

PIGBLOO

hard as nails

CLINT: A ruin of a man



From A to Z and never again, JACK BARRON decides to take alphabet soup with the man inside the Foetus, CLINT RUIN. Porky scratchings by PETER ANDERSON

D B L U E S

TO HAMMER the point home precisely, Clint Ruin is about to unleash his criminal record on a world which isn't equipped to take the shock.

The work in question is an album called 'Nail'. Performed by his Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel project, the vinyl seethes with a mad population of sadists, murderers, rapists, shit-eaters and general pervers.

And if you're fed up to the back teeth with the prevailing bad taste of pop abortions, I'd suggest you put 'Nail' between the sandwich of your ears pronto.

Clint, who has been known to use the assumed name of Jim Thirwell, is of course no stranger to controversy. Last year, for instance, pictures of him being crucified — which were used to promote the SPOTW album 'Hole' — were banned by many music magazines. I cannot think why since the same sort of gig did Jesus' reputation no harm.

In the public's imagination Clint remains something of a monster: a drug-crazed, orgiastic, child-molesting blasphemer. Yet on those rare occasions I've noticed him socialising, with or without his friend Lydia Lunch, he's seemed very quiet and retiring: a man happy to observe the chaos surrounding him instead of adding to it.

And today in the Some Bizzare office that impression is intact as we go through the alphabet of being a Foetus...

A THEISM: "It doesn't mean much to me because it suggests a wilful rejection of religion, but I don't feel strongly enough about it to reject it. I use it more for a springboard and something I use for analogy. So maybe the 'A' we should concentrate on is for analogy, which I do use a lot in terms of utilising extremes to express what I think. These extremes don't necessarily reflect my lifestyle literally, they are transposed onto my lifestyle. For example the idea in 'Hole' of using heaven and hell imagery might be clichéd, and is not the result of being a frustrated Catholic, but it illuminates earthly existence."

BULLSHIT: "I wouldn't want to persuade people I'm not full of bullshit, I don't care. The only person I have to please is myself. I feel honest and pure to myself and I don't feel the need to succumb to other people's interpretations of myself. I know what I'm saying and I think I've said it very clearly and concisely. That's it."

C LICHÉS: "These don't crop up because I'm short of lyrics or melodies. The musical clichés or lyrical proverbs appear because people already have a lot of associations with them. I then twist these clichés around,

put them in a strange context, so I can drive a point home or be disorientating."

"For example the surf clichés on 'Satan's Place'. (This is a 'Hole' song which rattles the bones of Beach Boys style vocals with lyrics like 'I'm gonna ride the wild surf in the bowels of the earth/I'm hanging ten on the final tidal wave in hell'). "As soon as you hear that surf sound, it unleashes a thousand associations from the past. I like to plumb into that to evoke an unusual atmosphere. The whole thing enhances the irony content, which isn't jokey or comic but humorous."

'DESCENT INTO THE INFERNO': "That song on the album 'Nail' is about when I was staying in LA — hah, this sounds like Graham Nash or something — which was late '83. It was like one of the worst periods of my life, absolutely disgusting. I spent a lot of time in the house, pacing back and forth, tearing my hair out and watching MTV. It was like an extreme culture shock, like being sent to the moon."

"A lot of the lyrics were taken from screwed up bits of paper which I found on the floor after being totally oblivious to writing them the night before. The words deal both with LA and my reactions to it, for example 'An obscene sprawling landscape of nothing/And nothing is its middle name/Meet you on the corner of nothing and nowhere... where in hell is that?'"

ECSTASY: "It's hard to dissociate ecstasy from the drug Ecstasy, not that I'm drugged or anything. Ecstasy as a state is not within my realm of experience, I've never felt the total awareness which I imagine ecstasy is..."

"Enter The Exterminator" on 'Nail' on the other hand is about the oppression of an environment expressed through a scenario not unlike, say, a South American jail or a concentration camp. The reaction I was trying to capture was the phenomenon where Jews in the camps and death factories entered the state of mind where they totally embraced their death and didn't put up any resistance. They were called Muslims."

F LAGELLATION: "Nah, I'm not really into it, but you've made quite an interesting observation that on a personal or social level, I am fairly shy and reserved-ish most times. My music allows me to purge certain parts of my personality which don't rear their heads in social situations. Because I can articulate negative emotions on record it makes me a calmer person, it stops me from going out and shooting people."

"I don't think I wallow in self pity on the songs, though to a certain extent it's like putting myself on the psychiatrist's couch and doing a public analysis of myself. This is why the songs require a rigorous self-editing process, to tear out the flippant elements and get down to the raw material."

GRIEF: "Grief is a tough word, though I like grief because as a concept the phrase 'good grief' as opposed to 'bad grief'? If we say it 50 times maybe it will lose its meaning, which is alright because I can't associate it with any personal experience anyway."

HAIRSTYLE: "When I started out I invented a complex mythology about the origin of the various Foetus

permutations, so when I went to music papers I could say I represented Self Immolation rather than a particular artist. I also did this because it detracted from the stigma of having a central focal key because I think that does demean one's work."

"People tend to assume that because you've got a certain hairstyle, you will sound like this or that. That's why a Foetus doesn't wear its haircut on a record sleeve and why I don't have my face on them. I like to propagate confusion by having different names. The names and forms allow me to have vehicles to make different sorts of statements. I don't want Foetus to be open because it'd become boring. Pictures and interviews are vacuous and have nothing to do with the creative process."

IDOL/IDLE: "I hate being idle. As for idols I don't have any. There are people whose music I respect, but you know what The Stranglers said about no more heroes. Pop stars are like confetti trodden into the ground, they're just there. They have nothing to do with creativity or movement in music. If they're treated as idols/ides, that's their problem, not mine."

JIM THIRWELL: "Who? Will he and the foetuses ever come out of the womb? I don't know really. I'll pass on both of those."

K ILLING: "The characters in my songs have been created to a certain extent because I'm trying to make a point about something I don't necessarily condone. Take 'Pigswill' on the new album as an example."

"The character in 'Pigswill' is touring up and down the West Coast of America with his girlfriend. They're picking up hitch-hikers, f***** them, killing them and then burying them in shallow graves and stuff."

"They check into this hotel and Pigswill gets this brainstorm and screams Destroy all girls! So he turns on his girlfriend and kills her brutally. He discovers she's menstruating and he goes wild and smears her blood all over the walls. Then he goes up this hill, Black Boot Hill, and runs her bloody clothes up a flagpole."

"Obviously I'm not condoning that sort of activity; rather I'm reporting it as something that could happen, and the use of characters helps in that process... But you see it's not like I swoop into alter-ego modes as Clint Ruin or whoever. The performers of the songs aren't alternative personalities, just different aspects of the same person being manifested."

LYDIA LUNCH: "I'll pass on that one as well; after all, it's none of your business."

MANSON: "Yeah, there's a song on 'Nail' which deals with the subject of Charles Manson. It's called 'DI-I-9026' which was the telephone number of the Spahn Ranch. I'm not glorifying Manson at all, but I do respect the power he wielded and his personal charisma. Also within the scope of that song I'm kinda taking the piss a bit with lines like 'If you wanna get some kicks phone DI-I-9026'. That's because I can't stand people leaning on and glorifying Manson for what he did."

"Nevertheless, I've a great fascination for his charisma and power, like I said. There are very few people who have that sort of power, Hitler

and Reagan are examples. It's not the acts that those people motivate that I'm interested in *per se* but the enigma that allows them to persuade others to indulge in brutality."

"If you think about Hitler, it's quite devastating. He motivated an entire war of incredible scope and down to him, there was a sequence of incredible events. Manson was the '60s version of that to a certain extent, albeit on a much smaller level. But I must add I dislike people who prod Manson's corpse thinking that sort of power will rub off on them; you know, Charlie's fan club."

'NAIL': "In the simplest, clearest terms the whole of 'Nail' is about oppression and the inter-relationship between oppression and power. The question there is: who holds the power? Plus there is the concept of Pigdome Come which is like this mythical heaven place."

ORAL SEX: "There's a blowjob scene in the film (*The Right Side Of My Brain*) between me and Lydia. Because of the nature of the film, which is Lydia's, it necessitated the blowjob scene. The film itemises different experiences that this girl, portrayed by Lydia, goes through, which are self-destructive. It's about a girl searching for a thrill through violence. Oral sex is not really relevant. I'm in that movie, that's all I'm saying."

PIGDOME COME (an instrumental overture where maybe Holst meets Ed Gein): "It's hard for me to express Pigdome Come succinctly. It's a mythical place of Foetus invention which is supposed to be an escape from all the oppression, hedonism and power itemised throughout 'Nail'."

"It's like a mythical Garden Of Eden place but it's not said whether this is on earth or in the pseudo-heavens above. I've portrayed it in a Disney schmaltz mode but at the same time it's stirring. I certainly believe in it as a piece of music but at the same time it's not my debt to classical music. Parts of it remind me of knights in shining armour and Red Indians. I guess it's a travelogue through different moods, a break from the power and repression."

RESTRICTIONS: "So far as music goes, the only restrictions that I perceive come from the fact that I can only deal with one adventure in one song. And funnily enough it's that which partly makes me feel like carrying on in music. But so far as restrictions go in terms of subjects or personally, well I don't feel any really. So let's scratch the idea of restrictions."

SUPERCALAFRAGALISTICSDOMASOCHISM: "Hey we're going back a bit here! That's from the song 'Wash It All Off' which is a tension song about a relationship, but it's neither a hate nor love song. That phrase kinda sums it up. How does sado-masochism relate to my personal life? Well I don't think people should have any idea what I'm about personally. I don't think I owe anyone anything. If they buy my records, it doesn't mean I have to be nice to them; they got a bargain in the first place."

'THE THRONE OF AGONY': "In line with the rest of 'Nail', this particular song deals with oppression but of the personal sort. By that I mean

the form of oppression which is self-inflicted. I often notice in retrospect that when making a record, I take the path of the most possible resistance, the whole Wiseblood phenomenon of grinding one's body into the ground unnecessarily. I hate the idea that people can only write when they're miserable. A lot of people, including myself sometimes, wallow in their own depression. I think that's absurd."

URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS: "No I've never had one myself, though I did have a friend who had an infection of the urinary tract. I thought it was a good analogy so I used it in a song. It's something girls get. We're really plumbing the depths now."

VIRGIN (RECORDS): "How did you know about that? It's true that I used to work for Virgin. When I first got to England from Australia in 1978, I hung loose for a couple of months, just checking what was happening. Then I did temping at department stores, picking up garbage, shit like that. After that I got a job at Virgin working behind the singles counter in a shop and was eventually promoted to ordering independent records for the chain. It taught me a lot about what not to do and financed studio time, but then I got laid-off. Richard Branson isn't my best friend."

WISEBLOOD: "As far as the group of that name is concerned, ie me and Rolli Mosimann, who was with Swans, we're still functioning and there's probably going to be a mini-album soon. I don't know whether you're familiar with either the book or the film of *Wiseblood*!"

"The book is by Flannery O'Connor and the main character in the story founds a religion called The Church Of Christ Without Christ as a reaction against all the phoney preachers he's encountering. Eventually the whole thing gets twisted and he enacts the parts by initially doing away with Christ and then placing certain restrictions on himself."

"These restrictions take the form of wrapping himself in barbed wire and filling his shoes with stones. He's not doing it to be a martyr or draw attention to himself but because he feels the need for that sort of torture. In retrospect I think I work a little like that, in terms of base things like imposing punishing recording schedules on myself to achieve my aims. Also, I once founded a church as well. It was called The Church Of The Immaculate Preconception, but that's another story."

X: This marks the spot where a brain cell died from over-activity."

YOUTH: "I believe in that old cornball crap that youth is a state of mind. I know useful 60-year-olds and useless 17-year-olds. I don't feel the need to retain youth, I'll have it for as long as necessary. I certainly don't believe in youth power."

ZE (RECORDS): "They put out 'Hole' in America and as a result, I am no admirer of their methods of business."

In an artistic sense Clint Ruin says what he means and nobody says it better. Forget the burnt bacon of pop's porkers, fry a Foetus for breakfast today. You won't get over the taste quickly.