

Evil:

The Rise and Fall of The Burning
The Memoirs of Michael D'Orazio
Part one

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Preface

The thing is I can't really remember being on stage when I was 20 years old in the band "The Burning". I mean I vaguely remember much about it, only glimpses of memories. When Marguerite Earhart gave me the original reels, and DAT tapes of the recordings after 20 years, I decided to make a cd of the work, and write this memoir as a companion and publish it on the market so that everyone would have access to the tapes, the story, and maybe I could make a few extra bucks. I wanted an honest account of the events of me growing up, and finally getting involved with the bands. After all I thought it would be a great story. I had a lot to say about what happened and the people I met along the way. I said some good things, and I said some bad things about people, and wondered if I was really doing the right thing by exposing what I would call evils in the music biz, or evils in society, which made me name the book "EVIL". I thought the band was sort of like a joke played on me after all the bad events I went through. I didn't see the good in it all, although after the band disbanded I went on to record on my own, and came up with 18 cd's worth of work, which I am proud of. But when it comes down to it I felt used and discarded in the end. Anyways enjoy the story, I hope it does the music justice.

M.D.

*I would like to thank all of the people involved for their help, and their support in making
of this book, and the production of “the Burning”.*

From the beginning...

Well where do I begin?? I think it all started when I was in high school, I think. I guess usually it begins when you come out of your mother's womb, and then as time goes by you just go along with things, and develop from your life experiences. I guess this is all true to some extent. I sometimes think situations may be a conspiracy; and that the good times that we live can turn bad if you cant let go, and move forward.

When I was in grade school I was shaped by the mistreatment of the nuns. Of course I went to a catholic school called Visitation B.V.M(Blessed Virgin Mary). There I was a very quiet sullen child. I was always aware, and scared that if I acted out that one of the other classmates would realize something about me, and cream me, or beat me up. Also I couldn't get away with anything. I retreated in my dream world, staring out the window, wishing for better things. I wasn't bored in school, but I would zone out during lectures, and draw in my notebooks to pass the time.

Drawing was a very popular form of art in class. We used to have competitions on who could draw the best flip animations in our notebooks. I got quite good at it, and was very pleased with myself.

There were times I did get in trouble for drawing. I drew a picture of Sister Pulkaria and showed it to my classmates. They thought the picture was great, and were very amused. I thought it was good enough to show the librarian, thinking she might be pleased. Instead she told me that this behavior was not appropriate, and that I should stop engaging in it. I was kind of disappointed that she didn't see the talent instead of the misdemeanor.

The other time I got into trouble drawing was when Sister Louise was lecturing for a somewhat long period of time. I was drawing some picture of that arcade game from the 80's called "Defender" in my phonics book, and she told me to drop my pen. So I dropped it. When she began lecturing again, I instinctively picked it back up without thinking, and she said, "D'ORAZIO!!!! AGAIN WITH THAT PEN!!!!!! IF YOU DON'T DROP THAT PEN I AM GOING TO SOCK YOU!!!!!!". And she did. She gave me a nice toljock on my forehead, and told me to take my book bag, and myself to the front of the classroom, and sit on the floor. I did think she overreacted, but what could I do, except let her humiliate me.

Which brings me to the time when I was in first grade. I just got out of kindergarten the year before, and sported my new catholic school uniform. The first day in 1st grade I was told that I did something wrong, and I cant remember what it was. It must have been trivial. The result was a baby bottle around my neck, with a string as long as my body: The glass baby bottle drug on the floor. Humiliation; that is what catholic school was all about.

Recollections of Childhood

When I was a baby my mother told me that I didn't cry. I was a very quiet baby, unlike my sister who was always screaming, crying, and carrying on. I remember that I used to rock back in forth in my crib, to such an extent that it would rub the hair off of my head. I remember one time I had a nosebleed, and I didn't care, I just kept rocking.

I thought I was a smart baby, cause I remember that I tried to open the crib myself or try to find a way to open it and escape. I couldn't do it, just because they are baby proof.

When I was really young my father was sitting with me on the floor in the living room, and I was just sitting there quietly, and he bit me on the hand. He sank his teeth into my skin, and I said very quietly, "Ooowww". I do believe he broke the skin. He brought me to the garage, and put methyolate the red colored ointment on my wound. I questioned this in my head. Why he would do this? I thought he was sadistic, but later in life my girlfriend told me that he could have been testing my reaction to harm. Sort of like an autistic child. I was quiet. Maybe he wanted to know if there was anyone in there.

Me and my sister Diana used to fight incessantly. I believe that she was the aggressor in most of the situations, which I came to resent later in life. She used to start a fight with me, and then tell my father that I started it. I used to hate that. She was a good liar. My dad always used to say, "It takes two to fight". That was his answer in most situations. I used to think she could get away with murder. She was also a great actress. She used to over dramatize her reactions to my punches. One time she threw herself head first into the hall mirror, after I pushed her. I really thought that I did this, but later I came to realize that she did that on purpose. She was humorous..

Violence was my game in my early grade school years. I remember I used to have a habit of punching other kids in the face, for trivial reasons. I think it happened twice. One time I punched my cousin Chris for breaking my favorite toy car. He didn't get mad, but I wasn't sure what kind of impression I was putting on. One time I punched my other cousin Tommy in the face, after he made me miss catching a pink rubber ball. He just looked shocked.

My violent streak ended when I picked on a new school classmate Robert Pickles. He was a short blonde kid. I instantly came to the conclusion that he was like a pickle. Robert Pickles was kind of popular with the other kids. I wasn't. One day in the schoolyard we were playing two-hand touch football, and we had a falling out. He told me he wanted to fight me during recess, and I said, "Fine!!!" I really didn't want to fight, nor did I have any interest in that stuff. It was a box lunch day, where we ate in our classrooms. I decided to stay in the classroom, cause I didn't want to go outside to face this issue. Two kids in class, one Jeff Brennen, drug me outside to face Pickles, and I just smiled, cause I thought all of this was just a joke. I didn't want to fight this kid.

Robert initiated the fight, and I just let him do his thing. The fight just ended up in like this farce. I was getting hit in the face, and I felt my fists hitting him as well. After round one Pickles walked around the school yard with all of the other kids rallying behind him cheering him on. Me I was whimpering on the sidelines wondering why this was all happening. I remember that there were kids surrounding me looking at me curiously.

Pickles came back for another round, and it kept going. I don't remember much after this. All I know is that there were no winners. Although I thought that Pickles won, cause he had support from all of the other kids.

Later in class a week after the fight, Jeff said to another kid, John that I lost the fight. Peter told him that it was a tie, and Jeff was like, "No he didn't he lost". I was pleased that this kid stuck up for me. But that was the end of it, by the end of my stay at Visitation I was slowly hated by everyone in class. I never became popular. I slowly started to become more withdrawn.

Making Friends, losing friends...

It's funny that most people I know have grown throughout their lives with friends that they met in school, and in their neighborhoods. I realize that I hung out with many people in my life, but as far as making friends, I was never good at that. Maybe I was too quiet, or maybe no one could trust me.

In second grade I managed to have a best friend, John Scarano. We spent a lot of time together wrestling, playing football, and generally playing in the street having a good time. I cherished our friendship, cause I felt special I had someone to share good times with. It wasn't until one day we started wrestling that I got too rough with him. I remember I didn't want him to win, and I got behind him and pulled his neck back, and he let out a groan. At this I was frightened. He got up and ran to the phone, and told me that he was going to call his mom to come get him if I didn't stop playing like that. I felt satisfied that I had power over another person, but it was a mistake, because our friendship was never the same again. I remember seeing him in the schoolyard one day, and he just blew me off, and started to play with all the other kids. This is when loneliness really began, and I realized it would never be the same again.

I managed to make different friends later with Larry, Rob, and Kevin. These kids were at the top of their class. They were the good kids, the smart kids, the clean-cut creative kids. We used to hang out and draw, play dungeon and dragons, and create comic books, and D & D modules. I never considered myself a smart kid, cause I had sort of a mean streak inside of me that didn't come out often. These kids were in the smart classes, and I was in the middle. I guess they considered me average, and this made me sort of mad. My friendship lasted the span of my stay at Visitation. After we graduated I went to public school, and they went to a Catholic High School. We never kept in touch. I tried, but they were not interested.

I lived in Norristown, and the public high schools there were brutal. I kept a low profile, cause I didn't want to be beat up by some big black kid. I got picked on a lot in Norristown Area High School. When I compare myself to people who went to private schools I kind of think I was tarnished, or damaged goods. I developed a very defensive attitude, and didn't trust that many people.

My whole life was jumping from one group of friends, to the next, always. I never made lasting friendships that I could grow into. I had many acquaintances though. I could go on and on about the people I hung out with, but are they worth speaking of. I could tell you the people who got me into smoking pot, and the people who gave me my first mushroom to eat. It goes on and on.

My First Crush

When I was in first grade I realized that someone in particular looked pretty to me. Her name was Maryanne. I am not sure what drew me to her instead of the other girls. All I know she was kind of slender, and fair in complexion. She had long brown hair, and her teeth were unique in that she didn't get braces yet if she ever did to straighten them out. She fit well into here catholic school uniform, with her dark blue knee high socks that she wore.

Every time we were called to go to the lavatory we would line up side by side; girls on one side, and boys on the other. I would count what number Maryanne was in line, and get in line with boys so when we walked to the bathroom, we would walk side by side. This happened all the time. I didn't think she would have noticed but one day at lunch she was sitting across from me at the lunch table, and she asked me, "Michael, do you like me????". I was embarrassed, and I pulled my lunch box in front of my face. I couldn't admit it. I never again laid eyes on her at class, and never did the lavatory line thing again. I just sort of forgot about being with her. I don't know why. I actually never allowed myself to fall for any girl after that until high school.

Disciplined at Home...

From the earliest time in my life at home with my folks all I heard was yelling and screaming. My parents fought endlessly. It was disturbing to me as a child that I kept hearing all of this turmoil. I heard phones being thrown, loud noises, threats, and crying. I never forgot this. It remains in my mind to this day. The screaming as time went on directed itself to me later, when my dad was dissatisfied with my performance at school. I remember him screaming that I better study, spitting tobacco at me, that he was going to give me a lick'in. And at the time he did. I learned to keep my mouth shut and do what he said, or I would expect something like the strap. I can count the times that he beat me for what I thought was trivial things. This is when I started to become quiet. I was afraid to talk back, speak my mind, and express myself. This made my life at school a hell. I wasn't like the other kids. They were free to be whom they wanted. I was always public enemy number one it seems, between being at home or at school.

I didn't get away with anything at home. I couldn't do anything. My dad sent me to work in the yard one day with my sister to put grass on newspaper to keep out the weeds. Halfway done I went in to get an ice-cream sandwich, and talk to my mom downstairs. My dad came in and asked why I wasn't working, and he drew his belt, and spanked me with it. I remember the belt hitting my genitals. I cried out loud. When my dad went upstairs, I went downstairs, when he went downstairs I went upstairs. I was disturbed that I couldn't even deal with my own father.

Most fathers would praise their kids, brag about them, and tell you how great they were and how much they appreciated them. My father resented this behavior, and treated me accordingly. He wasn't gonna let his son think he was something, or even become anything more than he was. For what ever reason my father had kids, I used to think they were for the wrong reasons. He put allot of pressure on me.

When I was ten he signed me and my sister up for swimming. I didn't think of this myself. He still says it wasn't his idea. I spent 8 years summer and winter in swim clubs practicing everyday. I didn't mind this, cause I didn't know that much better about anything. Sometimes my father would watch me on the balcony to see my progress. One time I messed up some kids flip turn just for kicks; I was just playing around. My dad took me home and told me he was going to give me a beating for messing up that kids chance of being a good swimmer. He tried this time, but I put my feet on his chest to kick him off. He stopped. That was the last time he put a hand on me as a kid.

My mother was a neurotic housewife. One time it was Mother's day. Me and my sister went to Berlin-Splillains to buy something for her. I bought this cheap bottle of perfume. I went home and I gave it to her, and she took it and said, "I DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS!!" and threw it against the wall. I was 12 years old. Later in life she would tell me that she bought her gift for herself, and that all I had to do is give her the money for it. Terrible. I never wanted to give her anything ever again. In fact later when I was generous to friends they too would take it and practically ditch me.

8 Years at the Swim Clubs...

I can't blame my father for promoting a healthy upbringing for me, and my sister. Being a swimmer was a big challenge. Some people say I look young for my age. I attribute my ability not to age to my years as a swimmer. It was an aerobic sport, good for your lungs, and upper body strength. You hold your breath for long periods of time under stress. I didn't appreciate the competition at the meets, but rather took to the discipline of strengthening the body and the mind. It made me extremely focused, and gave me good healthy skin, and a physique. I have to say people who I was friends with later envied my healthy glow. I didn't realize until later that this makes a difference to people. When you don't have a healthy regimen of exercise at an early age you aren't developed physically, and your mind, and your health age quicker. Having good exercise habits can last a lifetime if they are instituted at an early age. Some people think longevity is just in your genes, but I believe you live longer when you take proper care of your body.

I didn't realize until later that exercise could make you better at the things you want to accomplish in life. It made me a better artist to be healthy and focused. I don't think heroin will make you a better rock star, but running around the block allot.

Being a swimmer was definitely invigorating. Also hanging out with the other boys was a long string of humiliating experiences. The bigger kids would always pick on the younger ones, cracking a towel at them in the shower.

I was never quite good at the meets. I was 12, but was as underdeveloped as an eight year old. Kids my own age would make me feel bad about losing it for them all the time. I hated competitions, cause I was nervous, and I always lost. I was proud that I received 58 seconds in the 100-yard freestyle though, but that was as good as I got.

Picked On In the Locker Room...

Swimming was a very intensely focused sport for me. Practice was invigorating. Dealing socially with the other kids was a whole different story. When you're in high school it's a whole different ball game. I remember I realized I wasn't the strongest kid by far when I went to my first high school swim practice. One of my friends from grade school was being picked on in the water by some kid I just met. His name was Max. I tried to defend my friend Michael, and Max just kicked me off with no problem. Max seemed pretty with it. He was quick, aware, and he was not at all pissed off about my attack. This is when I realized that I wasn't that strong.

There was a list of kids that took control over the social aspects of the swim clubs. I was a small kid, and realized keeping a low profile at the club was essential in self-preserving my self-respect. I just went to practice, and kept my mouth shut most of the time. I did what I was told, and tried my best to work hard when I was swimming laps. While I was in the water I would think a lot about things, listen to the music that was being played underwater, and watch all the rest of the kids doing flip turns. It was noted that I did well in practice but when it came to the meets I would choke.

There are a few kids who took advantage of my vulnerability in the locker room. One friend Tony used to throw me around the locker room like I was some play toy. All I could do was let it happen, cause I didn't have the strength to fight back or tell someone it was happening. I remember him flinging me into a lock on the door, and it leaving an imprint on my skin. He saw it, and laughed in front of some kids at the pool, and I was like crying on the inside. I didn't show it, cause no one likes a crybaby. I just accepted it. Things like this would happen often, and I dreaded going to Phys. Ed. Some days. I was so tired of dealing with the bullshit, that I'd rather not have been exposed to it. After all this was a public school, and in a way I was a very private kind of person. Speaking of that, there were many people dragging me out to face personal humiliations.

Attending High School...

When I attended Visitation B.V.M I used to wear a uniform almost all the time. When I had my first year of high school I didn't know how to dress myself in a way to fit in, or impress the other friends. I wondered around the hallways wondering if I was cool or not, or just acceptable. My sister used to give me tips on how to dress sometimes, picking out fashionable clothes that would make me look hip or cool. I remember that I was so unpopular, that I had to wonder around the cafeteria asking people if I could sit with them. Some people said no straight off, but sooner or later took pity on me, and let me sit at their table. It wasn't uncommon for me to sit at different tables throughout the year. I did get to know allot of people.

Things started to change for me at a certain point. I started to feel more comfortable with myself. Someone that I knew in class handed me a cassette tape with some punk music on it. At the time I wasn't listening to anything special. I guess the kid was doing me a favor. The tape had three groups on it: Murphy's Law, Suicidal Tendencies, and the Violent Femmes. I didn't like the Femmes right off the bat, in fact I never took to them. They were too whiney. Murphy's Law was hilarious and fun, and so was Suicidal Tendencies. This was the real beginning of my art career. I had a reason to start drawing skulls after someone introduced me to the band the Misfits. I used to dress like all the other kids. Sooner or later I began to experiment with clothes. Steve one of my old school mates from grade school used to dress like a skinhead, only I don't remember him shaving his head. I had bought a new unbroken in biker jacket from Zern's farmer's market, and I waited for my chance to wear it. Steve used to wear boots, with rolled up jeans. I dressed up just like him one day when we were supposed to go out together. Steve was embarrassed after he saw me, and I realized that I might have done something wrong. I felt a little embarrassed after I copied his outfit. I crossed the line.

Me and Steve decided to go out that night, but I got the feeling that this would be our last moment hanging out as school buddies. He may have been embarrassed, and shocked I had the balls to start dressing up. We went out with other punk kids that night. I ended up putting my arm around some chick. Very fashionable, but for me it was out of place. I still felt awkward with girls, and it wasn't until someone started to bring me to underground clubs did I actually meet someone that actually admitted that we were boyfriend/girlfriend..

After I realized punk existed I was still wondering around the halls with no friends to hang out with, or fit in with. I met a girl named Kim and she told me about some punk club in King of Prussia that was right next to the mall. Upstairs it was called "Popcorns". It was a pop club. They played hip-hop, and all sorts of bubble gum music. Downstairs there was a club called Bebop Café. This place was great. They played punk, new wave, thrash, etc. It was dark in there, and all the guys would slam dance in the middle of the dance floor, moshing it up. It was exciting to watch. I never moshed myself because I was a very fragile child. I was a small very relaxed kid. I came to the clubs dressed in black, and just sat on the sidelines talking with some of the special education kids that came from a special school that actually was actually stationed right across the street from where I lived. One of those kids actually came to visit me one day

at my home. One time he gave me a Misfit poster as a gift. I might still have it. It was a big Pusshead skull design.

I was very disappointed when my friend Kim told me that Bebop planned to close in a month. I just caught the end. I guess they weren't doing that well. I only knew that there was another club down the street that was opening, and it played similar music.

My stay at Shadow's nightclub lasted a few years. It was downstairs at a hotel, and it was open on Wednesday nights. I made sure I went every week, didn't miss a day. There I met a lot of kids who liked to dress up in black, and studded clothes, doc martin boots, fishnet stockings, colored hair, and pale make up.

The Riot Street Party

One day a new friend of mine Chrissy told me about a party that was in downtown Norristown. Norristown was not a good place back in the late 80's, and to this day it shall be noted that there are still problems. Norristown is sort of like a ghetto that once was inhabited by many Italians, but was took over by blacks. Ever since crime has been in the newspapers, about drug deals, and prostitution, murder, etc.

When I got the call I told my dad that there was a party and that I needed a ride, He didn't say much. We hopped in his dodge pick up and drove onto Main Street. I noticed that there were black kids running around all crazy like. There was chaos. This is what you now would call a riot. My dad said nothing, and I got out of the truck, and walked across the street, and he just drove off without a care. It was a very dark night. As soon as I made it to the sidewalk, some black kid looked at me real psychotically, and punched me in my down jacket, right in the stomach. I didn't react; because I know if I did, him and his friends would have surely gotten the better of me. I asked myself why my dad would have left me in this mess. I avoided those kids, and began to dodge all the chaos surrounding me. I began looking around for my friend. After I found her, and she told me where the party was. She told me all the kids on the street were from this party. A fight broke out, and all hell broke loose. Kids erupted into the streets, causing mayhem, knocking over newspaper machines, starting fights, and all sorts of stuff.

We went back to the house where the party was and there was no fun happening. People were nursing wounds, talking about the fights, and so forth. All I wanted to do at this point was go straight home. But I didn't have a car, and my friends didn't want to leave yet for whatever reason. The black kids came back to the party house, and started to threaten some of the white kids. I remember there was one kid who complained that if he got into one more fight he would be discharged from the army. He said he was a boxer, and that he was already in trouble many times for getting into scraps with other kids. I just sat there and watched this mess. Some of the black kids were looking at me real menacing, like they were waiting to make a move, and get my ass kicked. I was nervous, very disturbed by all of this. I told my friends I wanted to leave, but they weren't ready. I just sat there and waited very patiently for this night to come to an end. I was quivering, and some of the spit collected on the corners of my mouth. Chrissy pointed that out, and I just wiped it off.

Finally she told me that her current boyfriend was going to drive me home, and I was relieved. After they took me there and told me that they were going back to the party, and I was like, "Good Luck". A few days later she told me, that her boyfriend tried to fight off some of the kids, and they threw a brick at his nose, breaking it. She had to take him to the hospital. His nose was all bandaged. After that night I made up my mind not to ever go to a party in Norristown again. I later saw one of those black kids in the hallways in school, and he still gave me one of those psychotic looks. I kept a low profile for sure.

Me, the Metal head???

During high school after I got acquainted with punk, and thrash music, I was approached by some kid named Jay. It seemed that he wanted to be my friend, and let me hangout with his crowd at parties and so forth. He was a metal head, and he had long brown hair, with a motorcycle jacket, and ripped jeans. I sat with him and his crowd during lunchtime. I was dating a girl Tara, of whom I had a crush on, and we both hung out with them together. They invited me to some of their heavy metal parties, and I ended up going. Deep down I never thought of myself as a tough guy, or wild man. I sort of felt kind like I really didn't fit into this whole scene. I guess Jay liked me, because I liked Danzig, and the misfits. Only really cool people like dark, and heavy stuff.

One night there was a party not too far from where I lived. I was invited to this thing and decided to look the part. I dressed up in a misfit shirt, with my big, unbroken in motorcycle jacket, which was oversized for a small frame that I was. I hung out in this guys house, and everyone was talking, and carrying on. No one was talking to me, and I just stood around watching people. I was playing darts to kill time, getting annoyed that they invited me, but no one was considerably interested in talking to me at all. I got really steamed, and aggravated. I saw this one big guy talking and having a good time with some other people. He looked like the head honcho or something. I took one of my darts, and lifted it up, and aimed it at him, very menacing like. I had no intention of throwing it, but all I know was he punched me, knocking me back. I couldn't fight this guy, I knew it, so I ran toward the pool table, and he tried to chase me around it. Jay came in and said, "Is that D'Orazio???". Some girl said, "Yeah". I ran out the door, as quickly as I could, and ran up the steps onto the back deck, and ran into the big guy's brother. He said' "What's wrong???". At that moment the angry guy ran up to the steps, and looked at me like he was going to beat the shit out of me. There was no match.

The brother decided to drive me home, cause there was no way that I was going to hang out with all the hostility. On the way home I told the brother that, "I would of kicked his ass". He replied, "No you wouldn't have". I knew this was true, but what can I say.

The next day Jay drove up to my house while I was in the yard, and talked to me for a little bit. I don't remember what he said, but that was the last time I ever hung out with those guys. I guess they realized I definitely DID NOT BELONG!!!

I do think that Jay was a cool guy. One time after one of those parties he was smoking a joint with some of his friends. I asked him If I could try it, and he said, "No". I think he thought it was a bad idea for someone like me, and I think he was right.

The High School Art Contest

One day my high school art teacher Mrs. Glisson told the class that there was going to be an assignment that we had to pick someone famous, and draw a picture of them as Santa Claus using pen and ink. If I remember correctly they would be displayed in the lobby of the school and judged. I quietly thought about my decision and had no ideas on what to do. I talked with one of the skater kids from my school who was extremely confident socially. He was kind of a punk but had a dominant male attitude, and was eager to go against the grain. His name was Tim Conroy. Outside of class he told me that I should do something more outlandish like do Charles Manson as Santa, and he would do Adolf Hitler. I had no idea who Charles Manson was. Tim told me that I should get the book “Helter Skelter”, because they had some good pictures of him in there. I did go to the library, and read the book in study hall to fully understand the man I was to draw. I found the book to be a little redundant but I ended up drawing the picture with a technical pen very carefully to capture all the detail.

When I submitted the piece to my teacher along with the other students she accepted the submission, and resumed to have it displayed in the glass cases in the lobby. Later I was told that me and Tim’s work was removed and disqualified because of the malicious content. Manson, and Hitler were not to be glamorized as Santa Claus, and this was offensive to the people in charge. Nicole McCartney one of my acquaintances in class won first place, but she told me mine was executed better and that I should have won. I didn’t care really, but later in life I thought to myself my life is always sabotaged by a bunch of bad influences. Such was my life.

My first band...

When I was in class one day in high school I ended up singing the song “I Turned into a Martian” by the Misfits to two friends Mike F. and Marc D. I guess they were talking about the Misfits, and were shocked and surprised that I knew them, and could even sing them. The Misfits were my favorite band at the time, because they were dark, and kind of serious to me. Mike Flynn told his friend Marc that they should get me in their band. The only problem was that their singer/guitar player Chris was in it, and they had to get rid of him before they let me in. So that’s how it went. Sooner or later they found an excuse to get him out. I believe his feelings might have been hurt, but what did I care this was my chance to be somebody.

I came over to the Dave’s house. He was their drummer, and had my first practice with the group. Chris was gone so I had my place in it now. We ended up playing Misfit covers, and I sang for a group for the first time. I remember trying to hit the notes on “She”, and I just choked. I realize I had very little singing experience, and I really needed to exercise my vocal cords. The band only did Misfit covers, with the exception of a D.R.I song, “Suit and Tie Guy”.

We practiced once a week I believe, but we hung out like a real band should. We spent a lot of time together at Mike’s house, and Dave’s house. The line up was Me the vocalist, Marc the guitarist, Mike, the bass player, and Dave the drummer.

Dave was a strange guy. I would talk to him on the phone, and in the middle of the conversation he would just make noises, and I didn’t know how to react to him when he did this. He just got weird sometimes. I thought there was something deeply wrong with him. It might have been in his genes, cause his family had four kids, but one was retarded, and one had cerebral palsy. I didn’t think much of this. Dave had one normal sister, who was into gymnastics. I remember the mom had to lock up all of the knives so the retarded son wouldn’t get to them.

All in all Dave was a nice guy, but he did lots of strange things such as rub his hand with sandpaper in class till it was bleeding and raw. He also could draw very well. I said one time that I was better than him, and he took it as an offense. I think this is why our friend Mike P. didn’t like me. I was sort of big headed. The reason why I said this was I thought it was more challenging to draw from your imagination, than to draw what you see. That is what he did. Granted he did it very well. I don’t think he got that. One time Dave took his blue Cadillac, and pushed Mike P’s Grand Torino into someone else’s car in the school parking lot. Mike P. was like “WHAT THE F--- ARE YOU DOING!!!! WHY DID YOU DO THAT????!!”

The thing that scared me most about Dave is when the whole band was in his Caravan one day, he drove extremely fast down a hill in the other side of the road when I car was coming down the opposite side. He swerved in the nick of time, but I was like that would have been the end of it. I was in the backseat of the Caravan with no seat belt. I would have been thrown to my death if we hit that car.

The band never played any real shows except the Norristown Area High School talent show. We practiced for this thing, and were psyched up for it. We played that night I believe very well, and we didn't f--- up that much at all. I remember singing "Skulls", sitting down on the stage looking down at the audience. Real corny, I kind of thought. I didn't think my family came, but later my dad confessed on sneaking in and sitting in the back so he didn't distract me from my moment.

The band broke up abruptly when Mike F told me it was over. He told me over the phone he wanted to beat the shit out of me. To this day I don't know why this happened. He later told me he broke up the band, because I didn't hang with them after practice. After practices I would leave to go to Shadow's Nightclub to meet my first girlfriend, Sue. It may have been jealousy, I am not sure, but it was a waste. All that practice came to an end. At our last practice, a friend of mine named Ian Wilkins. told me he knew a guy from Pottstown that wanted to start a band. He needed a singer.

The Burning...

Ian W. told me that this guy from Pottstown wanted to start a band. I was like wow. So I took a chance, and drove up there. I didn't know what to expect. When I drove up to this row home he was waiting there on the sidewalk with this big shit-eating grin. His hair was in this straggly bob, and he had acne, and glasses on. He is probably the kind of kid you wouldn't introduce to your son or daughter for that matter. Mike Mash was his name. I was a little scared by his appearance, because I came from a clean cut family, and I was still a little clean cut, and healthy. He smoked. I didn't.

He brought me into his home, and we went upstairs, so he could play some electric guitar for me. He was pretty impressive. I didn't know anything about music myself, all I knew is that I liked what I heard. He said he knew some people and that he was going to ask them to partake in this project. I just went along with it, and said, "Yes, I'll do it".

I am not sure how it started, but we began having practices in Spring City, Pa, at Ross Earhart's home. Ross lived with Marguerite Earhart, his mother, and her husband, and her daughter Crystal. We had our first practices in their garage. The garage was isolated from the house. I think that is where Ross lived. It was his lodging space. I never thought much of it. It was cool to hang out and have people over. This was a great time for me. Being in a band was a break from being normal. It gave me something to look forward to, and work up to. We did some unprofessional recordings on a cheap tape deck to listen to ourselves progress. Sometimes Ross would have parties at their house. But you know I was still a quiet kid. I would just walk around and watch all this fun happen. We drank cheap beer, ran around the house, drank liquor, and talked about music, and listened to music. It was a great time.

Marguerite Earhart: I am also Ross' stepmom. Ross' dad - Marty - was married to Ross' mom before me. Crystal is my daughter from my first husband. Ross lived in Pottstown before moving in with us when we lived on second avenue in Royersford. Ross did live in the garage due to privacy issues

Me and Mike Mash became the creative force behind the band. The line up was me/vocals, Mike Mash/guitar, Ross Earhart/bass, and Jeff Varcarcel/drums. Jeff V. was Cuban. He had a reputation with the ladies, which was considered bad. They said he was a womanizer, and that he was skeevy. His nickname was "the Cuban". I didn't give in to his reputation at all. He was nice to me, and didn't pick on me at all. Ross on the other hand picked on me tremendously making jokes at my expense all the time. I really grew to mistrust him if he ever was a friend to begin with, because one time I was missing my Rolling Stones tape, and found it in his garage. He just stole it, and when I asked him about it, he said it was his. I knew he took it. I was such a nice kid, I couldn't even take it back. It wasn't the value of the tape that mattered, but the fact that he just took it. I

would have given it to him if he asked. When people steal from me I assume that they needed it more than me, so he could have it, I didn't care.

Mike Mash wrote all of the guitar parts in the band. He would come to me, and I would take his guitar parts, piece them together, and then write lyrics to them. It was like a puzzle to me. I would record his guitar parts on tape play them over, and over, and then come up with the words. I had a process I went through. Sometimes Mike would write whole songs, but I dare say that he let me do most of the work. He gave me a lot of creative freedom. Ross usually wrote the bass lines to conform to the guitar parts. He wasn't that creative with the bass lines. He didn't do outlandish stuff, although he could play to the music very well. He kept on time, and when it came to shows he did fine.

Jeff (the Cuban)Valcarcel was always condemned for dropping drum sticks during practices, and shows. One time he dropped the sticks during a live performance, and Mike flipped out and criticized him severely. I didn't say much, I was glad just to be in this thing. I was fair in any situation. I wasn't really the leader of this band, so it wasn't my call. Later I believe I tried to gain more power over people in the band, and that may have broken us up I am not sure, but that is a different story.

Later there was an addition to the line up. Nick DiBlasio was to be the new keyboard player. He had professional equipment, and was responsible for enhancing the rock show with sounds, and noises. I was into it. I never really got to know Nick, except that It was well know, and talked about that he was gay. I was very indifferent to this, and paid no mind to it. I didn't really care. He could do whatever his little heart desired, but when it came to the band it mattered if his lifestyle interfered with what we were trying to accomplish. On an occasion Ross asked me how I wanted to handle Nick's tardiness at practice and I said, "We could give him another chance."

My First Real Girlfriend...

I met a lot of girls at Shadow's nightclub, I hung out incessantly trying to pick somebody up. There I got bold. I used to go up to strange girls dressed in Goth attire and put my arms around them. I didn't want them, but I sort of felt I should blend in. Sink deep into the realm of my environment.

One night at Shadows I was on the dance floor, and there was this cute punked out girl all dressed up. I was like this girl is hot. I went up to her and I said, "You look like I someone I used to know", and she said "A lot of guys say that to me", And that is all it took. We hung out the rest of the night together, and at the end, I asked her for her phone number. Her name was Sue. I was excited. This was the beginning, and the end in some ways. I was still a virgin. Not that I cared about that stuff. I wasn't interested in sex per say. I just wanted to fit in.

I called her and she responded to me. We decided to go out, and meet up. I believe we hung out with her and her friend Raven that night. Raven was with another guy in the other room. Me and Sue were left in the living room by ourselves in the dark watching T.V. It didn't take long for us to sort of make the connection. I wanted her, and I guess she wanted me. Soon we were all over the couches, rolling around on the floor, and moving all over the place. I did not go to second or third. I didn't want to move forward with this. But of course over a period of time Raven intervened, telling her that "What, didn't you have sex yet".

The peculiar thing is that Raven was helping put a tampon in Sue because she said she didn't know how to use them, or put them in properly. This happened in the bathroom with the door closed. I thought this was strange. I later realized that she did this to make Sue seem like a simpleton, when in fact she was smart and conniving. I wasn't ready in my life to expect the worst. I passed on innocent girls I met in the past, I guess because I wasn't learning anything from them. Here was a girl that I could learn something from. She was wild, she liked to dress up, and she was ready to have fun. Me, I had a pure heart, but I was prepared at an early age to handle intense situations.

Me and Sue had the habit of going to cemeteries, laying a blanket down, and making out in the dark. Tombstones surrounded us, and the mosquitoes had the habit of biting us. We thought this was kind of fun, and us being gothic and all. This fit into our scheme of things. We did this often. At the time my tastes for music was changing. I stopped listening to the Misfits, and Danzig, and started to become more interested in Bauhaus. Bauhaus was a gothic band that was popular in the early eighties in England. They were my new obsession. I stopped trying to sing like Danzig, and started to sing like Peter Murphy. His vocals really helped me find my natural voice in my band The Burning.

Me and Sue spent a lot of time together hanging out. I asked her "Why do you like me", she said, "Cause your good-looking". I didn't like that answer, because there is more to somebody than looks, and I felt like an underachiever. I wasn't accomplished

yet. That is why I stuck with the band. I wanted to be somebody. I wanted to be known for something. I wasn't into pleasure, as much as I was ambitious, and I think people realized this, and hated me for it.

After Raven told her that something was wrong if we didn't have sex yet. Sue took me to her home one night, and went into her brother's room. There in the dark she got naked, and so did I. This was the moment where I was seduced for the first time. It's hard for me looking back, and to breakdown what had happened. I would have preferred to have slept with the woman I was going to marry, instead this was the end of the good boy that I was. After 3 years of going out I never placed an importance on relationship. I just had sex, one girl after the other. I didn't care anymore what was right, or what was appropriate. I was ruined forever. I don't think she ever known this.

After going out with her for a while I felt I was special, so I started to deviate from normalcy. I started to wear some of the clothes she wore, like steel tipped shoes, and black hooded shirts, and wore bandannas on my head like a girl. I didn't want to dress fully like a woman, but I did want to assert my individuality, and my will to stick out and be different. I took the abuse that people gave me shit for either being a faggot, or so on. I was special now, and I could get away with anything that I wished. I remember the regular punk guys laughing out loud at the clubs openly to me. I just shrugged it off. I am surprised I wasn't beat up at all. I got away with it.

At the clubs I had masculine tastes in music. Music that was harder, and more aggressive. I used to dance only to the songs that supported my theory. Even though I dressed girly, and grew long hair, I still asserted my macho tastes in a way. Groups like "Skinny Puppy", or "Ministry", "Coil", "Meat Beat Manifesto", were on my list of favorites. All of my music influences would get somewhere into my songwriting.

I don't believe that Sue was monogamous. I don't believe she was faithful to just me. She would even talk about the guys she was with besides me. I don't know why she kept me around. I did almost cheat on her one time at a party, but when she found out she pretended to sleep with someone in the other room at the same place. This fucked with my head completely. She won. I had no power over this relationship. I used this experience as a lesson learned. I knew I wasn't going to marry her, nor would we ever be anything. The relationship was definitely heavy on my heart. I couldn't wait till it was over. And when it was I was devastated.

There was no way I could have kept up with her, she used every chance in the book to move ahead and leave me in the dust. She danced openly at the clubs on the speakers, she dressed in very sexual outfits, and she went to New York to catch up with the Club kids during the late eighties. She probably did drugs, and did all sorts of stuff that may have been deemed unhealthy. I should have gotten an A.I.D.S test, but if I had it, I wouldn't have wanted to know. I believe she was with me the whole time I was in The Burning, and when that ended I didn't feel like I had a leg to stand on. I really thought I was a nobody, but really I was a young kid who was grabbing at anything I could get.

The Burning's First Recordings

One day the band all met at this guy's house. His mom opened the door and let us in. I didn't know why we were there. She said that he would be down in a short moment. We all sat down on the couches waiting quietly. Turned out this guy was going to record us, and that he was a producer/musician himself. I was a little weirded out. This felt odd. What was I doing here?? Why did I deserve this??? I thought to myself. This guy came down the stairs. He looked like an east Indian only he had long hair. His name was Ian Cross. He had an air about him that he was above things. He was in the music business. He was connected. I was naïve at the time so I just went along with things, although I didn't fully trust him. The thing is I didn't know that the guys in my band knew people. I thought they were just regular guys out to plunder and have a good time.

Marguerite Earhart: *I don't remember who it was that actually knew him - I believe it was Russ who was manager of the group at that time. Russ worked at George's Music Store for a time .*

This was serious to me. Ian told me by listening to one of our live tapes that he wasn't impressed with my voice. What could I say to that? He also used to talk about his excursions with his lady friends, like hanging out with them in bed doing pills for days. I really didn't trust him, but like I said I just went along with the program. Ian scheduled some time in his bedroom; he had a real-to-real 8-track recorder. We were to record in his bedroom, very low budget like. I don't think anyone paid for him for his time. Ian was trying to establish himself as a producer. He also played guitar very, very well.

Marguerite Earhart: *Ian produced the reels for a really good price, and did it more as a favor I think. He charged \$200.00 + KFC Chicken/etc to produce the reels.*

The first day Ian wanted Jeff to set up his drums. It's appropriate to record the drums first to set the rhythm. If the drums are off, then everything else will be off he said. Jeff laid the first track down, and then Ross laid down the bass, then Mike the guitar, and the last it was me to do vocals. We did four songs; "A Burning Intro", "H.I.V", "Three Trees", and "To do". I remember being in the stairwell with the microphone in the dark wondering what am I doing here. I was focused enough to get the vocal tracks down very well. Ian let me do my grunts, and vocal noises that I adopted from listening to Bauhaus, and Danzig recordings. He gave me a lot of creative freedom.

Hanging out being creative was a good time. There was a lot of camaraderie during the sessions. We hung out drank beer, watched and listened as the tracks were laid down. It might have taken a week to do the first set of recordings I'm not sure. When it was all over we used to play the tapes over and over again. I used to let everyone listen to the tapes. I got some positive feedback, but I also got negative feedback from strangers. I did listen to criticism. Some of it actually tarnished my self-belief. I wasn't quite sure I was a good vocalist or not. I was too young to be sure of anything.

Marguerite Earhart: *It took a horrible amount of time in order for the reels to be completed, and then I think John replaced Russ as manager. Things didn't go better when Russ left. Which led to the breakdown of the group. Ian graciously brought the reel tapes once they were officially done upon my insistence to make sure they were ok.*

The Band plays live...

The band practiced often. We spent lots of time down Marguerite's cellar rehearsing for shows. Occasionally we would play at parties. I do remember being in someone's living room with people scattered doing Bauhaus covers, and some of our originals. These memories are vague to me. I can't fully remember them. Maybe I was drunk, or maybe all the excitement may have blinded my senses. I do believe people were into us, I guess. I never talked to any fans. I just did my thing. I do remember shrugging off girls who were interested in me. I felt it was shallow that they liked me for just being in a band. I wasn't a bad looking kid. I thought that it was noble of me not to take advantage of girls when I had that power. I think this may have disappointed a few people. I think some of the guys thought I was gay, but I am not sure. That subject didn't come up yet.

Among the shows that we played was one talent show at Pottsgrove High School. Mike Mash taped the show on a cheap recorder. I remember the curtain opening up, and there was me giving pelvic thrusts in front of all these high school kids. Mike M. was telling the kids not to dance or jump around for fear the people in charge would cancel our performance. I kind of thought that he should have just let things happen. I would have rather gone out with a bang, then to temper our performance and control the audience in that way. Terrible. He was still the leader, but I kind of thought that he liked to be the main man, which made me sort of challenge that later. I did criticize him sometimes behind his back, and it may have gotten back to him, which ultimately destroyed the band.

We played another gig at another high school. I am not sure which one. Mike was giving out tapes of our live recording from our previous show, and I was getting news from some skaters that there was some following developing amongst them. I wasn't a skater. I guess they liked us because we were cutting edge, I don't know. This was a big show. It was a full auditorium of people. It was packed. I can't remember if I was nervous or not, but when I got up on stage, I was sort of like a brick. I could hardly move. I sort of just danced nervously, doing my thing. I had sunglasses on so I didn't really see the audience. I tried to be cool, but I couldn't really loosen up. The set went really quick, and me being on stage was sort of a job. I wasn't comfortable with this kind of set up. I didn't connect with the audience at all. It was terrible for me.

No one really gave me any creative criticism when it came to my performances on stage. I don't have any real footage to have seen myself, and perhaps made some changes. I was scared on stage. I have to admit this. I never got fully comfortable playing for many people that I didn't know, or cared about. I didn't watch my buddies play that much either, so I don't remember how they acted on stage. When you're nervous and uncomfortable, your senses shut down, and you withdraw within yourself.

Somehow we started to get gigs down the city of Philadelphia. Our first performance was at a popular underground club called Revival. This was fucking great. This was my scene. These were the people I wanted to impress. I was ready. We were to go up with a few other bands downstairs. It was packed. Everyone was there

watching. I was really fueled and ready. When we got up on stage we began to play a song, and the power kept cutting out on us, and I was like “What the Fuck??!!”. They said they were having technical difficulties, or there was a problem with the electronics. What we played was good, but we never recovered because of the difficulties. I remember getting off stage really disappointed that we didn’t get the chance to really exploit the best qualities of our music.

Unsatisfied with what we got, they talked with the D.J. to schedule another gig, at Revival on one of their off days. I believe on a Thursday night. It wasn’t a popular night. The gig was badly publicized. I don’t remember even telling anyone about it. When we got there, hardly anyone was there to attend the show. There were a handful of kids in the back sitting there watching us play. I believe our performance was good that night, mostly because there was little tension. There was no resistance or pressure to impress.

Among other clubs we played was some warehouse in Reading called “Unisound”. It was where all the punk, skinhead, or straightedge bands would play. We had a successful gig there I believe. That warehouse later turned into a skate park, and a recording studio as well. I went to Unisound often with Mike to hang out, and just blend in.

Marguerite Earhart: *The Burning had a show scheduled in Reading which turned out to be a confusing disaster. Everyone showed up and was psyched. The place was a combination skating/stage/skateboard? warehouse. It was the first time I had been there. Russ was involved with the setting up - which seemed to be going well - then all of a sudden loudly announced that we were leaving. What? I thought - not actually hearing what was going on between the manager of the place, Russ and the band - and some robust woman coming up to me waving her hands in my face in some kind of voodoo action condescendingly calling me a groupie. All I know is that everyone took everything down and were out the door - and raced back to Spring City. Pretty exciting stuff.*

One of our most memorable performances was at “Voodoo”. All of our friends came and supported us. I had this whistle that I brought to blow during a part of one of our songs. When I blew it, people’s ears would widen, cause I blew it right into the microphone. I remember there were a lot of people in that audience as well. I was really confident that night. I danced ecstatically on stage to the “Funky Chicken”, so much I had a friend, Kathy Fadigan come up and dance with me. I believe it was kind of corny. I didn’t care. I guess it was all about having a good time. Someone told me that there were some bad criticisms by strangers, but I thought everyone always have something negative to say always. To this day it still happens. I have to say no matter how you try, or no matter how much work you produce no one will ever really be satisfied.

Marguerite Earhart: *I went with the group to a show scheduled - with a pretty good lineup - at the Holiday Inn in Pottstown. It turned out really good. I remember seeing the cops moving around out front videotaping people - which I thought interesting. I was told it was satanic 'cult' watch. [I learned that the police kept a list of names of people on this satanic watch list. I found out that Ross' name was on that list.] The*

Burning played to a full house that night. The Burning played at a packed house for a benefit for Amnesty International. At the Kimberton Fair The Burning did well but lost the competition - was good for exposure however. I thought it was a bit unfair that a more professional group won the competition. Sold a bunch of t-shirts. Had a great time.

Back at Ian's Recording Studio

It didn't take us long to record three more songs with Ian in his bedroom. We went back there knowing what was going on, and what to expect. We were better prepared to do a better job this time. I know I was more determined. I was getting better at writing, and I was getting better and more confident with my vocals. We planned to record the songs, "Burning", "Fall Girl", and "The Funky Chicken". These were some of our best songs yet. Our songs were becoming more complex, and more intricate. So much that Ian sort of got involved with some of the arrangements. He did the slap bass on the "Funky Chicken", and some weird guitar parts on "Fall Girl".

Like before, everyone had there input. I was the vocalist but I used Nick's keyboard to add some sounds to the music. I also brought this Disney Haunted House album to sample and put into the "Funky Chicken". The music came out superb. I was impressed and happy that we were creating some comparable stuff to the music I was influenced by. Ian was a pisser; he would make these jokes at my expense when I was trying to hit high notes. I believe he said that I was like Freddie Mercury or something.

I had trouble recording the vocals to "The Funky Chicken". The first take was horrible. I took the demo home and listened to it, and I was so unsatisfied with my performance. I told Ian I wanted to do them over again. He allowed this. I went to his house at night and did the whole take over again. This time I put a lot of gusto into it. I got it right this time. I started to get crazier, less tight. I told Mike, "See, I told you I could do it!!". He just looked at me.

After we recorded these three songs, I totally forgot about the first four we did. I thought the early recordings were kind of weak compared to the last three, and I even went as far as to lose my copy of it. I only publicized the last three songs. I told my girlfriend Sue that "Fall Girl" was about her, and she freaked out over the phone and hung up on me. What can I say.

The Last Show, and the End of the Band...

Marguerite Earhart: *The last show was played - that I attended at - was in Philadelphia. It makes sense now maybe why Jeff decided to give me live kudos at that show - I was touched by him doing that and was surprised by his thoughtfulness. That show was a great show, and had no clue that it was to be the last one.*

There was a time that I started to take an interest in the music that we were creating. Like I said Mike Mash. wrote all of the guitar parts. I was getting more inquisitive about what was being created. I started to rewrite the early version of "H.I.V". I started to write new bass lines, and created new lyrics for it. Ross had a problem with this, and told Mike that I was cutting into his territory. Mike just said, "He is trying to improve the band, that more than you do". I was quiet, and didn't really fight about it. Marguerite was telling us WE HAD TO PRACTICE, so the fun was out. We were to do as she said, cause it was her house. She got involved where she shouldn't have, I believe. Me and Mike were disturbed by this.

Marguerite Earhart: *I'm sorry that you - and maybe others - felt that I had taken the fun out of things. I knew that the group could do really well - and that everyone was distracted on other stuff. I was invested. I was hearing complaints that practice time was not being taken seriously enough, and I thought keeping on everybody's ass might motivate. I also felt taken advantage of - not by you. There is stuff that I don't really want to talk about, but doesn't concern you or anything you did. You were one person who always was on time for practice. Jeff was fighting with Nick and his companion at the time, and said he was expecting a baby. Nick did have his issues. The group was ripped off from club managers who wouldn't pay, a group album/tape was delayed due to delay in studio stuff - which didn't help pay expenses. Which were catching up to me at the time, and Marty was getting antsie in what I was spending. The Burning did make money in t-shirt sales which helped offset the cost of the shirts, but didn't get off the ground in making any money to move forward ... which is why I felt I should start to motivate with practice. All I can say is that I'm sorry.*

There was a problem with Nick, cause he didn't show for practices. It was known he had drug problems that were interfering with his involvement with the band. He was repeatedly given chances to redeem himself, but he kept screwing up. Ross decided to find a reliable replacement. He knew a guy who lived in West Philly. He was a talented writer, and keyboardist. His name was Nick as well. His involvement never really took that much precedence in the band. We were all fighting over whom he was going to work with. There was a tug of war. I'm sure are internal problems dissuaded him from taking us too seriously. He probably didn't like me, because I rewrote one of the songs he had presented to me in its whole. I was way over my head. I turned into a little bit of a control freak, maybe. I always thought I could do better.

Mike came to me one day at Marguerites, and told me, "After this show I am leaving the band". I didn't respond. I didn't say anything. I just went along with it as usual. I was disappointed, and didn't know his reasons. I didn't ask why. I just accepted it.

Our last show was scheduled at Revival once more, and we were to play with another band called “Batman’s Brother Ed”. These guys were into funk/rock, and they had a following. I wasn’t into there music per say, but I am sure they were going to bring people to this thing. Me and Mike just finished writing a new song called “The Gate”. And we were going to play it. I did go to this show with a different attitude knowing that this was the end. It was kind of somber for me. I was going to do things a little different this time.

When we got to the venue there were people scattered around. Batman’s Brother Ed was going to go up first. The lead singer had a lot of energy on stage. He used to jump around real crazy like. I kind of felt like they were better than us. I didn’t have that kind of energy to move around, but then again we didn’t do that kind of music. We were more dark and serious. I was more interested in giving a great vocal performance. I knew if I moved around a lot my vocals would suffer so I didn’t do it. I try to come up with reasons why my performance suffered on stage. I was self-conscious. It is supposed to get easier you would think, but for me it got harder. I guess because when you do something you always want to top it.

When I sang that night it was a somber performance. I was really disappointed that this was the end. I didn’t care if I did a good job, or a bad job. I forgot about everything, and just sang. I believe I kind of wailed on “The Gate”, sort of crying out the song.

There were a lot of issues concerning the end of the band. Ross had traded his quadroverbe for a P.A. sound system for me. And I bought two huge speakers that our manager Russ sold me, and I was stuck with them. I spent 800 dollars on them, and I was totally ripped off. They were obsolete, and no one would take them off my hands. I left these speakers at Marguerite’s house.

Marguerite Earhart: *Ross traded his Quadroverbe - to my dismay because Marty and I bought it for him and it cost a bit of money to help with his music - in order to help the band with the pa system. He said it would help save money on equipment rentals - which it really wouldn't have made that much difference. Ross found out after he made the trade that the group decided to dissolve so he was stuck with a pa sound system he didn't need anymore. He did eventually sell it. I'm still sour about it.*

The last day I was at Marguerites, Jeff, and Ross asked me in front of Mike Mash, if I wanted to stay with the band. I said, “But Mike wrote all of the music.” I had no confidence in Ross, or Jeff. There was lots of hostility. If I worked with Ross I knew there would be problems. I wasn’t a friend with him enough. I was still stuck on Mike, and I had an attachment to him creatively, and we had an ongoing working relationship I couldn’t just walk away from.

When I had to get my speakers from Marguerite's, Ross was waiting angrily for me to get there to harass me. I went in quietly to get the speakers, and left quietly with Mike. That was the end of my relationship with Ross, Jeff, and Marguerite.

Me and Mike still hung out together but it wasn't creatively. He started to get me into smoking pot, along with some hippie girl I met working at a restaurant. This was a new phase. Ian asked me if I wanted to go into Dome Sound studio to record three tracks in this 14 track studio

Marguerite Earhart: *I did not know what happened after the band broke up. Everyone simply disappeared. I started to have issues which I don't wish to talk about. I was not angry with anybody - except maybe Ross. I really didn't know that the group name was changed. Ross had moved out and in with some friends when things got tough here. He may have been angry, but he didn't share with me what happened to everybody.*

The Father, the Son, the Murder Machine...

Ian introduced me to this guy Brian Bricklin. He was a sound engineer, and a producer at Dome Sound Studio. They took me in and talked with me about what they were going to do, and how much it would cost. I was naïve. I didn't really know what was going on. The tape was going to cost clearly \$1000 dollars, money that I worked hard for at Restaurants, waiting tables, and food running. I just went along with it as usual. Mike didn't pay anything for this project so I picked the songs that we were going to record. The songs were "The Gate", the new version of "H.I.V", and a revision of "Three Trees".

Since the band broke up, I picked a new name for us to be assumed as, and that was "The Father, the Son, the Murder Machine". When it got back to Ross, and Marguerite, someone told me that they were extremely angry that this happened. I believed it at the time, but I am not sure if it was true, cause Marguerite denied it later.

Ian put a team together of musicians to put the songs together without the original band members. I was letting all of these strangers work on my tape for a fee. Ian told me that it is customary to buy lunch for people you are working with. I was like what do they think I am rich. Ian once told me over tea that he thought I was more "Worldly". I am not sure what he meant by that. Maybe I am materialistic?? I just felt like he was assuming a role for me.

These songs were to be recorded in three solid days. There was a lot of work to be done out of the studio, so they could prepare beforehand so it didn't cost more money. We laid all of the keyboard parts, and the drum machine loops together. All we had to do when we got to the studio was the guitar parts, and some over dubs, and the vocals. I have to say all of the guys, including Ian, Scott Brickin, and everyone else worked enthusiastically on the project.

I worked at Casa Maria in the early nineties, and I knew this girl Maria. She did a kick ass karaoke. She could sing very well indeed, and she was sort of interested in me. I went out on some dates with her, but I never became that into her. She told me not to tell our coworkers that we were dating. I was public about everything so I got annoyed. She was smart though; she knew if the cooks found out they would make my life a hell. Since she could sing well I thought she should be involved in the project. I had this idea that I got from Ennio Morricone's "Ecstasy of Gold" from "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" soundtrack. I thought that she could sing the play out of "The Gate" like the woman on that song. Ian let me do this. He worked with her, and felt she had a great strong voice. He did some trick where he recorded her singing this note for an extended period of time. It worked, she sounded almost like an opera singer. She was pleased I let her in on this project, and when we went back to my place we had a moment. But I didn't do anything. I later passed her on to a new friend Steve Cluthe that I met at the studio sessions. He liked her.

I had tremendously more pressure to perform at these sessions, because of the money, and the luck or lack of just being good. I was still inexperienced and young. I still struggled with my vocals. I thought I had to exercise them a lot to keep them optimum. I only strained them. When I got to studio I may have tired them out. I struggled with the vocals to “H.I.V”. The music was at a different pitch than the original version, and it was more intense. This version was more mechanical also. You can tell by the recording that I had a hard time excerpting my voice. Although the team was satisfied, and they were happy, I wish I could have hidden them behind effects of some sort.

All in all “H.I.V” was a successful take. I added some of the chimes to the background for the added effect. Mike Mash’s guitar work was phenomenal, and I still think that he is one of my favorite guitar players that I know. He is natural. Mike unfortunately didn’t play the guitar for “The Gate”. He wrote the music, but Ian felt that he could do a more precise job at making it sound crystal clear. Which is fine. I would have preferred being more honest in the recording, but I wasn’t really in control of the production.

“Three Trees” on the other hand was a total failure. I think Mike was extremely disappointed that we took one of his great songs, and cheesed it up, and made it sound corny. Terrible. I wish I never would have picked that song. If we had no songs, we should have picked a cover or something. It was like Ian took a hard rock song, and made it disco. I won’t let anyone listen to that track, because I don’t think that it should be remembered that way. As far as I am concerned it is on the cutting room floor.

The last day of recording we sat back and had a party. We listened to the end product. We were happy mostly. I was thinking that I like what I hear, but what do I do with all this stuff. I knew nothing about the business; all I knew how to do was be creative. That’s all. A friend of mine John Pescavage had them sent out to be copyrighted. We also sent them to some music labels. There were no positive responses. No one was remotely interested in what we were doing. We didn’t have a band anymore anyways. We wouldn’t have gotten far. I couldn’t do it by myself.

“Secrets”, the Underground Bar

There was a time when Ian brought me into his bedroom, and trained me to sing David Bowie songs, while he played the acoustic guitar. I was still young and unknowing of classic rock performers. He told me I sounded a lot like David Bowie and thought it was a good idea to perform them at this bar in Norristown. The club was downstairs from a restaurant right on West Marshall Street. It was kind of a remote area. There was not a lot of car traffic surrounding that place. It was kind of dark that part of town, probably lots of drug deals, and it was kind of like a ghetto. I was always daring but I was still underage. They used to get me in that bar a year or two before I turned 21. I guess I was kind of lucky.

The bar was kind of cool, lots of different kinds of people came to this place. It was cool that it was downstairs, because then it became more of private club, than just another bar. There they would have live performers on Thursday nights. It was hosted by a band called Berue Revue, or at that time they changed their name to Berue HaHa. They were asked to let me sing Bowie songs with them as they backed me up. This was kind of cool. It was kind of like a precursor to karaoke, only you had a real band play the songs. Sometimes I would sing with other performers, doing songs like Jane's Addiction's “Mountain Song”, or “Had a Dad”. I still remember Ian trying to do the solos, but not quite being able to do it perfectly. I went every Thursday to this place for a year or so. It was quite an exciting time. In the end I think Berue Revue got kind of annoyed with me coming up to sing. It was a favor to Ian I guess to put me in the spot light. After a while the bar closed up, and the upstairs turned into an upscale Italian restaurant. I ate there once, but never came back again. I sometimes ride my bike by that place seeing if it will open up again but to no avail, it never came to be.

The Freak'in Out Sessions

After the sessions were over at Dome Sound Studios, Steve Cluthe a friend of Ian Cross asked me if I wanted to record with him at his apartment in King of Prussia. He said he would only charge me \$100 dollars for each song recorded. He had an eight track reel to reel in his apartment, along with keyboards, mixing boards, etc. It was a professional set up in my eyes. Of course I said yes. What else was I going to do. I dropped everything and went to it.

Steve was great to work with. He was very patient with me. I would go home and work something out on my portable keyboard. He loaned me his drum machine to work out drum patterns at home. I was excited like usual. When we didn't work for a while, I would call him up and beg him to have me over so we could continue the projects. I had more creative control over the sounds we used. I wrote most of everything on his keyboards by myself. He was a technological wizard with his equipment. He engineered everything for me. He was a good guide. If I couldn't figure out something he would help me out. It was a worthwhile experience.

The first song I wrote with him was "Stay". This song was about going to church, God, and being insane. It questioned God, and the church, very controversial now that I think of it. After we laid everything out we realized it needed guitar. I knew someone through my sister. My sister was a friend with Ellen Bickell. She had a son, Rich who was a great guitar player. This was the first time I was working away from Mike Mash, and I wasn't sure if I was going to like his playing. So I took a chance and I asked him if he wanted to do it. He said yes, and took a crack at it. We played the song for him many times till he got the hook, and just did his thing. It probably was a hard song to play to but he did it justice. Kudos to Rich, thanks!!!

I listened to "Stay" and still I wasn't confident about my voice. I thought the song was good in my ears but I was sure if people weren't going to think it was corny or not. I was always unsure what I was doing was acceptable. Mike Mash said it was good, but I still wasn't sure.

The next song I wrote was a song inspired by Mott the Hoople called "Marionette". My version was called "Mannequin". There were similarities between both songs. They both have bold vocals on the chorus. Steve used less tracks by bouncing all the vocal tracks together. They were ferocious. The song was written about my late Uncle Jack Lenhart who was laid out at his viewing in his casket. This I remembered well, cause Jackie was still young, and an artist himself. I looked at his corpse uncomfortable. It was morbid to me; a great topic to write a song about!!! Mike Mash said that the vocals sounded forced, but I didn't agree. Between Ian, and Mike's criticism, I lost interest in the song, and taped over my copy of it.

"Gremlins" was an odd song we did together. I am not sure it was inspired by anything, except the movie. I did see that "Twilight Zone" movie a long time ago. I

think it might have been inspired by that. I asked Mike Mash to do the guitar parts for that song, and he did it easy. That was the last time we worked together on anything. I lost my copy to this song too.

And another song I copied over was “Burning Out”, I had Maria do the back up vocals on the chorus. In the lyrics I sang “MY HONEY NEEDS MORE MONEY AND MY HONEY SHES A JEW”!!! Ian came to me and told me the lyric was politically incorrect, and asked me if I wanted to remove it, or change it, and I said “You better leave it in there”. Later on I got paranoid that someone would take offense to the lyrics, so I made things worse and wrote a comic called “HITLER WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST DID YOU KNOW????”. I was kind of disappointed that they judged my work based on the content. I thought the one way to be popular was to be controversial. I had nothing to lose, so I went for broke. They had the power I didn’t.

The last two songs I did were called “Freak’in Out”, and “Loonier than Loony”. They were rap songs inspired by Renegade Soundwave, Bjork, and Cypress Hill. I blended the ideas I got from their music to create a new kind of alternative rap. The songs were mostly about driving around smoking pot, and getting into adventures, and being silly and all. Steve was into it, he played some percussions in the “Loony” song, and I experimented with different instruments to make it sound cool. After these songs were recorded I said that this was it. That was the end. My friend Melissa Tarka told me that the last two songs sounded like a band she was friends with called “Ween”. They were silly, no joke. She invited me over to her place and we got stoned and listened to them. I realized that I was on to something for sure. I was writing songs that were comparable to popular bands.

Steve gave me the run around about giving me good copies of the songs I did with him. He always gave me excuses why he just couldn’t give me a copy. Later in life I tried to contact him about giving me legitimate copies of the songs, and he just blew me off completely. I kept copies to three songs, and kept them mostly private to myself. I had to realize that I had to move on now, like always.

The Case of Jake Meyer

Jake Meyer was a guitarist formerly in the band “The Bricklin’s”. I believe the line up was Brian Bricklin, Scott Bricklin, Jake Meyer, and Ian Cross. As far as I know the band was successful in a way. I know that they played large venues, maybe even Stadiums when other bands were playing with them. As a local band they were well known. Of course the core of the band, and probably the leaders are both Brian, and Scott.’ They are connected in the music industry, as well as Ian Cross. After the demise of the band, It was told to me that Jake Meyer tried to put together bands, or projects that ultimately failed, or didn’t work out. Jake Meyer retreated into his lowly life, and became an alcoholic. He had a child, and a wife that lived in an apartment complex across from a bar that I used to attend often. Someone that I met, Eric told me that he had a friend who was dying. He was drinking himself to death.

I thought a lot about what I went through with the band, and how I was treated by those involved. Perhaps being brought into the music world, then dumped quickly after they made a good amount of money on me. It’s hard for vulnerable people with dreams, or people who invite you in unknowing, to trust people who could help them in a world where there are absolutely no guarantees. I do remember those times that I hungered for that same experiences on stage, or those moments in the recording studio. Once you experience that rush, you always want it. To this day, I still think about the band, I still think about the popularity, and the freedom I had. I remember all those good times with the people I met, feeling like I was bigger than life. Although I was brought up to be strong, and a survivor. I instinctly knew that if I gave myself heart and soul to these people I would be burned alive. I did go through a trial by fire. But Jake Meyer never recovered. It was later in a month that I heard that he expired from drinking. I heard he died in the hospital.

There was one time I remember seeing Scott at Grape Street pub in Manayunk, singing on stage with his guitar. He came out into the bar area all drunk, and everything. I tried to say hi to him, but he just sunk into a dark shadow, and avoided me like a destitute mother and her unwanted newborn baby. I felt abandoned by the same people who created me. You think you have friends, but sometimes they aren’t real.

I was brought by Eric to Jake’s apartment a month before he died. He was lying on the couch with a bottle of vodka. They smoked weed and talked about music. Jake was a bit of a character, but also kind of a vulture. When you talked to him you kind of felt like he was trying to be like a guide of some sort, only the path he was taking you on maybe to malevolence. He wanted to talk to me, maybe influence me. I kind of felt he had a malignant spirit, and I had to be on my way. You kind of felt like you were being sucked into something. I asked myself why I was brought here. Was it coincidence?

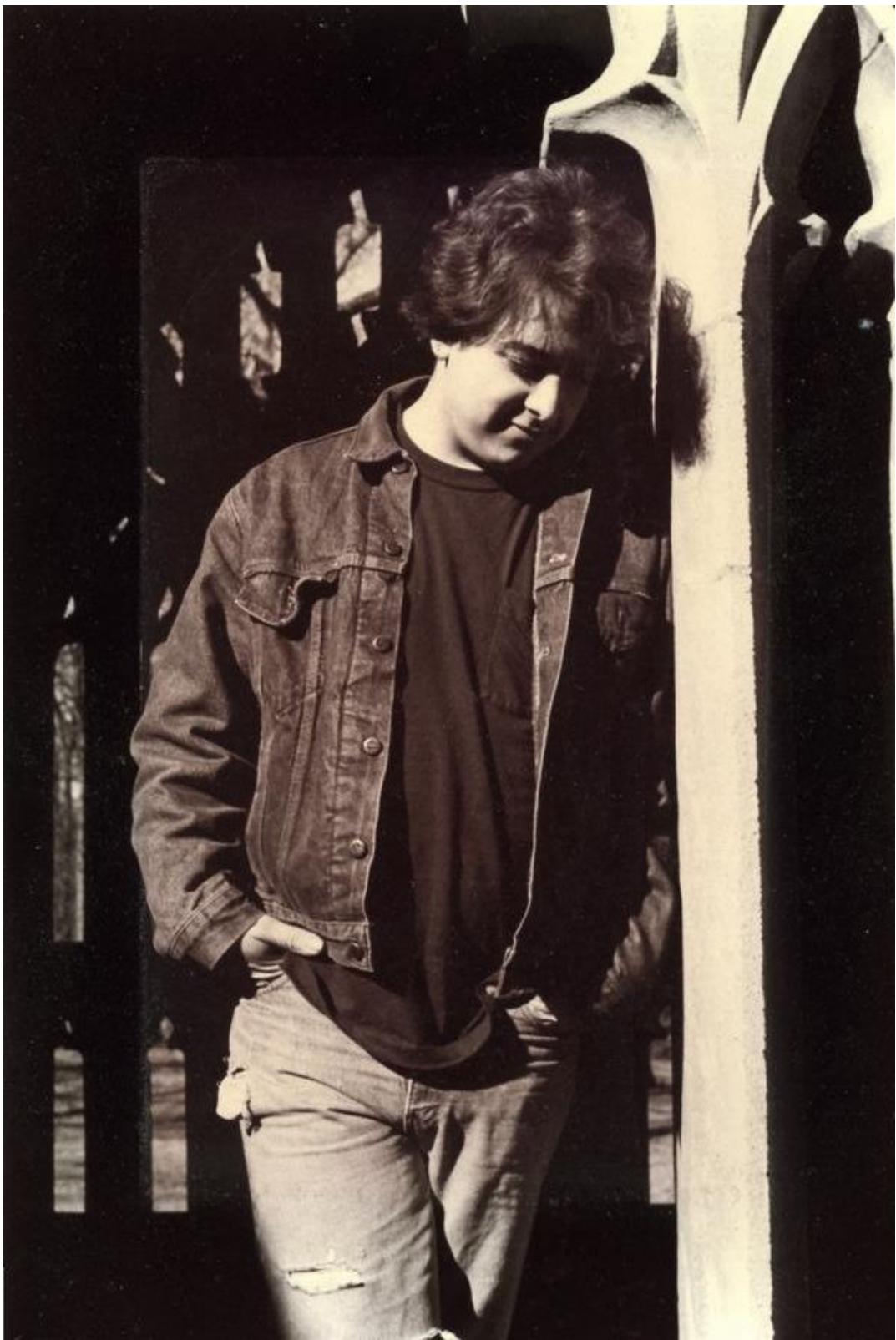
Was Jake a casualty? Was I under the influence of irresponsible behaviors of those in power? I wonder. I am an outsider to the music world, but I was brought in and discarded within the duration of a few years. Just thinking...



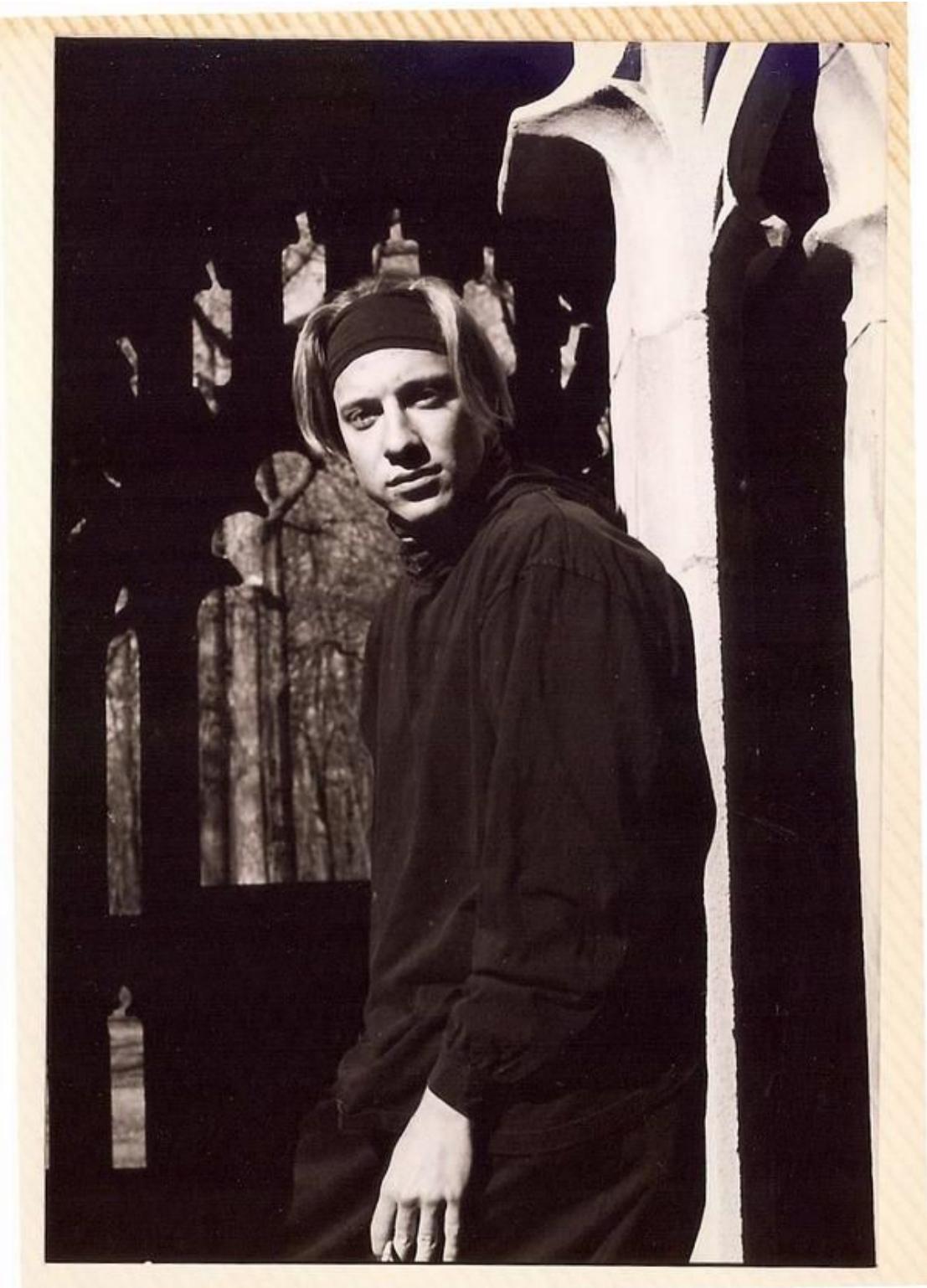
Me in a promo photo



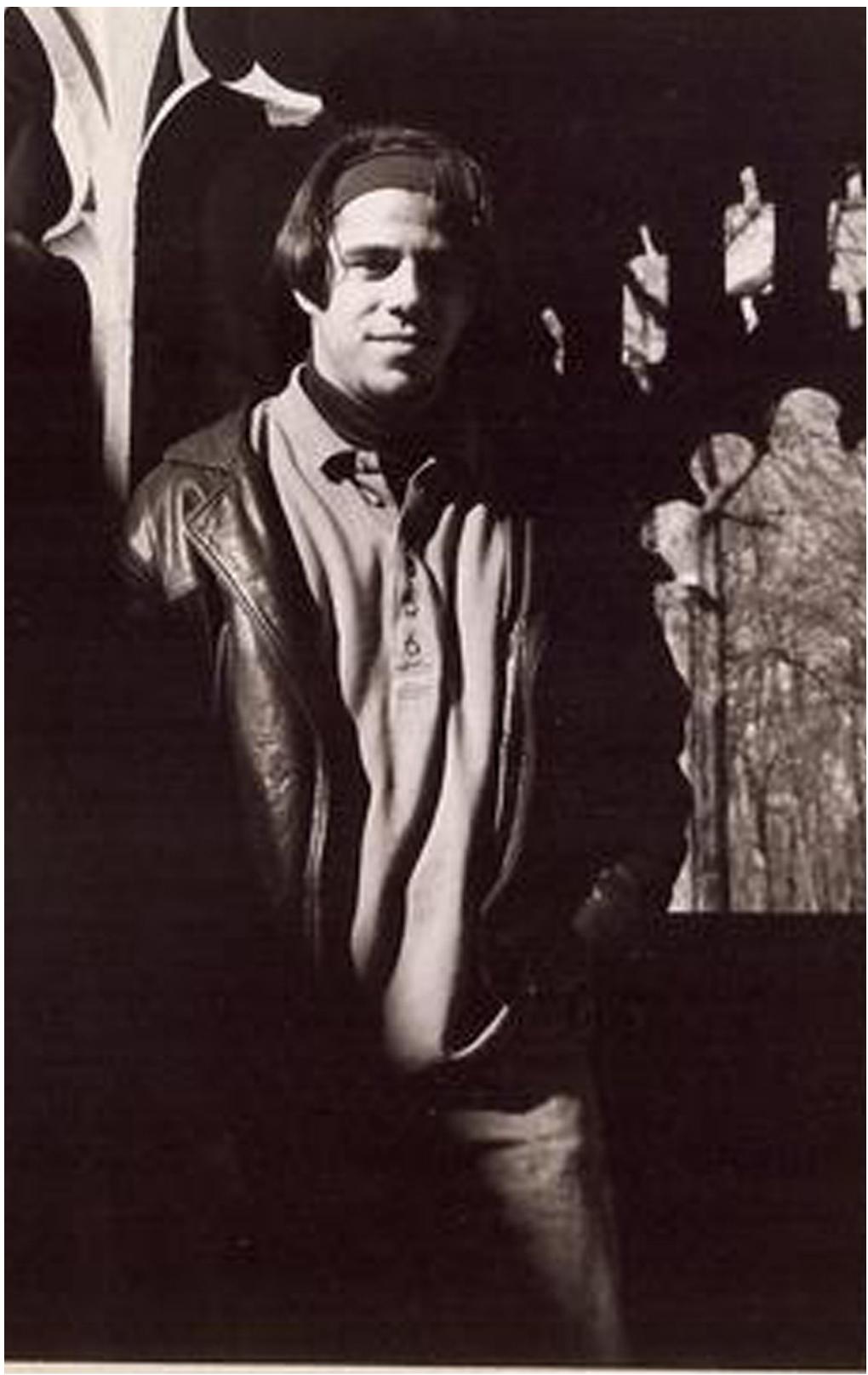
Mike Mash(Smash)



Ross Earhart



Nick DiBlasio



Jeff "The Cuban" Valcarcel



The Band plays live...



Sue, me, and Jeff





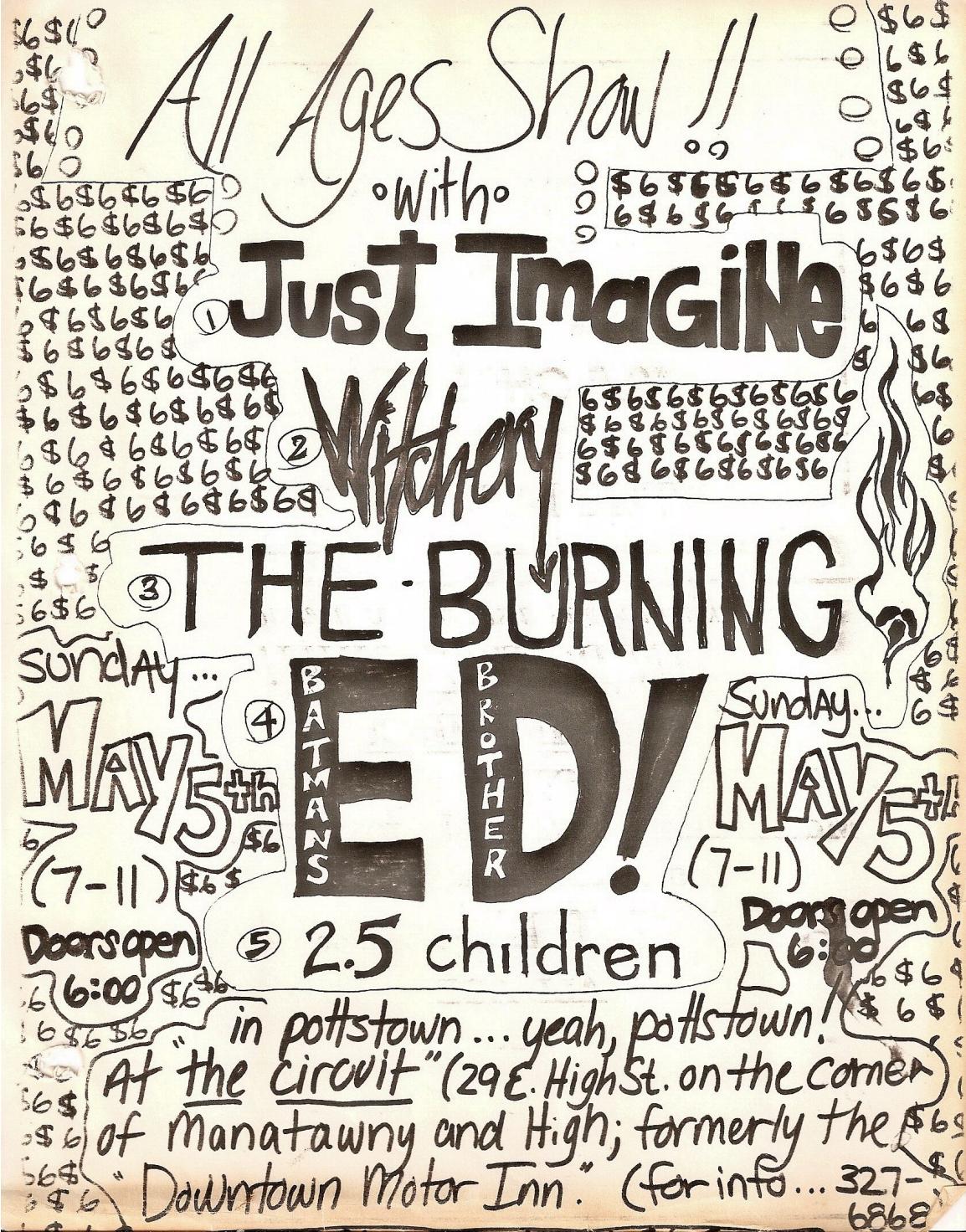
Sue dancing on stage at my request



Me with my silk screened Misfit t-shirt that I made in art class.











The Burning...







The Burning — (from left) Mike D'Orazio of Audubon, Ross Earhart of Spring City, Mike Mash of Pottstown, Jeff "Cuban" Valcarcel of Schwenksville and Nicholas DiBlasio of Gilbertsville — will be among the rock musicians performing at the Kimberton Community Fair, Route 113, Kimberton, this week. They will take the stage Wednesday at 7 p.m.

►The Burning with alternative rock 7 p.m. Wednesday and High Risk at 8 p.m.



WEDNESDAY JULY 24, 1991

THE
BURNING
AT THE KIMBERTON FAIR

come out and support the
fastest rising talent in the
area

plenty of food, drinks, and
fun

**AND ALL THE MUSIC'S
FREE**

What is Amnesty?

It's your conscience calling...

No, really. It is you. Amnesty International is a worldwide organization of people working to guarantee that all individuals receive the same basic human rights. When these rights are infringed upon, for instance in the cases of torture, execution, unjust trials,

or unfair imprisonment, you can write a letter and make a difference. Especially now, atrocities are occurring throughout the world. If we let them slide by then we'll all be in a heap of trouble. The saying, "Write a letter, save a life," really does hold true. There is power in numbers - new members are always welcome at meetings (held every Wednesday in room 602 from 3 to 4 pm).

ON OCTOBER
FIFTEENTH
IN THE
YEAR OF
OUR LORD,
NINETEEN
HUNDRED AND
EIGHTY-NINE,
A MEETING OF
FOUR IN BODY,
FIVE IN SOUL
COMMENDED. THE
OUTCOME WAS A
BIRTH, A LOVE FOR
THE SEASON.
HEAR THE VOICE
FEEL THE
STRENGTH
IN
MID-OCTOBER.

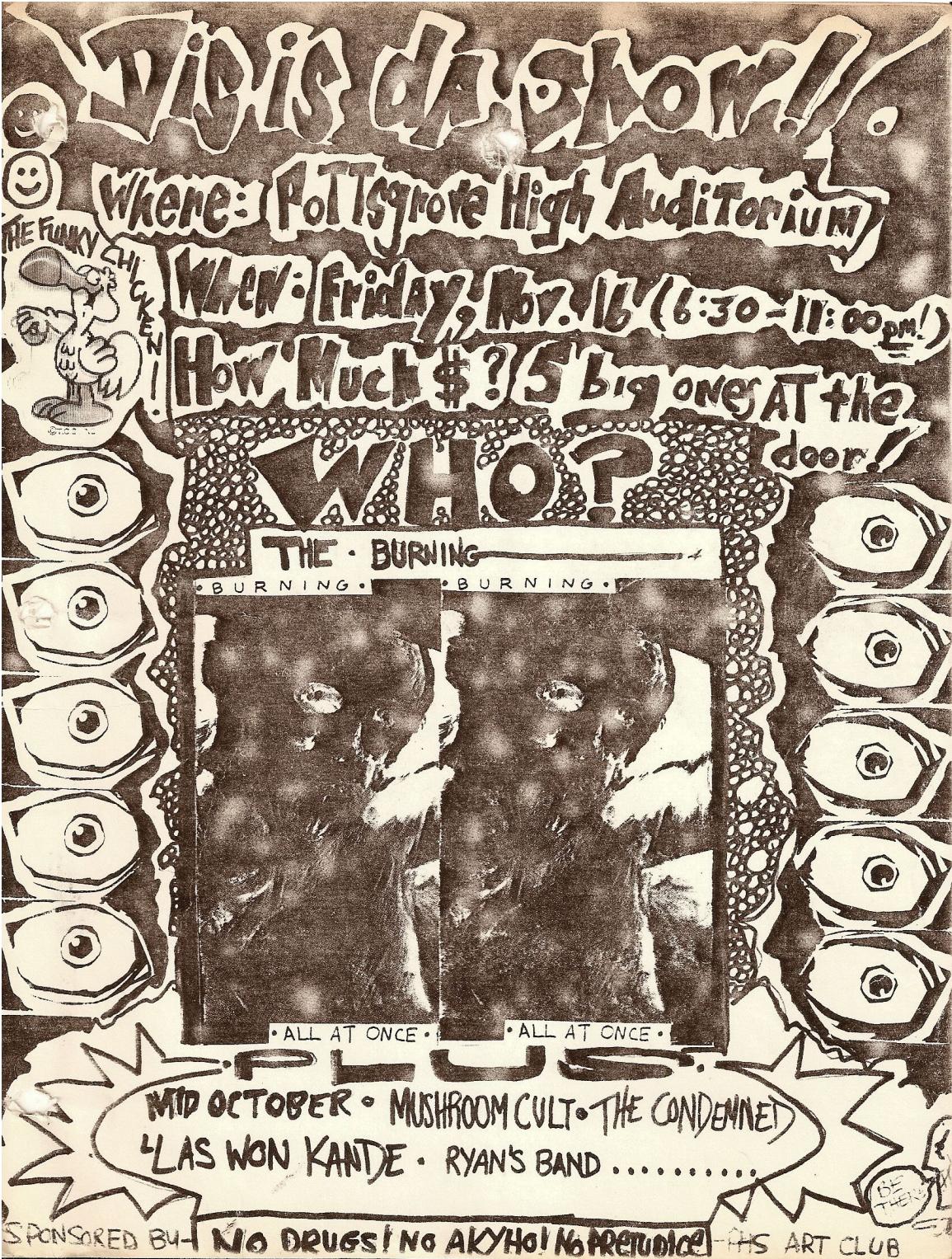


WRITE: c/o MIKE FAVLIK
326 WALNUT STREET
KUTZTOWN, PA
19530

Mid October

- IGLE TRENT DUDEK
KEYBOARDS, BACKING VOCALS
- LAYNE FRANCIS LIONS
GUITAR, LEAD VOCALS
- MICHAEL IGNATIUS PANICK
GUITAR
- EDWARD WILLIAM PILZ PERCUSSION
- THOMAS JAY WEAVER JONES













To Be Continued...