

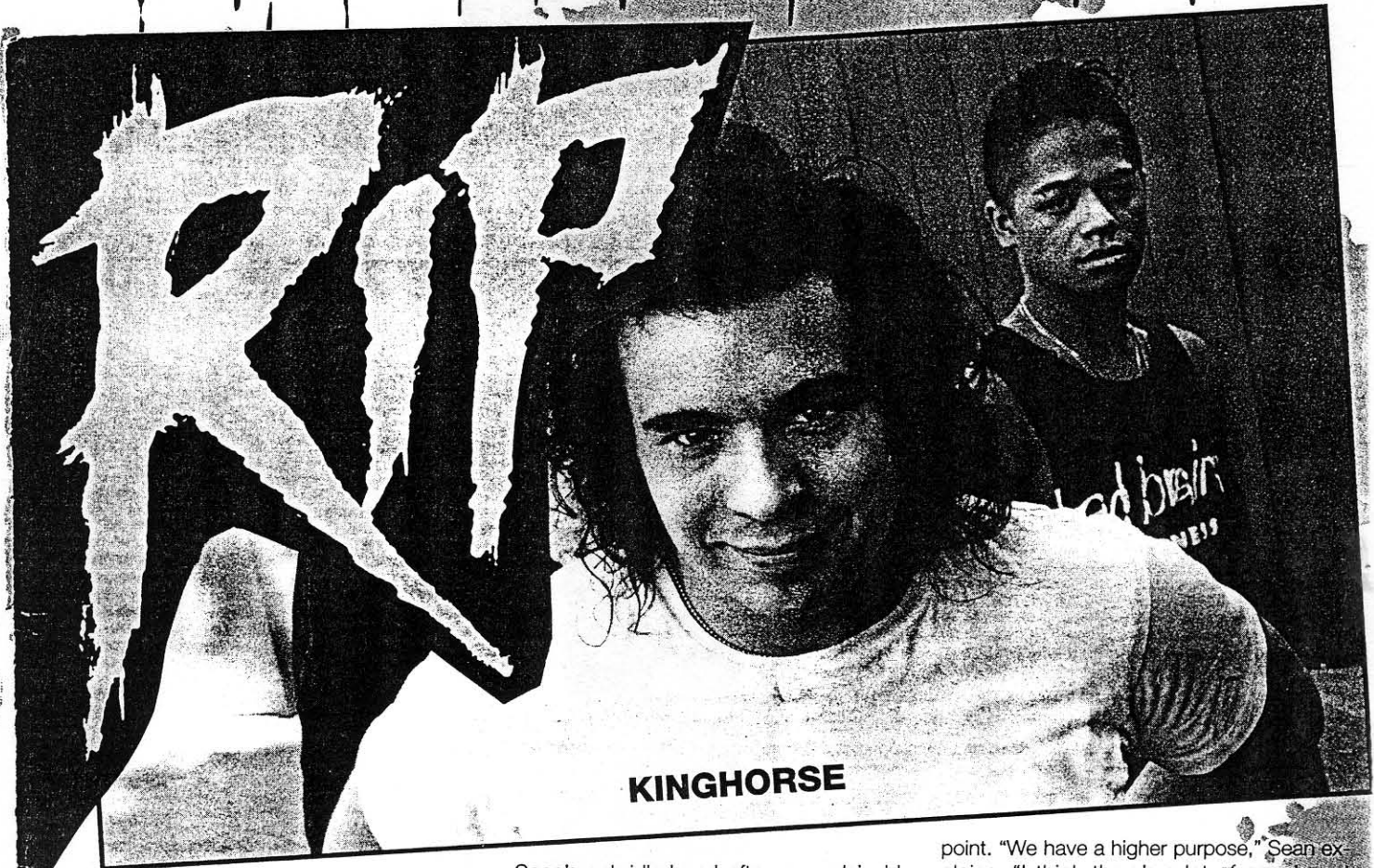
**This Is Not A Band..
This Is A Holy War.**



The truth is one.

Kinghorse rides among us.

FRESH BLOOD



KINGHORSE

In this era of shallow, good-time rockers, Kinghorse offers a loud voice of angry dissent. The group's self-titled debut album bares its fangs of truth, wailing a primal call to reality. Kinghorse delves beneath day-to-day life and unearths the phobias, neuroses and frustrations that most people would prefer to avoid.

This intense quartet hails from Louisville, Kentucky, a place singer Sean Garrison describes as "really, really redneck." Sean, needless to say, was an outcast, but it's likely he would have been an outcast anywhere. "I'm manic-depressive and psychotic about three months out of the year," he claims. "Like this constant chemical up-and-down, up-and-down. So it was pretty weird bein' in a situation where I was around all these redneck hicks all the time, and then suddenly just not bein' in reality."

RIP • MARCH

Sean's unbridled and often unexplainable fury toward his surroundings propelled him to express himself through rock 'n' roll. In 1982 he found a soul brother in guitarist Mark Abromavage. His admiration of Abromavage's fretwork eventually led to a creative pairing when their respective bands broke up. Bassist Mike Bucayu and drummer Kevin Brownstein completed the lineup. The thread that ties the four of them together is their alienation from normalcy.

Not surprisingly, Kinghorse came to the attention of Glenn Danzig. "My first band toured with Samhain," recalls Sean, "so I've known him for a long time." It was Danzig who brought the group's demo to Caroline Records, and who wound up producing their album.

In spite of the darkness with which its members view the world, Kinghorse is fighting for a more positive, open-minded view-

point. "We have a higher purpose," Sean explains. "I think there's a lot of people out there who need to hear that they can survive and get away with their hearts and minds intact if they just look deep and try to apply what they read and what they see and what they hear to their own lives. That's what we're trying to do." It's a lesson that Sean's learned firsthand. "Speaking as someone who is considered by certain groups of people to be ill, I would say, really, that if I can produce and express myself in a way where I can actively throw the demon off my back, I don't have as many problems."

Nevertheless, Sean realizes that there are those who are going to be put off by the group's brutal fight to gain acceptance for society's misfits. "It seems like a lot of people in the industry are frightened of the philosophical approach of the band, and they know we've come to shake it up. There's gonna be trouble."

—Janiss Garza

"WE ARE THE LEGION OF THE UGLY"

...So says SEAN GARRISON, resident evil cherub of Louisville, Kentucky's most loathed sons KINGHORSE. For a band classed as a 'particularly hideous blemish on the face of rock 'n' roll', MIKE GITTER is sure that the legion of the ugly is on the march

FOR ALL they know, Kinghorse might just be the most important band in the known universe.

A gaggle of grimly fiendish loons and warrior poets, their evil cherub of a frontman, Sean Garrison, is dead serious when looking you straight in the face and declaring:

"This isn't merely a band. We're a war, a holy war against the Lie."

Strong words for a bunch who, up until very recently, hovered on the bleaker side of the positively unknown. That is until one Glenn Danzig - a man who loathes and detests everything - let the world in on Louisville, Kentucky's best unkept secret.

"Glenn, in a lot of ways, he really amazes me," states Sean on the Misfits/Danzig

figurehead solely responsible for linking the band with America's Caroline label and producing their eponymously titled debut LP.

"He's in that whole tradition of Wagner and Elvis and all those other people that just refused to say yes to reality at all. He created his own reality completely and if he can help his fans escape for any length of time then he deserves every bit of thanks they can muster.

"If he can sweep them out of whatever terrible mess their lives are in and put them somewhere else - that's the mark of a truly great artist."

Not that Sean (who otherwise goes by the nickname of 'Rat') and his fellow bandmates (bassist Mike Bucayu, guitarist Mark Abromavage and drummer Kevin Brownstein) are in the business of pipe dreams and

escapism. Their mission is 100 times deeper.

"You've got to realise that, to me, it's more than just going onstage and singing," reflects Rat. "It's self-exorcism, ceaselessly, endlessly. The record is one attack after another as I examine myself with every song. I say things that are pretty hard to say and, in saying them, I've thrown the demon off my back, I've freed myself."

IN A LOT of ways, I feel like Nietzsche's Zarathustra coming down from the mountain and realising that people may not have the ears for my words, that they may not be man enough for my message.

"It's about living in a state of catharsis, constantly. Instead of letting the demons eat you up, you examine, attack and cleanse yourself. Just keep fighting the dragon - that's the only way I can put it."

It's like they say, if only fools and children are truly happy, then Kinghorse are getting through life as best they can. Catharsis is the single best adjective to sum up the 'Horse's electro-desolation and accompanying bleak world view. Listen to the croon-to-croak heart and throat scarring of 'Caged', 'Brother Doubt' or 'Red' and tell me this isn't the raving of a soul that knocks back double portions of fear and loathing each morning.

For all their ideological banter, the musical chord struck is just as deep; the post Hardcore, post Speed Metal generation's coming to terms and coming of age. A dark, lurking sound as intense as it is opulent, referencing the rabid snarl of the Birthday Party, the Stooges and the most furious burp-pieces of American Hardcore, all the while tossing about the sort of riffs that

shatter bones at 50 paces.

At present, they've craned their neck out of the South on only one occasion, a particularly unrepentant appearance at LA's Megabuck Metal industry's Concrete Foundations convention. Prefaced by Sean dedicating their set to 'everyone in the business of selling lies to little children', it would seem Kinghorse enjoy their status as a particularly ugly blemish on the face of rock 'n' roll America.

"Truth is, I'm out to burn it down," swears Rat with an I-dare-you-tell-me-I'm-wrong glare. "It's either me or them, so I've got no choice. I despise it with all my soul. I hate it. Rock 'n' roll is the business of the Lie with this whole Mafioso attitude that permeates everything; the bands, the labels, the radio and the video people who are all in the business of marketing utter lies to children who don't know any better."

IT'S JUST reinforcing what's wrong with America in the first place; all Americans live in pursuit of beauty. F**k that, we are the legion of the ugly. There's more of us, the ugly, twisted and warped of the world, than there are of these supposedly beautiful, smart-assed liars. There's got to be a voice for those that are ugly, twisted and need help.

"Remember the first couple of Clash records? The Sex Pistols? Minor Threat? Those were the records that hit me like a thunderclap, the voice of the average guy."

"I once read in an interview with Elvis Costello where he said that, 'Rock 'n' roll is supposed to be the business of pouring out your heart' - and that's exactly what he did. His first four records hit me like the document of some personal tragedy. He's writing

"There's more of us, the ugly, twisted and warped of the world, than there are of those beautiful, smart-assed liars"

SEAN GARRISON

KERRANG!

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about impudence and the fact that he doesn't like the people he's stuck with... and they don't like him. He gives you the impression that he wouldn't have survived if he hadn't written those tunes – that's how venomous his sounds.

"Isn't that what we're supposed to be doing? Aren't we supposed to be telling the truth?"

Kinghorse's roots go back to 1982, the halcyon days of American Hardcore, when Garrison roadied for Kinghorse guitarist Mark Abromavage's seminal Thrash unit, Malignant Growth.

"I remember that Mark's hand moved so fast that I couldn't see it," Sean laughs. "They were probably the biggest influence on me. Talk about bleak people, they were the bleakest motherf**kers I had ever met – they were just out of it, totally weird people!"

The collective end-grunt of a succession of Louisville underground mainstays including Maurice, Solution

Unknown and Fading Out, taking their nom-de-plume from a track on Elvis Costello's 'Get Happy', the 'Horse first rode together in 1988, a Kentuckian 'supergroup' of sorts.

TALK ABOUT a bunch of guys that just couldn't stop doing it, that's us," grins Rat. "To me, the whole American Hardcore explosion of the early '80s was probably the most important period in rock 'n' roll history. It was the whole do-it-yourself concept that Punk was supposed to be about, in mass production. It was a wonderful time and I'm glad to have been a part of it.

"Still, it's too easy for a bunch of guys that are 23 and 24 to stand around and talk about how great the old days were. The real proof of how important that time was is only

being felt today with all the people from that initial movement infiltrating at every level – people like Glenn Danzig, Pushead (Metallica/Mötley Crüe/Kinghorse cover artist) or Perry Farrell from Jane's Addiction. If you think about all the money he's getting to produce all those videos, it's phenomenal. Hell, it was bound to happen eventually. If Black Flag had been able to hold it together and kept making good records, there's no telling how big they'd be now."

If, on the surface, Sean's raves dwell in the realm of extreme paranoia and unfounded conspiracy, it's more out of a diagnosed manic depressive's will to cope than a calculated madman's ploy.

"I'm not crazy, I just have a brain that sort of rebels on me now and then, the sort of mind

admits Rat.

"When we started this, I sort of came to the realisation that what I considered wrong with me or twisted about me... those were the things that actually saved me. In some ways, those things have swallowed me whole, become me.

"All of us in the band are extremely suspicious and paranoid, a couple of us to the point where it sometimes gets real bad. Honestly, I don't characterise any of us as real stable personalities and the interaction between the four of us is pretty volatile, to the point where we become like some sort of psychopathic circus.

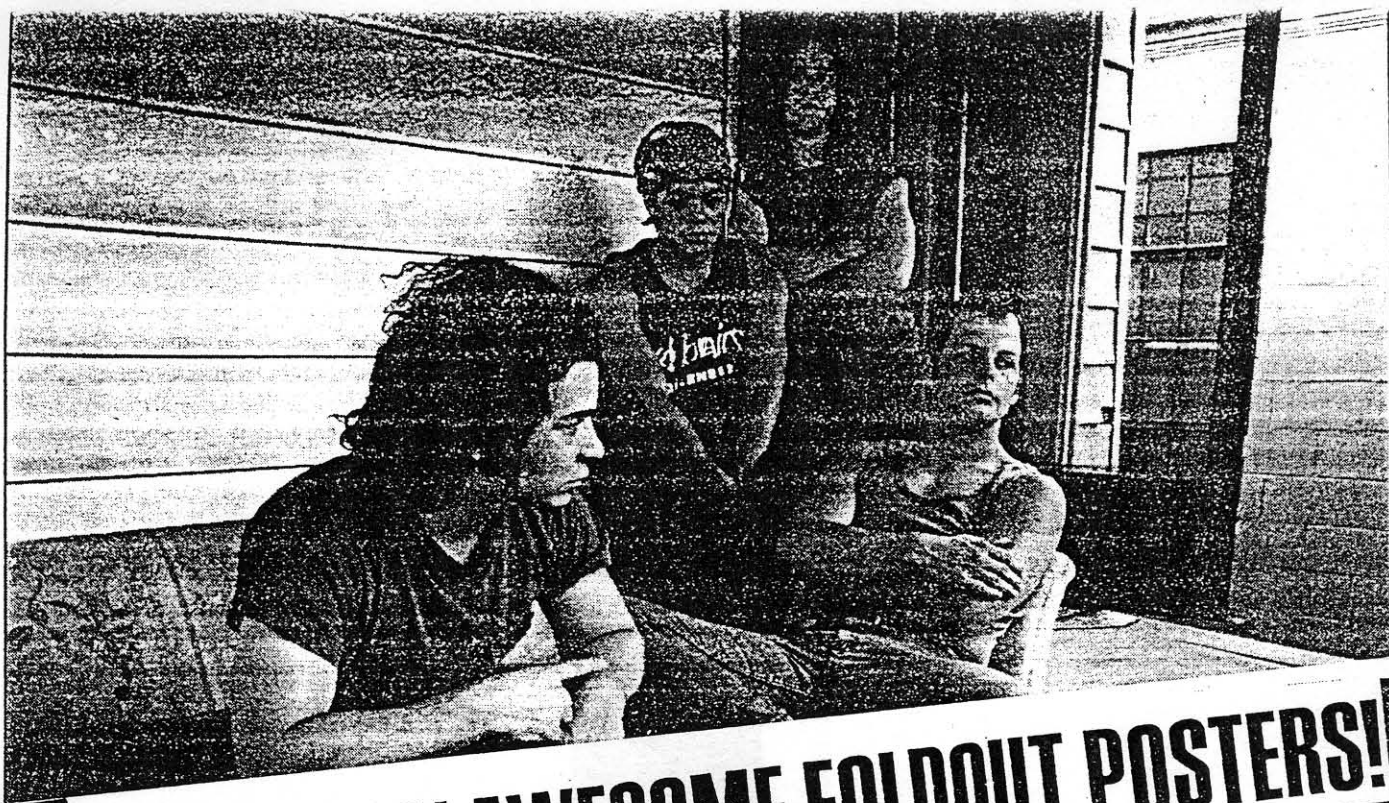
WE'RE CONSTANTLY on the attack psychically, making our stabs against a world that wants us to be silent, speaking the truth to a generation that is sick and tired of being lied to.

"This isn't just music to us. It's a weapon."

"All of us in the band are extremely suspicious and paranoid"
– SEAN GARRISON



KINGHORSE: "We're a holy war against the Lie"



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HEAVY METAL POSTERS

KINGHORSE: DON'T MESS WITH 'EM

OK students, here's philosophy lesson #1, according to Kentucky's wild semi-thrash Kinghorse: "throwing the demon off your back is better than letting it eat you alive from the inside out."

Vocalist Sean Garrison; bassist Mike Bucayu; drummer Kevin Brownstein and guitarist Mark Abromavage have a knack for spitting on rock's

pretensions. As they say, "we like to tell the truth about ourselves and our lives instead of hiding behind the bogus world that rock music creates. We are out to destroy that bull wherever we find it. This is not a band. It's a holy war against that crap."

To that end, their cataclysmic debut offering, *Kinghorse*, on Caroline Records, produced by Glenn Danzig,

is a slap in the music industry face, a gob on standard practices everywhere. "Freeze," "Caged," "Lay Down And Die," "Clay Fist," "Two Far Gone," these tracks have an originality and verve that sets them apart from the usual run-of-the-mill debut. Check it out.

KINGHORSE

Their mentor is musclebound Glenn Danzig, they're from the American South and they don't slide to easily into any obvious niche. They thrash with the intensity of Violence at their most rabid, but they're not *Thrash Metal*. They've grown out of a Hardcore background but their vocalist has a full bodied, swooping and meaty voice like you never heard in any Hardcore act. They're a lot of familiar elements from your favourite music taken further than you've ever heard them taken before.

They're Kinghorse, and the name comes from an Elvis Costello song. Sometimes things ain't so simple.

To begin with, frontman Sean Garrison explains how the band (himself, Mike Bucayu on bass, Kevin Brownstein on drums and Mark Abromavage on guitar) came to be signed to the rather happening Caroline Records label (home of dread rockers White Zombie, the excellent Funhouse, demented funksters Primus and in recent times Bad Brains)...

"Well there was a couple of press people went into the label while the tape was just sittin' there and they were sayin' these people are warped, you've got to sign them. Then Glenn Danzig went in sayin' the same thing. They were gettin' the same response from a lot of people...but the demo we sent them was truly awful. I listened to it the other day and I was appalled..."

None the less they eventually got the deal.

So how warped are Kinghorse?

"Well, it's just something other people keep saying. It's not something I'm too aware of. We've got a real isolationist attitude...two of us come from very backwards places. All those stories you hear about backwards America, that's all true stuff."

Garrison goes on to indicate that the band are more than a little suspicious of the music industry. Though they were shipped out to L.A. by their label to showcase at the annual 'Foundations Forum' metal-biz convention they would never contemplate re-locating out of their Southern base of Louisville.

"We pretty much despise the industry. Until the record came out we hadn't gone out of town much and I guess we must be backwards...moving would be out of the question."

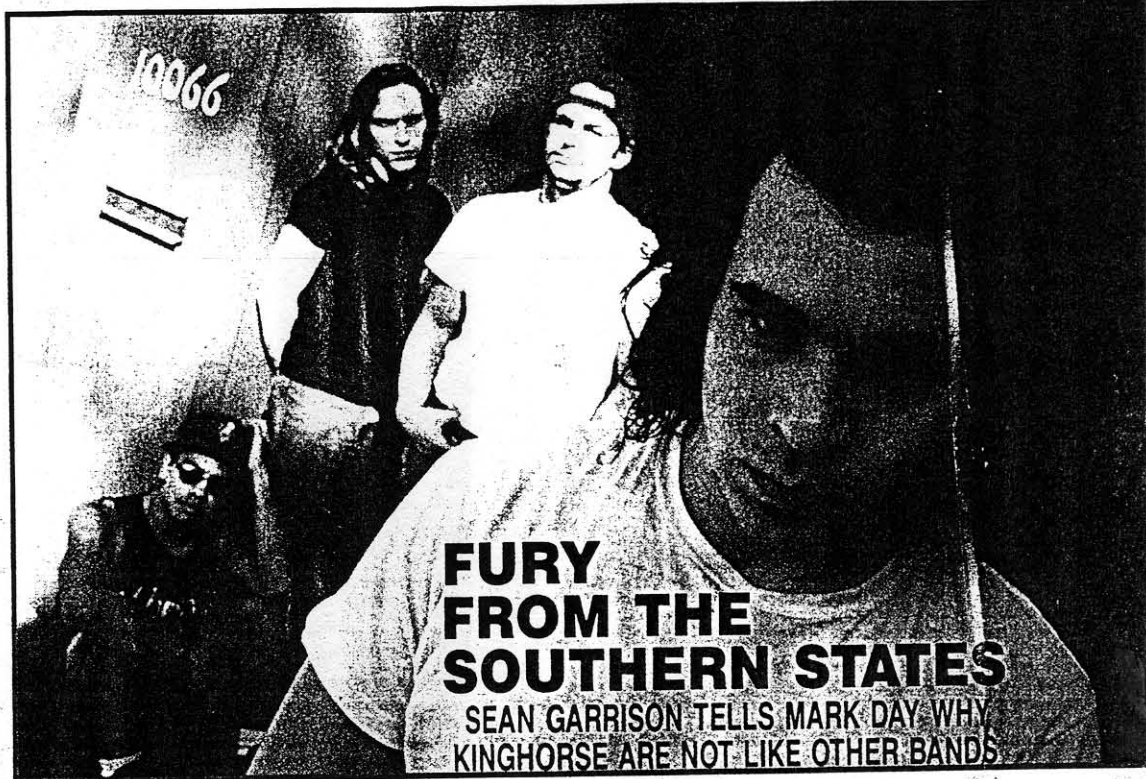
Their local shows are now pretty well attended, Garrison adds, to the point where they've been drafted in to open for na-

mainstream metal kids here who only get as underground as Testament or something...all those kids like us. It's not obviously Metal or Punk or Hardcore. But, yeah, anyone who likes Metal is going to like Mark's guitar. Though we're not

like bursts of mental illness."

Is mental illness closer to what Kinghorse sound like live? Garrison thinks it is...but he's not sure.

"I leave the live show up to the individual...I've no idea what people are seeing. I know



tional acts by local promoters - political post-Hardcore outfits like Fugazi and the Henry Rollins Band. But they don't, according to Garrison, fit in any better alongside that than they did playing L.A..

"Our whole approach and philosophy is different. Wouldn't say that we agree with Fugazi on any point. But the dichotomy at the Foundations gig was also pretty severe. I can't think where we'd fit...we've been compared to wrong a lot because of the cathartic thing...that's the word that keeps being used."

But you'll have to accept that a lot of Thrash-heads are going to pick up a Kinghorse record for the riffs, sorta Tony Iommi strained through Danzig's bleak, post-apocalyptic production. Some are just not going to pick up on Garrison's lyrics, rife with challenge and psycho-therapy.

"I think we'll cross over because we were able to appeal to a wide variety of people here at home", he replies, "The

going to have the usual Metal topics, there are a lot of messages in the songs that I don't think people are prepared to hear. I'm not writing songs about the Greenhouse Effect. I don't care, and I don't wake up thinking about Satan in the morning."

What about producer and guru Glenn Danzig. Did he sacrifice any goats during recording to ensure the success of the record?

"Well, between you and me, I don't know. I would ask you not to print this...". Garrison giggles, "There was one situation that was pretty spooky! But I've known him for so long I expect this sort of thing! We're very hard headed people, we're hard to deal with. But he it too, we fought quite a bit...he did give us a hand with arrangements. There were parts in some of the original compositions that were really screwy, schitzo. So we cut some things up to make songs that sounded more like songs and less like primal scream therapy. Less

we're different to any act most Metal fans have ever seen. We use the medium of rock music for different reasons...it's therapeutic. It's a necessity and I don't think we do it for the same reason as 99% of other bands. If I wasn't doing it I'd live on the street or be locked away somewhere...it comes across as very serious and pained."

Garrison describes his subject matter and motivations as "deadly serious". The name of the band, he hopes, expresses "relentlessness".

"There's a line in the song it's taken from which goes, With tenderness and brute force...that's pretty interesting..."

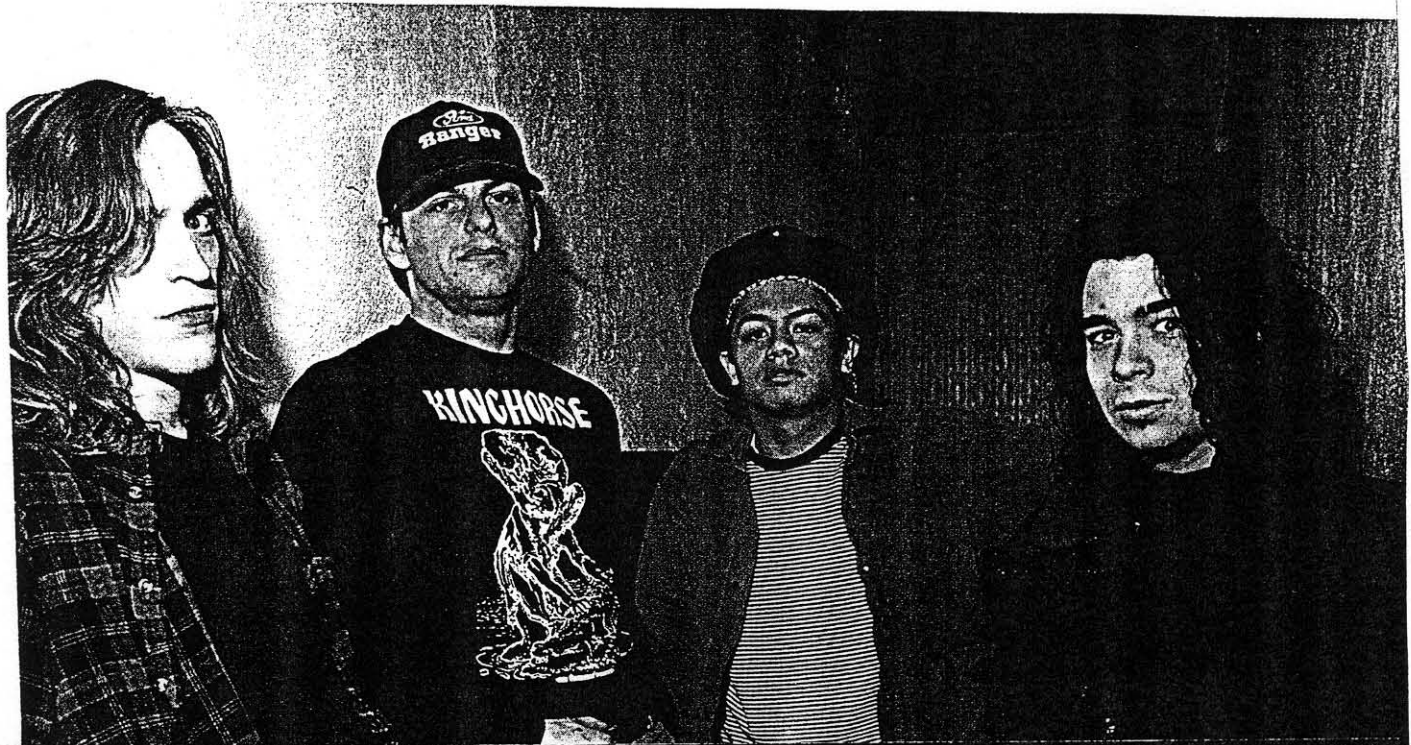
He says that the band are "Very poor people", and admits that "I don't know what's going to happen to us next..."

Some things are never that simple, but some things have a beautiful simplicity to them. Kinghorse are both.

MARK DAY

Thrash Metal Magazine

KINGHORSE



PURE SPEED

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"Everything that I deal with in our lyrics is so totally and completely personal," says Kinghorse's singer, Sean Garrison. "I don't think I could come near some of these things inside of everyday communication." The power of Kinghorse comes from the tornado of emotion that lies deep within the psyche. This group thrives on the kind of intensity that most people fear.

They have tapped into this visceral energy on their self-titled debut album. According to Sean, "Cage" is about the way "everyone's walking around locked up, and they're looking to each other, hoping that someone else will have the keys to open up their heart." "Greatest Gift" is about uniqueness and individuality. "Being ashamed because you're different is the sickest kind of lie," Sean advises. Instead, he acknowledges, "It's your salvation."

coming from. He grew up in the suburbs of Louisville, Kentucky, and found he had nothing in common with the beer-drinking rednecks of his neighborhood. So he turned to rock 'n' roll for his release. He found three other players of like mind—guitarist Mark Abromavage, bassist Mike Bucayu and drummer Kevin Brownstein—and together they formed Kinghorse.

Glenn Danzig, who knew of Sean's earlier group, was impressed by Kinghorse's aggression and intelligence. He brought the band to Caroline Records, and subsequently produced their album.

In listening to Kinghorse you risk exploring hidden areas of your mind and your emotions. That's exactly what this band has set out to do. Says Sean, "We're in a psychic war against those forces that are trying to shut down the soul." —J.G.

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SHORT CUTS

Reviewed by Gary Cee, Clinton S. Freeman and Corey Levitan

Kinghorse (Caroline)

Debut from Kentucky thrashers boasts producer Glenn Danzig's trademark power. Sean Garrison's strangled voice shares Glenn's dynamic range and wolfen growl, and ex-Malignant Growth guitarist Mark Abromavage tortures his six-string. Stop-start tempos are Metallica-esque, but with titles like "Clay Fist," "Razor" and "Lay Down & Die," who's to argue with Kinghorse?—CSF

GUITAR WORLD

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN
1954-1990

SPECIAL
COLLECTOR'S
ISSUE

DECEMBER 1990

★ ★
KINGHORSE
Kinghorse
CAROLINE RECORDS

AN INTERESTING COMBINATION of thrash-metal, the Doors and southern hardcore. Kinghorse has plenty to offer: There are cool time signatures, like the 5/4 verses of "Freeze." Mark Abromavage's total crunch guitar is blessedly devoid of technique-crazed taps and speed licks. And when Sean Garrison hits his lower range and actually *sings*, as on "Lay Down And



Die" and the bridge of "Greatest Gift," Kinghorse sounds unique and compelling. Most of the time, however, they rage and shriek and sound no different from a thousand other bands working this genre. As with most hardcore outfits, Kinghorse's self-righteous grandstanding is little more than an annoying ploy. For instance, they proclaim themselves, "not a band, [but] a Holy War against...the bogus world that rock music creates." Then, in "Caged," they sing, "C'mon, bitch, well gimme the keys/Yeah, I like you better on your knees."

—RICHARD J. GRULA

KINGHORSE

'Kinghorse'

(Caroline CARLP 11)

KKKK

AMAZING, THE 'names' the good folks at Caroline have brought in to sell this record: *Produced by Glenn Danzig... Cover art by Pushead...* Big deal.

Kinghorse exceed their shrinkwrap's hype with an album that throws the sort of riffs that could break jaws across the room.

No surprise that 'Fonzig' digs the grooves these Kentuckian misfits bring to bear. As ominous and textured as Glenn's own Samhain, as cathartic as the Birthday Party, Damned-esque in melody and tossing about the ugliest of genuine Hardcore angst, Kinghorse make a taut, aggressive debut that could potentially go down as one of the launching pad LPs of 1990.

Owing absolutely no allegiance to any frivolous bandwagon, this is a truly hair-raising affair. Evil cherub Sean Garrison growls with naked ferocity, unshackling the asylum inmates with 'Freeze' and 'Caged': *'You're not man enough to open this cage,'* he sneers. Plainly, Kinghorse are not a pack to be taken lightly.

While slipping dangerously close to a Tom Jones mega-croon with 'Lay Down And Die' and 'Razor', Mark Abromavage's muscular, storming guitars and the odd belly-grunt keep matters garrottingly rock solid and vengefully soulful.

Kinghorse are not simply a bunch of Danzig copyists - 'Brother Doubt' and 'Greatest Gift' gallop along at a steady clip, guitars piling up with twice the urgency while lyrics fall into the sort of ugly introspection few have the guts to bring upon themselves.

If you're man enough...



KINGHORSE

Kinghorse

(Caroline Records - CAR LP 11)

GOOD

70

I love all these bands who seemingly come out of nowhere and proceed to upset the applecart with an annoyingly unconventional approach. Which is exactly what Kentucky's KINGHORSE look more than set to do with their eponymously titled debut for Caroline Records. Incidentally, this enterprising label just gets better, by bringing to the masses some of rock/metals most unpredictable eccentrics, like PRIMUS and MIND OVER FOUR.

Although to be perfectly honest I've yet to get completely to grips with this album as a whole. KINGHORSE, the band, y'see, are far from instant. The four piece churn out an incredibly odd amalgam of sounds and styles, sufficiently well enough in fact to entice Glenn Danzig into producing their debut. This he's done sympathetically, while also giving it an occasional, I dunno, touch of the macabre sort of thing.

Yep, "Kinghorse", the album is a strange beast, full of agitated squabbling guitars, irritable rhythms and Sean Garrison's perplexing, perhaps acquired, vocal approach. Catch just a couple of the titles, like

"Caged" or "Razor". Angry. Angry titles for terribly pissed off, roots based music. Kinda like an extremely marked DANZIG meets soon come heroes TWO-BIT THIEF, but with an additional aura that's all their own. KINGHORSE may not be an easy listen, but they're certainly a rewarding one.

ROB CLYMO

JANUARY 1991



KINGHORSE

Kinghorse

Caroline

If you thought that most Kentucky bands sat on their porches and twanged on their acoustics . . . well, think again. Case in point: Kinghorse, a band from Louisville that mounts a full aural assault with its self-titled debut album. Check out the typically gory cover art by Pus-head, and then strap yourself to a chair (or maybe a pole, if you like it standing up) and turn it up to 11.

Lead screamer Sean Garrison's voice gets under your skin and makes you squirm, while the rest of the quartet (Mark Abromavage, guitar; Kevin Brownstein, drums; and Mike Bucayu, bass) provides a suitably thrashy maelstrom, captured well by producer Glenn Danzig. Lyrically, these boys come off like Manson-loving weirdos: Witness "Motherfucker, open this cage / Maybe then I'll leave this bitch in one piece" on "Caged." Check it out, this ain't no one-trick pony.

Lauren Spencer

Queensrÿche Gets Personal With Haunting Paranoid Love Songs; Alice in Chains Debuts

METAL
BY MIKE GITTER

JACK IN THE BOX: KEROUAC'S SPOKEN-WORD RECORDINGS

PULSE

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this as "a personal rec...
it as a personal record *Queensrÿche*
style. *Empire* is still a record of revo-
lutionary dogmas, the musings of
poet-warriors returned home, unable
to relinquish their visions of a world
gone topsy-turvy.

As seamless and anthemic as it is
complex and challenging, Queens-
rÿche has created a haunting album
of paranoid love songs. Highlights
include the eerily tense "The Thin
Line," painfully melancholic "An-
other Rainy Night (Without You)"
and guitarist Chris DeGarmo's evoca-
tive, Pink Floyd acoustic entry
"Silent Lucidity."

Alice in Chains (also from Seattle)
signals a second generation of new
age retro with *Facelift* (Columbia). A
chummy bit of metallurgy that moves
from *Master of Puppets* crunchdom
("We Die Young") to '70s cliché
("Sunshine"), this record transcends
the generic in subtle ways. More Sab
than Zep, Alice in Chains does
sound an awful lot like a palatable
version of "the Sub-Pop Sound" —
probably the upshot of hailing from
that selfsame Pacific Northwest
"trendy rock Mecca." The band
strikes a chord somewhere between
Soundgarden and Nirvana, though
no way is as wildly eccentric or mark-
edly interesting as either.

In sheer grunt-dom, Kinghorse
foists a pretty boss death-rattle. Pro-
duced by Glenn Danzig (like that's
supposed to be a big deal), the band's
self-titled Caroline debut is a tour-
de-grrrrr of cathartic power. When
(truly) anguished frontman Sean
Garrison screams "*Motherfucker, open
this cage!*" it's a genuine moment of
adolescent spleen-venting on par
with Black Flag's "Rise Above." Un-
der Danzig's Satanic influence, the
lad's guttural roar is twisted into a
creepy croon that ends up sounding
strangely like Tom Jones dueting

QUEENSRÛCHE (CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT): CHRIS DE-
GARMO, GEOFF TATE, MICHAEL WILTON, SCOTT ROCKEN-
FIELD AND EDDIE JACKSON

Nick Cave in Steve Albini's meat
grinder ("Two Far Gone"). Kinghorse
stakes its claim with an album of dark
intents and hellborne promise.

Andy Andersen, con man, self-
proclaimed "Master of Corruption"
and San Franciscan rock fool, de-
serves to be a star. His previous out-
fit, Attitude, went virtually unheard
— superb melodic thrash with plenty
o' hep rock'n'roll stylings. The high-
jumping wise-ass has, however, re-
surfaced with *Two Bit Thief*, a cool
mess of a band that sounds like all
those great old Brit-punk 45s slowed
down to 33. The band's *Combat* de-
but, *Another Sad Story*... In *The Big
City*, is a record that actually sounds
as tough as the skid row life it an-
themizes. Straightahead and pum-
meling, it strikes a chord somewhere
between the Ramones, GBH and
Rose Tattoo (whose "Remedy" *Two
Bit Thief* is cool enough to cover). The
lead track "City Boys," along with
"Hard Times" and "Modern Revolu-
tion" pack a punch the Skid Rows,
Spread Eagles and Faster Pussycats of
the world lay claim to but never quite
deliver. ■

Mike's dog, Bundy, is currently in heat
and spending a lot of time indoors catch-
ing up on her favorite episodes of *Barnaby
Jones*.

Louisville's hard-to-label Kinghorse relies on instinct

By KRISTIN FAUREST
Special Writer

People who are pushed to express themselves have "got to have some kind of demon," said Kinghorse vocalist Sean Garrison. "If you're not in a constant state of war, you're not alive."

"This whole thing is unpleasant but necessary," added drummer Kevin Brownstein.

The result is what Garrison likes to call "self-exorcism" — brutal, unrelenting music that's as cathartic for the audience as it is for the performers.

Garrison, better known as Rat, said the basis of the Louisville band's success lies in its reliance on instinct. "We want an instinctive reaction from the crowd," he said. "That's the most important part. It's obvious to me when I see a band and they're not relying on instinct."

Garrison and Brownstein were speaking, together with bassist Mike Bucayu, in guitarist Mark Abromavage's Bardstown Road apartment, where they practice.

The musicians didn't want to discuss artistic influences, and they were even more reluctant to compare Kinghorse to anyone else.

With a manic rhythm section, searing guitar work and savage, primal vocals, the band gets slapped with a lot of labels, from heavy metal to hardcore to "evil beatniks." None of them sticks. Although Garrison halfheartedly cited



Kinghorse, left to right: vocalist Sean Garrison, bassist Mike Bucayu, drummer Kevin Brownstein and guitarist Mark Abromavage. They'll be at CD Graffiti's on Friday.

PHOTO BY TOM OWEN

early blues as an influence, he quickly added, "Between all of us, we cover everything. We don't even think about it. ... That's for people to decide themselves."

The lyrics aren't to be classified either. "Everything is so completely personal," said Garrison. He's heard people use the words "existentialist" and "nihilistic" — terms he considers inaccurate.

Kinghorse was pieced together in April

1988, a product of the remnants of several local alternative bands. Bucayu and Garrison were in Maurice; Bucayu had also played in Solution Unknown. Abromavage played in Malignant Growth, which later became Fading Out, which Brownstein joined.

When the four first played together, Garrison said, "Mike and I said, 'Yes, we've hit on it at last.'"

Most of Kinghorse's songs are written by Abromavage and Garrison and developed by the rest of the band. "Mark is able to come up with material that sounds like nobody else's," said Garrison. "We all immediately know what to do."

They must be doing something right because the band draws huge crowds at all-ages shows at Tewilgans, Uncle Pleasant's, CD Graffiti's and the Red Barn, as well as at Bogart's in Cincinnati.

Fans like Tim Furnish, who just graduated from the Brown School and also plays guitar for Crain, keep coming back to see Kinghorse.

"Their music makes me feel," he said. "It's like intense. I kind of know what they're singing about. I don't particularly agree with everything, but I can see points made. It's mainly just the intensity of the sound."

"They draw a real good crowd," said Mark Smalley, owner of Uncle Pleasant's. "They're really good players. They do thrash and bash, but it's not just that. They're really good at what they do."

The band's debut record, "Rise," on Caroline Records, a subsidiary of Virgin, is due out in late August.

Kinghorse has tentative plans to tour this summer, but you can see the group for sure Friday at CD Graffiti's, 4121 Shelbyville Road. Doors open at 8 p.m., but Kinghorse won't take the stage until about 11. Cover is \$5.

5

Local alternative metal band, Kinghorse, releases debut

By JOHN JUSTUS
Music columnist

In 1982, Sean Garrison used to be a roadie for Mark Abromavage's old thrash band, *Malignant Growth*, and later went on to form *Maurice*. After both bands disbanded, that hammer of the gods, *Kinghorse*, was forged from the pieces in the nether-hell of Louisville in 1988.

It took the group no time at all to become one of

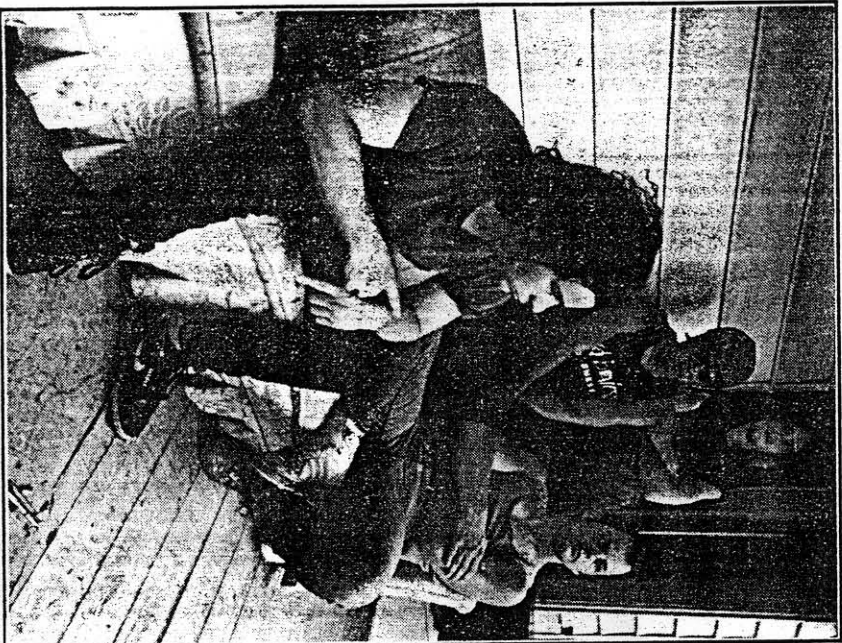


PHOTO COURTESY CAROLINE RECORDS

Kinghorse members, from left, Sean Garrison, Mike Bucayu, Kevin Brownstein and Mark Abromavage.

Louisville's top headlining hardcore bands. Starting out at dives like the Red Barn, they went on to play greater venues opening for fellow hardcore survivors like *Fugazi*, the *Henry Rollins Band*, and *Soul Asylum*.

In 1989 *Kinghorse* played several tour dates with Glenn Danzig's band *Danzig*. With Glenn's help *Kinghorse* was signed to Caroline Records and he also produced their self-titled album.

Cover art will be provided by avant-garde artist, Pushhead, who designed T-shirts for *Metallica*, *Mötley Crüe* and *Aerosmith*, not to mention numerous album covers including *The Misfits*.

Kinghorse's debut album marks a new success for band members Abromavage (guitar), Sean Garrison (vocals), Mike Bucayu (bass), Kevin Brownstein (drums).

If you have ever seen the band play live you already know of their reality-shattering sound that has been known to generate the psyche of audience members and whip them into a mad frenzy.

Its debut release captures that same musical strength. It presents its listeners with a hardcore sound that is blended with a true rage and carved in mental stone from the minds of the band members.

"Lay Down and Die," is a tune that reaches out and relates how the pressures of life grind people to the point where insanity seems to be the only constant. The concept came from Garrison's own experience.

"There have been times in everyone's life when they were so screwed up that there were literally two or three records that brought you through it," Garrison explained. "The music helped you to keep your mind intact."

"Greatest Gift," is a statement on the questioning of belonging to society, and "Red" is a brain-banking song with emphases on how hatred engulfs the soul.

Kinghorse's new self-titled album adds a little flair to anyone's record collection. Even if you are not a hardcore enthusiast or

haven't seen the band the million times they've played locally you will be overcome with what it has to offer.

Kinghorse has found its place in the high country and this album will surely turn some heads in the industry and bring great acclaim for the Louisville music scene.

Garrison said *Kinghorse* often takes most alternative music listeners by surprise because of the stigma attached to heavy metal.

"People who are into alternative music sometimes consider themselves to be smarter or they think they know something that the average Joe doesn't know and have an attitude about it," Garrison said. If it has anything heavy metal to do with it at they think it is stupid. They think of some guy with his hair parted down the middle wearing a REO Speedwagon T-shirt."

Garrison said the industry has reached a point where at last it has become impossible to categorize any form of music.

Sean commented, "What is post-hardcore alternative metal? That's what we are. What does that mean?"

"Finally we are back to square one. It's just a whole bunch of rock bands again. I don't really see any difference between the *Red Hot Chili Peppers* and *Sin Yard*. I don't want to differentiate.

"I'm sick of going, 'what is this' and trying to figure out if a group is targeted to me," Garrison said. "Does it go with my hair length, what I read, what I wear, and what I eat? That's insane. Because I read William Burroughs that doesn't mean I have to listen to something heavy. You can't label things anymore." *Kinghorse* is backed by the group's own philosophy.

"The band exists for the therapeutic value of the rock 'n' roll medium... What we're saying is we don't care how ugly you are, how crazy you are, or how screwed up your beliefs are. We accept you with open arms. You can be yourself," Garrison said.

Kinghorse's debut album will be released Oct. 31. To celebrate this gala event, an album-signing party will be held Friday, Nov. 2 at Ear X-tacy records, which will be followed by a show that night at the Zodiac Club.

KINGHORSE: PURE HATE

Kinghorse are a four-piece band from Kentucky. They have toured with and been produced by Glenn Danzig, have a migraine-inducing debut album on their hands, and above all, hate everything! Robyn Doreian reckons they know what's going on.

I proceed with caution to room 575 of the Sheraton Hotel, Los Angeles where I am scheduled to conduct an interview with the somewhat strange foursome that constitute Kinghorse.

Upon entering their temporary quarters, I am confronted with Sean Garrison (vocalist and self-professed psychotic), who is adorned in a white hotel towel wrapped tightly around his head. Unthinkingly, someone lights up a cigarette, which results in Sean diving head first onto the nearest bed, screaming, "Put that out! I'm trying to breathe!"

After the offending article is extinguished, Mike Bucayu (bass guitar), Kevin Brownstein (drums), and Mark Abromavage (guitar) sit down around a now-upright Mr. Garrison to embark upon what was to become the strangest, but most refreshing interview I have ever experienced.

Hailing from Louisville, Kentucky, Kinghorse came together from the ashes of a number of prominent bands from their hometown.

Previous to this, Mark handled Stooges-style guitar duties for Malignant Growth, a punk outfit that specialised in playing at a death defyingly fast breakneck speed. Mike and Sean cut their teeth in Maurice, who Glenn Danzig thought highly enough of to include as support of Samhain's *November Coming Fire* tour. As time went on, both bands dismantled, and a considerable time later, mutual admiration bought the the foursome together.

Kinghorse's debut show with Fugazi spread the word that they were a true force to be reckoned with, and their successive dates with Henry Rollins and Soul Asylum gained them such a following that they found themselves in the position to begin headlining.

Glenn Danzig once again appeared in the scheme of things, and requested they support Danzig on several southern tour dates. Through their association with Glenn, their demo was passed on to Caroline Records, which led to their subsequent signing. This resulted in Glenn carrying his commitment to the band even further, by entering the studios in New York to produce their debut album.

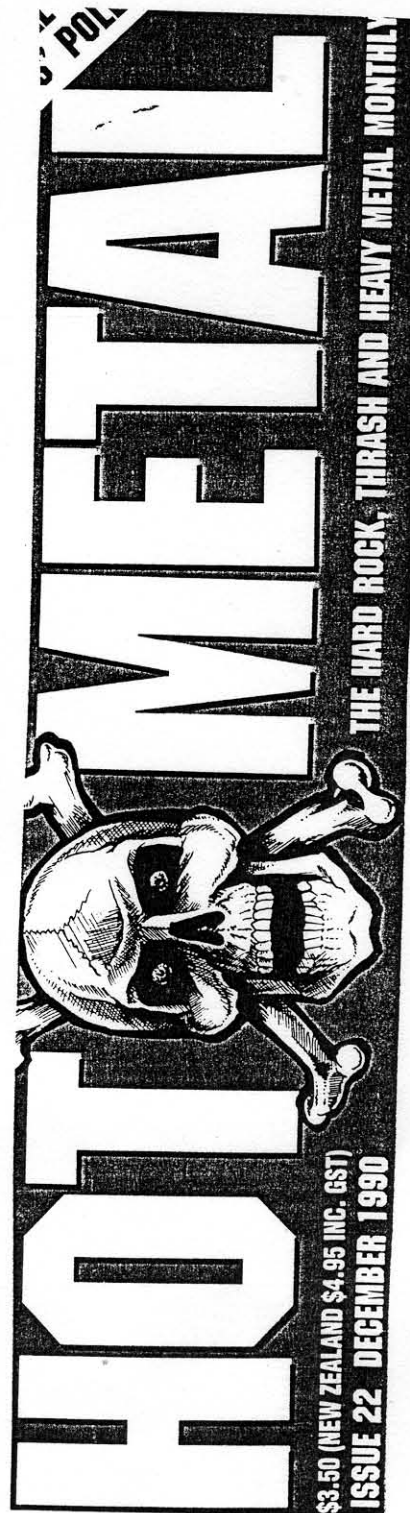
The artwork which adorns their album sleeve was done by none other than Pushead, who is already famous for his illustrations on Metallica, Samhain and Misfits record covers. Kinghorse sent him examples of the style of art they had been using on their fliers, replicas of woodcut prints from the 14th and 15th Centuries along the lines of Dutch engraver, Albert Dürer.

Once again, the use of Pushead was at the instigation on Glenn. So, what was the great Mr. Danzig like to work with?

"There were times in the studio when what we were playing was pretty chaotic, and what Glenn did was make the songs more palatable to the people who weren't initiated to our sound. Some parts were just out of nowhere. We were just grabbing shit from the air and putting it in because it was fun," explains Sean.

"We didn't give a f__k! We were having a great time with it, and then we were told it wasn't going to float on radio and that it wouldn't gel with some of the goofy-ass mother f__kers in this hotel (Kinghorse were showcasing at the Foundations Forum which took place at the Sheraton Hotel). So it was time to cut them up. It was a step we had to take. You don't enter the business of recording and whine about what your producer is doing. His ideas weren't about totally changing our songs at all, or watering them down - he was making really constructive suggestions. He simply gave us a chance to get a certain feel for different things from his perspective."

For those of us who haven't had the pleasure of hearing the manic chaos that reigns with Kinghorse both on vinyl and even more so live, I guess the Danzig connection could entice the uninitiated to listen to the band out of sheer curiosity. "It depends on your view of it," exclaims Sean. "We don't really





have anything to do with that world. We are totally against it! If it was up to us, we would burn it down and grind those people into atomic dust!"

Just what kind of people are you talking about?

"The people who like the kind of music and the kind of lifestyle where everything is totally packaged and put together on a platter," declares Sean. "It's like, f__k, Mark (whose day job is a garbageman) went onstage in his work clothes!"

"It's like taking a really shitty book and putting a real expensive cover on it," adds Mike.

Sean takes up the story once again. "We're not talking about Danzig, because they are a good band. It's just that when you deal with Glenn, you have to deal with everyone else out there. It's like the majority of people who came to see us play the other night (at their showcase at the Forum) went in thinking, 'I like it already!!'"

It really says something about people if they are that influenced by names.

"We're not from this kind of place. We don't know anything about all of this. Everything is so packaged and manufactured here in Los Angeles. The bands, the radio, and all of these people are pre-programmed before they even get on records or the radio. They have assimilated all the information they need to sell themselves.

"Because we are so isolated from all of that, we are able to tell the truth about what is going on with us without ever considering whether these people are going to like it at all. We succeed in the honesty factor where 90 per cent of those bands fail. It's not strictly their fault, it's just because they have been going out to clubs every night of their lives and have bought every f__king record they could find. I hadn't watched a video in five years until I went downstairs. I don't know who anyone is!

"We're in this business to deal with what is wrong with us. It's self-exorcism. All four of us are pathological misfits," confesses Sean.

How are people reacting to you here in Los Angeles?

"It's taken them a couple of days to get up the nerve to come near me," deducts Sean. "They're like (sarcastically), 'Oh, you're raging!' I don't know what the f__k they are talking about. I'm like, 'What does that mean? Do you like us or do you hate us?' 'Oh, you're great, d-u-u-d-e!'

"I tell you, I wouldn't piss on these people if they were on fire, the sons of bitches! We've annoyed so many f__king people. I'm not going to compromise to those filthy minded people who live to get high and cum. F__k them! I've met soupspoons that are deeper then these motherf__kers, so we are going to stick our dicks in as many metal peoples' asses as we can!

"We saw Rob Halford in the hall, and he was surrounded by some security people, so I just walked in front of him and said some rude things, mumbled like I was drunk, and he started laughing and left. Then we saw the guys from Testament, and I was like 'O-O-O-E-E-E!'. I tried to pinch their asses and they couldn't deal with me and made a comment to the effect that we looked lost.

"The deep-caring-about-world-issues metal room is down there! This is the stupid-ass independent butt-licker room. You can't come in here. Oh shit, you know, it's all crazy," surmises Sean.

After witnessing the band live at Foundations Forum, where Glenn Danzig also put in a rare public appearance to observe his protégés, I came away with a better understanding of Sean's apt words, "We're the thorn in the side of this whole damn mess!" They are indeed. Kinghorse's brand of chaotic (ex-psychiatric institution, pre-lobotomy) intensity would not be readily digested by those who have a weak constitution either physically or mentally, but those with the stamina should make a point of purchasing this fine debut release.

Having survived an hour or so of nihilistic rantings, I leave the band to their own devices. I enquire as to what they will be doing once they are back in Kentucky.

"We'll set up a couple of shows and figure out how to get some money, as we don't have any. We don't even own a drum kit, we rent one.

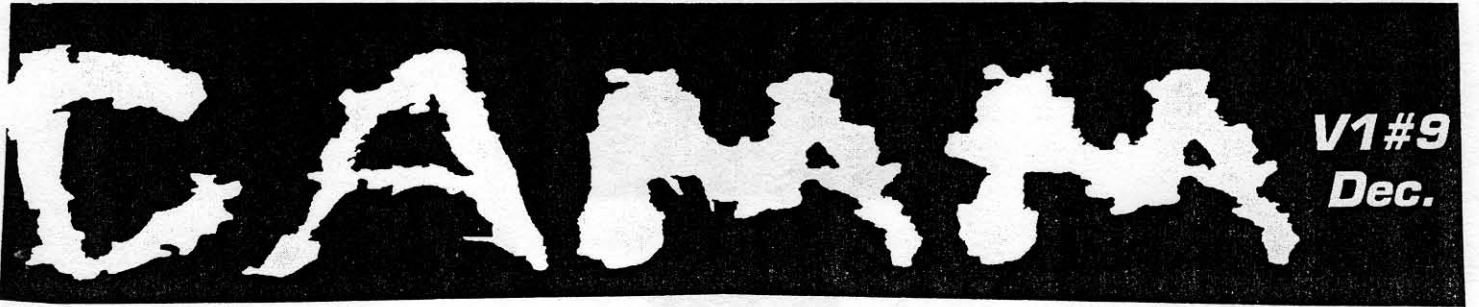
"Just go home and sit on the porch.

"We just love it! I can't wait to get home and sit under a tree and throw acorns to the squirrels. I just want to sit down on some grass, as I haven't seen a patch since I've been here."

Sean wonders why I am laughing.

"Is there something wrong with that?," he enquires.

Oh no. Quite the contrary. There is nothing wrong with that at all...



critique

- Mark Kadzielawa

Kinghorse *Kinghorse* (Caroline)

Kinghorse plays a kind of weird version of metal/rock. They sound garage-y at times, reminding me of Seattle bands. At other times they sound a lot like Misfits/Samhain, but it may be due to the fact that Glenn Danzig produced this album.

The album has Danzig's trademarks all over it. One might think that's bad, but isn't Danzig's sound one of the most distinctive and influential ones around? I think Kinghorse's music has the ability to appeal to the mixture of different crowds - it's not pure hardcore, it's not definite rock, it's a little bit of everything put together.

As I mentioned before, the sound is pretty much the same throughout the whole album, but as far as the influences go, they vary from song to song. There are a few areas of improvement needed, but I'm sure the band will improve as time goes on.

Kinghorse is still a very young band with good potential and this album shows it. Keep your eyes and ears open.

- Mark Kadzielawa