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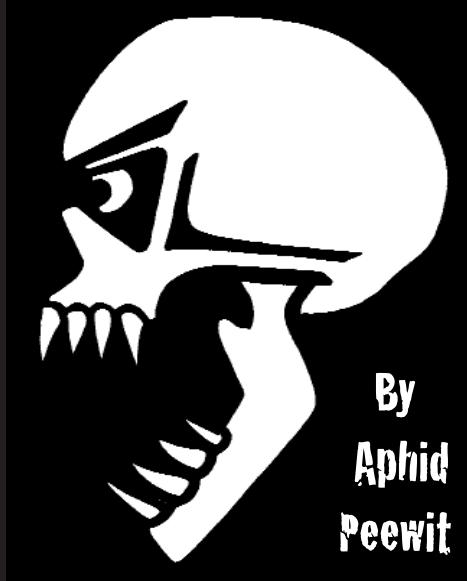
Big Fuckin Interview with



Dark Musings of a Skull on House Arrest

It's getting harder and harder to deny that we - and most of the rest of the so-called "free world" - live now deep in the maw of a terrible new danger. Evil forces have been unleashed and have grown out of the cracks in the air all around us like noxious clouds. There is a deadly new plague in town and it is called "Emo" and it is creeping all about us. Hell, it's not even creeping; it's getting high-fives and celebratory piggy-back rides on the massive shoulders of the Mainstream Media. Not since the Grunge Revolution of the early 90s have we seen the media make such garishly inappropriate advances towards a young "underground" musical scene. And as a result, the Emos are now everywhere; sniveling, emasculated bands like Pedro the Lion, Dashboard Confessional and Jimmy Eat World - just to name but a few. Bands seemingly intent on force feeding the world their sensitive, syrupy, dear-diary lullabies while attempting to neuter the beast in punk rock in the name of art and commerce. Is it mere coincidence that this virulent strain of musical *fashion* comes at roughly the same time as anthrax-tainted letters, small pox threats and terrorist alerts?

Fortunately there is an Anti-Emo



By
**Aphid
Peewit**

antidote. It comes in the form of Minneapolis' own Big Fuckin Skull: a band of confrontational, foul-mouthed Corpse People that play straight-up Misfitsy punk so rife with variations of the word "fuck" and stories of homicidal skulls that any sweater-clad Emo would grab his lunch box and run into the safety of Ian MacKaye's out-



rafe torso

stretched arms. Big Fuckin Skull is the antithesis of Emo and, for that matter, Straight Edge as well -- two sorry-ass musical/cultural phenomena that can largely be blamed on the aforementioned Mr. MacKaye.

Armed with a swashbuckling mythology that would make Joseph Campbell lick his chops, BFS song's feature lyrics about skulls that ride city buses and giant flying skulls that munch on twerpish little humans as if they were so much Fiddle Faddle.

For, though Jimmy may indeed now "eat world," the Giant Skull will fucking suck the puny intestines out of Jimmy and all the other Emos and slurp them up like spaghetti noodles, leaving the Emos to whimper their final whimper as the Giant Skull cracks a bloody sauce smile, ready now for "Miller Time."

Yes, the Skulls feeding frenzy will be the great cleansing and the final redemption from Emo. And I for one, can't wait for it.

The following interview with BFS singer/outlaw/tippler Rafe Torso took place in January of '02 while he was on house arrest for, once again, running afoul of the law. It was conducted via email. - Peewit

APHID: *Obviously first question: what exactly did you do to be put under house arrest and did it involve digging up graves?*

RAFE: One night in July I blew into a friendly highway patrolman's breathalyzer doohickey and it reported my blood/alcohol content as .11. (yes, that would be exactly .01 over the legal limit in the state of Minnesota). Unfortunately, seventeen days prior to my arrest, the law had been updated, permitting the state of Minnesota to add this most recent offense to the two other DWIs I was charged with six and eight years ago.

APHID: *How long are you on house arrest?*

RAFE: I'm on house arrest for thirty days, I'm in out-patient treatment for nine months, I'm not allowed to legally operate a motor vehicle for one year, and I'm not allowed to legally consume alcohol for the rest of my life. I take it for granted that I'll one day be a real-live outlaw.

APHID: *Do you have to blow into a machine that has a straw sticking out of it each day and/or do you have one of those radio frequency "tethers" attached to your ankle?*

RAFE: It's like this: Four or five times a day my special unlisted phone will ring and I lift a Sobrietor, which looks a lot like a gun, up to my face and say Canada, Cookie, and finally Eagle. If after saying these three words I've adequately convinced this stupid machine that I'm really me, I get to blow the proof of my sobriety directly into the little plastic straw. It's kind of like a game; if I win, I get to repeat the process at various inopportune times, and if I lose I have to go to jail for a year. This is the first time I've ever heard of the little piece of shit plastic fuckin nightmare strapped to my lower leg in just the perfect position to grate against my ankle bone causing oft-severe discomfort with every single movement, however slight, as a "tether".

APHID: *If you have the tether, have you tested it yet? Does it zap you if you stray too far or is it just for tracking purposes? If you shower with it on will it short out?*

RAFE: To be perfectly honest, though I've only been on house arrest for less than a week, I'm not very good at it. I've never

been zapped for wandering around town on the many flimsy pretenses I've employed thus far, but we'll have to see what happens when I get truly daring and decide to find out exactly what this little plastic bastard'll do. About showering with it, I asked the chick who gave me all the house arrest equipment the same question. Not because I really gave a shit, but because I wanted her to come over to my house and show me.

may or may not have been different in the past.

APHID: *My own experiences with incarceration have all involved uncomfortable cots, mean dim-witted deputies, really bad food and wall-less bathrooms - so I don't know how house arrest works. What are you allowed to do and what are you not allowed to do? For example, can you smoke cigarettes, beat off, invoke demons, etc?*

RAFE: Technically, I'm not allowed to leave the house for the next thirty days except to go to work, go to treatment or anything associated with treatment, or for any other reason unless it's deemed acceptable by the people who placed me on house arrest. Fortunately, being possessed of a guile stirred with envy and revenge, it's pretty easy for me to come up with a million reasons why I simply must leave my house to further ensure my sobriety and law-abiding behavior. I voluntarily don't smoke cigarettes in the house, and let's just say that it might be true that in the last four days I've beaten off more than I thought was humanly possible, and I've invoked more demons than I ever thought existed.

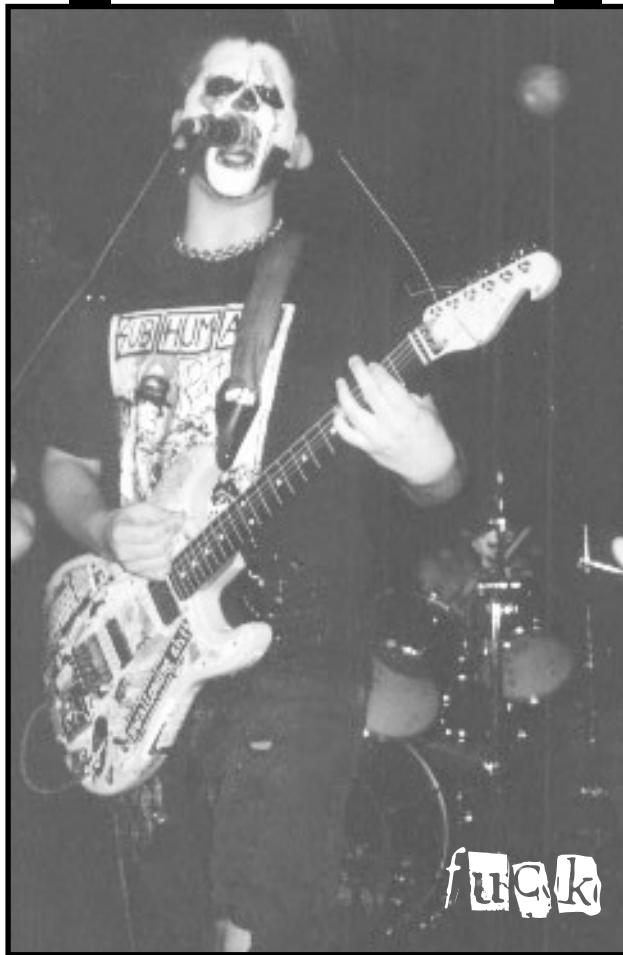
APHID: *Has your house arrest adversely affected the band in any way? Have you had to cancel any shows or has the CD project been pushed back at all?*

RAFE: My house arrest, at this exact time, is the second single biggest obstacle Big Fuckin Skull has ever faced, and the single biggest reason we haven't played more shows recently been able to put the finishing touches on the CD. At least now we know when we'll be able to start scheduling shows again.

APHID: *The words "fuck" and "fuckin" pop up in almost every line of every one of your songs. Excuse my forwardness, but do you suffer from Tourette's Syndrome?*

RAFE: Big Fuckin Skull rule number one states that every song we write, except for one, has to have the word skull in the title. Big Fuckin Skull rule number two states that every song we write must feature the word fuck, or any of its derivatives, at least five times. We've never broken rule number one, and we've only broken rule number two on two occasions.

APHID: *When is the much-anticipated CD due out? Is there a title for it yet?*



APHID: *Has your Skullmobile been "immobilized" by the authorities?*

RAFE: My skullmobile, a black '91 Hyundai Excel named Guts, blew up on me as I was driving home from the May 5th festivities in St. Paul. At the time of my arrest I was driving a Geo Metro which, consequently, no longer belongs to me, but to the state of Minnesota. Oh well. They can have the Geo, I'm keeping my aura.

APHID: *Is it just you, Rafe Torso, on house arrest or is it the entire band?*

RAFE: Currently, I'm the only member of Big Fuckin Skull on house arrest. It



RAFE: Originally planned to be released this past Halloween, our second CD, "Skulls Rule-OK?," should be ready to be released sometime mid-spring.

APHID: Will it be similar to "Six Skulls Against the World"? Which CD will have a greater "fuck" count?

RAFE: Most of the songs were written before or just after the last CD was recorded, so yeah, it'll still be in pretty much the same vein as *Six Skulls Against the World*. There's an acoustic ballad on this one, but none of that "evolving" or "growing as musicians" crap that you hear from all these bands as an excuse to justify the fact that their first musical endeavors sucked dick and swallowed. I've never actually done a "fuck" count, but I'm guessing *Skull's Rule-OK?* will easily blow the first CD out of the water, and the third CD, which we're writing songs for right now, will kick the christ out of the first two CDs combined.

APHID: This is just a guess: did you guys all grow up in strict Catholic households?

RAFE: Fuck [BFS guitarist] effectively summed up my own views on religion in seven words when I first met him: The Christian god...but can he fight?

APHID: Has Big Fuckin Skull ever done any Misfits or Samhain covers?

RAFE: In the old days we decided that "Skulls" was the only cover song we were allowed to play, but eventually we went ahead and did "Theme For a Jackal" once as well. Then the Misfits made their wonderful comeback and we decided not to play any of their songs anymore because we were getting too many people at shows shouting out "Astro Zombies!" and "play Hatebreeders!" That's just fuckin annoying. We've never seen anything wrong with playing Samhain's "All Murder, All Guts, All Fun" or "Archangel," but it's definitely a rare treat when we do.

APHID: On your website you have a link to a "skull quiz." Have you taken the Skull Quiz yourself and, if so, how did you do? Was it an embarrassing oversight or a case of professional jealousy that the author of the *Skull Quiz* - a Kevin L. Callahan - included no questions involving either the "Big Fuckin Skull" or the "Great Green Skull"?

RAFE: To tell you the truth I don't even remember the skull quiz. Is it still on the website somewhere?

APHID: World famous Wisconsinite and demented serial killer/cannibal Eddie Gein seemed to share your interest in skulls; he made soup bowls and drums out of them and had a human skull on each of his four bedposts. Please don't incriminate yourselves, but do any of you guys ever wear a belt made out of human nipples? Do any of you like salted noses?

RAFE: Ed Gein was all right, but we're more interested in fake blood, lots and lots of lots of painfully sticky, crummy looking fake blood.

APHID: If you could kick in the skull of any rock star (and not be put under house arrest for it) who would it be?

RAFE: I'd definitely start with Axl Rose. I

wanted to BE that guy when I was a kid, dammit, and now look at him. And given the current state of popular music, how could I stop with him? I'd spare Smashmouth, though. I fuckin hate their shitty music, but next to Limp Bizkit, Linken Park, Slipknot, Stained, Muddvayne...all that shit, Smashmouth seems pretty harmless to me. And you need those shitty harmless bands out there, else the basements where the good music's being played would be packed.

APHID: In the late 80s there was a punk band consisting entirely of little 10 year old boys calling themselves Old Skull. Is there any chance that the Big Fuckin Skull boys are the Old Skull kids all grown up?

RAFE: We've heard 'em, we've met 'em, we like 'em. They ain't us though. "I hate you, Ronald Reagan!" I love that.

APHID: Who do you think has a bigger fuckin skull: O.J. or Rosie O'Donnell?

RAFE: Rosie O'Donnell's skull is easily twice as big as O.J.'s. I wish it was as easy to decide which one of 'em I like better. O.J. Simpson is a real-live wife-murdering, rampaging monster who can't be convicted of any crime for fear of retaliation, and Rosie O'Donnell hates squirrels and likes Batman.

APHID: Has the author of the Great Green Skull poems had any of his material featured in any serious literary quarterlys like "The Paris Review?"

RAFE: It might be that the writer of the green skull poetry has used his green skull poetry to disrupt more than one open mic night here or there, and it might also be that the writer of the green skull poetry has made a green skull screenplay pitch or two to Hollywood, and it might even be that the writer of the green skull poetry sings in a band out there somewhere.

APHID:
Obvious Question
#2: what did Joe
Christmas do for
Xmas?

*"Ed Gein was all right,
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ing fake blood"*

RAFE: I apologize for responding to this question without actually having asked him, but Senor Chrismas is kind of a hard guy to get hold of. On his behalf, I'd have to guess that he decorated his tree, put a few lights up on his igloo, ate some dinner with his relatives, opened some presents, and fucked lots of chicks.

APHID: *The immortal straightedge band Crucial Youth used to say “If you curse, you’re the worst.” How do you respond to that? Have you ever considered trying substitute cuss words like “dang” “cripes” and “frickin”?*

RAFE: Didn’t Ian Mackaye once say “[I] don’t smoke, don’t drink, don’t fuck. At least I can fuckin’ think.”? What a fuckin idiot. The word “frickin” appears at least once on both CDs.

APHID: *How much of your lyrical work is autobiographical? Did you really find a skull that wasn’t your skull?*

RAFE: Some of it’s autobiographical, and ALL of it’s plain fact. It’s not so much that the six of us sit around and try to come up with funny little songs about skulls that kill people, it’s more like we’re just reporting on stuff we feel the world ought to know. In that way we’re like CNN, except we don’t make stuff up.

APHID: *What do you think of the Danzig-less Misfits?*

RAFE: There’s

no such thing as Danzig-less Misfits. Oh wait...you mean those guys out there writing songs like “Lost in Space,” “Walk Among Us” and “Scream”!?! Those guys just piss me off. I still think Jerry Only and Doyle are cool enough, and they’re certainly entitled to try reviving one of the best bands that ever was, but I think they fucked it up somewhere between becoming born-again christians and letting that jackass Michale Graves have anything to do with them.

APHID: *I’ve read that cussing is bad for your medulla oblongata. Is that true?*

RAFE: So who really needs a medulla oblongata? The true measure of a man is whether or not his skull will avenge him when he’s gone. Jim Varney and Dave Thomas of Wendy’s fame could tell you a few things about that.

APHID: *In light of what’s happened to Ace Frehley’s face, do you think wearing all that ghoul make-up is such a good idea?*

RAFE: The guitarist for Kiss sits in a

chair and has professional beauty people apply his make-up for however many hours before going onstage and referring to himself as Ace Frehley for a couple hours. The guitarist for Big Fuckin Skull gets drunk and throws his own make-up on five minutes before he plays and refers to himself as Fuck for the rest of his life. What I’m trying to say is that I’m not particularly worried about what happens to a guy like Ace Frehley ever happening to guys like us.

APHID: *You seem to be something of a craniologist. Why do babies’ skulls have that open spot on top? Can a person really*



*stick
his fin-
ger in it
and make
the baby smile
and shit and
stuff?*

RAFE: The fact that babies have that soft spot only proves to me that I’m correct in assuming exactly what I’ve assumed for years: The old, cruel gods of our ancestors, to whom were sacrificed many first-born children, preferred straws. As far as more modern uses for the soft spot, aren’t smiling and shitting the two most annoying things babies do? And don’t they do ‘em enough on their own? Keep your damn fingers away from them babies’ heads.

APHID: *How and when did the band come into being? Who were the original members?*

RAFE: Skull Fu started the band in the summer of 1994 because he was sick of writing and hearing all the same old polit-

ical nonsense songs being played by a bunch of drunk teenagers whose best efforts at toppling democracy produced a million anthems by the names of “Fuck the Government”, and “The System Sucks (and just doesn’t work)”. After telling us that he was gonna start a band called Big Fuckin Skull that only played songs about skulls that kill people, he enlisted Fuck and the imposter Gutt wrench from a band called Prozac Children (as guilty of the above-mentioned stupidity as anyone), myself from the Villains (maybe even guiltier of the above-mentioned stupidity. I mean, come on, what the hell business do I have writing anti war songs when the truth is I don’t give a shit about war one

way or the other?), and Eyeball McCool from his back-yard just because he was always mad and liked to swear. A couple weeks later we added Antone Baloney, but he didn’t last very long at all.

APHID: *Who are your favorite local bands?*

RAFE: Isn’t Mark Mallman from around here?

APHID: *Was the skeleton make-up there from the beginning or did that come along later?*

RAFE: The coolest thing about Glenn Danzig way back when was how he would get all dressed up in his awful masks and makeup...and then keep a straight face. And then, five years later, he’d get all pissed off if someone even mentioned the Misfits, and it’s like, whatever Glenn, the truth is you just felt stupid, huh? We thought we were pulling off the ultimate in satirical homages, deliberately applying the worst skull make-up and the fakest blood ever, and then the Misfits came back.

APHID: *As I’ve mentioned, a bunch of us Wormblower people got drunk and went down to the Lab two summers ago, just to check out Big Fuckin Skull. But after hanging out there for a while and suffering through some dreadful art-metal band, we were told that you guys failed to show up and hadn’t even called in sick or anything. Fortunately, we managed to get a bunch of free Pabst*

out of the deal, but we still felt screwed. You mentioned something about a bass player quitting on you that night - what was the story?

RAFE: Skull Fu quit that night, and nearly killed us all. I wish the Lab could have been notified, but I was too busy at the moment barely escaping with my life to give 'em a call.

APHID: *What's the deal with Skull Fu's neck? Did he survive a lynching or something?*

RAFE: He's a monster. I can't think of any other way to describe him. He's literally seven feet tall at the least, thin as a stick, and the strongest person I've ever seen or even heard of. I've seen him do things that mathematics tell me are just not possible.

APHID: *Here's the tired-but-required question: what are the BFS's influences?*

RAFE: Big Fuckin Skull's biggest influences are all the bands we've individually and collectively listened to and liked, and all the people we've ever individually or collectively met.

APHID: *Are any of you practicing Wiccans and do you do anything special to celebrate Samhain each year?*

RAFE: No, and no.

APHID: *As card-carrying punk rock and rollers, do you do your eating and drinking at the Triple Rock?*

RAFE: You simply must try the...

APHID: *Do any of you work at Extreme Noise?*

RAFE: By work at Extreme Noise you mean volunteer at Extreme Noise, right? To tell you the truth I'm usually too busy being a selfish bastard to help good folks out when they could use me.

APHID: *As a craniologist, what's your opinion of trepanation? Is there a BFS-trepanation connection?*

RAFE: It's good shit. A guy needs to replace his lost checkers with something.

APHID: *There's a drunk-punk band from Thunder Bay called the Kooks. They dress up in really awful Misfits costumes and do horrible drunken covers of old Misfits tunes. They're billed as "the*

World's Worst Misfits Tribute Band." I guess they get arrested a lot and are being sued by Jerry Only. Whenever they play it's an unholy, bloody mess. Have you ever seen them? Are they one of your influences? Have you guys ever played with them?

RAFE: I've never seen them. It seems just about everyone I know was once in such a band.

APHID: *Since skulls have no livers, can you drink obscene amounts of alcohol?*

RAFE: For the last year before it became illegal for me to consume alcohol I had a standing bet that I could drink any pitcher of beer in less than four minutes, and any following pitcher in less than ten. Skull Fu would tell you he can slam a forty in less than ten seconds. Kyle McKyle can claim to have drank Sam Ericson under the table in the first annual SSPDC. Fuck has the best talent of any of us by far. After drinking three fortys as fast as he can, which is considerably longer than ten seconds apiece, he can figure out the square root of the sum of any two drivers license numbers you give him, in his head, in half the time it originally took to drink the fortys in the first place, and still have time to explain how to make a grenade launcher out of a twelve gauge shotgun. But, of course, we're not skulls at all, just people wearing bad make-up and fake blood and we do have livers. The truth is I'd always start shaking uncontrollably and pass out soon after I finished the first pitcher in less than four minutes, it actually takes Skull Fu closer to twenty seconds to slam a forty, Sam Ericson never even entered the first annual South Saint Paul Drinking Competition, and Fuck's real talent is making up genuine sounding answers to math questions, and anyone who's read the Anarchist's Cookbook can tell you how to make a grenade launcher out of a twelve gauge shotgun.

APHID: *Who is the cooler skull: Skeletor or Ghostrider?*

RAFE: Ghostrider's a sissy. The old Ghostrider was a lot cooler because he was just a circus freak. Skeletor's a lot cooler than both of them put together plus the grim reaper himself because Skeletor's a bad guy who wants to eat your

skin and drink your blood. There's no room for skulls or skull-headed people that want to do anything but hate and kill. The best episode of He-Man was the one where Skeletor made himself a magic potion or whatever and got all huge. Just as he was about to kill He-Man once and for all, He-Man flung him over a cliff and then ended up saving him because to kill Skeletor would only reduce He-Man to Skeletor's level. That episode or the one, which I think was actually a She-Ra/He-Man crossover special or something, where Skeletor was wearing a scarf and caring about Christmas.

APHID: *What do skulls like to drink (alcohol-wise)?*

RAFE: It will eventually be revealed, but as for now I'm not telling.

APHID: *Who's your favorite porn starlet?*

RAFE: That I'm also not telling. I don't wanna blow my chances with any of the other porn starlets.

APHID: *Does your house look like Castle Greyskull?*

RAFE: My house IS Castle Greyskull. But I kicked that bird-lady out six months ago.



Endnotes: Thanks to Rafe Torso for wasting his time with all of this. Sorry it took so long to see the light of day. Thanks also to Fuck for the pix and to Eban L. for the question suggestions. For more Skull Folklore or to buy actual BFS hair/nail clippings, check out their website: www.bigfuckinskull.com

