ONE EXPLODING BUNDLE OF BURNING HATE, JIM THIRWELL AKA CLINT RUIN AKA FOETUS INTERRUPTUS EXPLAINS TO JONH WILDE THE DISGUST THAT GREW INTO HIS NEW ALBUM OF EPIC LOATHING, ‘THAW’. PICS: PHIL NICHOLLS

THE LADY AT THE HOTEL DESK IS GIVING ME one of those who sent you’re looks.

“We don’t appear to have a Mr Foetus here, I’m afraid.”

Do you have a Mr Ruin?

“Mr Ruin you say. Let me see... no, we don’t have a Mr Ruin either.”

Mr Thirwell? Maybe you have a Mr Thirwell.

“Erm... yes, we do appear to have a Mr Thirwell. Is this the man you’ve come for?”

Jim Thirwell. This is the man I’ve come for.

Thank God.

JIM THIRWELL is the only man I’ve ever met who feels as allergic to the rest of the human race as myself. Three minutes into the interview, a middle-aged Scandinavian man drags his wretched, catervauling infant into the hotel lounge and attempts to tussle with a chocolate-machine. Maybe he thinks it’s a cash dispenser. Jim Thirwell is staring at them, what can only be described as, abhorrence. He wishes them ill. Much ill.

“Do I hate people? Yeah, I’d say that was a fair assessment. There’s just so much to hate. When I blow into a country, I only have to see a dude like that walk into my space and I hate his guts. There’s just so much to choose from. I hate you, I hate you, I hate you...”

He’s not necessarily referring to me. He means everybody, everywhere, anytime.

“For me, there’s so much more to hate than to love. But not everyone is like me. I’m in a position where I’m trying to whittle down my life and cut myself off as much as possible from the things I hate. To clear myself away from the kind of humankind that I’m force-fed, that I want no contact with at all. I’ve been totally engulfed by American media for the past couple of years. That kind of conception of normality and sense of fun. It makes me hateful. These moralistic, brain-dead souls who are slaves to the morality they are fed by media and government.

“People never seem to go further than a few inches below the surface and I can’t handle that. I can’t stand hearing what comes out of their mouths. This incredible superficiality.”

The way they smell. The way they sound.

“Everything basically. Obviously, I prefer beautiful people. Some people can pull it off. Some people can enhance their own beauty simply by being on the case. “Nick Cave?” Oh yeah, I’d definitely say he was beautiful.”

IN “A Prayer For My Death”, from “Thaw”, you sing about daily life being like dysentery... “That’s pretty much summing up my philosophy. I don’t find it necessary to take responsibility. Bullshit is obligatory, daily life is dysentery. Escape this earthly Alcatraz, get out of this penitentiary. Crawl out of this century...”

“That’s a pretty concise expression of my feelings. It’s fatalism more than cynicism. All those words just poured out of me. It’s pretty close to the bone in terms of being honest about how I feel. I had sheets of that kind of stuff and it got edited down to a song. Sometimes it really chokes me up when I listen back to it.

“I couldn’t be so pedantic as to say what I want out of life. It’s hard enough to get by from day to day. I don’t want to be somebody else though. I’m quite happy being me. Is it fulfilling? Well no. But I’m not really that kind of personality. I do look for fulfillment... but I don’t necessarily get it. I know. I might get it in one thing and then something else will come along and fulfill it. Usually a person. That’s pretty much it. Dealing with atheism is the real bone of my life.”

Atheism. That’s rampant.

“It’s an epidemic... spreading fast!”

FOR someone who loathes so far and wide, Jim Thirwell Foetus is extraordinarily good company. Hardly the piece of crap you might imagine if you take a line out of context and let it offend your only liberal sensibilities. A line like, “Can’t sleep for the sins of 6.5 million Jews, I’d join the Ku Klux Klan just to get the uniform, and a good night’s sleep”, from “Cold Day In Hell”. A line like, “Destroy all girls”, from “Pigs Will”. A line like, “It’s a coruscating hoedown, black-eyed peas n’ fried nigger”, from “Hausse-On-Fire”. A line like, “esta es una para las muchachas, chupa esto” from “Chingada!” The last one is in Spanish but, in case you’re wondering, don’t ring up the Spanish Embassy. Find yourself a Spanish pen-pal of the opposite sex and wait until you are on very, very good terms.

Or how about, “A woman’s place is on my face”, the line that made Muriel Gray with embarrassment when Jim let it slip during an interview on “The Tube”, when plucky Muriel was daring to suggest that Mr Ruin might just possibly be the weirdest bit sexist? The man who wrote these lines is rather a straight arrow in person. Slightly shy. Highly vulnerable. Tremendously willing to co-operate.

As Thirwell has attempted to explain on previous occasions, the narrator in his songs is invariably not himself. As with “I’ll Meet You In Poland Baby”, from 1984’s “Hole” LP, when he used events and characters from history as an analogy for personal desperation. Isn’t that an easy way out though? I suggest. Passing everything off on the narrator, refusing to accept personal responsibility for certain inflammable lines. Isn’t that vaguely irresponsible?

“I don’t think it is the easy way out,” he says. “I think I’m putting myself in the firing-line by doing it. I’ve come up against a lot of resistance for doing it, I’m not
going to change because of that. I’m not going
to pander to people. I’ve had bomb threats and stuff like
that. There’s nothing good about feeling like a wanted
man. Or feeling like a moving target. I’m paranoid
and neurotic enough as it is! Without all that bullshit
going down.
I carefully extract a verse from “English
Faggot/Nothin’ Man”, a song from “Thaw”. It hums
like this. “I know where you live, I know where you’re
hiding. Squeal like a piggy. English faggot. English
faggot. English piggy. Nothin’ man.” I kind of wonder
where all that was coming from. Or going to.
“I don’t know who people that think that is. About
One
day, I came home to my apartment in Brooklyn
and on my answering-machine, there was this message
saying, ‘Clint Ruin, you English faggot. I know where
you live. I’m going to wait for you and I’ll
***you up’. Well, that kind of disturbed me slightly. Thinking
that someone was out there, waiting for me. Particularly
since I live in a crack-infested neighbourhood where
there’s a lot of crime going on. It’s not a comfortable
feeling. Then I started thinking about it. I’m neither
English nor faggot. So I started to see the irony in
there. The song was constructed around that point of
view.
Back in 1985, Thirwell was telling our
Theodore Mico that he’ll get round to killing someone
someday. “Yeah, I’ll do it.” he promised. “Not
tomorrow you understand, but I’ll get round to it
someday.” Two songs from “Thaw” — “Don’t Hide It
Provide It” and “Hauss-On-Fire” — continue the
murderous line that songs like “Where Evil Dwells”,
“Gumbo”, “The Fudge Punch”, “Pigwill” and
“Sadistic”, to name just five, would flush in the
Foetus past. I’m wondering if there’s danger on his lips right
now. I quote him a little chunk of Michel Foucault’s that
has lodged itself in the corner of my crowded,
rush-hour mind which is fenced-off for this kind of
thing. “The madness of desire, insane murders, the
most unreasonable passions — all are wisdom and
reason, since they are part of the order of nature.”
Is this how it starts?
“When I said all that,” he recalls, “I meant that killing
was simply the most profound thing you could do to a
person. That’s why it was fascinating for me, and still is.
Different people have different reasons for killing
people, I guess. I’m not even sure how many songs I
have about brutal murder. I’m just not conscious of
that. When I was making those statements, I was being
a little flippantly.

OBVIOUSLY, you’re not the
bloodshot monster that some people expect.
Well… I have my moments. Crudely. Sure, I can
be a bit moody and turn into a beast at times. But I try to suppress that side of
my nature. As least on a social level. I stick to tearing
the legs off spiders.

Thaw ”Thaw”, Thaw ”Thaw”, in the guise of Foetus
Interuptus, has moved dramatically closer to the
“hugeness” that he has always strived for. This
hugeness also threatens to be embodied in his
immunological collaboration with Lydia Lunch, the first fruit
of their long-promised Splitkist project.

As The Stud Brothers pointed out in last week’s
review, “Thaw” is an ultimate statement. It sounds as
though there could be no more left after this. But that’s
how it seemed after 1981’s “Dead”, 1982’s “Ache”,
1984’s “Hole”, 1985’s “Nail”, 1987’s “Dirtish”…

“Each time, I reach another plateau and I know I
have to go further. It’s getting closer and closer to
godhead. This (pointing to head) is the godhead. I’m
not surprised at the intensity of it each time. I’m so close
to it. I only want it to be more and more intense. I find
my music very uplifting and purifying. I’d like people to
listen to it and be totally engulfed. To be emotionally
wrenched and left shattered. To be taken on a
journey.”

It’s a way of putting yourself out of the misery.
“Oh yeah. It’s complete satisfaction for me.
Transcendent. I’m that close to it. When it’s finished, it’s
my baby.

You don’t believe in restraint.
“I do retrain myself in certain parts, but maybe just
to trick the listener into turning it up so I can slam the
energy through again. The use of dynamics is what I’m
into. I really got it out of my system with this record.”

Like all modern immaculate consumables (Albin,
Cave, Gira, Rollins, Gibby Haynes, Thurston Moore
and Kim Gordon; but especially Albini and Cave),
Thirwell seems to be heaving towards a point of
pointless excess, a point where fearful energies erupt
with a terrible force that is beyond all human control.
That’s what it sounds like. A point of ultimate self-doubt
and self-delight. Way out there where grave danger is
everywhere. That’s what “Thaw” sounds like.

“I try to be in a head-down, looking down,” he roars in
“Descent Into The Inferno.” “Now I know the inferno
from inside. And you can’t see them windows.
And smoke gets in your eyes. And eyes just wanna
cry cry cry cry cry. The impact is
immeasurable. It’s sheer immensity. It’s so
***ed up, you just wanna lie down and laugh hysterically. Jim
Foetus has reached the abyss even if the hotel
receptionist hasn’t no record of his arrival.

“I’m laughing inside? I’m crying inside. That’s what
it’s more like. But I could understand why a listener
would want to break into hysterical laughter. Sure. But
not funny ha ha.

Nervous, conflicting laughter.

“Well there’s so much self-delusion in there…
It sounds like full fury. Like it just has to pour out. Like
in “DIl-9026”, when he yells, “I’m gonna explode, I’m
gonna explode. I’m God! I’m Jesus! I’m Satan. Death
to the pigs!” Agony and bliss.

THE STUDS conclude in their “Thaw”
review that “the world according to Clint Ruin is one
shitty place.” Like many that have trespassed this
ruined land, they are not alert to the scarred beauty
that erupts from the cracks of Foetus. Serenity ever,
Ardror, Hysteria, Crisis and Chaos. Quenching nothingness.
If you listen hard enough, you’ll even find calm inside
this gruesome, barbarous discarod. Self-awakening,
self destructive, self-impossible. Can I drag Nierschke
into this argument? Okay. The thinker or artist whose
better self has folded into his works feels an almost
malignous joy when he sees his body and soul slowly
broken into and destroyed by time. It’s as if he were in
a corner, watching a thief at work on his safe, the all
while knowing that it is empty and that all his treasures
have been rescued.

These are the open pages of the sick man’s diary.

“Beauty? Oh yeah. You know, you can’t tell people
how to listen to records. But I think there are moments
moments of beauty. But people just pick up
on one element of it and ignore the rest. I’ve always
been very aware of that. I’m worth two licks of shit. It doesn’t have to awaken
nightmares. It doesn’t have to always be going down
into the inferno just to tell us what it’s like down there.”

With this new album, I’ve really tried to get more of
a stream of consciousness out there. Without
analyzing what you want to hear and what I want it to
be.

When I tell him that it sounds incredibly bitter, he
says there are good reasons for that. “I’ve been crying
inside for a couple of years,” he reveals. Part of the
reason for this emotional state is a long-running battle
with Some Bizarre or, as Thirwell says, “Some
Bizzare”. Expecting a double compilation album,
this will be his last work for them.

“I’m out of there and I’m wary about jumping into
anything too quickly because I’ve been badly burned.
I would dearly love to put out a statement about what
Some Bizzare have done to me and what an asshole
Steve is. He’s a total prick. I just fear retribution
because he has such a large body of work, owns
the copyrights. All this has made me inactive for the
past 12 months. But it’s helped in a way. It’s crystallized
things for me. It’s made me realize how close I’m
not to getting that hugeness.

“I know, there’s so much more I want to do with
Foetus, so much future I want to take it. Then again,
I want to temper it with other things. So I clean
experience and bring it back to Foetus.”

Suck on that squaresheads.