



CRASS 



 **219884**

CRASS 



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CRASS

extracts from CRASS IN MANHATTAN, by Steve Elman.

"Punk ain't music, it's a way of life, a way of thought. Punk ain't a fashion, it's a way of being, it's anarchy in the U.K., the U.S.A., where-ever, and that isn't tuned guitars and voices in harmony any more than it's limousines at the stage door of CBGB's."

Penny Rimbaud, drummer, CRASS.

MUSIC:

Crass appear on stage booted and dressed in black, clothing of a militaristic or institutional type design. The suggestion of militancy is heightened by the bands emblem, a kaleidoscopic hybrid of swastika and union jack, ("there's a reason for that," comments Andy Palmer, rhythm guitarist, "they're one of the same fucking thing, the U.K. over the jubilee was like Nuremberg, fascist, nationalist shit.") a huge banner bearing the emblem hangs menacingly behind the band throughout the performance.

"In England we get called fascists," says Phil Free, lead guitarist, "we're not, we're totally opposed to fascism of any kind, a lot of our work in England is for organisations like Rock Against Racism, so where does that put the critics?"

"I wear black all the time," says Penny, "as a social statement... a rejection of values, punk and social fashion stuff... punk's just another fashion now."

This toying with fascist imagery is undercut by the ragged nature of the clothing, (lead singer Steve Ignorant's trousers hang open at the knees shredded like the victims of a bombing), and the grimly haggard faces of the musicians themselves. With their close-cropped hair, variously of the spiky and skinhead mode, they could as well be the survivors of the concentration camps as the captors. The music is loud, so much so that many, even at the risk of their punk credentials, later complain of it. Bassist Pete Wright responds, "I think if you get five people together with massive amps and scream out as loud as you can you might get a message over to two or three members of an audience.... to offset the shit we all have to take we scream, there's fuck all else you can do. It's really a cry of rage, it takes that much to get through." Adds Phil, "It's the energy that counts, not the sound," and Penny says, "I don't think people can catch what Steve says anyway... it doesn't matter if it's an hour of feedback as long as we put over the right energy."

Energy there is no shortage of. Each song is brief, passionate, direct, and violent. Few chords, simple pounding beat on the simplest of drum kits. No preening on stage--- Penny and Andy stare questioningly at the audience throughout, guitarist Phil devotes all his attention to his instrument, Pete makes occasional spasmodic jerks of the chin, bulging neck muscles, pained eyes, the only manifestations of the angry content of the songs. These are half spoken, half shouted in insistent rage by Steve, but the look in his eyes is rather mournful, and when he's not singing he simply stands with arms folded and looks at his feet, even leaving the stage entirely when Pete takes a turn at the mike. Penny explains, "I get very frightened on stage, I think we all do, we're not naturals, it's a job we believe has to be done, we're not trying to show ourselves off, the uniform is an anonymity, not an identity, it's a job, within ourselves and for others."

Crass begin and end each set with their anthem, "Do They Owe Us A Living?", (of course they fucking do). Other titles include "Punk is Dead", a chronicle of the decline and fall of punk rock, "Chairman of the Bored", a bleak cry from the blank generation and

"Securicor", Pete's anguished attack on private armies. It is true that the vocals are pretty much indecipherable, but this has an effectiveness of its own. Crass work with screeching, abrasive sound, the roar of industry, the relentlessness of technology. The listener has to work for the words, and when one does hear Pete adamantly state (order?) amidst the din, "Use your own head!"--one hears it in stark, block relief. Steve Ignorant is a fine and dynamic vocal instrument, bleakly honest and very angry. He is brooding, has a vulnerable charm---seems so young. Pete's vocals are at least as compelling, more limited in range maybe, but absolutely biting. All in all, Crass are strong stuff.

POLITICS:

Music is only part of the story. Crass' summer stay in Manhattan did much to illuminate the political economy of N.Y.C. punk..... etc.....etc.....etc.....

"We like to work independent of the establishment," says Penny, "but it's good to hit the established clubs now and then, that's where the greatest complacency is, they're so hyped up with pop-anarchy, it's such a pose, but it's good to get in there and stir the shit again."

A scuffle interrupts Crass' set at Irving Plaza when Andy takes it upon himself to stop the activities of a photographer who is blocking people's view of the group. Another fight etc....etc.... etc....etc.

This sort of chaos is nothing new to Crass who were banned from the now defunct Roxy club in London, the result of a night last fall when, as Andy explains, "Everyone in the club was completely out of it and fucking about, it wasn't violent, just punk fun, it isn't rough, it just looks it, you'd have to go home and sleep for several days afterwards, but that's part of it as well."

"That was when we were having to deal with our own physicality," says Penny, "we weren't used to that sort of situation and just wanted to let the audience know that, that we're them, not fucking superstars on a stage, we didn't beat people up, we just fucked around and got people moving and the Roxy shits didn't like that, they don't want fun, they just want money."

This attitude has, of course, severely hampered Crass commercially. Pete describes a constipated London scene: "The people who run the clubs and the music papers were in like vultures right from the start and now they control things. There's been a reggae revival and a dexterity revival and there's disco for the real suckers and the energy has been sold out....most groups are just fucking showmen, they don't care fuck all."

"You can work it sly if you want to, but what's the point?" says Phil, "There's people around to buy you up, but you can't package revolution, look at the Clash, they're just another heavy metal band, they'll never get it back now."

"It's the attitude that counts, not the music," says Penny. "People would stomach the music if it weren't for the feelings behind it. If they can see you've sold out they feel safe."

"It's easy to sell out and it's easy to get a label attached to what you're doing. People call us a political band," says Andy, "it's just an easy category for their convenience. We're too personal to be political in that sense, we work on a personal basis, the politics are secondary."

"We advocate personal anarchy and control of your own situation," says Pete. "We want our own life, they can stuff their systems, they don't seem to have done too well with them so far. I know how I want to live; my way."

"We're not a band in the musical sense," says Penny. "We have a common cause and a shared identity, but that's not a structure, that's our own individual choice...being a band is peripheral to our real interests, which is personal change and sharing of that experience. We don't advocate revolution--we demonstrate revolutionary change."

So it was for Crass in Manhattan, a trial of conflict and confrontation, a commercial flop, and, simultaneously, a triumph of aesthetic consistency and a tribute to one group's determined adherence to punk values.

**CIRASS
WOIRIS**

ASYLUM.

i am no feeble christ/not me/he hangs in glib delight upon his cross/above my body/christ/forgive/FORGIVE?/shit/fuck/i vomit for you jesu/shit forgive/down now from your cross/down now from your papal heights/from that churlish suicide/petulant child/down from those pious heights/royal flag-bearer/goat/billy/i vomit for you/forgive?/shit he forgives/he hangs in crucified delight/nailed to the extent of his vision/his cross/his manhood/violence/guilt/sin /he would nail my body upon his cross/suicide visionary/death-reveller/rake/rapist/lifefucker/jesu/earthmover/christus/grave-digger/you dug the graves of auschwitz/the soil of treblinka is your guilt/your sin/master/master of gore/enigma/you carry the standard of your oppression/enola is your gaiety/the bodies of hiroshima are your delight/the nails are the only trinity/hold them in your corpsey gracelessness/the image i have had to suffer /the cross is the virgin body of womanhood/that you defile/you nail yourself to your own sin/lamearse jesu-calls me sister/there are no words for my contempt/every woman is a cross in his filthy theology/his arrogant delight/he turns his back upon me in his fear/he dare not face me/fearfucker/share nothing you christ/sterile/impotent/fucklove prophet of death/you are the ultimate pornography/in your cuntfear/cockfear/manfear/womanfear/unfair/warfare/warfare/warfare/warfare/warfare/warfare/warfare/warfare/warfare/JESUS DIED FOR HIS OWN SINS, NOT MINE/

DO THEY OWE US A LIVING?

fuck the politically minded/here's something i want to say/about the state of the nation/the way it treats us today/at school they give you shit/drop you in the pit/you try and try and try to get out/but you can't because they've fucked you about/then you're a prime example/of how they musn't be/this is just a sample/of what they've done to you and me/

CHORUS/do they owe us a living?/of course they do of course they do/do they owe us a living?/of course they do of course they do/do they owe us a living?/OF COURSE THEY FUCKING DO/they don't want me anymore/cos i threw it on the floor/they used to call me sweet thing/well i'm nobodys plaything/and now that i am different/they'd love to bust my head/they'd love to see me cop out/love to see me dead/

CHORUS/

the living that is owed to me i'm never gonna get/they've bugged this old world up/they're up to their necks in debt/they'd give you a lobotomy/for something you aint done/they'll make you an epitomy/of everything that's wrong/

CHORUS/

don't take any notice/of what the public think/they're so wiped out with T.V./they just don't wanna think/they'll use you as a target/for demands and advice/when you don't wanna hear it/they'll say you're full of vice/

CHORUS/

END RESULT.

i am a product/i am a symbol/of endless/hopeless/fruitless/aimless/games/i am a glossy package on a supermarket shelf/my contents aren't fit for human consumption/i could tragically injure your perfect health/my ingredients'll sieze up your bodys function/i'm the dirt everyone walks on/i'm the orphan nobody wants/i'm the stair carpet everyone pukes on/i'm the leper nobody wants to touch/much/

i am a sample/i am a scapegoat/for useless/futureless/endless/mindless/ideas/i'm a number on the paper you file away/i'm a portfolio you stick in a drawer/i'm the fool you try to scare when you say/"we know all about you,of that you can be sure"/well i don't want your crazy system/i don't wanna be on your files/your tempts i try to resist them/i know what hides behind your

**HIE DIED
FOR HIS
OWN SINS
NOT MINE**

smiles...../est/
i am a topic/i am a subject/for useless/futureless/andless/
mindless/debates/you think up ways that you can hide me/from the
naieve eyes of your figurehead/dont you find that it aint easy/
wouldn't you love to see me dead/your answer is to give me
treatment/for crying out when you give me pain/you leave me with
no possible remnant/you poke your knives into my brain/you send
me.....insane/
i'm an example/i'm no hero/of the great/intelligent/magnificent/
human/race/i'm part of the race that kills for possessions/part of
the race that's wiping itself out/part of the race that's got
crazy obsessions/like locking people up not letting them out/i
hate the living dead and their work in the factories/they go like
sheep to their production lines/they live on illusions don't face
the realities/all they live for is that big blue sign it says.....
.../it says FORD.
I'M BORED/BORED/BORED/

THEY'VE GOT A BOMB.

they won't destroy the world/they're not that crazy/you're not
dealing with the town hall/no they're not that crazy/no
political solution/so why should we bother?/well whose fucking
head do you think they're holding it over?/

CHORUS/four/three/two/one/fire/they can't wait to use it/they
can't wait to use it/they can't wait to try it out/they can't
wait to use it/they got a bomb/they got a bomb/and they can't
wait to use it on me/

twenty odd years now waiting for the flash/all of the oddballs
thinking we'll be ash/well the four minute warning has run on into
years/are we waiting for them to confirm our fears?/

CHORUS/

they can build them small/call it tactical/stop the fall-out/make
it practical/to smash the misfits who foul up their scenes/with
the practical tactical killer machine/

CHORUS/

PUNK IS DEAD.

yes that's right,punk is dead/it's just another cheap product for
the consumers head/bubble-gum rock on plastic transistors/
schoolboy sedition backed by big-time promoters/C.B.S.promote the
clash/it ain't for revolution it's just for cash/punks become a
fashion like hippy used to be/it aint got a thing to do with you
or me/movements are systems,systems kill/movements are
expressions of public will/punk became a movement cos we all felt
lost,but the leaders sold out,now we all pay the cost/punk
narscissm was a social napalm/steve jones started doing real harm
/preaching revolution,anarchy and change/no sucked from the
system that had give him his name/patti smith is manhattans
hiroshima/she burns and she scars but offers no glimmer/of the
futures and the hopes she preaches from the stage/she don't care
a fuck if she don't get a wage/punk was just a way of bemoaning
the fact/that a whole generation was afraid to act/the kids of
the street took the meaning of sedition/to be a personal fuck-up
that was socially malicious/well i'm tired of staring through
shit-stained glass/tired of staring up some superstars arse/i've
got an arse and crap and a name/i'm just waiting for fifteen
minutes fame/steve jones you're napalm/if you're so pretty vacant
why do you emarm?/patti smith you're napalm/you write with your
hand but it's rimbauds arm/and me yes i do i want to burn?/or is
there something i can learn?/do i need a businessman to promote
my angle/can i resist the carrots fame and fortune dangle?/i see
the velvet zippies in their bondage gear/the social elite with
saftey pins in their ear/i watch and understand that it don't
mean a thing/cos the scorpions might attack but the system stole
the sting/punk is dead/punk is dead/PUNK IS DEAD/

REJECT OF SOCIETY.

not for me the factory floor/sweeping up from nine till four/not
for me the silly rat race/i don't see the point in anycase/people
ask me why i say what i do/i say to them "well wouldn't you?"/if
you were fucked-up just like me/a reject of society/they say i dig
a hole and jump right in/well i don't give a shit about anything/i
don't comply to their silly rules/cos all they are is hypocrite
fools/

CHORUS/you give us conscience money/now you start to worry/the
frankenstein monster you created/has turned against you/now you're
hated/

they tell me i'm not what they'd like me to be/it's their fault
you can't blame me/they've fucking tricked me half the time/now
they've gotta stand in line/they don't like it when they see me
have fun/they turn around and then they run/they don't listen to
what i say/cos i'm just a reject of society/
CHORUS/

GENERAL BACARDI.

CHORUS/i've seen it all before/revolution at my back door/who's to
say it won't happen all again?/cos the generals sip bacardi while
the privates feel the pain/

they talk from the screen and T.V.tube/talk revolution like
processed food/talk anarchy from music hall stages/look for change
in colour supplement pages/they think that by talking from a
distant tower/that something might change in the structure of
power/they dream they dream never walk on the street/they dream
they dream never stand on their feet/

CHORUS/

alternative values were a fucking con/they never really meant it
when they said "get it on"/they really meant "mine, that's mine"
don't you see?/they stamped on our heads so they could be free/
they formed little groups like rich mans' ghettos/tending their
goats and organic tomatoes/while the world was being fucked by
fascist regimes/they talked of windmills and psychedelic dreams/
CHORUS/

BANNED FROM THE ROXY.

banned from the roxy/o.k./i never much liked playing there
anyway/they said they only wanted well-behaved boys/do they think
guitars and microphones are just fucking toys?/fuck em/i've
chosen to make my stand/against what i feel is wrong with this
land/they just sit there on their over-fed arses/feeding off the
sweat of less fortunate classes/they keep their fucking power cos
their fingers on the button/they've got control and won't let it
be forgotten/the truth of their reality's the wrong end of a gun/
the proof of that is belfast and that's no fucking fun/seeing the
squaddy lying in the front yard/seeing the machine-guns resting
on the fence/finding the entrance to your own front door is barred
/and they've got the fucking nerve to call it defence/seems their
defence is just the threat of strength/protection for the
privelged at any length/the government protecting their profits
from the poor/the rich and the fortunate chaining up the door/
afraid that the people may ask for a little more/than the shit
they get/shit they get/shit they get/shit they get/shit they get/
shit they get/shit they get/shit they get/defence, shit it's
nothing less than war/and no-one but the government knows what the
fuck it's for/oh yes they say it's defence/they say it's decency/
mai-lai/hiroshima/know what i mean?/the same fucking lies with
depressing frequency/they say "we had to do it, to keep our lives
clean"/well whose life?/whose fucking life?/who the fuck are they
talking to?/whose life?/whose fucking life?/i'll tell you one
thing/it aint me and you/and their systems/christ/they're
everywhere/school/army/church/the corporation deal/a fucked-up
reality based on fear/a fucking conspiracy to stop you feling real

/well they're wrong/aint got me/i'll say they're fucking wrong/i
aint quite ready with my gun/but i've got my song/banned from the
roxy/o.k./i never much liked playing there anyway/GUNS/

G'S SONG.

this country tells us that we're down and out/got you thinking
that we're through/got to suffer to get us moving/say it's up to
me and you/well look around and you'll see who gets the goods/not
you or me/cos they aint suffering no not for us/they're
masquerading like pissers must/they abuse us/keep us right
underfoot/with the illusion/of contentment and good/well it's not
over/war's still around/and they've got no problem when you're
underground/

FIGHT WAR, NOT WARS.

fight war/not wars/fight war/not wars/fight war/not wars/fight war
/not wars/fight war/not wars/fight war/not wars/fight war/not wars
/fight war/not wars/

WOMEN.

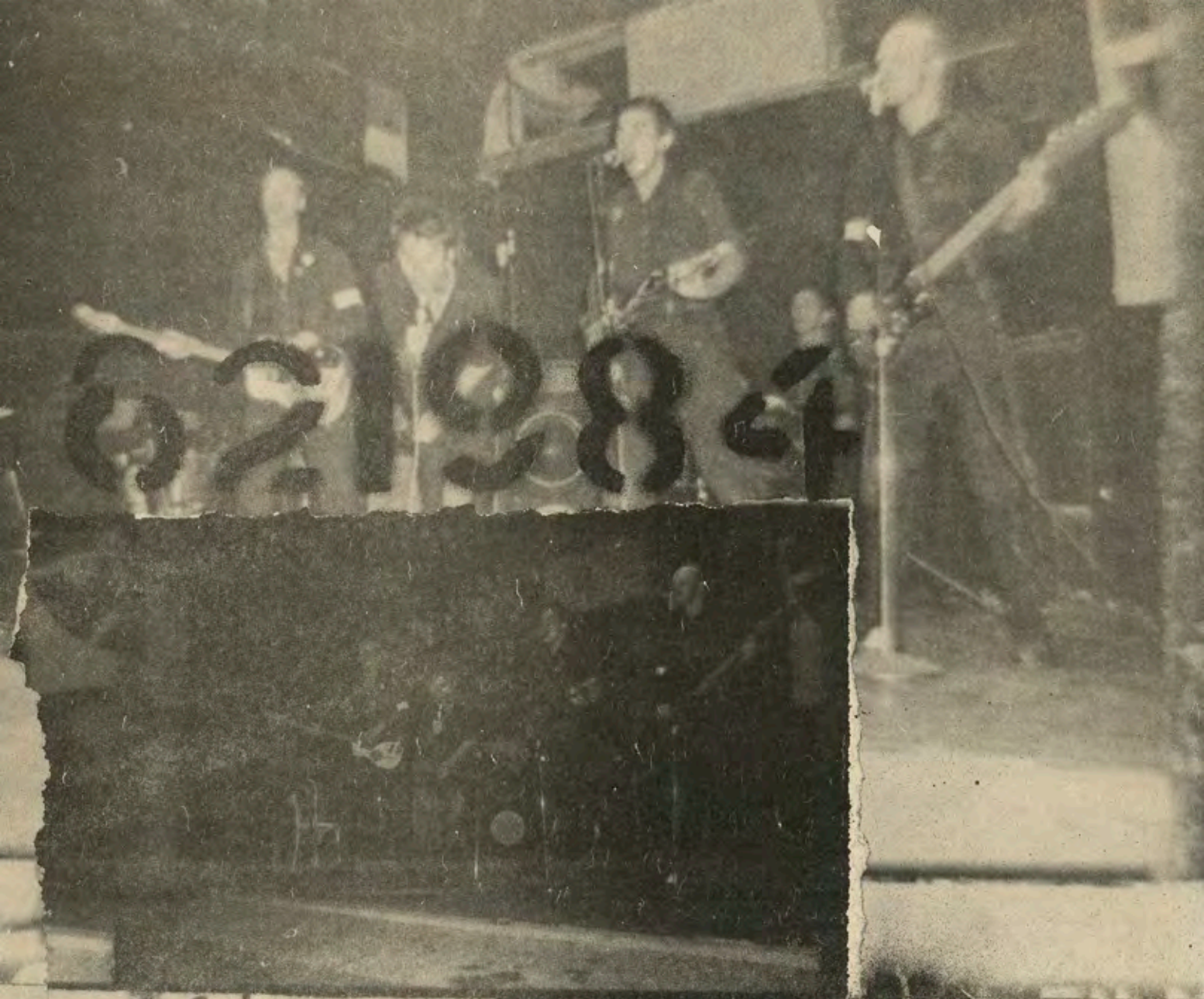
fuck is women's money/we pay with our bodies/there's no purity in
our love/no beauty/just bribery/it's all the fucking same/we make
soldiers with our submission/wars with our isolation/fuck is
women's money/we pay with our bodies/there's no purity in
motherhood/no beauty/just bribery/it's all the fucking same/we are
all slaves to sexual histories/our awareness of whoredom can be a
release/war is mens money/they pay with their bodies/there's no
purity in that game/only blood, death & bribery/it's still the
fucking same/but we've got the power/don't just stand there/and
take submission on the strength of fear/
FIGHT WAR/NOT WARS/

SECURICOR.

i'm a private in a private army/i'm a private in a private army/
i am a-working for securicor/take the money and come back for more
/i wanna do it cos i know i should/for the customer and the
common good/i walk around with a big alsation/he'll rearrange you
with no provocation/and i'm the bugger who has got the lead/and
you'll have to be bright if you want to get at me/securicor cares/
securicor cares/securicor scares the shit out of you/do you wanna
come closer?/i block the pavement with my club and hat/i deal in
money that you can't get at/you wanna use me cos i'm up for rent/
well tough shit cos i'm real busy/you oughtta know me cos i been
a cop/out of the army where i learned a lot/some kids still
chuckle when they see my van/but it's not all money sonny/you
wanna come closer?/DO YOU WANNA COME CLOSER?/i'm a private in a
private army/i'm a private in a private army/i'm a private in a
private army/

SUCKS.

do you really believe in buddha?/buddha sucks/do you really
believe in jesus?/jesus sucks/
CHORUS/is it alright really?/is it alright really?/is it working?/
do you really believe in marx?/marx fucks/do you really believe in
thatcher?/maggie sucks/
CHORUS/
do you really believe in the system?well o.k./i believe in
anarchy/in the U.K.
CHORUS/



021988

→ 21A KODAK



IFIGHT WAR
NOT WARS
DESTROY POWER
NOT PEOPLE

CRASS

SMALL WONDER RECORDS
SWEENEY TWO

**FIGHT WAR
NOT WARS**



**IN WAR THERE
IS NO GLORY
ONLY PAIN**

GRIEF

MUTILATION

DESTRUCTION

DEATH

YOU PAY.

you're paying for prisons/you're paying for war/you're paying for
lobotomies/you're paying for law/you're paying for their order/
you're paying for their murders/you're paying for your ticket/to
watch the farce/knowing you've made your contribution/to the
systems fucked solution/to their political pollution/no chance of
revolution/no chance of change/you've got no range/don't just take
it/don't take their shit/don't play their game/don't take their
blame/use your own head/your turn instead/it's not economise/it's
not apologise/it's not make it/it's not pull through/it's not take
it/it's not make it/it's not just you/it's not madmen/it's not
difficult/it's not behave/it's not oh well/just this once/it's
fucking impossible/it's fucking unbearable/it's fucking stupid/
it's fucking stupid/

ANGELS.

the angels are on T.V. tonight/grey puke/celluliod shit/the army
have sent a mission to Ireland/just to see to it/kojack is on the
streets again/grey puke/fucking shit/the army say they seek peace
in Ireland/just to see to it/

CHORUS/that they keep in line/horizontal hold/keep in line/
vertical hold/keep in line/brightness/keep in line/contrast/keep
in line/VISION ON/

coronation street is on twice a week/grey puke/fucking shit/the
army say they seek peace in Ireland/just to see to it/the army are
on the news report/real war/bullets/death/they're beating fuck out
of someone they caught/just to see to it/

CHORUS/
VISION OFF/

WHAT A SHAME.

doesn't take much to bring you down/there are plenty of people
standing around/they wait till you slacken off just a bit/then
they fill you up with passive bullshit/it's too good/it can't last
/what a shame/watch out for the quiet ones at the back/all they
want is the smallest crack/everythings happening down the front/
innocent bystander you're the biggest runt/fuck the punks/punks
are fucked/it's too loud/awful row/they can't play/they'll give up
/in the end/what a shame/oh what a shame/oh what a shame/it's
still the same/that's what you think/watch out for the quiet ones
at the back/all they want is the smallest crack/everythings
happening down the front/innocent bystander you're the biggest
runt/we all know/it's so bad/but we say so/what a shame/

SO WHAT.

they ask me why i'm hateful why i'm bad/they tell me i've got
things they never had/they tell me go to church and see the light/
cos the good lord's always right/so what/so what/so what if jesus
died on the cross/so what about the fucker i don't give a toss/so
what if the master walked on the water/i don't see him try to stop
the slaughter/they say i wouldn't have to live from bins/if i
would go along confess my sins/they say i shouldn't commit no
crime/cos jesus christ is watching all the time/so what/so what/so
what if he's always over my shoulder/i realise the truth as i get
older/i get to see what a con he is/because it's my life,mine not
his/they say they're gonna send me away/say they're gonna make me
pay/we're sorry but you gotta go/cos you were naughty you said no/
so what/so what/so what if i see through the lies/so what if the
people i despise/twist my arm/make me work/i'm no deaf dumb
fucking jerk/i'm no spastic lying in the street/i'm no superstar
elite/i'm just a person/a human being/NO YOU'RE NOT YOU'RE A PART
OF OUR MACHINE/you're a part of our machine cos we want you to be/
we've got you now and you'll never be free/we can even have your
body after you're dead/we can take the eyes out your fucking head/



YOU PAY.

you're paying for prisons/
you're paying for war/you're
paying for lobotomies/you're
paying for law/you're pay
ing for their order/you're
paying for their murder/you
're paying for your ticket
to watch the farce/knowing
you've made your contributi
on/to the systems fucked so
lution/to their political p
ollution/no chance of revol
ution/no chance of change/y
ou've got no range/don't ju
st take it/don't take their
shit/don't play their game/
don't take their blame/USE
YOUR OWN HEAD/your turn ins
tead/

it's not economise/it's not
apologise/it's not make do/
it's not pull through/it's
not take it/it's not make i
t/it's not just you/it's no
t madmen/it's not difficult
it's not behave/it's not, oh
well/just this once/it's fu
cking impossible/it's fucki
ng unbearable/it's fucking
stupid/IT'S FUCKING STUPID/



1933

CRASS



GERMANY GOT
BAADER-MEINHOF,
ENGLAND GOT
PUNK,
BUT

THEY CANT KILL IT.

/ CRASS /

WHY DO THEY FEED
US RUBBISH WHY DO
THEY FEED US SHIT
IS THIS REALLY Y'WHIA

TT	HE GOT FRIEND	HE
YT	DLY HOLDING	HI
NK	MY HAND SHE	WE
WA	GOT FRIENDL	NT
	Y DOWN IN THE	
	ES AND UP FOR	

SUMMER
NIGHTS

CRAP STAINED SCR
APINGS FROM THE
PIT

WHY DO THEY FEED
US RUBBISH WHY DO
THEY FEED US SHIT
IS THIS REALLY WHAT

THEY GOT FRIENDS
HE
DISHOLDING HI
MY HAND SHE WE
GOT FRIENDS WE
YDOWN IN THE NT
ES AND WHICH

SUMMER
NIGHTS

CRAP STAINED SCRAPINGS
FROM THE
PIT

CRASS WORDS

EXTENSIBLE PRESS

CRASS ☸



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