

ON THE TOWN

Coming Under Danzig's Fire

By Joe Brown

EVERYONE KNOWS that kids like banned bands best . . . Everyone, it seems, but Tipper and Jesse and that sheriff in Florida. There's nothing like a touch of evil, a whiff of the unattainable, or a "Parental Advisory" sticker to make something forbidden more attractive.

Glenn Danzig knows this. A canny veteran of several underground groups (Misfits, Samhain) before forming the metal quartet that bears his name, Danzig seems to be actively courting controversy and bad press, practically daring the witch hunters and censors to come and get him.

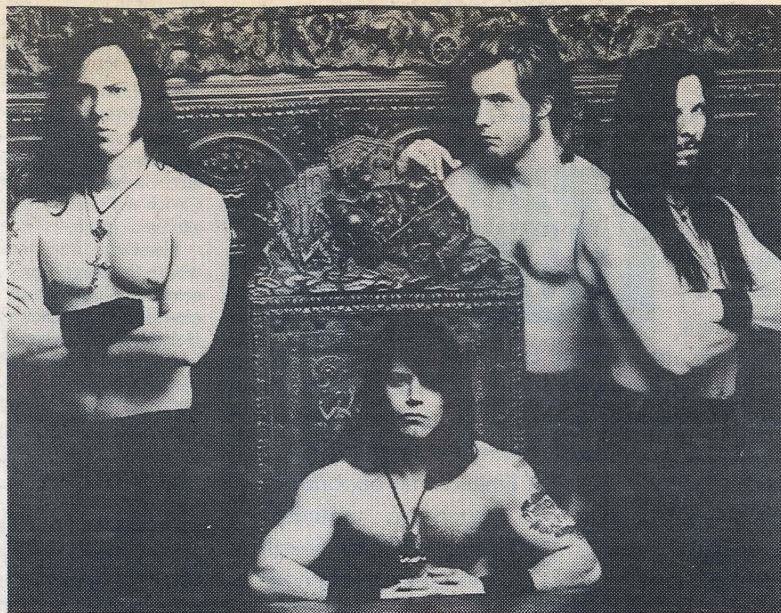
SPOTLIGHT

It's currently fashionable to blame heavy metal's Grand Guignol displays for everything from drug addiction to suicide to mass murder—the metal band Judas Priest is being accused of inciting youths to suicide with the bogeyman of subliminal messages via "backward masking." Danzig's songs are up-front and overt about matters dark and dire, with titles like "Long Way Back From Hell" and "Her Black Wings." And the lyric sheet included with the compact disc of Danzig's new album "Danzig II—Lucifuge" cleverly unfolds into an upside-down cross shape.

The band—including guitarist John Christ, bass player Eerie Von, and drummer Chuck Biscuits—will perform in front of its giant skull stage set at Ritchie Coliseum on Tuesday.

So Glenn, just who inspired this image of yours? Could it be . . . *Satan*?

"What Satanic stuff?" says Danzig, working himself from monosyllables into in a defensive huff. "I get tagged with all this Sa-



The Danzig lineup, from left: Eerie Von, Glenn Danzig, Chuck Biscuits and John Christ.

tanic stuff, right? I guess the Bible is Satanic then, right? So you think an upside-down cross is Satanic? You tell me, you're the interviewer."

Jeez, Glenn! Just asking . . .

"People throughout history have been misinterpreted. Never underestimate the stupidity of the world."

Danzig is on the phone from his Boston hotel room, where today he's registered under the pseudonym Wayne Campbell (which will be familiar to "Saturday Night Live" fans as the metalhead who hosts the public-access cable show "Wayne's World" from his basement rec room).

"I don't like to be lumped in with a lot of those bands that are supposed to be Satanic," he says in a low, gruff growl. "A lot of research goes into my songs, the lyrics, the

things I talk about. There are witch hunts going on, they're looking for people to crucify, of course. What are they gonna do, attack me? They'll be attacking the Bible. I don't like to preach, but if someone wants a message, it's there in the songs."

Actually, Danzig would more likely be charged with plagiarism than with sacrilege. His music is a thunderous contraption welding the old-hat to the tried-and-true: It's strictly Black Sabbath meets Led Zepelin, topped by Danzig's deep wail, a dead ringer for Jim Morrison's voice. But then, originality has never been a selling point in the world of heavy metal.

The Satan connection isn't exactly novel, either. Rock has always been called "the devil's music" by some, and the stories go way back to the mysterious bluesman Robert Johnson, who was said to have made a pact

with the fallen angel. A few carefully placed demonic references didn't hurt record sales for the Rolling Stones, Black Sabbath, Led Zepelin and Slayer, among others.

Danzig's "Lucifuge" (meaning "to shun the light") was produced by Rick Rubin, who seems to have a knack for naughty boys—he produced the debuts of the Beastie Boys, Andrew "Dice" Clay, the L.A. Satanic metal band Slayer, and the as-yet-unreleased but already controversial Geto Boys.

"Rick likes people that are very aggressive, and right in your face, I guess," Danzig says.

"Lucifuge" is on Rubin's own Def American label, and distributed by Geffen Records, which asked to have its name left off the packaging. "Now that the album is near gold, they want to start claiming responsibility for its success," Danzig says.

The band is *persona non grata* on MTV, as well, a fact which hasn't stopped Danzig's clip compilation (including such hellacious hits as "I Am Demon" and "Twist of Cain") from reaching the Top Ten on Billboard's music video sales chart.

Danzig is unusual among metal phenomena in that it's not just a boys' club. Danzig's publicist says concert crowds have been about 40 percent female.

"We get a lot of girls at our shows," says Danzig, who almost always appears glowing, shirtless, pumped-up and tattooed in his videos and photos. "We're not your typical ugly heavy metal band, so I guess it's a sexual thing, I don't know. Maybe it's because we don't look like girls. When you see the band, it's definitely guys."

"We play very loud, hard, aggressive music. We come out and do an honest show, we're sweating from the first song," Danzig says. "I think we could be considered dangerous to this little pop world. But if you don't like it, don't buy it; if you don't like the way it looks, don't look at it. It's really easy."

DANZIG — Appearing Tuesday with Soundgarden and Warrior Soul at University of Maryland's Ritchie Coliseum. Call 432-0200.