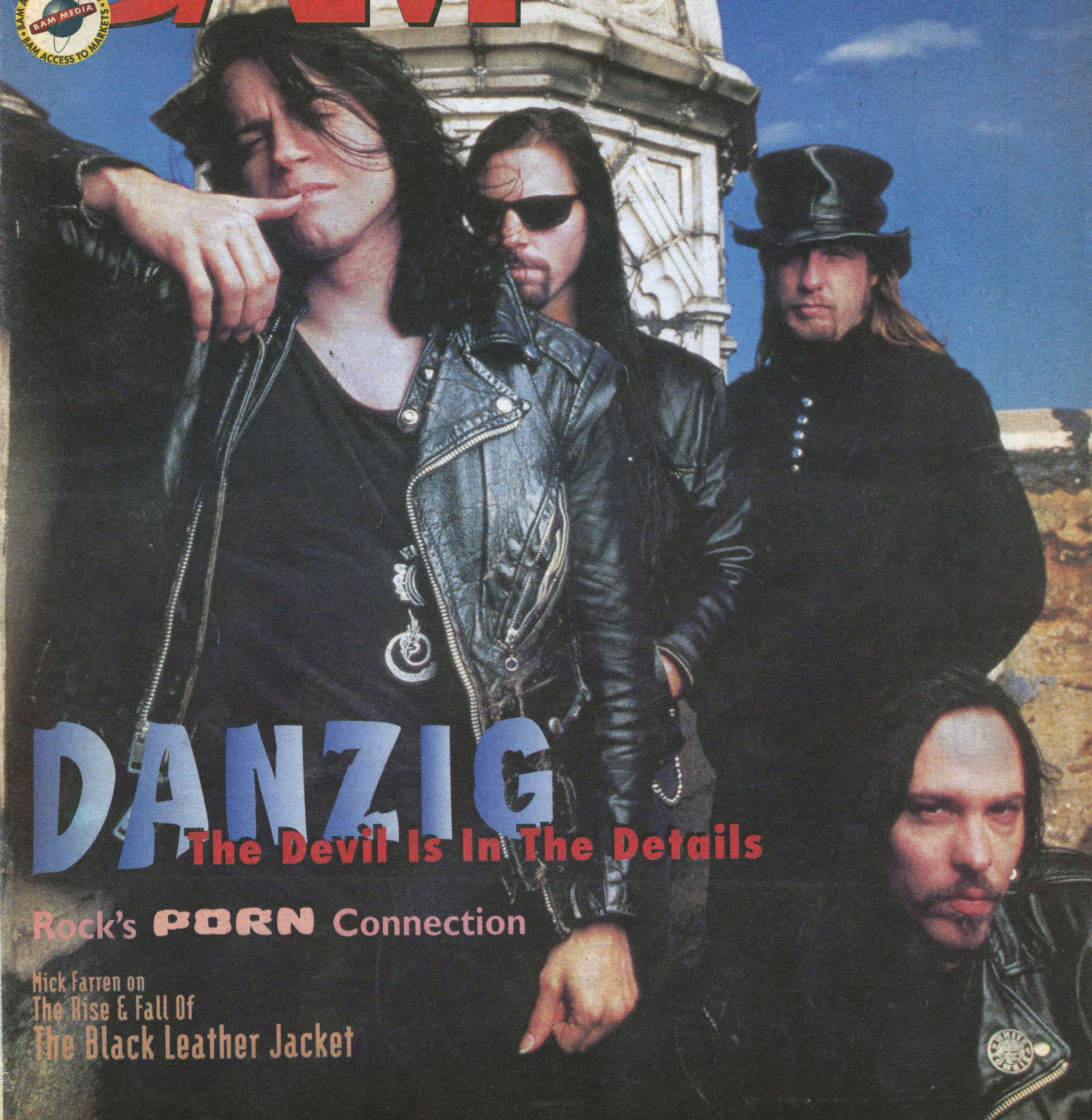


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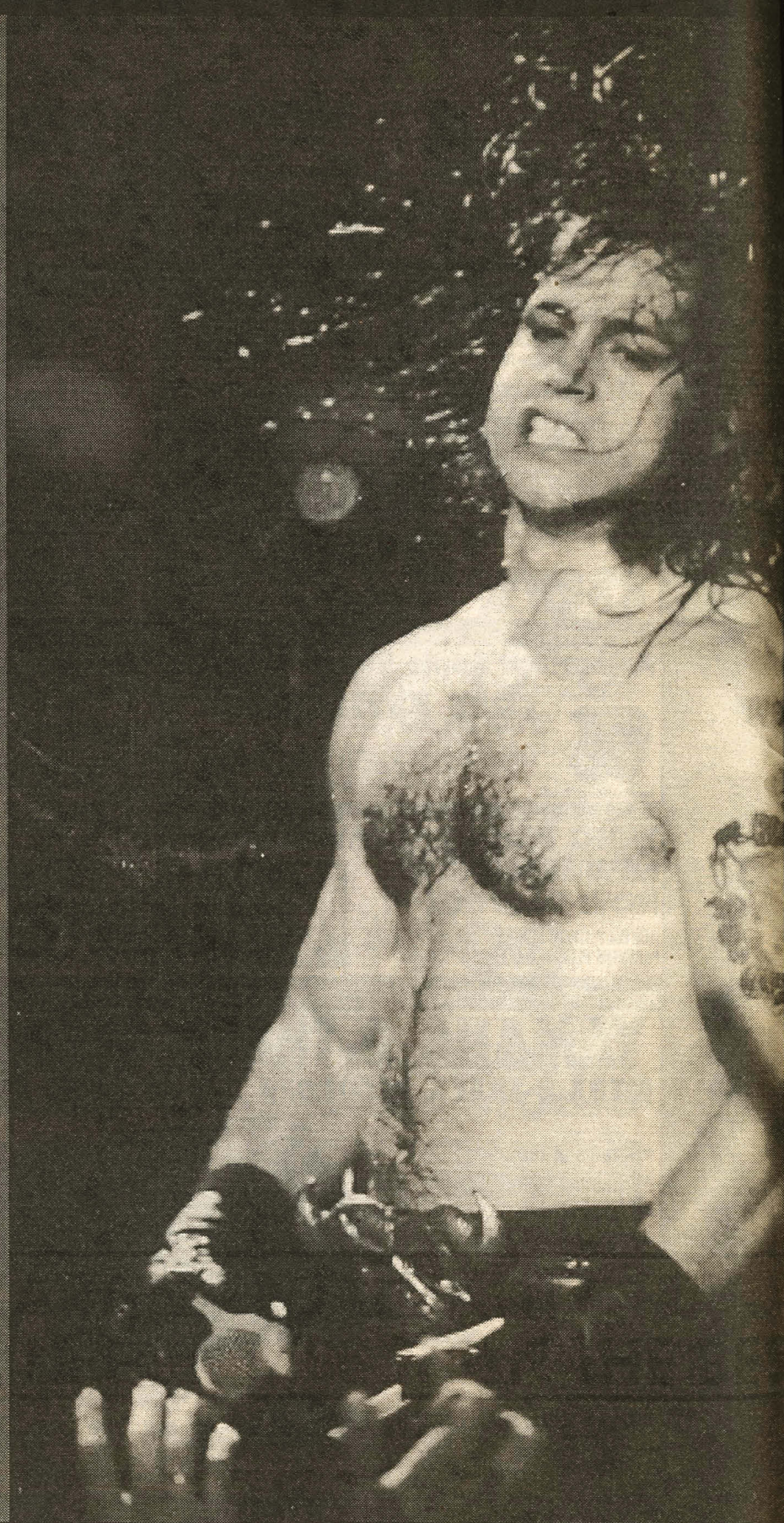
The Devil Is In The Details

Rock's **PORN** Connection

Nick Farren on
The Rise & Fall Of
The Black Leather Jacket

OLD MOTHER

DOES GLENN DANZIG HAVE A CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER TODAY, OR IS HE ALWAYS THIS IRASCIBLE? "IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, FINE. WHO CARES?" TENDS TO BE A FAIRLY OFT-REPEATED SENTIMENT FROM THE SINGER AS HE INVITES ME, MORE THAN ONCE, TO DEPART HIS LOS FELIZ HOME BEFORE OUR INTERVIEW IS BARELY UNDERWAY.



75 PERCENT JERK + 75 PERCENT NICE GUY + NEGATIVE ENERGY

GLENN

BY KATHERINE TURMAN

PHOTO: MARK LEALLOHA

But I decline to leave, reading the wicked glint behind his eyes for what I hope it is—a challenge imparted with humor.

Humor is generally not a word associated with Danzig, the former Samhain and Misfits singer, now up to his fourth release with the band that bears his name. But it is, nevertheless, an important part of his multi-faceted personality, which ultimately proves to be engaging, intelligent, amusing, and even nice...if occasionally and *intentionally* intimidating.

One longtime casual acquaintance says that 75 percent of the time, Glenn Danzig is truly a great guy. But if you don't really know him, the odds flip-flop, and it appears that 75 percent of the time he's truly a jerk.

But Glenn Danzig—perhaps due to his voracious, wide-ranging intellect, coupled with the dark, gothic image and interests—doesn't actually fit into any prescribed category. Which is why he and his band (guitarist John Christ, bassist Eerie Von, and drummer Chuck Biscuits) are constantly squeezed into the niche du jour. Consequently, he's used to people making erroneous generalizations/ statements/lies about him. And he takes every opportunity to vehemently set the record-according-to-Glenn straight...yet never expects that it will be.

In the several hours of tape garnered during an interview at LA's Record Plant studio and a subsequent, briefer afternoon of heated social discourse (wherein I was forced to defend the entire journalistic profession amidst much raising of voices) in his dusty, curio-filled home, Glenn proved highly opinionated. We heatedly—and with much levity—discussed auras, Bill Clinton's sex life, JFK assassination theories, Bruce Springsteen cover bands, how the political climate affects music, his smoky gray twin cats, and comic books, even as he occasionally played pinball with plenty of body language, his tapered hands tightly gripping the machine.

"I'm kinda like a negative energy magnet," the compact vocalist understates, as we discuss how martial arts have made him even more focused and aware. "Fights come to me immediately. People looking for a fight are usually drawn right to me for some reason. Maybe it's like I have what they need. I don't really want to be that guy anymore because I don't have time to play around. And I'll end up in jail because I'll just..." He snaps his fingers. "You know what I mean? I don't have time to be fighting for fucking 20 minutes."

When you could be playing pinball?

"Or doing something more constructive. Exactly. Like ending someone's life [!]. I can tune into people's energy now and just try to get away from it. [But] sometimes you *can't* get away from it. They want it. They want it real bad. And at that time, you can either try to deflect it or you can just go with it."

The New Jersey-bred Danzig is a scrappy individual. Much like

Ted Nugent, whether you agree or disagree with his convictions and conclusions, Danzig presents well-thought-out, convincing arguments. And he's always up for a good debate. He undeniably has the courage of his many convictions, stemming from what seems to be an "every man for himself, eye-for-an-eye" ethos, not to mention a self-preservation and self-determination that emerges even more strongly as we discuss riots, crime, LA, and guns.

"Sometimes the police can be more dangerous than the criminals. So, basically, watch out for your own ass," he advises. "That's what I say, and anyone who doesn't agree with me, fine. When you're bleeding on your floor, don't come crying to me. It's too late to change your tune, you know? It all comes back to knowing what the world is all about. No one ever said, 'Gee, you know what? You have a government now. You're safe in your own home, and the world is gonna be rosy, and you're never gonna have any problems.' It's still the same world, it'll never change. You can get all the technology you want, but there's always gonna be violence. There's always gonna be war. There's always gonna be poverty. There's always gonna be all that stuff. It's just the way the world is. You cannot change it. You can try to make it better for yourself, and then once you make it better for yourself maybe you can try to make it better for other people. But you are never gonna change the world and the way the world works."

This "seize the day" mentality accounts at least partially for his flourishing rock career. "If I want to do something, I do it now. I don't wait five years. I don't plan five years down the line. I do it *now*. If it's not important, I just don't do it."

And that *now* finds Glenn doing a lot. He recently finished a major tour with Metallica; he's working on his new comic book company, Erotic; he's looking forward to a U.S. tour in October; and he's waxing enthusiastically about the fourth Danzig effort, once again co-produced by American label head, Rick Rubin, who actually pops cheerfully in and out of the Record Plant lounge as he works on mixes for the new 4 LP.

The new record, Glenn explains, is "definitely different. I'm sure a lot of people were expecting us to just do just another version of 'Mother,' due to the recent success of that track. They were really scared of it when it first came out."

They?

"I don't mean the public," he clarifies. "Record-company people, radio. I'm sure we were blacklisted on lots of different stations, and we still are to this day. Basically, people just think Danzig is a Satanic band. It's amazing how people spread disinformation about what I do, what I say, who I am."

"Basically, it's like one person in power tells another person that this can't happen and that can't happen. 'Don't *ever* play that.' There are still stations, to this day, that refuse to play 'Mother' or

DANZIG

any stuff by us at all. It's just stupidity. Legally, I guess we could do something about it. If somebody said, 'This person is a Satanist, and you can't play their record,' that would be like me saying, 'This person is a Christian, and you can't play their record.' That's a court case right there. Basically, you can sue them for prejudice."

Although the success of "Mother"—which was first released in 1988, but not a hit until a live version came out on the

Thrall/Demonsweat Live EP in '93—is a welcome change, Glenn has problems with people (and *BAM* is included here) who were not initially supportive. But he's also willing to give most people the benefit of the doubt.

"It happened on radio first," he says of the track. "MTV only played the record after it was top-five radio all over the country. And then they *had* to play it. They didn't really want to, but they had to. And now they're kinda happy that they did."

Unfortunately, some Danzig fans weren't quite happy, actually writing letters to rock magazines to complain about Danzig's "MTV sellout." Glenn bristles. "That song is six, nearly seven years old! How can you call us a sellout? It's the same song. That's bullshit. There are a lot of people who decide when a band gets popular that it's not 'their' band anymore. It's a very childish, infantile attitude. If you really like the band, it shouldn't matter whether they're being played or not. Would you rather have just Poison on MTV? Or would you rather have...you know what I mean? If music is to get to the point to where it changes, the *real* music has to get out there for people to hear it, otherwise they won't know the difference from shitty music. But a lot of these people just want to keep the good stuff 'underground' music. Which isn't fair to the artists at all. Look," he says, somewhat wearily, "we do what we do. People like it, great. If people don't, great also. Because we're just gonna keep doing what we do. So that's it, and it's always been that way and it will always be that way."

Nevertheless, the success of "Mother" ensures that the new record will have more commercial potential than ever before following its September release. "I think someone put it best when they said this band just stayed together long enough for people to catch up with it," explains Glenn.

The new disc contains all songs written since the release of the highly successful live EP. About 17 tracks were penned; 12 intriguingly titled songs making it onto the disc. Old Danzig fans surely won't be disappointed, but there's enough variety to please the neophytes. The first single, "Until You Call on the Dark," has a memorable vibe not unlike the band's "Dirty Black Summer," while the passionate and distinctive "I Don't Mind the Pain" is a straight-up, mid-tempo, bluesy rocker. "Brand New God" is an intense, rollicking, high-energy track in the traditional Danzig mode, clearly influenced by Glenn's classic-rock musical upbringing, which included liberal equal doses of Cream, the Doors, and Roy Orbison (the latter recorded one of Danzig's songs for the *Less Than Zero* soundtrack).

And speaking of Orbison, no less a musical legend than fellow Sun Records stable mate Johnny

Cash has much praise for Glenn, who also wrote a track, "13," for Cash's latest album, *American Recordings*. "He's a real humble guy," says Glenn. "I'm like 'pshaw, the honor is all mine.' He said, 'Write me another one,' and I said, 'You got it, pal.' There's not too many people I like, but Johnny Cash is a *real* artist. I read all these great things [about Cash]," he says, clearly pleased, "and most of the writers were surprised that Glenn Danzig wrote a



SCENES FROM DANZIG'S "IT'S COMING DOWN" VIDEO:

"THEY WOULD ALWAYS JUST DESCRIBE ME AS 'DARK' OR WHATEVER. WHICH IS OK. I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT."

PHOTOS: JEFFREY MAYER



song for Johnny Cash. They would always just describe me as 'dark' or whatever. Which is OK. I can understand that. But people would then say I was some kind of Satanist, and I was always like 'What?' So, here's a person reading this who doesn't know anything about me, and reads some scumbag saying I'm into Satan, and now thinks, 'Oh, this is the gospel truth about Danzig...'

"But," continues Glenn, "the cool thing is I saw one interview with Johnny Cash and they started talking about me, 'Isn't he this...' And Johnny says, 'I just talked to Glenn the other day. Nice man.' It just shows he's a really *smart* guy who's been in the business a long time and knows all the bullshit. You know, 'Next question.' No bullshit. When I read that, I was just like, 'Thank you, John.' He was like, 'I've been there before. You just want me to slag somebody that I have nothing bad to say about. Let's move on.'"

If only everything could be that easy for Danzig. Clearly, Glenn does have a very black and white way of looking at the world. But he often ends up on the defensive, as fans and detractors alike constantly read too much into his lyrics and image. On the other hand, videos like the one for "It's Coming Down"—which featured Glenn walking a leather-

clad amputee on a leash—only fuel speculation about Glenn's private life.

"Well, this song is about eating people, so he must be a cannibal," says Glenn, paraphrasing yet another misguided Danzig interpreter. "Why?" he continues. "Does that mean that anyone who's ever written a book about cannibalism is a cannibal? No, of course not. 'Wow, he's talking about killing people. That must be him!' Maybe, but part of it is like

writing a novel. Sometimes you just can do a whole [fictional] story. But people don't understand that. They don't understand that there are no rules in anything. People always have to make up these rules."

Still, the Danzig that reaches the public via video, lyrics, and even album photos—all, clearly, artistic decisions made by the band—enforce the dark image. On the inside cover of the debut *Danzig LP*, Glenn frowns, on 1990's *Danzig II-Lucifuge*, his glare is accompanied by a biblical quote from St. John 8:44 that reads: "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." But it seems to actually be a quote from his song, "Evil Thing," that provides a lot of Glenn's *raison d'être*: "A thousand angers have kept me alive." And, indeed, Glenn's passion and ire are both fueled by his opinion of the masses and their stupidity, and then only semi-cathartized via his art.

For instance, one song that didn't make the new album is "White Devil Rise," in which Danzig takes on the Nation of Islam and modern black/white racial relations. "It both-

ers me that it's alright for people to say 'black power' and it's not alright for somebody to say 'white power,'" he explains. "It's like white people aren't allowed to be proud that they're white, but black people and Hispanic or red Indian people, whatever, they're all allowed to be proud."

Like you can be a feminist, but you can't, for lack of a better term, be a manist?

"You can say female liberation, but you *can't* say male liberation," Glenn agrees, after admitting that he's definitely *not* politically correct. "I'm not a big fan of the, uh, of the feminist-like movement. Of course, women's liberation is great,

but that comes from within. If you tell somebody 'No,' then you're liberated. If someone says, 'Well, you're gonna lose your job if you don't do this,' you should just tell them all to fuck off! And that's it. You've gotta liberate yourself, whether you're a man or a woman. You know, guys don't even talk about that kinda stuff, when the boss comes in and says, 'You do this or you're fired.' He doesn't go, 'Discrimination, harassment.' If you're a man, it doesn't work. But a woman can do it, it's double-standard and it's bullshit. I don't like it. If some guy tries to rape you, punch him in the face, kick him in the nuts, you know, whatever. No one says anything about guys getting raped in jail against their will. But that's OK, because it's a guy. Give me a break. I'm tired of it; I'm tired of all the double standards, I'm tired of stupid people making issues of stupid things, and I have to sit and watch it on the news. And I change the channel, and it's on another channel—something even more stupid. And it comes down to the fact that people are basically, like...cry-babies. It's very easy in this world to become a victim, and it's a shame because it's not really that hard to look out for yourself. You know, when people say, 'Oh, you're warped,' I'm just talking about what's out there—whether or not you want to believe it. That's your deception, you know?"

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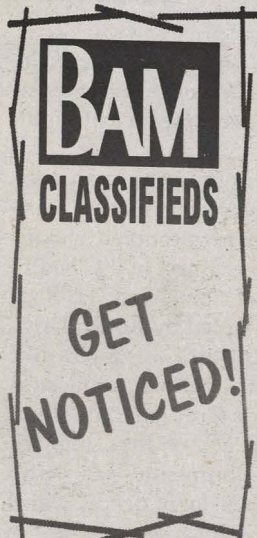
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It's pretty funny when people won't admit something to themselves or to the world, it's like they're deceiving themselves and they want you to be deceived, also. So, if you point it out to them, you're a lunatic, and you're crazy, and you're this, and you're that. I'm not a lunatic. I'm not crazy. I'm not a raving nut case. And, sometimes, a raving nut case might just be someone very impassioned about what they think. You have to deal with...again, it's back to generalizations; you have to deal with it on a person-to-person basis, you know?"

Nevertheless, as Glenn enthusiastically explains the concept behind *Satanica*, the character he created for his first foray in the comic book business with his Erotic company, some might still use the word "warped." Chances are, though, erotic horror fans will be nothing short of thrilled.

"[Satanica's] mom is having a sex dream and this demon comes through the window and fucks her and then rips her open and leaves her all mangled," he graphically explains. "And then her blood and the demon's semen drip through a crack in the floor, hit a worm, and Satanica grows from this worm—which is based on the old thing that these demons or Satan, or whoever, was a worm. So then she springs up, and she doesn't know *what* she is. She's freaking out. She looks over in the corner, and there's this rotting corpse with flies all over it—you know, what's left of this woman. And she puts her fingers in the blood, and as soon as she smells it, she gets a cognition of the whole scene. She bounds out the window, and that's how her first tale—which is about eight or nine pages—in a whole book of all different erotic horror stories—that's how her thing starts. And then the first issue takes off from there."

But even if Glenn delves into fantasy in both his comic books and his lyrics, he's also exceedingly grounded in reality. That reality for the last five years has been Los Angeles, where he resides in an old two-story, earthquake-damaged house filled with books, gargoyles, a stuffed wolf, and real-life cobwebs that give off an overall vibe not unlike the Munsters' TV abode.

So, how does Glenn feel about L.A., his home of five years?

"Well, it sucks."

Why does he remain here?

"Business. I hate New York, too."

He smiles and launches into a tirade that he's clearly recited before. "I used to like New York, but then all the yuppies and preps took it over and fucked it up. But there's something in New York that you don't have here, and it's common respect for other people and their space. Here in LA, people can't drive, but don't care that they can't drive. They'll cut you off, and if you yell at them for it, they're just like, 'What do you mean?' Or pretend that they didn't look, or can't see you, or something. It's like they know they're doing something fucked-up, but they

pretend that no one knows. People here don't respect the fact that *you* exist as well. They ask for something, so then you give it to them, and then they're offended when you give it to them. Basically, here, most people don't know how to fight, so they pull a gun. Pussy fag-ass pieces of shit! Anybody can shoot a fuckin' gun, you know?"

Not surprisingly, Glenn owns one himself.

"But I don't walk around with it," he clarifies. "If I did, everybody'd be dead." During the riots, he recalls, what saved his block from being burned and looted is that "everybody banded together, pulled out the guns, and said, 'Come down this street and you're dead.' I would have killed in a second. I would have blown someone's head off in a second. *In a second.* Wouldn't have cared either. I would have laughed!"

Really?

"Well, if someone has no respect for you, and doesn't care whether they kill you, or leave you dying or dead, why should you care about them? Tell me why. What gives them the right to take *my* life? As soon as they make that decision that they have the right to take my life, I kill them. Point blank. What's really funny is that they think, by making guns illegal, that no one will get shot with a gun. It's so funny. Probably a tenth of guns are bought legally, the rest are bought out of a trunk of a car. The fact is, they don't want a militia—they don't want people rising up and saying, 'We don't want this government anymore.' That's really the ulterior motive behind it."

A lengthy tirade on the failure of government ensues, and when asked what he advocates, or how he makes peace with the contempt he has for the society in which he exists, Glenn, typically, has a ready response.

"The solution is to nuke the whole fucking government, and you can't do that. No mini-revolution or even a giant revolution is gonna change anything. Here's what I advocate—keep a gun for yourself, if you are so inclined, and if someone comes into your house and wants to do you harm, kill 'em and take your chances."

Our conversation has mellowed sufficiently so that Glenn is now actually on the floor, playing with Nuthead, one of his twin male cats. He does, however, continue his ardent musings, concluding that, "I'm very into the world, and the way it is, and the way it always will be. There are things about the world, and nature, and whatever this Earth is...the order of things that can never be changed. And as much as people try to change them, they never change."

As Glenn walks out into the harsh LA smog, he grins, almost shyly, and shakes my hand. It's clear that Danzig won't be changing. Which may actually be a good thing. After all, the world could use a few more true believers. ■