

SICK OF IT ALL

I, Frank FOE, met up with Lou of Sick Of It All, and various members of the band at the Airport Music Hall in Allentown PA this summer. This interview was conducted in their bus before the show began. I first got into this band with their demo. Good, straight out HC may be getting scarce, but SOIA continue to be one of my favorites, dosing out tuneage that provides one hell of a release!

FOE So what's up with the tour, "New Titans on the Block"?

SOIA Whatever (referring to the tour name). When they asked us to do the tour, we were, it's cool, cuz it's us from the HC sect, the grindcore with Napalm Death, the Sepultura and Sacred Reich from the thrash metal. Sepultura and Napalm also get a lot of the death metal crowd. Then they told us the name of the tour and we were like, what the fuck is that! I guess it's just to cash in on that Clash of the Titans tour.

FOE So those 4 bands are touring and Biohazard is just an opening band here at Airport Music Hall? (Allentown, PA)

SOIA They played last night and tonight. It would be really good if they were on the tour too.

FOE Who set this all up?

SOIA I don't know who the promoter of the whole tour is. Someone contacted our record label. It's some booking agency. Originally it was just supposed to be Sepultura and Napalm Death. Then my brother was at Sepultura's record co. and was talking to some of the people there and they were like, Sepultura loves you guys. So Pete goes, well, why don't you ask them to take us out this summer. They said they were already set up with Napalm but that they'd see what they could do. Then their manager got the idea for the whole tour.

FOE How far are you into the tour?

SOIA This is the first show for us. Last night was the first show of the tour. It was in Manhattan, at the Ritz. We didn't play cuz we've headlined at the Ritz and sold it out, so it would be kinda useless for us to open up for everyone there.

FOE How do you think the crowds are gonna be with the different types of bands?

SOIA From what we saw last night, at the NY show, it will be like when we did the DRI tour. In fact, on that tour all the kids who were recognizably HC kids, were wearing Sepultura shirts. I guess you would call them Death Metal kids or whatever. When I was talking to Napalm Death they were saying they get the same kind of mix. Some shows it will be all metal and then, once in a while, it'll be all HC kids. They like the difference like we do... the HC kids are more involved, by diving and more crowd participation.

FOE SOIA have played in the Lehigh Valley a lot before. How do you compare this to when you played at Wally's in Bethlehem?

SOIA We like Wally's better cuz there's no barricades, there's no bouncers, and the kids could do whatever. It's more fun. Tonight it's like you're the band, you're the stars, which is bullshit. We can get into it more at a place like Wally's. Our music is crowd participation. But I can see it from the clubs point of view, with the monitors or whatever.

FOE Did your drummer play with New Kids on the Block?

SOIA Yeah, in like '87. He grew up with those kids. He played on their Christmas ep.

FOE When is your next record gonna come out?

SOIA We're going into the studio when we get back, in October.

FOE The album you put out was mostly old stuff...

SOIA Exactly, we had the choice to do that or take our time and write a whole new album. But we were like, when we go out on tour and play a song like "Bullshit Justice" and as I said before, we're a crowd participation band, who the hells gonna know the back up vocals except for the 100 kids who got the demo.

FOE How has your style changed since the early stuff?

SOIA Lyrically its a little more thought out. More than just blatant anger. It's still angry, but it's more directed towards things. Not just screaming at the world. The demo, the kid with the bat, that's the way we felt. We just wanted to whack the world.

FOE So what are you sick of...

SOIA Well, the same things. If you want to get into specifics, just look at the whole economy. We've felt it hard, cuz our jobs... I was supposed to get a raise, but I didn't get it, they laid off a lot of people. I was just lucky that my two supervisors are good friends of mine. I was spared being laid off cuz of friendship. We know a lot of people who work for the phone company in NY and working there 25 years doesn't mean anything. It's just gone.

FOE When does the tour end?

SOIA September 7th, Mexico City, Mexico. Here's an example of bad record company dealings. We asked them, do we need passports to get into Mexico? They were like, no you don't need one to get in or out. They were right, but... if you are going to perform in Mexico, you need a passport. They didn't tell us that until yesterday. They asked us to go down, shell out \$40 or \$70, whatever it is to get a passport and get all the paperwork done. I was like, it's the day before the tour, I hadn't packed, had to do laundry, our t-shirt man pulled out at the last minute, he



couldn't do the tour. So we have no t-shirts, he has all of our artwork for our new shirts, and we can't get a hold of them, so now our record company scrambled around and got us a t-shirt guy, but the designs are going to be very generic. We live off the shirt money. We get paid \$250 a show, which goes right back into the tour. We get \$20 a day to live on and all the rest goes right back into the tour. Now we don't have any shirts. Hopefully we'll get shirts, I don't think they'll be able to compete with the elaborate shirts that the other bands have.

FOE This all sounds kinda depressing...

SOIA It is, we were thinking of pulling out at the last minute, cuz it just didn't look worth it. But, we talked to the record company about it....

FOE They push your record. Like the last time you played here, I djed the show and they gave me records and tapes to give out. (Looks like I interrupted him, sorry.. on with the tour story Lou!)

SOIA Yeah, we get a lot of help from them... What we usually do when we go on tour is, we get a van and stay at peoples houses or mostly get hotels. But the people at In Effect said it'd be cheaper to get a bus and share it with Napalm Death. It actually worked out the same. Then everything started to fall apart the last day before the tour. The people who set up the tour don't work at In Effect anymore. In fact they don't call it In Effect anymore. It's Relativity Records.

FOE Do you have anything positive to say about what's going on?

SOIA No, I don't mean to sound negative about it. It's just like I hadn't slept the 2 days before the tour. It's the whole beginning. What really killed us was the t-shirt guy pulling out on us.

FOE Well, the kids will get into it...

SOIA That's exactly what Steve Martin said. He's been through this, and he's been through it a lot worse. He's like, we never had a bus. And I was like, we asked for a van. He's like, well, take it, just think, you have a bus, and all you want to do is play, right? Yeah, that's all we want to do, but we would like to have a little money to pay our bills and eat. But with all things considered, we just really want to play. It'll help us get a lot tighter as we go along too.

FOE You got a lot of publicity in MRR, not necessarily positive...

SOIA Yeah. Then they sent someone out to see us in California. It was us, Killing Time, Carry Nation, Vision and a whole bunch of LA bands. It was called east meets west. An ep was put out from the show, which was terrible quality. The show itself was great. Everybody went nuts! The lady they sent was like, "I can't believe it. You guys were amazing. I haven't seen a band with that kind of energy or incite a crowd like that..." Well we were like, why don't you people, instead of slagging NYC, come to NY and see all the NY bands, cuz at every show it's like that. Kids love it. They go nuts. We may not be politically correct all the time or whatever and the way we're going

about it is... we're trying to make it easier on ourselves by having a label do stuff for us. And they're like you can do things for yourself. It's hard enough as it is with the label helping us. I mean, everybody points the finger at Fugazi, who are a great band! Ian MacKaye is a very nice guy. He let us do "Betray". He was like, no problem. He just wanted copies of the single. He was very nice to us. Fugazi clicks with the people, and he has Dischord to fall back on. Like Suicidal when they first did it, they were doing it all on their own cuz they had a skate shop. We'd like to do something like that, if we had the capital. Now Suicidal is one of the biggest draws around the country.

FOE Opening for Queensryche.

SOIA I'm happy they're on that kind of a tour. Cuz I met Mike and he was "I hate when people tell me you shouldn't play arenas, that ain't right." I told him I think it's great for you guys, but your fans, you can't get that same reaction in an arena. I saw Janes Addiction when they were playing the small clubs in NY a few years ago. Then recently I saw them at the Garden. I just couldn't... they were great and all, but I was just sitting there, with a row of seats in front of me.

...talk goes back to Wally's, the infamous Bethlehem club that housed some of the greatest moments in the Lehigh Valley's punk/HC history...

SOIA I loved Wally's. We still have video tapes of some of those shows. That shit was crazy, that was the best. We were just talking about that, coming down here, looking at the map. Bethlehem, remember Wally's... The Russian Meat Squats. We had a lot of fun coming down with Raw Deal, Krakdown played, remember that riot. Oh shit, we still get riots.

FOE I heard you were on FOX tvs "Good Day NY". What was that all about.

SOIA That was a load of shit cuz we went on the show, they were supposedly doing a thing on straight edge. Me and Pete went on there and gave this 45 minute interview. They used one sentence from us and all they did was talk about how stupid slam dancing was. They didn't even ask us to be in the studio with them. They had the singer of Gorilla Biscuits on and if I was him I would've said wait a minute, I thought this was about young kids not doing drugs, being into straight edge and music. You're turning it into how dangerous and stupid slam dancing is. That's all you people ever do. They never talk about the positive aspects of HC and the punk scene...

Later that night, whilst SOIA was on stage, the negative aspects of HC were definitely more visible than the positive. Riot, yes. Members of SOIA, mace, people chanting "Atlantic City Skins", flying chairs, smashed tables... I couldn't get a hold of SOIA to see if they could give me some insight. Talked to a skin acquaintance that night, he said something about gangs...? Am I getting old?

C.I. Joe Headstomp **World Full Of Hate** **No Labels** **Disillusion** **Injustice System!**

The Blood & The Sweat
Clobberin' Time
Pay The Price
Give Respect
Breeders Of Hate
Pushed Too Far
Pete
Stic
Friends Like YOU

SICK ON IT ALL
BLOOD SWEAT AND NO TEARS