

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

gauntlet

VOLUME 47 | ISSUE NUMBER 1 | FEBRUARY 21 | 2006

RAD IAT ION POI SON ING

gary burns and jim brown

document suburban sprawl

at the calgary international

film festival page 15



Your religion is stupid

Still rocking after 25 years, Bad Religion return to Calgary

Bad Religion music interview

Chris Beauchamp
Editor-in-chief

Most bands don't last much longer than their proverbial 15 minutes. Whether it's the pressures of success, exploding egos or the vagaries of the drug- and booze-fuelled music industry, most are lucky to still be speaking to each other by their third or fourth album. It's no small feat, then, for any group to pass the quarter-century mark—and to do so from within the confines of a genre as potentially limiting as punk rock is even more impressive.

Formed by four Los Angeles high school students in 1980, Bad Religion has withstood their own test of time, producing 13 full-length albums and touring the world during their 26-year career. The road hasn't been without a few hairpins however, including a number of member and label switches that led the band through changes in their goals, their sound and their songwriting.

"You don't go too far out of the box," says BR bassist Jay Bentley from his home in Vancouver. "How big can that box that contains Bad Religion be before it becomes something else? That's the thing, trying to think of things that haven't been done. When the song is born, I think it's pretty straight-forward. You start thinking, 'What can I put in this that will make it something different?' And those are the things that are unexpected for everyone."

Bentley describes himself as the first "true defector," but notes that the other current members reside all over North America. At least partly, he attributes Bad Religion's staying-power to this ability to pursue lives outside of the band.

"The lives we've built up for ourselves have been built up with Bad Religion in them," he says. "I mean, we've been doing this since we were 15 years old."

Flirting with mainstream success during the mid-'90s punk explosion that saw label mates the Offspring propelled into rock and roll stardom, Bad Religion left Epitaph Records to sign with Atlantic. The move to a major label also left behind Epitaph owner and founding BR member, "Mr. Brett" Gurewitz, who publicly said he needed to focus on Epitaph, but was also known to have accused his band mates of selling-out. The loss of Gurewitz disappointed fans used to the songwriting dynamic between Gurewitz and singer Greg Graffin.

Although the switch brought on board ex-Minor Threat guitarist Brian Baker, and saw some interesting developments for the band—including songs about Graffin's personal



courtesy Sean Murphy

They might look like a bunch of your dad's friends standing around in an alley, but Bad Religion are still totally punker than you.

life, guest producing stints by Ric Ocasek and Todd Rundgren, and big ticket tours with bands like Blink 182—many older fans felt something was missing. Bad Religion never really took off in the mainstream like Rancid or Green Day, and in 2001, the band moved back to Epitaph.

"The one thing we seem to always be able to surmount as a band, is that irreconcilable differences, musical differences, never really happen," says Bentley. "You just kind of have these life moments where you go: 'Fuck you guys. I'm going to do this.'"

Gurewitz rejoined the band in 2002, co-writing a whole batch of new songs for *The Process of Belief*, and the old sound was back, though more mature, more developed—and with their latest album, 2004's *The Empire Strikes First*, more focused on their target. In this case: the neo-cons in the White House. Bentley admits, however, that punk hasn't had as much of an impact on partisan politics as some might like to believe.

"It really didn't do anything, did it?" he says, chuckling. "[NOFX's Fat] Mike did Punk Voter, and we put out records and we all went on tour and said 'This guy's a dick,' and it didn't do anything. It's much like when people said, 'You need to see *Fahrenheit 9/11*. It'll change your opinion of Bush,' and I said, 'I'm not the one who needs to see it.'"

With work underway on an as-yet-untitled album and a cross-Canada tour with the Dropkick Murphys

scheduled, Bad Religion will have plenty to do for the next year. And with a world full of problems, there will be plenty of subject matter for

Gurewitz and Graffin to address over the next few—or 25.

"Usually what we're talking about is just what it's like to be a human on

the planet," says Bentley. "And that doesn't have a time frame."

Bad Religion play at the Calgary Stampede Corral on Thurs., Sept. 28 with the Dropkick Murphys.

when is the last time
a movie made you
beg for mercy?

jackass number two

jackassmovie.com
copyright © 2006 by paramount pictures and mtv networks,
a division of viacom international inc. all rights reserved.

WARNING: The stunts in this movie were performed by professionals, so neither you nor your dumb little buddies should attempt anything from this movie.

in theatres september 22