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MELVIN'S LIFE

51

TOUR DIARY

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 1 & 2: Riding the Stripper Bus in Alaska

SEPTEMBER 10 2012, 3:15 PM ET

by *Buzz Osborne*

"My God, what were we thinking?"

September 5, 2012 – Anchorage, AK @ Bear Tooth Theatre and Pub

September 6, 2012 – Seattle, WA @ Showbox at the Market

2 down, 49 to go

We literally had to step over used syringes as we loaded the gear out of our practice space in downtown Los Angeles. Hmm...I can't wait to get back.

We are now calling this tour "51 States in 51 Days" because we think DC should be a state. Nonetheless, no one is listening to us about that, or much else really. So we drive to Seattle, leave our gear and then fly to Anchorage for the first show of the trip. Weirdly enough we ran into Dylan Carlson and the rest of Earth who were getting ready to fly to New Zealand for their first ever tour down under. They said they had no working papers and just tourist visas. Good luck! I told them about the time New Zealand customs officials ruined two of my guitar cases by tearing all of the lining out of them looking for drugs and when they found none, simply shoved the now useless mess back to me and told me to beat it. The Earth people seemed a bit concerned but marched onto the plane anyway. I'm sure everything will be fine once they get there.... We also ran into Jonathon Poneman and Bruce Pavit, the two top brass head honchos from Sub Pop, who were actually on our same flight! They told us they were on their way to Anchorage to sign a band that sounded like the Stooges.... We landed at Anchorage after 3 1/2 hours into a 75 mph windstorm. Really rough landing. I hate flying anyway and this did not help in that department one bit. Shitting your pants is no way to start any tour....After I changed my pants in a semi clean airport bathroom we made our way to the hotel. They picked us up in a bus-sized party wagon complete with a bar, flashing lights and a stripper pole. The only thing missing was the booze and the strippers....We are probably the only band in the world to get picked up in a stripper booze wagon with no strippers and no booze. That's okay though, I don't drink and I hate strippers. Why would anyone be interested in that look-but-don't-touch horseshit? Strippers are like training wheels for idiots who end up blowing cash screwing prostitutes....Cool.

Since we had a dry bar, the boys went straight to a liquor store and bought a case of Pabst Blue Ribbon to drink at the hotel. The winds continued to howl all night with the power flickering off and on every few minutes. I sat in the room and fell asleep watching *The Shining* which seemed like the right movie under the circumstances and I ended up having a weird dream about ax murdering some 8-year-old chatterbox named Tony.... The next morning I went to take a shower and found that the hot water didn't work and when I tried to call the front desk the phone was dead, so I shoveled on my clothes and stomped down to the lobby to see if maybe I could get a different room. At the desk they told me they did indeed have other rooms available that did include hot water but those rooms didn't have any power as a result of the storm but she said she could work all of that out no problem. At that point she handed me a new room key along with a flashlight....

The Anchorage show was a blast! Everyone was really nice to us and we had a great time! Thanks to all of you we talked to and everyone who helped us out...

Seattle: We took the redeye from Anchorage right after the show and landed in Seattle at 7 a.m. and went immediately to our hotel for some much needed sleep. I always have fun playing in Seattle and the Showbox at the Market is one of my favorite venues in the whole world. We have been doing shows there for years and everyone who works there are beyond nice. Thank you all for a wonderful experience every time!

Two down, 49 to go....My God, what were we thinking?

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Day 3: Earthquake Destroys Portland!

SEPTEMBER 11 2012, 1:37 PM ET

by Dale Crover

"To anyone that thinks it would be really cool to move to Portland, I hope you like shitty rain"

September 7, 2012 – Portland, OR

@ Hawthorne Theatre

3 down, 48 to go

We stopped at the Country Cousin restaurant in Centralia, Washington, on our way to Portland. I haven't been there in 35 years! My parents would stop there when we would take trips down to Oregon. The one thing I remembered about this place was when you opened the door you could hear a chicken clucking. I was pretty happy that it hadn't changed one bit, except now I'm old enough to order the bacon bloody mary. How could I not? I mean, the pregnant waitress practically begged me to order it just so she could watch someone drink.

Portland is the new, hip place to move to. I guess it has been for a while now. It's not quite the "Doom Town" that the Wipers were singing about. There used to be one gig in town, and that was the Satyricon. Lovingly referred to as the Syringe-icon. One time we pulled up to play there and the first thing someone says to me is "Got any rigs?" Niiice! Phil Irwin, a.k.a. the Whiskey Rebel and author of Job Jumper, was fed up with the change here in Snoreland, Boregon. All the old dive bars closing to make way for hippie grocery stores and trendy coffee shops. He said goodbye and moved to Hostile City, USA: Philadelphia, that is. We do have great shows here though. But to anyone that thinks it would be really cool to move to Portland, I hope you like shitty rain for most of the year, constant traffic jams due to bad city planning and lots of drinking, 'cause that's what you're in for. Oh, and even though it's gentrified, the junkies haven't left.

Show was okay. The power in the building blew out on the last note of the set...because of a 3.5 earthquake!

On our way to Boise, Idaho. Tweak Bird jumps on the tour for 45-or-so shows. Looking forward to having these guys on the bill. One of my favorite bands for sure! Weirdo brother duo, originally from Carbondale, Illinois, now living in L.A. They have a new CD out called Undercover Crops and it's really, really good! Another new record I've been listening to a lot on the long drives is Redd Kross, Researching The Blues. Great record! They've been a band longer than us even! I saw them the first time they came to Washington on the Neurotica tour, when I was 18. They're awesome then and are just as good now!

My friend Pat is using our tour to learn obscure facts about each state we visit. In Idaho it's illegal to fish from the back of a giraffe! I wonder what failed redneck stunt made it a need for that law?

That's all for now. Driving through forest fire areas to Montana. Wish us luck!

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Day 4: Beware of Flying Underpants!

SEPTEMBER 12 2012, 4:51 PM ET

by Trevor Dunn

"Speaking of skanks..."

September 8, 2012 – Boise, ID @ Neurolux

4 down, 47 to go

Winding along the remote Highway 21 en route to Missoula via Boise, Buzz at the helm navigates pouring rain and hairpin turns that seem to never end. People are often surprised that we do the driving ourselves — the three band members and three crew guys. I'm not sure what they think is so difficult about driving. I suppose that if I stayed up all night doing blow and screwing lonely skanks I might have a problem maintaining the wheel. The fine readers at SPIN, however, may be disappointed to know that I was in my pajamas and brushing my teeth two hours after getting off stage. Live slow and die old, I say.

I've been getting an array of interesting questions as we set upon this unprecedented tour. For instance, "Are you ready?" or "Are you insane?" Frankly, I don't see what the big deal is. It's a tour; we are playing music. Sure there are no days off and we may experience bouts of tiredness but, as someone who never takes vacations and sleepwalks half the time anyway, I see no goal unattainable. The thing that George Thorogood didn't understand when he shamefully failed at this world record back in the '80s is that the brain and liver are vital organs that make getting on stage possible. But he also made a career out of playing hackneyed cover songs in a stale bar band, so who am I to judge.

Speaking of skanks, we played in Portland, Oregon, a few nights ago. Portland is well known for its strip clubs and liberal attitude toward sexual frustration. The audience at the show did not disappoint. I was slightly distracted within the first ten minutes of our set by some live soft-core porn in the front row: A young woman in apparent ecstasy grinding her backside recklessly against her boyfriend, or brother-in-law or whoever he was, in rhythmic unison to my raw, uncensored bass lines. Their gyrations irked a guy trying to enjoy the show, sandwiched in next to them, and it seemed that a good ol' battle for territory was about to ensue. A few minutes later a pair of panties were thrown on stage from some other direction. I had to disguise my odium as I kicked them aside, out of the way of my delay pedal. I certainly have nothing against people having a drunken good time and brawling about it, and I'm quite happy that people want to hump and obliterate brain cells to my background noise, but these are the true obstacles of touring. Earthquakes, forest fires and vitamin deficiency I can deal with; high-strung kids letting their collective hair down with that not-afraid-to-die look in their eyes is another thing. I've got intonation, odd meters and quirky forms to think about. It's all I can do to maintain focus and concentrate on what I unapologetically refer to as my job. These aren't the lollipop jingles of Mötley Crüe after all. I decided a long time ago to rust rather than burn out. Upon closer inspection (not too close) I'm pretty sure it was some dude's underwear.

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 5, 6 & 7: George Thorogood Demands an Apology!

SEPTEMBER 13 2012, 2:38 PM ET

by Buzz Osborne

"We know for a fact you are not in the record book because we checked on that"

September 9, 2012 – Missoula, MT @ Top Hat Lounge

September 10, 2012 – Salt Lake City, UT @ In the Venue

September 11, 2012 – Cheyenne, WY @ Forum 619

7 down, 44 to go

I don't think there was two miles of straight road between Boise and Missoula. You are basically driving half a figure eight for hours on end. This added about two and a half hours to an already long drive. There are no freeways between those two cities. Great. The last time we drove through that neck of the woods we got a lot of, "Why don't you go back to California" from the Idaho locals because of the California plates on our van. Great again. Thank you! And I did have my heart set on moving to out back Idaho. No, I did my time with the rednecks when I was

growing up and I can't say I liked it much. Ninety-nine percent of the people I grew up around were total asshole bastards and I'm sure the same can be said of almost any of the cretins living deep in the woods on any part of the globe. I am done living with the rednecks. From here on out it's just me and the city, the only problem is that 99 percent of the people who live in the cities are bastards as well. Such is life I suppose....

Anyway...we rolled into Missoula late and quickly set up our gear. The show was in a bar of course, because we almost always end up playing in bars and this bar was fine. We had a great show in Missoula and everyone who worked at the bar that night was very nice. That being said, I don't like people in bars. In fact I don't like people much at all, let alone the drunks in some dingy hellhole. I never did my drinking in bars and, if I still drank, I doubt I would find much interest in sitting around a fucking bar swigging overpriced shit booze. Fuck that. Drinking for me was an adventure. It took me places and those places rarely included bars. I loved driving around drunk or drunkenly running wild through the woods or just sitting at someone's house and while their parents were gone and getting shitfaced. Or getting drunk at school. Now that was fun. What is it about being young and drunk that is so attractive? I don't know really because it makes little or no sense. I'd imagine it has something to do with dealing with the fact that your becoming an adult and drinking is an almighty escape from the reality of being human. All booze is the same. It never ceases to amaze me how important it is for the people around me who drink to get just the right kind of alcohol. I've never understood this, especially when I consider the vast amounts of alcoholics surrounding me who I know would drink out of a fucking toilet if it ended up that that's where the only booze was. Anyway....The show in Missoula was a blast!

Salt Lake City: Over the years our shows in Salt Lake have gone from really pathetically bad to actually really fun. We played our first show there in 1985 I believe to about 20 super uninterested creeps. After we were done I had to listen to a drunk in his 60s tell me why we should just quit. Unfortunately when people are drunk they always tell the truth. Well, I for one am sick to death of the drunken truth. I wish these sorry sons of bitches would just keep their mouths shut whilst hammered. Tonight was a really fun show...

Quotes of the night from fans were:

- "If you guys are doing one show in each state, then why are you playing in Salt Lake?"
- "51 shows in 51 days right? Well how long does a tour like that take?"

I just stare at people who ask questions like that, or I say something like, "I'm not really sure" and leave it at that. Brian, one of our crew guys commented later that it was the kind of show where everyone there seemed like they were actually listening to what we were doing. I agree. I agree and it's refreshing to have that happen once in a while. Thank you, Salt Lake!

We got up early the next day and drove to Cheyenne, Wyoming, for what turned out to be a show not unlike our show in Salt Lake, meaning really fun. It was a sort of rec center where they brought in all of the production. I was expecting Cheyenne to be us playing to eight half drunk cowboys telling us, "They moved the pool table tonight for this shit?" I really dig playing in places like Cheyenne and that's how it works on a "record breaking" tour such as this. We have to play every state. Which reminds me: On our drive after the show in Salt Lake, we got word that George Thorogood and Co. were all hacked off at us for saying they didn't actually finish their 50 states in 50 days tour in the early '80s. And they were looking for our manager and demanding an apology. Well, I don't work real well with people demanding stuff, so we can look at this two ways: 1. We can say, "Whatever bitch" and basically do nothing; or 2. We can say that we're sorry. What surprises me is that these guys know who we are at all, let alone feel threatened by anything we could ever say in the press. Are they kidding?

We've never had our songs in beer commercials or sold shit loads of records the way they have. Considering how well they seem to have done, it seems like a weird thing to get all hacked off about but hell why not, I guess. Who knew they would get so ma ma ma ma ma mad. I suppose they could be right and if they are then we really are sorry. We're sorry we said you didn't do it if you really did.

However...we know for a fact you are not in the record book because we checked on that. And, when you were doing that tour around 1980, I remember hearing that you quit after like 30-some shows. And I'm not the only one who heard that, so I didn't just pull that fact out of my ass. Besides, who cares really?

If you did it then we're sorry. And if you didn't, then you are simply not telling the truth, neither of which makes any difference. We get to live in our fantasy world and you get to continue making a killing playing Indian casinos and state fairs! I mean we really have to hand it to you guys. You've made a fortune by playing and selling nothing but Bo Diddley and John Lee Hooker covers, and for that, we salute you! That is nothing short of a goddamn miracle! Now there's a record you can really be proud of!

Never wrote a single song and yet still sold millions of records and played concerts all over the whole world! Just like Madonna and Britney Spears! But let's get back to what we were originally talking about....

If you guys did actually finish the tour and you are nonetheless still not in the record book, well....Whatever, bitch.

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 8, 9 & 10: The Gang Meets Obama!

SEPTEMBER 17 2012, 3:32 PM ET

by Dale Crover

“The President? At our hotel?!”

September 12, 2012 – Denver, CO @ Bluebird Theatre

September 13, 2012 – Lawrence, KS @ The Bottleneck

September 14, 2012 – Columbia, MO @ The Blue Note

10 down, 41 to go

In Denver we played the lovely Bluebird Theatre. It's been a while since we've played here. In the past, the theater had noise complaints from neighbors, resulting in a severe decibel limit. I've been clocked at 105 without the P.A. system, and with two drummers at times, forget it! They have since done a nice job of soundproofing the joint, so problem solved! Theaters like this are our favorite to play. They're built for performance and sound in mind. Unlike sports arenas, where you get to watch the band on a screen and it sounds like doggie doo! We don't have to worry about playing those types of places too much, thankfully. Even if we were a big band we wouldn't want to play the “Enormo-Dome”. Does U2 really need to play Dodger Stadium? Don't they have enough money? It's our belief that bands like that should say “thank you” to their fans and play nothing but theaters. Alas, these millionaire bands have giant egos, and are the laziest people on the planet to boot. We've put out three different releases, been to Europe twice, and are now on our second US tour — all within a year! Let's see you top that, Bono!

After a successful show we headed back to our hotel, or at least tried to get to the hotel. Every road surrounding the hotel was road blocked with a cop and a blockade. Our road manager Dave got out of the vehicle and asked one of the cops how do we get down the road to the entrance. He was told to “Go talk to those guys over there”. Those guys turned out to be Secret Service. After having our vehicle searched for guns and explosives I asked one of the servicemen who was in town. “You mean you don't know?” No, I honestly have no idea. “Well, I can't tell you, but you'll figure it out.” After going through more airport style security, I made it to my room and Googled “Obama Denver.” Sure enough the Commander In Chief was in town. The President? At our hotel?! How weird! Now, we stay at decent hotels, but nothing fancy. And certainly not the type of hotel you'd expect The President to be staying in. We realized the genius of the Secret Service plan. You'd figure he'd be staying at a five star joint downtown, and not some nondescript hotel on the outskirts of town. From our window we could see the Presidential motorcade “pig parked” out in the back lot. Now wonder they told us “Good luck finding a place to park.”

At breakfast the next morning Dave asked the waitress if we would see The President at breakfast. She scoffed at him and said, “No one is going to see The President.” We decided we should get the hell out before he decides to

leave and they lock the whole place down. So we made a beeline for Lawrence, Kansas. Usually we have a day off for this drive. It's a long, long drive! We usually take our time and stop at this weird roadside attraction called Prairie Dog Town, You see the signs for miles boasting five- and six-legged steer, rattlesnakes and the world's largest prairie dog. My favorite part is all the pygmy goats running around. Buy a bag of feed and you'll be surrounded by them. I wish we had a pygmy goat for a mascot. He could eat all the van garbage. By far the weirdest roadside attraction I've been to is also in Kansas. It's called the Garden Of Eden. This Mason fella named Dinsmoor built all these crazy religious sculptures around his house. You tour the garden, then at the end you go into a pyramid and view his mummified body in the stone and glass coffin he built!

Anyway, on to Lawrence to play the Bottleneck. Our first time playing Lawrence was at a place called the Outhouse. The place was just as glamorous as it sounds. Drive down this dirt road through the cornfields and you'll find it. When we first pulled up, there was a pick-up truck rammed right through the front of the place. The cops were there and some punchers were talking to them. We met the promoter and asked what the hell was going on. Right before we got there some redneck pulled up in his truck. He got out of his truck and was in his underwear with a beer in his hand. He said to the kids, "Which one of you faggots is going to kick my ass?" The punks just stared in disbelief, then the guy gets back in his truck, starts doing doughnuts and tries to run down the promoter. Wham! Right through the front door! They're still determined to have the show though. All was going well until the promoter came running up about three-quarters through our set yelling "Stop, stop!" There was a big fight happening and someone was unconscious! The cops were on their way back, as well as paramedics. The guy had a concussion, but at least no one was dead. That was also the night I was introduced to the band Jon Wayne. This girl gave me a tape of their record saying it would change my life. Sure enough it did! Jack White recently reissued Jon Wayne, Texas Funeral on Third Man Records. Yip! The Bottleneck show wasn't quite as action-packed, but fun nonetheless.

Played the next day at another nice theatre in Columbia, Missouri called the Blue Note. Had a great show and ate some tasty burgers down the street at a place called Booches Billiard Hall. This place has been open since 1884 and serves up cheeseburgers on wax paper. Small enough that you can easily eat two of them. After a great show we played wiffle ball with Tweak Bird in the back lot. Those guys are good players and big Cardinals fans. We usually have a home run derby with the staff of the Double Door in Chicago. They cheated the first derby and won the next. We have some good bats this time. The Double door best beware. We're out for revenge!

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 11, 12 & 13: They Almost Get Stabbed!

SEPTEMBER 18 2012, 4:58 PM ET

by Trevor Dunn

September 15, 2012 – Omaha, NE – The Waiting Room

September 16, 2012 – Des Moines, IA – Wooly's

September 17, 2012 – Sioux Falls, SD – The Vault

13 down, 38 to go

The stretch of road between Denver and Lawrence, Kansas, spans a tireless, vast, empty 562 miles. It's the kind of road that makes you wonder why people complain about overpopulation and urban density or lack of space for landfill. If you want to go somewhere in the U.S. where there is little to do or see, and you have the place to yourself, there are plenty of options. All you have to do is accept the nothingness. As long as you're ok with having no friends and eating garbage, you will have all the personal space you need.

We are traveling in a van, not a bus, so personal space is limited. It's comfortable enough, has a good stereo, air conditioning and even wi-fi. One thing it does not have is a toilet. After loading up on coffee first thing in the

morning, you can count on several pee stops. Of course, we are a van full of dudes. We can pee anywhere, and we do. My pee is no less disgusting than a dog's so I'm going to take the liberty of watering trees, fire hydrants, or the tires of the opening band's vehicle whenever the urge strikes. But sometimes you gotta go number two and in that situation a vacant lot behind a liquor store is just not gonna cut the cake.

Somewhere along the drive to Lawrence, Dave, our tour manager/soundguy, found himself in a dire situation. There wasn't a gas station for miles and he was... Well, he was prairie doggin'. You know, crowning. He had some cable laying to attend to, post haste. Time was running out and none of us wanted to be subject to poop pants in the limited quarters of the van. I was trying to enjoy my Hot Pocket and chocolate milk for cryin' out loud. Eventually, we came across a very sad, remote truck stop. By this time everyone needed the can, but unfortunately, the urinal was out of order. Only one toilet was available, so we waited our turns while loitering around the convenience store eyeing dusty boxes of cereal and bubblegum that had somehow passed their expiration dates. Now I know we aren't a bunch of preened pretty boys in business suits, but we're a trustworthy bunch, or usually are I should say. Brian, our merch guy, decided he'd had enough and went for the unoccupied women's restroom. (There wasn't a female within 30 miles of this joint, and I don't blame them. It looked like a prime hangout for rapists and child molesters). Just as Brian had his hand on the doorknob, urine threatening to make it's escape, the bleary-eyed, half-dead clerk jumped to attention and pulled a knife, yelling at the top of his lungs in some unidentifiable accent, "You no allow, you no allow, NO NO NO NO NO."

A chaotic scene developed at which time Dale snuck into the women's room. Dave was still in the can exorcising the evil that Cracker Barrel had bewitched upon him. I was ready to bust a valve myself, so I opened up the beer cooler and peed on the Bud Lite. In the meantime Buzz was shoving packets of beef jerky and Skittles into his pockets. Brian was, at this point, backed into a corner by the maniacal clerk. The two were yelling at each other as Brian tried to inch his way to the front door. That's when I heard a scream from the toilet, "There's no fucking toilet paper in here!" Cliff, our stage guy, who had been rolling blunts in the van, walked into the milieu and then slowly walked out. Right then the clerk seemed to half-faint and slumped up against the wall which was decorated with posters of locals who had been arrested for various crimes most of which involved meth and domestic violence.

I'm not sure if those guys found any toilet paper 'cause I got the hell out of there and back in the van, but not before I saw a pack of unruly teenagers walk in. We high-tailed it out of there and left it in their hands. Buzz passed around some Skittles and we drove the rest of the way in complete silence...

It was only a couple of nondescript days later that we found ourselves in the bustling hubbub of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I walked from the venue to a mall to mail some postcards. The mall had four open businesses: a wedding center, a tuxedo shop, a baby boutique and a pharmacy. I could only assume that the streets were empty because it was 6 p.m. on a Monday night and all of the picture perfect, functional families were preparing supper in their dream homes. I walked back to the venue and slammed four shots of tequila.

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Day 14: Rob Zombie Sucks

SEPTEMBER 21 2012, 5:36 PM ET

by Buzz Osborne

"I would rather eat my own shit then do another tour with people who behave like that"

September 17, 2012 – Sioux Falls, SD @ The Vault

September 18, 2012 – Fargo, ND @ The Aquarium

14 down, 37 to go

I made everyone listen to the Judy Garland live at Carnegie Hall album from top to bottom today on the drive. I think it's a totally weird and amazing record. Actually, it's a really weird album with Judy obviously blasted off her

ass on what I would guess to be a wicked combination of barbiturates and booze. At first everyone put up with my seemingly strange musical choice because I was driving and whoever drives normally gets to pick what music is played on the car stereo, but as the album unfolded and we got to the first in a long line of Judy's insane between-song ramblings they all got hooked in. It's hard not to.

Poor Judy I suppose, but who am I to argue or try to second guess what goes through the mind of some fucked up drug addict actress? We all pick our own version of living hell and she was obviously no different. So be it. It's still a great record. Trevor was so intrigued that he started playing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" during his solo every night. What a trooper!

Sioux Falls was a really great and surprising show! We played a brand new venue that was attached to a casino right next to a freeway. Tweak Bird described the club as looking like a place where you would "snort coke off some dude's dick." That being said, I liked the venue and I thought we played pretty well and had a very nice and appreciative audience. The only other time we ever played in Sioux Falls was in the mid '90s when we were on tour with Nine Inch Nails. After the show, I watched the cast and crew of NIN do, oh, I'd say \$30,000 worth of damage to a brand new arena dressing room. It sounds a lot crazier than it really was, and I wish I could write out the sound of shrugging. Like if you asked me, was I involved in the smashing of a brand new arena dressing room I could go, "Eh [shrug], I guess so." I fortunately got all of that adolescent vandal behavior out of my system when I was still a teenager. At my age, smashing the shit out of large objects just doesn't have the appeal it did for me when I was young. Back then I used to crave destruction like it was sex. I think the only time that kind of hell-raising really works is when you're young and stupid. These NIN guys were all younger than me so maybe it was still a turn-on for them and the only explanation I can think of for behavior such as this is that they must have been brought up as heavily sheltered idiots with helicoptering parents who were up their ass about every minute detail of their stupid little lives during what I would imagine to be an extremely boring childhood in some middle America shit hole. Now unfortunately, as adults, they need to smash the shit out of a wide variety of hotel and dressing rooms and do tons of drugs along the way just to forget that what they really should have done as teenagers was simply kill their overbearing parents....Be that as it may, I can still think of better ways to blow 30 grand.

This was NIN's Downward Spiral tour, which ended up being the bands zenith, meaning it was their biggest and most interesting album along with the biggest and most semi-interesting point in their career. I honestly didn't know much about NIN before this tour. I mean I knew they were popular with the MTV baby rock crowd and that they had sold a lot of records but I had never actually listened to one of them. Why would I? I usually have no interest in checking out what sort of bands the baby rockers dig. This is as a result of almost always hating whatever bands the baby rockers dig. That's not hard to do. The baby rockers are wrong. Wrong about everything actually. I had seen the NIN video they had out then that looked like a total burn of a Joel-Peter Witkin photo. The video was OK, I guess, and surprisingly enough the chorus to this baby rocker hit was "I want to fuck you like an animal," which I couldn't get my head around because the music that goes along with this "fuck-you-like-an-animal" sex boast sounds like weak, elevator music synth crap and would by no means lead you to believe the singer is capable of doing anything "like an animal." I suppose he could get fucked like an animal, but that's not what he's saying. I suppose he could be writing in the "third person," but I ain't buying that either.

Anyway, they were pretty good live for a band like this, but I do remember the drummer telling me that they probably couldn't even do a live show without backing tapes running pretty much the whole show. Whatever. At least NIN and their heavy-duty arena crew were nice to us and that whole tour, despite the rock and roll posturing horseshit was a cake walk compared to the next band we did a big wheel "arena" tour with, which was White Zombie...

Easily the worst touring experience of my entire life was the White Zombie tour we did. I could write a whole book about that infernal bullshit. On the first day of the tour, the first person we met from the entire White Zombie cast and crew was a mullet headed road manager who ended up behaving like a mean version of Cotton Mather. He was a "professional" roadie. Now I have never met a group of people who hate music more than professional roadies,

and it is clearly obvious that 99.9 percent of them know nothing at all about music. Nothing. I find this to be quite strange really. It's like someone who works in a bakery knowing nothing about baking. Actually this also extends to most of the bands these guys work for as well, but I pretty much lump all of these bands and crew into one big sewage pit. It's fitting.

Mr. Mullet told us straight up that he was going to see to it that we got fucked over every night PA-wise in order to not piss off his boss, the swollen White Zombie dictator Rob Zombie. And it just went from there. He openly told us that Rob acted a prick to him, and that's how life on the road was going to go for us as well. Perfect. One insane thing after another every day for the whole tour. On one of the few times we actually got a soundcheck, Mr. Mullet came on stage and pulled the plug because Rob was eating and that we were to "shut the fuck up" because he didn't like the "noise." My instant thought was what the fuck is he eating, a Faberge Egg omelet? I'd been to their catering and it was the same swill they always serve at these horrid rock'n'roll extravaganzas which amounts to nothing more than disgusting macaroni and cheese type garbage and an assortment of what appears to be dead things in jelly. You'd think he'd want some kind of booming symphonic distraction to help disguise the fact that he's eating a big plate of steaming dog shit. Or so you would think.... And the idiocy didn't stop there. Rob did this between song speech every night that consisted of unintelligible talking gibberish delivered in a "heavy metal" guttural grunt, and at some point he inevitably started saying "they said we couldn't do it, they said it couldn't be done." Which I'm guessing is in reference to them surprisingly being able to peddle another million records to their highly gullible brainless fans. I'm not sure why he thought his dull minions needed to know this. Their entire thing was just dumb.

Don't get me wrong, it was all our fault for doing a stupid tour like that in the first place and I certainly can't blame them for that. We accepted the offer! Big mistake on our part but we did learn our lesson as a result of that stupidity. I think it's a bad idea for us to try to sell our band like that. Actually, we believed that then as well, but it was their idea to have us along and for some reason that remains a mystery to me, they paid us pretty well. But those days are over for us. Now, I would rather eat my own shit then do another tour with people who behave like that. Actually if not my own, then who's shit would I eat? That's a good question....

I got up early after our Sioux Falls show to meet up with Tom Hazelmyer of AmRep fame who had driven there from Minneapolis the night before for the express purpose of doing some "haunted house treasure hunting" on the way to Fargo. What we do is drive down the interstate until we see an abandoned farm house and then go and check it out. This time I got some great pictures of a particularly destroyed place somewhere in rural South Dakota. We try to pick out places that are by no means occupied, otherwise you could end up getting your head blown off and rightly so. There are no lack of these dumps in areas like this and we usually don't have to really even break in. This time I only had to gently push open the back door and in we went. It's not treasure hunting really, it's more like looking around and it's a lot of fun.

Fargo, North Dakota: As we were loading our gear after a really fun Fargo show, a stoner rock hipster in his mid 20s started talking to me about how I was obviously looking at his girlfriend as we were playing... Keep in mind that I don't see much at all while I'm on stage and I certainly don't focus in on one person or another during a performance. I'm busy, and the idea that I could be making eyes at some chick during our set is totally absurd. Just then his girlfriend walked up puffing on a smoke and obviously heavily inebriated. She looked like a cross between a heavy metal Elvis and a slightly overweight street-tough version of Elvira and certainly seemed like she would take a dare. I told him he was a lucky man. What else could I say? In those situations you have to pick your words carefully or else you'll end up getting the crap kicked out of you. How would that look? Me getting the crap kicked out of me by some scrawny dudes girlfriend?

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 15-18: Those Stupid, Stupid Canadians

SEPTEMBER 24 2012, 6:24 PM ET

by Dale Crover

"Once I get started talking with an accent I can't stop doing it. I'll be eating at an Indian restaurant, not even realizing I'm talking like Apu."

September 18, 2012 – Fargo, ND @ The Aquarium

September 19, 2012 – Minneapolis, MN @ Grumpy's

September 20, 2012 – Madison, WI @ High Noon Saloon

September 21, 2012 – Chicago, IL @ Double Door

September 22, 2012 – Indianapolis, IN @ The Vogue Theatre

18 down, 33 to go

I could only think of two things while traveling across the Dakotas. The movie *Badlands*, where Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek go on a romantic fairytale killing spree, and *Fargo*, a not-so-romantic killing spree. There's more quotable dialogue in *Fargo* than *Badlands*. Once we get close it starts. "Where is Pancakes House?" "We stop at Pancakes House!" And lots of "Oh, ya?"s and "Geez Margies" in funny, almost Canadian accents all day long. Once I get started talking with an accent I can't stop doing it. I'll be eating at an Indian restaurant, not even realizing I'm talking like Apu. "Howdy parttiner. She'll have the birdie num nums!" The Simpsons and Peter Sellers have ruined me!

We've technically have never played in North Dakota before. The only time we played here before was across the river from Fargo, in Moorhead, Minnesota. Tonight is a sold out gig at the Aquarium, upstairs from Dempsey's Public House. No elevator, great! At least the load-in isn't as bad as Gabe's Oasis in Iowa City. Humping gear up and down the steep, metal staircase there suuucks! I decide that tonight's dinner will be at Dempsey's after spying pickled egg baskets and beer-cheese soup on the menu. I try not to eat a bunch of crap on the road, but we are in the Midwest, where even if you do order a salad it's going to be deep fried with double butter and extra cheese! Anyway, beer-cheese soup is delicious, and I'll burn off the calories in an hour when I jump on stage and play like a gacked-out gorilla for 75 minutes. After the show, the owner gives us a tub of pickled eggs and pretzels in appreciation for playing there. "This should last you, ya know. You won't even have to refrigerate them either!" "Where is Pancakes House?"

Minneapolis at Grumpy's! This place is our third home! I think we play here more that we do in L.A. Grumpy's isn't really a live music venue, only doing the occasional show. Our good friend Tom Hazelmyer is the owner, and that's why we play here. Tom is also the man behind Amphetamine Reptile Records. Though the label doesn't put out a ton of records anymore. We still do limited edition records and CDs, with super deluxe artwork and packaging with Tom. You can only buy these at our shows or through the AmRep website. People bitch and moan that some of these items are expensive and limited. What they fail to realize is that these items are handmade by us, or artists we like. A lot of work goes into the making of these and they are expensive to make. These items are priced as such. They are collector's items, and will be on eBay tomorrow at a 100 percent markup by some flipper. We learned that one the hard way. If you just want the music, you can find it for free on the internet. Sadly, that's the way things are now. Vinyl, full-length records, record labels and even record stores are breathing their last breath. There's a thing called Record Store Day that's held every April. Bands will make 7" records that are only available at stores on that day. We found out that some stores themselves were pulling the best stuff, and guess what? Flipping them on eBay! Gee, thanks a lot, jerks!

Grumpy's has great food, and they always feed us well. This time I do order a salad, but also a side of deep-fried mac and cheese bites. I think Tom may have got this idea from the Minnesota State Fair. We went there a few years

ago and shared a little bit of everything deep-fried: Spam, cheeseburgers, cheese curds, Swedish meatballs, things on sticks. The chicken-fried bacon sounded like a good idea.

In Madison we saw our old friend Dan Hobson, from the band Killdozer. We met and toured with those guys back in 1987. After picking them up at the airport at 11 a.m. they had us take them straight to the liquor store for a case of Rheinlander beer. “Stew” as they called it. Both bands were jammed into one van. No seats besides the driver and passenger seats, so five of us had to sit on the amp cabinets. It was always a mad dash to get in because someone had to sit in the spot we referred to as the “Butt Buster.” You had to hang by one butt cheek off a drum case! Those guys were really funny! After playing a few shows in Canada with them, they decided they were going to call their next record *Those Stupid, Stupid Canadians*. Unfortunately they chickened out.

Louisville today, and we’re in town early enough to do something besides sit and stare at nothing. We went to the Louisville Slugger Museum, which was pretty cool! I got to pose with Mickey Mantle’s bat. On the factory tour the guide told us that the pink bats they were making were for the Cubs, ha ha! Will they ever break the Curse Of The Goat?

The Melvins ‘51 States in 51 Days’ Tour Diary, Days 19 & 20: Billie Joe Armstrong Is a ‘Little Weasel’

SEPTEMBER 26 2012, 4:34 PM ET

by Trevor Dunn

“He should take some of the green in his wallet, buy himself a green smoothie and relax”

September 23, 2012 – Louisville, KY @ The Vernon Club

September 24, 2012 – Detroit, MI - Smalls

20 down, 31 to go

I have to laugh when my non-touring friends get jealous about my “road trips.” They like to guilt-trip me about my glorious adventures in this great and vast country of ours; about how much I get to “see.” I would say, however, that 97.3 percent of what I see out here consists of the inside of our van, fields of corn, backed-up traffic, and the bowels of rock clubs — usually just the dressing room and the stage. If there is a decent bathroom backstage I may not even leave the dressing room all night. That’s what happened last night in Detroit. It was cold in a crappy neighborhood and just the thought of moving seemed uncomfortable. So after load-in I made a sandwich with turkey and salami, sliced up some tomato with a plastic spoon, kicked aside an empty mouse trap and sat down for a lovely one-course meal in an unkempt, dusty “green room.” A pit bull yelped in the distance. A side of chips and salsa rounded up my carb intake. My doctor says I need more salt and carbs in my diet so I pile that stuff on whenever I can.

At this point, 20 shows under our belt, we are a well-oiled de-barking machine. From the time we pull our van up to the loading dock until we are ready to soundcheck — gear plugged in, stage fully wired, PA tuned — a mere 30 minutes has passed. Thirty minutes! What other rock band can do that? (Our maiden name may be Profane Derelict Outcasts, but our middle name is Efficiency). We then get our monitor mixes together and play through a song and a half, all of which takes another ten minutes. Then it’s time to party! And by “party” I mean look for a Cobb salad. A few nights ago we played an early show in Indianapolis. Due to having our van serviced and losing an hour as we entered the Eastern Time Zone we showed up somewhat tardy. No matter. We sound-checked, ate, played, loaded out, and were back on the asphalt by 10 p.m. We spent less than six hours in Indianapolis. I didn’t see shit. Indianapolis is one of those towns I’ve been to several times and could tell you absolutely nothing about

it. There are hundreds of cities like that floating around the detritus of my brain. They are cities full of opportunity and stimulation but all I can recall is a black box room reeking of the previous night's beer and dry ice fog. There isn't really time, especially on a whirlwind tour like this, to go exploring.

But to limit oneself to such colorless surroundings is to go mad and there's nothing worse than some rock'n'roll brat throwing a tantrum and going AWOL just because he can't keep himself occupied. Yes, I'm referring to that little weasel in Green Day. That guy's main problem is that he doesn't realize that he is Justin Bieber. He should take some of the green in his wallet, buy himself a green smoothie and relax. What kind of band name is Green Day anyway? Is that in reference to all the chord progressions they continually recycle? But I digress....

There are plenty of legitimate ways to break up the monotony of touring. But in addition to that stuff, my road-weary readers and traveling colleagues know what I'm talking about when I mention the "code of the road." There are ways to get exactly what you need in whatever town whenever you want. For instance, knowing who to talk to in order to get a "Kentucky Bagel" or "Louisville Lip Service." Every town has its specialty that the locals are privy to. Most liquor stores in Fargo provide "potato privileges." There is a truck stop half-way to Madison off of exit 263 called "Buck's Lucks" that, if the right person is behind the counter, will load you up on "stick figures" or "pancake palmers" depending on what day of the week it is. Now, Chicago is a big town and the prodigious range of lingo varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. It was pouring rain and I was experiencing acute shoulder pain and didn't feel like venturing outside so I ordered out for an "ultra-sound treatment." Unfortunately I was in the wrong place. What showed up wasn't what I expected but provided 23 minutes of entertainment nonetheless. After the show we drove a couple hours out of town and stayed at an Econo Lodge. I asked for a "single room with a roll-a-way." Most people who are "priority" customers at this fine establishment know that the vending machines are stocked with "extra dark Snickers." All you have to do is punch in the correct combination of numbers and letters. It also helps to be on the mailing lists of said hotels, truck stops, diners, etc. as they are always sending out updates, new passwords and re-configured "treasure maps."

As I write this, I'm sitting in a parking lot of a mall in Cleveland. There's a Bob Evans on the corner that I've been to a half a million times. The 63-year-old waitress there is named Gertrude and she has worked there as long as I've been thumping the doghouse. She claims that she used to work monitors for Poison Idea. If you order the turkey bacon melt "with a side of Cleveland corkscrews" and give her a wink you will not be disappointed. Sometimes it's the only way to get through the day. The remaining 2.7 percent of what I see on the road can be summed up in this phrase: drool on my pillow.

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 21 & 22: Bono Is a 'Rich Idiot,' Freak Asks About Cobain

SEPTEMBER 28 2012, 5:37 PM ET

by Buzz Osborne

Also: More words for George Thorogood!

September 25, 2012 – Cleveland, OH @ The Grog Shop

September 26, 2012 – Morgantown, WV @ 123 Pleasant Street

22 down, 29 to go

We are well into this infernal tour and now it's dark. Well, it's not actually dark but that's what Frank Booth would say and I've been on a Blue Velvet bender as of late, meaning I've watched all or part of the movie Blue Velvet for the last eight nights. Best sex scenes ever put to film! I can't watch those parts without laughing my ass off and laughs are good on tour, they give you the strength to go about your day and make it easier to face life itself. I've

been trying to talk Trevor into playing the song “Blue Velvet” in his solo but so far no luck. I still have half the tour to make it happen.

The 51 in 51 tour has been fun so far with no major screw-ups at all. Everyone seems to be doing well. We are busy every day just keeping ourselves on the road but it's not that hard really. It's a lot of shows in a row, but so what? In Detroit I did a radio interview with a DJ who really wanted to know where I stood politically. I asked him who did he think he was talking to, Bono? Bono... Great. Yet another horrendous rock-star jackass spouting half-baked political horseshit with absolutely no information to back any of it up. Does anyone want to listen to some rich idiot who most likely did a shitload of blow and decided in a drugged-up stupor that they could save the world? Not me. I fucking hate that shit. These loudmouth morons are just that, and it doesn't take a bullshit detector to figure it out either. I prefer to get my political beliefs from a higher source than whore-mongering drug addict entertainers. What source would that be you ask? No one cares what I think and why should they? What I think about politics or any social issue doesn't matter. On most nights I'm nothing but a blowhard entertainer as well, making a hideous noise and screaming my head off inside some filthy wretched den filled with drunken teenaged thieves and that's fine by me. Let's just leave it at that....

In Cleveland, after we loaded in, I watched a twentysomething hipster girl vomiting in the gutter next to a parked car 30 feet from the entrance to the club. This enticing display was obviously drug-induced and I noted with some respect that she had clearly gotten her money's worth for that day. I told the story about the whole incident later that night from the stage, and afterwards a drunken Melvins music fan told me that “drugs should just be legal, man, so that people like her could just be left alone.” Left alone? She was the one openly fucked up and vomiting in public, and besides no one bothered her at all. I certainly wasn't going to go over and see if she was OK. She had it all under “control” and the very last place I want to get is between a junkie and their weird drug trip no matter what kind of public spectacle they're making of themselves. I make a point of leaving that kind of shit alone. I guess we could provide a place for these junkies to vomit in private, but fuck that...

And besides, what if they did legalize all drugs? How would that work? Would you just be able to sit on an open street corner and bang government-certified legal smack or would you be under risk of getting a “shooting-up in public” ticket? Maybe you would just be able to walk into a legal “drug den” and throw your arm and a 10-dollar bill down on the bar and say “surprise me” and have a hot-looking waitress in a rubber nurse's uniform blow your head off with a syringe full of pure Nazi crystal meth. Actually that sounds pretty cool.

Trevor and I talked to an eight-foot tall butch Ohio kickboxing girl after the Cleveland show. She was on crutches as a result of double knee replacement surgery and she had an eight-inch scar running down the side of her face. She openly told us that she hated anyone who lived outside of Ohio and that Trevor looked like a “metrosexual,” explaining that a “metrosexual” was someone who looked like a queer but really wasn't. I told her I was impressed that she was filled with so much pointless hatred but she was dead wrong about Trevor not being queer.

As if that wasn't enough, in Cleveland I also got to listen to some smart-ass boozier tell me that he “had to drive all the way up from Pittsburgh to see you guys tonight. I think it's bullshit that your not playing Pittsburgh.” I explained that we already had the routing planned in relation to the drives for each of the 50 states plus DC in 51 days and that routing didn't include Pittsburgh. We needed a gig that was closer to our next show after Pennsylvania which would be in Vermont, to which he replied, “Oh, so on your 51 states in 51 days tour you're only doing one show in each state?” Indeed...I didn't bother telling him that the next show after Cleveland would be in Morgantown, West Virginia. Morgantown is actually a lot closer to Pittsburgh than Cleveland is. And so it goes....

We loaded our gear after the Cleveland show and drove for an hour and a half to a friendly roadside motel. I tossed and turned like a helpless idiot for most of the night, which kept me in a perpetual state of almost-awake sleep where I could see all of my dreams very clearly and I took note. I saw a bright blue sky with soft white clouds and a sun that shone so brightly that I needed to cover my eyes. I saw endless deep caverns with bent and still-bending

forks standing in long lines like sentries. These had a very distinct Dali like look to them. I saw friendly rocks that could talk and they told me coded secrets of the earth that I now of course can't remember.

In Morgantown, West Virginia, I had some creepy little four-eyed freak ask me if I felt bad about what happened to Kurt Cobain. Now here's a kid who looked as if he was barely even born when Cobain died. Confused by this weird and openly familiar question I asked him what the hell he could possibly mean. He asked if I felt bad about being involved in his death. I asked him how exactly was I involved in his death? He said, "Well, you know, by introducing him to music and shit." I had to admit he had a weird point....

I mean, had Cobain never met me he most likely would have fallen into a dead-end job not too far outside of shitty Grays Harbor. That doesn't mean he wouldn't have ended up dead anyway but I certainly don't feel bad about a goddamn thing. It's weird to me that anyone would think otherwise. Why should I feel bad? Do the fucking Germans feel bad about WWII? How about the Japanese? Do the Italians feel all broken up about El Duce and teaming up with Hitler? Do the French or English hang their heads in shame when it comes to thinking about how they fucked over half the globe? As far as I can tell they don't feel bad about any of that shit, in fact it's just the opposite. They could seemingly care less and instead proudly wave their countries flags all over the goddam world. So be it, but I will most certainly continue to contemplate this interesting scenario. Ha!

There's been even more noise as of late about George Thorogood beating us to the 51 states in 51 days record. Apparently his manager says he did it and even promises there are a lot of promoters and other rock'n'roll low-levels who will swear that it's the honest-to-Jesus truth. Wow. We are so impressed! Lord knows that no one involved in the music business has ever been known to tell bullshit stories. And we heard that George wishes us well on our attempt to break his totally unprovable "world record." Thank god for that I suppose. I mean, as long as George isn't mad....

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 22-26: Patchouli Vs. Farts

OCTOBER 2 2012, 12:43 PM ET

by Dale Crover

"I want a blow job from Raquel Welch, circa 1968, but that isn't gonna happen!"

September 27, 2012 – Allentown, PA @ Crocodile Rock Cafe

September 28, 2012 – South Burlington, VT @ Higher Ground

September 29, 2012 – Dover, NH @ Dover Brickhouse

September 30, 2012 – Portland, ME @ Asylum

26 down, 25 to go

Allentown, Pennsylvania: Strange place indeed! It has that old, musty smell of death. Street creeps hanging in the alley next to the club. The club is a pizza joint in front and a giant, weird beach-themed club in back. Are we anywhere near a beach? Workers at the club are actually very nice and helpful. They seem excited for the show. I don't think they get many bands like us there. Judging by the pictures on the wall of the owner with Bret Michaels, Good Charlotte, and Lil Kim I'd say that's true. For some reason the hospitality girl and her friend parked their butts on the couch in the dressing room all night long, either sleeping or staring at smart phones. I don't think they saw one minute of the show. There's a giant flat screen in the dressing room and the Yankees/Blue Jays game is on. We're happy as pigs in shit! Trevor breaks a bass string, and since he didn't bring a spare stand-up bass, it's time for Melvins stand-up comedy while he changes it. We do a little Q&A with the audience. Someone says, "I want you guys to play 'Honey Bucket.'" Buzz's reply, "I want a blow job from Raquel Welch, circa 1968, but that isn't gonna happen!"

Gay marriage, ice cream and hippie jam bands. Guess where we are? Yep, Burlington, Vermont. We've played this place a few times. There are two show rooms here, and two jam bands playing the other room. Their set times posted on the wall says that each band will play two-hour sets. Two hours? That's longer than our set and Tweak Bird's combined! I saw the Allman Brothers once. They extended their songs so long that I would forget what song they were playing. I guess you have to be stoned to get through it. There is a lack of pot stench coming from the dressing rooms, but I can definitely smell patchouli, which is way worse! These bands can really pack 'em in and everyone is doing that hippie trifling dance. Phish are from here. Have you seen the Phish Shreds video on YouTube? Fucking hilarious! Big Business played here the night before and stink-bombed the band Switchfoot. I wonder what smells worse: patchouli or farts?

Our first time in Portland, Maine, was the day Kurt Cobain killed himself. We just got off the plane from England and were about to start a big US tour. Our crew and gear had just driven all the way from L.A., and they figured we would cancel the tour. That would have been the worst thing we could do! We had just been on tour with Nirvana in Europe when he made the first suicide attempt, so we were hardly surprised by the news. We saw it coming, and there was nothing anyone could do about it. All the fame and fortune in the world didn't bring him happiness. I went out that day and bought a giant gong. I celebrated life that night by beating the fuck out of it! Since then every time we've played Portland I bought something cool for myself. It's been 13 years since the last time we've played here. I have more than enough cool shit in my life now, and don't need anything else. All I need is a lobster roll and a cup of chowder. I'm totally fucking happy!

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 27 & 28: Eating Bathroom Lettuce!

OCTOBER 3 2012, 4:02 PM ET

by Trevor Dunn

"I stare out the window of the van, chewing on sunflower seeds trying not to cry"

Sludge-metal pioneers the Melvins are attempting to break a world record: 51 shows in 51 states in 51 days. Join SPIN for their exclusive tour diary of this ridiculous and completely inadvisable endeavor! Catch up here.

October 1, 2012 – Boston, MA @ Paradise Rock Club

October 2, 2012 – Pawtucket, RI @ The Met Cafe

28 down, 23 to go

Well, we have made it halfway. We somehow defied the laws of gravity, inertia, hunger, disease, and blaring loud music. We somehow were able to drive in a van all the way across an entire country, set up our gear every night and play music! How is this possible? Last night we played in Boston, a town which will forever hold a special place in my heart ever since the movie *The Departed* came out. Oh how we enjoy mimicking racist, homophobic tirades in pidgin Bostonian. I somehow managed, once again, to not get my ass kicked for wearing a Yankees cap on stage. As if I care about that crap. I don't even follow baseball! I'm all up for a game once in a while as long as a sandwich is involved. In fact, to quote the Narragansett Beer can I'm nursing at the moment, "Hot dogs, peanuts and, of course, delicious lager beer. They all help make baseball more enjoyable." Yes they do, my New England friend. Yes they do. Maybe there are just too many bad memories from Little League of getting beamed by jocks twice my size. Half the reason I got into music in the first place was to get away from all the jocks and popular people in high school. If you take a close look at my Yankees cap there are two pins in the side. One says "cunt." I bought that at an S&M store the first time ever went to New Orleans in 1992. The other is a prairie dog from Prairie Dog Town in Oakley, Kansas. I would say those two pins sum up life on the road quite nicely.

After the show Boston, we drove about 70 miles to a hotel somewhere in Rhode Island. I have no idea where exactly. I went straight to bed, woke up at 11 a.m. and enjoyed a lovely "breakfast sampler" at a Cracker Barrel

across the road. My waiter had one eye and a lot of scabs on his fingers. Then I took a nap. Then I worked out in the hotel gym for an hour, took a shower and watched some garbage on TV. We left the hotel at 4:30 and loaded into the Met Cafe in Pawtucket. Now I'm sitting backstage on a leather couch eating cookies. I don't know how I will survive this lifestyle. Of course, one of the hardest things to do on tour is maintain one's health. After over 25 days into the tour it's no surprise that we have all passed around the same bug. Everyone is coughing up phlegm and looking beat. God knows where we got it. It certainly couldn't be the 25 different toilets I've sat on in the past three weeks; the hundreds of public doorknobs, remote controls, sink faucets and silverware that I grope every day. Nor could it possibly be from the fans, God bless 'em, who hang around after the show and want to shake sweaty hands, go in for an inappropriate hug or lend me a pen they've probably been chewing on to sign a poster. Believe me, I wash my hands a lot. Germs are pretty much a given byproduct of highway travel.

Somewhere backstage I found the ingredients to make a fine sandwich for myself. There was an entire head of luscious green leaf lettuce that my stomach was begging for me to consume. One of the many things you will not find backstage, along with a bottle opener, corkscrew, or cutlery, is a colander. Now, I'm no germaphobe but flirting with salmonella, botulism, or giardia is where I draw the line. Touring has a lot in common with camping, or being hospitalized, so I took this lettuce into the bathroom (food in the bathroom is a big no-no for me) and did a half-assed job of washing it in a sink that, thank goodness, couldn't talk. I would gladly prefer walking the street markets of Bangkok dining on pig stomachs and fried bamboo grubs than making a sandwich in a rock'n'roll bathroom. But beggars can't be choosers now can they? And it goes without saying that chiggers can't be boozers. It's an exciting life. I'm not harvesting the fodder for a book as compelling as anything Nikki Sixx or Keith Richards have ever "written," but I have more money than both of them combined, so I don't need to write a book. Both of those guys are still alive apparently, so who am I to judge? No one, that's who. I made my sandwich and stared mindlessly at the TV in our dressing room as the Red Sox suffered four Yankee home runs in the second inning.

In the meantime, between naps and sandwiches I've watched Elia Kazan's *Splendor in the Grass* for about the 50th time. It's one of my all time favorite heartbreaking movies about denial and frustration. I'm also reading Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*. In its own, completely antithetical way, it is also heartbreaking. By way of selfishly succumbing to base desires, the characters in this book fill me with pity and despair. I stare out the window of the van between chapters, chewing on sunflower seeds trying not to cry. Then I crawl into bed with Natalie Wood on my laptop, dejected and melancholy — her and I both — and ponder asceticism, morality, and compassion. Not unlike the two pins on my hat, these two poetic treatments from Kazan and Wilde combined make utter sense to me. I could never be so graceful though. After all, I'm getting paid to slam my hands into a hollow piece of wood with metal strings on it. The thing is amplified so a couple hundred people can hear it from across the room. For some reason when and where I place my fingers seems to make a big difference. If I can somehow coordinate my physical motions with that of the two other guys' motions, the reaction it produces is to great effect. People seem to like it. It's not an enormous amount of people, but it's impressive enough. What can I expect? I'm a total weirdo, but then again, so was Natalie Wood.

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 29 & 30: Rock Stars Don't Care About You

OCTOBER 8 2012, 1:07 PM ET

by Buzz Osborne

"I don't fault anyone for making money. I fault them for being boring, talentless, inhuman fuckheads"

October 2, 2012 – Pawtucket, RI @ The Met Cafe

October 3, 2012 – Newhaven, CT @ Toad's Place

October 4, 2012 – Brooklyn, NY @ Music Hall of Williamsburg

30 down, 21 to go

As a result of this SPIN tour blog we have actually had people asking us questions like how we could say such horrible things about these bloated, multimillionaire rock stars. And they always leave it off like at any moment we're about to get dragged before some rock'n'roll kangaroo court to stand tall before the man and pay for our ungodly sins against these talented and humanitarian pillars of absolute rock'n'roll dignity. Well clearly that should be the case, but let's get real for a moment here: What's Billie Joe Green Day or Rob Zombie or Bono going to do, not call us ever again? Are we going to be stricken from the rock'n'roll celebrity A-list as a result of these "outrageous" and pointless posted internet monstrosities? Will we receive absolutely no support from these people from now on as a result of actually having the balls to speak our mind in regards to this kind of bullshit? Oh please, whatever they do to us don't let it be that! I can't imagine what it would be like to have to work and live our lives with no support from these blowhard, asshole bastard, multimillionaire talentless rock'n'roll idiots. If that happens I may as well just fold this whole thing up and call it quits! Come on. These senseless jackasses don't care about me or what I think and I don't really care what they think. Why would I?

There is not one thing I or any of the rest of you can learn from a millionaire rock star. Nothing. There is not one piece of information, not one bit of advice that they could ever lay on me that I could use in any area of my everyday life. I suppose they could put me in touch with a good divorce lawyer but that does me no good since I'm one of the few rock'n'rollers who's been married only once and I'm nowhere near getting a divorce. Of course they seem to know all about shit like getting divorced and surprisingly enough drug rehabs, but I don't need assistance in those areas. I don't need a coke dealer. I don't need a divorce lawyer. I don't need the number for a drug rehab. That seems to be the extent of the useful information they have to offer us lowly peons. To be fair though, they do provide us all with an example of what not to do. I suppose there is some good in that, and I suppose that is important.

However...We're talking about imbecilic five-star clowns with imbecilic five-star clown managers and road managers and an army of imbecilic five-star clown sycophant assholes surrounding them at all times and nothing they do ever surprises me. It's predictably boring and pathetic and it's one of the reasons the Melvins operate the way they do. I can't stand that fucking shit and I just don't care. And besides, before you get mad at us for speaking our minds about this trivial bullshit, remember, these guys don't want or need your help. These rock star assholes don't care about you. They don't even care enough to try and make good music for their fans to listen to. What they generally care about has little or nothing to do with logic even because in most of these cases it's not about money. These overpaid lazy fuckers already have more money than God. So what exactly is the motivation for these boring turds? I have no idea. Lord knows I can't figure it out. If I had to guess I'd say it has something to do with them liking having their asses kissed on and off stage all over the world. That's what they miss the most when they aren't "working." On tour they get to strut around like Louis the XIV, but at home their just another pot smoking dipshit vegging out in front of a big screen cable TV. Wow. I remain unimpressed.

And I don't mean to just pick on rich rock stars, my hatred in this department extends to all multimillionaire entertainers, be they comedians, TV personalities, news anchors, movie moguls, film directors, writers, artists, and actors, with actors being the lowest slime-crawling maggots of them all. Actors really are the scum of the earth. Their behavior makes overpaid rock stars look positively noble. But that's another diatribe. Don't get me wrong, I don't fault anyone for making money. I fault them for being boring, talentless, inhuman fuckheads. "But come on, Buzz, aren't you worried about going a little too far with this insane and seemingly pointless shit talking?" No....Why should I be worried? When I do ponder such things I just think back to one of my favorite Flannery O'Connor quotes which is, "I'm not afraid that the book will be controversial, I'm afraid it will not be controversial." Of course! I'm not worried about a goddamn thing. Now if I could somehow work it to where one of these multimillionaires takes a swing at me. Ha!

Anyway....We played a great show in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, at a club I'd never set foot in called the Met Cafe. Everyone who worked there were really helpful and very cool and we had a great show. Great crowd and good

times were had by all. It was raining as we loaded out and there were a handful of very friendly fans waiting for us as we left who were surprisingly well spoken and only a tiny bit ripped. I like fans who are just a tiny bit ripped. Ha! New Haven. A club called Toad's. We've played Toad's a shitload of times over the years and it's always pretty good. A few times ago we invented a game in Toad's downstairs dressing room called "hall ball." This is actually an extremely dangerous version of wiffleball except it's played in a very confined space. You still throw the ball as hard as you can and you still try to hit the ball as hard as you can with the trick being to not get hit full in the face with a line drive. You have to be quick. They also have a hot tub down there that I wouldn't get near unless I was wearing a complete hazmat suit and even then. No fucking way. I usually don't even like using the john at clubs let alone climbing into a fucking backstage hot tub for Christ's sake. Screw that. I won't even get in a hot tub anyway, or a public pool for that matter. In that horrid nightmarish thing swimming in piss would be the least of it. The club told us they thought the last people to actually use the tub were George Clinton and company.

I talked to yet another drunk after our New Haven performance who actually got irritated because I didn't want to stand there and listen to him complain about our show. I try to avoid that kind of shit to the best of my ability. Guess why? We also had a "fun" encounter with a "fan" who we all dubbed "Tweaky Crank-enstein." You can imagine how well that went. Some blown out dude who wants to gack-yak your ear off about nothing whilst on a crystal bender. Perfect. He went from band member to crew member to band member and drove us all nuts.

The best part of touring is playing the shows. I mean that is the point of touring, at least for me. I have been blessed in that I've always gotten to play with other good musicians. Our New York date was our 30th show in a row. Our last U.S. tour was about 30 shows total and they were not on consecutive dates. This is definitely a different animal. We drove south after the show in New Haven to a lonely hotel in the middle of nowhere. The window to my second story room looked through a thick layer of evergreen trees straight onto the busy freeway. I turned on the AC full bore and between its incessant hum and the 70 mph traffic whizzing by 25 yards away I had a perfect white noise background to fall asleep to. As I was busying myself getting ready for bed for some reason, I was reminded of a quote from the movie Deliverance: "No matter what happens in the rest of the world, no one can find me here...."

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 31-34: Sandwiches From the 52nd State!

OCTOBER 9 2012, 5:33 PM ET

by Dale Crover

"What a great day to be in New Jersey!"

October 5, 2012 – Hoboken, NJ @ Maxwell's

October 6, 2012 – Wilmington, DE @ Mojo 13

October 7, 2012 – Baltimore, MD @ Ottobar

October 8, 2012 – Washington, DC @ Black Cat

34 down, 17 to go

The Sun finally came back out after weeks of drab and dreary weather. What a great day to be in New Jersey! Wait, has anyone said that before ever? Tonight we play Maxwell's in Hoboken. We've played here quite a few times over the years. I didn't discover until this time that the intersection the club is on is where Elysian Fields used to be. Home of the first-ever organized baseball game! The bases are marked on each corner, putting the stage in left field. How fitting, our band out in left field! I also learned from Buzz's onstage banter that he "borrowed" the title of our new record, Freak Puke, from the Fugs! One of our favorite Hate Hippy bands from NYC. It all makes sense now.

I had the best Cuban sandwich ever today at El Artesano in Union City. I don't know if I can eat a Cuban sandwich anyplace else now. Speaking of Cuba, Trevor and I did an interview with these college girls in Chicago. I told them that we're playing 51 states in 51 days. "Why don't you play 52 states?" one of them said. "And what would be the

52nd state?" I ask. "Cuba?" she says. Cuba?! You could have at least said Puerto Rico! I don't think you girls are taking the right classes." Anyway, those Cubans know how to make a damn good sandwich. Coffee too! Our first time in NYC was a real treat! We were on tour with the band RKL. We weren't even supposed to be on the tour. We took over for Beyond Possession after their van motor blew up in San Francisco. The guy who booked the tour was a guy from New York named Johnny Stiff. After our Baltimore gig fell through he told us to come to New York and come find him down in St. Marks Place. "Yeah, youse guys just go down dere an asks around for me. Everybody knows Johnny Stiff!" He clearly didn't want us staying with him. We spent all night looking for this fucking guy with no luck. We took turns sleeping in the van. Some guy that looks like Johnny Thunders walks up to us and says, "Why do youse have KISS on the side of youse van?"

"Uh, 'cause we like KISS I guess."

"It's just saws Paul Stanley down da street! Seen him a couple two, tree times down here."

"Cool, do you know Johnny Stiff?"

"Nope, don't knows no Johnny Stiff. Youse guys betteh bees careful down here."

We played Delaware for the very first time ever. The club had a giant evil clown over the door. We wondered if it was maybe a Juggalo hangout for a minute. I felt like I was on the set of a John Waters movie all night. The place definitely had a Mortville vibe to it. We went down the street to get burgers. The guy who took my order was on something pretty heavy. He had a hard time pronouncing "balsamic." The kid flipping burgers looked just like Michael Cera. He steams a good ham!

Baltimore gig at the Ottobar was fun. Baltimore is a weird place. It seems that it never changes at all. Lots of burned-out and boarded-up houses. Now we really are on the set of a John Waters movie! People here are excited that the Orioles finally don't suck and are in the post-season. Baseball rules, despite what Trevor says. I hated all the jerk jocks that played it too, but they're not the reason I like baseball. It's the weirdness of the whole game that I like. I don't really like football or basketball.

We hung out with Bob Bert from Pussy Galore and Mick Collins from Dirtbombs in Hoboken. Also saw Kid Congo Powers who was in the Cramps, Gun Club, and other great bands in Washington, D.C. These three are really nice guys! Rumor has it that they've done a project together. Can't wait to hear it!

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Day 35: 'This Sucks!'

OCTOBER 11 2012, 5:12 PM ET

by Trevor Dunn

"In the morning I stared blankly into my empty refrigerator"

October 4, 2012 – Brooklyn, NY @ Music Hall of Williamsburg

October 5, 2012 – Hoboken, NJ @ Maxwell's

October 6, 2012 – Wilmington, DE @ Mojo 13

October 7, 2012 – Baltimore, MD @ Ottobar

October 8, 2012 – Washington, DC @ Black Cat

October 9, 2012 – Charlottesville, VA @ Jefferson Theater

35 down, 16 to go

Being on tour is a weird experience. There is really nothing I can think of to compare it to. At this point, the routine and predictability of each day melts into the next. Years ago I came up with the theory that after two weeks on the road, all tours feel the same. The first two weeks are the hardest, and within the first few days patterns are established, stamina is challenged and habit is formed. It doesn't matter if the tour is five days or five months; they all feel like two weeks. The body adjusts to the abuse, the mind to sporadic sleep patterns, and very little is

unexpected. Nothing rears its head that cannot be dealt with or ignored. There is strength in the haze. The summer has slipped by and it seems that time has condensed and evaporated like milk in a hot bowl. I never know what day of the week it is. Before I open my eyes I can't be sure as to whether it will be day or night. Alaska, our first show, feels like a million years ago and yesterday at the same time. My calendar is nothing but a list of load-in times, set times, and mileage to the next town. Memory is selective and events are intertwined so that all the venues, all of the people, and all of the gas stations exist in my mind as one single entity. What some hopped-up kid said to me on the sidewalk after the show is the metaphysical equivalent of an empty bag of potato chips on the van floor or the depth of the stage at any given club. For all my consciousness has to offer in its blur of sameness I very well could have played a single show in the past 35 days, although the soreness of my arms and back begs to differ.

A week ago we passed through New York City, which happens to be where I live. What is even weirder about being on tour is making a pit stop at home in the middle of a tour. Of course, I was elated to be sleeping in my own bed and sitting on my own toilet. But it was just weird being there and I couldn't sleep or shit. There was a stack of bills waiting for me; I had to rush around running errands, getting bows re-haired, doing laundry — basically preparing for the second half of the tour. I couldn't relax. I almost got hit by a car. I tried to cram in a couple of hangs with close friends. In the morning I stared blankly into my empty refrigerator. It wasn't until I got back in the van and onto some unfamiliar highway that I could regain my composure, answer some emails, read, take a nap. The artificial stability of the road had nearly slipped away from my calloused grasp, but it was there waiting patiently. It waited for me in an empty Styrofoam coffee cup. It waited for me at 2 a.m. in a plastic bag containing a triangle-shaped ham sandwich. And mostly it waited for me, like the ghost of a barely known relative, in the hotel rooms that all smell the same and yet contain the lingering odor of a stranger who had been there just a few hours prior. An unknown perfume providing irrational security. Somehow, at this point in the tour, the cookie-cutter squareness of the hotel room is more ordinary and commonplace than my own home. A dirty couch backstage, underneath a bowling alley, listening to the opening band sound check, is a more calming place to sleep than my own bedroom.

NYC did not disappoint despite myself. I ate sushi among hipsters, paid a Chinese masseuse \$30 to beat the hell out of my back for 30 minutes, bought toothpaste at four in the morning, and ate tacos from a truck with a Mexican saxophone player. I caught a cab to Hoboken and sat in traffic for two hours in order to reach a destination six miles away. I seem to remember eating a hamburger in a venue I hadn't inhabited in a good 20 years. Then, according to my tour book, we were in Delaware. I do remember that the stage was about three feet deep and I worried the entire set about some drunk, moshing enthusiast flying head first into my upright bass. The next day we were in Baltimore driving through one of the most impoverished blocks in the country. One thing I remember in particular about that show was that as I was cathartically spilling my soul out in a solo moment, I heard someone from the crowd shout, "This sucks!"

Onward to Washington, D.C. and then Charlottesville, Virginia, where we played the Jefferson Theater, a 100-year-old venue whose segregated seating had seen performances of the likes of Houdini and the Three Stooges. That night three more stooges got up on the stage before making their escape to North Carolina and further down into the sweaty depths of this country. With many of these venues, I walk into them and become aware of cloudy memories from being there before but as make my exit, I leave those memories and the new ones to haunt the walls with all of the other bands' nebula. The spirits, in liquid or luminous form, invisible or served on ice, conjoin and roam the halls long after the loading of gear and the bleeding of flesh has stopped. I merely stop in to say hello, provide some fodder for the next audience and continue on my way like a faulty satellite spinning out of control but always brought back to some origin by way of the almighty circle, the inexplicable force of gravity and a longing to return.

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 36-38: Why Buddy Holly Died

OCTOBER 16 2012, 9:29 AM ET

by Buzz Osborne

**"I told the crowd that I was wondering if they could help me find
a graveyard where I could steal headstones or even rob graves"**

October 10, 2012 – Carrboro, NC @ Cat's Cradle

October 11, 2012 – Knoxville, TN @ The Square Room

October 12, 2012 – Greenville, SC @ The Handle Bar

38 down, 13 to go

They keep telling us we aren't really in the "south" yet and they've been telling us this since we left Washington, D.C. The "south" wasn't in Virginia and apparently, if you believe what the locals told us, then North Carolina isn't in the "south" either. It's almost like they don't want to admit that they live in the "south." Where is the "south" then? God knows....It's all the same as far as I'm concerned.

To me, everything outside of Los Angeles is the "south" including places like San Diego. It's sort of like the saying "everything is God." Indeed it is. I usually don't argue with people when they talk about their hometown unless it's to simply agree that the place they live sucks ass or rules the planet. It's all the same to me because I don't want to live anywhere except Los Angeles. Sometimes that's hard for people to get their heads around because L.A. has this weird stigma surrounding it and seems to be universally hated by all outsiders for reasons I've never understood, but don't expect me to run down a list of all the reasons Los Angeles is the greatest city in the world because that's something I would never do. If you are too stupid to figure that out for yourself then so be it, I will happily leave you to wallow in your own ignorance.

Anyway...We are in the "south."

One of the funny things about touring and doing a lot of shows in a short amount of time is how they all blur into a strange vaguely familiar glaring white haze and that never seems to change. It's not like I'm onstage in Indiana amazed at how much different it is than a show in New York City, actually I'm amazed at how similar the shows all are. Believe me, there is no shortage of screaming morons in so called "progressive" cities like New York, San Francisco, Paris, Berlin, or Tel Aviv. Stupidity knows no bounds and certainly no city limits, but by and large 99 percent of the people who come to Melvins shows seem to be relatively well behaved....I'm happy and relieved by this.

We played a wonderful show at the Cat's Cradle in North Carolina. We've played there a lot in the last 20 years and it's always a great experience. Easy load-in and nice people, plus a lot of okay places to eat around the immediate vicinity of the club. Right before we played I watched Cat's Cradle security talking outside to a very agitated bearded thirtysomething Melvins fan. I didn't hear exactly what the exchange was but when I asked the security guy about it later he told me, "Man, that dude is crazy." Perfect...At least he was outside and I hope he stayed outside. I didn't notice any bloodshed or insanity while we were onstage but there's usually a lot I don't notice that's happening in the audience while we play so anything is possible.

Our Knoxville show was really great as well. We arrived pretty early to find a very well-maintained venue that even had bunk beds in the dressing room! I'm not shitting you, bunk beds. At last we could and did live out our age-old fantasy of all living together in one big "house" like the Monkees! I crashed out on a top bunk and pretended that Trevor was an even gayer version of Davy Jones....

Weirdly, as we rolled into Greenville, South Carolina we noticed that almost every business we passed had the

word “anal” somewhere in its name. Then, as we were standing outside the venue I asked the Tweak Bird guys if they knew what the hell that big dark building next to the club was. It looked positively spooky, like a cross between a school, a prison, and a slaughterhouse. They told me they weren’t sure what it actually was but the sign said “Anal something...” We’d never played Greenville before and we had a really great show. The club was called the Handle Bar and we expected it to be a biker bar or maybe a gay club considering the name, but as it turned out, the Handle Bar name was actually about handle bar mustaches...which is actually still like a gay bar I suppose. I was kinda looking forward to seeing what a gay bar in South Carolina looked like...next time maybe.

Staring into the middle distance is the best way to describe the overwhelming sensation I have while being on tour, and that has always been the case. If you can’t deal with a huge amount of traveling and an endless amount of pointless free time while being surrounded by people you’ve been living on top of for weeks on end then forget touring. You will be a miserable bastard and you will end up freaking out over something as stupid as not being able to do your laundry. I mean think about it, if Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and the Big Bopper hadn’t freaked out about being cold on their tour bus and not being able to do their fucking laundry they would never have gotten on some rickety airplane during a blinding blizzard only to end up with their brains splattered all over a horrible, snow covered backwater Iowa cornfield. As a result of air temperature and laundry, the three rock star freakouts and the pilot all end up dead while the freezing cold tour bus quietly makes its way to the next gig with the non-freakout survivors still present and accounted for...chilly and wearing dirty clothes, but alive, or so the story goes. That is if you believe the tales told by Dion and Waylon Jennings who were both on the tour and who also both claim to have lost their airline death seats in a very “unlucky” coin toss to two of the three soon to be dead stars. No one claimed to have tossed a coin with Holly for his seat, but then, who would have? Certainly not me...Ha!

Staring into the middle distance and thinking about everything and nothing...I’ve worked out all sorts of problems whilst staring during a long drive both as a passenger and as the driver and most of that infinite wisdom is instantly forgotten the second I get to whatever club we are playing and we begin busying ourselves with loading in, setting up and sound checking. I usually survey the stage first thing and try to imagine what it will be like to be playing there that night, then I help set up the equipment in what I hope will turn out to be the best way possible for the configuration of whatever the stage layout is.

The stage layout is different in every club we play so I’ve gotten used to dealing with whatever is there. Some stages are the size of a postage stamp and some even have one or two giant poles strategically located mid-stage. That never helps but you just learn to deal with it and get along... Some stages are insanely big. On this tour we’ve played on more than one stage that was bigger than the square footage of some of the other clubs entire indoor layout bar included! None of that is a big deal though and certainly no reason to complain, and I’m not complaining. It is what it is and I accept it without question. Why wouldn’t I? We want to be here. I want to travel around the country and make my living playing music. I also try to behave in a way that I would appreciate as a music fan. That’s how we conduct ourselves be it in writing music or playing it live.

I’ve been doing introductions in the middle of the shows on this tour, which is certainly different for me. I usually never say a word and just let the music do the talking, but I have been known to rattle on from time to time. Once on tour a long time ago, we were in New London, Connecticut, and I told the crowd that I was wondering if they could help me find a graveyard where I could steal headstones or even rob graves. There weren’t that many people there anyway and I sometimes like to talk a bunch of insane shit if the idea hits me.

After the show a slightly overweight but still somehow attractive “Goth” looking girl told me that I should stay out of the graveyards around there because it’s hard enough for them in that town as it is.

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Days 39-41: What the Hell Is a Funkadelic

OCTOBER 18 2012, 4:22 PM ET

by Dale Crover

October 13, 2012 - Athens, GA @ 40 Watt

October 14, 2012 - Birmingham, AL @ Bottle Tree

October 15, 2012 - Pensacola, FL @ Vinyl Music Hall

41 down, 9 to go

The South is a strange place. It seems to me that it's never quite recovered from the Civil War. The ghosts are still here and you can feel them. Sometimes you see them. The first time we came down here was a real eye opener. There was still a lot of racial tension, and there still is in some places. Not that there isn't racism and discrimination everywhere else in the country, it's just much more out in the open in certain areas down here. You can drive 30 miles outside of any major city in the U.S. and you'll find rednecks and hicks. We get a lot of stares at gas stations and restaurants.

Of course Buzz gets it the worst. The other day in Alabama we were gassing up and the broad behind the counter said to him, "What're trying to do, scare people? You can't walk around here looking like that!" It's amazing that some people have no fucking filter at all! Yeah, he looks weird, so what? Try taking a look at yourself in the mirror. It's like what George Hanson says in *Easy Rider* about individual freedom. People think that they are free, but once they see someone who actually is a free individual it scares them. It doesn't make them running scared though, it makes them dangerous! I do like this part of the country though. And not everyone is a card-carrying member of the Ku Klux Klan. I've met some of the nicest, most genuine people on the planet in the South. Like the folks at the 40 Watt in Athens, Georgia. We've been doing shows with them for 24 years, and it's one of our favorite places to play. The first time we drew about 30 people. The sound man started singing while he was setting up. "Fucked your Mama on a sack of flour, she shit pancakes for half an hour!" WTF?!? We laughed our heads off at that one! He had been in the military and that was one of the chants. The Bottle Tree in Birmingham, Alabama is another great place. Lots of kitschy art on the walls. The dressing rooms for the bands are two airstream trailers out back. And then there's the food. Southerners invented fried chicken. Hats off to whoever came up with such a wonderful idea! There's been a serious lack of BBQ on this tour though. We're gonna have to take care of that real soon.

Someone told us that by playing Pensacola we weren't really playing Florida. Really? So, we should drive down to the Keys for a gig I guess? Great idea! Most bands blow off playing Florida completely. The first time we went down to Florida we had to deal with Nazi skinheads. That was a real treat. They hated our band with a passion! Then again, so did pretty much everybody else. We were really good at clearing the room. The punks were in no way interested in our long-haired bullshit. When we finally came back three years later everyone had long hair and Sub Pop T-shirts. Go figure! The club in Pensacola was nice. The dressing room was bigger than some of the clubs we've played on this trip. Complete with a pool table, ping pong table, foosball and giant flat screen. Again, we got to watch baseball playoffs before the show.

On our way to Jackson, Mississippi, we stopped off for gas. As Buzz was walking into the gas station, this black lady was staring at him. She said to him, "Hey, what's that on your shirt?"

"Funkadelic." he replied. "Now what the Hay-ell is a Funkadelic?"

She did have a point. What the hell is a Funkadelic? With this woman was a very openly gay black man. He was our hero of the day! A true, free individual that doesn't give fuck what you think. Real redeem baby! To you sir, we salute you!

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Day 42: America the Bleak, America the Beautiful

OCTOBER 22 2012, 4:25 PM ET

by Trevor Dunn

October 16, 2012 - Jackson, MS @ Duling Hall

42 down, 9 to go

Fellow Americans, I don't know if you've noticed or had the opportunity to see for yourselves, but this country is vast and elephantine. There are many different landscapes, some mind-bogglingly gorgeous; clean, untouched rivers snaking around angular mountainsides; green-and-yellow plains that seem to stretch flatly into oblivion. Thousands of forests, full of trees I can't identify, sit quietly growing and doing what they do best without help from anyone.

From the sheltered van in which I ride, hidden by tinted windows, surrounded by the collective aroma of five other guys and the evidence of what we have consumed in the last six weeks, I fantasize about running alone in the fields, climbing trees, swimming in icy waters and drying in the sun. I try to image silence, or the simple sound of a breeze or the warning cries of a hawk. There is also an abundance of abandoned failures. Boarded up buildings that Mother Nature has no hesitation about reclaiming; unwashed, beaten down people shuffling along the roadside, mumbling to themselves as they purchase a case of Bud Lite with spare change in callused hands. I am reminded of the brutal lyrics from Simon & Garfunkel: "Nothing but the dead and dying back in my little town." At times I am grateful to get back into the shelter of the van. If I can survive another truck stop without getting shot by some hick who can't figure out my Nicki Minaj T-shirt or my "long" hair, then I'm happy to eat fried chicken out of a paper bag in the insular world of this entourage. Of the 400 million people living in this country, the diversity and variation is not any less than that of Europe and its 47 countries. The dialects of English in this nation, not to mention the priorities of the locals, are well beyond any real semblance of "unity." I could not imagine trying to represent the people of this nation. It's just too big and too weird.

I grew up in a small town where I had to extend myself to find the culture I was interested in. Ultimately this inexplicable penchant for the so-called avant-garde or diversity or whatever you want to call it, led me to live in New York City, the capital of everything. That said, thanks to my father's side of the family, I have distant yet discernible roots in the South. I went to a family reunion in southern Missouri when I was a mullet-sporting metalhead in high school, and even though I feel like a complete outsider in this part of my country, there is something untouchably familiar about it. I almost feel like if I just make eye contact with some greasy, ready-to-unhinge hillbilly and give him a nod, he will understand that I understand. He'll leave me alone and let me go on my way, as I will for him. I don't give a shit who he votes for or whether he's illiterate or not. If it weren't for my desire to eat Korean bib at 4 a.m., visit an installation of Iannis Xenakis' architectural-music scores, or get paid to play free-jazz with lesbians, I would probably buy a shack in the middle of Alabama four acres from any other building. I would somehow feel at home and yet, I doubt I would befriend the aforementioned farmhand.

Against a motionless, blue horizon stand an array of tall, lonely fast food signs; they hover in the air reflecting the sun off of their red and yellow plastic logos; irreverent, harsh bullhorns calling the sheep into feed; primary colors for primates. We pulled into the ten-thousandth gas station off the side of a barren highway, roaming the tiny aisles of the mini-mart looking for something to snack on despite having absolutely no hunger pangs. There is always a double-feeling of guilt in this scenario. One is personal — that I have no business purchasing this crap that I don't really need. But, it's like watching TV, I am mesmerized by the shiny packaging, the taunt of immediate gratification. I am a victim of the system I help create and I oblige willingly. The other guilt comes from the watchful eye of the shop clerk. I wouldn't want that job. At some random moment of the day or night a swarm of six guys, disheveled and smart-mouthed, simultaneously push open the doors and head for the bathroom or the coffee machine, or just loiter

for a bit. We are dressed mostly in black, stained clothes, unshaved and clearly “not from around here.” I’d be worried. I make my selection and walk to the counter but the clerk has disappeared somewhere to the back of the store. I stand there for several minutes thinking about how much crap could be pilfered. There’s nothing in here worth the risk, plus memories of being disciplined as a kid for stealing linger in the deepest parts of my Freudian psyche. I wait patiently, staring at energy drinks, mints, cigarettes, lotto cards, male enhancement pills — the baubles of Western humanity, the flotsam and jetsam of the modern American, and maybe everyone else, too. Eventually, the clerk returns. I say, “Hi, how you doin’?” She says nothing. Not a peep. She rings me up and hands me my change while I steal a look at her cold face which gives up nothing. Later I think of things I could have said such as, “Oh, that good?” or “Yeah, I hear ya.” But I accept the communication breakdown gracefully. I let her have her shitty day and carry on with her shitty life. Far be it from me to assume anything about anyone. Maybe she’s perfectly happy, content, spiritually enlightened and loaded with cash.

Walking back out onto the asphalt I stand next to the diesel pump and feel the heat of Dixie below my feet. From about 75 yards away, down an over-grown embankment strewn with litter, a robust woman comes jogging out of a Waffle House and yells something at me. I look in her direction offering no response. She yells again, “Is that a vaaaaan or a buuuuus??” I continue to gape in her general direction completely confused by this question until it finally dawns on me to respond. “It’s a vaaaaaan,” I holler. She cups her hands around her mouth and shouts in a barely discernible drawl, “We were all of us inside tryin’ to figure out wut it wuuuuuuz.” My expressionless face betrays the mild disbelief behind my eyes. A million images flash after a pale gaze. What was that discourse inside the Waffle House? Why is this an issue? Who cares? What is the meaning of life? Why are some people lucky when others are born into endless despair? Would I rather freeze to death or die in a fire? She scuffles back into the restaurant, I hop back into my seat in the van, taking a sip from a refrigerated Starbucks double shot in a can. In Jackson, Mississippi, I am more than pleasantly surprised by the quality of the chopped salad, seared tuna tacos, and caramelized bread pudding with agave cream. The dressing room is a forgotten fry kitchen. A vat of grease stagnates and a pilot light burns on the stove continuously to keep the thing from blowing up. The crowd of barely 100 people are enthusiastic and friendly. They’re actually listening to the music, not yelling over the top of it so much. One kid purchases my duo CD of experimental, improvised music. He asks, “What am I getting myself into here?” as he breaks the shrink-wrap and hands me a Sharpie. The town reminds me of the one I grew up in. Empty, clean streets with little to offer in the way of culture and entertainment; isolated souls at every turn. I get it.

The Melvins ‘51 States in 51 Days’ Tour Diary, Days 43-51: We F*ing Did It!**

NOVEMBER 5 2012, 7:50 AM ET

by Dale Crover

Take that George Thorogood’s lying ex-booking agent, or whatever you are!

October 17, 2012 – Little Rock, AR @ Juanita’s Cantina

October 18, 2012 – Baton Rouge, LA @ Spanish Moon

October 19, 2012 – Austin, TX @ Mohawk

October 20, 2012 – Norman, OK @ Opalis Production

October 21, 2012 – Albuquerque, NM @ Launchpad

October 22, 2012 – Phoenix, AZ @ Crescent Ballroom

October 23, 2012 – Las Vegas, NV @ Las Vegas Country Saloon

October 24, 2012 – Los Angeles, CA @ Hollywood Forever Cemetery

October 25, 2012 – Honolulu, HI @ The Republik

51 down, 0 to go!

The last week of the tour was probably the hardest. Mentally, not physically. A good stretch of I-10 was closed in Louisiana causing delays. We almost didn’t make it to Phoenix. We were about to cross the finish line and then we

have van trouble. Thankfully Tweak Bird came to the rescue on that one! What's a little drama to keep it interesting, huh? Finally, back in Los Angeles we had a first-time experience playing at a cemetery. I've been to the Hollywood Forever Cemetery a few times. Lots of famous people buried there Douglas Fairbanks, Mel Blanc, Peter Lorre, and Johnny and Dee Dee Ramone. I can't believe that almost all the Ramones are dead! It wasn't that long ago that we ran into them at a Cracker Barrel. I had an amazing conversation with Joey about gravy. "Yeah, dey got good gwavy here!" We played in the Masonic Lodge. Weird gig. It kinda felt like we were playing a big house party. I had the same trouble Trevor had when he stopped at home for one night. I couldn't sleep worth a damn. Maybe because I knew I had to get up at 6 a.m. to leave for the airport. Anxiety about missing the flight I guess.

We ended the whole damn thing in Hawaii. The last territory to become a state, and the last date of our tour. The openers were a local band called Beaman. The singer was pretty funny. He was drunk off his ass and jumping around so much his pants were falling down. He told the crowd that they were from West Dakota. Shit, I guess we missed a state! We played our set and were done with it. The next morning we had about an hour before we had to leave for the airport, Trevor and I ran down to Waikiki Beach and jumped in the warm, blue Pacific. Staring at Diamond Head I realized what we had done, and felt a great sense of accomplishment. We did it! We really fucking did it! Take that George Thorogood's lying ex-booking agent, or whatever you are. I mean, "Whatever, bitch!"

It's a weird feeling going from 100mph to a complete dead stop. You're constantly on the move on tour: Driving, setting up gear, and playing, tearing it all down only to jump back in the van and drive again. When everything stops, you don't know what to do with yourself. It takes a few days to decompress. You go through a bit of Post-Tour Depression (PTD's). Eventually the world catches up with you. I was surprised to feel jet lagged when we got back from Hawaii. Then again, we did go through five different time zones and back in two days.

Thanks to everyone involved with the tour! Thanks for coming to the show, or shows if you did! We feel grateful to be able to still do this after almost 30 years, and we don't take it for granted. Thanks to SPIN for letting us write the tour diary. It was fun to do. It was funny seeing people getting pissed off at us for shit talking certain rock stars. All of what we said is true! People don't like the truth. They get defensive and weird when you say Billie Joe is a big baby for throwing a rock star tantrum, or that Rob Zombie is a total dick! It's fucking true! I'm one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet! I say it's true! Oh well, why believe us? We should just tell lies like Bob Dylan does. It's more interesting than the truth anyway.

The Melvins '51 States in 51 Days' Tour Diary, Day 51: Buzzo's Epilogue and Van Thoughts

NOVEMBER 6 2012, 9:02 AM ET

by Buzz Osborne

"Being in a touring band would be a great cover for a serial killer"

October 20, 2012 – Norman, OK @ Opalis Production

October 21, 2012 – Albuquerque, NM @ Launchpad

October 22, 2012 – Phoenix, AZ @ Crescent Ballroom

October 23, 2012 – Las Vegas, NV @ Las Vegas Country Saloon

October 24, 2012 – Los Angeles, CA @ Hollywood Forever Cemetery

October 25, 2012 – Honolulu, HI @ The Republik

51 down, 0 to go!

We are nearing the end of this tour. All that needs to happen now is for some unexplained disaster like malaria or lumber lung to strike us down leaving this pointless 50-state touring "brass ring" just out of reach. We should cancel Hawaii so we have to do the whole thing over again. Ha! Next year we plan on doing the slowest tour of all 50 states. One state a week for 51 weeks. This time we can walk between shows.

Norman, Oklahoma: This was one of those gigs where every person there was drunk and crazy. Even the chicks. Drunk, crazy, and howling like mad dogs. Brian said the audience took the prize for drunkest and dumbest of the whole trip. I'll take his word for it because we had plenty of drunk and dumb audiences on this tour and I would never say they were wrong to get hammered to the back of their brains on booze drugs and then roll around on the floor howling like crazy beasts. I think that's just fine....

I can't go into Oklahoma without thinking about Larry Clark's photography book Tulsa. It's a great book about how life works. There is a quote from Larry in the book that says, "Once the needle goes in it never comes out." It's hard for people to move on from a town like this. I understand that pretty well having grown up in a horrible shit-burg in backwater Washington state. I understand their plight and I can't wait to move on.

Random thoughts as I drive across the rolling nothingness of middle America: I drove 564 miles today. I tried to remember the vast array of insane things that went through my mind as I kept the speedometer between 70 and 85 for as much of the drive as I could...

When I was in kindergarten I remember one little girl brought a Porter Wagoner record for Show and Tell. He stood there on the cover in what I now know was a smart-looking Nudie suit. I remember thinking he looked tough with his giant greased pompadour, like he belonged in church. We listened to "The Carol County Accident," which in hindsight seems like a strange choice for a bunch of five year olds...

I wonder how many times this van would go end over end if I jammed us off the freeway and into a deep ravine at 85 mph?

What if I threw away everyone's luggage except mine at the next gas stop? They probably wouldn't notice until we got to the hotel that night so I might be able to get away with it for a few minutes, then they'd put two and two together and kick the shit out of me.

If I intentionally quit making any money at all and just sat at home doing nothing, I wonder how long it would be before my wife threw my ass out into the streets?

If Jimi Hendrix was still alive would he have ended up as boring as Eric Clapton?

I wonder how hot Kim Novak looks now?

If the Mayans couldn't predict the end of their own civilization, then what makes these idiots today think they could accurately predict that the world will end in December of 2012?

If stupidity got us into this mess then why can't it get us out? (That is actually a Will Rogers quote but I think about it all the time. Ha!)

Did Veronica Lake really drink herself to death?

Why do we even bother with a post office at this point? It seems like the only reason they don't close every one of them down right now is because they're afraid of what would happen if all those postmen got canned.

If two wrongs don't make a right then what do three wrongs make? What about four?

Some of us don't like nature....

Why isn't there a town called "Pork and Beans" in South Carolina?

Once, in the early '00s, Fantômas played a French festival where we watched a girl crew member unsuccessfully try to hang herself with a guitar cable off of the lighting rig during the show. Then, we walked over to catering and asked the

cook if he had any ketchup so that we could mask the flavor of the fucking shit food he was serving...

Do these greasy-looking biker dudes we see all over the country know that the only people who ride motorcycles in Los Angeles are cops and homosexuals? I don't think these guys realize that.

Fortunately for me, the pioneers destroyed the heavy infestation of dumb buffalo that used to aimlessly roam these prairies or we wouldn't even be able to drive through here.

And...It's weird to me that no one points out the fact that the Native Americans never even invented the wheel. I guess they didn't need it. Ha!

Who owns the patent on the plastic dots they glue to the center line on the roads? Jesus, the fucker must be a zillionaire.

Being in a touring band would be a great cover for a serial killer.

And so it goes. And that was only what went through my head in the first ten minutes. Ha!

I love to drive.

Phoenix, Arizona: We arrived after the sun went down and we left town before the sun came back up, meaning that after the show we simply drove to a hotel on our way to Las Vegas. There were already a lot of people in the club by the time we got there and they patiently waited while we quickly set up our gear. We were late and I hate people that are late and I hate being late...I like to get there and stay there until we play. I have a job to do and I try to make that my main focus on tour. I like to know everything is okay and that the show will go off without a hitch. Of course sometimes it just doesn't work that way but not because I don't try to have that be the case. Life is not fair.

Las Vegas, Nevada: Vegas is a weird place but that's well known by anyone with even half a brain. It's only reason for existing is to fleece suckers of their money. I've never been a gambler so I've thankfully never fallen prey to the dubious effects of gambling, but plenty of people obviously love to throw their money down the toilet. I think that's just fine. All in all, gambling is a victimless crime so who cares?

A long time ago, when they first decided to make gambling illegal, the real reason they did it was because they got sick of the casinos sucking money out of the local populations. That was the only reason they did it. Time seems to have healed that wound and I wonder how long it will take before these dummies who voted to legalize Indian casino gambling in places outside Atlantic City and Las Vegas realize this? There was a reason they only wanted gambling in a few spots in America. Not surprisingly I suppose, the second the Indians were granted gambling rights they immediately sold out to the Vegas casinos anyway! You'd think they would have learned their lesson when it comes to signing any pale-faced document. We had a great show in Vegas. We played right on Fremont Street directly across from a burger joint that advertised free food to anyone over 350 pounds! It was refreshing to not be faced with some idiot do-gooder telling us Americans are all too fat. We've demonized tobacco and at the same time lionized weed which makes absolutely no sense to me, and now the do-gooders are out to demonize what we eat! Fuck that...

Los Angeles, California: We played an amazing show at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in the old Masonic Temple. What a great place and everyone there were very accommodating. As it turns out, they bought the place out of bankruptcy! I didn't even know a cemetery could go bankrupt. They said they do have a bit of trouble with Hollywood zombies staggering all over the graves but most of them simply go home at closing time leaving the actual dead right where they belong, meaning rotting away in horrifically overpriced coffins.

Our plane to Hawaii left on schedule the next morning from LAX. LAX is always a treat while traveling. You first get to face a bevy of stone-faced cops waving you through a roadside tent "security" screening that serves absolutely no purpose whatsoever. Then you drive straight into gridlock as you try to weave your way to whatever terminal you're leaving from. The entire complex is U-shaped and filled with even more cops as well as asshole bastard traffic cops wearing high-visibility safety jackets. Both of these groups of obviously "overworked" law enforcement officials

constantly blow whistles and viciously yell at anyone who has the audacity to actually drive to the airport. I've heard these clowns described as "bureaucrats with guns" and unfortunately for all of us that seems to be the case. Of course today the powers that be do whatever they can to punish people who drive their own cars anywhere. I find this to be insane and totally unexplainable. Sure, I could have added at least two more hours to my trip to the airport by taking "Metro" but I'm not that stupid. Anyone who rides that fucking train to the airport is a goddamn idiot, and besides, it doesn't even go to the airport! You still end up on a fucking bus, or as those of us who hate any form of public transport call it, the "loser cruiser."

Let's see, haul all your shit to the train station, load it onto a train then load it all off again when you change trains, now load it all back onto the train, and then load it back off and finally load it all onto a fucking bus... Yeah, I can't wait! Now imagine that scenario toting your wife and three kids plus luggage on a trip from friendly LAX to Disney World. No one would ever take that on and even in rush hour traffic it would still take you longer to do that little song and dance to the airport than to just drive or take a cab. But cabs are too expensive and the train is a lot cheaper you say? Bullshit I say because the money used to build those worthless trains came out of our pockets in the form of taxes to begin with. If you don't consider that then I suppose it's the deal of the century, but only if your time counts for nothing. It's mind-blowing to me that they could spend all those billions of dollars building a "train to the airport" and then have it not actually go to the airport but then again, whoever said the decision-makers running the greater Los Angeles area were frugal, logical, or smart? Not me. Quite the opposite actually.

Well, I guess it's stylish to some people to spend an excessive amount of tax money on senseless horseshit like these fucking trains but I'm not one of them, and I'm sure none of these smart people whose idea it was to build an L.A. train line in the first place have ever set foot on one of these useless money wasters....

Then, after that, you get to face the geniuses at TSA. You get to stand back and helplessly watch a gaggle of overpaid morons destroy your hard-earned possessions all after radiating you, molesting you, and giving you the third degree. And remember, you paid to be there! We truly are doomed.

It's a five-hour flight to Hawaii but it seemed like ten. I tried to sleep to no avail as a result of four newborn babies all screaming their heads off simultaneously. This went on for the whole trip. I can't think of a better way of ruining your and all of the people around you's flight than taking a fucking baby on an airplane. What kind of a parent thinks this is okay? Besides, once your there then what? You still have a newborn baby to deal with on vacation. Then again, maybe they all plan on tossing their screaming brats into the mouth of Mauna Loa in some modern day sacrifice to the Hawaiian volcano goddess Pele! One can only hope.

I'd never been to Hawaii and my first impression was that it was a humid nightmare. Honolulu looks like Florida to me and when I pointed this out to my traveling companions and to the locals they all told me that Honolulu sucked but the rest of Hawaii was a veritable paradise. Of course! Once again I'm faced with a situation where I'm told that everything would have been a whole lot better if I would have just done something else. If I wasn't in Honolulu I would love Hawaii, in fact I'd think it was the greatest place on earth! Well surely. If only I wasn't in Honolulu...

As we were driving away from the airport it really hit me that we were going to actually finish this 51 shows in 51 days tour! We were going to do it! We were in Hawaii, the location of the last show and unless we got killed on the drive to the hotel or the club itself we will be able to finish this fucking crazy trip! It felt good to know that. It's a weird accomplishment that no one can take away from us.

The show was great. A very nice club with helpful people and very enthusiastic fans. All through the set all I could think about was that we did it! Afterwards I packed up my belongings and got a ride with the promoter back to the hotel. It was dark and rainy and I was looking forward to being home.

We had a few hours the next day before we needed to be at the airport, so Trevor and I walked through the city and went to the beach. We drifted along looking at the plethora of Hawaiian-themed crap shops and ended up at a Tiki bar that served breakfast. I ordered celebratory pineapple pancakes with a side of papaya, which seemed like the right choice. Trevor ordered bacon and eggs with a side of papaya. I asked him why didn't he get the pineapple pancakes, I mean hell man, we are in Hawaii. He made a sour face and told me he hated the taste of pineapple.

FIN.