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STIFF LITTLE FINGERS

DEATH RIDE 69

BAD RELIGION

BEATNIGS

Fall **89**



As we enter the post-industrial-"Baby on Board"-dayglo tampon- Malcom X-Geraldo-U/V protection 30 decade, there seems to be a common thread, nothing lasts. Even the '69 Volvo that put up with me from one end of the decade to the other is as likely to be resurrected as the "They're here" girl from "Poltergeist (I, II & III)" who died tragically of constipation. Punk rock and all the baggage it carries is no exception to that rule, or is it? Not only are Bad Religion still making 'em sweat on the packed dance floor of Raji's, on a Tuesday (and I'm not talking with a metal, country, rap, psychedelic, hip-hop or Debbie Gibson edge), they're doing it with the same members and twice the intensity that first caused the glands of boys and girls of all ages to swell longer than anyone cares to remember.

Greg Graffin: Low to mid range vocals

Mr. Brett: Highly fertile guitar

Jay Bentley: Savage Bass

Greg Hetson: Jerk'n guitar

Pete Fineston: Glam-free drums

ID: I over heard this conversation between these two guys in the bathroom. This guy couldn't believe that he saw you guys so long ago at the Cathy Da Grande. The other guy said that he was in junior high school at the time.

Brett: So, were we.

Greg G: There was already a history behind Bad Religion at that time. (they try to figure out what line-up they had then).

ID: Do you think there has there been a re-flowering of the band since you guys can pack a club on a Tuesday night, at the same time Old Skull is playing?

Brett: That's what screwed it up.

ID: Would you guys be willing to open up for Old Skull on a tour?

Greg G: Hell yeah, if we get more money than

them.

Brett: What do they need money for. They're eight years old.

Jay: If we go on at 12:00 and they go on at two, we'll gladly go on tour with them.

Greg G: We'll open for any band virtually.

Jay: What would we talk about, they're eight years old?

ID: Are you going to tour?

Brett: This summer we're just doing a European tour. No American tour, because we have less time.

ID: What part of Europe are you going to?

Brett: Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, England and Belgium.

Jay: We were supposed to play Czechoslovakia but...

Greg G: We're playing seven shows in Germany.

ID: Are you happy playing this kind of music?

Greg G: If we come out on a Tuesday night when usually at this time I'm sleeping I must be happy playing this kind of music.

Jay: I love this kind of music.

Brett: This is it. We wouldn't do it for this long if it wasn't it.

ID: How would you describe your musical evolution over the last eight years?

Jay: Oh, lord.

Brett: It hasn't evolved at all.

Jay: It's exactly the same. It's kind of like bats.

Greg G: Bats have good fossil records.

Brett: And they haven't evolved in over a sixty million years.

Greg G: So, we're kind of like the Batman.

Brett: We're nothing like the African Pigs, where you can trace their evolution back farther than any other animal with constant fossilization records (Someone laughs).

ID: So, can you think of any other bands besides yourself who have not evolved in the last

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10 years.

Brett: What about Boston.

All: BOSTON?

Jay: The Dobbie Brothers just came out with a new album.

Brett: It sounds exactly the same.

Jay: They degressed.

Brett: But I think that's kind of unfair. I think in a way we have evolved, and I think the Ramones have too. It's gotten better than someone like David Bowie where every album is completely different. We don't want to just ride the next wave of what is going to be able to sell. We might have, say at one time, done something that was...

Jay: Evolutionary.

Greg G: Childish.

Jay: It was very mature.

Brett: I think if you delete the one title from our catalog... There's an unknown title "Into Nothing-

ness..." (Greg is making attack of the killer ant noises to drown out this part of the interview).

ID: To date is that your best selling record?

Brett: It's the worst selling. If you delete that one and look at the ep's, "How Could Hell Be Any Worse," "Suffer," and then we have a new one coming out called "No Control..."

Greg G: Yeah, basically if you look at all our popular records we're the same.

Jay: No it's a progression of being better at what we do best.

Greg G: Refining your craft.

Jay: When we did our first record Brett had an Ibanez Artist guitar and did bar chords. I had a Sears bass with painted strings that I never changed, because I didn't know how, and they didn't break. And I said, "Well, they haven't broken. Why should I change them." Now we know what sounds best and what works best.

Bad Religion strike their best glam pose

Pete Jay Brett Greg G. Greg H. (Stand In)



Photo by Steve Alper



Photos by Thomas

Greg G.

Bad Religion at Raji's



More or less refining your craft in a way that makes it sound better, but the songs are written in pretty much the same way.

ID: So, now 10 years later you're using a Sears bass and an Ibanez guitar.

Jay: No, I would never go back.

Brett: Part of what makes us **Bad Religion** is that we sound like **Bad Religion**. None of us are virtuosos. The thing about us that is good, or the essence if you strip it down, is the melodies of the songs and the lyrics that go to those melodies. And those two things are somewhat singular, in terms of the club scene nowadays.

Brett: And the linear approach of the guitars...
ID: Has your name be a problem for the band?

Greg G: No. It limits our possibilities, but... You'll never see us on the top 10, because of the name.

Jay: It's better than the names that we were going to choose. If people like us, that's great. If they don't like us because of the name that's their problem then. Oh well, "**Poison** is safe to listen to." But poison is not safe. If you take poison you die. The name is more or less in

people's minds.

Brett: If I'm at my parents house and my mom has friends over they say, "Oh, is Brett in a rock band. What's the name of it?"

ID: I'm in a band called **BR**.

Brett: I'm in a band called **L-7**.

Jay: Or make up a lie or something.

Greg G: We're called **Pink Twinkies**.

Brett: Where did that come from?

Jay: We were going to play El Camino High School. We were going to give them a tape of **Devo** and say we were **Pink Twinkies** so they would let us play there.

ID: You have a sound that sort of defines a period of Southern California hardcore. Are people interested in you because of that when you go on tour?

Greg G: I think that's sort of true of the early '80s. You've got all these heavy metal bands. And what do they define.

ID: So, why didn't you go in that direction? What's different about you that's kept you from going in that direction?

Brett: Our skill kept us from going in that direction. I hate long guitar solos. That's the

whole reason I got into punk bands. Even if I could do that I wouldn't. Even if for some reason I became corrupt and demented and started liking indulgent four minute guitar solos, and vocalist who sound like their balls got cut off I still wouldn't be able to, because I don't have the ability to do that.

Greg G: I could sing like that if I wanted to.

Brett: No way.

Jay: He plays a mean lead bajo (though).

Brett: It's bullshit. The whole reason we got into punk music was kind of a backlash against that early '70s bullshit rock. That's like what is popular now. A few of the bands I like because they are real poppy. I like Pop.

ID: Can you name them?

Brett: I'm not going to name them, but there's a song or two on the radio that I like now. In general I really don't like what's going on.

Greg G: Generally people have written off the early '80s music, because they think it didn't go anywhere, and evolved into a sort of heavy metal long hair music. That's our biggest problem right now is people think, "Oh yeah, they're a

fossil band. They're a band that will remind us of the early '80s." But they're not giving us enough credit for it, because that music was vital and it still is.

Jay: We keep writing new songs.

ID: Is the band your main focus. I know you (Brett) have a studio?

Brett: I've worked on **Russ Tollman**, **L-7**, the **Little Kings**, **NoFX** and **D.I.** I work on 20 or 30 albums a year. And then there's **Bad Religion**. That takes about a week or 10 days.

Greg G: I say I put in about one third of my time into **Bad Religion**. That's actually a lot. It might even be less than that.

Brett: I put in less than that.

ID: So, all those years ago at **Godzilla's** and the **Cathy Da Grande** would you have ever thought that by 1989 you'd still be doing it at **Raji's**?

Brett: Yeah I did.

Greg G: I said, "If there's no reason for us to break up we'll still be together."

ID: So, what are some famous on stage incidents at **Bad Religion** shows?

Greg G: (They all argue) Remember one time this girl lost her purse?



Jay: Oh yeah, at Fenders.

Greg G: She came on stage and said, "I lost my purse."

Jay: "You fuckers, I lost my purse. Which one of you have it."

Greg G: Someone actually found it and gave it back.

Jay: That was so great. That sort of says where punk is heading.

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