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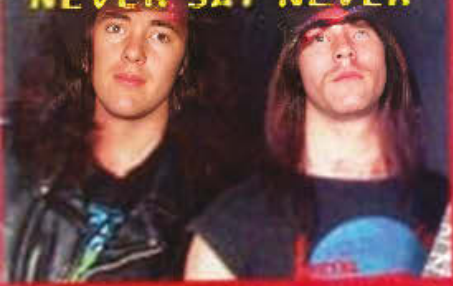
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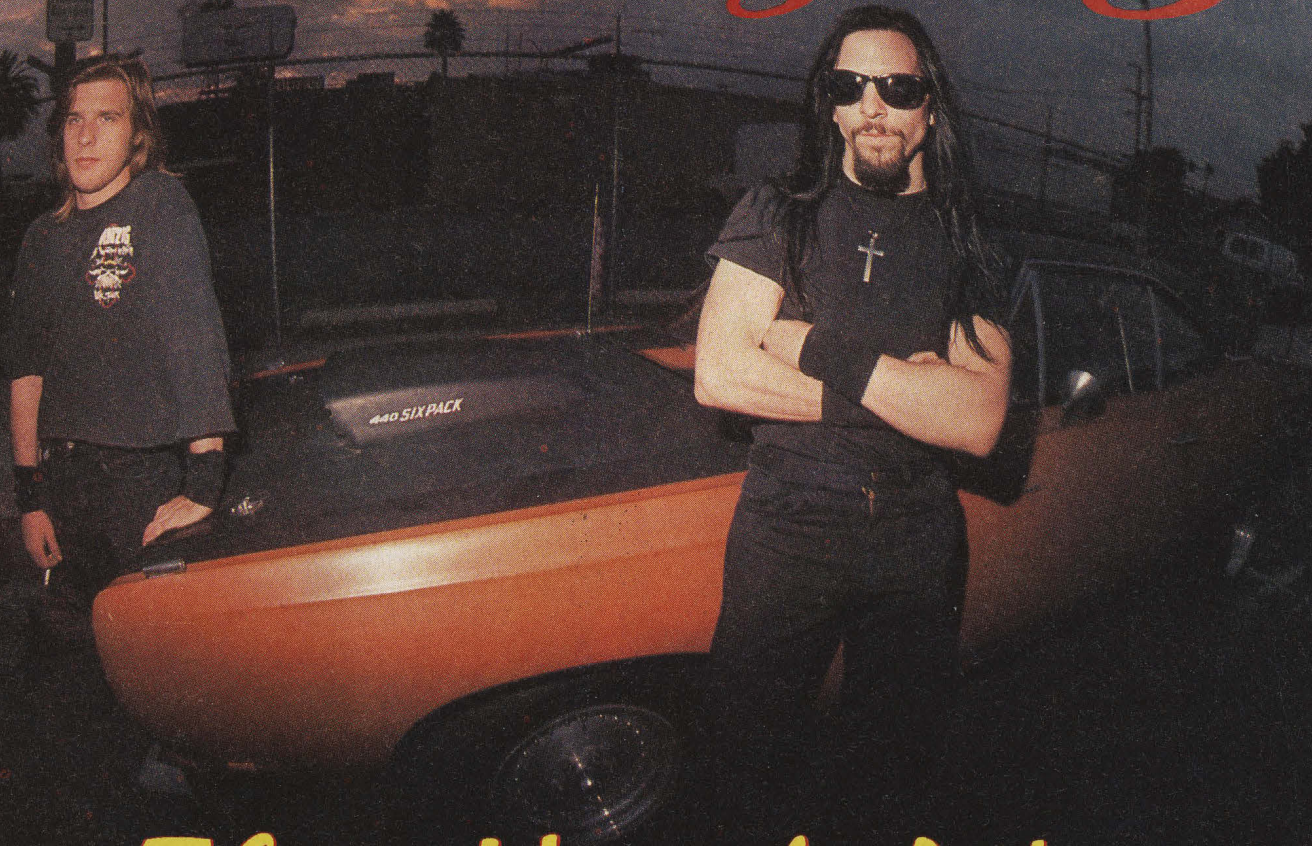
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Danzig



Two The Hard Way

By Daina Darzin

A lot of people hate and fear Glenn Danzig. There's the editor (of another 'zine, who shall remain nameless) who screamed, when proposed a Danzig feature, "That album cover is disgusting and I'd *never* do anything on the band." There's the people who have fallen prey to his sometimes sharp tongue, often because they asked him to repeat his musical history one too many times. He has been known to get nasty and hang up on interviewers. ("Just don't ask him about the Misfits and Samhain," his publicist strongly suggests before our interview.)

There's the press folks who *just*

can't stand all those Elvis-meets-Roy Orbison rockabilly influences on his new disc, *Danzig II: Lucifuge*, who've been arguing with those who like 'em quite a bit, debating at every industry schmooz-a-rama and showcase you'd care to attend.

There's people who think it's silly he won't tell anyone what "Lucifuge" means; (for the record, it means "withdraw from light" rather than something to do with Lucifer). Whatever its deeper meanings, *Lucifuge* is selling briskly—Top 100 chart numbers all the way.

So having heard all the rumors, it's a nice surprise to get on the phone with an entirely articulate, pleasant

person—on tour in Chicago, at the moment nursing a cold like any mortal, and perfectly talkative. (I wasn't gonna ask him about the Misfits or Samhain, anyway...)

THRASH: Did you expect the disc to be as controversial as it is among the critics? People either really love it or really hate it.

I personally like it that way. One of the things that bugged me about the first Danzig record was that everybody liked it. I didn't like that—it means something is wrong. I don't like to be the critics' darling 'cause critics usually don't know what the f**k they're talking about. So when everybody likes your record, it's strange—it's nice



Photo by Shaun Cairns/PhotoFeatures Inc.

when they kind of get what you're trying to do, but when they like it for weird reasons you'd never think they'd like it for . . . I personally like it if they love it or hate it, if it's divided, 'cause that means you put out a really good record, and people will be buying. Is it doing about how you'd expected, or is the sales level a surprise?

I thought it was going to do good, and also my old lawyer Peter [Paterno], who runs Hollywood Records now, thought it would do good. It surprised Rick [Rubin, producer and Def American god-figure], though. Did Rick not like aspects of the record when it was being made?

No, he likes the band a lot, and he produces it; he just doesn't know if people are ready for the

band yet; he knows they'll be ready for us eventually.

Was it your involvement with Roy Orbison on the *Less Than Zero* soundtrack (Danzig wrote a song for the now-late legend) that inspired you to have this strong rockabilly edge to your record?

I always liked that kind of music. I grew up singing in blues bands. When I sit down and listen to records, I don't listen to Poison or any of that crap. I listen to old Elvis, Roy Orbison, oldies stuff, old blues records, a lot of soundtrack albums, [gloom-and-bombast classical composer] Wagner, shit like that. I don't usually listen to heavy, loud music, 'cause I can go anywhere and hear that stuff, in a club, on the radio. So if I sit down and play something, it's something different.

When did you realize you wanted to incorporate that heavily into this record?

I don't know, I think it's just where my songwriting is going. Actually, "I'm the One" is left over from the first record and we just redid it.

How was it meeting Roy Orbison? What was he like?

He was great—very humble, a very cool guy, a Southern gentleman, very nice. Very unaware of himself being Roy Orbison.

Why do you think people are so hung up on your past?

I think a lot of people want to talk about it and they realize they're ten years too late. They should have wanted to talk about it back then, but were either too stupid or just didn't know about it or whatever, and it's just

too late now. We're doing the Danzig thing — the guys in the band don't really want to play that stuff and I can't blame them. They had nothing to do with it. We don't do any Misfits or Samhain songs. This is Danzig, not an oldies revival. I don't wanna live off the past, and we don't.

You said last year you didn't really want to tour in Europe this go-round. Have you changed your mind?

We're gonna go to Europe — I never said I was not going to tour Europe, I said I didn't like being overseas. I just don't like foreign countries that are really mixed up. We're gonna go to Japan and Australia, and I'm really looking forward to that, but I just think there's a lot of turmoil in Europe and I don't want to be involved in it. I don't want to be over there when something erupts. I don't want to get caught up in their problems. **Are they playing "Her Black Wings" on MTV other than on *Headbangers Ball*?**

I don't know if they're *even* playing it on *Headbangers Ball*. We're getting airplay just on regular TV stations that aren't even cable, and MTV came back to us after they'd approved the video and said, "We found something we don't like and we want you to edit it — there's a silhouette shot of a girl, and her dress is crinkled up, and it looks like a nipple." I was like, "what? There's Madonna in her 'Express Yourself' video totally naked, and they're dicking with us on this little thing." So we put in an alternate shot and then they came back three weeks later after they approved it again, and said "Oh, we found another shot we don't like." And I was like, "f*** you, that's it." We don't do it anymore. I could care less about MTV. I'm going to try to help whatever alternative video there is; I just did an interview with *Video Jukebox* out in Orange County, which is on regular TV and it's great. **Did it amuse you greatly when MTV accidentally played the uncensored version of [Danzig's extremely controversial video] "Mother" last year?**

Yeah. I had nothing to do with the censored version. They did that when I was on the road and I was really

pissed off about that. But it really was funny when it did all that and then played the uncut one. But it was really no big deal. USA Network played the uncut one all the time.

Does the Judas Priest trial worry you? Are you afraid something similar might come down on your head?

No. First off, I'm not Judas Priest, and most of the stuff I write about comes right out of the Bible or other noted literary sources. So if they attack me, they attack their whole system. I would take the Catholic Church, the Baptist Church, everyone to court. I would sue them. I would want to dismantle their whole organization. I would sue them for heresy, fraud, tax evasion, you name it. I would disrupt this whole world, bring it into a shambles. They don't want to screw with me, believe me.

You get misunderstood on that a lot . . . like for instance, on your current cover.

Yeah . . . an upside-down cross is not satanic. St. Peter didn't want to be crucified right-side up, because he wasn't worthy of being crucified like Christ. It was heresy to be crucified like his master. Anyone in religion knows that.

You're really into this stuff, aren't you . . .

I know what I'm talking about when I talk. If I don't know what I'm talking about, I won't comment on it.

For the most part, do you think bands who have a satanic image don't know what they're talking about?

I would guess that's a pretty safe assumption.

Does that piss you off?

It makes what I'm doing a little harder, but that's okay, 'cause everyone's allowed to do what they want to do. Who am I to judge them? It may be a little infantile, but maybe they're just going for reaction. They just want people to notice them.

What are you trying to do, besides make good music?

I just want to make good music and tell an interesting story. I really don't like that I get tagged as a satanist all the time, that all our songs are satanic. I dare anyone to find anything

satanic about "I'm the One" or a lot of our songs. It's just an easy tag for journalists, or people who want to be journalists, and just don't have talent to do it, and they don't do the research. It's just really shallow, but then the music industry and most journalists are really shallow. . .

Is there anything you want to do that you haven't done yet?

I guess I want to direct a few movies. I like period pieces. I would love to have directed *Omen IV*, but that's in production already. Movies you can say something with. I wouldn't want to do the next Chuck Norris movie.

Would you want to stop doing music to do that, or do you want to be like Chuck Berry and still be rockin' when you're 60?

No, actually, I think I'll be dead in five years. I just feel it. I'm resigned to it. . .

How would you describe this band to someone who'd never heard of you?

We're just a band that tries to write really good songs, and go out on stage and just take it to the ultimate. ♦

