

THE DWARVES



PUNK BAND unveil fail-safe method of ensuring there's no drum solo...

THE DWARVES (from left - Blag, HeWho, Wholley, Vadge, Trevor): they save 20 per cent on laundry bills

Words and photos: Mörat

# Block Shocking B



US punks **THE DWARVES** are so offensive, they have incited audiences around the world to stab them, abuse them and riot against them. Happily, this hasn't stopped them coming to the UK to cause trouble...

**N** MAY 1993, news broke that HeWhoCannotBeNamed, bassist with infamous San Franciscan punks The Dwarves, had been killed in a bar fight in Philadelphia. Given the band's reputation as one of the wildest punk rock bands ever to nail three chords together, HeWho's death seemed entirely likely.

Only a few months before, the band had played their now legendary UK debut show at The Venue in London's New Cross, which had lasted a mere four songs before a full scale bar brawl erupted. Several music papers (though not Kerrang!) ran touching obituaries to HeWho and condolences flooded in. There was just one problem. The Dwarves had made the whole thing up for a laugh: fooling the press, their then record company Sub Pop (who didn't see the funny side and promptly dropped them), and even their friends.

Four years on, The Dwarves are backstage in the Schlachthof club in Wiesbaden, Germany – one of the first ports of call on their current European tour – and they still think the HeWho affair is hilarious. "I remember us sitting at home laughing our asses off while various Sub Pop performers called to say how sorry they were," chuckles drummer Vadge Moore.

"I'm really sorry, man," mimics frontman Blag Dahlia. "I knew you guys were assholes, but that's really too bad."

Even their mates Poison Idea, one of the few bands unruly enough to rival The Dwarves, were fooled.

"I owed Jerry (A. Poison Ideas frontman) one for the time when he stuck a 9mm handgun in my ribcage," grins Blag wryly.

Er, why did he do that?

"Ask him!" booms Blag. "F\*\*king asshole! He'd been up for three days on coke and maybe he thought I had a sandwich on me..."

**T**HE DWARVES recently signed to Epitaph Records. The label flew them out to New York to play a celebratory one-off show, putting them up at a fancy hotel.

"We played for about 40

seconds," hoots Blag.

"Then we wrecked the drumkit that all the other bands were supposed to use," says Vadge.

"It was like, 'Welcome to Epitaph'," grins Blag. "We just wanted them to know that we're their friends."

Neither this nor the aforementioned four-song London set ranks as The Dwarves' craziest show. That honour goes to some dive in Richmond, Virginia where, according to Vadge, "the entire band finished the set wielding guitars like blunt instruments, beating the crap out of the front row".

The trouble had started when the band played Richmond the previous year.

"We had this dance called Do The Screw," explains Blag. "where you grab a girl, throw her to the ground and jump on top of her. Every group has a dance craze, and that was ours. So I grabbed this girl and she got really mad, and she told her boyfriend to kick our asses. He showed up backstage and smacked me in the face, and a minor altercation erupted. The cops came and all this stuff happened. The next year, they were waiting for us."

"We played this show and the tension was really thick in the air," Blag recalls fondly. "HeWho was naked, so the guy at the sound desk immediately turned the lights off and cut the power, but we just kept playing. In the darkness, people were coming up and throwing shit at us, trying to beat us off the stage."

"Finally, this one guy dragged me into the pit. HeWho hit him over the head with his bass and knocked him out. Then the guy's friend came up and our guitarist at the time, Eric Generic, hit him with his guitar, so the two of them were just lying there on the floor. When the lights came on, we were at the front of the stage yelling, 'Come on!'. It was just total insanity."

"We had a police escort to get out of the venue. We didn't really have any place to go, but we were friends with GWAR who live in Richmond so we went over to their house. Later that night, we heard these tyres squeal round the corner. We walked out to the van and ours was fine, but GWAR's van's tyres had been slashed cos it looked the same as ours. The GWAR guys were like, 'Man, I think you guys should go. It's too sick having you around'."

Then there was the show the band did at the Coconut Teazer in LA. "The place was just too packed," says Blag. "This was back when we were good, and after a while it was just a crush of people and we started trying to fight our way out. People started fighting back and it turned into a complete madhouse."

"Most of the set," adds Vadge, "was just HeWho and I playing the songs while everybody else beat the crap out of each other."

"But we don't wanna give the impression that we don't care about music," laughs Blag insanely. "That's why we got (guitarist) Whölley Smokes; he's the music guy, he knows the third chord."

**I**RONICALLY, THE Dwarves play some of the best punk rock on the planet; purer than neat alcohol and hotter than hell, as is proved on their latest wonderful opus, 'The Dwarves Are Young And Good Looking'. Doesn't it bother them that no one seems to go to their shows for the music?

"I'd like to think we make good music," shrugs Blag, "but no one else does, so it doesn't really matter."

"People just come to the shows cos they wanna see someone naked and they wanna see someone get beat up," opines Vadge. "They complain if they don't see it... So we beat them up. But sure, we get pissed off when we play for 20 minutes or less and get paid three grand."

The Dwarves don't mourn the loss of other hell-raising bands "cos it just makes us look much

better". But among those they rate are Seattle punks Zeke, the Electric Hellfire Club ("a Satanic metal techno band from Wisconsin"), and surprisingly, Marilyn Manson.

"I like Manson," muses Blag. "But the paradox is that people want their fear tempered with something. The real thing, like us, doesn't really sell. People want a cleaned-up-for-airplay version."

Which is one thing The Dwarves (completed by live sound/samples man Trevor Whatever) will never be. And they've got the scars to prove it.

"I got this one when I got stabbed," says Blag, pointing to a vivid scar on his throat.

"Everyone thought it was his jugular vein," interjects Vadge, "cos there was blood pouring all over the stage."

"But that was a good injury," continues Blag, "because it looked a lot worse than it was. The bad ones are when you get hit in the balls or something, and it doesn't look like anything but it really hurts. If you draw blood it's not bad, and you get dramatic effect."

Only one guy, original Kyuss bassist Nick Oliveri (now in Mondo Generator), has ever been too crazy for The Dwarves. He played briefly for them under the moniker Rex Everything, and lived up to his name. Remarkably, The Dwarves don't actually want trouble at their gigs.

"We're not good fighters," says Blag, "we're just a bunch of assholes who don't care. We'll do anything..."

**THE DWARVES play Leeds Duchess Of York November 19, London Camden Dingwalls 20.**

## WILD BOYS

The Dwarves' five fave hell-raisers...

### ● GENGHIS KHAN (psychotic warrior)

Blag: "I gotta go with Genghis Khan cos he annihilated most of Europe – that's a pretty good reason."



### ● JESUS CHRIST (son of God)

Blag: "Vadge doesn't like him, cos Vadge is the evil guy. But think about all the people that got killed in Jesus' name." Vadge: "Yeah, okay. I can respect that."

### ● GG ALLIN (deceased punk rock madman)

Blag: "You can't beat GG. I saw him talking to this dominatrix in San Francisco about pain. She's says, 'I'm really into pain. You think it's gonna be a fun show tonight? I'll be right up front'. First thing GG does is walk out, swing his mike-stand and break her collar bone! Like, 'You said pain was fun!'." Vadge: "Knowing him was like getting near a rabid dog."

### ● VLAD THE IMPALER (dictator/headcase)

Vadge: "How many thousands of people did he kill? He'd hand people to their families and make them eat them. He'd also bury people up to their necks and have their heads repeatedly kicked in."

### ● BRETT GUREWITZ (Epitaph Records boss)

Blag: "He's my favourite hell-raiser. But I'm not saying anything else..."



# Beats