



mainly it was a big love-fest.

**JR:** That to me is original punk's legacy outside of New York, 1977-1983. Very much living out of each other's pockets and playing on bills with each other happily, not worrying so much about who was headlining, staying on each others floors in a small DIY tour circuit...

**JOE:** Well, that was then. I wonder what it's like now. I've heard that it's not like that anymore.

**JR:** Everything changes. So The Mutants were your entry into this. Gullak invited you to one of his gigs, is that what happened?

**JOE:** Well actually, my beloved Jewish girlfriend **Jill** invited me. I had just finished getting my Master's degree in Fine Arts and I was working in my studio in sculpture, but thinking more and more about making videos, and then she said "Hey I know this guy named John Gullak, he's got some great crossover art stuff, and I know you'd like his scene, because his imagery and his choice in music is what you're into, too."

**JR:** Hot tip! [Laughter.]

**JOE:** Yeah. So I went up to the campus for the show, and sure enough I fell in love with it. It was a school show. He was still in California School Of Art. The College was open to it... what, after all these hippies running around naked, this was nothing! [Laughter.] This was like '75.

**JR:** '75? The Mutants go back that far? Pre-punk!

**JOE:** Yeah. Well they had just started getting a band together. Everybody was searching for a new direction, of combining music and their visual art, sculpture, the paintings, drawings, some performance art and theater, with the spoken word—it wasn't called that, it was called "poetry." [Laughter.] We'd get on stage and you'd read something, and we'd have some little event, usually something ugly

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that they would portray. And then the music came along. It just kind of spread out from there. It had that attitude, that punk influence! Come on, that same type influence out of England was a big deal. Like when **THE SEX PISTOLS** were rolling around [first single, November 26 1976, import] with their nasty songs. And to me **THE DAMNED** and **KILLING JOKE** were real big influences. I loved The Damned!

**JR:** Although Killing Joke's first single wasn't until '79 ["Nervous System."] The Damned and Pistols were both 1976 [Damned first single, October 22, 1976.]

**JOE:** That's true, but that really got me going with what I'm doing now, anyway.

**JR:** I've interviewed [KJ singer] **JAZ COLEMAN** a few times. Whip-smart interesting nutter!

**JOE:** Yeah, also a pain in the ass too. [Laughter.] I was on a radio interview in Paris with him, and man was he terrible with those French! He was just chewing them up! And he went for it, that's what got them! They tolerated it. [Laughter.]

**JR:** Now this catalog that's from the final issue of *Search And Destroy*, #11, is it a complete list of what you'd done up until then? Because I'd noticed that the first one listed is from January 14, 1978, the Sex Pistols/Avengers/**NUNS** show here at The Winterland.

**JOE:** Other than what I'd done at Art School. Then, I didn't want to list it, but who knows what will happen... You know how it is, once I'm dead and gone, everything is gonna turn to gold. [Laughter.] "Oh I knew that guy! He was a fuckin' creative genius!" [Laughter.]

**JR:** Well, *we're* not waiting for you to be dead to say that! [Laughter.]

**JOE:** It's like the **BRUCE CONNER** thing—I went to Denver to participate in the show for Bruce. I had all of his videos, I used to edit for Bruce and I loved working for him.

**JR:** He did the 16mm **Devo** video, right?

**JOE:** Yes! I worked for Bruce as an editor on *Mongoloid!* [Devo's second video, 1976; see: [v.youku.com/v\\_show/id\\_XMTUyMjQ5MDDEy.html](http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTUyMjQ5MDDEy.html)]. But you don't hear about that! I was just an unknown, but a damn good creative editor—so that's just how it is.

**JR:** The Avengers/Nuns/Sex Pistols footage is particularly of interest. The Sex Pistols were the big story, but anybody fair-minded who watches your video knows the two opening bands blew them off the stage!

**JOE:** For sure! The passion of The Nuns! I'm so grateful that I shot them, because I really liked [1979 debut single] "Decadent Jew" and [1980 third single, live] "World War II"; "Decadent Jew" is one of the greatest songs ever written, to me. The whole thing was such a weird scene. I wish they would have been more involved with our local shows. There wasn't enough cross with those people, and I would have liked to have more.

**JR:** Well they moved to New York! ["World War III" is live from Max's Kansas City.] We met them there! I ended up at in what had been their apartment for 25 years! I ended up with **RICHARD DETRICK'S** headboard! [Laughter.]

**JOE:** Well you're the guy who knows more about The Nuns, that's for sure!

**JR:** They put these two punk girls in that were sub-letting it while they moved back to San Francisco with this hair-brained scheme that they were going to return, and then they never did, and of course the girls thought that The Nuns were going to pay the rent and they never did. They got evicted. And then I moved in. [Laughter.] June 5, 1981.

**JOE:** All right. What a small world, isn't it?

**JR:** Yes, though I wouldn't have known about the place without a punk connection, right?

**JOE:** Well anyway, I fell in love with The Avengers right away, of course, **PENELOPE** [**HOUSTON**, singer] being an art student from the Art Institute SF. I saw her stuff before she was a star. Because The Avengers were a pretty cool band. And [bassist] **JIMMY WILSEY** [later **CHRIS ISAAK's** guitarist] is very underrated, and there's a guy that's been one of the most loyal Target Video supporters ever! He has been so behind what I do. It really makes a big difference, because you run into a lot of crap, even with other bands, because some of them get kind of confused about success.

**JR:** Or suspicious of what your motives are.

**JOE:** Right. And I never worked for any record company, or none of

that. That wasn't my motivation. I was just passionate about punk rock, and I tried to be selective in a sense that lyrics make a big difference to me. When The Avengers start talking about [1979's *Avengers EP's*] "The American In Me," I'm right there! I mean, I love that song so much. There were so many Avengers songs that were just excellent pieces—they still are very profound. [Also *Avengers EP's*] "White Nigger" is another. But try to play that song these days! Or speak that title.

**JR:** Penelope told me she was influenced by the **PATTI SMITH** [1978 *Easter*] song "Rock 'n' Roll Nigger." She thought that was very empowering.

**JOE:** In fact, I even made a video of "White Nigger," a kind of collage/montage, and I played the part of being a waiter. I show up with a white shirt and a tub full of dirty dishes, because I used to do that, and I could relate to that song quite well.

**JR:** You also documented incredible bands that weren't from here. Nobody talks about it, but your film of **IGGY POP's** [November 25] 1981 show that got released through MVD [*Live San Fran 1981*], what a great document! It was great to get the whole concert, with **CARLOS ALOMAR** [**DAVID BOWIE**] on guitar and **CLEM BURKE** [**BLONDIE**] on drums!

**JOE:** Yeah. Fantastic, wasn't it?!

**JR:** To me, that's the *definitive* version of "Bang Bang" which was, for instance, kind of butchered in the studio! It's really a *hot* song on your film! The only version I listen to!

**JOE:** Man, sign this guy up! [Laughter.] This is wonderful. Boy, you are really something!

**JR:** *Your* film taught me the problem wasn't the song; the problem was the take and the production. This is the sort of thing that I credit you with; you've preserved history beyond sometimes not-so-great, or as sad, woefully incomplete record releases.

**JOE:** Right. Thank you! Well fortunately I made the right contact before that show!

**JERRY:** Was that at Bimbo's?

**JR:** Old Waldorf.

**JOE:** Oh God, I hated that name of that place! But anyway, of course I was into Iggy Pop—oh man, who isn't? His music, his lyrics... And that video was a very special night, especially to see him in complete different character before he went on stage. [Where he's calm and friendly.] It was such a trip! You work with everybody, performers, but sometimes it's hard to divorce the off-stage person with the on-stage person. He was totally different. In an interesting way, but he was so subtle and reserved, and the first thing: he didn't tell me he was gonna come out with a leather garter belt on! [Laughter.] [Also: mini-skirt, motorcycle jacket, and fishnets!] I was onstage and, baby, thank you [for the spectacle!] [Laughter.] [See the whole concert: [youtube.com/watch?v=r6FNAMApHAo](http://youtube.com/watch?v=r6FNAMApHAo)]

**JR:** I *really* want to talk about The Screamers. [Singer] **TOMATA DU PLENTY** told me a great story [issues 47/48] just before he died [August 21, 2000], that Iggy was a fan of The Screamers, pretty amazing for him in 1979, and when Iggy was making *New Values*, he was living in Malibu [L.A.] and had a party, so he invited **Devo** and The Screamers to perform. And he greeted them at the door in the nude, spent the whole party in the nude, and said to Tomata and [co-keyboardist] **GEAR**, "Hey guys, thanks for coming! Anything ya want—booze, drugs, food, women? I'll get it for you!" [Laughter.] And then when they were playing, the only one dancing is Iggy! Naked! [Laughter.]

**JOE:** Oh my God, where was I and my camera? Oh, I wish I would have been invited to that gig!

**JR:** Then a year later I interviewed Iggy [cover, issue 49] and asked him about that, and he said "That was a great party! I never wore any clothes in that apartment!" [Laughter.] I said, "Tomata said you