

Killing Kurt Cobain, ad nauseam

BY GREG MCFARLANE

Did Courtney Love do it? Well she did 'it', with plenty of people to boot, but did she kill her husband, grunge legend Kurt Cobain?

This is basically the question at the heart of *Kurt and Courtney*, a documentary that delves into the various of the conspiracy theories that claim Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain did not die of a heroin overdose in 1994, but instead was murdered in a plot orchestrated by Love.

While most theories of this nature usually find themselves in a junk heap with 'Elvis is still alive and owns a Kentucky Fried Chicken in Macon, Georgia', among others, the circumstantial evidence surrounding the case seems to give Love's detractors ammunition.

Her father, Hank Harrison, won't quite say she killed Cobain — but he won't defend her either. Throughout the film she repeatedly threatens journalists who pry into her private life. The nanny that

Love and Cobain hired to look after their baby, Frances Bean, won't say she killed him, but says, if Cobain did commit suicide, he was driven to it by Love's controlling nature, violent outbursts and constant nagging. She says there was a lot of talk about Cobain's will in the weeks prior to his death. And there is ample evidence suggesting Cobain contemplated divorce.

Tom Grant, a private investigator whom Love hired to follow Cobain after he broke out of a drug rehab clinic in Los Angeles the week prior to his death, thinks Love is behind it. He says that Cobain had too much heroin in his system at the time to have the capability to fire the shotgun police believe he committed suicide with. However, tests by researchers in Los Angeles showed that someone with twice the heroin levels of Cobain could, at least for a minute-and-a-half afterwards, jump up and down on one foot without falling. And it only takes a second to pull a trigger. That gives plenty of time for Cobain to pull a trigger, but doesn't discount Grant's theory.

Much of the evidence is also open to speculation. Many of the couple's friends and hangers-on seemed reluctant to talk — many said they feared retaliation from Love. This lends more circumstantial evidence, but in the end nothing is proven. The documentary only intensifies the previous beliefs held by viewers on the subject.

More interesting, however, is the peek into the private lives of Love and Cobain. Never before have I seen such a glut of junkies, psychopaths, liars and wannabes. Cobain's best friend is a pimple-faced thirtysomething whose will has been destroyed by either too many drugs or Love's threats. And El Duce, the LA rocker to whom Love apparently offered money to off Cobain, was about as psychotic as one could get.

If we are judged by the company we keep, we'd all better get on our knees and pray for Cobain and Love. But, given the contents of this documentary, some of you may just keep Love out of that plea.



GETTING UNPLUGGED: Kurt before joining Elvis.

Somehurrygood Andrea Florian Independent



I have a new obsession. Her name is Andrea Florian and she is the quintessential feminist artist of our generation.

Florian's latest album, *Somehurrygood*, is a pleasant potpourri of musical styles and emotions. Between this and the same artist. From in-your-face acoustic assaults to portishead-esque ballads, to

whimsical *a cappella* chants, Florian certainly lacks consistency, but in a very good way. The tunes are not only diverse and unique, they are also oh-so-catchy.

Florian's lyrics seem like excerpts from a diary, filled with blunt honesty and packed full of emotion. The lyrics paint pictures of believable scenarios, a welcome change from the fabricated elation in mainstream music. Florian's songs have a purpose and a message, and you can tell that they are carefully crafted works and not harvested until ripe in her head. Unlike most artists, Florian is awake and thinking, and you'll find no sickly-sweet feigned utopia here.

The most enjoyable track on this record has to be "Feminist", a most surprising rant set to music. This track might be the official anthem of choice for all those who consider themselves to be feminists, stating "I am a feminist and I'm not scared to say it/ I'm not scared of what the word means/ I'm not scared of the word you'll take it/ and if you're intimidated/ then please

don't blame your fear on me."

Other notable tracks include "Point of View", an account of the frustration of respecting a different opinion. Also, "Somebody Else" is a great track that explores apathy and the fear of getting involved in sticky situations.

Enough gushing on my part. Buy this CD — it just might make you smarter. *Somehurrygood* is a necessity in the CD collection of every enlightened nineties chick.

JANET FRENCH

Clayton Park Thrush Hermit Sonic Unyon

Thrush Hermit has stayed the course on a simple philosophy for their latest record, simply, "hit the drums hard and cram as much volatile material as one can into each song". The result: rock 'n roll in it's truest sense.

After the debacle of their major-label debut, *Sweet*

Homewrecker, Thrush Hermit took a new approach — an energetic back-to-basics mind-set that is wonderfully present in the band's wonderfully produced, *Clayton Park*.

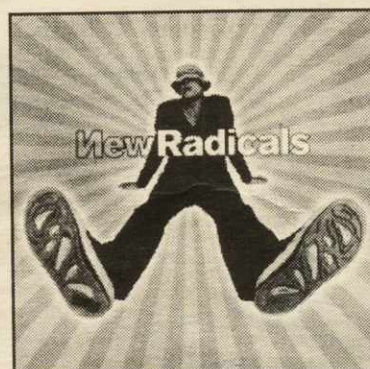
The Hermit's exchange of Goliath major label *Elektra* in favour of the down-home warmth of the modest-but-mighty *Sonic Unyon* has enabled the foursome to focus on what really matters — "hitting everything way into the red".

What results is a recording that comes off with lo-fi harmony (a la Eric's Trip) married with a loud rock intensity and emotion that has frontman Joel Plaskett wearing out his vocal chords. There are tunes that pop like Sloan (of late) only wish they could. Bottom line, Thrush Hermit sounds great.

A single listen to *Western Dreamz, Before You Leave*, or *Dreams for the Gang* (which features a rousing homage to the Black Sabbath era) will whet the appetites of even the harshest music critics. All in all, *Clayton Park* is a solid effort that will certainly leave it's mark on the indie-rock community.

JOHN ELMER

Maybe You've Been Brainwashed Too New Radicals MCA



By now I'm sure most people reading this have heard the single "You Get What You Give" by the New Radicals. And maybe most of you have seen the video for the

track, showing a hoard of kids overtaking a mall. And possibly some of you have heard the New Radicals, vocalist, Gregg Alexander, whining about how corporate culture governs all of our activities.

My question is: what makes him so special?

Granted, much of what he moans about is true. We are force-fed products and trends, and told what to do and how to do it (and how much to spend in doing it) by those in power. And more and more it appears that the person standing next to you is a clone of the person next to her.

Really, it's not what's being said that bugs me — it's the source. The New Radicals are a classic one-hit wonder created by and for the benefit of all those they denounce. And as much as Alexander complains about others who have sold out (by gosh, by creating music that people will like), he conveniently leaves the bartering of his own soul out of the half-assed social commentary he passes off as legitimate songs.

So, he yells and screams about how we have to reject consumerism and mass marketing, all the while appearing on commercials for HMV and Future Shop. Something doesn't add up.

Normally, I wouldn't denounce anyone for "selling out". In fact, society runs a lot smoother when people acutely pick their spots to rebel and conform the rest of the time.

But, if, as a musician, Alexander is going to disregard the effort put forth by other artists and condemn them — and then be guilty of doing the same thing — he's opened himself up to a load of criticism.

If you're going to truly deviate from social norms and want a real claim to the adjective "rebellious", it does you no good to merely bark at the hand that feeds you. It helps to at least leave some teeth marks. With, bland, uninspired tracks, the New Radicals do anything but.

GREG MCFARLANE

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