



THEPUNKSITE.COM

home - reviews - interviews - forum - pictures - free music - editorials - friends - the site

interviews



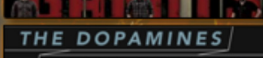
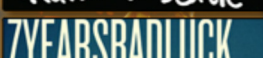
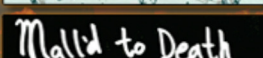
new reviews



new interviews



album streams



contests



<b>Band:</b> The Dwarves	<b>Member:</b> Amy Meyer
<b>Label:</b> Music Video Distributors	<b>Location:</b> Bottom Lounge - Chicago, IL
<b>Date:</b> August 20th, 2011	<b>Interviewer:</b> Amy Meyer

Recognize the **Dwarves**, slut! It has been 25 years of naked women, naked men in Luche Libre masks, violent live performances, and perfectly crafted albums.

The **Dwarves** are currently on tour in the United States and heading to Europe in November in celebration of their 25 years of sluts, drugs, and violence. Blag Dahlia, the charming front man of the **Dwarves**, sat down with Amy Meyer to talk about what makes the **Dwarves** better than most punk bands, reissues in the works, getting past members back together to make the new record, and how he stays so good looking.

**Amy: What is your name and what band do you play for?**

Blag: My name is Blag the Ripper and I represent the Dwarves, rock legends.

**Amy: So you're originally from Illinois, how come you decided to move to California?**

Blag: At the time, the girls were way better looking in California than they were in Illinois, but I'm proud to say that they've now risen to the occasion and there are gorgeous women all over town here; I'm talking to one.

**Amy: It's been 25 years since the band started, how have you evolved in those 25 years?**

Blag: I figured out how to sing, I figured out how to produce a record, I got a haircut, so I think in a lot of ways I've evolved. The Dwarves are a weird study in contrast, live we're just kind of an insane live punk band, but then in the studio we do some pretty sophisticated production. I was taught the art by Eric Valentine who is quite good at it. That's part of the yin and yang of the Dwarves, that's part of the story there.

**Amy: The Dwarves Must Die came out seven years ago and the follow-up Born Again just came out a few months ago, what have you been doing in-between albums?**

Blag: We toured a lot for **The Dwarves Must Die**; it was pretty much three years straight on the road. During that time, I decided that I wanted to a record of a lot of songs that I had written that did not really work in The Dwarves. On the last couple Dwarves records, the idea has kind of been to do every different hard genre, so do a pop-punk song, a hardcore song, death metal song, even some hip-hop and dance type songs, some surf songs, and garage songs. I then thought wow, I have all these songs and would like to make a record where maybe there's a country song, an acoustic song, a disco song, all those kind of softer genres. That was a record called **Candy Now!**, which proved to be a lot harder to make than I thought and actually took a couple years to do. During that time, HeWhoCannotBeNamed (Dwarves guitarist) stopped and did a record as well.

**Amy: Is he wearing clothes tonight? (He is often caught wearing nothing, but a Lucha Libre mask)**

Blag: You never know! You never know if he's going to show up or what he will be wearing, he's a weird customer that HeWho. I also put out a book called **Nina**; we were sort of doing a lot of different things. This record, **The Dwarves Are Born Again**, actually took over two years to make. This is the first one that actually got mixed in ProTools and it took me awhile to acclimate. I have used ProTools for editing and recording, but I never really mixed in it. That took some time to figure out the perimeters of because computers don't really sound as good as tape unless you play some games with it, so I had to sort of figure out what those games were. The Dwarves are this weird combination; its hardcore music and it's got a kind of thrown off quality, but we're really pretty particular about how it sounds ultimately. I think that's how we have gotten our records to be more listenable and more enjoyable, even when they were real hard or real nasty. I think there's something about Dwarves records that make them more appealing than most punk records, I'd like to think.

**Amy: Several past members of The Dwarves play on Born Again. How hard was it getting everyone back together to make the new record?**

Blag: Oh God, it was impossible. First of all, they're all nuts, and now some of them are old and nuts and other ones are young, nuts and weird. It was a logistical nightmare of enormous proportions, but that was part of the fun of it. It was 25 years of the Dwarves, so we figured let's bring everybody back and do something. Just to see some of those guys was great because I don't get to see some of them as much anymore, so that was a great thing.

**Amy: How did you decide who played what on what, how did you distribute the songs perse?**

Blag: Well, you know how every band kind of has a bad cop? I'm the bad cop of this band. I've been telling guys for years, no you're not doing that good and I am going to get another guy to do it, so everybody was kind of used to it. You'll have a guitar player who's great for playing punk, but he can't really play surf. A guy who does retro shit really



new reviews

good, but he can't really play hard shit. You got one guy who plays good bass with his fingers and can do some sophisticated stuff, but you got another guy that plays with a pick. So I just picked and choosed a lot, and by now everybody is used to it because I've been doing it for the last 15 years. Everyone got mad at me at first, and now everyone's real happy because you get to play on a record with a bunch of great guys and the record comes out great, so that was really all I wanted to do. I look at the records as an object and then the people in the band are my friends. It's hard to tell your friends, I am going to get this guy to do this part of the object, but like I said, by now everyone is kind of used to it and understands it, and it just became a great group effort with all these different people. Paradoxically, everyone becomes real happy because it's like wow, I played with that guy, and that guy, and that guy and this is great. It worked out.

**Amy: What determines who you take out on the road?**

Blag: Whoever can stand me, and it changes. While you are actually out there with me, you're like fuck this guy, I'm going home! Then a couple years later it's like fuck, I'm bored and that was pretty fun; I think I'd like to go out there again.

**Amy: Your last record was called *The Dwarves Must Die* and the new record is called *Born Again*, why did you choose that album title?**

Blag: We've always been big on death, Amy. Death is a real basic part of The Dwarves. At the time we made **Dwarves Must Die**, I really felt like wow, this is the apex of what we can do, and I thought it was necessary that we die. About five years later I woke up and there was this song in my head called "let's just get high and fuck some sluts". I thought I have my make a record around that song because it's so Dwarves, and so vintage Dwarves. People said what are you going to call it the resurrection or whatever? I thought, well **Born Again**, you've got your religious connotation, but really I think they are birds of a feather these two records. Although fans and reviewers seem to like **Born Again** a lot more than **Must Die**, they're saying it is more punk rock, it's got more guitar, it's more hardcore, and it is probably because Eric Valentine was not as involved with this one and he's got a cleaner production sound. Really it's the same thing, jumping genres, surprising people, throwing in different stuff, and not being content to just do a basic record.

new interviews



**Amy: I feel like people are a little critical of the rapping on *Must Die*.**

Blag: Everybody hated my rapping and said it sucked. Honestly, I will hold my head up on that rap; I think it's a good rap. I think people tended to say it was a whole rap or hip-hop record, it was one song. Personally, what I thought was clever about it was that it was a hip-hop song that made fun of rock bands, so that was what drew me in. I did not go out there and say, 'yo I'm hard, I've got a gun, I'm going to shoot you;' it was rapping and doing a battle rap about rock bands and how lame they are. Secondly, I thought that track was very interesting because we played live instruments on it; it started from a loop, but the loop is pretty much unrecognizable.

You know the other thing that I found interesting was you take a song like **Bleed On**, that's actually a loop from an old surf song, but no one said to me, 'oh you're doing hip-hop,' because people don't really know what hip-hop is. Hip-hop is just looping things, playing with things, and deconstructing things; so really there are hip-hop elements all over Dwarves stuff, it's just because I didn't rap on it that people didn't know it was hip-hop. I'll stand behind my rap, but I'm the only one; everybody else says I suck so sometimes you have to take other people's word for it, I didn't even attempt it on this record.

**Amy: Do you have a favorite song on the new record?**

Blag: You know, **The Dwarves are Still the Best Band Ever**, which is the title to let's just get high and fuck some sluts, I think it just kind of sums things up and it really means something to me because it was like an old Dwarves song, we wrote it in 15 minutes. The other one I really like was written by the Fresh Prince of Darkness, one of the guitar players, **You'll Never Take Us Alive**. He not only wrote the music for that, but he also wrote the lyrics and really encapsulated my lyrical style; he's very good at that. HeWhoCannotBeNamed has some great pop jams on here like **Number One**, which was really a great pop-punk song; you could see Blink-182 or whoever doing it. The band really stepped up and wrote a lot of great stuff on this one.

**Amy: What exactly does it entail to do the HeWho?**

Blag: Well, I wrote **Do TheHeWho**, but it's about him because he is so retarded and he moves so strangely; we just thought there should be a dance of doing what he does, which is basically spazzing out and acting retarded. I still think someone should make a great video out of that and teach you the dance; that one's got a little new wave element in it, a little keyboard

**Amy: It's a good one.**

Blag: See Amy, we even got to you.

**Amy: Haha, yes.**

Blag: Something tells me you don't really sit around listening to Dwarves records too much, so the fact that we got to you with something, that's what I'm all about. The thing I hear most of all about the Dwarves is I really thought you guys sucked, but then I saw you and loved it; or I really thought you guys sucked, and then my friend played me your song and didn't tell me who it was and I liked it. It seems like we're a band where the marketing and attitude scared people off a lot, but everybody actually likes us because we're really the best punk band.

**Amy: My only complaint is I have not heard *Better Be Women* live in awhile.**

Blag: Tonight you are going to get your wish Amy, because **Better Be Women** is coming! Now, that was my song about lesbians. I'm such a big fan of lesbians; I just think they are the greatest thing since sliced bread really.



new reviews

new interviews

**Amy: Nice, you dropped it for awhile live though.**

Blag: That's true; I think we had trouble doing it live, we didn't have a great take on it. I have a really strong singer now with me, Chip Fracture, and you really need another singer to put that chorus across. Chip is singing great and we dropped it back in.

**Amy: Some of the phone messages on your latest record are done by celebrity cameos; can you reveal who any of those celebrities are?**

Blag: The celebrity cameos are like Dexter Holland who sings on **Looking out for Number One** and **Happy Birthday Suicide**.

**Amy: Oh, I didn't realize he sang on this record too, it's pretty blatant on the last record with Salt Lake City.**

Blag: Yeah, **Salt Lake City** is pretty obvious; people haven't really pointed it out on this one. He's singing on there, and of course Spike from Me First and the Gimme Gimmes, Re-Volts, and Swingin' Utters, he's on there. The phone messages are more the usual thing, some girl that I had slept withâ€¦

**Amy: Wait, those are for real?**

Blag: Yeah, the phone messages are always real.

**Amy: Taken from your phone?**

Blag: They are taken from my phone, and people don't always say real things on them. I got in a lot of trouble with the **Better Be Women** message and had people angry with me, wanting to fight me and shit. I was like dude, yes, it is a real message, but use your imagination. People don't always tell the truth on their messages.

In terms of this record, there was a great one from a girl who had slept with a friend of mine. She got very upset about it and called me crying, and I thought it was so classic. We put it in this song called **Life of Sin**, which was written by Rex Everything (Nick Oliveri), the twat team king. He had that song, and since it's about sin and her phone call was so remorseful, I thought wow, let's have a slow breakdown in the middle and have the remorse in the sin song. It seemed very appropriate, and I actually called her about it and she was very cool about it. Some people would not really want their emotions out there; she didn't have a problem with it, so my hats off to her.

**Amy: Who came up with the idea to include a movie with the album? I've only watched part of it, but it seems to be mostly live material.**

Blag: It's largely live, and there are a few interviews. I want people to see me when I was more attractive and younger, that's what it comes down to. Also, it just fit in with 25 years of the Dwarves and including everybody. Some Dwarves didn't make it to the record, but at least they are somewhere on the video, so everyone is represented somewhere. You have to give people a little more nowadays to get them to buy a record or CD. Put good art in there like we always do and throw in an extra DVD, you're saying hey, here's more stuff, buy this product.

**Amy: How did your music end up on MTV shows, was it through your work with SpongeBob Square Pants?**

Blag: No, SpongeBob is separate. Salt Peter, who is the original bass player in the Dwarves, was friendly with Stephen Hillenburgh, who created that. Salt Peter wrote several songs for him because they wanted a garage, kind of silly feel and Pete is very good at writing those kinds of songs. They brought me in to sing one and said, imitate Lux Interior (The Cramps), and I said I've been doing that for 25 years, so I got to be on SpongeBob.

The other stuff is just through friends of mine who were music supervisors. This gets back to really how much better the Dwarves are than most punk bands. In the marketing world, we were always being told, 'oh you know, you guys, I don't know, these guys are cuter or they're younger or everybody likes them now,' but in the realm of film usages, nobody cares about that, it's just whose song is best and sounds best, so we always come out on top. They will check out 10 punk songs and it's real obvious whose song is the best one, so we're always getting in those MTV reality shows.

They never played a Dwarves music video on MTV back in the day, they would never even mention us, but yet when it comes to music and saying whose song is best and not caring whose song it is, the Dwarves wind-up on top. We've been in dozens of those, all over the place: Jackass, Viva La Bam, 16 and Pregnant, Homewrecker. We've been in all these things because you can hear what's better, plus we do instrumentals, which most punk bands are not even smart enough to do an instrumental in their fucking song when they mix it, I mean it fascinates me. Having been in punk rock my whole life, it's the kind of thing where you can criticize your own tribe; it's like come on punk rockers, you're fucking boring, you don't even try most of the time, you just sit there and try to wear the same shorts some other band is wearing and you fucking suck.



**Amy: You've been doing this a long time; I think you have a right to say what's up in your scene. I read you planned on re-releasing some of your albums, did that ever happen or is that still in the works?**

Blag: **Must Die** got rereleased with a couple extra tracks, and the big one that is coming is **Young and Good Looking**, which is really a much loved record because it came out right in the middle of the pop-punk explosion, and there's a lot of good songs on it. That one is going to be rereleased with tons of other material, live stuff, radio stuff, stuff from the **How to Win Friends and Influence People** record, so look out for that, it will probably come out next year; and then **Lick It** and **Free Cocaine** reissues. A lot of people like a bluegrass record I made in the 90's under Earl Lee Grace (**BlackGrass**), which went out of print very quickly and no one has seen in a long time; I should reprint that. We had a group called Penetration Moon, and most of the songs never came out; people asked me for that, so I



think over the next few years you'll see some reissues and stuff.

**Amy: How do The Dwarves stay so young and good-looking after all these years?**

Blag: Well Amy, you're seated before me; I think I've held on pretty well for an old man.

**Amy: You have!**

Blag: I'm not getting any complaints. I think it's important to do a lot of drugs, fuck a lot, and be angry all the time.

**Amy: What do you think still makes the Dwarves the best band ever?**

Blag: Other bands don't try, and most bands just started trying and then they kind of gave up trying as every year went on. Plus a lot of bands let themselves get sidetracked; they let things like jobs, women, and children, having a life get in their way. I think if you're in, you should be all in, and then when you're out, you're out. When I get out, I am going to get out, and I'm not really going to fuck with the Dwarves, but while you're doing it you should try. I think other bands are like bar bands, they're just willing to be whatever and do whatever and say fuck it, and that was never good enough for the Dwarves. I think the other part of it is always trying to conceptually do something different. We started as a 60's garage band and then we made hardcore records, pop-punk records, grungy records, we made all kinds of things, made a hip-hop track and everybody hated me; I always try and do something unique.

**Amy: Where did the whole Dwarves concept come from? A naked dwarf with bunnies and naked women?**

Blag: Oh wow, that's a good question. I wrote a film in the 80's and a friend of mine wanted to film it. He put an ad in the Village Voice that said, wanted: thirteen naked girls and a dwarf. We got a bunch of calls from some chicks and that was amusing. One night, we came home drunk from somewhere and on the answering machine this guy said, my name is Bobby Faust and I am indeed a dwarf! Sure enough he was and God bless him; I've used Bobby on as many records as I can, and I always will as long as he's still standing. I love to surround him with naked women and I think it gives you the humor of the band and the beautiful nude women you want to see, and it represents the Dwarves always kind of reaching for that but not quite attaining; that's kind of the beauty of this band. I think that's why we're hungry and keep trying.

**Amy: That's all I got, anything you want to add?**

Blag: TheDwarves.com is where you want to go and you can download all our shit. You can see dirty pictures, I mean I got pictures of Amy, so if you want to check that out. Don't miss the Dwarves; don't sleep on it, rock legends 25 years.

### media gallery

### free music blog

[Underdath \(09/19/05\)](#)    [Sick Of It All \(09/29/06\)](#)

[Angus Wallace - Distant Star](#)

