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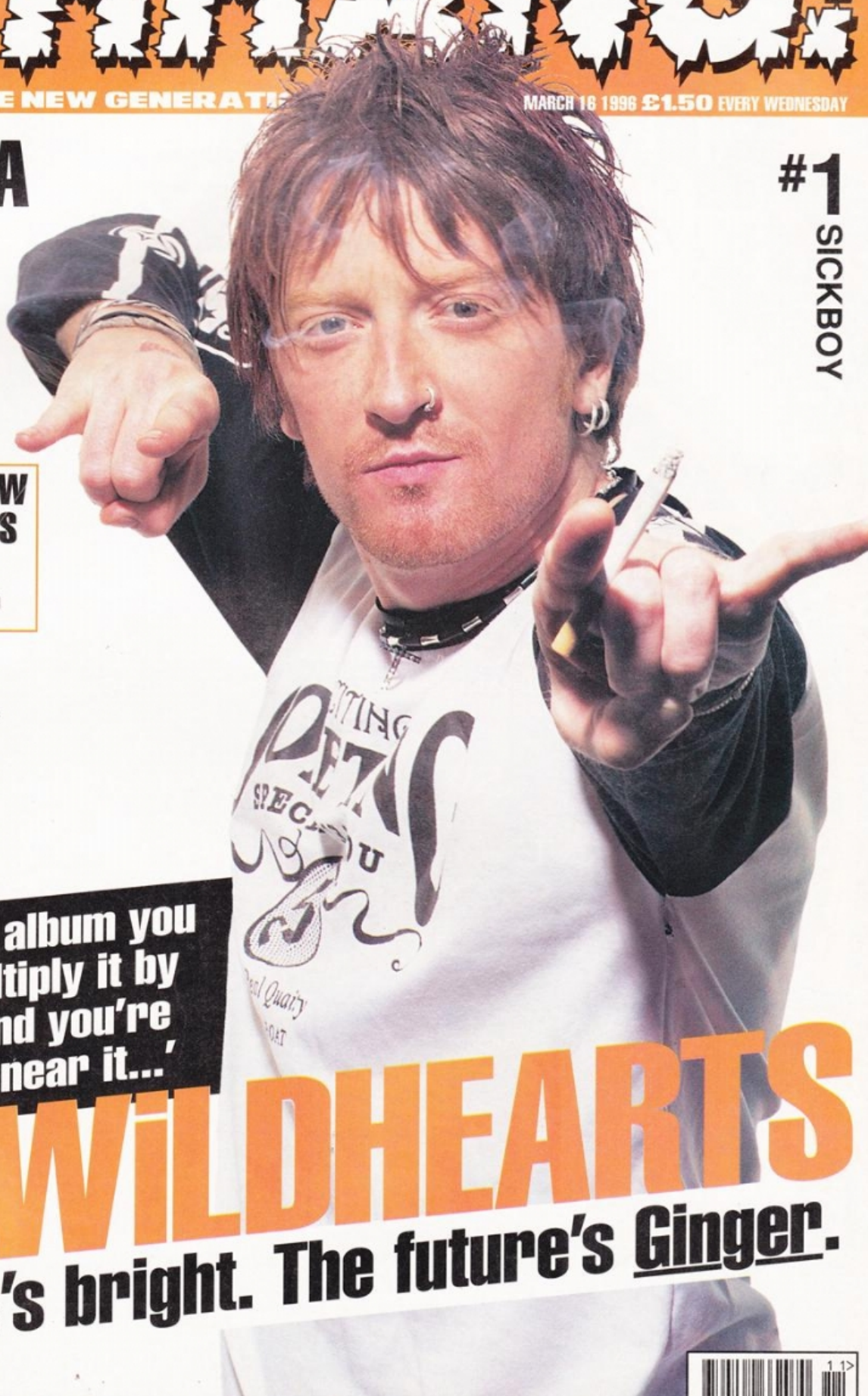
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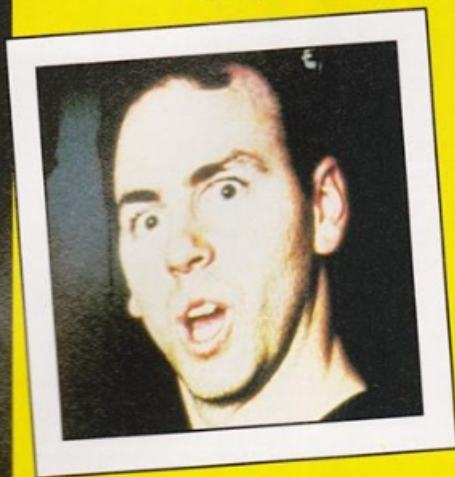
THE WILDHEARTS

The future's bright. The future's Ginger.

POSTERS: **BON JOVI** OFFSPRING **SKIN** SILVERCHAIR



SECRETS OF MY SUCCESS
HOW THE STARS GOT TO BE STARS



FAME FILE

NAMES: Greg Graffin (vocals) and Jay Bentley (bass).

BAND: Bad Religion.

MOST TREASURED POSSESSIONS:

Jay: "The silver necklace I'm wearing. My wife gave it to me on Valentine's Day seven years ago, and I've never taken it off. If I lost this, I'd be bummed."

Greg: "My wife never gave me anything so valuable, so I'd have to say my Bad Religion song catalogue."

FAMILIES:

Jay: "I have one sister."

Greg: "I have one brother. He's a computer nerd."

MONEY:

Greg: "We've been very fortunate. We never thought we'd make money from the band, but we do make quite a bit."

DEFINE SUCCESS:

Greg: "You're successful if you can be financially content, while doing something that you're internally motivated to do."

MALE IDOLS:

Jay: "Billy Martin, the head coach of the New York Yankees."

FEMALE IDOLS:

Greg: "Karen Gilovich, my marriage counsellor!"

PERSONAL SUCCESSES:

● **Greg:** "Getting better at songwriting. And also my academic work. I'm proud of finishing that."

● **Jay:** "Being able to steer a corporate entity successfully into the 21st century!"



OUT OF

The Bad Religion guide to selling millions of records – get beaten up, take too many drugs and bankrupt your own record company. The original Offspring reveal all to Jason Arnopp...

SIXTEEN YEARS is a long time to be doing one thing, and Bad Religion have been playing

uniquely melodic punk rock since 1980. The road to where they are today has presented obstacles - drugs, disagreements, near splits - but the Californians have just released their ninth album, 'The Gray Race'. It's their second for



OUR HEADS

major label Columbia, to whom they defected from Epitaph two years ago.

The band started out as three spike-topped, 15-year-old San Fernando Valley kids, playing in singer Greg Graffin's garage. At this stage, they were "surrounded by stoned-out hashers who loved '70s metal". Punk rock was in no way the cool thing to be doing. In fact, it got them beaten up.

How have Bad Religion lasted the course? It's a question Graffin and bassist Jay Bentley (who joined the trio as soon as they realised they needed a bass player) are about to tackle with furrowed brows...

KI: So what exactly was it like in the early days of the band?

Greg Graffin: "We had more drive and determination than many 15-year-olds, because we knew we wanted to play music. But we had no real direction."

Jay Bentley: "I just wanted to get off the street, so this guy called Tony Monza wouldn't kick my ass!"

GG (laughing): "Tony Monza's probably dead by now, but we were scared kids back then. We have a thing against bullies, because we were bullied endlessly. The metal kids were very fascist."

JB: "Tony Monza would yell, 'Listen to Rush, motherf**ker!', while he was stuffing me into a trash can. And I'd be going, 'Sid Vicious, you f**kweed!'"

KI: When you got around to playing gigs, you had a real DIY ethic – creating your own posters and flyers.

GG: "Yeah, but that was because we had youthful energy, and we knew no one would do it for us. It wasn't like we tried to be revolutionary and against the major labels. We were driven about promoting punk rock. And ourselves."

JB: "We just did it because we had to, and because it was better than going to the park and getting the shit kicked out of you!"

KI: You finally created your own label, Epitaph (which guitarist Brett Gurewitz eventually ran alone, leaving the band as soon as they signed to Columbia). Was that specifically what you wanted to do?

JB: "No, we tried to get on other labels and they wouldn't sign us. We made demos that probably sounded like crap, but we liked them. I could see why labels would turn us down."

GG: "It was like it is today. Even though we're on a major label, we don't get the recognition of more commercial bands. But luckily, Brett's father lent us about \$1,500. With that we could make a seven-inch ('Bad Religion'), press it, sell it quickly and make enough money for our first album."

KI: How did you feel when you completed 1982's 'How Could ▶



CASH POINTS

SO HOW MUCH ARE BAD RELIGION WORTH?

Greg Graffin: "A lot more than you think. The last album ('Stranger Than Fiction') made about six million dollars for Columbia Records, and they still don't know who we are!"

HAVE THEY SOLD ANY RECORDS OR WHAT?

Yes. 'Stranger Than Fiction' sold a million copies worldwide.

WHAT WOULD BAD RELIGION DO IF THEY WON THE LOTTERY?

Jay Bentley: "We'd buy more guitars!"
Greg: "I'd start a general scientific research foundation."

AND FINALLY...

Greg: "I'm happy for us to be just below the mainstream. I don't want to be the Number One attraction."

◆ Hell Be Any Worse'?

GG: "It was about what I'd expected, but not as special as I'd hoped. But it's still a classic punk album of the era."

JB: "It set a precedent for how we make records. Create a stress-free environment, and have a good time."

K!: Didn't things go wrong, though, when you recorded the unwisely experimental 'Into The Unknown' LP in 1983?

JB: "Yeah, that's basically why Epitaph went bankrupt for two years! I quit after playing one song, because I didn't like what was

happening. As I walked out the door I yelled, 'If that song makes it on the record with me playing on it, I'll sue everyone!'. Looking back, it was a very progressive album, but everyone went their own ways for a while after that."

GG: "We were experimenting with studios and synthesizers. But we were still a bunch of kids, and we didn't know you should stick to your guns, no matter what the musical climate is. It was lucky that we

made that mistake so young, because we were able to learn from it. As a result, we've been able to persevere through the metal years, the grunge years, and now the punk years."

JB: "The secret to success is persistence, and letting your audience find you.

Stop changing your f**king name every two years! But it was good that, unlike most bands, we couldn't blame the label."

K!: Were drugs at all to blame? Brett Gurewitz has admitted to heroin use at the time.

JB: "Yeah, the drugs and shit had something to do with the hiccups – but f**k, we were kids. By the time we were 18, we'd already done more than what some people ever do."

GG: "Jay was more 'classic', in the sense that he didn't do the trendy cocaine and heroin."

JB: "I just went straight to being The F**ker. I liked a drink and it lasted a f**king long time. I'm surprised I'm still here!"

K!: When did you become able to live off the band?

JB: "The last two years, if that."

GG: "We bought our first houses while we were still on Epitaph, with money from doing other jobs. But we were able to survive just from music by about 1993."

JB: "I wasn't willing to give up my job, because I still didn't believe you can live out of this. Then I realised you have to make a decision, and that does give the band more of a serious edge, because I don't have a nine-to-five any more. But this was – and is – a hobby gone completely f**king haywire!"

K!: Do Columbia Records see you as their pet punk band?

GG (laughing): "I don't even think they know we're here!"

JB: "Here's a quote for you, although I won't say who said it. 'Oh, you have a single?'. It's like 'Spinal Tap'. You know, 'Hi, I'm Marty Fufkin, Columbia representative. I got this new band The Gray Race with their album 'Bad Religion'!

"It pisses you off,

because you've been in control for so long, but eventually you just have to get real and admit that we couldn't run our own label any more."

K!: How do you feel about Epitaph upstarts like Rancid and Offspring surpassing your sales?

GG: "Oh, people ask us this all the time..."

JB: "They mean, 'Aren't you pissed off?'"

K!: Aren't you?

JB: "No! That's totally belittling to 16 years of work. Things we've done have meant more to me than anything I could f**king hang on a wall. To say that I was pissed off, would be saying to everyone who likes the band, 'F**k you, you're not enough'."

GG: "But also, with them acknowledging us as an influence, it means that the fruits of our labour have paid off. That makes me feel very proud." ■

BAD RELIGION headline London Astoria on March 15.



BAD RELIGION: men who know what it's like to be stuffed into a dustbin