

A BIKE MESSENGER SOMEWHERE

COC spent a lot of time seemingly doing nothing until finally getting Karl Agell as the new singer and

a whole different thing..maybe they should have changed their name? Maybe not. Hell, it was their band.

KAREN WEATHERMAN: The band was a whole lot different without Mike. Phil was a little strange. Karl - one of the things that was different was when Mike came over, he was a vegetarian and I could cook for him, but Karl was a vegan. You can't hardly cook for a vegan! When Mike came back, I was so glad. I liked it. I liked how COC evolved into the heavy metal part, I loved it.

TONY WEATHERMAN: When Mike was gone for awhile they used to get royalties and Woody would come in and give Mike's share to us and we'd keep it in a safe in the store. I think Woody missed Mike. We did too. Everybody missed Mike. Everybody liked him. He went off and was a bike messenger somewhere, maybe San Francisco. Then he would show up and he would have a big wad of money because of Woody. He had every cent that was coming to him because of Woody.

After the band re-established themselves with the new lineup and lots of touring for the *Blind* record, they began to work on a follow up album. While working on it, COC kicked Karl out of the band and Pepper eventually became the new singer. When this happened, Phil quit in support of Karl and the two started Leadfoot. Mike Dean rejoined his old band afterwards to re-record Swisher's bass parts, and soon the *Deliverance* record came out. The band ended up becoming the *Animosity* lineup with Pepper up front and that is the way the band stayed for a long time.

When I first started to write this project, I was very aware that most of the people I have talked to were huge fans of Corrosion of Conformity in their original lineups (as was I). When Pepper Keenan eventually fronted the band, it was like he helped give the band a second and more expansive career, regardless of what anyone else thought of it. The original band and what they had pioneered was done and over before Pepper even entered the picture, let alone him eventually becoming the new singer and eventual focal point of the band.

DANA KLETTER: I guess I think more about COC individually, as people I knew through other people, Reed as Claire's boyfriend, Woody and Karl as friends of everyone I knew. Lee was pretty tight with Mike Dean. And then Pepper. I had a lot of contact with Mike over the years. He moved into my old room at Lee's after I moved out. I don't see Mike much anymore, but for a while he was really a part of the Blackgirls' everyday existence.

SEAN LIVINGSTONE (JADE, MAY EVEN, DADDY, POLLUTION): COC made the Raleigh Hardcore

scene. People moved to Raleigh because of them. Nowadays, they're too easy to flog. As for others, people just speculate too much on what could have been and don't want to move on.

ETHAN SMITH: It changed when they bought Mesa Boogie amps and Woody got rid of his Sunn gear.

CHRIS SCHNIEDER (AGENBITE OF INWIT FANZINE, ORIFICE): I don't think that I could be mean about it; bands always have their own thing. Most bands that have stayed the same for twenty years usually suck just as bad as the bands that have changed. COC, they just took a little too much time off at that point in time, and when they came back it was pretty much with a different sound, much more metal. Mike wasn't singing, Reed wasn't singing. Karl was a good singer but it still wasn't the same. Woody took guitar lessons and had learned how to play guitar solos really well, which had really changed their sound. I suppose that they wanted to be successful, to become a bigger band. It's understandable that they wanted to do that but they definitely lost something.

WAYNE TAYLOR: They felt obligated. If they just took a year off and started recording. They felt obligated to be metal and they weren't really, they were this hybrid. They felt obligated and that was their downfall. They got bogged down concerning themselves with that.

REED MULLIN (COC, NO LABELS, RIGHTEOUS FOOL): We'd definitely gone through a lot of metamorphoses. We'd all grown together in our style. Early on we were knee-deep into Hardcore/Punk Rock, which was as vibrant, new and fresh as we could have ever been. We were playing with all the best, big bands then - Minor Threat and Black Flag. We were having a great time playing that stuff. Then that got really generic and all the great bands real-

ized it and they were getting bored with it all and many of them broke up and left the scene. They came back as Fugazi, Rollins Band. We were still doing our thing. God, this is sounding too generic so we started experimenting with other influences. We had to make it more interesting for ourselves.

I always had this bias against COC after those "glory days" had come and gone. I was a fan of the *Animosity* days, and not quite as much the later. This is still true, but at the same time looking back, I always checked out every record that the band released and always found music on every record (except for *America's Volume Dealers*) that I liked. *Deliverance* and *Wiseblood* both had some good songs on them; songs that were as good as anything by other bands I had no problem liking (like Soundgarden, for example). The band as a whole seemed very unsentimental about what they had done and I grew to greatly appreciate that. It just took twenty years.

Another factor that has come up in all of this is the prejudice towards the "southernisms" of COC, or that they somehow turned into rednecks. After all, wasn't Punk Rock supposed to be against all of that? I am not so sure. I didn't grow up in the south, so I never had to deal with people wanting to kick my ass for liking that "Punk Rock shit." I never disliked hard rock before I had heard Punk Rock. I never threw out all of my other records or pretended that I didn't like that stuff anymore. I also didn't equate rednecks with people that liked Led Zeppelin or Aerosmith, so I had nothing to be against. I think some of the people I have interviewed obviously don't feel that way.

And yet, COC's Woody Weatherman and Pepper Keenan had (for a lack of better words) pretty southern upbringings, complete with families that loved and played music, which included bluegrass and other "southern" types of music. Not exactly the crime of the century.



Woody Weatherman, Mike Dean and Brian Walsby of Snake Nation, 1989. Photo: Will "Casper" Lee.



Simon Bob Sinister, Reed Mullin and Woody Weatherman of COC recording 2nd version of *Technocracy* in Raleigh, 1986.

Photo: Brian Walsby.

WHY I HATED SONIC YOUTH AND REDD KROSS!

BY BRIAN WALSBY, 2010!!

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON, I LOOK BACK AT HOW I ACTED WHEN I WAS YOUNGER AND I KIND OF WINCE....

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, IT WAS SOMEHOW.. SORT OF JUSTIFIED.

YOU SEE, I QUIETLY HAD SORT OF A CHIP ON MY SHOULDER. NOT ALL OF THE TIME, BUT STILL... HOW COME? I WAS TWENTY YEARS OLD. YOU ARE NOT AT THE BEACON OF COMPLETE MATURITY DURING THAT TIME PERIOD.

YOU LIKE THE BIRTHDAY PARTY?

YEAH... SORRY I DIDN'T ASK FOR YOUR PERMISSION FIRST!

TAKING IT THE WRONG WAY!

SOME OF WHAT HAD GOADED ME WAS THAT I HAD FELT I WASN'T COOL ENOUGH FOR SOME PEOPLE IN TOWN BECAUSE I STILL LIKED PUNK ROCK AND HARDCORE - AT LEAST IN THEORY. I WAS SELF CONSCIOUS AND KIND OF INSECURE.

KISS ME... KISS ME... KISS ME IN A SHADOW OF A DOUBT...

I... YOU'RE MY LOVE... YOU'RE MY HAPPINESS

ABOVE ALL, I REALLY COULDN'T STAND BOTH SONIC YOUTH AND REDD KROSS.

DAYS OF...

THE FUNNY THING WAS, I REALLY DID LIKE REDD KROSS. I WAS REALLY INTO THEIR 'BORN INNOCENT' AND 'TEEN BABES' ALBUMS. I SAW 'EM WITH DE Z CADENA IN THE BAND BACK IN CALIFORNIA. I JUST COULDN'T STAND THAT "NEUROTICA" ALBUM 'CAUSE OF HOW MANY THOUSANDS OF TIMES I HAD TO HEAR THAT FUCKING RECORD FROM EVERYONE EVERYWHERE I WENT.

IT'S ACTUALLY A PRETTY SMOKING RECORD. BUT OH HOW I HATED 'EM, ALL THANKS TO MY RALEIGH PEERS.

SONIC YOUTH ARE LIKE... THE MOSTEST!

WE HAVE A LOT IN COMMON WITH SST RECORDS AND CHARLES AND CHARLES MANSON...

WE'RE ON THAT EXPRESSWAY TO YOUR SKULL!

AS FAR AS SONIC YOUTH, I ENDED UP LIKING THEM QUITE A LOT. THEY PLAYED A HOT SET AT THE BREWERY ON THEIR 'DAY DREAM NATION' TOUR, BUT BEFORE THAT IT WAS THE SAME OLD THING: THE TOWN OF RALEIGH MADE ME OBLIGED TO HATE THEM. THEIR 'EVOL' ALBUM WAS ANOTHER ALBUM I JUST COULDN'T ESCAPE FROM. FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS! EVERYONE PLAYED IT. ALL OF THE TIME AND EVERYONE WAS ON DRUGS WHILE THEY PLAYED IT. PLUS AT THE TIME, I THOUGHT SONIC YOUTH WERE THE EPITOME OF WHAT I HATED ABOUT PRETENTIOUS CRAP. TURNS OUT THOUGH IT WAS ABOUT THE LISTENERS AND NOT THE BAND ITSELF.

SURE, ALL OF THIS SOUNDS REALLY STUPID, BUT BACK THEN IT REALLY SEEMED TO HACK ME OFF. LIKE IT WAS SOME THING THAT REALLY MATTERED. ALL IT WAS WERE TWO BANDS I HEARD WAY TOO MUCH ABOUT.

IN THAT REGARD IT WAS JUST LIKE ME BEING IN HIGH SCHOOL WHEN AC/DC'S "BACK IN BLACK" CAME OUT.. NO DIFFERENCE.

ALSO, I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT THE DRUG ECSTASY CAME OUT AROUND THIS TIME. THERE WERE LOTS OF LOVING MOMENTS, PEOPLE WERE HAVING FUN, MORE FUN THAN ME. I BET, IS THAT WHY I WAS SO HATEFUL? WAS I JUST JEALOUS?

I'LL TAKE BRIAN'S TAB OF ACID! GULP!!

THESE THREE HITS OF ECSTASY HAS MADE ME REALIZE... THE RECORD "EVOL"?

IT'S GROOVY!

I DON'T KNOW, ALL I KNOW IS THAT I REALLY HATED THEM.

THE END



THIS IS THE BEST BAND IN THE SOUTH

Even though Honor Role were from nearby Richmond, Virginia (three hours away), they played down here in Raleigh so often that they might as well have been a North Carolina band. The classic Honor Role lineup of Pen Rollins (guitar), Bob Schick (vocals), Chip Jones (bass) and Steve Schick (later replaced by Seth Harris on drums) was a pivotal band back then as they were arguably one of the first bands to expand upon the Hardcore origins that most everyone had. Simply put: they were a great band that wrote great songs. Most people in Raleigh loved the band and so did I. They were very special and very much ahead of their time, one of the all time greats and true pioneers.

WAYNE TAYLOR: We didn't know about Richmond. They were having shows and it was a lot closer. When we went up to DC, it was five hours in a car. We really dedicated to seeing this stuff. No Labels played in Richmond once a month and they loved us. We could play at an actual club; Benny's, and see real shows. We never thought about inviting people down here to play parties. The people in Richmond had a real established scene with lots of people. I met Pen on July 4th at a Dead Kennedys show and we hit it off.

The first rumblings of the might of Honor Role came in the form of 1985's *Judgment Day/Anonymous Cave* single. Next year came their debut album, *The Pretty Song*, recorded by John Moreland and financed by Reed Mullin.

I had always assumed that people everywhere knew what a great band Honor Role was and it was much to my surprise when I realized that aside from some good underground press, no one knew anything about them. They did go on tour a few times and the people that saw them usually liked them, but they didn't make a lot of waves and to this day remain sort of a good little secret. Besides Raleigh, they were also enjoyed in DC, and that seemed to be the extent of people liking them.

Honor Role was as big a part of what was going on down here as any local band, and their importance and genius cannot be underestimated. They influenced a lot of people and to this day, I still frequently play their music. Honor Role was one of



At DC Space.

the most important bands to me because they sort of got me out of my "Hardcore" mentality and showed that you could have great songs, great music, great lyrics and yet display all of the intensity of the best Hardcore bands.

I saw them for the first time in 1985 on a road trip to Richmond with Ricky Hicks and Scott Williams. Honor Role opened up for Chicago's Articles Of Faith. There weren't a whole lot of people there. AOF were great. Singer Vic Bondi grabbed Scott Williams and screamed lyrics into his face at point blank range while Scott stood there frozen to the spot. I'll always remember that! It was Honor Role that really blew my mind though. Playing very little off of their first 7" that I knew, they played pretty much the bulk of what would make up their first album. When I moved to Raleigh less than a year later and saw them again, I couldn't help but notice that I somehow remembered all of those songs without having heard them since that first Richmond show. That definitely was impressive.

BOB SCHICK (HONOR ROLE, CORAL, DYNAMIC TRUTHS): We would all talk about and listen to records we liked, regardless of style. We were all big fans of Hardcore. But as it became more formulaic, it got less interesting. Same with the Punk stuff before Hardcore. Some of it stands the test of time, some of it doesn't. Some of the records are like perfect snapshots of what life was like at that particular time. Others sum up a feeling perfectly. Others mean something to people for any number of reasons; personal experience, nostalgia, the same things that I attach to different records or bands. None of the band listened to Hardcore exclusively, so as far as the band's development, it was always coming from different directions.

Honor Role started out as a standard Hardcore trio with Pen doing the singing. Their 1983 debut 7 inch, *It Bled Like A Stuck Pig* was an entertaining listen. It was standard Hardcore with quirky Meat Puppets type guitar playing here and there. The band soon added Bob to the band as the vocalist, and by early 1985 (after going through numerous bass players) settled into its stride with the *Judgment Day 7"* being released. From there, all of the songs that the band wrote (at the time) resonated with a maturity and confidence never before heard. Almost all of those songs ended up on the *Pretty Song* album.

Steve Schick and Chip Jones made a formidable rhythm section. Pen Rollins, to this day, is one of the best guitar players that I have ever seen. Ask anybody who knows anything about him and they will agree.

Bob's delivery and presence struck me as being very good. It was commanding without any of the running around or fake intensity so many others exhibited. As a lyric writer, I still feel that there was no one out there that did what he was doing any better. Just listen to the songs AND read the lyrics to these songs. It is a rare example of both facets completely complementing each other in the best way possible. Bob Schick's stories ran the spectrum.

It's more or less the combination of the bands song writing prowess, the chemistry between the band members, the incred-

ible guitar playing of Pen and the amazing delivery and lyrics of Bob that made (and still make) Honor Role the band they were. For some reason, the songs and lyrics never seemed to date the way a lot of music from this era did. In fact, I'd say that Honor Role produced the most timeless music of the era. When was the last time you enjoyed a band who had both great music and great lyrics? It has been awhile.

BOB SCHICK: I have always been into lyrics; they are the most important thing to me. So I've always listened to those very closely. I don't know who influenced me. I was a huge fan of The Fall, but I don't think lyrically the way I wrote was similar. I liked the Birthday Party, but the stuff I wrote was nothing like them. I guess there may have been some similarity to Joy Division, but it doesn't make me feel good to say that and I certainly hope it wasn't as bleak or Gothic as they were. I never tried to copy anyone.

I was at least as influenced by the books I was reading at the time as anyone else's records. I tried to write about people and not problems, not slogans and not politics. I like it better that way. I don't want to change the way anyone thinks as much as I may want to show what it's like to be someone else. What it's like to be completely outside of the way people our age, with our background, our strata live. That the things that we think are important, vital, don't translate at all to someone who's not had our experience. And that lot of things makes the world go around. Often, I would watch other people when I was out. Then I would imagine what their thoughts were, what they were doing and what they wanted to do. Little things that they may not even have been conscious of, and may not have meant anything to them at all would seem important to me.

I don't know why, I would just imagine. I hope the songs and the words have held up well. Since they are not too specific, they will hopefully not become dated.

HONOR ROLE INTERVIEW. Printed in *MRR* issue number 41, October 1986.

Honor Role have two seven inches out, and a debut album, "The Pretty Song" produced by Reed Mullin, out this September. You can see them on tour this fall. Greta of Unseen Force did this interview. Everybody was there except for Chip, who was out on a date.

MRR: How do you feel the upcoming tour will go?

Steve: Probably lousy, miserable.

Bob: I don't think it will be that way at all. I think it will probably be a lot of fun.

Pen: From a popularity aspect, I think it will really help us, but it's not going to be a tour de force or anything, playing to packed houses.

MRR: So what do you think of the new album and single?

Steve: Whoever arranged the songs on the album was like some sort of retard.

MRR: Well, who did it? Not you?

Bob: Pen did it. (Laughter)

Pen: Me and John (engineer) did it and Chip was there and Chip told us how he wanted it...we didn't listen. I think it's a good arrangement.

MRR: You didn't put the hit single on the first groove?

Pen: No, the hit single is on the second side or something, there's not really ANY hit single material on there.

Bob: I think it is a good representation of what we sound like all the way across the record.

Steve: Offer us free beer and a place to stay when we come to your town.

Pen: (still thinking of something else) Meat Puppets.

MRR: How would you like to die?

Steve: I'd probably have a really wonderful day where I ate a



Honor Role in Richmond, VA, 1986. Photo: Chris Schnieder.