

HEY FOLKS, AS PROMISED, HERE'S THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF THE BAD RELIGION INTERVIEW, THIS TIME FEATURING LEAD VOCALIST GREG GRAFFIN. TODD GETS GRILLED ON THE MOON LANDING CONSPIRACY THEORY BUT GETS SMALL VINDICATION AS HE LOCATES A COMPLETELY MANUFACTURED WORD IN A BAD RELIGION SONG - (ANY GUESSES?) - AND HE NOW HAS HIS UNABRIDGED WEBSTERS DICTIONARY SIGNED BY THE ONE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION PUNK. INTERVIEW BY TODD AND HOLLY PICTURES BY TODD

[The tape starts in the midst of an internet discussion] Greg: With the internet you can withdraw. You can hide in your own little cell and pretend you're actually part of what's happening. But all you're doing is separating yourself from society when what we need today more than ever is to bring people together. That's why people talk to me about what the Warped Tour means to me. It's so much more than just the fact that we're kind of like the grandparents at a family reunion which

air if it has to. It has gills so it can breath water if it has to The idea that it's succeeded for so long is because it's so adaptable. It doesn't matter what environment is present. It can make out a very good living and in that respect, Bad Religion... It doesn't matter what music is popular, Bad Religion is able to succeed because of our versatility. Todd: I have another biology question. Darwin, when he did the evolution of species, said that the main component that separated animals from humans was the use of tools - well, that's one of his beliefs - but he said this while watching a bird break open an oyster onto a rock. Wouldn't the rock be a tool?

Greg: Yeah, probably, but it becomes a matter of manufacturing a tool. A chimpanzee can take a twig and use it as a tool by dipping it down into an ant hole and then licking the ants off of the twig, but a chimpanzee takes a twig off a tree and breaks the little twigletts off and manufactures it into a long, straight stick, so in that respect there's manipulation. So that whole concept of manufacture/manipulation all depends on the Latin root. Man - M., A., N - which means hand. So, there's probably a series of stages of tool making and eventually you have to manipulate an object.

Holly: Do you still write your songs on a piano?

wasn't satisfied with Cal State. I wanted to be on a flagship university and a real major research institution and that's why I transferred to UCLA. When we started Epitaph Records, we never meant it to be the DIY flagship that people turned it into. We did it because it was a place to... It was us guys who needed a label to stick on our record. That's all it was and we stuffed records in the sleeves and mailed 'em to people and brought 'em in our trunk to the record stores. It wasn't a functioning label. Atlantic is an institution. It's got history and more importantly it's got the distribution network in place that's been there for thirty years that we can take advantage of to get our records heard much better than we could on Epitaph at that time. I'm a fan of getting my music heard by as many people as possible and the misconception is that you have to cater to their style of marketing and I think that anyone that has listened to Bad Religion will see that we stayed true to our integrity from the past. We make music that makes people think. That didn't stop when we signed to Atlantic.

Todd: Didn't you remix "Twenty-First Century Digital Boy"

Greg: That was actually Brett's idea. He though it was a good idea since this record was going to be heard by more people than ever. To have a tie in with our past. I'm pretty

## THE FLOW IS GETTING STRONGER WITH SWAND INCRIMENTS OF THAT

is very meaningful on an emotional level but it also is the new punk scene. That's where we've come with our punk scene. We have people who are active. I mean, literally, they get up off their ass and they come together for social reasons. That is so rare today. They're active, they come together with a common ideology and there's definitely room in that world for intel-lectual freedom and intellectual betterment.

Holly: Is the Warped Tour the largest tour you've

Greg: Well, we've played bigger ones in Europe but in America, yeah.

Holly: Jay told us that Bad Religion in German was Lake of Religion.

Greg: Yeah, Bath Religion. Bad means bath but they call little lakes baths.

Todd: So, just for the tape - Name, instrument and

degree. Greg: Instruments? I play a lot of instruments but in

the band... You know who I am. Holly: I know, we need to document this for the read-

Greg: This is Greg Graffin. I'm the singer for Bad Religion and I have a bachelors degree in anthropology, a masters degree in geology and I'm three fourths of the way there on a PhD in zoology.

Holly: So you're still going to Cornell, right? Greg: Well, I've taken the last couple of years off because of band crisis and family crisis and a lot of traveling.

Holly: Are you married?

Greg: Not anymore. I'm divorced. Holly: Do you have children?

Greg: Yes, two little children that I have joint custody

of. A six year old and a four year old.

Todd: Can you define Bad Religion in terms of an animal or an organism that has a long fossil history?

Greg: Yeah, Polypterus is the genus of a fish that still lives today that has a very ancient fossil record as well. But it still is a very viable, functioning organism in our modern biodus (sp?).

Todd: Is it in the family of the ichthyosaurus by any chance? Did it spawn from that?

Greg: No, that's a reptile. This is a true fish but it's a fish that's multi-purpose. It has lungs so it can breath Greg: Uh huh.

Holly: Have you ever written a song on anything strange or obscure?

Greg: Just acoustic guitar or piano. In fact, I put out a solo record last year and that was all just piano and acoustic guitar.

Todd: Reflex just wrote a long, positive review of it.

Greg: Oh, he liked "American Lesion"?

Todd: Yeah

Greg: Oh, great. That's great. Yeah, he's a friend of

Holly: What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received?

Greg: That's a tough one. Advice has always gone in one ear and out the other for me. It really has.

Holly: What's the most disposable class you took at

Greg: Well, I did a lot of teaching at Cornell but I took most of my classes at UCLA. That's where I got my masters and my undergraduate. The most disposable class? I hate to say it because I'm very liberal minded but I'd have

to say it was black English. Todd: [laughter] Why is that?

Greg: Because it was just stupid. We were learning ebonics

Todd: So you weren't reading a lot of Bell Hooks or The Invisible Man or anything?

Greg: No.

Todd: [laughter] You were just learning black English? Greg: Yeah, it was awful. I hope the class has gotten bet-

ter over the years.

Greg: I took it 'cause it was an elective and it's like, "What the fuck. I need a little break." I'm not opposed to the study of ebonics, I just think that the class I took sucked

Todd: I have a question and don't take it the wrong way, but why Atlantic? What was the thought process behind getting off of Epitaph and coming to Atlantic? And it's not even a major/minor type thing.

Greg: I think it's very similar to go... My first semester in school was at Cal State Northridge. The reason was because I didn't have good enough grades to get right into UCLA where I wanted to go so I went to Cal State

much a go along with the flow guy, you know? If the band wants to do something, I'll do it.

Holly: If there was no Bad Religion, where would you like to be right now? More than likely it would be doing something with what you've studied I'm sure.

Greg: Yeah, I'd probably be an associate professor or something like that.

Holly: Do you think that you might get more into that after, or if, the band does end?

Greg: I don't know. It's hard for me to say. This isn't a hobby for me but academia isn't either so I think there's room in my life to do both and I think, eventually, I would like to not have to tour so much and maybe spend some more time doing academia. That's logical I think, I almost went to NAU in fact

Todd: Oh really?

Greg: I got accepted to the PhD program there but I chose Cornell instead because D.K. Elliot is a professor there who works on fossil fishes and he accepted me as his student. And I visited it and everything.

Todd: It's a beautiful place. For literature it's really good,

actually.

Holly: What band do you wish never existed not because they were a bad band but because of the imitators that they

Greg: I can't really think of any. Can you?
Todd: Yeah, Bad Religion. Bad Religion and NOFX. They're two bands that I really love...

Greg: Then we never should have existed?

Todd: No, not at all.

Greg: Well that's what the question was.

Todd: Well, the question goes... OK, I'll do it to a literary. People who really like Bukowski - I really don't like what they write but I really like Bukowski. It's the same thing with Hunter S. Thompson. People try to be like Hunter S. Thompson and only seem to get the style so far but, to me, don't get to the meat of what he was doing. You know, don't get into the pathos of the dynamics of it. And the people that try it - it just looks so bad to me. You know, why don't you try to find your own thing? And that's what I have a problem with.

Greg: In that context I can say Van Halen which is a band I loved but look at what it spawned. Holy Christ. I mean, that was just sickening. But only in that context. You have to be very careful in the phrasing of the question.

Todd: Yeah, it's not the band itself or the band's fault or anything but the tie-ins are very easy or people only see, "Oh, that's a hook. I'll use that hook." but they don't see the whole .

Greg: So that means you don't care for

Pennywise or Blink 182?

Todd: No, I really like Pennywise. I don't like Blink 182. I think Pennywise is taking things, if we wanna get real technical, I think they're taking "Suffer" and they're using that as like your Dead Sea scrolls and going from there. That's their taking off point. I think they've actually superceded in some ways.

Greg: Interesting.

Todd: Blink 182 I have no respect for whatsoever.

Greg: Luckily I don't know enough about either of those bands to comment. I was just going off of what other people have

Todd: Actually, we got to interview Fletcher by himself and then Pennywise and they seemed pretty straight up guys.
I was really happy with them. If you could introduce people to two authors just for their vocabulary instinct, who would they

Greg: It wouldn't be based on vocabulary.

Todd: OK, who would you direct people to?
Greg: Carl Sagan without a doubt and maybe Don DeLillo.
Todd: Which Don DeLillo?

Greg: White Noise.

Todd: That's a good one.

Greg: He's a Bad Religion fan.

Todd: Really? I never would've guessed.

Greg: I didn't either until I got a copy of Mau 2 that said, "To Greg Graffin - A real talent." That was nice.

Todd: Wow. What are your thoughts on Pynchon? Do you like Pynchon at all?

Greg: I should read more actually.

Todd: Vineland is a good way to get yourself into it.

Greg: Yeah, my dad's an English professor at Wisconsin.

Todd: Oh really.

Holly: That's where I'm from. Madison. Greg: Right on. [the Dairylanders high five] I was born in

Holly: Really? Todd: Holy shit.

Holly: Yeah, I moved here about a year and a half ago.

Greg: I knew there was something about you.

Holly: Where in Madison did you live?

Greg: On Hancock near the university. My parents were grad students when I was born and I grew up in Racine. My dad still lives in the same house that I grew up in but I moved out here when my mom, in her wisdom, decided to divorce and move three thousand miles away from my dad which spawned the phenomenon known as Bad Religion.

A lot of the people don't understand, "Where did the anger come from?" All I need to say is, "Well, my dad lives three thousand miles away."

Holly: Didn't or does Descendents' Milo work or attend the

University of Wisconsin? Greg: I'm not sure. I heard he does have some academic connection but I don't know where. I went there for my first... After Cal State Northridge, it was my dream to go to Madison.

Holly: [laughter] I've never heard of that.

Greg: Because all my friends growing up in Racine were all going there and I just wanted to be with my buddies and out here I never felt part of the society. Bad Religion was sort of my respite from... This is a pretty harsh society and to come out here as a teenager, it was rough. So I just wanted to be with my friends back in Madison. I went there after I got straight A's at Cal State. After I got straight A's I was accepted but they wouldn't give me instate tuition so I could only go there for one semester. I thought I could go there for a semester and they'd change their mind. So then I transferred from Madison to UCLA. Dejected. I was happy with UCLA but...

Holly: How often do you go back to Madison?

Greg: Never, unless we play it. My dad lives in Racine so I go back there a lot. Todd: Has you dad ever seen you

Greg: Oh, he flies all over to see us. We're giving a talk next year if you ever go to the International Convention of Pop Culture.

Todd: Oh really?

Greg: Do you ever go to that?

Todd: I never got to but I know a lot of people who have.

Greg: Are you a member of the society?

Todd: No.

Greg: I think it's the Society for Pop Culture or something. We're giving a talk together. Graffin and Graffin. It'll be

Todd: What do you think is the sneakiest thing that the government is doing right now? What have they learned and become most adept at in the last four

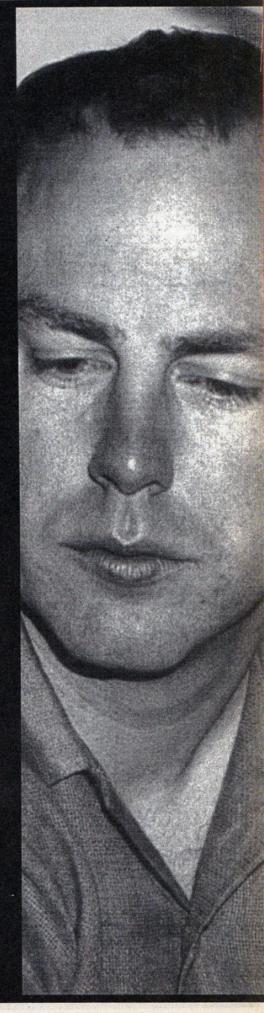
or five years?

Greg: Well, see, I don't believe that the government is sneaky. I think the government is sneaky. ernment gets away with what the peo-

ple let them get away with. The gov-ernment follows the course of least action, or least resistance, sorry. In that respect, deregulation really deteriorated our way of life in many things. I don't believe that the Reagan era deregulated everything because they were evil. I think it was because they had a warped sense of what was good for people and they had a warped sense of priorities. Profits were better than social welfare. And so today, the basic climate in government is one of deregulation. You talk to anyone and they say, "Government should stay the hell out of my business. Give me the freedom to make a profit." But then that's why we have the free market economy - runaway free market economy that we have all over the world where there's no more provision for social welfare. Dwindling resources for social welfare, dwindling resources for infrastructure and everything is about building up corporate profits. But do I think it's evil? I think it's a harsh and a horrible way to live but I don't think there's some evil element behind it all. It's going to take the people to say "Enough is enough." We need our government to intervene in corporate progress and I don't know when it's going to happen. One of the biggest industries that was deregulated was the airline industry so when we see a bunch of planes plummeting from the sky, I think people are gonna say to get the government back involved in regulation and maintain the service of the airplanes and create safety again. It's not only that, though. It's everything. There are no more standards anymore. The government has to lead the way in setting standards and in this era of government hands off, there are no more standards so you get companies... Media is a good example. Television, movies, records. You have these huge corporations that are only interested in making profits and so they don't care. They don't really have standards anymore. They just do little experiments with the public and see what sells and if it sells, they justify their actions by saying, "See, it's what the people want." But it's not what the people want. Today if you listen to the radio, there's nothing good on and they say that this is what the people want. It's not what the people want, it's what you're giving them. 'Cause if there were people having high standards of what they release to the public, then people would respond. If people are only given a choice of mediocre stuff, they're gonna take mediocre stuff over no stuff at all. So, some-one's gonna have to change the course. Bad Religion has luckily maintained high standards of artistic integrity and I hope that we can bridge that gap between popularity and high standards.

Holly: What's one thing that you wish you could understand that you just can't?

Greg: Why people are so hostile when they encounter those with different opinions. It's just something that is so foreign to me. When I get turned on by someone it's when they don't see things the way that I do and we entertain the discourse of rational reasons for thinking the way we



do. I love that. That's what the entire enlightenment period of the sixteen and seventeen hundreds was all about. People being able to speak freely and openly but agree on some methodology so they could come to some idea of progress. Today that's not around. People just get hostile

and angry at you if you ask questions.

Todd: I think it's kind of like people are used to having almost a freeway mentality talking to one another. If you cut me off, I honk at you. If you put your brakes on me, I'm gonna get in your face about things. I think it's the same thing with the internet. You have ten thousand pounds of metal and steel around you - you can kind of nudge some-body off. On the internet you can blast off and the worst thing they could do is leave something on a silicon chip in your commuter and all you have to do is go "Blip - I don't have to listen to you." The interface cards are so far removed from one another that hostility is what some people think is the only wire that they can travel in-between and that's really too bad.

and mats really too bad.

Holly: What's the last thing that really got on your nerves and/or the last thing that appalled you?

Greg: Oh, God, appalling. And I knew I was going to be appalled by it but I still went and that is the movie "Krippendorfs Tribe." It shows how deprayed we are as a society. This movie couldn't have even been shown in the seventies when people were a little more sensitive to cultural stereotypes.

Holly: What was the movie about?

Greg: This was a movie where a professor had spent all of his research funds without accomplishing his objective of making a documentary film of a New Guinean tribe so making a documentary him of a New Guinean tribe so since he had no money, he fabricated evidence by dressing his family up like tribes people and filming them in his backyard complete with the big lips and the face paint and every stereotype I was faught you weren't supposed to entertain and these fuckers made a movie about it which just shows that we are really in an era of no standards. It's all in the same theme of what the album's about. "No Substance." We're a society that completely superficialized everything and standards are something that carry weight and we just gloss over them.

Holly: What's your view on pornography?

Greg: It's changing over the years. Holly: How so?

Greg: I'm thirty-three now. When I was twenty-three I saw it differently. It's still remarkably exciting but I think the kind of people who turn to it... Like, I can think of when I turned to it, It's in times of need. I think if we were healthier people, I don't think we would watch it so much. And I think the fact that it's taking off is part of what I was saying earlier in that as a society we're withdrawing from each other. We're hiding from each other. We're not interacting anymore and the fact that there isn't real sex and real socially meaningful interaction is part of the reason that pornography is so pop-

Holly: Well, in LA it's magnified - put on billboards... Greg: Yeah, I think it's offensive that the whole concept of lookism is something that needs to be addressed more often. 'Cause I'm not excited by people I look at. It's people Linteract with. It's that simple.

Trodd: On that vein, what is the most penetrating piece of hate mail for saying, "This guy or girl is really scathing," but at the same time they have unearthed truth that I didn't know about myself before. Can you remember any inci-

Greg: I've never really... People that are usually emotional in their email, I don't take offence to because there's something going on with them. I can't control their anger. It's not really the fact that I sold out. They're pissed off at themselves for something. So I don't even entertain those kinds of notions. But people all the time ask me meaningful ques-

of notions. But people all the time ask me meaningful questions in email or regular mail.

Todd: What's one of the most meaningful questions you've encountered lately?

Greg: Once, somebody asked, me if religion is necessary as a guide for our moral system. Is it necessary? To which I answered abruptly, "No." it's not necessary. I mean, you could just as easily establish a system of morals based on the study of nature. It doesn't matter who created nature. That's not really a relevant question to me. I don't care where it came from, but it's there and there is definitely a system that it operates under. stem that it operates under.

Holly: And it surely isn't Ron Hubbard.

Greg: L. Ron Hubbord?

Holly: Yeah

Greg: I don't know much about L. Ron Hubbard. I under-

stand he was a great science fiction writer.

Todd: What has been a marked change for you in the last ten to fifteen years, personality wise? Has anything fundamentally changed or have you just adapted?

Greg: Oh definitely. I used to think that everyone were

idiots. Part of my upbringing I guess. And now I think everyone is valuable. That might have been in the last six years since I've had children and I think children are one of years since I've had children and I trimk diffurent are one of the greatest things in the world because they teach you so much about yourself. They teach you about heredity, about genes, about that which can't be changed. It gives you first hand knowledge of nature vs. nurture. My daughter's only that things I know that I'll never have an effect four and there's things I know that I'll never have an effect on her 'cause she's a certain way and that allows you to realize that some people are just certain ways and that still is respectable. It has nothing to do with their environment, has to do with the chemistry in their genes. I think it's

Holly: Do you do anything now that you swore you would

never do ten or fifteen years ago?

Greg: I sit at a desk once in a while but I swore I would never have a desk job. Usually when I write I sit at a table or something. I'm a divorced parent now which is something I swore would never happen. And it wasn't my doing but coming to terms with that short-coming was something that's made me a better person.

Todd: What's the number one thing that you think people get wrong about Bad Religion from the lyrics? Does any-body take the microphone away and they just sing the

wrong lyrics?

Greg: Well, remarkably it's not about lyrics. It's about perception. People perceive us to be the biggest assholes in the world - which isn't true - or to be the biggest sell-outs in the world - which isn't true - or the most unapproachable people in the world - which isn't true. Very few people actually spend the time to understand the lyrics I think. use anyone who did spend time would realize that all three of those weren't true. And like-wise, it's easy to think "Oh, they're Satan worshipers." But if you would spend

time with the lyrics, you would notice.

Holly: What's another one lyric or phrase of a song that people get wrong? That people either interpret wrong or just have all the wrong words to?

Todd: Like, "Fuck Armageddon, it's the smell." or some-

Greg: Or, "Peter Pan walked away." [laughter] Jay told you that one? Isn't that funny as hell?

Todd: That's great

Greg: I just saw him in the front row. [Greg mouths the words "Peter Pan walked away."] [laughter] That's as far as you can get. "These guys are writing about my favorite nursery rhyme." I don't really know. That's the one that comes to mind.

Holly: It's a good one.

Todd: Do you have any consumer tips or piracy tips? Any knowledge that you have that would be useful for...

Greg: Pirates?

Todd: No, no, piracy. Piracy, like computer piracy. Do you know any tricks of the trade or anything like that?

Greg: I know nothing like that. What did you say?

Consumer?

Todd: Yeah. Consumer tips.

Greg: No, I don't know. I think that we need to be careful of our consumerism. I'm a huge consumer. I'm not one to lead by example but certainly buying cheap ass products is lead by example but certainly buying cheap ass products is what everyone's obsessed with. I think you should buy once, buy right. There are so many cheap products out there and people just want to own a VCR so they go and buy the cheapest piece of shit they can find instead of maybe understanding how a VCR works and figuring out which one to buy. I've always respected people who do that. Even people who don't have that much money. My academic colleagues for instance. They understood the products they were buying. Today people are just so... It's a knee jerk reaction to buy things. a knee jerk reaction to buy things.

Todd: Ever thought of purchasing a Saturn?

Greg: No, just because I don't think it's a safe car. Now that I'm a parent I'm interested in buying the safest thing.

Holly: Mini vans? Todd: Volvos?

Greg: Actually, mini vans aren't that safe.

Holly: A bus?

Greg: Yeah, I have a Suburban which is the safest.

Holly: You probably tie the kids up in the center of it with

bungee chords.

Greg: Just because it's the heaviest vehicle on the road. Inertia is the most important factor in a collision, and also it live in a real snowy area.

Greg: Yeah.
Todd: Have you ever hidden anything in a body cavity for a long time?

Greg: Nope, never. I've never smuggled drugs or nothing like that. I don't take drugs.

Holly: What's the strangest thing that's been thrown at you

Greg: Strangest? Jay's already told you this story.

Greg: Squirrel parts. Someone threw a squirrel on stage, cut up in pieces. Luckily I'm a zoologist so I could identify

Todd: Any clarification?

Greg: There was never an understanding of why it was thrown up.

Todd: How long ago was that?

Greg: I think like three years ago.

Holly: Where at?

Greg: You'd have to ask Jay. I don't remember the show, I just remember identifying it. "Oh, this is skyglrus." (sp?)
Todd: Who's the longest fan you've had that you either

saw at a show and then kept in contact with or through fan

Greg: It might be Jack Rabid.

Todd: Jack Rabid - right. The Big Takeover. How's that book coming?

Greg: Pretty good. Pushing along. It's a huge project. How do you cover eighteen years of events?

Todd: We gave him some stuff.

Greg: Oh, good.

Todd: We gave him as much as we had. I mean, we don't keep exclusive records of every place.

Holly: Todd has this theory that there was no landing on

Todd: Oh yeah, I just have this one question. If this moon landing did occur, why are there no stars from the astronauts' cameras? Why are there no stars visible in any of the film? That's the only question I have dealing with that. If you look at all the pictures that were taken by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldron, there's no stars but I don't know enough about astrophysics to realize... I mean, there's very little atmosphere.

Greg: Well look outside right now. [It's partly cloudy, it's

the middle of the day, there's no stars.]

Todd: For twenty-five hours? But it doesn't have a

Greg: Well, what do you see right now? I don't see one star in the sky.

Todd: I see a lot of clouds but there are no clouds on the moon.

Greg: Yeah, but what if it was daytime? I don't remember but I think the moon is always daytime!

Todd: Yeah, I guess, Pink Floyd's "Dark Side of the Moon.

Greg: See, rock and roll does that.

Holly: You learn something new every day.

Greg: You should read Carl Sagan's new book because the evidence you just sited to bolster your conspiracy theory is actually pretty... On weak foundation.

Todd: Right, well, I'm just curious. I just want to figure it

Greg: That's good that you're open to learning about it but some people propose entire elaborate theories of conspiracies and alien resurrections based on the most flimsy suppositions.

Todd: What are your feelings on Steven J. Gould?
Greg: He's good and bad. He should stick to science. Cut all of his hippy bullshit out. I'm serious. That's his biggest downfall

Todd: What are you most angry about nowadays? You

hear about it - it's your button.

Greg: Yeah, the fact that we live in a society with no sub Greg: Yeah, the fact that we live in a society with his satisface is sickening to me. The fact that people are so unwilling to come together. The fact that people use religion as a crutch and the fact that people are so willing to use religion to persecute other people. The fact that w intellectually similar to the state of affairs back in the Salem witch trials. The fact that we're ignoring the progress that science has made. The fact that scientists are pitted against people as evil and manipulative. I could go on. There's plenty today to be angry about.



BAD RELIGION