

SHEER TERROR

Frank and Digs nabbed the Rev. Paul Bearer, esq., vocalist for NY's legendary Sheer Terror, for a quick interview one fine spring afternoon. The scene was from inside the band's van, parked outside of the TLA where they were scheduled to open for Biohazard and SOLA that evening. Here's how the events unfolded as a familiar site on Philadelphia's South Street occurred, the Hari Krishnas came bangin their stuff down the sidewalk...

PAUL That's fucking disgusting, horrible. Those kids are so young. Little kids latching on to this Krishna bandwagon to be cool, and they got some fucking freak like Ray Cappo fucking corrupting all these little kids with this half ass fucking religion, that have no idea, no clue as to what's going on in their lives. It's disgusting. Makes my stomach turn. These kids ain't even old enough to drink, to vote, and they're running around with the make up on their nose going "Hari Krishna", yeah they're fucking happy, they're fucking brainwashed. Ray Cappo should be destroyed, he should be publicly flogged.

FOE Have you ever met the man personally?

PAUL I never said two words to the guy. He called us degenerates. Sure, we're degenerates. He's corrupting these little kid's, having them run down the streets in bed sheets, and we're degenerates because we eat meat, drink and smoke. He's a piece of shit. I hope he dies a slow painful death.

FOE Do you think this is an extension of the Straight Edge thing?

PAUL Yes, but worse. At least with the SxEx thing, the kids had a mind. They didn't drink or do drugs, hey that's fine and dandy. I have nothing against SxEx, but with this, the next thing you know they'll be held up in Waco Texas. I'd be just as pissed off about this if somebody was coming down here with the Christian identity bullshit. It's just

so disheartening. There's better things to do on a nice day than walking around like a fucking zombie. Go ride a bicycle or something. Go live a normal life. These kids should be in school listening to Bon Jovi, have a paper route. People say we're freaks because we play HC, punk rock. We ain't turning kids into zombies.

As the Krishna's walk by again, 25 year old PAUL tosses some verbal abuse their way, "What a disappointment you are to your parents! You're breakin' your mother's heart!"

I interviewed Sheer Terror about 7 years ago in FOE #6. Talk moves on to what's been going on since then...

PAUL I'm a lot more bitter. Disgusted with life in general. I've drunk a lot more since then. You change, grow. Back then I was real patriotic, I still am, I love my country, dollar ain't worth shit, but I ain't wrapping myself in a flag and jumping in a river. This country has a lot of problems, it's probably the best country in the world, for me at least. When we went to Europe, it opened our eyes a little bit. The first show we played had 1,200 people there to see us. They went nuts. Europe is like Disneyland for a HC band. It's great to see that someone appreciates what you're doing. We get treated worse in NY, and all over the US. We get treated like shit cause we don't play anyone's game. Promoters. That homeboy shit and the fucking gang shit. We tell them to go fuck themselves. And they go, "you're not supposed to do that." We're not hip. We don't come out and say "Mosh it up". We don't hype the crowd. If you want to stand there, I could care less. Back in the day, you could play a song and the kids would go for it, now you've got to rile them up. If you can't dance to "Cup of Joe" you must have a fucking problem. A lot of these kids got something to prove. . . tough guy hardass. Fuck that. You're a punk kid and if you're gonna try to live up to this gang mentality you're gonna wind up dead. We're just a

hardcore punk band that likes to play and curse people out. That's what it used to be about, pissing people off. This homeboy fucking rap shit, I don't see how that has any bearing on hardcore punk rock at all. We know who our friends are, we're not a pack of wolves. We do have a psycho roadie, that's it. Basically, we're fed up with people.

Noticing how angry, yet still calm, Paul gets with people, I ask him why he still participates, keeping Sheer Terror going?

PAUL What else am I gonna do, get a job. I've had every job you could think of. Work sucks. If I wouldn't be doing this I'd be dead or in jail. Sheer Terror is therapeutic. That's the attraction to HC. I don't listen to a lot of HC, but I love to play the music. It gets everything out of my system, going and cursing out a few hundred people. I'm an emotional cripple, just like everyone else.

Everyone's got their own quirks. I could point the finger at everybody in the world but it's no one's fault but my own. I'm over emotional. I'm an extremist. I've gotten into all of this by myself. I've had relationships come and go, effecting me in a big way, it's my own fault. By doing the music, it's my way of casting out the demons. I've never met so many fucked up people as I have in HC, punk rock. I've got alcoholic tendencies, that's part of the reason why my engagement broke off three years ago (check the lyrics to "Three Year Bitch" from the band's latest record "Thanks fer Nuthin'"). I come from a family of them. My father is one, and so is my brother. I'm not one, but I have the tendencies. I'm also selfish, that's something I gotta work out with myself, or, fuck everybody and be an old lonely bastard. But I try to do what I can.

FOE So do you think marriage is a viable thing in the 90s?

PAUL Sure, as long as you love each other. If you're marrying to get something out of it,

monetarily or emotional needs, that's wrong. You get married cuz you want to. Two people in love, and you share that common bond in life. Surviving day to day and working with each other. A lot of people don't understand that. That's why the divorce rate is so fucking high. I'll probably get married some day, have a kid or two, but who knows, I screw up every relationship I'm in. Maybe one day I'll get it right. I love women to death. Sometimes I love them too much.

FOE What else makes Paul happy?

PAUL A pot of coffee, a fresh pack of cigarettes, European beer, women, animals, playing, tattoos, records, trying to live doing what I can, trying to keep some stability in my life.

FOE Do you know the meaning of life?

PAUL I wrote it down the other day, and some fucker stole it. I don't think there is a meaning to life. What would be the sense of living if everyone knew it. There ain't no big mystery, but there's no meaning. Just like the Krishna's, there's a coffin waiting for you too kid. Bang away on your bongo in your bed sheet all day. Go ahead, you're fucking yourself, listening to someone else. Once you gotta have someone else tell ya what life's all about, it's time you rethink a little about what the hell you're doing. People are so petty. Calgon take me away!

