

choices. I will allow that there are also people who just don't give a shit about things like this, but for those who do want to find a way to return to a lifestyle that doesn't involve trading in nine hours of our day, every day, for a few pieces of paper, this could be the book for you. It drives home deeply that there is a serious crisis modern civilization is facing but does allow for hope and a solution. —Steve Hart (PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623)

versed in all the sordid details of the Crass mythology, so he sticks to sharing his own impressions of the bigger forces at work, and one comes to understand how crushingly difficult it was for Ignorant to reside in the world of Crass that he helped create.

The autobiography was composed by Ignorant sitting down and telling his life story in bits and pieces to Steve Pottinger, who transcribed and edited Ignorant's reminiscences. That fragmented structure of delivering what are basically a collection of anecdotes is

## “More than just crazy conspiracy theories involving junk food and soda.”

—Andy Conway

*Edible Secrets—A Food Tour of Classified US History*

### **Rest Is Propaganda, The**

By Steve Ignorant (with Steve Pottinger), 300 pgs.

This is Steve Ignorant's autobiography; his attempt to add his voice to those writing the history of Crass. Here are the basic elements of his story: Stephen Williams was born in 1957 to a broken, working class home. He was mostly raised by his grandparents, hated the oppression of school, and drifted more-or-less aimlessly until he saw The Clash play live in 1976. After that, he decided he wanted to be the singer of a punk band. He changed his name to Steve Ignorant, enlisted the help of drummer Penny Rimbaud and a few other liked-minded people, and called themselves Crass. The band rigorously stuck to their anarchist ideology, DIY ethos, and personal principles. In so doing, they virtually invented the template for anarcho-punk and gained a worldwide following, but also created an oppressively stifling situation that was unsustainable for members of the band. After Crass collapsed under its own weight, Steve was left rudderless, questioning who he was and what he wanted from life. He briefly joined Conflict, another anarcho-punk band, albeit a less ideologically rigorous one, as well as Schwartzenegger. Neither band was as successful as Crass, but Ignorant eventually came to peace with always living under the enormous shadow of Crass, and all the baggage—good and bad—that came with that legacy.

There is a really good chance you knew all of that already. If you didn't and are wondering what all the fuss is about Crass, this book isn't going to help you much. Steve Ignorant divides up his autobiography into three sections (Before Crass, During Crass, and After Crass) and, quite tellingly, the Crass section is by far the skimpiest. This is definitely not a history of Crass. For that, go check out George Berger's excellent and exhaustive *The Story of Crass*. Ignorant skims across the Crass years with lightning speed, rarely pausing long enough to discuss any of the details, let only the characters, drama, or issues that characterized the band's history. If you are looking for Ignorant to dish the gossip or stab his bandmates in the back, you will be sorely disappointed. He seems to assume that his readers are already well-

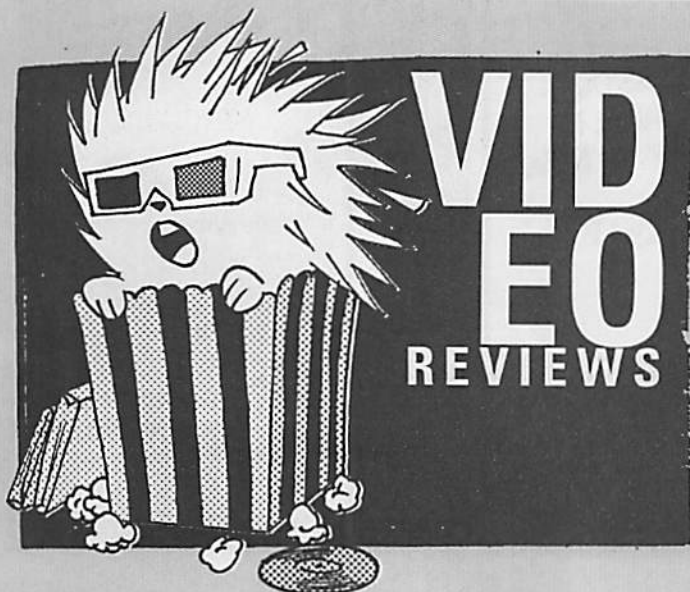
carried over directly into the book. Each chapter is usually five to six pages long. They revolve around specific issues (e.g., School, Sex, Fans, Violence) or events (e.g., Sixth Form, Dial House, Iceland). The effect of this approach is not unlike having each chapter function as a delicious snack (a chocolate chip cookie or, if you're a Brit, a Hit biscuit). You can consume one or two anytime you want and be pleasantly satisfied. Hell, you can even eat the whole pack and really enjoy it. But in the end, it just isn't filling, nor is it equivalent to a healthy meal. And that is true of this book as well. It is an absolutely enjoyable read, but ultimately unsatisfying. I wanted to know more about the specific details alluded to in Ignorant's life (and many that were just completely ignored). I wanted the characters to be more fully formed. Dear reader, forget about gaining any insights about the other members of Crass. They are never on the page long enough to get anything but the most cursory treatment.

So, if you're looking for depth or heft, this just isn't it. But to be fair, *The Rest Is Propaganda* doesn't pretend to be anything more than what it is: a collection of Ignorant's anecdotes. And, ultimately, that is what makes this book so engaging. Because, if truth be told, Steve Ignorant comes across as one of the most honest, self-reflective, and unpretentious blokes in punk. For that reason, *The Rest Is Propaganda* is far more enjoyable than Penny Rimbaud's *Shibboleth* (and, unfortunately, the comparisons are inevitable so why not face them head on). Sure, Rimbaud's autobiography has more substance, but Rimbaud (bless him) often comes across as a pretentious prat. Ignorant (bless him) clearly isn't as deep a thinker as Rimbaud, but is probably far more self-critical.

In the end, the *The Rest Is Propaganda* comes across as a collection of stories that Steve Ignorant could be telling in the corner of the bar/pub. Sure, the stories leave much to be desired, but the story-teller comes across as extremely likeable, while also deeply flawed and, to his further credit, highly self-critical. Damn, if I don't want to buy the next several rounds and keep him talking. —Kevin Dunn (Southern, southern.com)



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### **Dwarves, The: The Dwarves are Born Again: CD/DVD**

Now that there's a brand new offering of Dwarves audio debauchery in our hands, the question once again arises: why is it that HeWhoCanNotBeNamed—the most famous naked punk rocker this side of GG's mouldering old bones—never seems to have a boner when he plays? Isn't a floppy, limp dick antithetical to the Dwarves' brand of lust-engorged teenage testicle rock? You'd think the whole band would be running around with erections that last well over four hours and look like they're about to suddenly shoot away from their bodies like fat, purple bottle rockets. But boners or not, the Dwarves are back and not a moment too soon. If the swashbuckling lifestyle of drug-addled, booze-fueled, porn-steeped horn-doggery has been recently given a douchey twist by the celebrity Chas. Sheen, the right honorable exemplars/progenitors of that venerable lifestyle have returned to reclaim it and reanimate its bedraggled corpus with psychotic, rutting Yeti Blood, which is twenty-three times stronger than that piss-water Tiger Blood that Mr. Sheen has been peddling.

Since *Blood, Guts & Pussy*, the Dwarves have been basically giving you, song by song, the option of being beat over the head with a poofy pink wig of cotton candy or a nail-spiked dildo. Personally, I've always found

the drubbing by dildo to be the most satisfying, on some Neanderthal level or another. And while *Born Again* does have a few tunes that teeter on the edge of falling into that category of "candy-coated Epitaph-style pop punk," there are amped up tit-twisting scorchers on this album that would stand up alongside anything off of *Blood, Guts & Pussy*.

**Flestones: Pardon Us for Living but the Graveyard Is Full: DVD**  
I got this as a bonus when I preordered The Flestones' newest album and don't know if it will be sold on its own. New York's Flestones, if you don't know, are one of the first bands to show their '60s garage influences on their punk sleeves (contemporaries of DMZ, from

## "Isn't a floppy, limp dick antithetical to the Dwarves' brand of lust-engorged teenage testicle rock?"

—Aphid Peewit

*Dwarves, The: The Dwarves are Born Again*

Lyricaly the songs are oozing with such blatant self-celebratory, mythologizing cockiness, one can't help but visualize the old time porn footage of Ron "Hedgehog" Jeremy proudly fellating himself. But if you've got the cockiness to do it, then you would almost be a fool not to blow your own horn. This is, after all, the realm of ithyphallic gods and they and their super-charged reproduction organs don't have to answer to anyone.

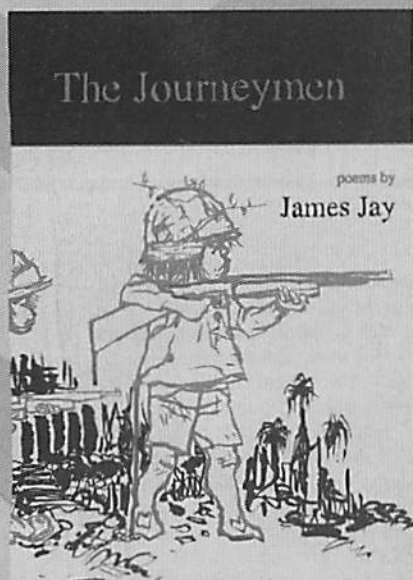
It's possible that you might've been expecting something of a Dwarves' swan song with this disc—a toothless, simpering half-hearted offering—especially after all those rumors about Blag having his clock cleaned by that precious little dork singer from Queens Of The Stone Age. And maybe you thought that the self-described "Jesus Christ of sin and vice" would slink off somewhere and quietly spoon with HeWho for the rest of his days. Not even close. *Born Again* is a cocked up aural blend of amphetamines and Spanish fly, a white trash pervert's orgitorium for the ears. Blag and his depraved cohorts have indeed returned and upped the ante. Tesco Vee, it's your turn now. —Aphid Peewit (Greedy, PO Box 170481, SF, CA 94117)

Massachusetts). They were around for the CBGBs boom but weren't really accepted by that crowd. The Flestones are lifers. They've been at it since 1976, still record and tour regularly and shit. I saw them play a house show recently! In my not so humble opinion, The Flestones didn't really come into their own until the late '90s when they found producers who could capture their blend of '60s garage and need-to-be-witnessed-live vibe. The DVD says it is based on *Sweat*, Joe Bonomo's biography of the band (a great read... it goes even further underground into New York's rock'n'roll/punk scene than *Please Kill Me*) but it's more of a companion piece, as it doesn't get as in-depth as the book. Most of the footage is only from the past few years but it gets across the sense of what keeps the band going. Interviews include band members past and present, label people, and famous friends (most notably, Peter Buck of R.E.M.). Here's to wishing someone expands on this documentary! —Sal Lucci (Yep Roc)



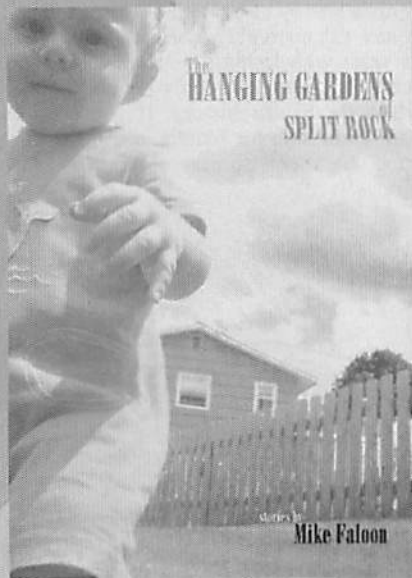
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