

# DFL



## **My Crazy Life: The Oral History of DFL**

By John Gentile

Foreword by Damian Abraham

## FOREWORD

The '90s were a time of great fractionalization in American Hardcore. The no frills, aggressive distillation of punk had mutated into: Post-Hardcore, Youth Crew, Grindcore, Thrashcore, Jazzcore, Thugcore, Power Violence, Emocore, Melodic Hardcore and others. What was in short supply at the time were bands playing straight up fast hardcore. As a young kid, getting exposed to this music by listening to Black Flag, Minor Threat and the Germs, I was given a sense that I had missed it. The era of hardcore punk had come and gone.

Enter Dead Fucking Last to my life.

Buying a copy of *My Crazy Life* on CD when it came out was a no brainer for me: I had read about them in *Grand Royal Magazine*, knew it contained a Beastie Boy and with 15 songs it was well in my "song count to price" ratio. I don't know what I had expected it to sound like but I remember being caught off guard by how raw and fast it was. Being 14 years old, my knowledge of punk and hardcore history was fairly limited but this was something that, even to my unseasoned ears, seemed different than the other bands at the time. I wasn't alone in being confused by it: I remember a review at the time complaining that this was a way for Adam to get punk out of his system before making another Beastie Boys record.

Though DFL wasn't the only band in at the era waving the flag for "old school" American Hardcore (shout out to Out Cold, et al), what made this record so unusual was where it was coming from. The Beastie Boys, and their magazine *Grand Royal* defined cool for me. And while they never made any attempts to do anything but celebrate their punk and hardcore pasts, how deep it went and even what that meant was still unknown to me. *Some Old Bullshit* wouldn't get released until later that year and the *Young and The Useless* 7-inch had yet to even enter my consciousness. Prior to *My Crazy Life*, the only records released on Grand Royal Records up to that point were by the Beastie Boys or Lucious Jackson and DFL certainly didn't sound like those records.

But there was a lot of context I was unaware of at the time. DFL was a band born out of a bi-coastal friendship by a group of adults returning to the sounds of their youth. They are a band unbound by time or geography. As much as it has hallmarks of early NYHC, DFL is very much a California Hardcore Band. I knew that they were based in California but it wasn't until years later that I'd learn of the band's deep SoCal skateboarding roots. In more recent years, after learning about Monty's involvement in seminal LA punk/hardcore outfit The Atoms, the band's Southern California Hardcore sonic predilections become clear.

Listening to *My CrazyLife* today, DFL still don't sound like anyone else. The production of Mario Caldato Jr. is incredible and unlike any other hardcore record before or since. The recording sounds lo-fi and deranged while still retaining sonic clarity. The bass and drum sit up front and Crazy Tom's vocals are manic and blown but you can hear every word. At times, vocals come in over top of each other, samples and sound effects, while used sparingly, are present on various tracks. This isn't a bunch of kids making a basement recording. It's a record made by people that had gone out and experienced making other types of music and returning to what they love, while bringing in what they have learnt. They could be playing more "grown-up" sounding music if they wanted to, but why would they want to?

I spend way too much of my time thinking about punk and hardcore. Obsessing over how the sounds and culture has been disseminated, evolved and influenced the greater world takes up far too much space in my brain. DFL is something I have spent a lot of time contemplating; they aren't easy to file away. A band out of step with their time and place and yet, somehow a perfect encapsulation of where they came from. *My Crazy Life* remains one of the most fascinating records of the '90s, for me. An album that, in a lot of ways, sent me on a path that I'm still on. Weirdly, it sounds more at home in today's landscape of hardcore than it did in the '90s. DFL just needed the world to catch up to their sonic. It is about time that a record of this magnitude gets released on vinyl.

**Damian Abraham**  
**Vocals - Fucked UP**

# MY CRAZY LIFE: THE ORAL HISTORY OF DFL

BY JOHN GENTILE

## I. DON'T BE A KOOK

**Monty Messex (Guitar - DFL):** I've always been an outcast. I never felt like I fit into anything. I was always kind of in my own little world.

I was born and raised in Los Angeles and my parents were divorced when I was really little- maybe when I was like six. I was raised by my mom and grew up with her and my younger brother. I didn't see my dad that much growing up. I didn't have a relationship with him until much later, in my 20s.

I was not a good student. I have a learning disability- dyslexia. I had a really hard time learning how to read. But, my mom was kind of like a hippie mom and she put me in this alternative school when I was in first grade or second grade. At the school, they would be like, "do you want to learn how to read or go outside and play in the dirt?" I would always want to go play in the dirt. Of course, the school folded. At that time, I was in the fourth grade. So, when I went back to "regular school," I still didn't know how to read.

When I was in junior high, I was a big pothead and smoked tons of pot. A little later, I ended up having a bit of a drug problem...*actually...* a pretty *big* drug problem. I went to Hollywood High and my mom would drop me off at school and then I would just go ditch. I don't think I attended much school at all.

**Ione Skye (Actress):** We all went to the same school in Hollywood called Cheremoya. I was closer to Monty's little brother, but we all grew up in Hollywood. There weren't the hovering parents back then, so everyone could be a little more wild, running around. Monty had a wild phase, but he was quiet. He was a rascal. He and his brother had a tape where they recorded all their farts or whatever. I don't know if he was a juvenile delinquent, but everybody was a little like that. There was a lot of skateboarding then.

**Monty Messex:** I was a skater, so I would go to the skate park and smoke weed and skate and be a pain in the ass. From Hollywood, I would take the bus to the valley. There was a skate park there called Reseda Skatercross. You would meet people on the bus and at the park. That's where I first met Tom Davis, who would sing in DFL a decade later. Tom was another skater kid that we were hanging out with. He had his own style of skateboarding. He had a Santa Monica skater look about him. We would ride the bus from Malibu and stay at his house at Big Rock in '78 and '79. In the '70s, it wasn't "cool" to be from the valley. But, it was *definitely* cool to be from Santa Monica.- The Z-Boys and those people.

**Max Perlich (Actor):** Tom Davis was the brother of Tamra Davis. At the time, she was doing Super8 and 16 millimeter punk videos. She was an artist on the early video media scene. Black Flag had a video directed by Tamra. At that time, everyone knew Tom as the little brother of Tamra



Tom was a real slow-moving person and we would call him monkey and then monk. He was my dealer. He had really good Indica with a lot of crystals on the buds.

**Mario Caldato (Record Producer):** Tom is a real interesting cat. He kind of lurks around in the shadows and then pops in, and then you turn around and he's gone. "Where did he go?" He's a real nice guy, a real sweet guy. I actually know him from working with him on videos. He used to work with his sister Tamra and he'd be like a grip and helped out building sets, driving people around. He did all the odd things you asked him to do. We kind of hung out and was on the set. He's a low-profile guy. Definitely a low-profile guy.

**Tom Davis (Singer - DFL):** I moved to Malibu with my dad at the age of 13 and lived with him for a couple of years. We would skateboard a lot in Malibu. I had a lot of really good friends that would skateboard. Actually, skateboarding was introduced to me through my mentors, like Tony Alva. At a birthday party, we had the Germs and X play on the beach on Malibu.

One of our skateparks was called Marina Del Rey and that was filled with a lot of pros and upcoming skateboarders.

**Monty Messex:** If you dropped into the Dog Bowl at Marina Del Rey and there were older guys, they would try to snake you and push you out of the way. But really, they were pretty chill, actually. We were little "grommets"- just groms. That's what they would call us- just these kids that were hanging around the skatepark and trying to stay out of the bigger kids' way. Alva was there and so were all the Z-Boys.

**Tom Davis:** Also, Christian Hosoi was there. He was already doing amateur skater events. That park always had famous people. Every Dogtown skateboarder was there- Jay Adams, David Hackett. Monty and I met on our way to Skatercross, which was a skateboard park in Van Nuys. My friend Drew Bernstein and I took the bus from the Universal Studios area and took it into the valley and Monty got on the bus somewhere on the bus. Monty was a real likeable guy. He's really friendly.

**Jim Lindberg (Vocals- Pennywise):** Tom Davis is the kid who sat in front of me in math class.

We both went to Mira Costa High School . That's the same high school as members of Black Flag, Circle Jerks, and Descendents. Tom and I were attending Mira Costa the same time as Milo and Bill.

One time, in that class, someone put acid in the teacher's coffee one morning and dosed him. The teacher was kind of a hippy guy. 20 minutes into class he closed his eyes and leaned his head back and said, "okay, I know what this is..." Only a crazy school like Costa could produce someone like Crazy Tom.

Costa was a melting pot of all your typical clicks. You had your jocks and nerds and heavy metal guys that hung out underneath the stairs at the football stadium. You also had the surfers and the skaters and then the punk rockers, which was a whole new clique.

I remember Janet Housden and her brother Steve. Janet was the drummer for Red Cross. They were the first punk rockers that I ever saw in real life. I distinctly remember walking by their house in Hermosa Beach and saying, "Wow! Punk rockers live there!" I saw Steve in the principal's office once. He had written on his back, "kill surfers!" I was a little concerned about that because I was a surfer.

I distinctly remember sitting down and talking to Tom. He said, "you should check out the Dickies!" So, I went right out and bought their album. That really kind of sparked my interest in melodic hardcore. The more I got to know Tom, the more I realized what a great artist he is. "It" has never been a pose for him. He lives it. He was born punk rock. And he's always just been a cool cat.



**Fletcher Dragge (Guitar – Pennywise):** To me, Tom will always be “Monk.” I think he had really long arms. He kind of looked like a little bit of chimpanzee. I’ve known him since Freshman year. I first started spying him around the Manhattan, Redondo area.

I was just getting into punk rock at the time. I realized there was a punk community that I wasn’t aware of. There were 15 punkers, maybe. Monk was cruising around on a strand cruiser and I was just looking at him. He had a style and flow. I was like, “that dude looks pretty cool!” Then I come to find out he was into punk rock and I started infiltrating the whole world and hanging with the boys. We started skating a lot. We skated everything from back yard pools to reservoirs to ramps. He was like one of my best friends.

I kind of looked up to Monk as a mentor for a minute. I just spent a lot of time going to shows with him. We were going to shows like Dead Kennedys or Minor Threat at the Barn- these crazy lineups at places like the Ukrainian Cultural Center with Bad Brains, Bad Religion, and Black Flag. Backyard parties were all the time down in Hermosa- pile into the station wagon, pick up a couple of cases of Olde English, and take off. It was just about the party. Monk and I used to break into shows a lot. We’d just got to wherever it was, climb up on the roof, drop into the attic, and run through the security guards into the mosh pit.

We wound up as this crew of misfits running around the South Bay and partying. We hung out in this parking lot in Hermosa beach at this school and it was kind of our spot. Every day, all day long, you’d have people partying, drinking. You’d find 10, 15, 20 guys at any given time in the parking lot and we’d launch off to gigs from there. We’d run around with the cops chasing us and partying and cranking punk rock. It was complete debauchery and we got away with way too much shit that you would never get away with now.

I was pretty notoriously bad with vehicles. One night, we are sitting there, after coming back from Hollywood, hammered in my ‘63 Buick. It was me and a few friends and Monk and the Buick had a pretty decent sound system. We went to this school and I decided to take some revenge on the school itself. I drove through the classroom doors and smashed the teacher’s desk and backed out! Tom is in the back seat screaming! Dave Campbell is in passenger seat. He might have ridden home on the hood on my car in a leather jacket doing 80 miles on the 101. Next, I just started hammering parked cars. I think I hit fifteen of them. My car was a giant old school cruiser. I sideswiped some cars and Monk is punching me in the back of the head screaming, “Stop! Stop! Stop! Fuck yeah! Fuck yeah! Let’s Go!” Just smashing shit. We got out of that neighborhood. My car was demolished. Monk was not happy. That was an average night.

**Monty Messex:** Around then, in 1979, I found out about the punk rock scene, which was good because I found people that didn’t fit in either. It appealed to me because it was loud and angry.

I was a 16-year-old skater kid. I hated life. I felt like shit. I went to my first punk gig with my friends Taz and Drew. Black Flag, Chinas Comidas, Fear, and the Germs playing a Halloween gig at the Hong Kong Café. The Hong Kong smelled like sweat, beer, and Chinese food. Black Flag opened. Punks pogoed, almost touching the Hong Kong’s low Chinese ceiling. Keith Morris was crammed into one of those cheap dime store Spider-Man costumes, the ones they make for little kids. From behind his plastic mask he spit out lyrics that hit me hard. Keith writhed on the beer soaked floor. I was like, “this is the coolest fucking thing that I’ve ever seen. I want to do *that!*”

I remember seeing that first punk show and thinking, “these people look as bad as I feel.” I remember identifying with the music and the scene and the whole fucked up vibe that was going on. From there, I went head first into drugs and alcohol, in order to kill that inside pain. I could just run amok and go crazy.

I don't even know *why* I felt so bad. Sometimes I think maybe the wiring in me was just fucked up. I don't know. I did know that I felt very uncomfortable in my own skin. I felt weird on the inside and that's what I identified with. When I heard Darby yelling, or saw Keith, or heard the music, it backed up so perfectly to what I was going through. The first single I ever bought was *Nervous Breakdown*. When I heard "Fix Me," I could just totally relate to that. "Something is broken in me." I really do think punk rock really saved me.

It's not like I was some straight edge kid that was all of sudden saying, "I'm gonna identify as a vegetarian and straightedger!" I went the opposite direction. I *wanted* to be a junkie and a drug addict. I could identify with Darby Crash and Johnny Thunders. But, I don't blame the punk scene for that. I mean, I would probably be doing drugs regardless. There was so much music. All of a sudden, I had a lot of friends around me that were like minded!

**Greg Hetson (Guitar – Circle Jerks, Red Cross, Bad Religion):** I've known Monty since he was very, very young. We were some of the few young punk kids going to punk shows at the same. He was kind of a quiet guy. He was a quiet kid. I mean, I'm not the most outrageous or crazy when you see me, either. I remember him and a couple of his other friends and they would run into me, and Jeff, and Steve McDonald. We were usually the youngest there, but everybody kind of looked out for us, and made sure no one fucked with us, which was cool.

Really, you were more in danger of the police breaking things up and beating people up than the gigs. Around '82, when it expanded beyond a few people, and the whole gang mentality came in, it got more violent. But before then, it started very small and we all looked out for each other. That attracted me to the scene at the time.

**Monty Messex:** At about that time, skateboarding kind of crept into punk rock. There had already been a first generation of punk rock, but they weren't skaters. They were artists and musicians like the Germs and the Screamers and the Weirdos. We were like the second generation of punk rock that were kind of like a bunch of knucklehead skater kids. At like the Starwood, you'd see people who skated. You'd see Jay Adams there or Tony Alva, and then skate world blended into punk world and it became a different scene.

By around '81 or so, things got a little more aggressive- Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Adolescents. Guys from Huntington Beach would come down and just start shit or make the mosh pit super aggressive. When I first started going to shows in '79, people were still like pogoing, but now, people were slam dancing and shoving each other. I think the Orange County contingency, that beach kind of thing, became much more aggressive.

**Jim Lindberg:** The real hardcore punkers were really the outcasts and definitely outside the system. I remember the Jocks at Mira Costa would yell "Devo!" at Janet and Steve Housden and would hassle them. There was one guy, Bobby, who was the leader of the punk gang. He ended up in some notable fights with the Suicidal guys later on. I remember Bobby and one of the biggest captains of the football team getting in a big fight. There was a lot of really ugly brawls. You did have to fear for your safety. Walking around with a mohawk could get your ass kicked for sure. You had a lot of violent dudes, a lot of broken homes, a lot of alcoholic parents, it was a very violent place. I think later on the skate scene, more than the surf scene, realized that skating was an outlaw sport and punk was outlaw music and they were perfectly made for each other.



**Tom Davis:** I guess there was a difference between us because Monty was a Hollywood punk rocker and I was associated with the beach punkers- those two worlds were very separated in the day, but we all got along until the punk gangs took over. Hollywood punks had gangs and stuff and the beach punks had skinheads and stuff. At the start, it was very simple and very fun.

**Monty Messex:** Tom moved from Malibu to the South Bay, Hermosa Beach. I stopped seeing him around as much and that's when I became closer with my friends Drew Bernstein and Taz Rudd. I would see Tom at shows, like the Fleetwood or Dancing Waters, or I'd see him at shows in Hollywood, like the Starwood. Taz and I started a band called the Atoms. We played with DOA, the Vandals, JFA, China White, Suicidal Tendencies, and the Misfits. Drew got a pick from Doyle of the Misfits and it was a big thing! "I got this pick from Doyle!" So, I went to get one and Doyle was like, "get the fuck away from me!"

**Tom Davis:** So, when I moved from Malibu to Hermosa beach, after the Marina Del Ray skatepark days, I ended up hanging with South Bay skateboard kids. The Black Flag guys were still living at the Church and we would sneak in while they were practicing and we would skateboard around and they would chase us out. We would take flyers off the wall. I was seeing all the bands at the time- China White, TSOL, Agent Orange, Redd Kross



when they were still "Red Cross," Black Flag. I grew up at punk gigs. Believe it or not, I saw every one of the Black Flag singers.

One of my friends had a fake wedding reception at the skatepark and he was friends with Darby Crash. That's where the cover of Circle Jerks' *Group Sex* got taken. The photographer told us to all get in the bowl. I'm actually on the cover. I'm all the way in the corner on the left side. It was pretty awesome.

Monty and I would constantly run into each other at concerts. I saw Monty's first band, the Atoms. I loved them. Taz Rudd, who I grew up with in Malibu, was the guitar player for the Atoms. He was more into playing music than I was at the time and he got together with Monty. I went to the Atoms show at Madam Wongs, but I hung out in the lobby. We kind of just hung around and drunk beers. Back then, a lot of the followship of punk rockers was not only going inside to the concert, but it had to do with hanging out in the parking lot and doing miscellaneous things.

**Monty Messex:** Looking back, the Atoms played some really good shows, but at the time, it didn't seem like we were playing good shows at all. Jeff Isbell was in the band and he said he was going to quit and go more glam. We were like, "good luck with that." Well... not too long afterward he would be known as Izzy Stradlin of Guns 'n' Roses... We actually saw GNR play a frat party and it blew our minds. We were soooo blown away. Axl was walking around in chaps with his butt cheeks sticking out and it was freaking the frat boys out.

**Ione Skye:** That was the Hollywood scene at the time. I did a movie with Flea from the Chili Peppers in '86. It was just after the "punk scene." There was a kind of music scene going on that was after the Circle Jerks and Germs, the authentic first round of punk.



By then, there was Fishbone and Mary's Danish. There was Thelionious Monster, Two Free Stooges. They would like break up on stage every single night as a bit. X would play, but I feel like it was more often John Doe, and not the rest of X. It was a tight group all of these friends in these little or not-so-little bands.

There was a druggie element to it, so it was kind of gnarly and everybody didn't have a lot of money. I was a little younger so I was kind of wide eyed. So, maybe it didn't seem as dark to me as it was.

**Max Perlich:** We all hung out, Tony Converse, Tom Davis, Kim Davis- she got painted by Jennifer Bruce and they would wear these bikinis as Go-Go dancers at this club called Power Tools. A DJ called Mario Caldato was the mixer behind Delicious Records. DJ-ing was kind of a new thing that was happening in '87, '88 or '89. Matt Dike said, "you have got to hear this, brother!"

It's this band of these guys in New York that are re-cutting Go-Go records and they have these white rapper kids and they do three different beats. It was like a secret he had in his trench coat. And then, at the club, they played "Hold Now, Hit It" and it had a tempo change and an 808 kick and it was soooo mind-blowing- it was like listening to a new B.T.O. for the first time or trying to understand how people like Jimmy Durante exist and function on the planet-- when you have these mind-blowing realizations that create a physical impact on your body... that's what they did with these machines and it was insane. You heard the freedom and audacity of these guys to have three different beats...it was very soulful and funky.

Matt Dike hired them, the Beastie Boys. He said to me, "we're going to get them at the airport! Get your Imperial!" I had a '64 Chrysler Imperial four-door. It was like 20 feet long. We picked them up.

They were on tour for the single "She's On It." They came to Club Power Tools and they had bottles of champagne and they were shaking them all around and it was visual debauchery. I remember I liked Horowitz from the beginning because he passed me a joint while we were driving through LAX.



## II. AMERICA'S MOST HARDCORE

**Monty Messex:** From '84 to '87, I wasn't really in the punk scene because I was so messed up on drugs. I got sober in '87. In '88 I met my wife. We moved to Echo Park. My son Bela was born in '89. I was going to school. I was going to community college and then I went to Occidental College. I felt a little weird. I was in my late 20s and every one there was like 18. I had my Mesa Boogie and my Les Paul Jr. I was trying to find a band and things just weren't gelling. I played with Carla Bozulich. She went to be on to be in a noise band called Ethyl Meatplow. Eric Avery from Jane's Addiction was in that band, too. But, that didn't work out. Maybe it sounded like grunge, even though it was a little bit before grunge was popular. Maybe thrashy garage rock.

That's when we started hanging out with Adam Horovitz and Ione Skye. I had known Ione from grade school. Ione was the daughter of Donovan. He wasn't around very much, but her mother was around. She came into my life through my brother, who was closer with Ione than I was.

I don't know why Adam and I got along so well. Sometimes you meet people you just get along with. We used to drive around and hang out. He gave me an advance cassette of *Check Your Head*. I remember listening to it and thinking, "Wow! This stuff is really amazing!"

Maybe I was friends with Adam because I wasn't really a Beastie Boys fan. I knew of them from "Fight for Your Right" because that was everywhere in '86 and '87. I wasn't really a fan boy. You could tell that those guys were on top of the world even before *Check Your Head* came out. They had a kind of confidence. They were at the center of the fuckin' universe, man. That was before the record even came out.

One day, I was hanging out with Adam. He and Ione were babysitting Bela. We were just doing stuff- the kind of stuff you do in your late 20s. I just said to Adam, "Hey, I wrote all these punk rock songs!" I had written "Pizza Man" and maybe "Meter Maid." Then, I just blurted it out, "Want to start a punk band?" It was kind of a joke, but kind of not a joke

...And he was like, "yeah, let's go over to G-Son!"

**Max Burgos (Senior VP- Grand Royal):** At first, G-Son Studios was just a building, really. There was no record label. Just me. G-Son was an old ballroom that had been used for various things. There was the main studio room, the recording space, which is where the basketball space was- there was a hardwood floor so they put a basketball court in there and built some skate ramps.



So, if you walk up the stairs to get in, you walk into a lobby. It was cramped. Then, you pass the control room and you go to the studio. But if you made a hard right after the stairs, there was this tiny little room which they called "Studio B." That's where Horovitz would cut up beats and make BS 2000 tracks. If they were laying down drums, Horovitz would be in there working on stuff. When I got there, they weren't recording anymore in that room and they put in a computer instead. That was my office... and that was Grand Royal Records... and

Grand Royal Merchandising. Maybe it was twenty feet by five feet. Maybe even twelve feet by five feet.

With a little bit of humor, Mike said, "get some business cards printed up." In the music business, there was this whole hierarchy thing. I was the only employee, but I was the Senior VP. In a way, it might have been an "F U" to the record business. In reality, I was also Mike's glorified assistant. If Mike needed something picked up, I'd go pick it up. If they needed me to travel, I'd go to New York for the College Music Conference.

**Max Perlich:** I remember when Grand Royal was created. A few of us were at the table at Thanksgiving and Mike Diamond came out and said, “we going to start a record label. It’s called Grand Royal!” I was like, “that is the name of an ice cream cone or a burger!” But Mike would never get mad at you. He would be like, “hey! Come on! That’s not very supportive!”

**Max Burgos:** The name came from Biz Markie. That was a phrase he would use. Technically, I was the second guy to get involved with Grand Royal. When *Check Your Head* came out, Capitol Records wouldn’t pay for the extra pages in the booklet for the lyrics- it was too much of a cost. They didn’t expect to sell that many records. On the vinyl, the lyrics were there because it was big enough, but on the CD they didn’t have enough pages, so they said “send an SASE to this PO Box for lyrics.” So, they had one guy before me who was doing it out of his house, just putting in all the names in a computer, going to the PO Box, getting the names, and sending the lyrics back- at a loss. The lyrics, by the time you printed them up and folded them, was more than one stamp.

**Monty Messex:** Adam and I began to practice at G-Son, which was in Atwater. It was a sleepy area at the time. The Beasties had a stage set up, with all of their instruments. In the early, early days, at that point DFL was just like... I don’t want to use the word, but it was a “joke band.” It wasn’t a real band. It was music that no one was playing at the time. Loud. Fast. It was really short songs.

I was definitely not thinking about where the music business was. That is not where my mind was at. I was oblivious. That’s just how the songs came out. I had found a cassette tape of Bad Religion’s *How Could Hell Be Any Worse?* And I listened to it over and over and over and it tapped into the memories of all the punk shows I saw in the early ‘80s. All of a sudden, it was like, “I wanna write songs like *this!*” Not because there was any niche to be filled, or not because nobody was doing it, it was just because I wanted something hard and really riff driven. That’s just like how I like to write a song-driven by the riff. I was just trying to channel that time into a song. I was oblivious to any kind of outside mindset like “punk is dead” or “punk was in a slump” or “punk was now pop.”

The day I asked Adam if he wanted to start a band, I already knew the name that I wanted, from day one. I wanted it to be called *Dead Fucking Last* or *DFL*. I heard that as a sailing term and when I visited my dad in Maine. He would say that if a sailboat came in last it was “DFL.” I always thought that was a really cool thing. It fit the music perfectly.



**Max Perlich:** DFL was a jam group of cover songs. That was a pleasurable thing for Horovitz. They could get together and measure their schmeckles. I don’t know why Horovitz was interested in starting a punk band when the Beastie Boys were so huge. I definitely don’t think he was “bored” or anything like that. He was working with Mario Caldato and you can imagine dealing with a huge label like Capitol who are probably very demanding... I can only imagine that it is demanding and complex, so maybe it was a foray into some other output. I don’t think he ever intended it to be pushed into a marketable thing or monetization. I think he wanted to have a purely creative output.

**Ione Skye:** With a band like Beastie Boys, there's a lot of pressure. So, for Adam, it was appealing to do a side project. I vividly remember them jamming and being at Tony Converse's house in Silverlake. I remember hanging out a lot that day and it just being a lot of fun with no pressure at all.

**Monty Messex:** I think at first, Adam asked both Tom and Max Perlich to be singers in DFL. Adam also got in touch with Tony Converse for drums. I didn't know Tony at all. I knew Max a little. I had known Tom but had not been in touch with him for a long time. Mike D played drums in the very beginning.

**Tom Davis:** Adam and I had Max Perlich as a mutual friend. Adam Horovitz is like a Robert DeNiro meets Jim Carrey. He's a really funny guy, but serious. He's great. Max was better friends with Horovitz than I was. At the time, my sister Tamra was involved with Michael Diamond, so that's how I knew them.

**Monty Messex:** I think it was Adam's idea to add Tom. I don't think I had any ideas for who to sing. Tom came and I asked him if he ever sung in a hardcore band before and he said "no"... and then we just took it from there.

**Mario Caldato:** When Tom got on the mic, he became kind of like a different person. He's usually very low profile, but, when he gets on the mic, all that energy comes out. He's wild! Talking a lot of shit and he has this crazy attitude, over the top. He didn't worry about pleasing other people. He was doing it for himself or doing it for a goof... he's a hard person to read. I wouldn't spend too much time trying to figure it out because you aren't going to get anywhere.

**Tom Davis:** DFL decided to have a practice or two either at Tony's house or some studio and I would go over and see the beginning practices. The goal was to have a good time and to play loud music. The idea was for Max and me to sing, so it was going to be two singers at the same time. But, I think Max was kind of shy. He never kind of mustered up the ability to get the words out. I remember at one practice, we were both holding the microphone and he was doing monkey sounds and I was just doing the verses.

**Max Perlich:** I was always miffed, not miffed in a "bad..." does miffed *always* mean bad? I mean miffed in a good way. I was miffed in a good way about the band. There was this rumor or shadow or ghost murmuring regarding my involvement in that band. I was just one of the friends that was into human angst. I'm sure it was visible in my body language. I never felt like I was connected. I'm not a professional punk emulator, so I could never dream or imagine myself being a part of that band because of the musicianship that has to already be produced in yourself, you know? I know that I just didn't cut it. They're hardcore. I know that was a nice thought, but I was never *in* the band. There are rumors that I was the first singer. That's bullshit. But Tom would say I was. I don't know why. Maybe it was just to get me to spout off. Maybe it was just to give me some props.

**Monty Messex:** While Mike D was the first drummer, Tony Converse was the "real" first drummer. The thing that I loved about Tony and the thing that was also most difficult about Tony is that he was a very passionate, very intense person. Tony and I used to bump heads a lot. I think that we both respected each other and both wanted what was best for the band... but, I think I was focused more on pragmatic things and business things and Tony would be more off... the I dunno... off the beaten path...

**Tom Davis:** Practicing at G-Son was family and brotherhood. It was like the Brady Bunch and Partridge Family mixed together. People would stop by and hang out. In the moment, it didn't seem like such a big deal. But it kind of was. Biz Markie stopped by. Chilli Peppers members stopped. Flea would play basketball once in a while.

**Monty Messex:** We started writing songs. There was a song called, "Get the fuck out!" I was working at the Occidental College information desk and I was really bored. There was nothing to do. I started to think of this song that went, "get the fuck, get fuck, get the fuck... out!" I told Adam about the song and his face just went, "whooooaaaa... you're really gonna say 'fuck' that many times in one song?"

Then I took the song to Tom and he put in the in the verses. I don't really even need to know what Tom's verses mean. They just make sense with the stuff that I write.

The way that Tom and I write, is I'll write the music, and he might give me a little note here or there on the music, but it's mostly what I write, and I might come up with the chorus like "Pizza man he delivers!" But, I don't tell Tom what to write for the verse. He just does whatever he does and whatever comes out is what comes out. When I listen to what he writes, sometimes it really is just like perfect. He can capture the vibe of a song. He just does his thing and it works.

Tom has his own kind of street smarts about him. He can be really moody. But, he's a really great artist and poet. His lyrics to me are kind of more poetry in a way. When I write lyrics, they tend to be very concrete and black and white, which can feel restrictive. But Tom writes these things that are like "wow... where did *that* come from?" I like it.

You don't just meet people that you can do something creative with every day- those things don't happen often. When they do happen, you should cherish those relationships and realize they are few and far in between. I look at Tom like my writing partner and creative partner and my business partner.

**Ione Skye:** I think, for Adam, he had been in the Beastie Boys for a while, so DFL was a new dynamic with new players. It probably felt nice and uncluttered without any baggage. They weren't middle-aged, but they were a little older than most people when they form a band, so there was some level of maturity. You could feel that everyone was having a good time. It wasn't a band that was "put together." It was just something that naturally happened.

**Monty Messex:** The way the first seven inch got recorded was I think we had worked out all of those songs, and we set up over at G-Son. No one really asked about recording and no one said, "now we're going to record the 7-inch" or anything. Mario started setting up microphones and Adam was like, "record this" and we just started playing. I didn't know we were recording our debut record or anything. I kind of got the feeling that "maybe they are recording?" It's not like we had all signed a record deal with Grand Royal or anything. It was all just for fun.

**Mario Caldato:** I didn't have a background recording punk bands. Beastie Boys had done like one or two punk songs on *Check Your Head*. "Time for Livin'" is probably the first song I recorded in that style. Though, I did do sound for the first gig of Mike Watt's Firehose. DFL was just a basic rock band set up. You just hit record and watch the levels.

It was Adam's desire of wanting to do this project and record it in-house real quick. The guys got the approval from Mike D and just went with it. There was not a lot of thought to it. The studio was set up for Beastie Boys obviously and so we just recorded it live.

I just remember it being very quick and fast. We were going to record whether they had the songs worked out or not. There wasn't a lot of thought on how it should be. It kind of was what it was. I think it's one take on everything, or mostly one take. We didn't spend a lot of time on it, but they were rehearsed.

I didn't say, "you should do this or try that." It was punk. What they got is what they gave. I didn't filter it. I just captured it. I didn't color it or nothing. Maybe I put a little effect on the vocals. Tom was into a dirty sound and we ran some distortion on the mic. Tom was like, "yeah that's cool, I dig that. Let's do it like that." I think the most contribution I gave was adding effects on different parts of the songs. I was just trying to capture the moment.

**Monty Messex:** I think like Mario and Adam had the idea that this has to be recorded on the fly and has to be really lo-fi. I think Tom was recording his vocals through a bass cabinet and I think he was on the stage singing with us live while we were playing. There was no overthinking. Play the song! Boom! Move on! Play it! Boom! Move on! There was no over thinking it. While we were playing, it kind of sounded exactly as I envisioned it would sound at the start.

**Tom Davis:** It was a practice session at the time. I didn't realize it, but those guys had the proper recording levels. So, we had a practice song or two and they just used the songs... which turned out to be a real good recording. You're not doing something over and over a million times, so you have that spontaneous energy. The Beastie Boys and the Grand Royal guys always had the vibe that everything was fun, everything was cool - "try a song, try a take." If it didn't work out, "try it again." It never seemed serious, which was cool about it. The next day, we recorded a live show at G-Son. That was filled with family and celebrities. All of the Chili Peppers were there. Members of Rage Against the Machine. Ice-T. Dr. Dre. A couple of actors- Matt Dillon, Drew Barrymore, Ione Skye... I think this kid named Corky?

**Max Burgos:** Mike Diamond told me that Horovitz had a hardcore band that he was fucking around with his brother-in-law and Monty and Tony Converse. I was told that they were going to play at a party and that's when I kind of realized that it was a band. I thought maybe it was just for the party. People would get together for these parties and have a band just for the party and not take it very seriously.

**Mario Caldato:** We did parties at the studio. That wasn't the first one. We would have a gathering every couple of months. This one happened to be a DFL recording. It was just a gig- that was just part of the party I don't even remember it being taken seriously. We had the tape and just decided to record it.

The live show was set up in our recording studio, but it has this big open area that is like a skateboard ramp and basketball hoops. It doesn't feel like a studio. It's like a club house or a garage. It's very homey. They basically called all the friends that were around at the time- Rob Cavallo, Donovan Leitch, Ione, they had their crew of friends, Hollywood actor kids, sons of famous musicians, the Amy Fleetwoods, Lisa Ann, The Beastie family and friends. Tom Davis probably brought his crew- some skater friends, Christian Hosoi, Max Perlich, that kind of posse.

**Monty Messex:** At that show, I remember being very nervous. It was advertised as either a Grand Royal or Beastie Boys party. The place was the area of a basketball court... it was a basketball court. There was 100 or 150 people there. It was "the hip and cool crowd of 1992." We played this style of music that probably a lot of people hadn't heard before. I was nervous and felt overwhelmed. I think we played really well. I'm guessing that Mario had just left everything mic-ed from the day before. I don't remember if any other bands played. The show was like 15 minutes. We had 11 songs.

**Ione Skye:** It was a really cool night. I feel like there weren't that many parties there, so it was really exciting. It was beautiful in that there was a big party there. During the set, the cool thing was that they did tap into that energy- everybody is angry and those four certainly have anger.

**BAM Magazine (May 21, 1993):** DFL (definition: a yacht-racing term that means “Dead Fuckin’ Last”), the new local group featuring Beastie Boy Adam Horovitz on bass, recently held a party at the Beasties’ own recording studio in Atwater, playing a live set which was recorded for posterity and will probably appear on Beastie Boy Mike D’s new Grand Royal label. Among those grooving were BAM 100 video-maker Tamra Davis, Redd Kross’ Steve McDonald, actress Drew Barrymore, Ione Skye (Horvitz’s main squeeze), and Chili Pepper Anthony Kiedis (Skye’s ex!) LA skateboard champs Tony Alva (who has a new fanzine out called *What’s Up*) and Christian Hosoi skated through the entire set, and actor Max Perlich acted as drum tech. Now is that the cream of trendy young Hollywood or what?

**Monty Messex:** The funny thing is that even though the *BAM* article said the gig was recorded for “posterity,” it was never released, until now- years later, I got AMPEX tapes that Mario and Adam recorded of DFL and one the party. Mario C mixed and mastered that recording for this release.

**Max Burgos:** After the party, I remember Mike giving me some photos. Maybe Spike Jonze took them or maybe it was Horovitz. Mike said, “hey, let’s get this record out.” Mike was very forward thinking into desktop publishing and what macs can do. I don’t even remember talking to Monty or Tom about the record. As far as I was concerned, I worked for the Beasties and it was Horovitz’s record that he wanted to put out.

There weren’t many people doing many 7-inches at the time except for singles and except for punk labels. The fact that it was a 7-inch that was basically an album was actually one of the core points as to why they released it like they did. Putting out the DFL record and how we put it out was *as important* as the results. How it looked, the feel, those were all very important considerations that weren’t treated lightly.

Horovitz called up Todd James who was also called “Reas,” who was a graffiti guy, and asked him to do a logo for DFL.

**Todd James (Artist):** Ad Rock called me and asked if I could create a logo for an indie punk band or something that was on Grand Royal. He said to make it a face where it says DFL in the teeth. It came together pretty quick. I remember being in my apartment. I probably drew it two or three times and was done. It wasn’t effortless, but it didn’t take long.

**Monty Messex:** The knucklehead itself was Adam’s idea. One day we were getting breakfast at the farmers market and I remember Adam pulling me aside there and saying that he had a vision of this kind of cartoon character smiling with “DFL” in its teeth. I said, “oh, that’s a cool idea.” That was the last I heard about it until I saw it. I was like, “that is perfect.”

**Todd James:** The logo actually ended up in a lot of places. You’d see it around. It was cool that way. What was cool, and this is the only time this has ever happened to me, maybe seven years later, they got in touch with me and said they had printed a bunch of merch with the logo in Japan and gave me a check. They didn’t have to, but they did.

**Max Burgos:** Adam was excited about putting the record out and so was Mike. It was the second record out on Grand Royal. Like everything with the Beastie Boys, there’s a sense of humor about it. There were very few things that were down-the-middle it-is-what-you-think-it-is. Usually, there’s another level to it. They did have a genuine love for hardcore going back to when they were kids, but I don’t think DFL was just a throwback hardcore band. I knew they weren’t. Look at “Pizza Man,” there’s a sense of humor to it. If you took a lot of the songs, they would have worked as Beastie Boys hardcore songs.



I actually ended up on the wrong side of Horovitz because Beasties were out on the road and I had to get the record mastered. Horovitz called me up really upset because he wasn't there for the mastering. He was like, "you don't understand! That's *my record* and you got it mastered without me." I remember feeling really bad about it. I don't remember where Mike was on that. So, I went to myself, "okay... this is *not* just a funny side project. It is something they are taking seriously."

**Tom Davis:** I heard about it from Mike that they were going to put something out, a 7-inch. I said I loved it. I thought it was a great idea.

I saw the cover of the *Dead Fucking Last* 7-inch once the record came out. I thought it was awesome. Spike Jonze took a picture of me holding my cat Grease by its tail. That cat had super powers. He was hit by a car when he was one year old, so his whole back and tail was numb. When you picked him up, he liked it. It wasn't a violent or mean thing. It was almost like a trick. I realize that it probably wasn't the coolest thing, now. MCA rapped, "you think you're slicker than Grease" on "So Wha'cha want." I think that was about my cat.

**Max Burgos:** People were actually kind of upset, even internally, about how Tom was holding the cat. But, the cat actually enjoyed that! It did look shocking, in a goofy way. It *looked* like something shocking was happening. In a way that summarized DFL- it looked shocking but in a way, it was fun, funny hardcore.

**Monty Messex:** No one had even told me that they were going to release it! I was in England on a thing for school and my wife told me that they released DFL on a 7-inch. There was no internal planning at that point. I wasn't even there for the mixing of it or choosing the front or back cover or the font. The only thing I was there to do was write the music, pick the names for songs, and kind of write some of the choruses.

The picture on the back is me with my hands holding my belt buckle that spelt out DFL. I thought it would be funny to take a picture of my belt buckle... which I still have! I don't even think the pictures were taken for the purpose of the record. I think Spike was just taking pictures and he came over with Adam Yauch. It wasn't like, "we need photos for the record" or anything. It was all very catch-as-catch-can.

**Max Burgos:** The record sold well. We had a feeling that a 7-inch, something cool, might catch on.

*Dead Fucking Last* was kind of cool and people liked it. We sent it to press, we sent it college radio. We had headshot taken. I think if you were on the receiving end, it looked like an indie label putting records out. It wasn't like "*here's the Beastie Boys and over here is a little joke.*" It was meant to be a real record.

For instance, there was a bottom line with Grand Royal. The point of the label was to make money and be successful. I don't think they were interested in spending money just for fun. They were willing to do that up to a point- they didn't necessarily want everything to be a chart hit, but they didn't want to lose money.

The thesis of the whole thing was that there has to be Beastie Boys fans that would want to hear Adam Horovitz's side hardcore band. There were Beastie Boys punk songs in the Beastie sets at the time and there were people going to see beasties and "Oh my God! They played four or five punk songs at the show!" We mail ordered a lot. A part of that came from sending out the lyrics via Grand Royal. I figured that since we were losing money on the lyrics, we could send out a catalogue when people asked for lyrics. That way, at least we could sell some stuff and get money back.

**Monty Messex:** To promote the 7-inch, the Beasties mentioned DFL in *Grand Royal Magazine* which was one of their side projects. The magazine was serious, but it was also pretty tongue-in-cheek. For *Grand Royal Magazine* issue one, I wrote a couple articles. One was an interview with movie director Alison Anders. Alison had directed a movie with Ione in it called *Gas, Food and Lodging* and she did a bunch of other stuff. Spike went with me to take photos for the interview. The other article was called "The Official DFL Hardcore Manifesto & Skate Report by Krazy Monte and Tommy Holiday." I think on the cover of *Grand Royal Magazine* issue two they put "DFL Bidding War."

**Greg Hetson:** When the DFL 7-inch came out, it was when a lot of the bands were getting more melodic or maybe more of a metal influence. But, DFL were an in-your-face-low-fi-get-up-and-do-your-thing kind of band. I think a lot of the younger fans didn't know what to make of it. Monty had a unique guitar tone. It's totally blown out. It was really, really, really noisy and really thrashy. It brought me back to the original spirit of the bands that I liked.

**Craig Setari (Bass- Sick of It All):** We used to be managed by Steve Martin- not *that* Steve Martin. Steve Martin who used to play in Agnostic Front in '87 and '88. Now, he had founded Nasty Little Man, which was the Beastie Boys' PR company. Steve was working with DFL and the connection was through the Beastie Boys. The DFL record came out and Steve was like, "you should check this out."

He gave me a recording and I *absolutely* loved it. It was hardcore punk in its most raw, early form. It was just so stripped down and so pure in the way it was delivered. That was my cup of tea and I fell in love with the band right away. You hear the "Pizza Man" call and response and, I mean, what more do you want?!

The sound, the way they presented themselves, it really struck a chord in me. As soon as I met them, I said, "I know what you are doing! I know what you are going for! Nobody appreciates this raw style anymore, but I appreciate it!" They were taking all of the dressing off of it, like it was just coming out of the womb!

**Jim Lindberg:** I think right away, when I first heard DFL, I thought, "this is true South Bay hardcore." It just had that loose, twisted, frenetic pace that you loved from this type of music. Writing songs like "Meter Maid," you have to grow up in the South Bay to know what that is about. We had the worst meter maids on the planet and you were constantly fighting with them! Right when you heard that, you knew exactly what Monk was talking about. It seemed like they were a classic punk rock band from the first time you heard it. So, well, um, that was a huge achievement.

**Fletcher Dragge:** Knowing Monk and what he's capable of, I knew it would be cool... and it was. It was totally punk rock, total lo-fi production. Shit was getting overproduced. Shit was getting clean. I was into that, honestly- I really liked Bad Religion's *Suffer*. But, DFL comes along and it is noisy, grindy, old school punk rock. That was a breath of fresh air, which is weird to say. They were really raw. They didn't give a *fuck* about production. Fuck! Listen to those guitar tones. Early days, we didn't have any money, so we'd just get a MXR distortion box and turn it up full blast. It was raw-I-don't-give-a-fuck punk fucking rock.

**Monty Messex:** When it came out, Maggie Gurewitz called my wife and said, "Brett really likes Monty's band. He'd like to do something with these guys." At the time, I was like, "Hey, we are with Grand Royal and I think we're going to stick with them." But, I did file the piece of information away in the back of my mind...

**Autumn McIntosh (Actress):** We would see DFL play all the time in Hollywood. It was so much fun. It was kind of like a crew of us. They were so raw and honest. But, it wasn't like dark or even angry... it was just raw emotion. They were just playing what they felt. There was nothing artificial or even thought-out about it.



**Monty Messex:** At one show, were playing someone was throwing beer cans at us! I was like, "really?" I looked over and it was Autumn!

**Ione Skye:** There was something really refreshing about all of it. The shows were really fun. It was almost nourishing or satisfying- it was timely. It was authentic. They weren't fronting or trying be something they weren't. There was something really right about that, at that moment. When a project is flowing it's flowing.

The thing about DFL is that they authentically loved and had the LA punk rock thing- Tom and Monty had grown up in the first wave of LA punk rock. It was just the right timing and everyone was in the mood for raw, real, authentic *punk* and it was honoring that genre. But it's not that they did it just to honor punk, they were channeling an anger and also just talking about our friend group.

Tom and Monty, they had this crazy look in their eyes, like a Darby Crash or a Tomata Du Plenty ... it's the look of a punk person, if that makes sense. Tommy truly has the spirit of punk person. He looks like a skateboarder and he has that true wild spirit. He was Tamra's little brother that everybody loved and now he's on stage just looking *wild*. He felt like, not to discount him, but he was this great mascot. Everyone was a total character.

**Max Burgos:** People really liked the DFL record so the idea came around to do a CD version, which would have bigger distribution and exposure. But, at the time, people didn't like buying a CD if it didn't have a lot of tracks. So, they recorded a few more tracks for the CD version. 12-inch records were a cool thing and we loved doing them, but they didn't sell as well as CDs, so we decided to do the "bigger version" of the DFL 7-inch as a CD called *My Crazy Life*. So, a 12-inch vinyl version was never released. We did do a cassette, too. The official name of the label at the time was Grand Royal Records and Tapes.

**Autumn McIntosh:** They used a photo of me on the back cover where both of my wrists were broken. I was friends with Keanu Reeves and one night I tried to climb over a fence on his property and I fell off it and broke both of my wrists! I was very honored to be on the DFL album.

**Mario Caldato:** There were always side projects and it was wild to see the different projects interact. DFL would open on a small side stage and Adam would play with them. Then, he would have to run over to the mainstage and up the stairs to play with the Beastie Boys!

**Ione Skye:** I think Adam felt guilty or bad, like he led them on or something. It's just so funny. As with any creative endeavor, it's just so amazing how many resentments and hurt feelings can grow. Adam is so sensitive, I'm sure he felt really bad, but I'll bet he didn't sit down and think about it thoroughly because people are often afraid of really hashing things out. I don't remember it being a huge kind of problem. I do feel like it had an abrupt end. Everyone was like, "oh... that was abrupt."

### III. SMOKEBOMB

**Monty Messex:** After Adam left the band, we wanted to do another record. I got the feeling that Mike D wasn't really interested in us and he seemed to be focused on other things. I reached out to Brett from Epitaph and said we are interested into moving over to Epitaph. Brett said, "that's cool. I want to have sit down with Mike D and make sure everything is cool." Brett and Mike D talked to each other and Mike gave his blessing.

Epitaph was a totally different vibe than Grand Royal. It was a different label with different people. Mike D was taking the label in a direction of indie stuff, not punk rock. When we got to Epitaph, it was all about punk rock. It did feel like a little fish in a big fish bowl. There tons of bands there and Epitaph treated us very well. We got a really good deal with them. The thing about Epitaph in '94 and '95, was at the time, Offspring blew up and Brett had a lot of money coming in and he was super generous. He gave us a good deal for our records and he paid for tour support. It was even non-recoupable, meaning we didn't have to pay it back.

**Max Burgos:** DFL actually asked me to come join them. So, I tried it out and stayed after work at G-Son and waited until they came by to practice. It was like a running joke how many bass players they had gone through. I remember Monty was really upset that I wanted to use fingering- he wanted me to use a pick! I was like, "no, I'm not going to use a pick!" So, we went through the set and I was never invited back because I never used a pick.

**Monty Messex:** We needed a new bass player, so we got Tom Barta. Tony Converse was like, "I got a guy that will knock it out of the park." I was being kind of a dick and I was like "yeah, okay." And then Barta showed up and knocked it out of the park at the first practice. After that, I knew Barta was in. But, Barta is a trippy guy. For instance, he smokes cigarettes and he wanted to smoke in the van. So, he took these milk containers and made himself a helmet with a hose that hung out of it. He would hang the hose out the van window so he could smoke while we drove.

We started to tour pretty soon. The first real tour was with Pennywise and Joykiller. I didn't know Pennywise very well at the time, they were Tom's friends. *I did know that Fletcher just fucked with us non-stop.*

**Fletcher Dragge:** It was always constant battles. Monk and I grew up fucking with each other so we just continued the battle. I can't remember if they did it to me first it did or if I did it to them, but a bunch of firecrackers were dropped into their van...there might have even been a bag of poo involved. There was always something a little dangerous. You put myself, Jack Grisham, and Monk on a tour, you're going to have chaos. No doubt about it. No doubt it will be...*problematic.*

**Craig Setari:** For some reason, everybody bought these plastic BB guns that really hurt when you got hit. Tom and Fletcher had BB gun wars in the hotel that really got out of control. You might be walking down the hall and then you got shot, even if you weren't involved! They *did not* care about civilian casualties. It was crazy what you could do back then- pre 9/11.

**Monty Messex:** You'd see the muzzle of a BB gun come out of the Pennywise bus and it would just start to shoot you! Fletcher would shoot us on stage while we were playing!

One time, we were in Austin and in our hotelroom. It was the middle of summer and it was super hot. The room had one of those air conditioners that hung out of the wall. Fletcher lit a towel on fire and tried to smoke us out of the room by holding it near the air conditioner from outside! Then, he busted in and had a BB gun- not just a regular BB gun, but like a machine- gun BB gun. I was lying in bed and he comes in and yanks the covers off my bed and yells, "get out of bed, midget!"

But, we had a BB gun that Tony Converse had bought in Japan. It was right next to the bed, so I grabbed it and jumped up. I sprayed the room with BBs, like Rambo or something. They ran out the door. One of the dudes from Joykiller was videotaping. They took cover behind the door into the hall and were firing into the room. Tom Barta and me ran to the bathroom for our own cover. We were pinned down. Barta grabbed a towel and dipped it in the toilet. The toilet was still filled with pee, so the towel was now soaked with pee. Barta flung it out of the door aiming at Fletcher. But, it hit the Joykiller guy in his face and wrapped around his head. He just screamed.

**Fletcher Dragge:** It was war.

**Craig Setari:** I think DFL was what it was always meant to be. It was a project that brought that authentic home churned flavor. Something like that isn't meant to go beyond what it is. It did what it is supposed to do.

**Max Perlich:** I just think that DFL is a lighthearted group. Punk rock is not meant to be thought of so seriously. It's not meant to stress you out. It's a parody of life. DFL is one of the best parodies of life there is.

**Travis Barker (Drums - Blink -182):** I grew up on DFL!

**Tom Davis:** The record was a place in time of hardcore and we were trying to give people from the '90s a version of the '80s hardcore punk rock. It was sort of a book marker. I'm really shy, so I can only say I hope that people respect it and like it. Those songs are sort of like... well... they weren't that hard to do. Monty and I have been friends for so long that this music is second nature to us. It's easy. It's what we do. It's who we are.

**Monty Messex:** I still love to play the songs. They feel as fresh to me today as they did when day I wrote them back in the '90s. When we play "Pizza Man," people love that song and I love playing it.

I'm proud of everything we did, and do, in DFL. But that earliest era was unique. I was in school. I had two small children. I was really broke, but I would go and hang out with the Beastie Boys and I had this outlet. I had this outlet where I could let things out and also express things creatively with no real pressure.

This music, punk music, is just a form of musical expression, like old school jazz. I could be into playing jazz from the 1950s. It's a good way of expressing myself. I just love to play old school hardcore.

Tom has always been true to the kind of person he is. He was always the same guy that I have always known. It's one of those weird things where some people you just click with and some people you don't click with. Tom and I clicked just right off the bat. When you find people that you can do something creative with, those relationships don't come around often. It's one a once in a lifetime thing. I don't take my relationship with Tom for granted.

**Fletcher Dragge:** You've got a lot of punk bands in the world these days. The thing is about punk rock, now it is a completely different animal. Everything has been done. Everything has been seen. If I shaved a mohawk into my head and tattooed my face, I could be the guy at Starbucks. *Everything* has been done.

In the '80s, if you were wearing a Black Flag shirt and Converse, you were opening yourself up for a beating from the cops or jocks. We were constantly fighting with the wrestlers. We were outcasts. We weren't welcome at the dance or at the parties.

You can describe it all you want, but people will never understand the feeling of walking down the street with football players driving past you yelling, "fuck you, you punk rock bitch!" and jumping out and attacking you with baseball bats.

People like myself, and Tom, and Monty, we lived through that abuse. That feeling- "Fuck you pig! Fuck you cops! Fuck you government! Fuck you robots! We're sick of your shit and we're gonna scream about it!" Now it's popular to do that, but back then, it wasn't. To me, it builds a different character if you were a part of that and you lived through that. You have the credentials.

That makes DFL more important than other bands that sound like this. They know how to play and record honestly. They know how to beat the shit out of their instruments. It comes from the heart. Tom and Monty come from that and it develops a certain character, a certain work ethic and it's all part of the ethos. And with that, you know have something that means *something*. It has heart and roots and a purpose. It's not fake. Real shit is real and it's *really good*.



