

SHEER TERROR

PHOTOS: RICH UNHOCH



Sheer Terror...sheer rage, sheer hatred, sheer hilarity. Sheer hilarity, you say? Just read the interview with these NY terrors as they *dis* just about everyone and everything in sight. Granted, some of the attitudes towards certain issues show the incisiveness of Archie Bunker. and I don't agree with all of their opinions. This raw, aggressive hardcore band have released one album, "Just Can't Hate Enough," on Germany's Starving Missile Records (with a US pressing planned on Blackout), a live 7", appeared on the "Where The Wild Things Are" compilation and, of course, are included on the wonderful 7" you get with this issue (aren't we so kind!). I interviewed Paul (vocals), Jason (drums) and Mike (bass, ex-Ludichrist) in someone's cramped car behind the Rat...

SV: How come your album came out in Germany and never got a US release?

Paul: Because nobody in America had the balls to put it out. Everybody wanted safe garbage, fucking Sick of It All-kind of hardcore and stuff like that. They don't want to take any frigging chances. According to them, we were too honest, whatever the fuck that's supposed to mean, because if we didn't like something, we would say we didn't like something rather than just kiss their asses and really try to get a big record deal.

SV: You mean in terms of what they were offering you or

what you had to say in the lyrics?

Paul: A little bit of both. I admit I am a loudmouth a good part of the time and I like to yell and if I don't like something, I'll make it known, whether anybody wants to know or not. But, I guess they didn't like that too much because we're not the big, "oh, let's get together and have a good time and mosh it up for unity" and all this other crap.

SV: They (In-Effect) promote bands like Sick of It All and Killing Time as being street-level type bands.

Paul: Yeah, and that's another thing, too.

SV: You come from the same area as those guys, right?

Paul: Yeah, and there's two things. Like these kids from the streets—from the streets nothing, they live with their folks. Who cares about the fuckin' streets. I ain't no bum, I ain't a hobo, I don't live on the streets.

Mike: Don't forget the streets.

Paul: Yeah, don't forget the struggle. Ahh, forget about it? I don't even want to know about it. It's ridiculous. What the fuck are they talking about, all this street shit. Old school, new school crap.

Jason: They struggle to get allowances and they tour and they come back and they get their mother's house.

Paul: (mockingly) We're fighting for our liberty, we're fighting for our freedom. What are you fucking fighting. Shut the hell up! What are you talking about?

SV: The Lower East Side Crew.

Mike: Back in the days, right Paul?

Paul: I used to hang out there years ago, back in '81, back in the days, me and Judge used to go around beating people up from Boston. You go to A7, just hang out and drink beers and then it turned into a bunch of little kids drinking Pepsi.

SV: Yeah, that's what I hear from people in NY who've been around for awhile say it's gotten ridiculous, just a bunch of kids from the suburbs.

Paul: Well, right now there's nothing. That whole Lower East Side crew didn't last through it all. So much for unity. Now the Lower East Side is like glam fags and crack addicts and weirdos and shit.

SV: They're trying to gentrify it, too.

Paul: Yeah, well sure. Maybe they're putting out a couple of people who've been down there all their lives but at least the rich people are trying to clean the place up. I mean that place could use a good scrubdown with some Ajax. I don't know why these people would write songs about it. It's a fucking shithole. It was a place that had a couple of clubs down there...you'd hang out, you'd drink but I don't know why everyone makes such a big stink about it, like those assholes in Judge, I don't know what the fuck they're talking about. I mean, how old's Porcelly? Early 20s? Most of these kids are from Connecticut and they're talking about "back in the days, hanging out on the Lower East Side," and say that was in like 1982, so that was 8 years ago, that means he was 14. Do you really think his mother was letting his safe home in Connecticut to hang out on the Lower East Side?

SV: Probably not.

Paul: Exactly. It's like, who the fuck are you kidding? It's funny. It's become a parody of itself.

SV: What inspires the hatred and rage in your songs?

Paul: Everyday life, really. It's a very easy emotion to bring about in someone and if you can find a way to channel it out or use it to your advantage, which is what I'm trying to do, fine, but I don't try to let it take over my life or anything. I just try to get on with my life and do what I have to do to succeed or get by and whatever shit I run into, and I run into a lot of shit—I don't know if it's my luck, my family's luck or somebody upstairs hates me—and that's what I write about. I could write a happy song but I don't think hardcore should be too happy.

SV: So that's probably why you're down on a lot of the newer bands that are trying to present more of a positive look.

Paul: Yeah, positive look but all they're talking about is beating everybody up or whatever.

Mike: Which ain't positive....

Paul: "Bring it down with this hammer I've got..." What's this kid got, a ball-peen with him or something. Yeah, fine, you don't want to drink, you don't want to do drugs, you don't want to eat meat, fine and dandy, I don't care. Do whatever the hell you want.

Mike: Everybody says Paul's a psycho. He doesn't assault anybody. What about that guy over there (the Rat bouncer who caused shit with Paul and Mike). He should start a hate band. Last time we played here, we had kids that wouldn't come up and buy records from us because they were afraid.

Jason: Yeah, they were getting another kid to go up to Billy (Wilson) to buy 'em for them.

Paul: If all the positive bands don't want to do anything, fine but if I don't like it, I'm going to say I don't want to hear about it. If they want to come down on me for whatever I want to do, go right ahead but don't get in my fuckin' face because I will slap you. I've got no time and patience for a 14 year old kid yelling at me. (mockingly) "Ahh, you're bringing down

the scene." Get the fuck out of here!

SV: I don't know. The concept of a scene is so ridiculous, it's so dated, anyway.

Paul: Whoever started using the term scene should be shot in the fucking head because they ruined everything. They killed it all right there. '80, '81 and '82 in New York, nobody was saying "oh, the scene, the scene." They had shows and they had crazy people who went to these shows. And some of these crazy people knew one another and they would hang out and drink and do what they wanted to do and that was it. But when somebody started going "scene, scene" and that whole California BYO bullshit, it just ruined it. It's like, these guys are organized? They couldn't organize a fuckin' poker game, they're going to organize an organization or they're going to change the world? They couldn't change their fuckin' shorts. That's what killed it right there. They couldn't organize a poker game. They don't even know how to play poker. They're too fuckin' young. And another thing with these straight-edge kids, they can't buy beer, they're too fuckin' young.

SV: Okay, if you were the mayor of New York, what would you do?

Paul: Bomb it! I'd level the place and make it into a giant parking lot. Much like Rockaway Beach, which should be a parking lot. I wouldn't want to be the mayor of New York. I couldn't live in the city. It'd drive me insane.

Mike: I don't know if you've got it out here, but every day, on the news, there's something racial in New York.

Paul: Yeah, they'll make something out of nothing.

Mike: They'll build it up and build it up until it kind of explodes.

SV: Like this week you had the Andrew Dice Clay on Saturday Night Live deal and the Jimmy Breslin incident.

Paul: They'll take 2 stupid little incidents and they'll blow it up into, "you see, everybody's going crazy, racism this, racism that."

Mike: Al Sharpton says if they get not guilty, the town is going to burn to the ground. (referring to the Bensonhurst murder).

Paul: Al Sharpton's a fat Barry White lookalike.

SV: So do you think the media makes the problem worse?

Mike: They're building it up. They don't know what they're building it up to but it's going to explode pretty soon.

Paul: That's the whole thing. I don't know if it's going to sound ignorant, but wherever there's a large group of black people, that's where they live and the whites live someplace else. It was like fine and dandy but then once the media starts going "Oh, you see how segregated they are, they're getting the raw end of the deal, this is bad, everybody should try to live together" and they try to force everything together, with the busing and everything and if you want to force something that doesn't want to move, there's going to be some sort of friction and everybody's paying for it and it's ridiculous. Let people do whatever they want to do, within legal rights. If they want to live there by themselves, fine, go ahead, this is America, but don't come down on me if I want to walk through your neighborhood. Granted, I've gotten a lot of shit from black guys—not a lot to really comment on.

Jason: But then again, you've got black friends.

Paul: When I was in high school, I didn't talk to anybody. The jocks and the guidos would come down on me. The black guys on the football team were taking my back and I've probably got more reggae and Motown and ska records than half these blacks into Public Enemy. So, sure, I've used the word



nigger—it's a fucking word. People want to offense to them, fine. Granted there are negative connotations with these words, but they're fucking words. I mean, somebody calls you an asshole, you're not going to shoot them, are you?

Jason: Words can't hurt you. Another thing is say 3 black guys beat up Paul, there'd be a little article. Now if Paul and his friend beat up a black guy, it would be "Oh, my God." I have nothing against black people; it's just ridiculous.

Paul: I ain't for the white power shit, because I can't stand white people, either. But, after awhile, it just gets to be so fucking much. Like Public Enemy. I don't particularly like rap but for what they do, they're probably the best in the business right now. But then they're standing on American flags.

Mike: And then they copyright their music through the American government.

Paul: The government's protecting your music. Shut the fuck up. Shit or get off the pot.

Mike: They pull down the government left and right.

SV: There's nothing necessarily wrong with putting down the government if you want to change it. Even standing on the flag is protected by the first amendment.

Paul: Yeah, but everybody takes that for granted. Rather than saying first amendment, why don't these people say, "I wanted to do it. fuck you, you don't have to like it," rather than "Oh, it's my first amendment right."

SV: But that sort of implies they have the right to do that then. They have the right to say fuck you if you don't like it.

Paul: Yeah, but those artists in Chicago.

SV: The ones who put the flag on the floor?

Paul: Yeah. Those people should be slapped. I hate artists to begin with. I ain't no gung-ho American but it's a symbol of our country. You don't have to like it, but if you're going to start some shit like that, a bunch of old guys who fought in war are going to see that and go what the fuck. I can't stand that shit. Get a fucking job. Paint a picture of yourself. Artists, I dunno...Ask us about Scatterbrain.

SV: What about Scatterbrain?

Paul: Scatterbrain are a bunch of homosexuals. That album is the worst piece of shit that ever came out, they are unoriginal, they're boring, they're stupid, garbage and for anybody to actually think Tommy Christ is a lyrical genius and there's lyrical insight is a fucking moron.

SV: Ah, you're just jealous because they signed them and not you.

Paul: Jealous of those fucking guys? Tommy Christ is uglier than me. I'm jealous of him. But he's singing about how the government is your mother and that's what he has to come up with is seatbelts in cars and helmets for motorcycles and driving at 55? Ooh, when will this reign of terror stop? Give me a fucking break.

Jason: We're definitely not jealous. They changed their name just to get on a label, to be in more stores.

Paul: They suck. That's the final words on Scatterbrain.

SV: Why did you leave Ludichrist, or did they leave you?

Mike: Me and Tony Scaglione of Slayer fame quit in mid-tour in San Francisco because we got the short end of the stick. I couldn't get along with Glen Cummmgs whatsoever. Tommy Christ has his own problems, which I don't want to get into.

Paul: Them and 24-7 Spyz, suck, too. I don't care if it sounds racist but the only reason they got signed is because they're black. Because if it was a bunch of white guys playing that music, they'd still be playing CBGB's. They came up from out of nowhere riding on the coattails of Bad

Brains and Living Colour and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

SV: But the Chili Peppers are white.

Paul: Yeah, exactly. But that's what everyone wants to do, now. Everyone wants to be big funk band. I'm not a big Chili Peppers fan but, for what they do, it's good. But all these labels are trying to get bands like that and 24-7 Spyz are the worst. My nephew, who is 3 years old, can write better lyrics, one and, two, their music sucks and they're a bunch of freaks.

Mike: But they mix metal and funk.

Paul: Yeah, they mix metal and funk—what an original concept. Ooo, fucking geniuses.

SV: Okay, why the Cure cover on the live EP?

Paul: Why not? I like the Cure. I always wanted to do that song for the hell of it and they're a good band. I'd rather listen to new wave dance music like them or The Smiths than Youth of Today, excuse me, Shelter, Go! How about Go!? Let's talk about Go!, Mike Bullshit's band. That's another guy—okay, he's gay and everything. Fine and dandy, you want to be gay, go right ahead, I don't give a shit. But not everybody in the world has to know. And not everybody has to like it. In his fanzine, he thanked Dolph Lundgren for existing. Oh, man, what are you, nuts? And somebody asked him why does he use football players in his flyers and he goes "Oh, they're energetic and I like sports and I like energetic people. And, also, they're cute as a dickens." Who wants to hear that? If you're gay, fine, keep it to yourself, shut up. I don't have to like it, I don't have to support it and I don't have to defend it.

SV: Let's see, who else in NY haven't you maligned yet that you want to malign?

Paul: Bad Brains. Fuck them. Sure, I haven't seen them in years, they put on a good stage show and everything, they're exciting but these simple, Jah-Rastafari guys have got this big tour bus and all these kids are like, "but they've done so much for the scene." What the fuck have they done for anything but themselves? What'd they do? Build a club? They get too much recognition, if you ask me. What else can we rant about here?

SV: Did you ever see "Do The Right Thing"?

Mike: It was good.

Paul: I didn't see it. I saw "School Days." Spike Lee, he's another guy.

Mike: He mouths off too much.

Paul: Of course he mouths off too much. He looks like a frog.

Mike: He wakes up and jumps out of bed and screams "I'm black!"

Paul: Alright, you're black. Who cares? Get on with your fucking life.

Mike: Just because he was an NYU film student and made a couple of movies, alright, now he has the insight of Jesus Christ or something. He's the black saviour.

Jason: These people should understand that we're all just pieces of shit that aren't going to amount to nothing. And if everyone would get that in their head, the world would be a better place. But everyone has to be better, everyone thinks they're the greatest, but everyone's an asshole.

Paul: Everybody's got something to say, including me. I admit I'm an asshole but I guess I'm just lucky because I am in a band and I get to do interviews. I get to be an asshole publicly.