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DVD showcases ex-Boisean's glory days

But these days, the ex-TAD frontman is more into the here and now

By Michael Deeds - mdeeds@idahostatesman.com

Edition Date: 02/22/08

During the early '90s, TAD was feared as the heaviest of the Seattle grunge bands - and not just because elephantine ex-Boisean Tad Doyle stage-dived on top of quaking fans. Fronted by Doyle, the group lumbered across Europe with Nirvana, released several bone-crunching CDs, got sued and eventually succumbed to the perils of rock 'n' roll in 1999.

The affable Doyle - now 47 and playing in a new band, Brothers of the Sonic Cloth, when he's not working as a bookkeeper - recently helped create an entertaining, 90-minute documentary DVD.

"TAD: Busted Circuits and Ringing Ears" (\$14.95) doesn't just illuminate a unique, ultimately troubled band. It sweeps viewers back to a special time in rock history.

What are your memories of Boise?

I grew up in Boise, Idaho. I was born in St. Luke's hospital and went to Jefferson Grade School and South Junior High and Borah High School and Boise State University - where they put the BS before U. (Laughs) I just remember it being a pretty mellow, sleepy town. We had a punk rock bar - it used to be called the Crazy Horse. (Editor's note: It's now Terrapin Station.)

Why did you move to Seattle in 1986?

I was playing drums for a band called H-Hour. We decided that we wanted to move to a more metropolitan area that actually had some national acts and some indie acts that would come through.

During the Sub Pop Records days, you were often referred to in press releases as a 300-pound ex-butcher. Did that actually mean you worked the deli at Albertsons?

(Laughs) That's a good question, because I did work the deli at Albertsons! That was one of my jobs. But I became a journeyman butcher working at Albertsons, too, over in the meat department.

Your stage persona was sort of a character. In the infamous chain saw photo shoot, did you even know how to operate that chain saw?

I had an idea. But (the photographer) had to show me how to prime it and where the ignition start button is so you could pull the chain and whatnot. I had actually cut cord wood in Stanley, Idaho, as a kid for a summer. I knew how to do that.

What are your memories of touring with Kurt Cobain and Nirvana?

I think that's pretty covered in the DVD. I don't like to get into them so much. But he was pretty fun. Those tours we were on were exhausting. We were playing 45 to 60 dates with one or two days off, and that was just a travel day to get from Austria to Czechoslovakia, you know? That's a long drive.

I try to stay in the present and now these days. It was certainly a gift to be able to be where I was with those guys. I had a lot of good times with them. Not everybody is afforded that gift and luxury of playing with their friends night after night.

I remember seeing TAD open for Nirvana at the BSU Pavilion. That was kind of weird.

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During Seattle grunge band TAD's heyday, critics often mentioned the fact that frontman Tad Doyle, pictured above with chain saw, was a butcher before becoming a musician.

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Yeah. It was. (Laughs) You know what's really funny about that? Right across the street, I used to play in hardcore bands as a kid at the American Legion Hall. I don't know if you're familiar with Pushead, but he's got his own record label and does all the T-shirt designs for Metallica. We used to have a blast together. It's really funny to go from that put-it-on-yourself type of show in an American Legion Hall to playing the Pavilion (now the Taco Bell Arena).

Is there anything you miss about the old days? Do you miss stage diving?

No. I still do every now and then. I'm just more careful about it. I don't want any broken bones.

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