

SUBMACHINE

I (Frank FOE) talked to Submachine when they recently played the Chameleon in Lancaster, with Vision. DOUG plays bass, ALEX sings, GREG drums, "the Stay free marshmallow man" JEFF plays guitar and RICK was the second guitar player that night. The two times I've seen them since that interview, RICK wasn't there and another drummer was playing. They like to rotate members, keeps things fresh...

FOE When did the band originally start?

DOUG Thanksgiving 1989. Our first show was in 90. That's when I got together with Jim. I didn't know his name or anything. All I knew was there was a guy who played guitar who wanted to start a band, whose phone number was MUDTOES.

ALEX That's area code 412!

DOUG I just called up and said, "Hello Mudtoes? You want to be in a band?" And he came over and I played Hasil Adkins for him and he thought I was weird.

FOE Is green the official color of Pittsburgh punk band's album covers? (Referring to the Half Life and Submachine lps, both of which use green and black on their covers...)

ALEX Oh you're talking about the Half Life thing aren't ya. (These guys are quick!)

DOUG I did that cover... Green is the color of Pittsburgh, because green is the color of money.



FOE In the song "Fabulosity", whose sister is that based on? Or what are the lyrics about.

DOUG Fabulous people. Young 22 year old people who move from city to city, spreading good will everywhere they go...

ALEX Off of their parents money...

DOUG And they want to be poets and artists and stuff like that, we sort of live a different lifestyle than these people but we keep running across these people everywhere we go.

ALEX They are in the mechanics of things, they are always one step ahead of you.

DOUG They are always the ones who don't play our songs on college radio.

ALEX Sister refers to a general thing...

FOE Why does February suck? (Referring to the same song)

ALEX Cause we're from Pennsylvania. By the time February rolls around, you are just like, this is too long. (Referring to the weather).

DOUG Thank god we don't live in Minnesota.

GREG We'd all be carrying guns.

FOE Where'd you get all the samples you used on the album?

SUBMACHINE "Barfly", "Cheech and Chong's Up In Smoke".

ALEX If you want to understand Submachine, watch "Barfly" and "Shakes the Clown".

DOUG Then you'll understand all the references that we make. Seeing as we've given up on language and all we do is quote other people. And thus is the same with our musical writing.

FOE And what bands would you listen to if you want to understand Submachine?

JEFF Poison Idea, Dwarves, Motorhead.

DOUG New Bomb Turks.

ALEX I think we've been listening to a lot more poppier stuff lately. Dead Boys, Black Flag, some old British stuff.

DOUG The Pink Lincolns rock.

ALEX I see you skated around the "What are your influences" question. That's what you meant.

FOE It worked didn't it (these guys ARE quick!)

ALEX Oh yeah. Good work funny man.

DOUG I have not written a new note that nobody hasn't heard before. In fact I can't even play the notes that I have written.

JEFF There were only two rock songs ever written, one fast and one medium tempo.

DOUG Well there was "Johnny B Goode" and "Louie Louie". So we are just like everybody else and basically just covering those songs.

FOE What do you think you'd be doing if you didn't drink?

JEFF I think I'd be collecting worms because I would have killed myself by now.

ALEX If you didn't drink then you'd probably be serious about stuff.

DOUG Well, we've already given up so we understand that we might as well sedate what is left and get through it. I'd probably buy a really big stereo and collect a lot of records, that I wouldn't listen to.

ALEX I was going to be a CEO for some company.

JEFF I'd be in an emo band.

GREG I'd be a DEA agent.

DOUG It's only a matter of time that anybody emo or anybody serious like realizes how bad the world sucks and wises up and just decides to...

JEFF Or just gets laid...

DOUG I'm 21, I'm not emo any more!

FOE What is the official beer of Submachine?

ALEX Usually when we are on the road we try and bring a case of Iron City.

JEFF It's a home town pride thing.

ALEX But GREG can't, he's allergic to hops.

GREG I drink whiskey.

JEFF I mainly drink whiskey, bourbon is my favorite poison.

ALEX My liver is going to go first. We're gonna start throwing in some money, have a pool to see who's liver drops first.

JEFF See who can shit it out first.

DOUG I don't think I've pooped a solid poop in three years.

ALEX It means your system is being cleaned out. Just as long as it is kind of dark, so I've heard.

JEFF Say something RICK! (Rick is the silent member of Submachine - it's hard to keep up with the rest of these guys)

FOE What do you think about shows like this, when everyone kind of stays back. I thought it was kind of odd, cuz like the last time I saw you in Philly, that was a great show...

GREG You got to play in front of your element.

DOUG Everybody was drunk right (at the show in Philly)...

GREG This is definitely a hardcore crowd (Vision was headlining) or maybe even a Pearl Jam, MTV crowd.

FOE How come your new guitar player RICK plays live with his shirt on?

GREG Cuz he's not as fat as the rest of us. As soon as we fatten him up..

DOUG Cuz his tattoos are on his legs...

GREG Why didn't you wear your chicken outfit.

DOUG That mother fucker is too hot. I can only wear that once a year. Halloween is the anniversary of our first show, so every year we have a big Halloween party. This year there was this pop band that is quite popular in Pittsburgh that has a cd out and all this crap. And they were supposed to play at the Decade, Pittsburgh's home of rock and roll. And they bring a lot of people in, and ALEX asked Billy if we could play that night, and he bumped them to put us on that night, cuz he knew that not only would he have more fun, but he would sell more beer amongst our 55 friends... I work at a tattoo shop there are seven people who work there, six of them called off, and one was under 21 so he couldn't go anyway.

FOE Day jobs?

ALEX I cook and that's kind of part time. And then at night I'm in charge of all the doormen at a bar.

DOUG I was a librarian for eight and a half year, and I quit so I could be a rock star. And now I make piercing jewelry in a tattoo shop.

JEFF I'm a construction guy when I'm working. Right now I'm not working.

ALEX GREG (who went upstairs to check out Vision) is a student.

FOE I would like to hear some stories now. Best and worst drinking/band stories...

DOUG This is a good one. There were all these people at my house and I threw in a video, I thought it was going to be a regular movie, but no it was a home video that I made with my girlfriend. I threw it in, turned it on and walked into the kitchen and then came back out and was like "Oh Boyyy" There were a few red faces in that living room. I just stood in front of the television...

ALEX This is off the top of my head. We were asked to play a house wrecking party. This dude was breaking his lease and dicking his landlord, who was a complete asshole. We played with like three other punk bands from Pittsburgh. The deal was, wreck shit, play and drink and everything. It started with people doing little stuff and it escalated to skiing down the steps, and riding a yankee clipper sled down the steps. Then **JEFF** found a piano, and they busted it up and tried to roll it down the stairs. The kitchen cabinets were thrown down the stairs. An old friend of ours Ron, found an old rusty machete and started to try and chop down the support beams for the house.

JEFF People were just going insane. I actually had to leave at one point because I was afraid of flying shrapnel.

DOUG People throwing beer bottles, jars of pickles.

JEFF John Ajax and Eric Lambert were just a tornado of destruction.

ALEX The cops came, they were old lady cops, and I was wearing my kilt and I showed them my legs. They said nice legs and I said thank ya lass.

DOUG Then we took the keg out and nobody saw us.

JEFF My favorite story was in Tuscon Arizona, when we were on tour. In one day we drank an entire gallon of Jim Beam between about four people. We played someone's house. The keg was in the living room, we played in the living room. There was like a hundred people in this house. It was utterly destroyed.

DOUG We had to buy the beer by the way. We were on tour and WE had to buy the beer.

JEFF These people went completely berserk. There were two guys named Mark. They called the big one Beef and the small one Veg., for obvious reasons. I see Beef stop dancing, and he sticks his fist through the wall and through the cabinet behind it in the kitchen and a bowl comes flying out of the cabinet at about mach 8 and ricochets about six times in the kitchen and lands right in the sink. I almost broke a fucking nut, laughing so hard.

ALEX It was funny watching other people drink at that place. There was a girl and this guy. This kid is on his girlfriend's car, on the hood of the car, she was obviously a little bit wealthy, it was a nice, cherry red car. He's on the hood of the car, jumping up and down, trying to kick the window in, while she is throwing 40 oz beer bottles at him So her and her friend leave. The kid follows them to her house and the neighbor comes out to talk to the girl. He's going to protect the girl. He gets his ass kicked, by the kid. The kid goes upstairs, kicks everybody's ass upstairs, gets arrested. The girl and her friend come back to the party. And the girl goes "Oh but I love him. We're still going to get married".

JEFF They were actually making fun of the neighbor for trying to defend them from her boyfriend.

DOUG I was afraid to sleep down there, cuz they had bugs bigger than robins flying around. The wings from these bugs were making sand fly. RICK, say something! And take your shirt off God damn it! He didn't even take his hood off.

FOE The song "Rage", how do you cope with it when you feel the rage?

ALEX I usually get loaded.

FOE I kind of figured that was going to be your answer.

ALEX The whole song isn't about me. I was looking for feedback from other people. How do I cope, I write a fucking stupid song.

DOUG And then kids take it seriously, and think you have some meaning behind it.

ALEX Hardly. Anybody gets just as pissed off as we get.



FOE It's just getting the shit out, that is what punk rock is about..

ALEX Is that it?

DOUG Would you call it cathartic.

ALEX It is part of it. To me it is part of the whole music thing.

JEFF Aggression and anger.

ALEX Punk rock is rock and roll. You can still be pissed off and have a great time.

DOUG That's why we're here, to have a good time. We're obviously not in it for the money.

(GREG comes back from upstairs, where Vision was playing)

GREG I want to dance but I'm gonna kill somebody. I'm gonna kill me a nazi.

DOUG GREG is one of the few real skinheads that I know. I mean there are a lot of people with bald heads...

GREG Alot of people say I can't be a skinhead because I don't drink beer.

DOUG Yeah, hey do you have a good drinking story...

GREG How about when we got pulled over...

SUBMACHINE (wild reply)

GREG Coming from Austin Texas. I slept through the fucking night. Woke up and we were half way through New Mexico and almost in fucking Arizona.

JEFF We were in El Paso when you took over.

GREG Alright, anyways, we get pulled over by the border patrol, we had just smoked a big hooter, and the cops start asking me questions like "Where did you come from?". And I'm thinking Texas, and I want to say New Mexico, but all that gets out of my face is "NMMMexico".... "Can we please search the van sir?". So they got like two bags of weed off of us. It was just crazy. They said it was such a small amount that it wasn't worth taking us in...

ALEX Besides that, they said "And we really don't know what this is".

GREG "Unless we have an analyst come and check this stuff out".

ALEX "But just to be sure of it..."

GREG & ALEX (in unison) "Get rid of it".

GREG So he takes me inside to the bathroom, at the rangers station, he's like "you just got to get rid of it". And I say, "Do you care how I get rid of it?" He's like I don't really care at all. He turned his back and walked to the door of the bathroom and I start eating pot. I end up with about a quarter of a bag left, I dumped a little bit out and handed the rest to him and he folded it up and put it in his pocket. So then we go out to the van, he gives us back our knives, didn't give us back our pipes. They overlooked this huge steamroller that we had right on the floor. They stepped on it like twice. We take a swig of bourbon, give them a salute and we're back on the road!

DOUG Anyway, we're on the "Iron City Punk" cd, "Punk USA" on Lookout, "Free Yourself" cd in Germany, "Lube Job" compilation, "Pittsburgh Punk Ain't Dead" compilation, the "Mindless Device" ep,

split ep with Filth, "Sex Deterrent" ep, "Now That I've Given Up Hope I Feel Much Better" lp...

JEFF We're doing a split with the Blanks 77. We're both doing Dwarves songs.

ALEX We're doing a split with the Pink Lincolns.

GREG CHUMPIRE/OX (Coming downstairs after Vision was finished) Vision broke all of the beer bottles in the back room. They went on stage after getting straight edge revenge on all the bottles.

DOUG Did they roll around on all the broken glass like real punkers?

GREG Nah, this is hardcore not punk.

ALEX I don't understand it?

JEFF SAY SOMETHING RICK!!!

FOE Tour stuff?

ALEX We're going to go in June, and we'll be doing a week with the Queers, cuz they are friends of ours and for some ungodly reason they actually like us a little bit.

DOUG I think they are faking it.

GREG They're scared.

FOE Maybe you are really being hired as their bodyguards.

ALEX Nah, they are actually really nice guys.

DOUG We did we get Joe King drunk. He got Submachine drunk.

ALEX He didn't get us drunk, he got "submachine drunk". Which is a term....

DOUG It's a level of drunkenness

ALEX It's like saying "Man I was really fucked up". "I was Submachine drunk".... Anyway we'll be doing about five weeks in June...

FOE There are only four weeks in June...

DOUG Ohhh asshooooole!

ALEX He's sharp like a marble... End of September, early October we'll do Europe.

DOUG We're an international pop sensation for chrissakes!... So this girl came up to me, this is one of the advantages of being in a punk rock band... you get girls... she says give me 12 inches and make it hurt, so I fucked her 4 times and hit her with a brick..

ALEX You ripped off Dice Clay you fuck! Except he only had to fuck her twice.

DOUG That is my one statement for all humanity to remember, there is only one person in the world with a smaller dick than me, George Bush. I watched a biography on A&E channel the other day, about George Bush, and they said he had a real small wiener..

FOE Any bad drug stories?

GREG We have no bad drug stories! We're responsible drug abusers.

ALEX We're happy drunks..

JEFF Not one overdose on tour yet!

GREG We thought we had one overdose when we tried to wake Ajax up at the border patrol. It took like 5 minutes to wake him up. The cops are like "What's wrong with him?"

JEFF He's Ajax!

ALEX He's just a little bit tired.

DOUG We stole a rubber machine one time.

ALEX When us and the Blanks went on tour...

DOUG The Intellectuals 77.

JEFF The IQ 77. We love them. They are nice people.

ALEX We get to this place, the guy who set up the show wasn't there, nobody else was there except for the other band, who happened to be a straight edge band. So we proceeded to drink for the next three hours, having water fights, and so after a while we decided we probably should go, but we might as well shop before we left, so I grabbed the condom machine..

DOUG I think I tried to take a ladder, but it wouldn't fit in the van. Just in case we needed it on tour. Somebody asked us if we got the money out of the condom machine. We hadn't thought of that. We just took all the rubbers.

FOE What did you do, ditch the machine with all the money in it?

DOUG In Georgia! And still I came home with VD!



FOE Is there anything you want me to edit out of this interview?

DOUG No.

JEFF We wouldn't have said it if there was.

DOUG We're fucking straight up!

JEFF ASK A QUESTION OR I'LL KILL YOU! (Directed at GREG Chumpire)

GREG Ok I'm thinking. Ok. What would matter more to you, a lifetime supply of porn or a lifetime supply of alcohol.

JEFF Alcohol.

DOUG That's a question that you can't ask.

ALEX No that is a question you can answer.

Although, you see, you guys keep talking about drinking like that is our sole purpose.

GREG Yeah, pornography is up there too!

What did we do the first time we went to Cleveland, we went to the porno store, cuz the guy that was putting on the party got arrested, and the party got canceled.

DOUG Exactly.

FOE Alright, then give us a top five.

ALEX There are only three things I like! TV! Drinking! Girls! The band!

EVERYONE That's four.

DOUG And this chair!

ALEX And this hat! And this book of matches in case I want to light myself on fire!

DOUG Oh I'm picking out a Thermos for you!

ALEX That is the Jerk in case you don't know. Top 5 things. Girls, liquor, tv, drugs and music.

DOUG I like big butts. That's number six.

FOE I think that is a sub category under girls.

GREG I've been getting steadily drunker during this fucking conversation.

DOUG I'm not conversing. I'm just talking.

ALEX I was doing ok, and then I started getting drunk.

(Talk switches from stories about a relation of Jeremy - the guy who released the Submachine lp on CI, and the guy who set up that night's show-, to all of the "moms" that Submachine has including, but not limited to the following Cindy mom in Pittsburgh, Cathy mom in Philadelphia, Julie mom in Chicago, to all other kinds of nonsense... until...)

BOUNCER GUY We'll be closing up here shortly....

ALEX Thank you... so Ajax and I went upstairs and DOUG was sleeping with his face all stuck to the pleather couch and we thought it would be funny to try and start DOUG on fire. So we try to light his pants on fire, cuz he had holes in his jeans, with all the frays, and we're lighting it on fire and it would burn for like a half a second and then go out, cuz his pants were so greasy and full of snot, they wouldn't burn. So we couldn't get our kicks off of that. So Ajax pulls his pants down and puts DOUG's hand on his wang and I took a picture of course, cuz it was funny.

JEREMY We gotta talk cash..

DOUG OK We've had enough of you FOE.

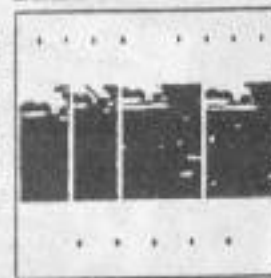
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