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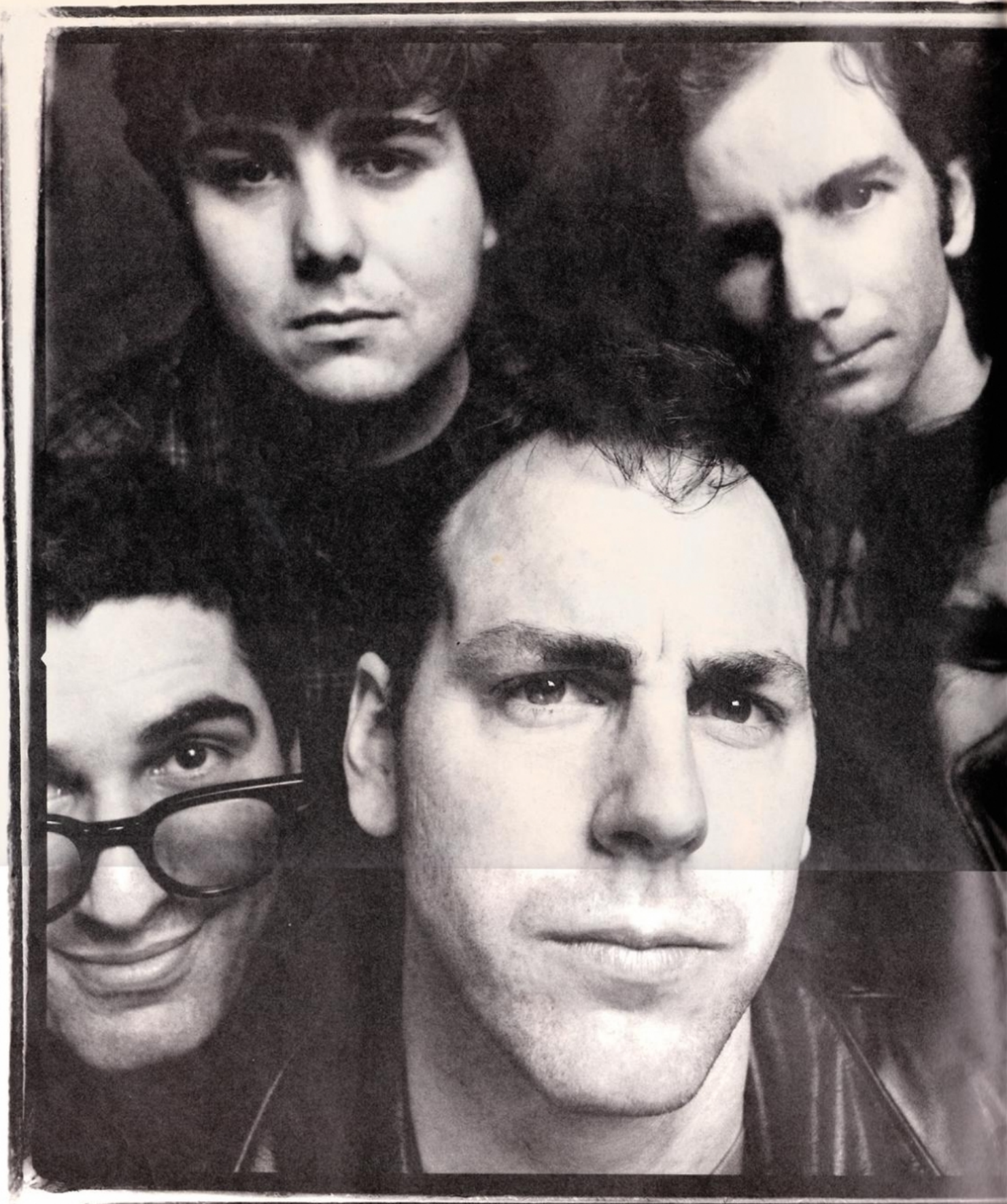
**LOLLAPALOOZA**

**'92** Exclusive Interview  
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**T**here are a lot of things that require you to think the same way everyone else does," explains Bad Religion singer Greg Graffin. "In that respect, you can label those things 'religion.' We try to set ourselves apart. Live against the grain."

"Bad Religion doesn't mean bad Christian," adds guitarist Brett Gurewitz. "We used a cross in our logo simply because it was the most universal sign of religion we could find."

Anyone who's not a believer in these prophets of southern California hardcore need only see the band in action. Amid 3,700 sweaty, mosh-

disc, shipped that many in a week. The new album features introspective songwriting, slower-tempoed songs, and quite pretty, full-force vocal harmonies that Graffin maximizes with his tuneful, kick-you-in-the-face delivery.

While Bad Religion could easily sell out dates for months on end, the band tours for only days at a time. Three members, Graffin, Bentley, and Gurewitz, are new fathers, and while Graffin is teaching paleontology at Cornell and working toward a Ph.D. in zoology, Gurewitz and Bentley are running Epitaph full time.

After the show, I crawl backstage, sit with Hetson's 60ish parents, and

# faith no more

ing teens swarming about like fire ants on the floor of the filled-to-capacity Hollywood Palladium, I do my best to absorb Bad Religion's patented angry, melodic hardcore sound, retain my clothing, and not pass out from heat exhaustion. Whirlpools of youth swing their arms like jackhammers all across the frenzied floor, as ambitious stage divers get tossed around like beach balls. Graffin's preachy, sociopolitical screams have all the power and punch they packed at the band's outset 12 years ago, when the singer was a mere 15. Guitarist Greg Hetson (ex-Circle Jerks) jumps around the stage like a jackrabbit, while bassist Jay Bentley and drummer Bobby Schayer back up the energy with furious rhythm accompaniment. It is by far the biggest and craziest punk-rock show I've ever attended—and that's exactly how the band likes 'em.

"People need a vent for their feelings," Gurewitz says. "Slam dancing is like a tribal ritual. It's intense, cathartic, rejuvenating, mystical."

While hardcore punk seemingly reached its creative peak many centuries ago, Bad Religion somehow continues to expand it even further, masterfully blending acoustic guitars, keyboards, and vocal harmonies at turbocharged speeds. The resulting records far surpass your average three-chord thrash, and come dangerously close to matching the band's live intensity.

Operating within the confines of Epitaph Records, the band's self-run label, and with very little press exposure, Bad Religion has released eight records. *No Control*, from 1989, and 1990's *Against the Grain* have sold close to 100,000 copies each; *Generator*, the band's most recent

**P** feast on the band's rider of trail mix, Twinkies, Dum-Dums, and Miller High Life.

**O** "It was pretty crazy," Mrs. Hetson says. "We try to see as many shows as we can. Tonight there was a bunch of mosh pits going on. Did you see them?" All too well.

**G** The next day I limp over to Ministry, a local coffee shop, where the guys are having their photos taken for SPIN. I'm greeted by a frustrated photographer. The band's in a playful mood.

**P** "Stop touching me," Bentley barks at Hetson.

**H** "You're touching me," Hetson whines back.

**B** "Excuse me," Graffin interrupts, semiseriously. "Could you make sure my sneakers aren't showing?"

**Y** The photographer mentions something about shooting Social Distortion the next day, which grabs the band's attention.

**C** "Hey, rock'n'roll, man," Gurewitz shouts, expertly imitating Social Distortion's spaced-out Mike Ness. "And don't touch my hair."

**R** "We played our first show with Social Distortion in the same warehouse," Graffin explains. "It was their third show."

**S** "Make sure we look better than they do," Gurewitz adds, handing the photographer a rolled-up bill.

**C** I ask the band how it deals with its success—the inevitable criticism of "selling out"—and whether that will affect any decision to sign to a major.

**F** "I think the amount of money we make shouldn't be any gauge," Graffin says. "The main thing I'm concerned with is putting out music that's consistent with what we've done in the past. Doing it our way. That's what it's all about."

DANIEL FIDLER

**Southern Cali punk reaches new heights in the '90s. There's no religion like Bad Religion.**

Bad Religion, clockwise from top left: Bobby Schayer, Greg Hetson, Jay Bentley, Greg Graffin, and Brett Gurewitz.