

# HOUND DAWG

## MAGAZINE

*"I'M A HOUND DAWG!"*

*NO. 4 FEB 2010*

### HUGH CORNWELL

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE  
ROCK LEGEND

### MOVIES OF 2010

THE PICK OF THIS YEAR'S FILMS,  
WHAT TO SEE AND WHAT TO MISS

### NORMAN WATT ROY

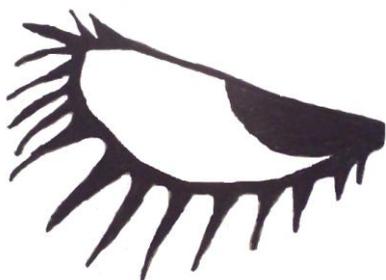
THE BLOCKHEADS BASSIST  
SPEAKS ABOUT HIS CAREER



**POETRY - HUMOUR - INTERVIEWS - SHORT FICTION - REVIEWS - AND MORE**

Issue 4 has arrived and well, well, well, it could just be the best edition yet. Firstly, we're keeping up with the great poetry submitted by those talented poets out there, as well as some fresh, unusual and exciting fiction from James Turner, a great story he has given us I'm sure you'll agree. Dave Graham also gave us all the lowdown on what films to see this year and also which ones to avoid like the plague. One film I will be seeing this year is the Ian Dury biopic, Sex and Drugs and Rock n' Roll. On that note, I chatted to a musical hero of mine, arguably the finest bass player the UK has produced, Norman Watt Roy of Ian Dury and the Blockheads fame. Norm was a top bloke and great to talk to; god I love listening to legends. Speaking of legends, this month's cover star has been an idol of mine for some time now, Mister Hugh Cornwell, song writing extraordinaire and ex leader of the Stranglers, who I got the chance to talk to about his solo career and the joys of touring. Alongside the interview with Cornwell is one with his former guitar player Chris Goulstone, a big name in music in his own right. Great stuff, well and truly. I really do feel this magazine is getting better by the issue and feel privileged to be publishing the material that I am putting into this eclectic magazine. Thanks to all the readers who make this magazine worthwhile, and those who have given me so much positive feedback. I hope you all enjoy the magazine as much as I did compiling it. Well never mind that shit, here comes Mungo!!!!

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WISDOM TWINS BOOKS WT 006

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James Turner, Chris Wade, Dave Graham, Derrick Keeton,  
Chris Goulstone, Hugh Cornwell, Norman Watt Roy,  
Alexandra Glacet, Barbe Q Barbies

# 2010 AT THE MOVIES

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*2010 looks like a half-decent year for mainstream film, and so I thought I would settle into my best Roger Ebert slippers and put together a list of what should be hitting the multiplexes in 2010. By Dave Graham*

## 15 FILMS YOU SHOULD SEE IN 2010

### 1) SHUTTER ISLAND

It's Scorsese and that should be enough. It hits the cinemas in February and advance word is very good. You may spot the twist a mile away, but in the hands of a master like Scorsese, the journey alone will be worth the admission fee. Expect Marty to draw inspiration from the likes of Sam Fuller's "Shock Corridor" in this thriller set in a hospital for the criminally insane. It also gives DiCaprio another chance to demonstrate what a great actor he is becoming.

### 2) THE TREE OF LIFE

Supposedly based on part of the script genius maverick Terrence Malick developed in the 70s. Who knows if it still features the sleeping Minotaur? We do know it stars Sean Penn and Brad Pitt and there's an accompanying IMAX film due out as well ("Voyage of Time", which is rumoured to be more of a documentary and may feature dinosaurs!). It's Malick so it will look beautiful and it should be inspired.

### 3) INCEPTION

Christopher Nolan's latest appears to be set in Paris and "the scene of the crime is the mind". It looks weird and sounds wonderful. Di Caprio and the stunning Marion Cotillard star. This is a chance for Nolan to get even darker away from the Batman franchise and this looks like nothing else due out this year.

### 4) TRON: LEGACY

It's Tron. It has uber-cool lightcycles. Nuff said.

### 5) THE RUM DIARY

Long overdue Johnny Depp projected, directed by "Withnail and I" helmer Bruce Robinson. Based on the legendary Hunter S Thompson novel about a freelance journo in the Caribbean. With women, drinking, politics and a dollop of self-destruction, this should be a cult classic in the making.

### 6) LEAVES OF GRASS

Ed Norton. As Twins. How can it not be amazing?

### 7) IRON MAN 2

The first rocked and Downey Jr is hotter than ever. The trailer looks great and with Mickey Rourke as the villain and Scarlett Johansson in black leather, what could go wrong?



### 8) BLACK SWAN

Darren Aronofsky's latest is about rival ballet dancers. But it's not just about the dancing. Expect some thrills and mystery and a sizzling scene between the two leads, Mila Kunis and Natalie Portman. It also stars Vincent Cassell, but expect Winona Ryder to "steal" the show (so to speak!) in a mystery role.

### 9) THE RUNAWAYS

Kristen Stewart stars as Joan Jett and Dakota Fanning is Cherie Currie in this biopic of one of the most legendary girl groups of all time. Expect the script to take some liberties with the truth. The campaign to re-release Ch Ch Cherry Bomb as a single starts here.

### 10) THIS MUST BE THE PLACE

Apart from PT Anderson, Italian maestro Paolo Sorrentino must be the most inspired director working today (inviting Scorsese comparisons –check out Il Divo). This stars Sean Penn as a bored retired rock star who hunts down his father's executioner – a Nazi war refugee. Here's hoping they find a place on the soundtrack for the Talking Heads classic, which gives its name to the title.

### 11) ROBIN HOOD

Ridley Scott in Kingdom of Heaven / Gladiator territory. This looks like a grittier version of the tale,

with Russell Crowe as Robin, Cate Blanchett as Marion, and thankfully not a Bryan Adams in sight.

### **12) THE GRAND MASTER**

This is Wong Kar Wai so it may not actually make it to cinemas until 2046. It reunites him with Tony Leung in a biopic of the legendary Ip Man, who tutored Bruce Lee. Supporting cast includes Zhang Ziyi and Change Chen and the rumoured long awaited comeback of the iconic Brigitte Lin.

### **13) DAYBREAKERS**

Vampires are everywhere at the moment, but this one thankfully steers clear of the Vampire porn of TV fare like “True Blood” and the teen angst Vampirism of the “Twilight” series. Here we have a role reversal, where vampires dominate the world and the humans are running out. Ethan Hawke stars.

### **14) LETTERS TO JULIET**

My tip for the sleeper romantic hit of the year. An American girl on holiday in Italy discovers one of Juliet’s unanswered letters in Verona’s mythic courtyard and sets off to find the lovers mentioned in the letters. The Trailer looks promising and all set to boost Verona’s tourist industry. The cast is fleshed out with Gael Garcia Bernal and Vanessa Redgrave.

### **15) FAIR GAME**

Crap title and yes, I know it’s the third Sean Penn in this list. However, he doesn’t do many films, and the ones he does are always worth watching. Not much known about this, but advance word is supposed to be good and should be interesting to watch Naomi Watts riff off Penn again (ala “21 Grams”).

## **10 TO AVOID**

### **1) THE BOUNTY HUNTER**

Jennifer Aniston and Gerard Butler (yawn seriously the guy needs to take a break from acting). Supposedly an action comedy. Oh dear.

### **2) SEASON OF THE WITCH**

Tagline: “Not all Souls Can Be Saved”. Nicholas Cage in mediaeval hokum. Sounds frightful.

### **3) KNIGHT & DAY**

Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz should have been banned from ever acting with each after the truly atrocious “Vanilla Sky”. Throw in the tags action, comedy and “fugitive couple on the run” and it's enough to make anyone feel ill. Check out the trailer and see what I mean. Oh, actually – don’t.

### **4) THE KARATE KID**

WTF?!! Jackie Chan as Mr Han. Pretending to be Mr Miyagi. NO! NO! Just No.

### **5) THE SORCERER’S APPRENTICE**

Nic Cage again. In a film about a broomstick that develops a mind of its own . . . er

### **6) GET HIM TO THE GREEK**

Why does Russell Brand have a film career?

### **7) FOOTLOOSE**

The original was hardly a classic, but it had a certain charm . . . but a remake?

### **8) THE LOVELY BONES**

Peter Jackson is probably the most unjustly revered director, and this suggest he’s back on “Heavenly Creatures” territory – which is one of the most disappointing films I have ever seen. Apart from the FX in “Lord of the Ring’s”, he doesn’t really offer much as a director. “Screamers” was a bit rubbish, and he should really go back to making unpleasant (and thoroughly entertaining) films like “Meet the Feebles” and “Bad Taste”. I hope I’m wrong on this one, but . . .

### **9) PIRANHA 3-D**

Hmm . . .

### **10) CLASH OF THE TITANS**

It will gross millions, but I thought the original was okay, and this doesn’t look very appealing at all.

## **5 THAT COULD GO EITHER WAY**

### **1) THE A-TEAM**

I really don’t know how this will play out. I’m guessing it will get a completely new audience but disappoint fans of the original. Neeson is a good choice as Hannibal. But . . .

### **2) WALL STREET 2: MONEY NEVER SLEEPS**

If you can get past the rather limited acting abilities of Shia Lebeouf, then Stone may deliver on this one. It’s relevant and Gordon Gekko is such an iconic character.

### **3) THE WOLFMAN**

Del Toro looks great in the trailer, but it may disappoint.

### **4) ALICE IN WONDERLAND**

Depp and Burton for the umpteenth time. Let’s hope it’s “Beetlejuice” and not “Charlie & The Mediocre Factory.”

### **5) SHANGHAI**

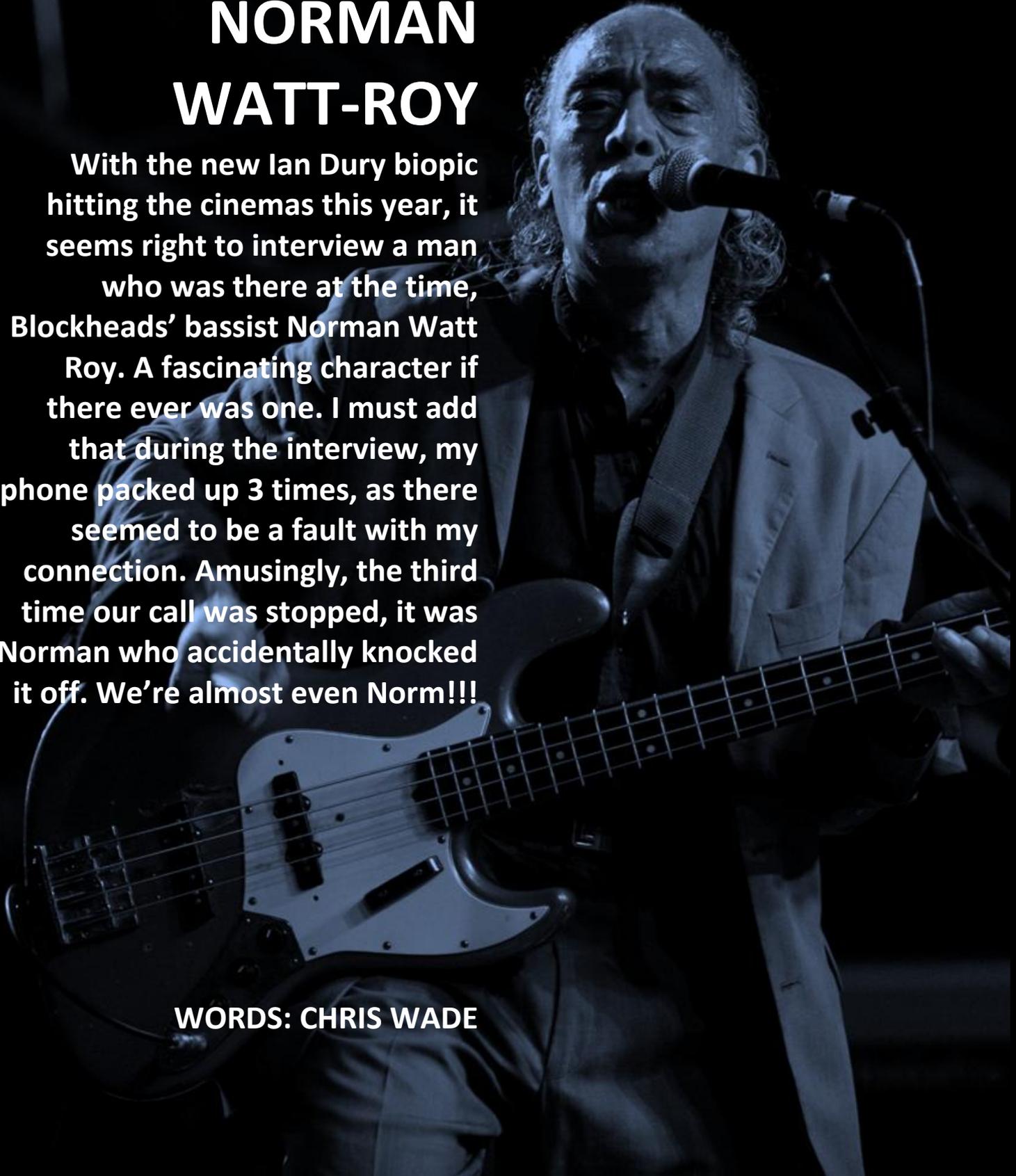
A supposedly lavish 1940’s period mystery with John Cusack, the amazing Gong Li and Yow Chun Fat. The footage leaked so far looks fantastic but it could all fall apart in visual excess.

# ***SEX AND DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLL IS VERY GOOD INDEED***

## **NORMAN WATT-ROY**

With the new Ian Dury biopic hitting the cinemas this year, it seems right to interview a man who was there at the time, Blockheads' bassist Norman Watt Roy. A fascinating character if there ever was one. I must add that during the interview, my phone packed up 3 times, as there seemed to be a fault with my connection. Amusingly, the third time our call was stopped, it was Norman who accidentally knocked it off. We're almost even Norm!!!

**WORDS: CHRIS WADE**





**You're originally from Bombay aren't you? What are your first memories of coming over to England?**

I was about 4, I remember coming over on the boat, a Polish one and I can remember watching the first film that I can remember and it was Calamity Jane.

**Oh, Doris Day. Good film that!**

That's all I can remember from the journey. But I remember when we got to London, it was November 1954. Me and my brother had never seen snow and we were like WOW!

**Bit surreal.**

Yeah.

**When did you start getting into music?**

I was 11 when I started playing rhythm guitar. My dad showed me a few chords and my brother was playing already, lead and stuff. So I ended up playing rhythm. And then when I was 14, from about 11 till then we had school bands. We finally got a bass player, one of my brother's friends. He had just left school and had a job so he could afford to buy a bass and an amp. My brother said to him if he bought the bass and the amp, he could join the group. But we forgot to ask him if he could play or not. He couldn't play but he was willing to learn. So we started teaching him a few simple things to do on the bass. After about a week he had blisters on his fingers and he said "I don't wanna do this no more." He said we could keep the bass and the amp that he was leaving the band. So

my brother said to me, "why don't you play bass?" So I was glad I had more to do than just playing rhythm. So I got into it when I was about 14.

**So you got into bass accidentally then really didn't you?**

Yeah it was kind of accidental. It was hard to find a bass player. There weren't that many around.

**Everyone wanted to be a guitarist in them days! It is interesting because I think your bass style is much more complicated than most bassist's. There's more stuff going on, so it's probably because you were a guitarist originally.**

(Laughs) I sort of developed that way. Some of my favourites were James Jameson and even Paul McCartney. It was the melodious ones who were playing melodies rather than sticking to the basics.

**Your style has been influential over the past 20 to 30 odd years.**

Thank you. You don't realise how influential you are because you know your own playing so well. I am sick of my own playing (laughs). I have to learn something new just to try and challenge myself.



**Most people know you from Blockheads, but you've been playing in Wilko Johnson's (ex Dr Feelgood and Blockheads guitarist and**

**all round legend - CW) band since the 80s. Do you have a strong musical connection to him?**

Wilko joined the Blockheads in 79 for the third album *Laughter*. We toured all over Europe and Australia, and I kind of got pally with him. When he was in The Blockheads he still had his *Solid Senders*. He would come off a tour with us and go on the road with his band. It was about 85, he came round to my house and asked me to do some gigs with him, because he'd lost his bass player and all that. It just went on from there. A few gigs turned into more and more.

**So you just love playing with Wilko then?**

Oh yeah, brilliant, yeah. Because his music is really routesy, there's only me and a drummer and it's all very free. We never rehearsed or anything. He just said "My stuff's really easy." After the gig he said "I dunno what you were doing Norm but I loved it." He loves to play 12 bars and I get a chance to jam with him. With The Blockheads you have to be more disciplined. With Wilko, because there's only 3 of us, you kind of like do whatever you like. You do what you want, it's free, it's like jamming all the time.

**That must be good for you though, playing in those two bands which are so different.**

Yeah, one of them is disciplined and musically jazzy and funky. With Wilko it's more kind of rhythm and blues.

**That must keep it fresh for you because you won't get bored will you?**

I'm a player at the end of the day, because if I'm not playing I'll be playing at home. When you're a player you just wanna play.

**I was reading about your session work, lots of interesting bands. Frankie goes to Hollywood and stuff.**

Oh yeah. The thing is, I did a few sessions with Charley Charles, original Blockheads drummer. We were getting a lot of work. That's how we met Chaz and Ian. We had the rhythm section.

**Loving Awareness?**



That's right. I was working with Johnny and Mickey (Turnbull and Gallagher of The Blockheads). It was me and Charley that met Ian and Chaz and then we formed the Blockheads after that. At that time we were doing a few sessions. But after The Blockheads had formed and *Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick* was a hit I started getting asked to do a lot more session work, just because I had been on some hit records and stuff. I found it hard to do session work. I didn't start out as a session player or anything but I did do a lot of work for what I considered to be friends: The Clash and all the Stiffs artists. The Blockheads were the only band who could really play in the early Stiff days so we kind of played on most of the records.

**What did you think of Ian Dury when you first met him?**

Oh I thought he was fantastic; amazing lyricist. I had never read anything like them lyrics. *Clever Trevor*, all the songs on *New Boots and Panties*.

**Have you seen the Sex and Drugs and Rock and Roll film?**

Yeah, well, I was a little bit disappointed. The acting was amazing; Andy Serkis does an amazing job. The thing I didn't get off on was the subject matter dealing with Ian's personal relationships. It's still a good film, very well put together. But I think a lot of people will be disappointed expecting a film about his music with The Blockheads.

**I don't want to know about his personal life really.**

You seen the film?

**Not yet.**

Well, when you see it you'll see what I mean. I thought they'd have focused more on his music with The Blockheads. But it doesn't have anything to do with that, it's about his relationship with his wife and his son, his girlfriend and his father; kind of dark.

**Bit of a letdown then?**

A little bit, yeah. Andy Serkis has done an amazing job. The clips you get of The Blockheads are just 10 seconds. You see glimpses of the band playing, and a guy who's supposed to be me for about 2 seconds. There's no talking parts. They made a drama out of his life rather than the music. And incidentally while all that's going on, they kind of go, "this is what was happening at the time, the music was going on." You know what I mean?

**So the music's a sub plot then?**

Kind of. It's not really about the music at all. It's about his life and his relationships.

**Not really any point in that for me really.**

That's what I thought, exactly what I thought.

**I'm not too excited about seeing it now.**

(Laughs) I am more of a documentary person really. I prefer factual stuff. Because it's a drama they have taken things out of context. They use stories that happened but put it into a different kind of situation. All the artistic license allows them to put different people in these stories. And that kind of let it down for me, because I was there and for me this isn't how it happened.

**That's a bit shit.**

Yeah. I mean there are aspects, like Peter Blake's art work was very good. A lot of people have seen it and thought it was exciting. It's down to personal choice. I thought a film about Ian and the Blockheads would have been better but that's just choice.

**I've read the Song by Song and Ian Dury biography book....**

Now that's really good stuff.

**They should have filmed some of that stuff.**

Exactly. The incident with Ian and me and Omar Sharif (when Sharif hit Ian in a restaurant) is in the book, but in the film the only mention you get is having Ian with a black eye and Betty's boyfriend asks him about it and he says it was Omar Sharif.

**That must be upsetting for you if you were there.**

Yeah. There was a play out last year and they took loads of stories and made into a conversation between Ian and Fred, his minder. Different stories and people were involved but they made it all into a conversation for this play.

**A part in one of the books that makes me laugh, although it probably wasn't funny really, is the thing you guys called Dury Duty. When Ian was too pissed up and one of you got the job of holding him up and looking after him for the night.**

Yeah (laughs). That's what we used to call it.

**Dury Duty is a funny play on words.**

That's what it was like after gigs. We all made things up like that all the time, even Ian himself used to.

**I know Ian has had an interesting life, but would you ever write an autobiography because you have had an interesting life haven't you really?**

A few people have asked me to do it. A couple of guys said they wouldn't mind having a go at it. I'll have a think about that.

***NORMAN- WHAT A LEGEND. CATCH THE BLOCKHEADS AND THE WILKO JOHNSON BAND LIVE THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR IF YOU CAN. NO, ACTUALLY FORGET THE IF YOU CAN PART, JUST F\*\*\*ING DO IT!!***

# MIRREN MIRREN ON THE WALL

**CHRIS WADE PICKS THE BEST  
PERFORMANCES FROM OUR  
VERY OWN DAME, THE  
LOVELY HELEN MIRREN**

This country has produced some of the world's greatest actresses for sure: Vanessa Redgrave, Judi Dench and Maggie Smith. These days we have people like Kiera Knightly, Rachel Weisz and such, glamorous figures with very little heavyweight impact. Fine movie stars sure, but little else. This seems to be the trend as of late with all film performers; style over content, makeup over natural abilities. There are very few that can combine the looks, the sex appeal and the world class acting ability-Helen Mirren is arguably the best example of this. The amazing thing about her is, while she has given some of the most astounding performances of recent years, she remains as big a sex symbol into her 60s as ever. In fact, she is probably more admired for both her beauty and talent now than she has ever been. It seems to get better for our Dame year after year, and I couldn't be any more pleased.

I suppose the point it all started to take off on a monumental level was in the past decade, that small period of time when Mirren was made a Dame, won an Oscar for playing the Queen and became an influential figure of natural beauty when THOSE pictures of her still looking great in a bikini were spread all over the press in a frenzy of interest. What separates her from any other yummy granny (if there are any more of those) is the fact she remains so modest. She once commented that she's fine with being average looking, and perhaps it is this lack of ego which makes her all the more appealing. For me, a person never too interested in someone's public persona, it's all



in the work. Mirren has been in some tremendous movies over the years and has given some of films' most powerful performances. She has charisma and a sense of mystery, yet a firm grip on reality. She's never been one to take herself so seriously, in a business that is full of pretence. Here is a pick of some essential Mirren moments.



## **AGE OF CONSENT (1969)**

What better place to start than Mirren's first major movie role? By this time she was enjoying success at the Royal Shakespeare Company, at the age of 22. Although she had appeared in movies before, this was the first role that made an impact. Directed by Michael Powell, it stars James Mason as an artist returning to his native Australia, who meets the

young Cora (Mirren), a primitive girl raised by her drunken Grandma on a remote island. She soon becomes his model, posing nude to inspire the struggling artist. But Cora wants to be more than this and amidst complications with the artists' ex wife, she attempts to show him she is a desirable woman too. Seeing Mirren so young on screen is a bit of an oddity, as most of her key roles are from her 30s onwards. But here she perfectly embodies that typical air of the 1960s sex goddess, far superior to Bardot or Welch, due to the sheer depth of the performance as well as the raw glamour. Free spirited and wild, a great performance.



### **O LUCKY MAN (1973)**

The second part in Lindsay Anderson's savage classic trilogy, following on from *If...* and continuing to rip the British system apart. *O Lucky Man* brings us out into the real world as Mick Travis (Malcolm McDowell) goes on a wild experience in a cruel, unforgiving Britain. The journey he takes brings him round in a full circle of self discovery, over the course of 3 epic hours. The best elements of this masterpiece are Anderson's constant cynicism, his straight forward direction and sense of what makes an "epic." Malcolm puts in a tour de force as Mick, a well rounded, wholly kind individual who goes through hell in his search for inner peace. Mirren appears in the movie as Patricia, a seemingly care free hippy chick who hangs with Alan Price. At first she seems to be a free girl, almost a thematic continuation of *Age of Consent's* Cora. But when we discover she's the spoilt brat daughter of one of the world's richest and most ruthless tycoons (played excellently by the brilliant Ralph Richardson)

she kind of goes down in our estimations. There are two sides to her performance here, both driving the themes of the movie. As a moral, it is valid. As a film it is more of an experience; a thought provoking, perfect moment in sublime British film history. Mirren's performance was well received and marked the point, for some, that her talent overtook what Michael Parkinson called "her obvious physical attributes."



### **CALIGULA (1979)**

As told in issue one of *Hound Dawg*, *Caligula* was one of the messiest films of its time. Controversial, shocking and at times grotesque, this pornographic biopic of Rome's nuttiest Cesar is now pretty darn brilliant, to me at least. McDowell tackles *Caligula* as an anarchist and portrays the power mad maniac with great strength and humour. Mirren plays his wife, a suitable sexy woman with a clear air of mystery about her from the word go. It is perhaps Mirren's sexiest performance to date, surprisingly subtle amidst the often cartoonish mayhem. While McDowell struggled with his credibility after the huge cock up (oo-er) of this film, Mirren strode on to more success in the 80s and 90s with a series of great performances. In *Caligula*, she holds her dignity, even in the 3 hour uncut edit, which features full lesbian romps and cum shots. Filthy stuff indeed but it needs to be seen to be believed.

### **THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY (1980)**

God I love this film! For me it is right at the top of the heap, unarguably one of the key British films of the 1980s. John Mackenzie's crime masterpiece combines enough humour, suspense, excitement and violence to create a

perfect piece of tense drama. Bob Hoskins plays crime lord Harold Shand, an ambitious patriot who wants to spread his empire far and wide for the good of the British Empire. While he undergoes a deal with the Mafia, Harold sees his empire being shattered around him. There are bombings, murders and cover ups as Harold tries to uncover the truth of the horror which not only threatens his plans, but his life too. Hoskins gives a career best here, a flawless characterisation of an on the whole decent bloke, who often enters frightening territory when he has to flex his crime muscles a bit. He brings Shand to life. But Mirren once again provides stability, as in *Caligula*, to her power mad Cesar, here a London based emperor. Mirren also provides the strength for Hoskins, someone for him to lean on and keep him in the real world. Helen is a perfect match for Hoskins in this film, as the complex, sleazy plot unfolds, and the pair of them hold this masterpiece together. They had acted together before in the theatre, but their film partnership is one of the great duos of the 1980s. They worked on screen together again in 2001's *Last Orders*, another great movie which also starred Michael Caine, Ray Winstone and Tom Courtney. There aren't many films you can call flawless, but *The Long Good Friday* is one of them. Fucking fantastic stuff.



## **THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE AND HER LOVER (1989)**

Foul mouthed crime drama, perhaps one of Britain's most shocking, in your face films of the past 30 years. The plot centres around vile gangster Michael Gambon's nightly dining at a posh swanky restaurant which he terrorizes to his best ability with his entourage of filthy crooks and scumbags. To him, it's his joint, just because he happens to be putting a bit of money into it. He insults other diners, acts like a total pig and generally makes a wanker of himself. To his right is his wife, Georgina (Mirren), a beat up moll silenced by her vile husband's antics. As he continues his ridiculous ramblings, Georgina has a sneaky affair with another customer in the toilets and the kitchen. When Gambon discovers this, all hell breaks loose, resulting in the most demented sick last 20 minutes of any movie I can recall. Mirren is fantastic in this film, embodying the put upon woman who builds the courage, in the end, to stand up to her abusing monster. Gambon gives, what I believe, to be his finest effort to date; an absolute bastard brought to life with fantastic dialogue and guts from the man himself, now playing the head wizard in the Harry Potter movies. The supporting cast, including Ian Dury and Tim Roth, are a marvel to be seen as are the glittering costumes as provided by Jean Paul Gautier. Peter Greenway's direction is perfect, as one would expect, effortlessly gliding in Altman style through the ugly proceedings. Visually astounding as well as an artistic triumph.



**ALSO SEE:** *The Queen, The Collection, Comfort of Strangers, Calendar Girls.*

# AN INTERVIEW WITH BARBE Q BARBIES

KAISA FROM THE BARBE Q BARBIES TALKS ABOUT LIFE AS A FEMALE MUSICIAN AND THE FUN OF PLAYING LIVE. OH YEAH, AND SHARING A STAGE WITH THE NEW YORK DOLLS. *WORDS: CHRIS WADE*



## When and where did you guys form?

Barbe-Q-Barbies were formed in Helsinki in 2002, but our current and final member count wasn't reached until in the beginning of 2007.

## Could you talk us through your line up, the role each member brings to the group and when they came on board?

The first members of Barbe-Q-Barbies were Niina (drums), Ekkis (guitar) and Katriina (bass) who had the idea of forming an all-female rock band. I met Niina when we worked at a video rental store and at the same time played in a band called The MoonDogSaints for a year or so. Niina, Ekkis and Katriina asked me to join the band after their first gig. Our present singer Niki joined the band in the end of 2006, and our final line-up was ready when Katja started playing the bass in Barbe-Q-Barbies in the beginning of 2007.

We all bring somewhat different type of personality to the band, which I see as an advantage to the band. All of us have a different kind of musical background as well as different taste in music. We all participate in arranging the songs and bringing our own ideas to them, though mainly Niki writes the lyrics and vocal melodies and I do the rest of the composing.

## Who are your influences? Are there particular female figures you admire in rock? It may sound silly but there is an element of L7 in your music.

Basically we all have different influences which have inspired us to play rock, but to name a few common influences in our music, I would say



AC/DC, Runaways, Motörhead, KISS and Girlschool. Ekkis is a huge fan of L7 and we might have a couple of songs which have been influenced by them, too. I myself have a tremendous respect for many female figures in rock, but you could say Joan Jett is my number one inspiration what comes to women in rock. She is great at what she does, writes good songs, has a perfect style of performing them on records and on stage.



**What was it like playing on the same stage as the legendary New York dolls last year? Did you meet Johansen and the boys?**

It was awesome, to share the stage with such a legendary band! We met them after the show and hung out backstage for a while, they all were very nice and fun-loving guys. What can you say... very down-to-earth kind of musicians, I love 'em. Later on we took Sami and Brian out for drinks at Bar Loose, a popular rock bar in downtown Helsinki.

**Niki has solo projects too, how does she manage to juggle both the Barbe Q Barbies and her solo work?**

There hasn't been any problems with Niki's solo stuff, at the moment she mainly writes songs for other artists. I think it's good to be able to do different types of stuff and the rest of the band totally respects that as well.

**Is there any news on an album coming out? What else are you up to in 2010?**

Actually we've finished recording, mixing and mastering of our debut album and things are looking good for us, at the moment we are in

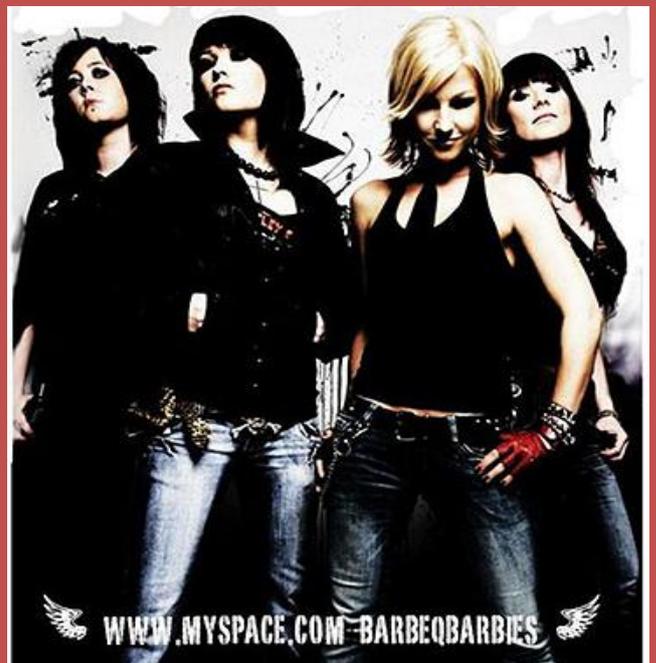
the middle of negotiating with a record company and if everything works out fine (which I'm sure of), we should be releasing the album soon! Our other plans for this year include doing gigs and festivals in the summer, hopefully outside Finland too.

**If there is one show you see as your highlight so far, which show was it?**

Personally for me it was definitely the warm-up gig for New York Dolls last year, it's always an honour to play with such great bands. Of course I would be happy to share the stage with them again someday.

**Lastly, is it easier in these days to be taken seriously as female rockers than say in the 70s and 80s?**

For sure there still are misconceptions concerning women playing rock. One advantage is that as an all-female band we get more visibility than the average male bands. That might be a good thing in the beginning, but you have to remember that without the motivation and love for the music, it doesn't take you far. The audience is not ignorant; they want to get their money's worth, so to say. Underestimating the crowd would be to assume that all you have to do is look good and be able to hold the Les Paul in your hands - you gotta be able to do so much more especially these days when there are so many different bands trying to make it.





## POETRY:

### ALEXANDRA GLACET

**Another recurring character, poet Alexandra Glacet with some more words for Hound Dawg.**

#### Faceless tube

The night buzz of the city  
riding along in the bright carcass  
thinking of you.  
Flickering lights bring images,  
empty visions of your face reflecting  
back  
I see myself in your shadow.  
Dreaming of your touch  
the bite of your mouth  
shouting out, lost in fantasy.  
Bodies entwined  
interlocking puzzle pieces  
pleasure sounds on rewind in my ears.  
Eyes boring holes to my soul  
the faces around me are all you  
though you were never here.

#### Bad Hair Day

'Hello' say's the face staring up at me  
full of innocence  
and expectation. Confined in her  
shopping trolley seat she wriggles.  
Children are funny; they find the  
simplest things amusing. Mind you, it  
could be my hair. Unruly and  
windswept, I really should have worn a  
hat, that'll teach me.  
With a giggle and a poke the smiling  
face is wheeled away.  
Still I'm wondering about my hair, and  
if I should buy greens or carrots to go  
with the organic chicken.

#### Night Musing

The picnic bench. A humble  
symbol. In sunlight; scenes of  
happiness; drunken summer days;  
families. Now silence.  
Only wind and sirens kiss my ears.  
Somehow I find myself drawn here in  
the sheer bleakness of the midnight  
hour. Maybe I'm searching for  
something? There's no one here. I'm  
alone.  
It seems appt. Hands so cold I can  
hardly write. Yet I'm compelled to stay.  
I wonder if I will find salvation here or  
the one I gave up. Maybe angels will  
dawn, if I sit here long enough. Frozen  
to stone. I need peace, my mind too  
busy.  
I want to run through the leaves that  
lay collected by the genial road  
sweeper. Somehow they stay where  
she left them. If I lay down in this  
place, can I stay forever?

## FICTION:

# Undercooked

By James Turner

James has been writing here and there for about 15 years. He organises a writing group in North London and other stories can be found at:

<http://ariu-jt.blogspot.com>.

Tuesday. I am sat opposite the in-laws with talk on the subject of dead friends and my dick is rock hard. I look from my trousers to Mary, who nods to her father as she nibbles on a bread stick. The restaurant is dark and overcrowded and my eyes droop. After a day on the road all I want is to lie down and fuck and sleep.

My evening routine revolves around takeaway food, television and sex, while Mary dines out at exotic restaurants and wine bars. This is our first time out together for months, dragged along due to her parents making the journey to town from their coastal hideout. Better than having them come to our home, my sanctum. A neutral venue was the only solution. In exchange for anal I promised to appear enthusiastic and suggested an Italian restaurant I had heard mentioned somewhere.

The main course is taken away and I follow Mary to the toilet, leaving mum and dad arguing with the young waitress, her lacy bra visible through a greasy stain on her white shirt. My wife goes through the door and I slip in behind her.

'Is the coast clear?' I say, unzipping my flies.

'What the hell.'

'I'm bursting.'

Pressing my lips to hers, I push Mary up against the marble basin and squeeze her arm.

'Remember when we dated.'

'Everyday.'

Mary pushes me off, straightens her blouse and disappears into a cubicle.

'You're only out tonight because they're here,' she says, as half a bottle of pinot leaves her bladder and trickles into the basin.

'Fuck. I'm about to explode out here.' I say, splashing some water over my face. 'Especially if that waitress keeps going past.'

'Go to the gents and sort yourself out.'

I stand there for awhile thinking about where our relationship had come to and how we had changed, until she told me to get out.

In the cubicle I think about the blow job and the chocolate sauce Mary licked off me and the time we fucked in the toilets at Pizza Hut on our third date and the ice cream we shared afterwards. I try to picture my wife's pussy, but it could have been anyone's from any old porno. I can only picture her at a restaurant, eating and chewing and swallowing it down. Lamb chops, cherries, stir fry chicken, cucumber. She describes the gourmet meals, her mouth growing moist.

Wednesday. I'm on the cusp, trying again to picture the folds of skin, the prickly stubble but all I see is Mary stuffing her face. She would be onto the main course by now, her third glass of wine. On the edge of the bed my hand grips my dick. I close my eyes and try again, those sticky pink lips, the engorged clitoris, but what I see only kills my erection. I lie back on the bed and think through our relationship, from lust to familiarity to routine to boredom and I can't remember the last time I went down on her. It must have been when we were dating. Was it during that weekend in Brighton? Why hasn't she said anything?

I'm going to give her head when she gets home tonight. I regain my grip.

Though by the time she arrives home I am asleep at the foot of the bed.

Thursday. Mary is already out by the time I get home, the lights are on and the smell of her favourite perfume lingers in the hall and her favourite knickers are missing from her drawer. In the kitchen is a note about chips and frozen sausages. I open a drawer and look through the collection of takeaway menus but I appetite is minimal. I find a fork and go to the refrigerator.

The dim light comes on and I poke about, a mouthful of coleslaw, couple cherry tomatoes and some potato salad, but they leave a stale taste in my mouth. A take a swig of a new juice, but it's full of bits, like its orange diarrhoea. I grab a packet of wafer thin ham and push a slice into my mouth and roll my neck as I chew it slowly. Looking down at the packet, the slices remind me

of my wife, something pink and soft and sticky and I pull out a slice and shape it into a hole and stick my tongue inside, working it around, flexing my muscles until the whole thing is in my mouth and I start chewing the sweet meat. An image starts to crystallise and I suck on another slice. In the salad drawer lies a dried up cucumber that two weeks ago had slid easily inside Mary. I return to the bedroom as my stomach rumbles and my dick throbs.

'I'm home.'

I turn the TV off in the bedroom and go downstairs, the video recorder set for the usual trash.

'Did you see my note?'

'Yes, wasn't hungry,' I say, bouncing from the bottom step.

'You sure? I can do you something now,' she says, flashing me a look and a smile.

She looks down at her fingers playing with the hem of her dress and slides the bag from her shoulder and hangs it on the end of the banister. From the colour of her teeth she has had four or five glasses of red wine and it's adorable the way she tries to hide this from me and avoids eye contact.

I shake my head, wrap my arms around her and plant a kiss on her cheek.

'Get off me you fool,' she says, as she pulls her cheek away and her body sways in my grip.

'Come upstairs,' I whisper and take her hand.

'I just want to collapse with the TV for a minute.'

Her eyes gaze in the direction of our beige sofa and I squeeze her hand.

'No,' I say. 'You're coming with me.'

I lift her chin and look into her eyes for a moment before I clench my lips around hers and get hit with a taste of garlic. I try to ignore it, but she pulls away.

'Sorry. Smelly breath.'

'Brush your teeth and let's go to bed.'

I lead her upstairs not waiting for her reaction, and I feel like a teenager again, taking a girl up to my room for the first time.

I watch Mary as she goes into the bathroom and fumbles for her toothbrush and I love it when she's drunk. The guilty smile and those honest eyes remind me of when we first met. Stumbling around a student bar, spilling my drinks over girls,

I eventually left the place alone and in search of food and jostled with the stream of people making their way to the kebab van. Huddling under the hatch out of the rain, I took my chicken kebab and as the crowd got restless the polystyrene carton was knocked from my hands. My anger dissolved into drunken lust as I looked up the culprit. She offered me her chips as we talked fast food and garlic sauce. A week later we shared a chicken chow mein. We were the same people with the same simple tastes.

In the bedroom I straighten out the duvet and wait for her and sip from a glass of water. She steps into the doorway and her cheeks are damp and glisten in the lamp light, her make up withered and demure. She lies down beside me, eyes closed and I kiss her cheek to keep her awake. My fingers run down her neck, over her breast, across her stomach and pulling up the dress they tickle the inside of her thigh and she bites her lip. I look down at the lacy black knickers, rub my hand over them and delve inside. I feel a burn in my chest and the taste of the ham returns to my mouth. Through a tangle of hair I find warmth. I look up and Mary is staring at me.

'Do you have to?' she says. 'I'm tired.'

'Just lie there and enjoy it,' I say, finding what I think is a clitoris, but there's no reaction in her face. 'I want to give you head.'

She snorts and looks away. My fingers lay still against her pussy.

'What gave you that idea?' she says, removing her jewellery.

I push one finger slowly into her.

'I just want to. I want to taste you,' I say.

She pulls a face and her hand goes to her stomach.

'My tummy hurts. I think I ate too much. Another night.'

She closes her legs on me.

'Come on,' I say. 'Can I get you something? Alka Seltzer, glass of water?'

'No. I need sleep,' and she turns her back to me.

'What the hell,' I say, pulling my hand away. I stare at the back of her head for minutes, wondering what she's thinking and if she still finds me attractive. I want her to turn back and kiss me, but she doesn't so I slide off the bed and go downstairs.

I can hear the neighbour's TV through the wall and it sounds like porn or a horror movie. I go to the fridge and tuck another slice of ham into my mouth. I'm hungry, but everything in the fridge looks dead and pathetic, so I return to the note on the counter. I could put some chips on, bit of ketchup, a beer, watch some TV. Then a scream comes from upstairs.

When I get to the bedroom Mary is still on the bed, but on her back, knees bent and legs spread, dress hitched up and I wonder if she's changed her mind. She lifts the dress further and her stomach is bloated like she's pregnant.

'There's something inside me,' she says, red faced.

'Do you need the toilet,' is all I can think to say. 'What did you eat?'

'I feel pregnant,' she says, and I wonder how she would know. 'Something wants to get out.'

She gives out a low grunt, which turns into a scream and I cover my ears and look away. The room has changed and seems older and I wonder when it was last decorated.

'Help me,' she says, trying to reach round her gut and pull down her knickers.

'I thought you didn't want me down there?'

'Pull them off,' she says, lifting her butt off the mattress.

I edge closer to the bed and on one knee I reach around her thighs and pull off the knickers and throw them on the floor. Her stomach is stretched towards the ceiling, peaking at her bulky button. At the base of the bump is a patch of pubic hair and those pink lips and it's just a bacon sandwich staring back at me.

Then something moves and I lean in and the smell of a chip shop hits me. The lips part and it edges out. Mary's eyes are closed, her face bright red and dripping sweat and I bounce off the bed and go downstairs and return with a plate. It is nearly out and with a tug I pull it free. It's hot and I drop it on the plate.

'What is it?' she says.

It's chunkier than the average French fry, but pale, undercooked.

'Which restaurant did you go to?' I say, not knowing what to tell her.

She tries to say something, but the words are lost in moans and groans and it seems that more are on the way. I watch her lips tense and glisten and I wish we could go back to the kebab

van when things were simpler. All that mattered was greasy food and drunken sex, we didn't need anything else. Her expectations surpassed me long ago, I'm no longer any use. Maybe I should stick to satisfying the lips of ham and leave Mary to get her kicks at expensive restaurants.

The lips move and another chip peeks out and I tease it free and drop it on the plate, perfectly cooked.

'Have we got any ketchup?' I say, but Mary is lost in concentration, her face strained, but with a smile and she seems to be embracing the situation.

I leap downstairs and shake the bottle as I bound back up, just in time to pull another fry loose, now coming in quick succession. I eat the golden brown chips, dunked generously in sauce and they taste good, just like the ones we use share, along with a battered sausage, lying in bed, watching TV, as she immersed herself in my evening tradition.

The groans get louder and there is a picture of pure ecstasy on her face. One of her hands grip the bed sheet, the other rubs from her pert breast over her slowly deflating stomach and I put another chip in my mouth. Her screams remind me of our sex on the kitchen table last month. We had met down the pub after work and instead of getting takeaway we raided the fridge when we got home and fed each other cocktail sausages, celery, yoghurts and ice cream, and undressed each other.

Mary starts to climax and a flurry of chips come in quick succession and her pussy is stretched and sore. Her body convulses and shivers, then collapses back into the mattress, her face calm and smiling and one more chip, black and crisp, peeks out and her stomach is back to the soft bump.

The plate is piled up and as usual a whole portion is too much for me on my own.

'You want a chip, Hun?' I say, but she's asleep.

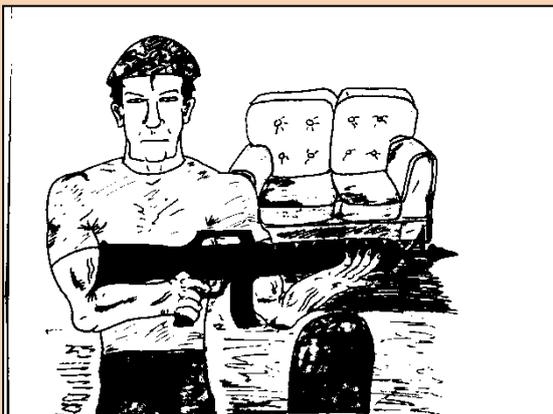
I leave her and go downstairs to the fridge.

**THE END**

**INTERVIEW ROOM 16 02:33 PM**

**FACTOR MEMBER NO. 518**

“We, meaning me and fat Fred, scurried through their garden by the light of the daily sun, between the salted up Bishops, under the arches and arches of Prince albums (all on vinyl of course), over the corpse of thunder cringe and through the frozen shirts which all had dry, flowered buttons on them. A guard, naked as a nettle saw me and planted 6 kisses on my bloated cheek, none of which touched me, but tickled ever so slightly like the most THIMBLE teasing of the peacock girls. Coins came out of his ears in our teasing moment of Sunny sex hopes and I heard babies cry in their limousines, walled with John Denver photos. The guard didn't want me to go past him, but I did anyway. As I scurried past his thin throat I saw a door, behind which lay my sweetly lil future timezzzz. I turned to see the guard had already killed fat Fred and was stealing his body temperature. Thank god he hadn't noticed mine. When I opened the door I saw the big Iranian Grandma shackled up and I had to put arcade machine blood down her old neck, a neck which crinkled and moved like an accordion as she chewed brown salad. She was crying and I shut her up with the force of my windy wind touch, all of which happened in five seconds. Then she rusted like the captain's purple hair jacket. And all of this, just to ensure my vacancy within the factor.”



**Proverbs of ancient days**

Pens are like.....women?  
 To whom I may concern.  
 Never play with matches, or fire.  
 Nobody likes a boiler.  
 Neat isn't half as good as tidy.  
 He who wears a hat.....dances.  
 Whoops!! Apocalypse, my into window fade.  
 The crazed Parisian can take out the rubbish and  
 rubbish his coats and hats.  
 Gas is a factor of 9.  
 Flipping over is a pancakes man.  
 Life is like news...42, ideal in the land of the swell,  
 fun.  
 Breezing in....Blowing out!  
 If you like him, never show him them.  
 Think. It might work, maybe.  
 Feathers don't fall, you plummet.  
 Terror is mans oldest nemesis, as is the flow.  
 The pasted prince can enjoy the drink of the  
 fortunate.  
 Its gonna be ok guy.  
 2 is the number we crave, just don't be 1.  
 Hilarity lies in shoes.  
 Smoke like a chimney, look like a stack.  
 Mint is a state of mind.  
 New pennies seldom change....ask at the fair.  
 Muddy Saw.  
 Cats do wear pyjamas.  
 Calling a woman by a woman's name does little but  
 justify her gender.  
 Fly in the rye, and you'll be a Daniel with fingers  
 and no smoke.  
 Dearest one with diamond hair is the likely queen  
 to pounce.  
 People drive people madder than my day is like  
 bread.  
 It's the mould that fits, not me.  
 Feelings are 2 emotions in one.  
 Sticking to a happy state can keep on bringing the  
 keep ons, 'til the night is blood.  
 Dressing is for cakes?

# **POETRY:**

## **DERRICK KEETON**

**As if being in issue one wasn't enough, now the Tennessee based poet is back in the pages of Hound Dawg.**

### **“Sand Castles”**

Some kings live in sand castles  
And their queens plant orchids by the tides  
Going once more inside, their prince away  
In his white shirt he wore to high school  
graduation  
The ghost still riding on his back  
That is, the ghost of the past  
Remembering that he didn't awake one day and  
decide to be  
A cyber soldier  
Trading in his beliefs the loving queen instilled in  
him  
For the crude follies and handed down ideas of a  
preceding generation  
Since when did love and happiness take a back  
seat with the blind?  
And why should survival take precedence, veiled  
in wan mercy unkind?  
A restless eternity, a burdened economy  
And what of beauty?  
Does not the rarest and most enchanted of flowers  
blossom in summer?  
The tide is closing in as a note is left upon the  
royal red door:  
“Foreclosure.” and, “We regret to inform you that  
your son has been killed.”  
Father reads, takes a drag on a cigarette and sighs  
as the orchids sway  
In the mercy of a breeze  
And mother clears away the weeds, a restless  
heart to be set  
Only by contemptuous ease  
And he walks inside, the ghost of the past still  
lurking  
Riding on his back  
Yet he continues thinking that righteousness will  
bring a fallen prince to fruition  
So once more, the last breath, the closing intuition  
Like lines read at the end of a ceremony, its  
victors bear white tassels:  
Some kings live in sand castles

### **“Thoughts of the Dead”**

Trains barrel by like a violent poltergeist  
In the dark, murky evenings  
They haunt back and forth, combing country sides  
and urban vicinities alike  
A breath not human to fill the lungs of a gravesite,  
christening  
The curious isolation there  
The lost memories rising up from six feet under,  
of playgrounds  
Of sensations childlike; of structured places, of  
adult chores unfair  
And still, it is this they share: the unfinished, or  
what was kept undone  
For the dead leave behind repressed thoughts  
which tear  
Into the thoughts of the living  
On days you mind your own, remembering a life  
unlike your own  
As if you lived once before, yet can no further  
adorn  
Just what could be or could be shown  
Into a reverie, thrown, until the ringing cries of a  
newborn  
Are cast into this lake of life, the deep and  
unknown  
Or washed upon the golden sands of death, its  
beach most quiet and serene  
There will always be, seen or unseen; those  
thoughts which happenstance  
Makes certain a most haunting requiem

### **“Obelisk”**

There is a runoff drain  
By the obelisks in the cemetery yard  
To these, a quiet calm is inevitable  
On grey, stormy days  
A writhing sense, unparalleled I feel  
And as I leave that field, the grassy dew doth  
sweep over my shoes  
As if the dead pursue me  
And as no words crept inward to comfort the  
feeling  
So heartless and fine  
For I now see a pattern distilled, imagining my  
name  
Upon those stones from whence the pain bestows  
And I will be as that dew on stormy days  
Reaching upwards as the ground is grazed

# CHRIS GOULSTONE

**CHRIS WAS INVOLVED IN HUGH CORNWELL'S CAREER RIGHT AFTER HE LEFT THE STRANGLERS. HE WAS THE GUITAR WIZZ ON WIRED AND ALSO PRODUCED SONS OF SHIVA, HUGH'S OFF THE WALL CONCEPT ALBUM. CHRIS WADE GOT SOME INTERESTING WORDS ABOUT BRONZ, HIS 1980'S BAND, ROCKING OUT WITH HUGH AND WHAT HE'S UP TO THESE DAYS.**

**Your 80s heavy rock band Bronz were short lived yet it seems you all had an amazing time. What were some of the best memories you had in this group?**

The best memories were actually of an earlier version of the band. Bronz were originally a space rock punk three piece that did the late 70's free Festivals like Stonehenge 77/78 and Glastonbury 76. Recording at the Roundhouse and touring the states in 84 was pretty funny!

But we were an 80's hair rock band by then!!!! And I was out of there PDQ - I don't like the circus!!!

**You all went on to varied fields after the band didn't you? What did you do right after Bronz?**

I formed a female fronted band called Headmaster - with some songs co-written with Bernie Marsden (Whitesnake) I played lots of sessions as a guitarist and was about to form a band with Adrian Smith from Iron Maiden and Mickey Lee (Cult) before I decided to join up with HC. This was a good move for me I felt at the time - Nirvana had killed off the over-inflated rock scene (which so needed to happen) and I really wanted to do something different. It was



also great to play with the new musicians Hugh had assembled; Robert Williams, Alex Gifford, Phil Andrews, Chris Bell, Steve Laurence - players I probably wouldn't have played with - sound checks were hilarious back then...my guitar noodling and Chris Bell and Big Steve's rare JB grooves!!! I learned a lot too from the straight down the line 'Black Telecaster/Vox' approach from the man himself!

**When did you get involved in playing for Hugh's solo band?**

1989/90.

**You played on the CCW album didn't you? Was it strange to see Hugh playing these softer songs after being so prominent in the public eye as a Strangler?**

Yep, I was on that album! No cause I knew Hugh as a friend by then and it seemed a cool thing for him to do ...you know - "keep them guessing!"

**How was the Wired period with you on the lead guitar?**

I loved doing the Wired album. Working with HC and Gary Langan (producer) was great. I was very happy with my contributions to that record - and particularly like the track 'First Bus to



Babylon' - classic Cornwell! I played a flutey guitar solo at the end!

**Were you comfortable with the direction of Hugh's band or did you want to go out and be the boss again?**

I had begun writing TV and Film music around the same time - I had no intention to form another band of my own at that time, so playing with Hugh was a good thing for me. I continued for as long as I could before I had to concentrate fully on my own career. I enjoyed the Hugh Cornwell Experience very much!

**What did you do after leaving Hugh's band?**

Built a studio - The Chapel of Rock and recorded over 50 CDs

**I see Bronz are back with a new line up. Would you ever re join the band?**

That's a former member trying to make a few shillings. This album is perpetrated as a Bronz record, which it is not!!! Sad really! NO I would not join this fantasy! Besides...I don't want to wear spandex any more. - I might reform the early 'Spacerock' Bronz line-up!!! He he!

**What are you doing these days then?**

I have just finished an album of Movie Trailers for the American market on Carlin/APM. I am recording a guitar version of 'Jupiter' from Holtz Planet Suite and also weeding the garden!!

**How was the UK tour with Hugh of November 2009?**

I had a great time - great to be back on the bus! Great to be with my old pals and it was good to apply myself to getting a full and pumping sound out of the various sound systems on the tour! - I may even do it again (if they'll have me!)





# **AN INTERVIEW WITH HUGH CORNWELL**

By CHRIS WADE.....



**What I find to be the most fascinating aspect of talented and creative people, whether they be musicians, writers or artists, is the way they become wiser with their advancing years. What I see as the most hopeful and optimistic part of all this is to see a veteran still creating excellent work all those years on, displaying a positive outlook on life and showing that one can get over the hard times. Hugh Cornwell is 61 this year (sorry for reminding you Hugh) but he really doesn't look it or act it. His latest album, Hoover Dam (available as a free download) is right at the top of his best work for me and his current live shows are some of the most exciting you could possibly see. For those unsure, Hugh used to be the front man of UK punk rock band The Stranglers and has been releasing solo material since he left the group in 1990. Well, this year Hugh is a busy chap once again, touring the US with his brilliant band before bringing them back to the UK again for a follow**

**up to his successful Academy tour of the Hoover Dam and Rattus set in November of last year. Speaking to me on a Wednesday morning, Hugh sounds full of life and as optimistic as ever. Speaking of the American tour fills him with excitement it seems. So here's how it went with the great man.....**

**The US tour is coming up Hugh, are you looking forward to playing to the new audiences in South America?**

South America, yeah! I've never been there, I've never been invited so it would be a new territory for me. There are not many places in the world I haven't been and that's one of them. Closest I've got, playing wise is, well, the Southern states of America.

**It must be quite exciting for you then, playing to these new audiences?**

Oh yeah. I always get excited when there's a tour going on, even going back to places I've been to before.

**Well I suppose, with you getting invited to these new countries it shows that the Hoover Dam free download is working.**

Well one hopes that, yeah. Absolutely.

**Are there any big differences between American and British audiences?**

Well, not really, people are people everywhere. If they enjoy what they're listening to they have a good time. There's a lot of new people obviously because of Hoover Dam and there's people who followed me from when I was in the Stranglers and they turn up too so it's very much a cross section. I'm finally getting back to a situation I've been wanting to be in for a long time, which is to be going to America regularly. It's starting to have an affect now and it's great. It was a lot of work, a lot of toil to get the team of people together, the right people, to be able to

achieve that. And we're finally getting there now.

**It seems like such a positive time in your career. It must be because you have the right team around you and the right band.**

Exactly. And we're going to go twice a year. There's one, this tour in March until the end of April and we're gonna be going back again in October time, twice a year. It's what you got to do and something I never did when I was in The Stranglers. Something I always regretted actually, sustaining an effort to go to America. I do love it there, I like the people, I like the fact that music is the back bone of their civilisation. And they stick with you, they really do, they like what you do. What we're going to do is look for people to help us spread awareness of the tour. So if there's someone reading this interview and one of my shows is in your area, something you could do to help us, let people know it's going on; whether it be putting posters up, or ringing a radio station and asking them to play some tracks from Hoover Dam. Or if there's some possible way you think you might be able to help, we'd really appreciate it and maybe we can give you some tickets or a reward; an evening out, or have breakfast with us or something. Help each other out. It's a long way to go and you've got to maximise your awareness that you're there. The way to do that is by utilising your friends and the fans around each show.

**The internet makes this easy doesn't it?**

Yeah. If you're on Twitter and they're coming to the show they can let all their mates know. All things like this help.

**I've never been to America, I'd love to go.**

Oh it's amazing. You should try and go to one of the shows on this tour. I mean

Chicago's on the end and Chicago's quite an easy place to get in and out of.

**One thing I like is that you normally go to towns others might miss out, even in England, towns that most people wouldn't even thinking of going to.**

(Laughs) I'm not sure which way to take that. I mean we always did that, the Stranglers always did. People do appreciate it. I don't do it so much these days, unless it's for warm up shows. Or acoustic shows, it's a lot easier with acoustic shows to go to these places.

**Are you focusing more on electric work for the next couple of years?**

I think so, because the line up's together and it's a great line up. I think it was get them a bit confused if they saw me going out to do a lot of acoustic work. It's also putting me in the right light as an electric player.

**Well it's getting to the stage now where you almost don't seem like a solo artist. It seems like "the band."**

Well long may it last. I show them that they're appreciated and they respond with commitment.



**That's why the band gets better too...**

Exactly and I can't wait to start working on some material. Stuff we're going to be working on some stage this year.

**I think the band having this Hoover Dam album, as in writing their own parts to the songs and such, has made them feel a lot more safe about their place in the band.**

Absolutely. Yeah. I mean when I did the demos, I just gave them rough arrangements of the drums, because I'm not much of a drummer but I can program things in. Put things in that I wanted there, and the same with the bass and they were there to be improved, which they did and that's their forte, that's what they're there for.



**I was thinking, say when you were in the Stranglers, the thing you got sick of was being one individual as part of a group. Now have you got to a point where you're still in charge but you have musicians you can trust, somewhere in between?**

Exactly, it's the best of both worlds at the moment.

**On to Hoover Dam, do you see it as your best work?**

I really don't know. Having played Rattus (Stranglers first record) recently, that's a bloody good album. So it's up there with that. Whether it's better or not I don't know, it's not for me to say. I enjoy playing it as much as I enjoy playing Rattus.

**Would you try the free download again for the next record?**

I'm not sure. In some way, maybe not totally, because this was such a total gesture and I'm not sure I'd repeat that. I really don't know, it's too early to say.

**I think it shocked a lot of people, while it wasn't gimmicky it still shocked people, it being totally free.**

I like that, the shock value, I like that. So to do it again, it won't have quite the same shock value or the same effect but in some ways I'll do something similar. But different..

**Each album you do is always incredibly different, almost like a new genre. Is this a deliberate thing or is it something that just happens?**

I always have a thing in my mind going into each album. The last one (Beyond Elysian Fields) I had this fixation with Dylan and the John Wesley Harding album, which is such a beautiful, seamless album where you can't really distinguish which song is which. That was a starting point, but I'm not saying Beyond Elysian Fields came anywhere close to sounding like a Dylan album or anything. It's just you need a starting point and with Hoover Dam, what was my starting point for Hoover Dam....

**You said you wanted to make a heavy album.**

Yeah, I wanted to make an album that was definitely electric and heavier, because the last one was based around songs played on an acoustic guitar so I wanted to get away from that. So that was the starting point with that. The starting point for the next one will probably be a similar genre but it won't sound the same, because the musicians will be the same, but I think I'll record it in a different way.

## **Not with Liam Watson?**

Maybe, maybe not, I don't know.

## **Tony Visconti mentioned working with you again.**

Yeah. I'm sure Tony and I will work again. Tony is always asking when we'll work together again because we had such a great time together. You must remember when I worked with Tony on Beyond Elysian Fields, he was a bit frustrated because he came in halfway through, you see. We did the backing tracks with a stand in producer engineer while Tony was finishing off another project. So he wasn't there from the word go which I think he was sad about. It just couldn't be helped. So I think that's at the back of his mind, he'd like to do something from inception with me and I think that would make sense.

## **He's so much more than a producer though isn't he?**

Oh yeah. He's a very accomplished musician so he knows the technical side but he's also got the creative side.

## **The thing is about your solo albums, the reason great producers want to work with you is because of the song idea, in the broadest sense if you see what I mean?**

Well I'd like to think so. I like to write good songs and that's it. Just an idea or a bass line or a hook isn't enough. I want it to be a rounded thing with meaningful lyrics that means something to me and maybe means something to someone else and some music that's memorable.

## **Is that what's recording about being a popular musician, that it might mean something to someone?**

Yeah absolutely. It reminds you that you're not just doing it for yourself. Because when

you are writing it is very much something that one is physically involved in and mentally involved in, so it's quite easy to end up thinking you're just doing it for yourself, which is enough obviously because it's so rewarding and it's a means of expression. That in itself is an engine itself, but it is nice to be reminded occasionally by members of the audience or public that it means something in their lives too. It's very good to be reminded.

## **You're getting older now, and still coming out with this amazing song writing. What is it; do you feel more creative now?**

I really don't know. I've been doing it so long now...



## **It's getting easier?**

It's getting easier yeah; it's like a master craftsman who makes wooden furniture or something. They've done it for so long you



could almost do it with your eyes closed. The distance between the thoughts and the execution gets shorter and shorter and you feel that you're getting out the idea absolutely the way it was first conceived, which didn't happen so much to me in The Stranglers. And that's going back to this set up I've got at the moment. My songs will go the way I want the way I want them to go but with other people's influence. I didn't really have that mode of working with The Stranglers. You'd write a song or help write a song, co write a song, and then the rest

would get their grubby hands on it (laughs) and it would end up finished whether it was the way you wanted it to be or not. Very rarely did Jean or I... we were so happy that the song got appreciated and finished whether it turned out the way you wanted it to or not wasn't an issue. In fact sometimes you thought 'I'm glad it came out different.' Sometimes it would have been nice to have said 'Hang on, this isn't the way I wanted this song to be at all' but you didn't tend to do that.

**In your book Song by Song with Jim Drury (where Hugh explains the meaning of the lyrics to all his songs when he was in the Stranglers) later on, it shows that you were writing more stuff on your own and the band didn't really appreciate it.**

Well, maybe that's another reason why I left.

**Something funny you joked about in an interview recently made me laugh. You said a keyboard is like pouring glue over the music and that all keyboardists should be shot.**

(Laughs) Well he probably got me at a moment of passion.

**If we get back to the upcoming tour Hugh...**

*(At this point Hugh sounds at his most excited yet in the interview)*

I can't wait. We're just putting the finishing touches to it. I think we might be going to Las Vegas now. A show is being made possible in Vegas on a Friday night. It's a good night to do a show.

**What venue?**

If it happens it's called The Cheyenne Saloon. It's modern, 500 capacity place. I've waited a long time to play in Las Vegas. I've

got a lot of fans in Las Vegas; it's the fastest growing town in America.

**Isn't that where the guy was from who travelled all the way to New York for one of your shows?**

That's right; he's one of the guys. He's perfect, a perfect example of the people who are my friends, fans, whatever, who can help spread awareness of my show. That guy is a perfect example. I remember, he came all the way to New York from Las Vegas to see me do an acoustic show. He said 'I'm only coming here because you haven't come to my town.' So, now I'm coming to your town pal. I can't remember his name, he's a lovely guy. He's the kind of guy I want to help give me a hand with this.

**You're showing the loyalty back to him by travelling and returning the favour aren't you?**

Yeah, absolutely. What's good about this tour is we're going back to Chicago. Last few times we've played there, it's been on a Sunday, this time it's a Saturday. It's the same venue but on a Saturday so that's gonna be good. We're going to a few places we went to six months ago so we're consolidating now. It's something I've been waiting a long time to do, consolidate my position in the States. It's gonna continue and I'm really happy about it.

**You may have more of a chance now, seeing as your music has that American edge now.**

Well, maybe! If we play in Las Vegas, we could actually go to the Hoover Dam. It's very close to there.

**Maybe you could do a photo session down there.**

Yeah, down Lake Mead.

*If you are a fan of The Stranglers and haven't heard Hugh solo, get out and see one of his US shows. You will not be disappointed! And if you are fully aware of how good he is nowadays, go along to a show and just ignore me cos I'm ranting on a bit now aren't I?*

## Hugh Cornwell US and UK tour details:

Here are the dates for Hugh's March/April/May tour. Visit the venue's websites or a leading ticket store for tickets.

13th MAR	- ZAGREB, Club Tvornica
24th MAR	- TUCSON, Club Congress
25th MAR	- PHOENIX, The Platinum Room
27th MAR	- LONG BEACH, Alexa's Bar
28th MAR	- SAN DIEGO, Brick By Brick
30th MAR	- LOS ANGELES, Spaceland
31st MAR	- SAN FRANCISCO, Red Devil Lounge * IN THE NAME OF LOVE FUNDRAISER
2nd APR	- VANCOUVER, Media Club
3rd APR	- PORTLAND, Doug Fir Lounge
4th APR	- SEATTLE, The Tractor
7th APR	- LINCOLN, Soiled Dove Underground
8th APR	- DENVER, Knickerbockers
9th APR	- ST LOUIS, Off Broadway
10th APR	- CHICAGO, The Abbey
29th APR	- LIMA, Barranco Bar
30th APR	- BUENOS AIRES, Niceto Club
1st MAY	- SAO PAULO, CB Bar
7th MAY	- ABERDEEN, Lemon Tree
8th MAY	- EDINBURGH, Liquid Rooms
14th MAY	- GLOUCESTER, Guild Hall
15th MAY	- PRESTON, 53 Degrees
21st MAY	- NOTTINGHAM, Rescue Rooms
22nd MAY	- BRIGHTON, Komedia
28th MAY	- LEEDS, Cockpit
29th MAY	- BILSTON, The Robin

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**THANKS  
FOR READING!**

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