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LIVE...

SUBURBIA

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Anthony Pappalardo  
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# **LIVE...SUBURBIA!**

**By Anthony Pappalardo & Max G. Morton**

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Brooklyn, NY



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# WELCOME TO NEW GRANADA

Max G. Morton

Some of us enter this world prematurely. After peaking on parent-approved science fiction, you find yourself with a pocketful of quarters pedaling your PK Ripper toward the inviting glow of a neon ARCADE sign. You feel invincible, adorned with a KISS iron-on from your most recent family vacation. Youth is enriched by voyeurism and impressionable minds warp like a record left in the back seat of a car. Perceptions change at lightning speed. Somewhere between dropping the quarter in and reaching the ominous game over, you learn that the bad, made-for-TV movie, disco record, and *People* cover have soiled KISS forever. Life has lost all meaning.

Joining karate is the next logical step for many subscribers of the unwritten manual to preteen survival. One might find himself kicking, chopping, and yelling *kiiiiiiyyyyyaaaaa!* at everything in sight. The utter determination to destroy might even catch the eye of an older dojo transplant who has an afro and spars in war paint. You have never made friends with someone that wasn't from your town, but pretty soon Motley Crüe is placed in your tiny palm and a new door—complete with dry ice—is opened. You are too fast for love and everyone else around you. When you pledge your allegiance to *The Number of the Beast*, Mother gets a little nervous. The monster materializes after devouring everything metallic, but unfortunately in suburbia you need wheels to go anywhere outside your head. While others are content with the same grip of records, your overactive psyche craves something faster and louder. *You Can't Stop Rock 'N' Roll...or can you?*

The initial shock value of “Fuck Like a Beast” is immeasurable. Sadly, it's as ephemeral as the India ink Pachuco cross tattooed on the hand of the dude who played it for you. Mercyful Fate has imported a new breed of evil to your town and before long you are hiding Witchfinder General records under your mattress. Hanging out in cemeteries is cool as shit, making new friends with Ouija boards brings you closer to being in league with Satan and your new idol is a man who smashes television sets over his head. For a moment it feels as if you could retire on goats and inverted crosses.

Distracted by a page in *Thrasher*, where does one turn? Corrosion of Conformity's spiked skull logo doesn't just look cool, it looks powerful. A threat, even. *Animosity* sounds like a ten o'clock news segment where everyone is at war. It appears you've dug yourself further underground than the long-haired grave robbers you spent last summer rotting with. You make compulsive lists after analyzing band thank-you's and shirts in photos. Pretty soon the locks everyone wanted you to cut are all over the bathroom floor. When you are not sticking glue and gelatin in your hair, you appear to have mange. All this and more, while still owning your virginity. Hardcore is a frightening discovery for modern times. Twenty-seven songs in under 35 minutes... Who needs society? Fuck the world.

As is written in the stars, you and your new best friend will become teenage science projects together and raid all the medicine cabinets you can find. Even though your friend is still *Haunting the Chapel* while you are *Dealing With It!*, it ain't long until all your favorite bands start to sound like watered-down versions of his.

You meet a few stragglers and fellow explorers here and there, but nothing is as it seemed on *Night Flight*. Your mother begins dating some cover band drummer who is ten years older than you. While he's playing air guitar and blowing kisses to his only fan in the mirror, your real dad has taken up residence behind bars. The guy at the record store who turned you on to all your favorite hardcore bands declared the scene “dead” and gave you all of his records just before joining Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth. Disenchantment puts experience in a choke hold. After so many nights spent with lyric sheets, you put an X on your hand because you have seen firsthand what drugs do.

Lurking possible outlets for the innate suburban rage you've channeled, you stumble across *Strength Thru Oi!* Nicky Crane looks pissed. Mentally, you move away to England. At the next show you notice the same types of youth beating a guy under a car, then lifting the car to get in a few more steel-toed kicks... Arrival.

A few home tattoos and assault charges later, Geraldo has some skins on the TV and everyone thinks you're voting for Hitler. Your

regular-ass cousin has taken to riding a skateboard, your now-stepdad has a porno called *New Wave Hookers*, someone tells you that Anthrax is NYHC, and you are officially over it. You smoke a joint to *Paul's Boutique*, fuck a girl and lose a few years.

Baked at a fairground for some headbanging MTV butthead tour, you wonder why mutants are backed up and staring at you. Quick-sand just played and you incorporated everything you learned in New York about dance floor justice. Suburbia is half-terrorized and the other half confused. Wasted and doing karate to live music—once again, you are on some next level shit. While White Zombie plays, you zone out on the back of a shirt.

Birth  
School  
Metallica  
Death

Yup, there it is. Life explained. You are born, you serve detention for defiling a locker with the logo of some band who would betray you with their next record, and you discover *Kill Em All*: Cliff Burton dies; James, Lars, and Kirk fuck you over. Then you die.

Somehow I didn't die, but life caught up to me, and all of the little things I picked up along the way have become not only acceptable, but quite easy to obtain. My records and old t-shirts are worth so much that they could put my non-existent children through college. At any given matinee, more elbows than not own a spiderweb. Fred Perry, Ben Sherman, and Doc Martens stores are all within walking distance of my house. Sometimes I miss being an outcast. I miss the hunt, but more importantly — I miss the fight. All of the genres at the Record Bar, all the gambles and choose-your-own-adventures of burning out in suburbia have come full circle. Without warning or want, here I am. My feet burn and itch in antique Nikes. I own a denim vest with patches from travels all over the world. A few years ago my liver gave out, which made the straight edge tattoos more meaningful. The print on my Cro-Mags shirt is illegible, and

when I do venture into a show, I still skinhead skip like it's 1988.

We all go back to the first thing that really turned us on. For me, everything stemmed from music. There is always a soundtrack for the headphones of the forever young. Records inspired us all. Songs are markers for many significant moments in life. The ritual of the needle dropping kept me alive. That crackle still tells me that everything is going to be alright. Music blocked out the sounds of my parents fighting and gave me hope that other people out there hated pigs, teachers, and organized sports. There were anthems to prepare me for and get me through puberty blues, high school halls, and nuclear war. Records are the ultimate handbook for growing up. Whatever we were into, there was solidarity in being an outsider; allies against Reagan Country. A rite of passage for some was another wasted night for others, but ultimately we're all just shrapnel of the same explosion.

Over the years I've mellowed out of such extremes as ditching all my metal records for punk ones and then my punk ones for skinhead ones. Sure, I might look back periodically and blow a bunch of money trying to revisit Mentholated Suburbia, until I realize why I got rid of some records in the first place... My mom might have been right about the Dayglo Abortions. On the other hand, there are those staples in each genre that survive the test of time and now can sit peacefully together on my newfound, custom-built shelves, not unlike the eclectic collection of friends I've amassed over the years.

At the end of the day, when the highlight reel plays, one might go back to better times. We are all guilty of this. Victims of the past, we are still searching and still collecting. Dreaming through modern landscapes, I often visit road trips and long-forgotten record stores. We are astronauts, forever cataloging. Just last night I was restlessly thinking about some old Crumbsuckers shirt that disappeared to God knows where. Why that shirt means something 23 years later is beyond me. I guess certain things just stab themselves into our souls.

We can all say, in one way or another, that we still live suburbia. This is *Live...Suburbia!*

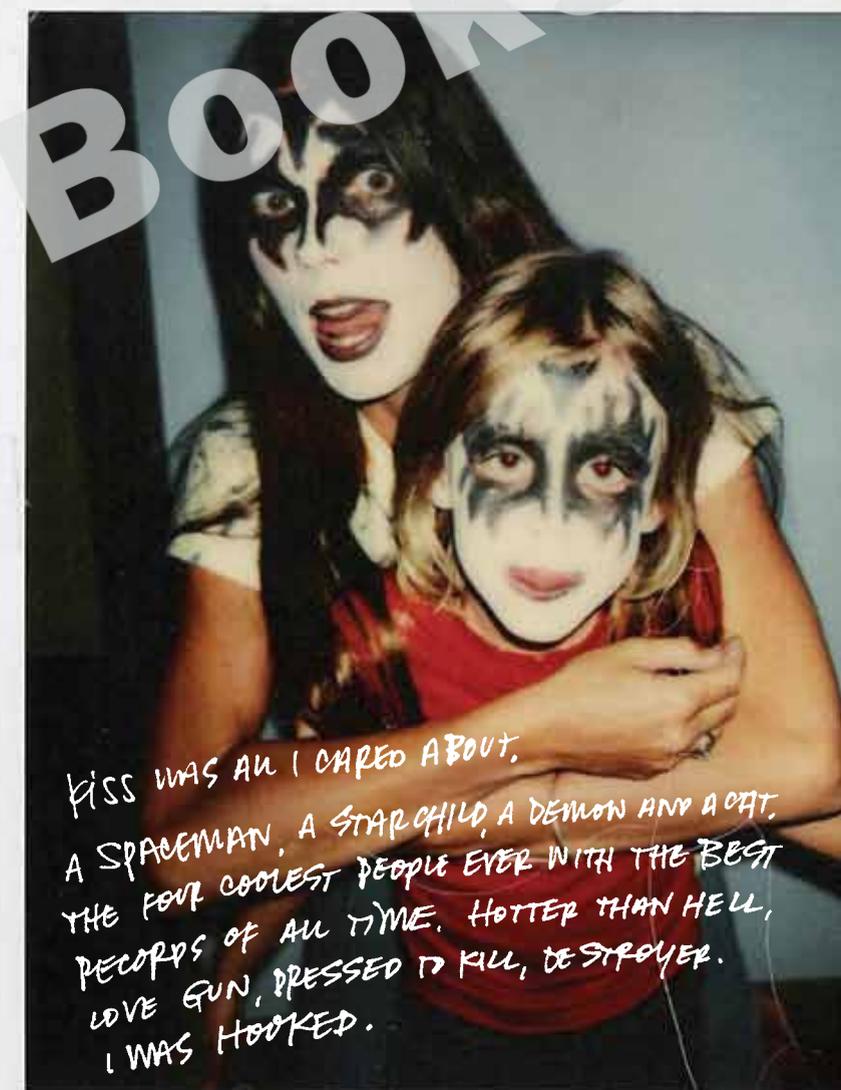
# LONG-HAIRED ANDROGYNY AND OIL-BASED FACE PAINT

Max G. Morton

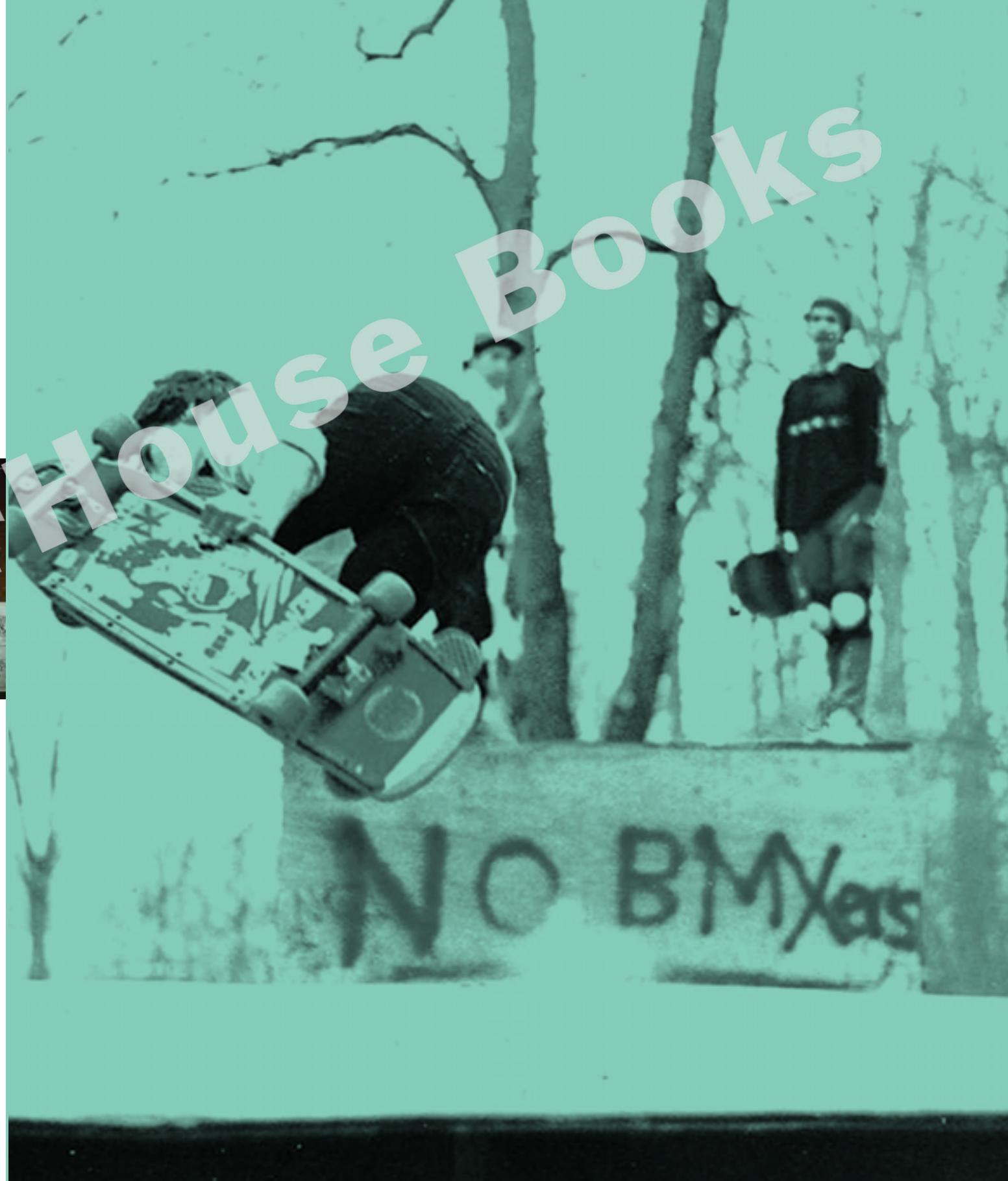
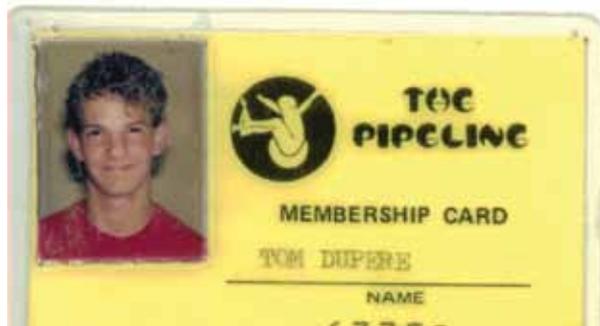
As usual at that time in my young life, I was wearing greasy Ace Frehley makeup when my mother and I flew to Ohio to visit her sister. I told the swinging stewardesses it was "cold gin time again" every time they came around with the drink cart and Mother chuckled while sipping her Tab.

Upon arrival, I used my space powers to convince my aunt and Mother to paint each other's faces like Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley. They ran to the corner pharmacy for some Polaroid film, while I stayed behind with a red-eyed, lackadaisical neighbor. I could not see how we were going to record *Alive in Columbus* without a drummer, after my uncle made it clear that blasphemy was not for him. Seriously, who was going to belt out "Beth"? It was only fair for the neighbor to fill out the band and put on some whiskers.

After the paint job, we procured some fireworks, and the cat-man and I walked around blowing up mailboxes and white picket fences until my mom and aunt finally arrived home in one foul mood. Apparently the cashier had panicked when they walked into the small-town drugstore in their KISS makeup, thrown all the money from the register at them, and began begging for his life. By the time my mom and aunt stopped laughing, the police had the building surrounded. It took quite a while to make the Midwestern redneck cops understand that my family members were not Knights In Satan's Service.







RUNNING

WITH

THE

DEVIL

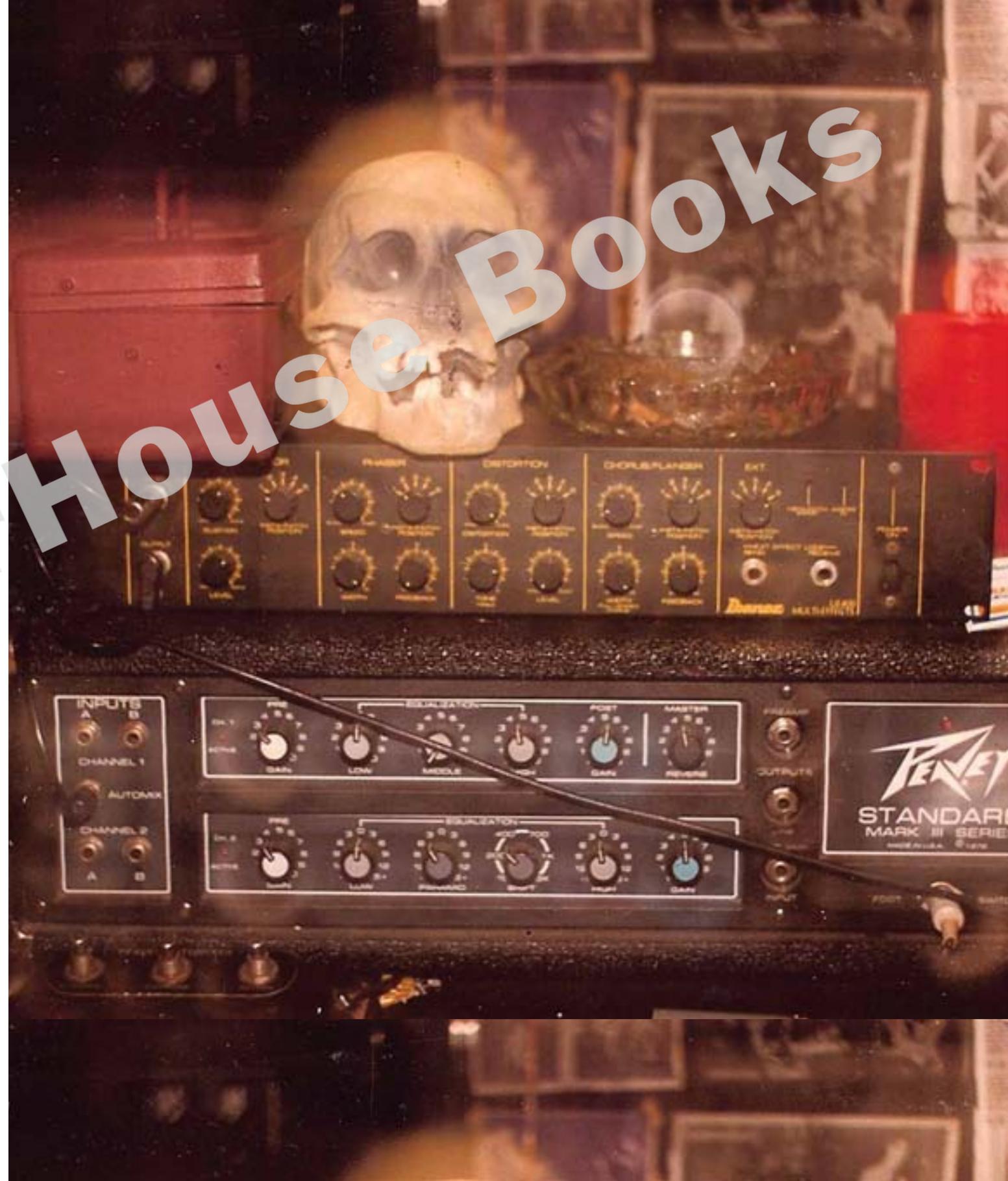


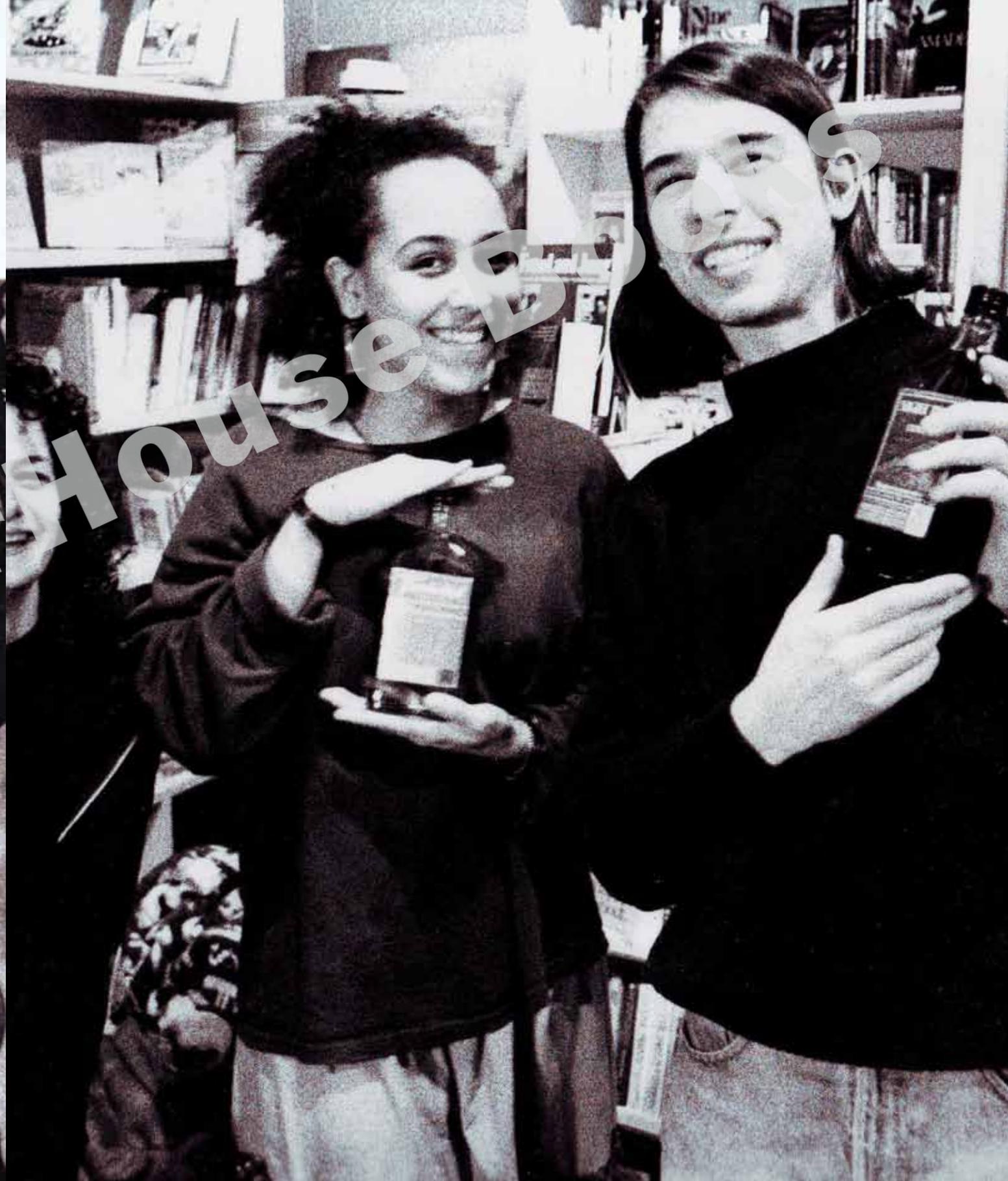


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