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## Impaler's Bill Lindsey shares memories and holiday greetings

Longtime frontman comes a-knocking

By **Danny Sigelman** Wednesday, Dec 22 2010

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Knee-deep in my parents' basement, what was once an after-school hangout is now a thrifter's paradise, a mélange of '80s teenage artifacts. Stacked high among the old art projects and school books are shoeboxes full of cassette tapes; one has *Van Halen II* recorded on one side, *Metal Health* on the other.

Remember those old handheld **Mattel** games with the little red dots? I found basketball, hockey, and baseball games nestled in that basement, along with drawers full of Atari 2600, Vic 20, and Nintendo cartridges. Yar's Revenge was always my favorite. Flipping through pictures of old friends and relatives, shots of my brothers hanging out at the DQ after ball games and in the backseat of the station wagon. I found a blown photo envelope full of stills from, all things, an Impaler concert my older brother had taken.



The killer shots were from an '86 show the Twin Cities' rock/punk pioneer, headlining the First Avenue Mainroom. There was a shot of guitarist **Michael James Topek** doing a power glide, and another of someone's studded shoulder and a pit. But what some may remember were close-ups of singer, fire-breather, and body-mutilator **Bill Lindsey**, his leather-gloved hand groping a blood-drenched microphone, looking the camera straight in the eye.

"Hey Bill. You don't know me but I have something I think you'd want," I wrote to Lindsey after finding him online. "There're some old pictures I found at my folks' house of Impaler."

"That's really kind of you. I'd love to come by and pick them up," he quickly responded.

The first "punk-metal" record ever made in our frosty state, Impaler's *Rise of the Mutants* EP, was released on national label Combat Records in 1985. Putting Minnesota on the map in the expanding world of metal, Impaler blended the two sounds, wrote their own

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songs, and put on insane displays inspired by their obsession with zombie horror movies.

A few days after my correspondence with Lindsey, my phone rings. I don't recognize the number on my phone so it must be him.

"Can I park in front of your house or is there a snow emergency?" asks a voice with a thick St. Paul accent.

Lindsey pulls up and gets out of the car, his long hair waving in the cold and snowy wind, and I start to get a bit nervous. I don't really get nervous around rock singers. But in this case I'm thinking maybe I should hide my pets.

He's spotted me at my door so it's too late. "Should I take off my shoes?" he asks.

"Oh no, don't worry about it," I tell him, running over to the music room to find my Impaler records.

"Your wood floors are so beautiful, I think I really should," he insists.

As we pour some green tea, Lindsey starts telling me some of his favorite memories from his 28 years in Impaler. "At that time what was big with hard-rock and metal bands was to play covers," he says. "But I really wanted to play original metal. There was a thriving punk scene with Hüsker Dü and Rifle Sport putting on their own shows and playing their own stuff, and I thought, 'Why can't a metal band do that too?'"

Impaler stabbed the hearts and ears of punk and metal fans alike, garnering huge exposure due to controversial lyrics and an ingenious album cover. With Lindsey in spandex, spikes, and heavy eyeliner, devouring a woman's corpse, the album frightened wigs off religious leaders and a gaggle of Washington, D.C., wives who announced *Rise of the Mutants*, along with albums by **Twisted Sister** and another of **Tipper Gore's** Minnesota favorites, Prince, as music that would incite outrageous and sick behavior.

"After the whole P.M.R.C. thing these evangelists, the Peters Brothers from **Lake Elmo**, started picketing and reading the bible at our shows," Lindsey remembers. "Eventually they hired us to be in one of the videos for their church," he smirks with pride. "As unpolitical as I was at 21 years old, I thought that was really just posturing. Seven years later **Al Gore** was on **MTV** to get the vote from young people."

Still performing with Impaler almost three decades on, Lindsey continues to horrify crowds with continuous releases and the band's legendary show. Blistering eardrums and tearing up bodies of diehard fans across the country, they really make a killing on the European metal festival circuit, where this type of music was never just something the kids were going



Brian Garrity

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Lindsey's son, better known as "Dr. Corpse," is now part of the act. "He does backup vocals and stage antics," Lindsey says. "He hits me with a folding chair, pro-wrestling style, and split my head open not once but twice!"

The teakettle is empty. My cat crawls out from under a pile of coats and mittens in the hallway. I ask Bill about his family and the holidays. We talk about shows we've seen, all the metal bands we both really love, and spirituality.

Bill tells me he works in physical therapy at a hospital in St. Paul. He helps people get back in shape and get their arm and leg muscles working again, quite a contrast to what he does with Impaler. He laughs, telling me some of his patients have come to watch him play in the past, and how he loves what he does at work and with the band.

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Impaler was by far the best band of the night 12/26. Blew away Icarus Witch and Di'Anno. Long live Impaler!

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The pride of Mn. Metal!!!! You rule, Bill!

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