

Lengua Armada Records



interview by stephe perry

On a road trip to see LIMP WRIST in Buffalo we started trying to pass time with stupid road games. We thought we would try and name the releases put out by Lengua Armada. We came up with a few of them. They were all by amazing bands who were new or had something to say. I spoke with Martin, at the show and we were having a hard time coming up with the discography. He had been approached by some kids about the history of his label. I got to thinking that Lengua Armada is a label that needs to be documented. From the Crudos material to the legendary CHARLES BRONSON LP, to the numerous benefit comps, to the showcase bands like SEVERED HEADS OF STATE, or WHN or DEARBORN SS, there are too many amazing releases for this label to go unrecorded. Over the next couple of months we set out to organize a history of Lengua Armada through releases. Here's is what has transpired from a series of conversations. Thanks to Jonah Falco for doing the initial transcribing.

MRR: What does the name 'Lengua Armada' mean, and where did you come up with the name for the label?

Lengua Armada actually means 'armed tongues.' 'Lengua' means 'tongue', and 'armada' means 'armed', and basically the idea for the label name came from this folk record I bought that was from central America. It was all these protest songs...I think it was from Nicaragua, or El Salvador, I can't remember. It was in Central America, and the record was called 'Guitarra Armada' which is 'armed guitars.' I was looking at that and I started thinking about the title, and I was like, this is a great record and it's a great title, but is it really the guitar that's armed, or the words that people put to the guitar that's armed? Or charged. So based off that I came up with the name Lengua Armada. The tongues and the words that come off it are more dangerous in a sense, so that's where I got the name from.

MRR: How did the idea to start a label come up?

Well, my first label ever was just to release stuff that was

happening in Chicago at the time, so I put out that comp. Yeah, so I did that, and I did a second release which was a no label release. That's the 'Built on Blood' LP comp with 7 inch.

MRR: So that's not a Lengua Armada release?

Technically it's not, but there's no real label name to it at all, cause at that time I had stopped doing the fanzine and I just wanted to release a record, and I did it, and there's no actual label on it. But I dunno, if somewhere along the line I linked it up with Lengua Armada, but it technically was not. Then I started Lengua Armada with the CRUDOS stuff, ...I really wasn't interested, or even had the desire to send out tapes to people, and see if anybody was really into wanting to release it, because I honestly wouldn't believe that people would be into it so we just kind of took it upon ourselves to release it ourselves...and that's when we started the label.

MRR: Where did the idea for the "Built on Blood" comp come from?

At that time I started getting involved and interested in a lot of the native struggle stuff that was happening at that

coming out of Chicago, that I was going to see all the time and it was before Lengua Armada even started. I did a fanzine called 'What the Fuck?' and I released a compilation seven inch with all the bands that I was going to see at the time...it was all Chicago stuff. That was called "There's a fungus amongus" seven inch.

MRR: That was you?

Yeah, and that's the first record I ever put out and it was just kind of something I wanted to do...I thought it'd be great. There was all this other stuff happening, but there was no local label or anything. There was nothing really happening, I felt, or enough...I shouldn't really say nothing, but there wasn't really

enough happening that encompassed what was happening

time in the Midwest, especially in the Wisconsin area. It basically came about cause one day a friend of mine who worked for Greenpeace said 'hey come to this benefit fund-raiser we're having' and there was a man who spoke there who I was totally blown away by. By his attitude and the way he spoke, and all the stuff was coming up about native struggle and resistance, and I thought 'what the hell is this all about?' so I started asking people and getting more involved, so I decided that I wanted to dedicate a record to this and do a fund-raiser. As well, it was a way of getting information out about this within the punk scene, so that's kind of where the whole...

MRR: Did this come out in 1992?

No before that...the "Built in Blood" comp came out in 1990. It was before LOS CRUDOS started.

MRR: So it pre-dated all the demonstrations around the Columbus celebrations?

It was right around then. It was before the 500 year thing, but it was like two years, or something like that, before it. Where it was mainly coming or trying to get into was a lot of the issues related to Northern Wisconsin, and Minnesota, where the Chippewa (Ojibway) people were dealing with the rights to hunt, fish, and gather, and they were being attacked by a lot of local white people who were really angry about it, but a lot of it was actually backed by big corporations, like mining companies and stuff like that. So it was the classic situation where it was really about, like, the wealth of the land. It was all targeted towards the native population and the local folks were rallied to go against the natives because they were 'depleting the resources' which is what was being said, but the reality of it was that there were mining companies that were putting out all this false information to the locals, and in turn the locals were taking it out on the native people.

MRR: What was the first release you did on Lengua Armada? Was it a Crudos record?

It was the CRUDOS first seven inch. "La Rabia..." seven inch. That was the first thing we did. Actually, we released the demo first, but the actual seven inch was the first piece of vinyl.

MRR: Could you give a sort of history of your releases...if you can remember how things started coming out after that?

Um, basically, that was the first record, and I told you why we did it, and at that point we decided to just keep on putting stuff out. The second release was a collaboration between us and HUASIPUNGO which was a split seven inch and we did it together as a split label release and that was because we had decided that we were going to tour together and everything, so we thought it would be good to collaborate on a project. So we did that, and then afterwards, I believe what followed was the third seven inch, which was a record of our own. It was the 'la injusticias....' seven inch. Then what was it...I can't remember the numbers... Then after that the 'History of Compassion and Justice' compilation came out. Then the Western Shoshone defense project, which actually has no label listed but it was also a split project between

MANUMISSION and LOS CRUDOS.

MRR: What was that?

That was the Western Shoshonee benefit record if you look on there, there's no label information listed at all but it was actually a collaboration between MANUMISSION and LOS CRUDOS. One of the members of MANUMISSION, and us. That's where everything starts going gray after that. I don't remember the order of stuff, but I could kind of give you a general idea.

MRR: Could you tell me about the 'History of Compassion and Justice' comp? I remember hearing something about it being packaged in paper towel. Yeah, paper towel. The title 'The History of Compassion and Justice' all came about surrounding the inauguration of President Clinton. I thought the contradiction between what he was saying and what was happening was very interesting. There was some article about him and his inaugural speech, and he was saying something about 'people who criticize America and who are angry about it, I don't understand why we've had such a great history of compassion and justice' and I was just in shock that he said that. I just thought about the irony of him having native Americans in his parade, his inaugural parade, and I just thought, how could you possibly talk about a 'history of compassion and justice.' It was just so layered with contradictions, I thought that it was just pathetic. No country has ever had a history of compassion and justice, you know. So I challenged that, and I thought about the idea of the cover, and I found some great artwork that related to the issue of slavery (United States and African Americans). I got the drawing and started thinking about what kind of paper I wanted it on. At one point I remembered seeing some paper towel with things like 'Home Sweet Home', and 'Home is the Place of the Hearts' printed on it, all this kind of bullshit, kind of sweet, home and love and family kind of thing, and I thought this would be a great backdrop for this image, for this record. So that's kind of where the paper towel idea came from.

MRR: It makes sense. Plays on the theme of sort of a rustic America, a rustic feeling America. Then a compilation came out, which I think was called 'Yo Hablo?' COPOUT was on it, ASSEFACTOR 4, SPITBOY, it was an amazing comp of bands that were outside of Chicago, with the exception of ARMA CONTRA ARMA. What was the idea behind that comp? The 'Yo Hablo' was another benefit that came out. A friend of my Mother's, this Chilean woman who was really, really active, and was involved in a lot of struggles for women's rights and things like that had formed a group. Actually the group was called 'Project Hablo' which means project speak, and it dealt with women who were in situations of abuse. Be it physical, or mental abuse, stuff like that, in the community that I lived in, in Chicago. I heard about this organization when they were starting out, and they were having trouble getting money and stuff like that. I thought it would be an excellent idea to put together a project called 'Yo Hablo'—I speak—and do it as a fundraiser for that group, and it turned out really well. It came out really well. I started talking to bands about it, and they seemed really interested. They all liked it, so they basically participated.

MRR: How did that record with REVOLUCION X come out? I think that was one of the next ones.

That bands a border band actually and what I mean by a border band is, that some members lived in the El Paso side of Texas, and some of them lived on the Mexico side. So, um, they were a really great band, a unique band. When the whole Zappatista thing happened, they were right on it. Their first seven inch which I didn't really, actually, it was a weird thing. They wanted me to release it but some label from France took it upon themselves to release it without getting the ok from the band. But it's an amazing record, and I love that band, so we got in touch with them and started to keep in contact. I'd said that 'I'd love to do something with you all' and they were into it, so we did that record. That was also a split label release between my label, and one of the members of LOS CRUDOS, who decided to start his own label, and we did it together.

MRR: That's cool. Did they ever talk about what being a 'border band' was like?

Not much, no. I mean, the band really went unnoticed for a long time cause people... Some of the members, the main member who started the band on the Mexico side, he wanted a certain amount of anonymity. He didn't want people to know exactly who he was because of the stuff he was doing. Especially at that time in Mexico, things were so politically charged, he didn't

want to be found so easily. There's really not much information that you can find. People asked me how they could get in touch with them, or 'do you have their information' and I wouldn't give it out, because they asked me not to.

MRR: Had CRUDOS traveled to Mexico at this point? How did you find out about them?

Actually, one day I got a tape in the mail, and that's how I first heard about them. I was totally blown away, I was like 'Holy Shit! Who is this band?' I was really into them from the get go, and we built a relationship with people from the band, so that's how it happened.

MRR: I think the MK-ULTRA 'Melt' 7 inch may have come out next? The MK-ULTRA seven inch which was amazing because it had potshots at Tony Victory and all this other stuff on the Unabomber. Yeah it was just one of those records that had lots of things that were very pertinent in terms of messages in songs. There were lots of songs on it, it was like classic hardcore—it had like the return. MK-ULTRA were from Chicago so this would be kind of a Chicago band release. How did this record come into existence?

Well, MK-ULTRA is another one of the bands that we started playing with a lot... with LOS CRUDOS. We built a relationship with the guys, based on doing shows together, and we became friends. The band had released their first single independently, and talk had come about doing a record with them. They liked the idea, they were into what we were doing with the label and stuff, so we went ahead and did a 7 inch with them.

MRR: Was that the same case with the My Lai and the 'Pony Soldier' EP?

Yeah, MY LAI was another local band that was around at that time, and I was really into what they were doing. These are all bands that we played with. Even when we went on tour, we had Chicago bands jump on sections of the tour with us, even if it was across country. We had MK-ULTRA play a bunch with us, the second half of our last tour, we played together. MY LAI played with us also on a couple shows; KUNG-FU RICK. Wherever we went we tried to hook up other younger bands to play with us.

MRR: In some ways it seems like Lengua Armada took on the role of being something similar to Dischord, where you put out bands from your own area.

We did that but we weren't exclusively that. The difference between us and Dischord, is that we felt that there was so much happening in other places that was being over looked, and we really wanted to support those projects because of what it was, and what it stood for. A perfect example would be REVOLUCION X. Nobody in the US would have probably touched that band. They would have gone unnoticed, so we wanted to expose them to the people that otherwise would not have got a chance.

MRR: There was another comp called Project Vida. Could you tell me about the Project Vida comp, and how that came about?

The Project Vida was another local community organization that basically dealt with HIV/AIDS prevention. I really liked what they were doing because they were young kids who would basically go out into the street; on certain streets in Chicago that were pretty much gang infested areas, and these kids would walk up to gang bangers and start talking about using condoms and would give them condoms. They were doing what I felt was pretty risky work, and I was kind of blown away by that. We had played a show for them at one point to raise money and awareness, so the idea for doing a record came out, and that's what we did. Project Vida means 'Project life.'

MRR: This record also came with crazy packaging. Could you describe what the packaging was, and how the idea for it came about? It was tinfoil, with like ruby tape, and transparencies.

Yeah, coloured tape. I just wanted to do something that looked really different, was really nice, and I dunno... I remember finding that image in a magazine, and I thought it was an impacting image. So I thought, 'how can I get this printed.' I just wanted to do something different with it, and basically the idea of... I mean the label always tried to do things differently like home made, hand made, not having to think about going to the printers to get something done, and that was another project where we took simple stuff, like buying little pieces of cardboard—which were the actual sleeves—and buying aluminum foil, which you could get pretty cheaply. Put a piece of

tape... The most expensive thing on it was the transparency. I kind of worked my way around having to pay too much for that, and it turned out not to be too expensive of a project.

MRR: But it seems like an incredible amount of work. It is, it's a lot of labour. Every record I've done for the most part, has entailed a lot of kind of hand physical labour, work. A lot of hands on. But that's kind of something I've always liked about doing the label was that no matter where you were, somebody who had that record, your hands were all over it. There were comments at the beginning of Lengua Armada—"Oh this is cheaply put together"—well you know if you're used to buying really fancy ass printed shit, well yeah you can look at it and say it's cheap or say this is hand made, this is pretty awesome. I think it's more creative than just giving something off to the printer and saying "hey print this for me, score it, fold it, put it together for me." I guess it's just getting more involved with what we were doing with the label. I like that element. Some stuff was just, grab whatever we would find, kind of thing that were thrown away or whatever, and there was actually so much of it, you could turn it into a record cover or whatever.

MRR: It's amazing. Actually, I've heard of your releases being described as "Über D.I.Y." in terms of packaging. Sort of over the top D.I.Y., and in a lot of ways it blows peoples minds cause no one can figure out what you're going to do next. In terms of screen printing or whatever, how you're going to package the next thing. One of the releases I wanted to ask you about specifically was the ANTI-DOGMATIKS seven inch. When did that come out? That came out right after the LOS CRUDOS tour of Europe. So before that, the CRUDOS LP had come out. There's a little story in the record about it, where we were on tour in Europe and I knew that when I got to Barcelona, Spain, that I wanted to straight up, just get on stage and just ask people if anybody knew the whereabouts of people from the ANTI-DOGMATIKS. Years ago I had received demo tapes of that band and I thought they were a great band, and I was shocked that nothing had ever been released by them other than some comp tracks. I thought -ok it would be great to release something by this band' cause I thought they were really an excellent band.

MRR: Were they still around at the time?

No, no, no, no. One of the members had passed away, and they weren't around as a band anymore. They had broken up years ago. Basically what happened was that we got to Barcelona at the show, we were late as hell. We just jumped on stage when we got there, and I flat out got on the mic, to this squat full of people and said 'does anybody here know anybody, or know members of ANTI-DOGMATIKS or BUDELLAM was a band that some of the members started after the ANTI-DOGMATIKS. This kid's arm just shoots into the air and he says "That's my older brothers band!" And I'm like "I wanna talk to you after the show", right over the mic, I didn't give a fuck. I was like whatever. And the kid says "that's my brothers band" and I said "I want to talk to him" so he gave me the phone number I called his brother from a payphone the next day and talked to him, and said "hey, you know, I love your band, I'm shocked no one has done anything, can I put out a 7 inch of my favorite songs from the two demos?" and he said he had to talk to some people about it but it turned out to be an okay. So that's how it happened.

MRR: Was it re-released with that discography?

Yeah, all that stuff got on there.

MRR: I wanted to ask you about the SEVERED HEAD OF STATE record. I had never heard of the band, and all of a sudden this record is coming out and there's this crazy buzz surrounding it. Who is this band, and how did you come about releasing this material.

The band basically are friends of mine. People from different projects and different bands. I had kept in touch with Jack from Mind Control records for a long time, and he had said 'hey, I started a project band, and I'm gonna send you a tape, and tell me what you think of it. I'd like if Lengua Armada would consider putting it out.' I got it, and listened to it, and said 'yeah it's pretty intense, it's good I like it' So it basically happened and it got put out. As a matter of fact, at that time it was a really bad time for me, cause I was in grad school and I didn't have much money, so the band actually paid for the first thousand. They fronted the money, and then I paid it back to them. But basically, they did it, and I did the second press cause I finally got out of my little rut.

MRR: What about ARMA CONTRA ARMA. Who were they?

ARMA CONTRA ARMA was a project band that Jose and I from LOS CRUDOS did with these two brothers that were living in Chicago, and we thought it would be really cool to start this project band called ARMA CONTRA ARMA. We didn't play many shows. We played ABC No Rio once, played a few other shows, and then the band kind of took a hiatus, and they got two other members besides me and Jose and then we got back together and played one last show. We also recorded the stuff we were doing at the time and that's the release of that stuff.

MRR: SIN ORDEN. Who were they, and how did this release come to be?

SIN ORDEN are a group of kids from the Chicago area. Actually it's a weird story of how this all hooked up. My older sister was working at the Jesuit High School in the neighborhood that had just opened up a couple years ago. And she said 'Martin, there are a couple kids at the school who are into alternative music and punk and stuff, and it turned out that they found out that I was your sister and kids have been coming up to me and asking me stuff. The teacher was there and overheard, and wants you to come into the class and talk to the kids about all the stuff you do. About your photography, about doing the label, about LOS CRUDOS, about everything.' So I got invited to this Jesuit High School. It was kind of weird, but they invited me to do this twice. I'd show parts of my video before it actually came out. Before long, one of the kids went up to my sister and said, 'hey this is my band, give your brother this tape.' And it was the SIN ORDEN demo. 'Who are these kids' I thought, so I got to meet them and it turned out that they were practicing like three blocks from my house—where they lived. So I just started going over there and hanging out with them. It was great because they weren't really in touch or tapped in with a scene of any kind. They didn't really know anybody, they didn't know what a lot of stuff was. I started supporting them, and turning them on to stuff, and said 'hey check this out, check that out' and then finally 'you gotta play this show.' So just getting them moving and connected with the scene. I wanted to support these guys, cause they were getting better and better, and crazier and crazier, and I was really into what they were doing, so I said 'How do you feel about putting out a record?' and we put out that seven inch, cause they wanted to.

MRR: You were talking to me about some limited edition records, and I didn't realize Lengua Armada had done limited edition records. And then I thought 'How stupid could I be' there was that CHARLES BRONSON record that everyone was talking about. Could you tell me about the CHARLES BRONSON 'Youth Attack' LP? The cover?

The CHARLES BRONSON thing was interesting because, again, they were a local band and they had played shows with us and would play around the suburbs and Chicago.

The funny thing about CHARLES BRONSON, is that there's been a lot of criticism of that record. A lot of people said that it was so limited, but in reality, it wasn't limited especially considering the amount of records we made was based on everything they had sold to that date. So we decided on doing a pressing of 3300. For 330 copies, the band said 'let's do a limited version', I was like 'okay'. So we did this whole version with the metal cover and the clear vinyl.

MRR: Could you describe it? Cause I've never seen one.

Basically it's a thin sheet of metal that has an image of CHARLES BRONSON silk screened one side, and it's lined with this red velvety material on the inside, and it's clear vinyl with different labels, pictures of the band. That's basically it. Those records were being taken to shows, and being sold for like six bucks, or kids could mailorder them or whatever. They were available to the public. The thing is, there was a Charles Bronson explosion all of a sudden. Even when CHARLES BRONSON was playing around Chicago, there were like thirty fucking kids there. You know, nobody gave a fuck. And all of a sudden, after that album came out there was this fuckin' boom, and they became super popular. I mean the album is a great album I like the record. I wouldn't have put it out if I wasn't into it, but they became super hyper blown up. I told the band that I'd repress it if they wanted but they said, no, we'll get some European label to do it. And that's when it went to another label in Europe and they released it. It was one of those weird things where people said 'oh you made a limited record' yeah there was a limited version of it. And then the whole crazy thing about E-bay happened, and kids were paying

like crazy money for it. And the funny thing is, most kids didn't realize that you could have still got that record from the band, or from me for six bucks. E-bay is just a whole other thing, and it's just a weird thing in itself.

MRR: The metal cover when you pulled out the record, did it scratch it so it became unplayable?
No...

MRR: That's a rumor I heard.

No, I taped off the edges so it wasn't as... No, no, no, no. Well if it happened, sorry, but it wasn't intentional.

MRR: What were some of the other limited edition covers that were made for your releases?

I think almost every record that we've done, except the really early ones, there's been some alternate sleeve or something.

MRR: Oh yeah?

Yeah. Pretty much. I mean, a lot of it came from...for instance the LOS CRUDOS LP—the "Canciones..." LP—I made a lot of those, and there's European versions and they look different. And I made different versions based on what materials I had available. When I ran out of the thick cardboard, and I no longer had anymore I grabbed other kinds of paper and things like that, but it was just so I could complete the pressing, and have it out there. And it wasn't because I purposely wanted to make 'a thousand of these, and five hundred of that, and fifty of this' It wasn't like that, it was just whatever I had available, is the way it went out. But other releases...the e-150, the HOG, a lot of the records, there started to be like alternate sleeves to it. And lot of the time, the band wants to do a limited sleeve, so it's like 'ok.' As well it's kind of an incentive for kids to continue doing mailorder, cause a lot of kids don't do mailorder anymore. And it's trying to say 'get it directly from us, and you'll get a different version'

MRR: Do you still do all your distribution by yourself?

I send out to distributors, and I give stuff to other people, so...

MRR: Who are some of the distributors that you work with?

I have my stuff being distributed through several people. One guy is 'Thought Crime in Germany. He is going to be carrying a lot of my stuff, like quantities for folks in Germany and Europe. Also Paco from London. He does La Vida es un mus that shares the same address as Active Distribution in London. It is very possible that other people throughout Europe will have it that I trade with on a regular basis, but there are several people who said they want larger quantities so they have stuff available for a larger audience. Those are the two main ones.

MRR: So they do some of it, but you still do some of it largely yourself.

Well not the bulk...it's harder now because I'm not in a band that's constantly touring, so it's harder to get rid of stuff. It's not as easy. I should say, because you're not getting it out there. You're not driving town to town and selling stuff to kids after shows. It's a little more difficult, but I'm still getting records; as far as distribution is concerned. Ebullition will pick up a bunch, but then any kid who sends me money in an envelope and says 'I want five copies for me and my friends, or ten copies and I run this little distro,' that's totally cool. I still do trades with other labels and bands and stuff. I get it out whichever way I can.

MRR: How did the e-150 record come about?

We meet the band when we did the tour. They played with us but we missed them because we got their late. Basically, with e-150 I heard the record and I really loved the first single. I thought it was amazing. But it was already sold out. It was sold in Europe and very few copies got to the U.S. We had talked about trying to get them. I said, "I want you guys to come tour the U.S." We kind of talked about it and I said that I would love to re-issue the 7". It would be nice to have it in the States and it would also help with the tour and they were really cool with it. They didn't believe they were going to come to the U.S. and they didn't believe that we would help them in that way. They just thought whatever, you know, and basically me and Kim Bae were taking a trip and we had to go there and convince them that we were serious. We were going to do this tour. We got the record going for their tour and that's how that happened.

MRR: What about the current material you're working on. You had a whole bunch of releases come out recently. The WHAT HAPPENS NEXT 7 inch, the DEARBORN SS 7 inch, the AUTHORITY ABUSE, the new Chicago comp. What's the New Chicago comp called?

It's called 'Chicago's on Fire Again'

MRR: And who's on it?

TREPAN NATION, THE KILLERS, LOS CRUDOS, MK ULTRA, CHARLES BRONSON, AUTHORITY ABUSE, KUNG-FU RICK, LANDMINE, STRENGTH IN NUMBERS, DANGERMUSE, and BULLY BUILDERS.

MRR: I saw one recently, it was packaged in a Chicago record. With silk screen over top of it?

Okay that's the limited version. Basically I made copies for the bands and stuff.

MRR: You went out and bought some Chicago records? At some used stores?

Yeah I went out and bought like 100 used Chicago (the old rock band) LP's. Doing alternate covers is something that I love doing, but I can't do 3000 of those. It would be way to expensive to find 3000 Chicago LP's and I basically stenciled flames around the band logo 'Chicago' and put a stickered, back like a sheet that I stickered on the back of it, and I taped the record inside. I would love to do everyone of them like that, but it's just way too expensive to do that. If somebody said, 'I used to own a record store and I've got a thousand of these things sitting down there' I would have fuckin' taken them all, but the thing is that it's just too much. I'm finding that it's kind of difficult—especially now that I've moved—it's hard for me to have hook ups and find materials that I would be able to use to do a huge quantity of things. It would be nice to do that but it's not...you know. So that's the limited version, it comes in the Chicago sleeve.

MRR: What does "Ahora Mas Que Nunca" translate to mean?

"Now More Than Ever"

MRR: How did the W.H.N. project come together?

I have known the people for quite some time and I remember talking to Karoline, Robert's wife, and we were talking and I said "I would really love to do a record with WHAT HAPPENS NEXT" and she goes "You know what, you should ask them. They would probably really like to do a record with you." I am like "You think so?", she goes "Oh God, yeah, they would." I was like "Okay, you know, I will ask them". I threw it out there at them and they were like "Yeah, let's do it" and they did the 7" so that was really cool.

MRR: Did you talk to them before the Chicago-fest about this?

Oh yeah, I think it was talked about before the Chicago-fest.

MRR: Where did the idea of the pop-up skateboard thing come from?

Well it was funny because they had this crazy idea of doing a pop-up. I'm like "Cool". I'm like "I've done one before". They're like "You Did?". I'm like "look at the second CRUDOS single" and there was a pop-up in there and I remember showing it to them and they were like "Holy Shit". I'm like "What do you want to do?" They were like "some skater thing". I was like "That would be great. Let's do it." I'm like, "I can do that. That's easy." I think we made 2,000 of them.

MRR: There was also a limited edition with a flannel sleeve.

I cut out all these flannels and put pins on them and stuff. It came with a sticker and was on color vinyl.

MRR: Essentially to represent the flannel shirt skirt?

Kind of. I thought it would be great because the whole idea behind this late 80's bandana flannel hardcore bands. I know they call it thrash but it is hardcore to me. I just thought this would be beautiful for this band. Let's do a flannel thing, because I thought more than bandana, flannel was the basically more visible than the actual bandanas so I did the flannel jacket for that.

MRR: Who was in DEARBORN S.S.?

DEARBORN S.S. was Kim Bae on vocals; Jordan on vocals; Matt Weeks from Council, CURRENT, and OTTAWA; Jeff who was in OTTAWA who played drums and he was also in NEMA and all these other bands; Dave Song played bass, and Derek Kinney who was in JIHAD. That's who DEARBORN S.S. is, who were a fuckin' great, very short lived, amazing band. Politically and every other way they were just right on people and the record is great. I love it. Unfortunately, they didn't get to do much more. They broke up.

MRR: Where did the name DEARBORN S.S. come from?

There is a whole explanation on the record about it. It is talking about

Dearborn, Michigan and Henry Ford and the relation between Ford and Nazi Germany and how he would support it economically. He was a believer in the whole S.S. mentality. And Hitler had invited Ford over to set up production lines. And it is written about and it is something that is not common knowledge and it would be great if people really realize what some of these people did. I love that record because of what it is—the content, the substance—that is super important to me in doing a label. Supporting bands and records that do that kind of stuff.

MRR: The record label seems to have mixed things like politics as well as great hardcore. That seems to be what Lengua Armada encapsulates to me. Well, to me, the important thing in hardcore and punk is that if there is no substance to it then it is very thin. It falls flat on its fuckin' face, as far as I'm concerned. It's a combination of many things. It's about energy, it's about anger, it's about being pissed at something. What is it that you are pissed about? If you are not backing it up with something that is weighty and has substance I feel like it is thin or weak or could become misdirected anger at some point. I like supporting bands or putting out stuff with that. I think the current state of hardcore, there are a lot of bands, there is a lot of hype about bands, there are a lot of really good bands but my question that I challenge the scene is where is the fuckin' substance? I don't care that you know how to play like the bands from 1982. If you don't have anything to fuckin' tell me I don't give a shit that you are a replica of something else that already happened. I'm cool when people do this thing where they are influenced by the old, but don't throw back 1981-'82 mentality at me because that goes nowhere. It is like where have you been for twenty fuckin' years. We have come a long way, I put that out there in the sense that I think the scene has to continually challenge, on many different levels, because it has turned into this aesthetic only. Where is the substance, where is the power behind it?

MRR: The message was a big part of it and it seems to have gotten lost in this drive towards an apoliticism of hardcore.

It could be apolitics or it could be just wanting to sound like something else or wanting to be something else. If you weren't there just do something new. You weren't there, deal with it. Not many people were there for it. It's okay.

MRR: Do you have any other observations about how labels have been running?

Coming from the States, I think there is a lot around big trends. I am losing respect for a lot of labels and people because I think what is happening is labels are acting like, you are all DIY and you have the DIY thing down but you are playing this major label game where you are scouting for bands and you are having almost big wars over bands. Like who's going to get this fuckin' new hot band. It's like bands are not allowed to live out the band, to actually do a demo, play shows, record a 7", do more shows. It is like right away labels are like I want to do your demo, two 7"s, and I want you to promise me to do an LP. You are playing this game with scouting and being really fuckin' catty towards each other. "I want to beat this label to this band". It's really weird stuff. It's very cut-throat-ish. Very competitive and it has nothing to do with why I thought I was into this. I don't understand where people are taking this. I hope that this either fizzles out and dies down or there is just going to be a divide at some point between people because it is fuckin' gross and there will be a new underground, hopefully.

The scene has become very competitive. It is not like there is this great show and six amazing bands are playing it. The after talk is "This band kicked all of those bands asses", regardless of whether it was a great show across the board. When people say "This band smoked that band", that's jock shit. That's jock fuckin' mentality. Fuck jocks. I fuckin' can't stand 'em. And I can't stand them coming around trying to act like they are punk or hardcore. Fuck that shit. Competitiveness, what is that?

The other thing about this that is very disturbing to me is the lack of creativity. I think there is a serious lack of creativity. There is a recycled mentality. Recycled artwork. It is just slapping up a photo of some ancient great legendary band on your ads, using them for flyers, stealing the old band's record covers. Come on, make your own shit. Are we not creative enough? Do we not believe in ourselves enough that we could just make our own fuckin' shit up? What is going on? I am sick of it. I love the old stuff just like anybody else, but do we need another MINOR THREAT photo on a flyer? Do we need another photo of LARM on a flyer? Do we need to see another knock off cover of the TEEN IDLES single? Do you know what I am saying? Do we need another INFEST bootleg? Do we

need another NEGATIVE APPROACH bootleg? or a MISFITS boot? No! **MRR: Especially when we have so many great bands out there trying to get things going ...**

I just can't believe we have this supposedly great scene that does not believe in itself. I have heard people say about how the scene is great right now. There is fuckin' tons of great bands and you know what, a lot of them do not believe in themselves because it just doesn't show. They are not creative. It's like they wannabe something else. Why bother? Why do it? Don't do it. People say they are preaching to the converted. If you are a punk kid and believes that, don't even waste your time here. Go somewhere else. Don't do it. Don't get into this. I just think that they don't believe in themselves. Put a photo of yourselves on an ad or on a flyer. Why not? All the old bands did that before. They didn't have to go back and put a photo of the SEX PISTOLS on their flyer. So why do we?

MRR: It's sad to think that today's bands can't bring something to the table that would update the script

Exactly and what they are reinforcing is this hierarchy that already has existed with "We're from the first wave of the scene and you are just some stupid kid and you can't possibly do anything as cool as we did because we were ultra fuckin' cool." And when kids do this we enforce and continue to have that hierarchy of this shit and I think that punk is one of the few genres of music that has this grotesque hierarchy of "I have been around, I am more valid than you are. You are some fuckin' poseur kid. Oh you are only this... I have been around since '79 and I have been around since '81." Fuck all that shit. You don't see that in jazz. Jazz is jazz. Jazz people love jazz whether it's new jazz, old jazz, whatever jazz. Why does punk do that? Hip-hop people, new people love the old, the old people love the new, too. Punk it's about hierarchy, it's bullshit, it's so trendy, the mentality. I hate it. It's like what is that. And I am one who has always been like "Fuck all that shit". The punkiest thing a kid could tell an old punk who comes up with that mentality is "Fuck You." That's fuckin' punk. That is the biggest "shut 'em up" you can do. I'm doing my thing, your fuckin' washed up, you want to cling onto this past that you no longer have. Too bad, I feel sorry for you, later.

MRR: Could you tell about some of the things you're working on right now, that are on the verge of coming out.

I have a NEW GRENADA 7"—A Chicago band. They have one seven inch, that just came out on Council Records and I'm doing their other single. I have the LIMP WRIST LP.

MRR: Is the LIMP WRIST LP going to be out soon?

Really soon, it should be coming out soon. I have to take it to get mastered within the next week and a half.

MRR: How much material is on that?

I think it's like 18 songs.

MRR: ...and it's all new?

Oh yeah, it's all different from the seven inch. A couple of the songs are from the demo but for the most part it's all new material.

MRR: Are the demo songs re-recorded?

Yes they are....and then I have a comp LP coming out. It's basically done in the vein of the old 'Really Fast' comps from Sweden, where each band does several songs. It's got DS-13, DEATHREAT, LIMP WRIST, SIN ORDEN, SEEIN' RED, LIFE'S HALT, MELEE from Boston, e-150, ESPERANZA....and then I have, the PUNCH IN THE FACE 7". They're a Chicago band.

MRR: Is it gonna be the demo, or is it gonna be new stuff?

I think they're going to try and re-record it. The demo is great, but I think they would like to try to record it again. So I dunno. Besides that, I have a seven inch by this band called TRAGATELO that I play drums in.

MRR: Oh wow, you're playing drums in a band?

Yeah out here in California, it's a couple friends of mine, we started this band. We have a demo out, a split demo and , we're gonna put out a seven inch, most likely.

MRR: What do you sound like?

Um....that's really hard to say. It's powerful, it's got melody, lyrically, it's really charged politically with a lot of different things that we talk about, but I like it a lot. I like the demo a lot.

MRR: How can people get in touch with the label?

They can write to me at: 1010-1/2 Riverine Ave., Santa Ana, CA, 92701 or by e-mail at martincru0@yahoo.com.