

**GOOD, BAD,
MERELY BORING:
1993 IN REVIEW**

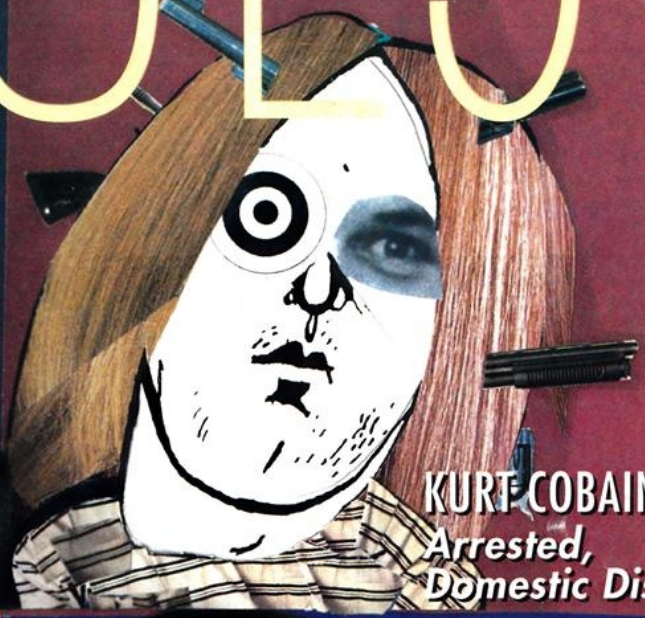
THE YEAR OF THE ARTIST AS YOUNG THUG

REQUEST

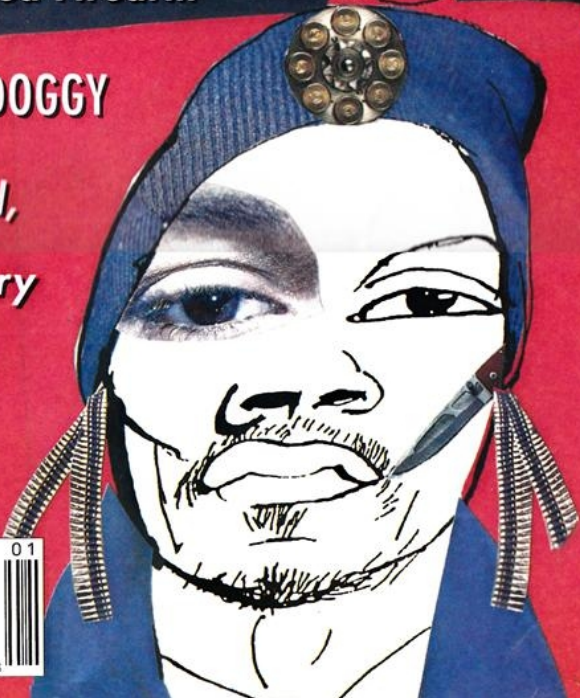
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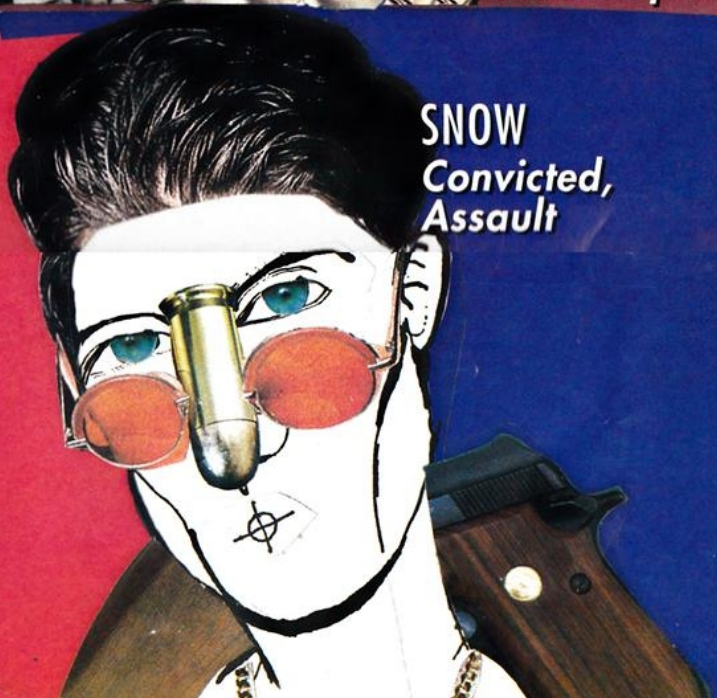
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CONNICK, JR.**
*Arrested,
Unlicensed Firearm*



KURT COBAIN
*Arrested,
Domestic Dispute*



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DOGG**
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EDDIE MALLUK

BAD RELIGION

THE BACKSTAGE AREA of New York's cavernous Roseland Ballroom is overrun with kids intent on capturing the attention of the members of Bad Religion. That isn't unusual, given the quintet's status as punk-rock gurus, but these particular youngsters, ranging in age from four months to three years, are the offspring of guitarist Brett Gurewitz, bassist Jay Bentley, and singer Greg Graffin. It's a slightly incongruous scene, but Bad Religion has long played by a singular set of rules, right down to Graffin's preservation of his highly unusual day job, that of professor of paleontology at Cornell University.

"Ask the cynics out there and they'll tell you academia is not a real job," says the affable Graffin, who also is pursuing a Ph.D in zoology. "My other life is very full and demands a lot of attention. My life away from music is just as important as my life in music. If I couldn't have that other life, I wouldn't do music anymore."

Graffin's double life became even more complicated earlier this year, when his 13-year-old band, which has been just as successful in its uncompromising autonomy as the higher-profile Fugazi, decided to make the leap from Gurewitz' indie label, Epitaph, to Atlantic, which recently assumed distribution of Bad Religion's seventh album, *Recipe for Hate*. The questions raised by the move are less political than they are financial. After all, Bad Religion had long been the most successful act on Epitaph, selling nearly 200,000 copies of *Recipe for Hate*, which effectively deflates the usual "poor distribution" rationale.

"What do you want me to say, [the band signed with Atlantic] because Stone Temple Pilots sold three million records?" Graffin shrugs. "A couple of years ago, I don't think major labels had the sophistication

to deal with bands like us. They were set up to promote bands that were more malleable. But Atlantic has shown some creativity in dealing with independent bands."

A politically charged hardcore band that isn't out to save the world.

Bad Religion's formula of juxtaposing verbose, politically charged lyrics and engagingly simple pop-punk melodies seems diametrically opposed to the methods of most of today's slacker-pop success stories. Then again, that contrariness separated the band from the hardcore pack as early as 1982, when it released *Into the Unknown*, an album influenced more by Electric Light Orchestra than punk's sanctioned icons.

"We were all 17 when that record came out, and we thought punk was about doing what you wanted, so we put out this record with a lot of synthesizers," Bentley says. "By that time [hardcore] was very formulaic, and we never fit that formula."

The largely negative reaction to that release prompted a split that saw Gurewitz and Bentley leave the band and ex-Circle Jerks guitarist Greg Hetson step in. But since the two cofounders rejoined for 1988's *Suffer*, Bad Religion's prolificacy (five albums in as many years) has outstripped its first set of peers. And while Graffin's diatribes are marked less by curmudgeonly combativeness than a scientist's show-me attitude

directed at those who unquestioningly follow agendas both religious ("Don't Pray on Me") and political ("Portrait of Authority"), they've left many new political punks in the dust as well. Still, Bad Religion doesn't want you to get the idea that it's out to save the world.

"I don't believe in that kind of thing," Graffin insists. "I study evolution, so I'm well aware of the fact that our species is not going to last forever. Ninety-nine-point-nine percent of the animals that have ever existed are extinct. Our extinction might be very soon by most standards, and I'm perfectly content with the fact that comparatively soon, we're all going to be dead. But to me, that's not a depressing thought, it's a thought that makes me cherish life all the more."

—DAVID SPRAGUE

LOS ANGELES