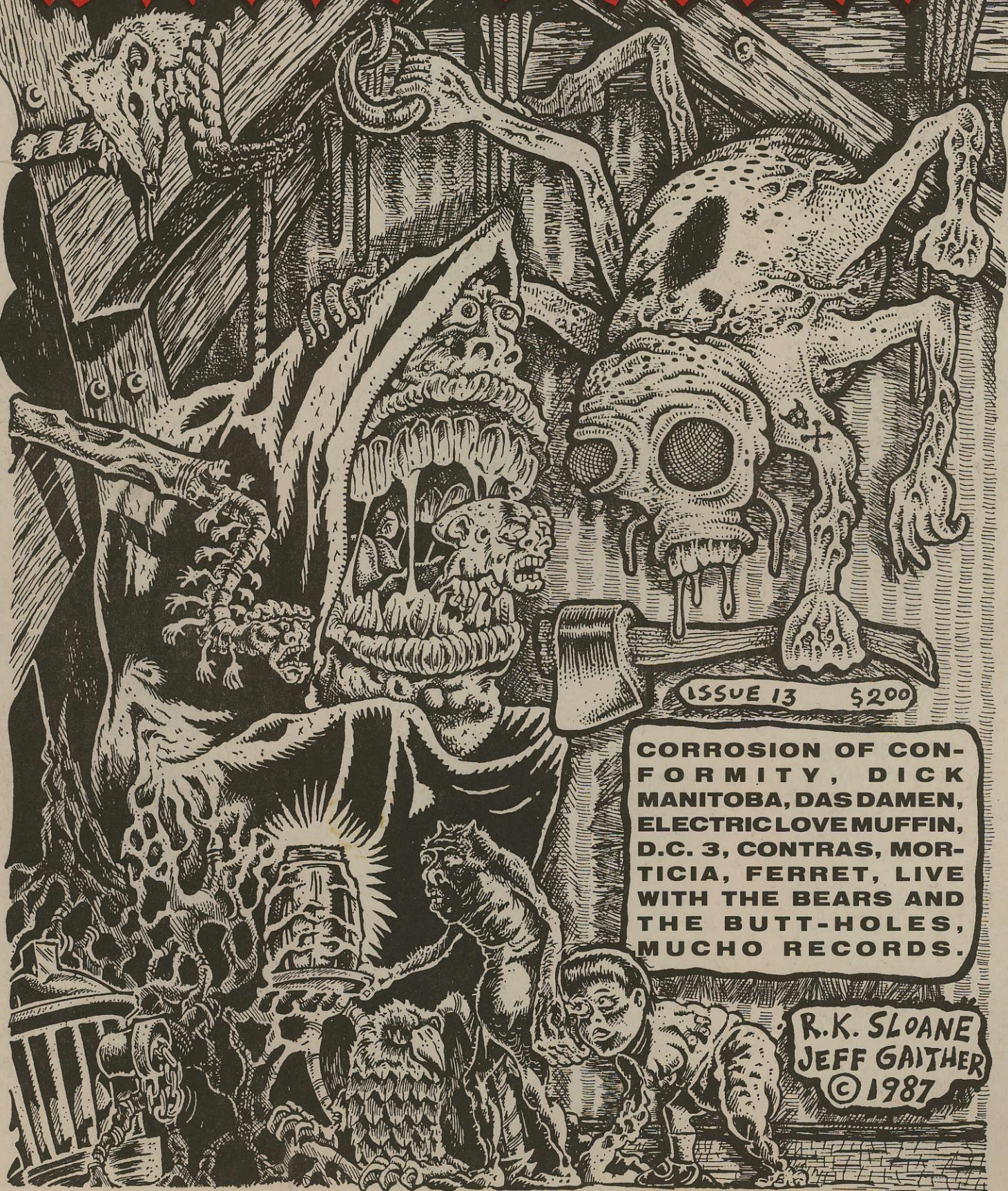


Uncle Fester



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**CORROSION OF CON-
FORMITY, DICK
MANITOBA, DAS DAMEN,
ELECTRIC LOVE MUFFIN,
D.C. 3, CONTRAS, MOR-
TICIA, FERRET, LIVE
WITH THE BEARS AND
THE BUTT-HOLES,
MUCHO RECORDS.**

**R.K. SLOANE
JEFF GAITHER
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CORROSION OF CONFORMITY

by Jake Wisely

If ever a punk band has affected my life and tastes in music, Corrosion of Conformity is the one. Their 1983 debut LP, "Eye For An Eye" (No Core), was my first true-to-life drop-jaw punk-rock experience. Sure, I had been listening to hardcore for a long time, but no record ever had blown me over and refused to let me up the way "Eye For An Eye" did.

Crucified for your crimes
Hung on the cross to die
Spikes in your limbs
To pay for your sins
An eye for an eye
An eye for an eye
Eye for an eye
Will Justify
Murder by the state

I suppose that line-up, still including Mike Dean on bass, but with Eric Eycke on vocals, might be the reason I dig metal so much today. They were crossover even then. C.O.C. even had a pentagram in one of their logos. That was before most punk bands acknowledged heavy metal's existence. "I think Woody and me especially have always liked Sabbath... We've always been into the real heavy stuff," said drummer Reed Mullin.

Being the two only original members now making up C.O.C., Reed and Woody Weatherman (guitars) grew up on the likes of Black Sabbath and Deep Purple. "It was never truthfully a conscious thing," said Woody when speaking of their progression towards metal. "Yeah, it was never, 'Hey, let's do this metal thing,'" adds Reed. "The first record, you can't really tell, just 'cause the production was so bad, but Woody's guitar sounded the same as it did on 'Animosity'." C.O.C.'s second LP, on Metal Blade, and essentially their break into the metal genre.

UF-DO YOU THINK DEVELOPING A METAL EDGE WAS GOOD COMMERCIALLY? DO YOU THINK YOU'VE SOLD MORE RECORDS, GAINED A MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCE?

REED-Yeah, this whole crossover thing...

WOODY-Metal people come see us, but I think metal people go see any punk band. It's just sorta the trendy thing. We're not picky about who

comes to see us. We like everybody to come.

REED-The speed metal/crossover thing has become a commodity. It's not that much of an underground thing anymore. Bands like DRI, they're selling records. The big labels, the big independents--Metal Blade, Combat-- are taking note of that and trying to corner the market. They're all flashing money in front of these naive kids' faces.

Both Reed and Woody agree that the crossover market has become oversaturated. "It just got real redundant. All the bands started sounding the same... You can only go so far

with that kind of stuff," claims Woody. Reed: "Now everybody starts picking up on the same formula."

As well, both agree that there are a number of bands who have proved themselves as innovators as well as being musically creative. "I can really narrow it down to Metallica and Voi Vod," said Reed, for obvious reasons. "Almost everything else is just real bland," adds Woody. "Plus, the way they approach the music is not really 'Rock Star'," concludes Reed, "They're like regular guys, cool people."

UF-HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY RESENTMENT FROM PUNKS WHO HEARD "EYE FOR AN EYE" AND EXPECT COMPLETE HARDCORE FROM YOU TODAY?

WOODY-Not as much. A long time ago we did.

REED-We've been putting off the whole heavy metal thing so heavily...

WOODY-Not really putting it off, just not really having much interest.

REED-We certainly don't live up to any heavy metal image.

WOODY-Some people are disappointed in that aspect. They'll come to the show expecting us to come out with a fucking cloud of smoke. But, the reality of it is, we come out on stage and tune up and do what we want to do.

REED-There certainly are degrees of professionalism about us playing, but we're not a hype. We don't take on the whole heavy metal formula.

WOODY-Hype is a good word. That's what a lot of bands are into--hype--coming out and making a spectacle to hide their musical ability. They have to come out with a smoke machine so people will go, "Wow!"

REED-Sometimes that kind of stuff can be fun, but that's not totally what we're into.

WOODY-If I go see a metal band. I like, it might be fun just to see 'em do that kind of stuff.

UF-TAKE THE MEATMEN...

WOODY-That's for fun and that's cool.

REED-Redd Kross do that too with the '70's thing.

UF-SO WHAT DO YOU THINK OF A BAND LIKE SLAYER WHO COME OUT WITH SPIKED GAUNTLETS, ETC.?

REED-Whatever floats your boat.

It seems that C.O.C.'s biggest problem has been dealing with the skinhead population. I can remember seeing them a few years back at a local hall in front of no more than 50 people, and they themselves were among that hairless group. But, as the band progressed, so did the length of their hair. To quote the insert to C.O.C.'s latest EP, "Technocracy" (Metal Blade): "The best thing about skinheads is that they're biodegradable." "But, you have to realize, at that point we had just come back from a couple real small tours where we had the worst experiences. We had our tires slashed and fights breaking out at every show," said singer, Simon Bob, in response to the quotation.

In fact, during their show at Minneapolis' First Avenue, Simon took time to explain their stance against violent skinheads, and to apologize for not being more specific on the lyric page. The audience response was gratifying as many people cheered and supported his



photo by Bonnie Graham



photo by Bonnie Graham

comments.

SIMON-So all the skinheads are gonna beat us up?

REED-No, I talked to 'em.

WOODY-What did you say to 'em?

REED-Well, they came out lookin' for us and I went up to 'em and asked what they wanted. They said, "What the fuck is all this on the lyric page, this biodegradable stuff?" I just told 'em the problems we had with skins in the past and they said they were totally against all the fascism and racism.

WOODY-See, that's what I mean. If they're having fun, that's cool, but if they start hurting people...

REED-I think it's dumb to classify a whole group, like on our lyric page. Any time when you say a whole group of people are fucked up, that's bad, that's unfair.

WOODY-I feel having that on the lyric sheet was wrong. I don't agree with it.

SIMON-I don't mind having it on there, but I would've liked to back it up more.

WOODY-If it was worded a little different, like "Racist skinhead" or "Fascist skinheads" or something, 'cause there are a lot of Minor Threat-type skinheads.

REED-Well, they know the difference.

WOODY-But still, maybe some people don't, like a metalhead that reads it and they might hate all skinheads 'cause they read it on the Corrosion lyric sheet.

REED-That's their problem if they're gonna be that impressionable.

SIMON-We should have been more responsible.

REED-I think we were being responsible. I think we were standing up for something that's really fucked up in the scene, and no one else does.

UP-SO YOU'RE NOT GONNA HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THESE GUYS THEN?

ALL-No.

Wew, now that that's resolved, on to the record:

WOODY-The tunes are actually very old. We wrote 'em right when "Animosity" was out.

REED-Except "Ahh Blugh", our heavy metal anthem. That's our seven second long speed metal song.

UP-"TECHNOCRACY" WAS AN EP, WHY?

REED-It was to finish our contract with Metal Blade. We wanted to get

away from that whole thing. When we signed with Metal Blade, we were really naive and we signed a bad contract... They really ripped us off, I think.

WOODY-They wanted a full album, and we really didn't want to give 'em all those songs.

REED-So we just gave them the bare minimum. I think the songs are pretty good. It was just something we had to get out of the way. Our next record's gonna be really good though.

C.O.C. has had extensive offers and inquiries from labels, major and indie, including Metal Blade, to establish a new contract, though at the time I talked with them, they seemingly didn't want to deal with a contract. "We already have a whole album almost written, so we're just gonna get home and kick back, and let it happen," said Woody. "We'll take our time."

UP-OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO GET THE BEST DEAL?

REED-We don't want to compromise any kind of ideology or morals or anything. If we sign with a major, it will have to be on our terms.

UP-IT'S HAPPENED BEFORE.

WOODY-I personally don't think we're really ready for a major label, 'cause we're not at that level.

REED-But you never can tell.

Better late than never: C.O.C. now consists of Reed Mullin on drums, Woody Weatherman on guitar, Simon Bob on vocals, and Phil Swisher on bass, replacing Mike Dean who also used to sing when C.O.C. was a 3-piece (before Simon).

REED-"Technocracy" is doing pretty good, but a lot of people expected Mike Dean (on vocals) though and we had just gotten Simon from the Ugly Americans. They were going, "This guy doesn't growl quite as much."

SIMON-At first, I heard a lot of, "Wow, who's this singer?", but lately, people are more used to it.

REED-Our live thing is a lot more fun, because I think Mike Dean added a lot of tension. He was a lot more serious about things than we really are. We got a new bassist who's really good. He adds comedy relief to the whole thing.

WOODY-We just have a lot better time

now.

REED-Which is what it's all about.

It is obvious that without Mike Dean, the band is more relaxed and not as intense, but the music is still just as powerful. A friend noted that Reed looked like a Muppet behind his dwarfing drum kit--something that wouldn't have stood out with the tense Mike Dean in the forefront.

Before I delve yet further into fact and opinion, Corrosion wished me to acknowledge that over 6000 lyric pages did not make it into their record sleeve. "Just because it was such a short record, we wanted to put in a big lyric page and they didn't put it in... And we paid for half of them," complained Reed. The culprit was named as Important Records, and from what I saw, C.O.C. holds a grudge. The 36" x 12" glossy lyric page is extremely important to the band, so if you have obtained a "Technocracy" EP without one, you may write to C.O.C. and they will send you one for free (I recommend including postage though). Write: C.O.C./PO Box 5091/Raleigh, N.C./27650.

Wrangling with other topics:

UP-WHAT'S YOUR REASONING BEHIND THIS TREND FOR HARDCORE BANDS TO TAKE ON A METAL EDGE?

WOODY-Just like anything else, everybody goes through trends. It's just like any other group of people--highschool kids--you fit in and you are cool. It just shows you're a little weak if that's the best you can do. Just following with the crowd, that's kind of a cop-out.

REED-I can see influences and stuff, but to grasp and totally take over the whole formula and do exactly what all these bands do, it gets old. With any kind of music: classical, jazz, punk rock, heavy metal and stuff like that.

UP-HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HARDCORE?

WOODY-Personally, I think a lot of people are gonna get really burned on the metal thing. It's really gonna branch out and even now, there are so many bands that are not afraid to play a little whimpier-type of stuff, less abrasive, more melodic. I think it's good for bands to branch out. I'm not going to particularly like it, but it's a positive thing. There's no reason why hardcore should have a formula.

SIMON-I think things are gonna get a lot more melodic. You're gonna have both ends.

REED-I think slowly but surely this heavy metal thing is gonna take over, then it's just gonna die out. There's so many new kids all the time. When I first got into it, I was influenced by Circle Jerks, Black Flag, and the Germs, but now kids are influenced by DRI, or maybe C.O.C., it's really weird. It'd be really nice if it got bigger and kids started looking around and seeing what's going on in the planet and taking note of what their leaders are doing.

WOODY-Not just within their scene.

REED-Yeah, people are so limited with their own little social clique. They escape from the larger school/parent layed-out clique and get into this one. A lot of kids don't go any farther than this: posing and smoking a cigarette, maybe getting drunk, I mean, big deal.