

● Over the rotting remains of New Order and a half-consumed Chinese meal PETER HOOK whips out his new band REVENGE under the twitching nostrils of STEVEN WELLS. Clicking like crazy was cracked lensman STEVE PYKE.

KNIGHT OF THE LIVID BASSHEADS



“**H**EY-YAH! CRAZEE!” All is turmoil. All is chaos.

“And this one’s for Maureen who is a big one-eight TODAY!”

Local TV personality and disc jockey Tony Wilson slams another of a seemingly seamless barrage of throbbing 125 bpm 12”ers on the turntable and screams:

“MENTAL! MENTAL! TRANSCENDENTAL! And REMEMBER! What Manchester does today, London does TOMORROW!”

Sparks fly as Jean Paul Gaultier-clad lads and lasses spark their clogs against the Hacienda’s defiantly modernist steel dancefloor. This is the North’s top disco. The music is incredibly loud. What little chatter remains uncrushed concerns the party at the far table.

In the midst of a group of 13 heavy-duty casuals sits a man with his hair pulled tightly back in a bun. He laughs uproariously, flashing fine white teeth. He throws a half eaten gravy-soaked chip over his shoulder where it is seized by his snarling black dog, Bullseye. He quaffs mightily from a gold flagon and wipes his mouth

on the sleeve of his Armani acrylic jump suit.

Occasionally one or another of the dancers will glance up quickly and look away. They know this man. He is the bass player for the most successful group to have emerged from Mank Fester since The St Braithwaite School Choir turned the charts topsy-turvy with ‘Matchstick Men With Matchstick Arms And Legs’. The dipping and bopping throngs of disco dancers are also familiar with *the rumours*. It is whispered that the bass player has “had strong words” with the rest of the band.

The bogs of this fine establishment are notoriously graffiti-free thanks to the hi-tech wipeable surfaces and the fact that all customers are frisked for marker pens at the door. This evening only one message has been written on the door of the third cubicle from the left. It’s a very, very crap, Lancashire dialect poem:

“Look! Look! Look! It’s Peter Hook!

Who the fook is Peter Hook!

Peter Hook? Peter Hook?

Who the fook is Peter Hook?

Peter is the devil’s daughter

He plays bass in a band called

New Order

Who sound just like The Pet

Shop Boys

Only not as good

Or at least he used to.”

Has Peter Hook really left New Order? The official line is “No”. New Order claim that all is well, that band members are merely pursuing “solo projects”. Yeah, that’s what

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you tell the kiddies. Now what do you tell the grown ups?

M'sieur Albrecht allegedly spent the entire Summer in the Lake District with Johnny Marr and . . . *the Pet Shop Boys!* Dead giveaway or what?

Peter Hook is "in the studio" with somebody called Dave who used to be the roadie for The Cult and play in Mank band Lavoito Lakota. And a geezer called "CJ" who looks exactly like LUKE Bros!

BOLLOCKS! Hook is *not* "in the studio". He is "in the Chinese restaurant". OK, so he's just "come from the studio" where he has been recording an album and a single with his "new band" Revenge.

The thing about Hooky, as you know, is that he's not all sucked-in-cheekbones at all. In fact he's about as cool as a coachload of cockernees on a daytrip to the Top Shop For Men's sock department.

Hook takes a hefty draught from his can of Chinese lager and waves a Peking Duck-filled spring roll under my nose before exploding.

"We like this music and — if you like it or not — we don't give a f—! We don't give a f— if people say 'we can see the reason the rest of New Order f—ed him off! Or 'he's gone off on his own because he's f—ing shite'! We still like working together and that's all that f—ing matters because . . ."

Dave Hicks shakes his very long hair in agreement.

"They haven't f—ed you off! You're being dynamic!"

Hook explodes, he drops the spring roll in exasperation and splutters.

"Can I finish? Eh? Can I f—ing finish?"

But Dave is in full flow.

"He's too fast for New Order! He's leaving them behind!"

"I'm too f—ing fast for you lot!" screams Hook. "I'm going to have to get another band by midnight! F—ing hell!"

The empty cans of Tiger Lager mount. The ransacked cadaver of the Peking Duck moulders. I casually ask why the band are called Revenge, little suspecting that in doing so I am sticking my digit in what appears to be a very sticky can of very festering worms.

"I got the name off the back of George Michael's jacket . . ."

Long-haired Dave half smiles and starts to say something that provokes Hook to administer a swift boot under the table.

What was that about? I ask. He was going to say something, spill the beans, and you stopped him!

"I got it off the 'Faith' video," snarls Hook. "Check it out!"

I fix his steely gaze with my own, *something* is going on here. Peter, I murmur quietly, do you believe in revenge?

"Yeah, but keep it quiet." He turns to Dave and smiles. "You don't want to be battered, do you Dave? Can I have the chopsticks please?"

David lets out a low whine and passes the chopsticks.

Dave needs help.

Would you care to elaborate on that, Dave?

"Er . . . It's just a good name. It . . ."

"No he would not," barks Hook. Did you see that! Did you see that! Hook has just nudged Dave with his elbow!

Hook fixes me with a gaze of lazer beam intensity.

"It's just a *good name* . . ."

"Yeah," agrees Dave. "It's just a good name . . ."

Pardon?

And Hook has just nudged him again!

"The Bible says that revenge is a bad thing . . ." says Dave.

"There is also a Chinese Confucian saying," I tell him. "A good revenge can wait ten years . . ."

"That's the LP title!" roars

Hook. He doesn't exactly bang the table with his fist and ask the serving wench for more rum, but you get the idea.

Who writes the lyrics Pete? "Who f—ing cares?" Touche!



Revenge: CJ, Dave and Cap'n Hook

Meanwhile a large light bulb has materialised above Dave's hirsute head. It goes 'ping'.

"Ten years!" he exclaims. "Joy Division was ten years ago!"

A silence falls across Manchester. I look at Hook. Hook is looking at the ceiling.

"Let's not get *too deep*, Dave!" he says, desperately trying to stuff the particularly smelly cat back in the bag, feverishly trying to scoop the beans back in the tin.

Are you . . . ? I let the question trail off, luring Hook into a false sense of security. Are you doing a Sting?

SLAM! The steel jaws of the trap spring shut! Hook sighs.

"No, the point is that the rest of New Order don't like to play live so . . ."

Couldn't you just get some session musicians in?

"I don't need session musicians. I've got me friends so I'm fine . . ."

BOLLOCKS! I tiddle off to do wee wees and the tape recorder is left on, *deliberately!*

Think about it! The enigmatic, the *mysterious* genius of Peter Hook about to be captured on Candid Recorder. He could say *anything!* What profundities will utter forth from the most sensually bearded lips in rock? What little pearls of wisdom will he let slip?

A week later I eagerly slide the tape into the machine and FF it to the relevant spot. I am very excited. What brilliant observation on the current state of popular culture has Peter made? What astute comments has my

subierfuge captured for the Xmas NME's 'Quotes of the Year'? Eagerly I press the 'Play' button. "BOLLOCKS!"

Thank you, Oscar Wilde. Whilst Hooky and Dave are running through their Captain Blackadder and Baldrick routine, CJ is munching away, very quietly, in the background. CJ is the keyboardist and the prettiest and the quietest member of the band. The keyboards dominate Revenge's music in the same way that Hook dominates the conversation. When I say "the quietest member of the band", I mean he might as well have been a stuffed Gnu for all the wit and sparkle he was able to inject into the interview. When I ask if Dave and CJ are Jason and Kylie to Hook's SAW, Peter tells me: "No, but CJ's the Gillian of Revenge, aren't you CJ?"

You see, whilst Hooky has had his self-confidence built up to Mark E Smith levels by ten years of severe arse-licking from hordes of hero-worshipping fans and sycophantic rock hackery, CJ has squirmed away in complete anonymity behind the mixing desk at Suite 16 recording studios, which Pete now owns. How much did it cost you, Pete?

"£21,000"

Oooh! Cheap really!

He looks at me suspiciously. "I didn't think so at the time. Why? How much money have you got knocking around?"

I laugh insanely. Pete sidles out of his chair. It is his turn to go wee wees and my chance to ask CJ and Dave what they really think of Hooky!

"He's alright!" says Dave. "He's hilarious. He gives us free drugs. He's a f—ing half-breed viking twat!"

Ha ha! The truth! And now, quickly, whilst Peter is still away, we must get CJ to tell us how it is, to explain to us *why* he's in a band called Revenge!

CJ looks around carefully, leans towards me and says in a very quiet voice:

"Um . . . I don't know . . . I wasn't getting a lot of recognition working behind the console . . ."

"Because you were SHIT! That's why!" AAARGH! No! he's BACK!

"Nah! He's really good at what he does which surprised me. It took me a long time to realise that this was a silly thing to try and do on my own because there's not much enjoyment . . ."

It is beginning to dawn on me that Peter Hook is a big-headed bastard and I am starting to warm to him. Another brilliant question takes form in the festering swamp of my brilliant rock hack brain.

Who writes the lyrics, Pete? "Who f—ing cares?" Touche!

"People tend to overrate personality in bands . . ."

ARF! ARF! ARF! ARF! Get Mr Blushing Modesty! " . . . And that's what tends to make lyrics so 'important'. They're meant to tell you something about the singer's personality. And it just isn't true. I mean, with a band like Crass it didn't matter what they were singing, you could understand the *feeling* and the *energy*. I don't think people are as *stupid* as people in the music press assume they are . . ."

Oh but surely! I exclaim, surely the lyrics of someone like Bill Bragg's or Chumbawamba are frightfully important!

Hook sneers. "I don't listen to Billy Bragg . . ." "I listen to Chumbawamba, right?" says Dave.

And it dawns on me. Dave is a former Crasstifarian. A graduate from the school of screaming anarcho agit-pop that Hook is definitely not. On the 'Possible Shit Stirring Meter', this scores at awesome TEN BILLION! Heh! Heh! Heh!

"I think Chumbawamba are a lot more sound and a lot more valid than Billy Bragg. Chumbawamba come from the same background as Crass and people like that and they know

people in the convoy. Billy Bragg's just sort of . . . um . . . is it relevant in the . . . er political field . . . no, the musical field . . . to . . . er . . .

I point out that Revenge aren't exactly delivering a raging polemic.

"No," says Dave, still desperately searching for his thread, probably suffering from severe shock now that he's spoken almost three sentences in a row without being interrupted by Hook.

"No, I didn't say that. Is that the function of music? I don't think it is. I don't . . . er . . . know if we should do that or not . . ."

Dave, I shout, pointing at his disgusting Summer Of Luv jacket, You're not a hippy at all! You're a Crassstifarian!

"Years ago I was . . ."

Hook's evil eyes grab my attention.

"So was I!"

"GASP! Peter Hook! YOU were a Crass fan!?"

"I used to play that—what was that Crass record?—before we went on stage. Why does that surprise you?"

"Yeah!" says Dave. "Yeah why does that surprise you? If you go back to the original punk stuff . . . er . . . that stance . . ."

"No!" hollers Hook. "Let him answer the question! Why does that surprise you?"

Because, I reply, Crass were an intensely political band whilst New Order have never put themselves on the line on anything!

"That's *not* true! We've put ourselves on the line on *many* things!"

Like what?

"Like running the whole music business—as much as it concerns us—in exactly the way we want to run it—which I think is a *lot* more valid. I think Crass had an influence on the people *that mattered*, even more so than The Sex Pistols because Crass were so blatantly uncompromising. They gave a lot of people a lot of strength whereas the Sex Pistols were compromised. Crass was more all-out 'AAAAAARGH!—really going for it. I drew a lot of strength from that."

Peter is bubbling with genuine enthusiasm.

"A lot of bands who are considered to be punk bands—your Killing Jokes, your Siouxsie And The Banshees—didn't stick to their principles. I think that's the saddest thing of all because they had *power* in the way that New Order proved that you had power to do something to alter your destiny or to affect the way you move in a musical framework, you chicken out before you get to the point where they actually get to do something . . ."

I find this fascinating. New Order have undoubtedly succeeded brilliantly at "doing things their way" but on such a *limited* scale. They've really done nothing but build a 'cool' little niche within the belly of the Rock Biz Beast.

"How many nightclubs do you own?" asks Hooky.

Let me see . . . at the last count, er, um, —none.

"Well! There you go then!"

But surely the whole point of punk was to blow up the entire festering shitpit of the rock business. Not to see who could collect the most discos? I mean—what was it that John Boy Rotten sang about this not being a game of Monopoly?

"Punk destroyed a lot of the mystery surrounding music," claims Hook. "Which is why I like Acid House. The way the technology has evolved has destroyed a lot of the mystery involved in making a record and that is vitally important in encouraging talent. You don't have to be able to play music to do it . . ."

It is clear that me and Pete are from different planets.

New Order and Factory are just successful mini-capitalists! I yell, provocatively (I mean, what is the *real* difference between Tony Wilson and Richard Branson?) You've made all sorts of compromises!

"We've survived! How have we made compromises?"

The minute you employ someone you become a *boss*. That's one hell of a compromising position to be in!

"Hm . . . employees do have certain responsibilities."

An answer, which, on my Punk Rock Meter, scores slightly less than zero.

"I dunno. The way I tend to attach myself to politics is to try to stick to things that I can change, tangible things. I have no global scheme. Can I have another beer please? What I've tried to do—and in a sense what Factory and New Order have tried to do—is stick to what we know best. I don't claim that I can affect thousands of people's lives, the only people I can affect are the people around me. Stay within your limitations. It always makes me feel ill when people try and convert and preach to you at a gig—I don't know, it's such an unrealistic situation. I can't imagine why people do it. When I'm at a concert the last thing I want is someone screaming unintelligible rhetoric . . ."

How do you feel about that, Anarcho-Dave?

Anarcho-Dave: "He's got a point! Most people are not stupid. They don't need to be ranted at."

But most people accept the "truths" of the status quo most of the time and surely radical pop music should challenge those truths?

Dave: "Yeah, yeah . . . that's true . . ."

Hooky Pete: "You've got the freedom to make up your own mind! Same way that I have!"

But there is this constant background noise of bullshit conformist propaganda . . .

Anarcho Dave: "That's true . . ."

. . . And anything that puts an alternative viewpoint is welcome. I say YEAH!

Hooky Pete: "So do I, but what I'm saying to you is that all this shite that seems to upset you doesn't upset me because I make me own mind up about what I see and hear . . ."

So you don't read newspapers?

Hooky Pete: "Not a lot. *The Sunday Times* maybe for the car adverts . . ."

The one aspect of the Factory/New Order masterplan for which I have unlimited admiration, is their refusal to *play the pop game*.

Hook: "I mean Guns N' Roses had sold so many records before their *Smash Hits* phase. They didn't have to do all that crap. It must be a boundless energy . . . or a boundless stupidity . . ."

Maybe they do it for fun. Isn't it simply an honest reflection of what pop is really about when Kylie gets phoned up by *Smash Hits* to draw a picture of a cow? More honest than all this 'cool' New Order palava? Whether Factory puts your records out or EMI—you're still just another tin of beans, just another consumer disposable.

Hook: "Taken down to its basic level, yeah. But there's a lot of people who don't think like that. There's a lot of people I know that enjoy the music New Order make and who are willing to give Revenge a chance because they know me or whatever . . ."

CJ, if you got phoned up by *Smash Hits* and asked to draw a picture of "peace and happiness", would you do it?

CJ: "I . . . phffffffttt! I don't . . ."

The Hookie Monster: "You don't know what peace and happiness is, do you CJ?"

CJ: "I . . . hee hee! . . . Um . . ."

The Lord Jesus Hook: "Are they a local band, Peace And Happiness? Must be from Liverpool with a name like that."

CJ: "Hmmm . . . I . . . I don't know . . ."

Ring Ring!
CJ: "What?"
It's the phone. Pick it up!

CJ: "Er . . . hello?"

This is the editor of *Smash Hits*. I want you to draw a picture of "Peace and Happiness".

CJ: "Oh, yeah, um, I'll do it!"

Lord Hook Of Mank: "Actually, that *does* sound more interesting than most of the usual shit you get asked. Like, what's your LP like? I wouldn't tell you anyway. I haven't got a f—ing clue. You've got to be realistic. A lot of people will want to buy this record because it's my group . . ."

Is this a beer drinking group?

DJ Grandmaster Hook: "You should stick to Ecstasy, mate! You wouldn't wake up with a headache!"

Hmmm, really? I've never had 'E'. What's it like?

Pete 'Gaz' Gook: "I don't know."

Dave: "AHAHAHAHA! Never heard of it! HAHAHAHAHAAH!"

Why are you in this band, Dave?

Dave: "I'm doing this because if I wasn't I'd be a dustbinman or in jail . . ."

Herrnomous Hook: "You'd never make a f—ing dustbin man! You'd have to get up early!"

I think you'd make a very good dustbin man. You wouldn't have to dress up for it.

Dustman Dave: "This jacket I picked up at Glastonbury in 1981 at the Green Gathering . . ."

Inspector Hook: "Robbing bastard! So why *are* you in this band? I want to know this."

Dauntless Dave: "Why am I in the band?"

The Incredible Hook: "You don't answer a question with a question! He does this to me all the bleeding time!"

Dangerous Dave: "It's a challenge really . . ."

The Hookie Monster: "Is it! Why? You trying to say it's some kind of challenge working with me, ya'bastard?"

Dave The Rave: "Yeah! No, no! It's the music! It's the music for the '90s, I reckon!"

Why are you doing this interview?

Dave: "We need the publicity . . ."

Hook: "No we don't!"

Dave: "No, we don't need the publicity."

Hook: "We survived for ten yers with the minimum of publicity, Dave!"

Dave: "Oh, right, yeah . . ."

Hook: "Right! End of conversation."

"Drawing a cow sounds more interesting than the usual shit we get asked—'What's your LP like'. I haven't got a f—ing clue!"



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