

BAD RELIGION

Frank FOE Spoke with drummer Bobby Schayer of Bad Religion, the punk rock band who have found the fountain of youth.

FOE I just interviewed the Dickies the other day.

BAD Did they mention me?

FOE Yes.

BAD I'm their stage manager and drum tech.

FOE You were over in Europe with Green Day?

BAD Yep, actually more with SNFU than anything. Green Day did like 6 or 7 shows.

FOE Is the punk rock resurgence the same over in Europe as it is here?

BAD I wouldn't go that far. It's a little more exciting here. It will take more time in England. We only sold 5,000 records there.

FOE Why did you decide to go to a major label, and now that the Offspring have gotten so big on your former label, do you have any regrets about going to a major?

BAD No not at all. The only reason why we left Epitaph was specifically to put out more records, and get more distribution in places that Epitaph couldn't get. There was a lot of push on Brett, cuz it is his label. It was kind of a relief on him. So he could devote some more of his time to the other bands on the label. It doesn't discourage us.

FOE Do you think that the mainstream will start to take notice to the lyrical content, which was one of the main forces behind punk rock in the first place. Which they really aren't doing now.

BAD Well I hope they do. I think that is important. There are a lot of die hard fans that come up to us and say, this song really made me think about what is going on, and made me take a look around me.

FOE I don't envision a world of Crass punx, but a lot of your lyrics are more in depth, than some of the other popular bands. As some of the bands get more political, like yourselves, do you think the kids will take notice?

BAD I hope so, cuz they are going to be running the world some day. They have to have an understanding about the air that they are breathing. And what's going on in the world, cuz if they don't they're going to be in a lot of trouble. I think the lyrics are what has made Bad Religion as popular as they are today. As well as the harmonies and all that.

FOE With the name of the band, now that you have started reaching a larger audience, have you found that any one has taken offense to the name Bad Religion?

BAD Not really. If anything they take more offense to the logo.

FOE Not even in the Bible belt?

BAD Not even in the Bible belt, actually we do pretty well down there. Which is surprising enough to me too. I would have thought the same thing, me being a Catholic. But other than that, it really hasn't happened.

FOE Are the reasons you chose the name of the band way back when, are they the same now?

BAD At the time it was just what would be outrageous and what would piss people off. It sounded good and the logo looked good. It was either Bad Religion or Head Cheese.

FOE I understand Brian Baker is in the band now? Did someone leave?

BAD Brett left. Pretty much to devote time to the label and he has two children now, and he has a recording studio to run, and we will be touring so much this year, he just can't juggle that many things at one time. So it was totally understandable.

FOE Is he the one who was going for his PhD?

BAD No that's Greg.

FOE You guys are like a bunch of over-achievers.

BAD Yeah, workaholics and over achievers.

FOE So how do you relieve stress?

BAD Sleep. Walking around. Coming to NY.

FOE Even more so than the lyrics, I would hope that the kids pick up on that...

BAD I think the most important thing about the music and the band in general is that the average kid can pick up a guitar and play a Bad Religion song. I think that is important. Kind of like the Ramones school. It's enjoyable and inspiring to do. And proves that you don't have to be a virtuoso or guitar wiz to do this. We're just five normal guys. We do an album a year, and hopefully we'll keep doing it. We're just as happy and probably as pissed off as we were over the last 15 years.

FOE Are the Circle Jerks still a band?

BAD They are recording a new album in January.

FOE You guys are like a supergroup now. Circle Jerks member, Minor Threat member... Bad Religion.

BAD And a Dickies roadie. I think more ideas come in that way.

FOE I'm sure it was a big decision for Brett to leave, from all sides.

BAD It was. With the success of the Offspring, and owning Epitaph and selling 3 million copies of records or however many records he sold, that's a shitload of work on him. When we'd be on tour he'd always have his laptop computer. And after sound check he'd just go right to the bus and start working. Non stop. I understand. If I was in his position I'd probably do the same thing. We're still just as strong as ever, still rocking out and having fun, and that's the main thing.

FOE What is your personal favorite Bad Religion album?

BAD I really like "No Control" and the new one. I like "No Control" because it is in your face and the music is great, and the diversity on it. I like the new one because it features Wayne Kramer on it, of the MC5. He's doing a record for Epitaph. The MC5 has been a great influence on me.

FOE Whether people realize it or not he probably influences a lot of people.

BAD Definitely. I was awestruck when he came in.

FOE ...Most people tend to say that "Suffer" is their favorite Bad Religion album.

BAD Absolutely. For a lot of people, that was their first introduction to the band.

FOE What year did Bad Religion actually start?

BAD Late 1979...

FOE Were you in another band before you joined Bad Religion?

BAD I was in a band that toured with the Dead Milkmen. We played in Philly. The name of the band was Two Free Stooges (I think that's what he said...FOE). Which featured, if you remember the movie Repo Man, the guy

Andrew who was in the Circle Jerks with Greg Hetson, and the little skinhead who used to shoot up liquor stores.

FOE Get the hell out!

BAD Yeah, it was an actor's band. Those guys were friends of Flea's, and we went out with the Chili Peppers.

FOE How old is everyone in the band?

BAD Hetson's gonna be 33, Graffin is 29, Jay is 30, Brian is 29, and I am 27. I'm the baby of the band. I'll be 28 in December. How old are you?

FOE I'm 28... This whole interview has been pretty positive, is there anything bad going on?

BAD I just think it's kinda chump (I think that's the word he used... cool word...) when people call us a sell out and that we're not punk and all that. And I think, don't forget we broke the ground for a lot of bands. I don't like the way people call us sell outs. I look back to when I was a kid, and remember seeing the Clash, the Damned, the Jam or the Stranglers and what did they all have in common. They were all on major labels.

FOE And if it weren't for those bands, you wouldn't know about the other bands. They are the first bands you get into, you hear those then you're like I need more of this, and then you get deeper and deeper into the scene.

BAD It all ties together. It is important that there are bands like Green Day. If you think about it, punk is 20 years old.

FOE It goes in cycles. spurts. Like when Husker Du got real big for awhile. It just keeps getting bigger in each successive cycle.

BAD When you went to see those bands in the early days, you're not thinking that you are making history, but now it's like, wow, I was actually there, was it really that long ago. I'm just glad to be a part of it.

