

REBELS WITH SOUND

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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 6

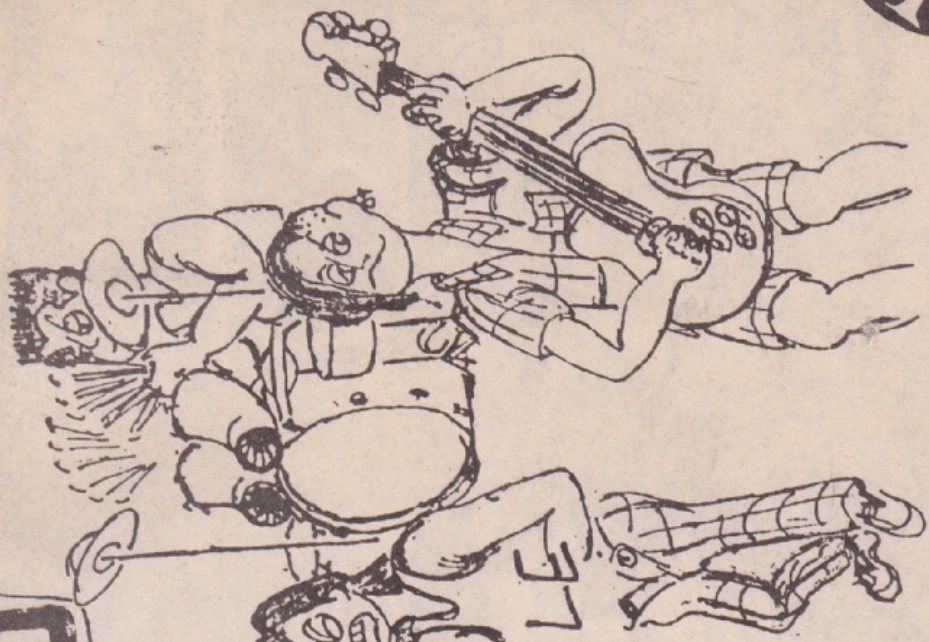
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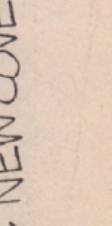
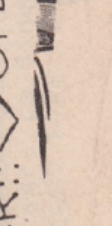
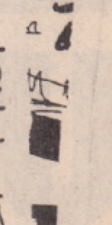
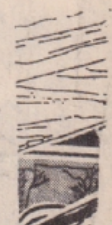
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We were hesitant to print this interview after the MRR article came out about their business practises. When you think about it thought, they're still DIY. After all these years, they've never been on another label but their own, Epitaph. So

its understandable that they must make some kind of money on tour to support the label and keep it going. Otherwise, they'll end up somewhere else, losing control of a formula that has proven itself to be very successful. We spoke with Mr. Brett and Greg Graffin a while back about Bad Religion's history, the beginning of punk in California and biology.

RS: When did the band first start rehearsing as Bad Religion?

MB: Back in 1980, we had a different drummer.

RS: Who came up with the idea for the band?

MB: Me and the original drummer were playing together and Greg and Jay were friends. Then a mutual friend introduced all of us and we just

started playing together. No one in the school liked punk rock anyway. It came about naturally, we all went to school in Woodland Hills, a suburb of Los Angeles.

RS: Who influenced you into playing?

MB: The scene back then

was a bunch of artists, homosexuals and misfits. We never fit in in highschool, we decided to start writing punk music. As far as influences, the first wave of American punk rock: Ramones, Dead Boys, Screamers, Weirdos, Germs. The first wave of English punk being the Sex Pistols, Stranglers, Buzzcocks....

RS: What was California like at the time?

GG: It was utopia. It was two girls for every boy, you've heard that song right? That's California. The waves

were tubular. It was 78 degrees, partly cloudy everyday. Never rained, but it poured. We were all dreaming a lot. You should've seen the girls. Back around '80, I went to a garden party.

RS: Did you ever think you'd last as long as you have?

GG: I never thought we'd last this long.

RS: Is it as good as it was, or better now?

GG: I think its better. No one's twisting our arms to do this. I like it.

MB: It keeps getting better and better, otherwise we'd drop out of it. When it starts becoming not fun, then we'll stop.

GG: No sense in flogging a dead horse, if you know what I mean.

RS: When and how did Epitaph Records come about?

MB: Its the name we chose to put on our first 7" back in 1980 and that was its conception.

RS: So, you founded it to put out your own stuff.

MB: It wasn't really founded, we just put out one record and of course, most 7"'s have the name of a label on it, so it was just a name. It wasn't really...there wasn't even an office or phone number, there wasn't anything. It was basically a word, that's all. We had no interest in going into business or starting a company. We just wanted our record to be in stores.

RS: How did it grow into what Epitaph is today?

MB: Well, people started to buy the records. Then we had to do things. It

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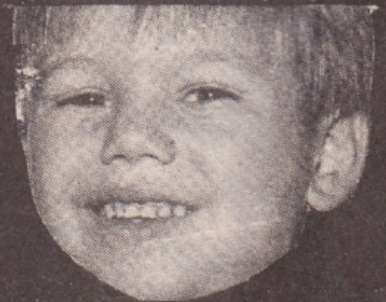
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gradually... Epitaph was never really a company until '88 when SUFFER came out. At that time, I tried to do it on a more legitimate level. Until then, we were just kids having fun and I wasn't interested in seriously running a company. I just wanted to have fun, take drugs, fuck and play punk rock. So, that's what I did.

RS: Who are you signing?
 MB: I'm signing bands I like. Like Coffin Break, Peter's right over there. Peter... come here. A guest appearance in the Bad Religion interview, with Peter from Coffin Break! Say something.
 PT: Bad Religion sucks.

MB: I'll go on the record to say Coffin Break totally rule and are the future of American pop culture.

RS: When did Greg Hetson join the Circle Jerks...
 MB: Greg was in Circle Jerks before he was in Bad Religion. Its not that he left us to do the Jerks. The Circle Jerks were a popular band before we were and Greg was our friend. Greg was actually responsible for Bad Religion first getting played on local LA radio. The Rodney on the ROQ show on KROQ 106.7.

RS: Was Bad Religion on hiatus when he was doing the Circle Jerks?
 MB: No, hew was always the extra guitarist in Bad Religion. It wasn't until the Jerks started doing less and less that he became a full time member.

RS: What were you doing during the time Bad Religion was on hold?
 MB: I was free basing in the bathroom, with the front door locked, the shades pulled down, the bathroom door locked, crawling on the floor, tin foil on the windows. Do you think I'm joking?
 RS: No... I don't know.
 MB: I'm serious, that's what I was doing.

RS: Were the two songs on the MRR single recorded especially for that release?
 MB: No, well yeah, but

we didn't write them for that. We wrote them for GENERATOR, but we recorded those versions of them hastily for the MRR 7", so they'd still be relevant.

RS: Did you know anyone that went to the war?
 MB: No, I didn't. Greg, did you know anyone that went to the Gulf?
 GG: Yeah, one of my students went to the Gulf war. I teach college kids. One of these guys was in ROTC, that they have at universities. He had to be taken away from his schooling to serve in Desert Storm. Then he came back and continued his studies even though he was dead. Its true, absolutely true.

RS: Where do you teach?
 GG: Cornell University.

RS: What do they think of Bad Religion at Cornell University?
 GG: They're very tolerant.

RS: Do they talk about it?
 GG: Yeah, its like academic nerd makes good. Like most academic types are social retards, so when they hear that someone is actually hip, they go really overboard.

RS: What do you teach?
 GG: Biology classes.

RS: You seem to have outlasted most of the bands on the infamous BYO compilation, what would you credit for your longevity?
 MB: I don't know. I guess we're just stubborn. We all get along and we really didn't have any musical ambition other than being Bad Religion.

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