

A Memoir
By Joey Slab

It all started back in the late 70's Seeing Combat, Gear, Combat!, Censored Youth, Yardapes and many others at the Bottleneck in Lawrence, Music Box and Downliner in KC. Dave Dog, Lantz Stephenson, Cathy Smart and I formed a band called The Insiders that never played anywhere, but we were hopeful!

Then came the 80's. In 1982 Dave Dog and I started a fanzine called Gizmosis and interviewed the Porps, Gear, Choke, and other bands, plus our "person in the club" interviews.

The Tunneldogs started a bit later, and Lantz joined an industrial band, (the remnants of Censored Youth) in 1983. We got a gig with Get Smart at the Bottleneck. Then played a gig with Husker Dü; the first gig at the VFW Hall. Mott, Archer Prewitt, Dave Dog and I played a strangely colorful 30 minute set. The Huskers stayed "at" our apartment - after partying in Archer's basement apartment below ours on Oak Street. They stayed in their VW van outside and ate bologna sandwiches. They did share the food, but they forgot to pay us our \$30. Bob Mould apologized, but we didn't care, because it was the most exciting gig and we were juiced!

Gizmosis, (later evolving into Son o' Gizmosis then Gizmosis the Cable TV Show) was a blatant promotional tool for the KC and area scene, desperate to juice the scene, a virtual whore of a mag that Dave Dog and I put together. That being said, one could for a mere 50 cents get a real update on events, art, and a ground floor look at the phenomenon that was happening in KC, one of the more varied and strangely peaceful scenes in the nation!

The Tunneldogs, of course, were featured in pics, the Columbia, Missouri and Lawrence scenes were covered. Dave Dog created controversy with his opinion pieces. The Tunneldogs finally broke up for the first time when Dave Dog went to Denver to live, and Archer Prewitt went to Italy. Slabs were born the week after.

Still, Gizmosis charged on! We also tried to interview bands we really rooted for such as Choke, OD's, Yardapes, and bands passing through, such as the Circle Jerks and Husker Dü. As time went on, Mott-ly, Crista Lucente, Karl from St Louis, and other artists and writers joined in. A rival mag called Issue started by scene veteran Rachel Levy doubled the fun. And don't forget the KC Scar magazine from Johnny Puke and Dave Slab with its Jello Biafra interview.

The OD Ranch was such a wild place that words cannot describe, but I'll try... I got a room there in '84 and that room was a little shack type structure, all the rooms were hastily constructed by Dave Olds within the second floor of the River Market area building that housed it. From this decrepit perch we would observe the building excitement of the KC punk/thrash goings on. Wake up, stumble down the hall, and kick over some empty beer cans, great stonables available at every turn, lots of drinking and carrying on. Sleeping while 3 bands are practicing simultaneously is an art.

Bands from out of town would enter and leave like a revolving door! Black Flag, The Minutemen, Blood on the Saddle, JFA, 45 Grave, Agnostic Front, Gang Green, Toxic Reasons, to name a few. D. Boone walking through while 30 punks crashed on the floor (there were always at least 10 people hangin' or sleeping there besides us) bellowing funny comments. People would show up from all over the country.

The Foolkiller went hand in hand with the OD Ranch as the outlet for all this activity. Kurt and the boys from the OD's would have an all-night jam session: Donnie and Kurt guitar, Mark Biemuller on bass, Mikey on drums and then the roster would change. I'd play bass or a visiting musician would hit the drums, whilst drunken drugged-out revelry exploded all around us. It was a good place, for example, to meet women, and for the women to meet men, etc. Sometimes we were just poor and freezing gathered around the potbellied stove-like heater in the "Living Room." Sometimes the power would go out and we'd play ridiculous songs on acoustic guitar hunkered over the stove or a space heater during an ice storm. That's when it was just us with none of the usual rabid hangers-on. There were fights. I started a couple myself, but it was usually a blink-and-you-miss-it occurrence.

At the Foolkiller, we had run of the place, so many rooms, two or three different performing areas, and a labyrinthine basement of hallways and secret rooms stretching under Main Street. I never really explored them all, I was afraid I would be lost! Seriously! One by one, bands moved there to practice on the 2nd floor. Vegex, The Bangtails, Diesel 99, the Slabs, our band at the time, and our alter ego String o' Coincidence, The Orange Doenuts, and others made the 2nd floor almost as interesting as the main stage floor.