

SOLD OUT

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IAN/DISCHORD KINGFACE
SUPERTOUCHE 7SECONDS
GITTER/GRIN AND MORE

PHIA RECORD EXCH
C 1750
(215)925-7892

The subject on hand needs no introduction. The conversation following was conducted not too long ago at the 'House' (in the quiet of Arlington, Virginia), and was transcribed for your reading pleasure. Thank You.

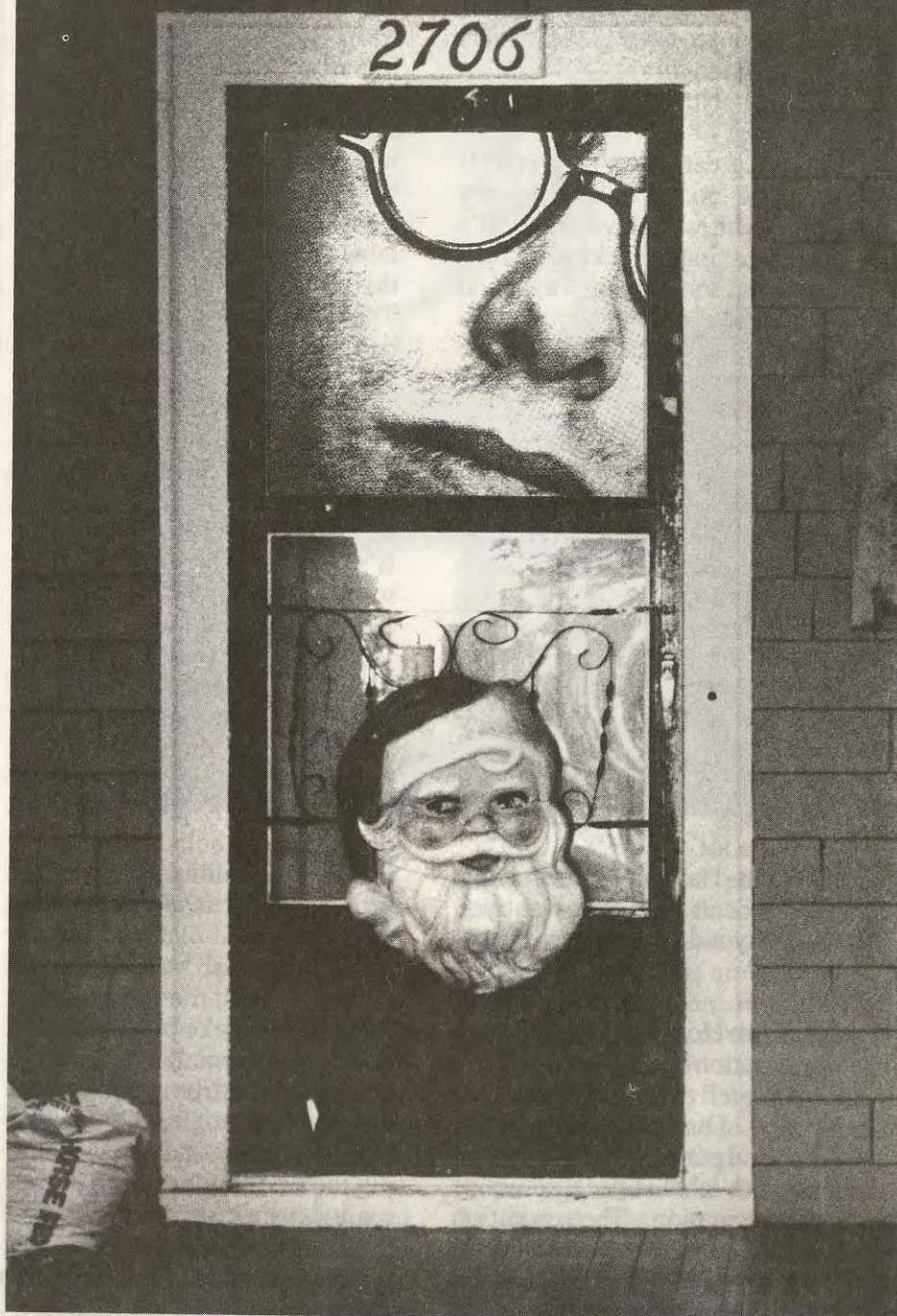
SoldOut-How was the label originally inspired to form?

Ian- We were in the Teen Idles from 1979-80. We'd played for a year, did some recording, and wanted to put out a record. It became clear that we weren't going to get on a label, so we decided to start our own label and put out our own records. A friend of ours, Skip Groff from Yesterday and Today Records, said he'd help us. We'd been playing all this time and we'd never taken any money out, ever. We always saved our money, and we used that money to put out the first record and start it. By the time the Teen Idles thing came out, they'd broken up and both Minor Threat and SOA were together. Henry put up his own money and put out the SOA single, and we distributed that. When the money came back from those, we put it all into the Minor Threat single, which sold a lot, and then we put it into the next one, and so on. We were totally in debt for years.

SoldOut-How are you motivated to do each consecutive release?

Ian- First of all, Dischord is not a label proper. It's a creative outlet for a community here in Washington. We don't sign any bands or whatever. Everybody who is on the label are all just friends, and actually now increasingly younger brothers and sisters of other people we've released. Basically, it's all part of a family. There's a responsibility we feel to continue putting out our friend's music; music that we feel is important and music that we like. It's a documentation that we really believe in. There's a lot of really important stuff happening here. There is a lot of important

Ian MacKaye of DISCHORD



stuff happening everywhere, but everywhere didn't document it and we did. That's why people find it so important with what's going on here.

SoldOut- You can't deny that it's a fun thing to do.

Ian- I don't know if it's fun. It's nice to have records and it's nice to have a company I guess, but no, it's not always fun. It sucks a lot of the time. There's an overwhelming amount of work, particularly for a person that wants to be in a band. For me, I've always wanted to be in a band and that's what I want to do, and the label is sort of a side thing.

SoldOut- Not so much fun, but satisfying.

Ian- It's great. I don't regret it. In fact, god no. I'm totally very happy with what I've done. It's not a great job, it sucks to be self-employed sometimes. Taxes and all of that stuff is really a headache. When you're someone like us, we're very disorganized...I mean, we're pretty organized, but we have very weird organization. When you deal with friends and family, it does get a little tense now and then. It's not all just business elements. Also, when you're like us, you're not trying to be a standard business. The record world is completely business, and when trying to go at it from our point of view, which is sort of anti-business, it causes enough problems and a lot of headaches. We're taken advantage of a lot.

SoldOut- Have any bands/people you've dealt with ever want you to go beyond your limits or capabilities?

Ian- Yes.

SoldOut- How would you resolve the situation?

Ian- We tell them that we do what we do. Dischord is a popular label, and part of the reason we're a popular label is because we've got a reputation. The reputation is based on what we do and what the label stands for. If we were to go against what we stand for just

to promote a band or whatever, then we'd undermine our own reputation. The label comes first on that level, and if the band want or need a different kind of finish, then move on. They do and that's great.

SoldOut- Does it happen on a good note?

Ian- Always, I've never had a bad falling out with a band.

SoldOut- Scream reassured that everything worked out mutually.

Ian- Great. Dag Nasty seem to think, and I keep reading this in interviews, that it was terrible. It wasn't terrible at all, it was totally friendly. Brian called and said, "We're gonna be on Giant." I said, "Great, man." I knew that was what they wanted and I was very happy for them. I don't care, I'd rather have a band on another label than to be dissatisfied with this one. It's not worth it to me. That's also why we don't sign bands, we don't want to get into a business arrangement. Every one of these bands are friends of mine, and we don't sign them or enter in business agreements with them because we don't want to have a business relationship with them. It's no fun and it's no good. We want to keep friends. We pay them and we're honest with them. We don't screw people at all.

SoldOut- The bands do get paid?

Ian- Oh yeah, everyone gets paid. We pay more than most record companies pay. We pay honestly and we actually pay them. We don't fucking bullshit them.

SoldOut- Obviously the label has grown. Is there a plateau or level at which you'd like it to stay, or are you content with its current course?

Ian- I don't make plans like that. We never planned to be here, we never planned to be anything more than the first single when we first put it out. Well actually, when we put the first single out, we did actually have a dream of putting out a series of singles of local bands, which we did. This just came after that and where we are today...

SoldOut- So you take one thing at a time?

Ian- Yeah, and we just kept putting stuff out. Jeff and I argue a lot, not argue anymore, but we discuss it a lot. We both have a lot of different ideas of what we want to do with the label, and somewhere between the two we were able to hash out a fairly cohesive manner. I think that Jeff is certainly the one responsible for the really high quality, and for the control and good look of the records.

SoldOut- So he deals with the artistic end of the product?

Ian- Yeah, and I usually record the bands. We share the business side of it. Dischord has three other people working for us that are as much a part of Dischord as anybody else. There's Amy Pickering, Cynthia Connolly, and Jenn Thomas. They are a part of Dischord. It's not a matter of helping out, they are definitely a part of Dischord. Without them we would not be able to keep up at all. Jeff does not have much time at all. He's got his own company, Pedestrian Press, making his own posters and T-shirts. He's really busy. I'm in a band and I'm not going to be able to do mail order. I don't have the time to do it, I've got enough trouble trying to keep up with other things. Jenn is here almost every day working on stores. We move a lot of shit and it takes a lot of time, and without them we'd be nowhere. Cynthia and Amy usually take turns, but Cynthia also helps out with art. Most people seem to think we're a store, and that we have like a little warehouse.

SoldOut- What is your situation with Southern Studios?

Ian- Southern Studios are a record...what are they exactly? Well, in 1983 we put out Out of Step, about 8500 of them. This guy, John Loder (from Southern Studios), flew to New York to come and see us (Minor Threat) play, because he'd heard of us. He worked with Crass and was in-

volved with Crass and all of that. So, he came to see us and we talked to him, and he wanted to put the record out. We did it with him and it was a good arrangement. Basically, we have total artistic control and everything, he just presses and distributes them. Everything we've put out, with the exception of a few records, is printed in France.

SoldOut- Cheaper?

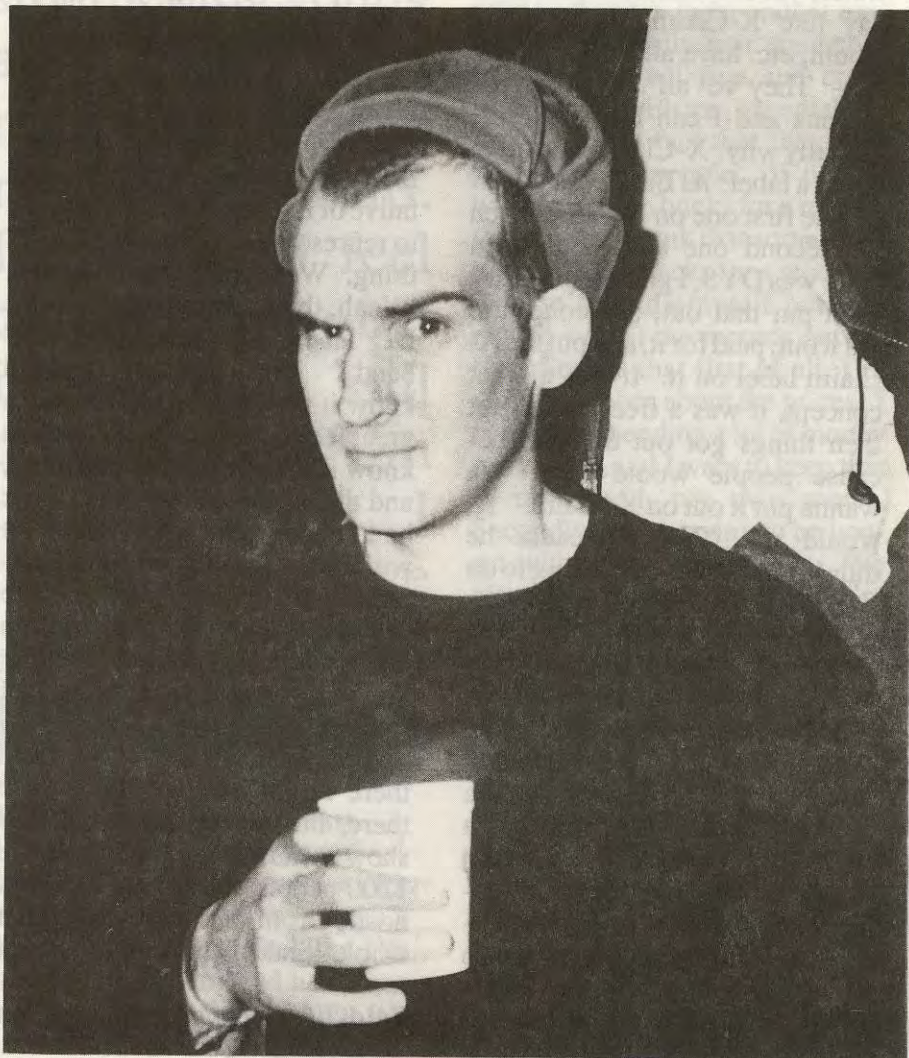
Ian- It's cheaper, and we get them over in such bulk that we can still sell it cheaper than most American labels. It's weird, but it just works out because we ship them in such high quantity. The last time I went to the airport to pick up our shipment, there were 3400 records. It all works itself out. Without him we'd be nowhere. That was a point in time where we reached a point where we could be on a plateau, and where we had to make a decision. The big decision we made was to either continue putting out records, or...wherever we went, we couldn't get credit at plants, so we had to put out one record, wait for the money to come back in, and then put out the next record and not even have repressed the previous record. For every one of the records we would have been able to put out only a thousand, and then put out the next record. John offered us the opportunity to put out these records and to keep them all in print. Now, we've sold almost 50,000 of Out of Step, and almost 50,000 of the Minor Threat 12" thing, and everything is in print, available, and distributed all over the place.

SoldOut- So without him, things would not be the way they are.

Ian- Yeah, that was one of the big decisions we made in our lives...well, I mean with the label. It was like, "How serious are we about this? Are we content just to sort of sit on it?" I mean, it worked out great because we're great friends with him and they're totally wonderful people. Also, without him we couldn't have done it. This (the Dischord House) is

the headquarters, and they basically work for us. We send them the tapes and the artwork, and we say, "You put it together." I do all of the recording here and everything, and Jeff does the artwork and all of the mechanics. We send them the negatives and master

one, we didn't want to enter in any bad business relationships. The worst kind of relationship you can have is a long distance one. When you have people you don't know, and you put out their record, they have to wonder about you. With people who we know here, we



"What, me worry?" Photo- Trent

tapes and say, "Run with it."

SoldOut- Where are they situated?

Ian- London, England. We recorded Egghunt there.

SoldOut- It's understood that Dischord only works with local DC bands in order to encourage others to do their own thing in their respective cities. Is that the only reason?

Ian- There are a lot of different reasons, and that is an important one. The reason we want to keep it a local thing is because: Number

know what kind of people they are, It's also vice versa. We don't have to worry about what these people in the bands are like. We know our friends are square and whatever basically, so we can hang with them. We know them and we love them, and they're part of our thing. So, that's one reason. The second reason is that we could hopefully...the whole thing in the beginning was that it was supposed to be a DC label. When we started we had this great vision of this great underground commu-

nity where all of these separate cities had their own labels, and we'd have this incredible network of independent labels. Only a few have still survived. Touch and Go is one of the only other labels to have survived from that time.

SoldOut- What has kept you above water, yet the other labels of that day like X-Claim, Fountain of Youth, etc. have all diminished?

Ian- They've all got different reasons and I can tell you individually why. X-Claim was never really a label. Al Barile (SSD) put out the first one on X-Claim, then the second one came out, then there was DYS, I guess. He didn't even put that out, someone else put it out, paid for it, and put the X-Claim label on it. It was a great concept, it was a free label. But then things got out of hand because people would say, "We wanna put it out on X-Claim." Al would say, "No!", because he didn't want to have anything to do with it. Fountain of Youth, aside from that they put out some really rotten records...I mean, they put out a few weird, fucked up records that people just didn't like. They didn't sell but a couple hundred of some. Plus, he entered unto a really screwy licensing deal with a distributor and got into a weird scene. I mean that's just individual stuff. There's also perseverance with what you want to do with a label, and who the people involved with the label are. The label has to make decisions when the times come and negotiate things as they come...it's tough, you know. Touch and Go made a big decision in their lives. When Corey quit the Necros, he said, "I'm gonna fucking do Touch and Go." And that label is all-inspiring to me. I think they're a great label. I love them, man. I mean, I don't love every one of their releases, but I respect them more than any other label in America that I can think of. They are really good people as far as their label goes. They do it all alone; Corey, his wife Lisa, and Boche. They

work out of their house. They do all of their own pressing and everything, they don't have this Southern trip. They do all of their own stuff. I mean, if I was in a band and wanted to do the label, I'd do that for sure. I don't want to just own a label, I want to be a musician. I want to be in a band. For me, the label comes second. Also with the whole local thing, when we first got into it, there was a label from Los Angeles called Dangerhouse. They were one of our favorite labels. They were really representative of LA, and we really wanted to represent DC, we wanted a DC thing. We wanted people to say, "Yeah, this is from DC. This is a DC label, and therefore a DC band." Then, everyone would know it was a DC band. It was a great feeling, man. It was great to know it. Also really importantly, and this is something clear in our heart and minds, to keep it within...we're not even a DC label, we're a Dischord label. The people we deal with are just within the Dischord community, because there's a big punk scene outside of Dischord. There might be a show with a Dischord band playing and there might be like 300 people there, but there will be another show on the same night with maybe 1200 people there, with like Agnostic Front or something. That whole kind of punk scene exists too.

SoldOut- Do you prefer it that way, exclusive?

Ian- It's not exclusive.

SoldOut- Well, with the separation...

Ian- So what? Heavy metal, punk, and rockabilly. All of these scenes exist. No, I don't feel a kinship to a lot of the negative elements that exist in the mainstream punk community. I don't like it, I'm not interested in it. To me, it's a lot of business bullshit and a lot of really ugly stuff goes on. Two or three years ago, I decided to descend from the punk scene and become an alternative to the alternative. You know, go underground to the

underground. It took a long time to figure that out, that we weren't the same. Everyone was saying how the punk scene was so depressing, but really it wasn't that the punk scene was so depressing, it was that the punk scene was no longer the punk scene. It had changed with time. It's natural. Generations come and go, and people come into different situations. As each punk comes into it, they've got a different set of circumstances. Really, we just sort of seceded from the nation and went underground again and started a new community, and that's all we did. It's great because in Washington the shows are so radically different. Like if Soulside or whatever played, no skinhead kids would come out to those things. They rarely do, and they'd never fight. It used to be really crazy because like Rites of Spring would be playing and these skinhead kids would be out there fighting everybody. It was like, "What the hell is going on?!" Finally these skinhead guys realized, "We hate these bands, why are we going to see them? Let's go see bands we like." It's great because nobody wanted them to come and fuck with anybody anyway. People would say, "Isn't that turning your back on the problem?" Well fuck that man! Who cares about skinhead kids? You go and think of the murder and assault going on all across the world at every moment of every day. To me, it's a matter of getting rid of small barricades. I don't want to spend my energy arguing with people about whether or not "they should be beating up people for the colour of their skin" or whatever. I'm not going to spend my energy on little dumb things. To me they're just dumb things. Clear, common sense decisions. I'd rather get past that and not spend energy on that, and spend energy on developing a bigger community, working over all of that. Take the thing about fighting with cops. Cops are just tools of

the government, there's no point. They're there to fight and why don't fight them? I'm not going to step in, it's not worthwhile to me. It's the same thing when people say, "We gotta stop these skinhead kids." I say to ignore them, they're just kids. The skinhead kids are just kids. They fuck with people, but there are other people that fuck with people too. You think about it too much, and you get whooped into it and put a lot of energy into trying to correct them, when it's not worth correcting.

SoldOut- They're petty problems begging for attention, that will just wither away with time anyway.

Ian- They definitely will. I tend to think that most of those kids wander around wanting to be hated so much, in that to hate them would only inspire them. I mean, the kids who I usually talk to are nice guys, and some are real fuckups and I feel bad for them for being fuckups. But I do not get into hating a class of people, I'll let them go about their business.

SoldOut- There are more important things to worry about.

Ian- Yeah, I could care less about them. So anyway, Dischord is like a Dischord community, and a big part of that is that we realize that sooner or later it has to come to an end, and that is a really important thing for us to think about.

SoldOut- Has the community gotten smaller?

Ian- No, it still continues to be pretty lively. It's weird. Not only are times different, but so am I. I'm as busy as of all and I live the label every day of my life. I wake up every day, I'm a punk, I'm still running Dischord, I'm in a band, and I'm still involved with people, a community, and with political actions and so forth. There is still a lot of stuff going on. Every day I wake up and I'm still going, so I guess it's still happening. But supposedly by design, it will come to an end. There will be no more bands, and everyone will have petered out. But we'll find out. It'll have been ten years this Janu-

ary/89 since my first show I ever went to.

SoldOut- Has the time gone by

“I still feel like I'm still fucking young and have tons more to do. I mean really, it's weird. In contrast I feel old sometimes, but in reality...I still don't even feel I'm college age yet. I don't feel I've grown up yet.”

fast?

Ian- Yeah, unbelievably fast.

SoldOut- Does it worry you?

Ian- No. I've seen a lot, met a lot of great people, and have done a lot of things. I still feel like I'm still fucking young and have tons more to do. I mean really, it's weird. In contrast I feel old sometimes, but in reality...I still don't even feel I'm college age yet. I don't feel I've grown up yet.

SoldOut- How does Dischord manage to sell its product so inexpensively, as compared to other 'indies'?

Ian- We're strongly supported. But the difference between us and a lot of those labels is that they spend their money on promotion, and we don't. We let the bands sell themselves. Also, we don't need the same kind of profit margin as everybody else does. We live a cheaper life here, we're

very...

SoldOut- Efficient?

Ian- Yeah, we're very frugal. We try very hard to not be totally wasteful. Also, the \$8.98 thing is a list price. It's an accepted list price by the business, and we're not interested in being in the business. (talk goes into the CD/list price conspiracy theory) Independent majors are generally just wannabe-majors. It's all fine and completely legit with me, except that I don't like the fact that they take advantage of people. If people want to pay ten bucks for a record, that's fine. I think that sometimes it's worth ten bucks for a record. I wouldn't spend it myself, but...the reason we put the records out for our prices is that first of all, I'm really stubborn about the prices. I don't like spending a lot of money on records, and I want to keep that in mind with my own music. Secondly, we're trying to be honest with people, grassroots. We want people to realize that we're some organic kind of business, and that we're not some fucking big business. It's hard, really hard. After eight years, it's hard for some people to take me in a realistic way.

SoldOut- The Minor Threat video Dischord released comes across as totally direct, lacking any sort of insight or understanding. Is there a reason?

Ian- We talked about it for a long time. They wanted to have interviews, photos, and other stuff, and my feeling was...the guy who did that footage also did a two-hour interview with me, my parents, and with all of these different people. Jeff wanted to run it, but my feeling at the time and still to this day is, "I'm still alive, I'm not dead." I'm not comfortable with having a memorial video made, which was basically what it would be.

SoldOut- Were the interviews only with you, and not the band?

Ian- Yeah. It was uncomfortable. I don't mind looking at it, but I'm not a 'look back' kind of person.

... very happy and proud to have been in the band, I like the band, fine whatever. I like all of the stuff I've done, but I'm still doing, and that is more important to me than what I've done. Now is more important than then, and now is more important than tomorrow. I'm hard at work now and I've got enough trouble with the baggage as it is. You could just imagine what it would be like if I was deified any more by the interviews and stuff. It was clearly thought out, argued, and discussed for a long time. Shit gets discussed like fuck around here. It was like, "No, I don't want freeze photos coming in, fading out, and stuff like that." It would be nice, I'd like to have an interview like that, but at the same time it's still too alive, it's not over, and I can't do retrospectives like that. Anyway, the last song on the tape, "Good Guys Don't Wear White", I thought should have been edited off. We argued about it.

SoldOut- Why?

Ian- One of the cameras had gone out at that point in the show. Number one, for me it was really clear that it was taken from the middle of the set. The rest of the set is virtually unedited, and that's exactly how the show went. We didn't cut out chatter or anything, the show just flew by. But if you look at "Good Guys...", I'm wearing a shirt again. That bums me out, because I'm really into a documentary kind of thing and I don't like seeing things taken out of order. He took it out of the middle because it was so shitty looking, and put it at the end. They thought, "If you had a choice, would you rather have it end with 'Steppin' Stone'," which I wanted because I thought it would have been the perfect ending, or, "would you rather have a shitty version of 'Good Guys...'" We argued and they felt that people would rather have it on there. That's weird, because I'm usually the one that would say, "Leave it on!" I felt that aesthetically it should come

off for sure.

SoldOut- Was the video originally shot for release?

Ian- It was originally shot for a cable TV thing, for a half-hour show. They originally shot like forty hours of footage. There was so much documentation on Faith, Void, us, and interviews with me. That's the only stuff I've seen out of that. That era is so undocumented compared to the Embrace, Rites of Spring-era. There's so much video for that. I've got tons of Fugazi video tapes.

SoldOut- Will you do any releases with the Faith video?

Ian- No, because the videos are no good. One thing about Minor Threat is that live, we held it up. We were good live, we sounded good live. I'm not saying that we were a great band, but some of the other bands like Faith and Void were dodgy. Sometimes they were really great live, sometimes they weren't. Lyle, Brian, and Jeff were fucking tight, it was unbelievable. That show was our second to last show in Washington, fifth to last show period. At that point we were like fucking pistol. We were so hot at that time, we were so on. It was a good time, and that was the last time we ever played the 9:30 club. Another State of Mind is another thing that's on all the goddamned time. We have a song on that, which is the only fucking stomachable part of that fucking rotten movie. It's supposed to be really authentic, and that is why I hate it so much. It's really full of shit. It changes it's story around and the chronological stuff is turned around. They keep checking in with Shawn Stern (Youth Brigade) and he's bald playing, and then that night they check in with him and his hair is grown in. That kind of stuff drives me crazy. As a matter of fact, when they interview me and I'm talking and my voice is fucked up...

SoldOut- It sounded like a bad cold.

Ian- I'd sung the night before the

interview. I sound terrible and I can barely talk. Then, I was in LA one or two years later and they were working on the soundtrack and they asked me to dub in a part. They wanted me to redo the whole interview, and I said, "No way." It was stupid, but I did agree because they wanted me to explain what was going on at that show, why we had no PA. We got into a big fight with the PA man and he took it away, but we lose PAs all of the time.

(Enter Brendan (Fugazi) Canty)
Brendan, how was work?

Brendan- Okay.

Ian- You love that job. Did my mom come down? You'd better fucking cut her a deal.

Brendan- I said, "Hey man, an extra discount for the Queen of NorthWest." She invited me over for custard.

(Exit Brendan)

SoldOut- I noticed that on the 4 7"s on a 12" compilation, there was a letter included mentioning some hard money times. Have such periods ever taken a toll on your enthusiasm?

Ian- At the time it was pretty discouraging, but we had no choice in the matter. We were \$5000 in the hole at the time. We borrowed money to put out stuff, and suddenly we weren't selling any records. We repressed Marginal Man and that thing was sitting like a dog on us, it couldn't sell. It that same year, IRS Records used to have a distributor called Faulty that they canned. In turn, this distributor called Pickwick went out of business. When Pickwick went out of business, three smaller distributors went out of business and all three of those owed us lots of money. In that one year, we lost \$1200-\$1500 to distributors, and we owed a lot of people a lot of money. We were discouraged, but we were also desperate. We had no choice but to continue at that point, so we took the first four singles and put them on one record as a way to raise money. The people in those bands never got

paid for that record. The first record we paid royalties on was Faith/Void, and we've paid everybody since. We don't pay on the singles. The Rites of Spring single lost money, Egghunt made us money, and Salad Days made us money.

SoldOut- Since then, has everything worked itself out?

Ian- Oh yeah, we're well in the black. We should cut that part out of the poster. People still probably think we're in serious...it's funny actually, we always get these letters with people sending us a couple of bucks saying, "I hope things get better...". We could never figure it out, then one day I realized it said it on the poster, and people probably still think we're really bad off. At the same time it's a cool letter, Jeff really worked hard on it. It's also an appreciation to the people in those bands. Another important facet to that record is that all of our original releases are now available in one form or another.

SoldOut- Not including the half-labels?

Ian- With the stuff we did on half-labels, we never really had nothing to do with. We just lent them the name because it would increase sales. Dischord swung a big bat and had a good reputation. Early on, with someone like Touch and Go, they'd do a half-Dischord and give us like fifty, a hundred, or whatever. It was also kind of cool because it showed the concept of building this network of independent labels. We'd stick together and if they fucked over one person, we'd say, "Hey, you'd better get square with these people or we're gonna pull on you too." We tried to create that sort of thing. With the Necros, we just wanted to help them out. With Double-0, that was R & B Records and that stood for Rich and Bert. Rich lived upstairs and I've known Bert forever. Iron Cross was Sab, he lived in the front room. United Mutation was just a local label. We actually stopped doing half-

labels with people from out-of-town. DSI is from Virginia, and Druid Hill, who did the Reptile House single, is from Baltimore. They always asked us to put it out, but we wouldn't do it. We didn't want to sign bands like that, we didn't want to put out these bands, so I'd encourage them to put out their own records. We'd give them the half-label to help them get started, and the idea was to help them start so that they could continue. Most of them didn't last. Sammich started and have thankfully continued. That's my sister's label.

SoldOut- What about Scream's This Side Up with Rough Trade?

Ian- We were out of money and Scream really wanted to put a record out. Only the pink one is Rough Trade. It's a screwy situation. Scream wanted to put out an album and we couldn't afford it. They'd spent way too much money in the studio and we couldn't afford it. They were shopping around for a label and Rough Trade said they'd do it, but Scream still wanted to be on Dischord so we did a half-label deal. In the end it was kind of a bummer, because once it came out I realized we'd backed ourselves into an exclusive Rough Trade deal, which was a real bummer.

SoldOut- What about the Ignition singles?

Ian- They put them out themselves. The first one they did alone, the second one was a half-label. It came out on their own label because they wanted them out right away and we couldn't do it. The tradeoff with Dischord is that you get bigger distribution with Dischord, but it takes forever to get the record out. That's why a lot of the bands break up when the record comes out, the bands can't last as long as the label. It takes forever to get the different parts together. If you're like Ignition and you want to put it out on your own label, it's like Chris Bald (Ignition guitar) can do art, so he'll sit down and do the art. Dante

(drums) will make the phone calls, and they get it done quickly. That's why they did their own singles. The bands should really put out their own singles, in my mind. What Jenny is doing is that she is basically distributing other local labels, like DSI, the Ignition records, like Sammich, Hellfire, and Mark/Kingface records. What we do for them is distribute them to stores. In that way it works out



'The Braincentre' Photo- Otto

really well, because we can always sell one or two of their records. The more titles you have, the more stores will order from you. If someone takes one of everything we have, that's a fucking healthy order. When we had only five records, it wasn't worth it. Now they can call us because we're a DC distributor as well.

SoldOut- I see you get lots of tapes from bands.

Ian- Yeah, it's too bad because we won't release any of it. I'll write a postcard and respond to every tape. There's only one tape I didn't respond to. I forget the name of the band, but they had this song called "Zucken Zie Meinen Shlongen" or something like that, and that translated is "Suck My Long

Dick”.

SoldOut- That explains it.

Ian- I just didn't like their whole attitude, they were bullshit. I actually respond to every tape sent, and that's why I'm so behind on my mail. Most of them are not that good. When people send me a tape, I look at how they present themselves, and how much they rely on really beaten concepts of self-promotion. If they send me a fact sheet or press kit, it better be fucking good because I hate press kits. I don't make them, I hate them. I think they're shitty. I'm burnt on a lot of music. I like to be challenged, I don't like to be sedated. They are all good tapes, but how much music can a person listen to? I don't keep the tapes. I'll tell you that right now, man. I'll listen to them, and if I like it I might set it aside, but generally I'll tape over the tapes. I'll write them a letter and say, "Thanks very much for the tape. I enjoyed listening to it." I'll tell them the deal with it, and then I tape over it. I've done my part. I don't know if you've seen my room, but I've got millions of cassettes and it's like an albatross. I hate them, I've learned to hate cassettes. I have them everywhere, I've got millions in my room. People send me a cassette and I feel ethically bad to tape over it. I can't throw them away. After I write them back, I've done my part. They can't ask for anything more. I can't keep it as a keepsake or anything, there's enough of that.

SoldOut- What has sold best for Dischord?

Ian- The two Minor Threat 12"s have sold about 50,000 each, and about 20,000 of Salad Days. After that, Dag Nasty does very well, Scream does good. Everything averages between 3-5000, but the Minor Threat stuff is far above anything else.

SoldOut- What new is coming in terms of releases?

Ian- We're not putting it out and it's not on Dischord proper, but we're definitely involved with



'The Dischord Dogs' Photo- Otto

putting out this compilation called State of the Union, which is a benefit for homeless people. The money is going to go out to a group here called 'Community for Creative Non-Violence', and also the ACLU. It's going to have Scream, Ignition, Soulside, Broken Siren, Christ on a Crutch, Kingface, Rain, 3, Marginal Man, One Last Wish, Fugazi, Thorns, Fire Party, Fidelity Jones, Red Emma, and Shudder to Think. That's a hefty lineup. It's a good record. If I felt retrospective, I would put out miles and miles of unreleased music that would just knock people out, particularly historian-type people. I'd love to put out the Skewbald stuff. I love those songs. That was between the first Minor Threat breakup and the reformation. It was me singing, Jeff drumming, Eddie from Faith and Rites of Spring on guitar, and John Paul playing bass. We recorded three songs in the studio, and I love that tape. The second deadline tape is fucking great, man. It's dynamite. There's unreleased Rites of Spring stuff, unreleased Beefeater, unreleased everything. It would be nice to get these things out, but at the same time I don't want to spend my time

working on that. I'm too busy to work on that, and to get retrospective would pull the plug on my...

SoldOut- What about Flex Your Head?

Ian- Flex Your Head was fairly retrospective, but it was about what was happening at the time. It came out in 1981, and at the time it was fairly retrospective because Minor Threat had broken up the first time. Lyle went to college and we thought it was all over, and since we had no band we spent the next few months working our asses off to put together this compilation. We put that out in January/82, and lo and behold we reformed in April/82. It was funny because before, Minor Threat was nothing. It wasn't until we got back together that it became such a big deal.

Info: 3819 Beecher St. NW
Washington, DC
20007 USA

