SLOTH 'ZINE DIGITIZATION PROJECT

ISSUE #3

Introductory Notes

Revisiting the first two issues of Sloth was a fun little treat for me, but as I began thumbing through the third issue I actually got chills because the sheer volume of work here revealed just how much of my life was involved in putting it all together. From conducting interviews to page design to corresponding with so many people worldwide to even changing the band name font atop each review, I was meticulous in managing this project all while finishing my senior year of high school.

Released in spring of 1997, Sloth #3 is staggering in how much content was crammed into its 52 pages: over 175 album and demo reviews, 16 band interviews, record label and magazine contact lists, reader mail, and for the first time, paid advertisements. Adorned with another of my full-color paintings, as well as debuting the official Sloth logo which I carefully designed by hand, this was the final issue to be printed on heavy white paper stock.

For the first time several friends contributed a handful of reviews and interviews, and I even opened up the demo section for bands to write rebuttals to a negative review. My strongest growth came in the questions I formulated for interviews as well as in the reviews which gave praise. I think a sense of fatigue set in when reviewing the many mediocre bands---these body slams may have made for an entertaining read but now I understand why some publications take the stance that "you simply can't review everything."

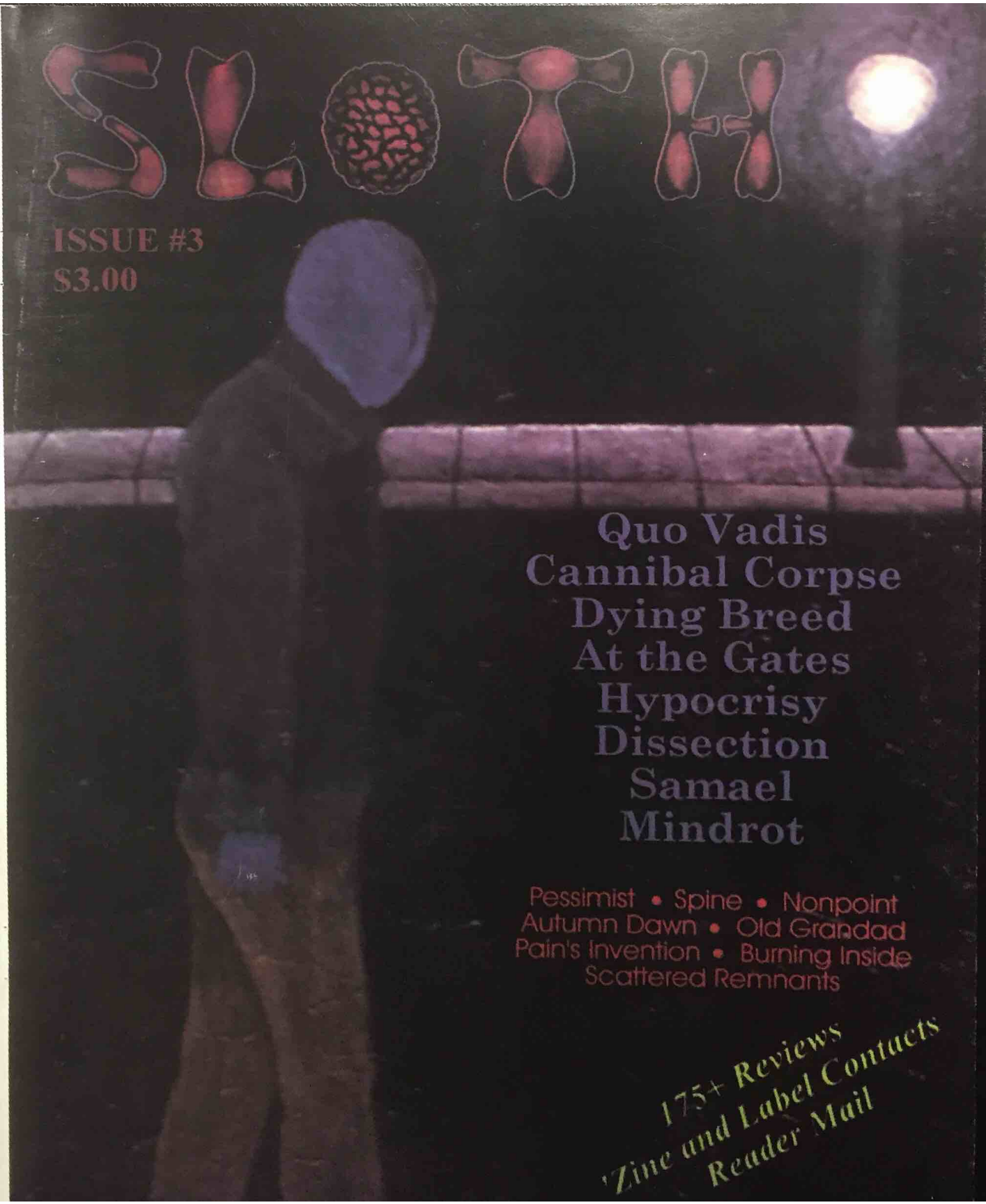
This issue was characterized by increased technical ability and a growing knowledge of the metal universe, but do remember it was written by a teenager so you'll have to pardon the somewhat frequent bursts of petulance and immaturity. But what the hell, what were *you* doing when you were 17 years old?

In Sloth we trust...

-Phil Alterman
December 24, 2015

SLOTH

ISSUE #3
$3.00



Quo Vadis
Cannibal Corpse
Dying Breed
At the Gates
Hypocrisy
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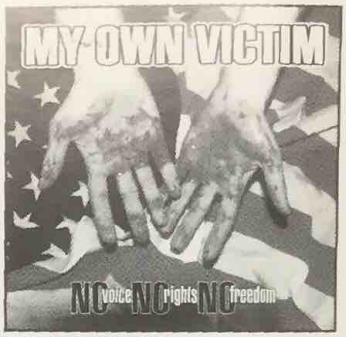
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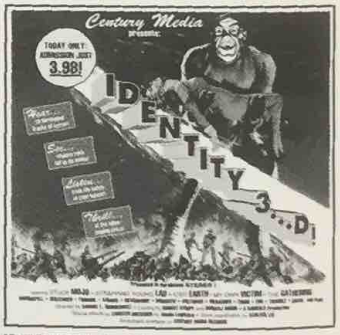
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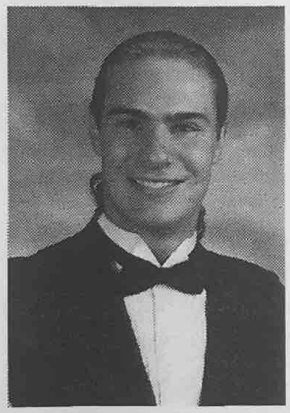
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It is with great enthusiasm that I welcome you to this third and most impressive issue of *Sloth* magazine. In your hands is the total underground package, complete with everything you need to keep informed and have a great music collection. The primary reason why we're so excited about this issue is our enhanced coverage of underground bands. One of the most repeated suggestions we received was to bulk up on the unsigned talent, so we did. Each of the ten unsigned bands featured here in *Sloth* demonstrates musical ability and originality, is hardworking, and has the confidence to continue forging its own path despite the pressures of trends and financial dire straights. We are privileged to be the magazine presenting such diverse young talent and hope you will take the initiative and get in touch with these bands.

We also made it really easy to contact people. You should have no problem writing to those unsigned bands, interviewed and reviewed. Each review has the band's address nicely formatted so all you have to do is copy down exactly what's on the page and shove the money in an envelope. Even a Big Jeans-wearing fake-skater could do that! And if you're a really cool person who's into the underground from head to toe, you'll appreciate the other 200 addresses of 'zines and record labels we've included. Unless you really don't like this style of music then there is plenty of great stuff for you in this issue.



About the next issue. I want more! More demo and album reviews, not to mention more interviews with your favorites and the best that the underground has to offer. (We've already planned chats with Hatred and The Great Kat.) One thing I feel *Sloth* needs is more international music. I've got tons of US stuff, so I'm going to be making a concerted effort to get in touch with as many foreign labels as possible. If you've got any to recommend, let me know. I wouldn't be able to do this 'zine if no one bought it, so tell me what you want and how I can get it! Also, we welcome your comments, suggestions, and lavish praise, because the only way we're going to get better is if you tell us what to do. How is *Sloth* going to be the magazine subscription you pass on from generation to generation unless you love it like I love ground beef and metal and sports that hurt and...???

So what's the story with me? I'm just a wee lad who'll be heading down to the University of Miami at Coral Gables, FL, this fall. I hope to hone my art skills, meet lots of great people, and not get killed in a hurricane. Throughout high school I've managed to keep this 'zine going despite the involvement with school, AP courses, sports, college applications, and jobs, so expect more *Sloth*s to come, with #4 hopefully out before college starts. I'm so excited! No more freezing my ass of all winter long.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this issue to my aunt, Rochelle M. Alterman. In April of 1996 she passed away after a valiant battle against cancer. She was only 49. She fought her illness with all her strength and never said, "Why me?" Her intense desire to live and the devotion of her husband Toby (my uncle) and her children, Jeff and Lynn (my cousins), were inspiring to our whole family. Looking back, I appreciate my aunt's courage more and more. In hard times we should all hope to be as strong as she was. She will not be forgotten, nor will her enviable spirit. That is why I dedicate this issue of *Sloth* to the memory of Rochelle Alterman.

-Phil Alterman, Editor

Of course, a whole lot of thanks is due to many people, so I'll try my best to name everybody...My parents and family, Larry Dambra (you rule!), Josh Shapiro and Andrew Burtless, Frankie Pasta, Jawsé, Blake, Sean, Eric, Joel Kaplan, Peter-O-Meter (both), Uncle Reddington, William Battle Cole III, Floyd, Herschel, Pykal Polsayn, Tylers White and Yowell, Vanilla Ice, Ed Cannon, Marion Barry (thanks for the crack!), Pat Herrity, Mrs. Hinners, Patrick Welsh, Patricia Lewis, Phanta Boon, Kokonis, Judith Lehne, Ula Gehret and Metal Maniacs, John and Underground 'Zine Scene, Chris and Subversive Agenda, Jack and Dogmatic Distro., Paul Greenhall and Vampyrum Publicity, Jackal Blaster 'zine, Nocturnal Empire 'zine, Sanguinary Surroundings 'zine, whoever invented meat, Don and Mike, Per Malloch, anyone who says 'arse', Tammy at Pavement Music, NHL '97 (*He shoots!*), Richard C. And Wild Rags, Lisa Jakub, George Gilmore, Planet Rock in Spain, the girl from Brazil I met in Kapital(!), Paul from As the Sea Parts, Greg from Compression, Stephan from Dead by Day, Von Young from Deaden, JD and Hellbound, Josh from Infamy, Mass Psychosis, Bryan and Medusa Oblongada, The Reviled, Tink and Slightly Miffed, Erik and Witch-Hunt, my cats [(man's best friend!) Motor, Oreo, Cowboy, Spot, Simon, and Sybil], Leland from Windham Hell, Marco Barbieri, Jeff Wagner (good luck at Metal Maniacs), Ed from Rage Records, the Infertil, the Washington Redskins and Capitals, people who call themselves 'Lord', anyone who has helped me when I needed it, and every saintly soul who bought this magazine! It's my true joy!

THE MAIL SACK

As promised last issue, we have included a section for readers to express their opinions and views, in the form of *The Mail Sack*. We've pretty much left these letters as is, but have opted to not print each person's address unless given prior consent. We wouldn't want our addresses published in some other magazine (like *Teen* or *Playgirl*) and felt it only natural to extend this courtesy to our readers. If you write to us and *would* like your address printed, please specifically say so. Send all of your profound prose to:

Sloth Magazine
c/o Phil Alterman
3509 Sterling Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22304
USA

Phil,

Great to hear from you and thanks for the zine. Very cool issue! I found myself agreeing with a lot of the reviews. Even the **Windham Hell** review as you'll see when our next release comes out. Cool editorial. Good to see someone say it. Anyway, keep up the writing, you're very good at it, which is a rarity in the underground.

Darkness Deluge,
Leland Windham
P.O. Box 1846
Snoqualmie, WA 98065

Hello Phil,

I enjoyed reading your 'zine. I really could find no fault with it. I found your editorial on Black Metal interesting. Don't underestimate the American Black Metal scene. It's a lot larger than people think. Just because it has stayed low keyed doesn't make it less of a power.

Take care,
Deborah Whitten
Crown Point, IN

Hey bud, Sloth 2 ruuules! I read it cover to cover! The interviews are awesome, you did a great job. Your reviews are better than ever...the only thing I miss is some of the gutter humor, like "I don't feel like crapping on every copy of this magazine to express my displeasure (with **Dead World**)," and "If you have agreed with everything I've written, you'll probably like this, and if you think I'm crazy, well, then fuck you!"

George "Tiger" Gilmore
Milwaukee, WI

Phil Alterman/Sloth Magazine,

How's it going? I just got my *Sloth* #2 yesterday. It's a killer zine. I just wish there had been more unsigned/underground bands featured. It sounds like that's in #3 which will be cool. Another thing is you don't seem to like black metal, I might be wrong (everyone has their own opinion). But before you close it completely out listen to the bands who seem to care about music (rather than image) like **December Wolves**, **Abazagorath**, **Demoncy**...

Take it easy,
Patrick Schroeder
Springfield, MO

Hi Phil,

You say in *Sloth* that you want feedback, so here it is :) First of all, I really enjoyed it. I was glad to read the **Suffocation** interview, cause I like them, but I didn't know anything about them personally. I also had to laugh at the **Kataklysm** interview during the part where he said that there's no metal on the west coast of Canada -- as I spent the last two years going to school down there I can say he wasn't kidding! Vancouver sucks! Anyway, the guys from **Meshuggah** sounded cool, but -- having never heard them myself -- I realized that most of the interviews are written as if the reader has heard every single band in there. So a suggestion would be to ask the guys what they were trying to achieve on this or that album, what they hope to sound like on the next one, etc.

I really liked the editorial about those black metal asses in Norway. I don't like Christianity myself, but I'm not gonna give someone shit cause that's what they believe. And why destroy all that great architecture? If nothing else, those jerks won't have anyplace to shoot their band photos for the next album if they keep torching them all, duh! The most useful, and my favorite part, though, is the interviews. Guys like me that live in tiny towns in Alaska are starved for such information :) I had mixed feelings about the reviews in *Sloth* 2 compared to *Sloth* 1. In #2 there were more detailed and objective descriptions of what the band sounds like, which I like, cause that's ultimately what makes me decide to buy an album. Yet they weren't as amusing as they were in #1 (I still laugh every time I read the part about the drummer for **Nokturnel** being faster than diarrhea coming out of your ass!). I would suggest a mix of professionalism and gutter humor -- #2-type descriptions for albums you like, and #1 cut-downs for albums that suck.

I think that your reviews are dead on. For example, I had bought the **It Is I** album before I read your review, so I was able to laugh along with it all the more. I bought the **Gutted** CD based on your review and I love it. And I'm going to check out **Medusa Oblongada** next...Oh yeah, I liked the cover art as well. Way better than some cheesy cartoon of a hacked up woman or something like that.

Chuck Adams
Seward, AK

Hello Phil,

I think you've done a hell of a job. You do a very thorough job reviewing stuff, and it's pretty obvious to me that you've not only done your homework on the releases, but also get a little "philosophical" about your music as well.

The interviews were OK. I think the problem lies in the fact that they were all live (except for **Windham Hell**), and that not only limits what bands are going to say, but also makes for you to have to come up with stuff off the top of your head, like the **Suffocation** one. What I'm trying to say is that they were a bit short for my taste, but you did effectively capture the live setting with all yer little asides. A good job I say, but it could be better.

Your editorial was interesting, but who gives a shit what those *kids* do over there? I read an interview with Monte Conner (Roadrunner) once and he said something like, "They'll all grow up and have kids and end up explaining to them how silly daddy was when he was their age." I got a kick out of that!

Later,
Chris Wojcik
Subversive Agenda 'zine
2230 Gateway Oaks #129
Sacramento, CA 95833

Great job guys! I don't know why you call this a "zine," it's more like a book. It's professional looking and you don't need a magnifying glass to look at it. I would like to see more compilation Cds reviewed...for example Metal Blade's *Metalmeister* and *Repulsive Assault* from Repulse Records.

I agree that King Diamond's rising vocal range is a little hard getting used to...I also feel that way about Karyn Crisis (good music though), but those high pitches make me grind my teeth together and then shrug it off. Lastly, thanks for the numerous ad clippings and stickers you've enclosed with the book.

Thanx,
Michael W. Hicks
Huntington, WV

Dear Mike,

Thanks for the compliments. The Repulsive Assault *compilation is reviewed in the album section. As you may have noticed, we had to scale down the font size in order to fit all of these glorious letters, reviews, and interviews into an affordable package. We hope you understand and that you won't need a magnifying glass to read it all. - Phil*

Phil,

First off, *great* zine! I was really impressed with the layout and your mature writing skills. I'm used to reading zines with near illiterate editors, so yours was a breath of fresh air.

Your editorial on Count Shit-fuck was right on the money. You have truly exposed this clown for the waste of sperm he is. I can only hope that his cell mates are a group of violent homosexuals. Maybe after a daily schedule of butt-slammings and pole-smokings, his ego will hit the ground where it belongs.

While I didn't agree with *everything* you had to say (opinions are like assholes right?), I loved the diversity and commentary. Keep it up, and let me know when #3 is ready.

Thanks,
Chris Alfano
Elon College, NC

Phil,

I really liked *Sloth* #2 and am eagerly awaiting #3. The only suggestion I have is that you do a review of Ember's demo '95 *Within the Realm of the Snoqueen*. At times the production is a little shoddy, but the music is absolutely amazing. Keep up the great work!

Brian Ronde
Wateruliet, NY

Dear Ryan,

Many thanks for the kind words! I contacted Ember and they sent me a copy of the demo. I reviewed it per your request, quite favorably I might add. - Phil

Phil,

Joe here from **Hatred**. I'm glad you liked *Suffer*. Thanks for the review. I'm very pleased with it because from reading your magazine, I know you review honestly and don't bull shit people. I'll send you our next release when we have it, hopefully by the summer.

Joe Jablonski
P.O. Box 10264
Alexandria, VA 22310

Hail Phil,

Sloth! Your 'zine is comparable to and in the same ballpark as any of the best. It seems to me that 'zines come and go so fast that you have to make permanent brand on their asses that says S-L-O-T-H, and I think you have accomplished this with your great interviews! #2 kicks me in the balls and says, "Fuck you! I'm here to stay!"

Thanx,
Jack Godwin
Dogmatic Distro
1603 N. Wilke Rd.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

HYPOCRISY

Interview by Phil Alterman

Sweden's Hypocrisy has built itself a reputation for being on the cutting edge of death metal while remaining underground. The band likes to keep a low profile and let its music do the talking. Its latest, *Abducted*, makes quite a statement, showcasing progression in songwriting, better sound production, and more focused songs than on the band's previous, *The Fourth Dimension*. Songs like "The Arrival of the Demons (Part 2)" and "Paradox" exemplify Hypocrisy's heavier side while "Slippin' Away" and "Drained" show the band's refusal to be tagged as simply "death metal." While not a musical genius like Dark Tranquility or as heavy as Kenkhra, Hypocrisy remains true to itself and a band to watch in the future.

Guitarist, vocalist, keyboardist, and band founder Peter Tägtgren spoke with me about *Abducted*, as well as...

Sloth: Besides slimming the roster after *Osculum Obscenum*, the band also abruptly altered musical styles. Was this what the 3 man core had wanted all along, or was this a natural progression?
Peter: It was very much a natural progression, and the way the songs were going to go depended on what sort of moods we were in.

Sloth: With your lyrics, you've gone from damning Christ to discussing UFO crashes. Please explain.
Peter: It's just another topic I wanted to bring up. I've always thought about UFOs but never actually written any of it down. It's to get more variety, because we don't want to be predictable.

Sloth: So, have your religious beliefs changed any since the first album?
Peter: Oh, no. There's still some *nice* lyrics on there, like "Killing Art," a song about lining up all the religions and shooting them down. It's the same as always and will never change because it's my lifestyle.

Sloth: I ask because I see **Hypocrisy** as being more laid back than all those corpsepaint bands who push an image. Does this come from your having been around a while, or are those guys just idiots?
Peter: There are only a couple of bands you can call black metal, the rest of them are just clowns wearing corpsepaint and singing about the snow and storms. It's so fucked up because they don't know what they got themselves into. I think I'm ugly enough that I don't need corpsepaint! (Laughs.)



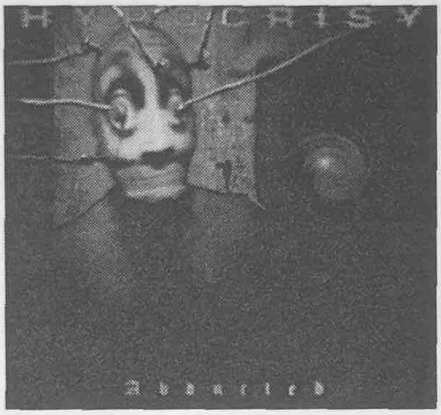
Sloth: So you're not one to burn down churches?
Peter: No, and that was just one guy's project.

Sloth: What's your opinion of those who do?
Peter: You can burn down as many churches as you want and the fucking government's gonna build them back up right away, so the only one who's gonna get shit for it is you.

Sloth: Anyway, you own your own studio, correct?
Peter: Yes.

Sloth: When did you buy it?
Peter: September '94.

Sloth: How'd you afford it?
Peter: I started off with a piece of shit, and when bands came along and recorded I set some of the money aside.



Sloth: Did you get the studio before or after *The Fourth Dimension* was recorded?
Peter: It was a couple of months after.

Sloth: Is that why the sound was kind of awkward?
Peter: Yeah, because we used another studio and didn't know how it was gonna sound. It turned out shit, you know, and it was a multi-million dollar studio! So remember, it's got nothing to do with equipment, but how it's gonna sound when you actually get it on CD.

Sloth: Were you fairly acquainted with your studio when you recorded **The Abyss**?
Peter: Not really. It was some of the first stuff I recorded at that studio, so it didn't come out very well. But you learn something from every recording you do.

Sloth: Speaking of **The Abyss**, do you plan to record a new album?
Peter: Not at the moment, but I think it will come in time because a lot of people want us to do it. That was just a side project and shouldn't be taken that seriously. Those were just songs we'd been playing since we started practicing when the band began. What we'll do at the end of a practice is me and Lars will switch places and just start jamming. The songs came about during a three or four year period.

Sloth: Is that why you don't plan on touring as **The Abyss**?
Peter: Oh, yeah. We're not going to tour as that band.

Sloth: When touring as **Hypocrisy**, do you play any songs from **The Abyss**?
Peter: We were thinking about it, but we still don't really know what we're going to do.

Sloth: I remember hearing about how you tortured Michael for the making of *The Fourth Dimension*'s album cover. Who, besides the chicken, did you torture for *Abducted*'s booklet?
Peter: It was just the chicken! (Laughs) We just wanted to do something weird, you know, not the same like everybody else does. We just tried something stupid.

Sloth: I find it stands out more than a lot of CDs I see these days.
Peter: Yeah! Why go with everybody else? We've always been like this, we go on our own path and don't look around to see what everybody else is doing.

Sloth: Did anybody else help out with the production of the album? I noticed the credits went to you...
Peter: Well, the other guys were sitting and recording while I was doing my guitar parts. That's why it says, "Engineered by **Hypocrisy**." They gave me free choice to produce because they trust me now.

Sloth: What other bands have you recorded there?
Peter: **Marduk**, **Dark Funeral**, and **Fleshcrawl** from Germany were here. It's just a bunch of different bands with different kinds of music. I don't do just death metal. I do pop, rock, hardcore, and so on, because I don't want to be in any one place; I have to think about my future. If I'm trying to be a producer I've got to learn a lot of things.



Sloth: You just mentioned you want to change directions. Is that why the last three songs on *Abducted* take such varied musical approaches?
Peter: The third to last song is just an outro of the album; we were fucking around, listening to too much **Vivaldi**. The two last songs were just a side thing I did for myself in the beginning. The other guys ended up hearing them and wanted them on the album. I didn't really want to do it because people would think that was the new direction of **Hypocrisy**. It's not though, it's just me trying to push the limits for myself to do something different. It wasn't anything that was gonna go public, but since everybody liked it...

Sloth: On the new album, you play part two of "The Arrival of the Demons." What's the story?
Peter: We had some time left over in the studio [after recording *The Fourth Dimension*], and I took out the guitar and started fucking around, put on some keyboards and the vocals. It was cool at the time, and we said, "Let's make a real song on the next album." So we put a "Part One" on the first one and would worry about it later when we did the next one.

Sloth: As a final question, what's next for you and **Hypocrisy**?
Peter: I don't know, we just want to get out and tour and play. We've been sitting inside this fucking studio for too long, we want to go out and perform.



The band's newsletter claims that *Inherent Perversion* could be the heaviest demo ever. I agree. And it doesn't take endless blast beats, mindless repetition, or unbelievably fast tempos to achieve this height either. Instead worrying about the whole songs -- not just one or two riffs -- the band is better able to use these same riffs by incorporating rhythm fills and melodies. That's right, a self-proclaimed brutal band from America actually using melody! The result is five songs with a brutal core that rely on tempo changes, catchiness, and sheer energy and conviction to win the listener over. What is this band? This is Scattered Remnants, a hardworking quartet from Massachusetts that is a master of self-promotion, overcoming adversity, and its music.

I interviewed guitarist Rob Settergren after having corresponded with him for a while. One thing that separates his band from the rest is that these guys are very down to earth. During one of my letters I asked him if they were having a tough time in the underground despite being original. He said, "Surviving in this type of music is hard because there are so many bands out there. It's hard to be completely original now. We really try hard to be as original as possible, but one thing I will not say is that we rule and are the most original band in the world. That would be way too much of an arrogant attitude." It's refreshing to hear a band say that. Never will we fear that Scattered Remnants has become full of itself and started playing tributes to Shannon Hoon. In a time when you've got to be "true" to the underground, Rob and his band are the upstanding citizens worth emulating.



Sloth: It's been a while since we last spoke. You mentioned you were looking for a drummer to replace Eric Roy. How has the search gone?
Rob: Yes, we were looking for a new drummer and we did find a few, but in the long run, we weren't very happy with them. That was until Derek Curswill, a friend of Ron's from Florida who decided he wanted to try out for us, and we were more than happy to let him. It worked out great at first, but after about eight shows and very little practice he totally lost interest and started blowing us off. So, we weren't getting any good practices done, no new shows, and no new material at all. It got to the damn point where none of us even wanted to play with this kid anymore. Being the little pansy that he is, he pretty much quit because he missed his girlfriend and wanted to spend more time practicing with some rock-type bands, ya know. Well, we went on with Jason [Hendershaw, vocals] playing the drums and writing new material, because he couldn't both sing and play drums live. We canceled a few shows here and there and just practiced with Jason. About two months later, Eric Roy called me up because we had mentioned to a few of his friends that it would be great to have him back, and he asked if we were still looking for a drummer. We were pleased to hear from him because we think this kid fits with us musically as well as being a good friend. It's been about three months since he's come back and everything is going very well. Seriously! It's really great to have him back, and I know everyone else is just as happy, too.



Sloth: What has the band been up to for the past six months? Playing shows, writing songs, recording, etc.?
Rob: We are working on new material and might set up some shows. Right now we're just concentrating on new stuff. We have played some cool shows with bands like **Skinless**, **Tyrant Trooper**, **Cannibal Corpse**, and some others, but since we spent a long time looking for a drummer and finally getting Eric back, we're pretty much just working on tightening up the old songs and working on the material for the upcoming new CD being released through Visceral Productions. This label signed us recently and we are working on the full-length which we hope will be out in the summer. As soon as the new material is finished and tight we'll go into the studio. This new CD will be all pro, of course, and it will crush *Inherent Perversion*!

Sloth: How has *Inherent Perversion* been selling? Have you guys been making any money? Has the sale of *Procreating Mass Carnage* been boosted by the newer one?
Rob: Well, *Inherent Perversion* has been doing surprisingly well; I mean, we've sold something like 1500-2000 of them so far. I'm really impressed, man! We have been making some money off of the CD, but we have just been dumping it right back into new merchandise like shirts, hats, and other shit. The whole band is pretty damn happy with the CD sales, and we've also sold over 2000 copies of the demo, *Procreating Mass Carnage*. We're no longer selling this anymore because, like I said before, we're spending all the money on new merchandise and we figured we'd milked it for as much as it was worth.

Sloth: There was some controversy over a guy named Scott Reppert and his scam label, Dismal Light Productions. What's the story?
Rob: Well, to cut this story down to just slamming this piece of shit on the head, we and about fifteen other bands sent him a one song DAT tape to be put on a compilation CD, and it never jelled from there. He took the fifty bucks that he charged and the DATs and ran! This guy is a complete disgrace to the underground! I mean, how sad is your life that you have to start up a scam label and try to rip off all the bands that are trying hard to get themselves noticed? We and all the other bands out there spend a lot of time and effort with every release and it's just pathetic when some shitbag comes along and completely rapes us, stealing our money and recordings. It seriously pisses me off, and I hope someday we can meet him and let him know what a serious prick he is. The end of the story is that we got his phone number from the Attorney General in Pennsylvania, we called him up and said he'd either give our stuff back or get a lawsuit filed against him. Needless to say, we got it all back. If any other bands out there are still looking for him, write to our P.O. Box and ask Jason how to reach him. I know we have helped some of the bands out there, but not all of them have gotten their stuff back.



Sloth: Definitely a brutal band, **Scattered Remnants** also incorporates some very European melodies into "Amidst the Afterbirth" and the title track. Has this balance always existed in your music or was it evolutionary? Please explain.
Rob: I guess it has, but it hasn't always been so strong. It's pretty obvious that we're influenced more by that style on the CD than the demo. I think it leans more towards the evolutionary thing, because this feel is stronger on the disc. I love that style, but not all of it, and I'm still stuck on the NY style because **Suffocation** was, is, and always will be my favorite band. Of course, there's so much out there worth checking out, and I get new stuff all the time that just blows me away. I'd list everything that I listen to but that would take way too much space. Here's a little of what I like: **Edge of Sanity**, **Dying Fetus**, **Memory Garden**, **Beheaded**, **Deaden**, **Skinless**, old **Entombed**, and **Vader**. We are all into different stuff, and that helps us grow as a band.

Sloth: After putting out such a successful demo on only your second try, where do you go next? Bands like **Gorefest** change their style drastically while bands like **Cannibal Corpse** just get heavier. Is **Scattered Remnants** on either of these paths?
Rob: I can honestly say that we won't be changing styles because we are quite happy right where we are. Jason's changed his lyrics and that may piss some people off because they aren't the typical gore lyrics anymore. He's spending a lot more quality time with himself, drowning in self-pity and hatred, and these lyrics will make you want to kill yourself when you hear them. Hahaha! Seriously, he has taken on a different style of writing, but it has thoroughly impressed me, that's for damn sure. We will continue on with our usual heavy death/grind until people no longer like it, ya know, then maybe we'll write some more songs like "You Give Love a Bad Name." Hahaha! Just kidding, man.



Sloth: What do you guys do besides play music?
Rob: Well, Ron and I visit the local porn shop frequently. Hahaha! I'm a pervert who likes nasty pig sex, ya know, real dirty shit. Ron's more of a story-line porno lover. I hate that shit. When I go (***Continued on page 30***)



Interview by Phil Alterman

Autumn Dawn stormed into the underground scene during the past year with its debut five song CD, *...Emptiness*. Its brand of catchy, mid-paced Morbid Angel death metal caught the eye of Wild Rags Records and the band was quickly set up with a deal. Consisting of only two members, the band blends Mike Harrison's (ex-Cadaver Symposium) musical talents with Vinnnie Matthews's (ex-Sadistic Torment) ferocious vocals. Their memorable music is highlighted by restrained tempos that allow for the kind of guitar exploration that would normally get lost in a blaze of blinding speed. It's a job well done!

These guys have a lot more going on than just Autumn Dawn, though, as Mike discusses below...

Sloth: **Sadistic Torment** is a solid band with a bright future. How did you convince vocalist Vinnie Matthews to leave the band and join you?
Mike: Actually, Vinnie was kicked out of **Sadistic Torment** because of personal differences between him and the band. During the same time, **Autumn Dawn** was more or less a side project of mine that I felt would help me get known better than releasing sloppy **Cadaver Symposium** stuff. Vinnie was also looking for a better project, so it came together rather well. An interesting note is that after Vinnie was kicked out of **Sadistic**, I was asked by the band to replace him, which I did for about three months until I realized why Vinnie left. After that **Sadistic Torment** became history. The only one of them doing anything is their guitarist, Sparky, who's working with Vinnie on his other project, **Mucus Membrane**.

Sloth: On all planes there is quite a contrast between **Cadaver Symposium**'s final demo and **Autumn Dawn**'s debut, which has better production, music, and song structuring. Please explain the causes of such rapid progression.
Mike: Easy. **Autumn Dawn** is all me. I wrote all the music and played everything. Whereas in **Cadaver** I had other people doing things that I knew I could do better, and that's why it fizzled out. Believe it or not, **Autumn Dawn**'s songs are actually throwbacks from **Cadaver**'s songs. It just goes to show that when you know how to do it right, don't let others do it for you! Vinnie's vocal melodies helped bring the music to life. He's very good at arranging vocal lines.

Sloth: The band's bio states that **Cadaver Symposium** suddenly broke up. Does that mean you did the awesome thing I once did and kicked everybody else out?
Mike: You too?!! Oh yeah, and I had been doing that since '92. This time I laid it to rest, and since I had **Autumn Dawn** going there was no need to put up with bullshit. But **Cadaver Symposium** was a big part of my life for four years, so instead of putting together another band, I've changed my approach and band name to **Mainframe**. It will involve much more than just music, also having computer artwork and graphics; sort of my own business without being lucrative.

Sloth: You say that you played all of the instruments on *...Emptiness*, and knowing you were mainly a guitarist I was surprised by your excellent drumming. How long have you played?
Mike: Hum...ah...well...actually it's a drum machine. (Sorry.) But I've been programming it for two years if that counts!

Sloth: What "emptiness" is the demo titled for? Is somebody still sad about that time Mommy wouldn't buy him a "Bubble-O Bill" popsicle from the Good Humor man?
Mike: No, actually, it's because my damn mother wouldn't buy me the G.I. Joe aircraft carrier I wanted. (Remember that big thing!!) But I did get the Headquarters for a good report card one time! Truthfully though, it stands for a lot of things. This was the first time I got the chance to do things my way, and realizing that, it kind of makes things empty on a personal level, seeing friends go after so many years of playing in the band and stuff, girlfriends, social habits...Things like that, you know.

Sloth: Your band has only been around for about a year yet Wild Rags has already picked it up. How did you and Richard C. get in contact? What is your current licensing deal? Was it a real confidence booster getting a deal so quickly?
Mike: Excellent question! So where should I begin...I think it's because the overall sound of **Autumn Dawn** is very good. Like I've mentioned before, I had been doing **Cadaver Symposium** for four years before this, so I felt this was coming and it was no big surprise. But interestingly one reason for **Cadaver**'s demise was because my former guitarist was obviously jealous, feeling that **Cadaver Symposium** was far superior to **Autumn Dawn**, which I disagreed with and our contract with Wild Rags proved it! Concerning Richard C., Vinnie did all the negotiations and planning. The current deal is a two year ownership and distribution of the *...Emptiness* 5 song CD, with royalties paid in full up front.

Sloth: Your style of mid-paced, catchy death metal sometimes hinders bands when trying to be a consistently original force. How does **Autumn Dawn** plan to gain more fans with each subsequent release without losing old ones?
Mike: I must admit you ask good questions; thanks! Well, most bands don't stay consistent because they're bands with many different view points. It's hard to find a single medium on which to base your style in this genre of music. Since it's just me writing, there's no one really to argue with, and if I want to write a grind song or a doom song then I can, and I think that makes things a little more interesting for listeners. To have variations from song to song is essential to make good music. As for future **Autumn Dawn** stuff, I'm not sure yet. Most of my time is spent in college and trying to get my new band **Mainframe** on the market, so time is limited. But if I don't do it, Vinnie will somehow find ways to make a follow-up release work.

Sloth: Do you mind being compared to **Morbid Angel**? What other bands do you think you resemble?
Mike: Actually, that's a good comment because I like Trey's playing a lot. I like the fact he tunes down to B flat, and his tone is great. But I think my biggest influence was **Carcass**'s *Necroticism* album. I was completely floored by that album and their tuning of low B prompted me to start **Cadaver Symposium** back in 1992. The playing on the new **Cannibal Corpse** album, *Vile*, is awesome, too. They tune to C sharp and B flat and the dual guitar work is inspiring to say the least. The new **Samael** is also really good.

Sloth: Is it true that you break into the zoo and frolic with the ostriches to gain inspiration?
Mike: Damn it, don't mock me!! Without those long-necked birds I'd never play guitar or even gain the courage to come out into public. How do you know this anyway? Who told you? Tell Me! (Mild break for comic relief...let's continue.)

Sloth: What kind of musical training do you have? Does Vinnie play any instruments or is he solely a vocalist?
Mike: I've been playing for seven years on my own. But I did take two years of music theory in high school and a few months of bass lessons. (I played bass and did the vocals in **Cadaver**.) I've always played bass and guitar, but once I realized no one could play the things I wrote correctly, I decided it was time for me to take over and play guitar solely in both **Autumn Dawn** and the newly formed **Mainframe**. Vince just sings, but he has good ideas that are being realized in his other project, **Mucus Membrane**. I have a hard time taking dictation from someone who doesn't know how to play guitar, because telling me what to play just does not work. But Vince does play drums some and his blast is one of the fastest around, no joke!

Sloth: Even in the days of **Cadaver Symposium** there were some great computer graphics in the J-cards. Do you design them? If so, where did you learn the programming techniques, and what programs do you use?
Mike: Back then both I and my former guitarist's brother did all the computer work. We went to the same school and we both used and owned Macs and Photoshop, which helped in everything we did for promotion. I did all of the **Autumn Dawn** stuff and the **Mainframe** J-card which I think is my best to date. I've been working with Macs and Photoshop for I guess four or five years now. I currently go to college in Catonsville and will soon transfer to the Maryland Institute of Art in Baltimore. As mentioned before, **Mainframe** will consist both of music and graphics, so any bands looking for primo digital imaging write me.

Sloth: Have you/do you plan to recruit more members for a full lineup?
Mike: No. It's just not practical with my time schedule. A band for the **Mainframe** project might happen, but it wouldn't be a conventional band as we know it; more of a collaborative group thing culminated to expand artistic talents.

Sloth: Do you know when to say when?
Mike: I thought I did, but when you're having too much fun and you start mixing, oh boy, it's over and I'm throwing up. But damn it, I love beer!!

Sloth: How many new songs do you have written? Is a date for the next **Autumn Dawn** release set? How have the sales of *...Emptiness* been?

Mike: I started writing this one 8 minute song, but now that I listen to it, some of the riffs are cheesy and with the exclusion of those it would end up being 4 or 5 minutes long. Other than that, no, nothing else has been written. Since the release of the demo last year and the demise of **Cadaver**, I've been working on the **Mainframe** project. Not much time for anything else. As for sales, we've unloaded maybe a hundred handmade demos, but the CD was just released so sales are unknown to me.

Sloth: Where do you hope the band will be in five years?
Mike: I don't think **Obituary** lasted that long! All I know is I'll be out of school, still playing guitar, writing songs, and most likely still single. Since genre trends change so often who knows where we all might be? If this retro shit has its way, we might be reliving the '80s again and listening to **Duran Duran** and **Journey**, and shake-ass music might be cool. Who knows? Long live death metal and hail Satan 'till the end!!! (Death metal growl to enhance enthusiasm.)

Sloth: Do you think that if you wore more spikes 'n leather you'd be a better band?
Mike: Are all those black metal freaks going to do battle in *Braveheart II*? If so, I hope William Wallace leads the Scotts to victory! That trendy shit has got to stop. If you want to dress up, then join your college medieval society! Other than that don't pretend it's Halloween and play music similar to death metal; it gives true metal like ours a bad name.



Sloth: Who or what is the target of the song "*So Blind*?"
Mike: That's Vinnie's writing, and it's about racism. Being so blind I guess, I'm not sure. I say that because on one of the **Mucus Membrane** songs he screams "white power" over and over again, so I'm sort of confused. (*Yes I find this funny.*)

Sloth: Feel free to shamelessly plug your band and my mag.
Mike: *Hail Satan!!!...um...*Hail me!!!... Seriously though, thanks for an entertaining interview and good questions. I think with this kind of work for *Sloth* (cool name) you should go far. Buy the **Autumn Dawn** CD, it's quite good, and look out for my new multi-media project **Mainframe**, it's very heavy and different. Listen to death metal exclusively and don't shop at Sam Goody. Fuck those **Marilyn Manson** freaks, fuck those goth freaks, and fuck you if you like anything played on MTV. Also fuck you non-Ford truck driving wetbacks, my foot's upside your head and my dick *is* big enough to be put in your mouth!

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NONPOINT

Interview by Phil Alterman

For the past few years, little attention has been paid to Florida's metal scene. Veterans like Malevolent Creation and Deicide couldn't pick up the slack forever, and eager fans began to look elsewhere for good bands. But it's now 1997 and times are changing. Bands like Nonpoint, Sickness, and Burning Inside are resurrecting the Florida metal scene slowly but surely, picking up the slack that Deicide left by becoming unproductive and no longer an asset to the underground.

Nonpoint originated in Puerto Rico but moved to southern Florida late in 1993. This hardcore/thrash metal group has been tearing things up ever since with its punishing live shows and two most recent demos, A New Breed of Anger (under the moniker Nonpoint Factor) and Generate. The band is maturing into an original entity with each subsequent release, and don't be surprised if you start hearing more and more about Nonpoint in the coming months.

Mike Hillyard gives us the goods on Nonpoint's past, present, and future...

Sloth: You've gone from playing an aggressive **Pantera** style to more laid back, groove-oriented music. Has the band been making such progressive leaps since its formation in 1991, or did something finally click after *A New Breed of Anger* came out?
Mike: It's not so much that "something finally clicked" as much as it is us evolving. The band has definitely been making progressive leaps since the beginning. We're constantly writing and trying new things, as well as maturing as musicians and as a group. We were playing and writing this style of music when **Pantera** was doing *Projects in the Jungle*, so it's not like we were trying to sound like them. Nor are we trying to break away from that sound. We just are who we are.

Sloth: What has the band been up to since *Generate*'s release?
Mike: We've been doing a lot to promote the tape and help get the name out, as well as securing as many shows as possible. Some of the highlights have been opening for acts like **Biohazard**, **Pro-Pain**, **Crisis**, **Voi-Vod**, and playing the South Florida Slammie Awards.

Sloth: Have more people than expected taken notice of the band since *Generate* came out?
Mike: Most definitely, the response has been overwhelming. We are constantly receiving mail from around the world, either asking about the tape and merchandise or expressing their satisfaction at how much they liked us. Hearing that means the world to us. The write-ups and reviews have also been outstanding. It's very rewarding when people start taking notice of your efforts.

Sloth: Have labels been showing any interest in the band? What sort of deal would you be looking for?
Mike: Yeah, we've had a few contact us and there are some things in the works, but nothing concrete at the moment. Basically we'd like a deal with a label that really believes in us and backs us 100%. Unfortunately, there are many good bands out there that get signed but then are kind of pushed aside for one reason or another. That's what worries me.

Sloth: When you guys began writing the new songs, was there a conscious effort made to change? Was it vocalized or did the new riffs just come out more "groovy." Did the smoother production also play a role in the band's new feel?
Mike: We never made a conscious decision to change. Right after *New Breed* was released bassist Hector and I were added to the lineup. The fact that both of us come from different backgrounds with different influences probably played a key role in the change of the sound and the feel of the songs. The production of a tape always affects the all-around feel, and that's why we spent a lot of time in the studio trying to capture it on tape.

Sloth: Many of the songs' lyrics deal with pride and inner strength. Are these the virtues of the band? Why don't you use gore or forest lyrics?
Mike: Well, we believe that everybody should have pride in who they are and where they come from and respect that in others. The inner strength comes from struggling to make it in this industry as well as striving to better ourselves in all aspects of life. We don't use "gore" or "forest" lyrics because we prefer to deal with issues that are around us and that our audience can relate to. It kind of forms a bond between us.

Sloth: You mention in your bio that playing live is the best thing for your band. Please explain the significance of **Nonpoint**'s live set.
Mike: We try to capture all of our feelings, emotions, and energy down on tape, and sometimes it's hard to do that. But live it's a whole different ball game, it's all there. The energy level is very high because we feed off of the crowd, they feed off of us, and it gets pretty intense and very explosive. We're really at our best live.

Sloth: The band was formed in Puerto Rico. What was the reason for the move to the US in 1993? Have you ever been back there to play shows?
Mike: Moving to the US meant an all around better exposure for the band. We've been back a few times, and it's always exciting and fun, and the response is great. *(Continued on page 35)*

'ZINES 'ZINES 'ZINES 'ZINES

The following is a list of 'zines and their addresses. We have made the best effort to include only legitimate publications, having compiled this list from fliers, other 'zines, etc. Here at Sloth, we do not believe it our place nor in our best interest to review what can be considered our competition, or our brethren. It is not that we feel Sloth to be superior to every other 'zine or want to bring others down. Simply, our efforts prove far more beneficial when they aim to improve this magazine rather than destroy the reputations of others. So, enjoy this list, make new contacts, and if any of these 'zines have ceased to exist or never did exist, please let us know so that we may update this list for the next issue.

Coroners Report
c/o Chris Wang
565 Drexel Ave.
Glencoe, IL 60022

Morpheus
c/o John Chatzidakis
Stenimachou 8, 17124
Nea Smyrni - Athens
Greece

Spectrum
P.O. Box 589
Hudson, MA 01749

Worm Gear
P.O. Box 426
Mayfield, MI 49666

Cursed 'Zine
c/o Justin Flynn
50 Winthrop Ave.
W. Warwick, RI 02893

Jackal Blaster
c/o Jeremy Ponder
P.O. Box 128
St. Mary, MO 63673-0128

The Politically Incorrect Journal
P.O. Box 771
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Sub Terra
Vouliagmenis 13
11636 Athens
Greece

Subversive Agenda
c/o Chris Wojcik
2230 Gateway Oaks #129
Sacramento, CA 95833

The Wild Rag
2207 W. Whittier Blvd.
P.O. Box 3302
Montebello, CA 90640

Metal Mafia
P.O. Box 5101
Fostoria, OH 44830-5101

Bizarre Domination
c/o Wil Stonebreaker
711 Gobin Dr.
Carlisle, PA 17013

Ilbasha
P.O. Box 1372
Elk Grove, CA 95759-1372

Prodigious Promoter
1603 N. Wilke Rd.
Arlington Heights, IL 6004

Metal-Core
c/o Chris Forbes
13 Carraige Ln.
Marlton, NJ 08053-1109

Sanguinary Surroundings
706 E. Marion St.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

Wretched Corpse Monthly
c/o Wayne Klinger
P.O. Box 264
Danville, PA 17821

The Grimoire
245 Lakeview Ave.
Suite 237
Clifton, NJ 07011

Midwest Metal
120 Broadview Vill. Sq.
Suite 406
Broadviw, IL 60153

Another State of Mind
2560 Komo Mai Dr.
Pearl City, HI 96782

The Nocturnal Empire
P.O. Box 1505
Cahokia, IL 62206

Devastation
P.O. Box 19516
Baltimore, MD 21206

Dark Legend
c/o Reymond
Block 27, #02-1010
Telok Blangah Way
Singapore 090027
Republic of Singapore

Carnifex
1385 Route 35
Suite 169
Middletown, NJ 07748
mspsycho@injersey.com

Cerberus
c/o Asmo Moisanen
Iskunurkka 4
92600 Pulkkila
Finland

Koito
c/o Seb Leoni
Casellina A.
65025 Manoppello Scalo
(PE), Italy

Sin Magazine
1586 Jefferson
Muskegon, MI 49441

Thornado
P.O. Box 41952
Chicago, IL 60641

Con Mucho
c/o Rick Driskill
5909 Wilkerson #174
Fayetteville, AR 72704

Torture Chamber Music Reviews
137 25th. St. NW Apt. 1B
Canton, OH 44709-3930

Underground Metal Zine
28881 Hufford Rd.
Perrysburg, OH 43551
hkolb@norden1.com

Nether Worlds
c/o Dan DeLucie
615 S. Marguerita Ave.
Alhambra, CA 91801

Before Dawn
c/o Mike Coles
P.O. Box 603
Anna, IL 62906

Gallory of Judgement
P.O. Box 11290
Clader Sq.
State College, PA 16805

Spiked Impalement
c/o David Arnett
709 Robin Hill
Edmond, OK 73003

Deep Imagination
c/o Jeffrey Monheit
73-56 193 St.
Flushing, NY 11366-1832

Static
115 E. River Rd.
Kawkawlin, MI 48631

D.B.N.
P.O. Box 3547
Lantana, FL 33465-3547

Metamorphose
c/o William Morrow
214 E. Jackson
Carlinville, IL 62626

Beyond the Grave
P.O. Box 500107
San Antonio, TX 78280-6107

Retrogression
c/o Brian Hall
104 Newport Ave.
Attleboro, MA 02703

Vortex from the East
c/o Abd Aziz
18 Lane PJS 2C
11N Medan Garden
8th Miles Old Klang Rd.
46000 Petaling Jaya
Selango,rMalaysia

Cursed 'zine
c/o Tom Janus
ul. Dlugosza 11/143
41-219 Sosnowiec
Poland

Under the Blade
c/o Nefarious Nick
RR-3 P.O. Box 635-F
Hazard, KY 41701

No Compassion
c/o Fabian "Tesfred"
Drama St.
Qormi Malta
QRM 06
Rapid Pulse
503 Robert Ave.
Winter Haven, FL 33880

Embriotomia
c/o Homer Nava F.
Apdo. Postal 4-631
Cuernavaca, Mor.
C.P. 62431
Mexico
Underground Zine Scene
c/o John Ridge
316 E. Main St.
Sebewaing, MI 48759

Haemorrhage 'zine
c/p Tomas Pauza
B. Sruogos 7-40
3028 Kaunas
Lithuania

Bloodlust Creations
c/o Chris
7481 Huntsman Blvd.
Suite 510
Springfield, VA 22153

Bloody Horror 'zine
c/o Eryck Diablo
P.O. Box 6287
Anaheim, CA 92816

Just Another Metal Zine
P.O. Box 922
Homewood, IL 60430

Under the Corpse 'zine
c/o Paul Beyer
P.O. Box 12993
Newport News, VA 23612

Plethora of Sound
c/o Craig Sackett
11 Crestmont Dr.
Dover, NJ 07801

Earsplit
P.O. Box 142
Congers, NY 10920-0142

Wartorn Magazine
c/o Lisa Ortiz
821 Wilmore SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Chaotic Critiques
P.O. Box 426
Lumby, B.C.
Canada V0E 2G0

Bloodbath
c/o Randy Rath
12624 State Route CC
Savannah, MO 64485

Fiberglass Diaper
166 E. Prospect St.
Port Washington, WI 53074

Black Moon Magazine
1385 Route 35, Suite 169
Middletown, NJ 07748
loublackmoon@delphi.com

Void of Tolerance
P.O. Box 4712
Victoria, TX 77903-4712

Shadows of Michelangelo
c/o Dai Katayama
P.O. Box 12787
Gainesville, FL 32604

Pit Magazine
P.O. Box 9545
Colorado Springs, CO 80932

Ball Buster
P.O. Box 58368
Louisville, KY 40268-0368

Sounds of Death
1069 Pinegate Dr.
Kirkwood, MO 63122

Underground Advertiser
11334 Prest
Detroit, MI 48227

Grind Zone
Via Biondelli, 7
20141 Milano
Italy

Lollipop Magazine
P.O. Box 147
Boston, MA 02123

Triumph of Death
1184 E. 33rd St.
San Bernadino, CA 92404

Concrete Corner
1133 Broadway, Suite 1220
New York, NY 10010

Etch
P.O. Box 10132
Lansing, MI 48901-0132

Word of Mouth
P.O. Box 416
Devault, PA 19432

Ill Literature
P.O. Box 480275
Los Angeles, CA 90048

S.854
P.O. Box 143273
Coral Gables, FL 33114-3273

Rage Magazine
P.O. Box 1289
Lake Worth, FL 33460

Are You Ready to be Digitized?
2441 Temple Ct.
Alexandria, VA 22307

Metal Maniacs
c/o Sterling/MacFadden
233 Park Ave. S. 5th Floor
New York, NY 10003

RiS Underground News
43536 Vandyke, Suite 340
Sterling Heights, MI 48314

Children of Caine
c/o Bill Connolly
P.O. Box 9400
Waterbury, CT 06724

Mind:Shaft
c/o Warren Wheeler
1/5 Ball Pl.
Albion Park Rail NWS 2527
Australia

Headfucker
c/o Raffaella Guerini
C.P. 151
25038 Rovato
Brescia - Italy

Isten
c/o Mikko Mattila
Peltolamminkatu 6 A 17
33840 Tampere
Finland

Syphilis
c/o Mikka Järviö
Ruukuntekijäntie 8 D 43
01600 Vantaa
Finland

Emanzipation
c/o Michael H. Anderson
Poste Restante
Banegaardspladsen 1A
4700 Naestved
Denmark

Decompozine
c/o Eric Kim
68 Degraves Kes
Wanniassa ACT
Australia

Succubus 'Zine
c/o Patty Villanueva
Apdo. Postal 19-364
03901 Mexico 19 DF
Mexico

Witchcraft Magazine
c/o Stefan Loens
Maximinstr. 26 A
56072 Koblenz
Germany

Gallory of Judgement
P.O. Box 11290
State College, PA 16805

Wild Rags Records
2207 W. Whittier Blvd.
Montebello, CA 90640

The Outcast
P.O. Box 603
Anna, IL 62906

Ten Minutes Before the Worm
c/o Brian Walsby
1304 Plint Pl.
Raleigh, NC 27605
Infernal Archives
817 NW 20th
Camas, WA 98607

Endangered Species
P.O. Box 120905
Boston, MA 02112-0905

Carcharoth
P.O. Box 420195
San Diego, CA 92142

Crom
1336 North Whitnall Hwy.
Burbank, CA 91505

Hell Frost
9933 W. Argonne Dr.
Milwaukee, WI 53222

Under the Volcano
P.O. Box 236
Nesconset, NY 11767

Socialblast
308 Old Wire Rd.
E. London, AZ 72847

In Effect
119-16 8th Ave.
College Point, NY 11356

Friends of the Draft Resistance
1258 E. 25th St.
Des Moines, IA 50317

The Rape of Angels
P.O. Box 7962
J.A.F. Station
New York, NY10116

The Requiem
1404 Lyons #B
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Skull Session
3280 Bobwhite Mews
Mississaugua, Ontario
L5N 6G1 Canada

Descent Magazine
P.O. Box 95931
Seattle, WA 98145-2931

Crank
P.O. Box 757
Stuyvesant Station, NY 10009

Neptune
P.O. Box 770
Townsend, MA 01469

Static Cling
126 Pokorny Rd.
Higganum, CT 06441

The Metal Crusade Report
P.O. Box 596
Lansdale, PA 19446-0596

Curse of the Chains
16 Fordham Rd.
Lawrence, MA 01841-4806

Upfront Fanzine
7 High St.
Collinsville, CT 06022

Old Grandad

INTERVIEW BY PHIL ALTERMAN

Do you like really obnoxious things? Are you really obnoxious? Does shouting about crack and Satan sound like fun? Do you like shouting in general? Do you think music should be fun? Are you sick of this intrusive inquiry? Do you want to know why the hell I'm asking all these questions? I don't know, you tell me!

The preceding paragraph is a fine example of an Old Grandad song. It was damn annoying fun and really obnoxious. Maybe I like this band so much because it puts my thoughts to music (minus the marijuana; I don't smoke that shit and if you really cared about yourself, neither would you). There are fourteen songs of fun thoughts on *Vol. 666*, the band's debut for its own label, Digest the Hellspawn Records. I heard from bassist Max Barnett that it took actual financial bribery to convince the band to sign itself.

Featuring Will Carroll from Warfare D.C., Brood, Machine Head and Erik Moggridge from Epidemic, Old Grandad's members are no strangers to music and its many styles. That's why the band doesn't play straight-ahead anything, but fuses death metal with rock, blues, and whatever else that makes songs obnoxious. Few bands could concoct such a mixture in an appealing way, and that's why you should read this interview and buy *Vol. 666*.

Sloth: First off, why the name "Old Grandad?" Is it simply the alcohol aspect, or is there an underlying fogie fetish you're trying to hide?
Max: We were sitting in church one Sunday and thought to ourselves, "Wouldn't it be nice to name our band after someone respectable? Someone with class, you know?" It was not until after naming ourselves **Old Grandad** that we discovered there exists a beverage by the same name which people refer to as "bourbon." The name has worked out very well, though. It's more like an anti-name. People have no idea what to expect or where we are coming from, which is good because neither do we. We also get more fan mail from people in prison who are fans of the drink (the alcohol is spelled "Old Granddad," we might add).

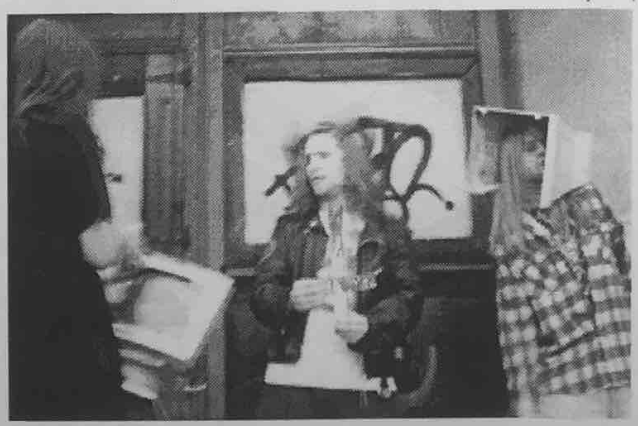
Sloth: Before receiving your CD in the mail, I'd never heard of you. When did the band form?
Max: Well, before mailing you our CD, we had never heard of us either. But, since you seem to know our names and have this idea that **Old Grandad** has recorded a debut CD called *Vol. 666*, we're gonna play along. So, let's say we've been together for, oh, two years?

Sloth: Many bands spend years trying to break into the underground. How is **Old Grandad** promoting itself?
Max: We have studied band marketing extensively. We organize protests outside of the clubs we play at and yell out slogans about impending doom and destruction and we invite the press and local church organizations to help out. We've found that the best tactic is to associate our band with the senseless slaughtering of cute, furry mammals. Especially if you claim to ingest them. See what it did for **Ozzy**?



Sloth: Are the first 665 volumes of **Old Grandad** material available? If so, where can one obtain them and for how much?
Max: You would not want to hear the first 665 volumes of **Old Grandad**. Since our formation, we've been through a number of different sounds and identities. 665, to be exact. We first formed as a 3-member marching band for the U.S. military. However, whenever we would show up at a function to play, we'd get arrested. Our mariachi phase was our most lucrative, but the mariachi gangster scene got a little out of hand with all the drive-by shootings. In any case, we are slightly ashamed of our past and would like it to be known that only *Vol. 666* should be purchased by music lovers. The others make nice beer coasters, though.

Sloth: I've gotten numerous e-mails from you concerning upcoming live shows. In what cities have you played? How many shows do you have under your belt? Do you open up for big acts? Any tour plans?
Max: We've played the usual national circuit: Modesto, Ceres, Alameda, Rhonert Park. Actually we've played about 30 shows to date, all of them in California. (You can check our website for an exact count. I don't have access to the Web, so I'm not sure.) Opening for **Voivod** has been, and will certainly always be, our best bill. We played with **Grave** recently and had a great time, especially considering we're not a death metal band. There are obvious death metal influences in our music, and we're all big fans of the genre, but our music is more what we like to call "death blues." "Psychedelic death blues," really. As for touring, it will have to wait until we're done recording our second album, which we are hoping will happen early this year.



Sloth: What led to naming two songs after Cheech and Chong? How do you feel about the harmless roles these guys have been taking as of recent, like Cheech playing the ghost of a Spanish conquistador in *Charlie's Ghost Story*?
Max: We were trying to think of a concept which could encompass all of the emotions, intricacies, dichotomies, and dynamics of the two related songs, something which would make the listener think he or she was standing at the edge of the cliff of time, breathing in the absolute purity of the rhythms and notes of the two songs. Also, we had a Cheech & Chong sample from *Cheech & Chong II*. It was this hilarious rant where Chong is explaining that it's not doing drugs which kills you, it's looking for drugs. As far as I am concerned, Cheech can do whatever he damn well pleases. Maybe he's just excorcising the demonic forces of lame dramatism from his soul and will return one day to regain his throne.

Sloth: Have you gotten any offers or label interest yet?
Max: It's hard to say. We definitely don't have labels breaking down our door, but we're getting listened to. We haven't really gotten around to soliciting responses from labels. That's our next step. It's tough though, because we don't fit any particular mold. Our 15 or so new songs are even more difficult to categorize. In fact, they are way out there! It's going to be a crazy album and we might have to put it out ourselves like *Vol. 666*. Hopefully not, though. We'll see.

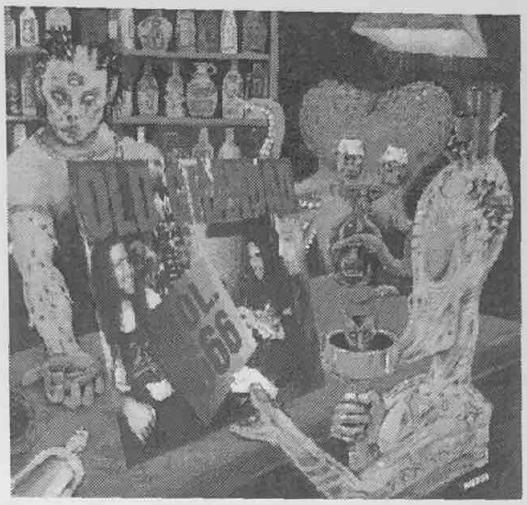
Sloth: Tell us what you know of the powerful North Pole underground. Rumors persist, I must know!
Max: Being on the top of the world, the North Pole has an enormous underground. Basically, the whole planet is underground. And the magnetic activity certainly makes it powerful. As for my personal knowledge of this scene, I know very little. Occasionally, however, I have these dreams where a telemarketer will call me on the phone trying to sell me long distance phone service and I'll tell them to %$#@ off. A little while later a huge, Nordic war vessel will pull up outside of my apartment and these battle-hungry warriors dressed in white fur will leap off of the boat and charge at me with battle axes and other impressive weapons. As far as I can tell, one of the warrior's brothers couldn't handle this destructive lifestyle and, instead, got into telemarketing. He is apparently offended by my response when he calls me up and decides to summon his bully brothers. The dream usually ends with me hiding in the refrigerator and shivering from the cold. I think this has something to do with the North Pole underground.

Sloth: What is the minimum number of piercings required (male and female) to live on Haight St. in San Francisco?
Max: First of all, here in San Francisco, we don't measure it by the number of piercings a person has, rather by the amount of unpierced skin. That way the numbers are more manageable. For example, it's easier for someone to explain that, "Jill Hawkalung has about ten square inches (of unpierced skin)," than it

would be to say, "She has thirty-two-thousand piercings." In terms of the most amount of unpierced skin you can have to live on Haight Street, let's just say if you don't interfere sufficiently with radio and television reception in the area, then you might as well pack your things and hit the road! Wait! That's how all those low-lives ended up on Haight Street in the first place.

Sloth: If we were to one day find out who God was, would you rather pray to the Ultimate Warrior, Jerry Garcia, Ronald McDonald, or Kirk Cameron?
Max: God is inside all of us. I had a Big Mac for lunch, so, I guess I have a bit of Ronald McDonald in me at the moment.

Sloth: I've visited your slick website several times. Has there been a good response to that? How do you plan to use it to your advantage in the future?
Max: We have an incredibly twisted and talented digital graphics artist, David Hecht, who designs and updates our Website (he also did the digital imaging on



the album, and wrote the lyrics to "42"), so, we get very amusing responses indeed. The web is an excellent forum for making art available. In terms of our own use, sound files can be problematic in terms of the various file formats and conflicts between different hardware. But we've gotten responses from people who have downloaded the soundfiles and found them to be interesting. We are currently planning to accept credit cards as payment for merchandise over the web. Having enough credit card numbers should help cover most of the expenses of producing our next album.

Old Grandad
c/o Digest the Hellspawn Records
41 Sutter St.
Suite 1315
San Francisco, CA 94104
or
Visit the **Old Grandad** website:
http://www.inreach.com/grandad

Have you heard of Burning Inside? How about its previous incarnation, Public Assassin? I didn't think so, and that's why I want so much for you to read this interview and buy the band's demo. It contains six songs of tight, catchy death metal with an *incredible* drummer. This guy simply pummels his kit and is one of the *best* I have ever heard! Burning Inside's rabid attack has more bite than Malevolent Creation's *Retribution*, the technical skills of Mass Psychsis and Fleshold, and salivated grunts that make you want to go "Aagh!!" You would be doing a disservice to the underground by ignoring Burning Inside and instead writing to some damn New York hardcore group that lives to mosh.

Mainman Steve Childers told me how it is, so listen up!

Sloth: What is the current lineup of **Burning Inside**?
Steve: The current lineup is: Steve Childers on lead and rhythm guitar, Richard Christy on drums, and Michael Estes also on lead and rhythm guitar. No one on bass at the moment. For our CD recording, we are using vocalist Andrew Harris and bassist Mark Matthews. These guys are from the Chicago band **Sarcophagus**.

Sloth: Does calling your band "Burning Inside" help you better deal with the internal jock itch you're suffering from?
Steve: First off, you need to see a doctor. Secondly, no.

Sloth: What has the band been up to lately? Playing shows? Writing new songs?
Steve: Lately we've been working on ten songs for our CD. There will be the six songs from the demo and four new ones. The newer ones are more technical, but still have that fast, blackened sound of old. We've only played two shows down here because of the bass player situation. Although Richard and Mike are in the band **Acheron**, they played the Milwaukee Metalfest with us this year.

Sloth: How has the response been of those who have heard the tape or seen you live?
Steve: So far we've had nothing but good responses with both the tape and live show. 'Zines seem to love the demo.

Sloth: Tell us more about your previous band, **Public Assassin**, and how you and the drummer ended up in a new band.
Steve: The **Public Assassin** story is long, so I'll make it short. It started in 1990, and we did a mini-CD and four full length cassettes. *Murdered* was the final demo and it contained a good version of "Hell Awaits." Anybody interested in buying any of this shit can write me; it's $4.00 a tape. Richard joined the band four years ago after we stole him from a *very* small community in Kansas. He's incredible! Keeps us on our toes, too. We did a shit load of shows in the Midwest, and in Wichita we played with a slew of signed death and black metal bands. Working with Richard has always been exciting and when we decided to do a faster, more challenging project in the summer of 1995, **Burning Inside** was born. To me the name mean your inner being or "soul." The spirit burning inside us all.

Sloth: Where did you find that incredible drummer? Certain people that will go unnamed (me) find him to be almost too fast to be human; does GNC have him on a special steroid diet?
Steve: GNC has fucking nothing to do with it. It's just hours and hours and hours of hard practice, working out, and beer.



Sloth: Do you think Missouri's Springfield is the best? Virginia has a pretty good one, and I'm willing to fight you.
Steve: Missouri's Springfield is the only one! *I'll* kick your face into a cinder block if you defer. The one on *The Simpsons* is all right, too. [This question was asked because Steve used to live in Springfield, IL.]

Sloth: Are you sending tapes out to labels, and if so, has there been any interest?
Steve: Yes, and we did get a deal with Chicago's Pulverizer Records. We're recording a full-length ten song CD soon.

Sloth: If everybody were to die in thirty minutes, whose world would you rock?
Steve: Whoever is in ear shot of my Mesa Dual Rectifier. And the dancer in *From Dusk till Dawn*.

Sloth: Why do you choose to play metal, or any form of music at all?
Steve: It's one of the only *real true* music forms left. I've loved it since I was ten years of age. It's in my blood. I love the imagery and the power. I also like the underground because it's ever-growing and caters to an elite crowd.

Sloth: Besides Tiny Tim, who has had the greatest musical impact upon you?
Steve: Personally, **Mercyful Fate, Infernal Majesty, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Celtic Frost, Death, Deicide**, and a slew of others. With guitar, I like **Van Halen, Rhodes, Malmsteen**, and **Hendrix**.

Sloth: There has been quite an upsurge of bands coming out of the Midwest lately. How has this affected you, the band, the scene, etc.?
Steve: **Dead Orchestra, Spine, Hostility, Possession, *Corpus Delecti***, and **Jesus Porn** are some of the bands we've played with. They're all great bands, and there are lots of others, too. The Midwest scene doesn't affect us anymore because we now live in Florida, where there are also a lot of kick ass bands. **Equinox** is probably my *favorite* at the moment, plus there's **Monstrosity**, etc...

Sloth: What would be the greatest thing that could happen for Burning Inside? The worst?
Steve: The greatest would be a non-stop tour and making some money on it! The worst would be a death in the band.

Sloth: Care to shamelessly plug your band? How about my magazine?
Steve: *Sloth* is a very good mag! I like the reviews and the caliber of bands featured. Buy it now! Write to me if you're interested in **Burning Inside**.

Burning Inside
101 E. Altamonte Dr. Apt. 1232
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701

Pulverizer Records
P.O. Box 946
Dixon, IL 61021

When we were first asked to go to this show, we were hesitant to say yes because of the strange lineup. As it turned out, Pessimist, Spine, At the Gates, and Napalm Death made for a great show. This group of bands was able to cover all the bases. The entire night was a truly amazing experience as each got on stage and pummeled the crowd with its own brand of death metal. The crowd was what brought it all together though, as everyone was there, from crusty teenagers to die-hard, drunk, redneck headbangers.

When we got to the show, Pessimist was just finishing up, but the people outside all said the band put on a great performance [I'll vouch for them -- I saw the band last year with Malevolent Creation, and they *were* great! - ed.]. We bumped into guitarist Kelly McLauchlin as he was leaving, and we all spoke for a while. He was a really nice guy and gave us some stickers and a demo, *Absence of Light*, to show his appreciation of our promoting his band. Hey, his band's good, so why not? Here's our interview with Kelly...



Sloth: How long has **Pessimist** been together?
Kelly: Three years.

Sloth: Is that with the original line-up?
Kelly: We changed the line-ups twice, and we got a new guitarist, drummer, and bass player. The only original members are me and the singer [Rob Kline].

Sloth: Have you and the singer been together a long time?
Kelly: I started back in Delaware in '93, and it was me and a drummer and a bass player, but none of those guys are left. And then we moved to Baltimore and hooked up with another guitarist and singer, and the only ones left are me and Rob.

Sloth: Have you always been into this kind of stuff?
Kelly: Like death metal? I've been into it since high school. I was always searching for heavier music that was faster and more intense.

Sloth: What influenced you to play?
Kelly: With guitar, I really got into Randy Rhodes, and then I started getting into bands like **Possession**, **Kreator**, and **Destruction** back in the late '80s. That's where it really started off.

Sloth: Has everybody else in the band always been into it, too? I ask because a lot of bands have guys who are into jazz and stuff like that, but they enjoy playing death metal because it's fun. I have some friends in a couple of bands who do that, and then they go to college and study jazz, even though they love pits and crowds at hardcore shows. Anybody do that in your band?
Kelly: It's funny, man, everybody's got different influences. My bass player, he's totally into jazz. We all listen to different stuff.

Sloth: What are your plans for the future? Are you trying to get signed to a major record label?
Kelly: Absolutely. We just finished recording our first full length, *Cult of the Initiated*. It's nine songs, and we're in the mixing stages right now. We're gonna get it out as soon as we can, and try to talk to some more labels.

Sloth: What are you looking at? Who would you like to go to?
Kelly: We want to set our sights kind of high, man, but I really don't want to mention any names. I can say this, though, that Wild Rags is helping us out a lot in terms of promotion of the new material.

Sloth: Well, thanks for the interview and good luck!
Kelly: Hey, no problem!

I, Phil, recently got in touch with Kelly and here's what he had to say...

Sloth: It's been a while since we last spoke, and I heard some rumors that **Pessimist** had broken up. What's the story?
Kelly: That is all just rumors. I was playing guitar with **Horror of Horrors** just to fill in for a couple of shows, but I could never leave **Pessimist**. We did fire our other guitarist, and now the band is stronger and tighter than ever!

Sloth: You had mentioned that you'd just finished recording your debut full-length album. What's it called? When was it released? How long is it? How would you describe it (sound, style, etc.)? How does it represent the band better than *Absence of Light*?
Kelly: The new album is called *Cult of the Initiated*,. It is nine songs plus an outro...43 minutes total. Compared to *Absence of Light* the songwriting is much stronger, more cohesive. The style is darker, faster, much more brutal and extreme. Musically, it is definitely more mature as well as an improved performance by all of us.

Sloth: This album is an independent release, correct?
Kelly: Yes, although we are currently negotiating several offers with labels/licensing deals and distributors both in the USA and worldwide.

Sloth: What have you been doing to promote it?
Kelly: Mostly networking the underground through the mail, playing live shows around the MD/PA/VA area as much as possible. We are also doing a massive advertising campaign online through bulletin boards and our web page at http://www.sting-ray.com/pessimist.

Sloth: How many were originally pressed, and of those, how many have sold? How much do they cost?
Kelly: Advance cassette copies are selling for $6.00, this includes a pro cover. We have sold about 200 copies already at shows and through the mail.

Sloth: Have 'zines and labels been responding favorably to the album? Have any labels shown interest in picking up the band?
Kelly: Yes! We have been receiving some killer reviews from Sweden, Japan, and Brazil, as well as being featured in *Metal Maniacs* here in the states. A label deal will likely be solidified within the next month.



Sloth: In recent years the DC metal scene seemed to be dead, but now with bands like yours, **Spine**, **Hatred**, **Puzzle Head**, and **Dead by Day**, things are starting to pick up. Do you feel this way?
Kelly: Yes, we would like to hope that the local scene is picking up, and we have played shows with most of these bands...Death Metal especially right now is very underground; hopefully this will cleanse the scene of lame bands that give metal a bad name.

Sloth: How are bands encouraging more fans to come out and show their support? Could this spread further and revitalize the world metal scene?
Kelly: We usually advertise in local 'zines, flyer the local clubs, or send out mail to fans on our mailing list...we always try to put on a killer live show. We are a very visual band so we don't just stand there and play. It has to be a total live experince! Anyone who has ever seen Pessimist live will know what I'm talking about! As far as the world metal scene, the USA scene sucks. I hear that Europe and Japan are totally into it.

Sloth: If someone who'd never heard of **Pessimist** were reading this interview, what would you want him to know?
Kelly: Pessimist is all about the dark side...the things we sing about are disturbingly real, the music is sinister and very evil -- yet we are not Satanic -- at least not in a fake or cheesy way.

Sloth: What if this person had heard *Absence of Light* and didn't like it? Why would he like the new album better?
Kelly: As I mentioned before, the new album is so much more well-executed, the vocals are WAY more extreme, the musical style is just stronger, and the overall production is killer.

Sloth: There was a time when Wild Rags was supposed to release a two song promo of yours. What became of that? Was there some sort of fight between the band and Richard C.?
Kelly: There was no fight, we are still corresponding with Richard C...Trying to get our money back! We sent him $300 and 500 J-cards to do this promo thing and he started jerking us around saying the tapes would be done soon and all this bullshit...six months later and still no tapes...basically we are still working on some kind of a deal with Wild Rags but basically he is a fucking conman, some kind of parasitic rip-off. It is a real shame to see someone like him claim to support the underground and then pull a stunt like that...unless it is resolved soon Pessimist will NEVER sign with Wild Rags, and believe me it's Richard's loss. Not to mention he will be receiving a nasty court summons from our attorney.

Sloth: You guys are pretty involved in the underground. What other hardworking bands deserve the public's support?
Kelly: We have always tried especially to support local Death Metal bands, but there aren't many left! **Dying Fetus**, **Horror of Horrors**, **Crucifer**, **Hatred**, **Puzzlehead** (**Stentor**), **Cadaver Symposium**, **Earthborn Deity**, and **Sadistic Torment** are a few of our faves.

Sloth: What's the band got planned for the future? Shows, tours, interviews, etc?
Kelly: We are already writing new material for the next album, meanwhile we are working on tour plans for later this summer...we will be playing in PA in March, KY and TN in April, trying to hook up with **CorpseVomit** for a Chicago show (they were featured with us on *And the Scene Goes On...Part 2* CD compilation on King Fowley's label) and then later trading shows with some bands in NY and Canada. We are always doing interviews with zines and getting airplay worldwide...

Sloth: Is there anything that would make this interview complete? Everyone get in touch! Support the Underground! Long live Sloth Zine! Thanx Phil!

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We now return to our regularly scheduled prgram, already in progress...We then strolled inside and watched Spine's set, about which we have conflicting opinions. Ernesto's view: Seeing them live for the first time, I was blown away! Their songs were fast and eerie, full of sound bites and a devastating bass. The guitarist and drummer were awesome, but the singer is what really made Spine great. His physical appearance alone is intense, and when you add his ferocious, Pro-Pain-like bellows, you're crushed! Through the band's whole set, the kids in the pit were jumping and colliding, banging heads and screaming. There



Photo: Eric Williams

were flying bodies everywhere! Eric's view: I wasn't that impressed. The first time I saw them, they put so much energy in their songs it really made the show fuckin' awesome! This time they just stood around looking tuff. If it weren't for the hardcore kids doing their little hardcore dance they do when they don't like a band, this one wouldn't have been much fun. When the band was done being tuff, we talked to guitarist Chris, who was actually pretty cool...

Sloth: So, when did you all get started?
Chris: **Spine** is actually a version of a band that started a long time ago, called **Oblivion**, and this current line-up started about two years ago.

Sloth: I saw you all last summer and you had like 50 people up on stage singing "X Generation," and I also got one of your demos. Have you put out a new demo in the past year?
Chris: Two of them, actually. We've got the *X Generation* demo, then we've got this new one called *All in Vein*, and we're finishing up five new songs, too.

Sloth: How many current members came from **Oblivion**?
Chris: Let me get this straight...okay. The singer used to be the drummer, the guitar player's the same guitar player, the drummer we have now appeared on one **Oblivion** tape, and the keyboard player/sampler used to sing for **Oblivion**. I'm the only new guy. I've known them forever, so...

Sloth: How long have you been in the band?
Chris: Two years.

Sloth: What are your future plans? Are you trying to get signed on a major record label?
Chris: Yeah, a while ago we were working on something with Relativity, but that was a *long* time ago. Right now, we're working with a new manager, and hopefully we'll hook up somewhere. We just shot a video for "X Generation."

Sloth: A video? For actual MTV or something like that?
Chris: If they'll play it, but I doubt it! It's in post-production; we've filmed it and now they're just editing it together. It actually looks like a real video!

Sloth: Is it footage from concerts?
Chris: It's us jamming, we did some rehearsal stuff, filmed some footage of weird, off the wall stuff. When we put it all together, it'll be cool.

Sloth: That's pretty much what you're working on then?
Chris: The video and seeing who's interested in picking up the band. There are so many different labels that you have to go through, because one will like you then change its mind. One label was into us, and then it folded. Some decent sized labels are checking it out, but we know it doesn't happen overnight.

Sloth: What would you classify your music as?
Chris: Okay, I can classify it perfectly. We got nominated for this thing called a WAMA by the Washington Area Music Association, which is like the local Grammy Awards. They nominate all the cool local stuff, and they called us something like psychedelic, industrial ambient. They didn't even call it metal -- it was techno! Techno, industrial, ambient music. It's as vague as you can get. We lost out to **Chemlab**, but I've never heard them.

Sloth: Thanks for the interview. I hope the video turns out all right.
Chris: Thanks a lot. See ya!

We came back inside late for the At the Gates set and were we ever mad. This was and is a hell of a band to see live and is recommended to anybody. These guys completely blew everyone away! The crowd was all over the place, experiencing an endless adrenaline rush. We had to be careful not to break someone else's nose and vice versa. All the *Slaughter of the Soul* hits were there, as well as some older ones. Each was a speed demon that ignited the crowd and kept the pit packed to the brim. We are loyal At the Gates followers and recommend that you pick up the band's most recent, *Slaughter of the Soul*. We caught up with lead singer Tomas Skogsburg afterward and spoke with him for probably half an hour. That's a cool ass mother...

Sloth: Who is this we're talking to?
Tomas: Tomas, the singer.



Photo: Eric Williams

Sloth: It's been a while since *Slaughter of the Soul* came out. Do you have any new songs written? If so, what direction have you taken? Are they similar in style the newer or older stuff?
Tomas: We haven't really so much written songs yet, but we have some ideas. We know where we want to take things. In a way, we want to get heavier. Take the paths to get heavier.

Sloth: I got a chance to listen to *Slaughter of the Soul*, and it sounded almost nothing like what you played tonight. The way it was played sounded more like **Carcass** to me than anything else, but it was good. Did you happen to play anything new tonight?
Tomas: We do a few shows, sometimes under a different name, to play some covers and now and then try a new song. We'll do that in front of a local crowd that's just most of our friends. You always want to know what sounds good, if you need to restructure the song, you know? After a long while of touring, we'll be like, "This song the crowd is really getting into, but this one they're not."

Sloth: Was there a set plan before going into the studio as to what you wanted to do for the album?
Tomas: We practiced hard the last two months before going into the studio. But there is still room to change, which we end up doing most of the time.

Sloth: This is your second show here at Jaxx. Where have the tours with **Dissection** and **Napalm Death** taken you? Any stories worth sharing?
Tomas: That tour with **Dissection** was long, and we've had some people say it was the best death metal bill in years. It was with **Dissection**, the newcomer, and we've been around for a while, but this was our first big album, as with **Dissection**.

Sloth: So you've enjoyed your time on the road?
Tomas: We love touring, it's what we want to do, plus we look forward to going home and writing new shit. We've seen so many people getting into the new shit, and now we have a lot of inspiration.

Sloth: Are any **At the Gates** band members also involved in side projects? If so, what are they all about?
Tomas: I guess the only one that puts out shit is with me and the drummer, which is a punk band with more of a crusty style.

Sloth: Crusty punk?
Tomas: I would compare it to **Disrupt**, that style. It's also got an early Japanese hardcore feel. We've released one 7" and one 10" so far.

Sloth: I heard some Japanese hardcore. That shit is evil!
Tomas: Yeah, it's violent stuff. In **At the Gates**, our guitarist writes most of the songs, but in this one, I do, so I get something else out of it. There's also some noise stuff or something else here and there, it depends on how much time we have.

Sloth: Are you friends with **Dark Tranquillity**?
Tomas: Yeah, we're really good friends with them. They live in a five minute walking distance from our house. The drummer and the singer live together, and there's usually a party there at least three times a week. (Laughs) And there's a lot of beer there.

Sloth: That's good, that's good! Now, do you guys ever swap members when you're jamming?
Tomas: In Gothenburg, the bands will swap members once in a while. A lot of bands swap, but **Dark Tranquillity**, who are some of our best friends, now have a pretty stable line up. Their new album's pretty good, too!

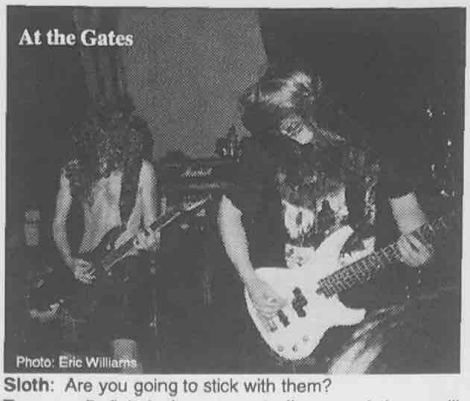
Sloth: Explain the cover of *Slaughter of the Soul*, if it has any significance...

Tomas: It's a painting, but it's a collage of a lot of shit. Other bands, like **Dismember**, had a lot on theirs too, but we sort of had our own idea. It's not that metal, and you really shouldn't read in to it too much, it just expresses a certain feeling.

Sloth: Do you all consider yourselves to be a religious band?
Tomas: No, not at all.

Sloth: I was noticing how all of your songs are about Jesus...
Tomas: Really they're more like anti-religion, or more anti-establishment. I guess we have more of the hardcore attitude about it than the metal attitude, with a more realistic outlook on things. I used to think about the religious stuff, but everybody grows up and gets tired of that stuff. As I said before, the religious side has already been portrayed by many metal bands, so we go a bit farther.

Sloth: Lots of bands have had trouble with the corporate Earache label. How has the band been treated thus far? Do you feel you are treated this way due to the great success of the album? Do you know why **Bolt Thrower** and **Brutal Truth** were dropped?
Tomas: With **Brutal Truth**, I would guess it's a mixture of the band hating Earache and Earache not being so keen with the band. I heard rumors **Brutal Truth** were dealing with Relapse -- I know Dan, and they were friends more with Relapse than Earache. **Bolt Thrower** seemed to be unproductive. I'd say Earache supported them in a way...Anyway, we have a really good relationship with the label. They've been treating us really good for it being the first album with them.



Sloth: Are you going to stick with them?
Tomas: Definitely for our next album, and then we'll take it from there, see where that album goes. For now, we will stick with them.

Sloth: Have you ever felt the urge to put clown makeup on, borrow Grandpa's rusty sword, and play eerie keyboards, all the while screaming about how beautiful the forest is?
Tomas: You know exactly what we are all about, because that's exactly what we are not. I can say that we probably have the same view of the Scandinavians. (Laughs) Some of that shit is probably cool, but, you know, I follow more of the crust and hardcore...

Sloth: How about this: Would you ever wear a bullet belt? What about a Hulk Hogan T-shirt?
Tomas: (Laughs) A bullet belt could be possible. It could be crusty. I have one at home, but I haven't worn it for years, though! *I still wear the* belt with the three rows of studs.

Sloth: Back home, does three hours of sunlight get annoying after a while, or does it make the mood perfectly evil for rocking?
Tomas: I tell you man, in my hometown the climate is like your climate. *That question* was kind of silly. That's all right, it was pretty funny. (Laughs) We've also got bikinis along *with* the bullet belts, by the way.

Sloth: Do you wear them at concerts?
Tomas: Bikinis or bullet belts?

Sloth: Both.
Tomas: Yeah, both. It's a good combination. (Laughs)

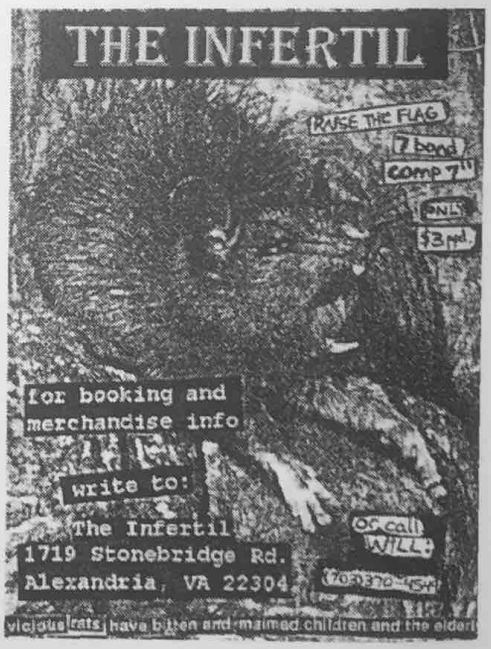
Napalm Death wrapped things up and they put on an exciting show. They're still able to dish out hard and heavy riffs after all these years! Unfortunately the editor/publisher/writer of this magazine doesn't like Napalm Death so we didn't do an interview, and Phil can go fuck himself [I send you to the show of your life for free and *this* is what I get? -ed.]. At any rate, these boys had everybody singing and dancing due to their powerful presence and catchy songs. I'd spend the money to see 'em again, because Napalm Death still delivers!

On a sad note, it appears that At the Gates has broken up. We'll have more details next issue.

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EQUINOX
Legendary Black Metal band Equinox, featuring ex-members of Acheron and Incubus, have released their 2nd offering, Thier Unholy self-titled cassette, recorded at world renown Morrisound Studios, available for a sacrifice of $5(U.S currency). Also available is their debut cassette "Anthem to the Moon" an unrelenting display of Black Magik, $5. Be watching for the signs of their new 7" record soon to be released. Old style Black Metal in the vein of Hellhammer/ Venom/Bathory. Make Checks & Money Orders to Pete Slate. Prepare for War! P.O. Box 350333 Grand Island, Florida 32735 (USA)

ALBUM REVIEWS

Abigor

Verwüstung/Invoke the Dark Age
1994 Napalm Records America

You just gotta love **Abigor**. These guys wield scythes, wear paint, and shriek, but also play an instrumental piece resembling a Carribean wine cooler radio commercial I heard. Not only is it genius, but just plain evil!

Besides that out of place ditty, "A Spell of Dark and Evil," **Abigor** plays okay black metal that incorporates heavy guitars and wild shrieks. The album's diversity also shows the band's potential, including classical guitar sections and a couple of silly instrumentals. Also, some of the songs' slower parts are reminiscent of **Hades**.

The lengthy songs tend to get old, and cause the listener to lose interest. The best are "Eye to Eye at Armageddon" and "Weeping Midwintertears" due to their catchy guitars. The middle songs really could be the same, and one must really be in the mood for black metal if he wants to hear **Abigor**. Maybe a more recent album by the band would be better, because this is pretty old. 🎸🎸🎸

Abscess

Urine Junkies
1995 Relapse Records

Two former members of **Autopsy** and their pals combine in **Abscess** to attack you with their "cameltoed fuck metal." Can you stand the heat? *Urine Junkies* is an album you'll either love or hate, and at different times I do both. Some days I can't stand the intentionally sloppy, crust-filled shriekfest, and on others I can't get enough.

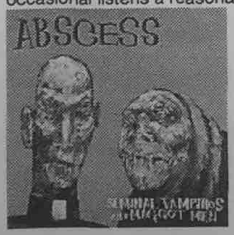
The upbeat music with punk influences is rowdy like an *Animal House* frat party, and some disgusting highlights are "Depopulation," "Bloodsucker," and the furious "Altar Toy." Basically, if you wish to get away from death metal's self-imposed seriousness and let loose, pop in **Abscess** and hop on for a rather diverse and perverse ride. 🎸🎸🎸 1/4



Abscess

Seminal Vampires and Maggot Men
1996 Relapse Records

Appearing to be a one shot wonder, **Abscess** flops on the eighteen song *Seminal Vampires and Maggot Men*. This is a sloppy mess from start to finish, and unlike *Urine Junkies*, has no great moments to make even occasional listens a reasonable idea.



Each song is a hastily put together attempt-at-an-anthem, full of punk's sloppiness and obnoxious lyrics. While **Old Grandad** manages to somehow control its brand of chaos, **Abscess** bathes chest deep in muck with a big grin on its one-trick face. Prime examples of the band's downfall are "Gonna Mow You Down," "Zombie Ward," and "I Don't Give a Fuck," and just flipping through each track reveals their uncanny similarities.

Urine Junkies is **Abscess**'s better offering and is recommended over *Seminal Vampires and Maggot Men* any day (even with the new album's cool cover.) 🎸 3/4

The Abyss

The Other Side
1995 Nuclear Blast

As pretty much everyone knows, this is the side project band of **Hypocrisy** with instrumental role reversal. Bassist Mikael Hedlund switched to guitar, drummer Lars Szóke also plays guitar, and guitarist Peter Tägtgren plays bass and drums. All three take part in the shrieking.

Even though **The Abyss** would not be considered true black metal by the official judger of "trueness," I find *The Other Side* to be good music, and that's what matters. Besides lots of black metal speed note playing (someone's gotta think of a term for that), there's enough chord action to satisfy my death metal appetite. Each song has something to offer, the best being "Tjánare Af Besten," "Psychomantum," and "Slukad," a song that sounds like a metal version of the chorus from **Coolio**'s "Gangsta's Paradise" from the *Dangerous Minds* soundtrack.

Some could even call this album pop black metal because it's very short -- only about thirty minutes -- and doesn't take any risks. Nonetheless, the professionalism that got and keeps **Hypocrisy** signed is present here, making this an enjoyable album of light black metal. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

ACID BATH

When the Kite String Pops
1994 Rotten Records

Before you notice who painted this album's cover, seeing Pogo the Clown representing this furious Southern metal band will throw you for a loop. It's only fitting that the man behind the brush was none other than John Wayne Gacy himself. That also explains the inner painting of the Seven Dwarfs looking over Pogo's corpse.

Coming from Oklahoma, **Acid Bath** has the soulful, more laid back musical feel that a lot of Southern bands -- like **C.O.C.** and **Down** -- are taking these days. While definitely metal, the songs themselves seem muted in order to convey the hopeless attitude the band has toward things. Vocals play a big part too, ranging from a distorted shriek to **Rush** style singing, and hold a lot of weight when it comes to whether or not a song is good.

Along with the ferocity comes a pair of beautiful acoustic pieces that are highlighted by the aforementioned singing. Nothing like the rest of *When the Kite String Pops*, these ballads, "Scream of the Butterfly" and "The Bones of Baby Dolls," are the kind of songs you never want to end, and you sit suspended wishing the moments could last forever. I pray the band's next album will have more of such material.

Experience the fury, the feedback, the distortion, the beauty. Experience life, experience **Acid Bath**. 🎸🎸🎸🎸

Adramelech

Psychostasia
1996 Repulse Records

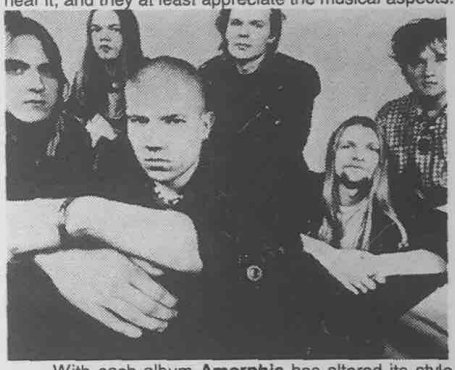
Adramelech's *Psychostasia* is one of the higher quality Repulse releases in both content and production. Incorporating the guitar stlyes from old **Sinister**, **Seance**, and **Demilich** (assuming the band's guitarists *did* have something to offer) with whispery growls, the band definitely has a unique style.

Quite progressive, the songs all demonstrate **Adramelech**'s unique character which comes from the guitars' note progression. Just as one immediately can point out an **Amorphis** or a **Bolt Thrower**, one can do so with **Adramelech**. A problem arises when the songs start to sound the same, as is the case with "Heroes in Godly Blaze" and the title track. This shows the band's need to focus more on songwriting, now that technicality and speed have been established. Both "Mythic Descendent" and "The Book of the Worm" show what good things can happen when the band slows things down, and hopefully subsequent albums will show the band progressing. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

Amorphis

Elegy
1996 Relapse Records

Already achieving heights that few metal albums have even come close to, **Amorphis**'s *Elegy* is a musical triumph that defies the boundaries of genre. Not only do I love it, but I've let non-metal friends -- even my dad! -- hear it, and they at least appreciate the musical aspects.



With each album **Amorphis** has altered its style, the new one having '70s stlye keyboards, a full time singer to contrast the less-emphasized growls, and better-developed song structures. "On Rich and Poor" and "Song of the Troubled One" are fine examples of the band's musical genius, not to mention the equally memorable instrumental "Relief" and the folksy "Weeper on the Shore."

Each of *Elegy*'s eleven songs is unique -- all of course retaining trademark **Amorphis** melodies -- so that even the acoustic reprise of "My Kantele" differs from the electric version. There are some truly beautiful moments on *Elegy*, and, with the exception of "Better Unborn" and "Cares," all of the songs are at least good and, more often than not, exceptional. Even "Cares" has a couple good parts, but it hits a dead end and becomes repetitive.

Now, I'll admit I prefer **Amorphis**'s previous album, the heavier *Tales from the Thousand Lakes*, but then again, that was by a different band altogether. 🎸🎸🎸🎸

Anthrophobia

Framework
1996 Mausoleum Records

A mere six songs and twenty minutes long, *Framework* manages to give a cross-section of **Anthrophobia**. Somewhere between hard rock, alternative, and hardcore, the band has trouble demonstrating its conviction, a mortal sin when trying to break into any scene. (Unless of course you want to be popular. Then all you have to do is write one of the stupidest riffs possible, write equally stupid lyrics about sweaters, and say your album was inspired by Kurt.) This is the kind of band you'll see showcased in some magazine like *Big Rok* which prints one issue of ten thousand copies then goes flop, and you just know the band is as worth

checking out as **T-Ride**. How many average bands of light hardcore must we endure before another like **Compression** comes along?

The bluesy "Resist and Change" is the only real ray of hope emitting from this band that vaguely resembles another hot number of the past, **Motorpsycho**. This song has warm guitars, personality, and conviction. *Now* we're talking! 3/4

Ascaroth

The Quest for Eldenhor
1996 Repulse Records

For those who like a little black metal now and then, **Ascaroth** is a band for you. Never too fast and with shrieks not too piercing, this Spanish trio understands how to reach a larger audience without compromising its love for black metal.

Almost "light" black metal, *The Quest for Eldenhor* is boosted by heavy metal riffing and realistic drum programming, best executed on "The Last Battle (Tower of Doom)." The use of keyboards and piano also aides **Ascaroth** in diversifying its music.

Considering the inlay picture is of a guy in makeup wearing a cape and holding a sword, this was a very pleasant surprise. **Ascaroth** is one of the more recommeded new black metal bands. 1/4

Atman

Like Pure Unawaited Magic
1996 Repulse Records

By using a female soprano in most of its songs, **Atman** goes from average, barely memorable black metal to a band with at least a chance. It's really weird when Mr. Rasp is interupted by actual singing, but the overall effect is better than if Mr. Apocalyptic Shriek had stepped up to the mic every five seconds.

One problem with the female vocals is their lack of crispness and subsequent envelopment of the other instruments. Musically, the band is not too great, either, with the occasional acoustic guitar or rare keyboard unsuccessfully trying to mix things up. The fair production manages mix the instruments well, however, bringing out the smooth bass as well as the drums and guitars. Not a bad release, *Like Pure...* could be a hint of good things to come if **Atman** chooses to further develop its style. 3/4

At the Gates

Slaughter of the Soul
1995 Earache Records

This is the album none can deny! It is so well done that it can bridge the gaps between metal's many divisive categories. Rage, technicality, speed -- it's all here. Each song has its own personality and is executed precisely by the best musicians around.

You want details? Tomas Lindburg's vocals are a "wailgrowl" which will attract the black metal crowd as well as regular death fans. Progressive metal fans will eat up the technicality of guitar wizards Anders Bjorler and Martin Larsson. Check out "Blinded by Fear" and "Suicide Nation" and you too will believe.

Producer Fredrik Nordstrom receives highest praise for his work here on *Slaughter of the Soul*, perhaps one of the greatest metal albums of all time. He blends each instrument perfectly and got a great sound out of the studio. Just a great job all around by everyone involved.

If Earache, which has an uncanny knack for dropping death metal bands, is willing to pick your band up and then give it tour support, you know you're good. Plain and simple, you can't go wrong with **At the Gates**.

Avulsed

Carnivoracity
1995 Repulse Records

A trio of older studio tracks and eight live tracks, *Carnivoracity* is a collection of some really boring tracks. All of the songs sound alike, with a majority of the music being drowned out by the brutal, monotone vocals. There is a nice keyboard section



somewhere in the middle of the eight minute title track, but to hear it you still have to fight Dave Rotten's growl. The best parts of the CD occur between live tracks, when the singer calls out to the crowd in Spanish and gets about three people to acknowledge his presece. *They were there to see his band!*

Avulsed is not very unoriginal and does not experiment too much within its songs. Another problem that hinders the band is poor sound produciton that really hides the guitars. You just don't know what they're doing! Hopefully the upcoming new album, *Eminence in Putrescence*, will show the band's improved musical and studio abilities. By the way, Repulse Records is run by a few members of the band, and I've got a hunch they started it because no label wanted to sign *another* brutal act. Not as bad as I once thought, **Avulsed** still needs a lot of work.

Baltak

Self-titled
1996 Battlegod Productions

Those who are familiar with Swedes **Algaion** will understand me when I say that **Baltak** is pretty good, but every single song sounds *exactly the same*! From song structure to vocals, few things vary, and as the music blazes, Frank Purdue's chickens handle the vocal duties. Luckily for us, the echo effect is on, so the screeches last extra long. Yes!

This is the type of disc to listen to when doing something, because it becomes a background constant kind of like a refridgerator, and when you do listen for a while it sounds pretty good, again like the fridge. The drum programming is done quite well, mixing with the black metal guitars to create a tornado-like batch of songs.

Amusing, wild, and enjoyable in doses, **Baltak** still isn't very original. The guy who is the band, Gorgoroth, pretty much copies *himself* each song! Also, his small repetoire of voices makes you wonder if he even planned the vocals before going into the studio. He can say, "Oo-ee-aye," "Aaaaaaaah!," "Yaaah!," and a few others, but that's pretty much it. So, if you're thinking of starting your own barnyard black metal extravaganza, in the immortal words of Gorgoroth, "Ooo-aaaah!" 3/4

Beyond

Reassemble
1995 Pavement Music

Formerly **Demented Ted**, the band now pretends to be **Carcass** and **Fear Factory** under the moniker of **Beyond**. Besides a few personal touches here and there, *Reassemble* is just a lame combination of the aforementioned pair. The riffage is a half-assed stab at *Demanufacture* (these two titles are so *different*!), and most of the melodic breaks incorporate the bends patented on *Necroticism: Descanting the Insalubrious*. Why those bands are successful and this one is not is due to **Beyond's** lack of conviction, originality, and ability to write interesting material.

Lazy production forces each instrument take a back seat to itself, and I can't believe this was even mastered. The vocals are whiny, but lack the conviction necessary to sell the whine, as if the singer were a kid who knows there's no way he's getting what he wants and therefore whines about not being able to whine for what he wants. A low growl urges along our beloved whiner (where'd they get that idea?), delivered in a monotone that aides the entire cast of characters in its sacred quest to not really care. Gentlemen, I believe the Holy Grail has been found!

As you can see, I do not care for the new direction **Demented Ted** has taken, not that I cared for the thin guitars of *Promises Impure* anyway, but that's another tale for another day. I believe that with a lot of practice and an extensive search for a sense of self that does not include checking out *Swansong* or *Remanufacture*, perhaps **Beyond** can utilize the competent guitar skills of Ron Janis and Mike Vega found on "Garden of Aeons." They can do it if they want to!! 1/2

Bile

Teknowhore
1996 Energy Records

How wonderful! A CD so good that if I accidentally pulled down my pants and took a crap on it, I'd hate myself for depriving the toilet of my daily gifts. The word is that **Bile** is supposedly the next **GWAR**, but the truth about this bunch of white trash bums who thought they could be **NIN** is that they got hold of a recorder, then banged, whispered, and mistuned their guitars until they'd convinced a record label they could do stuff. Poor, poor Energy Records! I wonder, if I sent them a sampler of some of my farts, would they sign *me*? Or would I also need to bang a couple of pots?

Lots of noises, sound bites, overly distorted guitars and vocals, and free time went into constructing *Teknoshit*, and the profound lyrics about sleeping with the neighbor's wife and hating everyone read just as if Poe himself had written them! Another big problem is how everything is going on at once, so when one does listen for content, he's hit by an unintelligible barrage.

As you may have *guessed*, I hate **Bile** like my deodorant protects: 110%.

The Black

Black Blood
1996 Necropolis Records

The cover of **The Black's** *Black Blood* pictures a menacing figure donning dark robes standing in front of a woodland scene. Let's see, that isn't just like every other mediocre release in the black metal stable nowadays. I could say these guys have diversity, musical talent, and an excuse to get away with pitiful arrangements, but then I would be lying like the bastard I am. Oh wait! They have acoustic guitars! That alone will give them:
-T.J.

Body Bag

Hate Crimes
1995 Cursed Records

An experienced band having been around for nearly six years, **Body Bag** features former **Master** and **Abomination** drummer Aaron Nikeas. *Hate Crimes* is the band's second release, a nine song independent



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album.

Musically, the band churns along similar to **Vader** and Florida's **Sickness**, but with a more industrial sound. Moe's vocals are mechanically distorted, or could just be altered due to the disc's overall production, which is on the border between professional demo and professional album quality.

Despite the overall tightness of the group, **Body Bag** is simply incapable of writing an album's worth of memorable material. *Hate Crimes* tends to drag along with its interchangeable songs and trite riffage. It's hard to appreciate the guitarists' picking abilities when they don't mix up their approach. **Body Bag** is forever destined to be an unsigned band if it can't turn its songwriting up a notch. 🎸🎸🎸

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Chris Kaiser
336 W. Lake St. #1
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Brutal Truth

Kill Trend Suicide
1996 Relapse Records

Recently Earache Records cleaned house on a lot of good bands, including the fiendish **Brutal Truth**. The band's bassist, Danny Lilker, had ties with **Exit-13** member and Relapse Records executive William Yurkiewicz Jr., so it's no surprise the **B.T.** boys are back and on this label.

Those familiar with the band's previous material -- the blazing madness of *Extreme Conditions Demand Extreme Responses*, *Perpetual Conversion* with its ungodly cover of **Black Sabbath**'s "Lord of this World," and the fierce *Need to Control* --



will find *Kill Trend Suicide* to be quite a surprise. Sounding more like **Pungent Stench** than anything else, the album's ten songs have you constantly checking your lyric sheet just to make sure it really is **Brutal Truth**. The silly sloppiness of **Abscess** also comes through, and the only thing that is familiar from the days of old is the psychotic drumming of Richard Noak, and he hasn't been in the band the whole time either!!

Here's a great story. One of the publicity guys at Relapse, Gordon Conrad, called me up to see how I liked this CD. I told him that I didn't really care for it and already written up this review. He recommended that I listen once more to see if my opinion might change. Well, I did, and my opinion *did* change. I went from thinking the album was okay to thinking it sucked! The sloppiness totally turned me off, none of the members show any sort of restraint, and these feelings came despite the great "Let's Go to War," "Hyoprite Invasion," and "Zombie." If **Brutal Truth** can recapture some of that classic glory that made the band notorious in the first place, then and only then will I see the band's being dropped by Earache as unjust. 🎸🎸 3/4

CATASEXUAL URGE MOTIVATION

The Encyclopedia of Serial Murders
1996 Deliria Productions

Can you say crap? It's easier than saying **Catasexual Urge Motivation**. This has everything I hate about grindcore. Overpowering, cloudy vocals, non-stop blasting, and crap drum programming. With twenty-two songs of absolute garbage, *The Encyclopedia of Serial Murders* is bound to have at least ten songs you'll hate.

Just one of the many Japanese noise bands, **C.U.M.** stands out like a drop of water in the Pacific and isn't even worth this much space in a magazine. BOOOOOO!!!!

Chastain

Sick Society
1995 Leviathan Records

From the label that brought you never-to-be-heard-from-again **Full Circle** comes a band that has at least established itself. **Chastain** released *For those who Dare* back in 1990, and has come back with the hour long *Sick Society*.



The album's first handful of listens all last about a minute, once you realize you sold your **Lita Ford** tapes for a reason. You see, **Chastain** is a band of the '80s, and besides some modern riffing, play nothing that would have you believe it was recorded less than a decade ago! From the stereotypical female rocker vocals to the simplistic "I follow the singer" musicians, things never get a chance to go uphill before crashing.





Mainman David Chastain, who looks like an **Alice Cooper** reject or a struggling '80s metal guitar teacher, tries to mix things up with folksy acoustic action and **Stevie Ray Vaugn** solos, but fails to spend much time on the simplistic and boring song bodies. To give credit, the ballad "Every Emotion" does achieve what the band spent an hour of material striving to achieve, which is what, appealing old school pop metal? Only diehard fans of this style will want to pick **Chastain** up, and if you're one of them, give me a call -- I'm still trying to get rid of my **Vinnie Moore** and **Shotgun Messiah** tapes. 🎸🎸 1/4



DAMIAN KROSS

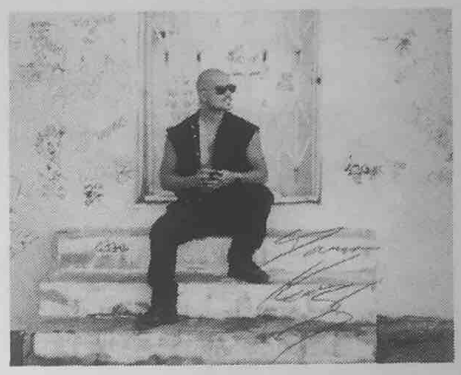
Fist Fuck the World
1996

A truly disgruntled one man project, **Damian Kross** lashes out against America, beggars, life's pains, and pink bunnies (I wish). This guy sounds extremely pissed, as if being hit by a bus wouldn't bother him too much.

His addictive anthem metal is led by distorted vocals and mid-paced, catchy riffs. Some of the best songs are "I Hate," "U.S. Aggression," and the instrumental, "Voice of Chaos." If Kurt Cobain had been in a metal band, it could very well have sounded like this. Damian appears to have no reason to live but probably doesn't kill himself because he looks so damn tuff. When you're down, *Fist Fuck the World* is the filthy, go-out-swinging-as-you-drown-in-your-sorrows Dr. Kevorkian you wish you had.

No one style characterizes **Damian Kross**'s music, an original brand of riff metal that is rounded out by well-handled drum programming and production. Damn, what a tirade of an album! 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

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Darkified

A Dance on the Grave
1994 Repulse Records

Part of the Repulse "Resurrecseries" -- an ongoing collection of older releases that are felt to have not gotten the proper recognition when originally released -- **Darkified** has its 1991 *Dark* demo and 1992 *Sleep Forever...* 7" on this CD EP. Despite showing its youth with primitive drumming that hinders the fast parts, *A Dance on the Grave* shines with memorable riffs and an interestingly narrated acoustic piece.

Despite the young band's sloppiness, I still really enjoy the uptempo Swedish riffs and vocal rasps, kind of like the black metal fanatic who digs the **Emperor/Enslaved** split, *Hordanes Land*, despite its shortcomings. The best songs are "Sleep Forever...," "A Summond (sic) for the Nameless Horrors," and "Outro - Out from the Darkness." 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

Dark Tranquility

The Gallery
1995 Osmose Productions

Gothenburg, Sweden, has been turning out a number of quality bands over the past few years, such as **At the Gates** and **In Flames**, who play melodic black/death and are able to capture the listener's attention with tightly-executed riffs and memorable hooks. **Dark Tranquillity** are no different. Hailing from the same locale as the above mentioned, they are finally managing to rid themselves of the shadow cast by **At the Gates** and become a noticed addition to the death-metal world with their newest release, *The Gallery*.

Propelled by the utter brilliancy of Niklas Sundin and Fredrik Johansson's guitar playing, Dark Tranquillity blaze the Northern sky with their emotional and heartfelt anthems. From the screams and growls of Mickael Stanne to Anders Jivarp's frantic yet controlled drumming, this band lets you know just what the word "fury" means. Songs like "Punish My Heaven" and "Edenspring" abound with the negativity so prevalent in today's extreme metal scene, but what a wonderfully positive experience it is! You can't help but feel the adrenaline rush while listening to *The Gallery*, the urgent need to smash things around your house.

What pushes **Dark Tranquillity** above the onslaught of imitators, though, is their refined sense of control. The pause at just the right moment to fill the gap with a flowing acoustic bit, mid-paced riff, off-beat tempo, or female vocal solo. If you have any lingering doubts, dispel them now! Pick up this album, as well as their progressive *Skydancer* CD [it's a classic! -ed], both of which should be highly liked by fans of **At the Gates**, or anyone looking for a band that bridges the gap between death and black. 🎸🎸🎸🎸 1/4

- T.J.

Deathwish

Triumphant Devastation
1996 Necropolis Records

'80s **Bathory**-esque black metal meets '90s revivalist-spirit in the form of **Deathwish**. While I can hardly call their *Triumphant Devastation* release essential, or even noteworthy, it does have merit. (Note: Some of the guitar work even reminds me of early **Slayer** and -- get

this -- punk rock/hardcore sped up a bit!) This is completely harmless, and although it does nothing to get my attention, coming from a black metal band and what not, it got me headbanging and stomping my feet in rhythm to the cries of "Mutilation!" and "Born to Kill!" shouted by vocalist Terror. Punk/hardcore sensibility transfered into the vein of pure black metal evilness....All it needs is a bunch of skinheads yelling "Oi! Oi! Oi!" in the background. 1/2
-T.J.

Deeds of Flesh

Trading Pieces
1996 Repulse Records

There I was, all set to hook these guys up with an interview, when along comes this piece of shit that I'd trade for a hubcap! How can a band that released the four song *Gradually Melted*, perhaps one of the greatest demos of all time, put out such an uninspired album of **Deicide** and **Cannibal Corpse** worship? **Deeds of Flesh** has built a reputation by mixing the brutality of **Cannibal Corpse** with the technical speed of **Macabre**, all with an individual personality. There is no conviction here, and even the most avid grind lover will not enjoy himself while immersed in this gory cheese. I'd sure like to read any reviews that praise *Trading Pieces*; I bet some magazine called *Necrocorpsegore* or *Analhilation* hailed this as the best album ever and gave it a perfect ten impaled fetuses.

What the album lacks is the demo's catchiness and powerful delivery. The new songs simply don't utilize the diverse tempo changes that made listening to *Gradually Melted* such an intense experience! The overpowering and one-dimensional vocals also play a part in this, as does the band's use of **Suffocation** and **Internal Bleeding** techniques. How many turtle-mosh tempos do we need between each blast beat? God, what a letdown! 1/4



Demilich

Nespithe
1996 Repulse Records

The Repulse re-release, complete with new artwork and four old demo tracks, still sucks as much as ever. So, for those not informed, reprinted is the review from issue #2:

Having heard great things about the extremely guttural vocals possessed by Antti Bowman, I was very eager to give this disc a spin. My expectations of hearing a "volcano" were left greatly unmatched. Possibly the whole hollow effect of the album had to do with it, but the blatant attempt to have the be-all, end-all of deep vocals sacrificed actual listening enjoyment.

Not to lay all of the blame on poor Antti -- he was just trying to up the ante -- because his guitar work, and that of cohort Aki Hytonen, is as bad as the vocals. Their playing is either very discombobulated scales, or just aimless fiddling around. In either case, the production is very thin. The occasional melody will pop up, but is soon discarded for the nonsense that you can't hear or discern anyway.

An interesting cover and funny song titles do nothing to help out a poor listening experience. I mean, that's what it's all about, right? So just stay away from this one. The vocals are no good, coming off as if the growler has excess saliva in his mouth, and since no aspects of the songs stick in your head, it's like listening to **Nokturnel**.

Dissection

Storm of the Light's Bane
1995 Relapse Records

One of the premier black metal bands of today, Sweden's **Dissection** superbly demonstrates its supremacy in the eight well-crafted songs of *Storm of the Light's Bane*. Unlike a plethora of black metal bands, **Dissection**'s guitars do not suffer from thin production, and the overall mix is of album quality, something expected but not often a given these days. Excellent, highly memorable riffs and melodies front the intricate songs, the best being "Thorns of Crimson Death," the brooding "Unhallowed," and the epic "Where Dead Angels Lie." Jon Nodtveidt's vocals are raspy but don't approach a shriek, and combined with the album's overall feel, will please both death and black metal fans.

A lively but dark album, *Storm of the Light's Bane* never fails to excite. The quality technical skills of the quartet don't go unnoticed and the album should not go unpurchased. 1/2

Dog Eat Dog

Play Games
1996 Roadrunner Records

No matter how much I want to, I simply can't *hate* this. Sure, there are all the signs of harder pop -- excuse me, Alternative -- from **311** to **Rage Against the Machine** to the artificially ska **No Doubt** and **Goldfinger**. Still, there's enough personality to allow **Dog Eat Dog** to pass on its own merit.

There are horns, rapping, **Biohazard** influences, and pretty much everything else that would turn off the average *Sloth* reader. Nonetheless, just as I found a soft spot for **Beats the Hell Out of Me** last issue, **Dog Eat Dog** isn't so bad, either. A word of warning though: The band is very optimistic and will definitely not appeal to those who are eternally melancholic.

My favorites are "Hi-Lo," "Sore Loser," and the humorous "Games." The sports-oriented CD package has a cool design, but only a few of you have read this far, so...

Down

Nola
1995 Elektra Entertainment

Featuring quite an impressive roster, **Down** is a culmination of Southern rock influences from Lousiana's top musicians. Philip Anselmo from **Pantera**, Kirk Windstein and Todd Strange from **Crowbar**, Pepper Kennan from **Corrosion of Conformity**, and Jimmy Bower of **Eyehategod** and **Crowbar** make up this all star lineup.

Each musician brings his own style into this world reknowned project, and even soulful vocalist Anselmo wrote a majority of the songs. Keenan brings **Skynard**-esque lead guitar, while Strange and Windstein both contribute the pull-off and bend techniques that make **Crowbar** standout. The great production that comes from a corporate label budget has enabled all to shine, especially the members of **Crowbar**. Yet to achieve stellar sound thus far, perhaps the **Down** experience will aid **Crowbar** in the future.

A couple of the songs aren't too good, but most are catchy and suck you right in. The instrumental "Pray for the Locust," "Lifer," and "Rehab" outweigh an average song like "Losing All," and the originality of the release will appeal to fans of all types of rock, from the heaviest of grind to the latest L.A. glam band.

Dystopia One

Attempted Mustache
1996 Rawkus Entertainment

With some similarities to **NIN**, **Dystopia One** will immmediately turn off a whole slew of music fans. It would be their loss. This band, complete with two fuzz basses and zero guitars, takes a weird but listenable delve into experimental *music*.

Having actual rhythms and tunes is what makes *Attempted Mustache* a lot more enjoyable than bands like **3D House of Beef** that do nothing more than make noise in each composition. Keyboards and vocal variety are the keys in making songs like "All Cops are Dicks" and "The Power of Ipecac" work, but at the album's middle and end, things really drone on. The endless slow sections and boring experimentation are by far the low points, pointing out that **Dystopia One** has far from shedded its roots and is in the early stages of maturity.

Lighthearted, silly melodies throughout add some humor to this pretty grey album, but too many of the songs lack this enjoyable quirkiness. **Dytopia One** is still working to reach that cherished middle ground between experimental, pop, and industrial that could mean fans, fans, fans. The group is on the right track.

E-mail **Dystopia One** at:
dys1@aol.com

Edge of Sanity

Crimson
1996 Black Mark Productions

Quite a concept, *Crimson* is a forty minute song that tells the story of the human race losing the ability to reproduce until a lord comes to save them, and the tales of mankind after his death. Besides the story, there is a ton of music to be heard! **Edge of Sanity**'s trademark, progressive death metal is enhanced by pianos, acoustic guitars, and choir singing.

One problem with a one song album is that the first half sure gets a lot more play than the second. I don't always have forty minutes to give, and that's really a shame when considering the last ten minutes contain some extraordinary music. It's actually the first fifteen that contain some awkward, unappealing parts.

For those that don't know, **E.O.S.** is from Sweden and has been one of the leading death metal bands for the past few years, having released *The Spectral Sorrows* and *Purgatory Afterglow* to really push itself into the forefront. With *Crimson*, better production and less silly parts have made this album the band's best yet. Yes, there are still some pointless sections, but you're bound to find them in any forty minute album.

If you can get over the hassle of having to fast forward, you will experience memorable music full of melodic solos, blazing speed, all types of vocals, and so much more.

Einherjer

Aurora Borealis
1996 Necrolpolis Records

Straight from the Fjords of Scandinavia, **Einherjer** make a valiant effort in the whole "Viking black metal" stable. *Aurora Borealis* is a bleak slab of ancient passion and primitive philosophy that takes me back to the time when strong Norsemen lived and died by Odin's creed. Nidhogg's grim vocal discharges stand out in contrast to Grimmar's rolling guitar riffs and Thonar's catchy bass lines. I almost found myself singing along, but then

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realized the lyrics were in Norwegian. Fans of **Enslaved** should dig this. 🎸🎸🎸
-T.J.

EMPEROR/ENSLAVED

Hordanes Land
1994 Century Media

A collection of older versions of songs most likely rerecorded since by both bands, *Hordanes Land* is pretty useless unless you're a big fan of these bands and want to hear their songs really sound like crap. I find both **Emperor** and **Enslaved** to be okay, but this CD is at best a mirror.

The **Emperor** songs are instantly forgettable, with the guitars sounding like a horde of angry bees, and the slightly better **Enslaved** has songs that are endless repetitions of themselves. Both bands sloppily incorporate many punk and early metal influences, too. If you're hellbent on checking these bands out, buy newer CDs from both and don't waste your money on this like I did. Fourteen bucks just so I can sell it for four. Worth it. **Emperor**: 🎸 1/2 **Enslaved**: 🎸🎸

Exit-13

...Just a Few More Hits
1995 Relapse Records

An EP that had been on the backburner since 1993, *...Just a Few More Hits* (a.k.a. *...Just a Bit More Shit*) is five songs of fuzzy guitar madness, along with a twenty minute, piece of crap noise thing. **Exit-13**'s music has completely gone downhill since *Green is Good*, and everything is now sloppily played through a horrid guitar sound which rivals that of **Internal Bleeding**! (Turned off yet?) Indistinguishable as they are, a few catchy riffs and time changes are to be found, but who would shell out $10+ for just "a few catchy riffs?" (That was also in the running for this EP's title.)

Before, I didn't even care that many of **Exit-13**'s songs dealt with the legalization of marijuana, because the lyrics didn't interfere with the cool music. Times have changed. For instance, the endless five minute edit of "Legalize Hemp Now" (how long is the original?) repeats its main riff a thousand times so we can be bitched at more and more about weed. Shut the hell up!! You're in a band, worry about the music. Go whine about that shit at the coffee shop where all your friends are anyway, bitching about why they still live at home. 🎸 1/2

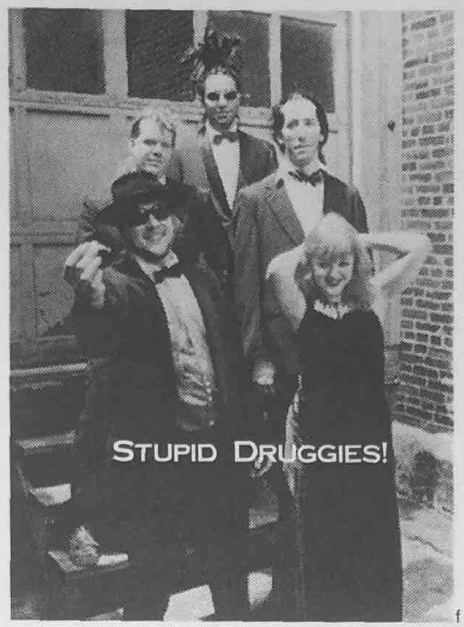
Exit-13

Smoking Songs
1996 Relapse Records

Contrary to the band's intentions, **Exit-13**'s *Smoking Songs* manages to refute the claim that smoking marijuana leads to creativity. There's nothing imaginative or unique about this album. Instead, it's just repetitive and monotonous garbage. The band members, who take pride in being weed fiends, have fried a bit too many of their brain cells.

Smoking Songs is supposed to be a collection of blues and jazz tunes that deal with marijuana and the "many virtues of the weed." The first song, "Light Up!," actually sounds decent for the first couple of seconds, beginning with a nice melody consisting of light trombone and guitar licks. And guitarist Steve O'Donnell can obviously play his instrument, as evidenced by his laid back bluesy style. But when the vocals kick in, that's when it gets ugly. After a while, it gets tiring to hear a raspy male voice sing about how much he loves marijuana. Get over it. No one cares. It's such a shame that **Exit-13** couldn't put the minimal musical talent that they have to good use.

The next few songs sound oddly similar to the first one, except with female vocals. There's no real variation between one tune to the next, besides the awful lyrics. Some of the titles, such as "Jack I'm Mellow," "When I Get Low, I Get High," "Weed," "Hempcake," and "Sweet Marijuana Brown," just speak



f

or themselves. By the time the last song ends, you will breathe a long sigh of relief. But wait! There's more (please no)! **Exit-13** managed to sneak in an experimental improvisation, called "Loading Dock," in the last few minutes of the CD. If you thought the band had any talent by this point, you'll definitely change your mind. Actually, it's far from improvisation, rather just a couple of people playing random notes at the same time. A box full of trained monkeys could do a better job.

Save your money and your time. Don't buy this record. However, if you already have it, do yourself a favor and throw it into the garbage where it belongs. Every cent that this band gets will probably go the drug that influenced this crappy record in the first place. Don't feed a weed fiend.
- J.S.

Fermented Vomit Records

Sampler
1995

Though it's not clearly stated, the guys from the cool 'zine *The Grimoire of Exalted Deeds* put this together. Most likely it was editor Bill Zebub who is responsible for this, but I must say this tape is anything but humorous.

Eight bands make up this joke of a compilation, with each one being as worthless as the next. One is a homemade keyboard band, while another plays slow motion crap metal. Either way, all of the bands are guaranteed to suck. There's no point in even reviewing each one, as each would get the same rating, give or take a negative numer of bombs.

Let me tell ya, when you want quality, you want "Evil Booger Gumbi" and "Entombed in a Bathroom," not to mention the whole series dedicated to "Doggy."

$5 everywhere to:
245 Lakeview Ave.
Suite 237
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Floodgate

Penalty
1996 Roadrunner Records

Featuring former **Exhorder** vocalist Kyle Thomas, both behind the mic and on guitar, is Roadrunner's latest signee, **Floodgate**. The band blends the styles of **Black Sabbath**, **Down**, and **Soundgarden**, all with the trademark Southern feel that's popular these days.

With eleven songs of over fifty minutes of music, *Penalty* is almost too much. Despite Thomas's soulful performance, there just isn't enough standout material to grab the listener like **Down**, and perhaps that's why **Floodgate** is signed to Roadrunner and **Down** is one of the few metal bands signed to Elektra. I found myself quite bored throughout this album, numbed by the fuzzy guitars and mid-paced music. Of course, there's no denying songs like "Whole," "Through my Days into my Nights," and "Second Guesser," but there have to be more like them!

Addicts of Southern metal take note, as **Floodgate** may be a pacifier until the next **Down** album comes out. For the rest of us who want the best, hang around and let this young band develop. 🎸🎸 3/4

Godflesh

Songs of Love and Hate
1996 Earache Records

Taking the cover photo used by **Bleed** (now **Crawl**) on its *Womb* EP, **Godflesh** is back with more of its trademark industrial metal. Incorporating elements of **Fudge Tunnel** and **Nailbomb**, various vocal stylings from popular "moody" bands, the trademark **Godflesh** sound, and a live drummer, the band hopes to reach a broader audience.

Maybe that's completely wrong, but *Songs of Love and Hate* is a lot better than the band's previous, endless albums of repetition that rival labelmates **Scorn**. However, the album's hour long set is characteristic of industrial albums' tendency to drag on. So, **Godflesh** fans, here ya go: another album I won't fight you for. 🎸🎸 3/4

Golgotha

Melancholy
1995 Repulse Records

Repulse's "safe band" (a term I came up with in the first issue to describe the one band a label can be sure will bring in lots of money for it to waste on crappy bands), **Golgotha** plays death with a doomy feel and has limitless potential. The nine songs on *Melancholy* are full of emotion and melody, pain and sadness. Progressive metal techniques, varied gothic narrations, and angry yells compliment each other well and add depth. Keyboards, acoustic guitars, and occasional female vocals pop up, too.

Golgotha understands it's okay to write long songs, and with time will weed out the unnecessary parts. The young band still needs to tighten things up and have its singer hit *all* of the notes. Otherwise no one will take this young band seriously.

Most doom fans should enjoy this, and those more into death will find the rough vocals a welcome bridge to doom. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

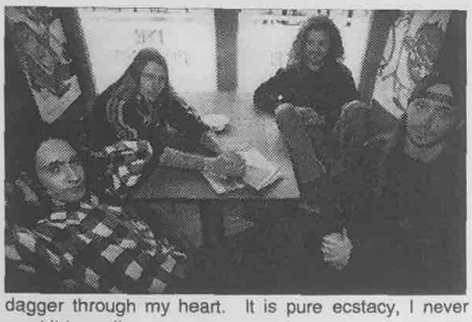
Gorefest

Soul Survivor
1996 Nuclear Blast

I accept. I now accept that the **Gorefest** I fell in love with on *False* is gone. I accept that *Erase*, with its wind-up monkey drumming, was a transitional album for the band, though still to be hated. *Soul Survivor* is like a cook book. Not all of the recipes work, and some of the ones that you do like have certain unfavorable hints.

At first, the listener is completely taken aback by the disparity between the light metal music and Jan Chris de Koyer's guttural growl. My mind was incredibly open when I first listened to *Soul Survivor* a number of times in a row, and maybe that's why I keep playing it again and again today. I'll admit, the vocals are extremely out of place on "Electric Poet" and "Demon Seed," but they work so incredibly well on "River," "Chameleon," and "Dragonman" that one must wonder what the future holds for **Gorefest** if it can capitalize on the positive results its new ventures bring.

What ultimately propels *Soul Survivor* into my permanent collection is the soloing. This album's lead work is not only its saving grace, but its symbol of quality. Songs that I don't like get a listen nonetheless because of the solos. *Soul Survivor*'s highlight is the last two minutes of the closer, "Dragonman," with its floating guitar harmonies and atmosphere that strike a



dagger through my heart. It is pure ecstacy, I never want it to end!

Unfortunately this album is not recommended to most. The core music gets silly, and **Gorefest** appears to have not yet completed its metamorphosis. Don't lose hope, because there are many unsuspecting out there like me who will be swept in without even knowing it. 3/4

Heavenshore

Between Human and Divine

1996 Repulse Records

With a name like **Heavenshore** and a CD cover painting of waves coming a' crashing down, this band sets you up for melancholic doom. Well, when the music starts, and this awful I'm-a-drugged-gerbil-for-a-narrator voice starts speaking about who knows what, you crap your pants thinking all four songs are going to be like this, and then a strain of black metal kicks in, the gerbil is gone, and you've just ruined *another* pair of boxers. Don't you hate that?

Another minute black metal band, the duo of Miguel and Fernando comes complete with bumble bee guitars, atmospheric keyboards (as opposed to brutal keyboards), and the all too common drum programming. Also, someone we'll call "Alicia" does the female vocals, but sources tell me it's just Miguel on helium.

Speaking of Miguel, his guitar style is influenced by the classic metallers of old and the black metallers of today, but the poor production makes it sound as if he's playing an electric razor! The middle oddity of "Heavenshore" thoroughly proves the point. Another time, amidst the background acoustic guitar or piano, he plays a solo but seems to have forgotten the metronome and loses his place enough to be in sync when it ends. Way to go!

Fernando saves the day, though, with one-dimensional rasps and boring narrations. Yes! All in all, this is a four song demo from a band that needs to listen to its own music before releasing it -- some parts, like the rasp/piano duet, just don't work -- and let time mature its abilities. 1/4

Helheim

Fenris

1996 Necropolis Records

This CD is touted by Necropolis as being controversial, industrialized black metal. Bah! Perhaps the only controversial element about this band is how they are giving the aforementioned label a bad name. Listening to them gives me a headache due to the incessantly repetitive and infantile guitar progressions, lackluster "industrialized" samples, and annoying groan/screams the lead singer emits at random intervals. At least **Samael** *knows* how to use a drum machine....I don't need to tell you to avoid these fellows like Bible-toting Jehovah's Witnesses. I'd rather be listening to **Nine Inch Nails**. 1/2

-T.J.

Hemdale/Exhumed

In the Name of Gore

1996 Visceral Productions

A brutality fiend's wet dream, this split is twenty-four songs from eight sick, sick minds. Among others, **Hemdale** offers "Bathing in Mucus and Bile" and "Licking Mental Patients' Cum off the Sheets," while **Exhumed** serves up "Bone Fucker" and "Disinterred, Digested, and Debauched." Yum!





I prefer **Hemdale**'s contribution over **Exhumed**'s rather generic, straight forward death metal with an **Incantation** feel. After a totally cheesy demo that the world raved over, **Hemdale** has come back with a good batch of new songs. Each has a driving force powered by chunky guitar riffs that are aided by thick production and mainman Craig Rowe's upbeat drumming. He leads the band the way King Fowley of **Deceased** does, making **Hemdale** a brutal band that's actually worth following.

A straight listen through either set is tough because both suffer from Same Song Syndrome, but both have some great ones, like **Hemdale**'s crushingly catchy "Curse the Gods" and **Exhumed**'s "The Naked and the Dead." Some humorous sound bites from *Confessions of a Serial Killer* help to lighten up **Hemdale**'s set, and I rarely stick around for the second half of the disc and **Exhumed**'s predictable batch. Oh yeah, beware of the sick cover!! **Hemdale**: 1/2 **Exhumed**: 1/2

Hetsheads

We Hail the Possessed...

1994 Repulse Records

Possessing the dirty Swedish sound of old that I really get into, **Hetsheads** holds an unheralded place in death metal history. Despite the fact that *We Hail the Possessed...* was recorded in 1991 and it isn't as brilliant as **Dark Tranquility**'s 1993 debut, *Skydancer*, it holds a timeless quality nonetheless. The constantly uptempo, churning songs are very catchy and go great with a casual evening on the porch with gramps.

Despite slight song similarities and a worthless tune like "Remonstrating the Preserver," this is the perfect remedy for those who have the **Entombed** blues. A cure for those yearning for the crusty sound that Sweden created, made famous, and exploited until a new direction had to be sought because someone traded his roots for a comic book. Oh well, cherish this piece of history, won't you? 3/4

Human Remains

Using Sickness as a Hero

1996 Relapse Records

An original, wacky, quirky band from New Jersey, **Human Remains** did the natural thing of breaking up. Luckily a few of the members have once again raised the flag in **The Sky is Denied**. *Using Sickness as a Hero* is only seven songs and totals less than twenty minutes, but the music is packed with enough ferocity and memorable moments to make it a worthy purchase.

While the winy vocals and shrieks of passion stand out, it's really the band's use of tempo changes that accentuates the rabid songs. They come abruptly and leave a quirky sound structures in their wake. My internal "Odd-O-Meter" was flashing a bright red throughout the whole CD. This is an experience fans of wild, unadulterated metal madness will find most pleasurable. 1/2

Hypocrisy

Abducted

1996 Nuclear Blast Records

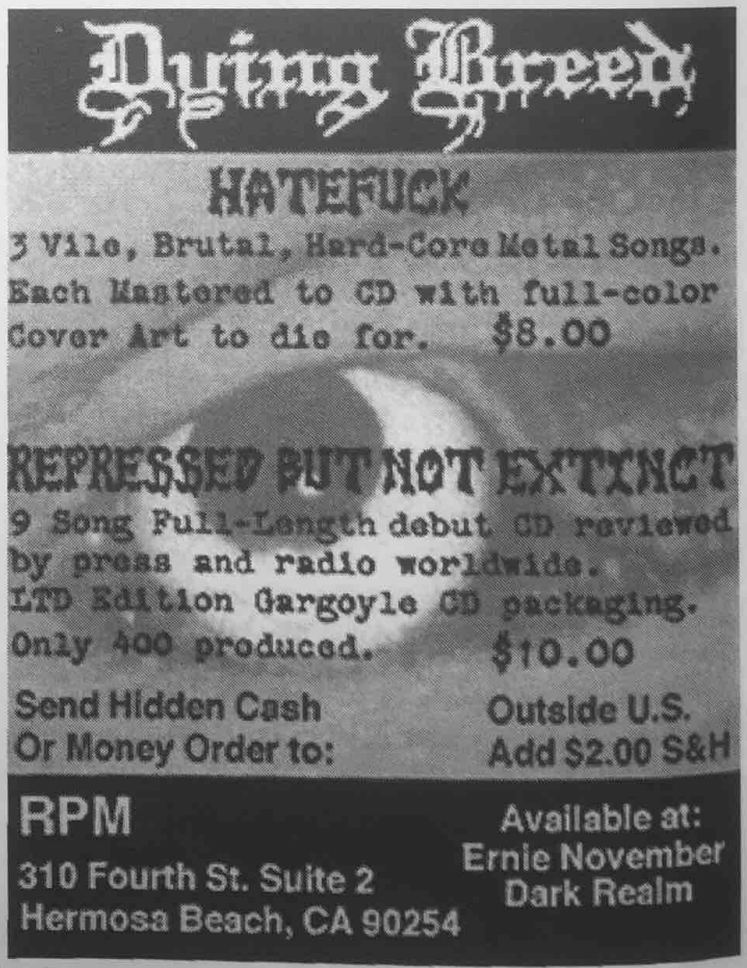
With the ability to branch off like **Gorefest**, **Hypocrisy** went from **Deicide** immitator to original powerhouse with 1994's *The Fourth Dimension*. The poor sound quality that cast a shadow upon that release has been bettered by *Abducted*.

Sure, it's classic **Hypocrisy**, but the band has progressed and is able to make its slower songs its best. "Paradox" and "When the Candle Fades" are fine examples of this, but fans of the fast stuff need not fear, for "Killing Art" and "Abducted" are here!

Another thing that makes *Abducted* fun to listen to is how enjoyable each song is. You may not like a part here, but ten seconds later another section kicks in and you're loving it. Part two of "The Arrival of the Demons" is just what it should've been, and the three experimental pieces that close out the album aren't as bad as everyone says. "Reflections" isn't really anything special, but the **Pink Floyd**-ish "Slippin' Away" and "Drained" are pretty cool.

The less abrasive style with which **Hypocrisy** now plays is a welcome change, but it'd sure be great to hear *The Fourth Dimension* with a good production. (Hint, hint!) 3/4

Immolation



Stepping on Angels...Before Dawn
1995 Repulse Records

Before **Immolation** hit the big time, being signed to both Roadrunner and Metal Blade this decade, it released demos under the current monicker and **Rigor Mortis**. Having been around about ten years, the band had lots of unreleased material to let all of its fans hear.

This CD's sixteen songs consist of a few demos and five live recordings. The progress of the band is well-demonstrated, so big fans of **Immolation** should eat this up. Personally, I've never been a fan and find most of the songs, especially the live tracks, boring. The best parts come from the early demos, when the band was into thrash and relied upon simple rhythms.

Once again, **Immolation** fans will enjoy this, but the rest of us would be better off picking up *Here in After* or *Dawn of Possession*. 1/4



Imprecation

Theurgia Goetia Summa
1995 Repulse Records

Graced with a childishly Satanic version of the Last Supper for a cover, complete with full moon, evil symbols, and demons, this collection of **Imprecation**'s material immmediately scares you like...like finding out your band sucks! Maybe it's just that these recordings are from up to three years ago and the band was still forging a path. Or maybe this Texas trio has a bit of **Absu** fever -- no, the band is more deathly, like **Infester**, which tried to play like **Katatlysm** *and* be diploma-font evil at the same time. An impossible task.

Guitarist Wes Weaver has a likeable picking style, and is most discernable when the song's tempo isn't blazing and demon-invoker Mark Beecher isn't growling like an octopus. (That is, of course, if octopi growl. I tend to think they're more likely to be Nordic shriekers than NY woofers, but you never can be sure). Repetition and just-above-demo-quality sound hinder *Theurgia Goetia Summa* from standing out, and wild man Ruben Elizondo's drumming is like techno with its predictable patterns, not that techno's bad when you're at a club dancing with a girl and she doesn't have an excuse to leave because the music never stops! Mortal Kombat! 3/4

In Memory of Celtic Frost

1996 Dwell Records

Although **Celtic Frost** came before my time, I know it is a band that deserves credit for influencing many prominent metal acts of today. So, while I may not enjoy the band's music per se, I appreciate its seminal influence.

Relapse Records recording artist **Morgion** starts things off with "Innocence and Wrath/The Usurper," and the thick, heavy production modernizes it. Pretty catchy, the song is one of the best on the album. 1/2

Enslaved stinks things up with "Procreation (of the Wicked)," which is boring and repetitive. It sounds just like it may have been the original, and I don't really go for that old stuff. 1/4

Reforming to play one last song, Canada's **Slaughter** presents "Dethroned Emporer," complete with "oohs" and "yeahs." Just another mid-paced sleeper of a song. 1/4

Also reformed, **Mayhem** got things back in order after Euronymous's death and recorded "Visual Aggression" in 1995. Black metal with the old feel you'd expect, the song is better than the previous two but lacks enough hooks to deem itself worthy of multiple listens. 3/4

Inner Thought, featuring former **Slaughter** guitarist Bobby Sadzak, graces our ears with "Morbid Tales," a song notable because of its odd sounding drum programming. The rest of the music is pretty good, with crunchy guitars and a low growl ala **Macabre** rounding things out. A nice break from the garbage, don't ya think?

Taking a heavy approach while staying true to the original, **Sadistic Intent** belts out "Return to the Eve." It sounds a lot like **Scepter**'s whole *Up Thy Ass* demo, and has the repetitive nature of all of the songs on this album. Still, well executed. 1/4

The godawful **Cianide** brings us the snailcrawl "Dawn of Meggido." Big deal. This band has always had a knack for playing crap, so why should doing a cover be any different? Really cloudy production furthers the torture, and by this time you begin to wonder when the bands who took positive influence from **Celtic Frost** are going to show up.

The disbanded **Divine Eve** presents vintage **C.F.** on "Visions of Mortality" with its raspy low vocals and simple guitar riff. Sorry, I just can't appreciate this old stuff! Plus, it's damn boring.

One of the more seemingly promising bands on the tape, **Grave**, rounds off side one with "Mesmerized." So fitting that Jorgen would then try to actually sing, his voice really a my-pet-gerbil-died whine. The '80s pop influences show through on this song, and I was anything but mesmerized. More like comatose.

Featuring Tom G. Warrior himself, **Apollyon's Sun** presents the lengthy, almost atmospheric "Babylon Fell." The song sounds pretty modern due to either the crunchy guitars or Warrior's knowledge of the song and ability to alter it accordingly.

Sticking more to the original than **Obituary** did a few years back, **Opeth** plays an energetic "Circle of the Tyrants." A pretty raw song, it has a catchy riff that keeps the listener's attention almost the entire time! Wowsers! 1/4

Endless ambiance is **Closedown**'s claim to shame, and "Danse Macabre" is prehaps the worst "song" on the album. Nothing eerie is created by this track, unless you call sleep eerie.

An amusing cover of "Massacra" comes from Norway's scary boys **Emperor**. A cool drum beat keeps the song going, but when listening, I often think of how much better **The Abyss**'s version of this is. Still, it's better than **Closedown**!

Finally we have "Triumph of Death" from **13**, a band featuring Alicia Morgan, former editor of *Metal Maniacs*. This endless crawlfest is shameful, therefore an appropriate way to end one of the worst compilations of all time. No wonder Tom G. Warrior himself hates the "tribute." This album is more like putting another six feet of dirt on the long dead band. 1/2

So, there you have it, plenty of reasons why not to buy this. And unless you're in some cheesy Midwestern band, the message has gotten through.

Internal Bleeding

Voracious Contempt
1995 Pavement Music

After a long, exhaustive search that has taken over fifteen years, it has been found: THE worst death metal album of all time! You ask how it can be the worst when bands like **Organic Infest** and **Darkness Enshroud** continue to strut their junk, but were these bands offered huge distribution by BMG? Were all the years of hard work in the underground going to pay off for them? Not for them, but it was for favorite **Internal Bleeding**, and the band choked!

Everything about this mass marketed debut is absolute garbage, the worst being the abominable Helen Keller production. All of the instruments are crammed together, kind of like if six people were to use



the same parachute at once. And if your feelings are hurt by the guitar sound, which is essentially background static, then cover your ears before Frank Rini starts talking to you in a salivated whisper! It's the final insult! Actually, it's not. The entire package, viewed from scientifically measured angles, is what should punch you in the balls and give you that nauseated feeling that only a racking or an **Internal Bleeding** can give.

Besides the "moshable" crap riffs that crawl along like brutal moshing turtles and are "contrasted" by the occasional jog or fast beat, the silly comic-style cover portays a gun about to unleash upon some cringing shirtless guy. Makes sense!

All in all, you'll be asleep by the third song or will have already died laughing at the titles of the songs you had to look forward to. Some brutal masterpieces of adjective-enhanced actions are "Inhuman Suffering," "Despoilment of Rotting Flesh," and "Gutted Human Sacrifice." This brutal disc gets the brutal mosh stomp of disapproval from my brutal boots, muthafucka!

Konkhra

Spit or Swallow
1995 Progress Records

What a great album! So many bands try to become stars with just riffs and speed, but as Progress's motto states, "Strong will survive," and **Konkhra** is strong! **Konkhra** is one of the few bands that truly crushes and doesn't resort to keyboards to attract fans.

As predicted in last issue's review of *Sexual Affective Disorder*, great things lay just over the horizon for this Danish quartet. And unlike many bands that eternally border on a breakthrough, **Konkhra** delivers with addictive riffs, well-produced vocals, and a good dose of speed. The raw guitars intertwine with the drums like the fingers of praying hands, all pounding with accuracy and fury. *Spit or Swallow* fires you up and makes you want to be a monkey and swing around and eat bananas and hang upside down! SO GOOD!!!!

Songs like the title track, "Facelift," and "Subconscience" drill you with inventive techniques usually not found within this simplistic genre, but then again, that's why **Konkhra** leads the pack. The solos mix things up while the drums simply gut you with their vitality and power. *Spit or Swallow* is triumph for the heavier side of heavy music and shall be heralded from this day forth!

Life of Agony

Ugly
1995 Roadrunner Records

An album that has been looked upon scornfully by many a reviewer, *Ugly* is perhaps one of the most emotionally touching albums of recent years. It's a shame others feel that because **Life of Agony** didn't stay with the more traditional hardcore that garnered the band success, its new direction should plainly be written off. Maybe because I didn't like these guys to begin with, I now appreciate their music.

The songs revolve around the emotional instability of the lyricists, singer Keith Caputo and bassist Alan Robert, from the unexplained death of a parent to the confusion of everyday life. Solid music backs up Caputo as he soulfully sings his lines.


Photo: Michael Wang

An album I didn't expect to like, **Life of Agony**'s *Ugly* has touched me and will remain in my collection for years to come. 🖙🖙🖙🖙

MALEVOLENT CREATION

Joe Black
1996 Pavement Music

Flying high after the successful comeback album *Eternal*, **Malevolent Creation** has released a limited edition collection of tunes that date from the band's demo days of 1990 through the present. The full-length *Joe Black* opens with three unreleased tracks from 1995's *Eternal* sessions, and these ultra-tight, speedy monsters are ferocious and addictive. Techno remixes of *Eternal*'s "No Salvation," "To Kill," and "Tasteful Agony" are a big surprise at first, but turn out to be way better than the chop job **Pantera** got on its *Hostile Mixes* EP. Why these pass with flying colors relates to the nature of re-mixing songs. The band's death metal wall of sound is taken apart brick by brick, making each instrument stand out on its own. **Malevolent Creation** has a top notch guitar duo and drummer, and all shine on the remixes.

Pre-*Stillborn* "Genetic Affliction" and **Slayer**'s "Raining Blood" display departed Brett Hoffman's voice as it sounded in the end, and the songs are pretty lame. Demo versions of "Remnants of Withered Decay" and "Impaled Existence" from the classic *The Ten Commandments* are pretty much what you'd expect, raw versions of the songs we already know and love.

As you can see, this is only a good buy if you want to hear the techno re-mixes and the unreleased stuff, because the latter portion of the album is nothing to clamor about. 🖙🖙🖙 1/2

Malformed Earthborn

Defiance of the Ugly by the Merely Repulsive
1995 Relapse Records

Disclaimer: I am one who does not enjoy the repetition of annoying sounds nor experimentation with noise, so keep that in mind while reading the following "constructive" criticism.

If I had ten hands, I'd give this ten thumbs down. If I had ten copies of this CD, I could have one hell of a frisbee game. Yet another side project with a guy from **Napalm Death** (this time it's Shane Embury), also involved is **Brutal Truth**'s Danny Lilker, who's been involved in numerous projects, from **Nuclear Assault** to **Exit-13** to **Satan's Bake Sale**. It would be wise *not* to put this album on their respective resumés, as it is perhaps one of the worst and most pointless recordings of all time.

Malformed Earthborn is a spawn of tour free time, and the boredom is quite evident. Lots of grating noise, occasional beats, and the all too generic sound clips make this hunk of junk completely worthless. I swear I will never listen to this again, and from the highest mountain I do shout: *When I get hungry, I munch on an ear of corn, and once it's digested, out comes* ***Malformed Earthborn****!* Highly recommended to the deaf.

Manticore

Integrating the Extreme
1995 Warhead Records

From start to finish, **Manticore** comes at you with full force, bringing along the way innovative ideas and precise technique a la **Konkhra**. The playing of thrashy music with heavy production and multiple death vocals is not one of the most untravelled paths these days, but virtually unknown **Manticore** is achieving not only national, but also worldwide success due to its musical professionalism and downright awesome songs.



A couple of riffs here and there are recognizable, and the cover of **Slayer**'s "Raining Blood" takes a while to adjust to, but these negatives are miniscuoule. They don't matter because *Integrating the Extreme* just rocks. Not like some LA "balls" band, but like a musical powerhouse ready to take on the world and kick its arse (what a great word!). That's **Manticore**.

Because the album is an addictive energy force, the catchy songs cause the listener to willingly overdose time and time again. Peter Philpot's great drumming style is reminiscent of fellow Aussie **Mortification** on its self-titled album. That, along with crunchy, brooding riffs that bite you with their vibrance, helps to make **Manticore** great. Bottom line, everything here works. Solid and consistent, **Manticore** won't let you down, bringing forth a potent blend of anger and power. 🖙🖙🖙🖙 1/2

Mass Psychosis

Face
1995 Koch International

The thirteen songs on this CD were recorded from 1991-94, and all demonstrate superb technical skills rarely found in a death metal band these days. I've had *Face* for a while, and the best I can describe it is as the



soundtrack for a large escape from a mental institution. While listening to this, I picture crazed men in white uniforms charging through the forest, yelping and clenching their fists. "We must get *Face*!" they shout.

A handful of wild voices scream and growl at you like madmen as the music goes from jog to sprint on a dime. Definitely not for the close-minded, **Mass Psychosis** is at times a challenging listen, but the band's songs are so ahead of their time that one wonders what more recent and mature material is like. The just released *Necroporno* will answer that question, and is available for $10 worldwide. 🖙🖙🖙 1/2

$12 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 267
Keyport, NJ 07755

Medusa Oblongada

Self-titled
1995 Megalithic Records

A highly original group, **Medusa Oblongada** layers its dirty brand of metal with multiple voices, sounds, and pretty much whatever else there is to hear. Luckily for us metal fans, the industrial aspect is not too prevalent, and this seven song CD is pretty darn impressive.

Formerly **Viogression**, this band can go from acoustic melodies to distorted screeches in the same song and make it work. Those almost ballads, "Bitter" and "Cancer/Sunshine," are the best of the disc, though the almost funky "Oddhead" shows that **M.O.** has cards from multiple decks up its sleeve. The simplistic closer, "Worms," also has its moments that show **M.O.**'s strength as an emerging metal band.


Photo: Marc Kennard

While this album may not be for all people nor all times, it takes a new outlook on metal, blazing a new path most properly called "emodustrial." Something like that. 🖙🖙🖙 1/2

Update! The band's label, Megalithic, went under. Direct all correspondence to the band itself at:
P.O. Box 37055
Milwaukee, WI 53237-0055

MINDROT

Dawning
1995 Relapse Records

Fully grasping the concept of writing complete songs, underground favorite **Mindrot** has put out a diverse, melancholic album full of suprises. The band is aware that songs are meant to be fully listened to and appreciated, and does not doubt itself when it comes to writing lengthy ones.

Dawning could be called a heavy metal symphony, exploring emotions via multiple guitar styles. Each member of the quintet capably executes his job, from Evan Kilbourne's drumming that refuses to be lazy in slow parts, to the multiple voices that fit each mood. Albums like this are so full of different elements that verbal reviews do not do them proper justice. They must be aurally experienced.

Songs like "Withersoul" and "Anguish" are in themselves adventures, going from fury to passion and everything in between. What's also interesting is that **Mindrot** manages to due all this without incorporating violins or choirs, pointing out that American doom bands can do it just as well as their European genremates without copying their style. In your face, Lord Sack of Scariness! 🖙🖙🖙🖙

Moonspell

Irreligious
1996 Century Media

Having burst upon the world with its 1995 full-length debut, *Wolfheart*, **Moonspell** wastes no time in releasing another masterpiece. *Irreligious* shows how the band has matured and now writes complete songs from start to finish.



More gothic than before, **Moonspell** is also aided by crisper production and better songwriting skills. The great songs are also a help! Songs like "Opium" and "For a Taste of Eternity" are led by memorable guitars, and the album itself is led by Langsuyar's trademark "Monster Mash" vocals.

These days, it's commonplace for a Century Media band to be of high caliber, and **Moonspell** is no exception. The eleven songs on *Irreligious* each have a personality, making for a soothing listening experience that does not in any way induce boredom. A solid album on a label that appears to be safe; nowadays, it's hard to waste your money on a Century Media band. 1/4

Mortification

Blood World
1994 Intense Records

I picked this up for five bucks at a pawn shop, and isn't it interesting how you can always find Christian Metal CDs at pawn shops? Another one I used to visit had tons, including **Living Sacrifice**, **Believer**, and **Mortification**'s *Scrolls of the Megilloth*. No kidding!

Anyway, the band has matured, meaning it doesn't kick your ass with the awesome death metal the way it once did. Perhaps the only really good Christian death metal band ever (anyone care to prove me wrong?), **Mortification** now has a cleaner sound and Steve Rowe chooses not to growl much, instead opting for his high-pitched, urgent grunt/whine.

The new music is pretty good, take "Symbiosis" for example, but some of the really heavy parts come off as weak. Plus, some songs are just boring, simply played so the lyrics can be sung, like on "Love Song." I can't say I don't like the new, technical approach **Mortification** has taken, but sometimes it doesn't hold me like the blazing *Mortification*. Man, is that good!

Then again, once a **Mortification**, always a **Mortification**. That fact is proved so eloquently by the short ditties that always get squeezed on the band's albums. This time we've got "J.G.S.H.," which stands for "Jesus Grind Satan's Head." While the band's musical quality may have somewhat diminished, its lyrical genius shall never fade! 1/4

Nailbomb

Proud to Commit Commercial Suicide
1995 Roadrunner Records

Showing what great guys of integrity they are by breaking up, **Sepultura**'s Max Cavalera and **Fudge Tunnel**'s Alex Newport are really just cashing in by saying they're not going to cash in. These assholes make a spectacle of their side project being just a side project! To release an album full of live tracks from the band's debut, *Point Blank*, then title it as they did, is nothing *but* a commercial sellout!

Nailbomb sucks to begin with, and hearing live versions of its crap songs creates this uncontrollable urge to press 'stop'. The two new studio songs on the album combine **Sepultura** guitars with the hip-hop drumming many Earache Records bands are "choosing" to use these days. I say "choosing" because the bands can choose to change and be like the purveyor of all things worthless and shitty, **Scorn**, or get dropped, like our buddies **Brutal Truth** and **Bolt Thrower**. Now who's got the integrity?! 1/4 Proud to trash this album.



N.D.E.

Falling
1996

With boosted confidence after playing shows with big name bands like **Cannibal Corpse**, **Napalm Death**, and **The Misfits**, the members of **N.D.E.** (Near Death Experience) saw no reason to wait for a label and produced their own full-length CD. The package itself is professional and has an eerie concept; on the cover sits a depressed guy, and under the CD is what he looks after shooting himself. Just one of those Kodak moments to let your true colors shine through.

Admittedly incorporating groove into the music, **N.D.E.** manages not to fall into traps by pounding home lots of strong speed and grind passages. Oddly, **Souls at Zero** also seems to be an influence, as evidenced in the mid-paced "I Don't Give a Fuck." **Ultrahead**, **Mortification**, and **Pantera** voices follow a **Korn** lyrical approach and further characterize **N.D.E.**'s style. In doing so, Bob Reinard and his angry shouts really sell each song as he reaches deep down to belt out his lines. Behind him, well-distorted guitars churn out catchy, upbeat riffs that absolutely rage on songs like "Try" and "Leech."



What really drives *Falling* home is the splendid guitar work of Reinard and Chris Longo. Their great dirty sound is backed by memorable riffs that refuse to let up. Of all the bands that are incorporating groove and hardcore with grind and death these days, **N.D.E.** is one of the elite. 3/4

$8 + $1 US/$2 world to:
P.O. Box 2297
Streetsboro, OH 44241

Neurosis

Through Silver in Blood
1996 Relapse Records

A CD I hated the second I popped it in, the new **Neurosis** album finally got a decent listen from me as I spent a couple of hours on the computer. I no longer hate this with my guts, nor is it destined to get much play in my stereo. It is too ambient for me, but not as bad as that "emo" shit that you see advertised in all of those free newspapers. This is harsh, **Acid Bath**-ish hate noise and it hurts!

How to explain this lengthy piece of work? Take **Eyehategod**, add sound excerpts, tribal drums, bagpipes, and pretty much anything you'd put in a blender, and you've got **Neurosis**. *Through Silver in Blood* is an experience that trudges through the listener's head, repeatedly hitting him on the head with Captain Caveman's club.

The band's hardcore roots have stemmed into flowers, they accepted the contributions of many insects, then a new plant was born with a whole new perspective to show the world. That organism is **Neurosis**. 1/2

NIDEN Div. 187

Towards Judgement
1996 Necropolis Records

It took me about twenty seconds to make my official judgemnt about this worthless side project band: It's as enjoyable as drinking liquid light bulbs. Seriously, how many crap black metal bands are going to be signed? Just because the singer from **Dawn** is in **NIDEN Div. 187**, does that mean every project he's in will be good?

This four song, twenty minute CD blazes from start to finish with the numbing power of **Baltak**. Most likely you'll turn it off well before it's run its course. Plain and simple, don't waste your time on this crap because you really don't have to. I, devoted to you, suffered the consequences of pressing 'play'. I am your Jesus! 1/4

Nightfall

Athenian Echoes
Holy Records

Nightfall's latest opus, *Athenian Echoes*, combines elements of melodic doom metal, war metal madness a la **Bolt Thrower**, and eclectic Grecian keyboarding in the same vein as countrymates **Septic Flesh**. If this doesn't narrow down their sound enough, I suppose they play "avant-garde doom with an attitude."

After the first listen I wasn't too thrilled, but after playing the CD again and again, the songs grew on me as I picked up on the differently layered textures. The opener "Aye Azure," starts off with a hauntingly symphonic keyboard attack complemented by tight guitar riffing, and the rest of the album continues in the same fashion, combining baroque arias over a churning yet seemingly endless sea of downpicking. Tracks 2 and 6 are my faves; "Armanda" begins with a positively upbeat guitar solo which then jumps into a full-fledged battle-hymn, then back into a skip-paced lick to finish the track off. "Iris (and the Burning Aureole)" is structured over a simple two-note progression that entrances you throughout the whole song, proving that these guys can be technical yet still creatively catchy.

Lyrically, **Nightfall** focuses on obscure erotica and tormented romantic pieces, perhaps drawing a poetic influence here from **My Dying Bride**. *Athenian Echoes* is not without criticism, however. On a downnote, the vocals are generic, and with only minimal variation. Sometimes they switch from growling to whispering, the latter done very weakly. Also, what the vocalist sings is completely different than what's printed on the lyric sheet, which is a letdown.

Overall, though, this is an intelligently composed, focused album which shows **Nightfall** carving their name into the diverse genre-tree of metal. Very promising.
-T.J.

Obsecration

The Inheritors of Pain
1996 Hammerheart Records

After a two year hiatus due to military service, seven-year-old **Obsecration** was immediately signed to Hammerheart Records of the Netherlands. The band plays speedy, technical death metal with an old **Atrocity** feel. Other influences help give a doomy feel, including rationed keyboards and a number of nice, melodic instrumentals.

Obsecration still is not a premier act due to its awkward melodies and gruff, out-of-place vocals. However, the band has a lot of potential and will impress many with its heavy, but melodic metal. It certainly won't be a surprise if the band becomes successful, because diverse guitar talents and maturing songwriting skills like this ought not to go ignored. 1/2

Write to the band at:
Logaras John
119 Dikearchou Str.
162-32 Byron
Athens, Greece

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Old Grandad

Vol. 666

1995 Digest the Hellspawn Records

Truly one of the great surprises of recent memory, **Old Grandad** is a lungfull of fresh air which the whole heavy music spectrum should inhale. The band's "brutal bluesy metal blasphemy" is well done, with the songs incorporating cow-size tongue in cheek humor into the mix. More than five different voices scream, growl, sing, and wail about alcohol, drugs, Satan, and other kindergarten topics. "Don't Call me a Deadhead" mercilessly mocks Jerry Garcia worshippers while the singer proclaims he's a pothead -- a wild ride indeed.

Musically, **Old Grandad** tends to keep 3/4 pace, with the occasional speed section, and for the most part, is fairly simple. What sets *Vol. 666* apart from so many others is the superior song arrangements, with their effective layering of both vocals and instruments. A solid performance is delivered throughout the fourteen song, forty-nine minute moody crusade of perverse humor. One minute they're screaming about Satan and crack, the next a **Monty Python** clip is playing! This is one of my ten favorites of the past year and I see no reason why you shouldn't pick up this genre-ignoring debut. 4 1/4

$8 US/$11 world to:
Digest the Hellspawn Records
41 Sutter St.
Suite 1315
San Francisco, CA 94104
or
Visit the **Old Grandad** website:
http://www.inreach.com/grandad

OPPRESSOR

European Oppression Live + As Blood Flows

1995 Megalithic

I hailed the band's brutal Red Light Records debut, *Solstice of Oppression*, in Sloth's debut. Well, as Sloth has grown and matured...gag! I simply got tired of the album because the influx of "brutal death" that came through the mail slot overloaded me until it was all one big, scary blast beat.

Anyway, this wonderful trashcan decoration piece features five live tracks from **Oppressor**'s 1995 European tour, a ridiculous cover of **Mötley Crüe**'s "Looks that Kill," and the old demo that brought the band into the public spotlight. The complete lack of crowd involvement makes the live songs sound like poor studio takes, which doesn't really matter because they're all so boring anyway. The singer casually blurts out generic woofs, obviously focusing more on his instrument than firing up the crowd. The **Mötley Crüe** song is turned into a death metal atrocity, and as the listener shuts off the CD even before listening to the last handful of unmemorable tracks, he chuckles and says to himself, "**Oppressor** sucks." 2

Orphanage

Oblivion

1995 Displeased Records

Touted by Displeased Records as innovative Celtic-Gregorian doom metal, **Orphanage** are nothing more than **Pantera** slowed down a bit, with sporadic keyboards thrown in for good measure. They are more of a disgrace to the doom-metal genre than anything else, and should be avoided.

Oblivion starts off nicely but goes downhill from there. The first cut, "Chameleon," is by far the best track on the whole album due to its catchy riffs, memorable chorus, and simplistic, but well-executed leads. George Oosthoek does a wonderful job of matching the intensity of the vocals with the jog-paced rhythm set by the guitars. Track 2 is also pleasant, mixing somber female vocals with a sluggish beat and a touch of keyboards.

Every other song on the album had me wondering, "What's the point?" Sadly, there is not one riff that got me hooked, one solo that stood out, nor even a memorable atmosphere provided by the keyboardist on the final seven tracks. **Orphanage** attempts to try their hand at avant-garde, progressive doom on songs such as "The Collector" and "Victim of Fear," but manage to humiliate themselves instead. I found myself shaking my head and reaching for **Anathema** when I was finished (thank God!) listening to this work of amateurity. Save yourself the 20 dollars, and buy yourself a decent import instead. 2
-T.J.

Pan-Thy-Monium

Khaooohs and Kon-fus-ion

1996 Relapse Records

The third and final chapter from a band featuring **Edge of Sanity**'s Dan Swano and Benny Larsson, **Pan-Thy-Monium** is the kind of side project that has gained reknown similar to **Down**. This four track effort -- two songs combining for nearly thirty minutes, a five minute atmospheric instrumental, and a minute of silence in remembrance of the god Raagoonshinnaah, which the band invented and based the project around -- is a musical triumph, no doubt about it.

The laid back feel of the two real songs, "The Battle of Geeheeb" and "Thee-Pherenth," is due to their overall lack of speed and cool, smooth production. The very deep vocals of Robert Karlsson are quite an interesting contrast to some of the music, considering there's plenty of soloing and a saxophone. A saxophone? That's right, you've got some flowing death metal going and boom! A sax! It turns out to be a really neat inclusion, and some of the craziness that ensues at songs' ends are assisted by the fluttering, bird-like sounds coming from it.

What really makes *Khaooohs & Kon-fus-ion* so fun is the "never look back approach" it takes. Lack of repetition helps to keep the music fresh, and the keyboard instrumental that closes the festivities is pleasant. An essential purchase, **Pan-Thy-Monium**'s swan song will hardly be forgotten. 2 1/2

Perpetua

Irrational

1996 Pavement Music

Add two cups of **Sepultura** and **Fear Factory**, drop in touches of grind and industrial, and you've got **Perpetua**. So you'd think, but this new band from Argentina has just enough tricks up its sleeve to avoid being cliché.

Besides incorporating lots of odd sounds that go bump in the night, like clanking and tribal drums, **Perpetua**'s music churns along with consistently upbeat tempos that neither of the aforementioned influences use exclusively. One problem with *Irrational*, however, is that it has twelve tracks. Listening all the way through can numb your mind and makes everything to sound the same, and really good songs like the title track and "Old Plague Revives" end up suffering.

A promising young band, **Perpetua** should improve with time, and having a sizable label's support in Pavement has got to feel good. Good enough in fact to begin the last song with about five minutes of some guy yelling into a trashcan! Has success gone to the these guys' heads even before their first album came out?!? That's confidence, baby. 2 1/4

Phlebotomized

Immense Intense Suspense

1994 Cyber Music

After hearing great things about a band, isn't it a thrill when you go out and spend your money on the CD and your expectations are met? Well, that's what happened with me, and *Immense Intense Suspense* is worth every cent I paid for it. The seven member **Phlebotomized** commands the listener's attention for the entire album, incorporating violins, acoustic guitars, and keyboards with the crushing main instruments that pummel like **Illdisposed**'s *Four Depressive Seasons*.

Having become quite a fan of the violin and its use in metal music, I am always impressed by bands such as this, **Celestial Season**, and the rising **Seraph**. To be able to mesh distored guitars and pounding drums with the beautiful violin is no easy task, and when it's done well, words fail to describe my bliss.

The core death metal that leads the way for **Phlebotomized** is solid and inventive itself, and by allowing diversity within the songs, enables the whole group to stick out. There is singing, there is growling, and there are duets with acoustic guitars and violins, but the best of all occurs when a trio of violin notes competes with the pounding drums, bass, and guitars. Wow! It is plain as day, **Phlebotomized** is a great band with which you should, and can, get aquainted. 2 2 2 2 2

Possession

Eternally Haunt

1995

After apparently getting ripped off by Metal Merchant Records, **Possession** picked up the pieces and released its debut album independently. With ten songs and over fifty minutes of music, *Eternally Haunt* is a professional album that does not disappoint. Its diverse nature is welcome in a metal world where the trends involve gore and lipstick.



Possession's guitars take a thrashy approach, though not in the **Exodus** vein of riff upon riff, with the songs rarely sticking to one pattern for long. A handful of different vocals further enhance the music, from standard growls to high pitched screams found on many of our favorite glam albums. Nonetheless, things work well in all that **Possession** does, rendering *Eternally Haunt* better than a slew of albums released by signed bands. Highly recommended. 2 2 2 3/4

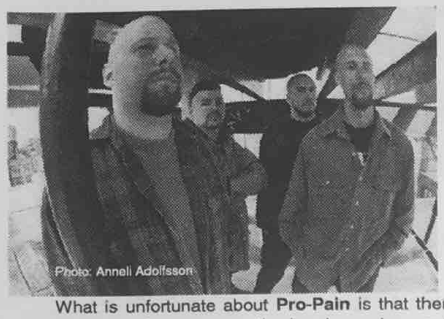
$13 US/$15 world to:
P.O. Box 3031
Olathe, KS 66063
or
Visit the **Possession** website at:
http://www.idir.net/~mholmes9/posswww2.htm

Pro-Pain

Contents Under Pressure

1996 Energy Records

Most people are familiar with **Pro-Pain**, the New York hardcore/metal band with former members of the **Crumbsuckers** and **M.O.D.** Now a quartet, the group plows through its third album pretty much like its predecessors. Hints of melody and slower tempos add diversity to the thrashy, hardcore style **Pro-Pain** is known for, and "Gunya Down" and "The Mercy Killings" utilize modern vocal variations.


Photo: Anneli Adolfsson

What is unfortunate about **Pro-Pain** is that there doesn't seem to be any more the band can do -- or is willing to do. Sure, each album has meant improved production and tighter songs, but these songs are predictable and without diversity. Unless more songs like "The Mercy Killings" pop up on future releases, **Pro-Pain** will be forgotten. 🎸🎸🎸

Quo Vadis

Forever...
1996 VomiT Productions

We all owe **Quo Vadis** a debt of gratitude. Right now we should be down on our knees and rejoicing about the release of *Forever...*, for it is an example of death metal's resilience in the face of adversity. Death metal has been taking a Rodney King style beating due to the recent influx of simply horrid bands, yet one good album such as this enables this genre's left-for-dead corpse to rise again to fight for respect one more time.

Considering the number of independent labels that are signing bands left and right, it's ironic that such a great album would come from an unsigned band. But then again, **Quo Vadis** *is* from Canada. In fact, Canadian bands such as **Quo Vadis**, **Kataklysm**, **Cryptopsy**, and newcomers like **Necrotic Mutation** and **Grudge** are single-handedly reviving the death metal scene. Here, North American brutality and European melody are successfully combined into a perfect blend of fiery, emotional, and ultimately sensational music. Neither of these two aspects is compromised, and you'd have thought **Quo Vadis** was from Sweden if it weren't for its forceful, song-driving drums and equally powerful growls and yells.

From the opening hyperspeed picking of "Legions of the Betrayed" to the alternating male growls and female vocals of "Sans Abris," the listener is immersed in a diverse world full of wild branches that stem from the band's death metal core. Plenty of competent soloing, tempo changes, and drum fills all add to the mix, and few will say they weren't impressed after just one spin of this disc. This band's incredible use of technicality, speed, and virtuous transitions truly sets **Quo Vadis** apart from the rest. A couple of short, non-metal songs that enhance the overall experience, "Mystery" and "Nocturnal Reflections," may go misunderstood by many listeners, but "Mystery"'s calm ending actually primes the listener perfectly for "Inner Capsule," a ferocious, emotionally-charged song that encompasses all of the passion that **Quo Vadis** is. Simply a classic. 🎸🎸🎸🎸🎸

$12 everywhere to:
Bart Frydrychowicz
P.O. Box 44, NDG
Montreal, Quebec
Canada H4A-3P4

Repulsive Assault

1995 Repulse Records

Repulse Records is a young label based in Madrid, Spain. I visited Spain during my summer travels and stopped by at the Repulse shop. I know some Spanish, but it wasn't enough to communicate with the guy who was running the store that day. Luckily, *Sloth*'s foreign correspondent, Alex Kauffmann, was able to translate. We got lots of Repulse goodies, including this CD and a big hug.

Repulse is a legitimate label that's got its act together. With a number of signees, it carries a wide variety of styles, and this compilation showcases some of the label's bands, as well as some independents it licenses.

Deranged starts things off with a bang on "Black Semen Vengeance." A brutal assault from Sweden, these guys incorporate American growls with both riff- and note-oriented guitars. A very fresh band, **Deranged** is a contender for the brutality throne. 🎸🎸🎸 3/4

See the review of **Adramelech** elsewhere in this section. "Heroes in Godly Blaze" appears on this compilation.

See the review of **Golgotha** elsewhere in this section. "Lonely" appears on this compilation.

See the review of **Imprecation** elsewhere in this section. "The Throne is Lost" appears on this compilation.

More of something Relapse would sign, crusty Japanese grinders **C.S.S.O** fly through "Bara Bara Man" speedily. Not very deep stuff, it's really cheesy and only has about ten seconds of noteworthy material. Oh, well. 🎸🎸 1/4

See the review of **Immolation** elsewhere in this section. "Internal Decadence" appears on this compilation.

See the review of **Avulsed** elsewhere in this section. "Powdered Flesh" from the upcoming *Eminence in Putrescence* appears on this compilation, and is slightly better than what's reviewed above, *Carnivoracity*. 🎸🎸 1/2

See the review of **Darkified** elsewhere in this section. "Sleep Forever..." appears on this compilation.

As with most of the demo bands on this CD, **Decrepit** plays brutal death. "Pathogenesis" is speedy and pretty catchy, and its drums stand out like with **Sadistic Torment**. Not groundbreaking, but short and sweet. 🎸🎸🎸 1/4

Contributed by Spain's **Haemorrhage** is "Deranged for Loathsome," complete with **Obituary** guitars and actual belches. The song is simple and midpaced, but very catchy. What the band lacks in production skills is made up by songwriting ability. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

Similar to fellow Finlanders **Sentenced**, **Godfall** takes an unimposing approach to its metal. Sure, there are the growling and distorted guitars, but technical guitars are interupted by "happy" riffs, clapping, and unimposing vocals a la **Disharmonic Orchestra**. Hearing "Watching the Foreverness" will make you a fan. 🎸🎸🎸🎸

More brutality, this time "Anger" from **Fleshgrind**'s debut demo, *Holy Pedophile*. It's similar to the band's latest, *Sorrow Breeds Hatred (Bleed on Me)*, so just go read its review, which appears in the demo section.

See the review of **Hetsheads** elsewhere in this section. "Paganization" appears on this compilation.

See the review of **Uncreation** elsewhere in this section. "Void" appears on this compilation.

See the review of **Demilich** elsewhere in this section. "Inherited Rowel Levitation - Reduced Without Any Effort" appears on this compilation.

With the chalky Swedish sound of its homeland, **Vomitory** is stale with its delivery of generic death. Besides a couple good solos, *T.S.S.*'s endless "Through Sepulchral Shadows" offers nothing worth mentioning. Average. 🎸🎸 3/4

Spain's answer to **Internal Bleeding**, **Reincarnation** is as brutal, cloudy, and fast as they come. Never mind writing a good song when you and three other guys can play and growl really fast, just go for it! Meanwhile, I'll be hocking your CD to the next bonehead. 🎸 1/2



The Reviled

Destroy...
1995 Rot'en Roll Records

A band that used to live in my area, **The Reviled** now consists solely of its founder, Texas Pete Reviled Avellone, who now lives in a trailer park in the outskirts of Charlotte, North Carolina. Just before moving, he let me in on his plans to "fuck goats, beat women, play loud music, drive monster trucks, wear a pistol out in the open, and become one with Satan." He's also recruiting new members.

To the album! *Destroy...* is really an amazing nine songs of punk/death/thrash/hardcore/hate/rock stuff that has to be heard to be believed. What helps differentiate each song are the crunchy metal guitars and the diverse vocals that range from death growl to punk yells, bringing **Skeletal Earth** to mind. The band's "D.I.Y. anti-rock" has a great sense of humor and some of the many song intros are truly amusing.

Songs like "Cathedrals," "Destroy the Reviled," and "Werewolf" incorporate exceptional soloing not found often these days, some fast beats a la **The Offspring**, and a slew of other vicious slander. Contact this insane band, trailer park or not! 🎸🎸🎸🎸

$4 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 240462
Charlotte, NC 28224

Rise

Shadow of Ruins
1996 Rise Records

One of the many do-it-yourself bands who opt to release albums through their own labels, **Rise** also opts to not suck like **Avulsion**. Playing a heavy style similar to **Jungle Rot**, **Rise** also has a Swedish feel at times.

Yes, this is more professional and technically proficient than many brutal bands, and most people will like this, but I am swamped by so much music that **Rise** just doesn't stand out as much as it really could. There are some bright moments, like on "The Vicious Icon" and "Captured in a Dream," but I can only handle small does of the album because monotony creeps in. Despite my pessimism, it's an okay album most of you non-numbed folks will enjoy. 🎸🎸🎸

$15 everywhere to:
Rise Records
c/o Rob Alaniz
P.O. Box 4414
Whittier, CA 90607

ROTTING CHRIST

Triarchy of the Lost Lovers
1996 Century Black/Century Media

The (thy?) mighty **Rotting Christ**, a respected underground band, had not graced my ears prior to this album, and how excited I was to find the new album waiting in my mailbox. (Fine, the floor. I don't have a mailbox.) *Having gone from one respectable label to another -- Unisound, Osmose, and now Century Black -- the band must be doing something right*, I thought. Now I know! The trio's brand of surface-simple, but onion-



deep, melodic metal is a multi-forked bridge that connects multiple musical styles. The raspy shout of guitarist Necromayhem (whoa!) is like that of many "impure" black metal vocalists that have decided to branch off, and the songs are all midpaced, allowing for maximum appreciation.



The phenominal music ranges from beautiful solos to speedier sections that display excellent pick control and ability. The aforementioned vocals don't overpower, permitting the music to meticulously explore. "A Dynasty from the Ice" and "The First Field of Battle" are instant classics, not to mention the seven other splendid songs. *Triarchy of the Lost Lovers* is a theory lesson on how to play modern metal to a diverse audience. No collection is complete without it. 4 1/2

Samael

Passage

1996 Century Media

Having come a long way since its debut -- the lame, slow-motion *Worship Him* that the band would probably rather forget -- **Samael** has leapt to the forefront of today's most innovative bands. With lively, mid-paced guitars and an educated use of keyboards, *Passage* is a positive step for this old band with young members (their average age is twenty-three).

While not as breathtaking or catchy as respective labelmates **Moonspell** and **Rotting Christ**, **Samael** continues to ignore the trends and forge its own path. Catchy songs and likeable vocals are the band's heart and soul, but "Angel's Decay" and "Moonskin" branch off into piano-led interludes and "The Ones" even has a techno feel, demonstrating the band's versatility and knack for change. The vocals are more spoken than actually sung, but fit well with the album's smooth vibe.

All of *Passage*'s eleven songs are carefully prepared pieces of mid-paced, progressive metal with that distinctive **Samael** touch. An excellent recording, *Passage* shows that years of hard work do pay off for those that are willing. And lucky us, we get to reap the aural benefits! 4

Sathanas

Black Earth

1996 Metal Merchant Records

Reviewed here are three tracks from the full length album: "Slaughter of the Gods," "Jaws of Satan," and "Guardian of the Abyss." There's nothing too special here, just American palm-mute metal with lots of pull-offs, accompanied by high, raspy vocals. The songs on this sampler are most likely the band's best, and with no parts of these even slightly memorable, who would put themselves through ten more songs of it! Plus, the average, demo quality production is not what album buyers want to pay full price for.

Frankly, **Sathanas** or a dozen other equally average bands could have earned a signing with Metal Merchant; this one just lucked out. 3/4

$13 US/$15 world to:
811 Tenth Ave.
New Brighton, PA 15066

Scorn

Logghi Barogghi

1996 Earache Records

This is downright shameful. It is hard to believe anyone, from Mick Harris to Earche Records, would willingly be associated with this CD. That Earache would drop actual musical groups like **Bolt Thrower** and **Brutal Truth** to make room for side project shit "bands" like this is disgraceful. Do you "underground trendies" hear me? I know the game you play, I see you cashing in your souls! Corporate bastards.

Scorn's third and final album (wipe tear away), *Logghi Barogghi*, showcases drums. Lots of "ghetto" drum beats that have a knack to be repetitive make up the album. Actually, the 70+ minute album is *only* a long drum beat, sustained and varied only when the songs change. *I want to hear the same beat for seven minutes, really!!*

An absolute piece of shit, **Scorn**'s final "contribution" is everything short of genius. This is recommended only to rappers who wish to practice "freestylin'."

Simple Aggression

Gravity

1996 Leviathan Records

The sophmore release from **Simple Aggression**, *Gravity* features the vocal talents of former **Full Circle** singer Eric Johns and smooth guitar work from Darrin McKinney and James Carr. Johns's voice is quite similar to Ronnie James Dio's, though he doesn't hit the highs as much as the former **Black Sabbath** member. Johns also sounds like **Soundgarden**'s Chris Cornell.

Much of *Gravity* sounds as if it were inspired by **Soundgarden**, especially by the song "Spoon Man." Not that this album is bad, because some of the choruses and rhythms are quite memorable, like on "Eternity: Suite." The instrumental parts are best, though, with their melodic acoustic guitars and solos. Perhaps the band would be better off just playing these instrumentals than trying to achieve success in a market that's not open to metal with an '80s feel, no matter how "modernized" it may appear to be.

Frankly, when you're in the mood, *Gravity* is a great listen. The musicianship and production are both solid, too, so it's too bad more people don't have a mind open enough to appreciate **Simple Aggression**, a band with a highly misleading name. 4 1/2

Slightly Miffed

Puzzled?

1996 Slightly Fishy Records

I met Tink, band member and official promoter, over a year ago when he was in the US. We spoke on the phone about his band, **Slightly Miffed**, and my young 'zine. We exchanged addresses in order to keep in touch, but nothing came of that. That is until I was "surfin' the net" and I stumbled upon the band's website. He hooked me up with *Puzzled?*, an independent release that's got some great booklet graphics.

It is impossible to classify **Slightly Miffed**. Its guitars are rooted in metal, and most of the selections are in fact metal, but because a whole lot of reasons, this album isn't really *heavy*. Maybe it's the crisp production, ultra-tight drum programming, or just the album's diverse nature. Maybe nothing like this has ever graced my ears. What the hell is this?!? The music is so damn good but equally as odd and I can't find the words to explain what it all sounds like. Let's try slowly. The vocals, which are handled by two people and appear in most of the songs, are usually spoken words and British yells. The aforementioed drums are adventuresome and were obviously programmed with great care. The guitars are also tight and determine where each zany song goes.

The fourteen songs on *Puzzled?* all have distinct personalities and only a couple aren't worth listening to. Such diversity -- sound effects from *Doom II* and vocals you'd expect from Hippie-era **The Beatles** -- is an asset that will benefit the band down the road as well. There's just too much here to talk about, so we'll go slowly again. **Slightly Miffed** is a very good band. Its music is very original, innovative, and progressive. It may take you a long time to comprehend this music. You should not wait a long time to hear this music. You should buy this CD so you can hear **Slightly Miffed** and get *Puzzled?*, both literally and figuratively. 4

8 pounds sterling (England)/$16 US (world) to:
P.O. Box 1017, Trowbridge
Wiltshire. BA14 8FJ
England
or
slighly@miffed.com
or
Visit the **Slightly Miffed** website at:
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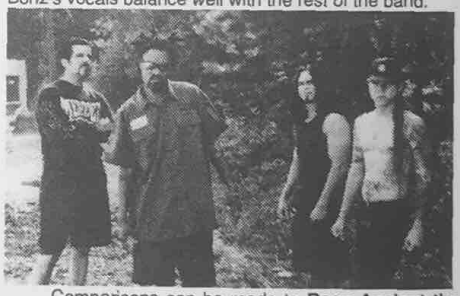
Stuck Mojo

pigwalk

1996 Century Media

The band that keeps coming back for more and more, **Stuck Mojo** has weathered non-stop tours, critics, and member changes, much to this reviewer's disbelief. The band's first album, *Snappin' Necks*, and its crossover quality did not settle too well in these ears, though some potential was evident. Now blasting ahead with the furious *pigwalk*, **Stuck Mojo** shows how much respect hard work can earn.

A problem that hindered *Snappin' Necks* was its cloudy production; it muffled the guitars and brought the vocals out too much. With the help of **Strapping Young Lad**'s Devin Townsend and **Meshuggah**'s producer Daniel Bergstrand, the problems were eliminated. The guitars now combine the best of these bands' sounds, crunching like a mouth full o' rocks, and Bonz's vocals balance well with the rest of the band.



Comparisons can be made to **Rage Against the Machine** and other well known harder acts, but the sheer ferocity of **Stuck Mojo**'s metal guitar attack blows away rigid Tom Morello and his simple, occasionally catchy riffs. Bonz's varied vocal approach, which ranges from rap to shout, is much more accessible than the whine of before and only adds to the music.

Quite a surprise, the latest **Stuck Mojo** is less crossover and more metal while still not afraid to incorporate other styles. Plus, the band's vicious attack on popular, so-called Alternative bands is both humorous and what many of us have wanted to say ourselves. "The Sermon" delivers the message, albeit tongue-in-cheek, in a prophetic way that'll have you believe. 4

THERION

Theli

1996 Nuclear Blast Records

When one forsees big things, he is willing to make sacrifices. For instance, in order to afford the cost of recording *Theli*, Markus at Nuclear Blast sold his Porche. Was it worth it? Once the word spreads about this album, Markus will be able to afford a rainbow set of Porches.

A review simply cannot begin to describe **Therion**'s latest and do it justice! It is the culmination of all the band has been working for since the days of *...Of Darkness* when mainman Christofer Johnsson was yelling about the corruption of Coca-Cola! A plethora of additional instruments and guests assists the four man core, including electronic programming, the Barmbek Symphony Orchestra, piano playing, and the vocals of Dan Swanö, the North German Radio Choir, the Siren Choir, and others. Simply amazing. Nothing short of an epic masterpiece, *Theli* may be the proof necessary to

validate claims that Johnsson is a reincarnation of Bach or Beethoven.

Behind a metal core that most bands would be content to have a vocalist growl over, *Theli*'s songs take off with sopranos and harpsichords, **Iron Maiden**-esque vocals, classical guitar ala **Tiamat**, and beautiful guitar solos. Jonas Mellberg also contributes to the some of the writing, and his "The Siren of the Woods" is one of the album's highlights. Also great are "Opus Eclispe," "To Mega Therion (hey!)," and "Grand Finale/Postludium."

I could go on, but why give away all of the hidden treasures? **Therion** has created a symphony of pure pleasure; pass on all else (including that Porsche) before you purchase *Theli*. 🎸🎸🎸🎸🎸

UNCREATION

Death to Humanity
1995 Repulse Records

A band that "vomit(s) on all 'zine editors who always say that brutal death metal isn't original," **Uncreation** tries really hard on its four song promo 4" CD. Good drumming and a few positive beat transitions are what stand out, but other than that, there's not much to *Death to Humanity*.

The vocals worship **Suffocation**'s Frank Mullen, the predictable guitars are like old **Internal Bleeding** and countless others, and the interchangeable songs are unbearably boring. With lots of work, **Uncreation** could make a name for itself, but until then, I await the vomit for which I am about to receive. 🎸🎸 ½



Vader

Sothis
1995 Repulse Records

Another release picked up by Repulse for worldwide distribution, **Vader**'s *Sothis* is much, much better than the horrendous *The Ultimate Incantation* which came out a few years back. This time around, the band's speed metal guitars are more up to date, avoiding the whammy bar insanity that helped make *The Ultimate...* the catastrophe it was. Really tight drumming by Doc helps solidify this highly impressive release.

Not a whole lot of style changes were made by **Vader**, so fans of the old stuff don't worry. Besides, there's still a silly invoking intro, "Hymn to the Ancient Ones" (I thought hymns involved singing). Plus, there's a repetitive and pointless instrumental, "De Profundis," thrown in to waste your time.

Having written off **Vader**, I was fairly impressed the band's 1994 material and look forward to future releases. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

Wild Rags

THE WILD RAG! ISSUE #32

Rock n' Roll Myths, Volume 1
1996 Wild Rags

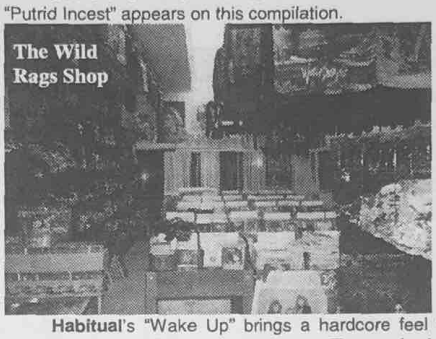
A bargain at only $5, this seventeen song CD presents a good cross section of the underground scene today. Plus, Wild Rags's exists to support the underground.

First off is **The End** with the thrashy "Pure Satanic Death." The vocals are sung sort of like old **Pantera**, but without a soaring range. The repetitive song is aided by great soloing and crunchy riffs. 🎸🎸🎸 1/4

Detestation brings us "Decay" from the *Massacre of Hate* CD, and speedy guitar picking and low, John Tardy-esque vocals help make this song stand out. While it may be a little monotonous, fans of pure death metal will enjoy **Detestation**. 🎸🎸🎸 1/4

Pretending to be technical but aware of their inability, the members of **Ad Nauseum** try to cover it up with extra deep vocals that lamely copy Chris Barnes from his **Cannibal Corpse** days. "Live This" is a boring song that's very forgetable. 🎸 1/2

See the review of **Sickness** in the demo section. "Putrid Incest" appears on this compilation.



Habitual's "Wake Up" brings a hardcore feel to the band's style of light death metal. The production isn't too thick and the vocals are a gruff yell. By taking a nice fork in the road, **Habitual** has avoided doing the straight ahead death metal thing. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

See the review of **Deus-ex-Machina** in the demo section. "My Rust" appears on this compilation.

Horror of Horrors has some really nice, melodic guitar playing that compliments its rough speed sections that make up the body of "Tragic." Buddy Buell's gruff vocals are a little too cloudy to really work with the rest of the song, but overall **H.O.H** is a much tighter and more professional act than many underground bands. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

Attempting to be doomy by having a couple of minutes of talking over some piano, **Days of Lamenting** is really just a death metal band with a case of Industrial Repetitiveness. Seek help immediately, press 'stop'. "Passing into Silence" really drones on, and its only saving grace is an interesting solo in the middle. 🎸🎸 1/4

Gorge's "Moylippnopa's Dream Knot" is not as good as the recently released *Among Composing Fields* (which is reviewed in the demo section), but still contains the quirkiness that will someday make the band great. Not bad, but lacking a pulse. 🎸🎸 1/2

A thrash metal group, **Friday Dies** has vocals you'd expect to hear from some '80s LA band. Very outdated, they are at best okay, but the lackluster music ensures that "Protect Your Temple" is not worth your time, as you should be protecting your ears. 🎸🎸

Brutal **Cannibal Corpsians** from Indiana, the **Sarcophagy** boys momentarily touch on originality but opt for the tried road instead. Therefore, "Grisly Homicidal Butchery" becomes nothing but a cloudy growlfest with a melodic solo as its peak. Actually, each time the listener hears the song, he also notices the spots where **Sarcophagy** could have taken it to new heights but decided to be more brutal instead. 🎸🎸 1/4

See the review of **Sadistic Torment** in the demo section. "Intense Decay" appears on this compilation.

The compilation's best song, "The Innocent of Darkness" showcases **Seraph**'s excellece in musicianship and songwriting skills. The band starts off with a heavy riff section, but blends it into a clean section with violins and actual singing. Mood changes are prevalent, and the song ends with a great violin and guitar duet. 🎸🎸🎸🎸🎸

Another great song, **Michael Knight**'s instrumental "Noir Lamour" showcases his exceptional guitar talents. Everything from the background rhythms to the soloing is done precisely and without flaw. The music is mid-paced and full of memorable parts that make the listener truly appreciate Knight's skills. 🎸🎸🎸🎸 1/2

See the review of **Judecca** in the demo section. "Forensic Pathology" appears on this compilation.

See the review of **Rise** elsewhere in this section. "Revenge Flowing Through" appears on this compilation.

See the review of **Infamy** in the demo section. "Count the Dead" appears on this compilation.

Witch-Hunt

Prophecies of a Great Plague
1996 X-Rated Records

Last issue I heralded **Witch-Hunt**'s classic demo, *Darkened Salvation*, but hinted that the band had yet to prove itself with only good four songs. This new five song CD EP has been released by X-Rated Records.

Prophecies... is in a way one step forward and one step back for **Witch-Hunt**, and I say that with disappointment. *Darkened Salvation* really stood out with its full, raw guitars and great melodies, tied together with tight drumming and appealing vocals. The new EP shows the band angling toward more tried death metal, with the overall sound production disappointing. The vocals, which used to be a muffled version of what Chuck from **Death**, are now just plain muffled and the low point of the release. Also, a re-recorded version of "A World Lit Only by Fire" shows how the different production has hurt **With-Hunt**. This band had a great sound and must use it again to recapture its fading glory!

Not to worry, all is not lost. The band *is* capable, as evidenced by the previous demo, and the laid back "When All Hope is Lost" hints at a new direction **Witch-Hunt** might consider taking. Even the vocals work! So, while this is a pretty good release, it should have been better. We'll just have to wait and see where **Witch-Hunt** goes, because I'm not giving up. 🎸🎸🎸 1/4

Write for price to:
Erik Sayenga
13 Hillcrest Rd.
Stafford, VA 22554

Xharathorn

Immemorial Atlantic Veneration
1996 Repulse Records

Really, this isn't the biggest piece of crap I've heard since the **California Raisons** put out an album! I'd rather hear the soundtrack to *Fraggle Rock* for the rest of my life than listen to this CD again. It's *that* good!

Five songs of the worst black metal showcase the complete lack of talent this trio from Madrid possesses. It's one thing to use the frequently copied high-note, speed picking that most black metal bands use at points, but to make the entire songs consist of that is another. The black metal vocals are predictable and the drumming is absolutley incapable of keeping time. This stupid CD is worse than a basement demo and probably wouldn't even make a good frisbee.

Although another will come along, for now **Xharathorn** is the worst black metal band in the world, and the labels New Gotia/Requiem and Repulse are completely moronic for signing and distributing this "band." Trust me, I may not be an expert on black metal, but you die hards will die if you hear this crap CD EP. A purchase of a frozen lizard is more worth the money than this.

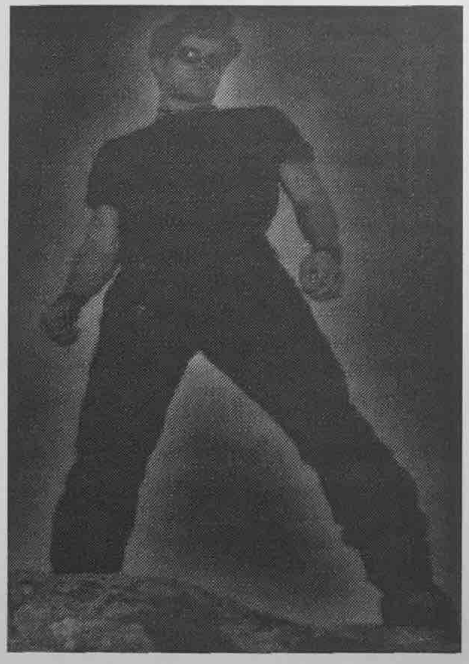
Malformed Earthborn, **Bile**, **Internal Bleeding**, **Demonic Christ**, **Darkness Enshroud**, **Niden 187**, **Cianide**, **It is I**, **Mortician**, **Dead World**, **Organic Infest**, and **B-Thong**. Each one of these terrible bands has been signed to a label and released an album. Each has had the advantages of paid advertising, staffs working on their behalf, and extensive distribution. **Quo Vadis** is not signed and at the present time chooses not to be. The band relies upon itself for promotion and financing, utilizing a website, fliers, and word of mouth. In a day when everybody is bitching about how much Alternative sucks and how there needs to be a great metal band to come along, it's disheartening to see this great band able to do only so much by itself.

Well, I'm doing my part. I can't make some corporate bastard who listens to rap offer **Quo Vadis** a contract, but I *can* help the band out by exposing it to legitimate fans like you. **Quo Vadis** is *the* hottest new band around and has grasped the concept of how to write diverse, heavy, and addictive songs for the discerning metal fan. Open your ears and you'll gladly open your wallet.

Guitarist, vocalist, and bandleader Bart Frydrychowicz tells all, so read on...

Sloth: I was at the video store once and noticed that it carried a Roman film called *Quo Vadis*. Is that where you got the band's name from? I looked in my Latin dictionary but couldn't figure out what it meant. Care to fill me in?
Bart: **Quo Vadis** stands for "Where are you going?" in Latin. There is also a saying in Old English which escapes my mind at the moment, but which had been used interchangeably. Anyway, to me it's an existential question in a sense: Where are we headed? What will become of us, who are we? The usual stuff. We've all heard about the movie but I don't think any of us have actually seen it. It has nothing to do with the band as far as I can tell.

Sloth: Despite your rising status, not many people are aware of **Quo Vadis**'s existence. How long have you been around? How did each of you initially come together? Were there ever any member changes?
Bart: As an independent band, it is very difficult for us to finance any sort of international promotion. And without the backing of a label there is only so much we can do. Personally I think that for an independent band we're doing quite well.



Quo Vadis formed initially under a different name as a thrash cover band [1992]. Yanic, Arie, and I all met in college, decided to jam, then do a gig, then another one, etc. After our first recording it was clear to everyone that we were here to stay. It was also around that time [June/July 1995] that Remy Beauchamp joined the band. He had run into Arie at a music store. At that point we had gone through our 16th or 17th bassist [that



Interview by Phil Alterman

seemed to be our curse] and Remy was looking for a band. We jammed a few times and it became clear that he was finally the person to complete the band as a unit. Things really took off from there. We added the bass tracks to our demo recording, released it, played innumerable shows, then last summer we went to record a full length album.

Sloth: Considering the number of non-talent bands that are being signed these days, are you guys surprised to have not been picked up by a label? Do you think *Forever...* will spark any label's interest? If that occurred, would you still remain independent because your self-promotion has been so successful?
Bart: Currently we're considering licensing *Forever...* We haven't been picked up by a label before *Forever...* simply because we didn't send anything out. We don't plan to record anything for at least a year, so we'll just license the album to a few labels, gain more momentum and international presence. When we're ready to record again we'll pick a label. All we need is exposure, licensing is adequate for that, and this solution conserves our independence and integrity, allowing **Quo Vadis** to remain what it is.

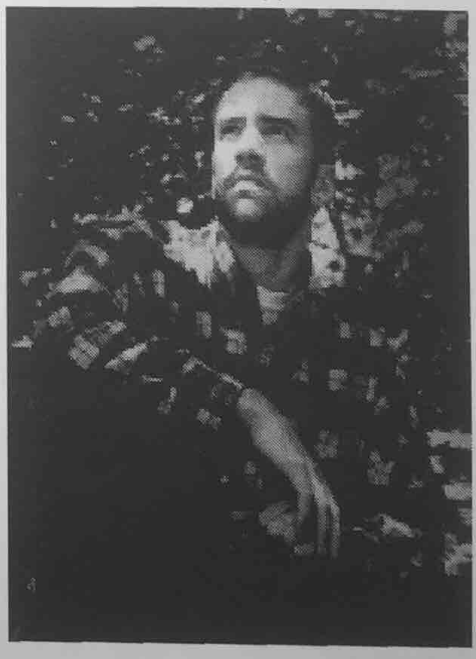
Sloth: What has been going on recently within the band? Promotion, shows, etc.?
Bart: Well as I mentioned, we're currently looking at different options for licensing the album. Locally we're preparing a big release show in Montreal. This will be a triple release, first in Canada, to have three albums launched together simultaneously. This is going to be comparable to a mini Death Fest, and we're even printing up special limited edition shirts for the event as an added bonus to the usual slew of merchandise. That is going to take place on February 6th, we're also doing a few small shows in towns around Montreal [during Canadian winters it's not recommended to drive hundreds of kilometers through the frozen wasteland to the next bigger city, as in some northern areas gas stations are but a few and it's not fun lugging your rack through a snow drift if something goes wrong].

Sloth: Are you pleased with the way *Forever...* came out? How long did it take to record, master, and get duplicated? Was everything self-financed?
Bart: We love the way the album came out. It was all self-financed. Everyone put a lot of time and effort into the whole project and it was well worth it. Working with Pierre Remillard, who also produced the latest **Cryptopsy**, was also a good choice as he has an excellent ear. Recording itself took about 2-3 weeks on and off. Mastering took a day. The actual printing of the CDs seemed to take forever... [hehehe] We encountered a ton of problems from our negatives being stolen with the equipment from the print shop to the final CDs being shipped to some hospital instead of to us [forced shock therapy perhaps?]. Aside from one or two screwups on the cover [again the printer] everything is perfect.

Sloth: One of the album's highlights is the high degree of each member's musicianship. There are no weak links! What sort of training and band experience do each of you have?
Bart: We've all played in some bands before forming **Quo Vadis**. Arie has about 14 years of classical violin training, Yanic and I are pretty much self-taught although I briefly took classical guitar lessons for a few months. Remy has some piano training.

Sloth: The new songs are all pretty lengthy and with multiple sections. How long did it take to write each song? Were they planned before being actually written, or did each evolve from an initial riff?
Bart: Some took almost a year, others we put together in a few weeks. It all depends on how the ideas behind a particular song's theme flow. We write something that we feel comfortable with, and if it's not finished, we let it sit until we feel inspired to finish that particular piece. Often we write other songs in the meantime. Such a song is "As I Feed the Flames of Hate." That one took us a year. In general, each song evolves from an initial riff or two, and if a riff is good, it will inspire the rest of us to write something.

Sloth: I think "Inner Capsule" is by far the best and most exhilarating song on *Forever...* Which one is your favorite, and why? Are there any you don't care for?



Bart: Everyone in the band pretty much agrees that "Legions of the Betrayed" is our best song as it represents all the personalities in the band. You have aggression and blistering-fast picking, emotional solos, guitars and bass intertwining interchangeably with each other, as well as emotionally charged lyrics and clean, precise adrenaline-pumping drumming; everything necessary is there. My other personal favorites would include "Carpae Deum" as well as "As I Feed the Flames of Hate." All of these have a personal meaning to me, and of course I like "Inner Capsule." That song is insane.

Sloth: One of the album's standouts is the drumming of Yanic Bercier. Did you make a conscious decision to put his sound on the forefront of the CD? Does he credit his unique cymbal style to his training or did it simply develop over the years?
Bart: Yanic never took any lessons. He is one of the most talented drummers I've had the honor to play with. For practice he often picks up a CD and plays along with it. We're not full time musicians as everyone in the band is busy finishing their degrees, and Yanic is certainly the busiest of all of us [Engineering Physics], so I don't know when he finds the time. He keeps getting better though and that's all that counts...

Sloth: When it came to arranging the songs, how much of a classical influence did you incorporate?
Bart: Due to our varying backgrounds it was a natural process for those to filter down into the music. **Quo Vadis** is essentially an avenue of creative expression, a sum of those influences which shaped us as musicians, and there is no reason why the music shouldn't proportionally reflect who we are.

Sloth: Who does the deep growl? Who does the rasp? Who does the yell? Who does the narrations?
I do the growling as well as some poetry reading [on "Carpae..." and "As I Feed..."], Yanic does the other poetry reading parts as well as the yelling. Arie's voice is the raspy one.

Sloth: The lyrics of songs like "As I Feed the Flames of Hate" and "Pantheon of Tears" have a stream of consciousness style as they explore inner emotions. When you write, are you focusing more on your thoughts or how the lines will fit with the vocals?
Bart: I write what I feel. "As I Feed..." is more of an introspective song as are "Legions..." and "Carpae." For "As I Feed..." and "Carpae..." I wrote freely, not adhering to any rhythms, as they were emotional, sad pieces. The words flow as they would in prose or in a lamentation, and I tried to embody pain with words on paper. In "Pantheon..." I felt it necessary to tie the words rhythmically to the riffing to emphasize anger and aggression. Actually, I don't really do this in a conscious way, because I write when I get inspired. It's more of a mystical process to me as is writing music.

Sloth: Now that the album is out and the reviews are starting to come in, when -- in the darkness of the night -- you stop and wonder if your existence has changed the world in any way, do you think, *Yes*?
Bart: Hehe, well, if our music made anyone stop and wonder, think, question, speculate what is or isn't, what is right or wrong, then I'd say we're satisfied. If there are people connecting to the emotion, sadness, hope, hate and aggression on the album, then I'd say yes, we're satisfied. As long as our music, the way we express ourselves, has made anyone stop and wonder, this alone is our reward.

Sloth: How have people reacted to "Mystery" and "Nocturnal Reflections?" Was there any apprehension within the band as to whether or not to include these tracks? Some might consider their and "Sans Abris"'s inclusion as pretentious *filler*. How would you respond to this charge?
Bart: There was absolutely no question in our minds to include poetry as well as "Sans Abris." What we write represents who we are. There are many sides to everyone in **Quo Vadis** and we are in no way a one-dimensional band. As for "Sans Abris," that was put on the album as a bonus track in order to introduce people to our previous material and yet another side of **Quo Vadis**.



Sloth: How come you decided to include the demo's "Sans Abris" on the album? Was there any thought of re-recording any of the demo's other tracks?
Bart: We considered re-recording "Sans Abris," but decided against it. We all love the song and decided to include it on the disc. We did re-master it, however, and there is a distinct difference in quality between the demo and the CD version.

Sloth: How had the demo been selling? Do you still perform these songs live?
Bart: We still get a few orders a month for the demo, and we've sold between 450 to 500 copies, but since we don't really keep track of the demo sales anymore it's hard for me to say. We still have a few left if anyone is interested. As for the demo songs, we still play them live as they are simpler and that makes them great show songs, always evoking a reaction from the audience.



Sloth: What is a **Quo Vadis** show like? How does the band come across differently on stage than on tape or CD? Do you draw big crowds when you play? What has been your most successful show, and why?
Bart: We try to focus on delivery when playing live -- that is on the quality of our playing as well as stage presence. We are at our best when relaxed because we can get the fans into it. Each of us has a distinct personality on stage. To be honest, we're not the best people to ask to describe the show since we're the ones playing and completely involved in the music and the anger or aggression or whatever the song is evoking at that time.

Sloth: Every once in a while I pick up a slight **Suffocation** or **Kataklysm** influence in your music. Are you fans of either of these bands? Who else do you guys listen to? What other unsigned acts are worthy of recognition?
Bart: I think I listened to **Suffocation** maybe 4 times in my life. Same thing with **Kataklysm**... My main influences would be melodic metal in any form, and choral or contemporary classical music. Emotional, moody, dark music, *Flamma Flamma* by Nicolas Lens comes to mind, or *Allegri* or *Pallestrina*. Remy and Arie both listen more to *all* sorts of metal, from **Blind Guardian** and **Helloween** to **Cynic** or the new Swedish stuff... Yanic grew up on **Slayer**, **DRI**, **Napalm Death** and (old) **Metallica** as most of us did....As for local acts worth recognition I'd name **Obliveon**, **Elements**, **Kataklysm** (RIP) and **Cryptopsy** (pretty much RIP as well), **Neuraxis**, **Tennebrae**, **BARF**... The local scene is actually quite crowded, and there is a lot of talent as well as shit...

Sloth: Bart, you designed both of the **Quo Vadis** covers. First, let me say I really like the demo's cover painting.
Bart: Thanx....

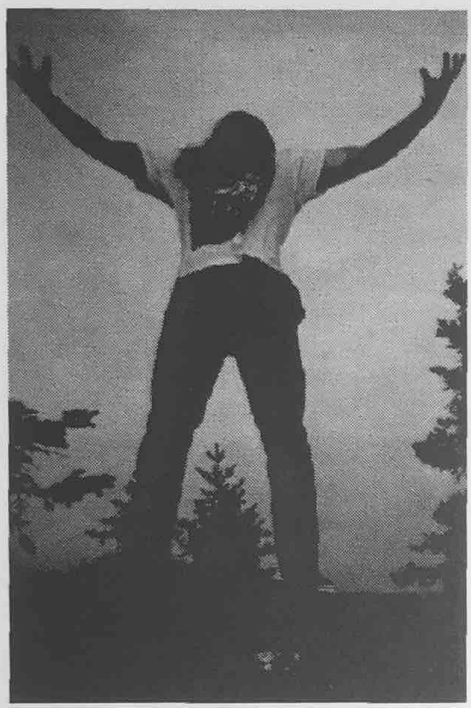
Sloth: The colors are fantastic! The album's cover isn't a painting but an altered photo.
Bart: Both are graphic art, originating from photos we took or things we drew, I just play around with them until I have something dark and foreboding.

Sloth: Was this done by computer?
Bart: All was done on computer; actually I'm a very much into computers since I build them and do tech support and such to pay my bills. That of course gets pretty frustrating, and combined with my studies [Bio/Ecotoxicology], it causes me to come up with some quite twisted things, be they lyrically, musically or visually. Same goes for Arie [studies Bio] and Remy [Mechanical Engineering].

Sloth: What sort of computer knowledge do you have? What sort of art training do you have?
Bart: Well since I build them I can say I know them in detail. As far as art training, I don't have any. It's all inspiration, hope it never runs out!

Sloth: Did you do all of the album's layout?
Bart: Yes.

Sloth: On the album's cover, there are silhouettes of



human figures and a harp-like boat in the forest. What's going on there?
Bart: The silhouettes are lost souls (the album is about fighting your internal demons), so perhaps the silhouettes are those demons; everybody will have their own interpretation...They are what you make them to be, just like the topics of our songs can be applied to a variety of situations. You see what you want to see in a sense. There is no boat on the picture, if there were, perhaps what you see is the river Styx... There is a harp with a crucified soul as well as a string instrument with and impaled victim on it. Like I said... souls, pain, darkness, suffering, illusions, hope, foreboding, demons, despair... Forever...

Sloth: What color was the original photo before you added the purple?
Bart: It was a nice photo of a sunny day in the forest.

Sloth: You also have a **Quo Vadis** website. How long has it been up and running?
Bart: The web page has been up for about two years, I change it periodically when there is enough time to develop a new theme or something like that... Artwork seems to be my department, I guess.

Sloth: Did you design that?
Bart: Yes.

Sloth: Have there been a lot of hits? What does it feature?
Bart: The site has proven to be of important value to the band, as we cannot promote ourselves in the traditional medium, and this enables us to create international presence based on the quality of what we present, not on how much we can pay for a color ad. The site features mostly band info, bio, reviews, interviews, whole samples of songs, and a way to contact us. It's everything you'd ever want to know about **Quo Vadis** and probably more then you'd ever care to, hehehe...

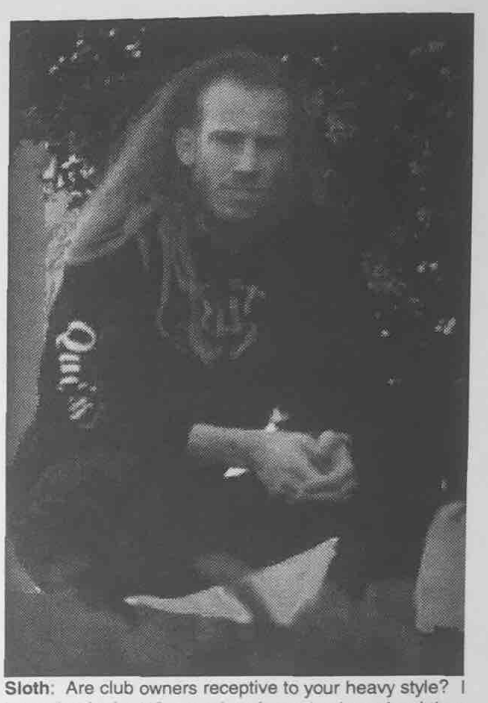
Sloth: How has the response been from those who have visited it?
Bart: Usually positive or constructive criticism on my HTML, hehehe.

Sloth: From looking at the band photos I've determined that you're a normal bunch of guys. What are you involved with besides music?
Bart: Like I mentioned we're all attending university in sciences... I spend a lot of time with computers besides school and of course music.

Sloth: During our earlier correspondences, you mentioned that you were working out numerous licensing deals with labels. How has that been going? Who have you confirmed deals with? By the way, how many units of *Forever...* were originally pressed?
Bart: Nothing is confirmed, currently we're working with Sepulture Productions as our distributor, with them trying to distribute around the world. As far as licensing goes we will not be making any decisions before May since we need to investigate all the legal options and such before we commit to any sort of contract. The original CD pressing was for 500 copies and is virtually gone. We're ordering our second pressing very soon.

Sloth: This might be a stupid question, but have you written any new songs since the album's recording?
Bart: We're working on some ideas, but there are no finished songs at the moment.

Sloth: What's your take on the Canadian scene and its impact upon the rest of the world? Which bands do you feel are at the forefront of what Canada has to offer?
Bart: Certainly the new albums by **Kataklysm**, **Cryptopsy** and **Obliveon**, **Neuraxis, Tennebrae**. A band called **Blood of Christ** apparently has something interesting material but I haven't had a chance to check it out yet.



Sloth: Are club owners receptive to your heavy style? I know that in the US many bands are having a hard time finding places to play.
Bart: Same here, so we don't play unless it's a big show. There is no point playing if you have to deal with mindless club owners. We don't play unless we can play in a bigger venue, so we don't have to deal with mentally stunted fools. Overall there isn't a great deal of good places to play I guess.

Sloth: Do you have any further comments that would make this interview complete?
Bart: Thanx for your interest in the band. Thanx to all our fans who supported us from the beginning. Good luck to you and your zine in the future.

Quo Vadis
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Visit the **Quo Vadis** website:
http://alcor.concordia.ca/~b_frydr/index.html

Scattered Remnants, continued from page 6...

to a smut shop I want filth. I visit strip joints a LOT! Also, we all go to plenty of shows to support the local and non-local bands. We do some serious traveling to go see a band that we really support. I run my own distro, Abound, which deals with CDs, cassettes, adult movies, magazines, 'zines, and other shit, too. It's just getting started now, but we already have a good amount of merchandise. I also do a lot of drawing. I've done a few logos and magazine covers, but it's nothing I would turn into a career because the shit that I draw is very strange. I'm not into too much gore stuff -- except for Vincent Locke and stuff like that -- because I'm more into the bizarre dead people orgies. Hahaha. That's about it, man, we really don't do much other than that; maybe play a little Playstation because that system rules and hit bars now and then.

Sloth: What sort of equipment do you use?

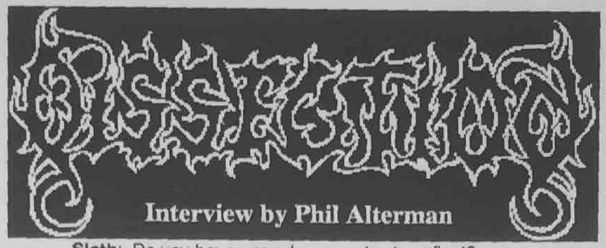
Rob: I can only tell you what I have because our other guitar player, Jamie, has way too much -- full rack, you know. I have my stupid Jackson guitar which I'll never buy again unless it's American made because what I've got is too cheaply made. I also have a Crate head, Marshall cabs because they produce a heavier sound than Crate cabs, and Alesis and Boss effects stuff. Jason uses a mic. Hahaha! I have absolutely no clue what bass stuff Ron has, but he's got a lot like Jamie. Nice, huh? I've been in the band for almost three years and I never even looked at anybody's equipment before!

Sloth: When you start writing a song, what is the reaction you aim to get out of the listener? What do you feel when listening to a **Scattered Remnants** release?
Rob: We usually try to create total debauchery and chaos. Seriously, we want to make our music a pleasure to listen to. We try not to suck at what we do; otherwise we'd just give it up right now. Heavy music is what we are trying to create. Personally, I really don't listen to much of our stuff because we had to hear it 10,000 times when we were recording it. Every once in a while I'll listen to it just to compare how much better our new stuff is.

Sloth: Any info that would make the article complete?
Rob: Well, first off, eternal thanks for the interview and the interest in the band, Phil. I sure hope your luck continues with the 'zine. Anyone interested in the band or my distro (the band is not involved with this), please write for a catalog and please send in your samples of merchandise and we'll talk.

Scattered Remnants
P.O. Box 814
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Abound Distribution
P.O. Box 176
Winchendon, MA 01475



Interview by Phil Alterman

Sweden's **Dissection** is flying high. After achieving underground fame with its 1993 debut album, *The Somberlain*, for No Fashion Records, the band was picked up by Nuclear Blast. The new album, *Storm of the Light's Bane*, sees **Dissection** taking its strong brand of black metal to the masses without sacrificing anything that brought the band to where it is. In fact, the members' inproved musicianship has enabled them to play even faster songs without turning them into jumbled messes. Death metal overtones and universally appealing vocal rasps add depth to the opus, and as the calm piano of "No Dreams Breed in Breathless Sleep" close out it out, the listener sits in awe, completely satisfied.

I spoke with the founder, guitarist, and vocalist Jon Nödveidt, who sounded upbeat and excited about **Dissection** and its future.

Sloth: It seems that Dissection is becoming popular very quickly, so what do you think you'll do to harness this success?
Jon: Go out on the road and play. We did a short European tour with **Dismember**. We played a lot of shows in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic. There's an American tour with **At the Gates** coming up. [This interview is rather old. The tour has already taken place. -ed.] We just want to tour.

Sloth: Are you getting lots of support from Nuclear Blast?
Jon: Yes, I would have to say so. It's been very good, and they have done very good promotion for us. We aren't used to that because we were on a small label called No Fashion Records, and there was no promotion at all. This is a big change for us. It's great that we have a record company behind us that really believes in the band.

Sloth: What else have you guys been doing besides the band itself?
Jon: Some of us are working, but at the moment I am unemployed and doing things of personal interest.

Sloth: Do you have enough money to stay afloat?
Jon: Yes, so what I do in my spare time when we're not rehearsing is to study the occult and read books.

Sloth: When you guys started out back in 1989, what were your hopes?
Jon: Well, if I think back, we just wanted to play! There were no big plans or anything, we wanted to play this kind of music, to hopefully to spread the word and get a record deal. That was the main goal.

Sloth: And things have just taken off from there?
Jon: Yeah, as you reach those small goals, you put higher goals further and go on doing what you're doing, always enjoying the present time.



Sloth: I was speaking to Marten of **Meshuggah** a while back, and he was saying how Sweden is much more peaceful than countries like, say, Norway. What is your opinion on that?
Jon: If you're talking about the black metal scene, I really don't know. I don't think that situation in Norway is really so bad.

Sloth: Are you into any of that stuff where you are?
Jon: Personally I'm into Satanism. But not as a fucking black metal organization.

Sloth: It's more of a personal thing for you?
Jon: It is completely a personal philosophy and a belief that I have developed for many years.

Sloth: So you're not out destroying churches and the like?
Jon: No, but I don't look down upon people who do it. They can do it if they want to do it, because I don't like churches, either.

Sloth: Are your beliefs somewhat conveyed on the new album's cover?
Jon: The guy who painted it is called Necrolord and he's a great friend of ours. We developed the cover concept together, and what it represents is the triumph of darkness.

Sloth: Has Necrolord done anything else for you guys?
Jon: Yeah, he's been working for us since the beginning. He did some demo covers, a 7" EP cover, and the first and second albums. His work has meant a lot to us and we'll use him again.

Sloth: You got a new drummer, correct?
Jon: Yeah, we've had him for a while. It's worked out really great.

Sloth: Is he on the album or not?
Jon: No he's not. I guess he started in the band just a few months before the album was released, so he's quite new, but he's been on tour with us and is a full time member. Everything is working out really well with him.

For **Dissection**, everything is working out well. Succesful album, stable lineup, and the world at its feet. The masterpiece *Storm of the Light's Bane* is destined to be a timeless classic, forever immortalizing these stellar Swedes.

7" Reviews

7" Reviews
7" Reviews

As you can see, we've got quite an impressive 7" collection. Hopefully we'll have acquired a few more titles next time.

Anathema
We Are the Bible
1994 Peaceville

To tide fans' appetites over before their full-length *Silent Enigma* album, **Anathema** released this two-song 7", sixth in the Peaceville Collectors Club. It may be still available from Relapse Records. The front cover depicts a Native American with arrows stuck in him as he's watched by vultures ready to pick at his flesh: a subtle hint of the madness contained within.

The first song, "Nailed to the Cross/666," starts off with hoarse chanting over lingering power chords. **Anathema** then take a hiatus from their usual gloomy symphonies to dabble in experimentation as they finish off the song with fuzzy guitar riffs and some guy screaming "666!!!" over and over again. A definite adrenaline rush worth listening to.

Already a big fan of the band, I couldn't help but sense the raw energy "Eternal Rise of the Sun" captures. The liner notes mention that it was based on the original theme written on the eve of the Gulf War, and the song certainly has memorable qualities. Here the vocalist grovels out somber poetry with a single guitar twittering out some notes in the background. This is truly music to be cranked up and absorbed, as it is extremely emotional, heartfelt doom/experimentation. I commend **Anathema** for their brief but solid offering, and can't wait to hear their *Silent Enigma* CD. Anyone who has 6 bucks to shell out should invest in this...it's well worth it.
🎸🎸🎸 3/4
-T.J.

Embalmer
There was Blood Everywhere
1995 Relapse Records

One of the most intentionally cheesy bands around, Cleveland's **Embalmer** revels in gore with its lurid covers, song titles, and lyrics. The title track, "The Necro-Filing Cabinet," "Blood Sucking Freaks," and "May the Wounds Bleed Forever" are all ghoulish speed machines that assault the listener with raw, abrasive guitars. The mid-paced, riff-oriented sections turn out to be the best as drummer Roy Stewart has an uncanny knack for playing the worst patterns possible whenever the tempo picks up. Rick Fleming's dual vocal attack is full of pain and this release's highlight.

For a gore band, **Embalmer** is surprisingly good thanks to its addictive riffs and pained vocals. Something's got to be done about the drummer though.
🎸🎸🎸 1/4

Hypocrisy
Carved Up
1995 Relapse Records

This is a pointless release. Nobody should waste their money on this. It consists of an early version of *Abducted*'s "Carved Up" and an average, **Slayer**-type song called "Beginning of the End." It sounds a lot like old **Hypocrisy**, and while catchy, is not worth shelling out any money for. There's not much more to say about it, either. 🎸🎸 3/4

PAIN'S INVENTION

Interview by Phil

Recently the American Midwest has been the breeding ground for a huge number of underground metal bands. One group that is leading the pack is Wisconson's **Pain's Invention**. After releasing its progressive grindcore debut in 1995, *Numb*, the band worked hard to promote itself and was rewarded with positive reviews and worldwide radio play. 1996 saw the band return to the studio to record *Enmity*, an abrasive three song demo that is highlighted by the passionate bellows of singer Brian Schroeter. The music also evolved, blending an industrial feel without becoming actually "industrial." The result is a classic that defies the laws that most brutal underground bands feel compelled to follow.

Below, Brian speaks his mind about *Enmity* and the various ups and downs that **Pain's Invention** has lived through.

Sloth: The new demo shows **Pain's Invention** branching off into new areas, all the while maintaining the band's characteristic feel. What caused the band to incorporate other styles into the progressive death metal/grindcore core? Was it simply the maturing process, did some of the members start listening to new styles, or was it strictly intentional?
Brian: We have always listened to different types of music, but never really influenced each other with it in the past. We started to show each other the other possibilities in music and then went to see how we could incorporate these styles into our music. All of us listen to music like **Scorn**, **John Coltrane**, **Frank Zappa**, the **Police**, and a large number of other influences. Then we put the death metal twist to them. I would like to add that we don't consider ourselves death metal. To me, death metal is preaching about death and being pessimistic. I'm optimistic and I don't preach. Anyway, we just try to be open to any form of music or noise and approach it as artists and musicians. As for maturity, yes we have matured but we have our moments when we like to be juvenile. Music can be serious but you have to have fun doing it to pursue a career in it.



Sloth: How does *Enmity* represent **P.I.** better than *Numb*?
Brian: *Enmity* was more thought out than *Numb* was. What I mean is that we really tried our best to structure our songs into something new rather than follow a trend. We used our influences rather than the latest metal trend. In some cases though, our influences were part of the current trend. We listen to bands like **Korn**, **Pantera**, and **White Zombie**, and I think you can hear those influences in *Emnity*. We were also more experimental with our instruments, like instead of looking for different riffs, Nick and Greg tried looking for different sounds. Jim looked for different drum patterns and Dave got to add more than he did to *Numb*. Dave didn't get the chance to experiment that much on *Numb* because the guitars dominated his bass. We made it a goal this time for him to be heard. As for me, I did some experimenting with my sound and word structure. We also decided to go to a studio this time instead of recording on 4-track. The studio was so fun and the engineers were what made it even better. Real down to earth and very open-minded people. The pot smoking might have had something to do with that.

Sloth: Have you been playing the new songs at shows? If so, how are they being received?
Brian: Oh yeah! We play those songs live when we can. That's what makes being in a band fun and rewarding. Actually, we only play one track off of the first demo, the song "Numb." The rest are *Emnity*'s three songs and our six new ones. I think people like them, but I can't be sure because we go into our own little worlds and block everything else out when playing live. In other words, we get really involved in the music. It's definitely something to see if you have the chance. I want to get the people involved when we're playing but they have to show us they want to.

The new songs go over well. Some people don't understand our musical direction but hopefully in time they will. We don't play many shows because we are rarely asked by other bands to play with them and there are bands that I have asked to play with that have either turned us down, given an answer that wasn't true, or never responded. Oh, well, their loss.

Sloth: Where do you guys go from here?
Brian: I don't know where we go. Hopefully to the land of success, but I am a person that takes things one day at a time. If something comes up that is good for us, then great, but if we run into a wall, we'll have to work around it and hope for something better on the other side.

Sloth: You were often criticized for your vocals on *Numb*. How were you affected by this criticism? Going into the studio to record *Enmity* or when writing the songs, how did you hope to give a vocal performance pleasing to the critics, the band, and yourself? So far, how has the reaction been?
Brian: Well, when I got the first review I was upset but I didn't let it faze me because it was just one review. You have to figure that not everything is going to be positive. Then there was this streak of reviews just bashing my vocals. I had one where I was told that I was worse than Cookie Monster! I was not pleased and I saw that I needed to change so that people would accept my style, but more importantly so I could be happy with myself. When we began writing new material for *Enmity*, I got into the mentality to just be natural instead of trying to be the most brutal vocalist on the face of the earth. I was putting all this anger I had on to the paper but I wasn't expressing it through my voice. I was false. So when I started doing my vocal tracks at like 3 in the morning, I just let loose and tried not to listen to my voice but instead to feel that anger, that spark that made me write those words. It was fucked up but it worked. So that's how I go about it now. Feel the anger before you listen to the voice.

Sloth: What exactly does "Pain's Invention" mean?
Brian: When we chose the name, it wasn't for meaning, but because we thought it was a cool sounding name. It came from a song by **Dark Angel** called "Pain's Invention, Madness," and it just kind of stuck. Nick was the one that came up it, so due credit must go to him. To me "pain's invention" is life itself. It is painful to live but it's also rewarding. Life is about feeling things emotionally and physically and pain is right up there with pleasure. We like pleasure. In some cases though, the only way to get pleasure is through pain. And vice versa.

Sloth: How old are the guys in the band? What do you do besides play music?
Brian: Well I am 20 and I attend college where I am working for a degree in Marketing. I also like to read (mostly fiction) and write. Nick is 19 and going to college to be a teacher. Jim is 18 and in art school where I believe he's studying to be a graphic art designer. Greg is 18 and going to school, where I believe he is working towards a degree in music. As for Dave, he's 17 and still in high school and I don't know what his plans are. We really don't do many other things beside work, school, and music. Except for Greg, he does plays a lot.

Sloth: Of all the band's songs (how many are there?), which do you feel are the best? Why?
Brian: We have about 14 original songs and a lot of ideas for other songs. My personal favorites are "Path" and the new "Primal" and "Clouded." They all have very intense rhythms and are very easy for me to get into.

Sloth: Has there been any label interest? Have you considered self-financing a CD EP?
Brian: No, there hasn't been any label interest as of yet, although I have sent out packages to various and gotten verification they were received by some of them. I am not saying which ones, though. As for self-financing a CD, right now we really can't afford it because we have tuition and other expenses that, unfortunately, come first. We would love to do something like that if we could get financial help, because doing it right now by ourselves is out of the question.

Sloth: Who else do you believe deserves the underground's attention? Why?
Brian: Oh, there are so many deserving bands! **Candiria** definitely deserve some attention. They are so incredible. I'm trying to get a show with them at the moment. Who else! **Aftermath** deserves attention. They have been working in the underground for so many years now and they are such cool guys, too. I know Charlie from that band. Also, **Medusa Oblongada** -- who was once on Megalithic, but that

label went under. Another incredibly talented band that goes unrecognized. There are just too many to mention because the underground is so full of unnoticed talent.

Sloth: All of the new songs' lyrics -- "Path," "Sequence 2," and "Worm Honey Blur" -- paint a bleak picture of human existence and the future. What message are you trying to get across with your words?
Brian: Not to be mean, but I don't want to give away the meanings because people won't read the lyrics, and if they do, might perceive them differently than me. So if you perceive the lyrics as "a bleak picture of human existence and the future," then that's fine. I give other people the right to think differently. I want the people to tell me what the words are about. It's called thinking.

Sloth: Has the recent surge in the number of bands in the Midwest affected **Pain's Invention**? Please explain.
Brian: Yes, and I know why. People are taking that chance to form a band but people aren't taking the chance to support these bands because they're not commercially acceptable or too extreme to listen to. Not enough open minds. It also hurts when you're looking for shows and clubs tell you that your music isn't right for their club. How the fuck do these people know? They're just going by their own opinion, not the public's. A lot of people like extreme music, but a select few don't agree and act like fucking He-Man. You know, "By the power of Grayskull, I have the power!" It should be, "By the power of ignorance, I am stupid!!" They're controlling the scene and they know it. MTV needs an enema, radio needs an enema, club owners need an enema, a lot of people in the music industry need an enema and I would be happy to help give it to them. This doesn't apply to everyone, though, but you get the picture.

Sloth: How come you guys opt not to wear apocalyptic armor? Wouldn't you feel a lot more tuffffff?
Brian: Probably the same reason we don't wipe feces all over our bodies and walk into hardware stores asking for fly swatters. It's stupid. I don't take anybody seriously who can't show their true colors. These people who wear this stuff don't scare anybody, it's all just props. I feel more tough through my voice than through what I wear.

Sloth: The band's bio states that during the recording of *Enmity*, "every ounce of emotion and energy was put forth" and that the members left fatigued. Exactly how stressful and tiring was the recording of the new material?
Brian: Well, we were recording well into the early morning hours, which accounts for the fatigue part. We wanted to get out of there because we had a budget to think about but we also wanted a great recording. We got frustrated, and that accounts for the emotion. We were putting in all we had during that time frame to make that recording. I think it paid off. What about you?

Sloth: Thanks for the interview! Feel free to promote the band, its merchandise, and my 'zine...
Brian: We have no shirts, but when people start ordering the tape then we will use that money towards T-shirts. Thanks, Phil, for taking the time to let me tell the public what we're about. Keep up the great work!!! Experience the extreme!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Pain's Invention
P.O. Box 293
Hartland, WI 53029-0293

LABELS

Here's another valuable tool we thought you'd appreciate. Can't find that album in the stores? Think your band has what it takes to get signed? Want to fill up your address book so people will think you've got "connections"? Well, here ya go! Labels, big and small, evil and not so evil, all around the world, promoting their music. Write to them and let the magic begin...

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c/o Frank Reisinger
P.O. Box 29 14
74019 Helbronn, Germany

Energy Records
545 8th Ave.
New York, NY 10018

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c/o Torsten Wellmann
Apdo. Postal 1-2023
Cuernavaca, Mor., C.P.
62001, Mexico

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P.O. Box 946
Dixon, IL 61021

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65 Reade St., Suite 2B
New York, NY 10007

Mausoleum Records
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New York, NY 10022

Mazur Public Relations
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P.O. Box 360
East Windsor, NJ 08520

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03114 Drebkau
Germany

Warhead Records
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Australia

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Santa Monica, CA 90404

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Nashville, TN 37202

Displeased Records
Veeringstraat 6
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Bucks HP15 6TY, UK

Necropolis Records
P.O. Box 14815
Fremont, CA 94539-4815

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Millersville, PA 17551

Osmose Productions
B.P. 57
62990 Beaurainville, France

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7050 AA Varsseveld
Holland

Full Moon Productions
948 Callahan Ct.
Lakeland, FL 33801

Unisound Records
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106 78 Athens, Greece

JSR Records
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Santa Ana, CA 92711-0484

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8790 Eisenerz, Austria

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Los Angeles, CA 90046

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Montclair, CA 91763

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701 48 Örebro, Sweden

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Tampa, FL 33684-0877

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Chicago, IL 60614

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Los Angeles, CA 90086-2529

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2798 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026

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New York, NY 10013

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S-581 17 Linköping
Sweden

Adipocere Records
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01540 Vonnas, France

Pavement Music
2123 S. Priest Dr. #208
Tempe, AZ 85282

Visceral Productions
P.O. Box 1142
Mentor, OH 44061-1142

Defiled Records
P.O. Box 2063
Boulder, CO 80306-2063

Game Two Records
11902 Lanner Pl.
Laurel, MD 20708

Rage Records
c/o Ed Farshtey, Jr.
P.O. Box 541520
Flushing, NY 11354-7520

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Akron, OH 44314

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P.O. Box 613
Arlington Heiths, IL 60006

Projekt Records
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Garden Grove, CA 92642-1591

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Jan Steenstraat 4
5121WJ Rijen, Holland

Hammerheart Records
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6300 ag Valkengurg
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3830 Ilhavo, Portugal

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Repulse Records
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Huntington Beach, CA 92615

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Toothless Records
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Baksteplassen 46
N-1349 Rykkin
Norway

Deviation Records
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Newarthill, Motherwell
ML1 5JZ, Scotland

Conquest Music
4195 S. Tamiami Trail #180
Venice, FL 34293-5112

Black Mark Production
354 1/2 Yonge St., Ste. #17
Toronto, ON M5B 1S5
Canada

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740 Broadway, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10003

BMG Entertainment
1540 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

DCA
268 Bush St., #3237, Dpt. E
San Francisco, CA 94104

Theologian Records
P.O. Box 1070
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

Black Sun Records
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401 22 Gothenburg
Sweden

Metal Age Productions
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038 61 Vrùtky, Slovakia

MDD Records
c/o Markus Rosner
Fachriastr. 9
74226 Nordhausen
Germany

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P.O. Box 2134
Madison, WI 53701

Headless Corpse Records
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San Carlos, CA 94070

Misanthropy Records
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Suffolk 1P7 5AU
England

Modern Invasion Music
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Gardenvale, Melbourne
Australia 3185

Progress Records
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DK-5000 Odense C
Denmark

Leviathan Records
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Tyrone, GA 30290

Roadrunner Records
536 Broadway
New York, NY 10012

Intense Records
P.O. Box 28450
Santa Ana, CA 92799

Rot'en Roll Records
P.O. Box 912
E. Npt., NY 11731

CANNIBAL CORPSE

Text and Photos
by Phil Alterman

It was to be a great night. I was going to see Hatred, Morbius, and Cannibal Corpse. I was all prepared with a mind full of questions and a backpack full of *Sloth*s and fliers. So what had to happen? A vicious daytime storm knocked out power all over the region and clogged the highways with accidents! But after waiting and assessing the traffic situation, Eric and I headed out. Luckily, the roads were clear and we arrived at the club after only missing one band, the local Abominog.

Hatred was up next and these guys simply owned the stage. Their performance was better than the one I'd seen them play earlier in the year, proving that they've not only matured in the studio with *Suffer*, but also on stage. That's why there will be an interview with them in the next issue of *Sloth*.

Emerging from hibernation for a rare live performance was Cyber Music recording artist Morbius. Only a three-piece, the band managed to hold its own due to the intense stage presence of its bassist/vocalist. His enraged performance drew most of the people toward his side of the stage, and he responded by delivering his lines right to them. Most everybody enjoyed the band, but after a few



songs I was pretty much bored with its mid-paced, formulated death metal and ready for a break. For a band that doesn't play much, Morbius didn't make a very good impression, and it would be interesting to hear how one of its albums sounds.

During the intermissions between the various bands, I met up with other notables like Paul Vanderslice from As the Sea Parts and Aantar Cobra from Horror of Horrors, as well as one of the guys from Abominog. The DC area scene is really picking up, and you're encouraged to check out these and other regional bands. Scenes don't have to stay dead forever, and we've got proof, so do your part where you are, okay?

So Cannibal Corpse went on and its performance was comparable to its latest effort, *Vile*. The guys were up there playing fast and furious death metal but I just didn't feel "it." You know, that feeling you get from music that gets into your blood and forces you to go crazy! Well, I didn't feel it and was even disappointed by the show's closer, the ever-popular "Hammer Smashed Face." The band obviously has talent -- just listen to that classic *The Bleeding* -- but has fallen into a rut, so pawn off *Vile*, put that money in the bank, and when a new Cannibal Corpse album comes out you'll have a free copy waiting for you!


Rob Barrett

After the show we hit the parking lot and waited forty-five minutes for bassist Alex Webster to show up. At this point it was about 1:30 in the morning, he was tired, I was tired and had just died of smoke inhalation in the club, but we did our damnedest to conduct a decent interview. And here it is...


Jack Owen

Sloth: Were you one of the founding members of the band?
Alex: Me, Chris, Paul, Jack, and Bob Rusay. All five of us pretty much made up the band. I called up Bob, Jack and I had just quit our old band, **Beyond Death**, and the other three guys were in a band called **Tyrant Sin**. They needed a guitar player and a bass player, and we were like, "Hey, we'll call them up and see if they want to make a new band." We didn't really want to join their old band, but we *were* interested in making a new band. So, we called them up, and that was it.

Sloth: How exactly did Bob leave? I was always in question about that.
Alex: We asked Bob to leave because we weren't satisfied with his guitar playing.


Alex Webster

Sloth: How did you convince Rob (Barrett) to leave **Malevolent Creation**?
Alex: He'd already been out of **Malevolent** for months, and **Solstice** wasn't really wasn't doing anything at the time because they didn't have a bass player. We just called him up and asked him if he wanted to do the tour -- we kicked Bob out just before the tour -- as it was just not gonna work and we needed him out. So we got rid of Bob and asked a guy named Eric Burke to join, and he didn't want to leave his band, **Lethargy**, from Rochester, New York. He was really good, but he was like, "Man, I'm sorry, I'd love to join but I can't leave these dudes, etc., etc." We were like, "That's cool," so we called up Rob and said, "Do you want to do this tour?," and he was like, "Yeah." He came up [from Florida] and did the tour. We ended up having three tours and the *Ace Ventura* thing all in a row, so Rob did a lot right away.

Sloth: How'd the *Ace Ventura* thing come about?
Alex: The movie had a spot where it needed a band like us...

Sloth: As a silly band? Just to make people laugh? When I saw it, people were like, "That's **Mötley Crüe**!"
Alex: Well, that's good for them. I'm very proud of their opinions. I know that we made a lot of people sit through seeing us. That's what made me happy about it. Fifteen seconds of that movie was us playing "Hammer Smashed Face" and millions and millions of people were forced to sit through that.

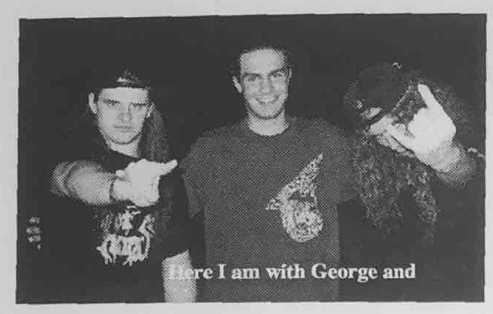
Sloth: I thought that myself and I cracked up.
Alex: That's what made me happy about it. I mean, I was very nervous about the whole thing, I was like, "Man, if they try to make us do anything we normally do not do, I'm gonna have to say no and walk off, and that's gonna drive everybody crazy." We were like, "Wow, a movie! We can fuckin' be in a movie!" They called up Metal Blade and requested us specifically 'cause Jim Carey had been listening to us, and we were like, "Yeah, we'll do this," but the same time I knew it was a comedy, and if we came off looking dumb...I mean, yeah, we're up there playin' and most people don't understand death metal, so they're gonna laugh at it like, "Ah, hah, hah, I can't understand what they're saying, ah, hah." I'm very proud of those people, but I don't care because they did have to see us. The band's name was made more visible, too.

Sloth: Was that a real show that you all were playing?
Alex: It was all bogus. It was a place we'd actually played before in Miami, but it was full, full bullshit. We were actually playing, sort of, but Paul couldn't hit the drums because whenever they have dialogue in a film and there's music, there's actually no music. When it's being filmed, it's all dialogue, so even the kids who were slamming couldn't say a word and they had to tread lightly when they were slamming so they wouldn't make noise. They'd have the playback for the first five seconds so we could find our place, and then they'd cut it off. They still patched it together wrong, so we're playing the wrong shit when we're up there.

Sloth: Was this before you moved to Florida?
Alex: It was a year before the move to Tampa.

Sloth: How come you guys moved all the way from Buffalo to Tampa?
Alex: I had personal reasons to want to get the fuck out of Buffalo, and I was really pushing the others guys to get out of there. There was shit I did not want to be around anymore, and snow's a part of it. I don't mind cold weather, but we also wanted to be a lot closer to Morrisound. Like on this last album, it was crucial that we lived there, to be with Scott (Burns) again at Morrisound, to be able to do a lot of shit we wouldn't have been able to do if we didn't live there. Before, what we'd have to do is pay for a month of living expenses, which would total out to thousands of dollars.

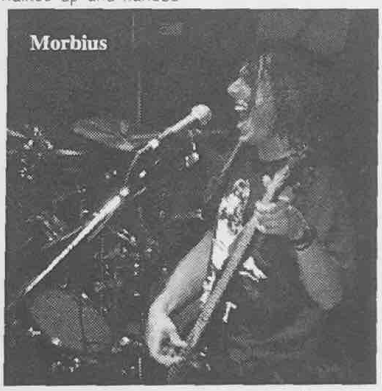
Sloth: What kind of budget does Metal Blade give you guys?
Alex: It's pretty small really, it's definitely smaller than any of the other major death metal bands. The last record we did with $35,000, and that was the most we've ever gotten. Now, that's a lot, but the first record was $5,000, the second record was $12,000, the third was $18,000, the fourth was $25,000 or $30,000, and the fifth, *Vile*, was $35,000.


Here I am with George and

Sloth: I gotta get to the question of Chris (Barnes) now...I read all about how you had to ask him to leave because of differences...
Alex: Yeah, we fired him.

Sloth: What kind of differences do you actually mean?
Alex: Well, personally we didn't get along very well, we thought that he didn't sound very good when he came and did stuff for the record. There were a few things that went on that are really not worth talking about, but there have been a lot of things personally, too. We didn't kick him out for personal reasons, though it made it easier to since we didn't get along with him. I mean, we would have tried to keep it together for the sake of our careers if we thought it could've worked, but we thought the band was gonna sound like such shit if we kept him in, so he had to go.

At this point, a member of Hatred walked up and handed Alex a copy of the band's great CD demo, *Suffer*. So we changed directions and started talking about underground bands...


Morbius

Alex: It's good to see that there are still some heavy bands out there.

Sloth: Yeah, a lot of bands are out there, and I've been getting tons of demos in the mail from around the world. So many of them try to imitate you and **Suffocation**...
Alex: Really? It's still like that? It's not so much like that in Europe anymore.

Sloth: What do you feel about all these bands that copy your style?
Alex: Well, if they are indeed inspired by us I'm very flattered and I think it's cool, but at the same time, if you really do sound that close to us -- I've got to hear some of these bands you're talking about before I can pass any judgment -- it'd probably not be in your best interest to sound like somebody else. I mean, if that's what they enjoy doing that's fine, but they shouldn't expect people to get excited about it if it's already been done. If they like playing that way then more power to them, but to improve the scene then I think some effort to develop your own sound is the way to go for sure.

Sloth: Throughout tonight, this one question has been in my head. Where do you see yourself in twenty to thirty years from now?
Alex: I'll always be playing bass, or doing something. That's a long time! I'll probably be working at a job somewhere and be playing bass on the weekends. I'll always be playing music, hopefully something interesting, something extreme. I'd love to do death metal for twenty more years but I don't know if I could physically handle it. It'd probably kill me, you know, because we're really hurting ourselves up there, it's not good for the body. I think we can keep it flying for another five to ten years. It just depends on how these guys and the audiences feel about things. But twenty to thirty years, I'm sure I'll be playing bass, but professionally or not I don't know. I've been so lucky in this profession, getting paid to play music -- I live off of this shit! It's like winning the fucking lottery! So for me to expect it to happen twice is pushing it; it's like winning the lottery twice. If **Cannibal Corpse** falls apart that's probably the end of making money.


Morbius

Sloth: When Chris was in the band he did all of the interviews and we really didn't get to hear much about you other guys. What are the other four members interested in?
Alex: Playing. I like sitting around playing death metal -- I like playing bass in general. We play our instruments a lot, we always jam. Rob (Barrett, guitar) lives with Lee and Jason from **Monstrosity** and they're always jamming together. We're really musically-centered people.

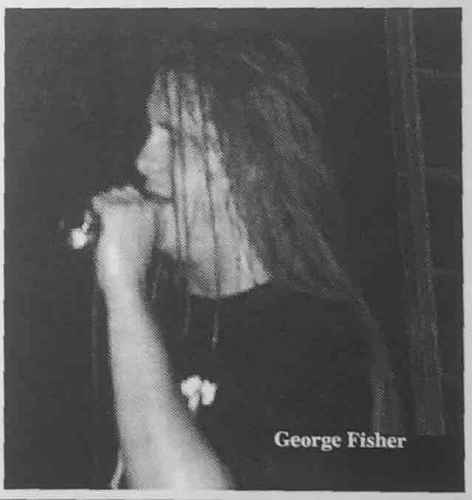
Sloth: Basically it's just music for you guys?
Alex: For me it's fully music, and I read, too. I don't party anymore. I'll drink beer occasionally but I don't smoke weed or anything. George watches sports and listens to a lot of death metal. Paul plays sports and doesn't smoke cigarettes. We're pretty standard people.

Sloth: Just a bunch of guys.
Alex: Yeah, and I'll tell you this: You don't get bored not having a job. People are always saying, "Don't you get bored sitting around all the time?" And I'm like, "Fuck no!" (Laughs) I've got plenty of things to keep myself busy. I've always wanted to not have to work, and it's killer that I can sit around playing all day, then read a book for like six fucking hours straight. I used to have to work eight hours a day, five days a week, and I was like, "Fuck! This fucking sucks!" By the time I'd get home from work I'd be dead, and *then* I'd go to band practice, but I never really had the time to do all I wanted to do. And now I do, and I realize we're privileged.

Just then, George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher walked up, so I started talking with him.

Sloth: How hard was it for you to learn the old songs? Tonight you were doing stuff from *Butchered at Birth*, songs that Chris had patented. How did you tackle this great challenge?
George: Everything was pretty straight forward and not too hard. I think a couple of vocal patterns were hard because the timing was a little off on the records. My real problem was that I didn't sing as low as he did on the older songs. Besides that, the only real difference was deciding if maybe I'd put an extra scream here or there. I'm not trying to play Chris down, but it wasn't really a super challenge. All I had to do was learn the lyrics.

Sloth: Do you plan to write a majority of the lyrics like Chris did when he was in the band?
George: I don't want to take the whole load because five minds are better than one. If it turns out that I'm the only one who has lyrics for the next album then that's what works. If Alex does, if Jack does, then that's the way it works. This is a band and that's the way it's going to be from now on.


George Fisher

Nonpoint, continued from page 8...
Sloth: What do "nonpoint factor" and "nonpoint" mean? How come you simplified the name?
Mike: To be totally honest "nonpoint factor" has no specific meaning to it, we just liked the way it sounded. We don't feel that the name *has* to describe the band, we let the music do that for us. We dropped the "factor" off because there were to many bands popping up using it in their own names.

Sloth: A few years ago, Florida was a death metal hot-spot. Now, bands like **Acheron**, **Burning Inside**, and **Nonpoint** are trying to resurrect the scene. What is your take on all this? Are things getting better or worse? Is there hope for metal to thrive in Florida or anywhere else?

Mike: The metal scene here sucks, and clubs are constantly changing format or closing down. Metal and all of its different forms will never go away because there will always be a band that plays some form of heavy music and there will always be a fan to enjoy it and support it. As far as metal thriving in Florida or anywhere else? A lot if it depends on kids supporting their local scene.

Sloth: What other underground bands do you think deserve everyone's support?
Mike: All local bands who work hard and pay their dues deserve all of our support. But a few of my favorite ones are **Puya**, **Compression**, **Chalk**, **Third Rail**, and **Pain Principal**.

Sloth: Any final words?
Mike: Remember, all of the bands whose albums you buy were once local, too. Without support on the local level, things will continue to stay slow and eventually stagnate.

Nonpoint
c/o Mike Hillyard
824 Twin Lakes Dr.
Coral Springs, FL 33071
e-mail: mhilly@ix.netcom.com

DEMO REVIEWS

Last issue we mentioned that we planned on having more demo reviews, and here we have close to a hundred, so there's bound to be something worth checking out. Also, we sent out these reviews to the bands before the magazine was finished in case any were displeased and felt the need to send in a rebuttal. We printed what they wrote exactly as it appeared, and opted not to comment on what was said. Read on, for now is your chance to support the underground!

Abazagorath

Channeling the Ethereal Moons
1996

Along with the CD EP's three tracks, **Abazagorath**'s black metal mainman Nyarlathotep (say that three times fast!) has also included a couple newer songs. Each shows vocal restraint and the guitars are less than piercing, a black metal rarity these days. Instead, the vocals are gruff and blend well with the decently produced instruments.

Channeling the Ethereal Moons is an enjoyable listen from start to finish, as each song is different and has memorable moments. **Abazagorath** may not be too original, but the band's strong, riff-oriented material is catchy and will attract a diverse metal audience.

The two new tracks are more of the same, with the guitar taking an **Absu** influence. Be on the lookout for **Abazagorath**, a band that's giving American black metal a good name. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

$6 US/$8 world (CD EP) to:
32 Hillside Terrace
Wayne, NJ 07470

ABSTAIN

Superiority Complex
1996

Anti-meat and anti-greed, **Abstain** is on a mission! Explaining why these guys chose to play music is also mission, one in which I shall not partake. All of the band's songs are short, speedy hardcore/punk/grind that sound the same. Unfortunately, the guitarist and drummer just aren't up to the task, leaving the vocalist no other option than to shout the whole time in an attempt to cover up their inadequacies. Relying on the methods of countless others, **Abstain** is generic and totally unconvincing. The songs start off with everything intact, but, unlike a nice, meaty burger, everything soon falls apart. 🎸🎸

$2 US/$3 world to:
Rob M.
4861 Merton Ave.
Cypress, CA 90630



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Accursed

2 Song Promo
1995

Before releasing *Meditations Among the Tombs* on Visceral Productions, **Accursed** put out this little demo. The first song, "Door to December," starts as average black/death with a European feel, set back horribly by the poor drumming and production. At times it sounds as if we're hearing a bass and drum duet, despite the guitarist doing his damnedest to be heard. A keyboard-laced moody section offers a small consolation to those listening.

"Cimmerian Darkness" opens with an wonderfully programmed intro that is full of serene atmospheres and perfectly intertwined drums, keyboards, and sound effects. The body of the song, however, is like the first, with the shrieks replaced by **Sepultura** vocals a la *Schizophrenia*. With better production and refined drumming, **Accursed** could break though. 🎸🎸 3/4

$3 US/$4 world to:
Gabe Catanzaro
3516 Men. River Pkwy.
Wauwatosa, WI 53222

Agonizing Terror

Disharmony in God's Creation
1995

Hailing from Portugal, the land of **Moonspell** and where old people are called portugeezers, comes **Agonizing Terror**. Fast brutal grind is the focus of *Disharmony...*'s five songs, and what keeps the tape from being a complete catastrophe are the drumming skills of Sara. She gives the songs a **Bolt Thrower** feel, backing guitars that churn along with lively but trite riffs.

The expected deep vocals have no positive effect, and the demo's cloudy production further hinders the band from making much of a dent in the already supersaturated underground. **Agonizing Terror** can hold a beat but couldn't write anything original to save its life. 🎸🎸 1/2

$6 everywhere to:
Tójó
Rua João de Deus, n^0 24 - Ilhavo
3830 Ilhavo
Portugal

Angelkill

Grave Samples
1995

Since *Grave Samples* is a collection of songs from 1989-90, let's hope this is not a very good representation of **Angelkill**. The first few minutes of the band's thrash is pretty decent, but as each song of repetitive, riff-based music plays through, it becomes utterly boring. Blakk's annoying vocal rasp sounds forced and imposes upon both the music and the listener, and is perhaps the low point of the tape.

"Die by the Cross" points to one of the band's main influences, starting off just like **Metallica**'s "Harvester of Sorrow," but disappoints like each other song. Real fans of old thrash might like **Angelkill**, but unless you're a true **Exodus** fiend, the repetition will get to you, too. 🎸🎸

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 371
LeClaire, IA 52753

ANSHAR

Self-titled
1996

Only three songs, the debut demo from **Anshar** shows more potential and ability than tapes from bands that have been releasing twelve song demos for years. With thrash and progressive guitar influences, **Anshar** blends together different vocals, musical styles, and tempos to create music comparable to **Strapping Young Lad**.

Reading that, you should have already died of a heart attack, but if not, read on for more ungodly praise! Everything about *this* tape is pure genius, from the superior song arrangements to knowledgeable guitar technique, and the diverse nature of each song guarantees you'll keep interested.



The final song, "Beyond Redemption," shows the clearest **S.Y.L.** similarity, with its pounding guitars and ape-like vocals. The thick riffing makes it the heaviest as well, but all three are equally good. According to **Anshar**, this tape "doesn't even hint at the band's energy" and hopes to record a "more truthful representation" soon. Interested? You should be, this is the future. 🎸🎸🎸🎸

Write for price to:
127 1/2 North Spring St., Apt. 3
Beaver Dam, WI 53916

As the Sea Parts

Trilogy of Sorrow
1995

While hundreds of US bands continue trying to be the most brutal of all, there are a few that wish to do something different. One of those bands is **As the Sea Parts**. The death/doom presented by newcomer Paul Vanderslice and **Witch-Hunt** drummer Erik Sayenga is high caliber music that delivers. With moody guitar work that is full of melody and gruff vocals that don't infringe upon the music, this duo has come up with a winning combination. Each emotional song is well crafted and thought out, truly capturing the dismay of doom.

The tape's overall European feel is fresh, allowing the band's individual personality to shine through. It's hard to believe **As the Sea Parts** has yet to become a familiar underground name; I give this my fullest support. 🎸🎸🎸🎸

$4 US/$5 world to:
Paul Vanderslice
13643 Lindendale Rd.
Dale City, VA 22193

Autism

Self-titled
1995

A small band trying to break into the death metal scene, **Autism** try and try, but its overall mediocrity make this demo one to put in a Christmas stocking along with a lump of coal. Setting aside the rough production, listening to the songs for what they are still is more excruciating than watching those NBC "Must Sleep TV" sitcoms, because a couple drum fills and odd guitar parts can't support the weight of four plodding songs.

With deep, hasty vocals and sloppy, forgettable guitars, **Autism** simply sets the standard for incompetent death metal. Hang it up guys, you're the worst.

$5 US/$5 + SASE and 2 IRCs world to:
P.O. Box 83142
Milwaukee, WI 53223

Autumn Dawn

...Emptiness
1996

A two man band from Maryland, **Autumn Dawn** features Mike Harrison from the defunct **Cadaver Symposium** and Vinnie Matthews, ex-singer of **Sadistic Torment**. They blend exceptionally well together and it's no surprise they were picked up by Wild Rags.

Cadaver Symposium was okay, with its third and final demo tape full of old school, Florida-style death metal based around catchy thrash riffs. The band's musical immaturity included sloppy songs and hasty vocals. Neither are found on *...Emptiness*, which is a huge improvement over Harrison's work when he had a whole band!

Autumn Dawn is similar to **Morbid Angel**, its music especially reminiscent the *Covenant* and *Domination* albums. The songs are mid-paced, full of the guitar exploration of both Trey Azagthoth and **Rotting Christ**'s Necromayhem. Other old school US elements stemming from **Cadaver Symposium** help give the band its individual character.

Vinnie Matthews delivers a solid performance with his trademark bark, helping to make *...Emptiness* quite an impressive debut. 3/4

$7 everywhere (CD EP) to:
Mike Harrison
8815 Howard Mills Dr.
Savage, MD 20763

Baseball Furies

Demo 1996

With a humorous J-card this light punk tape is a listen that'll put a smile on your face. The **Baseball Furies** -- its name taken from a gang in *The Warriors*, a great late '70s film about a hard night in New York's gang-infested streets -- play a rowdy four song set with both punk and metal influences. As one follows along with the lyrics, he sees nearly a dozen lines that read: *lead: Hanneman/King/Hanneman.* Surprisingly, the noted solos aren't there! Go figure...

A neat cover of "Runaway" sticks to the almost '50s mood the whole demo has, and before you know it, the tape's over. Different than anything else reviewed this issue, the **Baseball Furies**'s members are also in a whole slew of other bands, so it might be worth your while to write and see what else is available. 1/4

Write for price to:
Sam Jones
3630 Seminary Rd.
Alexandria, VA 22304

Beheaded

Souldead
1995

Besides being able to speak the international language of brutal death, **Beheaded** also incorporates good soloing techniques that may ultimately make a name for the band. *Souldead*'s cheesy grind and unbelievably forceful vocals are made tolerable by its super production and pleasant piano and synth arrangements. Unfortunately, the vocals don't change with the music, in essence nullifying the musicians' attempts at diversity.

Still, it's nice to see yet another country is supplying the world with death metal bands! And being a first demo, *Souldead* shows **Beheaded** has potential -- certainly a lot more than many American bands. Recently the band signed with Sweden's X-treme Records, so be on the lookout for a full length album. 1/4

$7 Europe/$8 world to:
David Cachia
83, Pellegrinagg St.
Cospicua CSP 04
Malta

Betrayer

The Truth is out There
1996

Further demonstrating metal's ubiquity is Israel's **Betrayer**, a band out for blood! Combining hardcore and thrash, *The Truth is out There* is a wild ride that rarely relents. While the band's trademark stop-and-go thrash guitar riffing is sometimes hard for drummer Ido to handle, things are pretty good overall. Yishai's vocals, delivered in a hardcore style, combine the accent of **Sepultura**'s Max Cavalera and pronunciation of German vocalists from bands like **Baphomet** and **Crematory** into an appealing, energetic tirade against society's ills.

The demo has clear production and all of the instruments come out well, not that thrash guitars have ever been found hindering. Despite the band's fresh flavor, **Betrayer** has yet to fully develop as a contender due to its patchwork songwriting and challenging crossover style. The next demo will truly indicate what the band is made of. 1/4

$6 everywhere to:
Yishai Swearts
10 Kazan St.
Raanana 43612
Israel

Blackened Chapel

Demo 3: Forever Falling
1996

Thinking agonizingly slow songs with stretched out growls meant good doom, former quintet and now solo project **Blackened Chapel** charges at you like a sprinting turtle! Granted, there are faster selections, like the five "Decapitation," but they come off as impressive as **Lividity** with their recycled riffs and worthless vocals. Matt Davis's generic use of keyboards fails to add a layer of atmosphere, instead littering the already repugnant music. I've been getting into lots of doom lately, but **Blackened Chapel** has me yearning for the cheesy death metal it played as a five piece. *Forever Falling* is the band's third demo and no hope is in sight, so go spend your money on something more worthwhile, like a book on how to discourage shitty bands from putting out demos. 1/4

Write for price to:
Matt Davis
P.O. Box 179
Baldwinville, MA 01436

Blood Coven

Dark Harmonies
1995

Awesome, awesome, awesome! Something about this trio makes its music both fresh and desirable at the same time. Perhaps it's the great European guitar work, the alternating high and low vocals, or the lengthy songs that show **Blood Coven** realizes a demo band must really wow the listener if he's to become a true fan.

An original, dirty sound showcases the four quality songs of *Dark Harmonies*, which includes a heavy, melodic instrumental in "The Burning Season" and "Statuary," a song on King Fowley's (**Deceased**) compilation, *Midnight Offerings II*, for his label, With Your Teeth Records. "Kiss of Akhkharu," another great song, opens with a sword fighting scene in which a couple guys are shouting in Italian(?). All of that, of course, is just the icing on the cake when you've got such a competent demo from a band worthy of a record deal. Check **Blood Coven** out.

$5 everywhere to:
Dann Saladin
3601 Dayton Ave.
Kent , OH 44240

Blood Ritual

Cruciform Antithesis
1994 Moribund Records

Another example of a band that knew it sucked so it decided to form its own label, **Blood Ritual** creates the kind of listening enjoyment only surpassed by hearing **M.C. Hammer** bootlegs. The band has no actual style, perhaps due to the hindering layers of vocal clouds, poor production, indecipherable speed, and overall sub-par abilities of the musicians themselves. Anybody who masturbates can pick up a guitar and strum fast!

Even for the most avid grind freak, *Cruciform Antithesis* is a complete waste of time and money. If this band has anything to offer, it will take years and years before it's able to shed its influences...you know, forget that. That's friendly bullshit. **Blood Ritual** is garbage! Some people just don't have it.

$5 US/$6 world to:
Moribund Records
P.O. Box 77314
Seattle, WA 98177-0314



Burning Inside

Self-titled
1995

The drummer and guitarist from the defunct **Public Assassin** have come back with a demo that is so well done on all playing fields that I cannot bring forth enough praise. Right off the bat, hyperspeed drumming very similar to Dave Culross's on **Malevolent Creation**'s *Eternal* just explodes in your face. The guitars keep right up, and each of the five songs is tight, with lots of time changes and bursts of energy, all executed with total conviction. Honestly, **Burning Inside** has come out of nowhere and impressed the hell out of me.

A tough task of handling the production was in fact done very well, blending the instruments and vocals appropriately. Speaking of the vocals, they're an enjoyable growl that fit with the music perfectly. Almost the speed and growls also lie slower guitar harmonies, solos, and rhythms which solidify why **Burning Inside** stands out. Definitely get in touch with these guys.

$4 US/$5 world to:
Steve Childers
101 E. Altamonte Dr. #1232
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701

Bypass

Natural Selection
1996

Three of my good friends make up **Bypass** -- which was originally **Polaris** and released this demo under the

name **Forhad and the Grasshoppers** -- and I've been an active critic of the band for nearly three years, which these guys will attest to with clenched fists! Their debut, *March of the Ants*, consisted of one quirky, silly original and a bunch of **Metallica** covers. I gave 'em hell for it, and the two years in between releases meant drastic changes on all fronts.

Although the **Metallica** influence shines through in the solos, the knowledgeable musicians are also keen on jazz, funk, and progressive metal, and ex-drummer Stephen Ritt was and still is in a punk band called **The Neurotiks**. *Natural Selection*'s six songs are energetic, catchy, and well done, from the addictive chorus riff of "The Hegira" to the ever expanding vocal range of Forhad Hossain on "The Uncreation." **Bypass** proves metal does not have to stick to just one category with class.

The overall light attitude of the band -- sorry, no dark armor to speak of today -- is demonstrated by the weird bass intros of Ron Knobler and songs like the title track and "Public TV." New drummer and all around good guy Michael Polson will be a fine replacement for Ritt, but we still need your help in deciding the band's permanent name. Vote for one of the three names above or the latest entry, **Phil Alterman is So Damn Cool**. 3/4

$4 US/$5 world to:
Ron Knobler
4000 N. Garland St.
Alexandria, VA 22304

Christ Inversion

Obey the Will of Hell
1995

You see this tape and you're thinking, "Oh, great! Pathetic American black metal." So you pop in the tape and get the generic "Let Jesus fuck you" excerpt from *The Exorcist*, which every "evil" band uses, don't ya know? Expecting a chicken scream any second, you're surprised when some blazing death metal kicks in. As the next songs play, you get really confused. This seven song demo appears to be full of well-structured anti-Jesus music with conviction! What's the deal? There are guitar harmonies, **Pantera** and **Acid Bath** vocals, and, I dare say, some upbeat riffs that are groovy!

This unpredictable release is rewarding if you can get beyond the cheesy Satanic intros, for **Christ Inversion** has come up with one of the most original releases of the past couple of years. Its diverse nature, extreme conviction (hear the singer shriek on "Lucifer Rise" and you'll believe), and overall composition are what make *Obey...* a classic. Folks, the days of **Deicide** are over and **Christ Inversion** is ready to take the throne.

$6 everywhere to:
Wayne Fabra
503 Community St.
Arabi, LA 70032

Coal Chamber

Demo 1996

Trying to hop onto the **Korn** bandwagon, Roadrunner Records recently signed **Coal Chamber**. Luckily, only slight similarities exist between the two -- as the brilliance of **Korn**'s debut can't be imitated -- and **Coal Chamber** does manage to produce a pretty original piece of work itself. The music is much heavier than **Korn**'s, and the varied vocals are sung with arrangement more in mind than frustration. The demo's three songs flow well and will appeal to a diverse audience because the vocals are understandable and have a slight pop feel.

And so what if the **Korn** influence really shines through on "I?" I'd rather see the trend to mimic **Korn** pick up as opposed to hearing another **Nirvana** mourner present his crap tribute band with every song called, "Why I love Kurt." Maybe Roadrunner's picking up of **Coal Chamber** wasn't a bad idea after all. 3/4

Write for price to:
832 3/4 N. Alta Vista Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Coalition

Self-titled
1995

Going beyond the stereotype that a New York band has to be brutal mosh or **Biohazard**-core, **Coalition** may someday be the purveyors of a new trend. The band's style starts with simple hardcore riffs that serve a "backdrop" for hollow vocal shouts that are part of one particular style. At times these vocals are an asset, and at others a boring, muffled hindrance. The problem can be eliminated with intense practice, figuring out what works and what doesn't.

Light keyboard use and able soloing deepens the **Coalition** vibe, though repetition does take its toll. However, you forget all about the negatives as the final, instrumental track, "My Time of Passing," kicks in. It slowly progresses from an acoustic melody -- something most bands would be content to base the whole song on -- to chanting amid drumming and guitar, sounding similar to **The Cure** and **Tiamat**. It is a lengthy, soothing experience equaled by few so-called atmospheric pieces. Look for newer, more mature material from **Coalition** soon. 1/4

Write for price to:
29 Churchill St.
Little Falls, NY 13365

Compression

Demo III
1995

I gladly admit I was caught off guard by this one. Calling their music "an alternative to hardcore," the members of **Compression** take on a daring feat yet come through with flying colors. Nothing like the ridiculous **Biohazard** or any other popcore act, **Compression** captures true personal emotion in this powerful five song demo. As with many good bands, quality song structuring is what ultimately sets **Compression** apart, and embracing ideas from the likes of **Rage Against the Machine**, **Korn**, and heavier acts has been done with a personal touch not to be forgotten.

Greg's gruff vocals border between singing and standard hardcore yelling, and the strong music is based on uptempo rhythms and occasional melodies. An original, classy act, **Compression** has recently signed with Tolerance Records; a deserved reward.

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 6726
Towson, MD 21285-6726



CorpseVomit

Bastards of Foreverfilth
1996

Chicago's **CorpseVomit** has been together for over three years and has released a pair of demos, 1994's *Gathering Chemical Children* and now *Bastards of Foreverfilth*. Both exhibit the band's grasp of speedy, brutal death that is highlighted by the drumming of Garrett Scanlan. Most of the vocals are regular deep growls, with various rasps finding their way into the songs, too.

Good arrangement keeps the unoriginal music from becoming boring, along with the aid if frequent drum and tempo changes. Some of the really fast sections tend to be sloppy, but most of the songs end up flowing pretty well. Once again, **CorpseVomit** is not a standout, but this pair of promising releases comes from a band more able than not. Both tapes get:

Write for price to:
Matt McClelland
8219 S. Troy
Chicago, IL 60652

CRUCIFER

Separation
1995

After releasing a pair of weak, cheesy death metal albums, *Festival of Death* and *Pictures of Heaven*, **Crucifer** released a three song sampler of an upcoming, highly delayed album. *Separation* shows a change in styles, as the band opts to take the '80s hard rock approach! Being that **Winger** and **Tuff** are completely forgotten and **Mötley Crüe** is but a fading memory (don't tell **Oppressor**), it's evident that this style went out with the dinosaurs, and no amount of cloning its remnants with death metal DNA can bring it back. Not much more to say, really. There are weak raspy vocals to keep this from being glam, but the thin production akin to **Crucifer** releases sure makes it close. 1/4

$5 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 3222
Fredricksburg, VA 22402

Damage

Black the Sky
1995

Only a couple of years old and already with at least three demos, **Damage** shows what comes from hard work. Incorporating gruff vocals in a **Metallica** way with the crunchy sound and riffs of **Konkhra** and a little *Cowboys from Hell* **Pantera**, the band's brand of catchy, mid-paced metal is a winner. A vague Swedish sound also permeates, and all the elements of **Damage** blended together create an original style and sound.

The songs don't delve deeply into uncharted waters, but what's done is done well, and **Damage** is better than most underground bands. Look around for this tape (Wild Rags carries it), because its twenty-five minutes of crunch metal are worth it! 1/2

Write for price to:
Gordon Johnston
Täppgränd 105, 2tr
121 33 Enskededalen
Sweden

Dead by Day

Out of the Krypt
1996

With vampires being the band's conceptual focus, **Dead by Day** offers a contrast to what most other American bands are doing today. "Gothic doom with a bite," the music is convincing and shows the members are into the style for genuine reasons. Each of the five songs is

Underground METAL Zine

Issue 1 is now Sold Out. Issue 2 will be out soon featuring interviews with **Naphobia**, Ron from **Dominion Records**, **Millenia**, **Krom**, **Enertia**, Ray from **Metal Curse Zine** and more. Lots of reviews, contact addresses and more. $ 3.00US - $4.00 World. Send money orders made out to Underground Metal or well concealed cash.(US funds only) Underground Metal Distribution is growing daily; write for a free catalog.

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Perrysburg, Ohio 43551 USA
Web page: http://norden1.com/~hkolb/umetal.html
Email: hkolb@norden1.com

different, with varied gothic vocals and occasional keyboards adding a flair. This band has great potential!

What sets **Dead by Day** back is the endless repetition of choruses in otherwise good songs, like "Legions of the Damned" and "Blood Feast." Besides that, the band's style of light, catchy, gothic doom is impressive and easy on the ears. Look for an upcoming full-length CD soon. 🎸🎸🎸 1/4

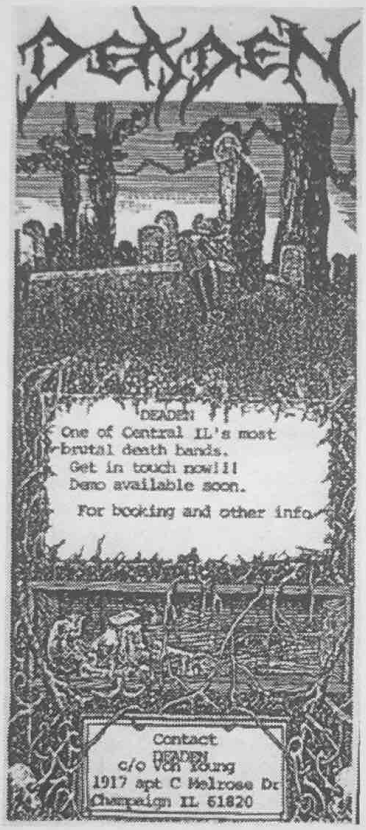
Write for price to:
9527 Milstead Dr.
Bethesda, MD 20817

Deaden

Self-titled
1995

It's a shame this tape consists of only two songs, because **Deaden**'s potential is great. A combination of **Cannibal Corpse** song structures and Florida's **Brutality**'s technicality, **Deaden** makes for some good music! The tape's superb sound production really brings out the guitar crunch, and the speedy sections are handled well by the whole band.

What sets **Deaden** back are the slow parts, which are too **Cannibal Corpse**-ish and can be done by any band, *even* **Internal Bleeding**! They're cheesy wastes of time, take too long, and are not brutal. The excellent picking abilities of Dean Stockton and Von Young go to waste and are just begging to be utilized. A good batch of speed does end the tape on a positive note, though. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2



Write for price to:
Von Young
P.O Box 286
Bondville, IL 61815

Dehumanized

Terminal Punishment
1996

A quintet from New York, **Dehumanized** features former **Immortal Suffering** guitarist Dave Zatuchney. You may have already read the review of that band's awful effort -- it's just a few pages ahead -- and seen that its downfall lies in its addiction to snail-like tempos. Well, **Dehumanized** is a sped up version of **Immortal Suffering**, minus the silly drumming, and it's no wonder Dave switched bands.

Pretty standard brutal death metal, *Terminal Punishment* is complete with discordant guitars, generic vocals, and tempo variations. Most of the riffs are unoriginal, with the songs' saving grace being their catchy speed sections.

The four songs on this tape are well-produced but could be from a whole handful nameless demos, and simply not enough stands out from the norm to make this a mandatory purchase. Those who crave brutality would find this better than most underground demos, but plain and simple, **Dehumanized** needs more time to allow its guitars to lead the way, not the ridiculous, tempo-stopping vocals. Maybe next time. 🎸🎸 3/4

Write for price to:
George Torres
67-39 Kissena Blvd. Apt. 4D
Flushing, NY 11367

Depressor

Self-titled
1995

Quite a pessimistic little demo we have here from **Depressor**! These songs about everyone's death in a nuclear winter, letting cows live, and degrading kids are sure to brighten your day. Musically, the drum programming gives the band a techno-metal feel, because the guitars are distorted and pull off some heavy stuff. Regretfully, the enjoyable music is set back by the vocals, which are spoken words coming from an angry mouth full of cotton. Overall, this industrial metal band with a punk attitude is all right, and a listen every once in a while won't kill you. 🎸🎸🎸

$4 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 472007
San Francisco, CA 94147-2007

Desolate

The Scourge of Sanity
1994

A classic, **Desolate**'s *The Scourge of Sanity* is one of those rare gems that will always sound new, no matter what stupid trend rules the day. It forges a new path not tread before, blending both black and death metal with a European feel. **Desolate** is a ruthless band of fiends that takes you on horrific trips through dungeons and places of rotting dead.

A professional production job blends the instruments well and the guitar tone is at just the right setting to allow both distorted chords and decipherable single notes. A background growl compliments a word jumbling John Tardy (**Obituary**) rasp. The songs are written with both the vocals and instruments in mind, with many time changes and main riffs left alone, not hindered by unnecessary shrieks. Each is an adventure where there is little turning back.

To compare, some of the churning riffs resemble those of **Bolt Thrower**, and the melodic sections have a real European feel. The tape has been out for a while, so be on the lookout for new material from **Desolate**. 🎸🎸🎸🎸

Write for price to:
Jeremy Kibort
63 Hampstead Pl.
Athol, MA 01331

Destroyed by Anger

Self-titled
1996

Taking a lot of ideas from **Pantera** and blending them with a New York attitude, the quintet **Destroyed by Anger** goes for it all on its new three song sampler. **D.B.A.**'s slow, thick riff approach has and still is being used to death, and the band has trouble standing out due to its seemingly artificial conviction and frugal use of tempo changes.

This angry, hardcore style of **D.B.A.** needs time to change, and don't doubt that it will once the bassist picks up the latest **White Zombie** at a used CD shop. 🎸🎸🎸



Write for price to:
Jason Fligman Management
80 Strathmore Court Dr.
Coram, NY 11727

Deus-ex-Machina

Society's Children
1995

Taking a fresh approach to their metal music, the guys in **D.E.M.** are bound to further separate themselves from the pack as time goes on. Although their style is light riff metal with old **Alice in Chains** vocals, others call it groove metal, whatever that means.

This fresh quintet stands out, not only because it hasn't jumped on the death metal bandwagon, but also because its six song demo is delivered with determination and professionalism. The crisp production brings out the crunchy guitars even while R. McCombs is singing, something bands appear to be having trouble with these days.

It's always paining to say this, because it acknowledging people's close-mindedness and the fact that a band doing something original will be ignored because of style, but if you're a death fiend, don't bother picking this up. (Hold on, I gotta wipe a tear away.) On the other hand, if you want some heavy stuff with a mainstream feel, don't be ashamed to pick up **D.E.M.** 🎸🎸🎸 1/2 (By the way, the band just released a new demo, entitled *Maxt*, available for $5 worldwide.)

$5 everywhere to:
4121 E. St. Rd. 116
Geneva, IN 46740

Dspayre

Meet Death at Full Throttle
1996

With a strong title and a crazy cover of some guy gleefully holding a gun to his head, **Dspayre**'s debut demo has the stage set for a wild ride. Unfortunately, we only catch a glimpse of death in second gear. You see, the band's speedy death/thrash doesn't really accomplish anything. Every vocal line Randy Carter belts out sounds the same and overpowers the music, making the speedy, **Vader**-esque guitars hard to hear.

Besides the tape's mediocre production (which any band can fall victim to), the music does not live up to its obvious potential. The demo's opener, "Objects of my Desire," starts with a cool, old school series of notes, but yields and goes to power chords for the vocals. **Dspayre** needs to shift its focus more to the music and not worry about the winded lyrics which bring the songs down. If that happens, we could have an underground competitor, but for now, just another tape in the stack. 🎸🎸 1/2

$3 + four stamps (US)/$4 + four stamps (world) to:
Jim Ash
15 Old County Rd.
Hingham, MA 02043

DUNWICH

Ignorance Powered by Greed
1994

Instead of being a fairly tolerable batch of 80's thrash and heavy metal, this deteriorates to crap and the only thing worth mentioning is the soloing ability of lead guitarist Dave Hagen. Why does **Dunwich** have me so up in arms? The truly wretched vocals of De Anna



Voyles, that's what! Try to imagine a really poor **Lita Ford** impersonator, or just the worst '80s female vocalist you've heard, and you've got De Anna. That's truly a shame because a lot of riffs are written to mimic the awful vocal lines, making for a very miserable listening experience. This doctor highly recommends a dose of musical modernization, but it appears **Dunwich** needs a specialist: Dr. Kavorkian. 1/2

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 2143
Otto, MO 63052

Dying Breed

Hatefuck
1996

This CD is a heavy metal wrecking ball! *Hatefuck* is made up of three pounding songs of intense, technical, modern, and crushing metal that make it one of the most complete demos available. Driving beats, hardcore vocals and death growls, and churning guitars are really what make **Dying Breed** a band to watch out for. By combining elements of **Illdisposed**, **Lemming Project**, and **Bolt Thrower** with an American hardcore attitide, **Dying Breed** is rewriting the book on death metal.

There's no reason any fan of good music should have this CD. An added incentive is the cover photo; initially you think it's just a close-up shot of an eye like on **Illdisposed**'s *Return to Tomorrow*, then you realize it's a glass eye in...

$8 US/$10 world to:
Richard Mora
RPM Entertainment Group
310 Fourth St., Suite 2
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

El Pecado

Angel de mi Guarda
1994

An interesting little tape, *Angel de mi Guarda* is highlighted by the high screams of the vocalist that are all done in Spanish! Not just a gimmick, these vocals add a new dimension to the music, which is generic, old school death metal. A couple of the songs start off nicely, but **El Pecado** (The Sin) just doesn't do anything with the positive momentum, letting each one sort of drift off into the sunset.

As you may have noticed, this tape is pretty old and most likely not a good representation of the **El Pecado** of today. Write to them about possible newer material, plus I think one of the members puts out a 'zine.

$6 everywhere to:
Mike Coles
P.O. Box 603
Anna, IL 62906

El Pecado's Rebuttal: I petty much agree with what you said. It was the beginning of three youngsters who wanted to release something fast, chaotic, etc...The second demo [*Mi Senda*] is better. The songs are better structered, longer, and more thought out. I'm sure we will experiment more and become better as musicians, as soon as we get a drummer! Well, I'll let you go. Keep up the good work, don't kiss ass!

- Mike Coles

EMBER

Within the Realm of the Snowqueen
1995

Another American black metal band to incorporate heavier riffing into its music, **Ember** is similar to New Jersey's **Abazagorath**. The vocals also have a more American feel, being a furious yell rather than a forest shriek, and contribute greatly to the success of the demo.

Some of the black metal picking is difficult for guitarist Mourngrym, but the main rhythms that the three songs follow are catchy and well done. Nothing too experimental, *Within the Realm of the Snowqueen* is a fun tape, and that's what you want. Worth the five bucks. 1/2

$5 everywhere to:
Peter Mlot
P.O. Box 2177
Darien, IL 60561

END OF ONE

No Souls Saved
1996

If nothing else, **End of One** really tries. Able to play standard death metal, the band dabs in thrash and black metal as well, but fails to use this diversity to its advantage. When you wish to incorporate different styles, you can't just play the basics! You've got to delve deep, do something new. **End of One** lacks that extra oomph, churning out endless garbage with its tried riffs and average vocals. How many more bands like that do we need? As mentioned, the act plays well together and probably gets good local support, but every town has numerous bands like this and few go far without doing something really groundbreaking. 1/2

Write for price to:
3 Malmros Terrace
Poughkeppsie, NY 12601
or
EndOfOne@aol.com

Equinox

Upon the Throne of Eternity
1995

An old American black metal band, **Equinox** was signed to Unisound Records not too long ago, and *Return to Mystery* is available, if you're interested. Along with this two song EP is included "Infernal Atavism (Descend to Tetragrammation)" from the album.

With a guitar style reminiscent of **Immortal**'s *Diabolical Full Moon Mysticism*, the band borders upon boredom but mixes things up enough to avoid such an unfortunate catastrophe. Keeping the tempo fast helps, but the band's restraint found on "Path to Eternal Ruin" is what really makes it effective. The vocals are like fellow Floridian Chuck Shuldinger's (**Control Denied**, ex-**Death**), with emphasis put on the higher notes.

In summary, **Equinox** blends black and death into a fairly tight batch of songs, and though their formulas may be as old as Coca-Cola's, enough effort is made to branch out. Does the band deserve to get signed? Despite **Equinox**'s longevity, I'd still say its music lacks the freshness that warrants a contract. Maybe Unisound -- like the Democratic party -- fills quotas, and needed more Black-Metal-Americans. 1/4

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 350333
Grand Island, FL 32735

Especially Likely Sloth

Self-titled
1995

Especially Likely Sloth features Jason Walton, a man of a thousand bands, including **Remember** and **Sursurris Inanis**. Definitely not for most of you, this "music" is full of cheap keyboard programming and chipmunk vocals. Humor is the desired result, but most of the spontaneous and endless material just isn't funny! There are tons of songs, including some '96 advance tracks which point to **E.L.S.**'s new direction of including lots of sound clips, from *The Simpsons* to **Type O Negative**. Unfortunately, a listen through just a couple songs is enough, and even then you question your own sense of humor. Was there even a time when closets were funny?

Perhaps with more practice and preparation, **Especially Likely Sloth** will truly be funny, but until then, requires a "very open mind," as Jason puts it. 3/4

$2 or a 90 minute blank tape everywhere to:
651 13th Ave. NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413

ETERNAL HATRED vs. USURPER

Battle to Sound the Same
1994

To the average listener, the bands **Eternal Hatred** and **Usurper** would be one in the same. The similarities the demos -- *Vengeance from the Grave* and *Visions from the Gods*, respectively -- have are amazing; for one, look at the titles! But that's just the start. Not only do all of the members use scary names -- **E.H.**'s one man is Carcass Chris, while **Usurper** has Diabolical Slaughter, Scythe, Apocalyptic Warlord, and Necromancer -- but each demo has four songs. Wait! Each was recorded at Eatin Studios by Brian Eaton in July of 1994! It's absolutely insane!!!!



The result of such "coincidences" is a pair of tapes that sounds pretty much the same (each repeats its program on both sides, too). For one, the vocals on both sound just like Dave Piekarz of **The Dead Youth** (and **Usurper**?), the guitars all sound too dry, and each tape sounds like there's drum programming, although only **Eternal Hatred** admits it. It's a toss up as to which tight demo you should buy (if either), though I'd opt for **Eternal Hatred** because of Chris's good soloing. Nonetheless, I suspect a Brian Eaton conspiracy going on here (who killed JFK?), and to bring him down we must impose the vengeance from the gods once we get visions from the grave, or was it the other way around?
Eternal Hatred: **Usurper:**

Write for price to:
Eternal Hatred
P.O. Box 1250
La Grange Park, IL 60526
and/or
Usurper
P.O. Box 388897
Chicago, IL 60638-8897

Family of Freaks

...And Freaks were their Names
1995

With so many bands trying to make it these days, it's really hard to stand out. Part of the camouflage, **Family of Freaks** just blends right in with the rest of bands that know in the back of their minds that they're going nowhere. Aside from some good solos now and then, *...And Freaks were their Names* has nothing of value to offer with its boring blend of late 80's thrash and half-assed death vocals -- excuse me, vox.

The seven songs on the tape are lengthy, occasionally interesting, and overall displeasing. The production is average for a demo, but can in no way save the moribund music.

$6 everywhere to:
Burt Beowolf
P.O. Box 442
Eagleville, PA 19403-0442

FLACKZZ STRADION

Fuck You
1994

Well, at least these guys are trying. **Flackzz Stradion**, now simply **Stradion**, attempts to mold elements of **Guns n' Roses** with simplistic metal and **Metallica** riffs, but, as expected, comes off sounding like a really bad **Trixter**. Actually, it sounds nothing like that crap band, but now I can say *Metal Edge*, because that band frequently appeared with mouths agape, faces saying, "How the hell did I get in a rag like this just by slashing my jeans?" **Stradion** would like to be doing that, playing garbage and getting expensive photo shoots and having ugly girls with underarm hair dangling all over their prepubescent selves.

Yes, this was recorded late in 1994, but titles like "Mr. Blisinbock" and "Dreams Don't Die" are straight from the days of *Headbanger's Ball* when Rikki had long hair, just begging to be squeezed onto the Japanese version of *Dr. Feelgood* as bonus tracks.

Fuck You's production is 4-8 track quality and the instruments don't blend at all, but that's because all the songs are bare bones in complexity. However, the riffs do have this really original pattern (you won't believe the genius!): Power chord, open string mute, and repeat. The vocals are just as intriguing, sung by a clown trying to be Axl Rose. God dammit!! Why the hell didn't *I* think of that? 💣💣

$2 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 1505
Cahokia, IL 62206

Fleshgrind

Sorrow Breeds Hatred (Bleed on Me)
1995

As is the case with most underground US bands these days, **Fleshgrind** aims to play "extremely brutal" death metal. Well, that sure gets me excited when I read about thirty band bios that say the same damn thing! Brutal band A through brutal band Z say: We like to play extreme, intense grind, blah, blah, blah. Well good for you. I like to eat nachos and pick my arse and listen to my favorite band, **Brutal Clone**.

I suppose **Fleshgrind** manages to stand out a little, because the music *is* tight and I did enjoy some of the rhythms, so maybe the cheesy bio was the one that broke this camel's back. Still, all positives are outweighed by the pathetic belch-after-drinking-a-gallon-of-blood vocals which sound much like **Broken Hope**'s Joe Ptacek. Can you believe **B.H.** guitarist Brian Griffin would produce an album that rips off his own band! What the hell was he thinking?! Anyhow, Griffin manages to give the occasionally memorable brutality a crisp and clean production, and this, combined with **Fleshgrind**'s overall tightness, is what sets the band above many other grinders. Recommended to those who enjoy lots of brutal death with some competence. 💣💣 1/2

$5 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 7142
Grayslake, IL 60030

Fleshgrind's Rebuttal: The part I don't like is about the "Broken Hope" vocals. This is my rebutal. I wanna start in 89 that was my 1st death band Trilogy of Terror then 90 I formed a band called Burial that lasted till 92. So I have been singing for eight years and if you listen to my voice I have one really low 2 mid voices and a high one. So right their I have a different style than Joe of Broken Hope. And if anyone says we sound like Cannibal Corpse, Suffocation or Broken Hope bull fucking shit. I been singing just is long if not longer than any of them. Just because all the other have got reconition and I haven't till now. The thing about us ripping off Broken Hope why would Brian record us. We don't rip off shit. If he thought we were doing that you think he would record us? Our style differs alot. There drumming and guitar riffs are lot more technical than ours and we stick to our style which is grind to grove riffs with heavy vocals. The only thing you can compare to us is that me + Joe have extreme vocals and we both play brutal death metal. Other than that I don't think we sound like them at all. About our bio sure I guess it is a little much and every body uses the word brutal know days. The problem is that the word is getting misused by alot of bands that are not. If you can write a better bio please do and send me one!
- Rick + Fleshgrind

GENETIC DEFENSE

Transmission of the Subsonic
1996

Having demonstrated the basics on this two song tape, **Genetic Defense** now needs to make a lot of adjustments. Since each song has a average industrial metal riff, something must be done to show the band can write more, because anybody can fiddle around on the guitar and come up with a riff. Things just don't seem to mix properly, annoying the listener just enough to give him a headache. Repetitive and out of batteries, the band trudges along with annoying spoken vocals that mimic the music note for note, in case you weren't quite sick yet.

The songs' middles do vary a bit, but when a band has to use the same chorus for two songs -- "My hope is gone" -- something is really wrong, and you'll just throw your hands in the air, willingly pressing 'stop'. 💣💣

Write for price to:
gendef@aol.com

GORGE

Among Composing Fields
1995

A very short, very weird demo comes to us from **Gorge**. What would have been an average demo with standard growls becomes a perplexing experience due to odd breaks and song structures. *Among Composing Fields* consists of four songs that boggle the mind like **Disharmonic Orchestra**, though not quite at that level. I enjoyed this challenging listen -- there's something interesting going on in these guys' heads -- and my curiosity has me on the edge of my seat to see where **Gorge** takes things. 💣💣💣 1/4

Write for price to:
Ian Heran
P.O. Box 362
Sonoma, CA 95476

GRUDGE

Self-titled
1996

A brand new band set to pummel your ear drums, **Grudge** continues Canada's ongoing tradition of death metal supremacy. Featuring great arrangements, the demo's eight songs are accentuated by multiple tempo changes and odd rhythms. The well-produced music blazes at times and hops along at others, sometimes acting as a death metal version of **Dissection**'s "Unhallowed." The vocals are powerful but don't give the impression that the singer is straining, quite a contrast from many of today's death metal vocalists.



Songs like "G.C.P.," "Compound Eyes," and "Bitter Conclude" effectively incorporate the band's skills with funky bass and true metal solos. Thick, **Morticite** bass and multiple **Kataklysm** vocals also add to the frenzy, helping to make **Grudge** possibly one of the most promising really heavy bands. 💣💣💣 3/4

$7 worldwide to:
Tony Macedo
16868 60th Ave.
Surry, B.C.
V3S 1T2
Canada

Haruspex

2 Song Promo
1995

One of the few demos that actually has me feeling "the groove," **Haruspex**'s sampler utilizes slow sections in the vein of **Cannibal Corpse** but never tries to achieve much velocity. Combine that with a simplistic approach ala old **Benediction** and American gruff vocals and you have **Haruspex**. The first song, "Thrust," is better than "Nocturnalust," which plods along with winded vocals and repetitive riffs. While this tape shows some promise, it but could be a lot better. 💣💣💣

Three US stamps to:
P.O. Box 83451
Milwaukee, WI 53223

H.A.T.E.

Rage
1995

Name: **Hostile Attitude Towards Everything**. Demo: *Rage*. Cover: Logo in front of hemp leaf, skull, and number 13. Style: Death, thrash, hardcore. Music: Crap? Think again! Nine times out of ten, a band like **H.A.T.E.** would live up to its cheesy image, but thankfully this is the exception. Applying the driving force of hardcore to power thrash riffs, this quintet produces six catchy, powersurging songs of madness on *Rage*.

Deep hardcore vocals like **Crowbar**'s Kirk Windstein's low constantly pound you with their intensity, and thick bass adds an extra punch to your already bruised midsection. Songs like "In Your Blood" and "The Pain" sweep you up like **Compression**, and tight riffing rounds out this highly surprising debut that's only a hint of what's to come. 💣💣💣 1/2

Write for price to:
Ray Shultz
529 Nth 9th St.
Reading, PA 19604

HATRED

Suffer
1996

Last issue, in which I reviewed **Hatred**'s debut demo, *Daze of Darkness*, I mentioned how subsequent demos would determine whether this would be a band worth watching or not. After seeing a live set and hearing the new CD, I can say for sure that **Hatred** is a world class act worthy of your attention. Hard work has paid off for **Hatred** as *Suffer*'s four songs completely blow *Daze of Darkness* away!

One of the keys to *Suffer*'s success is its superior songwriting. Well-placed bass lead-ins coupled with accurate drumming make the title track, "Reach Out," "Hatred with a Smile," and "Mass Genocide" great, memorable songs. The dual vocals of Tim Clayborne, already unique to begin with, play a big part in solidifying the songs, as his patented high screech and intelligible growl bang the songs home.

Just over thirteen minutes in length, *Suffer* marches along smoothly, and its excellent production makes this a mandatory CD EP purchase from a band that's going places. 💣💣💣💣

$5 US/$6 world to:
P.O. Box 10264
Alexandria, VA 22310

Hellbound

Transcend the Flesh
1995

A fresh tape from an old band, *Transcend the Flesh* is highlighted by frantic guitar picking ala **Slayer** and fierce vocals ala **Kreator**. **Hellbound** is self-described as "true original Bronx style old school death metal," which I'll agree with except the Bronx part -- is there a whole slew of Bronx bands playing this style? Didn't think so.

The old school metal feel is brought out well by the smooth, cool production, and the echoed vocals resemble old **Kreator**, just more gruff. The songs slow

down in some catchier sections, complemented by good soloing and various shouts. The drummer could use a little work keeping time, but overall, this is a solid demo. 1/4

$3 US/$4 world to:
J.D. Valladares
2861 Exterior St.
Apt. 3D
Bronx, NY 10463

Immortal Suffering

Eternal Damnation
1995

It's a shame that **Immortal Suffering**, a hardworking New York act that knows how to promote itself, is as original as what comes out of a Xerox machine. Any instrumental ability goes completely to waste in the name of brutality, with the music's extremely slow tempo only briefly hiding the fact that *Eternal Damnation* is typical, cheesy American death metal. Take away the quality production and snazzy packaging, the music remains as stale as your Aunt Thelma's breath. Occasional bright, up-tempo sections are ruled null and void by the ridiculous open string, palm-muted, drop D "dunhs" that are delivered as frequently as my million-dollar solicitations from Ed "I Never Thought Johnny Was Funny" McMahon and Dick "I'm Almost 21" Clark. All the while, bass drums resembling shuffling cards brutally tap in the background! Stop the madness, it's too damn funny!

What follows is not a joke: When I was last listening to the highly originally titled *Eternal Damnation*, I was also drinking a Coke. The soda enabled me to burp and I engaged in a duet with the vocalist. It was a moment as magical as the Dolly Parton and Garth Brooks duet I saw on the Nashville Network. Damn, that was bliss! Anyway, if you're really new to death metal (and want a reason to stop listening) or like slow motion, belch-fronted BRUTALITY, press play and the **Immortal Suffering** shall begin. 1/4

$4 US/$5 world to:
Rudy Lopez
2741 Miles Ave.
Bronx, NY 10465

Infamy

Count the Dead
1995

If you are a fan of brutal death metal, **Infamy** is not a band to be passed up. It is a completely crushing group featuring ex-members of **Entity**, **Brainstorm**, and **Preacher**. I'm not frequently impressed by the new batch of brutal bands, but when they play this well, I too am appreciative.

Aided by a thick, bass heavy production, *Count the Dead* blasts through its five songs with appropriate time changes and speed sections. James Grijalva's drumming holds everything together, adding a new dimension to the riffing which churns along like a steroid-induced **Bolt Thrower**. If you're influenced by the tranquil forest, pass this up, for **Infamy** plays furious grind that can only stem from the frustration of living in LA.

$5 everywhere to:
3145 Sheffield Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90032

The Infertil

You've Just Armed the Bomb
1996

When this tape was handed to me by drummer Metal Vader, I immediately realized what battle I was about to face. You see, I am good friends with all of the members of **The Infertil** (even singer Charlie Dangerous, who doesn't think I'm funny), but I also hate punk. Would I have to lie and say I liked the tape so as not to piss them off, all the while compromising my journalistic integrity? (We interupt this pompous rambling to ask for your assistance. Please shout at the top of your lungs, "Phil, shut the hell up!!) Anyway, I ended up loving the tape due to its heavy hardcore influence and controlled tempos, not to mention the memorable guitar work. Plus, a lot of the great riffs point to the fact that some punk and hardcore beats aren't that different than Swedish death metal, meaning that you probably would like this tape because it's not what you think. Sure, the vocals are punk, but at least they're not shouted in an obnoxiously fake British accent.

Damn I love this tape! Will Cole's drumming is really tight, at times bringing **Hemdale**'s Craig Rowe to mind, and Nate Read's bass can be heard despite this being recorded on a cheap 8-track. The whole production is fifty times better than most punk, too. This allows for Floyd York's memorable rhythms on "Commies are Bad," "Officer Friendly," and "Misfire" to shine through and make these songs instant winners.

Yeah, I like these guys and I know them. So what! I hated their first tape and let them know they sounded like a bunch of **Blind Melon** pansies; this tape is damn good and they deserve to be appreciated.

$3 US/ to:
Will "Metal Vader" Cole
1719 Stonebridge Rd.
Alexandria, VA 22304

Insatanity

Unholiness Rising
1995

Yeah, yeah, the band's signed to Unisound and has a full-length out. Just thought I'd review the demo since I shelled out five bucks for it. This four song demo was the band's third, and is similar to **Illdisposed**'s *Four Depressive Seasons* with its powerful, emotionless guitar tone. Occasional black metal melodies coupled with blast beat drums are also present, but the songs are lengthy and weakened by monotone vocals which recite a book each time! A higher pitched voice tries to break up the boredom, but the generally stale music brings it all down.

Unholiness Rising has been hailed globally, and there *are* some good sections to make note of, but the long demo just lacks enough memorable moments to make purchase mandatory. I'm no grind freak, so take into account how much grind you can take yourself. **Insatanity** is an overdose.

Write for price to:
Mark Rhochar
1104 Morris St.
Philadelphia, PA 19148

Judecca

Awakened by the Stench of the Dead
1995

Back to blood and guts we go, courtesy of copycrap **Judecca**. Not only does this shit band rehash **Cannibal Corpse**'s music, but its lyrics too! **Judecca** is a ridiculously cheesy band similar **Ad Nauseum**, with its endless songs consisting of mindless repetition. These "musicians" come up with one good riff and think they can base entire songs on it. Think again, you morons. Who is going to knowingly pay money for noise when he can just go and hang out in the furnace room for a while?

$6 US/$7 world to:
P.O. Box 150505
Cape Coral, FL 33915

Judecca's Rebuttal: I've never heard nor seen a copy of your zine before, but judging by the letter I received from you, I can tell you are just another one of those zines who purposely give bad reviews to bands in hope to get insult-ridden responses for your amusement. How pathetic. I mean, you put in your letter "Those displeased with their review may send in a rebuttal to be printed." I hope you weren't expecting me to call you names and imply that you are a homosexual or something?

And as for the review, you say we "rehash Cannibal Corpse." I don't ever recall them using acoustics at anytime. And the reference to Cannibal Corpse. Is that the extent of your death metal knowledge? You are on issue #3. What is that, about a year? Is that how long you've been into the underground? And there is only one song with "blood and guts" lyrics. (You forgot to mention that as well as the acoustics)...maybe because it didn't fit with your comparison to Cannibal Corpse. You didn't give a thorough review. And if you want to talk about cheesy. Bombs?!? I haven't seen something that stupid in a while, it made me laugh when I saw that.

And finally, you end your letter with "Please keep in touch and feel free to send in more material for review." You give us a bad review and then ask for more free promo cds! Man, are you a hypocrite. Is this the real reason you started your zine? To get free cds from all the hard working bands in the underground? I hope you print this rebuttal because it will give us more promotion and attention than simply your review. Now doesn't that make you feel stupid knowing that we will benefit and continue to sell cds and expand our fan base because of this...or are you too chicken to print it? Enjoy your laughs now, it doesn't bother me, because I know Judecca will be around a lot longer than Sloth Magazine.
- Bill Smith



Jungle Rot

Skin the Living
1995

One of the many bands recently to emerge from the American Midwest, **Jungle Rot** is also one of the standouts. Relying on controlled, discernible **Gutted** riffs, the band never loses its grasp when playing a fast beat. And with ten well-produced songs, *Skin the Living* could very well be considered an album rather than a demo.

Similar to **Fleshcrawl**, **J.R.** lapses into monotonous passages and listening to the whole tape is a challenge. The best songs are the ones that effectively use tempo changes, something the band should shoot for more

often. Still, for those less critical and without a lot of cash to spend, this is one of the most professional demos around. 1/4

$5 US/$6 world to:
P.O. Box 452
Gurnee, IL 60031-0452

KADATH

Into the Eternal Depths of Sorrow and Desolation
1995

Practically an album, this lengthy demo from Germany's **Kadath** has a nice Swedish feeling to it. From the grimy guitars to the consistently upbeat tempos, this feeling comes through big time. The tape would be great but the songs drag on and lack fluidity, with many abrupt tempo changes coming off awkwardly. **Kadath** is good but does not capitalize on its present capabilities, a no-no when it comes to achieving underground success. Surely the next demo will be better, because a simple shortening of the songs to their prime material would work **Kadath** wonders. 1/4

Write for price to:
Holger Friedenberger
Eifel Strasse 35
52068 Aathen
Germany

Lividity

Ritual of Mortal Impalement
1995

Recently, Immortal Records of Poland picked up **Lividity** and released the band's latest cassette EP, *Rejoice in Morbidity* (available for $5 US/$6 world). After hearing *Ritual of Mortal Impalement* -- which is what sparked the label's interest -- I wonder what sort of mind-altering plastic substances they were smoking over in Vaderville. **Lividity** is the utmost of stereotypical American grindcrap that poisons the underground and makes it *want* to die! How can I describe it? Lots of different speeds, growls, gurgles -- basically everything you've ever heard before is played here in poor fashion. To have a few bands that play this style is all right, and **Lividity** proves why its brand of short, generic growlfests is nothing more than an imitation of those at the top of the grind genre. 3/4

Write for price to:
Dave Kibler
1026 W. Marietta
Decatur, IL 62522

Lunatic

Empty Promises
1995

At twelve songs, *Empty Promises* is more like a full-length album. It consists of late era thrash -- now considered power groove -- and nothing is memorable after a number of listens. Even drummer Andy Arenas acknowledges that the songs "might seem a bit outdated," but no amount of warnings can change negative the listening experience to something that it isn't. Sure, all the musicians are pretty good, with great soloing sparsely spread out, but this overall stale thrash just won't cut it.

Gruff, generic we're-thrash-but-try-to-be-modern vocals aren't too impressive either, and by the time the first side is over, the need to keep listening has long since vanished. Well, Arenas also said **Lunatic** was preparing to hit the studio to record songs that are "way heavier and way better." Let's hope so. 1/4

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 1527
Centralia, IL 62801-1527

Lunatic

Uncontrollable Hatred
1996

So here is the more recent material from the band, and I'll admit that it's a lot better. Slowly, **Lunatic** is at least defining itself as a '90s mosh-thrash metal band. The vocals are a lot better too, with Harry Wadley sounding much like **Propain**'s Gary Meskil. By simply embracing a heavier guitar sound, the band has also modernized its whole personality. Borderline fans will appreciate this and surely be swayed into **Lunatic**'s corner.

Another lengthy release, *Uncontrollable Hatred* is brought down by the band's inability to write songs that don't rely on catchy, palm-muted riffs the whole time. What has improved, however, is that **Lunatic** is weaning itself of its riff addiction, most of the time for the better. Songs like "Torn" and "Drastic Measures" demonstrate such growth. "Be Damned," with its awful **Slayer** melodies and death growls, and the downright lameness of "No More than I" show that **Lunatic** may have reached a dead end. There's just no more for the band to do with mid-paced riffs. If these guys would just blend their hardcore attitudes and heavy riffs with some melody or black metal or just *something*, their songs would flow a whole lot better. They'd also earn more fans in the process.

Maleficent

Soul Departure
1996

As "some of the founding members were still in middle school" when **Maleficent** formed in 1992, it's safe to say there is plenty of potential in this young band. The guitar work is very active, and while still lacking an individual style, will improve with time. Cloudy production sets back this seven song offering, and boring blast beats and generic woof vocals tend to make an entire listen impossible. The aforementioned guitar work saves the tape, as its potential will lead the band in developing a personality. Don't ignore **Maleficent**, because once the band begins to experiment a little bit and shed the work of its influences, its music will be great.

Write for price to:
Grave Productions
P.O. Box 500107
San Antonio, TX 78280-6107

Masdecay

From the Pits
1996

Band leader John has told me that bassist Devlin is in a "coma from being hit on the back of the head with a lead pipe," so I should send him mail for when he wakes up. That's not a good idea, because *whenever* I wake up from a coma, the last thing I want to read is a review trashing my band.

Similar in style to **Damian Kross** with its simple riffs and do-it-yourself feel, **Masdecay** fails to grab and hold the listener's attention as does **D.K.** Featuring eight endless songs of slow motion riffs with mimicking vocals, *From the Pits* is just really, really bad. Sure, there are some cool parts, like when the vocals and guitars actually separate on "Subjesus," but thirty seconds of average music doesn't mean very much, does it? This is the kind of tape you'd expect from a bunch of junior highschoolers, hiding their inability to play with slow tempos and simple riffs. I know how it works, I did it in ninth grade!

The final, laughable blows are thrown when power chord scales are a song and the listener at last comprehends the **Masdecay** musical genius.

$5 everywhere to:
John Barnish
134 4th St. NE
New Phila, OH 44663

Mass Exhibit

Promo '95

On the lighter side of metal comes **Mass Exhibit** with simple, but catchy riffs and almost whiny, but still cool, vocals. In fact, Scott Rushlow's voice sounds like Phil



Rind's (**Sacred Reich**) when deep, but is delivered in a more hardcore style. The two songs on the tape, "Shredded Tongue" and "Coffee Break," don't really accomplish anything new, but flow well, are well-written, and will please fans of less than underground metal. Look for an album out from these guys soon. 1/4

Write for price to:
Avalon Entertainment Management
55 Crystal Ave.
Derry, NH 03038

Morgion

Self-titled
1995

Not to be mistaken for the California doom act, Virginia's **Morgion** plays up-tempo thrash with an old school metal feel. Production of the highest caliber effectively captures a sound the band was evidently aiming for, enabling the light "Locrian's Lullaby" and heavy "Nein Lives" to both come out well. Guitarist Jamie Vandelly sings as if he were King Diamond combined with Steve Sousa (**Exodus**) and Dave Mustaine (**Megadeth**). He's not bad considering what a catastrophic combination that could be.

Morgion's peppy music is played professionally, never becoming repetitive, and to top it off, the soloing ain't bad! Fans of early **Metallica**, **Iron Maiden**, and plain ol' metal will appreciate this trio. 1/2

Write for price to:
Abyss Records
15508 Vine Cottage Dr.
Centreville, VA 22020

Morkeum

Self-titled
1995

Canada has quite a reputation for cranking out solid bands these days, from **Kataklysm** to **Cryptopsy** to **Quo Vadis**. Perhaps with time, **Morkeum** too will join these ranks, because the act is in sync but lacks the songwriting skills to make itself a contender. Each of *Morkeum*'s six songs is fast and barely lets up, sounding like the love child of **Kreator** and **Morbid Angel**. I don't care much for either of these bands, but if you do, maybe it's worth your while to check **Morkeum** out. The production's good and nothing's really that bad, so go for it!

$5 everywhere to:
Eric Ménard
356 Bullard Magog
Quebec, Canada
J1X 3N5

Morticite

Infested Commercialism
1995

Coming out with a positive, realistic look at the world, anti-racist and anti-ignorance **Morticite** attacks with a

six song demo that lasts nearly an hour. The always upbeat to fast death metal has a bubbly production that really brings out the bass, and mainman Steve Eberl's rasps resemble the shouts on **Afflicted**'s *Prodigal Sun*. *Infested Commercialism* is hard to listen to, however, because all the songs sound the same and they're endless. Enough is enough! Little tone variation in the production and lack of solos also make small doses of **Morticite** more than plenty. This trio has musical skills and plays well together, and now it's time for maturation. 💣💣💣

$3 US/$4 world to:
Steve Eberl
322 Pike St.
Reading, OH 45215

Necropolis Rising

The Everlasting
1996

A new band from New York, **Necropolis Rising** races towards success rather than waiting for it, and if the seven songs on *The Everlasting* are any indication, underground notoriety is not far.

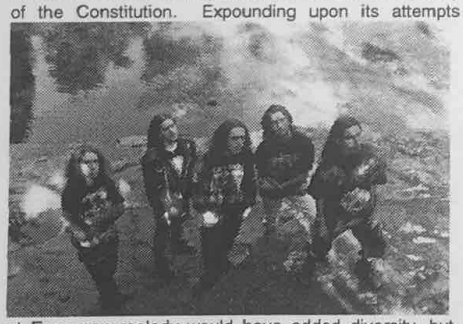
The band has a death metal core similar to **Immolation**, **Morkeum**, and **Pungent Stench**, but builds on the fast and furious madness with classical influences and weird **Gorge** interludes. **Necropolis Rising** has just begun its takeover and will be a force in the future with continued refinement. You just wait. 💣💣💣 1/4

$4 everywhere to:
1128 Gleason Circle
East Rochester, NY 14445

Neuropath

Desert of Excruciation
1996

Highly influenced by the more popular brutal acts of today, Australia's **Neuropath** sounds like New York would be its appropriate home. With **Internal Bleeding** mosh tempos, guitar techniques straight from **Cannibal Corpse**'s *The Bleeding*, and a deep vocal growl alike a handful of others, **Neuropath** is as authentic as my copy of the Constitution. Expounding upon its attempts



at European melody would have added diversity, but, unfortunately, brutality is job one for **Neuropath**. Try and picture the band's collective psyche..."Now, there'll be none of that melody, we must go brutal! BRUTAL!"

Those that want some well-produced brutality might take note, because **Neuropath** plays well together and its songs aren't simple (though plagiarized). Only three songs, *Desert of Excruciation* leaves a lot to be desired, and good production can't save songs that put you to sleep. It's naptime in stereo! 💣💣 3/4

$6 everywhere to:
Daniel Stubbs
1 Beaumont Crescent
Bayview NSW 2104
Australia

Nonpoint

Generate
1996

Proving to be a consistent force in the underground, this Floridian quintet continues to tear things up with its potent brand of hardcore metal. Formerly **Nonpoint Factor**, the band released a number of demos, including 1995's *A New Breed of Anger* (💣💣💣 1/4; available for $6 US/$7 world).

That tape showed a strong **Pantera** influence, from song structure to lyrical content to riffs to Anselmo vocals. A year's time has matured the group and the outside influences are slowly being shed. Along the way, more groove-oriented material has been incorporated, like on *Generate*'s opener, "Hurt in Vain." More melodious is the music as well, just another aspect of refinement that is pushing **Nonpoint** to the top.

Hardworking, dedicated, and innovative, **Nonpoint** is making its mark. The band is taking over one fan at a time, and you're next. 💣💣💣 3/4

$7 everywhere to:
Mike Hillyard
824 Twin Lakes Dr.
Coral Springs, FL 33071
e-mail: mhilly@ix.netcom.com

Northern Lights

Demo 1993

A lot of one man bands have been popping up recently, and most have been pretty good. **Northern Lights** is not one of those bands. The vocals sound like those of a guy who couldn't even cut it in an '80s glam band. Nigel yells about pot and Satan, and not only does he sound like a fool, but he ruins whatever occasionally good riff there was. Hard to believe, but there are some nice moments buried below his wails of, "This green bud's a fucking blast!"

Although each song is highlighted by guitar solos and harmonies, **Northern Lights** just doesn't have enough charm in its basement metal to attract listeners. And as the tape of '80s metal winds down, the songs get less interesting and more silly, dealing rotting bodies and Anton LaVey. I'm scared, how 'bout you? 💣💣 3/4

Tape/CD: $5/$11 US; $6/$13 world to:
Nigel Fellers
c/o Keeper Productions
P.O. Box 6978
Falls Church, VA 22040

Nuclear Death

All Creatures Great and Eaten
1993

Chaotic, blasting, furious, and energetic. Those are words, and they just happen to describe **Nuclear Death**. I do not like **Nuclear Death**. I like music with variety and lots of hooks. There are some parts of this tape I like, such as Loni's furious screeches and growls, but the music is not very interesting, causing the numbness characteristic of when one suffers from "Same Song Syndrome." Also, the overall looseness of the duo sounds intentional, but on purpose or not, does not cater to me. 💣💣 1/4 Grind freaks take note: A new CD, *The Planet Cachexial*, is now available through the band's label, Cat's Meow Records.

CD: $10 US/$12 world to:
P.O. Box 43424
Phoenix, AZ 85080-3424

Nuctemeron

A Time the World Forgot
1994

If **Bolt Thrower** came from the US, this is how its music would sound. Totally professional, **Nuctemeron** blows away over three-quarters of the demos I've received with its refreshingly original songs.

Brooding guitars incorporate classical melodies and false harmonics while deep vocals power through the riffs. The epic songwriting of *A Time...* is what makes this six song demo with intro and outro unforgettable, and I find it hard to believe that all **Nuctemeron** has gotten is a licensing deal from Wild Rags. This melancholic demo, as timeless as **Desolate**'s *The Scourge of Sanity*, is an eerie experience that could be a soundtrack for the Middle Ages. (Anybody tracking with me?) Just get the tape, all right? 💣💣💣💣

$3 US/$5 world to:
Tiffany Woods
202 S. Del Pueblo
Chandler, AZ 85226

Odium

The Blackened Sky
1995

A DC area band that's been performing at a lot of shows recently, **Odium** plays classic death metal in the vein of **Deicide** with **Metallica** and **Slayer** influences. The product? *The Blackened Sky*, a long, eight song demo with clear, but bass-ridden production and overpowering vocals. Repetitive, forgettable songs in which the drums override the guitars. **Odium** is just one of those bands you accept as bad.

Furthering the demo's demise are sour, echoing vocals, so that by the time the first side is over, all interest has been lost in the clouds. There are just too many good bands for us to spend our time and money other than **Odium**. 💣💣

Write for price to:
Joe Fuller
9019 Scott St.
Springfield, VA 22153

Ossuary

Fat
1994

A band that's been getting a lot of favorable press recently, **Ossuary** had my interest sparked. Characteristic of a spark, this interest was short-lived and disappeared upon hearing *Fat*, a rather repetitive and aimless demo. Death metal for the sake of death metal.



The sextet does have some promise, though, as all members *do* know the songs they're playing, some of the arrangements are nice, and the sound -- if a bit distant -- is good for a demo. So, if **Ossuary** does progress, expect a band still not original, just capable of impressing fans new to death metal. Plus, its style of **Incantation/Morpheus Descends** metal isn't too risky (or hard to learn). 💣💣 3/4

Write for price to:
Eric Armusik
82 Manhattan St.
Ashley, PA 18706

Ossuary Insane

Fallen to the Pits
1995

The debut from this hitherto unknown band, *Fallen to the Pits* has the same ferocious production of **Infamy**'s demo. **Ossuary Insane** also plays brutal death, but without the all-out speed attack found on *Count the Dead*. Here, the three layered tracks pound the listener with multiple vocals and extra crunchy guitars with the ferocity that few underground bands come close to. Originality is not the band's strong point, but to see what level **Ossuary Insane** will take its brutality is definitely worth waiting for. 💣💣💣

Write for price to:
P.O. Box 22094
Eagan, MN 55122

Pain's Invention

Numb

1995

Referring to its style as "progressive grindcore," **Pain's Invention** pretty much hits the nail on the head. Not many blast beats to mention here, thankfully, and the songs manage to keep the good rhythms going. The guitarists deliver smooth transitions and tempo variations with their riffs, and songs like "The Art of Breathing" show the drummer's expertise. *Numb*'s four songs get better with each listen, and the only problem is the vocals. A lot of other people have voiced their displeasure, saying vocalist Brian Schroeter ruins the songs, which is a bit drastic. Brian asked me why I don't care for his voice and I finally figured it out. The music's production is very crisp and the songs are bouncing and upbeat, but Brian growls a cloudy woof delivered in a near monotone. The contrast is not good, but can be corrected next time around (what great foresight have I!), and I'm anxious to hear future releases from **Pain's Invention**. 3/4

$4 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 293
Hartland, WI 52029-0293

Pain's Invention

Enmity

1996

WOW!! Simply amazing! **Pain's Invention** went through a complete evolution between *Numb* and *Enmity* by stripping down the unnecessary and bulking up on what works. The three new songs are enthralling vents of fury and passion, and this quintet may someday reign supreme in the death metal jungle.

When the build-up song "Path" finally explodes, I actually get scared! It is perhaps the only song that genuinely sends shivers down my spine. As one of my friends says, "It sounds like there's a guy chasing after me with a knife." That guy screaming at the top of his lungs would be Brian Schroeter. His powerful performance shows the obvious commitment he's made to his music. By adding **Kataklysm** "speed stanzas" and **Meat Hook Seed** whispers to his gorilla growl, he has also breathed new life into a gagging genre, brutal death metal.

The music has advanced as well, going from progressive, riff-oriented grind to avant-garde American death metal. The **Pain's Invention** recipe includes the following ingredients: **Brutal Truth**, **Candiria**, **Machine Head**, **Malevolent Creation**, **Fudge Tunnel**, **Korn**, and **Medusa Oblongada**. Truly an original masterpiece, *Enmity* has the vitality, vision, and conviction that so many bands are unable to capture.

Parricide

A Future of Suffering

1995

In the mood for a solid death/thrash band that delivers? I present to you **Parricide**, originally a one man act that now only needs a bassist to complete its lineup. This demo's four songs blaze along with well-programmed drums and '80s thrash guitars, all with a modern feel to keep the listener's interest. The raspy vocals of mainman Bob Cardente are quite original, a psychotic vent somewhere between a scream and a yell.

A few more tempo changes now and then would have helped, but overall, *A Future of Suffering* outshines dozens of other demo bands. Therefore, it's no wonder **Parricide** has been receiving lots of rave reviews and tape sales are sky high. Now that there's almost a complete lineup, new material should be out shortly. 3/4

Tape/CD: $5/$8 US; $6/$9 world to:
P.O. Box 17106
Esmond, RI 02917

DEEEIMIET

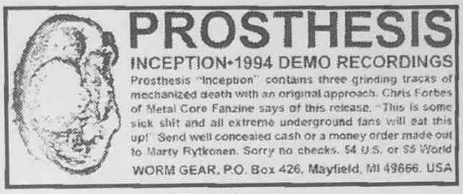
Absence of Light

1995

You call this a demo? More like a three song teaser from a band just inches away from the immeasurable heights of success! From start to finish, *Absence of Light* proves why **Pessimist** is being received well at shows and is licensed by Wild Rags. Combining the pit-inducing brutality bands like **Internal Bleeding** and **Fleshgrind** only think they have with superior technicality and songwriting skills, **Pessimist** makes for a joyride of a listen.

Another positive element is Rob Kline's varied vocals. Besides his likable, common growl, he also uses a yell similar to the "Yaaah!" a guy gives in the movies when he falls to his death from great heights. The guitar team of Kelly McLauchlin and Tom Persons incorporates a number of styles, from **Cannibal Corpse** harmonies to **Morbid Angel** solos, all packed together in a thrashy format that's bound to please. Do you self a favor pick up a tape from **Pessimist**. 3/4

Write for price to:
2814 Chenoak Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21234



Prosthesis

Inception

1995

Sounding a lot like **Infamy** with its crushing sound, industrial death duo **Prosthesis** rumbles forward like a high-on-crack train. Now, industrial really isn't my thing, but I know when it's done well, and the three songs that make up *Inception* are monstrously strong. Very crusty, but also professional, **Prosthesis** is bound for success if it keeps on pounding, programming, and growling.

$4 US/$5 world to:
Worm Gear Records
P.O. Box 426
Mayfield, MI 49666
or
fcic@aliens.com

Puzzle Head

Missing Pieces

1996

Another two piece, industrial-tinged death metal act, **Puzzle Head** is immediately notable because drummer Mike Greenhall was once in underground classic **Stentor**. He and Mike Potter take a more deathly approach than the thrashier **Stentor**, which both adds and subtracts.

Stentor had thin but catchy guitars while the **Puzzle Head** sound is thick, almost too thick. Riffs that would have stood out on a **Stentor** tape get lost behind equally thick growls and muddy distortion. **Puzzle Head** resembles a number of other brutal bands in both sound and song, including **Malevolent Creation**, **Corrosion of Conformity**, and **Brutal Truth**.

The five songs of *Missing Pieces* are delivered in a slow, churning style with odd time changes that occasionally break up the monotony that sets in. So, not too original but with a weird sound, **Puzzle Head** is above average and just needs some time to work out the bugs.

See Relapse Records catalog or write to:
2441 Temple Ct.
Alexandria, VA 22307

Quo Vadis

Self-titled

1995

The needle in my demo haystack, this is by far one of the best releases I have heard in my life. The fact that this young band is without contract is beyond me, because this diverse, five song debut is filled with emotion and performed with great ability.

The first two songs, "Element of the Ensemble" and "Sons of Greed," start off by going straight to the jugular with speed accompanied by appropriate breaks and rhythm changes. The solid growls and occasional **Moonspell**-esque wails fit perfectly. On both sides of the tape, some of the riffs are slightly familiar, but what **Quo Vadis** does with them is what puts the band ahead of so many others. Songwriting is what makes or breaks a promising band, and we have a winner!

"Vital Signs" opens up with an intro, and another great metal masterpiece follows. "Sans Abris" is more laid back, with classically influenced clean guitars leading the way. A mature song not for grind lovers, it incorporates female vocals and is followed by a short acoustic melody entitled, "Sadness."

Quo Vadis is an awesome band that will achieve the success it deserves. Go out and promote this quality band!

$7 Canada/$6 world to:
Bart Frydrychowicz
P.O. Box 44, NDG
Montreal, Quebec
Canada H4A-3P4
or
qouvadis@axess.com
or
Visit the **Quo Vadis** website:
http://alcor.concordia.ca/~b_frydr/index.html

Remember

Self-titled

1996

This two man project shuns the urge to play brutal death metal, or really any metal at all, and opts for an atmospheric, ambient approach. It's meant to create moods and each song is supposed to tell a story. I don't dig this whole ambient vibe, Joe. To me, it sounds like musical wind. This five song tape is just a preview of what's to come, so perhaps the band can incorporate some more memorable moments in the future. 1/2

See address with the **Especially Likely Sloth** review.

Retalliation

Death from the Inside

1995

Quite a story behind this one. Currently serving lengthy sentences in a Massachusetts prison, the four members of **Retalliation** (sic) have come together to "reenter the outside world from the confines of prison." Using an old 8-track recorder and allowed only four hours a week to practice, these guys have certainly worked very hard to release this pro-duplicated cassette.

Dealing with the topics of prison life, founder Rick Desrosier's lyrics are at times powerful, but at others silly. His delivery follows suit, with some of his emotional efforts powerful but others seeming out of place. Considering the equipment he and the other members were using, this demo has very good production, especially with the lead guitars. Also, the powerful closer, "The Enemy," is followed by a chat the band recorded in which the guys talk about themselves, the band, and its experiences.

Death from the Inside is highlighted by the guitar playing of P.J. Fredricks, who is able to play both acoustic and metal. In fact, his memorable lead work is what makes songs like "Possession" and "The Marching" so good. You'll be playing "mouth guitar" along with him as he hits the highs and slams his whammy bar!

So, not the most polished of releases, the intentionally raw and fierce *Death from the Inside* is musically strong and points to the question, what if these guys could record in a real studio? That is something with which the members of **Retalliation** must live. 3/4

$5 US/$6 world to:
Rick Desrosier
P.O. Box 661
W. Side Station
Worcester, MA 01602-0661

Sadistic Intent

Resurrection
1994

Previously signed to Gothic Records, **Sadistic Intent** is now on its own and this old six songer is still available. Similar to **Desolate** with its "dark" feel, **S.I.** doesn't really fit into one category, though at times it brings the thrash/death feel of **Pessimist** to mind. The death vocals are just like Ross Dolan's of **Immolation**, and are not particularly appealing.

All of the songs are consistently upbeat but with similar main riffs, though some good soloing helps diversify them. Lagging at the end, *Resurrection* does show that **Sadistic Intent** has potential, and the age of this tape suggests new, better material may be on its way. 💣💣💣

Write for price to:
Sadistic Intent
c/o Rick Cortez
6251 Casitas Ave.
Bell, CA 90201

Sadistic Torment

Unearthly Horrors
1995

A five song demo with an included bonus of 1994's *See Your God* demo, *Unearthly Horrors* is quite the bargain. One of the better of the fast, brutal bands around, **Sadistic Torment** is similar to Florida's **Sickness** with its never-ending passion for speed. And while the music isn't all that original, its presentation is. Lively, oddly produced drums lead the attack, intently followed by technical guitars and the intense vocals of Vinnie Matthews.

Sadistic Torment's tempos know no boundaries, ranging from crawl to sprint and all between. Each song is well-crafted and has a distinct personality that is attributable to this band. The way one can hear a **Konkhra** or **Dark Tranquillity** song and immediately recognize it applies to **Sadistic Torment** due to the band's original riffing and drumming styles. This professional act is recommended to fans of classic death metal with lots of twists. 💣💣💣 1/4

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Scattered Remnants

Inherent Perversion
1995

Remember the name **Scattered Remnants**! Sure it's pretty dumb, but the band kicks the asses of so many other bands it sure as hell doesn't matter. Forget **Internal Bleeding** or any other so-called "brutal" bands, for this will some day be the standard.

A five song CD, *Inherent Perversion* is only the band's second demo, yet one more release could be what it takes to put these boys to the top. Complete with blazing speed sections, hopping mosh beats, and sludge crawls, **Scattered Remnants** will satisfy all those who are searching endlessly for a brutal band to satisfy their cravings.

Drummer Eric Roy is said to have been "dismissed" for lack of interest, which isn't so bad, because on both the title track and "Vaginal Vomit," there are these awesome riffs that he just can't nail home! It's so annoying because you're totally into it and you hear the drums and cringe. Still, his performance is excellent the rest of the way through, and in no way should this hinder you from purchasing the CD.

The melodic opening and acoustic "As the First Tear of Blood Falls" show that **Scattered Remnants** masters more than one trade. A triumph for brutal death metal, **Scattered Remnants** crushes all. 💣💣💣💣

$9 US/$10 world to:
P.O. Box 814
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Scepter

Up Thy Ass
1994

First of all, **Scepter** truly amuses me. They're "fucking metal" attitude is so damn funny! I have a friend who goes through phases -- one week he's surfing on desk tops, the next he's "metal" -- and **Scepter** fits the metal one so well I have to laugh. The band's music pays homage to all the bands from the early 1980s, like **Venom** and **Bathory**, but is played with love and takes from these bands their influence, not their riffs. Despite being old school, **Scepter** is original in its delivery, and, excluding the trite "She Rides Majestically," is a romp through some fun tunes. I was totally surprised when I found myself liking this, but **Scepter** has a giddy aura that sucks you in and actually makes you happy, which is quite a metal rarity. 💣💣💣 1/2

$5 everywhere:
P.O. Box 388068
Chicago, IL 60638-8068

Sickness

Ornaments of Mutilation
1995

Over the past few years, the death metal spotlight has pretty much disappeared from Florida. Besides Europe, the American Midwest and Northeast are having scene booms, but Florida seems to only have its big name bands like **Deicide** and **Malevolent Creation** to tout. Having been around for six years, **Sickness** has plenty of experience and is ready for fame. The members bring forth a straight ahead, pound-your-head-with-boulders approach on their latest MCD, *Ornaments of Mutilation*. Though a little too generic for me, **Sickness** is a tight group with complex songs and **Brutality**-esque vocals that are better than a lot of bands, signed or otherwise. This hardworking group deserves the fruits of its labor; won't you send them something green? 💣💣💣 3/4

$8 US/$10 world to:
2023 NE 15th Ave.
Wilton Manors, FL 33305

Stigmata

The Gods of Earth and Heaven
1996

Doing the laid back, **Black Sabbath** thing, newcomer **Stigmata** requires an open mind from the death metal audience. Almost mainstream, the CD's six songs focus on Josh Brock's vocals, which sound like Lane Stanley from **Alice in Chains** if he were trying to sing like **Skid Row**'s Sebastian Bach. It's not bad and should appeal to those into this style.

The guitars have a definite **Sabbath** influence, which the band freely admits, but also incorporate some modern metal techniques. Simple and non-daring riffs provide the background for Brock's singing, and the lengthy songs tend to drag on. The songs that build up or have catchy choruses work best, evidently why "Breathe" and "Feel Nothing" are so enjoyable. No more words need be said, those interested, you know who you are. 💣💣💣 1/4

$10 everywhere to:
1247 S. Petit Ave.
Suite 429
Ventura, CA 93004
or
Visit the **Stigmata** website at:
http://www.rain.org/~machine/StigmataHomepage.html

Sulkus

Promo '96

Just a three song preview of the band's upcoming CD EP, this tape shows a lot of promise. Although similar to *Heartwork*-era **Carcass**, in no way is **Sulkus** a rip off. Hell, "Anti-body" begins with a guitar lick straight from George Thoroughgood's repertoire! Throughout this tape I enjoyed the dexterous guitar work that successfully changed tempos without losing the drummer. The harmless gruff vocals did not sway me one way or the other, which is not a bad thing. There's not much more to say, really. **Sulkus** is a professional band with an original sound and is destined to go far, so help get the bandwagon's wheels rolling, get in touch. 💣💣💣💣

$2 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 346
Jannali
NSW 2226
Australia

3D House of Beef

Lazgrodin/Zosaval
1995

When listening to this, I feel the way Beavis and Butthead do when a really cheesy video from the '80s comes on. "Oh, no. Change the channel, Beavithhh!!" The first tune starts with a simple riff, but then comes an obnoxious, megaphoned, and highly out of place yell that causes the aforementioned reaction. By the third song, the "music" is gone, and my favorite, sound experimentation, is on tap. Tonight, I'll be the designated driver.

I don't like noise projects and have no clue what's good or bad, just that they're annoying as hell. It is literally impossible for me to bear listening to this any longer, and **3D House of Beef**'s full length offering is heading for the fireplace. (A bonus track, "Sphincter Boy," is actual music, but way too little way too late.) 💣

$4 everywhere to:
P.O. Box 1660
Duvall, WA 98019

Ton

Point of View
1995

With the ability to mix it up every once in a while, **Ton** manages to step above most grind bands. Granted, the results are not astounding, but they do point out that the band has promise. Blast beats are not the focus, and the mid-paced approach enables the band to smoothly go off on speedy and sludgy tangents. Altering vocals further enhance the listening experience.

A nice production job that only occasionally muffles certain instruments also brings out the bass in key spots. When more generic riffs are played, however, the songs are interchangeable, but hints of experimentation prove to me that **Ton** may be a band to look for in the future. 🎸🎸🎸

$5 everywhere to:
7163 Raleigh St. NW
Massillon, OH 44646

Transgression

Pain I Invoke
1995

The first thing I noticed when I heard this tape was that it sounded too much like **Metallica**. The opening track, "Proud New Soldier," sounds just like something from the *...And Justice for All* days. Sure, the songs are heavy, but they lack originality. The playing is solid and includes some nice melodies, which are heard on the intro and the acoustic "Wake." All of the demo's leads are well written, but there's nothing spectacular. "Tree" is the heaviest song, but it lacks originality except for some guitar parts.

Guitarists Buck Sutton and Ray Cole play very well together and demonstrate this on the last track, "Head to Head." The rhythm guitars in this song are really heavy and solid. John Wood's vocals sound very much like James Hetfield, and his bass pretty much follows the guitars. Drummer Danny Carter's playing is pretty good, and similar to that of Lars Ulrich. Like I said, **Transgression** sounds like **Metallica**.

Somewhat mediocre playing hinders the tight act, but the overall production and sound quality make the demo more worthwhile. If you like the old **Metallica**, you should definitely check this out. 🎸🎸🎸
- F.H.

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Welcome in my dream, I hope it's your kind of nightmare

Travail

Translation
1996

A hardworking band from the exploding Midwest, **Travail** has two full-length, self-financed demos to date. The group's self-titled debut was straight ahead thrash with dry production, and a real chore to listen to. *Translation* shows the band's thrash roots branching off into melodic solos and rhythms while still retaining a bite, and the instrumental "Resurrection" is a fine demonstration of such progression.



The title track shows **Travail**'s matured songwriting skills, as do some less-notable others. The catch to all this joy, and what keeps **Travail** from being top notch, is the vocals. Perhaps its their awkward production or just awful delivery, but either way, they ruin the improved music. The CD's opener, "Living Life Dead," is a prime example of this problem. The music chugs along nicely when this obnoxious voice that's one hundred decibels too loud starts shouting like a drunken child molester who lives in a dumpster! It's simply awful and is a plague that ravages the whole disc.

Travail is too hardworking of a band to let one weak link bring it down. These guys just have to stick with it and do what they need to do. 🎸🎸🎸

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Turning of the Gears

Murder Through Discord
1995

Bringing forth a crushing onslaught similar to Canadian immortal **Kataklysm**, **Turning of the Gears** comes out of nowhere and simply outdoes a majority of the so-called brutal bands which mistake speed and deep vocals for brutality. Although **T.O.T.G.** possesses both, these qualities are presented under control, intentionally, and with enough variations to keep the listener's interest and earn comparison to the aforementioned great.

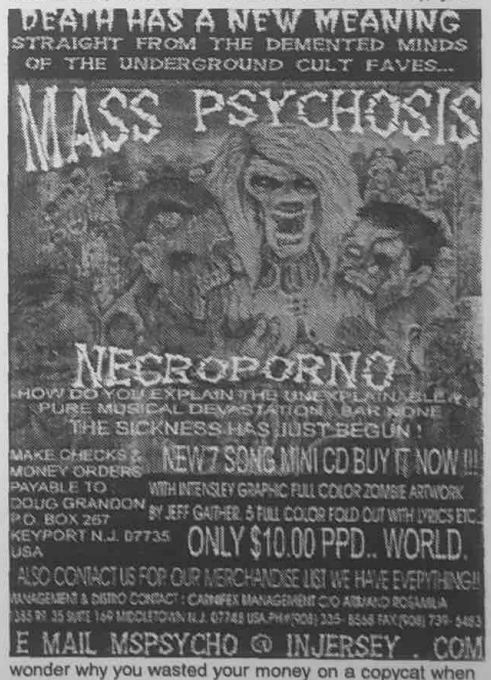
Each of the seven songs on this CD is energetic and well executed, with only a couple negatives to mention. For one, the gorilla vocals need to be more adventuresome, and the drummer has a knack for losing his place. Still, you can't deny the plentiful positives of this debut, and that **Turning of the Gears** has a whole lot of potential. 🎸🎸🎸 1/2

$8 US/$10 world to:
George Noriega
3591 Magnolia Ave.
Lynwood, CA 90262

Unearth

Spill the Plagues
1995

These days, with the way riffs are rehashed again and again, it's no wonder many bands are able to write songs in which all or most of the members keep time. They've heard the riffs so many times before, or at least songs with exact same fast part, slow part, fast part structure, that playing them is no stretch. That's why at first, you would think New Mexico's **Unearth** had its stuff together. Once you realize that the band is just a clone of **Morpheus Descends** (a band which is a clone of **Incantation**, which is a clone of rat excrement), you wonder why you wasted your money on a copycat when real brutal death metal acts like **Pain's Invention** and **Candiria** are taking things to a new level. Sometimes you just feel really stupid. 🎸🎸 1/4



$5 US/$6 world to:
P.O. Box 21097

Albuquerque, NM 87154

Mindrot

Interview by Phil Alterman

California's doom legend Mindrot has been playing for years. Over time the group has developed a style that molds death metal and doom, with acoustics and layerd vocals adding depth to the music. Up until Relapse Records signed the band, it had been struggling to support itself in a saturated underground. Finally able to get a label's support, Mindrot in 1995 released its debut, *Dawning*. More recently, the group just finished a brand new 5 song demo for its forthcoming record (due out in September) with Joseph Bishara (Drown & Prong) producing. However, Jim Barnes will produce the actual album, as he did *Dawning*.

I spoke with bassist Matt Fisher and guitarist John Flood about the debut, the band's past, and other great stuff! Check it out...



Sloth: I noticed a lot of the lyrics on *Dawning* are downtrodden. What inspires them?
Matt: Life in general. Musical influences throughout the years, your heart, emotions, how you feel. And we come from a more socially aware environment as opposed to being apathetic lyrically.

Sloth: I see it as much more down to earth than "carnage" bands.
Matt: Yeah, we're trying to get across a feeling that people can relate to. Depression, anger, frustration, anxiety. Just heavy emotions that are hard to expose on a day to day level. It's kind of like an emotional release. We try not to express these too much if you're just hanging out with us as people, and that's why we express them through our music.

Sloth: I feel the songs themselves do the same sort of thing because they're so long and complex. How do actually come up with them? Do you have a series of riffs and rhythms you want to put together or do you all just sit down and come up with something that's majestic and seven-and-a-half minutes long?
Matt: Well, we never really plan on it. We don't sit there and plan to write long songs, they just happen. Sometimes we put riffs together; one person will have a riff, and if it fits with someone else's we'll put them together. Sometimes we write separately, and for the most part we feel we can express more with the long songs rather than the short formula songs. That's exactly what they are; they're written to follow a formula and we try to avoid that and give each song its own personality.

Sloth: Do you ever feel pressure to shorten them? Like at the end of "Anguish," the slow part is long but it doesn't get dull. Have you felt pressured to shorten that?
Matt: We have a couple of parts that are repetitious like that. I've never felt the pressure to shorten them down. John, on the other hand, doesn't like to play the same riff over and over again. It doesn't bother me at all, because I think to get the overall feeling you have to do it completely. When the song was written, it was meant so we could jam at the end. As far as the pressure, we can always shorten the songs for a radio edit.
John: We have some new shorter, faster songs that balance that out. It's not like we're trying to come up with these ones just to be slow or long, it's just the way they came out.

Sloth: I also like the way you incorporate some clean vocals to contrast the growls.
Matt: We try to keep it from being too much of one way or the other. We like to keep our heavy vocals audible and our melodic vocals away from **Life of Agony**. We like to keep the vocals and music on the same plane.

Sloth: When did you convert from the simple grindcore band you guys were into a more atmospheric grind band?
Matt: The thing with that is we've never had the opportunity to do a full-length album. If you listen to our very first demo, the one from 1990 that was released through Wild Rags, it has a variety of influences. It has one slower, melodic song, then there's a heavy grind song. Since then, we haven't had any opportunity for full-length recording. *Dawning* is our longest recording [53 minutes], so it shows every angle. Some people take their full impression from the EPs and 7"s we did, and those were misrepresentations of the band because they were limited to two songs. They could get the impression we're a total grind band or something...

Sloth: Do you feel under less pressure now that you've had the chance to elaborate with time length, put in some sound bytes, and slow the tempo down?
Matt: Yeah. Actually, the newest song on this recording was written in 1992, so this album should've been released a couple of years ago. We've just progressed casually into this style, and now we have the budget to prove ourselves.

Sloth: Was it discouraging having these songs and not being able to release them to the public?
Matt: Yeah, it was kind of irritating. We were dealing with record labels for so long and kept getting the run-around, and we were saying, "Damn, we want to get these songs out. We want to release them." And there was a time when we might have come up with one or two songs in a year, too.

Sloth: Has there ever been any temptation to break up? It took 6 years for something big to happen for you guys.
Matt: No, we've never been tempted to break up. We've always had high expectations.

Sloth: I found the guitars on *Dawning* a little too distant. Was this the sound you wanted because you didn't want them to overpower?
John: We had a little trouble with the guitar sound when we went into the studio. We weren't as prepared as we should have been with our equipment. And the whole deal with that is that we originally went in to record a self-financed EP and it turned out in the middle of the recording Relapse came into the picture and we finally worked a deal out with them. They wanted us to turn it into a full-length album and record three more songs. So the first 5 songs were done on 16 tracks and the last three were on 24 tracks. Those came out fuller sounding. So, basically it was the equipment problems we had when we originally went in. It's only our first album, and the next one will be that much better.

Sloth: Has Relapse been very supportive of you guys?
John: 100 percent! They're totally behind us, and that's the reason we ended up signing with them as opposed to some of the other labels we were negotiating with, like Century Media and Metal Blade. Relapse was just totally behind us just from listening to our original mixes.
Matt: They've been interested in us since our 1992 *Day to Dream* promo demo, and that's when all the label stuff started happening for us. As far as the recording goes, the second half we got to do more guitar heavy stuff. We added more rhythm tracks and space for guitar.

Sloth: Why not re-record the first five then?
Matt: Budget. We were on a limited budget, and they felt it was good enough to release. We're happy with it, though the guitars could be heavier at times. I like to layer rhythms tracks myself, and we didn't get to do that as much as we possibly could have. On the next album we'll make up for that.

Sloth: Any final comments...
Matt: I'd just like to say that if you're interested in experiencing more than one form of extreme music, you should definitely give our band a chance. We put a lot of work into our project to make sure it's original and diverse, capturing many emotions. We've been doing this for a long time and are finally happy to have our full-length album out.

Sloth: Oh, yeah, one more thing. What is that statue on the cover of *Dawning*?
Matt: It's a panel off of a huge wall sculpture in Italy called the "Port Del Paradiso."

Sloth: Does it really have the "Mindrot" on it?
Matt: Sure. It was made in 1400-something. It was a preconceived idea just waiting for us, and that's where we got our name from.



Dying Breed

Interview by Phil Alterman

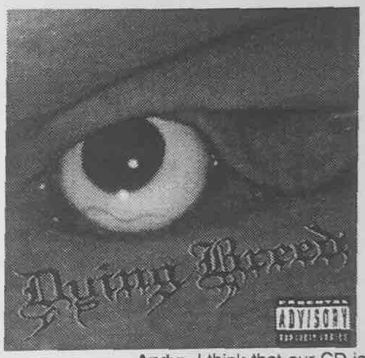
Completely unable to relate to the mediocrity of modern music, California's Dying Breed has based its career on marching to its own drummer, come fans or boos. As evidenced by the band's hefty international radio play and 'zine appearances, not to mention being in *Beyond the Law* with Charlie Sheen, people are taking notice and want to hear more. *Hatefuck*, the band's second effort, follows where the nine song *Repressed but not Extinct* for Hiram Records left off, pounding the listener with a punishing brand of hardcore death metal. Its three songs vent the band's frustration with current trends, as bassist Andy Prietto points out, "We hate everything about the direction of today's music. Dying Breed's rage is fueled by the desire for change." And as Andre Agassi says on that stupid commercial where he pretends to come to terms with his baldness but really wants to cash in on it like every jerk athlete who doesn't have a real job, change is good. Imagine turning on your local modern rock or *Buzz* station and it's playing something heavy like Dying Breed! If this band keeps working hard and playing songs like "Steel Wool" and "Erosion," then the future looks bright for all of us.



Sloth: You've been getting a lot of good press from 'zines and radio stations, plus you've played with a number of big name bands. Do you feel the number of new fans you're gaining is representative of the amount of this visibility?
Andy: Playing with big bands definitely helps out a lot with gaining new fans. With the smaller shows in Los Angeles, we don't see many new faces due to the struggling metal scene. The fanzines and radio play we owe a lot to our manager, which really adds to our fan base.

Sloth: How is your debut album, *Repressed but Not Extinct*, surpassed by your latest offering, *Hatefuck*? Did the writing process change in between releases? Do you feel more "mature" since the first album came out?
Andy: The first CD we did was a few years back, and we have definitely grown since then. The music on the first CD was good but the budget was small, so the recording suffered a bit. The new CD has only three songs, so we used the money to concentrate on the sound and are much happier with the quality of the CD.

Sloth: Why such a forceful title for the new EP? What exactly does it mean to you?
Andy: The title took a lot of consideration since marketing a CD with the artwork and cover-art we chose would be tough to sell in most record stores. Luckily our manager lets us keep our ideas and style of writing without being too concerned with sales yet!



Sloth: What does the future hold for **Dying Breed**? Shows, albums, etc.?
Andy: We hope to get signed by a major label soon. The new CD was finished only a few months ago and has been getting a lot of good responses. We have been playing a lot in LA but hope to be playing a little more on the road.

Sloth: Which is better: *WWF* or *WCW*? Who is better: *WWF* Hulk Hogan or *WCW* Hulk Hogan?
Andy: Hmmm, I can't say we watch a lot of wrestling, but I have always thought Hulk Hogan was a fag. I mean, shit, *The Nanny*??

Sloth: Your management, RPM Entertainment Group, is a doing a good job with promotion. How did you get in contact? How has RPM benefited the band? If you get signed, will you stay with them?
Andy: A lot of bands I have read about seem to talk shit about their manager or tell horror stories about them, but our manager has done nothing but good for us and is a close friend also. I don't see us being with any other manager, signed or not.

Sloth: What is a typical **Dying Breed** show like? Are the crowds sizable? Do you play often?
Andy: Since we have been playing with a lot of big bands lately, the shows are always sold out or very crowded. When we play local shows with local bands, we still have a good fan base. As far as what we are like live, unlike some bands, we are much better live than on the CD.



Sloth: I would say **Dying Breed** is a cross between **Illdisposed** and US Midwestern metal, with a touch of Swedish strumming. The (death) metal music is diversified by the primarily **Crowbar**-ish hardcore vocals and occasional death growls. These days, mixing the two genres is almost considered taboo, with a majority of the bands' music sounding forced. What efforts were made by **Dying Breed** to ensure a perfect mix? Does your hardcore/death combination stem from other influences or was it strictly an internal choice? Have you been gaining a lot of crossover fans? How would you categorize the band's style?
Andy: Our music is hard to categorize. It seems that the question comes up a lot. The best way to describe it would be from looking at the background of the music. Pat, Bill, and I have always been into hardcore and thrash. We grew up listening to **Celtic Frost**, **Possessed**, and **Kreator**. Aaron, the drummer, is the punker of the band and has always been into the punk thing. Todd, on lead guitars, joined the band a few years back and listens to just grind and death metal. So with all that in mind we just started playing what came naturally.

Sloth: What's the better buy? **Vanilla Ice** *Live* or **The Fat Boys**' *Greatest Hits*?
Andy: My ex-girlfriend gave me a **Vanilla Ice** tape once, so since it was free, I'd have to say **Vanilla Ice** (although he is as much of a pickle smoker as Hulk Hogan.)

Sloth: What makes a **Dying Breed** CD a more worthy purchase than other bands' discs?
Andy: I think that our CD is a good buy -- even though there's a lot of other good music to buy -- because we did it ourselves, put a lot of time into it, and the quality is good...Basically, it is just fucking heavy shit!

Sloth: What is the "dying breed" the band is named after or represents?
Andy: When we first got together, we had a lot of different names. Pat was stoned one night and was watching a Burt Reynolds movie, and it said something about being a "dying breed." Ever since that day, we have been **Dying Breed**.

Sloth: Whose idea was the pornographic cover? It took a few double-takes to realize what was really going on. So, whose "eye" is the photo of?
Andy: I knew that question was coming. Well, to be honest, all of the band was together one night under the influence of...Anyway, we were talking about what the cover should be and, since all guys have sex in the mind 24 hours a day, it just came up. The first idea was to put a cigarette in a vagina, but that would've been too obvious, so after a few more beers the eyeball idea came about. As for the woman who posed for it, part of the deal was to never tell who it was. It was a trip taking the picture!

Sloth: Now, unleash the inner tantrums and promote your band!
Andy: As far as last words, we want to thank *Sloth* for the interview and support. Your questions were good so we apologize for the lengthy answers. To all our fans, thanks for all your support. And, help support local bands and stop all the politically correct bull-shit!

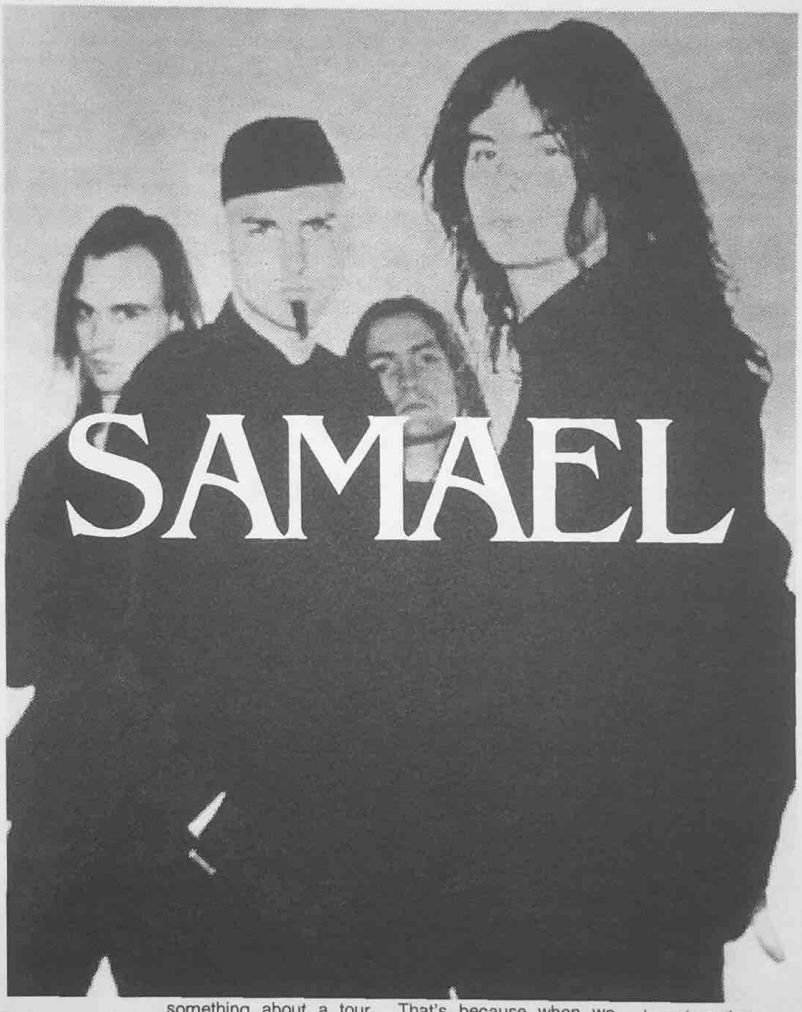
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Dying Breed
P.O. Box 13351
Torrance, CA 90503

Three years ago, if you'd told me I would be interviewing Samael for my own magazine, I would have wondered if you needed counseling. For one, I heard "Worship Him" from the JL America sampler and hated it. In fact, for me that tape was my first trip into really bad death metal, with such bands as Organic Infest and early Immortal tainting what had been a perfect genre made up of Deicide, Malevolent Creation, Cannibal Corpse, and a few others. Also, the magazine was still a while off and I was more interested in breaking into the world of "girlfriendom" than charting Samael's evolution.

So I met up with the band once again in the form of the surprisingly good *Passage*. It shows Samael forging its own metal path, with drummer Xy (what are his parents' names?) moving to keyboards and programming the drum tracks. These keyboards add a necessary layer to the music, at times playing a piano lead and at others a suspenseful fill. In the future expect to see Xy's role increased as the band ventures deeper into uncharted waters.

I spoke to guitarist and vocalist Vorph just days after he recovered from the mysterious Swiss-guy-in-America disease, and the toll his long journey and illness had taken was evident in his voice. I'm sure he's fine now and more ready to rock than ever before.



Sloth: The first song I heard by you guys was "Worship Him," and I thought it was really bad. How old were you when you recorded that album?
Vorph: We recorded that in Switzerland, and it was our first experience in the studio. And our producer was someone who had never worked with an extreme metal band. If I look back I don't think it was so bad for the time. Of course, compared to what we can do today it's kind of cheesy.

Sloth: Have you reworked any of those old songs?
Vorph: Well, we were playing them live, but so far we've only kept one, "Into the Pentagram." We re-recorded it for our mini-album in '95.

Sloth: Over the years your music has evolved drastically. Do you credit this to time, improved skills, or group tightness?
Vorph: It's everything. Those three factors are important, and we all were looking for something different. We just searched for something new that was important to us.

Sloth: Initially, what caused you to decide to use keyboards with **Samael**?
Vorph: That was Xy who started composing with keyboards. We were on tour when he fooled with this idea, and soon we felt we had to somehow incorporate it into our band.

Sloth: Do all four of you use keyboards when writing new material?
Vorph: I think it's just Xy who's writing all of the music right now. We all play a little for ourselves, but he's the official composer of the band. Everyone has input in what he's writing, of course.

Sloth: When I received *Passage* from Century Media, I was apprehensive. I'd heard a song from *Rebellion* and didn't care for it. How did you go about refining your style to make the new album a winner?
Vorph: I can't really tell you. The thing is, when we started working with the drum machine, it was totally new. It wasn't as if we'd planned it for a long time. It just happened! If I look back to the *Rebellion* mini-album, that was a good bridge between *Ceremony of Opposites* and this one. The new songs ended up flowing perfectly.

Sloth: Right now, how much do you practice?
Vorph: Right now we won't practice at all until we hear something about a tour. That's because when we practice, we tend to use tapes and a drum machine. That's very time consuming, and now we're just waiting to tour.

Sloth: Did you spend a lot of time preparing for the new album?
Vorph: Yes, quite a long time. Everything was more or less ready before we started working with programming, but that changed everything. We had to rethink the compositions of the songs. We threw out a couple of things and added some more. We definitely needed those two years between the previous record and the new one.

Sloth: What was the rationale behind programming the drums when it would have taken less time to do them live and it could have cut down on the occasional "false" sounding spots?
Vorph: This is an interesting way of working; it's something new. We chose it because Xy works at home and cannot play drums there. Before, he had to go to the rehearsal place and record his drums on a 4-track. The songs would never turn out very well. So the change was easier for us that way. For the live performance, Xy cannot play both keyboard and drums. We don't want to have one extra member right now, either, so the drum machine is the best solution for us.

Sloth: Are you pleased with the way the drums came out?
Vorph: I am. Of course if you're a drummer, you may say they sound too cold or without any feeling, but I don't think so because Xy's formerly a drummer and he's tried to keep his own patterns with the programming. If you're into programming, you will appreciate how much work went into it.

Sloth: So in the future are you going to stick with the programming or try to find another drummer?
Vorph: We don't know about the future. We're just going for things right now, and we'll see what comes up later.

Sloth: Are you guys playing any live shows when you go back home?
Vorph: We will play some festivals in the spring, but I don't have any confirmed dates.

Sloth: So have you played live without a drummer?
Vorph: Yeah, we did a two month tour of Europe, and I think we did a pretty good job.

Sloth: The response was good?
Vorph: Yeah, it was cool. When Xy's not playing keyboards, he's always doing something.

Sloth: Tell me, what exactly does "Samael" mean?
Vorph: It has a lot of different meanings in occultism. For us, it's just the name of the spirit of death.

Sloth: A big deal is being made over the fact that you guys are pretty young. Do any of you attend any form of school?
Vorph: No, I left school as soon as I was able to. It's a matter of knowing what you want to do in your life. We wanted to play music and as soon as we were ready, we started.

Sloth: What do you guys play besides music?
Vorph: Personally, I do nothing besides reading and traveling when I've got time and money.

Sloth: You guys can afford to be just a band? You don't have to work jobs?
Vorph: We can survive. (Laughs) At this point we can survive, but we don't have the freedom to live expensively.

Sloth: Are you guys planning on doing a US tour sometime soon?
Vorph: It would be exciting, and as soon as we get something interesting, we'll do it!

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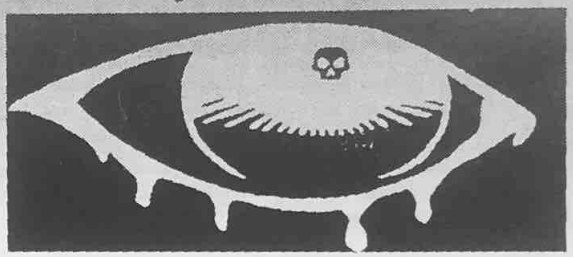
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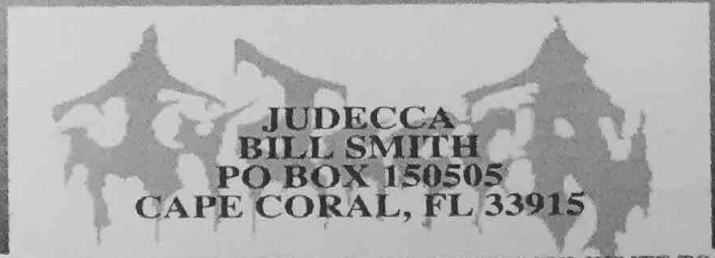




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