



ASSUME

I KNOW

NOTHING

**ESSENTIAL HARDCORE
YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT**

...as of 2026

Trent Scott (Absolute Truth Zine, Direct Order)

AGNOSTIC FRONT - *VICTIM IN PAIN* (1984)

Ok listen, let's get down to brass tacks. At the end of the day, real coremen/corewomen reach for *VICTIM IN PAIN* when they need a spark. It's a life-resetter. Like, if you find yourself lost in the sauce music-wise, go grab VIP, put it on and let it guide you to back to glory.

what else can be said about this record that hasn't already been said? It literally has everything you look for when you made the decision to ruin your life and become addicted to hardcore punk like the rest of us. Authentically pure musicianship (supernerds will call it "shitty playing"), fast, hard ass vocals, socially aware/in your face lyrics and mosh parts that will unlock all inner pit demons. Oh, you really like your local band's metalcorexbeatdownmosh part? well starts with this record. *STIGMA* has been quoted as saying he intentionally recruited certified moshers to join AF. Let that sink in for a minute. You literally had to be a good moshers to be in this band. No, I'm not talking "crowd killing" or whatever the frig you XXXL KORN shirt TikTokers call it, I'm talking *STYLE. REAL style.* Also, being that *VIP* was released in '84, a time when a lot was going on politically (like today...), *VIP* set itself apart from its contemporaries by speaking directly to what was happening in New York City. It defined what we all know as NYHC. It sounds like New York, setting up classic, after classic...after classic NYHC records that would be released a few years later.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Many thanks to those who contributed. Here are some more records that we feel everyone should be listening to, in no particular order.

Agnostic Front - *Live At CBGB* (1989)

Sick Of It All - *Blood, Sweat And No Tears* (1989)

Hatebreed - *Satisfaction Is The Death Of Desire* (1997)

No Warning - *I'll Blood* (2002)

Negative Approach - *Negative Approach* (1982)

Outburst - *Miles To Go* (1989)

Black Flag - *Damaged* (1981)

Minor Threat - *Complete Discography* (1989)

Poison Idea - *Pick Your King E.P.* (1983)

Chain Of Strength - *True Till Death* (1989)

Sheer Terror - *Just Can't Hate Enough* (1989)

Bad Brains - *Rock For Light* (1983)

Discharge - *Hear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing* (1981)

Breakdown - *'87 Demo* (1987)

Madball - *Set It Off* (1994)

Mental - *Yo!* (2004)

Straight Ahead - *Breakaway* (1987)

Killing Time - *Brightside* (1989)

Germs - *(GI)* (1979)

There is more...
but you can figure
out the rest

...unless?

NEW YORK
HARDCORE

FLOOR
LV

MENTAL

Floorpunch - The Final Mo

check out:

Cro Mags-It's The Limit + Hard Times
(Movie Clip-1986)

<https://youtu.be/h9YLydmCML4>

Live footage from "The Beat"

A movie by Paul Mones, Vestron / Lions Gate, 1988

Hard-Core: Life of My Own
By Harley Flanagan
Feral House, 2016

Hard-Core
LIFE OF MY OWN

The Evolution of a Cro-Magnon
By John Joseph
PUNKhouse, 2008
Loud Speaker, 2017

EVOLUTION NON

Mutations
By Sam McPheeters
Rare Bird, 2020
Endnote #55 Pg 239, 240

MUTATIONS
THE MANY STRANGE FACES
OF HARDCORE PUNK

SAM
MCPHEETERS
FOREWORD BY TORI VAIL

You ask anyone who played in BREAKDOWN, RAW DEAL, OUTBURST, YOUTH OF TODAY, BOLD..they'll tell you that VICTIM IN PAIN was the influence.

In closing, I just wanna say that I'm honoured that [REDACTED] asked me to do this thing, it's always fun talking about records that I love. To the young'n that might be reading this, just know that I'm super confident that VIP will be your favourite listen on this list. If it isn't, hit me up. In closing, don't be a poser, go buy this record, listen to every word Roger is saying and get busy to every mosh part.
STIGMAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!

ALSO CHECK OUT: FLOORPUNCH - THE FINAL MOSH LIVE AT CBGB's - 05/21/2000

If we're doing HC 101 live sets, this FP is definitely up there with the BREAKDOWN Thompson Sq. Park vid as top dog, in my opinion. Every young person needs to watch this video, regardless if you're into hc or not. It's purely educational. We as society need it. The NYHC medley intro to start your last show...at CB's no less, is insane and still talked about to this day. It's pure chaos in the finest form. There are a couple of different angles of the set floating around YouTube, but I prefer the one that faces out to the crowd. You can see every dive and pit. People loved this band so much, which is evident it in this video. It would be so sick to see people going off like this again. It could be YOU! MUST WATCH.

<https://youtu.be/DeUj7RSgqWM?si=ftw5WP89q8gvYUX8>



@dangramful 11 years ago
the final shit
6
Reply



Taylor Young (The Pit Recording Studio, God's Hate)

Carnivore - *Retaliation* (1987)

Of course I'm gonna pick this. Quirky, musical-but-hard NYHC with a metal edge and tongue-in-cheek lyrics. If you drew a line to hardcore blending with metal, I think it would lead to Carnivore - maybe even start with them. Possibly some of the best production from the era as well. "No one wins, we all lose."

Carnivore - *L'amour Brooklyn '86*

Live 1986 <https://youtu.be/1N1lbhfqIL4>

Honorable mention:

Melvins - *Gluey Porch Treatments* (1987)

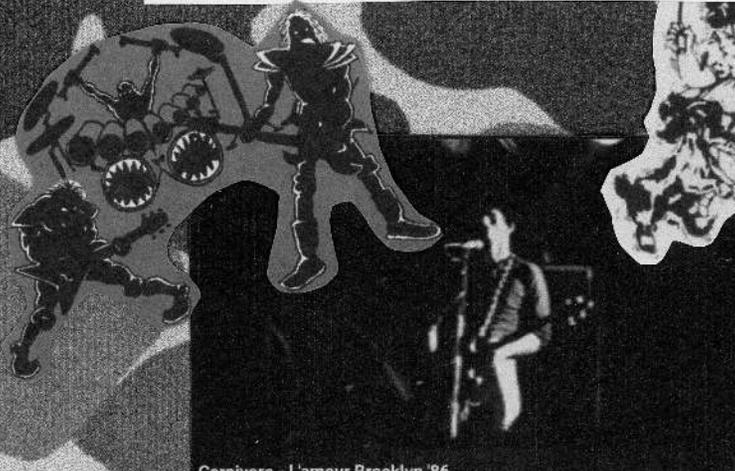
Influenced by Black Flag, but chopped and screwed to a degree that they ended up accidentally creating multiple genres from playing hardcore punk. I think they're often lumped into art punk or post metal or whatever but this record (and many others) is as hard as any.

Every regrettable life lesson you'll ever need is also packed into the fifteen crossover passages on this LP. It's a reverse age of enlightenment—in the best way possible—offering raw, harsh parables rather than tropes of vague idealism. From *World Peace* (still painfully relevant) to *Hard Times* and *Do Unto Others*, it recalibrates your moral barometer—for better or worse—through a sound that channels *Bad Brains* by way of *Motörhead*, with a shadow of early *Black Sabbath* looming over it all.

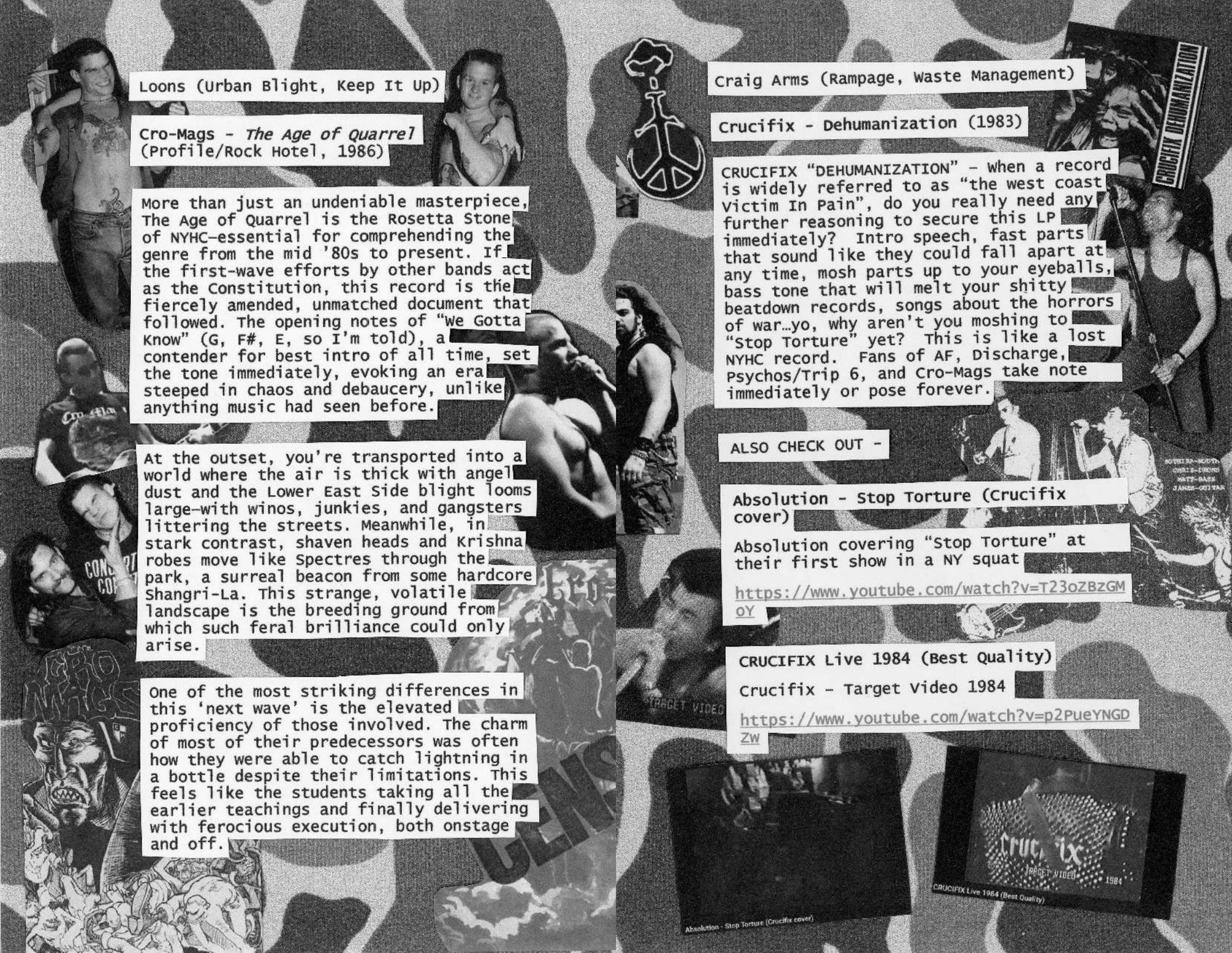
Decades of infighting over name rights, dubious label and management dealings, and deeply rooted personal grudges left a lasting blemish on their legacy. As a result, this record became notoriously elusive in the pre-internet age and only adding to its mystique. The byproduct of this turmoil also happened to spawn two of the genre's most magnetic cults of personality, and a flood of tattooed imitators across nearly every scene in their wake.

The ongoing debate—Team Harley or Team JJ (with the occasional nod to Team Paris)—has truly become hardcore's own Beatles vs. Stones. A friend once described this album as "so good it made every member involved certifiably insane," which is a fair take. Having said that, none of the madness diminishes its lasting significance to this day.

MELVINS



Carnivore - L'amour Brooklyn '86



Loons (Urban Blight, Keep It Up)

Cro-Mags - *The Age of Quarrel*
(Profile/Rock Hotel, 1986)

More than just an undeniable masterpiece, *The Age of Quarrel* is the Rosetta Stone of NYHC—essential for comprehending the genre from the mid '80s to present. If the first-wave efforts by other bands act as the Constitution, this record is the fiercely amended, unmatched document that followed. The opening notes of "We Gotta Know" (G, F#, E, so I'm told), a contender for best intro of all time, set the tone immediately, evoking an era steeped in chaos and debauchery, unlike anything music had seen before.

At the outset, you're transported into a world where the air is thick with angel dust and the Lower East Side blight looms large—with winos, junkies, and gangsters littering the streets. Meanwhile, in stark contrast, shaven heads and Krishna robes move like spectres through the park, a surreal beacon from some hardcore Shangri-La. This strange, volatile landscape is the breeding ground from which such feral brilliance could only arise.

One of the most striking differences in this 'next wave' is the elevated proficiency of those involved. The charm of most of their predecessors was often how they were able to catch lightning in a bottle despite their limitations. This feels like the students taking all the earlier teachings and finally delivering with ferocious execution, both onstage and off.

Craig Arms (Rampage, Waste Management)

Crucifix - *Dehumanization* (1983)

CRUCIFIX "DEHUMANIZATION" – when a record is widely referred to as "the west coast Victim In Pain", do you really need any further reasoning to secure this LP immediately? Intro speech, fast parts that sound like they could fall apart at any time, mosh parts up to your eyeballs, bass tone that will melt your shitty beatdown records, songs about the horrors of war...yo, why aren't you moshing to "Stop Torture" yet? This is like a lost NYHC record. Fans of AF, Discharge, Psychos/Trip 6, and Cro-Mags take note immediately or pose forever.

ALSO CHECK OUT -

Absolution - *Stop Torture* (Crucifix cover)

Absolution covering "Stop Torture" at their first show in a NY squat

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T23oZBZGM0Y>

CRUCIFIX Live 1984 (Best Quality)

Crucifix - Target Video 1984

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2PueYNGDZW>

Absolution - Stop Torture (Crucifix cover)

CRUCIFIX Live 1984 (Best Quality)

Bob Wilson (Rebirth Records, FYA Fest)

JUDGE - BRINGIN IT DOWN (1989)

From the opening feedback on "TAKE ME AWAY" to the bass intro on the closer "WHERE IT WENT" this has everything you need out of a hardcore record. It holds up today for how heavy it is and has lyrics like "a beer a joint like a gun at your head" come the fuck on. Every song is great in its own way and Mike Judge knows how to express himself in a way many have tried and failed miserably at. I once had an older dude in our area give me and a friend his binder full of cd's to burn and check out and the only cd he took for himself to listen to for the month until he needed them back was this one, that's how powerful this shit is. This absolutely paved the way for Integrity and countless others who ever played metallic hardcore after this came out. If you're not throwing a trash can across the pit when the drum intro on the song "BRINGIN IT DOWN" take your ass back to the local emo night

No Justice - Last Show Washington DC 12/2000 (back of stage view)

Before this video got co-opted by soulless click bait sites taking a break from writing about whatever label is paying them to kiss their wack bands asses that month, me and my friends would sit around someone's computer and watch this obsessively. There will never be another NO JUSTICE so the point isn't to watch and imitate it because that's impossible, but to me this is one of if not the best example of what sets hardcore apart from any other type of music. A person most likely dropped on

The b-side unfortunately carries the difficult task of being up against several of the all-time greatest NYHC tracks but if the intro of Growing Up, The Next Step doesn't get you stomping and diving like a crazy (but not insane) person - perhaps this just isn't for you. So what's it gonna be? You gonna enlist in the warzone fan army or ignore one of the best HC records of all time. It's your choice.

Also check out:

Spoiler Speaks - Review: Ball of Destruction

<https://spoilerspeaks.blogspot.com/2008/08/review-ball-of-destruction.html>

FEATURING RAGER, VINNIE, AND WILL FROM KINOSTIC FRONT. INTRODUCING FREDDIE RAGER'S 12 YEAR OLD BROTHER.

JUDGE

THE STREET'S SHIT

DONT FORGET





NIAGARA HARDCORE

Warzone - Don't Forget the Struggle Don't Forget the Streets (1988)

The first full-length release from one of the most prolific bands of NYHC's second wave, Warzone's Don't Forget the Struggle, Don't Forget the Streets, may draw the ire of some for its imagery - but don't get it twisted, these skinheads are patriotic but they sure as hell aint racist. U-N-I-T-Y is at the forefront of the message here and when Raybeez put pen to paper for the lyrics on this LP he may well have been carving the Ten Commandments of hardcore punk into stone. Forgive me if I don't particularly concern myself with whether a group of New York street kids can provide a thesis as to why they use the imagery they do or why they feel it necessary to shout out Jesus Christ in their liner notes - because the riffs on this record have fed generations of hardcore youth.

DON'T FORGET

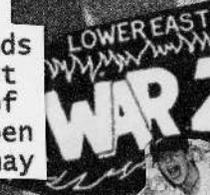
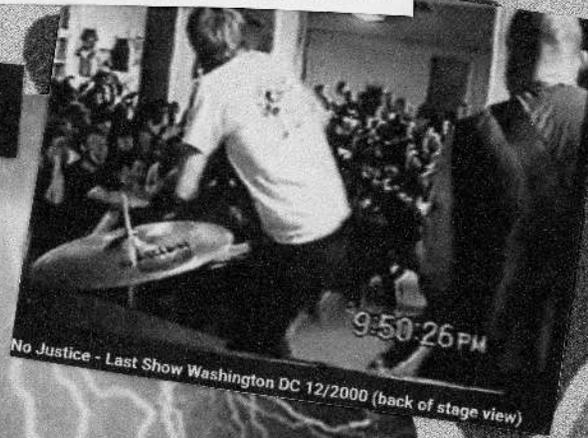
"Hardcore music should stay out of big business" "Don't forget your roots - don't sell out" these are the core tenets of this thing we do. It's a movement - not a business. I know for the Niagara region in particular this record has been an abundant source of inspiration, right down to the style and swagger displayed by the band in their promo photos and live videos and I can assure you that it's also the case in many other scenes across North America. As the band continued to release new music the influences expanded and the guitar work got wilder but this LP stands as the true document of the impact Warzone had and still has on hardcore today.

THE STRUGGLE

their head repeatedly as a child would counter this with "dude THE CHARIOT WAS A CRAZY LIVE BAND" and my response will always be...no that shit sucks this is the real deal. Hardcore at its best is wild unpredictable and unhinged and there's no better way to see that then this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HUnw9WqCZI&t=236s>

@wienerstein2817 6 years ago
Holy shit. I have never seen anything this crazy before.
21 0 Reply



@robertnowicki8989 2 years ago
Oh fuck. Super
Reply

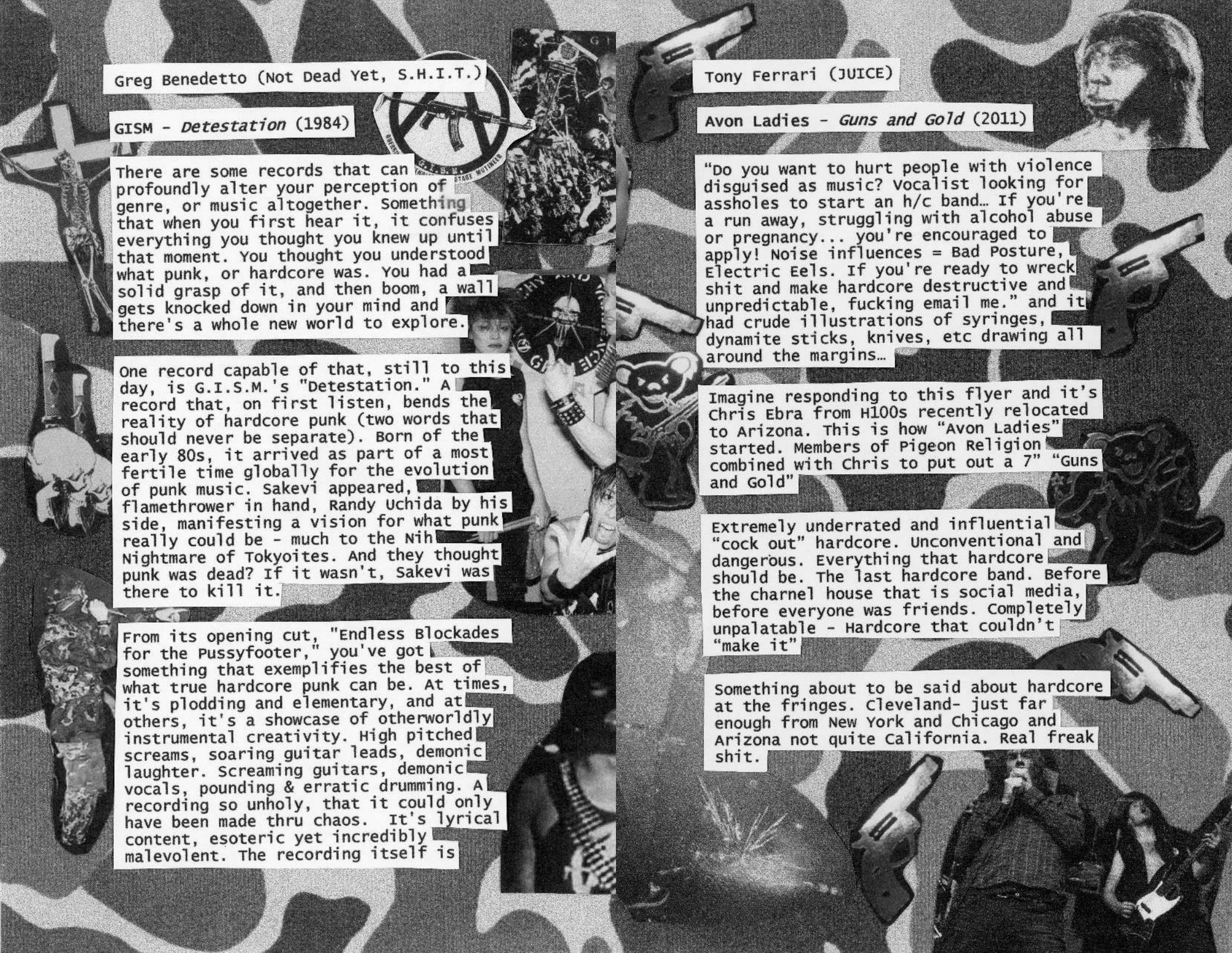
MATT-BASS

SAMMY-DRUMS

MIKE JUDGE-THROAT

PORCELL-GUITAR

RAY LOUIS



Greg Benedetto (Not Dead Yet, S.H.I.T.)

GISM - *Detestation* (1984)

There are some records that can profoundly alter your perception of genre, or music altogether. Something that when you first hear it, it confuses everything you thought you knew up until that moment. You thought you understood what punk, or hardcore was. You had a solid grasp of it, and then boom, a wall gets knocked down in your mind and there's a whole new world to explore.

One record capable of that, still to this day, is G.I.S.M.'s "Detestation." A record that, on first listen, bends the reality of hardcore punk (two words that should never be separate). Born of the early 80s, it arrived as part of a most fertile time globally for the evolution of punk music. Sakevi appeared, flamethrower in hand, Randy Uchida by his side, manifesting a vision for what punk really could be - much to the Nihilist Nightmare of Tokyoites. And they thought punk was dead? If it wasn't, Sakevi was there to kill it.

From its opening cut, "Endless Blockades for the Pussyfooter," you've got something that exemplifies the best of what true hardcore punk can be. At times, it's plodding and elementary, and at others, it's a showcase of otherworldly instrumental creativity. High pitched screams, soaring guitar leads, demonic laughter. Screaming guitars, demonic vocals, pounding & erratic drumming. A recording so unholy, that it could only have been made thru chaos. It's lyrical content, esoteric yet incredibly malevolent. The recording itself is

Tony Ferrari (JUICE)

Avon Ladies - *Guns and Gold* (2011)

"Do you want to hurt people with violence disguised as music? Vocalist looking for assholes to start an h/c band.. If you're a run away, struggling with alcohol abuse or pregnancy... you're encouraged to apply! Noise influences = Bad Posture, Electric Eels. If you're ready to wreck shit and make hardcore destructive and unpredictable, fucking email me." and it had crude illustrations of syringes, dynamite sticks, knives, etc drawing all around the margins...

Imagine responding to this flyer and it's Chris Ebra from H100s recently relocated to Arizona. This is how "Avon Ladies" started. Members of Pigeon Religion combined with Chris to put out a 7" "Guns and Gold"

Extremely underrated and influential "cock out" hardcore. Unconventional and dangerous. Everything that hardcore should be. The last hardcore band. Before the charnel house that is social media, before everyone was friends. Completely unpalatable - Hardcore that couldn't "make it"

Something about to be said about hardcore at the fringes. Cleveland- just far enough from New York and Chicago and Arizona not quite California. Real freak shit.

Bee Traverse (Pressing On Distro, Kleener)

CRASS - THE FEEDING OF THE 5000 (1978)

Opening with Asylum, replaced on the original pressing with 2 minutes of silence due to the pressing plant refusing to make the record due to its blasphemous content, an incredible piece of spoken word and musique concrete before diving into one of the most jam-packed records for anthemic punk songs. The drums march through the entire record like a battalion with the guitar clacking along and the bass carrying catchy melodies with snarky vocals preaching timeless messages phrased for the lowest common denominator. Do they owe us a living? Of course they fucking do.

Also read *Shibboleth: My Revolting Life* by Penny Rimbaud.

absolutely fucked. The kind of thing that could only be produced by people who had no clue what they were doing, other than terrorizing a recording engineer.

Throughout, it is a record that makes your skin crawl. Its influence is immeasurable. Whether or not you're trying to chart the history of Portland punk, or Cleveland hardcore, or Norwegian Black Metal, you will find the influence of G.I.S.M. deep at the heart of it. Sakevi himself, a vocalist whose reputation preceded him. Whether you heard about him firing a gun into a crowd, or unleashing flames on a Tokyo subway, he became the ultimate example of the 'confrontational' frontperson.

For me, this record was one that exposed the world of international hardcore punk & to the most potent idea behind it all. That *real* hardcore punk, more than anything, is violent populist folk music. It is a mirror to the permutations of the real world. And that mirror can be (and was, and still is) held up anywhere on earth. Pointed at the right things, it can be brutally truthful. And in that, it can be the ground in which true creative experimentation can take place. If you haven't gotten past North American Hardcore, then let me tell you urgently, you are missing out. Use this as a cue to start with Japan, but Italy, Sweden, Brasil and more and more.

Also check out:

Lip Cream "Eikaku Na Mirai"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwnJCna8MjQ>



CRASS

SHIBBOLETH
my revolting life



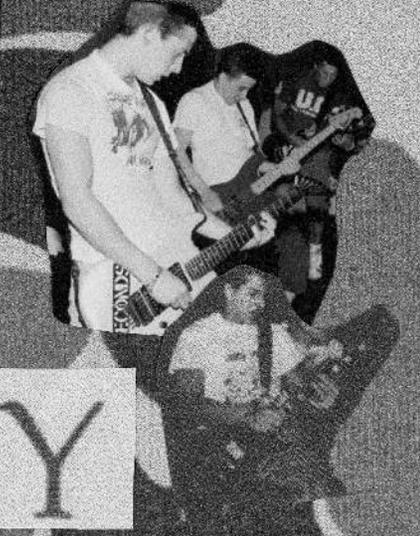
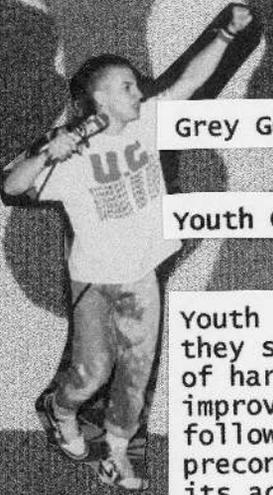
YOUTH OF TODAY

Grey Gordon (Demolisten Podcast, Colossal Man)

Youth Of Today - *Can't Close My Eyes*

Youth of Today is a band so good that they singlehandedly invented a subgenre of hardcore and then no one managed to improve upon it even a single time in the following 40 years. Leave your preconceptions about youth crew and all its accompanying corny shit at the door—Youth Of Today is a hard band. The lyrics “You say you wanna fuckin’ fight? we just might” over a hard as nails moshpart? Are you kidding me, man? I’m about to drop a pin on an opp right now just because I *thought* about that song. This is a record that contains every single component that makes hardcore great: breakneck speed, crushing moshparts, anthemic lyrics, and a vocalist that sounds like an escaped mental patient. It should tell you everything you need to know that Infest (another one of the greatest bands of all time) essentially started as a wholesale YOT ripoff. I could’ve picked any YOT release to speak about here, but *Can't Close My Eyes* feels like the definitive document of the band. Nine songs in fourteen minutes that have been often imitated and never replicated. Not to mention these little Connecticut mutants pioneered damn near every component of modern hardcore as we understand it. They transformed straight edge into a certified movement, they brought discussions about animal rights out of crust punk spaces and into hardcore, they made being strong cool, and they redefined hardcore’s visual identity in a

way that still reverberates today. Some nerds might say “for better or for worse” after the previous statement, but not me. All that shit rocks. I love looking cool, making empathetic choices, and being physically capable of vanquishing my foes. Legitimately, I could compose a PhD level thesis on Youth Of Today, so I will close it out simply: Hardcore genuinely does not get better than this. Sit down with this record, read along with the songs, study the insert, and let it change your life. You will never want to have hair again.



YOUTH OF TODAY