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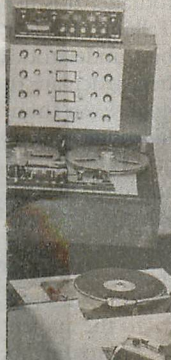


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The Story of Rock 'N' Roll Comics

[Wild Eye]

Todd Loren published unauthorized comic books that depicted the likenesses and logos of commercial endeavors. He's another of those "free speech" advocates that thought he had the right to publish whatever he wanted and profit off the efforts of other people. If you did to him what he did to copyright holders and creators, he'd certainly have cried foul.

All these guys like Larry Flynt, who claims to be a First Amendment protector while exploiting others for profit, or Jello Biafra who put out Wesley Willis recordings, or MTV constantly railing against censorship and Jesse Helms when they refused to show Michael Jackson videos or the Ramones or the Cramps, or Frank Zappa who viciously launched a vendetta against Tipper Gore and the PMRC but enthusiastically embraced her rather than support George Bush... they're all just two-faced ass-wipes with double standards. Todd Loren fits right in, publishing "Tipper Gore" comics. He was one of the early hipsters who spoke with authority and enjoyed telling others how to do their job but is also known for paying his artists late, or not at all. Denis Kitchen, the guy behind Kitchen Sink, responsible for reprinting Will Eisner's *The Spirit* and numerous newspaper strips, commented that he found Todd "disagreeable, brusque and I did not like him at all!"

This documentary attempts to justify Todd's legacy as something of a cultural genius who, under the banner of "Revolutionary Comics," released 500 titles in six years, thus bringing in music fans to read and collect comic books about Motorhead, the Sex Pistols, the Slits, Hendrix, Skid Row and Guns N' Roses.

Next to Bill Hicks, one of the

dumbest fucks on the planet has got to be Mojo Nixon, known for sputum and swill that largely appealed to drunkard fratboys. He, of course, is one of Todd's supporters.

The dead giveaway comes when Todd would venture out to conventions and encounter other people, his self-worth totally wrapped up in secondhand compliments: "Oh, I've hung out with KISS!" "I publish comics!" "I'm my own grandpa!"

The only person who may have cared about what Todd thought was important was the person who stabbed him to death back in 1992, and to this day, speculation persists that he may have been one of the earliest victims of Andrew Cunanan, responsible for murdering Versace and known for seeking out gay men who put themselves at risk.

Todd had made a lot of enemies. I never met the guy but hated him

for having such pedestrian taste, unimaginative and deliberately pedantic. He loved to say how money wasn't his priority. If that's so, why not publish comics on struggling, unheard bands in order to promote them instead of Bon Jovi or Motley Crue?

There are two ways to approach any commercial endeavor. You can ride the coattails of those who've already put in the sweat and effort to build a fan base, which is what Loren did. Or, you can do things the hard way, starting from scratch, investing, promoting and building something that's never been done before you thought it up. That's the way creators approach life, not demanding that other people recognize their success but providing a catalyst for growth that mutually benefits all involved.

Todd Loren wasn't a good businessman, and judging from this documentary, he wasn't that good of a person either, and that surge of mediocrity was evident in his substandard comics.

—David T. Lindsay

