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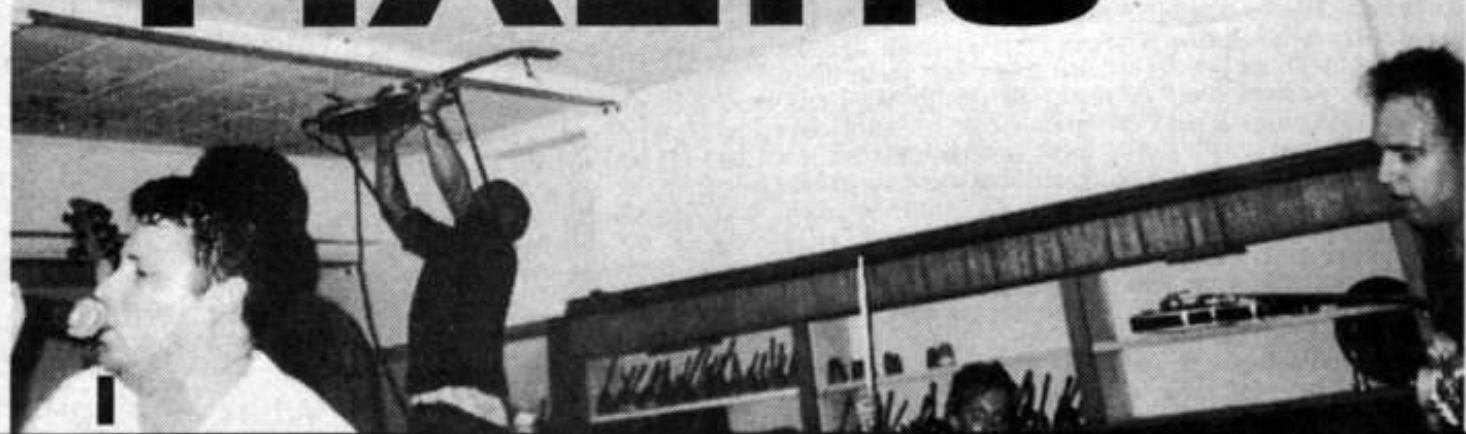


— **BLACK EYES OPTIONAL**

25 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT the WAR in COLOMBIA • VALENTINE KILLERS • CRIPPLE BASTARDS • LORD HIGH FIXERS • FEDERATION X • AMBITION MISSION • NOSEDIVE 'ZINE

the death of...

the LORD HIGH FIXERS



I had never even set foot in Texas before I headed down to Austin with partner-in-crime Brett Schultz. He was on spring break, I had some vacation time coming, and I said what the hell, let's go. Fortunately, our trip coincided with the Lord High Fixers' last show ever, and as an added bonus they were playing with the Fatal Flying Guilloteens, my favorite band to come out of Texas in recent years. I wasn't quite sure what to expect of the show. While I didn't own any Lord High Fixers records, I knew that Brett was crazy about them and that Tim had been a fixture in the Texas punk scene since the late '70s, had been in seminal bands like the Big Boys, major label funk-a-teers Bad Mother Goose, the demonic, blues-drenched Poison 13, and Jack O' Fire. But I did know that everyone in the band was either approaching 40 or had already crossed that threshold, and we all know what age does to bands...

Which is why I stood there with my mouth open when the Fixers launched into their set, watching these supposedly old musicians go completely ape-shit on stage. They flung themselves around stage and into the audience with a vigor surpassing bands half their age. Halfway through the first song Tim plunged off stage and landed on his back, sending a few audience members to the ground. But the fall didn't slow him down at all; he jumped back up and proceeded to go even crazier, spending half the show leaping around the stage and the other half alternately beating the shit out of his guitar and throwing it out into the audience. It was one of the most inspired and energetic performances I had seen in a long time. Afterwards Tim and Mike sat down with us to talk about a whole bunch of shit.

Interview with Tim Kerr (guitars) and Mike Carroll (vocals) of the Lord High Fixers by Mike Joyce, with occasional interruptions by Brett Schultz.

MRR: Brett and I have never been to Texas before, and the whole point of this trip was to see the Lord High Fixers last show ever.

Tim: Oh Lord!

MRR: One thing I was very curious about was I've heard a lot about not messing with Texas. Now let's say that I, a young punk from Los Angeles, shows up here and starts messing with Texas. What's going to happen to me?

Tim: [laughs] You might get your ass kicked, that's probably what's going to happen.

MRR: Can you think of any good examples of kids coming from out of town and messing with Texas? What happened to them?

Tim: You want me to take off [on a tangent] or do you want me to tell you the truth of why that ad is there? Because what the ad actually is, is for "don't litter."

MRR: Let's talk about the attitude.

Tim: Now, the way punk rock has become, no, nothing is really going to happen. Back when—

yeah, just the fact that you didn't look like you were supposed to look, you got fucked with. That was messing with Texas. [It's true, Brett and I spent one afternoon in a bar in El Paso, and at one point one of the locals inquired as to who had let the faggots in] But even to this day, like when people say "Texas music," it's not any of the stuff that *Maximum Rock N Roll* writes about. Like the Butthojes, Ornette Coleman, or people like that. You might hear about the 13th Floor Elevators, but that's about it.

MRR: Now the Lord High Fixers are the second band featuring you with Mike Carroll on vocals. What inspired you guys to get back together and do a band again?

Tim: Mike. What happened basically was Mike, he was pretty bad with alcohol, because you'd never know by seeing that [the Lord High Fixers live on stage; Mike Carroll is a fucking madman!] but if he's here talking you'll see, he's real quiet and shy, he just doesn't talk very much at all. So to get up there and do that, he had to get pretty sloshed. And it just kind of got the best of him. And then he left, he was gone, during the period when I was in Bad Mother [Goose], we literally lost him, and it was like losing someone in your family. And we were scared to call his parents because if he wasn't there, it was kind of like "shit, he could be dead." He finally called and came back. [Mike Carroll joins the interview at this point] He called me back, and it was just so great to hear him, and when he actually said that he was thinking about doing something new, I was like, I'll drop everything to do something with him, because he's just great, he's definitely wide open to everything like I am, so it's cool.

MRR: Is that how the Poison 13 reunion [around 1994] came about?

Tim: When he called back, that's when Jack O' Fire was doing stuff, and I didn't know if I should talk about music with him, because I didn't know how to approach him. I didn't

know exactly what had happened or anything. I just didn't know, and I didn't want to lose him again. But at one point, he said something to me about Poison 13 or something, and I basically said, "well, you know there's a lot of people that want to reissue that, but I've always said no because we didn't know about Mike," and he said well, that'd be cool, and the thing that totally just floored me was we were sitting there and he says, "maybe we could do a show," and I just couldn't believe it.

MRR: And the band started from there.

Mike: I had sat in with Jack O' Fire a few times and we had recorded a few songs with Jack O' Fire and it just kind of grew from that.

MRR: How many of the current Lord High Fixers were in Jack O' Fire and Poison 13?

Tim: Just us. But Mike was never actually in Jack O' Fire. When all this happened, I didn't know if we should take it slow or what was going on, so I said next time we go into the studio, think of some songs you've always wanted to do but never got to do, and we'll do those, and that happened and it kind of went from there.

MRR: If I could ask you about the Big Boys for a minute.

Tim: Oh yeah, that's totally fine. I'm totally proud of all that stuff, I'm not one of those people that's all "this is now, I'm not talking about that shit."

Mike: I was the roadie for the Big Boys.

Tim: That's how Poison 13 started. We were friends from that. Mike always wanted to be in a band, but things weren't really happening, so I said good, I'll help. And we'll just play one show, and it went from there. The Big Boys were the same thing, we said let's play one show, and everything went from there.

MRR: Did Poison 13 and the Big Boys exist at the same

time?

Mike: Not really.

Tim: Kind of, because in reality the Big Boys actually never broke up, we just quit playing and just never got back together. And the bad thing about this was that a lot of people thought we [Poison 13] were trying to be the new Big Boys, which, no, we weren't.

Mike: It became obvious [that we weren't] the first time people saw us play. It was totally different.

[Brett, unable to contain himself any longer, asks]: What was the first Poison 13 show like?

Mike: It was at a real small bar, and it was basically just all our friends. It wasn't really wild or anything because I'd never sung before. We just kind of got up and played ten songs.

Tim: I just remember Ian and Alec from Dischord were doing this trip, an 'on the road' kind of thing, and were actually here and saw the very show which was pretty cool.

Mike: It was real low key.

Tim: Because that band, people down here did not really like. Because we're playing blues, which is a total Texas thing, and if you were punk rock back then, especially when all the hardcore stuff started up, that's the last thing you wanted to hear. And here we were, doing that, we were doing it real loud, and to this day, Mark [Arm, of Mudhoney fame, a huge Poison 13 fan] and Steve [some other guy from Monkeywrench] and all those characters from Seattle don't believe me [that Poison 13 was hated], I mean 30 people were coming to see us. We loved it, we were having a great time, but people hated it.

MRR: Was there a big backlash from

let's say that I, a young punk from Los Angeles, shows up here and starts messing with Texas. What's going to happen to me?



the hardcore kids, not just in Texas, but all over America? The Big Boys were regarded as a hardcore band, or at least a part of the hardcore scene, it seemed.

Tim: You always saw it more here, because everywhere else we were playing with bands like the Screaming Sirens and bands like that.

Mike: We played with bands that were kind of like us, like the Divine Horsemen, Gun Club. We didn't really play that many hardcore shows.

Tim: Well [Poison 13] did play with Samhain. You have to realize too that that's kind of what punk rock was about anyway, if you're true to what you're doing here [Tim taps his chest], it doesn't really matter what people think. I mean it's cool if people like it, but the biggest thing is to either hate it or love it, don't just be like "eh. . ." [shrugs apathetically] Leave some sort of impression. Either fucking hate the thing, or...

Mike: We drank a lot; we had a reputation for being real obnoxious. When we opened for Samhain, I would go "OK, here's a fast one," and then do "Spoonful," which is a total dirge, slow. We would kind of taunt them a little bit.

Tim: With the Big Boys—and I'm totally proud of all this

it's cool if people like it, but the biggest thing is to either hate it or love it, don't just be like, "eh."

MRR: Is that a big problem in Austin? Are there lots of gangs around here?

Tim: I don't

think it's as bad as Houston or Dallas, and a lot of small towns are getting it more than the actual cities now. But the old established gang here was the Brothas. You'll see graffiti, but that's it, we never had a big deal with the Crips and the Bloods.

Mike: Law enforcement is really paranoid about it. There are lots of ridiculous rules in school, like if you wear red you get sent home.

MRR: Speaking of gangs, let me ask you about the Young Lions Conspiracy, which I've been hearing a lot about, but I haven't gotten any concrete answers to what it actually is.

Tim: [laughs] That's right! There's all kinds of stories flying around about it, and mainly I'll tell the story—I found out about it from the Big Boys, off a Sun Ra record. I saw some kind of weird little address and thought it was pretty cool, started writing, had a time just like everybody is now, had a really hard time



Leave some sort of impression. Either fucking hate the thing, or...

stuff—but it was getting to the point where everybody was really watching what you were doing, which is cool, but it comes to the point where people have to realize that you need to be yourself, and realize that all these people are human beings, give everybody a break and have fun with it. We were definitely kind of pushing buttons with that band.

MRR: It does seem that for a while that a lot of bands in the hardcore/punk rock scene, a lot of hardcore shows, weren't really about fun.

Tim: It was sort of a ritual thing, a rival thing. Texas was a lot better. Texas never really had that locked-in thing like LA, California, or anything, and that's why you had bands like the Butthole Surfers that didn't sound anything at all like the Dicks who didn't sound like the Big Boys who didn't sound like Poison 13. It was pretty cool, and it still kind of is pretty wide open, which is why I got into this in the first place, which was the whole community thing—you could pretty much do what you wanted to do.

MRR: Did the Big Boys like Big Girls?

Tim: [laughs] Well, I'm married, I can't answer that.

MRR: You weren't married then, were you?

Tim: I was.

MRR: One thing I've noticed is that a lot of girls in Texas get married very young, and its frustrating because I see all these gorgeous women and I'm like hey...but then I notice the ring.

Tim: Well go up and ask. You never know

Mike: They get divorced, and then you'll have girlfriends.

Tim: And then you wont get your ass kicked because you'll be dating a Texas girl!

MRR: They'll be the ones kicking my ass. But forget about girls—lets talk about posses. Like I said, this is my first time in Texas and I'm not really sure how things work around here. Are there still posses dispensing frontier justice, or is that a thing of the past?

Tim: Well the gangs are probably dispensing frontier justice, and they're posses, so there you go.

trying to get anybody to write, and finally got some sort of response through one connection to this connection, and we've just kind of been writing. The emblem, if you look at it, it looks like the thing from the Black Panthers, except it's a lion. Its one of those things where it's about you, it sure as hell doesn't need to turn into straight edge or anything like that. It's all about you, and you participating in stuff and keeping the doors and windows open in your own mind and having the freedom to express yourself and do something creative.

MRR: OK so our friend Felix, he's the biggest Big Boys fan ever.

Tim: Hey Felix, you have the same name as the kid who plays drums for DRI—his name was Felix and he lived in Texas and we were friends. [Felix really likes DRI too, coincidentally]

MRR: Getting back to the Lord High Fixers, I saw you on stage today, going nuts, and you put bands half your age to shame. You have a new album coming out, and there seems to be a lot more unexplored territory to go to. Why end it now?

Tim: Well we're probably going to do some other things, me and Mike, but for this group of people things have pretty much run their course, because Robbie is moving to Brooklyn, Stephanie started her own band—Sunshine Supergirl—and we weren't real comfortable keeping that name with a totally different group of people. I think it's more appropriate to change the name and keep going in the same vein.

Mike: We'll see what happens.

Tim: It's kind of been like that in most of the stuff I've been involved in—they never expected it to go this long to begin with, I mean, Jesus, we went to Japan twice, which was amazing. It's been pretty cool that it's lasted this long. We weren't even going to do this

show. What happened was, in Japan, Stephanie had decided that she's drumming in Sugar Shack, and she's married to Andy, (she met Andy through this band, so she calls it the Lord High Fixer Uppers), so with Sugar Shack and then her band, it was kind of one of those things where [she said] if I keep doing this, if I'm going to keep going, I've got to stop something. Mike really wanted to do one more show, and Robbie did too, and I thought it would be really cool, but I'm the kind of person who says whatever happens, happens. And then when she found out that Robbie was going to move, she said yeah, I want to do one more show before you leave. They've been friends for a really long time, so then this thing happened.

MRR: But a reunion isn't out of the question?

Tim: I don't really like reunions. I mean we did the Poison 13 thing just because nobody liked us to begin with, you know? The worst part about those things to me is that the band could be better than they were, but the trouble is that all these people that never saw the band back then think they saw them and they didn't. I mean, especially with the Big Boys, or any of the old bands, it was the whole package. The crowd was half; the band was half. But now it's turned into such a thing where you're going to a show, and seeing the band onstage, it's just a whole different mind set, and I'm just not that much into reunions at all. I mean more power to anybody else that wants to do it, but...

MRR (Brett): So what about the future? Will you be continuing on with different projects with the same band members?

Tim: At this point we don't know. I have a feeling that Andy and Stephanie probably won't be. With Robbie, it will kind of be hard because Robbie will be living in Brooklyn, but he's great. When Jack O' Fire was doing stuff, Josh was living in DC. He's got a great band now called the Sorts, but he would come down to see his mom, and we were a holiday band. He would come down for the holidays and we would record. But I don't know, we'll see. I was telling Mike, I didn't even realize Mike wanted to keep doing stuff until last week, because he doesn't ever talk that much. But we did a... Keith from the Circle Jerks has diabetes, a really bad case...

MRR: Yeah, I saw him at a record store recently, and he looked terrible.

Tim: He doesn't get any money from the Circle Jerks or anything like that, and they wanted to do a benefit record for him, and they asked him who he wanted on the record, so he said Slayer and bands like that, but we were one of the bands, which I was totally honored and surprised about. We went in and did "back against the wall."

Mike: Which was probably the most fucked up version I think of that song ever.

Tim: And so we were leaving and he said you know, I kind of wanted to do more stuff. Monkeywrench is wanting to play so much and I'm pretty much the hold up now.

MRR: Where do you work?

Tim: At the library of the University of Texas, doing computer graphics and stuff, which is really cool, so I'm kind of the one holding that up.

MRR: So you're the monkeywrench in Monkeywrench?

Tim: Yeah I'm the monkeywrench in Monkeywrench. But if Mike wants to do anything then I'm there, he's family, I love him so much.

MRR: So you're pretty much rooted in Texas.

Tim: Yeah

MRR: Is your Texas pride going to make you vote for

George W. Bush this year?

Both: Uhh... No. [laughter]

MRR: Do you have any political endorsement for the upcoming presidential elections?

Tim: Ian MacKaye, somebody ought to get him to be president.

MRR: So we're in cattle country right now, right? What's the biggest steak you've ever eaten in one sitting? They have those deals where if you sit down and eat a 72 ounce steak, it's free.

Tim: Where is that? It's on Route 66 somewhere, this really old mom and pop place, but I've never done that. I've eaten steaks when I was a kid and stuff, and here chicken fried steaks are the big thing, and now they're starting to serve chicken friend bacon [what the fuck?!!] if you can believe that. But I've been a vegetarian since 1984, so...

MRR: Well what if it was a tofu steak?

Tim: Umm, no.

MRR: In keeping with the rock and roll theme of your life, how do you plan to die?

Tim: Playing.

Mike: On stage.

Tim: Yeah that sounds good to me. I'll have a heart attack; too much jumping around and falling off stage.

Mike: Yeah I think my neck is permanently stuck in this position.

Tim: I just don't see the point of doing this unless you're going to push it further. I mean we never know what's going to happen. That's why people would always come to see us here, it was great, because bands would play and then we would play and you couldn't even describe it, its like this *happening* kind of happened and then there would be some other band. And Mike too, we feel really strongly, that if you're going to do it then push it, there's no point in rehashing the same old stuff.

Mike: That's why we never play that much, we never considered a month-long tour and playing four times a week, or five times a week, because realistically there's no way we could keep up the pace. Our instruments would get trashed. We would get injured.

Tim: the longest one we've done—Estrus had a four or five show thing in California—I can't remember what it was called, but we were on the bill, us and the Makers would be together all the time, which was great. But by the third show my guitar would make two noises. It either went WOOOOOOOOOOOOO! Or WEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE! And Robbie's bass—his jack was so far in the bass that it would take us 30 minutes to get it plugged in, but it's a live show, what the hell, here we go... Somehow we made it through the next few shows.

MRR: Now that the Fixers have broken up, what sort of young Texas bands should we be listening to?

Tim: The Fatal Flying Guilloteens! [at this point Mike, the drummer from the Fatal Flying Guilloteens—who are amazing—comes over to thank Tim for letting them play with his band] Of all the stuff I've been recording, it's one of my favorite things, it's really, really cool. To me, that's where this shit needs to be headed, where you stand there with your mouth open wondering "what in the hell?"



MRR: Thanks guys!

Both: Thank you.

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