, it's ART (Dammit, there, I said it. Now crucify me, okay?). Then the Ensemble'll turn around and get down and nasty with something like "Untied Dogs," and your brain turns things over to your butt. As it should be.

f rom the MOVIE ...

BY LEE RANALDO

(SEVEN)

SCENE: In a a car (natch)

A: Choose any memory and crawl in, hide there awhile. it seems like all of life occurs in dreams and memories. not much is NOW, so much took place long ago. this music I'm listening to keeps finding ways of carrying me back in time. all of life occurred in the past, the present is an endless stasis waiting to pass. to be filed in the cabinets of memory ... think about it, nothing happens until you're remembering it. before then it's just unknown, the thing you can't plan for, or else it's right *now* and just *is*, you don't feel it because you're so *in it*. then suddenly you look back and can see yrself sitting bloody in a wet street, or in bed with those green eyes ...

B: or bored out of your head laying on a bed in some room ...

A: everything I feel is the remnant of some past emotion, all thoughts are now gleaned from a catalogue. the world is turning but going nowhere. round and round in our heads... a frantic static. yet my vision penetrates further into these trees as the years go by. i can see them now. if i step aside, let go, i can feel the mist from the car ahead on my face, a gentle familiar blur of droplets.

B: to break free of memory, to break free from all the people and shit, everything that ties one to life ...

A: it would mean forgetting the past, no regrets, no romantic delusions of any sort. dont we look with a special awe on the person who can live in the present, dying every minute without regret, trembling with anger but not looking back?? they sever ties with humanity in order to envelop themselves with their own visions. it leads to a kind of madness. so we as artists, not true blessed madmen you unnerstand but *artistes*, try to induce the state in ourselves, try to in one way or another *blitz* ourselves out on to that line, jack

LEE RANALDO is working on a collection of his writings.



in for a temporary fix, for the visions of a moment, food for thoughts, mental sustenance, then jack out and try to process ...

B: how about jacking off? har har.

A: Those self-destructive angels of rock and roll ... a lineage of greatness ... morrison cave reed shit even presley in his own warped way patti dylan all dying for the cause, who would be their predecessors ?? the war generals, tortured artists ...

B: ... van gogh, schiele, michelangelo: dying for an abstract ...

A: the pioneers, the ones of folklore, hardheaded people with a single mind. I guess the warriors are a great example of the archetype. single-mindedness under duress, no fear, confidence in the body and its abilities to conquer, to bring light and truth ... fighting till the death ...

B: or till the war ends ...

A: (laughing) not even then ... look, look at that baseball diamond there, empty in the rain, amidst this suburban hellishness ... those guys are fighting against that happening to them, they want life that is every minute

(A SHORT SCREECHY SWERVE AVOIDING A REAR-ENDER ON THE WET ROAD INTERRUPTS THIS // HEART IN THE THROAT FEAR)

jesus that puts everything in perspective, here we are holding some stupid conversation and it's almost the end of our whole lives. what would matter then?

B: nothing!

A: that makes all this talk seem a futile attempt to prevent the inevitable, the death/the end. no matter how far we get we're sorry to see it end ... gotta work around that, how do you suppose it's possible?

B: we shoot not to kill, we climb up out of graves and tombstones we fight against

A: the land goes on and we dont listen, i'm rolled under these wheels

B: oceans of pity roar

A: history takes its toll on each day, sucks life through the veins of an innocent child

cant see for the spray on my face that clouds up the damn life moving over to the side

B: the road weak, time crumbling

A: shallow land lays empty

B: poles against the sky, wet, dull
thick as metal and hard as sky

A: we ruin, we rape, cant stand still in this cold, endless rain. frustration and envy could rule if the powers that be would only

B: never in a million years



A: not free from economic constraints; force me to

B: your face and my ass

A: riding anywhere just to get gone and stay away, frightened by the thoughts of family and marriage

B: he'll make a fortune eventually

A: and his little life with wife in the static suburbs

B: subhuman well of being

A: cant swim up to the surface

B: we bellow, on the shore, for them to arrive, safely

A: a word becomes a memory, a childish thought becomes a life, one day's memories make up a lifetime of regret

B: twisted warped lines of sight, no light on the curves ... new roads at the end of old ones

A: endless separations

B: nothing but winter ever in new york

A: we come and go and never look up

B: this sky with clouds like battleships in fleet to the horizon, wheat stands in the wind

A: the roof beam buckles grey under the weight (there it comes again) of the years. the seasons are endless and i havent known of one for years.

B: just a taste ...
just a taste ...

A: another book to read

B: too much food

A: eighteen wheelers fly by,
i'm in love with love!

B: a plot of land speaks louder than a feeble attempt at recognition

A: i know myself

B: god help the man of knowledge

A: an endless stream ...
occurrences

B: mildly green



A: fertile

B: stripped, caught dead

A: blown

B: mongrel shapes

A: that same wind tunnel
crouched and waiting

B: a can of forever

A: clipped

B: betrayed

A: castrated

B: grey dose of the ages!

A: gone town
hip radio

B: orson welles couldnt hold it

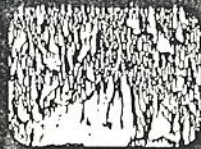
A: fixation
faith
fate

B: finitude

A: future imperfect.

B: (*hysterical*) the fucked meteor!
the fine grain!
't/to ... fornicate: yes!, the fornicating sodomists! hee-hee!!

A: (*musings, intoning*) full house of cards, a house full of cards, a full deck,
clamber up and tumble endlessly against the deep well of sky



DESIRE is only

gravity...

On sure, you could just call them "the band that short chicks and guys with glasses feel safe 'slamming' to," and certainly, we've done so, but if that's the only way you define Spiral Jetty, you're missing something important here. Once a jangly sort of "quirky pop band" squarely in the Feelies/Talking Heads tradition, the power trio of Adam Potkay (guitar, vocals), Andy Gesner (bass), and Dave Reynolds (drums) has evolved since 1981 into an outfit that emphasizes both precision and aggression with its slashing, sometimes sweet, sometimes dissonant guitar (Potkay has the meanest right hand going these days since Richie Havens), bombastic, near-orchestral drumming and muscular, jumpy bass, all put to the service of songs that encompass both the melancholy and exultation of day-to-day existence. Yeah, we know how cheap and easy it is to just make comparisons, but here goes anyway: If Big Black were less hostile, if the Minutemen had been from the East Coast, if The Feelies weren't so determinedly self-indulgent, you'd have a band that may be a lot like Spiral Jetty. Really. They have two albums, "Tour Of Homes" and "Art's Sand Bar," both on INCAS records. First one's just pretty good/not bad, but the second one is an Essential Possession. The following interview took place in the back room of a yuppie bar in

SPIRAL JETTY admit to a checkered past of hell-copter-flying, window-washing, nude modelling, existential depression, and, uh, well, working with the Feelies...

A terribly long interview with New Jersey's most unclassifiable band.

New Brunswick and was transcribed by one of the band's many legions of adoring fans, so direct any complaints of inaccuracies to Department CB, Chrome On Fire, care of this station

So, Adam, you seem to have a grooming problem...

ADAM: I told you that story, right? I heard about it from the friend of a friend that people in San Francisco elevators discuss my grooming. I mentioned it today to my doctoral advisor

and he goes, 'yeah, yeah, people rag on you all the time.' I couldn't believe it, man. Brought it home that it's not the 70's anymore... I asked (a friend) about it and she said, 'oh, well, at least, you're better groomed than Dave Reynolds.'

DAVE: (Mutters)

Well, you guys are in two different worlds...

ADAM: True. I dwell in the Ivory Tower. How about you, Dave?

DAVE: I dwell in the dark and dreary dungeon.

And Andy falls somewhere in-between?

ANDY: Me? Um, Suburbia. The highway.

So now the album's getting licensed in Europe, distributed by Rough Trade and Midnight, etc, is it time for a new deal?

ADAM: Well, the first record sold a lot in Italy and Greece, mainly because of that compilation we're on -- 'American Shores.' It's put out in Spain. It's us and some other bands like Yo La Tengo.

ANDY: But now the interest is in Holland. Schagen, Holland, to be exact.

Shagen? Could you spell that?

ANDY: S-H-A-G-E-N.

Thank you.

DAVE: That's Shagen.

ANDY (ignores Dave): And they're interested in licensing it if it does well.

Are you guys still on INCAS?

ADAM: the thing is, we're still on INCAS, we put ourselves there, and INCAS is like this semi-non-existent co-operative ...

It still exists?



ADAM: it does, it does. I mean, people still run it; don't return our messages, etc. People sometimes accidentally call INCAS when they want to get in touch with us, not knowing that INCAS won't talk to us, so we're like this pirate satellite of INCAS ... I don't think our record deals are representative of the band's quality. Frankly, we've gotten no breaks at all ... We're not on SST, we're not on, you know, anything ... *(Adam whines a little while longer, elicits sympathy)*

DAVE: We're just so good people don't know what to do about it.

ADAM: Well, it's not that, it's just that we're so odd.

ANDY: So underground.

ADAM: There's bands that are more underground but they're more underground in a certain way ... take like New York circa 1983. There's a really good band, Sonic Youth. And on their coattails all sorts of other bands can ride because they slept with Sonic Youth, whatever. And suddenly people will listen to Live Skull and whatever comes down the road that hangs out there and plays there.

DAVE: Like Madonna.

ADAM *(Ignores him)*: We've never been a part of anything like that. We also do weird shit, we do 'rock songs' but also *(unintelligible)*.

Well, is the problem being 'quirky' or is it lack of a scene?

ADAM: Both. We haven't been part of a scene outside of the New Brunswick one which, unfortunately, nobody outside of New Brunswick pays attention to. I think it is important, because (New Brunswick) is certainly much better than the Hoboken scene or something like that ...

DAVE: I'd like to get away from that 'quirky' thing, you know, people think we're XTC or something ...

ADAM: It's not that the music's quirky it's just that we do whatever the fuck we want. If we want to do 'My Cat Jeffrey' we do 'My Cat Jeffrey.'

DAVE *(interrupts and, talking simultaneously with Adam, is unintelligible)*: Blah blah blah blah XTC blah blah blah quirky blah blah people think blah. And let's get it on the record, right. I know at least myself and Adam ...

ADAM & DAVE: ... HATE XTC!!!!
ADAM: We shouldn't even mention XTC.

DAVE: I don't know how Drew feels about XTC ... but the whole thing gets down to what Jackie Gleason said, man ... He said that the difference between ordinary and between talent is that talent

never conforms to anyone except themselves.

ADAM: That's true.

DAVE: Talent never tries to please anybody except themselves.

I think we need a moment of silence after that ...

DAVE: The immortal Jackie Gleason *(continues to mutter)*

Mention is made of the band's lack of a booking agent -- Andy does it all -- and what touring they have done.

DAVE: I love the road, though.

ADAM: You love the road because we went on tour and played to like packed houses with bands that we really liked and it was fun. I mean, I enjoyed that also, but I don't want to have to play in Arkansas on a Tuesday night to two toothless old men, which is what happens when you get a small booking agent. Nothing ever comes of it. I've known so many bands who've tried it that way.

You do seem to be getting a following in the Northeast, though.

DAVE: Europe. We should go to Europe. It's the thing to do.

ADAM: Uh, yeah. I mean, it went really well. We've played Providence a couple of times and Albany and there's a following in both those places, things went especially well in Providence with Salem 66.

What's your favorite band to play with?

DAVE: It was pretty exciting playing with the Del Fuegos because it's like, hey, all of a sudden we're playing with the Del Fuegos ...

ADAM: ... in Boston.

DAVE: ... in Boston, you know.

ADAM: ... at the Rat.

DAVE: ... at the Rat, you know.

ADAM: Outside of that I'd say Salem 66, because I'm infatuated with them.

DAVE *(mumbles)*: I don't know about that.

Discussion turns to the band's first ep, Tour of Homes, and it's 26-minute, nine-song running time. No one can explain why they didn't add two more songs and call it an album. So instead they offer to tell how the band formed.

ADAM: You want to hear the real story of how the band formed?

DAVE: Can I leave the room now? I'm bored with this story.

ADAM: I'm too beat for this ... I thought this was going to be a monumental interview.

DAVE: Aren't we going to get five pages like Catharsis did?

Ah, maybe. So are we taking this story back pre-power trio?

ADAM: I started playing guitar in Seaside

Park, playing an acoustic in the basement, jamming on Neil Young songs. I was 17, it was about 1977. By 1978 Andy came around, and Andy was outrageous. He used to have this stupid little Fender Mustang bass with this dumb little practice amp, and we would sit there, grooving, playing Neil Young songs, having a good time and then Andy would come and everyone would be bummed, man. He didn't know how to play or anything ... it was hilarious.

DAVE: But he could play harmonica.

ADAM: That's true.

DAVE: If he could find it.

ADAM: Anyway, we started playing together despite that, and it turns out that Andy's the only bassist I've played with in my whole life, we're talking about ten years. So slowly we got a band together with Brian Racek and we were a rock and new wave trio playing surf shit, hanging out. Then in 1981 Andy and Brian moved to Ithaca and we went through various stuff and what finally happened was Brian left the band ...

DAVE: They left before you did?

ADAM: Well, no, I was already there. I was at Cornell 78-82.

DAVE: I just want to make sure the people get this right.

ANDY: Fall of 1981. In the Spring of 1981 I used to hitchhike to Ithaca to play gigs.

With your portable amp?

ANDY: Sometimes there was an amp there. I left it with Adam, maybe.

ADAM: So, anyway, Brian left the band. It was a very noble gesture simply because we were writing songs at a certain point that he couldn't play ... so one of our shows this preceding Spring was at this 'arts co-op,' really a fun show. And after the show, this like incredible Nazi all dressed in black with a gray armband comes up to me. Now of course the first question I asked him was 'why do you have on a grey armband?' and he said ...

DAVE: I think it was probably a black armband, gray shirt, I know that shirt ...

ADAM: Gray shirt, black armband, okay, okay, so he says, 'don't you know what day it is?' I'm commemorating the anniversary of Ian Curtis's suicide.' So that's great. And he says, 'I have a brother. He plays the drums. And maybe he could play with you.' And I said, well, oh yeah, he could play with us, no problem. So that next fall Brian left and lo and behold I did call Dave and he played his first show with us on his 18th birthday Halloween Night at a fraternity house in 1981.

DAVE: Let's make a point here. My brother isn't really a Nazi.

ADAM: He's a teddy bear. But when you

first meet him he's terrifying, especially if he's wearing a gray shirt with a black armband and talking about his brother. But since then, we started playing that year and by 1982 Andy fell out of a window and broke his ass, broke his back, broke his feet, and we moved to Boston. It was a travesty. We broke up and got back together in New Brunswick in 1984.

DAVE: Why did we break up?

ADAM: We broke up because Dave was flying helicopters, I was being a, a, a writer and ah, and Andy was ...

DAVE: The way we broke up was that you left us. YOU decided ...

ADAM: It was pathetic; we hadn't played together in nine months.

DAVE: But YOU left because you wanted to become a starving novelist instead of a starving musician.

ADAM: And what did I get? A couple of short stories.

No novel in the drawer?

DAVE: I think he discovered his talent is much more as a musician.

Hey Andy, how'd you fall out the window?

ANDY: There was a window-washing accident. That's all you have to put.

ADAM: He fell out a window. He was leaning back washing it, and he fell.

DAVE: The rest of the breakup is ...

Hey Andy, was this before or after the nude modelling?

ADAM: I was a nude model, too.

DAVE: I was never a nude model.

ANDY: Yeah, but Adam was never like I was, like serious for a full two semesters. ADAM: I used to do it as much as he did! He was in a sculpture class where they made him keep the same pose for two months. I was in a drawing class where I got to move around.

DAVE: With our female lead guitarist in the class.

ADAM: Yeah, we had this female lead guitarist for awhile who has half-Japanese and half-Greek. Incredibly trendy. Her name was Stephanie Pitsas, and she's still in some pathetic fashion band in Ithaca but she was cool then, and until we got to New Brunswick that was the most popular we ever were because everyone was in love with her, man, she was foxy. It was hilarious, we'd be up there looking like the Feelies and she'd there in her black leather pants, playing like Ritchie Blackmore.

DAVE: She'd hide behind anything she could on stage, though, remember?

ADAM: Yeah, but when she left the band we went from playing in front of like a hundred people to about five.

These were the dark days of Spiral Jetty?



ADAM POTKAY: I was a nude model, too.

ADAM: Yeah. And then Andy fell out of a window.

ANDY: *ADAM HAD A WINDOW-WASHING ACCIDENT!*

ADAM: Oh yeah; Andy had a window-washing accident. Dave went to fly helicopters. It's amazing he's still alive. And I guess I just fell into this incredible depression.

No helicopter-flying accidents?

DAVE: Some real close calls.

ANDY: He took the place of these two guys who had crashed and killed themselves a few months prior ... I moved to New Brunswick because Kim (*his girlfriend*) graduated Cornell, and we had to move somewhere ... she wanted to go to Rutgers. I was keeping in touch with Dave and his company that he flew for folded so he moved down here ...

ADAM: I was living in Baltimore at the time. We got together that summer and I was like driving from Baltimore to New Brunswick for gigs, to play like WRSU benefits. I got my MA at Johns Hopkins after two years, and then number one, I hated the school, number two, my girlfriend Catherine hated Baltimore, number three, Catherine wanted to go to NYU to study fine arts, number four, I wanted to be in New Brunswick to hang with these guys, number five, Rutgers offered me \$40,000 dollars, number six, I was in New Brunswick.

What was wrong with Baltimore?

ADAM: Everything. It was the most depressing city I've ever seen. It's just an incredibly poor city, everyone is so downtrodden, I've never seen a city with less spirit. It's the kind of city where the black people call the white people 'sir.' The weekly would have letters to the editor that would go

like, 'Dear Editor, I'm having a problem, when I go to sleep rats nest inside my car engine and eat the ignition wire, what can I do?' and the reply would be 'Well, put rat poison in your car engine at night.' It's just so, like, God, end of the earth, man. That's where the song 'Baltimore' on the first record came from.

ADAM: I really want this to be in the interview because it just occurred to me, I'd never even thought of this, you know, our song-writing has changed over the years, in fact, more recently than before we've been writing songs altogether. Before I used to come with the guitar parts already done ... everything we've done up until things like 'Hey Joe' and 'Bad Thoughts' I could do credible acoustic versions of, and I think that even still in some seminal, fundamental way I still do have this folk sensibility.

DAVE: So now, are we like heavy metal/folk? (*laughs*)

Is Adam's ego a problem?

DAVE: No, my ego's always the problem.

ADAM: He's not that bad ...

DAVE: I play it up, just for, you know ...

Who's the favorite Jetty among the fans?

ANDY: I think people remember Adam's looks.

ADAM: It's the fact that I'm singing the songs and most uneducated listeners only hear the voice and a little of the guitar anyhow ...

DAVE: I think Adam is the only one who's ever been given the offer of a place to stay after a gig.

ANDY: That's not true.

ADAM: That's not true.

DAVE: Well, I'm the only one who hasn't, then. Andy is definitely like the all-American sex symbol type ... but then, again, I'm the only one whose name ever gets chanted during shows.

ADAM: Well, Andy and I are married men ... we've been together with our girlfriends longer than anybody else we know.

When are you going to make them honest women?

ADAM: I don't know. I've been living with Catherine since 1982 ...

DAVE: You're right on the brink of common law marriage.

ANDY: Summer of 1981 for me and Kim ...

DAVE: So this summer you're common law.

ANDY: Yeah, but there were times we weren't living together.

ADAM: Oh, come on, Andy.

And what did that mean in terms of your social life?

LONG PAUSE FROM ANDY ...

ANDY(FINALLY): I don't know. But you know I have to say the reason I'm really excited about this interview is because, uh, I really respect the interviewer and I really like Chrome On Fire. Believe me ...

DAVE: I'm enjoying it. I'm actually making, like, like ...

ADAM: Good points.

DAVE: Good points.

It comes time to discuss the Feelies, who produced several tracks for 'Tour Of Homes.'

ANDY: I approached Glenn one night at a Jetty show that he had come to and asked him straight out, that, ah, you know, we'd like very much for him and Bill to consider, you know, our music, you know, maybe to produce us.

Were they familiar with you before this?

ANDY: Sure, Adam had sent them tapes going all the way back to 1981.

DAVE: Adam actually approached Glenn first, though, I'll never forget him going up to him and saying ...

ADAM: 'Crazy Rhythms is my favorite record of all time next to 1969.'

DAVE: ... and he said 'thanks' and walked right away.

ADAM: But Andy somehow got their attention. But we did that with them and they're nice guys and we like them and let's not say anything else because we've gotten in trouble in past interviews and don't put this down on tape but ...

ADAM (5 minutes later) : ... It's always a mistake to work with one's idols.

That's on the record?

ADAM: Yeah.

So 'Tour Of Homes' went over pretty well, still.

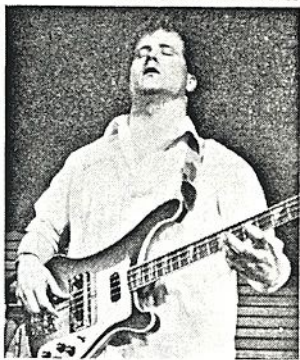
ADAM: We sold out the first two thousand, yeah ... I think both records in their own ways are good. I happen to like 'Art's Sand Bar' more because we did it recently, and I like 'Bad Thoughts' and 'Beat Goes On' the most. But neither is probably near as good as the live show. We haven't been able to capture that energy .. we need something; a new studio, a new producer, I don't know what it is. I know we haven't gotten a good guitar sound yet. We've gotten a great drum sound, a kick-ass drum sound, a good bass sound, good vocals, but the guitar sound just hasn't been there.

That's true. Your guitar-playing's a lot more wild than it's ever come across on record. How many shows has the band done?

ADAM: Two-hundred to two-fifty, in basically four years' time.

DAVE: Well, four and a half maybe. Over,

PHOTO BY AUGUSTO F. MENZES



ANDY GESNER: If we did get signed to a major label...we'd go right down the toilet.

ah, like six and half years or, yeah, a six and a half, seven year period.

ADAM: A lot of times.

DAVE: A producer I think I'd be very happy working with, as trendy as it sounds, is Don Dixon. Because to me, this guy gets big sounds from every instrument.

ADAM: Hey, who produced EVOL?

Sonic Youth and Martin Bisi.

ADAM: That's a fucking good production, Jesus Christ.

DAVE: All I'm saying is that my three goals in music are to ...

ANDY: Get laid.

DAVE: ... to appear in a Creem profile, to make enough money to drive an Edsel, and to record Spiral Jetty live at Budokan.

What are yours?

ADAM: My goals are small. Sell 12,000 records, do a couple of kickin' tours, and oh...

DAVE: We all want to be able to live off it.

ADAM: And then drop out gracefully ... I'm an English teacher, I'll always have that. Right now it's great because any time I want I can take off.

DAVE: I have nothing.

ADAM: Cause I'm not, you know ...

DAVE: How would you like to work in a warehouse?

ADAM: ... if the Rolling Stones had stopped with 'Exile' they'd be Gods still, if Husker Du stopped with 'New Day Rising.'

ANDY: There, see what would happen to Spiral Jetty if we did get signed to a major label with all the money and all the push that we'd get? I think we'd go right down the toilet. We're really happy with our underground status.

ADAM: I'd like to be major underground, though ... SST ... (etc, etc)

PART FIVE: NEW BRUNSWICK -- THRIVING SCENE OR PATHETIC ENERGY-LEECHINGHELLHOLE?

ANDY: I talk to lots of people who say, 'wow, man, I remember New Brunswick back in it's heyday, 1983.'

DAVE: No, I think we came in at the right time when we came in, we were really the only new band to come on the scene for almost a year-and-a-half period. That heyday was over and the next heyday wasn't going to start for about another two years and we were right in the middle.

Where are those older bands now?

ADAM: Well, the Smithereens are on K-Rock.

DAVE: They've never really been considered a part of the scene. And they've never considered themselves a part of it.

You guys be the same way if you hit?

DAVE: I would.

ANDY: No way, we're very much a part of this scene.

Weren't you guys kinda of the first of a, excuse the expression, new wave of NB bands?

ADAM: That's true. I think it was this attitude that, if guys this weird can go out and pack the Court Tavern and people are going to like them, well people are going to like us even more because we'll rock out (laughs) ... what I like best about the following we have in this town is that they let us be experimental, we can take all sorts of chances and it usually goes off. Unless it's really bad.

And what about your reputation, excuse me but I gotta bring this up, as the Band That's Safe To Slam To? I've, uh, heard this on the radio ...

DAVE: Well, I think it's great that people are known to slam dance to Spiral Jetty, but I think the great thing is the people who start it are always the females in the audience.

ADAM: That's true. I think that's cool, man.

ANDY: The females, the females who start it off are usually like ...

ADAM: It's usually my girlfriend Catherine.

ANDY ... these girls with a cumulative grade point average of 3.8. Undergraduate, I mean.

ADAM: The point is it's not all 300-pound guys slamming to the Skulls, it's like, Pam and Joanne and Catherine and whoever else jumps in ... I don't feel like I'm not macho enough, that I should attract like, you know, I mean, who the fuck cares?

Well, do you notice maybe a preponderance of (pause) oh, I don't know (pause), people who wear glasses among your fans, let's say?

DAVE: I think that, ah, I think, um...

ADAM: Could be.

DAVE: I think our New Brunswick audience is very mixed, compared to a lot of the other shows you might go to. You can see every type of person ... everybody thinks we're something different.

All things to all people, that what you're saying?

ADAM: No, I just think we're not that easy to peg. I mean, here's a band that's going to do 'Hey Joe' and 'Bad Thoughts' and poor acoustic songs, 'My Cat Jeffrey,' whatever comes to mind. The great thing about a New Brunswick audience is that they're going to eat it all up.

DAVE: We're possibly the only band in the history of rock and roll that has covered Jonathan Richman and Black Sabbath both.

Let's do the part where you get yourselves in trouble. What other NB bands are cool?

ADAM: Unless a local band gives me a tape, I have a hard time seeing them, since I live in Jersey City, and I'm also married.

DAVE: I've told Adam many many times, there aren't that many opportunities to see this band, I've told him many many times to see Catharsis. I mean what does Adam like? He likes Sonic Youth and Neil Young. So there you go.

That's them.

ADAM: I like the Wooden Soldiers. I don't like their first record that much, but what they and we have just done is go to Brad, our producer's house, and do an acoustic tape. I like the Wooden Soldiers' acoustic tapes. They're these beautiful songs that sound just like Paul Simon, nice little acoustic songs. I don't like them that much live, either, but acoustic Wooden Soldiers I like.

They're sort of label-mates, aren't they?

ADAM: We are putting out an acoustic cassette of just songs, some originals, including the already infamous 'My Cat Jeffrey,' text supplied by Christopher Smart circa 1760's, music supplied by Dave Reynolds, so we credit it to Smart Reynolds. Some Dylan, some Young covers.

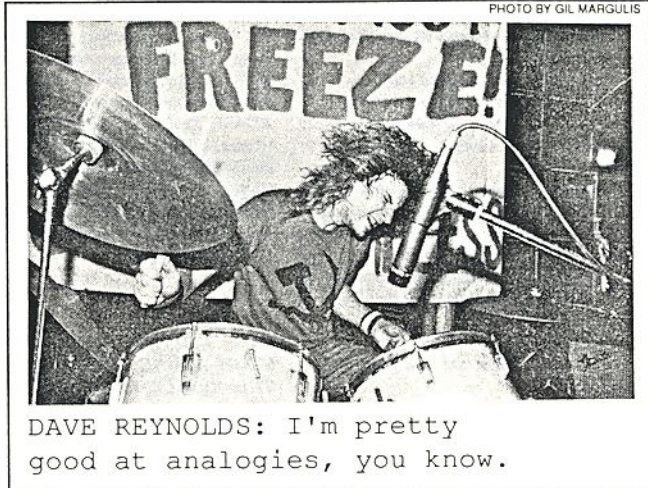
When will it be available?

ADAM: March (ed note: oh, well, that's when this issue was supposed to be out, too...)

DAVE: I'd like to add that I'm probably the biggest Hip Shy fan around.

ADAM: I like that song 'Existential Top Cat.'

ANDY: My list's endless. Destroy All Bands, Catharsis... Moby Dick were incred-



ible.

DAVE: I really dug Closet Elvis... I'd like to produce them.

Didn't you produce Malcontent?

DAVE: Yeah, along with Tom's Electric Tombstone, that Christmas song last year. I really enjoyed doing it. Any local bands out there, listen, I'd ...

DAVE: Well, we flirted with the Hoboken scene a little bit ... Hoboken's 'next generation' is defined like this: you go to a really fancy restaurant and get a dish with mushrooms in it and find out the mushrooms are bad. And making you sick.

ADAM: Good analogy.

DAVE: I'm pretty good at analogies, you know.

ADAM: The problem with Hoboken is that there's a preponderance of musicians; more than there should be. Also so many rock critics ... everyone's a 'rock critic' there and it's like, you play a show at Maxwells and everyone has a pad in front of them.

DAVE: And a great big HUGE stick up their ass.

How about the songs? it seems you gone from personal, small canvases to almost, dare I say, anthem-like stuff?

DAVE: Like arena-shit ...

ADAM: The major criterion for a new song is that it shouldn't sound anything like the one before it.

Why do you keep stealing song titles?

ADAM: Why? Uh ...

You ever thought about what someone thinks, picking up the album ...

ADAM: 'Hey Joe,' 'Beat Goes On' ...

'I don't want this record, it's all '60s covers!'

DAVE: On our next album we're going to have a song called 'Freebird' and one called 'Stairway To Heaven.'

ADAM: Uh, I'm trying to think ... I don't know why ...

DAVE: Also on the next album will be 'Lola,' 'Inda Gadda Da Vida' ...

ADAM: I guess because it's funny. At least I find it funny. Though 'Hey Joe' is actually an elegy to my grandfather.

Well, you are known for your wry sense of humor.

ADAM: I am? Are you joking?

Do you feel more like a singer or guitar player these days?

ADAM: I feel like a folk guitarist.

Is that what's responsible for the leg action?

ADAM: What?

The unique Adam Potkay dance that ...

ANDY: He doesn't know he's doing it.

Nobody ever told him?

ADAM: Yeah, I think the thing is that the dancing changes according to my mood, you know. I don't really notice it, although it has been pointed out to me.

I think it's the high point of the show for everybody.

ADAM: I used to dance a lot, back when New Wave was basically dance music, in 1980 I was the kind of guy who'd dance all night. I'm a dancer from way back. I can't help but 'move to the groove.'

ANDY: I get to dance a lot more because I don't have to sing.

You do that two-step back and forth.

ANDY: And I stick my tongue out.

Well, one corner of the mouth, at least. It's not like you're doing a Gene Simmons or anything.

ADAM: The thing about playing live is you can surrender to it. The day I start having to like, 'put it on for the kids' is the day I quit. *Like the Replacements do now...*

ADAM: Do they? Oh, yeah, they pretend to get drunk, somebody told me that. That's so stupid.

And now they do these 'anti-videos' that are so dirty ... when are you guys doing a video?

ADAM: We joke about it. I guess we'd do it if we ever had to.

Seems like a crucial part of marketing right now ...

ADAM: But I don't like them. I don't watch them. I hate them.

The Swans do videos ... Sonic Youth do videos...

ADAM: Sonic Youth?

Yeah, they're just not on TV.

ADAM: What, like weird Richard Kern videos or something?

Yeah, in fact, there's supposed to be one for 'White Cross' with animation, etc ...

(Adam spends some time digesting this information)

Your music's very up, happy, people dance to it, yet the lyrics are damn grim. How come is that, anyway?

ADAM: Like anyone else I spend most of my time in absolute despair thinking that I suck, all sorts of things like that. We all spend large portions of our time incredibly depressed ... besides which, who wants to hear a happy song? Like, say, 'Walking On Sunshine.' I don't care if you're walking on sunshine. I don't want to hear about it.

You prefer writing about desire to writing about fulfillment.

ADAM: Who remembers a Shakespeare comedy? Who remembers 'Twelfth Night's plot? You can't forget 'Lear' or 'Hamlet,' but like 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' ...

That happens to be my personal favorite...

ADAM: That's because it's got people copulating with goats.

But your newer songs seem a little happier, though.

ADAM: That's because I was 21 years old when I wrote the original ones and now I'm 27. I'm not going to write 'East Berlin' again.

DAVE: In the beginning I was still looking back at my days in high school where I was a nobody and it was sort of like, 'I'll show them. That's a lot of what 'Tour Of Homes'

was for me, looking back as an adult on those times. But I came to the realization when I went to my fifth high school reunion that it doesn't matter anymore.

ADAM: That's true. The title, 'Tour Of Homes,' is kind of like the suburban album; the 18-year-old album. 'Art's Sand Bar' is the 22-year-old album. And the next one, which'll only have new songs from the last year, will be the 27-year-old album, more about where I am now.

PART UMPTEN MILLION: WE START ASKING, AND ANSWERING, THE REALLY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

ADAM: I get letters every day. I don't know if you guys know that.

DAVE: I've never read any of our fan mail yet. Except for the one from that 14-year-old girl.

ADAM: No, I get letters all the time.

DAVE: Thanks for telling us, Adam ... See, the thing about this band is, we've been together so long, it's kind of to the point where we're like brothers, you know. We don't generally socialize with each other and everything.

ADAM: We still do!

DAVE: Well, you're different, because Andy I don't really hang out, but we run into each other a lot, and we lived together once ... *(continues to mutter)*

ANDY: I've heard Dave's stories before.

DAVE: Exactly.

ANDY: I've heard your best stories.

DAVE: I know.

ANDY: About a dozen, dozen times.

DAVE: Right, and that's why this situation is like a combination between being brothers and being married.

Who plays the husband and who plays the wife?

DAVE: I think Adam would be the husband, Andy would be the wife, and I'm the kid.

ADAM: Perverse.

Thank God I don't have to transcribe this one ...

ANDY: Who's transcribing it?

Cathy Bowley ...

ADAM: Well, she can just transcribe the good parts.

DAVE: We ain't nothin' but good parts, man. We're like, we're like, the Perdue Chicken of Rock and Roll!

What's your favorite book?

ADAM: Hey man, I've read so many books you have to say to me what genre, what century ...

DAVE: I can answer that question!

Come on, Adam, I knew you'd say that.

ADAM: My favorite book?

DAVE: I can answer that question very quickly! Max Beerbohm, 'Zuleika Dobson.' A book that I've been trying to get Adam to read for years. You've had my copy for two years.

Favorite beer, then?

ADAM: Harp draft is pretty sweet.

Okay, favorite candy bar?

DAVE: Ah, I don't eat candy that much, but I'd probably have to say Nestle \$100,000 bar.

Who's your favorite existential philosopher?

DAVE: Come on, man, I'm only a warehouse worker. Give me a break. I've got one semester of college. Give me a break on this one.

ADAM: But your brother's a book seller, for God's sakes.

Favorite city in the nation?

ADAM: New York.

Favorite river?

DAVE: Genesee.

ADAM: Cause it puts out that beer he likes so much.

Favorite sexual position?

ADAM: Female dominant.

DAVE: You like to be on the bottom, too? So do I.

Well, let's see if we can get a consensus here.

ANDY: Oh, man.

ADAM: I saw Andy with some kinky cream once.

ANDY: What? What are you talking about?

ADAM: I saw the sex cream, man.

ANDY: That I had it?

ADAM: Yeah, it was like sex oil, man. It was a long time ago and I said, Andy, what the fuck's this? And you go, 'Hey, keep things lively.'

ANDY: That was like five years ago.

'Fess up Andy. Don't coach him, now.

ADAM: It's that sex oil ... I don't know what they do with it ...

ANDY: Um, I don't know. I think the most important thing is that it doesn't always have to take place in a bed.

ADAM: Rad.

DAVE: Rad.

ADAM: He's talking 'Last Tango In Paris.'

DAVE: I'll bet Andy's a kitchen-table guy. *What's the longest you've ever continuously vomited as the result of alcohol consumption?*

ADAM: About 12 hours.

ANDY: When I was at Lehigh I was in a fraternity and I prayed to the old porcelain. Lehigh made me realize I didn't need alcohol to have a good time.

ADAM: I once spent an entire ferry ride from France to England puking in a storm.

DAVE: I've slept on a few bathroom floors.
 ADAM: I slept on that bathroom floor. I woke up there in the morning, though ...
(Somehow we get on the subject of hair length ...tres chic, no?)

ADAM: This is cut short; it used to be as long as everything else.

DAVE: Why would I be impressed if you cut your hair? Why would I, of all people, be impressed if you cut your hair?

ADAM: I don't know, I thought you'd notice it at least.

DAVE: Cutting your hair is synonymous with slitting your wrist when it comes to me. When was the last time you punched somebody?

ADAM: When I was in the seventh grade. Boy or girl?

ADAM: Boy. I think there was a little fight. I wrestled him to the ground. I won.

DAVE: It was like, I was in about the sixth grade, and there's this kid, and he really got on my nerves, he did everything to, you know, really bug me. And he lived about, every time I'd go after him, he lived about a block from the school and he'd run home and I couldn't get to him. So what I did was, my mother taught elementary school, and I told the kid that my mother said we should be friends and why don't we play a game of rugby. And he said, what's rugby? And I said, that's what they call soccer in Europe. Now at that point that's what I really thought, except that, you know, it was more physical. You know, guys had sticks to beat each other. So what I did was we got a ball and started playing soccer, and then I ah, then I jumped on him and beat the crap out of him.

What dead thing have you seen that sticks out in your mind the most?

DAVE: I can answer that one. Mind if I start on that one?

ANDY: Be my guest.

DAVE: My grandfather.

I was thinking more like road kill, actually.

DAVE: He was in the hospital at the time. We, my brother and I, took my grandmother to the hospital. He was, you know, green. He hadn't been embalmed or anything yet.

Have you ever masturbated anywhere besides your own home?

DAVE: I masturbated in my parent's house. That's not really my home.

Any public places?

DAVE: Yeah, definitely, man. I probably did it a couple of times while I was flying helicopters and I was living in a hotel five nights a week.

You masturbated in helicopters?

DAVE: No, no, no, when I was living in a hotel five nights a week I might have had a



a little fun in the shower a couple of times.
 How old were you when you lost your virginity?

ANDY: I was in the ninth grade.

If you could be an animal ...

DAVE: Sloth. Could I answer the last question?

Sure.

DAVE: Twenty.

Late bloomer.

ANDY: Oh, oh.

DAVE: You know, that'll probably destroy my reputation in this town. The sexiest man in New Brunswick lost his virginity at 20. Hey, are we getting another round?

If you could have lunch with anyone from history, who would it be?

ADAM: David Hume.

Is it a good idea to give needles to junkies to NYC?

DAVE: Yes, it is. Ask Adam how old he was when he lost his virginity. I think that's a question that should be answered by all of us, as long as two of us have.

ADAM: thirteen.

ANDY: Did you lose it in Seaside?

ADAM: No, Trenton.

What's your favorite cartoon?

ADAM: When I was little? Marvel Comics, man. I had complete collections of Daredevil and Spiderman.

I said cartoon, not comic.

ADAM: Well, I guess over the years, Doonesbury.

CARTOON, NOT COMIC STRIP!

ADAM: Oh, TV. When I was a kid, the Flintstones.

ANDY: Definitely not the Flintstones. I always felt like, you know, Fred Gwynn and

Bob Denver were kind of like cartoon characters to me in a way.

Good answer.

ANDY: It's funny, because now on Nickelodeon at 2.00 ...

ADAM: Fred Gwynn's on all the fucking time now.

ANDY: On Nickelodeon at least.

ADAM: The Fred Gwynn channel.

If you had to go live in a television show and you couldn't come back, which one would it be?

DAVE: Good question. Actually live in one. And you couldn't come back.

DAVE: I was watching Alf the other night, where he goes to Gilligan's Island and realizes it wouldn't be that great living there after all. Um...

ANDY: The original Laugh-In.

ADAM: The cast of the original Monty Python.

What's the most intellectual sport?

ANDY (After some argument): There's no doubt the biggest mind-fuck is wrestling.

ADAM: It's Greek.

DAVE: I'd have to say billiards.

ANDY: Can I tell my story about when I quit the football team and everyone ragged on me including my father and my family and all I really wanted to do was go back down to the shore and hang out with my friends? No.

DAVE: Andy's father was convinced that he was hanging out with Adam and doing drugs.

ADAM: My hair was very long.

ANDY: On New Year's Eve Adam and Brian Racek came over and meanwhile my

dad had somehow come across a bag of weed and he confronted Adam and Brian as they came to the house...

ADAM: He came up to me, and I'm, like, in high school and he said, 'Andy can't go out with you boys tonight. Do you want to tell them why, Andy?' And poor Andy said, 'Ah, cause I smoked dope.' And he said, 'Do you boys smoke dope too?' And I said, 'Hey, not me, I'm goin to Harvard.' That's what I said.

ANDY: I'm a scholar. That's what he said.

Have any of you guys ever shoplifted?

DAVE: I did.

ADAM: When I was really young, I stole some glitter. It was, like, symbolic. I didn't even know it yet. I was around eight years old.

DAVE (*interrupts mercilessly*): I stole because I was really poor. I stole a stick of butter so I could make macaroni and cheese because I had everything but the butter and I stole a pack of cigarettes.

ADAM: How'd you get the cigarettes? They're usually behind the counter?

DAVE: They were, as you were going up the check-out, this is like Buffalo, I like went up and took a pack of cigarettes and then walked back out of the supermarket and I had that flight jacket where, like, you put your hands in your pocket and it was like you could put it around like into the back of the jacket and I just stuck everything in there. And I went up and bought a pack of gum or something. Because at that point I had maybe 95c to my name. To last me a whole week.

ADAM: Ask us who our favorite female vocalists are.

I don't want to ask this. I don't want to ask you this

ADAM: I want to tell you, though.

Who's *your* favorite female vocalist, Adam?

ADAM: Stevie Nicks. Swear to God, man. She kills me.

Andy?

ANDY: Alison From Young Marble Giants.

DAVE: I'd have to say Patsy Kline.

Oh. Who's your favorite drummer, Dave?

ADAM: Just go ahead and say John Bonham.

DAVE: Rick Nielsen. (????)

Who's your favorite existential philosopher?

DAVE: I already had that one. I bow out gracefully.

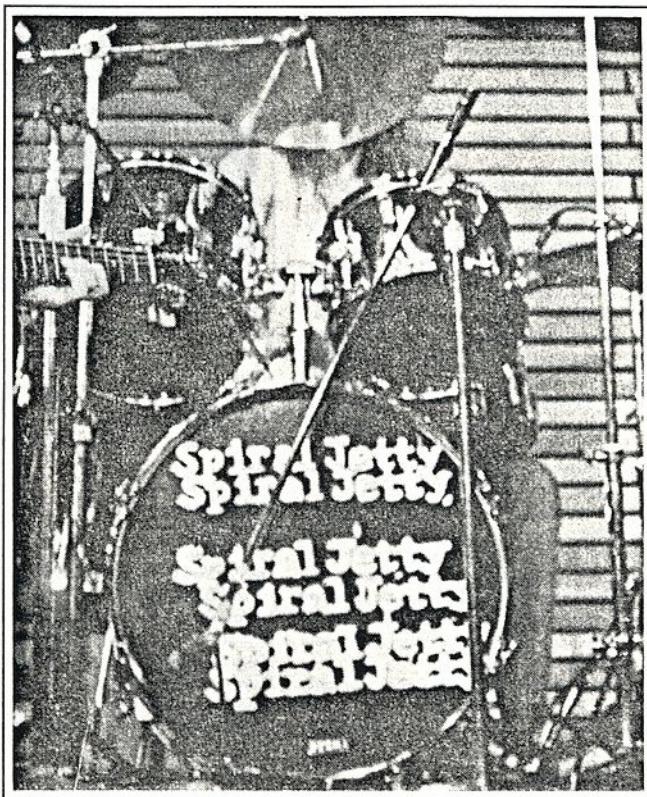
ANDY: Don't look at me, man.

The world is waiting.

ANDY: I don't know. Come back to me.

SPIRAL JETTY:

RHETORIC RADICALLY SUSPENDS LOGIC!



ADAM: Albert Camus. Okay, there we go.

DAVE: I can tell you the most profound statement I ever heard. In all seriousness.

ADAM: What's that, man?

DAVE: (*Obviously having waited all night to spring this one*): Vladimir DeJilas in his book 'The Unperfect Society,' right at the beginning he says, like, you may wonder why I called this book 'The Unperfect Society' as opposed to the Imperfect Society and he's saying, like, if it's called the imperfect society it would, umm, give the impression that society can be perfect, which it can't. Therefore I call it the unperfect society.

ADAM: That's cool man.

DAVE: That's probably one of the most profound statements and I've like drawn on that.

ADAM: You want to know my most profound statement? It's Foucault. He said 'rhetoric radically suspends logic and opens up possibilities of referential aberration.'

DAVE (*STARTS SHOUTING*): OF COURSE HIS MOST PROFOUND STATEMENT I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THE FUCK HE'S TALKING ABOUT.

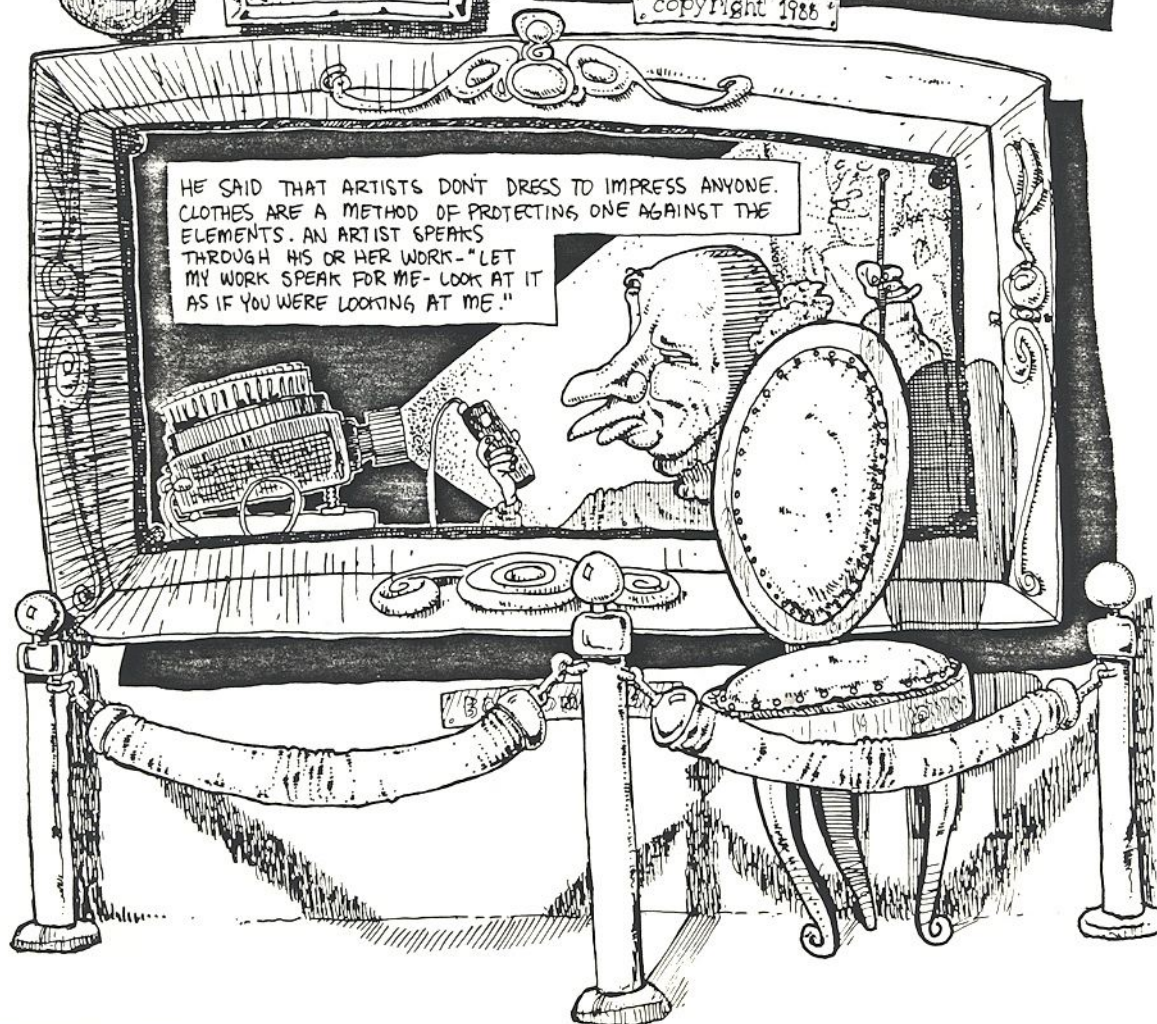
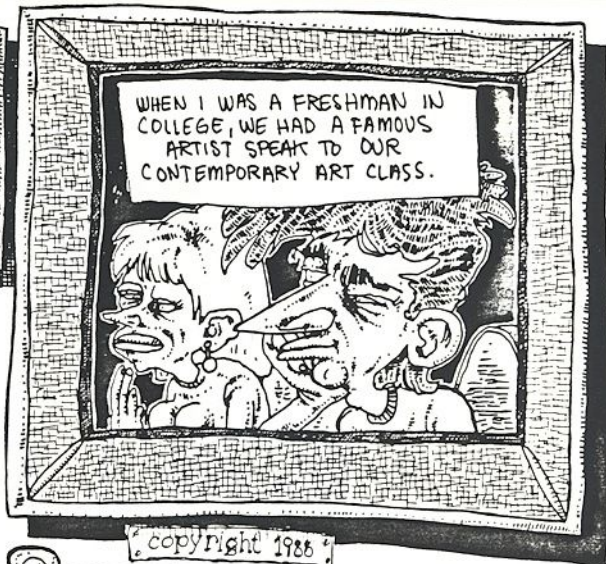
Any words you live by, Andy?

ANDY: Uh, I really liked the book 'Loaded.' I mean, 'Uptight.'

ADAM: Uptight, man.



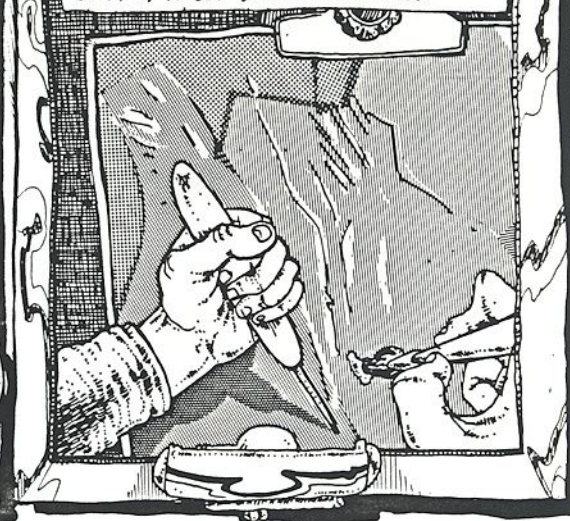
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with
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HE THEN WENT ON (AT LENGTH) ABOUT HIS OWN WORK, ONE PAINTING IN PARTICULAR IRRITATED ME.



THE FAMOUS ARTIST HAD BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH ENAMEL ON CANVAS. AFTER APPLYING THE ENAMEL AND ALLOWING IT TO SET, HE SCRAPED IT OFF WITH AN ICE PICK.

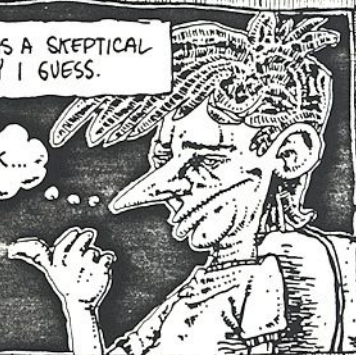


AFTER DISCOVERING THE NEW TEXTURES ON THE CANVAS, IT MADE HIM THINK OF A CONCEPT FOR THE PAINTING.



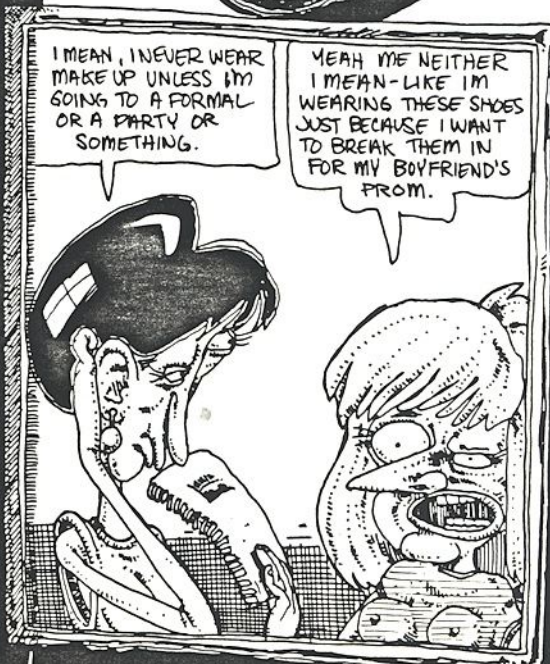
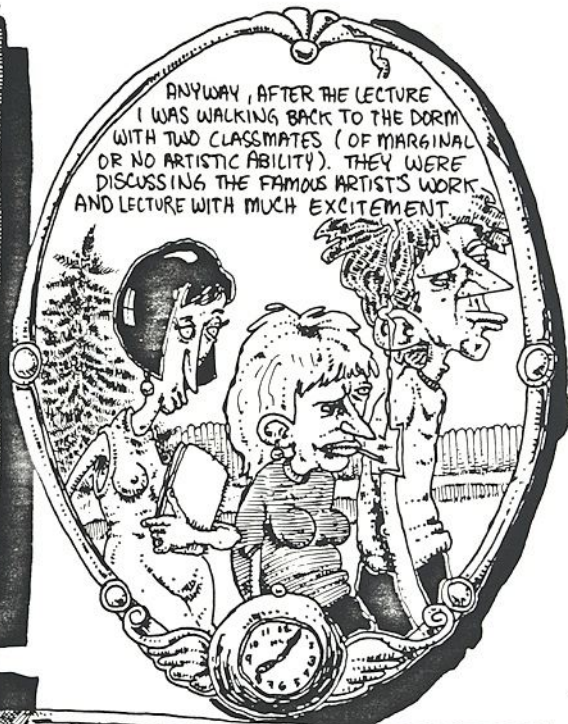
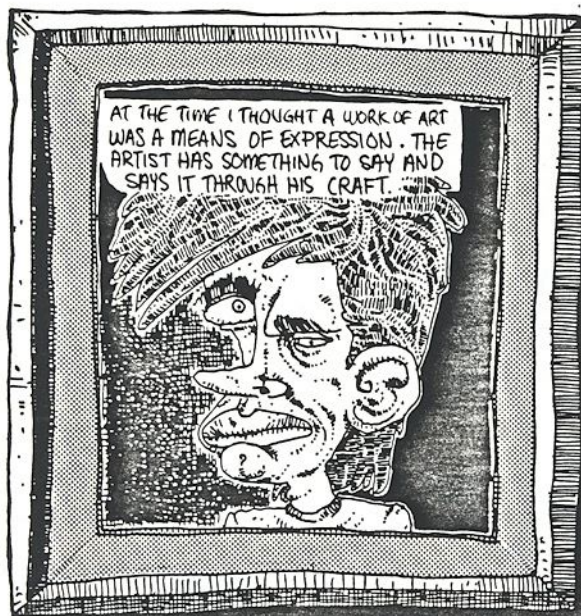
I WAS A SKEPTICAL GUY I GUESS.

DICK...

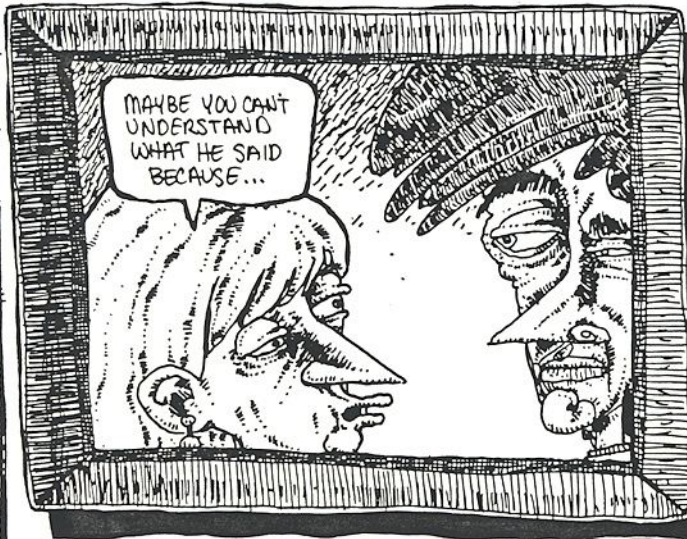


2

read on







NEEDLESS TO SAY, I
DIDN'T AGREE WITH
HER EVALUATION OF
MY COGNITIVE
ABILITIES.



John T. Quinn

the end



the

MORTIFICATION

of

ELVIS PRESLEY

ELVIS

spreads his cheeks in Hell, grimacing by now only the slightest bit; even the unbearable becomes rote, after awhile. A spray of steel-winged butterflies exit the King's anus; a pair of thoroughly Lesser demons with nothing much better to do pause to mock his burden, elbowing each other with wormy elbow-joints protected by bony-carapice shells in stomachs bulged by undigested carrion. They mutter suggestively, purse their thin rotting lips, then finally take turns bending over so one can ram his thumb up the other's smelly ass in crude satire. Elvis remains stoic as the butterflies rise in a blanket of whispery squeaks, sounding like a hundred screws being threaded. by a hundred inexperienced carpenters.

Somewhere in the left corner of Hell (Dante notwithstanding, Hell is not circular, but SQUARE, MAN, SQUARE) a huge movie screen undulates slowly, pale and cancerous, bereft of film, exploitation or art, classic or bomb; not poked by the sharp corners of Joan Crawford's shoulderpads; not adhered to the plumber's helper suction of Brigitte Bardot's lips; not damp or jagged from the brush of the Creature From the Black Lagoon's scales. In life this movie screen was Harry Truman. Now eternity is his to be spent as white without light, that's the price for he who brought white light/white heat to so many, who when the air went (pop) over Nagasaki became the Pop of a whole new age. Now he's almost happy, really, as a movie screen, because there's always hope, isn't there? and he saw in a catalog smuggled to him by a sympathetic harpy that "The Searchers," yes, John Ford's greatest film of all time will be available for rental in 1992, the year when trade barriers drop not only for the European Community but for heaven, hell, and every other Universal Corner as well. He's already got his order in, directing said harpy to fill out

by dave clark

when the drunken teenage demons motor up in their Camaros and Mustangs and pelt him with flaming jujubes, finally sidling up to piss out acid against his pure expanse, he fantasizes of the impossibly soft touch of Natalie Wood's eyelashes against him

the form using one liver-streaked talon dipped in Anne Frank's blood. In the worst of times, when the drunken teenage demons motor up in their Camaros and Mustangs and pelt him with flaming jujubes, finally sidling up to piss out acid against his pure expanse, he fantasizes of the impossibly soft touch of Natalie Wood's eyelashes against him, the tender drift of Wayne's calloused palm. All the demons are in on the joke, but aren't telling: the film scheduled to be screened in Hell is the remake, directed by Jim Brooks and starring Meryl Streep and Dustin Hoffman. BUT then that's Hell for you.

Somewhere east of the Wayne Gacy Memorial Brimstone Barbecue Pit Lassie shivers with fever, chases her haunches around in an endless circle, snapping toothlessly at fleas with titanium shells; if she dares to swallow them they'll just nest in her large colon breeding and fucking and idly gnawing away until the poor dog will have no choice but to tear out its own guts to scratch the itch -- she learned this lesson the hard way, swallowed a couple of the insects three times before she had it figured out. By the way the light reflects off the molten lagoon she's been sipping from she can tell it's nearly time for Timmy's daily visit; if her back leg hadn't been torn off a month ago by Lorne Greene it would certainly be now thumping in pleasure. She loves her master more than any other, but oh, if only he hadn't taken pliers to her teeth in a fit of anger that time, it was the only time she ever nipped him and he even got off anyway, shot glucous mess down her canine throat the way he's been doing since she was just a growing puppy. She imagines she hears the echo of his forlorn whistle, but it's just the screams of the newly-damned arrived by golden parachute finding out there is no Health Plan in Hell or severance pay and no company car and there is the home entertainment system but it's Beta and everyone knows you can never find a good movie on Beta on this coast anyway and, say, a fast-tracker, asks, pulling loose



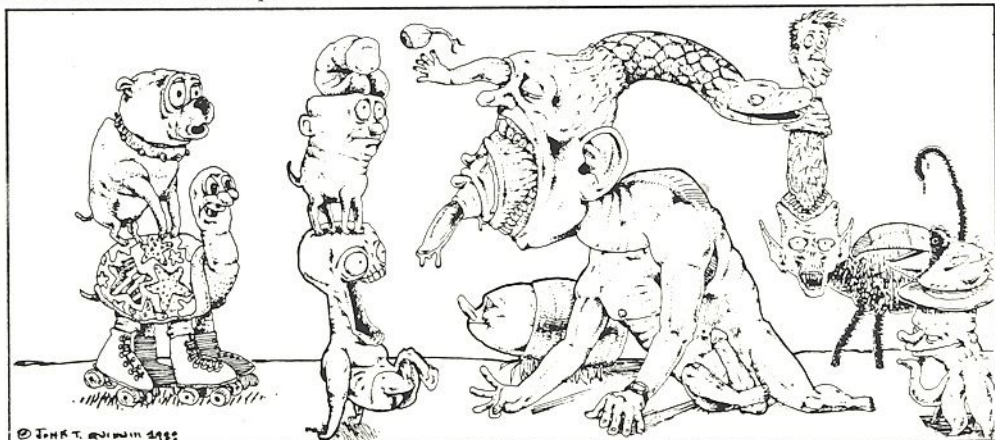
his power tie which is starting to stain from big quarter-sized drops of sweat falling off the tip of his nose, what coast are we on, anyway? And Baal, who's got the shuttle shift on this endless day, looks innocently to the sky and refuses to answer and a senior vice president who's not used to being fucked around with puts a hand on Baal's shoulder -- after the VP crumples to the ground crying and screaming, clutching the cauterized stump at the end of his right arm, Baal smiles a gap-toothed Alred E. Neuman grin, snaps his fingers, and a rolled up schoolroom map blinks into existence and dutifully unrolls itself. Using his long thin, silver-capped penis as a pointer, he wends a path across the orange-peel-flat globe and lands directly in a suburb of Cleveland from which the group is currently "One hundred miles down, one dimension to the right" as he explains in his smug radio announcer voice.

The executives all begin to wail again and it drifts through the charcoal-tasting air and mingles with another noise, a sound like the sweet stench of rotted sugar across a cranberry bog, like the indus-

trial odor of a 16-year-old's menstruation cycle captured in Jordache panties, the kind with the fake denim flap printed along the front .. no, no, it's just good old Louis Armstrong, bleached whiter than the cliffs of Dover by the circling carrion eaters who follow him wherever he goes, in love with the man the music the freewheeling life-affirming sound of Satchmo's horn. The harder he plays the more their bowels loosen in joy, and the more vanilla he becomes. Though there isn't a truly *cruel* bone in his body, he can't wait until Miles Davis gets here. Satchmo doesn't have anything against Elvis, though, thinks he's not such a goddam bad kid if only he wouldn't sweat so much and insist on giving out those little scarves to the daughters and wives of all the Lesser demons and ask them to wrestle each other for him wearing nothing but their pee-stained white cotton panties ... Satchmo grins at the thought remembering a couple of indiscretions of his own involving a rum bottle, a crayfish, and a sweet young boy with a perfect process. The memory triggers a bar of triplets and the shit-storm increases ... Elvis in fact passes a few yards away, it's late afternoon in Hell and time for the daily mortification and crucifixion ritual... he's dragging the rhinestone-studded twelve foot high cross towards the Main Gate, where they'll be expecting him soon (The once he was late taught him the virtue of punctuality). This is certainly not the worst part of Elvis's day. In fact he's come to rather enjoy it; it doesn't hurt any worse than the butterflies and is quite a bit less ignoble -- indeed almost honorable in its implications -- and when



they hoist the cross high enough he can look down across it all the swarms of grubs feeding on the open wounds of little dead girls sent here by uncles who they threatened to tell on the old men whose last meal was from a dogfood can being rended limb-from-limb tied to the saddles of twin chlorine-breathed horses the bleeding violet and orange skies smeared with the wispy but toxic smoke of frying souls the unspeakable visages of the Higher demons and Elvis sees a certain beauty in the kingdom he surveys and when they let him down the Children of Hell will chase the wounded and barefoot interpreter of such songs as "Can't Help Falling In Love With You" and "Spinout" and "Suspicious Minds" and "Teddy Bear" and "Dixie" and "How Great Thou Art" and "Blue Suede Shoes" across the fields of frozen blood in mock adoration, chanting **ALL SHOOK UP ALL SHOOK UP ALL SHOOK UP ELVIS WE LOVE YOU ELVIS WE LOVE YOU ELVIS WE LOVE YOU** and then they'll fall down laughing when he turns his face to hide his tears of relief and joy because even in a world ruled by the one eye, the man is still KING, after all. The man is still King.



RECORDS & TAPES

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE DIN WHEN THE DEMONS HAVE DIED DOWN?

THE GUN CLUB: "Mother Juno" (RED RHINO) That Jeffrey Lee Pierce is a psychopath is acceptable lore. His music never struck me or his admirers as an act, anyway. Where I think he's been misinterpreted, though, is the claim that he invented, or popularized, whatever, "mutant blues," "psychobilly," etc, etc. It's not fair to Pierce, whom I think was following a noble tradition; it's also not fair to Robert Johnson who, had the electric guitar existed in his day, would have made the blues even more psychotic than Pierce could ever dream of.

Enough said in the disclaimer area -- except it's probably a good idea to add that Pierce doesn't seem to figure much in the punk rock spectrum either; much as his admirers love to include him with their more "authentic" punk heroes, this wild man never has had much to do with the standard targets and icons. But he's never rejected his following, so he probably feels like he belongs there, anyway.

The Gun Club's reunion album does not belong there, however, any more than (for completely different reasons, naturally) Alex Chilton's *High Priest*. That Pierce is still a psychopath won't be disputed here, but like a lot of old men, his scope has changed dramatically over the last few years. He's always been one to make epics, and his best stuff is good drama, the bad stuff melodrama. But the crisis (there's always a crisis) was internal, the songs' psychological probes were broad-based -- you got the impression he thought *all* of society was sick and twisted. Robert Johnson's territory, in other words (also a lot of lower east side bands' territory of late, but I wouldn't want to name names. Especially as there are too many to name).

So *Mother Juno*'s personal touches are something of a jolt. Society is as fucked as ever, but Pierce -- maybe because he's cleaned up his act lately -- is a whole lot more distanced from it and, because he's been there, is compassionate for a change. Punk rockers love to turn their back on this sort of stuff (see Lou Reed's *New Sensations*), but Pierce, as noted, is still hysterical, so his audience can pretend not to notice. This is made easier by the return of original Gun Club and ex-Cramps guitarist Kid Congo, and there's also a noisy cameo from Blixa Bargeld. You really can't get any hipper than that these days, right?

Mother Juno is tough, even mean in places, but the rough edges are gone. The record is well-mixed, and a sheen coats every track. This makes for a peculiar effect, like Pierce wailing from the depths of the Grand Canyon (appropriate, actually) but -- especially as you hit the end of side one (or the fourth track, goddamn CD aesthetes) -- the songs begin to sound mournful, more emotional than you'd have a right to expect. In "Yellow Eyes," for example, Pierce plays the



compassionate stabilizer for a fucked-up friend. "The Breaking Hands" comes off like "Knocking on Heaven's Door," for chrissakes, "Hearts," gives us more passionate wailings from both Pierce and guitars, till you hit "In the Port of Souls," every bit the angst-laden epic it sounds like it's going to be. Instead of describing tabloid murders, Pierce thinks about death, period, not even spitting in its face.

Of course, all this is hokey if you want, but the very fact that it's Pierce who's writing and singing changes how you think about it. He's no sell-out; his vocals are way off as usual, and the background noise pervades (Kid Congo is credited with "feedback," of all things. Geez, gimme a break). Cynical as a lot of people must be over this work -- it was oddly ignored, especially when you consider the amount of press given to other minor band reunions -- a reflective but no less sonic Jeffrey Lee Pierce doesn't strike me as something less than his early renditions of psychosis. It's both musically and lyrically gratifying, and not a little scary, still. I'm ready for more. DAVID CROZIER

RECORDS & TAPES

UT -- "In Gut's House" (BLAST FIRST) These three British-based females have been around for the better part of the decade, but no one seems to know who they are, and that's too bad. "In Gut's House" is what would have become of the early Rough Trade post-punk scene (stuff like the Raincoats, Lora Logic, the Slits) if it hadn't faded into oblivion and day jobs and was influenced by the current wave of NYC noise/dissidence bands. Sonic/Skull guitar attack meets desperate impassioned vocals, a definite sense of skewed melody, and the occasional Raincoats-like violin. A few faster tempos would certainly have helped matters, but when Ut clicks -- such as with the singalong harmonies of "Evangelist" or the angry, freeform "Dorty Net" -- there's nothing else like them.

-- APPLESTEIN

LIVE SKULL -- "Dusted" (HOMESTEAD) This band used to suck; meandering jams, heavy art attitude ... but THEN Songs! Singing instead of bad attempts at "vocals!" Godhood! So what do they do now? Put out not only their own best record to date but what's destined to be one of the best goddam records of the year and they celebrate by breaking up. They *deserve* to be stuck in their day jobs forever and ever. But hey, if you thought "Don't Get Any On You" was a deadly slice of noise, then this thing is sure to suck your eyeballs out. Less jamming, more in the way of interesting songs, ever-improving chops: "X'd With The Light" was superb on the last LP, here it sounds like the Empire State Building crumbling in on its own foundations. Could there be any truth to the rumor they broke up in order to reform and sign a contract with SST? (...)

DEBBIE GIBSON -- "Only In My Dreams" (ATLANTIC) You know what always happens when a jerky sexist rock crit gets ahold of a record like this ... well, here, I'll remind you: Infectious pop from a pampered Long Island babe without infections (While Tiffany suffers purple hickies in the dark corners of malls nationwide and doubtless curls w/her Svengali who's got her suing her mom for Independence, this babe developed a meaningful relationship with her Casio). If Madonna had led a sheltered existence, never done the bad rub-a-dub, and listened to more Billy Joel than real rock and roll, she coulda started out like this ... Though "Shake Your Love" and "Only In My Dreams" are heart-rendingly primo girl-pop, no denying it. Despite their transcendence, the gal is not quite the laundered version of Madonna, hype notwithstanding: the rest of the material here, sadly, is not quite as mollifying. Madonna's first album, may we remind you, was a monster. Though "Foolish Beat" is a lot like "Love Don't Live Here Anymore" and "Falling Angel" glitters like ... like ... no, I ain't gonna lower myself ... But what will dear Debbie be like once pierced (And we don't mean earrings)? Like the virgin-bitch saints of old, will her power flee through her ruptured hymen? Or will she piss on her Casio and join Royal Trux? Stay tuned, same bat-channel.

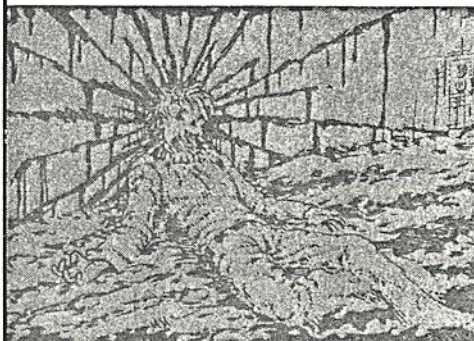
FETCHIN BONES -- "Galaxy 500" (CAPITOL) "Hmm," thinks the A&R dude at Capitol, "Cowpunk. There's an idea. Maybe it'll catch on." Don Dixon bands suck. Major label debut is nothing you haven't heard done better by Blood On The Saddle or Tex and The Horseheads, though I give 'em some credit perhaps for the James Brown R&B cops. But don't all those crackers know those riffs? Lots of chops, but no real reason to exist. Some extra marks for semi-cool guitars and vocals, plus "Chicken Truck" is real cute, a gem amidst a bunch very stupid lyrics. Woulda been really impressive four years ago ... no, it wouldn't have. These people grew up wanting to be "rock and roll gypsies." They deserve to tour with R.E.M.

GODFATHERS -- "BIRTH/SCHOOL/WORK/DEATH" (EPIC) Anyone who's worried if power pop can exist in the late '80s without sounding necrophilic can rest safely after this LP. Their first "real" album (following the "Hit By Hit" compilation), BSW reflects the power of their best single tracks (e.g. "This Damn Nation," "Sun Arise") while promising more of an album's cohesiveness. No need to delve too deep into influences territory (early Who/Small Faces/Dr. Feelgood -- probably Clash and Chords, too). Yes, we've heard it all before. But it doesn't sound that way. Ideologically there's nothing particularly new here either -- but that doesn't mean their complaints against the complacent facism of society are any less valid than they have ever been. Quite frankly, this is mainstream, not alternative,

CASSETTE PICK HIT:

DRIVETIME!

KILLTIME



CLEFT PALATE -- "Big Fat Gash" (BIRD O'PREY) If you're the kind of person who finds themselves *driving a car*, it is your duty to yourself to get ahold of this cassette. Driving to a gig? Driving to work? Driving to your main squeeze's college down in Maryland where you'll arrive on her doorstep just in time to choke on the smoke from the tailpipe of the fratrat who's taking her back to the house for Polaroid Night? Driving yourself to ruin, even? Then, bumpy, you NEED this cassette. NASTY NASTY NASTY guitars, killtime lyrics (as distinguishable as they are hostile -- imagine that, Pussy Galore fans), and the kind of bass/drums bottom that'll loosen your date's anus AND brains to the point of easy entry for yourturd (INSERT ILL-USED METAPHOR HERE). Cleft Palate, by the way, is William Tucker's (Swinging Pistons, Scomflakes) and Christopher Chang (Scomflakes)'s answer to Big Black and Wiseblood and also the logical continuation of where the Scomflakes seemed to be headed before Greg Ginn, knowing a fucking superlative thing when he saw it, stole their rhythm section. Well, if he was smarter, (i.e.: Not from California) he woulda taken the other two as well, and played tapes of Tucker's axe-antics while he faked the notes. Complaints: Some of the lyrics suck, when they're not good. Chang's voice doesn't come across with quite as much character as it does live. So what: OWN THIS TAPE. (P.O. Box 39, Trenton, NJ, 08601)

music. But the Godfathers produce mainstream music the way it *should* be, not necessarily the way it is. And it seems reassuring to know that this stuff can continue while our favorites (Sonic/Pussy/Zombie) try to destroy it. -- GLADSTONE

SONIC YOUTH -- "MASTER DIK" b/w "BEAT ON THE BRAT" (SST) Um ... uh ... um ... cool photos on the interior sleeve ... uh ... \$5.99? ... gee ... "Beat On The Brat" ... ha! ha! Pretty cool ... doesn't sound *bad at all* ... Better production than the original, at least ... what's this other stuff after it? Hmmm ... "Master Dik" ... J. Mascis, I see ... UM, I hear he's supposed to be a guitar god ... can't figure out why ... volumes: godhood? Hey, just picked up the reissue of "Kill Yr. Idols" ... some record, huh? That was \$5.99 too ... I hear the Whitey album has a cover version of "Addicted To Love" on it ... interesting ... yes, very interesting ... Hey, I tried to play "From Here To Infinity" the other day ... didn't have enough time, though ... But,

RECORDS & TAPES

uh, seriously, folks, this *is* the worst record the mighty Youth have ever made, and though that makes it better than 3/4 of the shit I find myself subjected to these days, I would think the joke quite a ways funnier if I was the kinda rock guy who got all my cool records free go ahead, call me anal ... If this was \$3.99, I'd probably call it "indispensable!" That not being the case, You can tape mine if you want to.

DIVINE HORSEMEN -- "Handful of Sand" (SST) A nice little gem of an EP; fans will want it, and those too cheap to take a chance on a whole album worth of the best "conventional" rock band of the end of the decade would wise to take the chance. The live cuts are almost too perfect to be true; immaculate, burning performances, recorded and mixed better than most independent studio records you'll hear this month. Chris D. and Julie mix vocals in a manner Not Of This Earth; Peter Andrus and Wayne James cook on guitars; drummer Rex Roberts has ace taste and grabs your gut still. Donovan cover is nice; having an electric version of "Frankie Silver" (from the acoustic "Divine Horseman" album) is even nicer.

DADDY IN HIS DEEP SLEEP -- "Sleep Alone With Daddy" (REST-LESS RECORDS) Why do I like this so much? I shouldn't. There's nothing really new here, and if Daddy doesn't hit any sour notes, they don't quite transcend either ... But the thing GROWS on you, it really does. Obvious antecedents: X, Go-Gos, Divine Horsemen. If it were just a step or two to the right it would fall into horrifying jangle-guitar R.E.M.-scent territory; if it was just edged a little to the left it would be more than a little similar to "More Fun"-era X -- one of that band's definite peaks. Jeffrey Layton is the best and the worst thing about Daddy: His guitar work shows the same peanut brittle-good taste as Billy Zoom, but his vocals sometimes meander into meaty-mouthed pseudo-tortured Stipe-throat territory. Rhythm guitarist/vocalist Lori Bauer is truly reet, though; I dig her pipes. Drums are both exceptionally well recorded and exceptionally well-played; they massage the adrenaline gland where the songs alone might not. Must note that besides Ms. Bauer and some dude standing next to her (sorry, dude, how about a photo caption next time?) this crew needs some definite sartorial advice ... spike new wave haircut/down vest MUST go, as well as pained-sensitive looking type in foreground. Ah, but it's just the art director/Mussolini in me ...

LAUGHING HYENAS -- "Merry Go Round" (TOUCH AND GO) This is sort of old, true, but on the off-chance one of our devoted readers is missing out on it, here's the scoop: same vein as Killdozer a lot of the time, except better, and there isn't a damn thing wrong with the latter outfit. "Stain" and "Gabrielle" are two of the most intensely harrowing slabs I've been subjected to since, oh, the last review, at least! But seriously, this six-song EP (seven on the tape) is affecting, effective, and it even SWINGS too, in a sarcastically pseudo-jazz kinda way; a lot rarer and more special than just "rocking." If I was the kind of anal retentive Christagauric who handed out ratings, I'd give it an A Minus; B plus for the music, and A plus for some of the most intelligent, passionate, convincingly delivered lyrics to be found since the last Tom Waits album. Seriously. And, yes, even better live.

METALLICA -- "Master of Puppets" (ELEKTRA/ASYLUM) Even older than the above-reviewed gem, I know: yeah, well, I just finally got the tape; scored it as one of my 12 free selections in my latest Columbia Record & Tape Club scam so I could see what all the burbling was about -- some pretty intelligent people of my acquaintance are high on these slopeheads. Well, sorry, vodka, but any-fucking-one who truly DIGS these asswipes has gargantuan boulders tumblin' ALL around inside his cranium. I listened to the first song: thought, "pretty good, well-produced, kinda catchy, crunchy, etc. Great double-bass drum work." Then the second one: "Hm, this would be a lot better if that asshole wasn't singing bad 'heavy' rhymes in a typical cliché metal voice." Third one: "These songs suck, even if they *do* play like motherfuckers! Clichéd recycled riffs! Not a single surprise to be had!" By the end of side: "ZZZZZZZZ." And now all you would-be metal revivalists can kiss my fucking big butt, because I was there during the dunder-head '70s, too, and your stupid imbecilic worship of stripped-down metal shit that's not even as good as its roots -- Zeppelin, Sabbath, Purple, etc --

is EXACTLY the same sort of sociological behavior as yer pathetic parents digging on the '50s revival during the early '70s as a kneejerk fearful reaction to psychedelia. The two Led Zeppelins albums that have held up the best are "III" and "Houses Of The Holy" -- you can actually listen to 'em without losing IQ points, dig? Reviving "Whole Lotta Love" and "Stairway To Heaven" makes you about as clever as those dopes scouring antique shops for poodle skirts and Fiesta Ware. I think you pathetic lumps of shit should go all the way with this business of trying to recreate your adolescence and go back to high school and get beat up by the bad senior dudes in wood shop and get ripped off buying parsley and baby powder instead of real drugs and stay up late at night wondering what it would be like to get laid, contemplating if you were agile enough to suck yourself off and best of all, to REALLY recreate the experience you should move the fuck back home

with mom and dad and let them support you & yr Montrose records ... oh, but you already do all that ...

LL "Master of Irresponsible Rock Criticism" COOL DAVE

HONEYMOON IN RED (WIDOWSPEAK) Listen, it's not my fault I keep going on about this broad Lunch and her various projects -- if you had her taste in collaborators and sweeping talent, I'd pay this much attention to you, too ... this record is a definite sweet nightmare come true. The long suppressed Birthday Party/Lunch project, Lydia gets it on with Rowland S. Howard, who sounded much friskier in 1982 than in These Immortal Souls; new mixes include Thurston Moore. Two sides of mindblowing guitar-grunge, a new one thrown in; I would call this a "Queen Of Siam" for the '80s ... something you'll either ignore or internalize as soon as you hear it like it had always been there in the first place, depending on how deep you insist on burying your head in the sand. The music here doesn't rock for the most part, but it does *throb* and *pulse* and *ooze* ... "We Three Kings" is just a monstrous piece of music, with Thurston turning in an encyclopedia of cacophony that sounds something like the air rushing from a freshly-harpooned customer on the corner's table ... For more Moore/Lunch, also see "The Crumb," the non-LP A-side of the 12-inch (marketing tactics suck ... shit)

THE END OF MUSIC AS WE KNOW IT (ROIR) Mykel Board attempts a No New York for the '80s, and proves ... what? That there's some great & not-so-great bands out there? That No Wave has lost the label (call it generic "Noise" now, one supposes) but codified (or calcified) into an actual *movement*, with differing camps of opinion, etc? I dunno. I suppose a lot of these people bristle at being placed in context. Fuck 'em. Uneven tape, but ultimately worthwhile (not counting the sour sound quality.) Royal Trux are more interesting than the thought of another Pussy Galore record; Honeymoon Killers are a pleasant, arty sort of garage band. Thurston Moore turns in an offhanded, silly cover of "European Son" that I suppose someone thought would help Place It All In Perspective for us ... or else he was just fucking around. Black Snakes contribute two cuts, including a cool version of NYC-victim-anthem "rearview mirror." Krackhouse is worth about as much as Big Stick, I think -- draw your own conclusions. Would have liked to have seen White Zombie here. For real abuse, read the Steve Albini liner notes ... pretty opinionated for a guy who produced The Pixies ...

MEGADETH "Anarchy In The U.K." (CAPITOL.) Kinda reminds me of (Hey) Bing Crosby covering "Hey Jude" way back when. Could Megadeth maybe come up with a song of their own of equal ideological assault for today, 1988? Don't bet on it. Yeah, dudes, Punk sells, but who's buying?

GLADSTONE

ARTPHAG (WANGHEAD) First, look inside the cover: it's an old Snakeout cover turned inside-out and hand-painted. And whoa, Molly, this fucker's wild. Low-budget in all the right ways, it's a twisted, oily mass of jungle drums and plodding ka-chunk ka-chunk riffs on over-distorted guitars. 20 songs in all and most all worth your time. Rocks like a Jerry Lee Lewis wedding night.

FRAMPTON

RECORDS & TAPES

ANOTHER GREEN WORLD

THE SMITHEREENS "Green Thoughts" (ENIGMA/CAPITOL) Despite a willingness to ride the bandwagon of well-wishers, it should be obvious to anyone by this point that the Smitheereens were never really a New Brunswick band. Not that they didn't play here (at the Court) as much as any band that actually lived here, but they were never really a part of what was going on musically. They were always following their own plan, moving at their own pace, chasing their own demons.

The same can be said about them today, on a national level, as shown by the release of their second full lp, appropriately on Capitol's classic rainbow label. What piqued my interest enough to realize this was a blurb in one of those mall record store tip sheets. Smear thick was the typical PR shmutz calling them "that garage band meets Rolling Stones edge." Huh? Not that the same noncommittal schmear hasn't been put over everything else, but unlike other acts (Flesh for Lulu, Big Pig, Wild Seeds, Will & The Kill were in the same sheet), The Smitheereens, "one of America's premiere young rock bands" (how ridiculously wrong!) can't really be slotted in an '80s bullshit quadrant. Surprisingly enough, this doesn't seem to have affected their chances with many AOR programmers & general promo people, who (I've always suspected) don't really give a damn about music at all. Sometimes, I guess, payola can promote good things as well as bad (Which is not to implicate the Smitheereens -- any record in the top 40, or nearing it, is there at least partially thanks to palm-grease. It's a fact).

The Smitheereens are somewhat aware of all this and it works to their advantage. In an age where the teenager as a social force is post-mortem, the better bands are ones that are unafraid to embrace maturity and intelligence. This hasn't worked against them in the typical adolescent mentality that likes the Fabulous Thunderbirds or ZZ Top. Don't cringe; like it or not, this is the realm they're working in now.

It's in this context that I see *Green Thoughts* as a very good album. Not a great album by any means, but a GOOD album. It is a celebration of "good," of true quality, and while it may not seem ground-breaking, like their own faves the Flaming Groovies, or DMZ, it will be as worthwhile in 20 years' time as it is now.

For the Smitheereens, as a band, this LP shows they've ripened -- the musical personalities of Messrs. Bahjak, Diken, Mesaros & diNizio that *Especially For You* hinted at appears boldly here. As a songwriter, diNizio's progress is evidenced by the inclusion of "Elaine" (A Beauty and Sadness-era tune) along with a selection of otherwise brand-new songs. Because of the fact that most of the lp was written or completed within a five week period late last Autumn, the record is much more cohesive-



sounding than the first lp. I wouldn't recommend Pat try and repeat this attempt, though. What he gains in flow he loses in lyrical aptitude -- none of the songs are as cleverly worded as "Behind The Wall Of Sleep," "Strangers When We Meet," or "Groovy Tuesday." As the title might suggest, the album is both somber and pensive. At its best, in "Especially For You" (co-written by Bahjak -- let's see some more of his stuff in the future), it is also more determined than depressed.

Despite a willingness to place itself on a creative second-string, with direct references to Capitol stalwarts Beatles ("Something New") and Beach Boys ("If The Sun Doesn't Shine"), this is a strong piece of work. And a good album, too.
ERIC GLADSTONE

KILLDOZER "Little Baby Bunting" (TOUCH & GO) Killdozer is one of the most aptly-named bands in existence, and are in fact as mean as a possessed piece of heavy equipment. This new record sports an x-ray of Ed Gein's head on the back cover; subtlety is not their forte. Not Michael Gerard's voice growling like a certain down-town New Brunswick schizophrenic and the drums and guitar that fight for the space in-between. The storytelling is the key: "The Puppy" and "3/4-Inch Drill Bit" stand out here with yet more twisted tales from America's heartland. Favorite though: "A Kiss," with lyrics "at the hospital, they said I was drinking urine and dancing in my own feces... NOT TRUE! NOT TRUE! though I have been known to take a nip from the toilet" Tough to be beat. Also another of their infamous covers, this time "I Am I Said," which is funny enough, but it's about time folks realize the Dozer has a lot more on the ball. Yip!
SCOTT FRAMPTON

EUGENE CHADBOURNE -- "Kill Eugene!" (PLACEBO) Ex-Shock-ably Chadbourne has been churning out more records than ol' Jandek of late, and nothin' could be finer (He lives in North Carolina, okay?) This one's more of the chaotic same, filled with radio bits, live performances and even phone conversations (like the Chad trying to get a gig in Nashville, where the club owner offers him a hardcore matinee). Chadbourne can play in just about any style, and does, including acoustic renditions of "Eight Miles High" and "Purple Haze" and "Oh Yoko" that are more listenable than you

might think. Not much use here of the Electric Rake, but there is a solid group of originals to keep you going until the next Chadbourne barrage. In the meantime, check out his "Lucifer Sam" and wonder *what* North Carolina does to people.
S. F.

THE FALL "The Frenz Experiment" (RCA) Whereas most rock and roll is about muscle -- and the best of it is about viscera -- The Fall seem to be about sinew, which is this record's forte. From the bizarre interior dramas of "Athlete Cured" and "Oswald Defence Lawyer" to the self-conscious but equally wonderful cover of "Victoria," The Fall twist the old corpse of rock and roll into some stunning variations by shifting the patterns than pop music works on. Mark E. Smith's half-spoken, dislocated vocals come across as those overheard bits of conversation one simply cannot place, but the phrases are repeated in Smith's own odd rhythm to form the "hooks." In a like fashion, the guitar riffs seem, at times, to separate themselves from the rest of the song, and the drum beats, as in "Carry Bag Man," push on too insistently, as to coax the rest of the process along. Sugar Ray Robinson used to talk about getting inside someone's rhythm and disrupting it; that's what's going on here. If you get the chance, scam yourself a copy of the import, if only for the bonus 7-inch with "Mark II Sink Us" and "Bremen Nacht Run: and the nicer cover that isn't so RCA shiny."
S.F.

CHROMED TA

How Hip Can A SECONDARY SOURCE BE?

BY DAVID CROZIER

MOST MAGAZINES barely register above newspapers in terms of value, permanence. You read an interesting piece of work, you're anal retentive, you clip the newspaper article and file it away, maybe you save the whole magazine. For somewhat baffling reasons, old issues of magazines have in this collector's age taken on an astonishing level of over-inflated worth, but I in general throw mine away as you do yours. What those '70s era *Rolling Stones* and *Sports Illustrated*s are doing in my folks' attic eludes me, but it's certain the silverfish are having a better time with the Mick Jagger and Pete Rose profiles than I ever will.

But *Re/Search* magazine, to get only moderately heavy, really does transcend most everything offered at your friendly newsdealer (What's that? Yes, a *newsdealer*. You could but any of 200 different magazines there, plus esoteric comic books, erotic literature, detective novels, cough drops, gum, decent cigarettes, and a good cup of coffee -- but you don't see any spoken word songs about them).

How *Re/Search* outshines other specialty magazines is best explained by examining its approach. For one, it isn't about a specific subject, e.g. music, film, art, books -- although it covers all of these and more. It isn't specifically a critical rundown, interview spotlight, or source guide, although it exhaustively covers these and other areas. It has no rigid boundaries, so format doesn't block the flow of ideas. Because the subject matter is relatively obscure and thus poorly covered by other media (or did I get that thought backwards?), every issue will at the very least illuminate if not altogether enlighten the reader on the subject. Most crucially, the magazine's editors, V. Vale and Andrea Juno, aren't nearly so interested in their own words as those of their subjects. Space so often reserved for "This Artist/Subject Is Great/Significant, And Here's Why" is virtually absent, leaving the readers with an immense wealth of information presented in both interviews with, and excerpted material from, the source. When you've downed an entire issue, you're likely to have a greater

RE PRANKS!
SEARCH



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TO THE LITERATURE OF THE 1970s
AND 1980s
A GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE OF THE 1970s
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AND 1980s

litterature

THE DAY OF
CREATION,
J.G. BALLARD,
Farrar, Straus,
Giroux, \$17.95

If you're a member of the growing Ballard cult, you already have this newest novel from the writer we all know stands second to none in importance, incisiveness or scope of imagination in the second half of the 20th century. How many lives has *Crash* illuminated, anyway?

Ballard is perhaps more difficult to love than Wm. S. Burroughs, his American counterpart, because despite his works' insinuating eroticism and wild vision, he always remains, even in the heat of obsession, chill and removed in a way a relatively hot-blooded Yank like Burroughs eschews.

Day Of Creation is no doubt bound to get a lot of notice -- Time magazine already devoted a full-page review to it, since Ballard has now been Spielbergized with last year's semi-okay adaption of *Empire Of The Sun*. Well, this one won't disappoint the curious or the converts. Ballard careers between the oppressive desolation of

The Drowned World and the wild surrealism of *The Unlimited Dream Company* to produce something thoroughly different from either -- a drive through the pits of an arid desert hell that ends in a flood that signals not the decay of *Drowned World* but redemption, hope cleansing, all that stuff.

Between this and Burrough's uplifting close to *The Western Lands*, one wonders what's becoming of our greatest fatalists...

BETWEEN C&D

Edited by Joel Rose & Catherine Texier, Penguin Books, \$7.95. Some pretty wild stuff here, the best of it served up by Dennis Cooper (not surprisingly) and Kathy Acker (very surprisingly). LitSlut Tama Janowitz makes a mercifully brief, copy-selling appearance with something that seems to have been trimmed from *Slaves* (You mean that book was actually edited?). Very rect stuff though from David Wojnarowicz, and Texier, as well as a racist piece of shit that seems to have had good intentions, if no skill to speak of.



understanding of the subject than you could obtain in the form of biography, bibliography and PBS special combined.

This is not the popular arts being discussed here, obviously. Rather it's devoted to topics not even discussed enough to be *misunderstood* by your average media glut-ton. Issue topics range from the very broad (an issue exploring what is termed "Industrial Culture," which is too loosely defined to describe here) to the very specific (interviews with and works by British writer J.G. Ballard). Either way you get in-depth coverage. There's room in this setting for smugness, which could easily pervade *Re/Search*, and chances are a good number of readers would be satisfied -- delighted, even -- with it, so common is we-were-here-first mentality in the underground. Certainly Vale and Juno don't altogether avoid elitism, and their subjects occasionally spill over into the territory, but for the most part that attitude, like deep critical analysis, remains in the background in an attempt to keep the presentation to the point.

The Ballard issue is particularly useful as introductory material for an author who, despite being prolific and popular in Europe, has been slighted here. The issue works its way through three excellent and diverse interviews and follows with several fiction and non-fiction works by the author, along with supplementary biographical and critical work, plus a complete bibliography. It's a tremendous compilation, so arranged that you're first acquainted with the author, his characteristics and philosophies *before* coming into contact with the source material. Thankfully, the critical supplement is delegated to the back, and limited to only 20 of the issue's 175 pages. Critical commentary, generally provided by outside sources, is *Re/Search's* weakest point; whether or not and why something constitutes art is as boring as it sounds (still reading?); *Re/Search* presupposes the worth in an artist or topic, and explores the humanity, or lack thereof, behind the art. Ballard's insights of society and man, particularly his fear that society is *too* healthy, and the future will simply be boring -- his métier is science fiction -- are often as revelatory as his fiction.

The recent issues, *Incredibly Strange Films* and *Pranks!*, are both massive collections of essays and interviews. The former is a study of films in "bad taste" (sexploitation, gore, grade Z science fiction), for the most part allowing the critically-ignored directors to defend or expand upon their films. Covering hundreds of films as well as elaborating on genres of small interest (biker films, women in prison films, educational films -- the last a particularly interesting topic), this is mind-numbing -- one can become an expert on the subject in a matter of days. It's almost unfair to those who really worked for their knowledge through endless trips to scummy theaters and low-grade video outlets.

Pranks! is a less focused territory, discussing the role

Dave wants you to *USE* these coupons. really.

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of the "prank" as an artistic or political statement, a method for subverting the media, or an action of pure mischief. Much of this work -- and it's the largest *Re/Search* to date -- may leave one viewing the world as an intentional or extended joke. Everything is suspect: new age music, existentialism, the Bible, you name it. Of course, all this fun inevitably leads to a lot of stupidity and immaturity: Many of the subjects aren't so much pranking on society as displaying random cruelty, but artless degenerates aside, there's genius here. Jeffrey Valance's letter writing project in which he asked (ostensibly as part of an art history project) every senator to make a drawing of something they liked, produced a political statement he couldn't have imagined. Interviewer Boyd Rice exclaims upon looking at the results (33 senators dutifully and rather pathetically responded), "This is what our people in government are doing -- they're just sitting in their offices doodling." The media pranks, such as Alan Abel's staged wedding of Idi Amin (150 reporters covered it) are even more satisfying and appropriately vicious. As a thesis, the prank as art doesn't quite float -- pranking is ubiquitous, and art isn't, or shouldn't be -- but that aside, this is an excellent collection of human brains slyly at work, kind of a hip answer to Studs Terkel's *Working*.

Any issue of *Re/Search* makes a good starting point into Vale and Juno's thus far unending source of off-kilter subjects. If the price doesn't scare you off (around \$15 a pop), you'll be pleased to note all issues are available, and well worth the money. Dive in.

excerpts from the bulgarian secret m&m torture trick

BULGARIA ON \$17 A DAY

BEING A POET MEANS JACK SHIT

IN WHICH THE PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN MYTH IS DISPROVED AND THE ARTIST MUST COME TO GRIPS WITH HIS VACANT SPOILED CHILDHOOD AT THE HANDS OF AN ALL-TOO SOBER

FATHER

The tears that burn through my cheeks like the passing eyes boring through my head, looking back they can never hate me as much as I want to be like them. This is the unfair trade-off that typifies Bulgaria.

by
samuel
nathan
shiffman

I had known dave from his almost daily appearance in the pharmacy/liquor store I worked at. He would load up on cases of Coca-Cola, potato chips and Snickers bars, then pay for it with the credit card they had given him for emergency use only. At this time he was on academic probation from Rutgers, but he had decided to take a summer course so he could keep his dorm room (a great place to hold parties). Rutgers finally got rid of him, but not me. I would see him at hardcore shows, beady eyes, sarcastic *i'm above it all* smile, trendy long hair. His stares burn through me. I just fucking hate him. His image is one of the many that follow me everywhere. It was no surprise after not seeing him for months to spot him intertwined with a 4'9" tall, chubby political college-groupie. He had been spiritually awakened to the suffering of those without an emergency-use-only credit card. His vacant eyes stare at me now. They betray the L.S.D. nostalgia of not being part of a time long since past. His eyes have grown even more beady, his conscience serene (the influence of Coca-Cola long since washed out). Glowing from his self-righteous smirk he weaves through the political functionaries. My eyes scream *Bulgaria* at him. But he is entwined with his 4'9" tall neurotic chubby political girlfriend. Her I could care less about: girls like this are doomed before they were born. Their cause is greater. Everyday is a struggle to transcend their bodies. They are always secure in the mirror of self-love, touching inner pain. They have won the battle of SELF. Her train stops in central america. For him it is the M&M torture trick.

The tears that burn through my cheek like the stares through my brain. When I look in the mirror there is no redemption. No peasants fall to my feet kissing my hand in dumb gratitude. My liberation theology is strapped into a chair of a

small interrogation room in the secret headquarters of the Bulgarian state police. No chubby neurotic girls will stare in the mirror in an attempt to pull me out. A slot in the ceiling opens. All I can do is sit and await my fate.

"As far as I'm concerned, this whole story is anticlimactic," sneered my father. Please, people are dying it's duty to help them ... we who have so much. "You've been building up to this for some time." "At least we had a sense of intellectual foundation in our time." "You will fail, and to a much greater degree than we ever could." Hey Dad, why the fuck weren't you born an alcoholic factory worker? You could have left me some sort of legacy dear father. You would smack me around at the slightest provocation whipping a beer can at my head. I would have grown up proud in your image. Why don't you peer at me through johnny walker eyes with the hatred of something you don't understand. Why weren't you an alcoholic factory worker dear father? I wish I could look in the mirror and see my own destruction as clearly as I see yours, in Bulgaria as the ceiling opens wider I can finally smile.

One should always be silent in the face of oppression. It is the greatest literary badge an artist can wear. It is the french kiss of western intellectualism. True oppression gives one a reason to a genuine smile. There are no mirrors in the iron bloc. the men all have moustaches, the women all smile and the bear sits in the park with an acoustic guitar singing Neil Young songs off key. If my dad had been an alcoholic he would have told me. I wouldn't have wasted my whole fucking life finding this out for myself.

Smokey Robinson sang "A taste of honey's worse than none at all" (I second that emotion) Joey Ramone sang "Bam bam ba bam ba bam bam bam bam" (I wanna be sedated) Both of these songs are readily available in Eastern Bloc countries on the black market. With these songs I can chart my rise and fall. My greatest moment embraced in a french

SAM SHIFFMAN is the most handsome man in NJ. Or the ugliest.

excerpts from the bulgarian secret m&m torture trick

kiss both songs blaring at me through the eyes of the tongue of my father as he whipped a can of Budweiser at my face.

Touhas is a yiddish word. Goys pronounce it Tush. Tush is a kitsch word. According to Milan Kundera Czechoslovakia was fled of all kitsch in 1968. Poland is full of kitsch but no tush. Bulgaria has neither but the United States has both. with this information as readily available as it is it is a small wonder that there are so few Bulgarian help organizations. College students riot the world over in honor of their south american bretheren. Palestinians are in the hearts and minds of all. What of my beloved Bulgarian brothers? Who will rally with we for them? Smokey Robinson? Joey Ramone? The typical idiot savant college student will let himself be led by the nose rings of crusty sixties dropout psuedo-political organizers. Their cry is *Oppression*. My cry to them is *Go Fuck Yourself*. They lead the marches and discussion groups. I am hatred of them through a mirror. One can only know oppression from my side. I am Bulgaria they are shit.

Some might accuse me of being a pseudo-intellectual wannabe. Of the poetry community I have no need. To be a washed-up 30-year-old alcoholic or ex-alcoholic serves no great vision of suffering and pain. You have no great gift which you're bestowing on us. Out of touch with a generation which just as soon would smash all your goddamn heads in. They will look at you as I do and their eyes will betray you as mine betray all of you. They scream *fraud*, *wash-out*, *liberal* and worst of all *OLD*. They are the longest-running movie in Bulgarian movie theaters. This revolution has no need for middle-aged poets.

This is all their is.



My eyes scream *Bulgaria* at him. But he is entwined with his 4'9" tall neurotic chubby political girlfriend. Her I could care less about: girls like this are doomed since before they were born.



NEXT ISSUE:

† interviews with

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† more of the fab work of

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Where the (would-be) stars let down their hair and act just like they imagine real people must ...



Another melancholy eve at the Court Tavern: the band's have stopped playing, the bar's out of Budweiser, and they just don't make illegal intoxicants the way they used to...



New Brunswick's token happy group, the Blases (pronounced biases) defines satisfaction: a Budweiser and a night out at the Court. And thou.



LSD: New Brunswick in quintessence, like it or not. These friends of the devil sport cool shirts, awesome tattoos, earrings galore, and, uh, never mind, enough already. Turn the page—Not so fast!—we didn't say Satan says.