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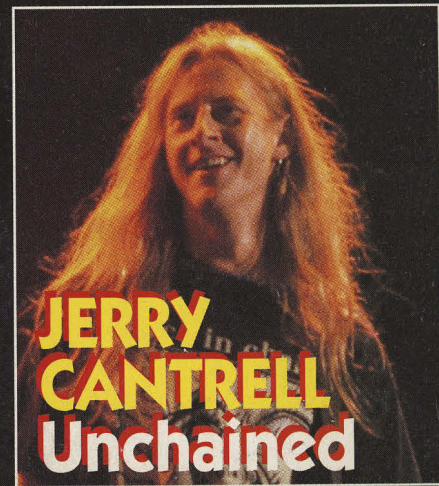
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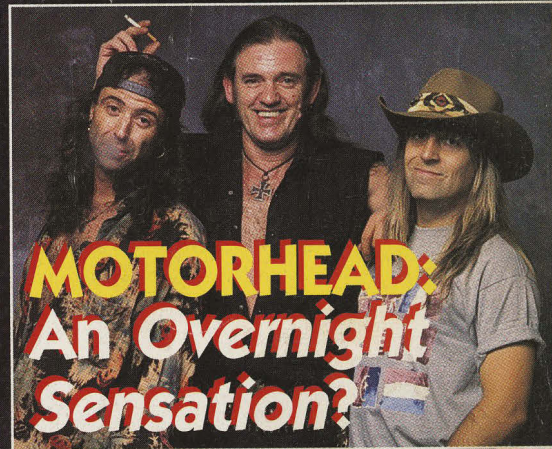
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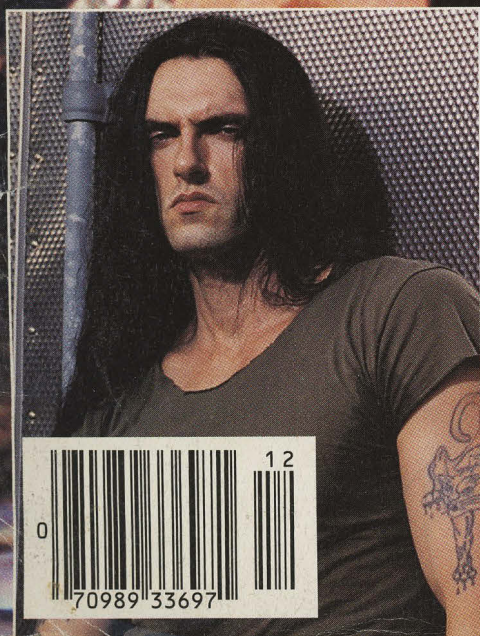
TYPE O NEGATIVE'S Man Of STEELE



JERRY CANTRELL Unchained



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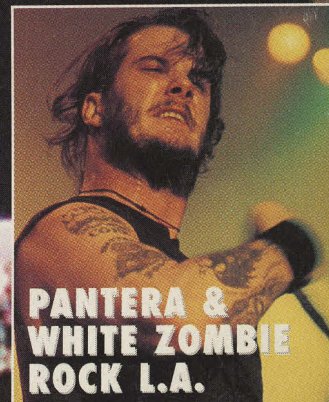


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PETER STEELE

A Positively Revealing Conversation with the Voice of TYPE O NEGATIVE

by Gerri Miller

■ Summoned to Los Angeles for an *October Rust* listening party the night before, Peter Steele couldn't wait to leave. Regretfully over-sated from eating too much at a business lunch, Type O Negative's towering frontman wished he was back in Brooklyn, the New York City borough he's lived in for all of his 34 years. "I don't hate L.A., I just love being home," said Peter, who, it turns out, lives in the same neighborhood I lived in as a child. We spent a few minutes talking about local landmarks, segueing to an interesting discussion of his upbringing, his life before and since Type O, road life, and his personal beliefs.

P: I lived in Red Hook, Brooklyn first, but the neighborhood changed quite quickly and severely. I had five older sisters and my parents were concerned for their welfare and we moved to the wilds of Flatbush. I'm in the same house for 32 years.

G: Five older sisters, no brothers?

P: That's right. Around Christmas and my birthday it was great, it was like having five extra mothers but when I did something wrong... and once every two years and 10 months they would all have their period at the same time which is when I stayed under my bed. I took my train set and my cat under there and I was okay. I kept out of their way.

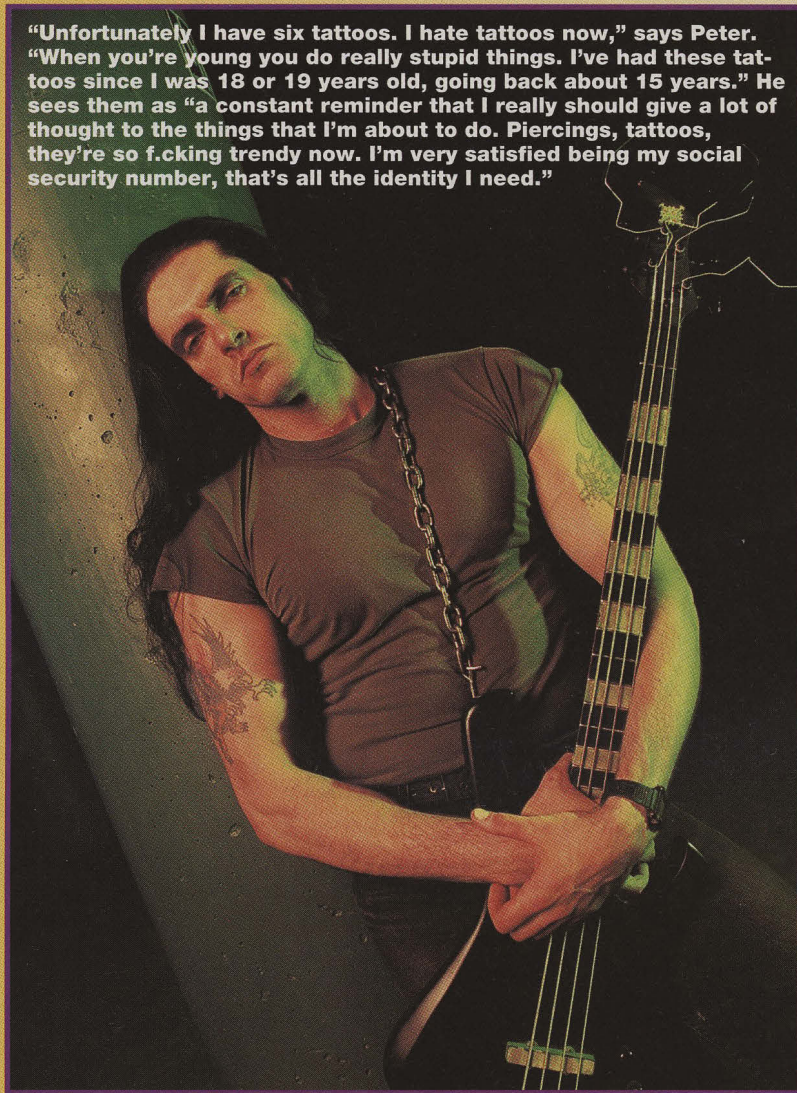
G: You and your dad were outnumbered.

P: Savagely, yes, sometimes unfairly but I got used to estrogen. I also have five younger nieces.

G: Your sisters have families.

P: They've all been married at one time.

"Unfortunately I have six tattoos. I hate tattoos now," says Peter. "When you're young you do really stupid things. I've had these tattoos since I was 18 or 19 years old, going back about 15 years." He sees them as "a constant reminder that I really should give a lot of thought to the things that I'm about to do. Piercings, tattoos, they're so f.cking trendy now. I'm very satisfied being my social security number, that's all the identity I need."



All nieces, no nephews.

G: So you're *really* outnumbered. But I guess you're taller than all of them.

P: Yes I am. My sisters range from 5'10" to 6'1". I'm just about 6'6".

G: When did you get into music? What triggered it for you?

P: I have a niece two years younger than me who I was always quite competitive with. Her mother offered her guitar lessons and since I could not be outdone by my niece I also took them. She dropped out after two weeks but I really got into it and about six months later I joined a band but they only took me in temporarily because they actually wanted a bassist, not a second guitarist. So I

ran down to the music store and traded my six-string in for a bass and that's why I started playing.

G: How old were you?

P: 13. As far as singing goes, my former band Carnivore, we were looking for a vocalist for a long time and didn't have much luck, and since I had the least worst voice in the band I got pushed to the front and was told "You do it." So I did it. When we formed Type O Negative it was only natural that I assume the vocal responsibilities.

G: Does it feel more comfortable now?

P: Yeah, it's the hell that I know. I got used to it.

G: Do you prefer performing live or in the studio?

P: I hate performing live, because I'm a very shy person and I'm horrified to actually walk out there. When I look in the mirror, I think to myself, "Can this face entertain 5000 people?" The answer is no so that's why I always have that bottle of wine handy, it takes the edge off things.

G: You're really that petrified of going out there?

P: We all are. 15 minutes before going on stage we all have to shit. Sometimes people out there think we're looking really passionate on stage and we're really getting into the music but we're trying to hold our feces in.

G: You've been doing this a while, the band's popularity has grown—doesn't it get easier at all?

P: It just becomes different. I've never had much self-confidence or self-esteem and it's something I've never gotten over and I don't think that I ever will.

G: Why? Where does it come from?

P: From a psychological point of view,



Type O Negative is visible in the video for "My Girlfriend's Girlfriend" and on stage.

being the last of six children I got the impression that I was not really wanted, that I was a pain in the ass, that whenever they had to take me shopping or I got hurt, there was a lot of eye rolling, there was complaining about bills and I felt like shit. It always stuck with me. Everyone has their psychological trash that they carry around with them. I don't think I had bad parents, I had great parents but they weren't perfect—no one is perfect. I don't blame my parents for my shortcomings. Everyone wants to blame their parents or the school system or the government or the church. These people should look at the face they see in the mirror and say, "You're to blame."

G: I hear you used to work for the Parks Dept.

P: Yeah, I did that for seven years in Brooklyn, '87-'94 in District 2 downtown, which covered Brooklyn Heights, Cadman Plaza and Fort Greene. It was nice down there and I got to do something different every day. The reason I stopped doing that was because my life was way too easy and good. I was making almost \$40,000 a year driving trucks, working overtime. During the summer they'd bump me up to a pool supervisor. I was responsible for the whole facility and I had a crew of 40 people under me. I got paid over \$1200 per week, I did that from June-early September. After the summer I'd go back to maintenance, driving trucks and busting up concrete. As Type O Negative became more popular it got more and more difficult to try to juggle two careers at once. Something had to go. If I had kept my job with the city which I was really tempted to do, I would have wondered about what could have been. Even if I fail at this at least I have my answer. Things are going really well for us and I consider myself fortunate

that I can walk and I can see and anything that comes after that is icing on the cake to me.

G: So why *October Rust*? And who came up with the title?

P: I came up with the title. The original title was *October's Rust* but we felt it was linguistically goofy. When I think of *October's Rust* I think of the leaves changing colors and falling to the ground, and I love autumn, I love October, I love the cold weather. It comes from the fact that I'm half Icelandic and half Russian. My father's side is Russian, and my mother's is Icelandic.

G: Was Steele originally something else?

P: It's kind of a long story. My grandfather's cousin was a famous Russian by the name of Joseph Stalin, and when he came to this country he had problems trying to find a job because of his last name so he took his wife's maiden name. Stalin translated into English means "Man of Steel." I changed my name legally to Steele.

G: Did you play any of the *October Rust* material live when you toured with Ozzy Osbourne?

P: Yes, we did one song, "My Girlfriend's Girlfriend" because it was the shortest and the catchiest.

G: How did it go over?

P: There was some polite applause. I don't like to do the new material live simply because you're at the mercy of the deaf sound man and the blind light guy. You can write the best song in the world, you can perform it perfectly but if the sound system is not happening or if it's lousy acoustics it's gonna sound like shit. I don't want to give people a false idea of what this new album is gonna sound like. I don't want people leaving

and saying, "That new song sucked, why should I bother buying the album?" when maybe it was just a bad sound system. Not that I'm trying to make excuses for myself but I've heard it happen with other bands when they came out and did the new songs live and they didn't sound that good.

G: But you'll want to promote the new record when you go on tour in September.

P: After the album is out hopefully most people who'll be coming to see us will have had at least a week to hear the thing before they come to the shows.

G: So how many new songs will you play now?

P: Probably four or five, I think "My Girlfriend's Girlfriend," "Love You To Death," "In Praise of Bacchus," "Cinnamon Girl," and possibly "Druiddess."

G: Are you opening or headlining?

P: We're gonna be headlining.

G: Who's opening?

P: For the first week and a half it will be Prong and Life of Agony. For the remainder of the tour we'd like to have Frontline Assembly and Femme to Femme but that's not confirmed right now.

G: Are you planning to tour Europe and Asia?

P: The first leg of the tour is the U.S. and Canada which will last about two months. We'll take a week or two off and go to Europe, we'll come home around Christmas, I think we have a month off and then we'll be doing a second U.S. tour. Things change minute to minute, this is just how it looks right now.

G: Are you looking forward to it?

P: First of all, when I tour it's a job. I've got a responsibility to my fans, to the band, and to myself to put the best show on that I can. As far as fun goes, I'm not really a party person and I don't partake in some of the things that are prevalent to a rock musician. Usually before the show I'm on the bus working out.

G: What's your routine?

P: I work out three days on, one day off. My routine is, we get into the hotel around noon and I take care of some usually urgent biology, and I work out on the bus. I have an understanding with the band that since I'm the only person in the band that does not smoke the back lounge is mine.

G: You can't fit in the bunks anyway, can you?

P: No. I sleep on the floor in the back. I take all the furniture out, put it in the bays, and take my weights on the bus, a bench and 400 lbs. of weights, I pray for a level parking spot, and I work out for an hour and a half, take a shower, go to sound check, then we play. I get off stage and it's time for shower number two, we do a meet and greet, and then leave again.

G: Is the road routine boring for you?

more

PETER STEELE

continued

P: Deadly boring. It's hurry up and wait. Your whole existence is based on 45 minutes on stage. It really is quite boring but I'm not one of these people that likes to waste time on tour. I've got a bunch of science books—I hate fiction. I don't like movies or video games. I read, I have a keyboard I write songs on. I'm either reading or working out or writing songs on the bus or sleeping.

G: Do you write on the road?

P: It's hard to get motivated on the road to write songs but I don't force myself to do it. There are times I'll think of a riff and work it out on the keyboard, add a bassline to it. I have a drum machine in there so I have a basic idea how the song is gonna go. I'll play the song for the band so they can get an idea how it's gonna go. If they really don't like something I'll try to come up with an alternative part. 90% of what I write the band is very satisfied with.

G: Are you aware of the America Online bulletin board for Type O?

P: No, I do not have a computer. I just don't have the time. I don't have that much of a use for one. I'm not one of those people who has the time to sit there and chat with the other geeks about this and that, I have better things to do with my time. I'm not gonna sit on my ass and start rumors.

G: Do you go out to clubs, to see bands?

Former Danzig guitarist John Christ joined Peter at the October Rust listening party in L.A.

P: The problem I have with going to see bands is I feel like I'm back at work. I almost never go. It's like a guy who works in a car factory 40 hours a week, the last thing he wants to do is work on his own car. I don't like crowds and noise and lights and screaming. It's not that I'm a snob, it's just when people come up to me and want to talk to me I don't know what to say to them. I feel embarrassed to death.

G: You must be really embarrassed when they come up to you with the *Playgirl* issue you were in.

P: Yeah, it's like everything else, I pretty much have shown everything with my music so whether or not I take my clothes off it's the same thing to me 'cause I just bare it all anyway.

G: Why did you pose for *Playgirl*?

P: I did it as an investment in my career and the band's future. Not so much the money, it was only \$2000. I was trying, no pun intended, to expose myself to a different audience.

G: Are there any soundtracks or collaborations coming up?

P: There is no time for that right now.

G: You cover Neil Young's "Cinnamon Girl" on *October Rust*. What song would you like to cover next?

P: Any Beatles song, which is what we're thinking about right now, which one we'd like to do.

G: Because of the subject and imagery in some of your songs, fans have asked about your religious beliefs. Are you a pagan?

P: When I use the word pagan it is the closest definition to my beliefs that the average person could understand. I respect nature, I love nature but I'm not into magic or rituals or anything like that. I love the seasons, I love change, I love to see them come and go but I'm not an actual wiccan or pagan. I'm not into life

after death or reincarnation or any of that. A lot of wiccan people believe in spirits or forces which I personally feel don't exist. The only other way I can describe myself would be an evolutionist, which is my philosophy, my religion and my politics all rolled up into one. There are a lot of people who

Though often photographed in a green shirt, Peter says he doesn't have a favorite color. The muscular 6'6", 240 lb. bassist ("I could probably lose 5-10 lbs. of fat") works out with weights six days a week.

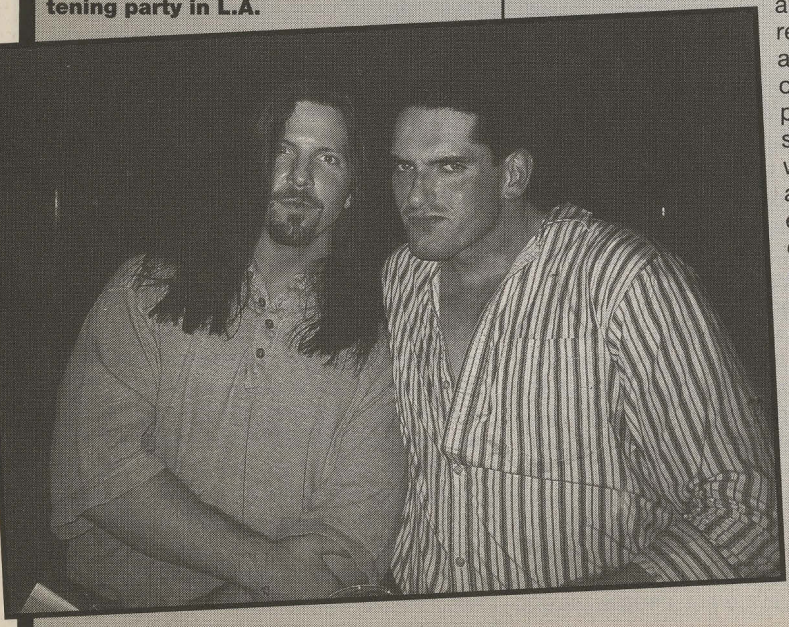
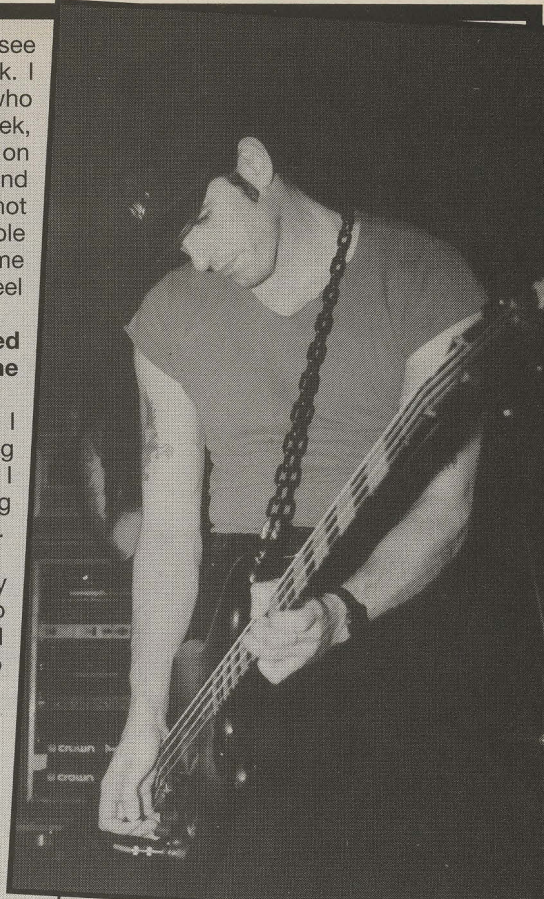
think I'm into magic and satanism and all this paranormal stuff but I don't believe in anything. I believe I am 240 lbs. of chemicals and that is it. When I die my matter like all matter will simply change form. I will know, at the second of death, what I knew the second before my birth which is absolutely nothing. There is no satan, there is no justice, no punishment.

G: Were you raised in a religious household?

P: Yes I was, my father was a Russian Orthodox Catholic and my mother was a Roman Catholic. [Catholicism] is against nature, everything that gives people pleasure is a sin. If God does exist why would he or she give me sexual urges if I'm not supposed to give in to them? That's just one example. It's not the correct philosophy for me.

G: Is there anything else you'd like to say to your fans?

P: I hope that we don't disappoint anybody with this album. We hope to gain some new fans and try to pay some bills through album sales. We'll be playing everywhere—backyards across America, streets, block parties, you name it. •





TYPE O NEGATIVE