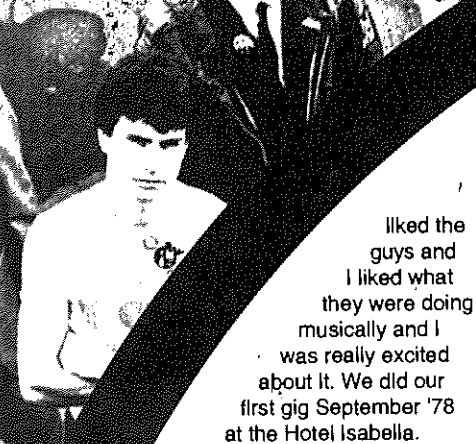


# THE MODS

The Mods were a four-piece Toronto punk band from the late-'70s with a unique look and sound. They added another inspiring dimension to the Toronto scene with the killer 45 *Step Out Tonight* and the '95 CD release *Twenty 2 Months*, both long out of print. There was also their inclusion on the extremely rare *Last Pogo* LP and appearance in the obscure Colin Brunton film of the same name. The following interview was conducted by Greg Dick, the singer of the *Dream Dates*, and took place one week prior to their reunion gig, which coincidentally was the band's first gig in almost 30 years. Scott Marks, the guitar player, and David Quinton, the drummer, were interviewed on *Equalizing Distort* radio. All photos and images courtesy of David Quintron.







I liked the guys and I liked what they were doing musically and I was really excited about it. We did our first gig September '78 at the Hotel Isabella.

**MRR: That was the first place the Mods played?**

Dave: Well, with me. That was the first gig I played with the band.

Scott: I remember playing the Isabella. I had no idea that was the first one with you.

**MRR: Dave, you were in the Androids originally as we said earlier with Bart and Sally who originally had a band called the Concorde. When you were in the Androids were you in the Qute first and then you joined the Androids?**

Dave: No. Actually, it was the other way around. I was in the Androids and our first singer was Ruby T.

**MRR: ...who was on the cover of the Last Pogo record, for all you kids trying to figure out who Ruby T is.**

Dave: She was really a fun girl. She was Mike Nightmare's girlfriend, the singer for the Ugly, and then when the Concorde broke up, Sally joined us and the band was kind of weird and dark and strange. I didn't love the experience, if you know what I mean. And after the Androids broke up, that's when I put together the Qute. And the Qute were together for three or four months, during the time that I was hanging out pretty heavily with the Mods and getting to know these three crazy bastards from Scarborough.

Scott: That's when I recall seeing you guys at the Bev and Vince was your drummer then.

Dave: I was singing.

**MRR: Was the Qute a punk band, or...**

Dave: Power pop, punk band. You know what's funny is when we talk about punk nowadays everybody thinks of mohawks and pins and this hyper-fest music.

That's not what it was when it started. For us, in '77, everything from Elvis Costello to the Police to Talking Heads to Patti Smith to Television to the Dead Boys was all considered punk. Basically, any band that played simple raw punk music and wasn't caught up in the corporate rock scene was considered a punk band and a new wave band. So it's funny, even the Androids, they had punk-ish leanings but it wasn't punk in the sense that people think of it now.

**MRR: How did you guys get turned on to punk? Where did you hear about it?**

Scott: I think my first experience wasn't going to see punk rock. I saw Patti Smith play Massey Hall on the Horses tour. I was interested in Patti Smith mostly from reading *Rolling Stone* where they were talking about Patti Smith playing the Bottom Line and all these places in New York and everyone, from the folk scene to every scene, was thinking about Patti Smith. And that show at Massey Hall was incredible. I remember buying tickets and we ended up with floor seats halfway back. I think we were the only two who knew who Patti Smith was. But I didn't know what it was called at the time. To me they were just a great rock band. And then I remember reading the article in *Rolling Stone* about the Pistols. It was all about their secret tour, the Spots tour where the Sex Pistols were on tour secretly. That article just fascinated me. Talking to Greg and Mark at the time, it was before we had really gotten involved with David, it made sense that this is where we had to go. What we were doing was just not making any sense. It was a slow evolution. We started hanging out at Records on Wheels downtown. Seeing the Jam at the Colonial was definitely a turning point for all of us and we realized we can play this, we can do this. We could probably do it better than some of the people out there and we can write this stuff.

Dave: When you talk about the first exposure to punk or what got us interested, you know

you have defining moments in your life when you remember things especially from your teen years and I remember my first exposure to it like it was yesterday. I was watching a TV show and they had this segment on the Damned from England and they showed them doing their photo session and they were putting brown paper bags on their heads.

**MRR: That was a single cover for "Neat Neat Neat."**

Dave: Yeah exactly, and I had never seen anything so outrageous in my life. That was at a time when rock bands were supposed to look pretty and everything was Elton John and Boston and all that kind of crap, and just to see these guys putting bags on their heads... It was outrageous for 1976-'77. I got interested in it and the next thing I did was pick up a Viletones single downtown—"Screaming Fist." And then I just started buying 45s of all these different bands. I think the first punk album I actually bought was the Dead Boys record, which was one of my favorite ones.

**MRR: Yeah, the Damned record came out... I think that was actually the first "punk" record and back then especially in the earliest days there really wasn't a lot to choose from. I mean, if you bought compilation records, you had stuff like Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.**

Scott: Or Eddie and the Hot Rods.

**MRR: Yeah, Eddie and the Hot Rods. Those guys were wearing bellbottoms. They did have some cool songs. "Do Anything You Wanna Do" is a pretty cool track.**

Dave: Well, a lot of bands went through transformations just like them...

**MRR: I was going to ask you about Bookies in Detroit. Tell us about it now. What was Bookies like?**

Scott: Still the strangest club experience of my whole life. Bookies was located close to the university, but was also the local transvestite bar.

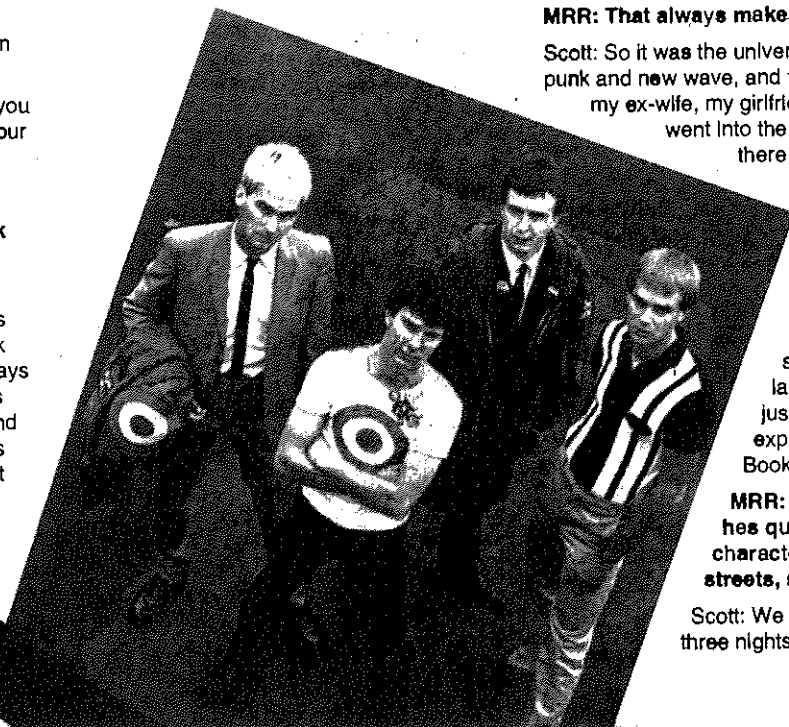
**MRR: That always makes for a good mix.**

Scott: So it was the university students into punk and new wave, and transvestites. I know my ex-wife, my girlfriend at the time, went into the washroom and

there was as many guys facing the toilets at the stalls with their mini skirts on... Do you remember the women who ran the door that had a shotgun across her lap? I mean, it was just the most bizarre experience playing at Bookies.

**MRR: And Detroit has quite a few crazy characters running the streets, so...**

Scott: We were there for two or three nights and I just remember





the one night, there were a bunch of people from the hotel or the bar that came over and were drinking Wild Turkey straight, and I just remember the one guy guzzling Wild Turkey. I was in awe.

Dave: That's what you aspire to.

**MRR: So you guys played Bookies three nights with Teenage Head.**

Scott: The first time we did Bookies we were on our own. The second time was in that summer of '79. We did a number of dates in the States. We did Hurrah's in New York. Went on to Philly. I don't remember the name...

Dave: Pirate's Cove in Cleveland. The place we played in Philly was the Hot Club. The Hot Club was unbelievable. It was all cement. It was a cement floor, cement walls, in a really bad part of town and I played there a couple of times.

Scott: And then we went to Chicago. The first time we played Chicago was really weird. We played this bourbon bar on one night and the next night we played punk night at Mother's. And then the next time when we played with Teenage Head...

Dave: All I remember from that one was that it was our first gig in Chicago and it was the first time I ever saw that guy Jim Skafish, who put out albums on IRS Records. That really weird looking dude with the big nose.

Scott: What I remember—I have a few memories of Chicago—I remember being very, very, very, very hungry in Chicago because we hadn't eaten in three days and we had no money because we played Cleveland and I think there was six people there. Us and Teenage Head. At that time Teenage Head were really breaking in Ontario, they were starting to fill traditional bars, but once you got south of the border... Do you remember the Pirate's Cove? I remember doing sound check and a girl coming out and asking us if we did any

Bob Seger. They had no idea. And I think, generally speaking, any of the cities we went to in the States, with the exception of New York, were far behind the Toronto scene. The Toronto scene was really healthy at the time.

**MRR: Well, you guys were actually quoted as saying after playing New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, and Detroit that you realized how much further ahead the Toronto scene was.**

Dave: I think that's right. I think Toronto has had periods in its history where it's been ahead of the times and other times in history where it hasn't been, when it has been other cities in the US or whatever, but yeah.

**MRR: What other local bands did you guys find inspiring?**

Scott: Like I said, I was a big fan of the G-Rays.

**MRR: Where did you first see them play?**

Scott: The first time I saw the G-Rays was at the Horseshoe and I guess what I really found refreshing about them was the fact that you could tell they had some musical background... Johnny wrote great lyrics, phenomenal lyrics, and he had such a great stage presence. I mean, to me they that folk or country background. That was there. It wasn't necessarily at the front but you knew that these guys listened to something other than punk stuff. They were probably one of my favorite Toronto bands at the time. The Diodes I liked as well.

Dave: I think all the guys in our band really liked Johnny And The G-Rays. I know Greg did a lot and Mark did a lot. Scott loved them. We used to play with them sometimes.

Scott: And when we split up I joined a band called Popular Spies for a while. It was a great experience.

Dave: There were an awful lot of eccentric Toronto bands in those days.

Scott: There was the first wave, I don't know if you guys caught anything like Oh Those Pants, Zoom, the Cads...

Dave: I saw the Cads. They used to play at the Bev sometimes. And you know who I really liked was the Government.

**MRR: Yeah, I loved the Government.**

Dave: I liked Andy Paterson. I thought he was a really interesting character. I liked their songs. I thought they were cool.

Scott: The Scenics were an interesting band too but...not really accessible live but I liked their recorded stuff.

**MRR: Yeah, they had a record out on Ready Records and actually I remember hearing a story about them recently. There was a concert promoter in Toronto who came up around the late '70s named Louie Louie and I remember the Scenics opened for a band called the New York**

**Niggers at the Horseshoe and it was the same time that the Gary's had the Edge and after that gig the Gary's apparently wouldn't book the Scenics anymore. And I was actually going to ask you guys, I know you guys started playing Larry's Hideaway.**

Dave: '79.

**MRR: Yeah. Now I think that was the same time as the Edge. Did that run into any problems for you? Were you guys getting gigs at the Edge?**

Dave: No, the Gary's were always really cool with us.

Scott: They were great with us. We got great shows with them. And I don't think they minded that we played other places in town.

Dave: Larry's is filled up with grass now.

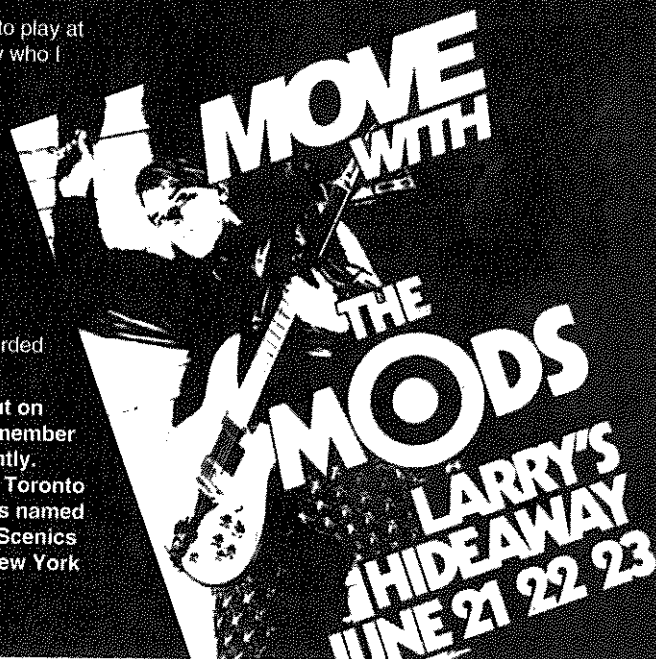
Scott: I know, I worked the fire there. The best Gary's show that we opened was with the Specials at the Palais Royale. That was just an awesome venue. It was a great night. It was steamy. It was hot. That's the show to me that stands out of our big opening acts.

**MRR: Yeah, the floor in there is like a trampoline. Kind of like the Commodore in Vancouver. Now, the Mods had a very unique sound that was unlike any of the other Toronto bands. How would you guys describe yourselves, as being a part of that scene?**

Dave: I think we were a punky power pop band. I don't think we were a punk band. We played pop music. We had harmonies, but we played very, very aggressively. And I think the punk overtones were in there. So by no stretch were we a pop band, but I don't think we were a punk band either. We were somewhere in the middle.

Scott: Yeah we moved more towards the pop but there was some other influences as well. But I think the studio stuff was never captured. In retrospect I still find the live stuff more interesting. A lot of the studio stuff that was recorded sounds kind of pale.

Dave: Yeah, I agree.



**MRR:**  
It was  
interesting,  
Mickey De  
Sadist of the  
Forgotten Rebels  
was making fun  
of you guys in the  
Last Pogo film. I was  
wondering what your  
reaction to that was.

Dave: The Forgotten Rebels weren't good enough to play at the Last Pogo. That's why they weren't there.

Scott: After they magic-marked my house on Main Street. That was the first time I had met the Forgotten Rebels. We had done a gig downtown and I was renting a house on Main Street. A bunch of people came back there and there was this Johnny Rotten look-alike, who was Mickey of course, and in the morning we woke up and there was all these Forgotten Rebels things written in magic marker all over the house. So he didn't really ingratiate himself.

**MRR:** But he did go and see the Mods a lot.

Dave: Yeah, we used to see Mickey at Mods gigs and I've always quite liked him. I think he is great and I think their band has always been good and done some good things and he has hung in there a really, really long time.

**MRR:** They've never broken up. He's a great guy. He's got a sense of humor in him. He used to rub the Toronto people the wrong way. It seemed like it.

Dave: When he said that about us in the Last Pogo movie I never took offense to it at all.

Scott: I thought it was hilarious.

Dave: I always thought it was very funny and that he had a very sharp wit. I never took offence to it whatsoever.

**MRR:** Your first gig was at the Horseshoe with the Jumpers and the Viletones. How did the crowd react to you guys?

Scott: June '78.

Actually the crowd... I think we literally came from nowhere and people weren't expecting anything and I honestly think we blew them away that night. To this day I have never been so scared. Nicky was on drums at the time. We had just revamped the band. We had been rehearsing for about a month. We had a set. The first song we opened with was "Substitute" and literally I remember us being up on stage and people had told us "You guys looked scared shitless" and we were. We were scared. We didn't know what was going to happen. And we did it and the place, literally, you could see people stopping and turning and watching because we had been playing together for a year and a half. We could play. We were tight. Musically we were tight. We had vocal harmonies. It was a great reaction we got an encore that night. And from there on, Gary Cromler, I remember him coming up and saying "I want to book you guys again." It was immediate. And I remember we drank for two nights after that, we were just so happy about it.

**MRR:** You guys built up a following pretty quickly it seemed like.

Scott: Within two months. I mean, it was unheard of and it was weird. It was really weird.

**MRR:** Now, you guys were talking about the Philips Building, the old warehouse where you guys practiced. The Ugly practiced there too and I know Dave, you told me a story about the Ugly, that some of the gear might have been found or borrowed and you were telling me about a few constables coming down looking for Mr. Nightmare.

Dave: Well, it was really weird because the Philips Building was a little refuge for all these bands and nobody from the outside would ever really come in. One day these plainclothes policemen came and they were looking for guys from the Ugly and I remember them questioning Sam and asking whether he had receipts for equipment and Nightmare had sort of run outside and gotten onto the roof and taken off. Yeah, it was one of my memories of that place because I hadn't really seen that sort of thing before. At 17 years old I hadn't been exposed to that kind of stuff.

And I also remember the Diodes very

distinctly rehearsing because they were doing rehearsals for their first album at the time with their producer Bob Gallow and I used to go into the room once and a while and listen to them and kind of watch what a supposedly real record producer would do with the band and their music. The one thing that kind of freaked me out was

I was in the room when

he suggested they change lyrics for one of their songs. They used to have a song called "Jerry Hall" and Bob Gallow—he was sort of this discovery guy, you know, with his shirt undone and a big medallion and stuff—he looks at them and goes "Who's Jerry Hall?" and they kind of laughed and they said "it's Bryan Ferry's girlfriend" and of course we all knew of her as Bryan Ferry's girlfriend in those days, and he said "Well, you know, nobody knows who Jerry Hall is so I think you guys should change the name to something like 'China Doll'" and of course they did change the name of the song to "China Doll." That's the way they recorded it, but to me it was always "Jerry Hall."

**MRR:** It's funny considering how popular Jerry Hall is now, especially with her own reality TV show.

Scott: They were there the first night we played the Horseshoe, because I remember Cato coming down to the dressing room after and he kept looking at me and pointing at his Townsend button because I was playing a gold Les Paul with a Hi-watt amp, which I didn't do for any particular purpose other than I bought them together off a guy used. I'm going "Yeah, well..." and of course it was Townsend's signature thing.

**MRR:** It wasn't Mike Nightmare, was it? (loads of laughter)

Scott: No, it wasn't. Thank goodness.

**MRR:** What Toronto clubs did the Mods play?

Scott: We did the Horseshoe, we did the Turning Point, Larry's...

Dave: The Edge

Scott: Isabella.

**MRR:** No one seems to mention the Cheetah Club much. I know you guys played there. Tell me about the Cheetah Club. Where was it?

Scott: Cheetah was on Isabella almost at the corner of Isabella and Yonge on the south side and it had been a disco. In the heart of the disco era it had been a hardcore disco with the glass tables and these little loungey things. It was as far removed from a punk bar as you could get. You know, going from the Horseshoe, which was your typical beer-swilling place, to the Cheetah, which opened up to some punk bands who immediately started to destroy it. That's what I remember.

THE EDGE  
THE MODS  
THE MC

**MRR:**  
I don't  
think it  
lasted very  
long.

Scott: No, it didn't last long. We played there and the Viletones showed up and I remember... I don't know if we did two nights there or one but anyways I guess they got Mark or someone to agree to let them do a guest set and that was the biggest mistake. The Viletones got on stage and they wouldn't get off and that was the night that the PA toppled over and they had one of those big old juke boxes at the Cheetah and it crushed the juke box. It was a mess.

Dave: I remember Leckie getting thrown into that juke box.

Scott: I remember Leckie up on stage. He took his spike belt off and started just swinging it around.

**MRR:** I saw him do that a few times at various places. Either his belt or a chain.

Dave: There was a big, big fight. I think we did the two nights and there was a huge fight on the second night and that was the end of the Cheetah Club basically. The thing I remember about it is that was the first night I met Stiv Bators. The first night that I actually talked to him was at the Cheetah Club.

**MRR:** He was probably here with Cynthia from the B-Girls.

Dave: Yeah, he was here with Cynthia. Cynthia was his girlfriend at the time. But I remember that fight. That was a massive ugly fight at the Cheetah Club. It was funny, in those days I remember in '79 or early '80 when all of a sudden

there was a lot of violence at the end of gigs. Do you remember there were times at the end of every show where there was a fight?

Scott: Well that's how you knew it was over.

Dave: Yeah, they were ready to close the place.

Scott: In Ottawa we played the Roters Club and that was hilarious. We were right at the end of the gig and...

**MRR:** You were playing with the Bureaucrats at that gig I think because they actually wrote about it.

Scott: Is that right?

**MRR:** Yeah, yeah.

Dave: They probably opened for us.

Scott: And really, there was no stage, you just played at the end of a room in the corner and they were all pogoing in front of us and I remember the one guy leaning over and pouring beer on my guitar and then all of a sudden Mark flies off the stage, puts his bass down and attacked this guy and a brawl ensued.

**MRR:** Who was pouring beer on your guitar? Was it a guy from another band?

Scott: No, a guy from the audience, but Mark was our fighter.

Dave: Scott is not telling the whole story here. The guy sort of sprayed beer on him first and Scott was warning him. You came to the front and you said "If you do that again, blah blah blah" and then the guy did it again and Mark leapt on him and this huge fight ensued. Again, me and Greg, being the tough guys in the band, we kind of went out the back door because it got really rough. That was a small little place.

**MRR:** When you guys were playing Ottawa, was there much of a crowd there?

Scott: Yeah, it was packed. The scene up there was pretty good.

Dave: It was a good scene. It was very, very underground because Ottawa was Ottawa. It was a government town. A university town. But they had this really strong, very underground scene. But we had a very strange set of experiences there. Not only that bad fight, but I got hit with a bottle at a club called the Black Swan. And it was a quart of beer that was full, you know.

**MRR:** Like those big ones that they had at the Gasworks?

Dave: Yeah. It was a guy from a motorcycle gang that had just walked in and picked it up and...

Scott: Well, you used to go on the road and you had no idea. I mean, at Cobourg, you play for these people where they had Led Zeppelin cover bands, and we would walk out playing our own stuff and that's what the situation was. The Black Swan was not a punk club but they were trying out some punk bands, and when they didn't like you they just killed you.

Dave: Yeah, they tried to kill me. I was knocked out cold. I had to go to the hospital. It was pretty bad. My other favorite memory... Well actually, no, I have another favorite memory in Ottawa that I don't like to discuss, but my second favorite memory is of Scott at the Beacon Arms Hotel.

Scott: (laughter) And you want to discuss that one.

Dave: Well, you might know that Hotel Detectives in the '30s and '40s were called Hotel Dicks, right?

**MRR:** Yeah.

Dave: Scott was the Hotel Dick.

Scott: I had a tendency sometimes to get naked on the road and cruise the elevators at 2:00 in the morning with Mark. Cruise is probably the wrong choice of words.

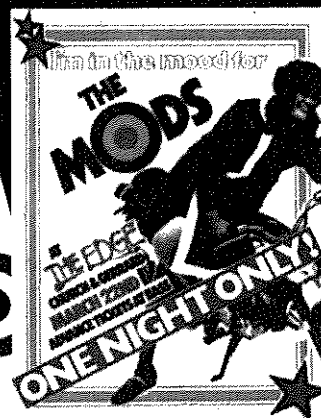
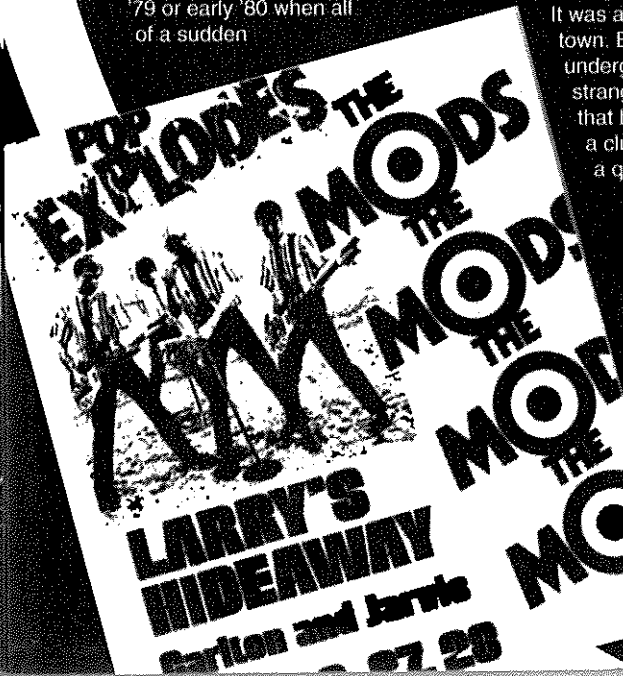
Dave: Yeah, you weren't cruising.

Scott: The joke was that the elevator opens up at 2:00 in the morning with myself and Mark on it, and this guy is walking by the elevator promptly turns around and gets in with us and I am thinking, "Why would any guy in his right mind get into an elevator with a naked guy?" Anyways, it turns out that he is the house detective. So the elevator proceeds to the basement where we are both just pissing ourselves laughing and so we get off and nonchalantly walk away, and that's when he tried to stop us and we head for the stairs. I ran up nine flights of stairs ball-assed naked and got into bed and the guy caught Mark on the second floor because he was smoking like a chimney and Mark was totally winded. He couldn't get away.

Dave: It's funny. Every time the Mods went out of town, it was some kind of adventure. It was very funny and I think it had something to do with the way we were as people, but also our age because unlike a lot of the punk guys who were 30 years old and pretending to be 19 or 20, we were young.

**MRR:** Well, you were young.

Dave: And so was Mark and Greg, and Scott was just a little bit older than us. We were young guys so when we went away out of town, away from our families and our parents and whatever, we would go crazy. To think that we never got in trouble, never got arrested or never got in accidents or whatever. We would pile into this little van with all of our equipment... I mean, the fact that we came out of this stuff alive is amazing, and the hotels we



saying is "You've got to play with me." And I was like "Uh huh." (hesitantly) And he was like "I'm going to call you. I'm doing this record and you'll come and play on it." And I was like 'whatever.' Then I didn't hear from him for five months.

**MRR: Then you ended up playing in his solo band and on his album of which you contributed a song "Make up Your Mind." Did you write it for Stiv?**

Dave: I wrote it for Stiv. I wrote it when we were all living in Ohio and writing for his solo album, and he recorded it and then when I did my solo record in 1980 I re-did it. Scotty came in and did guitar on it.

**MRR: Beautiful. So you guys kept in touch. Now Stiv, he knew a lot of people in Toronto, so he was close to Steve Leckie (of the Viletones)?**

Dave: I don't know that he was close with him. I know he knew him. And Bators had a funny tendency of making fun of people that were very intense. So the more intense you were, the more he made fun of you. He knew that I liked Leckie and I liked the Viletones and stuff, so he used to try and poke fun at me. He used to write letters to me and stuff saying 'How is Nancy Dog and the V-Tones?' And used to tell me that I should start a band called David and the Quintones. The funny thing is that Bators was much older than me. He was born in 1949 so he is a child of the '50s and early '60s, so a lot of his humor was that kind of stuff. Like plays on words and making fun of you like 'You were in a doo-wop band.' So I think when he would make fun of Leckie, it was all like that. Like in good spirit. I think he liked Steve and I think he liked the Viletones, but the more Bators liked something the more he made fun of it. That's how he was.

**MRR: What is the song "The Other Side" about?**

Scott: Greg wrote the lyrics for that, and that was definitely a song about the hypocrisy of the downtown punkers. I mean the reality was... Steve Leckie, the first time he came out to hear us in Greg's basement, we were driving out to Scarborough and Steve's going 'Wow man, like I am out in the country' and of course Steve went to Midland Collegiate down the road from where we grew up. "I'm from the other side." I can't even remember the lyrics, but it is basically you live downtown, you talk like

you're a street person, but the reality is you're just like us.

You're from Scarborough. You're from North York. You're a poseur.

Dave: I think the more I came

to realize over the years. I concluded that it's not where you come from and it's not your education level and it's not the community that you grew up in. It's a feeling that you have. If you have that same feeling, you come together and enjoy the same kind of music and might enjoy the same kind of scenes together. It doesn't matter where you come from. So people who were trying to say "I'm like this and you're not, so you can't be a real punk or you can't be a real this or a real that" it's really just a crock of bullshit. People come together because of what they like. People come together because of a commonality and a community of feeling.

**MRR: Tell us about your 45.**

Scott: The 45 was recorded in late November of '78. A couple of nights at Comfort Sound up at Dufferin and Rogers Road...

Dave: For \$120.

Scott: We did a basic bad track with everyone playing. We did a guitar overdub then we threw the vocals on it. We pressed a thousand copies with the picture sleeve and they sold out very quickly. They were selling them at the Record Peddler at the time and Records on Wheels. They got around the country a little bit but it wasn't the distribution you could get today. The first time it was ever played before it was released on vinyl was we had gone to see Elvis Costello play at the O'Keefe. Battered Wives were opening the show, that would have been November, and Mark and Greg and I went to the early show. He did two shows that night. From there we went over to the Horseshoe and got over there at about 10:00 and the Police were playing the Horseshoe. The first Toronto appearance by the Police.

**MRR: I was at that gig.**

Scott: Well, there wasn't many people there.

**MRR: It's funny, because the amount of people that said they were there...**

Scott: It would have been packed.

**MRR: I came into Toronto with my friend John Rudyk to buy a Bryan Ferry album, because records came out a week earlier in Toronto than they did in Hamilton, and we had come in and we were in town that night and we went down to the Horseshoe and there was a little color picture on the door and it said "Tonight from England the Police at the Horseshoe" and we thought, what the hell, we'll go in. I didn't like them. I thought they sounded like Styx because he had such a high voice. There was no one in the place and he had this green jumpsuit on with zippers on it and stuff and it really wasn't my bag.**

Scott: The person doing the sound for the Police that night was Nash the Slash. I went over because I was standing beside the soundboard and he gets talking to me and he says to me "You're in the Mods" and I said "Yeah" and we got talking. Anyways, that night in the Horseshoe they played "Step Out Tonight" on cassette in between the sets for the Police.

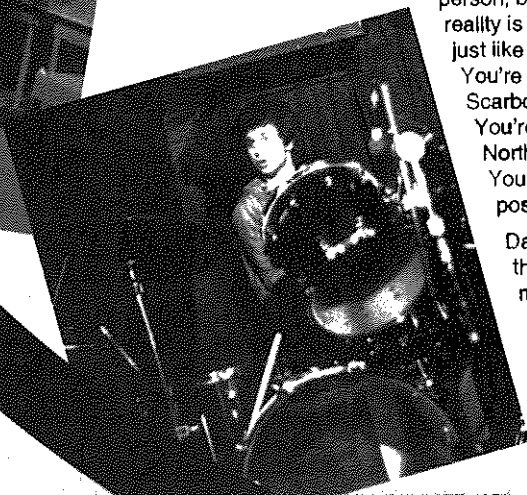
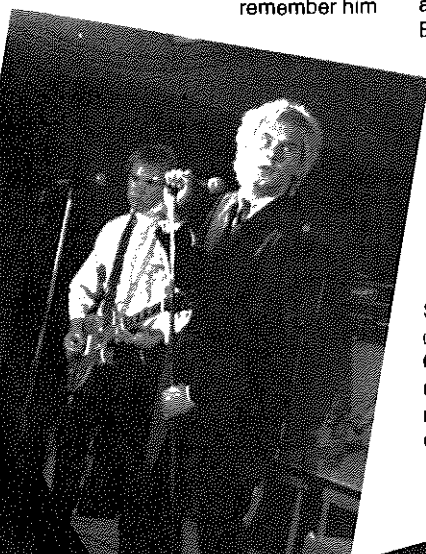
would stay in Chicago and Detroit and New York... it's unbelievable we came out of it alive. We weren't staying at the friggin' Waldorf.

**MRR: Now you guys were talking about... Back to the Cheetah Club, you were saying Stiv Bators came to see you play there. That must have made you feel pretty good to have somebody with that high of a profile would have come and seen you.**

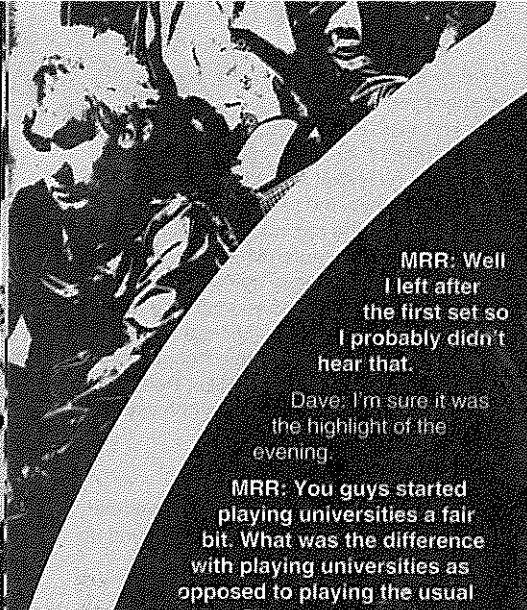
Dave: Well it's funny because Bators and Leckie were at a Mods Turning Point gig that we did, and they both came on stage and did "Teli Me," the old Stones song, with us.

**MRR: Three singers?**

Dave: The Dead Boys and the Mods had both done "Teli Me," so Greg and Stiv and Leckie sang it together. But I didn't talk to Bators at all that night. I didn't talk to him until the Cheetah Club gig and he came up to me afterwards and he was so drunk he could barely stand up and all I remember him







**MRR:** Well I left after the first set so I probably didn't hear that.

Dave: I'm sure it was the highlight of the evening.

**MRR:** You guys started playing universities a fair bit. What was the difference with playing universities as opposed to playing the usual venues?

Scott: The money was better. And the beer was better. There was more free beer.

Dave: It's really interesting the kind of things that stick out in your mind. One thing that I remember so distinctly is we were playing at Western and I

remember doing a college radio show and whoever was interviewing us said, "So you guys are just in this for fun and to have a great time and you don't care about money" and for some reason it pissed me off. I don't remember what it was, but I think it was the fact that a college kid was saying that to me. And I thought to myself "Why is it that we can't care about money or success? Are we just there for people's amusement?" So you're here getting a college education and you are going to get a job and make money and have a family and am I supposed to die in a gutter? And I remember sort of challenging the kid and saying that we have to live too. We have to survive also. You know, the beautiful thing about this band is that we have also survived so nicely. Because to me, this life was not about ending up in a gutter. It wasn't about ending up dead. It was about infiltrating the regular world with our influence and the way we think about things. And I think that the four of us have been really successful in doing that. We've all sort of achieved success in ways other than music but we have infiltrated the world with our attitude. In that way, in that very tiny corner of the world in which you live, you effect a little bit of change. And to me that's what it was all about. It wasn't about dying. It was about staying alive and surviving. I didn't think Sid Vicious was such a wonderful character.

**MRR:** You just had one foot in the gutter.

Dave: Yeah, once in a while, it's nice but you don't have to give up your life and ruin it in order to have a great time and to be involved in rock and roll.

Scott: I thought we were totally in it for the money back then. *(loads of laughter)*

**MRR:** I never believed anybody that said they didn't want money. I remember Joe Strummer kind of going on about that and the next thing you knew he was riding in a limo opening for the Who in football stadiums.

Scott: You know what though? In all honesty, to me...when you're 18 to 21, the idea of being famous is more exhilarating than having a mansion in the south of France or something like that.

**MRR:** Absolutely.

Dave: It was all about that, and when I say money, it was not about money to be rich, it was about money to survive. To have enough to go to on. Scott had money problems the whole time we were in the band because he was older than us and he lived on his own. I remember a lot of gigs where you would get more than us just to keep you going. He had to buy groceries and stuff.

**MRR:** You guys had a lot of A&R interest from major labels and then finally almost a recording contract. What happened?

Dave: There was a local producer by the name of Keith Elshaw. He used to work at Q107 and did some demos with us. He started his own record label to be distributed by CBS and we went in and we did some recordings with him. The problem was that we never really got the right approach in recording this band. We probably should have been recorded live. Instead, we got this kind of airy pop kind of treatment and it really was disappointing for us. At the end of the day CBS approached us directly and said, "We think that we should just sign you guys directly." We thought that this was an OK idea, and our independent label sued them. So there was a lawsuit that came up out of the whole thing and I think ultimately it got settled and the settlement was that CBS stayed away from us and then paid the studio bill to the independent label. So our album remained on the shelf until 1995 when a handful of those tracks ended up on our CD. But I think all the guys in the band agreed that the best stuff that we recorded was either live or demos that hadn't been released and I think our single is probably pretty representative of what we sounded like at the time.

Scott: Yeah, the early phase of the band, I think the vocals got a lot stronger and a lot more cleaned up. We were just badly produced. No one knew how to produce us. Everything was being produced like they produced Queen back then. They separated you, moved you far into the studio and it was all about separation. It was just the absolute wrong approach for the type of band that we are. It took about ten years before people figured out what they should be doing with bands like us.

**MRR:** So this recording is on the *Twenty 2 Months* CD, correct?

Dave: Yeah, some of the tracks.

**MRR:** But it's cleaned up?

Dave: For *Twenty 2 Months*, we chose a whole range of material, some from our demos and some from that album. It was never released.

Scott: Not a heck of a lot. There are three tracks on *Twenty 2 Months*—"Reactions," "Coming In Out of the Rain," and "Change My Mind"—that were recorded on 24-track but not in the album sessions.

Dave: Those were for Warner Brothers.

Scott: Warner Brothers wanted to do some demos so we went in and they were done in a ten hour period overnight from about 10:00 at night until 8:00 in the morning. We punched out the three songs from beginning to end and they partly stood the test of time because we didn't dick around with them.

Dave: Yeah. And in fact they are more representative of what the band sounded like then. There are a lot of bands from that period that had similar complaints. The second Dead Boys record...





# step

**MRR:**  
Yeah,  
they  
hated Felix  
Pappalardi, I  
think.

Dave: The same situation. They totally cleaned it up, whereas the first album, those were demos done with Genya Ravan and they ended up being their first Sire Records album. It was the same thing. The demos were more representative of these bands than the records that they eventually did, because people were trying to clean them up and make them commercial and I guess that is the only way the music industry responded back then, although the music industry is still horrible and always will be horrible.

**MRR:** Christina Hunt of the *Toronto Star* wrote an article on April 26th, 1979 saying that "violence, hatred, and ugliness died when punk rock crashed out. In its place are new wave bands like Toronto's the Mods, aiming to put fun back into the music." Do you agree with that statement?

Scott: That's what we told her.

Dave: You know what? I think that as much as punk was the beginning of a whole period of change, people were anxious for it to go away.

**MRR:** But one thing that did change around that time was that you guys changed

your name to the News. Why did you do that?

Scott: Well, the whole Mod revival thing was coming out of England. Greg and Mark had gone over to England in that summer of '79 and they had come back and everything was mod. It was like calling yourselves the Rock and Rolls. It didn't make any sense anymore. It was probably the right thing to do at the time but the wrong thing to do in retrospect. And the News was an OK name until Huey Lewis took it.

**MRR:** Did the News sound any different from the Mods?

Scott: No, it was a name change only. It had nothing to do with musically. I don't think. It was strictly to do with the Mod revival that was happening in England. It was a name that wasn't going to fly outside of here.

Dave: We were trying to distance ourselves from it, but the problem was the name never really took. Like every time we were doing a gig the News was always "formerly the Mods."

**MRR:** I remember that. Times were changing.

Scott: There were just more bands coming out that were doing things that were a little more complicated and interesting. I don't think it was a question of punk dying. I think when the Viletones split up and the Secrets formed and Leckie took all the Ugly and created the new Viletones and it was just like they were shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic. It was the same guys playing in different bands. But we...

**MRR:** In 1980, you guys started getting frustrated. What was starting to happen?

Dave: I think the recording was very disappointing for us and the record company shenanigans was disappointing for us and I don't think we had an appreciation at that age for how long it took for things to happen. We were very impatient and naïve. It's funny because the same naïveté and innocence that made the Mods

such an incredible experience for us and has left us with such good memories is the same naïveté and innocence that caused us problems as kids because we couldn't wait. We thought that things had to happen quickly. But you know what? To us, we saw bands like the Police where it did happen quickly. It was like, every step that they took was boom-boom-boom and it was a period of months, not years. You gotta remember man, in those days there weren't old grey-haired 50-year-old farts playing rock 'n' roll music. You did not see that. So guys did have their success

early. Guys did have their success young and they were on their third record or fourth record or whatever. So, it's easy for us to say now that we were impatient, but the fact is that is kind of the way it was back then. That was a big, big part of the problem.

Scott: It was the first real turnover of rock 'n' roll too. I mean, finally Lennon and McCartney were getting old. The Kinks... all these guys were getting old and they were moving into different things, and you had the new bands coming in like Queen and all these studio bands that no one could even hope to sound like. It was really what punk was, giving the music back to the next generation. That's my theory on it. No one realized it in the late '70s. Now, I think you look back and you see exactly what was happening—we could not sit down and learn "Bohemian Rhapsody" and play that. We could not learn Steely Dan songs. We just did not have the virtuosity to do it. And when you're 18 or 19, you shouldn't be playing that crap. You should be playing something that means something to you.

**MRR:** Your last gig was at a private school, of all places. Where was the school and how did you get a gig at a private school?

Scott: That was our last gig that no one really knew about. What everyone thought was the last gig was opening for Squeeze, and then we went and did this show at the private school. Where was it? Bathurst and Bloor somewhere.

Dave: Yeah. I can't remember the name of the school.

**MRR:** Like UCC? Oh, Bathurst and Bloor. There is one just sort of north of Bloor, a little bit west of Bathurst. I've seen that school.

Scott: I don't know how we got it. Greg got it somehow. Someone approached Greg at a show and they brought us in and we played there and that was it.

**MRR:** What finally broke the Mods up for good?

Scott: Hmm. I think it was Mark's socks. (laughter) I think Mark sort of had enough and you had the offer from Bators.

Dave: I had the offer from Bators.

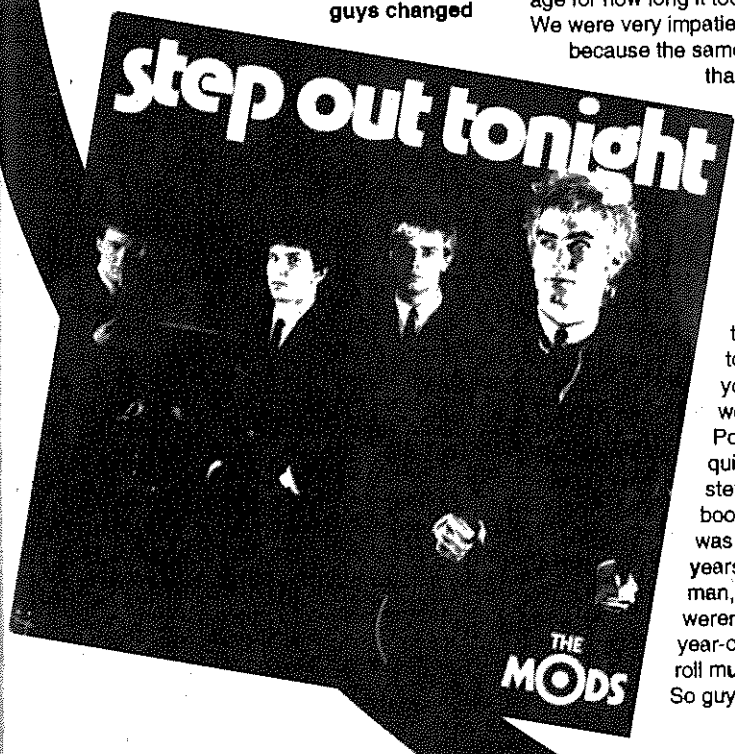
Scott: Greg and I were not ready to pull the plug, but...

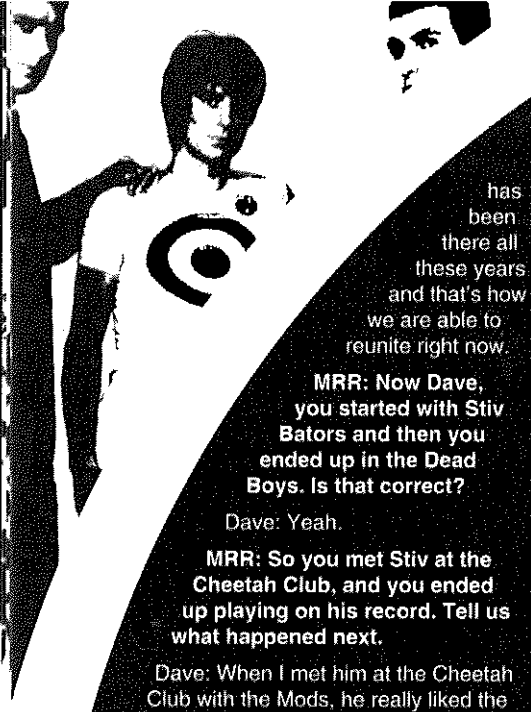
**MRR:** After the Mods broke up I saw a place on the New Music where the Numbers were having a party in a basement and Greg was with them. I don't know if he was actually a member of the Numbers.

Scott: Yeah, he joined them.

**MRR:** And Scott, you went on to be in the Popular Spies. What about Mark, was he in any other bands?

Dave: No. You know, it's funny that when we broke up, it was kind of like me and Mark deciding to do it. Greg and Scott weren't ready to do it. So, it was like a marital couple kind of coming apart in a way. But there was always a strand of friendship that went through us and





has been there all these years and that's how we are able to reunite right now.

**MRR: Now Dave, you started with Stiv Bators and then you ended up in the Dead Boys. Is that correct?**

Dave: Yeah.

**MRR: So you met Stiv at the Cheetah Club, and you ended up playing on his record. Tell us what happened next.**

Dave: When I met him at the Cheetah Club with the Mods, he really liked the Mods a lot. I went down first in the summer of 1979 to Los Angeles to record

a couple of singles with him and one of the guys from Blue Ash, which is an Ohio band, and I spent a month and a half down there. We recorded a bunch of material, most of which came out on singles and has since been released over the years. I then came back to Toronto and re-joined the Mods and we played for several more months while the Dead Boys went back on the road. The original band had reformed, and when they started to fall apart Bators called me and said "Would you like to come and replace John in the Dead Boys?" So after having done these solo singles with him, that's when I joined.

**MRR: And how old were you then?**

Dave: When I joined Stiv I would have been 19 years old.

**MRR: So your parents were pretty liberal about letting you go to play with a bunch of guys called the Dead Boys.**

Dave: Yeah.

**MRR: Hanging out at the Tropicana with everybody from John Belushi to Dee Dee Ramone. I know I have heard a lot of crazy stories from you. You eventually went along and were in the original line-up for Lords of the New Church with Brian James and Stiv Bators. What happened?**

Dave: Well, after the end of the Dead Boys and after Bators' solo record had come out, Brian James came and joined the band. We didn't have a name for the band at first.

We actually played some gigs under the name

Partners In Crime. I quite liked playing with Brian, I thought he was a great guy and a really fabulous guitar player. We did a bunch of gigs together, and then this decision was made to re-locate to England where the band was going to be managed by Miles Copeland. So I kind of faced this dilemma whether to come back home to Toronto or whether to go to England with Stiv and Brian and I chose to come back home to Toronto.

**MRR: Then you went solo. You released an album on Bomb Records which has a killer photo of you taken by Rodney Bowes. Listening to the album, it is clear of your love for pop music. Did Stiv and the Dead Boys turn you onto pop?**

Dave: Yeah—I mean, I always liked pop music anyway. I loved the sort of pop glam phase, bands like Slade and the Sweet and stuff, but the Dead Boys and Jimmy Zero loved the Raspberries and a lot of that sort of Ohio pop, bands like Blue Ash. So, that influenced me a lot. And, in fact, I think a lot of guys in punk bands were closet pop music fans. Really, it was just a stone's throw away. We thought punk was so dangerous at the time, but we go back and listen to the Ramones now and it sounds like the Beach Boys.

**MRR: You said "the only really beauty in music is the people who make it and the people who listen to it. Everything else sucks." You kind of hinted at that earlier. I thought it was a very interesting statement. I couldn't agree more. There is a lot of interest in the '70s Toronto punk scene now—film projects from Colin Brunton and Blair Martin, the "Punk 'til you Puke" exhibit by Will Munro, an upcoming book by Liz Worth, a photo documentary by Rodney Bowes. Scott, what do you attribute this to?**

Scott: People are really bored. (laughter) No, Toronto, probably outside of London and New York, had the best scene going. Maybe LA but I don't even think LA had much going at the time. And it took a while before people realized it and there is some history here that has been unearthed and people are going back to revisit it.

**MRR: What is inspiring you guys to play again?**

Dave: For me, it was the fact that we have talked about it over the last few years but it never materialized because there wasn't a proper venue or anything. For me personally, it was watching the documentary *New York Doll* about Arthur Kane. Watching that film just made me feel like "You know, what if we want to do this, now is the time to do it." We really want to do it now while the getting is good, because the fact is as we get older and stuff like that, it becomes more and more difficult to pull it off. And watching that film just gave me a sense of immediacy about all of this and thinking now is the time to do it. And Cleave Anderson, it was him who first called me, the drummer from Battered Wives and Tyranna and a whole bunch of other bands. He is also in the Screwed.

Scott: The Way Outs.

Dave: He had called me and said "Would the Mods ever consider doing something?" And I said "You know what, I think we will, as long as we don't have to play three hours."

**MRR: Can we expect any more shows after this gig?**

Scott: Just the Asian tour. (laughter)

