



## CARNIVORE

*Carnivore* reissue

Metal Mind Productions

Ray Van Horn, Jr.

What Peter Steele accomplished in his early years before making TYPE O NEGATIVE *the* household name in the Goth metal ranks is always acknowledged but seldom given more than *fleeting* acknowledgement. Granted, back when both the 1986 self-titled debut and the following year's *Retaliation* were released, CARNIVORE was considered an acquired taste even by headbanger standards. Over two decades later, *Retaliation* is now given proper due and respect as a paving stone of thrash and hardcore, while *Carnivore* is examined as a nuclear age by-product trash classic, as much as GWAR's *Scumdogs of the Universe* became a few years later. In fact, the early inception of CARNIVORE should be thought of as GWAR's not-too-distant ancestor as Steele (then known as *Petrus Steele*) and company was known to appear on New York stages in post-apocalyptic *Mad Max* garb while dousing crowds with theatrical blood spews. Sound familiar?

The execution of *Carnivore* is utterly primitive by modern metal standards, but everything from it bearing the infancy stages of thrash to the sci-fi nuclear fallout fantasy element to Steele's propensity to tongue roll his r's throughout *Carnivore* all create a specific endearment that to have lived it becomes reminiscence while those just coming to this album for the first time are in for a wild history lesson. Throughout *Carnivore*, despite the chum bucket delivery on songs like "Predator," "Legion of Doom" and "Thermonuclear Warrior," there's something almost bittersweet about it all, particularly if you were awake from the Big '80s party to fret over the button-pushing threats between the United States and the former Soviet Union. As heavy metal and punk have always been reflective of the times in which they're cultivated, *Carnivore* is a whimsical though subtly advisory concept album that wraps with the ten-minute thrash 'n clunk finale "Worlds Wars III and IV." Along the way, *Carnivore* jibes without excuse or gravity for its chauvinism on "Male Supremacy" and its religious pokes with forked flickers on "God is Dead" in a hypothesized blown-out world devoid of structure and morals.

Though it all sounds naïve now in retrospect, if anyone has assumed we're past the potential of a nuclear holocaust, then the inherent silliness of *Carnivore* becomes a bit more serious, particularly once you consider the about-face directional change Steele and CARNIVORE executed with the spit-in-the-eye that was *Retaliation*. Put altogether, the path of Peter Steele on his way to TYPE O NEGATIVE may have been instinctive by

nature, but each step of the way from ridiculous to randomly somber is a crazy fun examination.