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## East Bay Ray And The Killer Smiles – s/t

By

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I'm pretty sure that if you're reading this article you at least have an opinion on the Dead Kennedys and their in-fighting and legal battles. One of the first arguments people employ when taking the side of Jello Biafra over his former bandmates is "Well, at least Jello's still writing new music while the other guys have been resting on their laurels and trying to cash in for decades." And along comes East Bay Ray and The Killer Smiles to put your argument to sleep. I don't really want to waste another breath with all the bullshit surrounding this band. I think the band, the media, and the commenters of the intertubes have done enough of that already. So instead I'd like to give just an honest review of this album without getting entrenched in the mucky muck.

It would however just be shitty of me to not at least mention the importance of the Dead Kennedys at least in my life up to this point. Bands like DK were in a way my first introduction to political thought. Here were bands talking about the government, big business, poverty, and most importantly placing value on individuality... and for the first time in my life I was starting to understand a little better the world around me. I also was starting to question things I used to take for granted. I once had someone

tell me that eventually I'd get older and think more conservatively. I'm still waiting for that day to come. So when you see me still rocking a DK pin on my jacket (like the one I wore out to dinner last night) that's me letting you know that not only have I not given up, but I also have impeccable taste in music.

To say that The Dead Kennedys were purely Jello Biafra is nonsense. That surf punk sound that was crafted by the rest of the band was every bit as important as the lyrics. If it was just some guy screaming over a microphone to noise, who in the hell would listen? Instead what you got was this almost amped up terrifying version of Dick Dale that made you take heed to the message therein. Jello's been with some great musicians over the years from DOA to the Melvins, but I don't think he ever had as good a backing band as East Bay Ray, Klaus Flouride, and D.H. Peligro. And likewise I don't think any of the remaining Kennedys ever had quite the frontman. That being said I still really am surprised about how much I dig this new East Bay Ray and the Killer Smiles album.

Ray's guitar work is as great as you remember it. Often imitated never duplicated. And honestly I'm not even put off by singer Skip McSkipster from the Wynonna Riders and recent Dead Kennedys' tours. Really though as the name implies this is an East Bay Ray project though and through. I mean you know in the same way Van Halen was probably not named Diamond Dave for a reason.

So yeah, definitely check this one out. Who knows maybe some day the planets will align and The Dead Kennedys will kiss and make up... I mean I fucking doubt it but at least they can't take our records away and at least all parties involved still manage to put out new music worth giving a shit about every once in a while.

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