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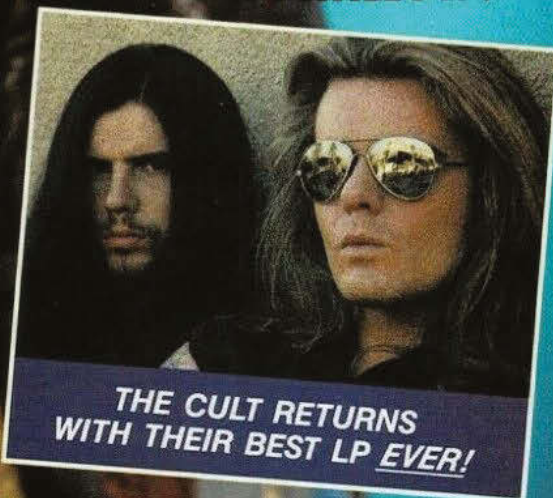
MASTERS OF REALITY

STARTING THIS ISSUE!

**SHREDDING THE
NEW VIDEO GAMES**

DEAR MAMA FORD

**FORBIDDEN PIX!
THE DANZIG VIDEO
MTV COULDN'T
SWALLOW!**



THE CULT RETURNS
WITH THEIR BEST LP EVER!



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DANZIG

TALES FROM THE DARK SIDE

The music is heavy, ethereal, commanding and, best of all, timeless. What the band Danzig, and even more specifically Glenn Danzig, offer on their successful self-titled album could easily be a statement from the '60s or '70s. The fact that it arrived at the end of 1988 and is carrying on well into 1989 is purely an identifying mark on the calendar.

With a cult following generated from both the Misfits and Samhain—both hearty staples in a different setting—Glenn Danzig is now more comfortable doing what he feels is undeniably his calling. In many ways he creates a mysterious persona. Glenn's lyrics are short, profound lines that he works hard vocally, and they offer plenty to discern. His conversational tone is very similar to his lyrical style, unless it happens that you tap into a nerve or mention a subject he is particularly focused on.

The assignment this time was to find out what Glenn Danzig is all about, to get in-

By Jon Sutherland



and as much as possible. Without a psychologist's couch, and talking over the lines to a hotel room in Detroit, we had to make-do.

Mr. Danzig was surprisingly cooperative during this conversation, responding usually with a quick, short answer and often leading the discussion into areas that at first seemed inconceivable. A lot has been made of the band's Metallica connection, and Glenn handled that one first. "I remember being at a CMJ convention a few years ago, and a friend of mine told me that a couple of guys wanted to meet me. It was right after Metallica had toured with Venom, before *Ride the Lightning* came out. James and Cliff came by to talk. Now I get together with the guys whenever they are in town. Kirk writes me letters once in awhile."

The connection goes a little farther than that, as many magazines have captured James Hetfield wearing Samhain or Misfits T-shirts in performance. Ever since Metallica covered "Last Caress/Green Hell" on their *Garage Days* EP, even more attention has been focused on Glenn Danzig—hardly a curse as more and more bands try to break out in an already crowded marketplace. "I like the way James writes," Glenn admitted. "His lyrics aren't about stupid stuff. He never writes shit like, 'I wanna rock and roll all night and party every day.'" When confronted with the statement that the music by Danzig and Metallica could hardly be more different, Glenn's response was filled with a little chuckle. "That's funny, James thinks our stuff is the same." When told that Metallica had been playing "Mother" in soundcheck on their tour, he answered by saying, "That's cool!" It was also too great a temptation to relay a quote attributed to Kirk Hammett, during the Monsters of Rock tour last year. According to Kirk, Metallica had reservations about covering the Danzig songs from the EP live, thinking that the audience might not be into it. When "Last Caress/Green Hell" went down killer day after day, it forced James to blurt out as he walked off stage, "Damn, I wish I wrote that song!" to laughs from the other Metallimen.

With most of the compliments and clever stories out of the way, it was time to dig at the Danzig persona. To many, his musical tone and lyrical style seem very dark and brooding. "Not at all," he said. "I don't see the stories I tell or the themes I sing about as dark at all. To me it's just what the world is all about. It's reality. People who see it as dark are just fools anyways, because you can't have life without death. Without bad there is no good. The opposites have to exist, and you might as well accept the world the way it is, because you can't control the way it was set up."

These are strong words from someone with a unique vision, who may have been typecast too quickly by journalists who only see the shaded side of his reality. "I'm not as fascinated by Gaelic and Celtic cultures as people think I am," Glenn reiterated. "I studied it [he also chose the name Samhain for his band, which is a Celtic holiday for the

dead generally celebrated on November 1st that was basically stolen as a holiday by the Christians and is remarkably similar to what is now Halloween], but I am also interested in many other things as well. I've read about

complicated man twirling his spoon in a big pot that is spinning the other way. He may also be just as simple and direct as many think he is mischievous. A talented artist, he conceived the album designs for his past



different religions and how they are interpreted. In some Eastern religions whatever you do will come back to you threefold, and if you don't fear what is bad, you will be condemned to return over and over again before you reach salvation. I find subjects like that interesting, as well as the missing chapters that were taken from the Bible in the early days that would cast a completely different light on Christianity if people were exposed to them today." Those same chapters, which tell of Christ's adventures, weren't as pure as the edited manuscripts that finally became the Bible as it is accepted now. They also indicate how history can be twisted to adhere to certain views that historians feel compelled to control. The final verse of "Twist of Cain" challenges this storytelling technique by showing what many feel is both sides of the same legend.

Glenn came to these realizations through a personal search and education that continued beyond the mandatory public schools. "I read a lot. My taste varies from true crime, to martyrs, psychics, telekinetic stuff, true history, to comic books." Comic books? "Yeah," he said, laughing slightly, "I like Animal Man, Batman—the concept behind it—Big Daddy Roth stuff. I also love TV. I know a lot of people don't like TV, but it gives you the world at your fingertips, even if it is misused a bit."

It's easy to interpret Glenn Danzig as a

bands. A cunning songwriter, he wrote most of the songs you hear on the albums he's been involved in and played much of the guitars until he found this righteous band in time for the Def American release. When asked if he had to swing any deals to get the musicians he needed, he simply said, "Nope. I didn't have to steal anybody from another band. They were all available and ready to work." This same brutal honesty also leads to many of the reasons why Glenn Danzig is at the level he is. "It took me a long time to get this together," he said.

He also welcomed the help of producer Rick Rubin, who got his two cents in. "I'd say Rick had about 25% input on the record," Glenn admitted. "We listened to what he had to say, and if we didn't like it, we didn't use it. But then anything he offered that we liked, we used." It may be more than casual curiosity to wonder why Mr. Rubin was so interested in getting involved with Danzig. First he took the time to pursue Slayer, the hardest and most demonic metal concoction available at the time. Later he took a fancy to the Cult, previously known as the Southern Death Cult. Now he is working with Masters of Reality, and soon with Trouble. A very interesting metal roster, to say the very least, and one that Danzig fits on very well.

There is more to the Rubin connection and story, which came out when Glenn took

the time to divulge some studio details. "We over-recorded," he confessed. "I recorded one song that is an acoustic song. I'm not really playing; I'm banging on the guitar and singing along in a voodoo juju kind of way.

Rick has it in the can. He can release it if he wants too. There are also a couple more songs sitting there that we didn't put out. I write a lot of songs, and I throw away a lot of songs."

More mystery is added to the equation, as any serious Danzig fan would have to wonder what Glenn would sound like entering voodoo land with only a guitar that he may not play properly. It all adds to the legend that is building. Glenn Danzig casts shadow and light from a perspective that is unique and interesting, but also very occultish. Unlike many who would or could be labeled easily, it is not a shallow dig to find out where his head is really at. Sometimes he says things that are seemingly universal, and other times he says things that cut across the accepted standards and are blatantly blasphemous. "I really don't pay much attention to what is going on," Glenn says. "Unless I hear something I like, I won't listen to much." Many musicians practice the same philosophy, absorbing all they can while learning, then not paying much atten-

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Frank White



Frank White