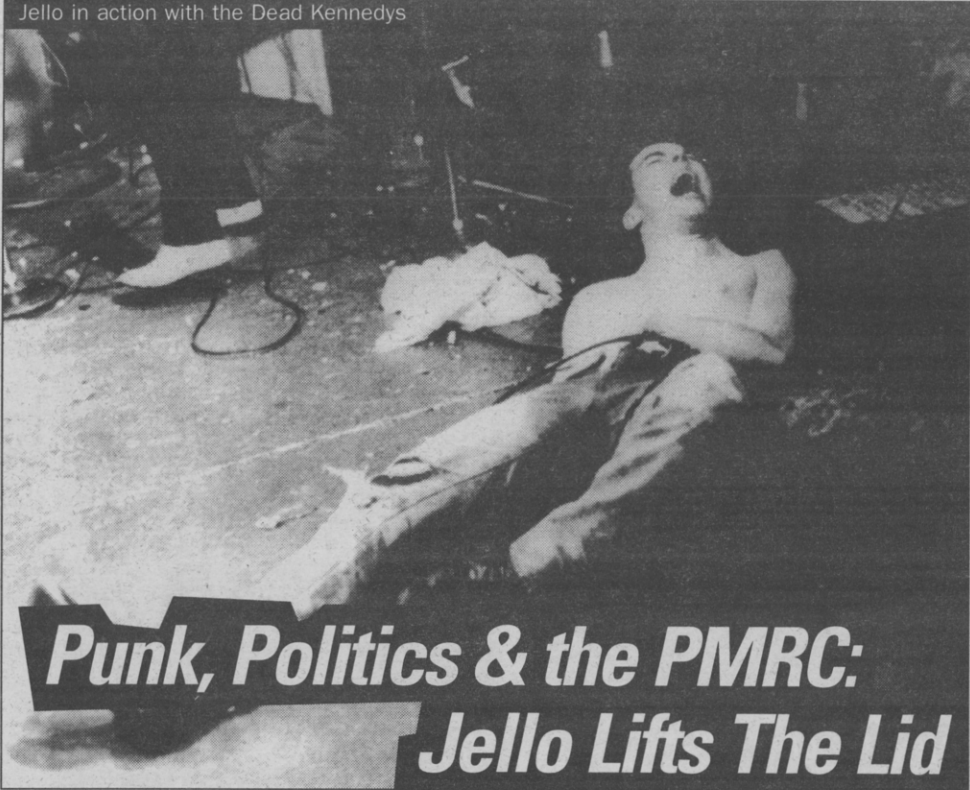


Jello in action with the Dead Kennedys



Punk, Politics & the PMRC: Jello Lifts The Lid

It was the actor Sean Penn who once said: 'It's a wacko world, and if you ain't talking about wacko issues, you ain't talking about what's going on.' A call to the San Francisco home of former Dead Kennedy's singer Jello Biafra activates the answerphone, the message leaving no doubt that Biafra still knows what time it is.

"Heeeeyyyy, how about those militias? Blow up a building in Okalahoma city and make it everything they want. Hearings on Waco. Hearings on the raid on neo-Nazi Randy Weaver in Idaho, and the Government even pays him for their trouble. How about those black helicopters? How about those conspiracy theories about the highway signs marking an invasion so they take them down and cars wipe out? But some of these theories I like. Blue-helmeted UN troops hiding in abandoned salt mines under Detroit, ready to storm out from the sewers and go door-to-door taking away people's machine guns. Wouldn't it be great if that was true? I'd get out the lawn chairs! Get out the lemonade! Watch the show!"

Having screened the call, Biafra answers and shuns small talk by announcing he doesn't have "a typical day". He will however, admit to being ever so slightly tired. Despite this, the grand old lad of punk is a humorous, intense and cantankerous interviewee.

This month sees Biafra perform a spoken word show at the Powerstation in Auckland, his first NZ appearance since 1982, when the Dead Kennedys played two shows at the long-gone venue, Mainstreet.

In 1978, Biafra formed the Dead Kennedys with guitarists 6025 and East Bay Ray, bass player Klaus Flouride, and a drummer called Ted. They

provided a focal point and a uniting force for Californian punk fans and musicians alike, and soon caught the attention of white, middle class America, with brash punk anthems like 'California Über Alles', 'Holiday In Cambodia', and 'Too Drunk To Fuck'. It wasn't long before the DKs were drowned in controversy. In the following years, Biafra ran for mayor of San Francisco, and set up the independent record label Alternative Tentacles, that released the initial efforts of the Butthole Surfers and Michael Franti's Beatnigs. The Dead Kennedys split in 1986, and Biafra's life since has revolved around running the label, engaging in musical collaborations, performing countless spoken word shows, and battling constantly with pro-censorship advocates such as Tipper Gore (wife of US Vice-President Al Gore) of the Parents Music Resource Centre (PMRC).

His hectic lifestyle was curtailed just before Christmas last year, when at a gig at SF's Gilmore Street venue, Biafra was set upon and badly beaten by a group who claimed he'd 'sold out', and was no longer 'punk'. The attack has left him with a permanent knee injury, and almost a year later, he's still feeling the effects.

"It's better than it was, but it's never going to be the same again. It was pretty well smashed by those guys, and I still have a lot of physical rehabilitation to go. In their case, it wasn't really a political agenda. They just like beating people up, while hiding behind punk rock as an excuse. I labelled them 'punk fundamentalists', but in their case, it was just an excuse to fight. I had nearly been jumped by 10 people in Texas three weeks earlier, again on a vague charge of 'selling out'. It's never been so violent on what you call 'the

left' as it is now. That's why I labelled it 'punk fundamentalism'. There is indeed a group of people who think they have the right to decide how the music should sound, how people should look, and how much money they should be allowed to make."

One of the major conflicts between Biafra and the self appointed punk purists of the Californian scene, is his refusal to publicly condemn the recent punk revival, spearheaded by bands such as Green Day and Rancid. According to the *NY Press*, the explosion of punk rock in the mainstream has been greeted by the underground purists 'with a response verging on the clinical symptoms of paranoia'. Biafra sees no reason for the panic.

"Why should people waste their energy whining about Green Day when there's people lying homeless in the street by the millions in this country. It's kind of a false issue in a way. I agree that there has been a really negative effect on the underground music scene, thanks to all the major label raids. But the fact of the matter is, this is reality, it has happened, we have to move on. We can't just hide and pretend this never happened, and so I think the bands are going to split into several different layers of so-called music scenes, where people who want to stay below ground for political reasons will stay below ground and network with other people who feel the same way they do. If somebody then decides to leave the fold and go somewhere else, then why not just support some of the newer artists who believe the same thing you do? What I'm getting at is I think it's a waste of energy to try and save the sacred underground music scene from the wicked corporations. You just have to concentrate on your part of it and do what you think is best, and you work with what's there for what you want to achieve."

Biafra also fears a new generation of punk fans will be turned off the music by the old school hard-liners.

"The other sad thing about this fundamentalist backlash is all these people who are discovering punk music through Green Day, Offspring and Rancid might be interested in the politics behind the original scene, but they're going to have that much less chance of ever coming in contact with it if the first thing they run into is some grumpy, elitist fundamentalist saying: 'I was here before you were and you like the wrong bands, therefore everything about you sucks and I don't want to talk to you.' All this factionalising and infighting is what the police love the most about us."

To that end, Biafra's battles with the authorities have always been held in very public arenas. In 1984 his home was raided by nine police officers, and he was charged and put on trial (but not convicted) 'for distributing harmful matter', after the Dead Kennedy's album *Frankenchrist* (with cover artwork featuring 'disembodied genitalia') was sold to a teenage girl. Biafra's lyrics have also come under congressional scrutiny during two separate hearings into heavy metal and rap music, and he has also appeared on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, squaring off against Tipper Gore. Over the last two years the spats have become much less frequent, and the PMRC, in particular,

have opted to target other artists.

"The PMRC have kept a very low profile since Tipper Gore became Mrs Vice-President, but she has continued to lash out at rock music, as has Hillary Rodham and Bill Clinton. They've all called for a mandatory legally enforced rating system for music albums, where you could actually get jailed, or fined, or have your record store closed if you carried an album without a 'Tipper' sticker on it that some crackpot Southern Sheriff thought was obscene — everything I've ever made, for example. But overall, they try to go after more high profile targets nowadays, preferably African-American, because then they can play the racial card as well, and tap into this huge group of people who won't admit they're racist, but allow racism to motivate a lot of their political decisions."

"I think that's the only reason major labels were open to loud guitar bands being on their labels in the first place. They slammed the door for 10 years until Husker Dü were signed, and then didn't sign another one until two or three years later, when Sonic Youth got picked up by Geffen. There were always quality bands, but why did they wait until then? One of the reasons, I think, was the boards of directors were a little alarmed at the number of white suburban kids listening to black rap music and the political messages they contained — 'Let's offer them some white music instead, preferably the kind with escapist, shoe-gazey lyrics: 'Oh, boo hoo, I'm such a loser, I feel helpless so I guess I'll do nothing.'" Of course not all the bands they signed had that attitude, thankfully. The slacker/generation X stereotype was not really pushed by the corporate media in this country in a big way until after young people helped get rid of George Bush — and then it was totally manufactured."

Which begs the question: What part did the bands play in that?

"Well, they were suddenly getting offers from major labels who never would have offered them shit a year earlier. Mainly it got through to these clueless suits up in these labels: 'Oh, my god! There's a whole new generation of people who really aren't interested in what Eric Clapton is doing these days. Dear me, what should we do? Maybe we'll let them have a pop band that has a little bit heavier guitar sound than Journey.' They'd do anything to start milking those dollars."

No matter what he says, Biafra is a conspiracy theorist himself, but he's less a mass of contradictions than most. When his ideas are challenged, he offers more than: 'aaahhh, but that's what they want you to think.'

He may have strong opinions on almost every topic and injustice under the sun, but he's still undecided as to the direction and content of his shows (he returns again in December) down under. Reviews of his most recent USA outings have talked of three hour-plus sessions, complete with question and answer periods, and lengthy 'stream-of-consciousness' monologues. Guaranteed, it won't be a regular jam, and if Biafra is as entertaining up close and personal as he is down a phone line 16,000 miles away, it will be unmissable.

JOHN RUSSELL



Cyco Miko Suicidal Survivor

Recently Mike Muir (legendary frontman for the legendary Suicidal Tendencies) and his band of merry troubadours visited these shores. If anyone was blessed enough to catch the Cyco Miko/Infectious Grooves type thang, they would have seen Mr Miko doing his Cyco thing on stage. If you missed out on Mike's fiery and ferocious performance, then fret not, for here are some fiery, ferocious and damn straight answers from a damn straight shooting from the hip kinda guy.

During his time as Suicidal Tendencies front-person, Mike Muir wrote some jolly intelligent, witty and perceptive lines, and proved he could be deeper than a deep sea diver diving deeply in a deep sea. Dive deeply and journey to uncharted and, at times, unfathomable waters, as we give you Mr Muir's views about...

Politics and the Government

'I went to your schools / I went to your churches...' etc., etc.

"Whenever anyone runs for office, they always say: 'I'm going to make your life better.' Well, if anyone ever says that to me, I'm gonna beat the shit out of them because that's insulting. How the fuck can they make my life better? They don't know who the fuck I am."

Bill Clinton and Splinters in Yo' Ass?

"Clinton got elected because he said he believed in a place called Hope. If he said he believed in a place called Hard Work he never would have been elected. Hope's a bench you sit on and get splinters in your ass. I don't believe in PC [political correctness], I believe in CS, common sense. If people had common sense there'd be a lot less need for politics."

Fear

"We need only fear the sky falling on our heads." Chief Vitalstatistik

"There is nothing I'm scared of. My father said: 'If you're scared of something, you should do it.' That's why you should never be scared of things. Fear is something you create when, in reality, it should be something you destroy."

Rage Against Rage Against the Machine

A couple of years back there was some sort of tiff between Mike and the RATM boys. Was it all some inflated media bollocks, like the Blur/Oasis rivalry, or did they really despise each other? You be the judge.

"I really hate rich kids telling everybody how screwed up the world is. You come to where I grew up and try to live there! I don't need you to tell me how fucked up everything is. If you say the fundamental problem is corporations, then why are you signed to one of the biggest corporations in the world? Everything they do is majorly hypocritical."

Extreme Rage Against Rage Against the Machine

"They are a bunch of fucking idiots. In interviews they say the reason they got together was the violent overthrow of the government. They never spent a day of their life in jail. They never had anything unjust happen to them. If they think they can overthrow the government, why did they start calling up my label and manager and going

[imitates scared, wimpy 'Rager', whining pathetically in a pussyish way] 'oooooooooooooh', when I said: 'You're a bunch of fucking pussies and I'll beat your ass any city.' They should *shut the fuck up!*

Final Word on Rage Against the Machine

"They're pussies!"

Woodstock and Lollapaloser

"We are not part of that fake hippy shit. *Woodstock* was completely stupid. We do not want to fit in. We want to give people a different presentation. If people don't like it, they can go listen to some other crap they think makes them happy."

Mike's Music

"No bullshit. No bullshit. That's how I'm livin' my life."

No bullshit

After experiencing Infectious Grooves and Cyco Miko live, it was a pleasure to find Mike was absolutely spot on when asked what the fans in New Zealand could expect live.

"We play great music. That's the only kind to play."

KEVIN LIST

HAVRIX 1440 SUMMARISED CONSUMER PRODUCT INFORMATION (Hepatitis A Vaccine) The following is a summary of the most important information about HAVRIX 1440. Full Consumer Product Information is provided with the vaccine. If you want to know more about HAVRIX 1440 you should ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. It is important to follow your doctor's advice about HAVRIX 1440. WHAT IS HAVRIX 1440? HAVRIX 1440 is a vaccine made using hepatitis A virus which is grown in a laboratory, in cell culture, then killed. HAVRIX 1440 is made without any human blood products. Each vial of the HAVRIX 1440 contains 1440 ELISA units of the killed virus in 1mL of a salt solution. HAVRIX 1440 also contains aluminium hydroxide to promote the activity of the vaccine and small amounts of other excipients. WHAT HAVRIX 1440 IS USED FOR AND HOW IT WORKS HAVRIX 1440 is a vaccine used to prevent hepatitis A. The vaccine works by causing your body to produce its own protection (antibodies) against this disease. Hepatitis A is an infectious disease which affects the liver. It is caused by a virus which is usually transmitted from person to person in food and drink or by contact with water or matter contaminated by sewage. Symptoms of hepatitis A begin 3 to 6 weeks after coming into contact with the virus. BEFORE RECEIVING HAVRIX 1440 You should not receive HAVRIX 1440 if: You have had an unusual or allergic reaction to HAVRIX or any of its contents. You have a severe infection with a high temperature. Women who are pregnant, likely to become pregnant or who are breast feeding an infant should discuss the risks and benefits of vaccination with their doctor. HOW IS IT GIVEN? HAVRIX 1440 is usually given by injection in to the muscle of the upper arm. Two separate doses are needed, the primary dose and a booster dose given 6 to 12 months later. SIDE EFFECTS (THIS NOT A FULL LIST OF THE ADVERSE EVENTS REPORTED FOLLOWING VACCINATION. REACTIONS THAT ARE COMMON OR SERIOUS ARE LISTED) Reactions following vaccination are generally mild and usually do not last for more than a day. The most common side effects following HAVRIX 1440 vaccination are local reactions around the injection area such as soreness, mild redness, slight swelling and/or hardness at the site. Less common events may include, headache, fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, or feeling sick. As with all injectable vaccines, there is a very small risk of a serious allergic or anaphylactic reaction. Symptoms may include, severe difficulty in breathing or swallowing, generalised hives, swelling of eyes, or face. Distributed in New Zealand by SmithKline Beecham (NZ) Ltd, PO Box 62-043, Sylvia Park, Auckland 6.

Havrix
Hepatitis A Vaccine