

# BLACK FACE

CHUCK DUKOWSKI, co-founding member of BLACK FLAG, and EUGENE S. ROBINSON, singer for OXBOW, destroy all music



Avant-harde supra-group rends and renders CHUCK DUKOWSKI-penned era BLACK FLAG, featuring early OXBOW drummer TOM DOBROV and INSECTS VS. ROBOTS' guitarist MILO GONZALEZ

## Out Fall 2011 on Hydra Head Records

*Eugene Robinson should have a phobia named after him: fear of hulking bodybuilders trained in mixed martial arts fighting with a thing for exhibitionism who front bands that play savage, jet engine-loud pummel-core and also dabble in porn and journalism. - SF WEEKLY*

*If Chuck Dukowski had only played on, say, Black Flag's first 6 releases – and he DID – he'd already be a music legend. Hell, if he'd only written Black Flag's "My War" – which, again, he did – he'd make the history books. But there's much more to the guy than that... – Dave Lang, Perfect Sound Forever*

The set list reads like a laundry list of things that scrub as hard as you want they still remain: My War, Padded Cell, American Waste, What I See, I Love You, No More and over and out of 20 tunes that though the circumstances might have changed – early '80s cop-fueled street riots to '11s total collapse paranoia and fin de siecle mortal fear – the reality is this: no one makes music like this because no one can make music like this.

"THIS" being a coruscating blend of unseated anger, confusion, discontent and something timeless, something new, something called BLACK FACE. Started by BLACK FLAG's CHUCK DUKOWSKI [and OXBOW's EUGENE S. ROBINSON], BLACK FACE will revisit his classic hardcore hits, as well as previously unreleased and unrecorded DUKOWSKI-directed BLACK FLAG songs [Monster, I Want To Kill You, Where Will We Run, Leave Me Out to Rot].

Not only did the time seem to be right, but "these songs I wrote specifically for Black Flag but never got around to recording sound better now than they ever could have then," says Dukowski by phone from his L.A. redoubt. And pulling in OXBOW's frontman and singer Eugene S. Robinson made a kind of gut-level sense when it came to giving voice to songs that were going to be informed by a singer with a sense of place and emotional immediacy. "Lots of people have approached me about this before but none of them had IT or could pull it off. Eugene does and can."

"If there was a bigger Black Flag fan I've not met him," said Robinson. "And with their past history of rotating singers I was really crazy enough back then to think that I had a chance. But chances are funny things and I never mentioned this to anyone so it was with great delight that I greeted the news that Chuck was wanting to revisit some of this shit again."

Even more than a simple re-visitation BLACK FACE draws on the members selective and collective takes on music as riot in a way that carries them well beyond well-meaning cover band.

"This thing is going to happen while it is happening and it will happen like it's never happened before," says Dukowski.

Adds Robinson, "you probably will have completely failed to guess what it is that hit you after you've been hit. But you WILL have been hit."

BLACK FACE is...

CHUCK DUKOWSKI [Black Flag, Wurm, SWA, October Faction, United Gang Members, CD6]

EUGENE S. ROBINSON [Oxbow, Whipping Boy]

MILO GONZALEZ [Insects vs Robots, CD6]

TOM DOBROV [Oxbow, The Stiffs, Jet Crash Miracle]

**VICE:** Hi Eugene. How are you?

**Eugene Robinson:** I'm really great! Getting better every day.

### You've changed.

I was joking. I meant things are getting worse. You see, currently, I see myself at the bottom of a big hole. And as I've always been very vocal about being in the bottom of this hole I sometimes get people yelling down to me saying, "What are you doing in that hole?" I say, "Well, it's a long story but what I really need is somebody to pass that ladder down." And then they usually say, "Well, I'd like to help you, man, but I gotta go."

### That sounds familiar.

The thing is, the hole is not a bad place to be. Just look at all it's given me... all this... hole.

### That was a fun intro to the conversation. Now what about this other thing? How did you form Black Face/kinda reform Black Flag?

Well, Chuck and I have known each other for a real long time. The first interview I did for my old zine, The Birth Of Tragedy, was with Black Flag, and later he got an issue I did on "Evil" and liked it, so they took out some SST ads and eventually SST put out an Oxbow record called Serenade In Red, and subsequently we became friends. Anyway, I think I was doing a show for A Long Slow Screw in LA.

### The book show? Where you do the readings?

Yeah but I started having people like Jamie from Xiu Xiu and Scott from Neurosis back me up so it wasn't just a guy on stage reading.

### And where does Chuck come in?

Oh, well he came to see the show and to play with me and I asked him jokingly, like I'd been doing for years, if he was ready to put Black Flag back together and have me sing. And he kinda laughed again but he never said "that's ridiculous," and eventually I guess he ended up talking to Robo and Dez (Cadena) and Greg (Ginn) about it and then it seemed like it all might happen.

### Wow, so what happened?

Well, in true Black Flag fashion it evolved into a swelter of legal things between Chuck and Greg that made that lineup impossible.

### And so you have these two other guys, which makes it not really a Black Flag reunion but something new.

I never really wanted to do a Chuck Berry Revue thing where there are a lot of guys onstage playing Chuck Berry songs but no Chuck Berry. We always said it'd be cool to do something new and forward-looking and then Chuck said, "Look, when I left Flag around My War there were a lot of songs we didn't record, and when I left the band I took them with me. So I've kinda been waiting to do something new.

### And now is the time. So what's the plan?

We've finished recording and the stuff is being mastered. We're going to release four songs on two different seven inches, only on vinyl. I know you can take a USB turntable and burn the songs, but I'm hoping the number of different steps involved in doing that will give people disincentive to do it. I mean, I'm close to living in my car. Which is to say: We spent money on this so you could spend some money on this.

### And the live show will be...

The unreleased, unheard songs from that era and that set list that I included, these would be specifically Chuck-penned Black Flag tunes.

For me, the Chuck incarnation of Black Flag was the most potent incarnation of the band ever. And when you see us play, with this lineup and these new songs, you will see that this is a heavy fucking representation of a road not taken, of course, now taken.

### And so let's see the set list?

Here you go:

"Monster"  
"Leave Me Out to Rot"  
"Where Will We Run"  
"No More"  
"Spray Paint the Walls"  
"I've Heard It Before"  
"American Waste"  
"Padded Cell"  
"Modern Man"  
"I Love You"  
"The Bars"  
"Damaged 1"  
"Louie Louie"  
"You Bet"  
"White Minority"  
"Six Pack"  
"Police Story"  
"Gimmie Gimmie Gimmie"  
"My War"  
"What I See"  
"Rise Above"  
"Nervous Breakdown"  
"I've Had It"  
"Fix Me"  
"Jealous Again"  
"No Values"  
"Revenge"  
"Depression"  
"I Want to Kill You"

### Wow. That sounds pretty good.

Yeah.

Eugene Robinson interview with VICE UK Editor, Andy Capper. Reprint from VICELAND.COM, August 3rd, 2011.