

Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death

Trial kills Dead Kennedys

by Jayn Ritchie

Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death is the final album by the Californian group The Dead Kennedys. The record was released over 6 months ago at the height of the censorship trial against the lead singer, Jello Biafra, and four other people. Although the trial ended on August 27, 1987, and the group disbanded in December, the record still merits attention, as do the issues of the American censorship trial.

The trial concerned the charge of "distribution of harmful matter to minors", referring to a poster included in the Dead Kennedys' record *Frankenchrist*. The poster was of H.R. Geiger's piece "Penile Landscape". After a lengthy and expensive trial, the charges were dismissed. The Los Angeles City Attorney's office had hoped this case would set a precedent so numerous other musicians could also be charged. The Dead Kennedys and Alternative Tentacles Records were specifically chosen because they

were independents, working on a limited financial budget. The City Attorney's office admitted they felt this was a "cost effective way of sending a message ... that we are going to prosecute". The outcome of the trial was determined when the judge declared the content of the poster was to be seen within the context of Biafra's lyrics. It became obvious (even to the City's attorney, Guarino) that by taking Biafra's lyrics into consideration, the case went in Biafra's favour.

The record was released in order to get more money to pay for the trial. Despite this pointed (and worthy) reason for releasing this record, it is one of the finest "greatest hits" collections ever. The record is essentially a collection of singles and B-sides from their previous efforts. Most of the material dates between 1979 and 1982, and the album even includes a bonus flexi-disc with "Buzzbomb from Pasadena" and "Night of the Living Rednecks". Also included is a handy booklet of newspaper clippings, song information, and lyrics.

The album includes their first single, "California Uber Alles", which still has the force and vitality of its original release in 1979. Almost a precursor to the censorship issue is the single "Too Drunk to Fuck", which was originally issued with optional warning stickers to cover up the title should the record dealer find the title offensive.

Two other highlights are to be found in the 17-song collection. The first is a twisted cover of the old rebel rocker "I Fought the Law". The song was recorded by the band at the time of protests concerning the return of Dan White to San Francisco. He was an ex-police officer who had been charged in the deaths of Mayor George Moscone and gay Supervisor Harvey Milk five years before. Protests had surrounded the original conviction of White — he was convicted for manslaughter, not murder, and this was seen as a case of extreme corruption and collaboration in both the police force and the legal system. The single was intended to have been released under the pseudonym

of Lily White Dan and the Hot Potatoes and distributed for free during the protests, but only made it on a French compilation in 1986.

Their sacrifice was not in vain

"Pull My Strings" is the final landmark single on the album. It dates back to a live performance by the Dead Kennedys on the Bammy Awards (Annual Bay Area Music Awards) in 1980. The Kennedys interrupted their planned song to perform a par-

ody of the money-seeking music-makers they felt the Awards represented. Biafra mocks, "I wanna be a prefab superstar" and the chorus mimics "My Sharona" with "drool, drool, drool, My Payola!" The uptight management were less than impressed. They didn't care to hear Jello singing "I wanna be a tool/... I'll make my music boring/I'll make my music slow/I ain't no artist, I'm a businessman/No ideas of my own."

Jello Biafra and the Dead Kennedys may have staved off the idiots of censorship in the early rounds of the debate, but it seems obvious less articulate musicians will soon be targets of right-wing censorship. I hope their sacrifice was not in vain.

NEW RELEASES

by Scott Neily

One of Canada's best guitarists, David Wilcox, is back with his first album in two years, *Breakfast at the Circus* (Capitol Records). His fifth effort to date, *Breakfast* is a musically diverse recording, full of philosophical lyrics that evoke strong imagery.



David Wilcox; is he really into yoga?

With the help of long-time collaborator Sadia, Wilcox has produced an album rich with his well-known, melodically struc-

ture sound. Key songs include the title track and first single "Breakfast at the Circus", the rocker "Fire in my Bones", the grinder "On a Roll", the party-flavoured "Let it Flow", and the dynamic "Laying Pipe".

David Wilcox has long been considered a top campus and club performer. *Breakfast at the Circus* is an honest collection of intelligent rock tunes that is sure to bring Wilcox a great deal of notice in the music scene, both in Canada and abroad.

Paul McCartney, the most successful ex-Beatle, has returned with *All the Best*, a twenty-song greatest hits album (Capitol Records). For those fans who don't need a compilation album because they already own the rest of McCartney's records, this one comes complete with the brand-new,

never-before-released single "Once Upon a Long Ago."

Despite that obvious commercial tactic, the album does contain the very best tracks of McCartney's post-Beatles career. For the younger generation which missed growing up with the Beatles and Wings, the album shows off the highlights of the man's remarkable talents. Included are such number-one hits as "Band on the Run", "Listen to What the Man Said", "Ebony and Ivory", and the biggest single of 1976, "Silly Love Songs".

All the Best covers the albums of the man listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most successful composer and recording artist of all time, from the post-Beatles era up to the present. An excellent compilation, this album is a great addition to any record collection, old or new.

Appealing a faculty decision?

The Student Advocacy Service provides free assistance to students who may become involved in an appeal process. Advocates can assist students with appeal procedures, submissions, and by representing the student at appeal hearings.

INTERESTED?

Call 424-2205 or visit Room 404, The S.U.B.

Used & Rare Books

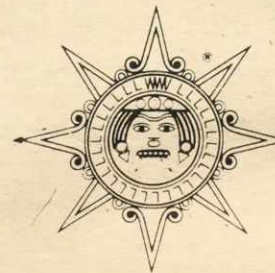


BACK PAGES

1520 Queen St.
Halifax
Nova Scotia
423-4750



By presenting this Ad, from now until February 28th Profiles Hair Design is offering 20% student discount every Saturday on perms, highlights and cuts.



SOLANA

The Tanning People

Present this Ad and receive free Sunbed membership and 20% off your first suntan session.

420-0272
1119 Queen Street
Halifax