



# **ART THROUGH INTIMIDATION**

**An Introduction to the flyers of  
Black Flag**

**By Chari**

**Sabba-Too-Jee Press, 260 Adelaide St. East Box 62,  
Toronto, ON, M5A 1N1, Canada**

**2013**

*for L.B.*

## **INTRO**

**The drums hit and the lead guitar dropped like a bomb from the sky. The thunderous wall of sound kicked in, so brutal it could destroy anything. On top were angry, defiant lyrics sung from a limitless reservoir of vitriol. I just stared into the vast emptiness of the speakers, awestruck by how perfect it was.**

**The first time I listened to Black Flag was cathartic. All the frustration and angst inside just spilled out of their songs. It felt like the greatest music ever.**

The other great thing about Black Flag was their flyers. They were illustrated with stark pen and ink drawings. Beside each image was a caption that was humorous, but also subversive. The spontaneous reaction was to laugh. After, more serious reflection would follow. This isn't supposed to be funny. So why did I laugh?

Raymond Pettibon is the artist who drew those images. He did not create art for Black Flag. Instead, drawings were chosen from pre-existing art. The images selected during the initial period, from 1979 to 1981, exuded a sense of danger. They were as striking and intense as the music and became synonymous with the band, even if this wasn't the original intention of the art.

The flyers are known for their graphic content, but the people who focus on those aspects miss the point. They do not see the satire, the metaphors, or any of the other things that give the flyers depth. The images are more complex than they first appear and no single faceted interpretation can distil their essence.

Pettibon's art is full strength, but he does not hit you over the head with a message. Instead, he subtly lifts the mask and exposes what's underneath. Raw truth and hypocrisy are displayed in the full light of day, but without moralizing and without telling us what to think. He points at the emperor's new clothes, and stops there. The results are powerful and thought provoking.

Not everyone gets it. Some people can't see beyond the blood splatter. In high school a teacher noticed me reading a book of Pettibon drawings. He took it out of my hands and slowly turned the pages. The look of disgust on his face was obvious. He told me that my generation was sick and that only a diseased mind would want to read this book.

I got a similar reaction when I tried to play Black Flag to other people. I carried around a tape of early songs, mostly from *Everything Went Black*. I considered it to be the most listenable of Black Flag's recordings. Come on, who wouldn't like *Gimme Gimme Gimme*?

Apparently, I was wrong. Most people hate Black Flag. I popped in the cassette at parties and got death stares. "Turn that shit off!"

My one successful coup was at a high school dance. I started talking to the DJ as he was setting up and could see that we'd made a connection. He righteously thought that I and my friends should get at least one song during the dance.

It took forever to get through the mind-numbing popular songs (Wham!, Tears for Fears, Twisted Sister). Then it came. *Nervous Breakdown* on full blast. The floor shook. I skanked my heart out. And then it was over. A pile of bodies lay in the centre of the gymnasium floor. They didn't know how to dance to this music and just started pushing and shoving each other. One person got hurt and had to leave. He came back to school on Monday with his arm in a sling, telling everyone I ruined the dance.

The outside world reacted in the same way to the art and the music. Both sparked instantaneous and severe hostility. Consequently, putting a Pettibon drawing on a Black Flag flyer made sense. It was an act of defiance that expressed what the music was about.

Over time, the flyers have become iconic. They cast an aura over the music, influencing how it is experienced. This is especially true for people like me who never saw the band play live. The menacing presence of the flyers sets up the songs and the cathartic release that follows. The art and the music – together – are the complete package.

As a collector, I've spent years chasing down the flyers and any bit of information that would help me to understand them better. The challenge wasn't just acquiring the flyers, but trying to make sense of them. So much amazing material was created that the task of organizing and studying it seemed incredibly daunting. Ultimately, I created a zine that I wish had been around when I first started collecting. It would've helped me make better choices during the early days of eBay, when legitimate collecting opportunities still existed.

I've chronicled the story of the flyers over five periods, each with its own distinct set of characteristics. An attempt was also made to interpret and find meaning in the art. There's lots here, but even so, this is just a starting point. An introduction. So much more needs to be done.

## ORIGIN STORY

In the mid-seventies, Greg Ginn taught himself to play guitar and wrote songs as an outlet.<sup>1</sup> At some point in 1977, he got a band together. He convinced Keith Morris to sing. Keith recruited his friend Bryan Migdol on drums. Their band was called Panic.

Chuck Dukowski initially filled in as bassist and later became a permanent member. He was in the line-up that recorded the *Nervous Breakdown* EP in January 1978. Many cite this as their favourite Black Flag release, but it should be pointed out that it was Panic, not Black Flag, that played on this recording. The band concept of Panic was different from Black Flag. Panic was more about a band freaking out (hence the name). They also had more of a fun feel than what was to come later.<sup>2</sup> (Despite rumours, no flyers were created while they were still called Panic.)<sup>3</sup>



It was a family connection that brought Raymond Pettibon into the same sphere as Panic. He is Greg Ginn's brother. He graduated from UCLA in 1977 and began working as a math teacher. He had also been drawing for a while and some of his political cartoons had been published, but then something happened. According to him, "...there was a point when, to my eyes, my work did become mature. In a way, it kind of happened overnight, in 1978."<sup>4</sup> From that moment on, he was an artist.

By mid-1978, Panic needed a drummer. They got Robo. His drumming was faster, but also more expressive. He helped amplify the dark emotional tone of the music while increasing its energy level. As a result, Panic's sound changed. The music became heavier, and more intense.



An uncredited photo of Robo-era Panic circulating on the internet.

In the fall of 1978, the band's new name, Black Flag, was chosen after it was suggested by Raymond Pettibon.<sup>5</sup> The black flag is a symbol of anarchism, but they were not explicitly referencing political anarchy. As Chuck explained, "My definition of it (anarchy) is a commitment to change. No system. Cuz the world really is anarchy. But a person committed to it, is committed to the destruction of the status quo."<sup>6</sup> The band didn't want to play the same music the same way until it became stale and irrelevant. It was better to be in a state of change, to not rely on an established formula, and to continually smash what came before.

The name also worked because it was intimidating. According to Chuck, "all of the cultural references (anarchy, poison) inherent in Black Flag are threatening."<sup>7</sup> They had a heavy, menacing vibe and this was expressed in Chuck's lyrics from the song "Spray Paint the Walls":

*It feels good to say what I want  
It feels good to knock things down  
It feels good to see the disgust in their eyes  
It feels good, I'm gonna go wild  
Spray paint the walls*

*I don't want to see the plan succeed  
There won't be room for people like me  
My life is their disease  
It feels good, I'm gonna go wild  
Spray paint the walls*

"I did intend to confront the world," confirms Chuck, "and I enjoyed it immensely."<sup>8</sup>

A commitment to change and a heavy, threatening vibe are the two parts of the Black Flag aesthetic that became the defining features the flyers. Being in a state of change opened things up. It allowed for unexpected choices of artwork to be used. As well, the heavy vibe of the band was later reflected in the ominous visual presence of the flyers.

By the end of 1978, Pettibon and Black Flag were in a similar position. Both had found their artistic voice and wanted to express themselves. Pettibon had published his first collection of drawings *Captive Chains* in an edition of 500. Black Flag released their first single *Nervous Breakdown*. 2000 were pressed, but only 500 had the original "brick wall" sleeve. They produced these items, but had no audience. It was now time to make things happen.

## **THE FIRST SIX**

(January to June 1979)

The Hollywood punk scene had shunned Black Flag. To them, the band was a bunch of outsiders from the suburbs. Unable to get any gigs, they rented the Moose Lodge Hall in Rindondo Beach to put on their first show which took place on 27 January 1979. The earliest flyers were created for this gig.

No effort was made to document the earliest flyers. However, enough material has survived and enough details have been provided by first hand sources to reconstruct the order of the first six flyers. However, this isn't an exact science. This sequence is a best guess based on available information.

**Chuck described creating the first Black Flag flyer in *Barred for Life*:**

***"I took a picture out of his (Pettibon's) *Captive Chains* book and just wrote the text while I was doing my laundry. I was like, 'I have to do some flyers for this show,' so I wrote it with a marking pen and Xeroxed it at the Post Office, or someplace nearby, then went and passed them out..."***<sup>9</sup>

**The flyer depicts a hand holding a recently fired gun, smoke still rising from the barrel. Just above, the blood splatter that drips down the wall functions as a knowing wink from Pettibon. Someone outside the frame has been badly hurt, but what actually happened is left to the imagination.**

**Chuck chose an image with violence, humour, and the threat of the unknown. He then framed it with show information to produce this flyer. In doing so, he created a prototype for all the classic flyers that came later. But at this early, formative stage, there was no established way of doing things. Other types of flyers would be made for other shows. It took awhile before this prototype became a template.**

**This flyer is extremely rare. There is only one image of it on the internet, on the Rat Sound legacy site. Most collectors do not even know of its existence. Supreme rarity and importance make this, more than any other flyer, the Holy Grail of Black Flag flyer collecting.**

# PUNK ROCK

\$2.50

WITH  
THE  
ALLEY  
CATS  
RHINO  
39  
&  
BLACK  
FLAG

BOY  
BOY  
BOY

SAT.  
JAN 27  
AT THE  
REDDOOD  
MOOSE LODGE  
516 N.  
PAC. COOR  
ENTER  
HWY  
REAR.



Keith Morris also drew a flyer.<sup>10</sup> It depicts two beatniks talking about the upcoming show. The flyer features two counter culture figures, but it is decidedly not punk. It is an early indication that Black Flag were not followers. They did not pander to the punk community. They had their own self made anti-establishment style.

Black Flag put on their second show by renting a community centre in San Pedro. There are two known flyers for this show. One was by Raymond Pettibon. The band names are drawn with a hatching technique. Beneath are a map and directions followed by the heads of two characters from Pettibon's comic book. They are offering deals for *Captive Chains* and the *Nervous Breakdown* single.

This flyer is notable for two reasons. It's the first flyer created by Raymond Pettibon, but his artwork is only a minor feature. The main focus is on the humorous Pettibonisms found in the text.

The other reason for this flyer's importance is less obvious. In the bottom right corner is a small ad for the *Nervous Breakdown* single. Within the ad is the first printed appearance of the Black Flag bars. The bars were Pettibon's stylized depiction of a black flag waiving in the wind. They became the logo of the band and this flyer establishes that the bars were in use quite early, before their second show.

Sat. Jan. 17th 9:00

At the MOOSE  
LODGE, 516 N.  
PACIFIC COAST HWY.  
IN REDONDO BEACH  
ENTRANCE IN BACK  
yea man real  
greovy.

\$7.50  
ADM.

What?

the ALLEY  
CATS,  
RHINO 39  
and  
BLACK  
FLAG!

Why  
you know  
I think  
in!





# PUNK ROCK BLOW-OUT 2

CHANGE YOUR LUCK

featuring L.A.'s best bands

IT'S LATER THAN YOU THINK

# ALLEY CATS

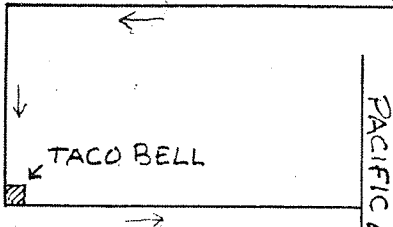
# PLUGZ

# BLACK FLAG

# DESCENDENTS

IN BEAUTIFUL RUNDOWN **SAN PEDRO** home of the bars

HARBOR FREEWAY



GO TO END OF HARBOR FWY.  
TURN LEFT. MAKE ANOTHER  
LEFT AT THE TACO BELL  
(SANTA CRUZ AVE.). TAKE  
SANTA CRUZ TO PACIFIC  
AVE.

## SAT.

## FEB. 17 9pm

211 N. PACIFIC AVE.  
at the corner of Pacific &  
Santa Cruz aves.

admission only **\$3**

Present  
this flyer at door  
for \$1 off CAPT-  
IVE CHAINS  
comic book or  
send \$1.50 to  
SST Records



Special  
collectors'  
asbestos  
vinyl  
for your  
protection

**BLACK FLAG 7" EP III**  
4 songs Send \$2 ppd.  
to SST Records  
PO Box 1, Lawndale  
Ca. 90260  
name \_\_\_\_\_  
address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ALLEY CATS  
THE PLUGZ  
BLACK FLAG  
AND THE DESCENDENTS**

**TAKE HARBOR FRWY. TO END OF  
IN SAN PEDRO FRWY.  
GO LEFT TO TACO BELL AND MAKE  
A LEFT (SANTA CRUZ ST.) ON LEFT  
SIDE AT PACIFIC AVE. IN ALLEY**

**211 N. PACIFIC AVE. SAT. FEB.  
SAN PEDRO 9:00 17TH  
INTERANCE  
IN ALLEY**



The other flyer for the second show was designed by Keith Morris. It has a similar illustrative style to the first flyer he made. Thick black marker is used, and the handwriting is identical. It is better executed, but less inspired than his previous effort. Show information is followed by a cat, a plug, and a flag which represent three of the bands that played that night (the Alley Cats, the Plugs, and Black Flag).

The next flyer was created for Black Flag's first club show at the Bla Bla cafe on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of June. Show information surrounds the *Nervous Breakdown* picture sleeve. This is the first appearance of Pettibon's hand drawn "Black Flag" letters which he seems to have preferred. The presence of this lettering style on a flyer is an indication that he likely created that flyer.

The next and final flyer from this early period is for Black Flag's second club show. It depicts a punk girl getting kicked out of the family home while being taunted by her father. The drawing is more straight humour than satire, which is unusual in Pettibon's art. Also unusual is the presence of a punk character. This is virtually unique among Black Flag's flyers.

The image is not consistent with the Black Flag aesthetic, but this is a precedent setting flyer. The *Pettibon drawing framed by show information* format, introduced by Black Flag's first flyer (illustrated with Pettibon's gun) was adopted after this flyer. As such, this was the first standardized flyer from which all other flyers followed.

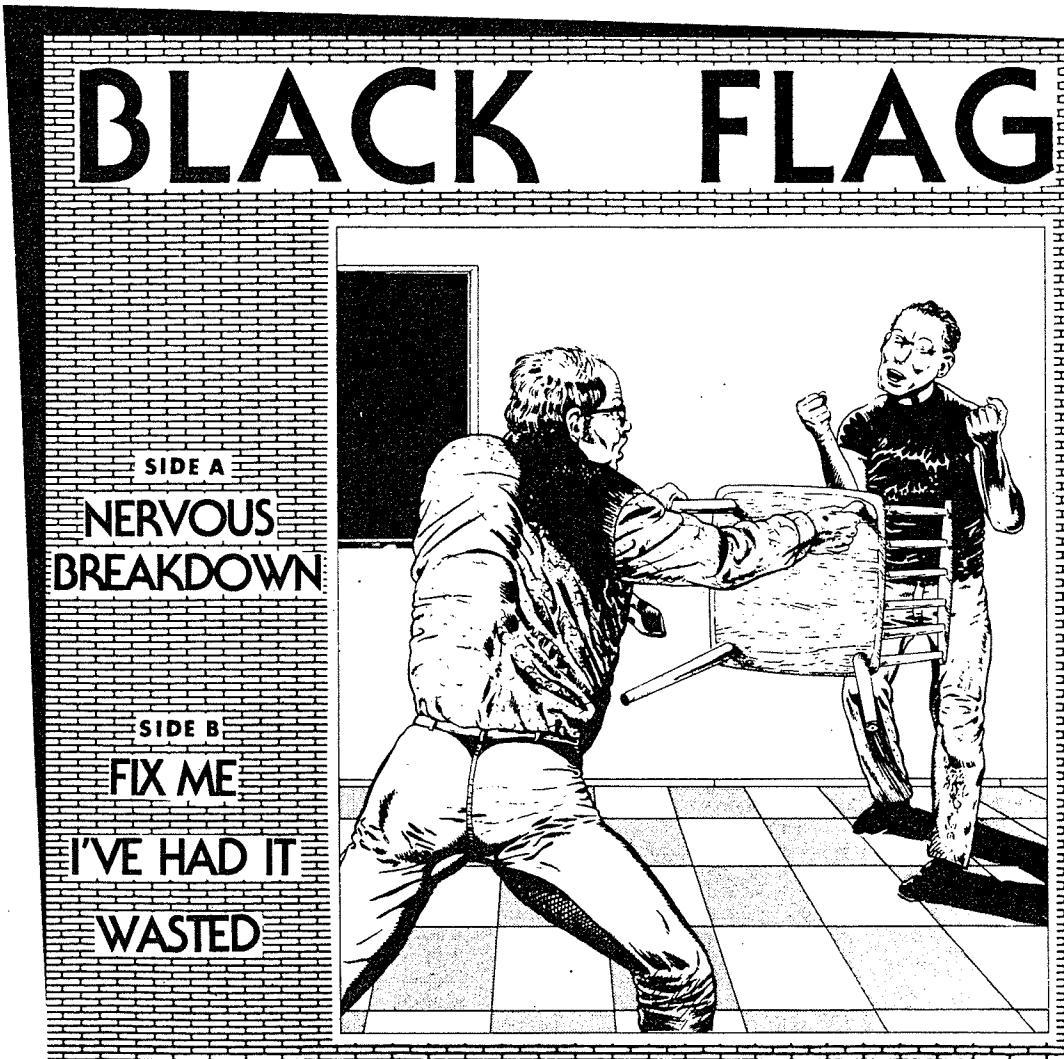
# BLACK FLAG

at BLA BLA café

NO AGE LIMIT

M.  
J  
U  
N  
11

Tu.  
J  
U  
N  
19



SHOW STARTS AT 11 PM adm. \$2.50  
12446 VENTURA BLVD.  
STUDIO CITY

# BLACK FLAG

*gets a zero for conduct*

# Hong kong cafe

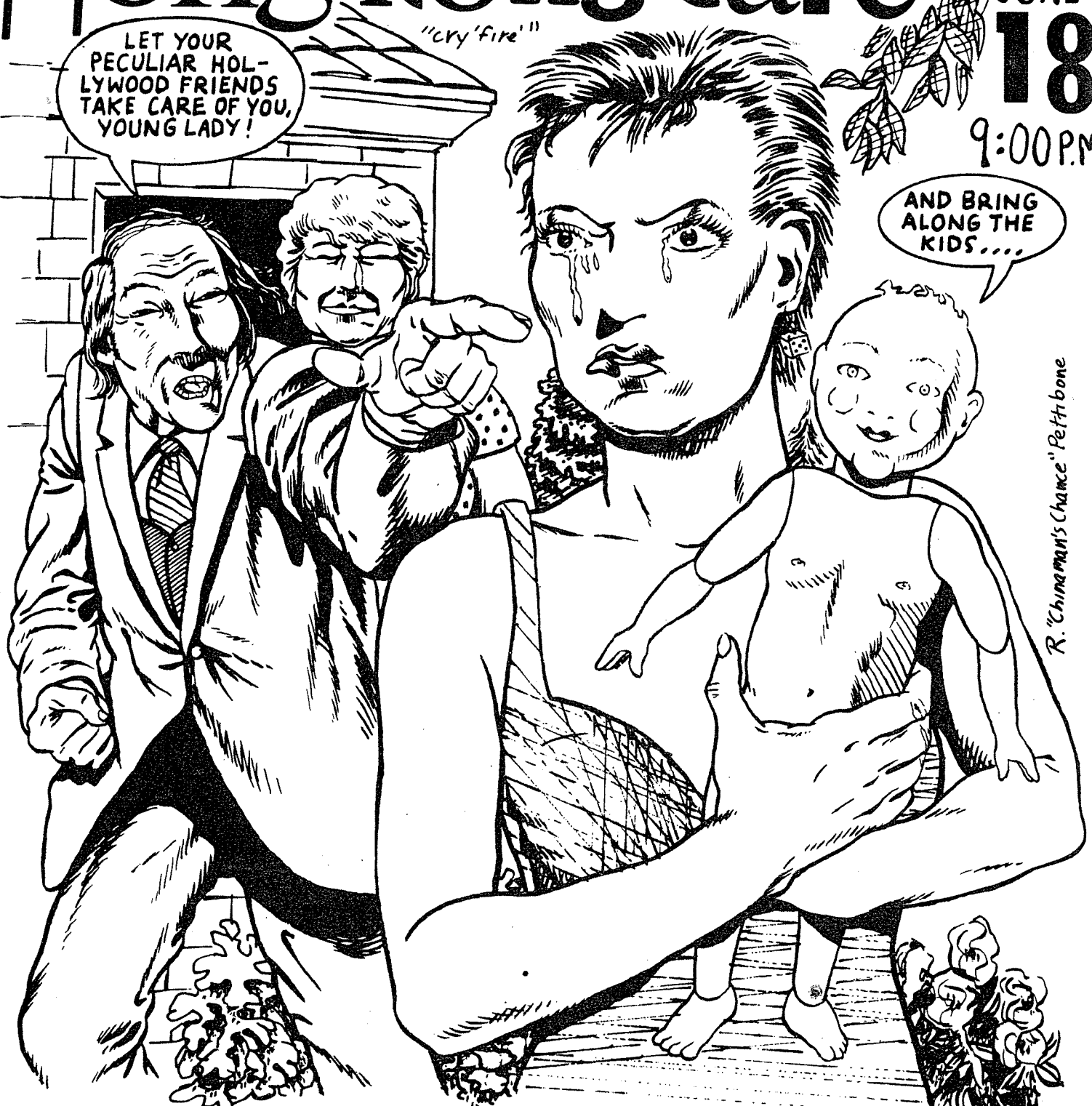
**M**  
JUNE  
**18**

9:00 P.M.

LET YOUR  
PECULIAR HOL-  
LYWOOD FRIENDS  
TAKE CARE OF YOU,  
YOUNG LADY!

"cry 'fire'"

AND BRING  
ALONG THE  
KIDS....



R. "China Man's Chance" Pettibone

425 GIN LING WAY CHINATOWN 628-6219

**BLACK FLAG AND THE LAST**

## **THE NUMBERED FLYERS**

**(June 1979 to December 1979)**

After their first few shows, Black Flag broke through the barriers that had blocked them from getting gigs. “They didn’t know who we were.” Says Chuck, “Once we started playing – it’s like a lot of things – once you get the ball rolling and then there’s momentum.”<sup>11</sup> For the rest on 1979, the band often played in the Los Angeles area and made two trips to San Francisco.

The flyers for the second half of 1979 were numbered. The numbering began with # 7 in June and ended with #22 in December. The first six flyers from January to June are assumed to be the only previous flyers because the numbering begins at seven.

The flyers were numbered to document them as they were being created. "In the very early days there may have been an attempt to preserve the sequence," explains Chuck. "Alas, it went by the wayside."<sup>12</sup>

The flyers for this period were lettered and laid out by Pettibon. "He did the lettering for a while," says Chuck. "We started to play lots of shows and then, because of volume, we took over."<sup>13</sup> The exact moment when Chuck took over is difficult to pinpoint because he laid out of at least one numbered flyer (Black Flag flyer #18) and possibly more. In any event, Pettibon stopped creating the flyers by the end of 1979 and only briefly returned to lay out a few more flyers in the fall of 1980.

#### 29 June 1979, Black Flag Flyer #7

A knife throwing act gone awry. The human target, wounded by the thrower, has stabbed him in the back and is now approaching him with a second knife. The thrower lifts his hand to defend himself.

Early Black Flag songs depict someone on the edge; either immobilized by frustration or frustrated to the point of lashing out. There are no solutions, no redemption. All the narrator can do is "go berserk." This image captures that feeling of powerlessness and of being provoked to the breaking point.

# BLACK FLAG

gets a zero for conduct

# Hong kong cafe

425 GIN LING WAY CHINATOWN 628-6219

# FRI. 29<sup>TH</sup>

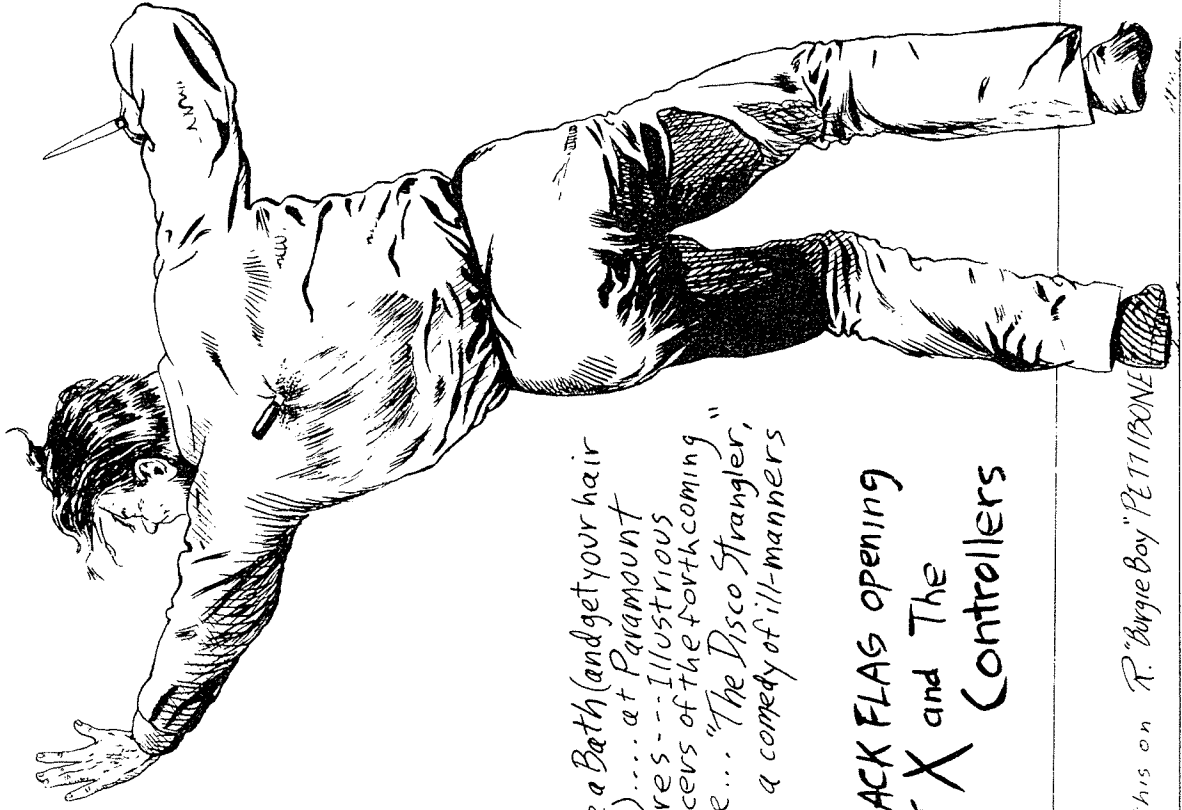
# NO AGE LIMIT

show starts at  
9:00 P.M.



Take a Bath (and get your hair dyed) ... at Paramount Pictures -- Illustrations by the forthcoming movie ... "The Disco Strangler," a comedy of ill-manners

BLACK FLAG opening  
for X and The  
Controllers



blame this on R. "Burgie Boy" PETTIBONE

BLACK FLAG FLYER #7



This is the first truly great flyer; but it's also a flyer for a show that never took place:

*The night before we were supposed to play...we started handing out our flyers on Thursday. We were out there passing them out and I'm talking to Kid Spike. I'm going yeah we're really going to have a good gig tomorrow night and he goes: "I don't think you guys are goin' to be playing tomorrow night, that's what I heard!"<sup>14</sup>*

- Keith Morris

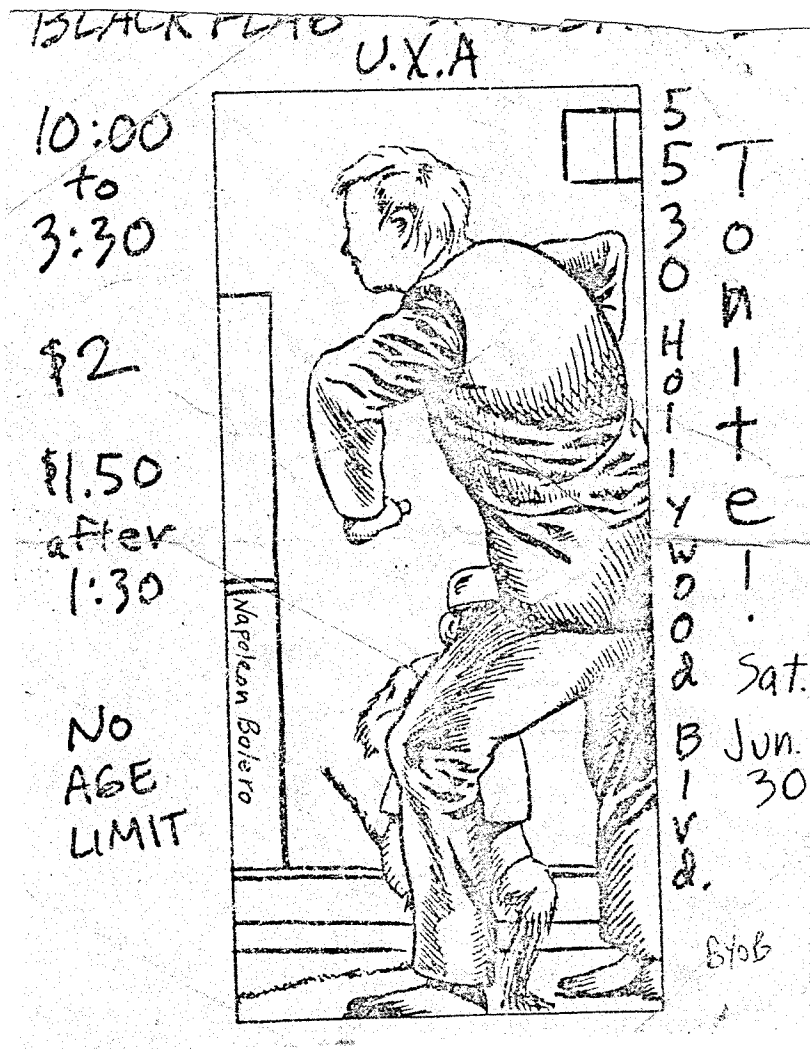
*They cancelled us without letting us know about it and we went ahead and printed up flyers and they watched us pass out the flyers to 2 guys that booked the bands...We rented this place in Hollywood the same night and the next night put on a gig there.<sup>15</sup>*

- Greg Ginn

The better known flyer for the newly booked show is Black Flag flyer #8. A soldier embraces his sweetheart, the caption reads "One of the best things about war is... love." A far more obscure flyer was also created.

### 30 June 1979 Un-numbered Flyer

A monkey services a man in a business suit. A rarely seen sexual theme, it graphically depicts the pursuit of dehumanized gratification. The man's elbows point up, reacting to the skilful efforts of the monkey. Typically Pettibon, this farcical gesture invites laughter despite the demeaning and pitiful circumstances.



This small (4 x 5½ inches) xerographic flyer was given out on the day of the show. The art is interesting but all flyers, no matter how great, become yesterday's news after the show. Most are thrown away. The fact that this obscure flyer survived is remarkable. This is the only known example; no others have come to light. As such, it represents the ephemeral nature of punk flyers because it was so quickly made and forgotten.

**25 and 27 September 1979, Black Flag Flyer #15**

Sunken cheeks, closely cropped hair on the sides, and subject matter point to Ed Gein. If it isn't him, then the character is certainly inspired by Gein. Pathologically fixated on his mother, he skinned the corpses of recently deceased women to make a female body suit that he wore to channel the spirit of his dead mother. It was how he remembered mommy.

**10 October 1979, Black Flag Flyer #16**

Some of Pettibon's work is impenetrable. Others, like this drawing, can have meanings teased out of them with some effort.

Many assume that the female is Marilyn Monroe, probably because JFK is present. But Pettibon's depictions of her are instantly recognizable. This is not a very good likeness, and for this reason, she probably represents someone else.

The bottom two panels show Lee Harvey Oswald, JFK's assassin, beside JFK. If the top two panels mirror the bottom two, then Senator Ted Kennedy is the killer of the blonde woman. That would make her Mary Jo Kopechne.

On the night of 18 July 1968, Ted Kennedy left a party with Mary Jo Kopechne. He drove in the darkness through back roads, and then accidentally off a bridge. Kennedy managed to escape as the car sank into the water. He went to his hotel room and did not report the incident until the next morning, after her body had been found by someone else.

# BLACK FLAG

I REMEMBER  
MUMMY (sic)



Concert-goers are encouraged to bring blankets and picnic lunches.

Good news: Black Flag gets to play  
Bad news: they have to do a disco set so the police can dance.

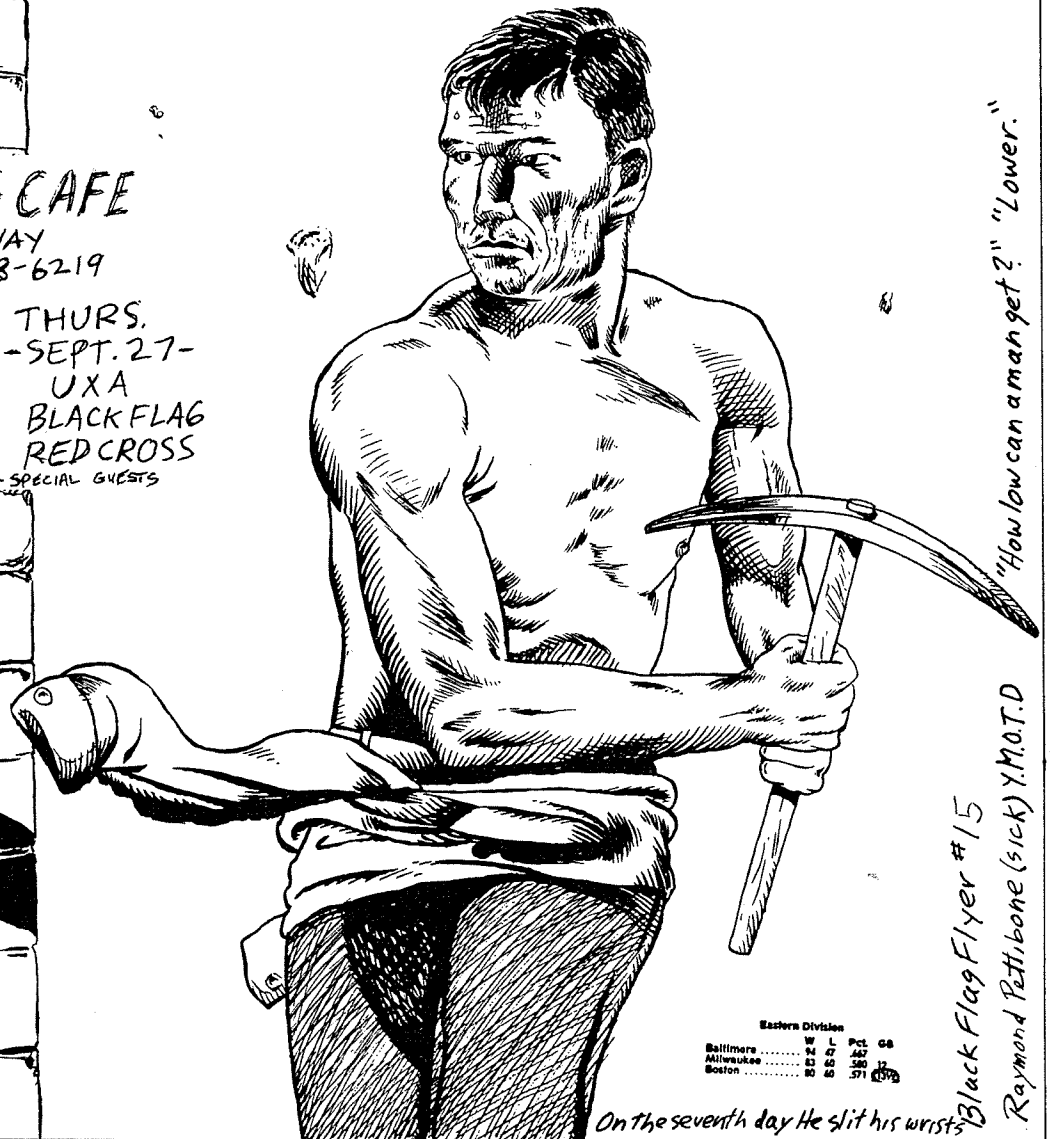


## HONG KONG CAFE

425 GIN LING WAY  
CHINATOWN 628-6219

TUES.  
-SEPT. 25-  
FLYBOYS  
BLACK FLAG  
SILENCERS

THURS.  
-SEPT. 27-  
U X A  
BLACK FLAG  
RED CROSS  
+ SPECIAL GUESTS



"How low can a man get?" "Lower."

Black Flag Flyer #15  
Raymond Pettibone (sic) Y.M.O.T.D

| Eastern Division |    |    |     |
|------------------|----|----|-----|
|                  | W  | F  | Pct |
| Baltimore        | 24 | 47 | 267 |
| Milwaukee        | 23 | 60 | 267 |
| Boston           | 20 | 51 | 277 |

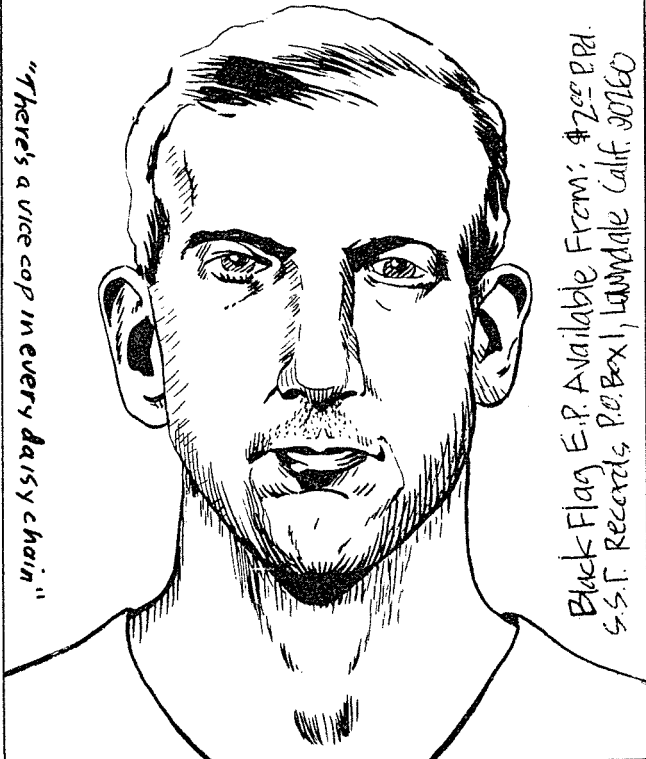
On the seventh day He slit his wrists.

# BLACK FLAG



'20 minutes' respite from the sanctuary of sleep'

at Mabuhay Gardens Wed. Oct. 10 with  
the Dead Kennedys



"there's a vice cop in every daisy chain"

Black Flag E.P. Available From: #200 P.P.R.  
S.S.T. Records, P.O. Box 1, Lompoc, Calif. 93450



Raymond Pettibone Black Flag flyer #16  
noted 11/21/81

Callously abandoning a fatally trapped person is incomprehensible. What followed is equally disturbing. He got a minor conviction for fleeing the scene of an accident with no jail time. Voters continued to re-elect him until his death 30 years later. Everyone just closed their eyes and pretended that everything was okay. Their slumber gave him sanctuary from having to face any real consequences.

A grand jury later considered this incident, but was only allowed to hear 20 minutes of testimony as they searched for truth. Although brief, it was in Pettibon's words, *a respite from the sanctuary of sleep*.

**1 November 1979, Black Flag Flyer #18**

For Pettibon, nothing is "sacrosanct above comedy."<sup>16</sup> This includes pedophilia. Approaching this subject from a satirical angle is challenging for the audience. The image of a sexually exploited child is very upsetting, but in a humorous context is capable of arousing extreme anger. The purpose of satire, however, isn't to appease people's sensibilities. It is supposed to force them to confront the ugliness, which is what this flyer does.

The image is unsettling, but the message is clear: children are exploited. Pedophilia exists. Pettibon pulls it out of the shadows to show everyone that the monster is real.

# VIRGIN-LIKE INNOCENCE

BLACK FLAG "Nervous Breakdown" E.P. available now on SST RECORDS

HONG KONG CAFE Thurs. NOV.1 9 pm  
425 Gin Ling Way - Chinatown

with:

BLACK FLAG  
MAU MAU'S  
RED CROSS  
URINALS  
SPITTIN' TEETH



NOV. 1  
HONG KONG  
CAFE - THURS.

Black Flag Flyer #18

# BLACK FLAG

YOUR WORST SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED

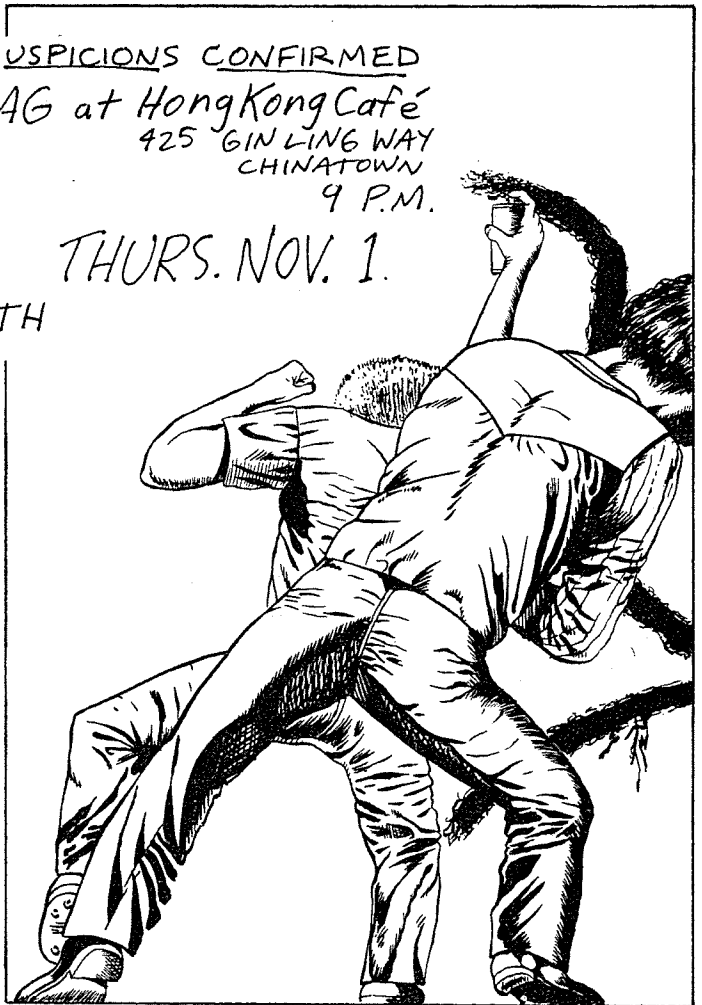
**BLACK FLAG** at *HongKong Café*

425 GIN LING WAY  
CHINATOWN

9 P.M.

with:  
MAU MAU'S  
REDCROSS  
URINALS  
SPITTIN' TEETH

THURS. NOV. 1.



Raymond Rittbone, lecturer on the horrors of life, horrors of death  
Black Flag flyer #19  
Ever authority to foster disorder



art through intimidation



### 1 November 1979, Black Flag Flyer #19

The adult's clenched fists show that he is frustrated by his inability to control this situation. The kid smiles as he ducks and doges to complete wild, unrestrained art. No one can stop him.

The art parallels Black Flag's late night campaigns when they illegally posted flyers to promote their shows. According to Keith:

*We would go out on our flyer-pasting missions in Robo's little white Ford Cortina. We'd have the bucket with the paste, we'd have a few hundred flyers, and after all the flyers were posted, like three of four hours, we'd go home to sleep.*<sup>17</sup>

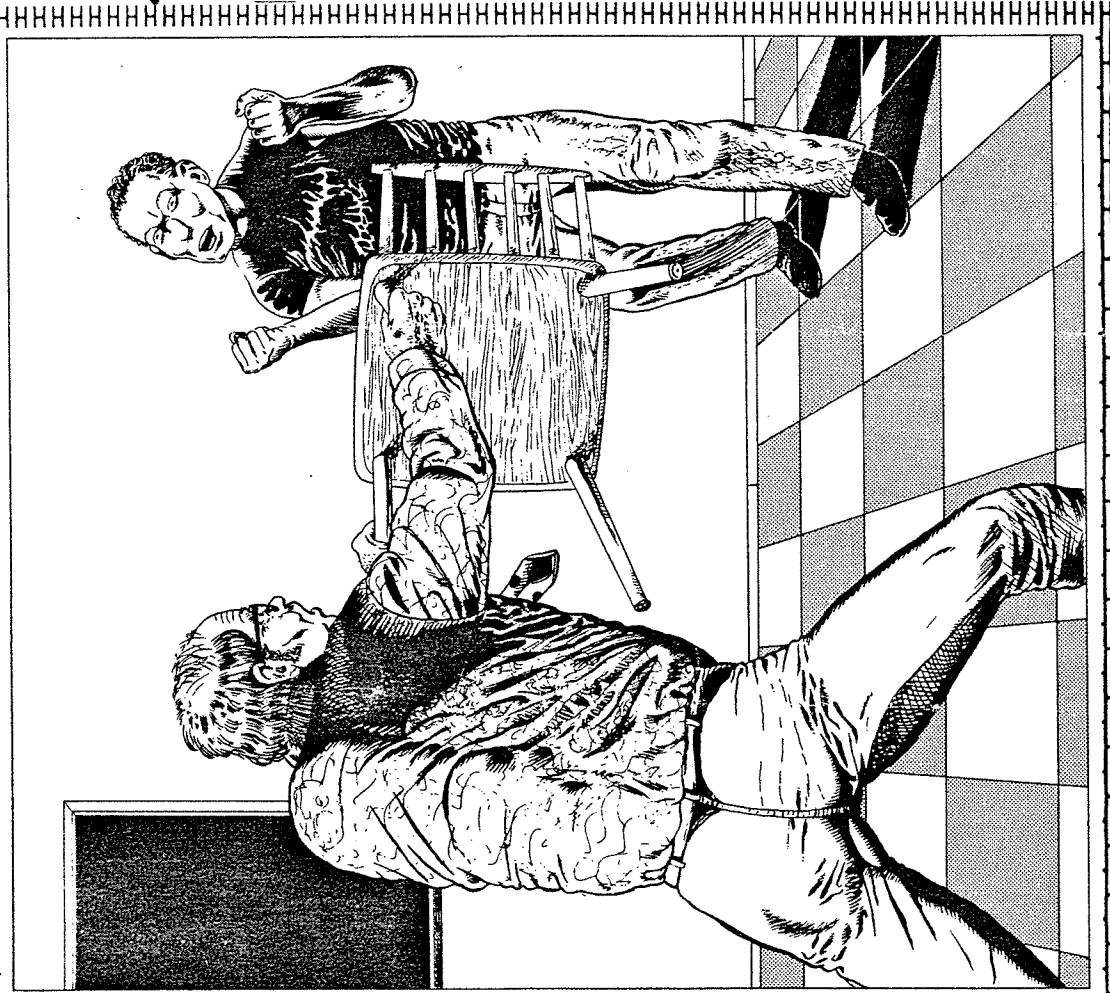
It would be interesting to know how the general public reacted the next morning as they walked down the street and were greeted by a knife wielding nude woman (flyer #7), or Ed Gein (flyer #15). It probably felt like some sort of attack was under way. The flyer's caption sums it up perfectly. *Art through intimidation.*

### 1 December 1979, Un-numbered Flyer

Fans have always known about the awkward musical mismatch that took place when Black Flag played a show with Madness, but the flyer was unknown until it surfaced a few months ago. Hand writing style reveals Keith Morris as this flyer's creator.

Keith parted ways with Black Flag a few days after this show. This turned out to be his swan song flyer and it is a reminder of his connection to the epic initial phase of Black Flag when they left their practice space and started to play shows.

# BLACK FLAG



SIDE A

NERVOUS  
BREAKDOWN

SIDE B

FIX ME  
I'VE HAD IT  
WASTED

SINGLE AVAILABLE AT MOST OF  
YOUR FAVORITE RECORD STORES!!

WITH THE  
MUTANTS,  
AND MADNESS

at the 😊

fabulous

MABUHAY  
GARDENS

SAT. DEC. 1ST  
10:30 P.M.

MUK! MUK!

MUK!!

SUCKERS

## **THE INTERREGNUM**

(January 1980 to April 1980)

The numbered flyers ended in December 1979. No new Pettibon art would appear on the flyers until April 1980. Inbetween, Black Flag promoted their shows with flyers that did not feature the art. At the same time, another band was allowed access to Pettibon's art to create their flyers. A close look at these circumstances reveals how Black Flag's flyers and the art of Pettibon were more compelling together than apart.

When Pettibon told Maximumrocknroll in 2008 that "...if it wasn't me (providing art to Black Flag), it would have been someone else"<sup>18</sup> he was implying that his contribution was inconsequential. One look at a flyer made without his art shows just how wrong he is.



Flyer for 16 March 1980. Chuck's lettering pasted over an urban wasteland.

The most prominent feature of this flyer is the enormous letters that spell "Black Flag." Many assume that the large, ultra-bold font was chosen because it projects an ominous sense of power. The actual reason was more practical. As indicated by Chuck, "The text for Black Flag got changed to make it more legible from a light pole."<sup>19</sup>

The flyer promotes the show, but does little else. It seems bland when compared to the previous flyers with Pettibon's art.

The Pettibon drawings used for the flyers contained more than a sharp wit and a subversive message. The topical aspect of any art makes it interesting, but not compelling. It's Pettibon's idiosyncratic style that draws people in. He makes extreme behaviour, no matter how aberrant or abhorrent, seem familiar and relatable even when it is distant from one's own way of thinking. The art is likeable even if the subject matter is disturbing. It gave the flyers a striking quality that made them stand out and memorable.

Pettibon's art is a key component of the flyers, but accessing his art could produce very different results. By February 1980, Keith Morris's new band, the Circle Jerks, was playing shows that were promoted by numbered flyers featuring Pettibon's art. Anyone seeing the numbered Circle Jerks and Black Flag flyers for the first time would think that they contain the work of two completely different artists.



There were 8 Circle Jerks flyers with Pettibon art. The first six were numbered, followed by this one. The last flyer with Pettibon art was for an August 1980 show with the Dead Kennedys.

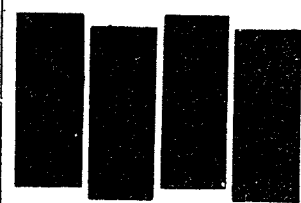
The flyers are different because the two bands are so different. According to Keith:

*What set us apart from Black Flag is that we were not as aggressive. We were not as angry...The thing with Black Flag was that it was so incendiary, so in your face, so explosive...Whereas the Circle Jerks, we wanted it to be a party. We wanted everybody to have a good time and get laid.<sup>20</sup>*

MALAISE!!!



# MALAISE! FLAG



# BLACK

# Berkeley

# Square

Sat

APRIL

12

W/NO  
SISTERS  
& VIPS

Tue

APRIL

15

W/

SECRET  
SERVICE

1333 UNIVERSITY  
8493374

Napoleon "Pariah Saint" Bolero

The images chosen for the Circle Jerks flyers are more based in humour and sarcasm. Those drawings had a closer affinity to them and did not duplicate the look and feel of Black Flag's flyers. This underscores the importance of art selection. A drawing had to be very carefully chosen from Pettibon's cache of artwork in order to create a Black Flag flyer.

New Pettibon art began to appear on Black Flag flyers in April, 1980. The second flyer with new art was for the 12 April 1980 show at Berkeley Square. The original art shows the word MALAISE written into the left forearm by a razor being held in the right hand. The caption "*MALAISE!!!*" implies that the inscription of the three exclamation points remain, and will result in suicide. The image and caption are so simple and direct, and so perfect. There isn't anything that Pettibon could have done to make it better.

He published the drawing in his 1982 book, *My Struggle for Life After Death*. Beyond that, the drawing never left the art world. It has maintained a static existence, experienced only by those who already like Pettibon's work.

As a flyer, however, this drawing spits fire. Most advertizing depicts beautiful people enjoying life. Posting the Malaise image in a public forum pierces through this fake veneer of happiness and well being. It forces people to confront a different point of view. Context gives the art meaning it otherwise didn't have. Something was gained by converting it into a flyer. A whole new work of art was born.



## **THE CLASSIC ERA**

**(April 1980 to December 1981)**

The flyers have taken on a life of their own. Thousands of Black Flag flyer images are posted on the internet. Collectors routinely search for original flyers on eBay. They are more widely known now than ever before. This interest is largely based on the continuous, and uninterrupted string of incredible flyers from the Classic era. Every single one is great. Many are iconic. Looking back on it now, this was an incredible time when Pettibon and Chuck could do no wrong.

Two main factors allowed this golden age to happen. To begin with, Pettibon's art changed. His very early drawings were more detailed. Over time his style became cleaner and more precise. These changes made the art more direct and intensified the impact. This was ideal for the flyers because they were better able to grab someone's attention.

The second factor was Chuck's layout. He put together virtually every flyer during this period. As previously seen with the *MALAISE!* flyer, he applied the lettering in a way that did not interfere with the image. Even when using huge, eye catching letters to promote the band, he turned an image into a flyer without diminishing its power. His clear and careful layout, and his daring placement of lettering created the dynamic look of a classic Black Flag flyer that no one ever duplicated. This becomes more obvious when other people became more involved in laying out the flyers in late 1981.

6 June 1980, The Jumper

A biker stands on the ledge of a building, staring down at the street. He pays no attention to a priest and a police officer. The caption: I never want to die.

Collectors refer to this flyer as "the Jumper" but the caption does not clearly indicate that the biker has a suicidal intention. It's more likely that he's engaged in the reckless pursuit of thrills, beyond the religion and law that he ignores. On a metaphorical level, the drawing could also represent an artist destroying themselves to achieve immortality through their art. Either way, his über-cool two tone motorcycle jacket will ensure that people can see him if he falls.

The ORIGINAL

# BLACK

# FLAG

SUBHUMANS



RED CROSS  
SCREWS

ANGRY SAMOAN S

DER STAB

FRI JUNE 6 AT THE FLEETWOOD

260 N. HARBOR DR. REDONDO BEACH

I NEVER WANT TO DIE

**“The Original” Black Flag at the top of the flyer refers to the original line-up with Keith Morris. He sang for Black Flag at this show. Just a few weeks earlier, Keith’s replacement, Ron Reyes, had quit the band.**

**The flyer is unusual in that it appears hastily put together, perhaps just before the show. There’s a fair bit of space between the letters and the edge of the paper that the letters were printed on before being pasted onto the artwork. Chuck normally cut the paper much closer and neater to the edge of the letters.**

**This is the first of the “classic four” flyers that are illustrated on the back of the *Everything Went Black* album cover. They were put there to exemplify the flyers, and ever since, have become the most iconic of Black Flag’s flyers.**

#### **17 August 1980, Time Stands Still**

**This is the first series of themed flyers. From August to November 1980, Pettibon recommended artwork that presented a theme over the course of two or more flyers. There are at least four series of themed flyers.**

**This first series consists of four quarter sized flyers for a show in Vancouver. The caption for each flyer is “...time stands still...” The first drawing shows a man and a woman in a romantic embrace. The second drawing shows that same man sitting alone in a room. He is shirtless, wearing only pants and socks. His arms are crossed. A framed photo of the woman is seen on the side table.**

SUN AUG 17

\$ 300 w/this flyer  
pt. 1

... time stands still...  
at Js Delux 114 w. Broad way

VENFORM PROD.

INSEX  
tuNNeL CanaRY

Write your name and address on the back for our mailing list.



BLACK  
FLAG IIII

NO AGE  
LIMIT  
\$400

SUN AUG 17

at Js Delux  
pt. 2

114 w. Broadway

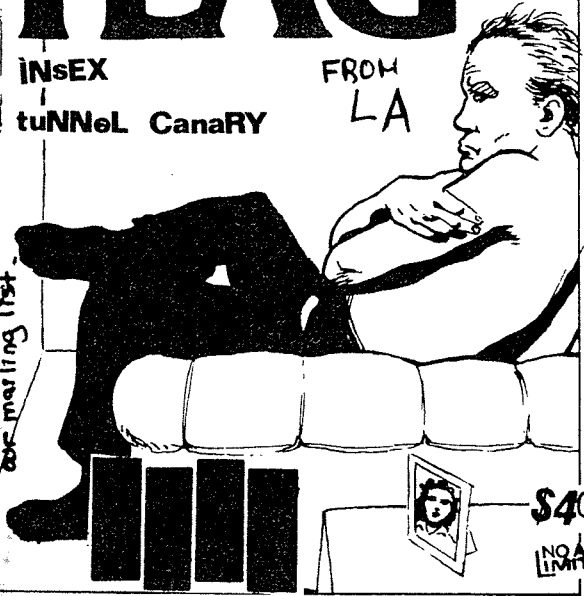
... time stands still...

BLACK  
FLAG

INSEX  
tuNNeL CanaRY

FROM  
LA

Write your name and address on the back for our mailing list.



\$ 3.00 w/this flyer

VENFORM PROD.

\$400  
NO AGE  
LIMIT

BLACK  
FLAG

INSEX tuNNeL CanaRY

... time stands still...

NO AGE  
LIMIT  
\$400

Write your name and address on the back for our mailing list.



SUN AUG 17 at Js Delux 114 w. Broadway

\$3.00 w/this flyer  
VENFORM PROD.

FROM  
LA

pt. 3

SUN

time stands still...

AUG 17

IIII

\$ 3.00 w/this flyer

at Js Delux 114 w. Broadway

Write your name and address on the back for our mailing list.



BLACK  
FLAG

INSEX  
tuNNeL CanaRY

NO AGE  
LIMIT  
\$400

pt. 4

VENFORM PROD.

The third drawing shows a euphoric heroin user who has just shot up. The final drawing shows that same person sitting in jail, his arms crossed. The beads of sweat on his forehead suggest that he is experiencing withdrawal.

The two scenarios juxtapose the highs and lows of love and drug use, implying that being romantically attached to someone is like a narcotic. It delivers an illusory, transient joy which is equally capable of inflicting terrible misery. The loneliness and isolation that the man endures when he is not with the woman is likened to heroin withdrawal in jail.

19 September 1980, Everything Went Black

A hedge trimmer is held open by two hands. The caption: Everything went black.

This flyer depicts the threat of the unknown. An unseen attacker uses hedge trimmers to inflict harm. Did he use them to cut the power to the lights? Did he use them to attack the victim? None of this is clear.

Symbolically, the hedge trimmers form a giant X that cross out and negate everything. This is the most threatening of Black Flag's flyers. This is also the second of the "classic four."

3 October 1980, Patty Hearst

San Francisco's own Patty Hearst appeared in a brief series of two flyers for shows in the Golden Gate City. Pettibon explained how his interest in Hearst stems from the hypocrisy of her radical ideals:

RT on Hewitt

**D PRESENTS**  
at The Hideaway 427 Hewitt in LA

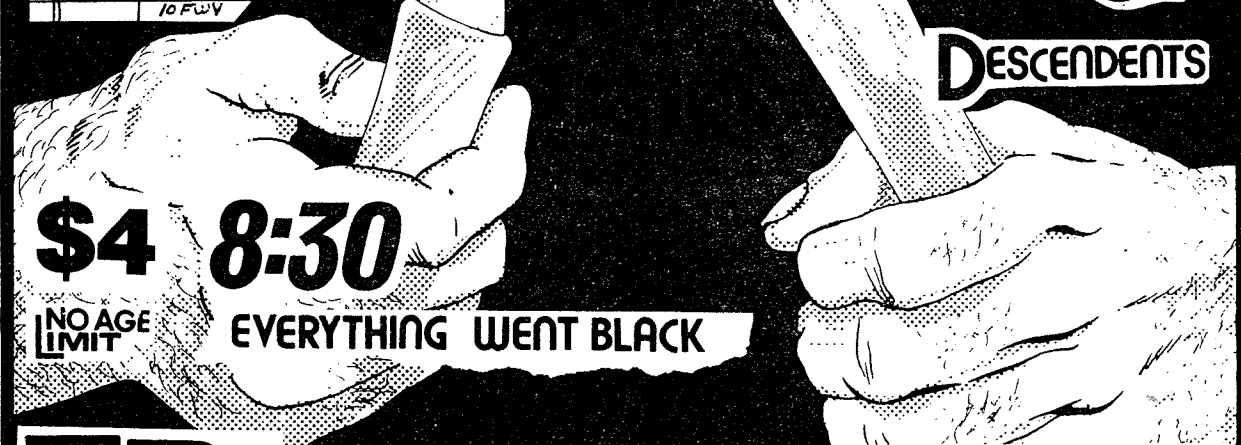
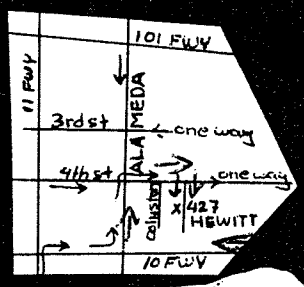
# BLACK FLAG III

**GEZA X AND THE MOMMY MEN**

**THE CIRCLE JERKS**

**STAINS**

**DESCENDENTS**



**\$4 8:30**  
**NO AGE LIMIT** **EVERYTHING WENT BLACK**

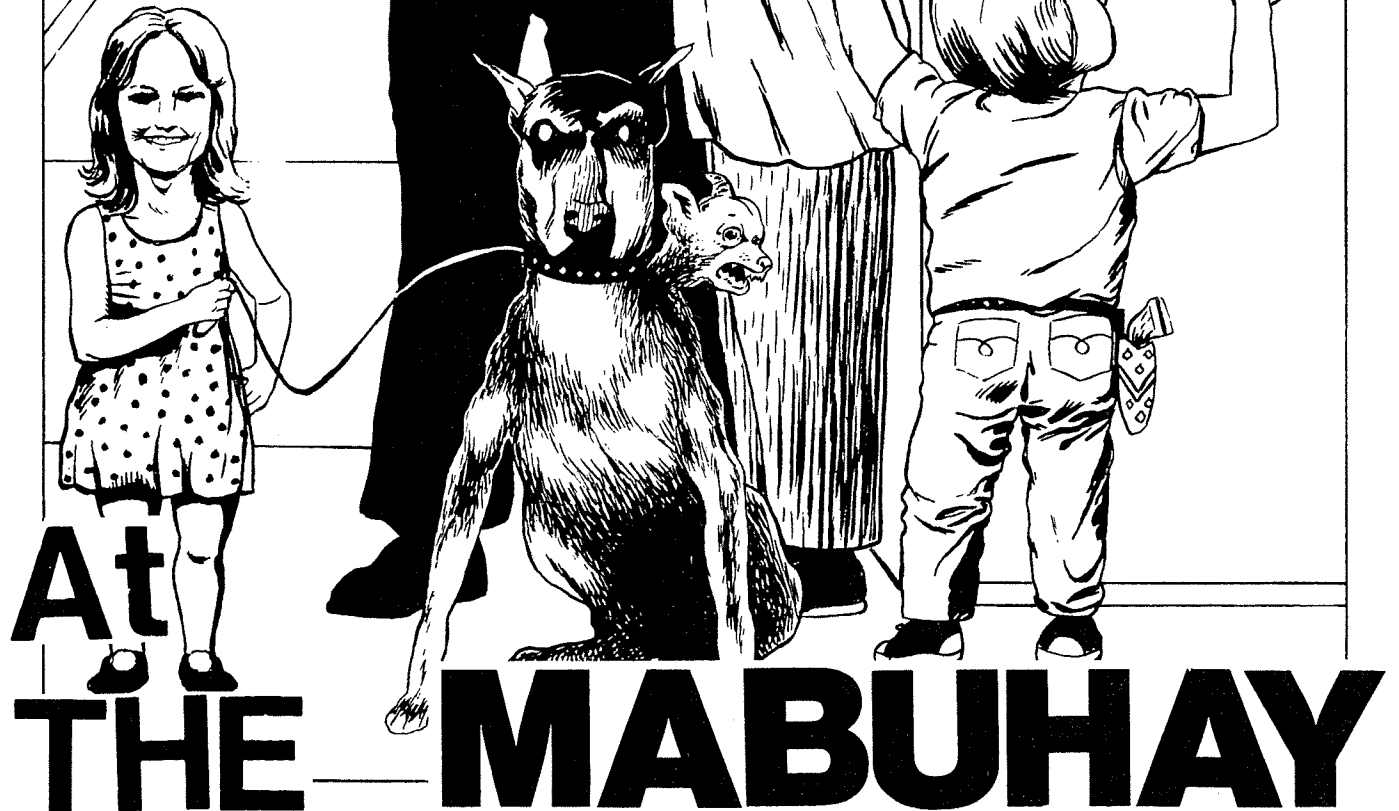
**FRI SEPT. 19**

After Hours Party no extra \$  
DE DETROIT  
saccharine trust  
minutemen

# BLACK PANTHER PARTY FLAG

FRI

OCT 3



At  
THE

MABUHAY



*A lot of the best humor, whether it's the Three Stooges or Molière, is about someone who is really strident or pretentious. The SLA and a lot of political groups from the '60s and '70s—to any time period—are so strident and they're so full of their own righteousness for the moment. Inevitably, a year later—like, in Patty's case, she went from being a debutante to an urban guerilla and then back again, where she married her own bodyguard.<sup>21</sup>*

The image lampoons Hearst by depicting her with her bodyguard husband, two kids and a radical family dog.

#### 8 October 1980, The First Creepy Crawl Flyer

The third and best known series of themed flyers. It was based on the Charles Manson's family. "Creepy Crawl" was a term they used to describe the missions where they broke into homes and burglarized them as the occupants slept. Black Flag had their own creepy crawl concept. As Chuck explained:

*Creepy Crawl is fear. Fear is a real strong emotion in people. It goes both ways. When you go into a situation, you experience it, and the whole idea is to RIDE it--to use the adrenalin you get from that and direct it. And that within yourself is part of the Creepy Crawl. What you do to other people with it is make them feel this experience of fear. You threaten a lot of their values, and the potential for something to happen that they don't understand, or they don't have control of in their existing mental framework, makes it useful to throw them off balance and thus open people up to where you don't have as prejudiced an attitude.<sup>22</sup>*

# BLACK FLAG

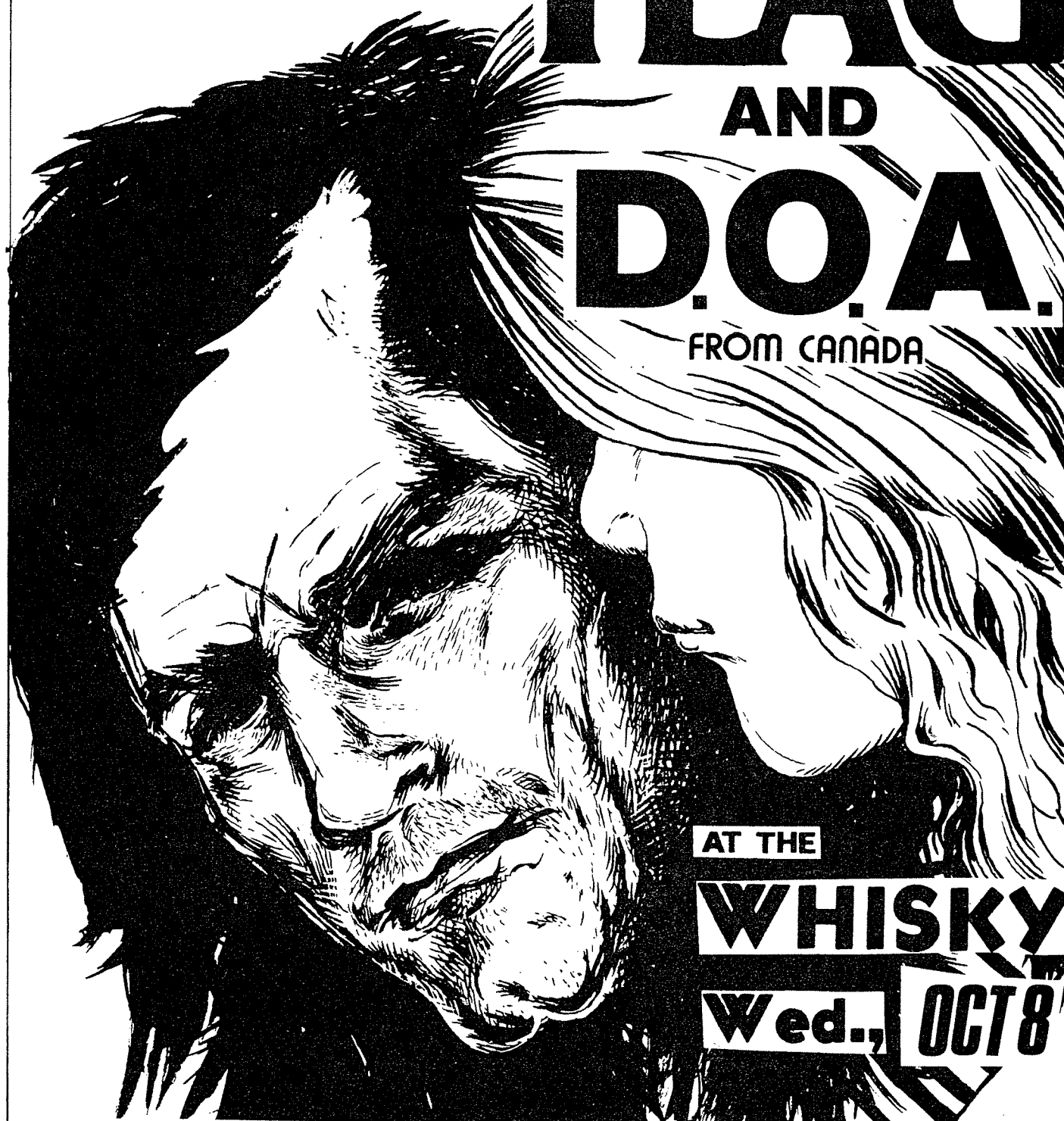
"CHARLIE, YOU BETTER  
BE GOOD. IT WASN'T EASY  
GETTING IN HERE, YOU KNOW."

# FLAG

AND

# D.O.A.

FROM CANADA



AT THE

WHISKY

Wed., OCT 8

CREEPLY CRAWL THE WHISKY

St. Pettibone

The creepy crawl concept acknowledged how the band felt when confronted with hostility. Rather than submit to fear, they immersed themselves in it to challenge the outside world, to make others fearful, and to nullify the prejudice they faced.

At that time, Manson was the most hated and feared man in America. Placing him in a banal conversation about behaving himself at a party amplified the ominous presence of his image because it minimized the terror that people felt in the wake of Helter Skelter. The threatening power of this, and most of the flyers, rests on inferences and not on graphic violence. These inferences were offensive to many, but were clever and funny to the people who understood the humour.

Unsettling the mainstream was typical behaviour for Black Flag. But alienating the audience which they'd worked so hard to build was unexpected. Manson was associated to the hippies. Black Flag's punk audience hated the hippies, and saw them as their antithesis. However, Chuck embraced the counterintuitive choice of artwork, *"I didn't really like that flyer, but couldn't really help but think that it was challenging too. This was the flyer for our first show in a big, above ground venue, and it had this long hair on it."*<sup>23</sup>

Looking back on it now, choosing this art was more closely aligned to the ideals of punk because it did not conform to the expectations of their audience. It went against the grain and embodied the spirit of anarchy that Chuck had defined as a "commitment to change." Being open to risk and to trying new things made this flyer possible. It became the third of the "classic four" and, arguably, Black Flag's best known flyer.

**18 November 1980, The Last Creepy Crawl Flyer**  
**Jesus nails Manson to the cross.**

This is the last and the most interesting of the Creepy Crawl flyers. It's better understood after hearing from Pettibon on why Manson interests him:

*Manson is someone who's an original exegesis of The Bible and The Beatles. He takes this blank piece of work, The White Album, and by the time he's through with it, it's blood red. He's taking these Rock lyrics and making apocalyptic importance out of them. The Bible as well, The Book Of Revelations ... everything's open to interpretation. That's the way Manson works and that's why he's an important figure to me.<sup>24</sup>*

Manson predicted the apocalypse through the Beatles. He revealed this vision to his family and they killed to make it true. They fell into an alternate reality because the street smart and charismatic Manson dominated their minds. He was their Messiah, a new Jesus Christ. This moment was captured here with Christ replicating himself through Manson.

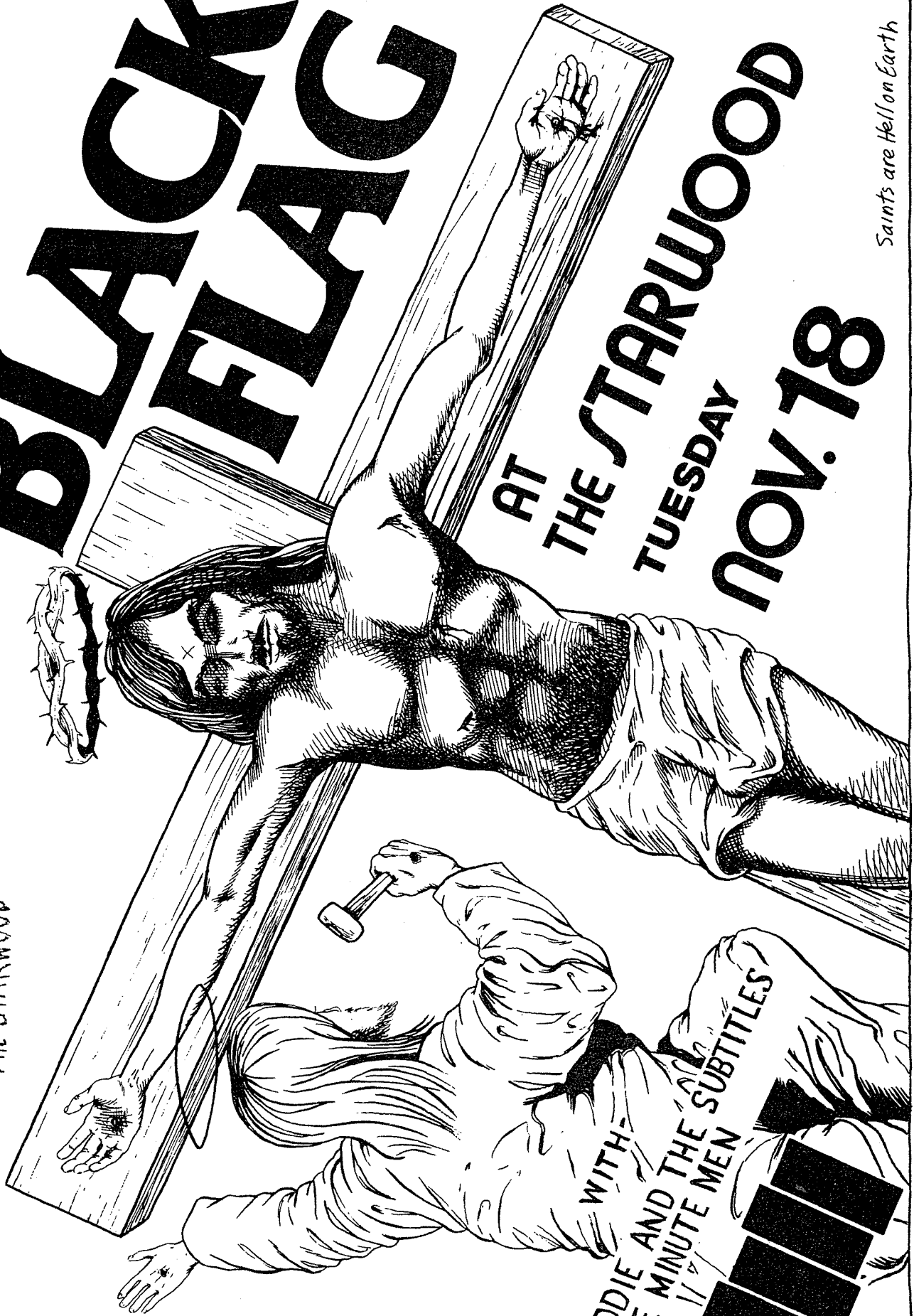
**18 November 1980, Mind Control**

The first flyer shows a baby branded on the forehead with the letter "A." The second flyer shows an angry older man with devil horns under the control of the puppet strings. The caption on the second flyer: *It terrifies me that people think they can get away with anything!*

St. Petribone

CREEPY CRAWL  
THE STARWOOD

# BLACK FLAG



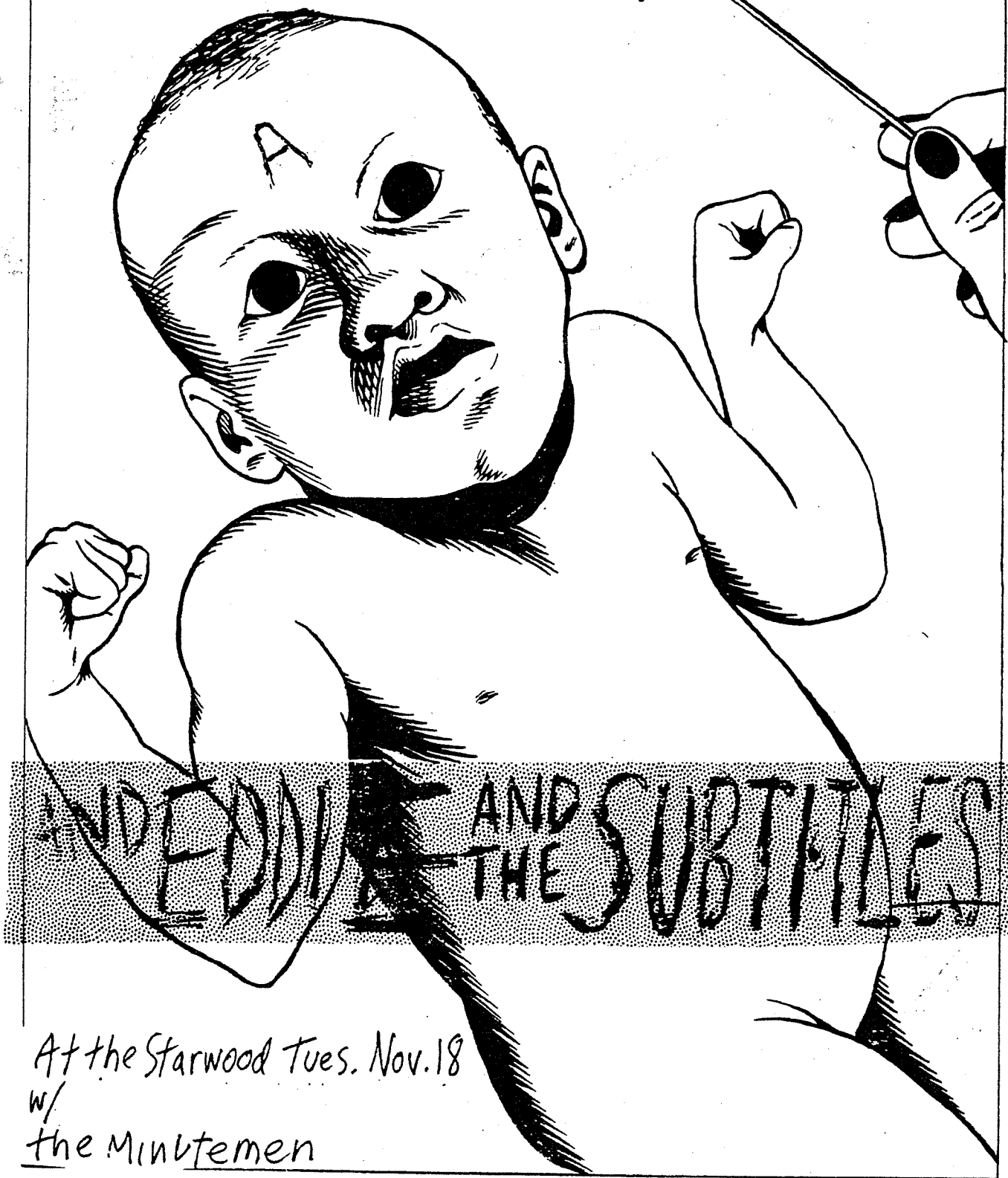
AT  
THE STARWOOD  
TUESDAY  
NOV. 18

WITH  
EDDIE AND THE "ALL"  
THE MINUTE MEN  
//



Saints are Hell on Earth

# BLACK FLAG



At the Starwood Tues. Nov. 18  
w/  
the Minbtemen



"It terrifies me  
that people think  
they can get away  
with anything!"

*Pettibone, above morality & anatomy*

At the Starwood  
Tues. Nov. 18  
w/ Eddie & the  
Subtitles and  
the Minutemen

**BLACK FLAG**

These two are the last of the themed flyers. They are also the last Black Flag flyers that were laid out by Pettibon. Both flyers are about control.

The baby symbolizes how we start out with a clean slate that is eventually filled with all the things we learn as we grow up. Things like racism, prejudice, and misogyny are taught to us leave an ugly mark, as ugly as the "A" on the baby's forehead. A branding mark is a sign of ownership, or in this case, a sign of indoctrination. Once a belief system is programmed into a mind, they belong to that group.

The letter "A" is likely a veiled reference to the circled "A" which is the symbol of anarchy in punk culture. If so, the flyer is about young people who blindly accept punk without ever questioning it.

The other flyer appears to be a distorted image of a conservative, with an infantilized large head and small body. His devil horns indicate that he is inherently evil. The puppet strings show that he is under the control of others. He needs to restrict people because greater freedom "terrifies" him.

It would be quite easy, almost understandable, if a punk laughed at this dehumanized vision of the establishment. But if they do laugh, then they are being sucked into the propaganda. That is what pairs this flyer to the previous one. An indoctrinated person who questions nothing will also blindly accept caricatures of the other side. In reality, the unexamined life of a punk is as controlled and manipulated as the conservative's. He is, in fact, an older version of them.



**6 & 7 January 1981, Taste the Moment**

A beer commercial slogan combined with a murder scene. My personal favourite.

Pettibon downplays his significant role in creating the iconography of Black Flag. Part of the reason may be related to the way his work was treated:

*"To me my work was the equivalent of a band like Black Flag or any other band who was righteously self-protective of recordings. I would give them original art and it would come back to me scrawled upon and taped over or whited out, and I'd always ask nicely, 'Could you please make a copy of this first and then do that?' Their master tapes were deemed sacrosanct, while my work was seen as completely disposable..."<sup>25</sup>*

An example of the unsanctified treatment of his work is seen on the original art for this flyer. The photo cannot be accurately reproduced here, but can be seen at <http://pettibon-e.tumblr.com/image/28380523373>.

"Taste the moment" was written on the original art. The words were then whited out or etched out and this is obvious in the photo.

**11 February 1981, The Reality of Evil**

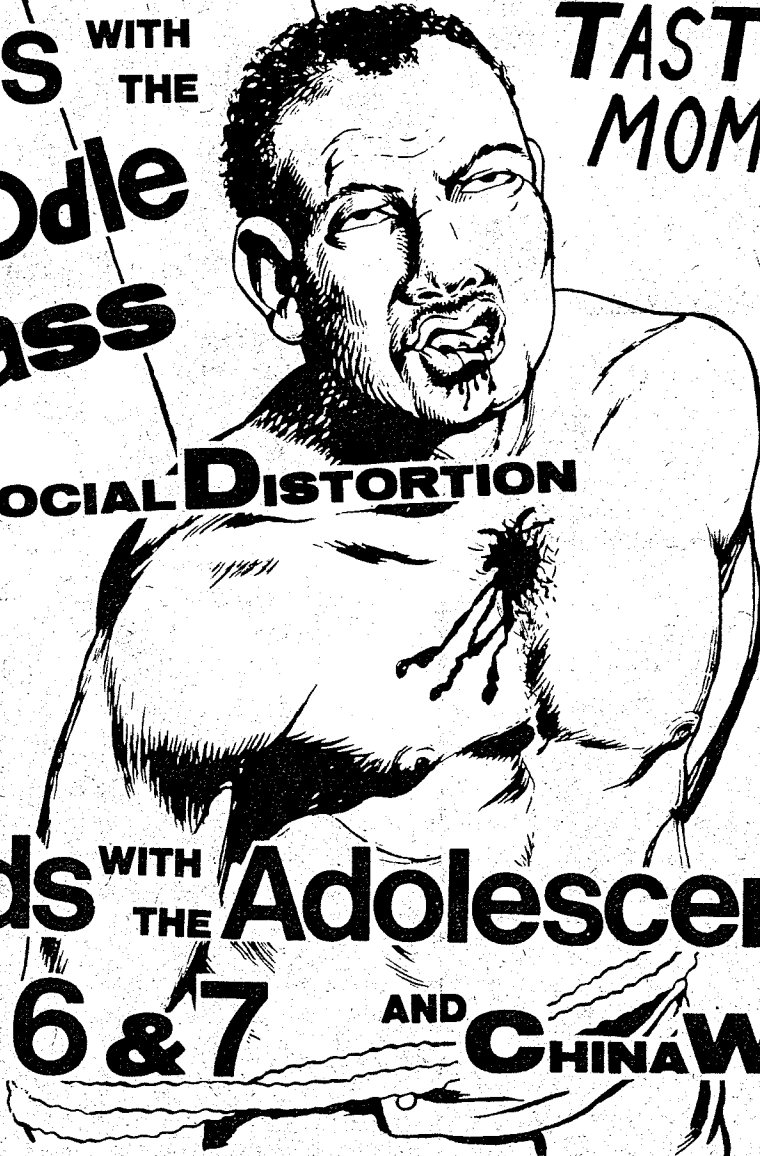
Chuck chose the art and did the layout for this final "classic four" flyer.

# BLACK FLAG III

Tues WITH THE  
Middle  
Class

TASTE THE  
MOMENT!

AND SOCIAL DISTORTION



Weds WITH THE Adolescents

Jan 6 & 7 AND CHINA WHITE

*Pettibone*

*Art is Religion*

*A Kiss and a fix went enough anymore*

# STARWOOD

8151 Santa Monica Blvd

CLIMAX PRESENTS

BLACK PANTHER



Advanced tickets available from Ticketron,  
Zed Vinyl Fetish, and Moby Disc.

THE REALITY  
OF EVIL

FEAR  
CIRCLE JERKS  
CHINA WHITE

WEDNESDAY FEB. 11

at the STARDUST BALLROOM 5612 Sunset blvd \$6  
For more information call — 462-1111

Racism is rarely the subject matter of Black Flag's flyers. It does appear here, but in a very subtle form. Like many Pettibon's images, the meaning is not overt. At face value, it appears to be a cool devil head. However, it is actually meant to be an exaggerated anti-Semitic representation of a Jewish person. This is the "reality" of what evil looks like to the racist.

The obtuseness of this flyer was demonstrated in 2002 on the short lived television series *That '80s Show*. A large and obvious homage of this flyer appears in the background of a street scene. An anti-Semitic image would never be shown on a network sit-com. It's more likely that the production crew had no idea about the true nature of the source material.

#### Summer 1981 Tour Schedule

The last of three Pettibon illustrated tour schedules that were issued by Black Flag during the Classic era.

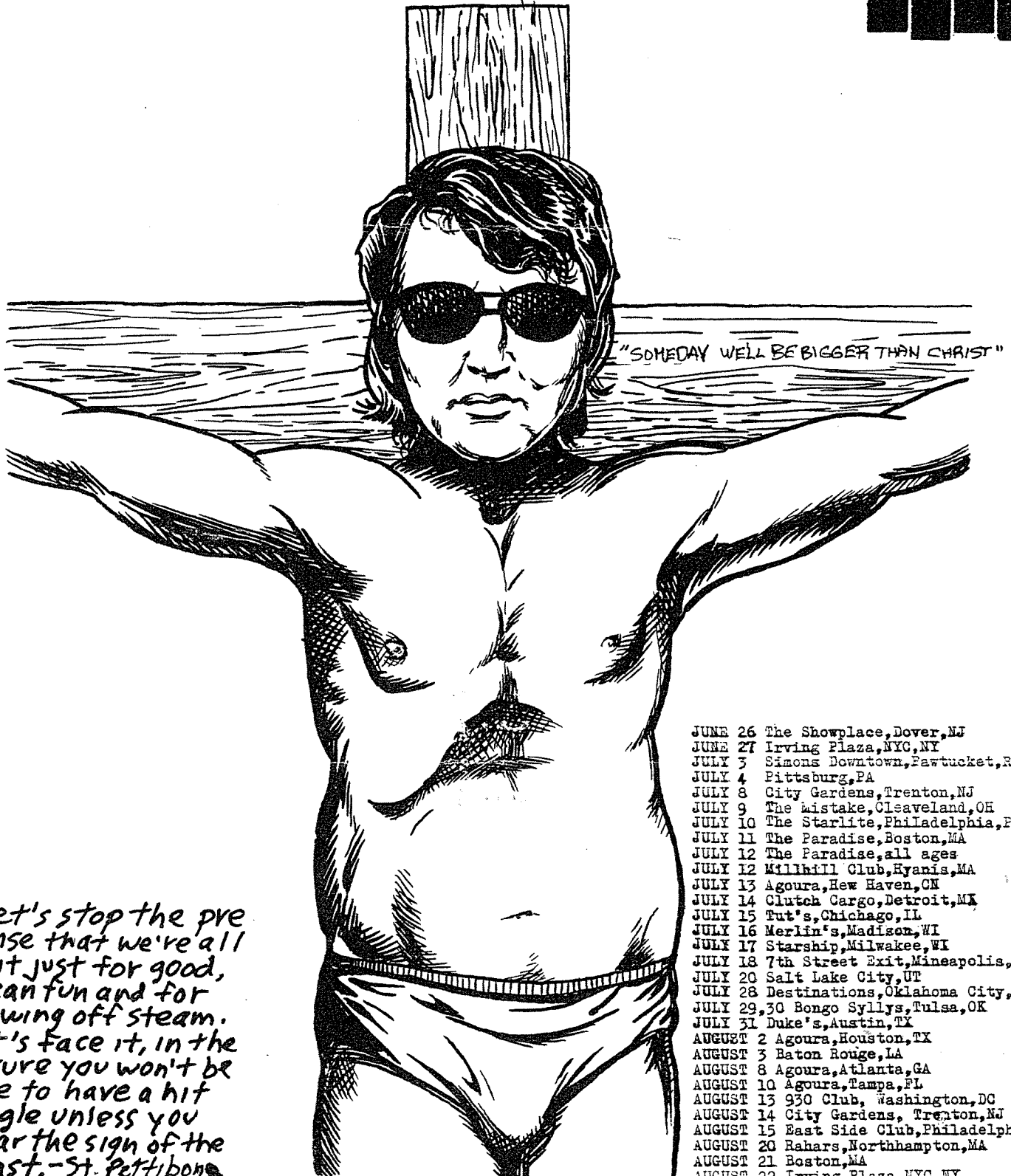
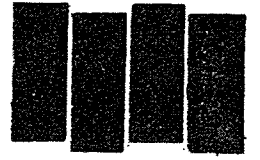
Pettibon made drawings that targeted Elvis' persona. This image, however, takes aim at the fans. The caption "You didn't love him enough" touches on the unquestioning commitment of his followers. If they had only been more than absolutely devoted, then his death would not have occurred. Crucifying the fat Elvis puts him in an idealized context, showing that he is venerated no matter what the truth may be.

#### 31 October 1981, Superman

Pettibon literally peels away Superman's g-rated exterior to reveal the truth underneath. In the process, he humanizes the Man of Steel more than DC comics ever could.

# BLACK FLAG

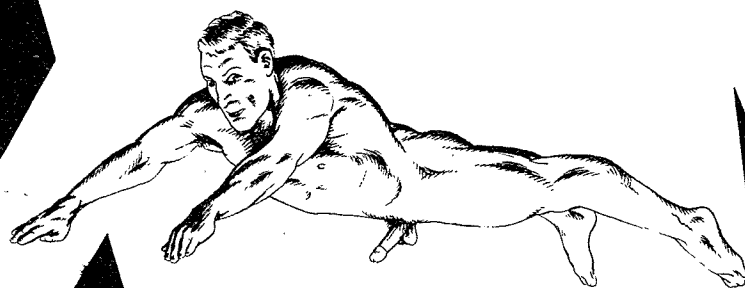
YOU DIDN'T LOVE HIM ENOUGH



Let's stop the pretense that we're all in it just for good, clean fun and for blowing off steam. Let's face it, in the future you won't be able to have a hit single unless you wear the sign of the beast. - St. Pettibone

- JUNE 26 The Showplace, Dover, NJ
- JUNE 27 Irving Plaza, NYC, NY
- JULY 5 Simons Downtown, Pawtucket, RI
- JULY 4 Pittsburg, PA
- JULY 8 City Gardens, Trenton, NJ
- JULY 9 The Mistake, Cleveland, OH
- JULY 10 The Starlite, Philadelphia, PA
- JULY 11 The Paradise, Boston, MA
- JULY 12 The Paradise, all ages
- JULY 12 Millhill Club, Hyannis, MA
- JULY 13 Agoura, Hew Haven, CN
- JULY 14 Clutch Cargo, Detroit, MI
- JULY 15 Fut's, Chicago, IL
- JULY 16 Merlin's, Madison, WI
- JULY 17 Starship, Milwaukee, WI
- JULY 18 7th Street Exit, Minneapolis, MN
- JULY 20 Salt Lake City, UT
- JULY 28 Destinations, Oklahoma City, OK
- JULY 29, 30 Bongo Sylls, Tulsa, OK
- JULY 31 Duke's, Austin, TX
- AUGUST 2 Agoura, Houston, TX
- AUGUST 3 Baton Rouge, LA
- AUGUST 8 Agoura, Atlanta, GA
- AUGUST 10 Agoura, Tampa, FL
- AUGUST 13 930 Club, Washington, DC
- AUGUST 14 City Gardens, Trenton, NJ
- AUGUST 15 East Side Club, Philadelphia, PA
- AUGUST 20 Bahars, Northampton, MA
- AUGUST 21 Boston, MA
- AUGUST 22 Irving Plaza, NYC, NY

# BLACK FLAG



## DOA

### SACCHARINE TRUST

Overkill

## SAT OCT 31

### at the Elite Club

FILMORE  
&  
GEARY

## **POST CLASSIC ERA**

**(1982-1983)**

If the Classic Era was a celebration of amazing art, then the Post Classic Era was the hangover that followed. It's not that the flyers are terrible. Some great images and interesting flyers were made after 1981. However, the flyers spiralled away from the heavy vibe that had previously challenged the world with awe inspiring art. They began to look different. Everything had changed.

One of the changes was that Chuck didn't always make the flyers. This duty was taken up by other people who worked with the band, including Joe Carducci, Mugger, and Dave Claassen.<sup>26</sup> Adding others to the mix diluted a previously consistent aesthetic. It changed how the flyers looked. This is obvious in the Hateful Whore flyer.

#### 5 March 1982, The Hateful Whore

The art is based on a real life incident where a man cut off the arms of his spouse and then went to jail. Locals were so upset by this flyer, that they pressured the promoter to cancel the show. The band agreed to change the flyer and the show was allowed to proceed.

The art is provocative and the satirical caption is razor sharp. But the layout is not well executed. The white space around the words is distracting. The bars are not aligned with the name of the band. The date of the show is missing.

The layout is a mess. But even if it was technically perfect, it still wouldn't look like a classic Black Flag flyer. It was Chuck's aesthetic sensibility that created the look of the classic flyers. Others may have tried, but no one was ever able to duplicate it.

The flyers also changed because Raymond Pettibon's art changed. It became looser and more cerebral. He continued to explore many of the same themes as before, but in a different way. His new art did not have the same immediate impact as before. The new images simply did not work as well for flyers.



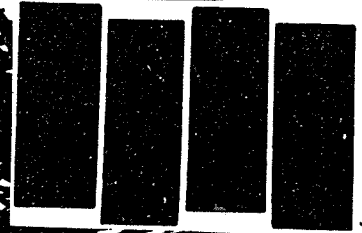
**GOLDENVOICE PRESENTS**

*HATEFUL WHORE. Because of you a good man went to prison.*



**BLACK**

**FLAG**



**ADOLESCENTS**

**\$7.50**

**CHANNEL 3 & OVERKILL**

5679 Hollister

TICKETS: Turning Point (S.B.), Morning Glory (I.U.), Jailhouse (Vent.), Rockpile (Gol.), at Door.

The biggest change, however, was in Pettibon's relationship to Black Flag. During the classic era, he was fully engaged in the process of selecting dangerous art that antagonized the outside world. By 1982, he was antagonizing the band.

According to Henry Rollins, Black Flag's final singer, "For most of the time I was in Black Flag, Ray's basic posture with us was like...(raises middle finger to the camera)."<sup>27</sup>

#### 17 July 1982, Roller Derby

Pettibon pokes fun at the menacing presence of Black Flag that he had helped to create. He depicts them as an affable, happy go lucky team.

Pettibon was no longer interested in collaborating with the band, and instead, frustrated their attempts to use his art. "If you notice," Henry muses, "there is a solid year of Black Flag flyers with nothing but erect penises."<sup>28</sup> It would not have been possible to carefully choose drawings for Black Flag flyers when the art selection was being limited to phallic images.

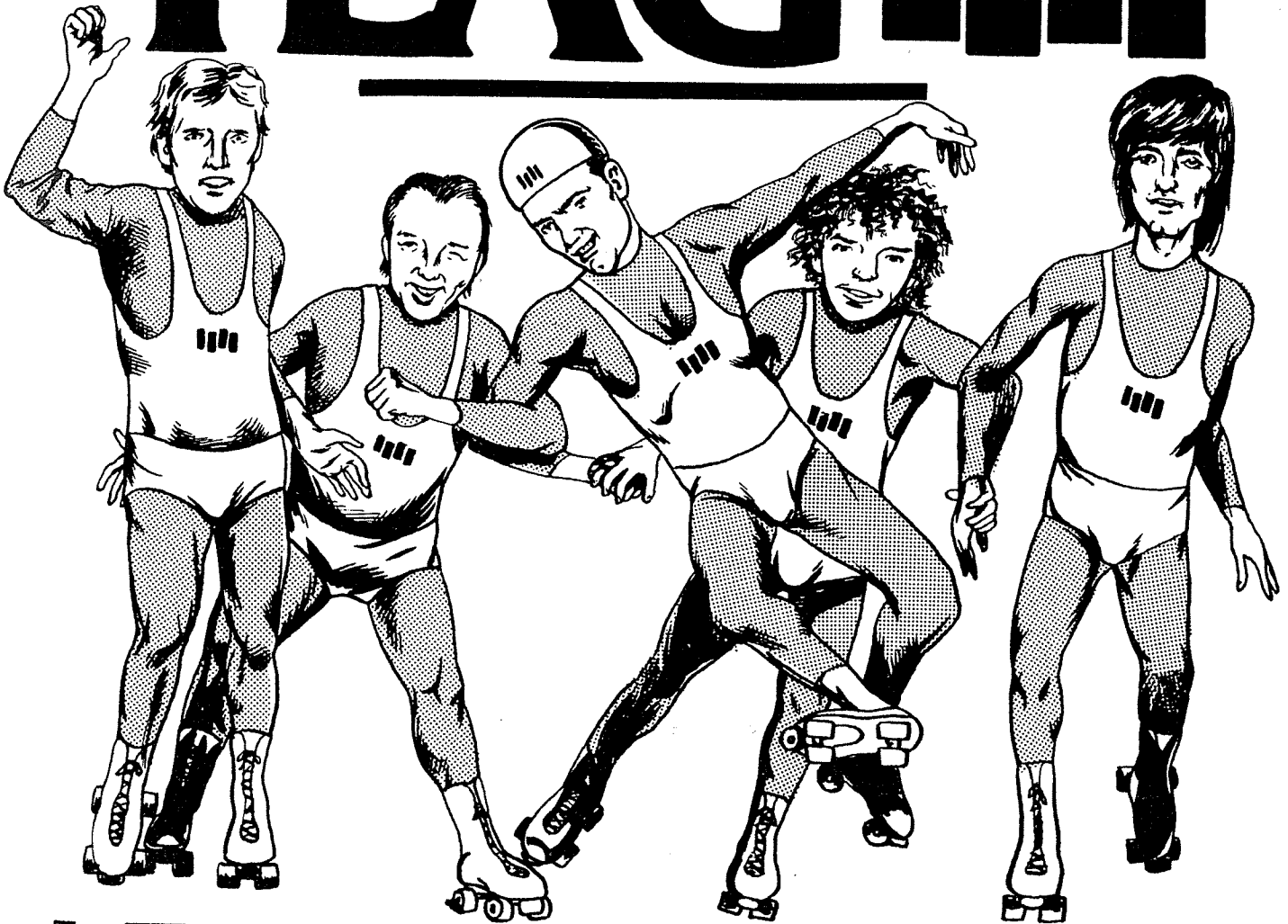
#### 11 June 1983, Angel Dust

Chuck made this flyer. The power of the drawing shines through the complex mixture of small and huge letters that he skilfully laid out.

This was the last flyer that communicated the heavy vibe of the band. It does a great job...even to this day. While photocopying the prototype of this zine, a real estate agent at the copier beside me noticed this image. She quickly gathered her things and left.

Goldenvoice &  PRESENT

# BLACK FLAG IIIII



TOVAR/MONEY/PETTIBON

**45 GRAVE  
DOA  
DESCENDENTS  
HÜSKER DÜ  
UXB**

**\$8.50 & 9.00  
TICKETS AT  
TICKETRON  
& DOOR**

**SATURDAY  
JULY 17  
OLYMPIC  
AUDITORIUM**

AND DON'T MISS

**BLOW-OUT! & WHISKY July 20 MINUTEMEN, SACCHARINE TRUST, MEAT PUPPETS, OVERKILL.**

PETTIBON'S TRIPPING CORPSE(1.75), CAPTIVE CHAINS(1.50), ASBESTOS(1.25), OFFER CHRISTS(1.25), NEW WAVE OF VIOLENCE(1.25), POBOX 1, LAWDALE, CA 90260.

GOLDENVOICE PRESENTS

EVERYTHING WENT  
BLACK REUNION  
FEATURING

RON REYES (CHAVO PEDERAST)  
DEZ CADENA ROBO GREG GINN  
JOHNNY BOB GOLDSTEIN  
CHUCK DUKOWSKI

JUNE 11 SAT

BLACK FLAG MISFITS  
VANDALS



Advanced  
\$7.00

ASSIST GIG INFO  
(213) 372-1848

SHOW STARTS 7:30

TICKETS AT:  
Zeds, Rhino, Aaron's  
Middle Earth, Moby Disc  
Vinyl Fetish, Discount  
Second Time Around  
Tiketron Civic boxoffice

SANTA MONICA CIVIC AUD.

ANGEL DUST

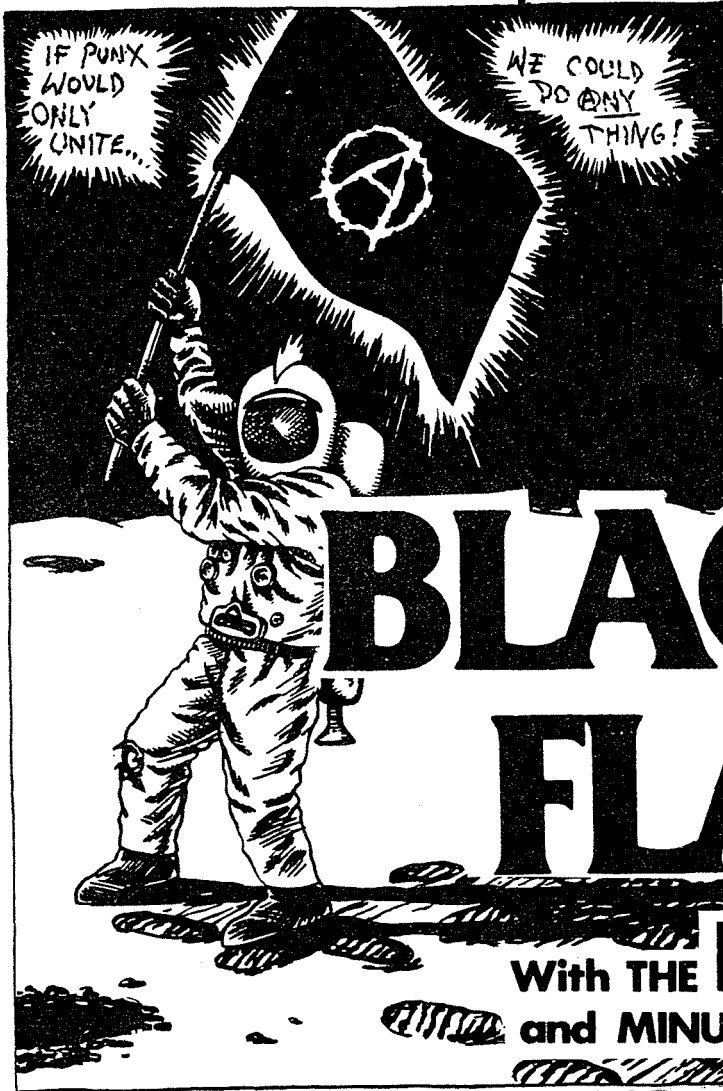
ART BY [unclear]

Chuck always felt that Pettibon's work as an integral part of Black Flag. He incorporated the art whenever he could, even when doing so caused some friction. According to Chuck, "Greg (Ginn) had wanted to move away from the art flyers in favour of strong bold legible from a distance type."<sup>29</sup> His departure from Black Flag in the fall of 1983 brought an end to the use of original Pettibon art for individual flyers.

Black Flag continued to promote shows with flyers, but the only Pettibon art they used came from their album covers. This was likely done to promote the record at the same time as the show. It was a marketing technique. It wasn't art.

The one exception was when Black Flag played with the Ramones on 17 November 1984. This was the last time Pettibon drawings were specifically chosen for flyers.<sup>30</sup> The moon punk drawing is a great image but the lettering and layout are sloppy. It was an inauspicious end to what was probably the greatest run of art flyers for any single band.

*Avalon*  
ATTRACTIONS



DOORS OPEN  
AT 7pm

# BLACK FLAG

With THE RAMONES  
and MINUTEMEN

At the HOLLYWOOD ART: Raymond Pettibon

# PALADIUM SAT NOV 17

## **EPILOGUE**

**The flyers fell into obscurity after Black Flag disbanded. For the most part, they were put in storage by the few people who appreciated them. That is where they stayed until the rise of the internet which allowed isolated people to connect and discuss their niche interests. That was the start. A more powerful medium would eventually shine a brighter light onto the flyers.**

At one time, it was almost impossible to acquire American punk collectables. A Misfits single might appear in Goldmine. Local record stores, if they were hip to the music, occasionally had an original pressing of Minor Threat's first single. But for the most part, collecting was a challenge.

All that changed in the late 1990's with eBay. Legendary rarities, like the Necros first single (only 100 pressed) were suddenly available. Collectors went crazy buying up all the impossibly rare records. Eventually, punk flyers started to appear on eBay. This was the first real opportunity, after the fact, to collect the flyers.<sup>31</sup> By the 1998 punk closets were being flung wide open to satisfy an insatiable memorabilia lust.

The 1999 publication of the book *Fucked Up and Photocopied* also brought greater attention to the flyers of Black Flag. It documented the early flyer art that came out of America's punk community. Before this book, there was no place to go and survey the incredible variety of everything that had been created. This book also brought artistic credibility to the flyers. Seeing it all at once underscored how the artistic merit of this work had previously been overlooked.

The profile of the flyers has also been helped by Raymond Pettibon's success as an artist. He is highly regarded in the art world but the flyers do not get a lot of respect. They're viewed as a mere footnote in his prolific career. The spectacular advertizing art that he created continues to be ignored.



Virtually every single Black Flag flyer can now be found somewhere on the internet. The art and the music continue to resonate with a new generation that wasn't even born when the work was being created. Unfortunately, a book that compiles every flyer in chronological order has yet to be written and probably never will. There is too much acrimony among the principle players and not enough momentum to make it happen. In a way, however, it doesn't really matter. After all these years of collecting, nothing has changed. I remain fascinated by the mystique of the flyers and continue to search out their untold story.

## END NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Greg Ginn, Ripper 3, September 1980
- <sup>2</sup> Dukowski, e-mail 11 December 2012
- <sup>3</sup> Dukowski, e-mail 27 January 2013
- <sup>4</sup> Raymond Pettibon, interview in Bombsite issue 69, 1999
- <sup>5</sup> Dukowski, Interview with Mark Prindle, 2007, [www.markprindle.com](http://www.markprindle.com)
- <sup>6</sup> Dukowski, Ripper 3, September 1980
- <sup>7</sup> Dukowski, e-mail 11 December 2012
- <sup>8</sup> Dukowski, e-mail 11 December 2012
- <sup>9</sup> Dukowski, quoted in Stewart Dean Ebersole's book Barred for Life, 2013
- <sup>10</sup> Raymond Pettibon credits Keith Morris as the flyer's artist during MOCATV interview uploaded to Youtube 22 February 2013
- <sup>11</sup> from Steve Appleford, "Black Flag fans, after years of no band, now get two," Los Angeles Times, 31 March 2013
- <sup>12</sup> Dukowski, e-mail 3 January 2013
- <sup>13</sup> Dukowski, e-mail 10 December 2012
- <sup>14</sup> Slash Magazine, September 1979
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid
- <sup>16</sup> Pettibon interview, at [www.Art21.org](http://www.Art21.org)
- <sup>17</sup> from Jay Babcock, 12 Step Program in Self Reliance, LA Weekly 20 June 2001
- <sup>18</sup> Layla Gibbon interviews Raymond Pettibon, Maximumrockroll #304, September 2008
- <sup>19</sup> Dukowski, e-mail 10 December 2012
- <sup>20</sup> Keith Morris interview with Earworm Radio 2, 28 July 2012
- <sup>21</sup> Pettibon interview, at [www.Art21.org](http://www.Art21.org)
- <sup>22</sup> Ripper 6, November/December 1981
- <sup>23</sup> Dukowski, quoted in Stewart Dean Ebersole book Barred for Life, 2013
- <sup>24</sup> Interview with Steven Cerio, Seconds #34, 1995
- <sup>25</sup> Quoted in Mark Spitz & Brendan Mullen, We got the Neutron Bomb, 2001
- <sup>26</sup> Dukowski, e-mail 27 February 2013
- <sup>27</sup> Henry Rollins interview in the MOCA "Art of Punk" series which was uploaded on Youtube 11 June 2013.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid
- <sup>29</sup> Dukowski, email 23 September 2008
- <sup>30</sup> There were two flyers with non-album art for this show. They are the only post-Dukowski flyers with non-album art.
- <sup>31</sup> At one point, Black Flag's record company SST sold Black Flag flyers. 10 flyers could be purchased for 2 dollars. This ended sometime around 1987.

**Also available: All I Care About is Music. A short novel about punk rock and record collecting. \$6 CDN post paid in North America.**

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