



HARDCORE MEANS RESISTANCE



CrimethInc.

Inside Front

Special tour
edition
August 2025



For anarcho-punks and hardcore anarchists

In memory of
Jen Angel, Josh
Edwards, James
Murphy Hoopes,
John Rivera,
Massimo Meloni,
and sure, even Bill
Korecky.

*—there's nothing an
anarchist can't do—*

mechanism is crystal clear in your mind: seven pins, seven springs.

When slowly falling through water, time is equivalent to depth. Memories of the past are mingled with hopes for the future; they await you together at the surface. The joy of someone giving themselves to you, followed by confusion at the sound of the locking bar clicking into the shackle toe, what did I just hear?

At the end, you tabulate the myriad attempts at picking the lock: discussion, alternately showing and repressing feelings, reading, being brave, being timid, prayers, trying anything.

Jadugar Mandrake successfully performed The River Escape on multiple occasions throughout his career. But what Lahiri learned on the 16th of June, and what I learned on the pier at Borghamn, is the lesson of Heraclitus before Plato: that no man steps into the same river twice. When belief has run out of time, the body is alone.

Then there is only water, pressure, cold.



lives, in a nameless mass grave. Only one of the dead that lay there had been granted a grave marker: the noble dog Oden, who belonged to a lieutenant of the prison guard. All the buildings of the resort date back to this murderous time. Even our charming bungalow was revealed to have served as a guardhouse, living-quarters for the lieutenants who policed the barracks.

That night, as we lay in bed in the guard-cottage, sleep eluded me. I lay quietly in the dark, with my mind unleashed. After several hours I arose and left the cottage and made my way towards the Vättern shore. The sky held a pale glow, as if lit from within, perfectly mirrored by vast waters. The Scandinavian sun was obscured by a jet-black strip of distant forest, the far side of the lake, the horizon.

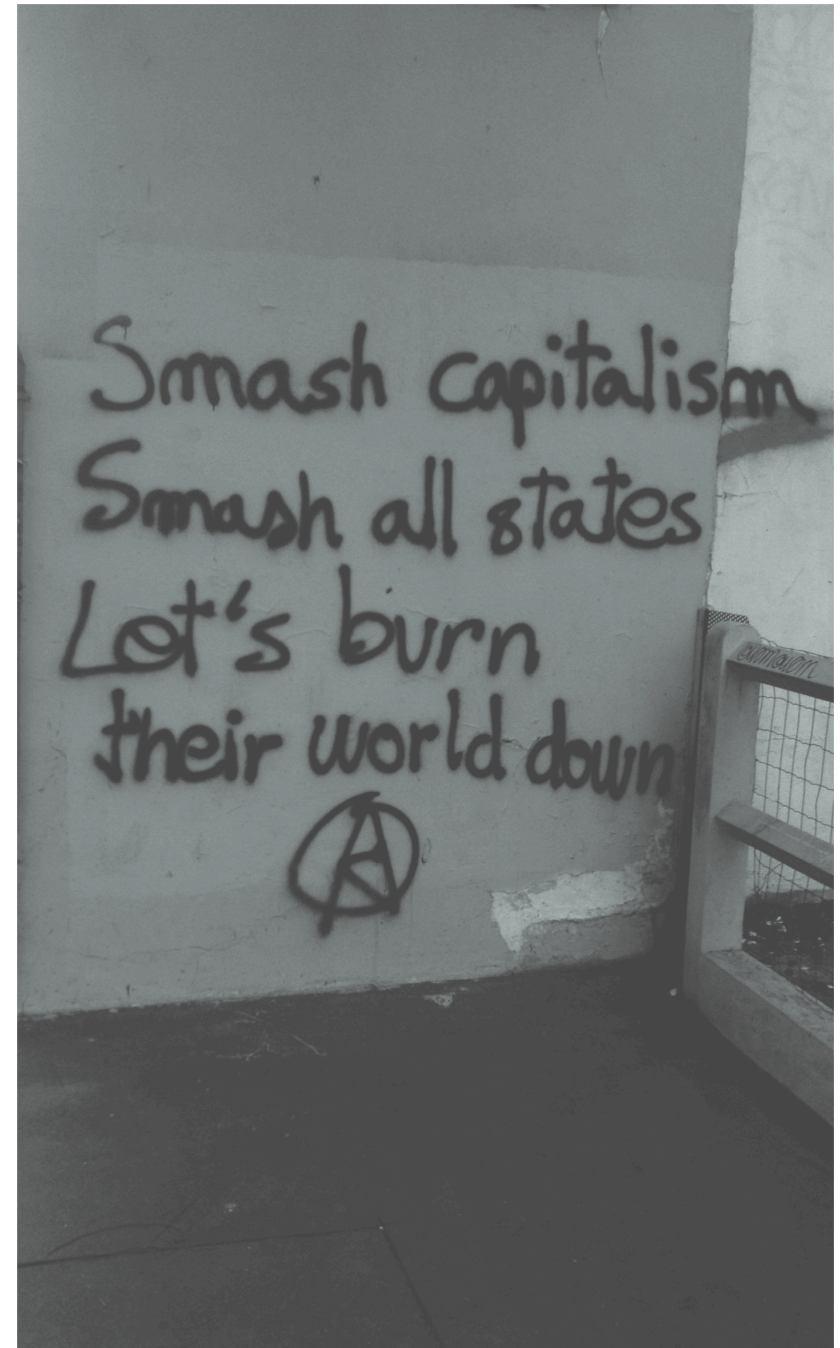
I walked out along a windswept pier into the mouth of a sunrise covering all water and sky as one. The lake was a chaos of waves, gusts of water sprayed the masonry of the pier and the eruptive reflection of the sky on its surface drew and held my gaze. I stood as one hypnotized, subconsciously trying to gauge the depth of the lakewater crashing against the stone.

On Sunday the 16th of June, 2019, the Calcuttian magician Chanchal Lahiri set out to attempt The River Escape, an impressive maneuver inspired by Houdini's Overboard Box Escape. Known to his fans as the Jadugar Mandrake, Lahiri's hands were tied behind his back, his legs bound by thick rope, and his entire body was wrapped in chains fastened with a total of six padlocks.

Assistants hooked the ropes between his feet to a cargo crane above the pontoon where he staged his operation on the Hooghly River in West Bengal. A crowd watched anxiously from the nearby Howrah Bridge. Mandrake was hoisted by his feet and lowered head-first into the river.

Many escapologists have described the sensation of performing a technically difficult escape as a spiritual experience. While the scene is painstakingly assembled, conviction is born out of faith, seemingly from thin air. It is an alchemy that feeds on the audience's enthusiasm, as the Italian escape artist Andrew Basso put it: "We must believe together."

The initial gasp as water touches the skin, when breath is pressed out of the body by the cold, brings physicality to what was previously an abstraction. Your body remembers the twist, the specific wriggle that first tightens then releases the tension of the rope, ingrained in your body by countless hours of repetition. No sound now but the interior of the lake, no sight but the wash of light scattered, no air. The familiar feel of the kit in your hands: the pick, the rake, the tension-wrench. The vision of the lock



*For artists,
who love the world
so much
they wish to learn its
forms and force
for rebels,
who love the world
so much
they wish to change
them.*

will: privately, afflicted by an ailment that medical intervention was, at the time, unable to stave off.

The cottage was a one-room bungalow surrounded by a closely cropped lawn of vibrant green grass. It stood on a block foundation covered with stucco and every seam between its crumbly surface and the ground was dotted with shoots of weeds, wildflowers, and skinny bushes. It was the kind of berserk plant-life you get at the height of summer in Scandinavia, when every starved chlorophyll finally gets a feast of sunlight. You've never seen "don't know when to quit" more accurately embodied in a rosebush.

Inside, there was a kitchen-ish alcove with a single shelf and a row of cupboards (there was no running water in the cabin). Beyond that, it was a single room with a large bed and two small orthogonal windows, one with a view of the water.

One of eight small structures comprising a humble resort in the Swedish village of Borghamn, this humble abode was tucked into a nook on the eastern shore of the great Lake Vättern. Known for its reserves of limestone, Borghamn is the site of an expansive quarry that has supplied marble and cut stone to nearby monasteries, castles, and cathedrals since the 1100s. The resort itself is famously built on top of a filled-in section of the quarry dating back to the Middle Ages.

I came here in July with someone I loved a little too deeply. The cabin served as a basecamp for our forays into the nearby tableland forest. By day, we hiked in the woods and swam in the lake and at night we walked the roads of the open-air quarry, still active, and were awed by the giant saw blade used to cut the living rock before retiring to our private chamber.

One afternoon, as we made our way along the southern edge of the resort's boundary, we came upon an ancient stone wall, knee-high, surrounding four rows of six tidy earthen mounds, with a gnarled oak at the far end. This strange garden had a haunted feel and stood in contrast to the cheerful summer grasses. A plaque stood just outside the entrance. "Here lies Oden, who died saving his master from drowning in the harbor."

Later that night we found a pamphlet telling the story. In 1842, the Swedish government took possession of the quarry at Borghamn and set up a work camp for felons and petty criminals. For more than fifty years, the quarry was worked by prison labor.

During that time, it was not permitted for workers who departed to be buried in a traditional graveyard. These individuals were considered forsaken by the church and it was therefore treasonous to honor them, even in death. As a result, they were buried next to the quarry that took their

Escapology.

*Jon Ridenour (of Zegota and Fire & Lightning zine;
www.jonathanridenour.net)*

The immersive study of hardware designed to obstruct bodily movement, and the art of removing oneself from these designs, has been practiced by weirdos and esoterics throughout the ages. Not to be confused with escapism, the subtle art of diverting one's attention from an unpleasant reality, which has been practiced, also throughout the ages, by all of us.

Practitioners of escapology are known as “escape artists” and the most famous of these is undoubtedly the legendary Harry Houdini, active 1891 to 1926. People hear the name and generally picture a compact muscular man draped in chains and locks, standing atop a rickety wooden platform that more closely resembles a gallows than a stage. Early Kodak images of Houdini dressed in a singlet, hanging upside-down amongst a rabble of skeptical onlookers, remain imprinted on our collective consciousness.

One popular fact about the most famous escape artist concerns his death. As everyone knows, Houdini drowned attempting the infamous Overboard Box Escape, in which our hero was shackled at the hands and feet, nailed into a wooden packing crate, and lowered into the East River. Unfortunately, like many of our collectively-known facts, the story is entirely untrue. Houdini actually escaped the wooden crate in 57 seconds and emerged unscathed to the jubilation of the crowd, his manacles slowly falling to the bottom of the river.

That an escape artist should perish during a performance furnishes our myths of history with a certain satisfying irony. Events that we've witnessed can become infused with our own passionate interpretation, as our minds search for an explanation that we can understand, that will push us farther down the path determined by our nature. When exposed to the dramatic, we subconsciously yearn for drama.

In fact, Houdini died in a hospital bed in Detroit, suffering from an inflamed abdomen caused by a ruptured appendix. No watery thrash of death for the world's greatest escape artist, death by drowning, unable to pick the lock. No fitting end for a life dedicated to the defiance of logic, no public execution for the crime of irrationality. No, he died like most of us

Introduction

We hastily prepared this special limited edition of Inside Front in just a few days, scrambling to finish it in time for the record release shows for the Catharsis LP “Hope against Hope.” Although it has been well over two decades since the previous issue, many people who contributed to previous issues of Inside Front sent new material for this one—not to mention at least one contributor who was not yet born when the first issues of Inside Front appeared.

Staying power.

Thirty-one-and-a-half years since the (embarrassingly bad!) first issue of Inside Front appeared, photocopied illicitly at my workplace (for which, in fact, I was swiftly fired, all the better to embark on a life of crime and willful unemployment), I can confirm that what seemed like mere youthful rebellion was indeed a point of departure for a much richer and more fulfilling way of life. Though the way has not always been easy, it has been infinitely more rewarding than it would have been if I had affixed myself to the Procrustean bed of the straight world and amputated all of the unruly and beautiful parts of myself. Instead, I have had a life of adventure, in which I have been able to make common cause with some of the most inspiring people alive today.

It is always right to rebel.

Precisely because the way is not always easy, we here at Inside Front endorse a **straightedge** lifestyle (our pleasures should uplift us, not endanger us) and a **vegan** diet (if we want to become capable of profound love, we should sensitize ourselves to the tragedies around us, not numb ourselves to them). We endorse a **MAXIMUM ULTRAIST** approach to everything. There are still so many dawns that have yet to break, and we should be there for them.

Why hardcore, still, today, in the year 2025?

In the 1990s, in a time of social peace (at least in the United States), the hardcore scene was ahead of the times in that it was hyper-connected, internationally networked, and artistically experimental. Today, the hardcore scene is increasingly conservative, artistically speaking (though we challenge you to prove us wrong!), it's no longer any better networked than any other social milieu, but it is now old-fashioned in a potentially explosive way, because it involves physical collectivity, togetherness that unfolds on a slower time frame than the virtual reality of internet relations.

People have also become more aesthetically literate than they used to be. Whereas both a blast beat and a black bloc were completely foreign and incomprehensible to most people in 1999 (and both models derived both their strength and their limits from that fact), today, a much wider range of people can understand both of them. Yet as these reference points have become more widely shared, a crucial detail of the punk program has been lost: **context is everything**. The very same song can be meaningless in an expensive club and transformative in a squatted space of resistance. Banksy has demonstrated this in the field of the visual arts. Real, living art has to break the frame.

As the social peace that used to exist crashes and burns, countless people are grasping for new ways of connecting and fighting. Hardcore and punk still have something to offer people today—perhaps now more than ever.

A friend who participated in the defense of Weelaunee Forest once said that, proportionate to their numbers, punks were the most impactful participants in that movement. Those from any other walk of life could learn about the situation without necessarily feeling impelled to take action—but punks, my friend said, could not learn about anything without immediately asking how they themselves could take action in relation to it.

Do it yourself: this is still the key.

Rolling Thunder
P.O. Box 494
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

"It is obvious that Isterismo's Italian is the result of a mix of Google's automatic translator and copying from unknown sources.

Of course, none of the singers in these bands know Italian."

Now, Kalashnikov is the opposite of an extremely distorted Japanese band shouting in Italian without understanding it. They're actual Italians whose music is, if anything, too virtuosic. They understand what they are doing all too well. I got to see them play in a tiny wine cellar at the 5000-person anarchist gathering in St-Imier in summer 2023, and they were amazing—and to their credit, they let a single belligerent American bully them into playing an encore—but their signature is a thousand perfect notes in rapid succession, not one wrong note so distorted that it is not a note at all.

As a gesture of good humor, however, Kalashnikov recorded their own version of this Isterismo song, and it's **also** fantastic, though for the opposite reasons. You can hear it on their record "МАМА АНАРХИЯ."

I love Contropotere, so the vocals in the Kalashnikov cover version really do it for me, and I don't mind the fact that it sounds a bit more like *hardcore as in techno* than *hardcore as in hardcore punk*. Both interpretations of the song, despite the vast differences between them, occupy a territory somewhere between hardcore and pure harsh noise for its own sake.



Kalashnikov Collective in Riga, Latvia (04/12/2015)

the person from the record label that released the 7" was at the show! I cornered him and asked if Gasmask had done any other recordings.

He explained to me that the 7" was just a prank. It was the first Napalm Death LP set to 45 RPM rather than 33.

Isterismo and Kalashnikov: "Non Puo Scappare Dall Agonia"

Tonight, I'm listening to this downright stupefying song by the Japanese hardcore band Isterismo, "Non Puo Scappare Dall Agonia"—and also to a cover version of it by Italian whiz kids Kalashnikov.

Much of Isterismo's rendering of "Non Puo Scappare Dall Agonia" is just standard lo-fi hardcore fare, albeit exceptionally brutish. Willfully brutish. Crude. Arrhythmic. Atonal. It sounds like an avalanche—and not a particularly musical one.

But something timeless occurs precisely 56 seconds into the song, when everything cuts except the bass guitar—if that is indeed a bass!—and the world COMES TO AN END and you can HEAR IT COME TO AN END. If that is a bass, it sets a sort of Ultima Thule for harsh bass sounds. If it's not a bass, heaven help us all, because it sounds like something that could render whole continents uninhabitable. It's not possible to listen to second 56 without shuddering in shock, then laughing aloud in horror.

Isterismo sang in Italian, as a gesture of appreciation for the old Italian hardcore bands (like Wretched) that inspired them. They preceded the more recent crop of bands (like Vittna) that sing in a second language other than English (though the Finnish band Força Macabra, which sang in Portuguese in tribute to Brazilian punk, well preceded Isterismo). According to the Italian anarcho-punk Kalashnikov, who went to Japan in 2016 and met at least one member of Isterismo:

"While an older generation of labor-oriented radicals used to deride punks' political commitments as ephemeral, punk is much older—and stabler—than today's contemporary political organizing models; it dates from a time when subcultures still produced lasting identifications and commitments. Small wonder if many of those who still maintain the infrastructure of anarchist organizing from one year to the next are longtime punks. Punk combines the engaging agitprop and global networks of 21st-century cultural movements with the longevity of pre-internet political formations."

–"Punk: Dangerous Utopia"

"This is how punk can inspire us in our anarchist experiments of today and tomorrow: as a transformative outlet for rage and grief and joy, a positive model for togetherness and self-determination in our social relations, an example of how the destructive urge can also be creative."

–"Music as a Weapon: The Contentious Symbiosis of Punk Rock and Anarchism"

"We are often defeated. However, no matter how often beaten, we cannot forget the joy we felt during the dispute. The pleasure of stretching our will power. The pleasure of trying out our own strength. The pleasure of seeing a manifestation of real comradely emotions among comrades. The pleasure of seeing the world clearly divided [into friend and foe]. And above all these various pleasures, the pleasure of seeing faintly and gradually our own future and society's future. The pleasure of seeing an improvement in our own personalities."

–Ōsugi Sakae, 1920



Catharsis “Hope against Hope” LP

It has been a long time now since the last CrimethInc. music release—but desperate times call for desperate measures. Taking up arms against a wave of authoritarianism and despair, North Carolina’s premier hardcore band, Catharsis, has recorded a new full-length album, “Hope Against Hope.”

This record picks up where the band’s last material left off, continuing to push the envelope in terms of what hardcore can do. They don’t retread the ground they broke on their previous albums, but press forward into ever more abrasive and dynamic territory. Politically, they remain uncompromisingly radical in their lives as well as lyrics. Hardcore draws its dramatic power from the connection between word and deed; this is not a band that has slowed down, toned down, or mellowed out.

In the words of the band themselves:

This is our first full-length release in 26 years. We’ve been working on these songs for a long time—if you saw us on tour in fall 2000, you witnessed an early version of the oldest one.

We’re still the same band, the four of us who recorded the *Passion* LP and Jimmy, who left the band almost thirty years ago and had to wait until we got back together in 2012 to resume playing with us. We’re still the same people, just a few years older, a few years angrier, more heartbroken, more haunted by the brutality of our society, more convinced of the urgency of our mission. We are still doing what we have always done, metabolizing our grief into fury, our despair into determination, reaching out to you across the gulfs that divide us, seeking to give hope to fellow rebel hearts.

It is still true that, if the world we deserve to live in does not exist, then our clumsy efforts to bring it into being are the closest thing to it that we will ever experience, and the best way to mourn our distance from it, the best way to honor it and what is noblest within us. *Hope Against Hope* is our humble contribution.

We tracked the drums with Benny Grotto at Mad Oak Studios and recorded



Someone in the crowd holding aloft a lost boot between songs, immediately before they performed “Chaos Is My Life.”

X Gasmask X “Fear of a Red Planet” 7”

SOA records in Italy

Matt got this 7” for review from a record label in Rome. It was the fastest, craziest thing we had ever heard. It was SO fast. It came with a manifesto about how important it was to keep innovating in hardcore, lest we be reduced to just listening to our Napalm Death LPs on 45 rpm rather than 33 for variety.

We tried to figure out if the band had any other recordings. I wrote friends in Italy asking. Apparently, it was practically impossible to get a copy of the 7”. There was only one pressing of very few copies. I looked for one for a long time without any luck.

And how did the band play that fucking fast? I’d never heard anything like it.

Years later, our band finally got to Rome on tour. And amazingly,

The Exploited, video of live set in Poznan, January 20, 2025

Dear Murphy, I learned today that on January 20, 2025, when you were in a coma from which you never recovered and we were failing to come through on our oath to return to the streets of Washington, DC to contest the second inauguration of Donald Trump, the Exploited performed for well over an hour in Poznan, Poland. Wattie came out shirtless and leaped around yelling the entire time as if he hadn't already had three on-stage heart attacks on two continents. They opened with "Let's Start a War." He dedicated a song to Palestine. At the end, they brought out the promoter to sing on "Punks not dead," announcing that he had been booking them in Poznan for 35 years. And those were the only intelligible phrases out of Wattie's mouth the entire show—no one on earth has understood Scotsmen from that particular part of the British Isles since the Picts were fighting the Romans.

Dear Murphy, no one alive can appreciate this as much as you would have. It was like how at your birthday, Ernie talked about how the two of you would hang out and listen to the Exploited "and sketchy bands," as if there was any band sketchier than the Exploited. You should have been with us to laugh at that.

It was J20, and I missed you, and we were breaking our vows, but the Exploited were keeping theirs. Punks not dead.

the rest ourselves. Kurt Ballou at God City mixed it, Scott Crouse mastered it, and we are releasing it through our friends' do-it-yourself hardcore labels. Some of our favorite musicians perform with us on this recording, including Gosia from the Polish band Next Victim and the singers of Brazil's Point of No Return and North Carolina's own Scarecrow and Vittna.

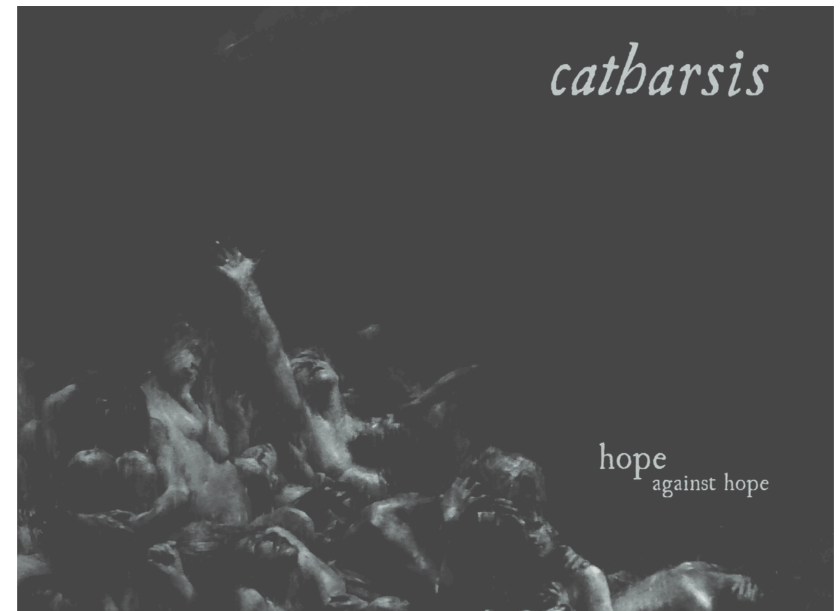
You can stream the record now everywhere, or order from CrimethInc. in North America, or No Gods No Masters in South America, or Refuse Records in Europe. Download from crimethinc.bandcamp.com. The booklet, with lyrics, is at catharsis.band. All of these links are at linktr.ee/catharsis_nc

For us, hardcore is not a style of dance music or a marketing strategy. Hardcore is still a secret society at war with the world, a way of living in struggle against everything around us that is petty and servile, a way of fighting to defend the beauty of the world.

For all, against all.

"A record that feels less like a comeback and more like a statement carved out of three decades in the trenches... Hope against Hope is exactly that: a reminder that even in despair, there's still ground to stand on, and still reasons to push forward."

-Idiotiq





I think the worst that can be said about “Wheel of Pain” is that there are one or two songs here and there that can risk feeling kind of samey when following the really insane ones I just mentioned. But honestly, they’re some of the shorter and faster ones, and... isn’t that what we kind of want anyway? At the end of the day, more of the same with Consec is a gift unto itself.

That’s the review. I’m not going to give it a rating, I don’t need to. Go listen to it. Consec is the band that made hardcore punk special to me. I saw them play for the first time at the second hardcore show I ever went to, and every Consec show I’ve ever seen has a special place in my memories. I think at the end of the last Consec show, Sadie jumped off of a speaker straight onto my head. It was awesome. We lost a real one when they broke up—whether or not we should hope or wish for their return someday, what we absolutely must do is listen to “Wheel of Pain.”

from. We can hear it in the speed, the riding riffs, and the perfectly placed dives throughout Consec's catalog, but it really comes to new heights on this album.

I'm less knowledgeable about how drum kits work, and even less so about how the minds of drummers work... but Oli is a fucking monster. If you could never listen to anything he's drummed on, you'd know all you need to by just looking at any photo of him playing live, you'd see it in his face. He's an absolute machine, and an absolute gem in any band. So many fills, fast as fuck, hard as hell.

And while we're talking about things I don't know a ton about and frankly never hear as well as I should, one thing I can tell you about the bass lines on *Wheel of Pain* is that when they're given space to breathe and stand on their own... they're smooth, funky, and absolutely demand every bit of attention that they get.

And finally—what can't be said about Reeth's vocals? Lyrics aside (they deliver), Reeth's unique inflection and cadence are one of the things that make Consec stand out.

Speaking to the content of the album itself—as expected, every single song on the album contains the fast, raw, and thrashy bits that we know and love about hardcore punk, always with each member's special flair. Again, what really brings the magic throughout the album are Sadie's riding thrashy riffs and perfectly placed divebombs (ex. “Meat Shield”) and Oli's absolutely insane hammering drums (listen to “Belly of the Beast” to be immediately murdered by these).

However, if we want to talk the real standouts, in which everything comes together in a way that makes moshing mandatory, we have to talk about “Quick to Forget” and the title track, “Wheel of Pain.” The former has always been a Consec favorite of mine, as I've seen it performed at probably half a dozen shows before “Wheel of Pain” was released. The whole song is this riding side-to-side that will make the whole room move, with fantastic vocal pacing/rhythm on Reeth's part that Sadie riffs into the unforgettable gang vocal section (“ QUICK... TO... FORGET!”) that will have at least a couple punks trying to grab the mic at any given show. Just don't get caught in the constant side-to-side on the way there.

And finally—the title track. It deserves the status, no question. The song comes in hot with an amazing side-to-side out of the gate. No chance and no warning for those not trying to mosh (You. Will. Mosh.). Everyone rips on this song. Reeth's vocals shine the most on this song with the way they just come through front and center, Sadie is giving us what she is best at in spades, Oli is hitting those drums like they don't have a family, and Zim's bass is given one of those aforementioned moments of empty space that make moshers want to pogo into the ceiling.

“Like Weeds”—A Dialogue about His Hero Is Gone's Timeless Anthem

D: His Hero Is Gone's “Monuments to Thieves” and the first *Tragedy* album have an extraordinary number of iconic moments—the kind of parts that after you hear them just once, you could remember them for the rest of your life.

B: But it's not just the writing, it's also the delivery. I remember how you described the drumming and the guitars: *manic* and *depressive*.

D: Whatever happened, I think it was a consequence of the guitar player and drummer being brothers and also from Memphis.

B: Have you ever tried to play along to the recording, when the d-beat comes in? It's not easy.

Supposedly, you can program a drum machine to play anything—but I've never heard a drum machine play a d-beat correctly. They can't. Artificial Intelligence will never replace human drummers in this respect. Played properly, the d-beat has a stagger in it that no machine can duplicate. It's organic, like a galloping horse.

And it's not just machines. Professionally trained classical musicians and experienced jazz musicians have told me that the d-beat is the one thing they can't fathom.

Still, all that said, there's something special about the d-beat Paul Burdette plays on “Like Weeds” specifically. I think the band is playing a standard d-beat, with the guitar strokes on the 1, the 2, and the 4, but either Paul is doing something weird or there's some looseness in the relation between the strings and the drums that somehow makes it better, not worse. It's the kind of strange alchemy you can only hear in hardcore.

D: I feel that “Like Weeds” could be rendered convincingly by two players on a piano—except for the drum fill, which, like Arturo Giovannitti reading his poems, may be one of those things that only one

person in the history of the world knows how to do correctly. Given that current science leaves open the possibility that something like Nietzsche's hypothesis of the eternal return may be factually true—the idea that the universe is born, lives, and dies on a singular plane perpendicular to time—I find it pleasant to contemplate the possibility that the drummer of His Hero Is Gone in some sense is, was, and always will be executing the intro to “Like Weeds.”

B: If at all times, there is a place somewhere in the cosmos where—and for all places, there is a time somewhere in the past and future when—the drummer could be hitting those three stick clicks to let everyone know the approximate pace at which all hell is about to break loose in furtherance of chaotic total liberation, that might indeed render it easier for me to sleep at night.

D: Regarding the drummer, I can only speculate as to what degree the Burdettes would have absorbed The Who growing up, but the drummer sometimes reminds me of Keith Moon in the sense that the more you really try to break down the great drum parts on “Baba O’Riley” or “Won’t Get Fooled Again,” the more mystified you’ll get. Like, in some ways, it can seem like he’s completely off beat or operating on a parallel plane of reality to the rest of the music, but no, he’s doing exactly what he means to do in the fifth dimension and it sounds amazing. The drumming on “Monuments to Thieves” is kind of like that but also from Memphis and taking place at blinding speed.

I have a mental picture in which the rest of the band is a team of horse archers, hanging upside down off the sides of the back of the drummer, a shaggy and half-wild creature capable of executing dangerous and unpredictable movements at unsafe speeds.

Having just listened to the song again, no matter how many times a person may hear it, there is not one second from beginning to end where one can truly say that you know exactly what the drummer is going to do next. I don’t know the first thing about the man personally, but to me, the performance carries the energy of the sort of 9th grader in regards to whom, by the middle of the year, the 12th graders were like “Ah, just leave that Paul kid alone, you never know WHAT he might do.”

B: Yeah, you really get the impression of a talented and driven young person who has not yet mastered his craft entirely—which makes him more unpredictable and capable of discoveries that exceed his understanding and intention—pushing himself to the absolute limit of his ability.

D: Speaking of the legacy of the 1960s, I suspect there’s a funny historiography of the tri-tone at work with His Hero Is Gone. They repeatedly used tri-tones to good harmonic effect, something I assume

Blast “Hope b/w Damned Love” EP

This Belgian band, Blast, seems to have discovered the d-beat in 1972, along with (in a feat of apparent coincidence) the blast beat.

This isn’t great music, but listening to it is like discovering that the ancient Aztecs played racquetball. It’s like how a bunch of different branches of the evolutionary tree of life have evolved into sea urchins over and over throughout hundreds of millions of years.

In the words of Macedonio Fernandez, “Nothing begins, or else the world was created old.”

Consec “Wheel of Pain”

Vera

Consec’s Wheel of Pain really gives almost everything you’d want from a hardcore punk record—it’s fast, it’s aggressive, it’s raw, and every single person in it is bursting through with skill.

There’s this perception that you don’t have to be a skilled musician to start a punk band, and this is true. We absolutely need people who are not “skilled musicians” to start bands. Because sometimes, when those people start bands, and play and play and play in their scenes for a couple of bands over a number of years... they get good. Really good. Individually good, and then collectively good when they start a band that survives for a couple years.

Consec is one of those bands. Sadie is a fantastic guitarist whose love of thrash shines bright and is indicative of where her drive and skill comes



HR performing with Bad Brains at Valley Green Housing Complex in Washington, DC on September 9, 1979. Photograph by Lucian Perkins.

with Bad Brains, that he is so excited to be there. His excitement, by itself, somehow makes his contribution to the track work. You feel happy for this guy, that such good fortune could befall him out of all proportion to his merits.

Rollins is basically a gym instructor at a wedding getting to sing his favorite song onstage with a real band—but that band is Bad Brains, and Bad Brains is so good that not even a gym instructor can mess it up for them. I mean, if HR was on there, the track would be blazing, but Bad Brains are still blazing even with this tone-deaf jock trying to yell over them. You really have to hand it to them.

that they picked from the branches of the Black Sabbath tree, but which Black Sabbath themselves picked up from the Mississippi Delta blues, which originated right next to Memphis. You'd have to ask Todd Burdette, but "Going directly from Delta blues to hardcore without having to necessarily even go through Sabbath" might be part of why the brothers had the juice.

I'm not sure what it's properly called from a music theory perspective, but I'm almost certain that if you were to map out the notes used in the central riff in "Chain of Command" (the one that bookends the song) they would fall under what's called the "Delta Blues" or "Minor Blues" mode or scale, the one that incorporates the tri-tone into a minor scale. "Like Weeds" is in the same Delta/Minor Blues mode, incorporating minor scale notes as well as the tri-tone.

That's setting aside the quiet intro, for now, which contains note relations that sound alarming because, generally speaking, they are *not used in music*. If it wasn't for the flat second, you could say it was in Delta Blues. If it wasn't for the tri-tone, you could say it was in Phrygian. If it wasn't for the perfect fifth, you could say it was in Locrian. It comes about as close as anything else I can think of to being possible to describe as "a part of a song in Locrian," but it's rare indeed to find a song of any kind that completely eschews the fifth to the root, so really, it's not. It's probably better categorized as "Whatever You Call Metal Phrygian but that Also Incorporates the Tri-Tone." Now that I'm really chewing on this, "Refuse/Resist" by Sepultura is more or less in this mode also, whatever you call "Phrygian with Tri-Tone."

B: It's not immediately apparent, but the clean-channel intro of "Like Weeds" foreshadows the verse riff. The second highest note in the intro is equivalent to the highest note of the rhythm guitar in the verse riff; since the band is tuned to C, they're both A flats. But it's misleading, because in the clean channel intro, that A flat lasts one beat, whereas the song proper gets underway, it's two beats.

D: That intro is even more tonally bleak than the Delta Blues mode. The next part, the part with the iconic drum fill, is purely tri-tonal, with the evil F sharp at odds with the root note, C.

The next part, the "Verse" part, only contains notes in C Minor; it does not contain the evil note as it pertains to the root. But it still has a distinctly evil Delta Blues undertone, because in the main verse riff, which goes "C C C C E flat G D A flat," the prominently featured second (D) to the flat sixth (A flat) are tri-tonal in relation to each other—they are indeed the two notes of the minor scale that ordinarily you would most studiously avoid using in proximity to each other in a minor-key folk song.

Then the “Chorus” is purely in folk minor, soulful gospel harmonies and all, providing relief from all of this Evil Delta Tri-Tonal business, setting the band up to defiantly slam on the root while Todd screams “Like weeds we will grow!”—which itself is another way to keep the hellhounds of the Evil Interval at bay.

The verse then returns, and we must again face the shadows of the Implied Internal Demons of the D-A flat, in order to gird ourselves up for the return of our ancient enemy, the evil C-F sharp.

Getting about as deep into the weeds with it as I can think to go, I think the transition from the verse to the chorus is so effective because in the verse, the low guitar is doing Implied-Evil-Tri-Tonal Devilish Delta Blues Business, while the high guitar is doing Soulful Minor Gospel Business, but then, in the chorus—the one and only time it occurs, like a single ray of sunshine in a prison cell—the low guitar turns its back on the dark one and joins in on the Soulful Gospel Business as well.

B: Incidentally, the second half of the chorus—if you can call something a chorus that only happens once—is one of the only places in any of their bands that those folks use muted chords. They self-consciously eschew them everywhere else, except in Tragedy’s “With Empty Hands Extended,” where there’s just no getting around them.

But you’re saying that makes the melodic verse and chorus of “Like Weeds” pull so powerfully at our heartstrings is that everything before and after it is in that scale with the blue notes, but for the verse and chorus, it opens out into a familiar, heartbreaking C minor, which, forgoing the blue notes for a moment, is able to move us anew, as if we are discovering the minor scale for the first time.

D: It’s not overly complicated, but I think it also affects the listener intuitively because of the way the low and the high parts play off of each other ascending and descending: first the low goes up and the high goes down, then both the low and the high go up, then the high goes down, then the high goes back up, then the high goes back down, or something like that, and then it cycles back through the whole thing again—more or less approximating the experience of living one’s life harmonically committed to liberation for all.

B: Ups and downs.

D: The low-high interplay thing is also the same reason that the part of “Uz Nikdy” that sounds like a Czech folk song is so good. I mean, I guess it is sort of Effective Principles of Harmony 101, but it sure can work well in service of the revolution.

Anyway, whether or not it was intentional to be incorporating elements of blues and gospel into the song, it just musically makes sense to me that the album was made by persons from Memphis. Whatever the

Bad Brains performing “Kick Out the Jams” with Henry Rollins

Here we have one of the strangest chimaeras of hardcore music, the Bad Brains cover of “Kick Out the Jams” with Henry Rollins singing.

In the original version of the song, the MC5 were basically bad white kids from Detroit playing what they imagined might be a bad white kid equivalent of the revolutionary music that Black people were playing at the time. The Five actually had chops, though—“Kick Out the Jams” is a good song. The fact that Bad Brains decided to do a cover of it is high praise.

Bad Brains are consummate musicians. Like, they are basically the inventors of hardcore, and to this day, they remain some of the people who played it best.

Whereas arguably, Henry Rollins is not a musician. Never was a musician. Never sang a right note in his entire life. It’s a stretch to say he ever sang a note at all. Black Flag’s whole thing was belligerently playing wrong notes on purpose, or playing right notes in such a tone-deaf manner that they might as well be wrong notes—and it sort of worked for them—and that is probably why they ended up taking Henry as their singer when everything else had failed. You can’t say they didn’t try to have another singer. They tried over and over. They ended up with Henry, and they must have deserved him, because they never had another singer afterwards, at least not while they were a real band.

As for Henry... All you can say for the guy is that he does seem to be able to tell when other people are playing music, or else he wouldn’t know enough to be excited about Bad Brains. But you can tell, listening, that even though this guy has *no business* sharing a track

Ann Hidonia's Top Ten

1. Ragana, "All's Lost" (2012) and "You Take Nothing" LP (2017)
2. Diane di Prima's Revolutionary Letters #8, #14, and #46 (1971)
3. Pan's Labyrinth by Guillermo Del Toro (2006)
4. The Spectacle, "Rope or Guillotine" (2004)
5. Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019)
6. Abner Jay, "Depression/I'm So Depressed" 7" (2009) also "The

True

- Story of Abner Jay" (2009)
7. Hitachi Magic Wand (1968-present) "I'm thinking outside the box!"
8. "Woelv, Gris" EP (2006) and Geneviève Castrée "Complete Works 1981-2016"
9. *No Spiritual Surrender*, Klee Benally (2023)
10. *At Daggers Drawn* (1998)

Luscious Supreme's Top Ten

1. Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*
2. Autarch, "The Light Escaping"
3. Conflict, "Standard Issue 82-87"
4. Dead Work, "The White Plague"
5. W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America*
6. Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*
7. Ray Luc Levasseur, *Until All Are Free*
8. Fredy Perlman. *The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism*
9. The Pist. "Ideas Are Bulletproof"
10. Regurgistate, "Be Young, Have Fun, Smash Racism!"

opposite of "cultural appropriation" is called in relation to the interplay between white Southern music and Black Southern music, "Like Weeds" strikes me as a constructive example of that.

B: "Seek no solace in finding roots."

D: The lyrics are even more relevant in my forties than it was when I was a teenager.

The lyrics to "Monuments to Thieves," which follows shortly after "Like Weeds" on the LP, put the topic of race in the South front and center. The song even uses the phrase "black bodies," in more or less the same way that—for better or worse—became so widespread 25 years later.

To me, the fact that His Hero Is Gone wrote the lyrical soundtrack to the year 2020 in the year 1997, packaged in a way that only a deeply dysphoric and maladjusted person would be able to appreciate, is really Gen X anarchism in a nutshell. It could have been packaged like Elton John, however, and no great numbers of people would have been ready to listen anyway, which was the whole problem—and why it was reasonable for a sensitive person to feel dismay about the situation in the way that His Hero expressed.

Re-reading the lyrics to the "Monuments" album, the word "I" appears precisely one time—in the memorable phrase "I am not machine"—and the word "me" does not appear once. Even when the listener might reasonably assume that the vocalist may be talking about himself in "The Unwanted Child," Todd does so in the third person. Contrary to the overwhelming American tendency to personalize everything, he seems intent on showing that there is a structure at work in the experiences that he's describing.

Within the context of the album as a whole, I don't think it's too much of a stretch to say that "I am not machine" calls to mind the famous photograph of the civil rights marchers with the signs reading "I am a MAN."

B: New Model Army, Amebix (when they were a real band, in the 1980s, decades before one member's senseless descent into antisemitic conspiracy nonsense), and His Hero all share a narrative approach to time, involving a sort of simultaneity of past and present.

My chief reference point for New Model Army is that when I interviewed the folks in Tragedy in 2002, after multiple members of the band made the same joke ("We listen to both kinds of music—punk and hardcore") at various points in the course of the interview, I was like, but in all seriousness, do you listen to anything else (this is when they had just recorded "Vengeance," the first song of which very clearly ends with a riff based on the Phantom of the Opera theme), and Todd became very serious for a second and answered: "Yes. We listen to New Model Army."

The punchline being that it was offensive for the folks in Tragedy that people would ask if they had borrowed a riff from a Broadway musical when they had just shamelessly taken the title of their album directly from a New Model Army album.

Anyway, this narrative strategy that His Hero Is Gone shared with New Model Army and Amebix fixes them deeper in a particular place while illuminating how the ghosts of the past continue to act in the present. The latter two bands invoke two thousand years of British history. His Hero did something similar with the “Monuments” album. You can see it on the cover.

D: Which again implies some sort of intuitive understanding that the events of the past, present, and future recur eternally and simultaneously.



the other hand, I was in that same godforsaken practice building they sing about, so I can relate. That place sucked!

9. Lil Nas X “Old Town Road” (2018)

Exploding the barriers between country music and hip hop, bringing a radical queer sensibility to both of those genres, and delivering the best “fuck you” chorus since Rage Against the Machine (“can’t nobody tell me nothing”). At two and a half minutes long, this has more punk rock songwriting economy than the operatic prog-rock compositions of most contemporary crust punk.

10. Corrosion of Conformity “Animosity” LP repress (2022)

HC/thrash/punk/metal/crossover masterpiece from 1980s North Carolina. Glad this record is still in circulation. Rest in Peace to drummer Reed Mullin, who passed away in 2020.

Top Ten Texts to Prepare You for the Coming War with Heaven Heralded by the First Catharsis Record in 24 Years

Yaldabaoth Demiorgos

10. *Anarchy in the Age of Dinosaurs* b/w “Your Politics are Boring as Fuck” – The Curious George Brigade / Nadia C.

9. *The Movement of the Free Spirit*, Raoul Vaneigem

8. *Q*, Luther Blissett

7. *Occidental Eschatology*, Jacob Taubes

6. *The Moral ABCs*, Dr. Immanuel Bronner

5. *Gone to Croatan*, ed. Ron Sokolsky and James Koehline

4. *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, ed. Marvin Meyer

3. *Barbarians*, the Disordered Insurgence, Crisso and Odoteo

2. *Gnosticism, Nihilism, and Existentialism*, Hans Jonas

1. *At Daggers Drawn*, Anonymous

depiction of medieval life, complete with graphic violence and cannibalism, but conveyed with a strange aura of childish wonder and in a magical realist, fable-like manner. Moshfegh is one of the contemporary greats of literature, and this is her magnum opus. It's a shame that *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* is the only one you ever see in airports.

2. Solveig Güzel, *The Uncensored Picture* (2025)

Best zine of the year. A hilariously crushing indictment of patriarchy and academia, two things which truly are very annoying when combined.

3. Lynda Barry, *"Making Comics"* (2019)

The back cover text reads, "Have you given up on drawing? Would you like to give it one more try?" A master class from one of the greatest. Don't go to art school, just read this.

4. Alex Graham, *"Dog Biscuits"* (2022)

A comic about the pandemic, originally serialized on social media in 2020 during the lockdowns. Soap-operatic and very funny, this grew to graphic novel lengths and is one of the most biting accurate documents of that surreal moment in time.

5. Kilgore Trout, *Complete Works*

Comprising 117 novels and over two thousand short stories, this multi-volume, hardbound edition is, significantly, a pure product of the imagination, the author himself being an invention of another novelist, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., who used the failed science-fiction writer Trout as a protagonist in order to illustrate the darker facets of the human condition, and also as an excuse to synopsise the outlandish plots of various non-existent sci-fi stories. Kilgore Trout is well known, in one instance, for letting a caged bird free. The bird flies to the windowsill, but upon poking its beak out to examine the outside world, flies back to the safety of the cage. Trout comments, "That was a wise decision. You left yourself something to wish for."

6. Alice Coltrane *"Journey in Satchidananda"* (1971)

If you think Godspeed You! Black Emperor is the most relaxing music out there, check this out.

7. Soft Grid *"Agency"* (2019)

Expansive, psychedelic synth-based kraut-rock. A great soundtrack for quiet, introspective moments. Would be nice to have more of those, wouldn't it?

8. Pisse *"Dubai"* (2021)

Written and recorded during their downtime after being denied entry to the USA for a tour, this album features an ode to the practice building from which all their equipment was stolen. These people have some bad luck! Given the language of the lyrics and the teutonic gravitas of the keyboard bleeps, maybe you have to be German to really get into this. On

The Stateless Fair

We sent out a prompt, reading as follows:

Imagine that, until now, there has been no anarchist worthy of the name, but a colony of them is discovered somewhere, interacting in both cooperative and combative ways with other nearby life forms. Imagine that they host an event entitled...

The Stateless Fair: A Clash of Utopias

1. What goes on at The Stateless Fair? Assume the sky is the limit.
2. If you were invited to participate, presuming limitless resources and logistical possibilities, what would you bring or do?

Here are three of the answers we received:

Francisco Pezoa, Santiago, Chile

First of all, the space would be defended. If not with the intention of keeping it after the fair, at least to remind people that we can be combative and what we can do to defend liberated zones. Depending on the terrain, a perimeter of tree houses, debris and bandanas, tripods, barricades that are open but could easily become defended.

—ACTS OF SEDITION: A festival of informative one-act plays about anarchist history: spectacular attentats, jail breaks, strikes that ended in massacres but stoked the fires of rebellion and resistance, an impersonator performing Jacob Von Rees' rant about alcohol at the anarchist congress of 1907.

—MASTERLESS CEREMONIES: Circus acts that emphasize collectivity, or when they focus on one person's abilities, they are presented in such a way where the audience has to wonder what unbelievable feats they themselves are also capable of. Scenes in which cops are clowns, animals train humans, and a set of trapeze that when you fly off the handles you just keep flying.

—CRIMINAL MAGIC: A magic show serving as an educational workshop: disappearing from the scene, escaping from handcuffs and jail cells, spells to curse or distract cops, both tricks and witchcraft.

—HACKING RACES: A set of computers, HACKTHISSITES, with their screens projected on a much larger one for the audience to see. If there are not already enough hackers around, an easy-to-follow hacking workshop would precede the races.

—LET THEM EAT CAKE: A cake-eating contest. In addition, a variety of cakes are inconspicuously placed throughout the fair, so attendees just stumble upon cake every now and then. There are also vegan funnel cake and cotton candy, and enormous fortune cookies with full-size zines and books baked into them.

As for hardcore publications, one of the most promising new ones is The Counterforce (the-counterforce.org). From outside the hardcore scene, it is necessary to cite Jean-Pierre Brunel's "Piano in Taksim Square" (2013) and Diamanda Galás (live Halloween 2017).

Detritus Books Top Ten

1. Racetractor, "2042"
2. Physique, "Overcome by Pain"
3. Lifeless Dark, "Forces of Nature's Transformation"
4. Thou, "Umbilical"
5. Regional Justice Center, "Freedom Sweet Freedom"
6. Kruelty, "Untopia"
7. Graf Orlock, "End Credits"
8. Marrow, "The Sea Of..."
9. Owen Hart, "Earth Control"
10. Full of Hell, "Trumpeting Ecstasy"

Al B. Tross Top 10

Courtesy of a certain longtime zine author, comic artist, and DIY musician from Carrboro, North Carolina

1. Ottessa Moshfegh, *Lapvona* (2022)

I declare this book to be the best hardcore thrash metal punk crossover work of the 21st century. You can read it as a polemical political allegory and it is fearsome, or just enjoy the fun of a horrifically realistic

Reviews: Idiots and Savants

Editor B's Top Ten in Hardcore since the last issue of Inside Front

1. Tempest, everything, but especially that fucking LP
1. Tenue, everything
1. The Spectacle 10", both LPs, the demo tracks, and live
2. Ekkaia, "Demasiado tarde para pedir perdón"
2. Leadershit LP and split with Derrota. Damn!
3. Mind Pollution "Spalone Dusze" LP and demo, Next Victim "Ogien Ledzkich Fobii" and split with From the Depths—check out Dyyim and Sorrow, too
3. Schifosi—everything, everything
4. Fall of Efrafa, "Inle" LP
4. Ictus discography
5. Gattaca LP and EPs
5. Cop on Fire discography LP—"Creer en Nada!"
6. Modern Life Is War "My Love, My Way" and "Witness" LPs
6. Tragedy live in the Netherlands in 2018 and "Fury" 7"
7. Marrow, "The Sea of..." LP
7. Plague Mass "Living Among Meat Eaters" LP
8. To What End, both LPs
8. Ursut "Köp Dig Lycklig" LP—really, just that first song over and over
9. Masakari live
9. Melete, seven song recording, not sure if it was released
10. Sect "Plagues on Plagues"
10. Anarkuss live in North Carolina in 2025
11. Nightterror live in Georgia in 2022
11. Bad Friends live and demo

Murphy Hoopes

—Slip'n'slide, target games (like archery, but with... other things), music, pig races, you dig?

—DIY bicycle-powered fair rides, built with bike parts.

—A night time screening of an uplifting movie, something like I Love You Phillip Morris or What to Do in Case of Fire or V for Vendetta.

—Probably you're imagining an event without money, but it could be fun to do typical fair like shit to raise money for prisoners OF THE STATE: a dunk tank, pie throwing, benefit tattoos (pick three elements from a hat and that's your tattoo! or put one back and choose again for another \$20), solidarity raffles or solidarity bingo, taking bets on the hacking (or pig, hehe) races, etc.

—A REALLY good punk show, I'm talking like bands that are GOOD, talk about politics in non-boring ways, and the show doesn't exist as an isolated event but exists as a venting/reenergizing/processing/celebrating place for earlier wildness, or a launching point for wildness to come.

—State fairs always have some kind of exposition or something, so how about a utopia exposition, where people bring their own maps, guides, brochures, different visions of their utopias.

—Interactive games that occur throughout the fair, LARPing-ish but in a way that coincides with participating in other fair activities. S— from Montreal knows a guy who designs crowd games like this.

[Redacted], an anarchist in a mid-size US city wracked by repression and social drama, who is considering rereading Valerie Solanas' Scum Manifesto.

All I know about the Stateless Fair is that, when it's in effect, every anarchist goes and gets every [redacted] and then [redacted] for as long as necessary. Besides that, the details are unclear, except that apparently, they do not touch each other. *Touching seems fatal.*



Uz Nikdy/ Never Again: Czechoslovakian Hardcore in the Syrian Civil War

We received the following accounts of the same events from two different correspondents.

If we can bring the punk that we feel, the feeling that we engage with, at our shows and concerts into the rest of our lives, then we begin to transcend the sameness, and we breathe new life into life.

For after all, we are an art movement, and the purpose of art is never to create more art. May we all strive to remember that. The purpose of art is to create more life. A curse and damnation would be the day when our punk simply creates more punk. It must create more life. That, is what we as artists of living must strive for.

When we take what we feel inside of our punk rooms and break away, we have brought ourselves to a place where we truly are unrestrained. We become unrestrained by the rules and behaviors that have slowly, like the proverbial frog in a pot rising to slow boil, begun to govern and dominate punk in ways that replicate, not the mainstream music that we used to rally against years ago, but which emulate and uphold the political structures that are in place that we seemingly hate.

So I invite you to be more punk and to disassociate from punk! Go forth punk, and remove yourself from punk! You might find that greener pastures in which to creatively frolic await than those in which you have been mired as you slog and stumble in mosh pits. You might be happier, exultant even, and you might find new people, new ideas, new approaches to creativity. You might, if you're actively engaged and fortunate, find new life and potential.

It might turn out to be the most punk thing that you do over the next few years.



means become more and more like one another. This is likely never the goal but seems an inevitability. Humans tend toward creative and generative laziness. That is, of course, unless we make alternative choices creatively and actively.

Punk is an art movement. It is a general tendency amidst a collection of creatives towards ends that are relatively expressively similar. It has been true throughout human creative history as it has been true recently for punk rock and its rockers as well. And we are very recent with our punk. Four or five decades seems like an eternity but we are barely teething as we gnash our teeth at the world. We are in our infancy.

As a movement, I am describing and including the combination of music, politics, ethics, ways of being, and styles of critique that we have for one another. They are all beginning to blend. From the influence of social media and its homogenizing effect, to the wanna being like the Joneses we experience at shows when we want to sound like this band, or have shirts like that band. With exceptions of course, in many different ways, over time, we are slowly becoming the same.

This, of course, doesn't have to be the case, and the standouts, aka those who rise above – all pun(k) intended – the sameness are those who do something different and who make different choices.

With that in mind, disassociating myself from punk over the last five years was an experiment of sorts. After all, can a punk survive in the world with less punk? I wondered. I made a choice to find out. And the answer: in short yes. There is punk alongside of punk. Note that I am not saying "beyond" punk because the typical mental approach is that one is leaving something behind and progressing. But this was different. This was a choice to move differently in the world without casting aside or behind the other thing. Still punk, just very different.

Choosing to walk a different path, with a new focus, new social structure, and new aesthetics, turned out to be the most punk thing I could possibly do. It allowed me to do away with the things that are unfortunate about punk, and to bring along with me the things that are exciting about it and the reasons I got into it in the first place. I brought those ideas and approaches into other areas of my life and found that they were appealing to others, non-punks if you will, and see that these people were inspired, interested, and connected.

And the results have been amazing. People are hungry for something new. They are hungry for something different. They are hungry to be shocked out of their own sameness. They are hungry for the precious seconds of their lives to be filled in ways that are unusual and have different shapes and angles and feelings and styles the way that we often feel at our shows and fests and artistic/musical presentations.

Account I.

In March 2019, my friends and I were positioned on the second floor of an abandoned building in the ruins of the Syrian town of Al-Baghuz Fawqani. A Tweety Bird blanket was hung over one of the blacked-out windows in our room. There was a small kitten who would sleep with us. The comrades in the hospital to the north had sent us there with an ambulance. We took it forward to retrieve casualties from the front line, administering what care we could. Usually, I drove.

In our group, there were volunteers from around the world who had come to Syria to defend the revolution. We found ourselves there in the last days of the last battle of the territorial war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. In our ambulance unit, none of us shared common citizenship or a native tongue, but we soon found that we did share a background in the global punk counterculture. One of the comrades described to me the sadness he had felt on the day that he had been forced to shave off his mohawk and flee his country. "But punk is not here," he said, pointing at his hair. "It is here," he said, pressing his fist to his heart.

By leaving my phone on the roof for several hours, I had managed to download a song titled "Never Again," recorded in 1992 by the Czechoslovakian band Kritická Situace. The song had come to my attention back in 1998, when it was featured in a memorable and impassioned review in issue 11 of the American hardcore publication Inside Front. It tells the story of a conscript fleeing from the army through the wilderness, vowing that his superiors will never be able to force him to kill.

My friends and I were now in the exact inverse of that situation as internationalists who had crossed the world voluntarily to defend the principles of autonomy, ecology, and women's liberation that the social movements in northeastern Syria were putting into practice. Still, war is war. Many nights, after *teknil*, we would sing "Never Again" together quietly in the darkness, to the sound of gunfire, mortar, and bombs. Those fluent in Slavic languages would sing the words, and the rest of us would carry the rhythms and harmonies as best we could.

Most of us survived.

"Nothing is more tragic than records and other works of art lost like this one, forgotten by time, unable to touch the human beings for whom they were made, unable to provide the beauty and hope those people sorely need," concluded the 1998 *Tu-du-duuu-duuuu—tu-du-du-du-duuu-duuuu* article about this record. Wherever Kritická Situace

are now, I would like them to know that their song was there for us when we needed it.

After I returned home from Rojava, an old friend and I recorded a piano duet of “Never Again” to send to those who were at that time still at the front.

Account II.

I remember one moment clearly.

Some comrades from our group have roots in the punk subculture. As one of them always said, it's not about your haircut, it's about what's inside. Myself, these past years, I listen to hardcore punk very rarely; and after coming here more than a year ago, I found that culturally it is so far out that I didn't even dare to listen it. Yet, as the months passed and I often felt alienated, missing home or my own roots, I realized that without certain bands or people I met in the punk scene, I would have never ended up in an anarchist group striving to follow the heritage of Maria Nikiforova, Nestor Makhno, Buenaventura Durruti, and others.

So from time to time, I caught myself listening to bands I liked ten or fifteen years earlier. The local comrades have a longstanding culture of revolutionary music, but we have something like that, too, and in addition to the traditional revolutionary songs and hip-hop, punk is essential revolutionary music for some of us.

In Deir Ezzor, a friend told me that he had a melody in his mind a lot and asked if I knew it. “It goes like this: *Tu-du-duuu-duuuu—tu-du-du-du-duuu-duuuu.*”

It immediately rang a bell, and I could join in with buzzing the guitar melody, yet I couldn't recall what song it actually was. Another friend of ours joined in immediately and we realized that we all know it. It was the Kritická Situace song “Už Nikdy” (“Never Again”).

We had very limited access to internet, and when we did get it, everyone from the unit wanted to contact their relatives—so listening to the song or downloading it was impossible. We tried for many days. We managed to get a message to a friend overseas who immediately recognized the song, yet it wasn't any easier to receive it over Signal. Up on the roof of our building, it was sometimes possible to get a little Iraqi cell data service bleeding over from across the border, but it was not safe to be on the roof in the midst of a shooting war. A comrade took the risk of taking his phone up there and leaving it there for hours at a time, hoping to download the Signal message with the song in it.

It took a week or two of attempts, but he succeeded. The moment we

said to my friends, *Let's get out of here and find something better to do in Pittsburgh.*

As we were walking (well, I was sitting, being pushed), we stumbled across a hardcore punk show in a garage with the audience crowded into the alleyway. Should we go? I enthusiastically said *yes, I want to go.*

The touring band was ripping. Forced Humility, all the way from Finland. My friends joined the crowd. A punk in a leather jacket ran over to me and yelled to everyone around “We gotta get this guy in the air!”

Immediately, I was crowd surfing, in the invalid chair, in an alleyway, a huge smile on my face, having a joyous moment in spite of all that had happened just prior.

With an unflinching PMA, friends, the determination of anarchism, and the passion of hardcore punk, nothing can bring me down, nor you nor anyone who earnestly takes these on. Not torn ACLs, not violent misogynists, not those who lack solidarity, not the wasteoids known as the police, nothing.

“When Art Creates Life, Not More Art”

By Artie S. Ahrlives

The most punk thing I have done in the last handful of years is to disconnect from punk. One might think that is the antithesis of punk! For if I was punk, wouldn't I absorb myself further into punk, in order to indeed be more punk? Is a punk without punk less punk? How punk is punk, and what defines punk and its actions from approaches to punk that are less punk? And in terms of the use of the word “punk” here, describing punk, I have just set the punk world record for the most punk of “punk” in a paragraph about whether being punk is indeed punk.

But to the point. Realistically, punk, like any other art movement, tends toward homogenization over time. This is true in music. It is true in painting. It is true in sculpture. As eras of artistic styling become codified, the practitioners and artists involved in those methods and

maintaining that a positive outlook is foolish and naïve. I reflected on how I had changed my perspective after the raids. I explained to my friend what PMA is and how I've had to adopt that, that it's not just a cope, but does in fact affect how one acts and relates to the world.

After I espoused that so clearly, my PMA was bound to be tested. Let a trying weekend in Pittsburgh begin.

Do you want to go to a punk show tonight at a disused outdoor basketball court? The answer was "Obviously" and I didn't even and still don't even know who was playing. It was a small show and I was one of the few people dancing to the no nonsense fast punk. I was doing the jumps in the air where all your limbs go flying out and on one jump I heard a pop by my knee and I went down to the ground. A friend grabbed my arm to help me up and I was suddenly screaming in pain. The pain was so bad I lost vision for a few seconds and had to be carried out because I couldn't walk. I didn't know it yet, but I had fractured my tibia and torn my ACL.

Word got out the next day that I needed a wheelchair or a pair of crutches. What I got was found in a backyard; it was what was once commonly called an invalid chair. No way to push it, wheels at the bottom so you can't reach, and a toilet seat underneath the flap where the sitting cushion should be. No worries, I can still get around if people push me. Gotta stay positive.

That afternoon, I was at an anarchist potluck in a cemetery sitting in the invalid chair, stationary in the grass. Behind a large tombstone, a guy was waiting who had once stalked and harassed several of my friends that are not men. He waited until there were no men around me and only small young people. This person was an aspiring boxer. He walked right up to me. I saw his face and knew something bad was going to happen. "You need to get the fuck away from me," I said. Without saying a word, he punched me six times in the face. I chose to fall out of the invalid chair in order to he continued to punch me in the back of the head several times until a friend got him off me. People ran after him to no avail while I began to have a bit of a convulsion and adrenaline dump.

After a medic looked me over my friends asked me what I wanted. Before I could answer, another person walked up to me. He began to berate me and informed me he had no solidarity towards me or any of my friends whose houses were raided. I asked if we could talk about this a different time because I was having an adrenaline dump in an invalid chair after getting punched by an unhinged misogynist.

The old me would have despaired by that point. In fact, he would've despaired way earlier. But not this guy, this guy has PMA. I

got the song was like a group therapy. We sat in that house without windows in the middle of Baghouz, put the phone in the middle of our little circle, and pressed play. Three friends coming each from very different places, from different parts of the world, but all knowing this song thanks to punk. We sang along over and over and were carried away for the moment. It felt like back in the days when I got my first LP and sat home with friends to listen to it.

The interesting part is that the song is about running away from military duty:

"Už nikdy nevezmeš pušku do svých dlaní, nikdy se neozbrojíš žádnou zbraní, už nikdy nezamíříš na bratra svého, už nikdy netrefíš se, přímo do černého. Dezertér!"

"Never again will you take a rifle in your hands, never again will arm yourself with a weapon, never again will you aim at your brother, never again will you strike the target. Deserter!"

It is not a war song. But actually, it felt just right. We all felt rooted and at peace. As anarchists, we didn't come to Rojava to kill or fight. We did not join the armed struggle for that. Rather, we understood the necessity of self-defense and the people's struggle for self-determination, a revolutionary attempt to create a new society based on equality and women's liberation.

The band wrote this song at the end of what is called the era of "real socialism" in Czechoslovakia, when punk rock was forbidden and all men had to serve in the state army directly under the control of Moscow. I am not trying to argue that today the members of the band would support using arms because we are in a different context and time, but I see a huge difference myself. I am fighting for a utopia, a world without weapons and wars. It is this desire for total liberation which paradoxically drove me to take part in what we know as the Syrian civil war.

I think that once an anarchist puts on a uniform and takes up a firearm to participate in such a conflict, they had better retain as much of a "hippie" approach as possible to balance the toughness needed to survive in war. Especially those who come to the Middle East from the so-called West. A self-reflective mindset and a determination to analyze toxic masculinity is very important, lest we end up on a slippery slope towards becoming what we fight against. So yes—NEVER AGAIN!

I wish this, anyway.

A few days ago, on the Summer Solstice, sitting around fire, we played a game. I had to describe a book I liked. Without thinking, I picked *The Fifth Sacred Thing* by Starhawk, which I read just before coming here and I felt again that it all kind of made sense to me. The distance between utopia and reality is sometimes very far, yet we must not forget our utopias.



Terror at Immigration and Customs—Extreme Noise Terror, to Be Precise

Editor's Note: If questioned, we strongly urge you to say that on the advice of your lawyer, you are going to remain silent, and to say nothing whatsoever beyond that under any circumstances. However, we endorse the "Phonophobia" LP by Extreme Noise Terror as well as their guerrilla appearance with the KLF at the 1992 Brits awards, during which Bill Drummond fired a machine gun at the audience.

Dr. Straightedge, or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Just Be Posi

There's a term in popular Catholicism called "Cafeteria Catholic." It means you pick and choose (like at a cafeteria with the food option) which aspects of the faith you believe in and which you're more like "I don't know about that one," or "this is clearly symbolic." You could say that for a while, I was Cafeteria Straightedge. Now, don't worry, I didn't drink, smoke, or do drugs. Then what was missing, you ask? What was missing was I roundly rejected having a positive mental attitude (PMA).

It's not that Gorilla Biscuits and the countless of youth crew bands didn't connect with me sonically, but lyrically speaking, it just didn't click. What did connect was Hounds of Hate—Braddock, Pennsylvania's finest—an early 2010s negative straightedge band, as I called them. Lyrics like "No redemption in a dying world, nothing to do but watch it burn" summed up my feelings. If you've ever been to Braddock, you understand.

I was able to ride this anger quite far. "We are not the least afraid of ruins," said Buenaventura Durruti, and I just wanted to make those ruins; I didn't care what came next. My participation in social movements, DIY music culture, and anarchyland was fueled by this. Then some major adversity hit that caused a reorientation.

In the early part of the year, my house was raided along with the houses of several friends. Cops pointed red dots all over me as I crawled to them. One cop in particular decided to beat on me. This led to a prolonged period of nightmares and elevated heart rates in the middle of the night. But it also caused a mental reorientation. For the next few months, I kept telling myself "Gotta stay positive" and was constantly looking for the bright side in adverse situations.

A few months later, on a drive up to Pittsburgh, a friend was

crowd stood around the DIY stage, beneath a large tarp constructed to protect us all from the rain.

When we started, people immediately swarmed us. A friend of mine jumped off of the one-foot stage, flipping onto the sweaty people in the front. Someone shoved me into my amp in order to hold themselves up as people behind them crashed into one another. We did not have many songs and we played them all as fast as we could. Halfway through our last song, someone else dove off of the PA, grabbing onto the support post as they launched themselves into the air. For a moment, it seemed like the entire makeshift covering would fall onto us. At that moment, I hoped it would. I wanted everything to crash down on us, for us to crash up at it.

After our set, it poured rain. Many people did not even seek cover. They just stood in the water.



“You and all your friends are going to jail!”

The ruddy-faced FBI agent was screaming in my face, specks of his dribble lightly spraying my now clammy skin. I had just been pulled off an airplane flying into New York City, for a job interview of all things. While having a job was not a particularly anarchist thing to do, I was in rather desperate need of funds, as my full-time career of overthrowing global capitalism was not providing me enough financial windfall to pay for housing and food. Nonetheless, while I had known there was trouble afoot between me and the law, I was not exactly expecting this.

The buzzcut FBI agent was about my height, but he stood on his toes in a vain attempt to stand over me and so project a more intimidating demeanor. He had a short, blond, pale side-kick, who was markedly less aggressive. Although I have years of training with agents and knew that speaking to them is by far the worst thing one can do, I have to admit, I was flummoxed: I had committed such a varied amounts of crimes against the state over the preceding decade that it was simply unclear to me which one had sparked this particular questioning. I couldn't help asking, in the most innocent voice I could muster, “What crime exactly are you accusing me of? Do you have any evidence?”

The FBI agents immediately pulled out a series of photos and some scraps of paper with phone numbers on it. It appeared quite a few of people had been tailed by agents.

The most befuddling element of the “evidence” was a grainy picture of a large penguin suit, constructed of out what appeared to be white disposable coveralls painted with black wings. A large helmet with a bright orange peak and rather cute penguin eyes attached completed the terror-inducing ensemble. Whoever it was inside the penguin suit made the outfit seem more an adorable Halloween costume than tactical body armor for hand-to-hand mêlée.

“Really, all you have a penguin costume? That's the best you have? That's not even illegal,” I foolishly blurted out.

“OK, well maybe you aren't going to jail, but your friends are going to jail!” the agent screamed at me, his face growing to a volcanic hue of blood-infused red, veins popping out of his forehead.

The sidekick kicked into gear. “Look, you are a smart guy. Why don't you just tell us who the bad guys are? Then we'll let you go.” It occurred to me these FBI agents were literally playing good cop, bad cop.

My curiosity sated, I shut the fuck up, although I could barely restrain a laugh. I asked to use the bathroom, as I had just gotten out of the airplane, and they let me. One of the agents followed me to the bathroom, but they let me use it in peace—which was remarkably good luck, for reasons I won't spell out. Having been harassed at the border a few times

before, although not in the United States, I travelled with a blank GNU/Linux laptop and no cell phone, as I would buy a new cellphone and restore my ability to communicate to the outside world from encrypted data on a microSD card. That card, however, was nowhere to be found.

The agents were most excited by my laptop. They forced me to turn it on to “prove it wasn’t a bomb,” and asked me to type in a password. They asked me to show them the hard drive. Although it was mostly blank, I had kept a few harmless photos of myself engaged in acts of tourism with my family and harmless computer manuals on the laptop. The agents called in a third person, an affable white-collared African-American. He dutifully took my laptop and disappeared.

Continuing to yell at me, they went through my luggage, searched my body with an almost neurotic thoroughness, and riffled through my passport looking for obscure passport stamps. They completely missed the stamp showing that I had been deported from Japan, as they could not read the red Japanese characters. What excited them most was a CD I had in my bag, titled “Extreme Noise Terror.” They immediately opened it and demanded I tell them what it was.

As you probably know, Extreme Noise Terror is a British hardcore punk band. It really did seem that the agents believed that a terrorist would fly to the United States of America with a clearly labeled CD entitled “terror” on it. I could imagine their heads were spinning as they imagined all sorts of devious plans I could have on that CD.

They handed all my hardcore punk CDs to their colleague in IT. After an hour or so of awkward silence, the computer technician reappeared, and said told me he was having trouble copying my hard drive. Apparently, my GNU/Linux operating system was beyond his pay grade. Stallman would be proud.

After lengthy berating that eventually gave way to begging, the agents eventually moved me into a waiting room with other assorted immigrants—mostly from the Middle East and Africa, as to be expected given the generalized racism of airport secondary inspections. Hours later, they returned and tried to interrogate me again. This time, I remained completely silent.

The short, “good” cop tried a new approach. “It’s getting late—do you want a ride to where you are staying?”

I was shocked, as I had been expecting to be hauled into a jail cell. I responded that I’d be able to find my way out the airport just fine. They returned my bags and my laptop, including my precious hardcore CDs. However, the agents confiscated my annotated copy of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*.

I gathered my things and took a subway to New York City, although

Dekalb County Police officers and a single private contractor. The contractor evidently drove his flatbed truck into the parking lot, screaming at the welcome desk volunteers to leave or face the consequences.

It seems that the developer had it exactly backwards: he was the one who would face consequences. The story goes that a few enterprising people pulled hammers and stones from their pockets and set about smashing the windows of the truck. The police stood aghast. In their black hoodies and cargo pants, the people emerging from the tree line launched rocks, cans, and bottles at the cops. The cops fled. The crowd barricaded the parking lot with logs and tires before trashing the truck completely. Someone reportedly crawled underneath it to steal the catalytic converter.

For the previous two nights, hundreds had gathered to hear dance music, indie rock, and hardcore punk. The illegal music festival brought together lots of people from across the region into the endangered forest. With the truck in ruins and the parking lot barricaded, I worried that the atmosphere might become threatening for the final night of music—which my band was supposed to play.

And now the truck was on fire. Not only would festival attendees walk through barricades past a destroyed tow truck, they would have to walk past the charred remains of that truck. If—that is—the police did not raid the forest before then.

I did not have much time to worry. I made some phone calls to my friends. I continued shuttling materials into the woods. The hours passed and no police arrived. I still wasn’t sure. When music started up a few hours later, scarcely two dozen people stood around listening to it. Four times as many people had, reportedly, defended the park from the eviction. Where were they now? And where was anyone else? I couldn’t take the stress. I drove home and showered, ate a meal. Loading some equipment into a friend’s car made the situation feel a bit more real. We were really going to play.

I returned to the park around dusk. More people had gathered. The first thing you could see upon entering the parking lot was the burned-out truck. But it had changed. Hundreds of flowers rested on top of it. Someone placed cans of paint next to it, which passersby hastily put to use, redecorating the truck with slogans, tags, and shapes. The truck became a monument. As I helped load a guitar cabinet out of my friend’s trunk, I realized that some people I faintly recognized were taking group photos with the truck. They laughed and lounged on top of the blackened remains, now redecorated with colorful accoutrements.

A friend of mine introduced our band. He spoke for a while about “Rock Around the Clock,” reminding everyone that rock music had always been a subversive cultural phenomenon. The sun went down. A fairly large

basically sitting up against it, facing the front of the venue, just in time to see a dozen people run up to me—a number of whom have since told me “Oh yeah, I thought you fucking died.”

One of my immediate thoughts at that point was “Damn it, I bet these tapes and records in my backpack are fucking destroyed now.” A medic comes up, looks me over to make sure I’m alright, and two other people help load my (destroyed) bike into the back of a pickup. Of course, the guy who hit me (no damage to his car) decides to call the cops, and instead of leaving (like I probably should have in hindsight), I end up getting a ticket on top of getting hit by a car... from the same cops who were just there getting water bottles thrown at them.

Everyone was really supportive of me afterwards. They even helped pay the ticket. Honestly, the most hardcore thing I did was get hit by a car, but what everyone else did was a lot cooler—between booking an awesome show at a weird time for what came to be an incredibly important movement, setting the tone by successfully fighting the cops off from said show, and coming together to support people when they get their shit rocked.

Feels like the essence of any good hardcore show.

Hardcore in Weelaunee Forest

I smelled the flames before I saw them. Black smoke licked up above the tree line. The stench of boiling rubber and oil slowly blanketed everything. I knew that it was the tow truck. I tried not to panic. I continued down the path toward the stage area, several cases of water in my arms.

For months, people had occupied sections of this urban forest to prevent it from becoming a police training facility known as “Cop City,” or a movie soundstage complex. The forest defenders lovingly referred to the latter as the “Hollywood dystopia.”

Earlier that morning, hundreds of people camping in the occupied Weelaunee Forest had awoken to yelling. “Everyone get to the parking lot! They are trying to tow our cars!” Wiping the sleep from their eyes, dozens of punks, anarchists, and environmentalists dragged themselves to the parking lot of Intrenchment Creek Park. An aspiring Hollywood producer and real estate developer named Ryan Milsap stood with a small group of

taking the Long Island Rail to Babylon did cross my mind as a way to throw the agents off my tracks. Instead, I took the subway to Broadway Junction and did the classic trick of jumping out of the metro and running to another subway, then taking another subway to yet another stop, jumping out of the subway—looking to see if anyone was jumping out behind me—then frantically running back to the last car of the subway (as if exiting the station) and jumping back in to see if anyone would follow me. The first time I did this, I saw some suspicious movements behind me, so I tried the whole repertoire again a few times. Finally satisfied that I was not being followed by agents of darkness, I managed to find one of the few remaining old-fashioned payphones.

After exchanging some dollars for a somewhat excessive number of quarters, I frantically called everyone whose phone numbers I could remember, which admittedly wasn’t many people. The one person I reached, I asked him to alert everyone I knew as to my experience. Having successfully spread a wave of paranoia throughout New York City, and quite terrified of going to stay at a friend’s house in case the forces of evil were still on hot on my heels, I took the next train to Boston.

A few days later, I was with my lawyer, a white-haired sixties radical. He was going through the details of my airport interrogation, one after another. He looked up at me, pushed his glasses up his nose, and said in a deadpan voice, “This is actually quite serious. You are certainly the target of an investigation, and you will almost certainly be either indicted or summoned to a grand jury and asked to testify.” He looked over to his bookcase, which was full of radical literature, including a few titles from French communist theoreticians. He leaned forward and whispered into my ear.

“You know, grand juries only last eighteen months. You mentioned you have a job offer in Europe, right?”

To be precise, I had an internship offer. However, I did not have a visa. That being said, I was certain I could figure out some cunning plan—and being stuck in a jail for refusing to testify for a year or so seemed distinctly unpleasant, especially for allegedly possessing a cute penguin suit.

My lawyer pivoted around in his leather chair. “I’d recommend getting out of dodge.”

As I boarded my airplane back, I was looking over my shoulder. To my surprise, the United States government had decided to let me leave.

However, I did have a feeling I would end up in distant Harar, smuggling weapons for a liberation struggle.

Show Review: Nightterror and Symbiote at the end of the Pandemic Lockdown

Vera

A friend of mine was explaining to me today about the generally unhinged “first shows back” after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US, when people decided that either it was safe enough or important enough to go back to punk shows. And I think it felt “important” enough to a surprising number of people—people who had never really been to a punk show just needed to get out and experience the energy and emotional release, and figured a punk show was probably the best thing to try.

I was one of those people, more or less. I had been to a lot of shows in my life, and a few punk shows, but mostly the kind of medium-to-large venue punk shows where the tickets are like forty dollars and the band is selling tickets to Gen X-ers trying to relive the good old days. I had never been to a DIY hardcore punk show, but after a year not having been in a mass of people, and seeing a flyer on the internet, knowing lots of my friends would be there, I was like “fuck it.” It also helped that it happened to be a kick-off/benefit show for a budding social movement, so like, all the better. I show up, and everyone I’ve ever seen anywhere ever was there; however, having never really been to a show like this, I honestly felt kind of out of my element, so I was mostly just wandering around, talking to some friends here and there, nervously browsing merch tables.

But then the bands start playing. If I remember the order correctly, it was Nightterror. I just remember what felt like over a hundred people

packed into this tiny venue, waiting for the first bit of live music in way too long... and then the whole building just starts to fucking move. Like, everyone, from the people immediately in front of the vocalist to the people standing on the window sill are going back and forth in a fucking tidal wave—I’m drowning, and I couldn’t have been having more fun anywhere else.

It’s insane. In my memory, there’s this insane energy the whole set. I’m short, so I basically didn’t see anything and it didn’t matter—it changed my life anyway.

People head outside, mingle... I overwhelmed and don’t really know anything about the other bands so maybe I skip a few, talk to some friends, whatever. It’s like 11 pm or something, and I’m inside at this point, and then there’s blue lights outside; the cops are there, I think maybe just one or two, in like a “OK, it’s loud, it’s late, go home everyone” kind of way. Maybe they already hated this spot because it was an anarchist social center, maybe these particular pigs didn’t know or didn’t care... but what happened next probably scared the shit out of them.

At least two dozen people pour out of this venue mid-set (it was Symbiote’s set, if I recall correctly), hoods up, throwing shit at the cops, shouting at them... and they just don’t know what the fuck to do. They end up calling for backup, a paddy wagon shows up, and people just keep standing there, shouting at them. There’s this great picture from that night where like, these two pigs are standing across the street from the venue, arms crossed, looking pissed... right under the anti-police banner that had been hung on the building opposite the venue earlier that night.

Symbiote has not stopped playing, most people are actually inside losing their minds and moshing to the blue lights flooding in through the windows, and there are people outside shouting at the cops, still. The cops decide that the only thing they can really do is give everyone parking tickets for parking in an adjacent lot, and then... they just leave.

I was like, “OK sick, this night that literally couldn’t get better somehow just kind of got better... the cops literally couldn’t do anything to stop us and had to leave. This is great.”

The show goes on for another hour or so, and I grab some records and tapes before getting ready to go home with some friends. I’d ridden my motorcycle to the show that night, so I go to hop on, and clearly was feeling wayyyyyy too excited and energized by the experience. So I start riding over to where my friends are to follow them out of the neighborhood, when right in front of the venue, everyone standing outside, I get t-boned.

It didn’t feel that bad in the moment. I remember saying to myself, “Wow, I am not going forward anymore! I’m kind of flying sideways, actually.” The car had thrown me back first into a signpost, so I was