THE EXORCIST
LIFE AFTER FOETUS
BY WILLIAM LEITH

MARC ALMOND
GRAM PARSONS
MEAT WHIPLASH
I LIKE THE BAD THINGS in life. The other day I was in someone's car and they were playing this music that was so bad. I hated it. Everything about it disgusted me, but I loved listening to it because I knew why it was so bad. I enjoy hating it, but I hate myself for enjoying it.

There's a savage little twist of wilful perversity which lies at the heart of the footnote scheme of things. Perversity is what Clint Ruin has instead of a good singing voice or a nice face, and he seems to explain everything. It has many uses with his escape clause. He looks at me and lights another cigarette. Unless I tell you otherwise he's always lighting another cigarette. "Sometimes," he tells me, "it's as if all of horrible things I need something to purify me.

SO YOU WANT PURITY? Well, purity costs. And right here's where you start paying for it — in blood. And blood costs too, you know, only this time your currency are shame and degradation. And so on, into the mere. To anyone in search of good clean insurrection and a cathartic jab, this bit of wisdom — the fifth factor — should be enough to make them pay their hard-earned and all over their copy of Socialist Worker. To Clint Ruin, on the other hand, the first whiff of odour is where the fun really begins.

THIS IS THE STORY OF a pure, Australian kid called Jim Thirlwell who stayed in his bedroom all the time, reading sci-fi and Sartre and cultivating his adolescent Existentialist phase, much like any other skinny shy-boy with a grain of intelligence. He was sarcastically anti-social and hardly urban, growing up on the outskirts of Melbourne, the most suburban city in the world.

"I've put myself through a deprogramming process so I've blocked out most of my childhood, but I remember as I grew up I felt like I didn't want to be where I was. I was always pretty miserable, which I didn't really even know until I had something to compare it to."

Thirlwell went to, and of course subsequently dropped out of, Art School. I asked him what he did and he said it was stuff like his album sleeves — sick stuff, got bored with Australia and decided to come to London.
for some cultural stimulus and a bit of humanizing. He should have known that the line he put out and said about a country is to look at its TV advertising, but the fact is, he is in the mistake of going on reputation.

"England is just like Corrour Street. It's so mundane and it constantly addresses itself to the mundane. People in these petty, hideous situations, you can have two beautiful, baring, stupid people in the most horrible of circumstances. England, England, England's straitened, held back from aspiring out of that situation."

It's an old class thing again. Ruin hated England because of the distances between people and the naivete of its curtain-taken, window-dressed, window-saved, white wallpaper, the image of some of his most disquietingly brilliant work: the woman who is holding some words self-consciously that was "Ache" and the wider-scope crash of diseased humour and sculpted sociopathy in an earlier book, "Choke". He says to me, "sounds like a pop album when I listen to it now". He's moved on a bit since then.

He tells me about living in Paris in the 70s, and about his new album, "Nail". He's moved to a much larger house with a lot less cash-flowing and crime-ridden society and it feels good. From Coronation Street to Livin Of The Rich And Famous. He can now make as much as he cash flows about on the game-shows.

"New York is the other extreme from the condition in which I have lived in England and it is a very moneyious, consumptive, piteous, vile serial killings, which I think is sick as you will. The class structure's much more blundered, and much more to do with money, which you can see in the advertisements, or the people with more money. There's more stimulus, less oppression, more choice, more contrast, more opportunity. There's nothing like the onslaught of stimuli you can drive yourself instantly."

"MUSICALLY, I've been interested in creating something that's not my liking in terms of style or sound. It's just sound. As always, I've drawn from a lot of different sources, but this time I've filtered them through a lot of different filters, I can't find some of that.

"I'm so close to this record—it's like I've cut off a lot of my ties, I'm in the room. I'm not alone, not nowhere, myself and the producer, I'm just alone, I'm just somewhere alive and engaged and a lot of things have been successful. It's... the record I've always wanted to make. It's really all about me (he's self-referring), all about what I'm interested in."

In the current climate, you can't want an Futter album, and a little bit more, because whereas in the past Futter records sounded like thin things, like bondage, like falling apart, now it sounds like they are being torn apart. Mass, mass-murder, mausoleum—in this case, they are... coming out, they are a cackle or two. This is a progression from merely shouting "Crucifixion is my addiction" on a record to the whole atrocity of the crucifix's point of agony. Like 'Mourdering' or the film Blood Simple, it gives you a sense of tangible horror.[5]"

"As you know, I believe that we are playing with objects and situations and evoking with horror."

"Nail is actually pop music in the middle stages of AIDS. The immune system has been knocked out and all sorts of rage, but I think it is flourishing in there. There's one that's brought on some kind of hormonal shakedown so that the timing cannot put a period of whom, which is causing staggering abdominal pains, one that gives you the traditional rush of vitality the moment you crook. "Piss, sweats, nails," quips Clint Rain, "who gave the sandwich to Muma Caza". And, in a slightly more humorous mood, "I'm your gloria, your gloria, coming to you—ya a stake through your HEART."

"There's a thread, a theme of oppression running through all of my work. I've tried to itemize it from various viewpoint—the oppression imposes on oneself, the oppression of the young, a statement, like Enter the Exterminator, which is about a concentration camp, and Figurante, which is about a murderer's. It's murder, it's murder evolving out of my travels up and down the West Coast, which I hated. Actually, I don't know if I hate it, I take it as such, and it started off being and then I tried to apply it to those notorious losers who travelled up and down the coast picking up young hitchhikers and fucking them and killing them.

"I'd like to do like I killed someone. I think I'm too moral to take it that far. I think it would hinder me. I can't imagine someone's life much more than that, can you?"

"THINK TOO MUCH?"

I have just suggested that Ruin's essential difficulty is that he is agnostic about much things. He looks worried, but then I can't remember a time this afternoon when he didn't look worried."

"Nail is a new vector. I feel my way of thinking about things takes away a lot of the enjoyment, he laughs. "Worry me so much more of more when I think I'm being analytical about being analytical! No, I do worry a lot—about everything. Absolutely everything! It's just what makes it really difficult for me that I worry so far in advance, I worry about... will it really be worth it in the end? Will it really matter? Will it really be worth it?"

"The last thing I worry about," he says. "We PUSH THE conversation a bit deeper, probing anxiety like Ruin and guilt. We let the psychezeitounas of Ruin's songs conceal a deep respect for organisations and much things he looks worried."

"I'm not saying not, nor, perhaps not at all. It's difficult to tell how far Christian faith has pushed its dubious idea that the glass is to the foetal mind, but there wouldn't be much point in perpetrating extreme blasphemy if you weren't going to purge something from yourself."

"Sometimes I feel guilty about nothing, and then sometimes I feel guilty about looking guilty, and then I feel guilty about trying not to look guilty. I cringe at the sight of unfairness, the unfair downwinding of the culpable. I find that these are the two most destructive emotions, and these are the ones I try hardest to suppress. I have absolutely nothing to be guilty about, I crumble by everything I do so very.

"Soon enough, though, he's being flippant, back to the old perversity. He tells the story of his three favours: friend, lover and subject."

"Moorer Grey said to me, you're travelling. I don't travel that much. Basically, a mortal's place is in any face. That is, no, it's hilarious. That's the type of humour I really appreciate, one that attacks everything. My view on feminists is that I'm a feminist myself, I come across as a manufactured extremely volatile situation, one where you can elicit an extreme reaction, so I guess I just take advantage of it."

"A lot of the time I'm speaking from a character point of view, which doesn't mean I'm in conditioning what I'm saying, it means it's just as likely that I'm taking the opposite stance."

"Do you enjoy playing the parts?"

"I do purge certain parts of my personality which don't get a chance to externalise themselves. I'm not sure that I'm like Stalin in 'Ill Meet You In Poland, Baby', but here I go to great lengths not to get mixed up in the politics, not to say anything pro- or anti-Nazi. By distancing myself, I can portray the full horrors."

H E IS NOT QUITE THE HORSEMAN OF THE Apocalypse that I'd alluded to. He is the recent inhabitant of the obsessive Wasp Factory schoolboy type that I'd worried about. In fact, there's a lot of Tom Waits in him. "I'm not sure that I'm a lot of '80s New Parnoid self-improvement in there, too. He talks a lot about getting better at that."

"Ever since I started putting out records, it's been a learning process the whole time. I have an unapathetic approach for the studio knowledge, which is part of my self-improvement programme. It's a constant evolution. I'm aspiring to be a great... Clint Rain. I want to be a person that I think is great."

What about Rambo, Clint? "Love it."