

"IT'S THE FIRST TIME THAT WE REALLY DID A FULL RECORD FROM BEGINNING TO END."

TERROR

INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT VOGEL
BY SCOTT ALISOGLU

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TERROR IS UNEQUIVOCALLY ONE OF THE BIGGEST HARDCORE BANDS IN THE WORLD, if not the biggest, along with Hatebreed, Agnostic Front, and Sick of It All. As such, it is no surprise that Century Media saw the enormous potential and snatched them up after the Los Angeles based group fulfilled their contract with Trustkill. Terror is a band that walks it like they talk it and never makes a bad album—always in your face, always intense beyond belief, and always delivering the goods to their legion of fans. New disc *The Damned, The Shamed* is another impeccably written and recorded firestorm of hardcore rabidity, and one can tell from talking to vocalist Scott Vogel that he knows it.

After a long run with Trustkill you made the jump to Century Media. Did you spend much time looking for a new record label?

What we actually did was make a four song demo of new songs and sent them out to record labels that we thought would be good for us. Then once they got it, the labels that showed interest we talked to. It took a couple of months. We weren't so interested in the label that was offering us the most money. We were interested in a record label that was excited and really wanted to get behind it. Trustkill did good for us, but something we never took into consideration until now was that we're overseas so much and those places are pretty important for us. Trustkill had some distribution overseas, but they don't really concentrate on it like some labels do. Century Media has such an amazing presence in all these places we go to, and that came into the decision. They were definitely the label that was by far the most interested and really psyched on it.

In between *Always the Hard Way* and *The Damned, The Shamed*, you did the *Rhythm Amongst the Chaos* EP—four new songs and the Breakdown cover, "Kickback"—on Reaper Records. Was that just something you wanted to do and finally got the chance?

Yeah, definitely. When we were under contract with Trustkill, we talked to the kid that does that label Reaper, Patrick [Kitzel], who is one of my really good friends, and Trustkill wasn't too into the idea; they had us under contract and said we couldn't do it. As soon as we fulfilled the contract with Trustkill, we were free to do what we wanted. Our drummer [Nick Jett] has a studio where we can record. I just like EPs. We went into the studio, we recorded the thing ourselves, we put it out in the US on Reaper, and then we put it out on labels in Europe, Australia, Japan, Africa, and Costa Rica. It was pretty much just friends we made from traveling and smaller labels of people that we met. We just gave them the record pretty much for free and just said if you make money off of it, then give us some of the money. It was something to do for fun. We just wanted to work with our friends and put some new songs out before we did another album.

Putting an EP out from a band like Terror must have helped a small label like Reaper Records immensely.

Yeah, he sent me a picture of the record at Best Buy, and I know he was psyched to have one of his records getting distribution like that. He works really hard, and going into it we didn't expect him to do as much as he did with it. He advertised great, and we got some good interviews out of it. So it really helped out in different ways.

What's the idea behind the title of the new album, *The Damned, The Shamed*?

It's again going back to traveling so much. We're lucky enough we get to play in Korea, Japan, Australia, and South America, and all these crazy places. It seems like no matter where I go I meet people and hang out with them, people in bands and people into really loud, aggressive music, even people in a lot of the metal bands we play with. It seems like a lot of people, and I can totally relate to this, have grown up in some shitty situations and maybe felt a little lost or hopeless and then they found music, like real music and real lyrics. There is still something about when I get a demo from a band I never heard, and sometimes music can give me chills or the hairs stand up on the back of my neck. I meet these people, and they're exactly the same. They felt a little fucked up and lost, and then when they found music and everything that comes along with it—live shows and the role scene, the underground—they use that as their bridge to escape from the crazy world we live in. The lyrics are about that.

Was it ever a question to work with producer Zeuss again?

We did actually discuss it, and our manager had some other ideas, but in the end, I love the sound of *Always the Hard Way*. I love the way he mixes vocals. Zeuss is somebody that makes us feel really comfortable. I've done records with producers that rubbed me the wrong way, and I didn't like the way they would talk to me, just certain attitudes. Zeuss is someone that when we tell him certain things, he totally understands. His ideas we believe in because the first record went so smoothly and the other records that he's worked on that we listen to. The other thing is the studio setup is so comfortable. It's pretty stressful making a record; you don't have all the time in the world and it's going to represent your band for the rest of your life, so you're under a little stress. The way his studio is set up he has a house next door that's five steps away. So you can get out of the studio and clear your head. I've recorded in places that are in the middle of the city, and you're there all day because the only place to go is a hotel; you're just sitting in the studio losing your mind. But he's out in the woods, and it's a great atmosphere. We knew we'd be comfortable, and we knew he would do it right. We talked about other things, but in the end, we knew we wanted to go back to him.

***The Damned, The Shamed* sounds like Terror, but you also incorporate a few nice touches like the lighter section with that laid-back lead in "Betrayed" is a pleasant surprise.**

I'm very happy with the record as a whole, and I also think it's a breath of fresh air. Like you said, we're Terror, we're not going to do anything outside of our element, but there are definitely some things on there where people are going to go, "I didn't expect that." I think it's the first time that we really did a full record from beginning to end. Who wants to hear the same Terror record over and over? I love all sorts of music, and when we were writing the record, those parts of the songs fit, and it's what we wanted to do. I sit back and listen to the record, and there are definitely some songs on there that when we started if we would have written it at that time I would have said, "We can't do this, this isn't a Terror song." But now it's just a natural progression. I think it's cool. We've written so many songs where it's fast part, chorus, fast part, chorus, breakdown, that it's fresh to have some new ideas.

When you mentioned that it's the first time you wrote a full Terror record, what do you mean exactly?

I think the other releases were just kind of a bunch of songs that we put on the same record and called it a record. On this record, there is some flow to it, some ups and downs, and it just seems fuller to me. Toward the second half of the record there are a few songs that are more laid-back, and then we come with some really heavy stuff. There are actually some dynamics to it. Some bands get caught up in doing the same thing over and over. It's funny we put a new song up online, and I saw some of the comments. And people were like, "Oh, it's the same old Terror," and I'm like, "There's a huge solo in the song, there are vocals with effects, what do we have to do?" I don't think people even want to listen to it. I think they just want to say something stupid.

There are always songs on a Terror album that stand out, and this time it's "Rise of the Poisoned Youth." Based on the album title, that's one of the definitive songs.

That is definitely the song that defines what I was talking about. "Rise of the Poisoned Youth" is exactly what the title is about. Like I said, I meet all these fucked up people that come from all these fucked up places, and the only place they feel whole or natural is at a crazy show. It's funny, most people that you would consider normal, if they walked into a show and saw people jumping on each other's heads and screaming at the top of their lungs would probably think that it was insane, but for other people it gives them peace. I guess that's what makes the world go round.