



INTO THE GRAVY, written in 1988 by G.W. Sok, singer/lyricist of Dutch band The Ex since 1979, was first published in 1989, as part of a collection of essays on punk ideas and personal ideologies, called Threat By Example. Blah blah blah blah blah-di-blah, and was re-issued in 2002 by Temporary Services.

INTO THE GRAVY

by G.W. Sok
(The Ex)



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Temporary Services

G.W. Sok
INTO THE GRAVY

an essay (or so they say)

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INTRODUCTION

Sometime during the later 1980's, The Ex were asked to contribute to *Threat By Example*, a collection of essays on punk ideas and personal ideologies. These were the writings by the people within the Do-It-Yourself community, about the how's and why's of their lives—what made life worth living and gave it meaning and a sense of purpose. A book about constructive rebellion, as its editor Martin Sprouse called it.

When asked to contribute, my first thought was: Okay we'll do it. Then my second thought was: Oops. Because, doing what we had been doing up till then—since 1979—wasn't always “planned”; most of the time it came kind of naturally—usually reacting instinctively to what was happening around us, deciding on the spot. If something felt good we'd do it, and otherwise: no.

But this time I really had to go sit and think, and then write; about why we did everything we did in the way that we did. Attempting to put down in words the ideas behind our choices... that wasn't always easy. Nevertheless, in the end I kind of managed, and the piece got printed in *Threat By Example* in early 1989.

About thirteen, fourteen years went by since I first wrote the article. Then in 2001, Temporary Services asked if they could reprint this seven-chapter thingy. I said I would give it

a thought, but I reckoned the article to be rather out-of-date by now. I mean, in fourteen years so much has happened in the time gone by. The world has changed so much—and our world too, for that matter. We traveled all over the place since then. Not just Europe only anymore, but also the US, Canada, the East block, glasnost Russia. Those visits made a big impact; our perspectives changed, improved, our world got so much bigger then.

Around 1992 we also realized that this band had become our job somehow. I mean, we didn't have time for real jobs anyway, being that this band was what we loved to do most. And although we got off the dole, it hasn't really affected the way we work. We are still an independent band, living low-budget lives, still organizing everything ourselves, working together—preferably with like-minded people. We still get inspired by the same ideals, aim for the same kind of goals, and still try to cough up music that matters to us and to others.

Anyway, having just returned with the band from Ethiopia (another impressive, mind-blowing experience), and on the eve of our one thousandth concert, I read the piece once again, and convinced myself: It'll do, let's do it. *Into The Gravy* reflects how The Ex looked at things during the eighties, but even now, in the zero years, I still believe it makes sense.

And oh, it's true, I rewrote a couple of sentences, changed a word here and there, corrected the occasional error. But I haven't really changed the original text. It's all still there. And that should do.

So what else can I say? Hey, have a nice day? (Okay.)

- G.W. Sok, April 2002



1. ELVIS & ME

(HOW I WROTE ALL HIS SONGS)

What I like about Elvis Presley is the way he died. Rock 'n' roll couldn't have hoped for a more splendid farewell. I mean, take crashing in an airplane during a heavy storm, or being drunk at the wheel and getting into an accident, or drowning in your own pool; no problem, when you've got enough money. There is nothing heroic about it either, though there are idiots who want to make you believe otherwise. Dropping dead off your bike after getting off drugs, or simply falling out of the window after another fix; at the best it's just a little tragic. A bit more dramatic would be dying live on stage due to a lame heart attack, or death due to the effective enthusiasm of a gun in the hands of a psychotic music lover.

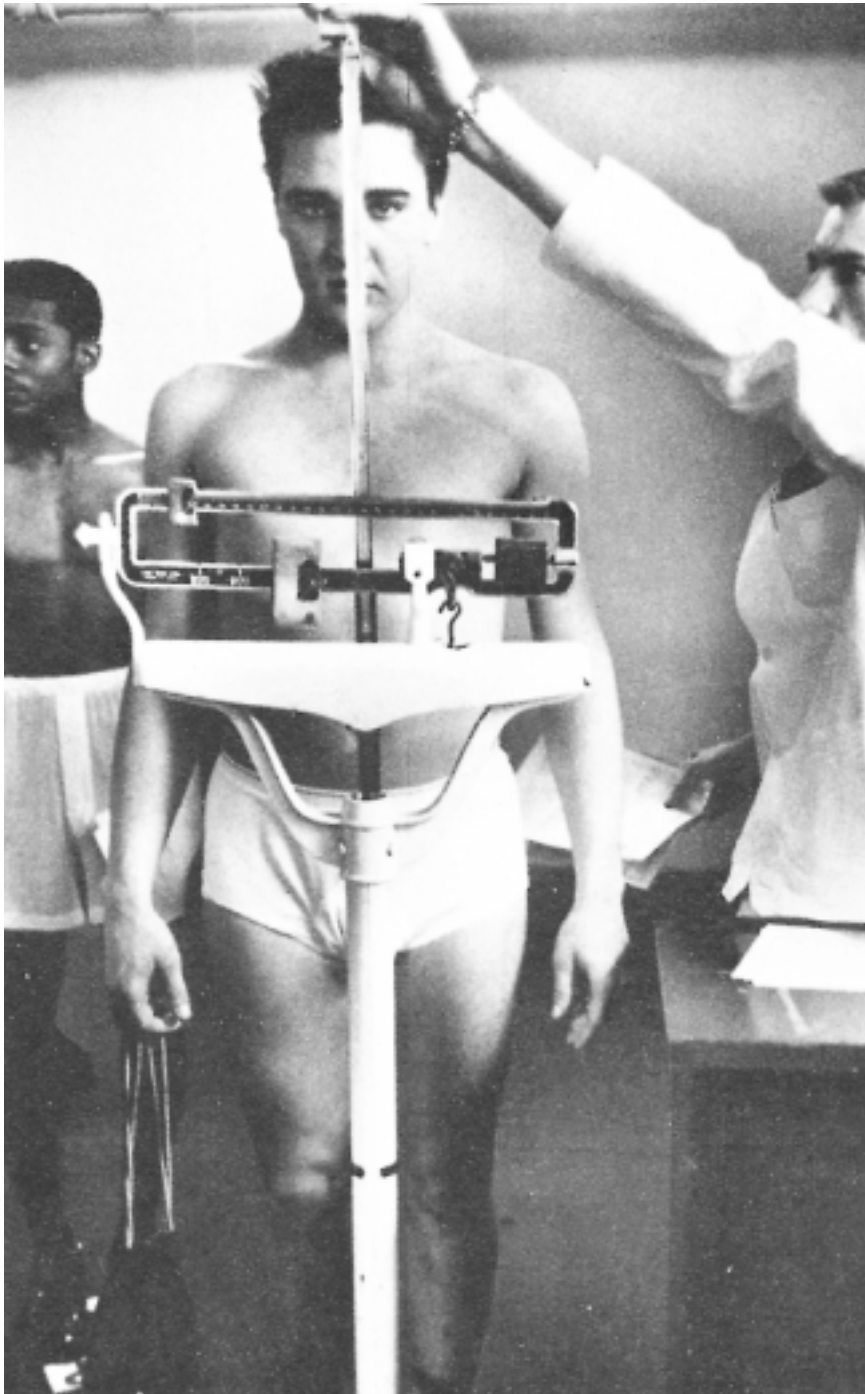
The rumor goes that Elvis Presley died at the moment he decided to join the military service. I love to hear this because it's so true. In fact, he was already dead. Anyone who has ever seen any old film of that living corpse of dressed-up misery, with its combed hair, army uniform and tie, well, they know that what they saw was not a King of Rock, but the ump-teenth newest prewashed product of the good old moralistic bourgeois entertainment industry. And everybody loved it, because this is what the people want: bite-sized, pre-chewed

morsels which are gentle on the teeth and go down easy. To actually put your upper and lower jaw together... Naw, too much effort!

The thing with Elvis Presley is that for nearly twenty years he managed to walk around like a zombie without a single fan realizing it. And not only that, he saw to it that the rest of the world had a lot of fun at the same time. Elvis the Entertainer, who, like a lap-dog, does everything his corrupt manager tells him to; who marries the beautiful daughter of an army-officer, never fucks her but does, nevertheless, become a father, because the people expect him to; who wore more silly costumes than Ronald Reagan could invent misplaced jokes; who copied himself for years and years in Las Vegas singing covers of songs once made famous years ago by himself; who put even more garbage on record than he put into his own body. And just for the record: the President of the USA made this Drug Addict Number One an honorary member of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs!

Did Elvis ever realize what his true talents were? Well, that might have been one question too many for someone who did not mature beyond his sixteenth birthday. But still, the manner in which his body decided to say goodbye to earthly life indicates that, one way or another, he had at least an inkling of what an absurdity he had been. For what could be more impressive than having your bloated body, sated with drugs, placed on the pot by your bodyguards, whereupon, in complete seclusion, you crumple forward, emptying your sick body while falling to the ground, and with your hands and feet firm in your shit and puke you then breathe your lowest and last breath (unaware of the fact that two hours later, four heavyweight bodyguards will be needed to free your already stiffening body from your gold encrusted bathroom).

That is the true spirit of rock 'n' roll, the ultimate struggle for life. Dying in a way nobody who ever took advantage of him could ever have foreseen: biting the dust in the dirt he



had been a part of his whole life. The personification of rock 'n' roll killed by what he had been exploiting to the bitter end: pure shit.

Elvis was a real rebel, more than worthy of his title, “King Of Rock”. That’s why I wrote all his songs.

2. THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

Punk was in town, and it seemed there were concerts everywhere. There was a sort of mood of “hey, wait a second, we can do that too...”, and like so many others, we decided to start a band. How could we know what that would mean? It seemed simply fun, (trying) to make music.

It was the time when the Dutch squatters welcomed the new queen with an unforgettable tumultuous crowning day, the time when it was still possible to win riots over the police. Later, state violence escalated ever faster and then this became impossible. But of course it didn’t mean that from then on everything was nice and quiet on the streets—the various social abuses remained. But it goes without saying that we were inspired by this social movement, also because we were squatters ourselves.

The advantage of starting a punk band was that one didn’t have to be able to play all that well. Lucky for us, because we still had quite a lot to learn (i.e. everything!). We weren’t troubled by knowledge of chord schemes or composing rules, because in our opinion punk rock meant you could do whatever you wanted musically. This seemed ideal to us—especially since we were unable to play any fast punk music at all. I mean, counting till four caused enough problems already.

Our starting point has never been a particular goal or ideal. The band developed and we grew together with it, most of all because we enjoyed making music enormously

(and we still do). We learned how to use the instruments (although we never want to become real musicians—they're boring), and we noticed that there could be more to it than just music for music's sake. You can stick to the practice room, do normal gigs, but also you can play at demonstrations and actions, give people information they won't find in the national press, work out musical projects, or do benefits for good causes. To us music means, most of all, freedom of expression. We see music as a means of striving towards freedom. And basically, there's only one freedom—one where there's no repression.

Through the years, our basic ideas haven't really changed essentially. But we have become a bit less naive, a bit more realistic about our possibilities (and those of the so-called "punk" movement—or is it punk "movement"?). Through our own experiences and the choices we made, we found for ourselves the structures within which we want to (co)operate. When it comes to music, this means the whole band creates the music. There is no boss telling the others what to do. Someone comes up with an idea, the others add to it. Then it's a matter of searching, puzzling and trying before the song has a definite form. Although we developed a certain style of "songwriting" with the years, in principle the music can take any possible shape or form—we're not stuck to one sacred formula, since it's not fucking pop music. It is exciting to search for new approaches to teamwork and creativity, to explore one's own limits and possibilities, then to move those limitations further away.

The lyrics are as important as the music, as they, too, reflect our ideas and opinions. We believe that any kind of cultural expression reflects a political choice—either one of mindless, stupefying escapism from reality or one of happiness and anger. When we know that a block away people are getting evicted, and the cops beat up people for no reason, or a couple of businessmen are kicking large numbers of em-



ployees onto the street, then we're simply not in the mood to sing silly love songs. We get angry about things we see. We sing about the injustice and hypocrisy that happen nearby or even further away. On the other hand, we also sing about things we like, things that inspire us, alternatives to the crap this "civilization" has smacked into our faces.

Playing in a band is not the most important thing in our lives but it is a part of our lifestyle. Neither the lyrics nor the music can be separated from our life outside the band because they have everything to do with one another. As far as we're concerned, as soon as this is not the case, the band would no longer have a reason for existence. We care about equality and democracy within the band and outside the band. For us life is about co-operation and solidarity, not about egotism, greed or competition. This means that we prefer to work with people and bands that have a similar sort of mentality and attitude. Practically this means: no sexist, racist or fascist bullshit in either words or gestures. In terms of gigs, this means no hassle about being the "main" or "support" act (each band is equally important), helping each other out when it comes to lending equipment, and a fair division of the money. (This all sounds very easy and normal, but in the rock culture such an attitude seems to be rather unusual—and that's shit. That's why we hate rock stars, especially the "alternative" ones, since they're supposed to know better.)

We are not idealistic or out of this world, we are realistic. We don't see music as a means of getting rich or famous (in fact, it produces horrible people). Those who dream of that are the ones whose heads are in the clouds, for it means fuck all. For us music is more than a wallpaper of sound. Besides being pure entertainment, it is, above all, communication. On the one hand this means confrontation, an attack on the conditioned listening of sounds—and on the other hand this means identification, the expression of ideas and passing

them on. It is the sound of recognizing mutual ideas and ideals, a way of communication that stretches across countries and language barriers. (Oops, a real statement sneaks into the final paragraph. Sorry about that.)

3. NO MORE HITS

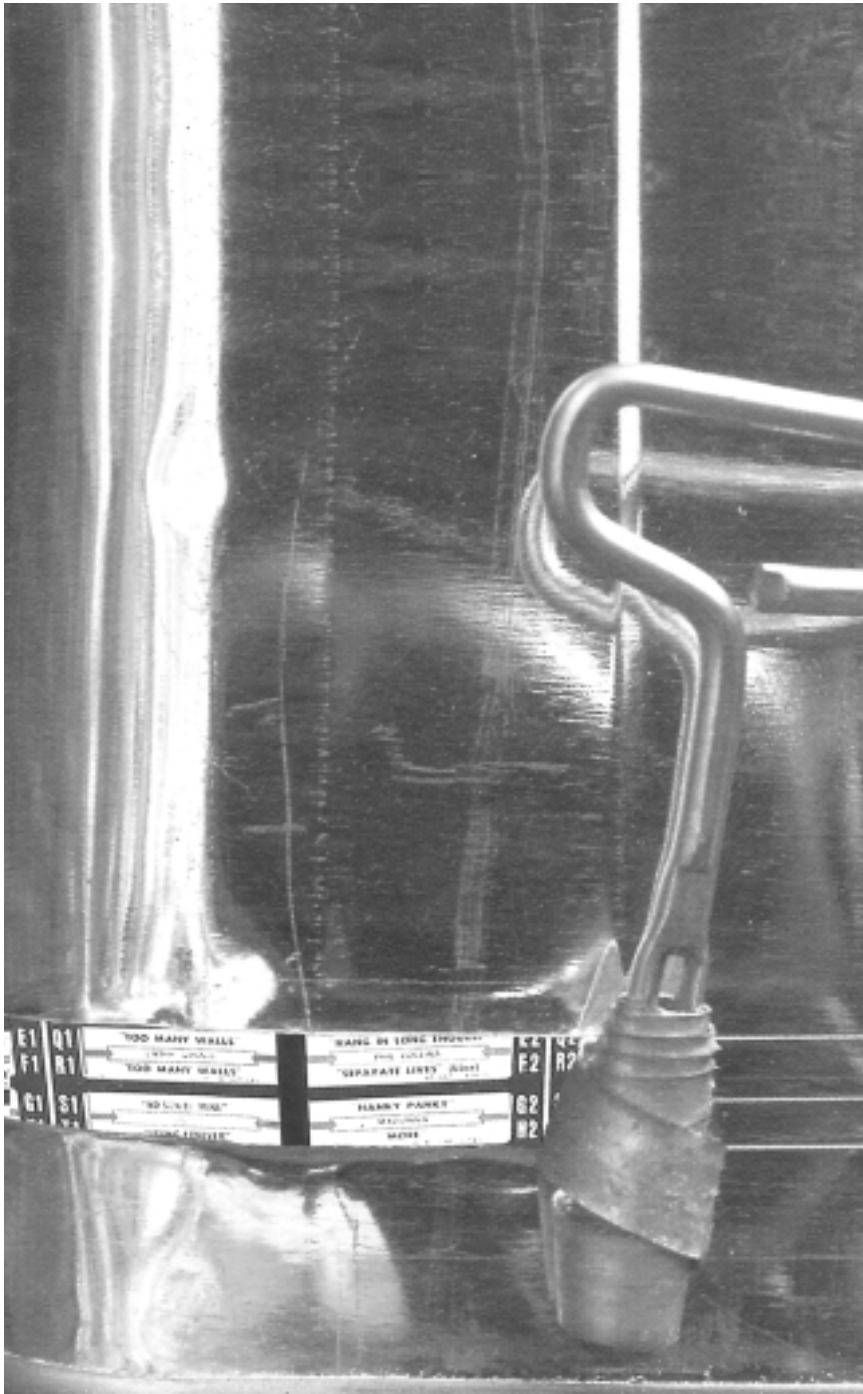
As I come out of the station and walk across the pigeon-shit filled pavement of the square, pushing swiftly through the passers-by, about to cross the street, a streetcar suddenly speeds from around the corner and heads straight up to me.

My body crashes against the yellow metal, sticks there like glue, until the streetcar comes to a stop with gnashing brakes. Then it slips off, drawing bloodlines on the asphalt. Bystanders flock around, frightened faces, screaming, yelling: their eyes shrinking back say that I'd better not have too many illusions about myself.

A man with a black leather bag has struggled through the crowd and is bending over me now. He wipes his glasses clean with a finger (I am surprised I can still focus my eyes) and says he's a doctor. Friendly and superfluously he advises me to move as little as possible. Thanks doc, no problem. For I have the feeling that breath is slipping away completely. And when I beckon the man, with an extreme effort, to come closer, I can only spit a couple of last sentences in his face with the greatest effort. Then I definitely lose consciousness.

My thoughts drown and everything goes black. A reflex action, I take one step back. And it's not till the streetcar has rattled by, that I, dazed and gasping for breath, realize what I've just narrowly missed.

Immortality! The utmost essence of rock 'n' rollishness, summed up in a handsome compilation boxed set with my biggest successes! And ditto, part 2, if possible even part 3. My collected works. The best of. A selection of. Tribute to. A



remix of all my songs in a luxury bargain offer. The final live album. The presumed lost bathroom demos. A brand-new double-album with previously unreleased material. Then the whole lot once again, in different sleeves. Plus the collected interviews, the video-rockumentary and the authorized biography in paperback. In short, everything a self-respecting musician dreams of his whole goddamn life... Success!

A little too late for my appointment, I sit down in the inviting chair. Fortunately some time to come round, before the meeting starts concerning my contract renewal (that ever inevitable intermediate stage on the way to the top).

His secretary beckons. "If I would be so kind to..." I nod and stand up, and follow her into his office...

When my secretary showed me the notes he left on the table in the waiting room after his speedy departure, I could have killed him. The asshole! Walks into the room talking like "you should hear what just happened to me blahblahblah". Is he stupid or what? Does he think we have a money tree or something? We are no fucking charitable fund. Can't he understand we invest our time and money in him not just for the fun of it. We want to see some more results than the couple of marginal little successes that son of a gun has saddled us with. The selfish shit. Finally he had the chance to be of real use to his record company and then the bastard shrinks back. Doesn't he fucking know what it costs to hire a fucking streetcar nowadays?

4. SWISS CHEESE (PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUSE IS)

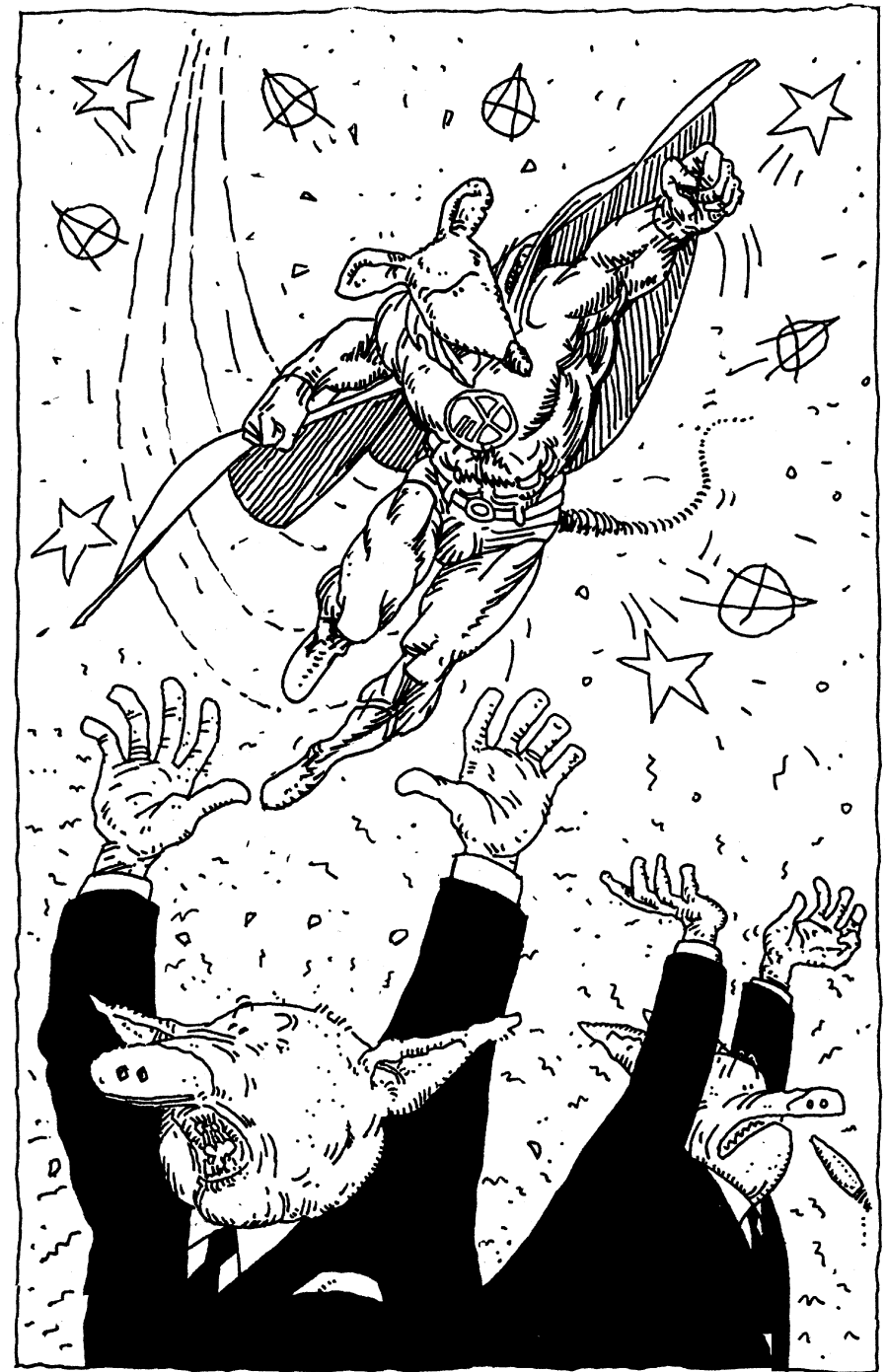
The first thing you smell when you drive into Geneva is fresh air, mixed with the knowledge that this city stinks of a pile of

too much money. Not so strange of course, considering the fact that Switzerland itself is not so much a country but a colossal overgrown sort of safe-deposit box, And so it might seem a bit weird for a so-called anarchist band to go and play in a fucked country full of shit people.

But hey, why exaggerate, every country has its assholes. And so here you won't find a brilliant economic dissertation about how this world is hanging together by strings of greed, power abuse, and repression. Better read a serious newspaper instead, or another good horror story. Or just take a look around you. Because it just isn't normal that a bunch of bastards wish to decide over your head how people are supposed to fill in their lives. We don't tell them not to wear those stupid ties either, do we.

Speaking of bastards, it must be clear that we're not very impressed with the present music biz, for it hardly has much to do with music nowadays. When turbo-drive washing machines turn out to be hit material one day, then you can guess with a hundred percent certainty what the newest trend will be the day after. We don't want to have anything to do with their trappy Sound of Money. We prefer to do things ourselves as much as possible. We make the music and the lyrics we like to make, and that's it. And in case you were wondering: no, we're neither preachers nor prophets. (If you absolutely want a message, leave your phone number and we'll put some rubbish on your answering machine.)

Simply said, we wish to stay as independent as possible. Therefore it is a very important aspect of our way of working that the income for our survival is completely separate from the music. This way we don't have to prostitute ourselves by doing five gigs a week at a series of shitty venues and we won't have to do sell-out tours by playing loads of overused worn-out covers of "the very best of our own all time greats". We wish to keep far from becoming a stupid jukebox. All of the band members are on the dole (we just don't have time



for jobs), which means we are not rich, but it's enough to survive on. The band supports itself with income through gigs and record sales.

We release our own records, whenever we want. We decide on the recordings, the sleeve, the (low) retail-price, and the various extras (like posters, booklets, lyric-sheets, postcards, flexi discs, chewing gum leftovers, bread crusts, anything else we can get excited about).

In Holland we have our own record label, Ex Records, in the rest of Europe and the USA we work together with some other independent distributors and labels. Basically we'd prefer to do it ourselves over there also, but due to the long distance, this is practically impossible.

By the way, "concessions" doesn't have to be a dirty word. Some things you just can't do yourself (pressing records, printing sleeves, distribution), and thus you have to ask others to do that for you. Which by itself is nothing wrong, when you know these others are reliable and not ripping you off. That's not to say that every independent label (large or small) is okay by definition. There are assholes among them too, you have to judge case by case. And it's not a crime in itself either to talk to people of the national music press. We're not always that impressed by them, but some journalists are really interested. When they can be trusted (which is possible, you know), there is no point not talking to them. Even if it's simply for avoiding getting stuck in your own little indie ghetto, because the world is bigger than that.

It's not that everything we touch turns to gold, we make a lot of mistakes, but that's not so bad, because we can learn from them. But everything we do is because we want to do it. There is no boss or manager who prescribes what is and what isn't possible. We decide that ourselves, and that's why we call ourselves an independent band.

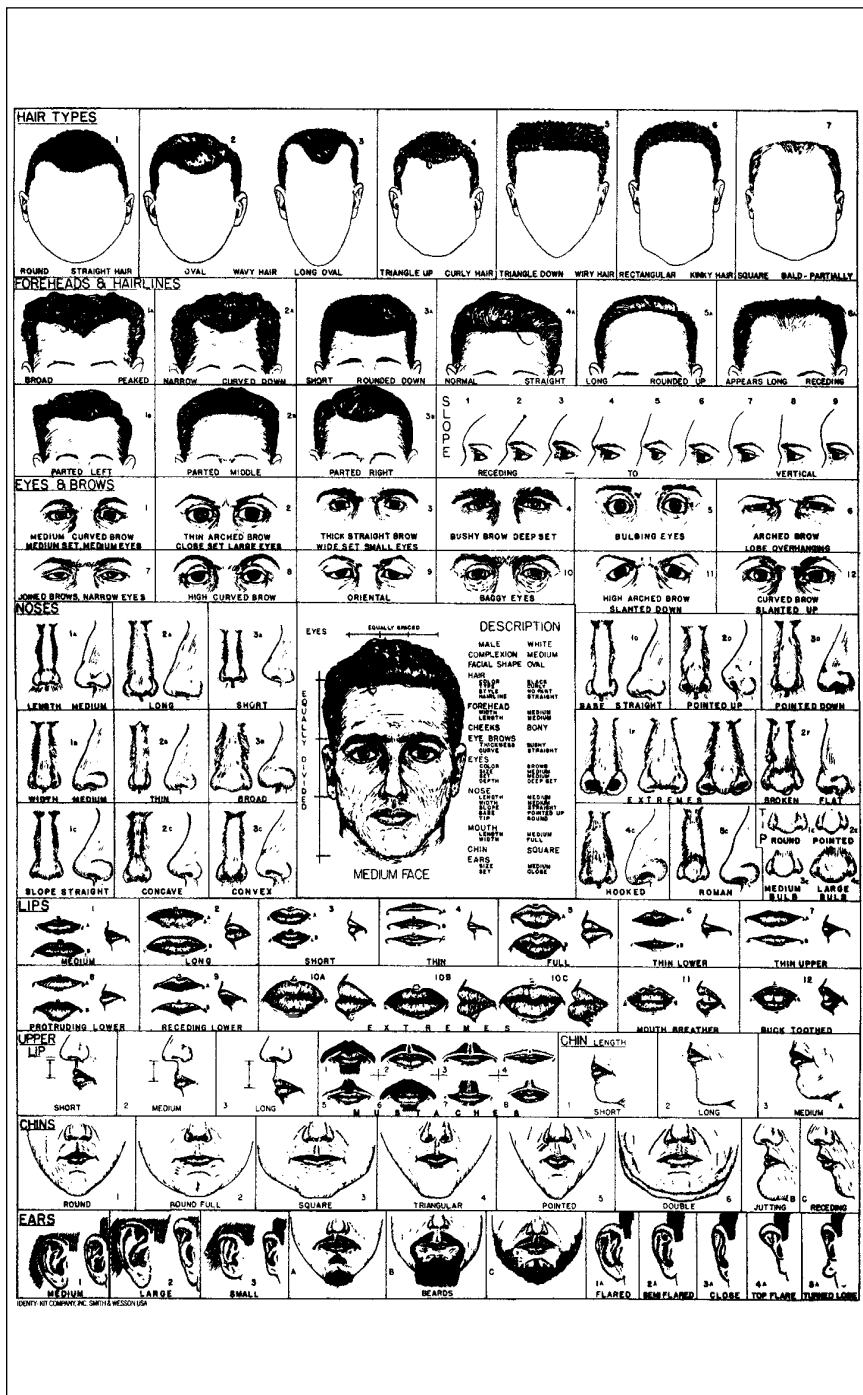
The same principle goes for our concerts. In Holland we organize and book our gigs ourselves, and abroad we get

help from friends. They are people who we got to know through the years via a network of international contacts that mostly work outside the official music circuit. This goes from doing gigs in regular clubs, to playing in sheds, at manifestations and demonstrations, on the roof of a van, in a pub, or a squat, or in an empty factory squatted for the occasion. Although we don't always manage, we try to keep the (potential) entrance fees as low as possible (culture is not only meant for people with lots of money), we usually don't sleep in hotels but at people's places and we happily eat what they serve us. Thus the spot where a band plays or the way it is organized decides to a large extent whether a concert means more than simply playing a set of songs.

Ideally concerts are something for bands, organizers, and the audience together. That is why an illegal concert in a farmer's shack in Czechoslovakia with fifty Czechs going out of their heads does a lot more to us than just another gig in the next hall somewhere in a big city.

Which brings us back to Geneva; the concerts that we've done there illustrate perfectly what I'm saying. Normally, Geneva would mean playing in an expensive shitty club and we wouldn't feel at ease there at all. So our friends over there organize so-called "wild concerts". On the day of the gig they squat an empty factory, while at a secret meeting place, the audience (informed in the weeks before through word of mouth) waits for a sign to get in. In no time there is a generator providing electricity, light, drinks, food, equipment, an audience; and music, of course.

Everybody helps where help is needed and everybody is important (the police don't interfere simply because there's so many people). After the concert the gear is packed in and all the people leave the way they came. I'm not saying this kind of concert is possible everywhere (a regular club can be good too), but it just makes you realize that the distance between Amsterdam and Czechoslovakia and Geneva can be



a lot less far than the distance between your room and the local concert of another spoilt arrogant rock star.

5. FUCKFACE RIDES AGAIN

He's nowhere and everywhere, returned though he never really left, inseparable from the scene. Hardly distinguishable from your friends, often only detected too late. His name is Fuckface, but that's a pseudonym because otherwise you'd recognize him! Difficult childhood, sure. We know that line.

"Then I would stand in front of the mirror, mouthing the words of the music, you know. With an empty toilet paper roll for a mike and I would flush the toilet at the end, for the enormous applause. Almost real. Only the last time it was a bit disappointing."

How come? Did your parents catch you?

"No, the water was cut off."

If there's a concert, Fuckface will be there too and everybody will know it because Fuckface needs room to "dance". He isn't afraid to take it kicking and pushing. It's no big deal, he thinks. He calls it anarchy, because he doesn't know what the word means.

"Those wimps shouldn't whine so much. That's so square. They can't stand anything. I do what I want, that's my right."

But doesn't anarchy mean above all, that you also have respect for others, that you don't obstruct their freedom?

"They can dance where they want, can't they? But not in the pit, okay? It's tougher there, like it should be."

Unfortunately, Fuckface also formed a group. "100% Do-It-Yourself," their boss says, and "all the politically-aware lyrics." Fuckface is against the system and it sounds best via double Marshall towers. And damn it, he's got success. How sad that apart from his lyrics he's nothing more than a sexist macho asshole.

“Yeah, really wild, man. Good show, afterwards, lots of booze, chicks and messing up the hotel, you know... all the food stuck to the walls.”

But doesn't that mean that in fact it all means nothing but... “Ah shut up, take another beer, stupid.”

Fuckface isn't afraid of reality. For within his safe indie city it's a piece of cake to revile the big bad world around him. And when he can profit from it, he'll walk over to the other side just as easy. If you can't beat the enemy, join him, you know. So he calls himself independent, and alternative, or whatever. It doesn't matter, really, it just means absolutely nothing.

“Sure I got my principles. But such an offer I can't refuse, man. So much money I wouldn't make on the indie circuit in twenty years.”

So you're doing it for the money then?

“No no, definitely not. But why not take it when it's there? Besides, we can reach a far bigger audience than we have been doing so far.”

But who needs a bigger audience when you don't have anything to say?

“All that political bullshit... Better have some fun, man.”

And Fuckface goes on, because he doesn't know how to stop. He's the spreading cancer in any movement where people work together on the basis of mutual trust and respect to build something positive. Where power relations are being refused and greed is laughed at, Fuckface grabs his chance. For Fuckface is the asshole, a parasite on other people's good intentions. He's the leech sucking blood, the egotist that, in the end, sticks his head up always and everywhere.

When he's “grown up”, he finds a job (civil service, factory, army), gets a wife, has two or three kids, votes for the wrong presidential candidate and hangs out in front of the TV in a chair with a crate of beer for his companion. He's the sucker

who forbids his children to sing to music in front of the mirror (and therefor slyly cuts off the water supply).

“Fuckface.”

Yeah, I knew that already. But what's your real name?

“You'll never guess...”

Dickhead.

“Hey how did you know that?”

I just wrote a piece about you.

6. CARROTS FROM HELL

What we like about music is the fact that it can be both a direct and an indirect form of communication. It's not only possible to make records and tapes so people consume passively, but one can also use music via concerts to get a confronting reaction from the audience. We don't mean to say that we think other media are inferior or that we don't want to use them. On the contrary. But in our case we prefer to use these other media as an integrated part of our music. At concerts we might use banners and posters, and sometimes leaflets to express some of our ideas. With the records there are always lyric sheets, booklets, posters or other things we think are interesting.

We don't have one definite, outlined route. In fact, we always react to what is going on around us, situations we're in or things we have to deal with directly or indirectly but which concern us. Sometimes this results in a single or an album with various topics or just doing some gigs. At other times, it can mean adopting a specific topic for a project or the organization of an event or benefit gigs.

At the end of 1985 we had the idea to put out a double 7” (basically because we hadn't so far). Then we got in contact with people working on a book about the Spanish Civil War (in 1986 it would be fifty years ago when the war started).

They told us about this enormous archive of the Spanish anarchist workers' union, CNT, housed in Amsterdam and recently made available to the public. After seeing the thousands of impressive photos, we knew we had found our subject. One of the factors in this decision was the fact that most of these photos had never been published before, and that in most of the existing books on this period (over 2,000 at least!) the anarchist point of view was very much neglected (if mentioned at all). Another thing was, that after having researched the subject a bit to get a good idea of what took place then, we saw clear links between what happened then and what is happening now. This made it even more interesting as the project had a strong link with the present reality. Out of the many photos, we chose 150 to tell the story of the revolution. In the cover of the book were two 7" s, each with an Ex-version of a Spanish rebel song from that period and a song in English about this piece of history.

However it wasn't the first time we did a project like this. Back in 1982 we made "Dignity Of Labour", a box with four 7" s, plus a booklet about the closing of a paper factory in a small Dutch town. One reason for this was that some of us lived there (and still do) when the factory closed its gates. In fact we had squatted the former manager's villa the year before, We were close to the fire, so to speak. Not only that, it was also a period in which similar events took place all over Holland (the closing of Ford's car factory and Gilda's liquorice factory, among others). It was a "brilliant" example of how a factory was closed down by a multinational corporation who gave fuck all about the employees. Not that they had such nice jobs (it was literally sickening work), but for a large part of the community it meant their daily bread. They gave the best years of their lives and were chucked out like a piece of garbage (and alas, this sort of things keep on happening).

Musically speaking, the singles box was a definite change in our style. Till then we made strictly structured songs. This



time we mostly improvised, used tapes of various machine noises, invited some guest musicians for a contribution, and used more unusual instruments like the marimba, double-bass, and woodblocks. We couldn't get permission to record at the factory's ruins, so we recorded the basis-tracks in a studio and then sneaked into the ruins to fill the last tracks there. The eight untitled pieces of music, the lyrics, and the booklet tell the factory's history, not from a neutral point of view, of course. Otherwise there wouldn't be much use in doing the project in the first place.

Another adventure was the "Blueprints For A Blackout" album from 1984. For this project, we had gathered a lot of ideas at the time, which we wanted to work out during the recordings (the lyrics would be written during the sessions too), plus we had a couple of songs we already had been playing live. Again we asked some guest musicians and we used noise-collages and unusual "instruments" (marching beer crates for instance).

Instead of the industrial noise of the "Dignity" box, this time the music spanned a wider range of styles; it varied from hard and noisy to minimal and melodic. The double album came with a king size booklet with all the lyrics and with photo-montages, plus a poster about a then recent major squat eviction.

The latest major project was the double-album "Too Many Cowboys", which was released in the summer of 1987. It contained mostly live recordings plus some tracks recorded in the studio, and it included a 24-page newspaper, containing articles about several topics (Nicaragua, censorship, DIY, Animal Liberation Front, a.o.). Some of the articles we wrote ourselves, others were written by people we regularly work with or whose work we appreciate.

Among the smaller projects was a split 7" with a group of Kurdish refugees, Awara. This single contained information and music about the Kurdistan case (mid 1984). In a way it

was also a sort of statement showing that these two totally different types of musicians have a lot in common, because basically they are both about one and the same thing.

Next to that, we have done a lot of benefit gigs, and together with befriended bands, we've organized several benefit tours. On the one hand we do benefits to express solidarity, pass on information (especially the information you won't find in the official press), and on the other hand simply to raise money. We did this with Zowiso and Morzelpronk+Nico in 1984 for the British miners' strike (and later on also released a benefit album for the strike, in early 1985): with BGK and the Wandas in 1985 for the antimilitarist Onkruit activists, and with Chumbawamba in 1987 for the anarchist prisoners support organization, Black Cross.

At the end of 1988 we also contributed two songs to "Intifada", a compilation album with seven Dutch bands about the Palestinian Uprising. Before that, during the summer, we released a benefit 7" for the people arrested on suspicion of being involved with the Rara (Revolutionary Anti Racist Actions). It points out the hypocrisy of the Dutch government, which, although stating otherwise, supports apartheid by putting the anti-apartheid activists on trial (and thus backing up the collaborating Dutch companies).

Of course we know that the money raised from those benefits means drops in the bucket (we're not totally stupid), but they also are an expression of solidarity and direct support. Another nice thing about all this, about doing what we've been doing, is that we have met a lot of people, who, all in their own way, big or small, are trying to make this world a better place to live in. Because they show that it's possible to create an alternative to the dehumanizing everyday reality, they are an inspiration for us. Every now and then, one needs that kind of confirmation of the feeling that it does matter, that there are more of us out there, that what we're doing is life-affirming.



And what all this has to do with carrots from hell, you ask? Honest, I don't know. Not yet, that is. This story still hasn't finished, you see.

7. RAMBI (OR: WHO KILLED BAMBO?)

... turned onto his other side, and thus claimed the rest of the blankets, she awakened. Slowly. Out of a deep sleep.

She looked aside, and became cold. Vague, numb memories in her sleepy cranium. Fuck, is this a dream, was she still drunk? Did she really... sleep with him? No idea, but blurred images in her dawning consciousness. Anyway, she couldn't remember. Not very well. Brrr...

She stood up, put on her bathrobe and walked to the window. Shit weather. But... as she opened the curtains wider, letting the sunlight into the room, the events of the night before came back to her memory, bit by bit.

Oh yeah, the music seminar... She felt a bit lost there, walking round among all those artists and business people, she was bored. Suddenly he stood there, overwhelmingly charming, showering her with more compliments than a girl could hope for. He had seen her play once, he said, she had talent. She was going to make it big. He was sure of it. And in case she was still looking for someone to help her improve her voice, and help her with the business side of her career (not at the cost of her integrity of course, but one did need friends in this business), his services were available. She felt flattered by all this considerate attention, and so it became a pleasant evening after all. Then when he offered to bring her home it was already late, and the moon was shining so bright that she thought it was the beaming future itself smiling down upon her.

But in the daylight it all looked a lot more sober. His costume was expensive but ugly and it stank of aftershave. His mouth smelled of cigars, the thick stub lay stinking in her ashtray. She hesitated. What should she do with him? Did he really mean what he had said, did she believe it herself? She didn't know what to think. Maybe it was still too early to think about it properly. Well, she'd see. But then she looked out of the window lost in thought and stared at the mountains of gold in the distance. Ah, such an adventure, that would be nice, wouldn't it? Lots of traveling, full halls, the world at her feet: success, fame, riches.

She heard a soft sound and turned. He was upright in bed, wide awake (how long had he been sitting there?), and he moved his hand kind of familiar under the blanket.

"Hi there, my sweet little thing," he said friendly. But the hurried tone in his voice made her stiffen and she turned her eyes away. She looked into the mirror, but the mirror looked back. Then she looked at him, but he too was watching her. And for a moment she couldn't tell which was which.

The awful smell of his newly lit cigar butt penetrated her nostrils, and suddenly everything fell into place, the thousands-of-times-promised-mountains-of-gold-at-the-end-of-the-rainbow, the inevitable reality of the music whores in the coke commercials, and the realization of who were killing pure rock 'n' roll over and over again. Why should she go hunting for bigger cigars? She didn't even smoke. And actually, she preferred to keep it that way. Seemed so much healthier somehow.

Hopefully she could get rid of him before breakfast.



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