

In a very personal opinion, I think the mid- to late 90s were very dark years for the metal scene. By "dark" I mean that the metal scene wasn't as exciting as it is now or in the early 90s. I'm sure some people out there think those were the best years for the metal scene, but I personally don't feel that way. Even the fanzines, I've seen a lot of zines from that era and I just don't feel the same vibe I felt with those old zines from the late 80s and early 90s. Luckily, SLOTH zine was one few that gave me motivation to continue reading zines, and also one of the zines that inspired me to do REBORN FROM ASHES. Unfortunately SLOTH is not active anymore, but let's find out what interesting things the former editor Phil Alterman has to say.

RFA- What's up, Phil? It's a pleasure to have you here in these pages man, thanks for doing the interview.
PHIL- Tony! Thank YOU so much for the honor of being here. In just two issues you've shown that Reborn from Ashes is an incredibly thoughtful and passionate zine. It's flattering to be remembered for Sloth after all these years.

RFA- Let's start from the beginning. How did you become interested in metal music? How old were you when you told yourself, "Ok, metal is what I'm into and fuck everything else?"
PHIL- I would have to say it was an instinctual attraction, there's just something about electric guitar through a cranked amp and pounding drums that has always been "it" for me. I remember as a kid listening to Casey's Top 40 on the radio, the bands that appealed to me were Whitesnake and Def Leppard, not INXS and Wilson Phillips, ya know! And then it progressed along the familiar metalhead's path, discovering stuff like Metallica and Megadeth, then stuff like Anthrax and Slayer, and finally the decent into the most extreme music at that time (the early 90s), death metal like Obituary and Carcass.
I swear I will always remember those times when I was listening to this underground metal show at night, Rock 103 up in Maryland, I had to run an antenna across my bedroom ceiling to pick it up, haha—the first time I heard "Hammer Smashed Face" by Cannibal Corpse, "Sacrificial Suicide" by Deicide, and "Sinners Bleed" by Entombed, I swear those were religious experiences. They opened up a whole other world to me. Now with many years life experience and hindsight it makes me chuckle—who could have guessed that Malevolent Creation's *Retribution* is still as important to me today as when I was 13 years old? There's either something sad or beautiful in that, but I'll let you decide that, haha!

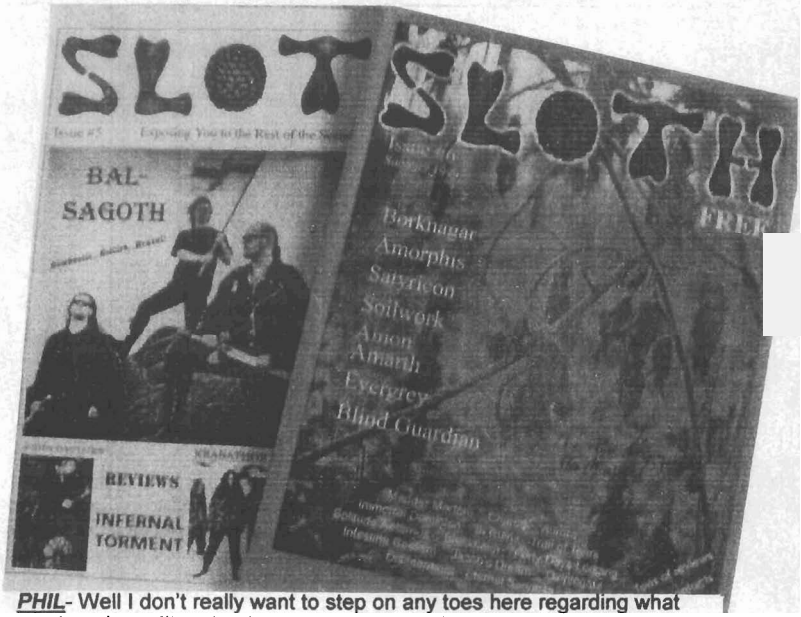
RFA- What fanzines were you into? Were you inspired by a particular zine or the idea to do SLOTH zine came out spontaneously?
PHIL- Well early on I was reading the bigger mags like Metal Maniacs and Metal Edge, and I think I picked up a few copies of SOD at Tower Records. And just through those I began to pick up on the idea that there was an underground scene that not even Headbanger's Ball was tapping into. I'd see the full-page ads for labels like Relapse—which in the early 90s served as the American Nuclear Blast office—and since this was pre-internet you'd have to mow some lawns, save up the 14 bucks to order one of their compilation CDs, wait a month to get it, haha, but in the end I was exposed to bands like Macabre, Benediction, Kataklysm, Sinister. I was lucky to get into the scene back then because it seems like every band was doing its own unique take on the style at that time.
But to answer your question, Metal Maniacs had a zine review section and I ordered a cheap one called Morbid Commentary by this guy named Per Malloch, who incidentally I just discovered died of an overdose at college in 2000. The zine turned out to be pretty much the template that I followed for issue #1 of Sloth—silly hand-drawn front cover, 20-some odd pages of obnoxiously opinionated and quirky reviews. I said to myself, "I can do something like this!"

RFA- You've mentioned before, that your issues 1 and 2 were done the old school way. How was the response towards those first two issues? Do you remember how many copies you put out?
PHIL- Yes, so issue #1 was all black and white, came out in the summer of 1995. My mom would sneak into the copy room at work and run off a few copies here and there. I don't know if this all sounds silly because of the internet and how savvy kids are today, but that was the old school way: having mom make copies, now that's pretty fuckin' metal, haha! So that issue maybe had a total print run of 250, maybe more realistically like 125. It's been a long time! But I sent it out to the labels to show them I had a product, and by issue #2 I had lots of new albums to review, had conducted a handful of interviews, and did splurge on a color cover, some very non-metal artsy painting I'd done. I did an initial batch of maybe 100 at Kinko's—I'll remember that forever, a Friday night in February 1996, rather than out partying with the other kids, there I was. Future copies I'd get the covers from Kinko's and have my mom do the pages at work—so total print run on that was maybe 300-400 at the very most, again possibly around only 200.

RFA- I believe when you started doing your zine, the internet was not very big at that time, people were still writing letters. Were your parents surprised when they saw tons of letters in their mail box addressed to you?
PHIL- Yeah man, I started getting enticingly thick envelopes from all over the country, then even from Europe. It was super exciting, especially for a teenager who loved metal but had no money! But I gotta say, when you receive promo music for free it is a responsibility, and you have to take your role of reviewer seriously and put in the time listening to it all. And Tony, I think you'll agree sometimes that becomes more of a chore when you see a stack of mediocre albums you've got to sit through multiple times, haha!
As for my parents, well they never ever have understood metal and took a pretty humorless view toward it. But they were glad to see me doing something constructive with my time so I guess they kept a cautious eye out while I wrote the zine. The one time they blew up was when I'd get these handwritten letters from prisoners who'd somehow gotten one of my flyers, and back in those days I was writing to people all over the world, what was it to me? But they freaked out, saying that when these bad men got out they'd come to the house and rob us, hahaha! Ah Tony, this interview is bringing back some memories...

RFA- Issue # 3 was professionally printed. Was it difficult at that time to be able to afford the costs while you were in school? Weren't you selling the zine for $3.00 at that time?
PHIL- Issue #3 came out in the spring of '97, just before I graduated high school. The thing that irks me about this issue is that yes, it was supposed to be professionally printed, but the night I went over there to pick up the boxes, the job wasn't quite complete and there was some low-level employee standing in front of a copy machine as it spit out the body pages! So yeah the color cover was done beautifully but the rest old mom could've done, ha! I mean, it was expensive for sure, there was not any profit from sales—not that there ever was—but I funded it partially with advertising, partially by umpiring baseball games (having long hair and dealing with baseball parents, that's a whole other interview, haha), and my parents helped out too. But the cost definitely steered me toward using newsprint in future issues.

RFA- You know, one thing I liked about your zine was the reviews. They were very opinionated, no ass kissing, no bullshit. You were not afraid to say "this band sucks" even if the band or label sent you free CDs or promos. I've read zines where most of their reviews get good ratings. Do you think sometimes the zine editor feels obligated to do a "good" review when they get free material, especially if that particular label sends several CDs for review? What's your opinion about this?



PHIL- Well I don't really want to step on any toes here regarding what another zine editor should or should not do. As a reader I know it's hard to figure out what's worth checking out when everything is praised, and I'd rather disagree with an editor but know his general tastes and gauge what to buy from there. I actually revisited a few of the old Sloth issues while thinking about your questions, and even I was shocked sometimes by how obnoxious or bizarre some of those reviews are, haha! You have to realize I wrote Sloth between the ages of 15 and 19, so the zine was a kind of mix of insane enthusiasm for what I liked and an outlet for my sarcastic sense of humor. Looking back I just hope I did more good than harm with it all.

RFA- I noticed that you are quite an artist. Didn't you do the cover for issue# 3? What's the story behind that cover? Serial killer?
PHIL- I was big into art back in those days, that was the one class where you could be somewhat free. The cover for #3 was just something acrylic I did at home. I like acrylics because you have to apply the background first and you can create lots of textures because of its thick, plastic nature. The mysterious character just appeared, beware of the blue-headed man!!!

RFA- Were the people interested in the zine mostly in the US or all over the world?
PHIL- I'd say due to the fact it was a physical zine it was mostly distributed in the US. Now with the internet it doesn't cost anything for you to access and be accessed worldwide. But I did send copies to overseas labels and I received many promos from obscure Czech labels or demo bands in Germany. I mean, over time when you've put out several issues and you've spread thousands of flyers in the mail, word gets around since at least at that time in the late 90s the scene was had a somewhat defined membership. Now with the internet, technological advances, and metal's popularity, there is no end to the scene—besides the real deal bands, any kid with a computer can whip something up and you've also got plenty of trendy wanna-be's.

RFA- Issue #3 was printed on white paper but after that all your issues were printed on newsprint. Why the switch to a different type of paper? Did you like better the newspaper style or was it cheaper to do it that way?
PHIL- It was pretty clear that if I wanted to continue doing the zine after issue #3 I was going to have to fund it completely on my own. I was heading to college in Miami and my parents justifiably were not going to help out anymore, so I needed to find a cheaper option. I'd initially been resistant to going newsprint because I wanted Sloth to stand out since it was on white paper, but the tradeoff was that by going to the cheaper material I was able to print many more copies and therefore reach more people.

I interviewed Bill Zebub of The Grimoire of Exalted Deeds zine for issue #4 and he told me about this company called The Small Publisher's Co-op, they would piggyback multiple zines into a large order every month or so, and this way you could get really cheap printing rates. So from the advertising and reduced printing costs, I was able to pretty much break even printing 5000 copies of Sloth issue #4.

RFA- The first issue that I saw was issue #4, I got it for free with my order through RELAPSE records. I believe was given away for free through record labels and distros. To send a single copy to somebody, were you charging people just for postage? Were you ever going nuts with tons of zines to send though mail?
PHIL- I think I sold that issue for a couple bucks, just to cover postage basically. As for whether or not the little tasks ever drove me crazy, I mean this was my life, I was 18 years old doing a full college course, interviewing all these bands, corresponding with labels, getting good at graphic design, just managing the whole operation. Yeah, it almost seems crazy looking back, but I guess when you're "in the shit" you don't have any perspective and you just let it rip!

RFA- At that time, weren't you printing thousands of copies? I'm guessing you were selling a lot of ads and the ads were paying for the printing costs. Were you able to get rid of all those copies?
PHIL- So the print run evolved from just a couple hundred copies for the first two, a thousand for #3, 5000 for #4, and then 7500 for issues #5 and #6. Again for the final two issues I sold enough ads to pay for my costs, and of course I worked various jobs to help cover those other expenses like postage, supplies, etc. I never made a dime, that's for sure! But it wasn't about that, it was a pure passion given a creative outlet that over time became more and more professional. I did get rid of almost the entire run of those last three issues, right now I only have a small mixed box which I'm keeping for personal posterity or whatever.

RFA- Can you mention some of the record labels that used to carry SLOTH zine? Were they mostly US labels or some overseas? I bet it was expensive to send a box full of zines overseas?
PHIL- Mostly US labels like Relapse, Metal Blade, Wild Rags, Red Stream, Cursed Productions, Metal-Core, and maybe Century Media, I can't remember on that one. I did have some overseas distros but they were required to pay for the shipping—I remember I sent a bunch to Sweden in this thing called an M-bag once, it's like a golden Santa sack! Just thinking back on little things like this, it reminds me how much you learn about dealing with people and navigating the real world, doing stuff like worldwide postage and booking advertisers. In some ways I really got more a practical education doing Sloth than I did at college—though that James Joyce class must've been good for something...

RFA- Even though the zine was given away for free, did you ever think that some people that were distributing the zine were selling it? How did you feel about those people making money off your zine?
PHIL- If it happened it wasn't really a big deal to me. I was mostly just so happy after all the hard work each time to get the zine out there.

RFA- While doing the zine, you were also attending college. I know for fact that doing a zine takes a lot of time to put together. Were you ever stressed out between the zine and school?
PHIL- Well, as mentioned before, it truly was a busy time. I did take a small break from Sloth in the fall of '98, just doing small preparations for issue #6 so that I would be sure I had the energy and focus to get it done by the spring deadline I had set.

RFA- Most of the cover that you used for your zine were pictures or bands or pictures of something. There were hardly any zines using actual artwork or drawings on their covers. Do you think it was easier to do it that way or that was just they style happening back then?
PHIL- I did use "traditional" covers for issues #4 and #5, which were on newsprint, a medium that didn't lend itself to my using a painting. And the zine was definitely taking on a more professional tone in general, I was getting creative with the layouts using Microsoft Publisher, and I wanted the cover to get people excited, so I included lots of band pics and mentioned all the contents. For issue #6 I used a sort of grim looking photograph I took back in Virginia of a dead branch in winter, and the Sloth logo was overlaid in orange.

As to whether my covers were consistent with a certain style, there were so many zines of different types out there at any given time it's hard to say what idea was your own or somehow influenced by others. I mean, you certainly want to achieve the balance between a cover that's appropriate to attracting a metalhead's attention while also being your own "look."

RFA- Through the years you probably received a ridiculous amount of demos, CDs, fanzines, and magazines. Do you still have all those things or did you get rid of whatever you didn't like?

PHIL- Oh yeah, I got hundreds of items during those years, and even after I'd ended Sloth a few still trickled in for a while. Obviously you're not expected to keep or return the stuff you don't like—I think I either gave that stuff away to people or traded it at this place called the Record Mart that used to be in my hometown. What's funny is that people are paying big money on eBay for many demo tapes from this era, not necessarily that they're any good but more because they're rare or cult. Wish I had'em still, haha!

I still do have many special items from these days, and in fact I just digitized some of the rare demo tapes I have from the old days. It's amazing what people are doing right now, they are digitizing obscure demos and posting them online via Rapidshare, then posting a blogspot page about it. It's just beautiful, this kind of cooperation.

RFA- What about rip-offs? Were there any record labels or bands that refused to pay after their ad was printed?

PHIL- I got ripped off a few times, but that's reality for ya. One company that advertised with me in #6 called Burning Church Enterprises, they sold t-shirts and since he couldn't pay on time we agreed to have him print Sloth tees for me when I got back from Australia...well, that never happened! But a funny story, one label (whose name I won't mention) placed a full-page ad with me for about $200 and never paid. I hounded that motherfucker for almost two years before he finally let me pick a bunch of CDs from his mailorder catalog—among them were two great discoveries for me, Symbyosis and Kralizec, so it was worth the wait!

RFA- Issue #5 was very thin, just about 22 pages. I know the issue was compact because you wanted to have it ready to distribute it at the Milwaukee Metalfest in 1998. Did you ever wish you waited longer and have a more complete issue?

PHIL- Issue #4 had just come out around March or April of that year, so the only reason #5 came out when it did and as it did was for the Metalfest. Otherwise I definitely would have taken my time. I mean, I passed up a weeklong trip to England with my family in order to work on that issue...*am I fucking insane?! But I gotta tell you, that first day* in Milwaukee, my friend Sean and I hit the line outside the venue before the doors opened and passed out hundreds of copies to diehard metalheads. Moments like that made it all worth it.

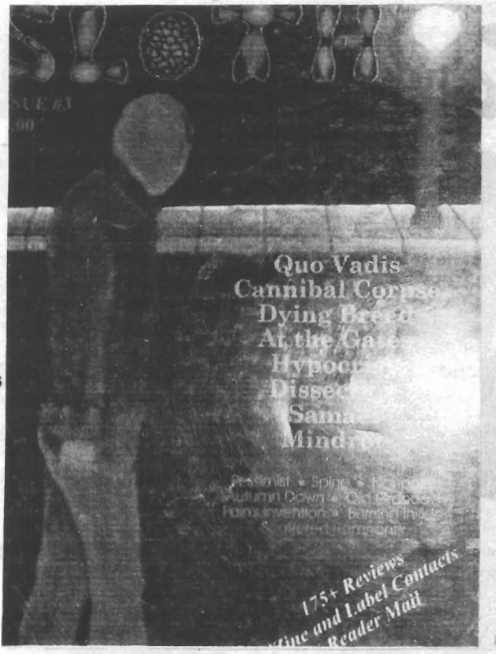
RFA- Which issue it took the longest to put together and when it was done you felt this huge relief?

PHIL- Well as you know, Tony, every issue is its own monster, and I think anyone who's taken part in big projects will say that each one has its own triumphs, disasters, memories, etc. Issues #1 and #2 were more just about learning, seeing if I really was going to do a serious mag. #3 I definitely upped the quality and content with more interviews, tons of CD and for the first time demo reviews, all during my senior year of high school, so that was really stressful (back then we had books and used to study, hahahaha!). But then again, when an issue is complete then comes the work of promoting, distributing, etc., so it never really ends! Issue #4 was a lot of fun, I also had a couple outside writers come in, #5 was done in manic fashion over just a couple months, and #6 was by far the most serious, intense, and biggest issue of them all. I guess I was lucky that three of my good friends who lived on my floor in the dorm were all studying abroad that semester, or else maybe Sloth #6 wouldn't have seen the light of day, haha!

RFA- Somewhere in issue #6, there is a list of zines and you marked the ones that you considered your favorites. I was surprised that some of the most popular and long running zines like THE GRIMOIRE OF THE EXALTED DEEDS, METAL CORE, HEADFUCKER, SOD, WORM GEAR, even PIT MAGAZINE were not marked as your favorites. What do you think about these zines?

PHIL- Yeah, I put a star more by ones that I probably shared similar tastes with the editors, or if it was a huge zine I guess I figured most people had already read them already. I meant no disrespect to any of them and I deliberately never reviewed other zines. Sloth was kind of a wild opinionated beast, both making some bands feel like gods and pissing other bands off. I didn't feel the need to poo-poo any other hardworking zine editor's efforts.

RFA- **At what point did you decide to stop doing SLOTH zine? I mean, your zine was very successful and you worked very hard to earn a good reputation in the metal scene. Why give it all up?**





PHIL- That is a great question. In hindsight, seeing how well metal has done in the past ten years and what a struggle the real world can be, hehe, I guess it would be easy to say, "Oh, well of course I should have kept on doing Sloth! It would be huge right now." But I had many interests and things I wanted to pursue in life, and remember I was now only a 20-year-old college kid at this point. I remember I had just gotten back from a semester studying in Australia, and in my mind I had made all these plans for Sloth to be this and that, but when I got up to my bedroom for the first time and saw that huge stack of mail on my desk—my heart just sank.

It's like, I had been there and done that. I couldn't go back to that frame of mind, that lifestyle. And Tony, you know that running a zine is beyond just a job, it's like an animal you are obligated to look after and keep alive. I was doing a double major in photography and creative writing, and I felt that I needed to focus on creating my own art rather than just reporting on that of others.

I will admit that perhaps if I'd transitioned to the online thing, expanded the staff, not spent as much time on it, I could have kept it going. I didn't realize how well it could have served me later in life...but it just wouldn't have been the same crazy Sloth zine, which I now see as some sort of bizarre time capsule of my frantic mind during those years.

RFA- When you decided to stop doing the zine, did you have interviews and material reviewed that was never released? Did you try to give it to other zines?

PHIL- I had no material written at that time, as I just returned from 6 months out of the country. A couple years later I dabbled in writing for another zine but only got as far as interviewing the band and typing it up halfway—my heart and mind were just not into it at all during the early 2000s.

RFA- Out of all interviews that you did, what were the best interviews, the most memorable ones? Which ones you consider the worst?

PHIL- My first interview was with Crowbar, I was 16 and they were playing at local club. I was so nervous, tape recorder shaking in one hand, question sheet shaking in the other, and I will always remember how kind and patient they were with me. That's right, the big bad boys of Crowbar, haha! I really enjoyed talking with Tom Englund of Evergrey back in the day—this was before their second album came out, and you could tell he was so dedicated and hungry, there was no

question he would accomplish great things. Many interviews were done via e-mail and so those I can't really comment on whether I enjoyed them or not.
Obviously it's frustrating when some bands take forever to respond, it's like, "Hello, I'm trying to promote your awesome fucking band here!" So yeah, that's why I took a stab at Immortal Dominion in issue #6, calling it "The Lame Interview," haha. Why practice, why record a pro CD, why send it out to people, if you're not going to be a pro?

RFA- Did you ever get any complaints or death threats from bands or labels when they got a bad review. Do you remember one of the most ridiculous complaints?
PHIL- I got a few angry pieces of correspondence from time to time, but nothing actually frightening or whatever. I remember being trashed in a few zines but that's cool, if you dish it out you sometimes gotta take it too. I did get a phone call from a female band member one time, she was really upset because I'd made some insulting remarks about her looks, and in hindsight yeah, it was hurtful. But hey, I was an obnoxious kid at the time, there's a lot of ridiculous energy in those reviews, good and bad, take'em for what they are. And you know what, everyone has said and done stupid things whether or not there's a paper record of it, so...

RFA- I'm guessing, before you stopped doing the zine, you received free material from bands and labels. Were you ever worried of what they might say when those reviews never saw the light?
PHIL- Pretty much all of that stuff I gave to the college radio metal show guys. Zines come and go so I don't think bands would've shown any particular disappointment beyond just not being reviewed.

RFA- Now, the million dollar question is: will you ever bring SLOTH zine back to life and start were you left off? Have you ever though about it? Or do you think it's for the best to leave it the way it is right now?
PHIL- Tempting, very, very tempting, señor! But I think there was a certain time and place for me to have been involved in that. I manage a studio now and am working on a couple music projects, so I really feel my role is to be supportive and constructive, use the years I've spent carefully listening to music in a positive way, helping young bands sculpture their sound.
But I have just setup the website slothzine.blogspot.com where I will try to start posting back issues of Sloth as well as all those cool rare tapes I digitized.

RFA- Even though you were not doing your zine anymore, were you still in touch with the zine scene? Have you seen any good zines or some that you think have potential recently?
PHIL- Ever since I stopped publishing Sloth I pretty much disappeared from the underground scene and followed metal just from the periphery. It was really only in 2004 when I heard Fall of the Leafe's *Fermina* that I really had a metal awakening. I had been burned out from my zine days, thought I'd heard it all, and that album was basically what I'd been waiting to hear my entire life! Just this soaring, atmospheric melodic dark metal with courageous, soulful clean vocals. And from there I've gotten into more obscure and creative bands like Silent Stream of Godless Elegy, Unhola, and Moonsorrow.
To answer your question, I'm slowly getting back into this underground scene but haven't read too many zines. Highwire Daze here in Burbank is a longtime zine whose editor Ken has done incredible work showing truly positive support for the scene for almost 20 years. I really admire that. And of course Reborn from Ashes, I was honestly shocked at how you pick the most interesting bands to interview, and your well-researched questions really draw these guys out. Kudos to you!

RFA- Do you have any advice for those maniacs out there who might be thinking about doing a zine?
PHIL- I say dudes, if your blood is itching to carry the banner of metal with a zine, go for it! The scene needs energetic zines to spread the word. And now, with all the opportunities to connect with people all over the world via Myspace, the Encyclopedia Metallum, and so many other online resources, the possibilities are pretty darn exciting. I just gotta warn you, there's no free lunches here, if you're doing a zine because you want to get free CDs the last laugh is gonna be on you. Running a zine is like running a small business, it will consume your miserable life, haha!

RFA- Tell us about your current projects I DREAM OF APOCALYPSE and PENANCE & VENGANCE. Can you describe the music direction and what sort of topics inspire you to write lyrics?
PHIL- I Dream of Apocalypse is a project I started in 2007, it was my return to making metal since my high school band Lumbricosis broke up back in the day. IDOA's lyrics are political in nature, exposing everything from spineless metrosexuals in the song "Straight Fag" to government conspiracies in "A Convenient Suicide." The music is a pretty wicked hybrid of death and thrash with tasteful touches of punk and hardcore. So it's serious but clever lyrics in an intense but fun musical package. IDOA was on hold last year while we built the new studio but I'm about to write some new songs for it—the country is imploding financially and spiritually, so I ought to have lots to talk about, haha!
Penance & Vengeance came about because I was looking for an outlet for my more personal lyrics as well as the melodic guitar parts that didn't fit with IDOA. The lyrics deal in a very naked way with topics such as isolation, emptiness, failure, and hopelessness—I strive to articulate these concepts and feelings very directly, and not bury them in cloudy metaphors. And unlike bands like Bethlehem or Silencer I want to connect with people in a positive way, to acknowledge that we may be broken but that we must triumph over it, not self-destruct or commit suicide.
Musically P&V draws heavily from dark melodic metal bands like Novembre, Anathema, and Fall of the Leafe, with a heavy focus on the song progression capturing the moods and emotions. Therefore you'll sometimes find big swings from the harshness of Mithotyn into straight American singer/songwriter passages. If there was any justification for ending Sloth and the wandering sort of life I've spent out here in LA in my 20s, it was because this band was brewing deep inside me. I feel a bit like Tom from Evergrey when we spoke back in the day, I will bring this musical vision to life!

RFA- You also run a t- shirt business called SHIRTS WITH BALLS. Can you tell us what type of propaganda you promote on the t-shirts? How can people get those t-shirts?
PHIL- Ah yes, Shirts With Balls! I launched SWB in late 2002 with the goal of printing only the funniest and most offensive designs out there. Over the next two years I sank every dollar I had and every dollar the credit boom of the early 2000s would give me into it. I did some festivals and sold a bunch online, but basically it was a financial catastrophe. In 2004 I got into selling random used t-shirts on eBay to help promote SWB—next thing you know I was out of debt, got into selling original 80s vintage tees, and was on the verge of liquidating the SWB originals line for good.
Then a friend turned me on to many of the anomalies about the 9/11 attacks and next thing you know, I'm a certified conspiracy nut printing shirts about how the Twin Towers were destroyed by controlled demolition. Wowsers! So I did that for a couple years while still running my eBay business full time, and this time I think the SWB originals made about $65 profit! So I'm just getting rid of the last of those 9/11 tees at shirtswithballs.com because if the whole economy is gonna collapse and we'll be living like Mad Max in a few years, I'd rather spend what time I have with electricity at my disposal playing metal than trying to wake up the idiot Joe Public, ahahahahaha!!!

RFA- You also have a brand new studio called STONE HEAVY SOUND, that seems to be a huge project for you. Have you had any bands recording yet? Are prices affordable?
PHIL- Yes, my longtime friend Juan Suarez—who wrote some articles and reviews for Sloth—is an experienced audio professional with a knack for recording as well as composing movie trailers. Now he and I have spent many a drunk evening discussing the merits and philosophies of metal, and over time it became obvious to us that we needed to open a recording studio to do for the scene what Morrisound and Sunlight Studios did for it in the past. We found an empty warehouse space and built our studio from the ground up just like the Amish—with the help of a few power tools, of course! We've had a couple small projects come in and are getting out there meeting local bands, it's just a matter of time before the Stone Heavy Sound train gets a'roaring down the tracks! As for rates, we designed this place to be a high-end studio, it's totally pro, we're not some bargain basement chop shop. But you get what you pay for and we're not sticklers on the clock—bring your band in, let's get the songs done right!

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or with a fanzine such as **REBORN FROM ASHES**?
SIBYLLE - Note that this website is only in its beginnings. I have not put in all the interviews and reviews we have. They are almost all in boxes, "Real Archives boxes". Anyway, I give all of my attention while doing an interview. The same for a big magazine or a small fanzine. There is no difference for me. All of them are important! Smaller fanzines just have more questions! (smile)

REBORN - What is your personal point of view towards the metal scene from when you started until today?
SIBYLLE - It has changed! I may appear as an old idiot, but in FRANCE in early 1980's, all the bands knew each other. All were friends and supported each other. It is not the same now.
There are more bands wanting to be much more important than the others.

REBORN - Do you remember any of your favorites fanzines from the past?
SIBYLLE - Well sorry, but there were a lot of them. I remember some French ones, like **Decibel Storm** and **Initium**. And now from the USA, **REBORN FROM ASHES** of course !!!!

REBORN - Have you done any shows or tours outside FRANCE, and what countries would you like to visit? Any chances to make it in the **HELLFEST** festival?
SIBYLLE - Well we played mainly in FRANCE, but also in SWITZERLAND. I would like to go everywhere possible. A tour of the USA would be great! And yes of course, the HellFest would be very good for us to play!

REBORN - How has you life changed from when you started **WITCHES** until today? Do you have kids and/or a husband and do they understand and support your music?
SIBYLLE - Yes, I have kids- 2, a boy and a girl so my life has changed a lot. And certainly more than before when I was just playing music. My kids do like **WITCHES** and also the other band of their dad.

REBORN - Nowadays you see lots of bands fronted by women or 100% female bands. How does that make you feel? Can you tell us any of your favorite female or fronted female bands?
SIBYLLE - Well, there is of course now more bands with female singers. More commercial metal than we are, but a few into guttural singing… that's great. In 1986 in FRANCE, I was the only one singing like that. It was strange for people to hear a voice like that, especially when they realize it was from a girl that voice came from. My fave band in extreme metal is certainly **HOLY MOSES**. I have known **SABRINA** for a long time now. I told her I prefer the first albums, but someone told me I would like the new one. Shame on me, I don't have it yet!

REBORN - I'm sure a lot of people would like to know this. Do you like Death and Black Metal? And what is your opinion about the new Thrash Metal explosion and the new genre called, Gore-Grind?
SIBYLLE - Well sorry, but I don't put labels on music For me all is Metal and I won't tell you that I like or don't like one special kind of Metal. One band can please me and another will not even if, they're playing the same style. More over, the different styles change over the years. I remember **VENOM** was considered as a Black Metal band. We called it that in FRANCE. Now **MAYHEM** (hello to them) is one of the most popular Black Metal bands I know. I don't think they're playing the same music as VENOM did. At the beginning of **WITCHES** some said that we played Thrash and others said it was Death. As everybody seems to not have the same ideas about defining the music, I prefer to listen to it and afterwards say if I like the songs or not.

REBORN - What are the future plans for **WITCHES**, any plans for a new album?
SIBYLLE - We would like to do another album this year, but we're waiting for label propositions.

REBORN - It's been a pleasure doing this interview with you **SIBYLLE**. Any last words or messages for the readers of the Reborn From Ashes 'zine?

SIBYLLE - It was a pleasure for me too, thanks a lot for that! Support the Underground and **WITCHES** of course!!!

www.witches.fr
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SLOTH 'zine Interview

...Continued from page # 18

RFA- Well, thanks a lot for your time, Phil. Do you have anything else you would like to say to the readers, metalheads in general and old fans of SLOTH zine?
PHIL- Tony, again thank you so much for this great interview! The fact that Sloth gave you some inspiration to start Reborn from Ashes means a lot to me. To the old readers, I hope Sloth in some way helped you in your metal quest and I thank you for giving it the support it had to thrive for six issues. To the metalheads, never let anyone stigmatize this great love of ours!
And finally, Tony, this experience meeting you because of Sloth has highlighted for me the idea that no matter what it is you do or create, it takes on a life of its own, you never know who it will touch or how it will inspire. So I guess that's a good reason to strive to put out positive things—to have our legacy be that we made the world better, not worse

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