

CRUCIAL TRUTH



by Boz

In case no one's noticed, Crucial Truth are back in town and will be spending a couple of months here. This interview was taken with their lead singer, Gary Shaft, right before their West Coast tour in August. Check out their EP "Darkened Days", which is just incredible- but not as incredible as the band is live.

Q: How's the club scene in NY?

A: The club scene isn't really that good. The Peppermint closed down to hardcore sort of, CB's closed to hardcore, Irving Plaza closed down to hardcore. Same old story- the kids don't drink so they don't make enough money. Umm- the new A7 is alright- it's called 2+2 and I don't know...you just can't get a good place in Manhattan, pretty much.

Q: What about the name change again?

A: I don't know, my sister said it was too hard to say. I really don't know what it is right now. ...Crucial Truth or Crucial T? We put it on the record as Crucial T. We might change it again the next time we do a record.

Q: What about your relationship with the Bad Brains?

A: Ohhh no! Well... I don't really have any relationship with the Bad Brains. I like a couple of them I get along with and a couple I don't get along with, but they seem to be getting a bad reputation in California and Texas especially. I don't know- to me they seem to be luring people to their shows by using the punk and hardcore thing, and then you get there and they lay the Jah trip on you. It's kind of bullshit...they're using the scene in a way which I really don't like at all.

Q: Are you guys going to have anything on their compilation?

A: We were originally- I decided not to.

Q: Why did you change your mind?

A: Yeah, I just think it's like a big contradiction, what they're doing and about what they believe in. I think it's a total- joke.

Q: Do you think they're hypocrites...the difference between what they preach and what they practice?

A: Well I wouldn't want to call them hypocrites. You would have to ask them about that.

Q: Who writes most of the songs for the band?

A: I've been writing them... most of them. Skippy pretty much... still handles all of the music just about but I've been writing alot of songs on guitar now.

Q: In general, what would you say your songs are about?

A: The songs are dealing alot more with myself... alot of the songs, instead of any kind of political thing.

Q: What about "Fascism's Fun"?

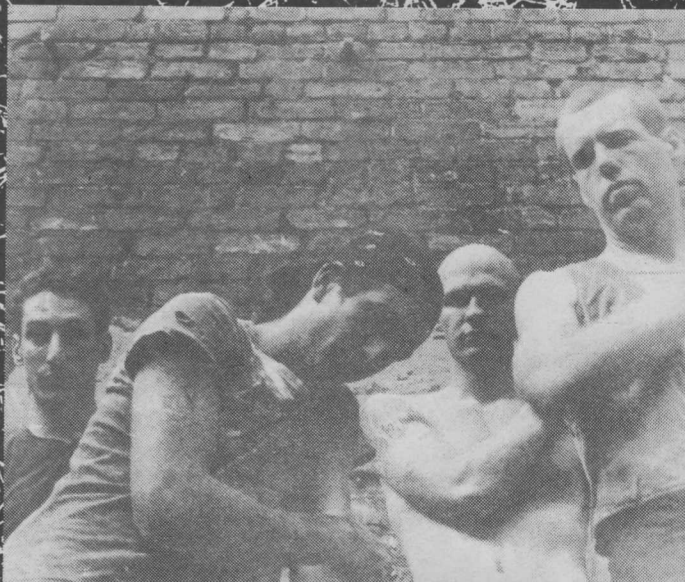
A: It's like this sarcastic commentary about how much fun the big pigs have in the world.

Q: Basically punk deals with rebellion in alot of respects, do you feel that you have that need to rebel?

A: Yeah, I've always been that way since I was a kid. Some of the things I did when I was a kid were totally obnoxious. Yeah...my parents were real strict Scottish people. When I was growing up smoking pot and doing mushrooms...and when I was growing my hair they didn't like that, and now when I cut my hair they didn't like that either. Yeah, I guess I've always been rebelling...it started as a parent thing although I love my parents. I still feel the same fire as when I first started getting turned on by the earle music.. the early punk stuff.

Q: You guys seem to have a change in attitude... or at least that's my impression from, let's say, back in the days of the Balkan... from a not-give-a-fuck attitude to now, you seem more serious- I mean Skip's got his briefcase inside and....

A: Yeah! It got to the point where down here it didn't matter, cause we could just work our jobs and do that bullshit trip at night. You remember last summer our attitude changed a bit...we saw the D.C. bands and the Bad Brains...and then when I went to New York my attitude changed alot more. I stopped drinking alot...almost...stopped smoking and cleaned out alot...just started living a different life. The reason for the organization- it just stopped being funny after awhile and it started to aggravate me and in New York you have to be organized no matter what you're doing. We've gotten alot better, also, which kind of inspired



DAVE CAMP

us to try to market ourselves...if anyone would want to listen to us, you know. That's why it took us so long to put out a record, 'cause we just really weren't into our songs that much really.

Q: The record's kind of a change, two of the songs are much slower than what we've been used to. Is that a new direction for the band?

A: Yeah! I like heavy metal, I always have. I got sick of hardcore as far as...like you stand outside of A7 and the door would open and you couldn't tell which band it was...it just got so fucking monotonous. There's only like 3 or 4 hardcore bands I really like. It wasn't an intentional change- it was just like something I changed when I started writing the different music...Skippy's always loved Hendrix and that sort of stuff- it's a new formula in a way. We kind of got when we started writing songs we saw that inside of us... instead of sitting down and saying 'I'm going to

write this hardcore song here so everyone will dance and smash their brains out to it', I just said that now when I write a song, I write a song exactly the way it comes to me and the way I feel rather than writing to an audience, so to speak, and I think we're getting better that way.

Q: So what punk bands do you like that you've come across recently?

A: I like Void...Minor Threat's good and Black Flag and the Damned and Discharge and there's not too many bands I listen to now. There's not too much in New York I really like. The scene there is really kind of weird. I noticed when I got back here, there's a lot more comradie between people, believe it or not. New York is so paranoid...you don't find a lot of parties in New York, or like last night the gig was a lot of fun...New York it's like everyone's got an attitude...everyone wants to know what you want from them. But I've got to defend the scene up there, too...some people are really into the music.

Q: So what happened at the Elk Center in Philly?

A: (Laughs) Well, it was July 4 and we went on at midnight. Jet brought out this flag that was 10 feet long and I lit it on fire and Cramp had a fire extinguisher that he had pulled off the wall that was squirting water and he was squirting water all over everybody. Skippy was throwing confetti and playing the "Star Spangled Banner" and I was punching my hand through this wall. All of this happened before the first song, so like the promoter came out and started flipping out. There was a lot of tension in the place and I thought there was going to be a riot and it was just a crazy night. That place closed down. The week after that we closed this place down in Bridgeport, Connecticut- this redneck biker bar, semi-punk scene. That was another wild night and we almost closed another club the next week, too...we were on a hot streak.

Q: Do you think the owners or promoters are nervous or is there another problem?

A: I can't blame them in a lot of ways...we really didn't do that much damage, but it's kind of a hard thing for me, because if I feel like doing something, I do it...The clubs can't take the tension because people get scared. Most of these owners and managers don't know what it's all about, they just want to know where the money is and when people start flying all over the bars and everything and burning flags, they kind of get a little uptight. Basically, people don't want to let go and have fun.

Q: So what do you think of American punk versus British punk?



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A: Almost everything that comes out of England sucks, like 2 or 3 bands...

Q: A lot of people here worship the British bands...oi and that type of thing especially.

A: I hate oi music! Let's make that clear right now. When we were down here before...I think I was misquoted in the Borington or something saying I like oi bands, and I can't stand that kind of music.

Q: What about the record, are you happy with it?

A: Yeah, I'm very happy with the record- we spent a lot of time on it. I just wish we could do an LP we've got a load of new songs. We just haven't had the time, changing musicians and all...

Q: Anything you want to add... any encouragement, advice...

A: Tell everyone to practice their golf shots, polish their cars, and if they're in New York, don't look me up.