

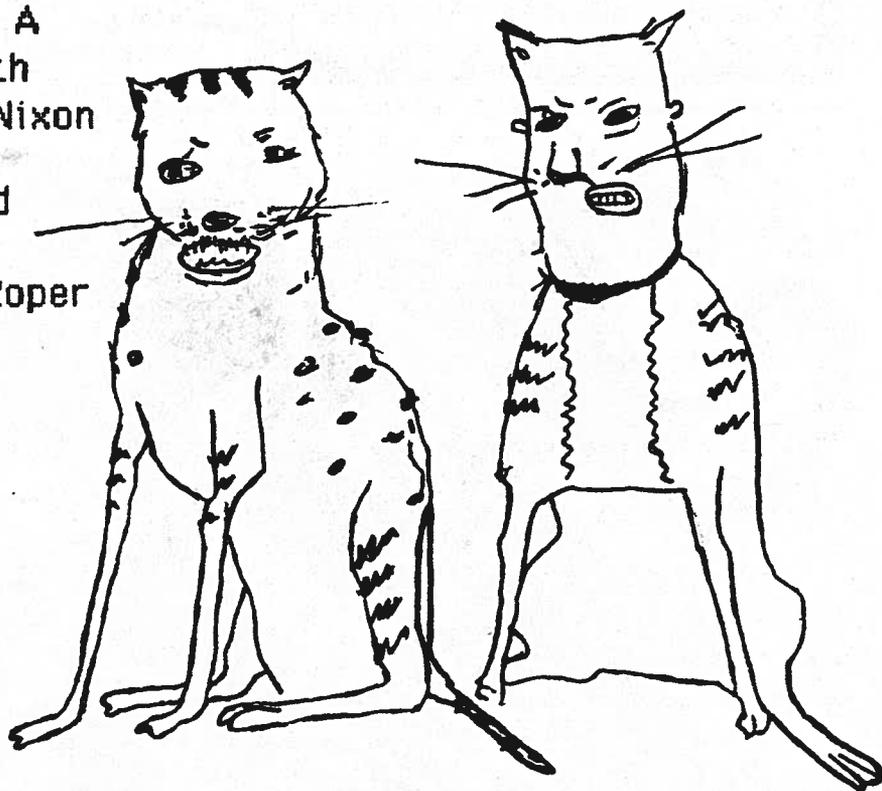
RHETORIC FARM

issue 6

Three days with
the Raunch Hands

FREE!

Q & A
with
Mojo Nixon
and
Skid Roper



RECORD REVIEWS POETRY AND THE GRAPEVINE

Another month has passed, the sixth issue of Rhetoric Farm is out, but you've sat, again, in front of your typewriter - glassy-eyed. There, on your desk - paper smeared with black spots - SHIT it looks like you've written something.

We at Rhetoric Farm find that surprising.

Why aren't those poems, short stories, record reviews, or pieces of art (the front cover doesn't appear magically every month), in Rhetoric Farm?

Send submissions with a SASE to: **J. Gruener, 920 N. 3rd Ave.**

Tucson, Arizona 85705

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- 5: Camper Van Beethoven / Del Fuegos

RHETORIC FARM is

Jordan Gruener
Peter Catalanotte

Front cover by
Mario Garcia

Special thanks to Elizabeth Reeves
 and Gene Armstrong

Her Name

one night
 he spray-painted
 her name
 all over his bedroom walls.
 he thought that
 if he was surrounded
 by her name
 he would be able
 to sleep better.
 there were hundreds
 of her name
 around him.

he was mistaken though
 and later regretted it
 as he painted over
 each one.

-Jim Parks

Six Toes

the eyes of the company commander
 examined the feet
 of the new recruit
 whose body
 was minnesota white
 and naked except for
 the issued swimtrunks
 and who was standing
 with the other recruits
 all shivering by the pool.

the company commander
 turned to the swimming instructor
 who had just taken the whistle
 from his mouth
 and then turned back
 and once more examined
 the feet.

it was the damndest thing
 he'd ever seen.

-Jim Parks

POETRY



Across the Street

by Jordan Gruener

The punch was sixty hits of acid (half a sheet) and alcohol.
 He saw an Arab man hold a kitten to a street sign. The kitten would try to climb
 the steel pole, but its claws wouldn't dig in.

The man would pet the cat - but not let go.
 Everyone else lay on the floor as well. Twenty bodies - they looked dead, but
 most weren't, which was, in a way, too bad.

He woke up. Turned over. Christopher felt like shit. His breath smelled like
 canned fish. He went back to sleep.

The dream was all knives. He hated dreams - they always turned into
 nightmares - insomnia - was better than dying without blood in his head.
 "Get up asshole."

Christopher woke up, rolled over. Eyes closed, his mom would be cooking
 breakfast about now. Eggs sausage toast juice. But the warm beer wasn't real
 bad. Chris threw up. A gray/green puddle formed by his face and began to soak
 into the skirt of some punk girl.

He went to the bathroom and kicked a dirty matchbook out of the way. The light
 was warm. His toothbrush was there, and there was still toothpaste in the tube.

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In front of Christopher's house the street was hot, the sun was high overhead and a dog occasionally barked. The cat was on his lap, purring. He was happy. His sister had just died.

Repeated the same words - sentences were constructed wrong. Voices rang in his head, he could concentrate or even write fast enough. Everything was slow, but the images in his head burned holes in the movie screen - white stinking holes with brown edges.

His sister once put out a cigarette on this couch.

* * *

The next days were different, but not much. He still wore make-up and went to the park late at night. It felt right. Strangers to his face, touching his lips, pinching his ass. They'd get him alone behind the girls/boys brick restroom.

Sink a tongue deep in his mouth - it was like the movies - knee to the groin, bite the tongue, the blood flowed easy. Chris enjoyed this. The stomach, the balls both smashed aching then the wallet (money usually). If not, more kicks. This, he thought, was love. It was also money.

When he got home there was a note waiting. Sticking out of the typewriter it looked like this:

i borrowed your typewriter
i love you
I made the bed
i miss you
i will turn off the air
and lock the door
I thank you.
I found a cat
in the sofa

"This is nice," he said. Chris had received the note before, different forms of course, but all saying the same thing. 'I love you' in lower case letters.

I saw a girl earlier today, she wore some new-wave punk cowboy shirt. The shirt had silver collar tips, she wore a bola tie, and the black fringe from her shirt fell over those sixteen-year-old breasts. It was enough to make anyone

Seeing-Eve God

there was this kid
and he drew with a stick
the eye of a god
on one of the barren patches
in his backyard

and for a moment
the kid saw the god
and the god saw the kid

and then it was time
for dinner.

-Jim Parks

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cry, except her boyfriend who grabbed her ass and had his hand slapped by her pink nails. That was great. America was full of love after all.

Everything was always pink and chapped. Give me a call if you want to.

Christopher turned on the tv and watched Billy Graham. There was a number on the screen (206 367-9100) Graham said to call, Chris, too, could be saved. He called, but they wouldn't accept the charges.

Back in the fifth grade the custodian was fixing a cooler on top of the library. He had a ladder up to the roof, it was lunch time and there was some boy we didn't know well who said he could fly. We dared him.

The roof never seemed really high, but as his body hit the ground and pieces of white poked out of his skin, we realized the library was bigger than we thought. I never saw him again. His picture was in the newspaper the next day, but for some reason his sister cried when I said her brother was famous.

Things like that, an old memory, shit on the sidewalk, or a broken wine bottle - either way the boys always knew which way to turn when the cops came and who they could dare.

At Chris' house the note had been in the typewriter for two days. The phone had yet to be lifted from cradle. He wasn't sure what would happen.

I would, sometimes when the crosswords got dead and worn, draw my picture on blank match book covers and send them to friends. I would find a name and address in the phone book, my friends were always my lovers. When that didn't work I could listen to records in my bedroom, by myself.

There was a tape-loop I could listen to - appreciate. It was titled "Come Out."

Sometimes I would draw my picture on matchbook covers. Usually looking nothing like me, the eyes would glare, spit lust. I would have long hair - eyelashes thick and bunched.

Chris gave Kathleen flowers once. White, yellow, and pink carnations clutched in her worn hands everything was clean and shaking. The carpet shined, the knife had raspberry jam on it, the sheets were clean, and the big yellow pillow was filled with archaic paisley.

-Anyone in there?

He opened the front door and looked around.

-Chris are you in there?

-Yeah, who's this?

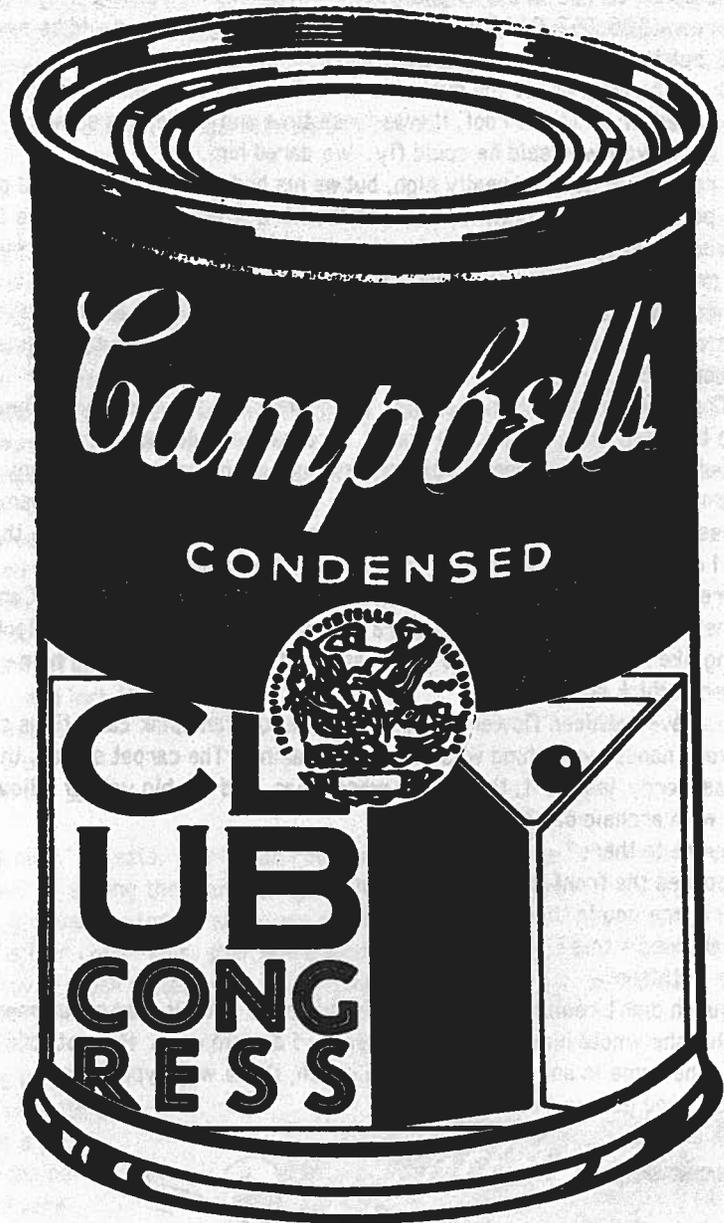
-It's Kathleen.

Kathleen didn't realize he hadn't opened his eyes yet. It was about noon Chris thought; she wrote him a note that resembled a poem once. He kept it in folds of a book. She came in and sat down on the couch, there was typewriter.

-Didn't you get my note?

-Not exactly.





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STORIES FROM DOWN SOUTH - WAY DOWN SOUTH AS TOLD BY REBARB

um, When I moved to Rio, I first lived in a hotel where my room had no windows, and the bathroom was down the hall. All night long it was clomp, clomp, clomp. I got very tired of this very quickly, and soon began to procure another place to live. I found a place that appeared to be very nice. It was in an Art Deco style building that was divided into 4 equal sized apartments. For \$70 a month I was given a room of my own and breakfast every day. Except breakfast consisted of nothing more than coffee and unbuttered bread. Sharing this apartment was one of the strangest groups of people I have ever in my whole entire life had to have spent time with. The woman who owned the apartment was a hairdresser. She shared her room with a refrigerator repair woman (one must remember that in South America, any appliance service woman is by definition a lesbian). One morning, I woke up to find on the coffee table in the living room, sitting in an empty coffee can there were two strap-on dildos. There was an odor in the room. Somehow, I convinced myself that there was nevertheless no reason to consider moving out. Everyone has their Thing.

The other room was rented out to three very young, very muscled, very stupid gigolos. It took me a few weeks to figure this out. One day, one of the boys made me teach him how to sing "New York, New York."

As if all this weren't enough, there was also living in this apartment a schizophrenic woman who was the maid. She broke at least 3 or 4 valuable things a day. She also kept with her clothes in the bathroom, a collection of gay male pornography. One day, she went really nuts. She wandered around the house possessed with Macumba spirits. Later that afternoon, the spirits left her in a frenzied spasmodic fit of tears. What finally induced me to leave was yet another person to share the apartment. This man was a car thief who carried a gun. I will always remember my days there in that apartment with a certain fondness and bemused irritation.

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RECORD REVIEWS

ALBUM of the MONTH

The Good Earth
The Feelies
Coyote

Take note: Boston took six years to make an excessive album of little artistic merit. The Feelies waited six years to make a follow-up to near-classic *Crazy Rhythms*, and produced one of the best albums of the year.

If the Feelies weren't so legendary, *The Good Earth* would almost pass unnoticed. It is as quiet and tranquil as The Velvet Underground's third album or Brian Eno, circa *Another Green World*.

Whether the buried vocals are producer Peter Buck's (REM) fault is anyone's guess. Probably not.

This album is as vital to the post-punk '80s as *Crazy Rhythms* was to the post-wave '70s.

-Peter Catalanotte

Eat Your Paisley
Dead Milkmen
Restless/Fever Records

Last year's debut *Big Lizard In My Backyard* and its big hit "Bitchin' Camaro," was a clever if vacuous display of post-punk witticisms. With *Paisley* we're subjected to pretty much the same thing.

About the only thing wrong with this LP is the inclusion of a lyric sheet - you no longer have to speculate how dumb the songs are. However, if you expected any brainy excursions into life's troubling questions, that's your problem. Any band that pokes fun at Husker Du's hair length (the song "The Thing That Only Eats Hippies") can't be all bad.

-Peter Catalanotte

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Un "Sung Stories"
Phil Alvin
Slash

Hell, everybody from John Cougar to the Beat Farmers have been talking and playing "roots rock." Alvin, whose usual job is singer for the Blasters, puts 'em all to shame with this hep record.

With the invaluable assistance of Sun Ra and his Arkestra (who are more widely known for their free jazz expounding) and the truly fabulous Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Alvin resurrects several pre-rock standards of the blues and swing persuasions, keeps the tinkering to a minimum and simply creates music capable of blowing us all away. I'm telling ya true.

From the natty "Ballad of Smokey Joe" (a medley including bits of Cab Calloway's "Minnie the Moocher" and "Kicking the Gong Around"), to the powerhouse, gospel-tinged "Death in the Morning" (with the Jubilee Train Singers), with pit stops for the incendiary blues of Otis Blackwell's "Daddy Rolling Stone" and the 30's classic of troubled times "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime," this is terrific album, centered, of course, on Alvin's deep vocals, which can truthfully be called beautiful.

Joe Jackson tried to revive some old swing tunes on his LP "Jumping Jive" a few years back, with less than successful results. This transcendent and faithfully gritty record by Alvin is a winner that could become a classic itself. Here's hopin'.

-Guillermo del Brazo Fuerte

I Live Here
Ritual Tension
Sacrifice

Ritual Tension is to the general run of rock 'n' roll bands as George Orwell is to Jackie Collins. Their sound falls somewhere between *Second Edition*-era PIL, Richard Hell and the Voidoids, and Arto Lindsay: disjointed but never unintentionally spastic. Ritual Tension play with finesse and intensity.

I Live Here is a collection of songs usually about New York City, but moe generally about the human condition as singer Ivan Nahem views it. Since he is a perceptive and educated man, his vision is acute. Since he's obviously passionate as well, his words are full of life, his reading of them a revelation.

There's nothing dry or tedious about this record. If you have a taste for noise-rock, New York style, this record should spend a lot of time on your turntable. Though it doesn't have that almost popish feel that Sonci Youth's most recent work has, it is driving and quite powerful, and the thought and passion that went into the material places it a cut above.

-J. Varlett McMassacre

teacher sez it is lower



Peter Case
Peter Case
Geffen

Ex-Plimsouls vocalist, Peter Case, turns up a winner with this gutsy solo effort. Playing only an acoustic guitar, and backed by a flawless ensemble, (including T-Bone Burnett, who co-produced with Case) the songs are reminiscent of, nothing less than, Creedence Clearwater Revival. The song writing is strong and simple and the album itself (with the exception of the Pogues' song "Pair of Brown Eyes" - a poor cover choice) is wonderful.

-Peter Catalanotte

Jamboree
Guadacanal Diary
Elektra

After the impressive *Walking in the Shadow of the Big Man*, expectations were high for this, their second LP. But *Jamboree*, while exceptional, is just a little better than more of the same.

They still employ the back-woods religious imagery and country/swamp sound that served *Big Man* so well. But perhaps in an attempt to break away from this, they have strayed towards sillier, off-the-cuff compositions ("I See Moe," "Cattleprod"). However, the songs that are worth hearing ("Spirit Train," the title track) are just that.

-Peter Catalanotte

Gone II -- But Never Too Gone
Gone
SST

Now that everybody and his mother knows Black Flag has become little more than a boring caricature of itself, where can guitar whiz and Flag founder Greg Ginn unleash his creative energies? Henry Rollins went on the road with his spoken word pieces. Could it be performance art for Greg?

Naw. Back into the rock 'n' roll fray tromps Greg only to emerge with the best trio since Cream.

Gone's second LP of keen, improvised instrumental noise is an ode to excess, and a blessing at that. This musical inferno sounds like the Grateful Dead, had they grown up under that bad sign called punk rock and got strung out on speed at a Black Sabbath concert while listening to Ornette Coleman on their Walkmans.

It's mean, loud, and full of jaw-dropping guitar solos from Ginn. All this might sound like the "harmolodic" style of experimental jazz guitarist James Blood Ulmer, but it doesn't. The structures are not quite as complex, nor the bottom as funky. But *Gone II* rocks. Subtly be damned.

This stuff surpasses the Flag's own instrumental molasses. Caveat emptor: if you don't get off on overindulgence, look elsewhere. The pace never slows, except shortly on the lumbering last number, titled "Cobra XVIII."

-Brazo Fuerte

we heard it through the...



Guru of Groovy **Randy Love** is as busy as ever. His band **Marshmallow Overcoat** has released a new single (on **Dionysus**, not **Voxx** as we reported last month). His new fanzine **Psychedelicates** should be out soon and **Sounds from L.S.D.** is being wrapped up. By the way, the Overcoat found a drummer - **John Brett** of **Black Sun Ensemble**. . . **Mallife**, our favorite guide to consumerism, has released its tenth issue on cassette. It includes stories from the last nine issues, backed by drippy mall music. Send \$3.50 or a blank cassette to Addled Recordings, P.O. Box 40421, Tucson, 85717. . . **The Raunch Hands** (see story this ish.) blew into Club 814 with the fabulous **Johnies** opening. Grapevine spotted local celeb **Fonda** as well as blues buddies **Mojo Nixon** and **Skid Roper** (see story this ish.) who had just played a rousing show at the UA . . . Both **Thai Pink** and **Undertow** have new cassettes out. The tapes are available at Wrex Records for a nominal charge . . . Thanks goes to **Charley Brown** of **The Entertainment Magazine** for informing their readers (Oct. '86) that techno-trendy **Fiction** considers music "a form of self-masterbation - silly us !! . . . Lots of new fanzines popping up. **Grooving in Green** features articles on peace and how to achieve it. It's 50 cents and available at **Wrex** (see ad this ish.). You can also buy **6 Feet Under** at the same location for 75 cents. The latest issue contains interviews with the **Cult** and **Gentlemen Afterdark** . . .

Notes from the UA Cellar . . . Tue, Sept. 30: **Domino Theory** displayed a brave, if not dull blend, of techno-jazz-funk . . . Mon, Oct. 6: From San Antonio came the **Krayolas**. Sporting two-piece suits and a vocalist/keyboardist with posture problems, they reminded us of the Kinks - no, the Knack . . . Tue, Oct. 7: Hard-rockers **Quiet Lyze** (get that spelling right) kicked out the jams and urged us to 'rock all night.' Or is it **nyte**? . . . Tue, Oct. 14: **Fish Karma and the Droning Headaches** shocked and offended a stolid crowd with frequent insults and biting sarcasm . . . Wed, Oct. 15: This show was a double bill with **Jeff Colt** opening for **The Mourning Glories**. Both were well received and played their little hearts out . . . Thu, Oct. 16: If **Gentlemen Afterdark** should ever disband (again), **Undertow** can easily fill their (dress) shoes. Nuff said . . . Finally, Mon, Oct. 27: The critically acclaimed **Balancing Act** played to a receptive crowd. They performed tunes from their EP, *New Campfire Songs*, which happens to be produced by Peter Case (see review of Case this ish.).

Any dirt, scoops, poops, or corrections should be addressed to Grapevine, 841 E. Speedway, Tucson, AZ 85719. Nasty rumors given preference.

GROWTH OF TWO TALLY-WACKERS

Mojo-Nixon and Skid Roper came from opposite coasts to form the famous Rock 'n' Roll Duo. What brought these musical maniacs together is still hazy. Many different stories have been printed in the past and more will be. I gathered some normal questions and asked Skid and Moj. I expected somebody on a different planet, but found an average U.S. citizen from the planet Earth. Well, not altogether normal, yet someone I could really relate to.

by Kevin Parker

Sound Check - -

Mojo stomps around, sucking on his "Sonic Love Jug." Skid stands tall, calmly on the stage. Mojo exits the hall.

Rhetoric Farm: Where did Mojo go?

Skid: He went to go touch himself in the bathroom?

RF: What sort of name did your mamma give you?

SR: You may think it sounds funny but, David Jones. The name tells it all.

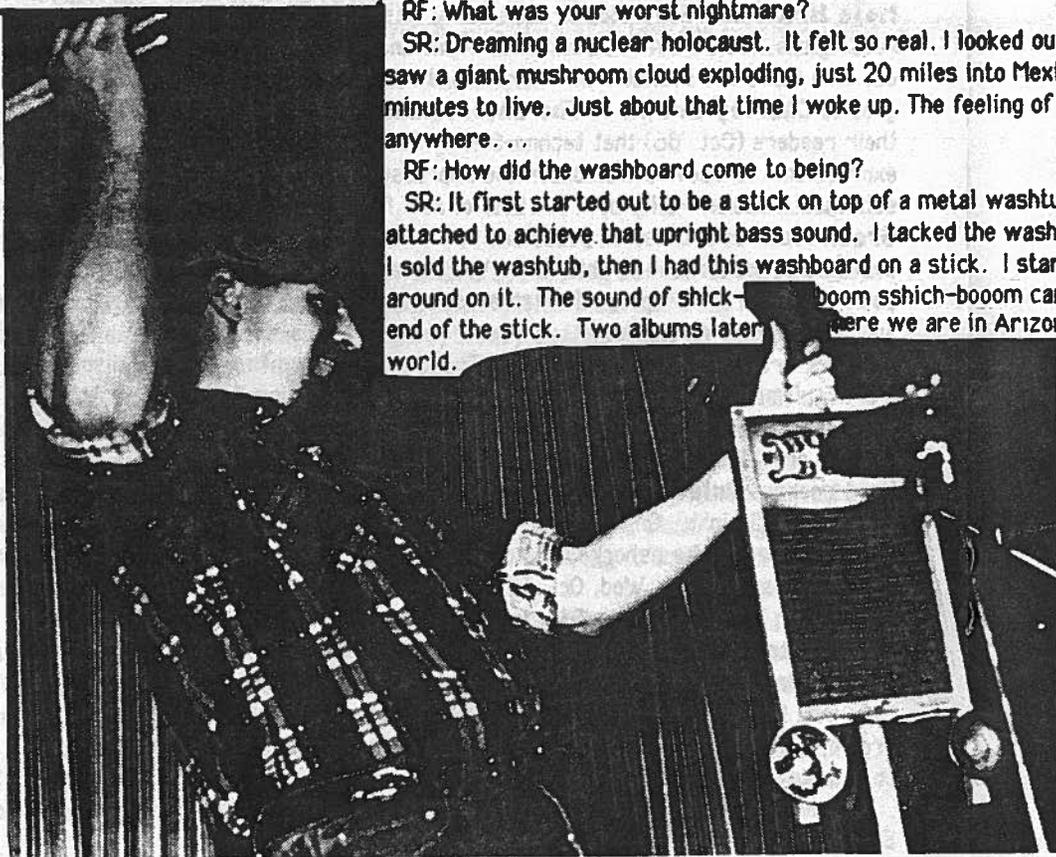
There's already a David Jones from the Monkees.

RF: What was your worst nightmare?

SR: Dreaming a nuclear holocaust. It felt so real. I looked out my window and saw a giant mushroom cloud exploding, just 20 miles into Mexico. Only 20 minutes to live. Just about that time I woke up. The feeling of not being able to go anywhere. . .

RF: How did the washboard come to being?

SR: It first started out to be a stick on top of a metal washtub. A string was attached to achieve that upright bass sound. I tacked the washboard on for a joke. I sold the washtub, then I had this washboard on a stick. I started to scruffle around on it. The sound of shick-boom sshick-boom came later as I banged the end of the stick. Two albums later here we are in Arizona - Tucson - touring the world.



photos

by Steve Marcus

RF: Do you think Mojo is offensive?

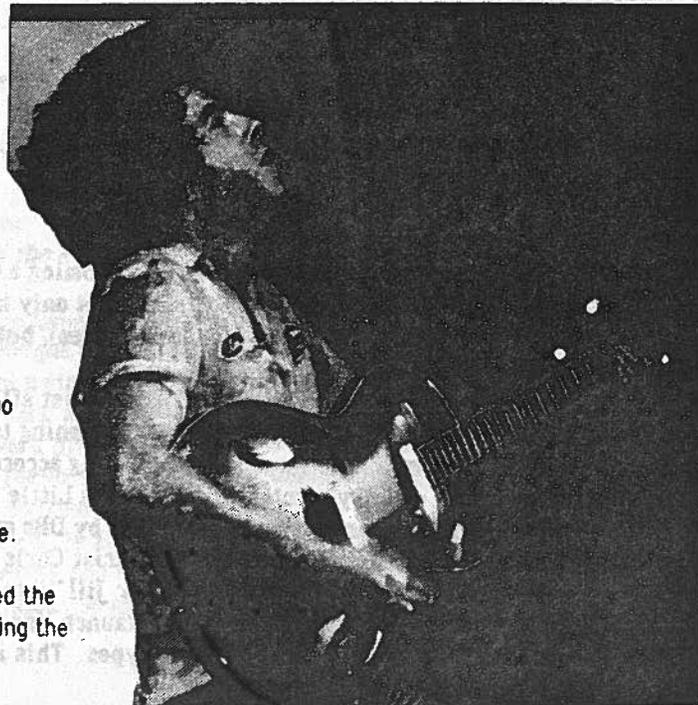
SR: Sometimes he goes too far, but on the other hand, sometimes nothing is too sacred. You can make fun of anything.

RF: Is it true you were in jail?

SR: The stupid truth of the matter is I was running away from a jay walking ticket. They caught up with me when we were recording our latest album in the studio. I was fingerprinted, photographed, and humiliated.

Dinner Time - -

RF: Who is Aunt Eileen? (This is my aunt and I gave Mojo one clue - black, horn rimmed glasses.)



MN: Do you know what kind of slippers she wears? Those fuzzy blue slippers with the Elvis heads on. I bet you she's sitting at home right now, drinking some generic Tab - Fighting Flab with Tab - reading the Weekly World News, and watching the Wheel of Fortune.

RF: No Mojo, but nice try. She works in a bank.

MN: It doesn't matter now . . . she's a traitor, she's an accomplice to the enemy.

RF: What sort of dreams do you have?

MN: Their so completely disjointed that nothing ever makes sense. I mean everything is FREAKED OUT. Like this one, this reoccurring one that has something to do with Neil Young and an inflatable raft and an escalator. I mean this dream has been going on for about ten years. It's so weird, I can't make this up. I don't know what it's about . . . I never have dreams that are based on reality.

RF: What sort of childhood did you have?

MN: Everything was normal. Mowed the grass, went to church on Sundays and played on the high school football team. But there was a couple of different things: my father ran a black radio station - very religious, very conservative, very Southern, and racist. Here he was, a white man working at a black radio station. He was involved in the civil rights marches in the mid '60s.

RF: Did you masterbate excessively?

MN: I had this fear, when I was 15 or 16, that I was addicted. It just didn't seem right that . . . from when I was 12 - when I first started that motor - up until I was 19, I maybe missed five nights.

It wasn't always nights, sometimes it would be days, sneaking one in here or there whenever I could. I was getting good at sneaking 'em in. We're talking an average of one and a half a day - 10 - 15 a week.

It gave me time to think about things - like writing my songs.

Luxury Condos Coming to Your Neighborhood Soon
Various Artists
Coyote

Another example of how Coyote Records is fast becoming a contender in the Great American Underground Label Sweepstakes. Not only have they released a lot of noteworthy records (Full Time Men, the Feelies), but they have put out this remarkable compilation.

There are so many gems on this LP it is difficult to list all of them: Syd Straw (of Golden Palominos fame) singing about "Listening to Elvis;" Scruffy the Cat's "Big Fat Monkey's Hat" laced with rollicking accordion; and Last Roundup taking a lazy country stroll through "Just a Little is Enough."

If that isn't enough, there are secret appearances by DBs guitarist Peter Holsapple (posing as Mr. Bonus) and ex-DBs guitarist Chris Stamey playing with the Jacks (turning the old DBs song "Ask for Jill" into a real oddity). Plus, there's a sweet little album closer by the Raunch Hands and a stirring number from one of the Feelies' projects, the Trypes. This is what compilations should be like!

-Peter Catalanotte

Baby, You're Bummin' My Life Out
in a Supreme Fashion
Theolonius Monster
Epitaph

If James Brown married the Replacements, they might have this band as a child. Lead singer Bob Forrest has a strong, soulful voice, and with four guitarists, they must have one helluva live show.

Guest appearances include ex-Plimsouls Peter Case, and Tupelo Chain Sex guitarist Tupelo Joe. Well worth a listen.

-Peter Catalanotte

Beyond the Sunset
Rain Parade
Restless

Sakes alive! Heartiest of thanks are extended to Restless for releasing this live-in-Tokyo disc which until recently, has only been available as an import.

Let your noggin simmer in this psycho-pourri for an hour or two -- it's an ecstasy unequalled by any drug. *Beyond the Sunset* is chock fulla 40 minutes of choice Rain Parade -- including dazzling psychedelic exercises such as "Blue," "This Can't Be Today," "1 1/2 Hours Ago" and the meandering epic "No Easy Way Down." Production and playing quality is generally high, except on the aptly sloppy covers of Television's cool "Ain't That Nothing" and Green On Red's "Cheap Wine."

An added delight for listeners: "Cheap Wine" features Dream Syndicate stalwarts Dennis Duck (on tambourine) and Steve Wynn (on vocals and rhythm guitar).

-Guillermo del Brazo Fuerte

Blood and Chocolate
Elvis Costello and the Attractions
CBS

Just when you thought it was safe to trust him again, he makes this. *King of America* while not a staggering effort, was his best in quite a while.

With Nick Lowe back at the production knobs, *Blood and Chocolate* returns to the excessive word play and hide-and-seek messages that plagued his earlier efforts. "Tokyo Storm Warning," though catchy, may one of the worst songs he has ever written.

"Battered Old Bird" is absolutely his worst performance ever recorded. The vocals are breathy and overwrought, the lyrics far too personal to be of any use to the listener. A major disappointment on every level.

-Peter Catalanotte

EVOL
Sonic Youth
SST

The best albums seem to exist in a realm all their own; listening to them is akin to entering a whole new world, as one does an exceptional book or movie.

That may seem a grand statement, but *EVOL* is a grand statement in itself. The music is in turn terrifying and tender.

"Expressway to Your Skull" rises in a furious scramble, then subsides into a mesmerizing drone that goes on forever, thanks in part to a closed-groove ending.

The sound quality is a little less than sonic, therefore, they must be experienced live. Whole new world indeed.

-Peter Catalanotte

Knocked Out Loaded
Bob Dylan
Columbia

I can't say ol' Bob Zimmerman treads much new ground here; after 20-odd albums, our finest rock poet seems to be reworking a great many tired and true themes. That's not to say this is an unworthy record. Dylan's hard-rockin' '70s material, such as "Isis" and "Knocking on Heaven's Door," is the major inspiration for this stuff, and a few songs live up to the tradition.

The R&B romp "You Wanna Ramble" and the proud 'n' loud chorus on the 11-minute "Brownsville Girl" (composed with playwright/actor Sam Shepard) emit some of his best vibes in years. And that includes the outstanding recent records *Empire Burlesque* and *Infidels*. Kris Kristofferson's fine, countryish inspirational, "They Killed Him," would not be out of place at a Baptist service, and it rocks hard at the same time. This is a stable song to balance an uneven record with disappointing Dylan numbers written with Carol Bayer Sager and Tom Petty.

Considering this man's estimable talent and the formidable supporting players (T-Bone Burnett, Al Kooper, James Jamerson Jr., Eurhythmic Dave Stewart and Petty and several of the Heartbreakers), this could have been much better than it is. Then again, I'll take mediocre Dylan over nearly anything that's on the radio these days. -Brazo Fuerte

More Rock 'n' Roll Rarities
Chuck Berry
Chess/MCA

This archival collection is the second from the venerable Chess Records to compile some of the many obscure gems by the legendary rock patriarch. Listeners born after 1960 will probably be unfamiliar with many of the arrangements -- several originally monophonic numbers have been remixed for stereo and a couple ("Rock 'n' Roll," "Sweet Little Sixteen") are actually the original demos.

The inimitable Berry tears up the grooves of this platter like a one-man guitar wrecking crew. "Ain't That Just Like a Woman," Bobby Troup's "Route 66," "I Got To Find My Baby," "My Mustang Ford" and the haunting "House of Blue Lights" stand out immediately as the best of an excellent 12-song batch.

Of interest to rock 'n' roll buffs: Many of the tracks feature the rolling piano of Johnny Johnson and the bass playing of blues statesman Willie Dixon. -Guillermo del Brazo Fuerte



Dear SANTA,

all i WANT for christmas is a
Shopping spree in The cockpit.

MARY MERRY,
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Blasting Concept-Volume II
Various Artists
SST

There is no real difference between this album and *Blasting Concept-Volume I*, but at least this one is spared the usual violent Raymond Pettibon cover.

Of course, the best tracks here are from the Minutemen, the Meat Puppets and ex-labelmates Husker Du. Surprisingly, Black Flag turn in a groovy guitar song called "I Can See You" that could reach classic proportions if Henry Rollin's atypical socio-psycho lyrics weren't tacked on.

Unfortunately, you have to sit through derivative dross like DC3 and the thoroughly worthless Saint Vitus to get to the good stuff. I recommend taping it and leaving off the heavy-metal-is-hip music that is so much a part of most of these bands.

-Jane Hybrid

T-Bone Burnett
T-Bone Burnett
Dot

Though he has produced many artists, from Los Lobos to Elvis Costello, T-Bone Burnett is still relatively unknown as a composer/performer. This is a pity, as he has made some wonderful albums through the years, with this almost certainly being his best.

With a completely acoustic line-up, the sound is much more subdued than his earlier efforts, and he has lost the preachy tone that overwhelmed the otherwise powerful *Proof Through the Night*. Perhaps because of this, his songwriting is stronger than ever. "I had to run before I knew how to crawl," he sings in the album opener "River of Love." "The first step was hard/But I had trouble with them all," he then concludes. "I almost made you happy."

Two wrongs: covering Tom Waits' "Time" (which only Waits' sing-speak delivery can bring justice to), and "Oh No Darling" (rhyming at the expense of reason). Otherwise, a remarkable album from a very talented artist.

-Peter Catalanotte



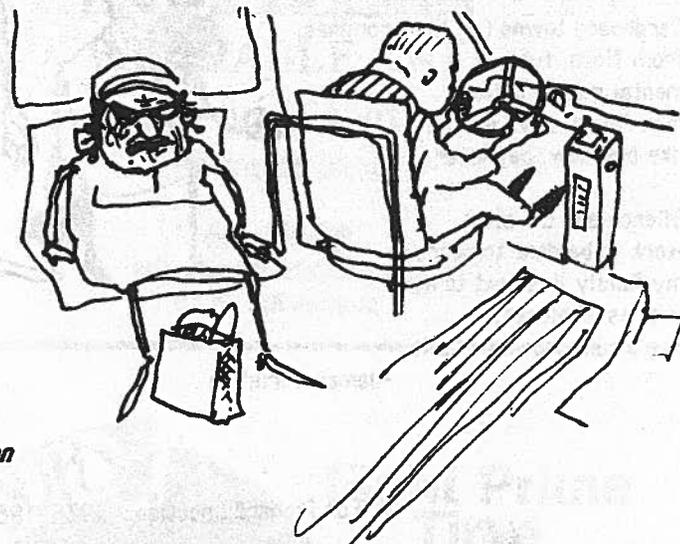
Microdisney
The Clock Comes Down the Stairs
Big Time

I'll forgive a band almost anything if they're lively, or at least have well-written songs. Unfortunately, this British band has neither.

If we must categorize, I'd stick them in the Aztec Camera/Style Council league, which is a compliment (Aztec Camera) and a criticism (Style Council). In "Horse Overboard," the singer tells of his love for his wife and its gradual waning, until he finally decides to throw the horse - his wife - overboard. "Genius," a sarcastic ditty, states in the chorus "You're a genius, you're a giant / You're a prince, you are the pope / The things you feel are just a joke / So burn, burn, burn."

Musically, however, this is the wimpiest album since the Style Council's *Internationalists*. The songs have complex chord structures, the arrangements are clever, the productions is lush and layered. But if it's this boring, what is the point?

-Jane Hybrid



State of Our Union
Long Ryders
Island

It's easy to like the Long Ryders. Their songs are catchy, the arrangements are tight. Plus, they have that American sound that is so popular these days. And though I used to defend them in arguments, I'm finding it harder and harder to stay on their side.

They always lean towards one extreme or another. Either they're 60's paisley-hipsters, as on their first EP *10-5-60*. Or they're American Music Revivalists, as on their last LP *Native Sons*, sounding a little too much like Buffalo Springfield for their own good. The latter was still their best effort, because it seemed natural. It seemed down to earth.

But *State of Our Union* is too natural, too down to earth. It really is pathetic, hearing them jump on the Bruce Springsteen- John Cougar Mellencamp- Jackson Browne (did I miss anybody?) bandwagon. Stick to songs like those on *Native Sons*, and we'll all be better off.

-Jane Hybrid

Morning Glory

The sky has ended,
blues, blood red,
waters, brown,
and flesh rots in the black sun,
like pieces of grade "A" chuck.

The edge,
a new civilization,
conceived in horror,
born on a wing and a prayer,
like it was sent by guardian angels.

Cardboard towns fall like promises,
from flash, fussion,
mental masturbation,
man finally pays his bill,
like buy now, pay later.

Silence and the pitch,
work to be done tomorrow,
my family lies next to me
in piles of pieces,
like a rummage sale table.

-James Christian



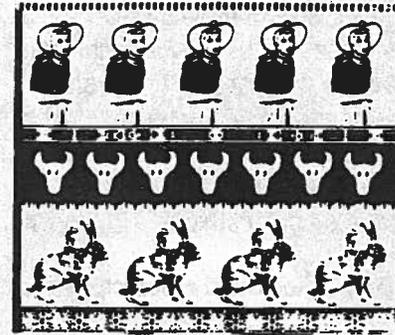
For Richard Brautigan: 1935-1985

I was down by the old swamp the other day,
and I could have sworn I saw Richard sitting
on his favorite lazy-boy rocker.
He was handling a pole, but the bait
was gone from his personal hook, it had been taken
I suppose. There was a shot-gun near,
lying on his left-side leaning on an oleander tree.
I thought it might be hunting season,
Maybe a shot-gun wedding, you know the classical story,
where the boy gets stuck with the girl.

-James Christian



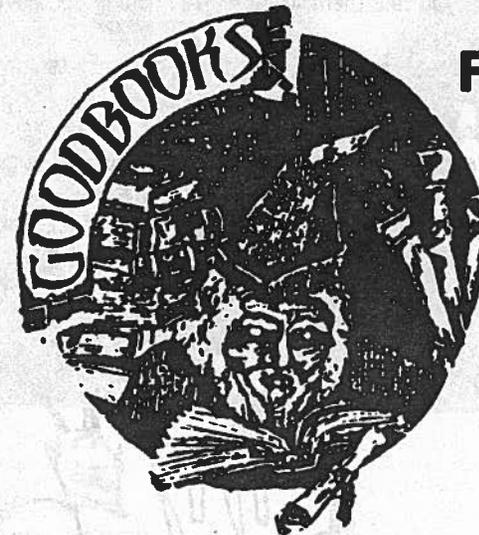
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3 Days With the Raunch Hands - or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and love the Band

In the beginning we had an idea. We'd interview the Raunch Hands. Great idea, right? We had some great questions, too - "Do you get laid more now that you're in national magazines?" "Have you found America yet?" and my personal favorite, "What's it all about?" But alas, it was not to be. Faced with the knowledge of the band's previous physical abuse of interviewers, we chickened out. Instead, after a sparsely attended, but earthshaking show at the Metro in Phoenix, we invited the band to stay with us in Tucson during their three days off to observe them firsthand. This is what we learned.

by Ermintrude Castleberry Additional research conducted by Vixen Baudhaupper

Phoenix sucks. (We already knew that.)

Band members' natural positions are rarely vertical, especially during the World Series. This is not necessarily a bad thing.

Don't tour Canada unless you have a water tight vehicle and for God's sake, don't eat the food. (Do drink the beer though, it's 6.4)

You eat better if you open for a fairly well known band instead of headlining. Disregard bottles lofted at your bean. Think of it as a learning experience.

Don't play with bands that have a "z" in their name.

Don't join a band in which any member doesn't change his socks.

If you're starving in India \$10 per diem is great. Otherwise, it sucks.

Certain band members aren't safe for women to be around. Or men. Or sheep.

Don't get a swelled head if "cutting edge" celebrities want to hang out with you. They don't like you any more than you like them; they're just hoping you have drugs.

Don't shop with band members unless your taste runs to 10 cent shirts and nickel underwear.

Even macho rock 'n' roll gods can be shy at first. Keep at it.

Do buy *El Rancho Grande* and *Learn to Whap-a-Dang* and watch for the upcoming album. If you're independently wealthy, have a sugar daddy, or simply have nothing better to do with your money, join the fan club. Just think of it as one less case of Meister Brau.

Don't break down in Nebraska.



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