



<http://www.lostatsea.net/>

Busted Circuits And Ringing Ears

Before Nevermind blew up it was Tad, not Nirvana, that reigned as the biggest thing in Seattle's nascent grunge scene. Way louder and heavier than any of its peers, Tad was led by a psychotic, 300-pound woodsman and former butcher who wrote dark lyrics and was an evil guitar wizard with a bag full of mean, crushing riffs at his command. Or, at least that's how Sub Pop marketed the band. The truth was something altogether different.

Clothed in flannel and brandishing a chain saw in the early video for "Wood Goblins," Tad Doyle, his face contorted with rage, played the part faithfully. And yet, the new documentary Busted Circuits And Ringing Ears portrays Doyle, the band's namesake, as a warm, intelligent, and funny performer willing to do just about anything to further the cause of his band - see the frightening, but hilarious, opening sequence of Doyle being filmed sitting on top of a moving car rolling down the streets of Seattle. Unfortunately for Doyle and his bandmates, their story is also a hard-luck tale of major-label deceit, inner turmoil, massive substance abuse and career sabotage.

A full and complete history of the band, Busted Circuits And Ringing Ears seamlessly weaves ferocious live footage together with testimonials from journalists, fans, Sub Pop label executives and Seattle music giants such as Soundgarden's Kim Thayil, Mudhoney's Mark Arm and Nirvana's Krist Novoselic to tell the story of Tad in rich detail. Priceless between-song banter and images of the mountain man Doyle stage diving could bring a smile to anyone's face, but it's the sad narrative of how misguided intentions - however humorous - and corporate neglect torpedoed Tad's rise that will suck viewers in.

Always looking for a laugh, Tad ticked off the wrong people along the way. Pepsi was not amused when the band used the Pepsi logo for the single "Jack Pepsi." Another lawsuit stemmed from Doyle slapping a racy photo of a scantily clad couple locked in an embrace on the cover of the 8-Way Santa LP - the woman, who became a born-again Christian, apparently stumbled across it by chance while in a record store. And then, there was the infamous promo poster for the album Inhaler - perhaps Tad's most powerful statement of purpose - that showed then President Bill Clinton smoking a joint with the caption "This is heavy shit." Apparently, not everyone got the joke, and that's too bad.

Far from being a novelty act, Tad had the musical chops to compete with any of their peers, and on the Bleach tour with Nirvana the band more than held its own, as the film demonstrates. Influenced more by the 1970s proto-metal of Black Sabbath and Blue Cheer than punk, Tad, in its original incarnation, was powered by the bulldozing bass of Kurt Danielson, the drum bashing of Steve Wied - and later, Josh Sinder, formerly of The Accused - and the guitar fury of Gary Thorstensen. Tad caused earthquakes. Tad destroyed cities. Tad, as writer Charles Cross, author of "Heavier Than Heaven," put it, had a sound that "...was literally so heavy that I felt like I was having a heart attack" and, at the same time, was as sophisticated as Sonic Youth.

The fascinating legend of the band aside, Busted Circuits And Ringing Ears also wistfully documents the rise and fall of Seattle's grunge scene. The story moves along at an easy, but never turgid, pace, and it is dense

with material, including a handful of music videos as a bonus. While Doyle and his bandmates deserved a better fate than the one they received, at the very least they have this documentary as a tribute.

TRAILER: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2Reke4PRxM>