

Life In A Bungalo Digest

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... The End

Inside: Interviews with Bad Religion and Biohazard,
Why Ultimate Marvel Sucks, Record Reviews and the Usual Rants and Raves

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It's fair to say that Bad Religion have been around forever. Born from the late '70s California hardcore scene, Bad Religion have spent 20 odd years preaching their own sense of warped politics intertwined with burning punk grooves and harmonic vocals. Life In A Bungalo got a change to interview lead singer Greg Graffin at a recent show in Jersey and he blew us off. In his place we got a slightly inebriated Jay Bentley. I think we got the better end of the deal. (ed. note- This interview was conducted prior to the re-joining of guitarist Bret Gurewitz.)

How did you feel when you found out that "New America" was played on the monumental final episode of Beverly Hills 90210?

Jay Bentley— We were in Europe when it happened, and one of Brian's (Baker-guitar) friends called us and said 'you're not going to believe what just happened.' None of us knew anything about it. We laughed about it, but that was about it. I don't watch the show so I don't know anything about it, but I thought it was fitting. On with my day.

Is the song "Get Off" about sex?

It's not, but we've always thought of it as that. I think it's just about the concept of life as a ride. Hey Greg, is Get Off about sex?

Greg Graffin— The song Get Off is about a runaway roller coaster that represents the human race.

Which is why in the middle of that song we have that part where all the guitars go down, down, down, and I do that high pitched girly scream. That was me. Get Off is about life as a ride. Greg just wants to get the fuck off the ride. Which isn't really a great sentiment either.

Why are you guys the only band that survived on a major label?

Because I think we are a feather in their cap. The magic number is 50,000



and that's when everybody got dropped. If you don't sell 50 you're gone. These days it's not that hard to sell 50,000 copies, but it is harder for a major label, because indie labels, like Fat Wreck Chords, have a built in fan base that likes the label. When Subpop was hot, when Twintone was hot, when Epitaph was hot, you got this label identity and people bought the records even if they never heard of the band, because much like music critics you find that you have the same tastes as someone else. Atlantic doesn't have any label support from people. They don't give a shit. It's Phil Collins, Kid Rock and us. You can't buy everything with Atlantic on it, because it doesn't work that way.

(ed. note- since the interview Bad Religion have left Atlantic for Epitaph. So much for that question.)

Five years ago punk rock was huge, but now, unless you sound like Blink 182, the punk stock market has crashed. How has that affected Bad Religion and sales?

I don't think we see a lot of that hyper activity. That sort of mania. That's not really part of what we do. I think everybody benefited from Nirvana forward. Then reality set in and it tapered off. Now you can have an unsigned punk band put out a decent record and they can move 40 to 50,000 copies, because there

is now a fan base set towards alternative music, which there wasn't before. It was just a sparse network of people that just talk now and then, but not like it is now.

Last time I talked to you, you said that your least favorite album was "Stranger Than Fiction..."

I said "Stranger Than Fiction" was my least favorite album? That must have been before "No Substance" came out.

I would like to change my sentiment on behalf of the people.

I talk about records, not as musical entities, but as images I have of doing the records. I don't sit there and put on a record that we've made and enjoy it. I put on a record and I think about what we



Jay and Greg

were doing at the time. I listen to the records critically when we make them to make sure I am happy with what's on the album, and then I never listen to them again. So when I hear them, I think of whether we were having fun, whether I was throwing up, whether we were eating Chinese food, whatever. So "Stranger Than Fiction" was a really difficult album to make, so it might have been my least favorite album to make.

I liked making "No Substance." It's an album full of bizarre sentiment that doesn't really patch together in anyway shape of form, because that was the way that it was written.

There are a lot of new political

bands ranging from Rage Against the Machine to Boy Sets Fire coming out. Do you think that Bad Religion is still as political driven as you were when you were young?

I'll tell you this much; a lot of the bands that have gotten on that particular treadmill seem to have an agenda, and we never did. So we got slapped on the back with the political motif and that was fine, but it never our idea to set about having an answer for everyone.

I appreciate those bands more than any of those metal hair acts that play redundant ridiculous music, and I wish more bands were like that. I don't know if that's something that you can maintain at that level, because you have to stand up to a lot of criticism.

We do, but I think because we don't tell anyone this how you are suppose to live and think I can do whatever I want. We never got heat for the crossbuster, we never got heat for anything.

The band has always spent a lot of show time making fun of Princess Diana. What was your reaction when she died?

She died while we were making the record. I remember Brian and I were in a rental house in Ithaca, Newfield to be exact. I think the anti-Princess Di sentiments were coming from Greg were more anti-royalty. This was a person who no one ever paid much attention to until she died, and all of a sudden she was a martyr. So that's why he was poking fun of her.

Obviously that was in pretty bad taste, but we're tasteless. We're pretty hard on people that gain that kind of status for an unapparent reason. It was tragic, but it doesn't necessarily mean that she was any more important then Sister Theresa. She passed away a week later and I don't remember her getting near as much cov-

erage. This is the mentality of people. Mourn the beautiful rich people when they pass and find out something good about them.

Are there any plans to play England since you have boycotted the country for numerous years?

No, never, but I wouldn't mind playing in Scotland.

What was it like playing with Eddie Vedder (Pearl Jam) on Recipe for Hate?

We've been friends with Ed for a long time. He was coming down and seeing us play in San Diego when he was in his first band and even before. We kind of already knew each other in that way and when he was in L.A., he just stopped by the studios and we told him that he had to sing.

Nobody can just stop by the studio and just say hi. Anybody that walks in we put them to work immediately. The only person we've ever hired was the slide guitar guy on "Man on a Mission."

There is a rumor that you won't play "Whisper in Time" live.

That's not true. There are very few songs that we won't play, but there's a shit load of songs that we can't play. I'm trying to think of a song that we won't play. There might be some songs that Greg can't sing anymore. There's a shit load of songs that Brian doesn't even know. He's probably got about 85 down pat, and that's not that bad. On any given day we can bust out about 45 or 50, and on some songs we may only know the chorus. So it starts to break down until we get to the point where we don't even know how the song goes.

Are you anti, pro, or oblivious to Napster?

The thing is I think Napster has a great purpose in helping unknown, unsigned bands get their material out there for eve-

rybody. In terms of record swapping, which has been going on forever. It eliminates that 'I'm going to make you a mix tape of all these great hardcore bands from Connecticut' that no one has ever heard of, and mail them to his buddy in California.

That's fine. On the other hand, for other bands it's not so great, because that's not what it was intended to do. My only problem with it has been that everybody has been bagging on the bands and the record labels as the reason for Napster's existence. I'm asking you. Is that true?

I think it's the fact that we are paying \$19.99 for a CD that hurts the most.

Who do you think is responsible for that?

I would blame the overpriced record stores.

Record labels sell their records for \$7.25. That's a running price. Bands make \$1.18 to \$1.20. So when you break it down Sam Goody is making \$12. So, it's the record stores. So in a sense, if Napster were to be an alternative to paying \$18.99 at Sam Goody, and if they were to pay the \$6 licensing fee, then everybody would be happy. I would buy a record for \$6.

Yeah, but I would rather not pay \$6 for a crappy download that takes eight hours to get.

I've never been on Napster so I don't know what the quality is. Can you download a whole album on Napster?

One song at a time.

It's important that everybody has that ability, but they need to make it right for everybody. Us aside, there are bands on indie labels that are just struggling to get by, and if they are selling 1,500 to 2,000 copies and that's what they need to float their next project— if they're losing

those sales it's going to be hard to meet their quota. Eventually, no one will be able to make music anymore, because no one will be able to afford it. Which is bazaar.

I couldn't help but notice that Mr. Brett was on the last album, and you no longer make fun of him on stage. Did you guys kiss and make up?

I suppose so. When I say we're fucked-up people I mean that. We're mean, and we've been making fun of each other way before "Stranger Than Fiction" came out. Greg use to change the words in "World War III" or "Politics," two of our oldest fucking songs, from "We're all being oppressed by the upper middle class," to "We're all being oppressed by Brett Gurewitz." Brett never thought it was funny.

Did he just show up in the studio to record that track?

He wrote the song, we all learned the song independently, but he never showed up. We just recorded the song and Greg sang it. I remember sitting there saying "Why don't we just send this back to Brett to do the guitar parts on it?" It worked that way.

Is there any animosity between Bad Religion and Brett over "Tested?"

Brett was pretty mad about "Tested," because it only had two or three songs of his on it, and we all kind of laughed and said, "I don't know if you know this, but

you're not in the band anymore."

Maybe he wasn't around for that memo.

But there is no animosity there anymore. At least not as far as I can tell.

Is there any relation between Billy Gnosis from "Into The Unknown" and the Billy from "No Control?"

Brett kinda had a pseudonym for himself, which was not Billy Gnosis, but Billy Pilgrim. On the band he did after "Into The Unknown," the Seeing Eye Gods, he recorded a song called Billy Pilgrim. That was more self-penned than "Billy Gnosis."

"Billy Gnosis" was a combination of a book character, and just some ideas about drug addiction.

"Billy" on the other hand, was probably more about himself.

We use to play the song live a lot, but it's a fairly difficult song to play.

What was it like opening up for Blink 182 on these outdoor arena little girl-fests?

Yeah. I mean I was fun in the sense that this was the first tour that we opened for since Pearl Jam.

We opened for a lot of bands in the earlier stages of our career, but we got to a point where we stopped opening for people.

We opened for the Ramones in '89 in San Pedro. We thought that was great and we were basically treated like shit, and we said we were never going to do that again.

Fucked by the label or the Ramones?

Fucked by everybody. We just went there and everyone was barking orders at us.

We stole all there pizza. If they are still wondering where all there pizza went. I stole them. I did to. I stole every



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Along The Way

I refuse to abuse what is kind to the Muse,
but it's there and it's happening to me along the way.
As we go through the snow, we cannot forget our foes,
but the dinner's always waiting at the table along the way, yeah.
What you see, not for me, isn't what you planned to be,
but you'll have what you wanted in the end along the way.
And we'll try as we cry and our brothers pass us by,
to be strong through the ages of our tears along the way, yeah.
Now we grow as we show that the morals we must know
will be shapen and mistaken by the falls along the way.
But forget, don't regret, to find love and happiness unless you're
willing to be strong when they are gone along the way.
Like Tommy, you are free, and you will not follow me,
until we see each other once more on the path along.

- Bad Religion

... Thank you very much. Goodnight.