



June 12th 2003

ERIC - HERE IS SOME ILLUSTRATIONS  
OF MYSELF AND SOME WORDS FOR  
YOU TO COBBLE  
TOGETHER....

use as much  
OR AS  
LITTLE AS  
you  
require....

Can the text  
be arranged  
around the  
pictures?



lyrics



ideological  
product!

Hope this  
isn't too  
late and

you can make use of  
it!....



JOHNNY (773) 491 1181







GRUFF WELSH ACCENT





My theme today will be something about  
toughing it out at the bottom of the heap,  
surviving in exile, thrills, spills, shaking  
hips & the crushing weight of compromise on  
a sorry career in the punk rock trenches --  
It will be interspersed with cautionary  
parables for those who feel compelled to  
express themselves through word and tune yet  
do not at first recognize the rising tide of  
dung they're willingly wading into.

I will present an unnecessarily multi-  
layered and complex anecdotal description of  
my experiences burrowing on the fringes of  
rock'n'roll AND my half-cocked resistance to  
the strange magnetic pull of the beast  
itself, with its excess and incompetence,  
dodgy deals, breathless lies and lavish  
dinners that can leave tortured artists &  
self-taught cowboy musicians morphed limply  
into hopeless corporate employees.

It will be a tell all, show all,  
incompletist carnival of bluster, blather,  
greed and self-delusion that will hopefully  
consume you, the audience, in great tides of  
pity and regard for the tireless &  
impoverished entertainer who having signed  
up for the long haul is prepared to die with  
the reins in his hand..

**IT' S NOT ENOUGH**

IT'S NOT ENOUGH (wacos/pigsville © 2000)

You can be the last one standing as the surface  
of the earth melts

like a chocolate BAKE

Throw me out with the garbage - I'll never  
get that far

Bury me in the street

Scatter me LIVE Beads of mercury

HAVE ME STUFFED just LIKE TIGGER  
OR PICKLED FOR a SOUVENIR....

MY PAINT IS PEEUNG, MY NAILS ALL RUST  
at the Peak of my popularity

I'm CRUMBUNG INTO DUSK.....

IT'S NOT ENOUGH!

I'm entertaining, mesmerizing  
COLLAPSING AS WE SPEAK

LEFT my clothes all neatly folded

NOW I'm heading ON UP the CREEK

PAST the University of Boredom, the Shrunken Head

the DEATH WISH CASINO

Barack Gold

" Paradise Garage Sale

ON the DECK OF THE WRECK OF THE Marie Celeste  
where Rock'n'Roll came to die

I'LL STILL BE trying to change the channels

AS my life goes flashing by - IT'S NOT ENOUGH

I reached my teenage years during the early 70s, that ultimate twilight of cool, a wannabe soccer hooligan in a South Wales sea-port town hopelessly devoted to my local team Newport County & their endless travails at the very bottom of the fourth division. The fact that they weren't much good and were largely frowned upon by my macho Welsh-speaking Rugby loving uncles only increased the attraction...

Soccer in the lower ranks was not about big money & success - it was about the lack of it and getting by against the odds and somehow, sometimes, scoring that one amazing heroic victory but more often as not, NOT. ~~THE~~ blind with hope we'd be back again next Saturday, waiting around for something to change. It was as accurate and poignant a representation of the working class experience as any poet, folkie or painter could ever muster up, playing itself out relentlessly in the pissing rain and wind week after week, a clumsy backbeat to the choking routine of daily life...

Mostly we ate chips, drank pop & shouted sarcastic abuse at our own players, competing in this with other gaggles of sorry ~~MA~~ **YOUTH** scattered sparsely across the rotting wooden railway sleeper terraces of Somerton Park. Surreal chanting was big - "Gimme a .... (random letter)" etc. etc. "What have you got?" "GTRRROPUB!" Heh. heh. heh.

Feather cuts, Doc Martins, Clockwork Orange, Bowie, Slade - Most of the kids I knew who went to the footy back then had their pants set on fire by Punk Rock at the same time as me. We left town, got into bands & followed our noses down new roads to nowhere, unconsciously carrying something of Newport County with us

**PILL SAILOR**

PILL SAILOR - (LOW NOISE MUSIC © 1997)  
JONNAN BOND

A PIT BULL TATTOO one good eye of Blue  
that's wandering still BUT what can you do  
these ropes are all knotted & tangled round me  
I'm a sailor who wandered a little too far from  
THE SEA...

DID THEY RAISE UP THIS CHILD JUST TO DIE?  
TO STARE FOR TOO LONG INTO ONE SKY?

WELL SHIRLEY BASSEY'S FROM TIGER BAY  
BUT I'LL SPEND MY LIFE DOWN IN PILL  
THEY SHUT DOWN THE DOCKS THROWN OUR LIVES ON THE  
ROCKS  
BUT MY GOOD EYE IS WANDERING STILL  
PAST THE PILES WHERE I FEETER ALL DAY  
TRANSPORTER BRIDGE TRANSPORT ME AWAY  
THESE ROPE.....

they passed in the channel  
great ships BY THE ~~SCORE~~ SCORE  
to carry out coal & carry in ORE  
and at night these old sea LEGS  
were anxious to stray  
they'd come from all over BUT never intended to stay

SO TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW  
& FIND ME A SKIPPER with ~~NOISE~~  
SOMEWHERE TO GO

*Why do you play that dog-turd music?* says legendary rock critic Lester Bangs.

It's New Year's Day 1981, less than a month after John Lennon's murder, and the Mekons are at a media punk rock party somewhere on frozen Manhattan. The whole city seems to be nursing a giant twitchy hangover.

*Er..Don't really know but that's a pretty accurate description,* we reply.

*What! snarls Lester, you're meant to defend yourselves...*

*Why? It is dog turd music.*

Lester ponders this for a moment. He's a very big man in a black winter coat and beret with dark rings under his eyes. I've read his stuff in the NME; the manic older American journo who took punk rock to heart.

*That's a totally revolutionary concept, a band that doesn't even like itself!* He seems genuinely impressed.

It turns out that he'd been at the Gang Of Four/Mekons/Au Pairs gig at Huzrah's the night before and actually likes our band. The dog-turd jibe is a Bangsian ice-breaker and we don't give a shit because while this is our first US gig ever, it's probably our last anywhere. We're at a fairly terminal stage of disintegration (sacked by Virgin

Records, bass player run off to join the Venezuelan Symphony, sick of playing last year's flavour to the dwindling gaggles of violent morons who'd annexed the British punk cul-de-sac, sick of each other, skint, unemployable, gone back to art school etc.) and if New York seems a long way to come to expire, WELL! it worked for Sid!

*Come round tomorrow, says Lester and gives us his address (above a Chinese restaurant in the West village, no doorbell, just yell Lester)*

The next afternoon perturbed Manhattan diners gawk as 3 under-dressed art-school punks huddle together on the sidewalk screaming Lester! Lester! up at the sky. After a few minutes a window opens & a pair of stereo speakers are lowered by their wires towards the street below blaring the 2 chord thrash of Never Been In A Riot, our first single. This is more than a little disconcerting and things get worse when Lester sticks his huge head out and starts shouting along.

*Hey! listen! this is you! He is swinging the speakers back and forwards just feet above our heads as snow spirals down between the buildings in big fluffy clumps.*

**RIOT**

RIOT

(melkon ©1977)  
(dance love music)

NEVER BEEN IN A RIOT

" " " " FIGHT

HOW COME FOR ME EVERYTHING

TURNS OUT RIGHT

" " "

When it's time for broken bottles

& they call the stretcher boys

I'm always in the TOILET

MISSING OUT THE NOISE X 2

I was in this LATE NIGHT CAFE

I was eyeing UP THE TILL

when in walks the BRITISH POLICE

getting their Bacon GRILL

" " " "

In Leeds we never heard Merle Haggard, George Jones, Patsy Cline, Ernest Tubb, Kitty Wells, Buck Owens & Bob Wills... (We got Boxcar Willie instead)... the mystery and misery of real hard country music only filtered into our strangely parallel punk-rock universe thru tapes sent by a Chicago college DJ called Terry Nelson.

It was a total eye-opener, confirmation of something dark sinewy and uncomfortable that lurked beneath ~~the~~ all that Nashville easy listening. Corny as it seems these stripped down honky-tonk tales of lust & loneliness, sex & death, struck a chord with us (usually E major) and connected our alienated, drunk, commie souls to a strident tradition we hardly knew existed.

Later on The Mekons first tours of the States in the mid 80s, decked out in pearl buttons, black embroidered western shirts, pointy boots and collar tips - The cool civilian uniform that presents outsiders with a direct line to the core of the American cowboy myth, we stumble into the R&R Ranch, a subterranean honky-tonk deep beneath the shiny skyscrapers of Chicago's

Loop. Up on the stage <sup>low</sup> beneath huge wall-mounted longhorns & cowhide maps of Texas a band of old guys called The Sundowners are half-way through some grueling 8 hour shift, their lovely rasping western harmonies guiding a crew of sozzled city-folk down the long trail to dawn.

"Looks like we've got a band here!" says singer Bob Boyd inviting us up to play a few numbers!!! Guitarist Don Walls stays & play with us; his beautiful fluid guitar lines acting like a powerful glue to hold us all together.. He smiles encouragingly and does not seem alarmed by how crap we are. Maybe he recognizes some kindred spirit, maybe we're all just smashed.. who cares. In a hard city a million miles from the country, we're all exiles trying to keep our feet out of the corporate dog-shit & forget the racism and totalitarianism that make this place so terrifying..

**NASHVILLE RADIO**

Anne Bourbon-Levinsky to  
Sophie Bourbon

August 1st, 1986

Dear Mom,  
Don't call anymore, I can't deal with you and all your bullshit right now. After all we talked about I can't believe you treated me like that. Where shall I start? (or should I even bother?) Yes, I'm old enough to get the bus from downtown, OK you were busy (drunk) so you couldn't meet me. Yes, I mind sleeping on the floor with a bunch of ugly, wasted people I don't even know, shouting all night, crashing into each other, playing stupid hillbilly music, doing drugs or whatever! Yes, I wanted to talk to you, ALONE! It was so disgusting, I was scared to use the towels in case I caught something. I was just using the corner of one to dry myself when some big drunk stumbled in in his filthy underpants, and that guy asleep in your room, where was he from? I couldn't understand a word he said? Your pillows are ruined, all stained with hair color (!) and the

weasily one who was laping everything and the stench and those plastic containers full of green God knows what. What's up with that! Couldn't they just pay for a hotel? They are using you! How do you expect me to feel? Yeah that's my mom's house, the one with the hammer and sickle hanging in the window, I never asked you for anything! And you dare to criticize my life, my politics while you throw your life away on some booze drunk. Can you imagine what it feels like to be called a 'little motherfucker' by your own mother? I just don't get it. Mom, what are you doing??? What is it with women of your generation, you come on all pious to your daughters about feminism and then you throw yourself at these dingy men playing loud ugly music. And don't tell me there are women in the hand, that won't wash. You and I know what this is all about!!! Don't call. I can only imagine what Dad would say. Does he know you're like this? A.

← From  
Mekons  
UNITED  
Quarterstick  
1996

Anne Bourbon-Levinsky to  
Sophie Bourbon

October 27th, 1989

Mom, So I finally saw them in this horrible little bar by the University. It was just a horrible noise and shouting and they're on A&M? Sling's label? The support band were cute, the drummer was a cop! Mom if you're gonna get involved in music then get into something that is at least current and real for young people today in 1989. This English girl heard one of their records and burst out laughing. She called it 'Pub Rock' and said no-one under 30 would be seen dead with a record like that — they're all into Acid House. I'm not sure what that is but it's gotta be better than that tired old Mekons shit! Needless to say I didn't introduce myself. They didn't spot me thank God!  
I miss you, A  
XXX  
PS Maybe they can give you your money back now they're POP STARS!!! And in answer to your question; private charities and volunteers would look after the mentally ill. Capitalism is beautiful!  
OK.

MILLIONAIRE

Drink & Pills and Nashville Radio  
life'll never be the same, chills &  
spills from Maine to Mexico, ridin'  
on my funeral train! I gave my  
life to country music, took my  
pills & lost, now they don't play  
my songs on the radio, it's like  
I never was.....

The champagne was never cheap  
BUT I COULD pay someone to  
DRINK it FOR ME! never rise  
up from this sheets - watching  
TIME just roll away  
I love a millionaire

## ***The Myth of Expertise***

Letter from Bob Wills's attorney, David Randolph Milsten, to Saul H. Bernstein of Irving Berlin Inc. Music Publishers on July 16, 1940, regarding changes the firm had made in both the music and lyrics of Wills's song "San Antonio Rose" in an attempt to popularize it.

*Dear Mr. Bernstein,*

*Mr. Wills did not contemplate such a radical change in the tune as has been made. According to Mr. Wills the original tune has been abandoned and the song has been revised so that now all that is heard when playing the piano score is harmony to the original melody.*

*You have so changed the words and the tune that the patrons and fans of Mr. Wills will no longer accept the song. Mr. Wills now almost continually has embarrassing moments when his orchestra plays the song as published because his patrons refuse to dance to the tune and call for the original to be played and the original words to be sung.*

In November 1969, people all over the world heard "San Antonio Rose" sung in its original form by Apollo 12 astronauts Charles Conrad and Al Bean on their way to the moon.

MEMPHIS

DESTROY YOUR SAFE & HAPPY  
LIVES BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE  
THE BATTLES WE FOUGHT WERE  
LONG & HARD JUST NOT TO  
BE CONSUMED BY ROCK N' ROLL  
ROCK N' ROLL



EAST BERLIN  
CAN'T BUY A THING  
THERE'S NOTHING  
THEY CAN SELL ME  
I WALK THRU THE  
WALL - IT'S NO PAIN  
AT ALL - I'M  
BORN INSIDE THE  
BELLY OF ROCK N' ROLL

## ***The Myth of Rock 'n' Roll***

Going through Checkpoint Charlie into East Berlin in the late eighties, I'm pulled over by a border guard for having some Soviet insignia on the arm of my leather jacket.

WHERE DID YOU GET THIS?

I'd bought it in a goth-rock store on Hamburg's Reeperbahn some days earlier and sewn it onto my jacket out of boredom in the van.

THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE . . .

Oh, yes it is, they sell this stuff all over Western Europe, even in Leeds. There's much shaking of heads and pointing before we're finally let through. We soon find out that about the only place you can't buy cool Commie paraphernalia is in the East. Fur coats, perfume, watches, no problem. As long as you've got Western currency to pay for them. But all we've got is a pile of East German marks smuggled in inside someone's knickers . . . and there's nothing here to spend it on. Hey! We're from the West, products of capitalism, raised on rock 'n' roll, born inside the belly. . . . We demand the right to procure choice Stalinist nuggets and the hammer 'n' sickle souvenir bric-a-brac of your crumbling sector in exchange for this toy money.

Come back in a few yeats, and you can buy a chunk of the wall, slurp Miller, and watch MTV at TGI Friday's in Karl Marx Platz with your previously owned Red Army tank parked outside, stuffed to the brim with contraband plutonium. And the same border guard will say:

DO YOU WANT FRIES WITH THAT?

Herbert Marcuse said that whatever you throw at capitalism, it'll just sell it straight back to you. The music business is capitalism's muscular right arm with a big fat catcher's mitt on the end.

For a while punk rock was too hot to handle (a brief, formative moment of opportunity and danger), before the major labels donned their oven gloves, held their noses, and swallowed it whole. When the Clash signed to CBS, some odious little PR drone came up with a marketing slogan, "The only band that matters," just to rub corporate salt into communal wounds. It was in the papers and on posters all over the States. We thought we could climb into the dragon's mouth and piss the flames out, but we learned: the only band that matters is the one that makes money. . . . Punk rock is reduced to Malcolm's swindle . . . . It's reassuring for the industry: WE ALL WANT THE SAME THING.

By the mid-eighties, rock 'n' roll had grown up and gotten a job on the board of directors. The myth of a social conscience saw pop stars posturing to conceal a hunger that feeds on the world, thinks globally, and acts locally—to screw everybody.

Wednesday, February 12, 1997: satellites beam U2's press conference all over the pop-saturated planet. It doesn't matter if it's from the lingerie department of Kmart, the laundry room at Trump Tower, or from up a dead bear's arse: the irony is transparent, the meaning plain: ignition engaged, the engine turns over.

I can't hear you, Bono, my ears are full of shit.

~~REDACTED~~

PS Saw a thing in an old Rolling Stone of the Mekons on stage in Austin last year with some hairy punk guy who was in rehab with Kurt. In '87 time they gave up. Sven says they're clown grown men taking part in some sad kind of perpetual arrested adolescence. 'Singing' their dreadful rubbish which Sven says is not 'a really radical re-positioning of cultural production under the Reagan/Thatcher axis', but just some old dumb guys pretending to be intellectuals to cover up the fact that they can't sell enough records to ignore the critics. So fuck you. I remember that time in Chicago when you were such a bitch and it still hurts. Don't bother to call, we haven't got a phone.

Anne Bourbon-Levinsky to  
Sophie Bourbon

August 23rd, 1995

Nice joke — Berry Garcia — fuck you! Nice to see the joke is always on me, hope you had a good laugh at that one. You were always such a cynic, such an empty ship with your sorry cargo scattered across the ocean-floor while you continue to float on uselessly, marinating in your own sad, poisonous bile. Sorry, but I mean it. There is a hole in your ship and it is JESUS shaped, PLEASE think about it before it's too late. You can't just go on and on like this. Can you? Where next? Iraq? You're like the Ohio honey-hunter, who seeking honey in the crotch of a hollow tree, found such exceeding store of it, that leaning too far over, it sucked him in, so that he died embalmed. I will pray for you in your life of pointless excess and loveless, perverted coupling.

Yours, Anne

From Mekons  
United

HELL'S ROOF

WALKING ON HELL'S ROOF

HISTORY IS WRITTEN BY THE WINNER  
THIS IS A LOSER'S SONG  
I TOOK THIS JOB IN THE SUMMER  
NEVER SAW THE WINTER ROLLIN' ON  
NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD END IN A SECOND  
A PUNT OUT SMOKIN' WRECK  
EXPECTATIONS & AMBITIONS  
WERE JUST A ROPE AROUND MY NECK  
BROKE MY BACK TO EARN A CRUST  
SAW MY DREAMS DIE IN THE DUST  
NOW I'M WALKING ON HELL'S ROOF lookin' at the flowers  
IN THE A to B & the M. P. Hour  
KEEPING OUT OF REACH OF THAT Higher power  
WHERE THE BEES ARE BUZZING IN THE APRIL SHOWERS  
OH ALL IN BLOOM, Red yellow & Blue  
SO SWEET & true, there's nothing better to do  
I'M NOT HIDING come and FIND me  
WHAT AM I DOING there's NO NEED TO REMIND ME  
JUST WALKING ON HELL'S ROOF looking at the flowers  
THE SPOILS BELONG TO THE VICTOR  
THIS IS A CONCILIATION SONG  
YOUR LIFE IS SCIENCE FICTION  
IN A FLASH THEN YOU'D BE GONE  
NO MORE TRAPS & NO MORE TROUBLE  
BAD LUCK AND BURSTING BUBBLES  
WALKING ON HELL'S ROOF looking at the flowers

(WALCOS - Pigsville © 2001)

The year 2000 AD had long passed. One who remembered the celebrations sat, quietly staring out over the empty tundra. The stillness of the relentless sky seemed strange on reflection (but you got used to it). The figure stirred, still in deep thought, and gazed into the engulfing shadows. Then, as if gently caressing the memory of an old friend, it turned slowly toward the light. A strange bird, awkward and enigmatic, flew across the dying sun, cried out faintly, then disappeared into the confusion and wilderness beyond.

From *Living in Sin*  
The melons  
Novel in progress