

Ruination are an ultra elite international killing machine featuring Ebro on drums from CHARLES BRONSON / MK ULTRA / CRUDOS fame, Chris Colohan (THE SWARM) on vocals, Andy Dempz (BLOODPACT) on guitar, and Mike Halichuk (velcro shoes) on bass. RUINATION have become a buzz band and for good reasons. They have an ep and a sleuth of comp material about to be released. They originally started out as an attempt at trying to create a terrorist group, but quickly moved onto playing some of the best thrash to come out of the past year. Because RUINATION come from Chicago, Ann Arbor, and Toronto it is difficult for them to play, but

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event (like the closing of Who's Emma or the recent TRAGEDY show where the singer from THEY LIVE almost burned off his face). I got to talk with Andy, Chris, and Ebro at the TRAGEDY show in Toronto (on December 19th, 2000) about the difficulties of being international hardcore super-studs. Interview by Stephe Perry of Equalizing-X-Distort, photos by Go(r)d Dufresne of Deranged Records.

**Who is in the band and tell us about your most recent punk lineage ?**

Chris: See right from the start we've got problems.

Ebro: Okay, since I'm the most important, I'm Ebro and I play drums and I'm from Chicago and I was in LOS CRUDOS and CHARLES BRONSON and MK ULTRA and the MESHUGUNA's. That's my lineage.

Chris: I'm Chris Colohan. I'm from Toronto, Ontario and I was in the LAST RESORT and the MUSHUGANAS and now I sing in this band.

Ebro: Oh yeah, I was in BASKETCASE, too.

Andy: I'm Andy and I'm from Ann Arbor, Michigan and I'm in BLOODPACT and I was in EARTHMOVER and I was in END OF THE LINE and I was in DEADBOLT. Not the END OF THE LINE on ebullition.

Ebro: I was in TREPAN NATION, too, if you care.

**Being from different cities, how did RUINATION form? It seems unusual that bands form from different cities, although that might not be the case anymore, but given the obstacles that come along with distance, how did you form?**

Andy: Because no one in our respective areas was hard enough to form an entire line up.

Ebro: Exactly. I looked for the hardest people in Canada and the United States and I was like "Oh yeah, Chris Colohan. That Motherfucker is hard, yo". No. What happened really was Chris called me up one day and he was like "I want to start this band." And I was like "Oh yeah?" And he was like "I want you to play drums for it." And I was like, "What like a project?" and he was like "No, like a real band". I was like "Alright, we can try it." He had talked to Andy and he'd played with Mike before.

Andy: And I played bass for the SWARM for a week and so it just went from there.

Chris: It was really kind of like when they have those big international things and they're trying to form a girl band, like the SPICE GIRLS, and they have try outs because they have to get the five best people from all over North America like in Canada and the States and Hawaii and...

Ebro: There's some big fat dude from Canada named Ron Perlichuk and he wanted to find the cutest people and stuff. We all tried out and I was the cutest, but then Chris came in third.

Andy: We were the best dancers.

Chris: We were kind of the cutest and the hardest in the whole land so we had to join hands and make this work. That's really it.

**But it was mostly that you knew each other ?**

Andy: It was people that we knew and it is actually hard to find enough people with the right ideas and the right approaches to things to do bands.

Chris: ...or the same ideas, at least.

Ebro: We had all met. Well I never met Andy before, but I had seen EARTH-MOVER and stuff...

Chris: and we had met at parties....

Ebro: I totally started snorting coke off Chris' ass one night and it turned out to be him and

Chris: ...somehow we got into a conversation. Hey you're actually a real person.

Ebro: No. CRUDOS had played with THE SWARM before and I met him when CRUDOS toured up here. He seemed like an alright guy.

Chris: He "seemed" like an alright guy...

Ebro: ...and now he is a fuckin' asshole. Naw, I just figured it might work out and shit and it would be fun. So it happened.

Chris: Is it fun ?

Ebro: Yes.

**What are some of the obstacles to being a band with long distance dilemmas ?**

Andy: Everything. Take this week for example.

Ebro: It's weird because it's like we have months and months of breaks in between what we do and so far it has worked out pretty good because we have been able to meet up and record a bunch of songs and practice for a weekend, but then when it comes together for tours sometimes communication breakdown enters into it because we are all trying to communicate through e-mail and Andy: ... we have no van and no practice space. Plenty of booze and no where to drink it. (laughter).

Ebro: Yeah shit like that and the fact that they are Canadian really puts a damper on the whole band because I keep getting everyone to sing the national anthem and they don't even know it. They start with "Oh Canada..." and I'm like "Shut Up".

Chris: We have to keep getting into that fight about who invented basketball.

Ebro: Exactly because supposedly Canada did. I never even heard of this, but some country named Canada did it.

Chris: Some state north of Buffalo called Canada or something.

Ebro: It's kind of a pain in the ass commuting from country to country and shit, but we have been able to do it.

Andy: Anytime we want to do anything we have to deal with the border, but we

have been lucky so far.

Ebro: We have to spend a lot of money to hook up and do shit and coming from people who don't really have much money.

Andy: We don't have the chance to play local shows to build up some money to start like a normal band would. So we have no van and we have no practice space, between those two things we have no gear this week.

Chris: We wing it all the time.

Andy: It's a barrel of chimps from there.

**Okay there must be some good reasons for why you do it.**

Andy: Well fuck you wanted the obstacles. The reasons are we all know what we are doing and so things can go pretty easily. When we are together, we usually work around the clock. Instead of fucking around and doing it an hour a week we get together and practice for two days straight like six or seven hours a day and then play a week of shows and then record. And that works pretty well. We can be pretty productive. And each of us can write songs so we end up with a lot of stuff. We are more productive than most bands who are together.

**It seems like it because given the amount of time that you have been together you have a lot of things coming out.**

Andy: Given the amount of records we have available. We have recorded for three records and none of them are available.

Ebro: We are able to have fun with it. If I wasn't having fun with it I probably wouldn't be doing it. It's fun and it has worked out really well, surprisingly, I didn't think it would because I am a cynic, but it has worked out pretty good. There are problems with obstacles that we have mentioned but I don't think they're enough to stop us because we love hardcore (laughter). I mean as dumb as that sounds we love doing this and being into it and wanting to do it takes precedence.

**One of the things that I have noticed about the year 2000 is a bit of this super group phenomenon. It's really become apparent in hardcore where you have members from other prolific groups that are from other cities. Examples of bands like XLIMP WRISTX or THE OATH come to mind.**

Chris: Well, that pre-supposes that you meant to do something based on your collective status, but we knew each other from playing, we liked each other's playing style.

Ebro: Yeah, I had better pants than Chris.

Chris: Yeah he had better style.

Ebro: I was rocking Nautica and Tommy and he said "Yo, I like your style, Word".

Chris: He was kicking the phat styles long before they were cool, and we thought we could work with that.

Andy: It's not that we had to search far and wide for a roster of members, we just wound up with them.

Ebro: I've noticed that a lot of bands are trying to milk that shit and that's not what we are trying to do obviously. Yeah we have been in other bands and people have used that to advertise records and advertise shows, but that's not what we are doing. We had just known each other from these previous bands and we just did it to have fun. We're not trying to ride on the coat tails on what we had done before because I don't think this band sounds anything like what we had done with other bands. People can do what they want. If they want to take us as the x-members of whoever bands - go ahead -but I like what we are writing now and I think the songs stand on their own.

**The first ep was recorded after your second practice.**

Chris: ...and it shows.

**Where did you record the first ep ?**

Chris: Cloud City in Redford, Michigan with Mike Hasty (WALLS OF JERICHO).

Andy: He was the guitar player for EARTHMOVER and so I know him from that and most of the recording I have done has been with him and out of his practice space. He has a 24-track digital studio. We borrowed their (WOJ) practice space for the two days proceeding and then set up and let it rip.

Ebro: That was meant more to be kind of like a demo at first or at least that was my idea behind it.

Andy: Okay, see I hate this because people are like "the Ruination demo" and there was no RUINATION demo. We did a quick mix while we were there and we were going to make tapes of them for the next show and if we decided that it was good enough we were going to go back and do a good mix and press it as a 7", but we fucking slacked and we didn't make tapes and instead we said the hell with it and we pressed it as a 7" real quick because my other band BLOODPACT was going on tour and so we were like "Fuck it, let's go too." And we just paid out of our pockets to go lose our asses and have a really really good time and so we pressed the 7" just to have for tour and then it came back from the mastering place and the guitars had mysteriously disappeared somewhere along the line, so we have a re-mix of it and it is going to be pressed and sound fuckin' normal, finally it sounds good, and I am totally fine with it because when I play I don't play to fuck around, I play for real and I never think



'this is just a demo' and half ass it. That's part of the point that I was saying about playing like BLACK FLAG or MOTORHEAD is that those bands did not fuck around. They did it to do it. I wanted to ask you about the tour to Europe. How long had the band been together before you toured Europe and how did the tour come about?

Ebro: A couple of months.

Andy: Lost & Found and M.A.D. sent us a big basket of money in the mail and we just went.

Ebro: No we had only been around for a couple of months.

I liked it because there were some places where people knew that we were in these bands or whatever so they came to check it out, but it was also I liked it because we had played a lot of places where no one had heard. They just

came to see a fuckin' punk show, but they still gave us a good response. I think that it was really cool to do that even though I am sure that people are rolling there eyes at the fact that we were able to go to Europe so quick, but we fronted the money, we lost the money and.

Andy: It's just like booking a DIY tour of the States. At that point, if you are willing to cough up for the plane tickets then you can do it.

Chris: It's not a measure of having been really great or big. If you can get yourself there, and don't care if you lose your shirt, you just do it.

Ebro: ...it was a fun tour.

What was the response? Did people like...

Ebro: ...people were usually pretty into it.

I wanted to ask you for record nerd status: how many copies of the ep were pressed?

Chris: In the end, 700.

What were all the different versions of covers?

Chris: They were just different shows. They were city based.

Andy: We'd always argue about the cover and since every jackass band from the east coast tours Europe and has a PROJECT X cover,

we did that to make fun of it. We made 300 of those and those are on grey. And then from the same presses a 100 on grey for the Chicago Fest, where we made fun of local Chicago fuckin' corporate label, then there was 100 for a show in Toronto, and there were 200 on black and 50 of those had a cover for an Ann Arbor show which we made during the show running around the block from the house to Kinko's and then there were 150 which had all four covers a la the Dischord 12" just to say that this is getting fuckin' stupid.

Chris: And now No Idea is putting out officially, in quantity and mixed right. Andy: ...with a real cover, once we finish arguing about it.

You've recorded stuff more recently. Can you go through the projects that you have lined up?

Andy: Two songs were recorded in Chicago. One came out on the "Short, Fast + Loud" comp but it got fucked up in mastering and slowed down by 10% so it is "Short, Slow + Loud". And then there is another song which is going to go to an "Inside Front" comp.

Chris: We did 4 songs with Eric Ellman (THEY LIVE) in his basement. He recorded those for the split with THEY LIVE. And that is coming out on DeadAlive.

Andy: So we've recorded in Detroit, Buffalo, and Chicago and then there is going to be three or four songs that we are going to record in January for a 7" split with POINT OF FEW on Wicked

Witch (Amsterdam) and we are going to record those in New York at Don Fury's. Do you have plans on touring?

Chris: (starts laughing).

Ebro: Yes. We have a couple of shows.

You are playing shows right now.

Andy: We have a show tomorrow in Sherbrooke and a show the next day in MA. and five shows in January and then recording at the end of that. It's good to record at the end of strings of shows because it is the only time that we have enough time to be together and play often enough to get tight.

Andy: I am going to Japan for my own reasons in May-

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Chris: He's going to assassinate the shogunate.

Andy: -and then hopefully after that we will tour like fuckers through the summer.

Ebro: Woah.

Chris: Yeah I was hoping to tour like a cunt and I think these guys were hoping to tour like fuckers. But we are going to tour a lot in the summer.

Ebro: He is going to tour in his own cuntting band.

**What has the response been to RUINATION? You talked a little bit about this when I asked about Europe, but just in general what has the response been?**

Ebro: It has been pretty promising. It hasn't been overwhelming. Like "Oh my god, they're the buzz band" and shit like that, at least not that I know of. You know maybe we are

to be, but we're all different people with our own ideas. You know how frustrating it gets when you play in a band and you are trying to maintain on behalf of 5 people some stance that is totally an individual thing, and should only ever BE? It fucking burns you out. I try to avoid that kind of dogmatic, soap-box shit in writing songs. It turns people off more than it gets through to them. At the same time, there's a real resurgence of the opposite extreme lately, towards the apolitical, the apathetic. I'm not about that at all. I think it's abusing this medium that people have worked to create and maintain, to not be saying anything for fear of being held to it, or fear or being wrong. Dogmatism on one side, apathy on the other. Fuck them both. The songs are just personal, political, alienated, anti-authoritarian, pissed off punk rock songs.

Andy: I think it's cool because it is sort of re-attaching. In an effort to be the most political band or the most right on people took it to such an extent. You can talk about people being killed for the sake of environmental devastation in Nigeria or whatever, but besides not buying gas at Shell what the bloody fuck does that have to do with most peoples lives?

It doesn't extend beyond boycott politics in this country because no one has set a fuckin' Shell station on fire.

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**SPIN-KICKS-FOR-JESUS WAY."**

a secret buzz band or something, but I think it is cool cause it is just people who like simple raw hardcore said we are good. Some shows we have played people have gone off and some that people just stood their and looked dazed. Overall, we have gotten pretty positive responses from people.

Andy: Some younger kids, seeing a band for the first time playing guitar that actually has mid range in it and playing the stuff that we do...the history of punk rock has been cut off sharply after a certain point where there is just so much of it and people just pick up whatever is current. It seems like a lot more people are not tracing the history like they used to. So a lot of people don't understand some of the stuff that goes into what we do and they go "I don't know what you were doing but I liked it." That's cool.

Ebro: They don't understand the complex drum arrangements that I do (laughter)

Chris: Most of our fan base, the type of people that would come out to see us are the kind of people that would drink from the furry cup. People that would eat from the bushy plate are the kind of people that like RUINATION.

**What lyrical subject matter do you tackle?**

Chris: A lot of that stuff about drinking from the furry cup and- no, for real? It's not so much like an ethical assault force on people. I think that is one thing that we kind of agreed on. We have a general understanding of what we believe hardcore to be and share basic leftist politics, but we're not all the same in our lifestyle politics. We are all Straight Edge kids in a real life way, not in like a down your throat, windbreaker spin-kicks-for-jesus way. I mean Ebro eats meat and we're both vegan and whatever...

Ebro: they don't feed me so I get to choose what I eat.

Chris: ...we know who we are and we don't need to be on some sXe or vegan crusade to validate it. We're on the same page as much as we need

At the same time, I think it is important to realize that those institutions contribute to the alienation that everybody feels and that brings home. So maybe if you address that alienation immediately and the politic that creates that alienation I think that that's what is important.

Ebro: I just bought Gap and Shell not too long ago.

Chris: I try to boycott politics, as well. Especially when drinking from the furry cup.

**How can people get in touch with you because I am sure there are things that people might want to ask you directly?**

Andy: There is a website at [www.plusminusrecords.com/ruin](http://www.plusminusrecords.com/ruin), and a hot-mail address at [xruinationx@hotmail.com](mailto:xruinationx@hotmail.com). Each of us have different addresses in real life. You can track us down at my address which is P.O. Box 7096 / Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48107 / USA.

**Are there any last comments?**

Chris: We would like to put props out to Rittersport Marzipan bars and european peanut butter.

Ebro: Word. To my homies in lockdown. Keepin' it real, 24-7.

Chris: I think we should say thanks to Mike Halichuk because he is going to leave the band to do other stuff and he was a really big part of everything we have done up until now.

Ebro: We have to find another whipping boy for the band.

Chris: Yeah, but we are not going to find anybody that can rock track pants and velcro shoes like that, I'm pretty sure, so it's gonna be a different Ruation from here on in. R.L.P Timmy.