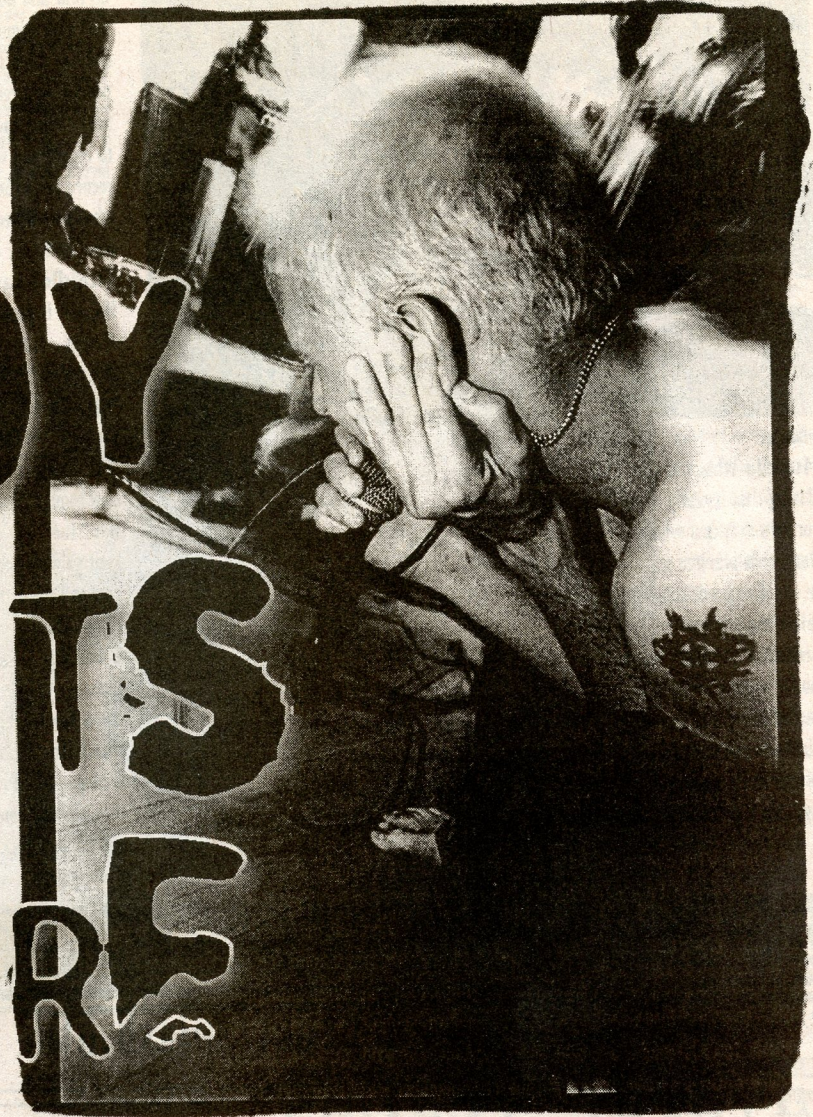


BOY SETS FIRE



This interview was reluctantly submitted by Ed Dougherty and Matt Garite and conducted in early 1997 on Long Island before Boy Sets Fire recorded their full length for Initial Records, which was released this summer.

Muddle — Okay let's start out with the generic — how did the band get started?

Josh — Well, that's actually an interesting question.

Chad — Josh and I were hanging out on a porch and we said, "Let's start a band." So I said, "Let's call that guy Nathan." And Nathan said, "Let's call that guy Darryl." And then we had this real... this other drummer... and uh, we didn't get along. He didn't like me, so we kicked him out and got Matt.

Josh — We had all kind of been in bands before, but not as one unit, so we kind of finally got together. We're probably the product of six of seven Newark bands.

Matt — Six or seven? Like eight or nine!!

Josh — Alright, alright...

Muddle — Were you guys friends before

then?

Everyone — Yeah!

Matt — I hated all of them.

Josh — Chad's my brother-in-law, and I grew up with Nathan since he was older than I was. And I knew Darryl as the straight edge freak. He could really whack that bass around.

Darryl — Among other things. But Nathan's my illegitimate child, and that's how I always knew him.
(silence)

Darryl — He wasn't really!

Josh — Alright, never mind. Wasn't funny.

Darryl — It could have been.

Josh — No, not really.

Darryl — Damn brutal.

Muddle — What were you guys like

when you started out?

Matt — Horny.

Muddle — No, I mean musically.

Chad — Why don't we ask James?

Josh — James is the roadie.

James — Well, I liked the demo. The old stuff is still just as good. I've been watching them for a couple of years and it's always had the same emotions and energy. When I heard the first demo, I figured it would be something totally generic but it developed into something good.

Chad — It's difficult for us to gauge.

Muddle — Because the 7" inch is much different than the 12",

Josh — It was all recorded in the same time!

Muddle — Well the 12" is a lot more

melodic than the 7".

Nathan — That's because we could fit more shit on the 12".

Matt — We had more to work with.

Muddle — So it's not a progression...

Nathan — Oh no, you're right... on the 7" we just threw down three songs and we didn't worry about incorporating all of our different influences.

Chad — It's not as if we don't progress, but just at that particular time it was...

Darryl — I mean, we've been writing a pretty good combination of things from you know — real mean, tough 'beat up your mom' type stuff all the way down to real pretty 'make a tear come to your eyes' kind of stuff.

Matt — 'Bust out the tissues' — you know... that kind of stuff.

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Interview

Muddle — In the guide to American Civics 101 you constantly quote Marx.

Would you consider yourselves Marxists?

Darryl — Oh man, we took this one last time. Well, I'd say there are certainly a number of Marxist ideas that we find...

Josh — Views.

Darryl — Yeah, I mean... Marxist views, ideas, what have you — to be good. We find them to be very positive and useful, but I wouldn't say that we are completely Marxists because that would tie us solely onto his theories and ideas.

Matt — Who's Marx? (laughter)

James — My name's Marx. That's my fucking last name. Anything I say is a Marxist theory.

Nathan — Basically, our whole aspect, like we talk about revolutionary ideas and stuff. And so we couldn't peg ourselves to like one ideology. I mean, we use some stuff from Marx. We also probably use some thing from maybe Kropotkin or something, who was more of an anarchist. So I mean, there's no way to rally peg us in one set of beliefs.

Darryl — There are a lot of ideas out there that we hold to be ethical and expedient to what we'd like to see changed.

Muddle — What ideas do you mean and what changes would you like to see?

Matt — Total fucking chaos.

Darryl — Well one thing that I always bitch about is when you have capitalism, no matter what, someone has to starve. I think that's inherently just a horrible thing. Regardless of how much someone works, they're gonna have to starve so someone else can get rich. That's something that I think can easily be seen to result in greed and the need to stab someone in the back in order to get ahead. If people can't get what they need to survive, then there's no chance for them to develop as real people.

Chad — We'd basically like to see the destruction of class systems. Which might be somewhat Marxist. (laughs)

Josh — A big change that I would like to see is a reinstatement of faith in your fellow man and kind of trying to get past our instinctual fear of one another. I think just me being afraid to talk to people because of class or race, or for me, quite honestly different sex. We need to realize

the inherent goodness of our fellow man.

Matt — And woman.

Muddle — Before I ask this, let me say that it has nothing to do with straight edge. You take a very anti-big business stance, and yet most of you smoke. Isn't that supporting big business in the worst possible way?

Darryl — As the straight edge guy in the band, I think the safest thing to say is, "Yeah it is, but so's driving a car. Or even buying a New York Yankees hat."

Muddle — Well, I think there are different degrees.

Nathan — No, I don't think there are different degrees. Okay, New York Yankees; you support that sort of thing, and you're supporting Oscar Meyer and a bunch of other things. When arenas go up, they will reroute streets so people don't have to look at the fucking homeless people. So you could just go to the fucking ballgame and not have to worry about these people. So I don't think there are any kind of degrees. That's like...

Darryl — Is it worse to rape someone or to kill them? It's like the equality of sins...

Muddle — Then what do you actually do against big business? Do you try boycotting any corporations or anything?

Darryl — I work for a big corporation and that sucks. That's one of the ways I compromise. I don't know if that's good or bad. I suppose it's neither. Maybe it's kind of bad, but I do that to pay my bills so I can afford to go on tour. However, Josh and Chad, who both smoke, they both work for a totally D.I.Y. company. Is my working for a corporation, which supports the class system, that much worse than their smoking?

Nathan — You also have to bring into mind addiction. A lot of us have been smoking since we probably got any of these ideas in our head.

Matt — That's a bad excuse. We could all quit if we wanted to.

Nathan — We're not trying to make excuses, but whatever. I think a lot of people need to realize we're all human, and no matter what you do, you're gonna be supporting corporations. I'm not trying to cop out here, like, "Oh well, we might as well just do it." But I'm just saying...

Josh — I think it's more important to make an internal change, like how you act towards other people in a capitalist society.

(The band then goes on to talk about how they try to support smaller cigarette companies and microbreweries.)

Muddle — I think there's a big difference between the examples you stated and smoking. The Yankee hat analogy is kind of irrelevant, because that obviously isn't a necessity and falls into the same category as smoking. Like driving a car is a necessity for a lot of people, and so is working. While smoking is a completely voluntary act to support wrongful deaths of thousands of people and is not a necessity for anyone.

Darryl — Not necessarily.

Josh — There are plenty of people who don't have to work and can still support themselves. I don't know them personally but...

Muddle — In certain places, like some suburbs or rural areas, it's a necessity to drive in order to have a job. Maybe if you live in the city you could ride a bike to get to work. But around here, maybe I could get a job at the deli around the corner, but does that pay enough to support me?

Darryl — But not everyone can work in the deli... I think what's coming out here is the frustration and realization that it is

impossible to completely separate yourself from an establishment and from big business. The grasp of the establishment on the people is so great that rather than quibble about whether this guy drinks or this guy smokes or this guy has a nice car. It's better to look at more important things, like what is this person doing other than that. I mean, a straight edge kid who does nothing is useless.

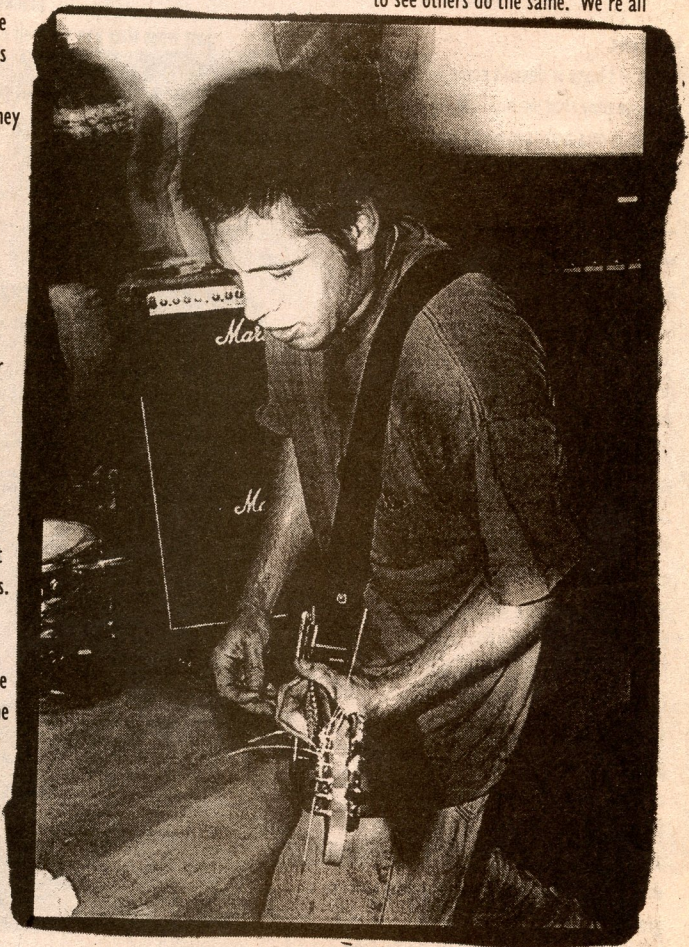
Josh — I think it's a good choice for him.

Darryl — Well it's a good choice for him but otherwise he isn't producing, he isn't doing as much.

Josh — Also people have been smoking tobacco since the dawn of time, there has only been big businesses for the last 200-300 years.

Darryl — Good point.

Nathan — Also, when we talk about revolution and how we want to do things we really are trying to strive for these things. And we aren't only doing this to preach to people, we are also doing it for our own good. Yet we too are supporting big business and fight against it. We want to break free of our chains just as we want to see others do the same. We're all



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imperfect.

Josh — I hope it doesn't come across as when we talk or when we play that we are looking down on anyone. I hope it comes across more as you're trying, I'm trying, lets all try to get together and find a better way to do things.

Muddle — Did any of you go to college?

Nathan — Josh goes, Chad goes and Darryl is going to go.

(the band then laughs at a rumor we heard that they are rabid pro-lifers and participated in a recent rally at an abortion clinic)

Muddle — You guys talk about the frustration of having ideals, views and everything, what could the average hardcore kid...or anyone...do to become active?

Nathan — There are plenty of things you can do. You can get involved with things like Food Not Bombs, different associations for all kinds of issues...there are communes where you can break away from supporting this capitalist system.

Chad — There are a lot of volunteer programs. There is this one program that is available in a lot of public schools called Odyssey of the Mind. You work with children and instill an impression on them, and these things last a lifetime. The kids really seem to grow.

Josh — On a real personal level, after the

show in Philly the other night, I saw Nathan and Eric, one of our roadies, give a homeless gentleman one of our extra blankets. And I think that's a very small thing, but it could mean a lot.

Chad — Sort of like redistributing the wealth...

Darryl — Even directly within the hardcore scene...shows, which are the fundamental basis of hardcore, generally what is the charge for a show? Five dollars...

Josh — Not on Long Island...6 or 8.

Muddle — In defense of that, certain shows, it's very hard to make back the money...

Darryl — Yeah, I know, but the point is that some people don't have that much money. Unfortunately we live in a capitalistic society where you have to make back the money to pay for a hall...but if you get a hall that won't charge you, then you could, make the admission at the door a blanket or at Christmas time, a toy.

Just ways that you yourself can implement a different system of exchange other than currency, something that's real and that a person can feel. And it can make people think if its possible to do this on a large scale.

Nathan — One small thing, if you can't find an organization, start something yourself. Don't wait for other people to start your revolution for you.

Muddle — Have you guys gotten any comments on the

packaging of the split 12"?

Matt — I think it sucks. The whole D.I.Y. thing is fucking awesome. However we were not really aware of how everything was gonna be put together as a final product. I mean there's a little dissatisfaction when we take out the record and the whole thing falls apart. Not the record, but the cardboard part. The covers got changed without us knowing. It's mainly lack of communication between us and Conquer the World.

Josh — I think the screening was very nice...the use of the other covers was a bit weird.

Muddle — Are you guys friends with Jazzman's Needle or did Conquer the World arrange that?

Darryl — Talked to them on the phone, met them once.

Matt — I don't thin we've ever played with them

Chad — What we decided to do is re-release our side of the 12" on CD on Rosepedal Records.

Muddle — Are you going to put anything else on the CD?

Chad — No, we'd feel weird if we had added extra songs and someone came up to us and said, "Hey, I bought your 12". Oh wait, there's a CD and I gotta pay five more bucks for those extra songs?"

Josh — Plus the CD is gonna be dirt-cheap. The wholesale is gonna be like \$1.80 or something.

Muddle — What about new stuff? What's that coming out on?

Matt — We're recording a full length probably around February on Initial Records, and that will be out sometime in late summer.

Josh — Oh yeah, put in that Irony of Lightfoot rules!

Muddle — Did you guys vote in the last election?

Nathan — Okay, well I guess we should just go around. I did not.

Chad — I voted and I really like the Australian ballot.



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Interview

Josh — No, I did not vote.

Darryl — No.

Nathan — Do you want us to explain why or why not?

Muddle — Yeah, sure.

Nathan — I personally did not vote because I felt it was like choosing a lesser of two evils. Because either way, you get evil. There was no one on the ballot I felt I could support. I am into more grassroots than voting kind of things.

Muddle — Would you consider independent parties to be "grassroots" and what do you think about them?

Nathan — I feel that a lot of underpublicized parties have good views, but I would still rather do it myself. That's not to underscore anyone who does vote. That's just my own personal beliefs.

Chad — Damn right. I voted, and I did it because I felt that even though it's such a tiny little minute thing, it's still just a little more that I can do by walking into the booth and pulling a lever.

Josh — I did not vote, and I will not vote until there is more than one party to vote for. Right now it's like two sides of the capitalist



party. And I feel that by not voting I send more of a message than if I did vote.

James — My name is James and you're damn right! Polls are so low, they have to throw out the whole electoral system, since they pick and your vote doesn't matter anyway. They've voted against the majority in the past. The lack of voters is getting a lot of people to think that we should have direct election of senators and candidates.

Matt — I didn't vote because the electoral vote is just a total crock of shit. It's not even a democracy when you have the Electoral College.

Muddle — This is kind of abrupt but do you have any closing comments/movies or books that you'd recommend?

Matt — Oh yes. The Outsiders, Red Dawn, anything from the 80's. Red Dawn fuckin' kicks ass. Oh what was that one fucking movie... I liked Baby the Last Dinosaur. That was the first movie I ever fucking cried in.

Chad — Old Yeller!

Nathan — I just recently saw Dead Man Walking. Man, I have not fucking cried during a movie like that since I saw E.T. It showed like both sides of the coin without really taking a stand on the death penalty.

Chad — Mars Attacks!

boy sets fire

Boy Sets Fire.

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