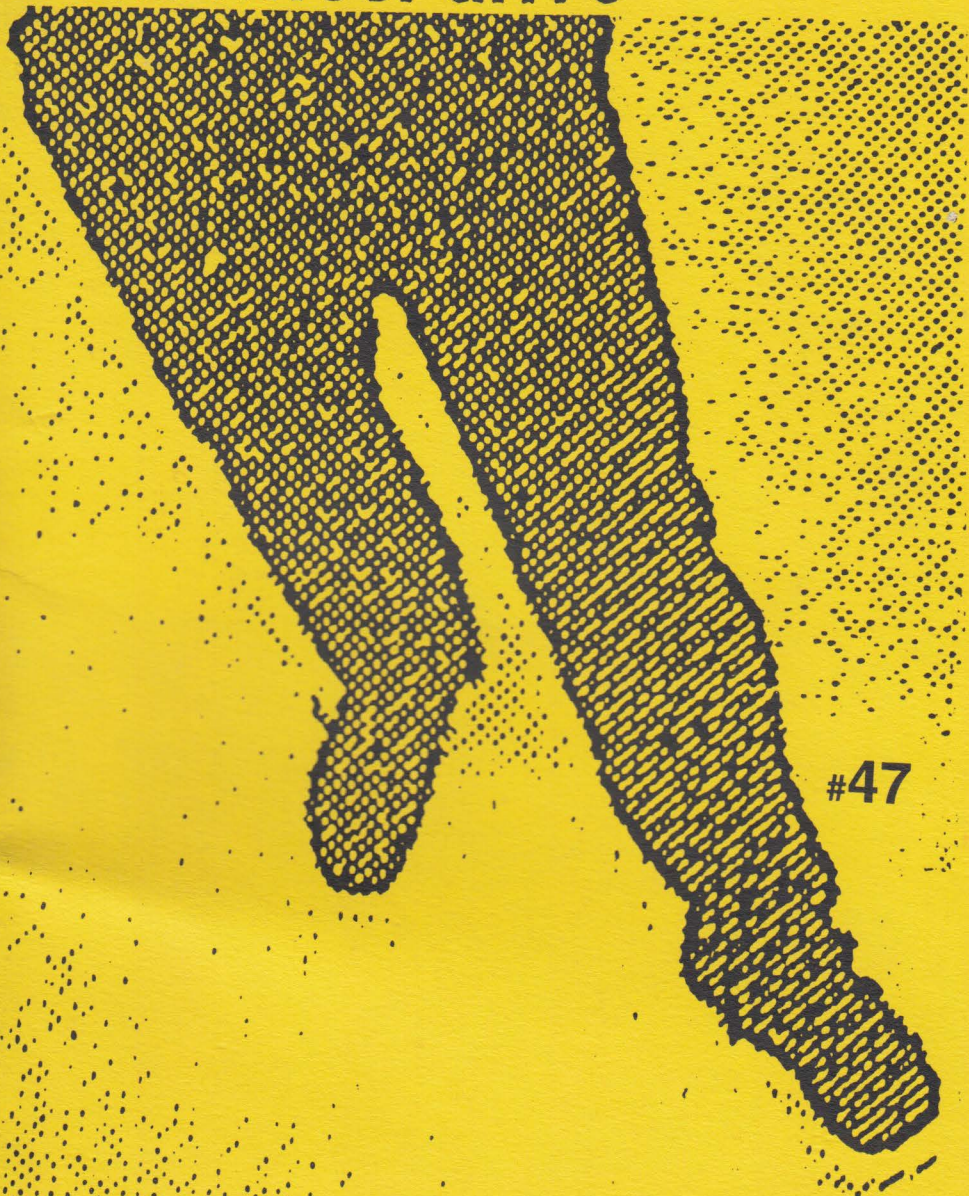


*front wheel drive*



#47

# Just Add Water

Water is being added to juice concentrate. The frozen mass relinquishes its tart taste, compromising its original form to create something consumable. This same phenomenon occurs everyday in various forms in the lives of people you know.

A college student makes good grades and wins a scholarship to a graduate school. He sacrifices his own free time to study to make these grades. A high school football player wins games for a team and lands a spot on a college team. He also sacrifices his time, perhaps even time for a job so he can practice his football skills. Your favorite band signs a million-dollar contract to a major label and loses some of their edge to gain mass appeal. Water is added to the lives of these people in order that they give up a bit of themselves for the consumption of others. The college student's good standing makes the grad school look good, the football player's field skills make his college look good, and the band's softening makes the major label look good through mass record sales.

How does all this relate to *Front Wheel Drive*? Well, what does seemingly everyone want out of his hobbies eventually? To get sponsored by a major company, to go to events, to do shows, to get free gear at the very least. Here's where the water comes in. Large companies have images to uphold. Your attitude and your free time will both either somewhat dissolve, or you can keep piddling around in Podunk, Nowhere.

The point is, conformity has its place, but so does having a core that's true. People all too often co-op their baser beliefs in exchange for what they think they should do at the time. What do you really want from your life? What do you really want from your sport, or your hobbies? When the water is added, how much will you give up? How much will you keep for yourself? In the end, It's all up to you. -RoyC.



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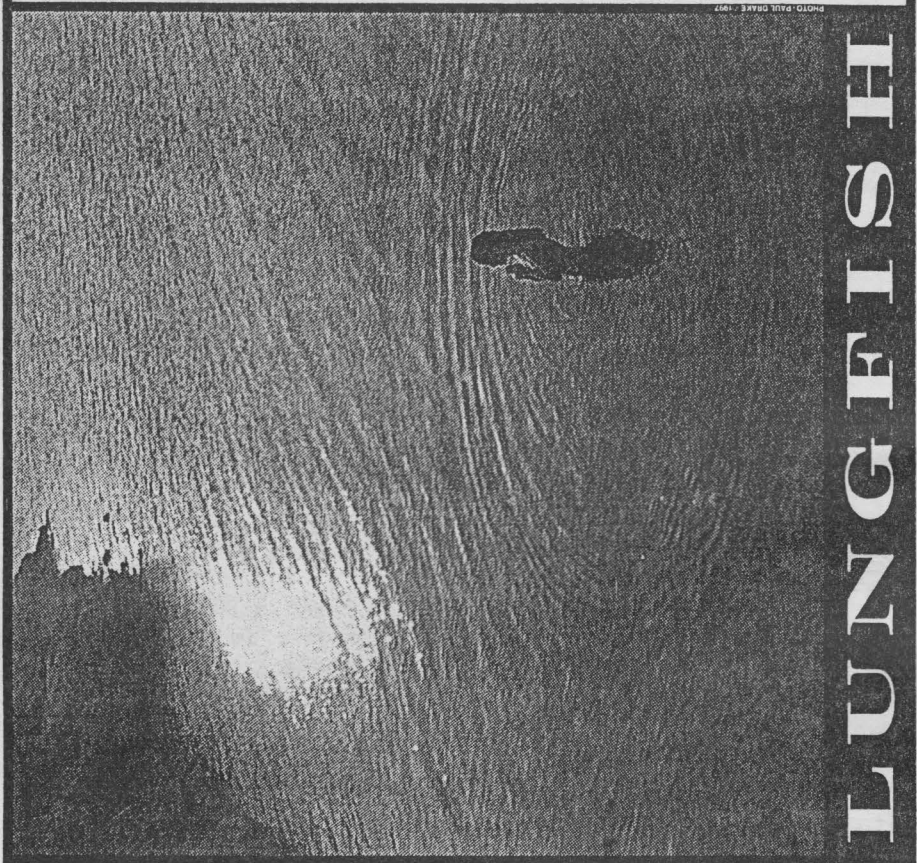
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# LUNGFISH

PHOTO BY MARK 1997



# the promise ring

by Roy C.

Navigating the musical landscape lately has been like playing bad stock: absolutely unpredictable. And it's only going to get harder in the year to come.

Music styles and sub-genres are splitting faster than we can come up with names for them. It's all blending into a big mudhole of indiscernible sounds comprised of past sounds we'd just gotten used to. Although it hasn't been like this all along. Not long ago, you could easily guess who would be a hit, and you'd rarely be wrong. Things were pretty well set. Pop-metal ruled the earth and everyone else took what they could get.

A few years ago, a revolution of sorts occurred. I'm quite sure you're all familiar with it as this region spawned its reluctant leaders and trend-setters. Since this so-called revolution, the face of popular music has changed irrevocably. The metal dinosaurs are all but gone, and every other genre (and sub-genre and sub-sub-genre...) now has an almost fair go of it. Figuring out who will last and who won't is the hard part for the labels, the press, and the fans alike.

Enter The Promise Ring. No, they're not here to turn the industry on its ear with a new style of music or to send the kids up in arms with their angst-ridden teen-anthems. They're here to do what they do. And to do it well.

"Things have gotten so weird over the past few years that now being on an indie

label is not that much different from being on a major," says guitarist Jason. "We've had a few majors bugging us, but we're not interested in that right now. We've only been together for like a year and a half, two years, and we've still got one more record to do for Jade Tree." The Promise Ring is four guys who got together (by their own estimates) about two years ago among the cattle and beer of Wisconsin's metropolis Milwaukee.

Through their good friends and contemporaries Texas Is The Reason, they hooked up with uber-indie Jade Tree to release a few seven inches and their beautiful recent debut record *30 Degrees Everywhere*.

The Promise Ring "sound" isn't anything new, and that's hardly the point. Call it "pop-punk," "emo-core," "boy-rock,"

"post-hardcore," or whatever. The point is that it's just plain good music that holds its appeal in the emotions. *30 Degrees Everywhere* is rife with poignant tales with school-boy vocals over straight-ahead guitar lines. Simple and to-the-point without generic rehash.

"You know. It's weird. Some of the lyrics aren't about anything," explains singer Davey laughing. "Some songs just paint pictures and I try to complete them with the lyrics. I'll hear something and think, 'wow, that sounds blue,' and I'll make a lyrical reference to the color blue."



FORGET WHAT YOU KNOW:

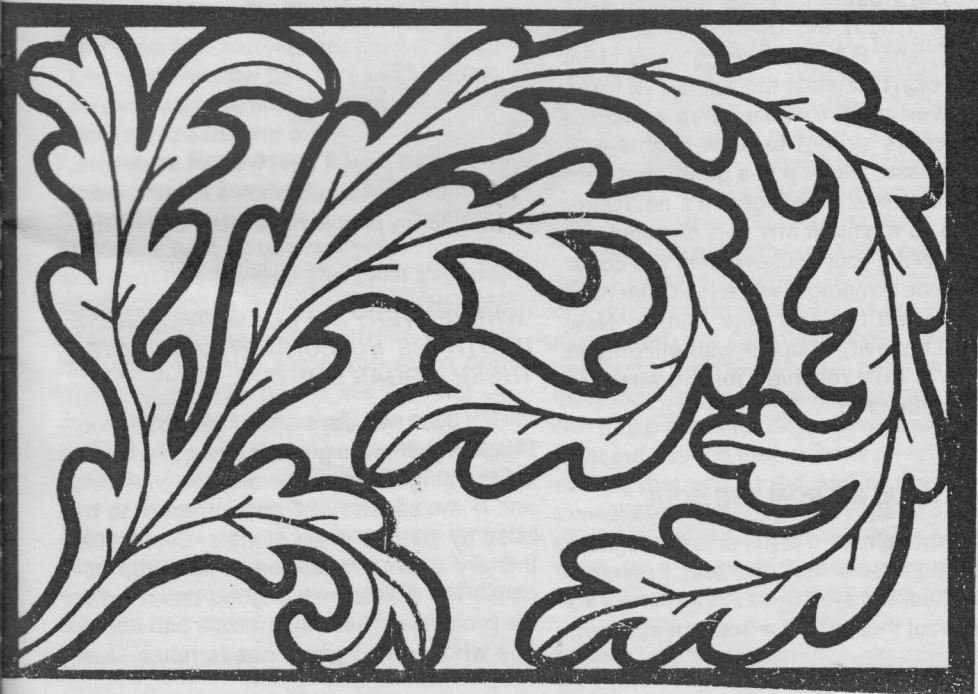
## *Amnesia*

"Unfiltered musical freedom" is what Brad Laner was looking for when he formed his latest ensemble of noisy pop, Amnesia.

If you don't recognize the name, Laner used to bend guitar sounds for Medicine. But after a year of indolence and introspection, he's back at the helm, squeezing squealy sounds out of his guitar.

He cites "boredom and an inability to make 'normal' type sounds in the first place" as the impetus for playing guitar, and Amnesia's new record *Cherry Flavor Night Time* (on Supreme/Island Records) is exhibit D in the case that finds him guilty as charged. The undeniably pop core in these songs wears a dark veil of distorted guitar waves created entirely by Brad and his guitar.

"In the studio," Laner explains, "I definitely prefer to work alone. Though I love playing with the live band..." The "band" is rounded out by Jeremy Wood, and Jason 71, but count on Brad's guitarwork to be the center of any Amnesia show. -RoySee



In the mid-to-late 80's, I wasn't much for Run-DMC or L.L. Hip hop existed to me only through records by Public Enemy, Ice T, and Boogie Down Productions. I liked their stuff because it was *about* something. Rap to me thus far had been mostly about itself.

In '89, when BDP's *Ghetto Music* came out, my man Thomas (my main source for what was solid as far as Hip hop was concerned) said he would tape it for me. What he failed to tell me was that he was putting something else on the B-side...

That tape changed the way

I viewed the entire genre of Hip hop. The songs on the flip of KRS-ONE's usual uplifting raps were from De La Soul's *Three Feet High and Rising*. This was the first record that spoke freely about the ills of Hip hop so far. It was the first anti-Rap Rap record, if you will. I wasn't the only one geeked either. Kids who'd never thought twice about Rap were all over De La. It was enough to make them denounce everything they'd established with *Three Feet* on their next release, *De La Soul Is Dead*.

But Posdnous AKA Wonder Why (Plug 1), Trugoy the Dove AKA Dr. Ama (Plug 2), and P.A. Mase AKA Baby Huey (Plug 3) didn't stagnate there. They've taken themselves and the whole genre with them (four records strong) to new heights with every release. Hip hop is a genre that constantly rotates and changes. It's nearly impossible to maintain any sort of popularity without selling your soul everytime you come out (anyone remember when Ice Cube happily recorded his first solo joint in New York?). Longevity coupled with integrity in Hip hop is truly reserved for the absolute cream of the crop.

### "DE LA SOUL IS FROM THE SOUL."

I thought hard at the prospect of talking to De La Soul. Not only was I nervous and excited, but I felt like I already knew so much about them. De La Soul speaks from

the soul. This fact cannot be denied. They're records reveal so much about what's going on in their personal lives, there's almost nothing to ask.

"We as people outside of the industry are always trying to learn more," Posdnous explains. "And whatever we take in, we try our best to convey it on wax. So beyond trying to find the best beats and the best music, we try to convey the best way we can the evolution of our group. And not just trying to have the most positive message, because it could be in a negative light or us being upset or us not finding peace and tranquility... We try to bal-



## de la soul

Stakes is Still High... by Roy C.

ance it correctly because sometimes, regardless of how you feel, the best tracks maybe focused on negative things. We try not to look at it like that. We try to have a balance of positive and negative on an album because there's a balance to what the human being is. "All we try to do is just stay true to who we are as people. We can't just focus on just doing what we wanna do and let it be on wax. We separate ourselves as rappers and realize we are just people, and we try to just do the best we can as people. And that just naturally shows in our music. I'm just happy people have stuck behind us."

**"WHERE EVERY ASPECT IS VIVID, THESE BROTHERS NO LONGER TALK SHIT - THESE NIGGAS LIVE IT"**

Just two days after I talked to Pos, Biggie Smalls was gunned down in a drive-by shooting. Biggie was only 24 years old and is the second well-known rapper to be killed by gun-fire in six months. Events like this are adored by all forms of media because the drama makes good copy, but in the process it gives rap music a bad name. The whole damn genre needs rehab. Just

like the kids debating in the first scene of Spike's movie *Clockers*, heads claim you're not hard if you don't kill people. Doing the things you talk about on record is considered by many "keeping it real," but the grammatical first person in a rap song doesn't necessarily mean the rapper.

"Even on an entertainment level," Pos says addressing the issue, "Back in the day, even when there was a beef it was more lyrically focused, whereas now it's on more of a physical level." Theatrics used to play a huge role in lyrical story-telling, but nowadays one is expected to be that person - theatrics or not. This clash of lyrical-character vs. man-on-the-street is like walls closing in. And those walls are already closed for Tupac Shakur and Chris Wallace.

Pos, "But sometimes I don't even credit it to an influence, but just a reassurance of what they were already doing. I don't like to think that a lot of groups were rapping one way and then when they heard us they started focusing on how we do things. There's a lot of groups out there who had the same ideas, and the same views and energy, but we were just lucky enough to get on first so that helped a lot of record companies pay attention to the groups that were out there like that. When we were trying to put our unit together there were a lot of rappers out before us that assured us that what we're doing could be done." Given, De La begs, borrows and ganks from the old-school, but they blend so much of their own lives into the stew that it can't help but come out innovative.

**"SEE BUT DON'T DO LIKE THE SOUL, BECAUSE SEEING AND DOING ARE ACTIONS FOR MONKEYS"**

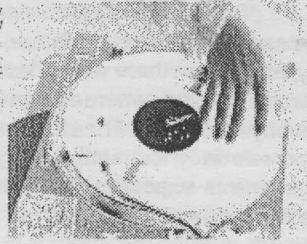
"There's a lot of groups trying to do positive things," states Pos, "From Cool J. to the FuGees trying to organize fund-raisers, Adam Yauch from the Beastie Boys doing the Tibetan Freedom Concert every year...

There's a host of others trying to do positive things." The most important thing out here is creativity. Like KRS-ONE says, "You can be a pimp, hustler, or player, but make sure on stage you are a dope rhyme-sayer." Hip hop is still a young culture and genre, so creativity is a must if it is to expand as an art form and even to simply maintain its existence. De La Soul is easily one of the major benchmarks of innovation in the short history of Hip hop, even though other groups have reached a larger audience by borrowing their style. "I definitely feel we had some type of influence," says

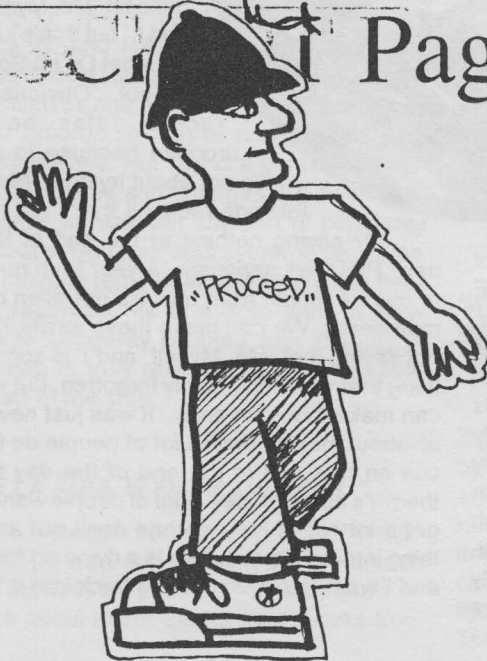


**"IS IT JUST MY DE LA CLOTHES, OR IS IT BECAUSE WE HATE THIS SONG?"**

As irrelevant as it might seem to their true fans, De La's record sales have dropped off since *Three Feet High and Rising's* surprise hit "Me, Myself and I," but that's just not what De La Soul is about. "Obviously, record sales have dropped because to us it's not about trying to have this one radio hit that's not really saying nothing at the end of the day," Pos says seriously. "A year from now, or even a month from now it's not even remembered. We can make those easily. I'm not saying that 'Me, Myself, and I' is something that was necessarily forgotten, but we can make those for days. It was just never all about making that. A lot of people do focus on that and at the end of the day for them it's about money. A lot of people wanna get a lot out of Hip hop and don't put anything into it. Forget it. This is a dying art form and I want to put something back into it." ♻️



# Page Separator



DEEP CONCENTRATION  
*Page by Cap'er.*

# IT'S FINAL, ON BLACK VINYL

three double LP's: a six-pack of sounds from the future.

## DEEP CONCENTRATION

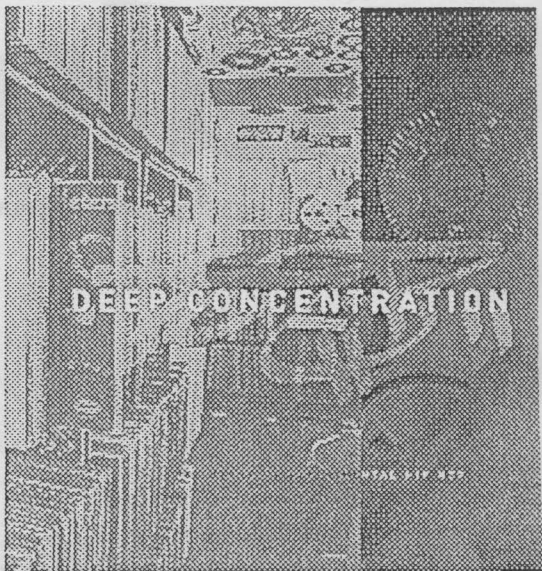
Here it is folks: The Future of Hip hop. Om has brought together all the cutting edge artists in the Hip hop underground on one tidy compilation. Stellar tracks are turned in by the likes of **Cut Chemist**, **Radar**, **Prince Paul**, **Lateef** and

**Lyrics Born** with **DJ Shadow**, the **X-Men**, and **Peanut Butter Wolf** with **J-Rocc**, and **Babu** (of the **Beat Junkies**). The layers of cut-and-pasted sounds and beats galore showcased here are more than enough to prove that the Hip hop DJ as artist and producer will lead music into the future, whether the rest of the world follows him or not (Om Records 50 Minna St. San Francisco, CA 94105).

## RETURN OF THE DJ Vol. 2: Two words for you: **Radar** and **Z-Trip**.

Not to over-shadow the rest of this solid, must-have compilation, but these two Phoenix, Arizona DJ's are on their way to certain legend status. Their track, "Private Parts" is simply amazing. Starting with a tweaked out My Bloody Valentine loop and a spoken word piece, it erupts into Radar scratching some nasty racket over a frenetic, neck-breaking beat. Z-Trip picks up the second half with his proven zigga skills before the piece finally subsides back into the MBV loop and the spoken words about (what else) private parts. Others representing the lovely skills include England's **DJ Format**, Norway's **Tommy Tee**, Paris' **LF Peee**, and of course, U.S. homies like the X-Men's **Roc Raida**, and Cincinnati's **Mr. Dibbs**... Oh, and don't sleep on Volume 1! (BOMB Hip-Hop Records 4104 24th Street, Suite 105 San Francisco, CA. 94114).

**AUDIO ALCHEMY** (*Experiments in Beat Reconstruction*): Another compilation of audio chemists armed with turntables. **Cut Chemist** comes correct once again with his smooth "Layered Laird." **Q-Burns Abstract Message** bring the noise on Side two's "Last Stand." And Seattle's own **Sharpshooters** round out the set with "Omega." Other stand-outs include **Bugs**, **Mumbles**, **DJ Wally** and **DJ Swingsett**, but the whole thing is never less than intriguing. *Audio Alchemy* is a bit more off the beaten path than either *DEEP CON* or *Return of the DJ Vol. 2* (even though all three feature some of the same artists), but that's the beauty of the future: it's in our hands. Let's cut it up (Ubiquity Recordings, Inc. Box 192104 San Francisco, CA. 94119). -caper



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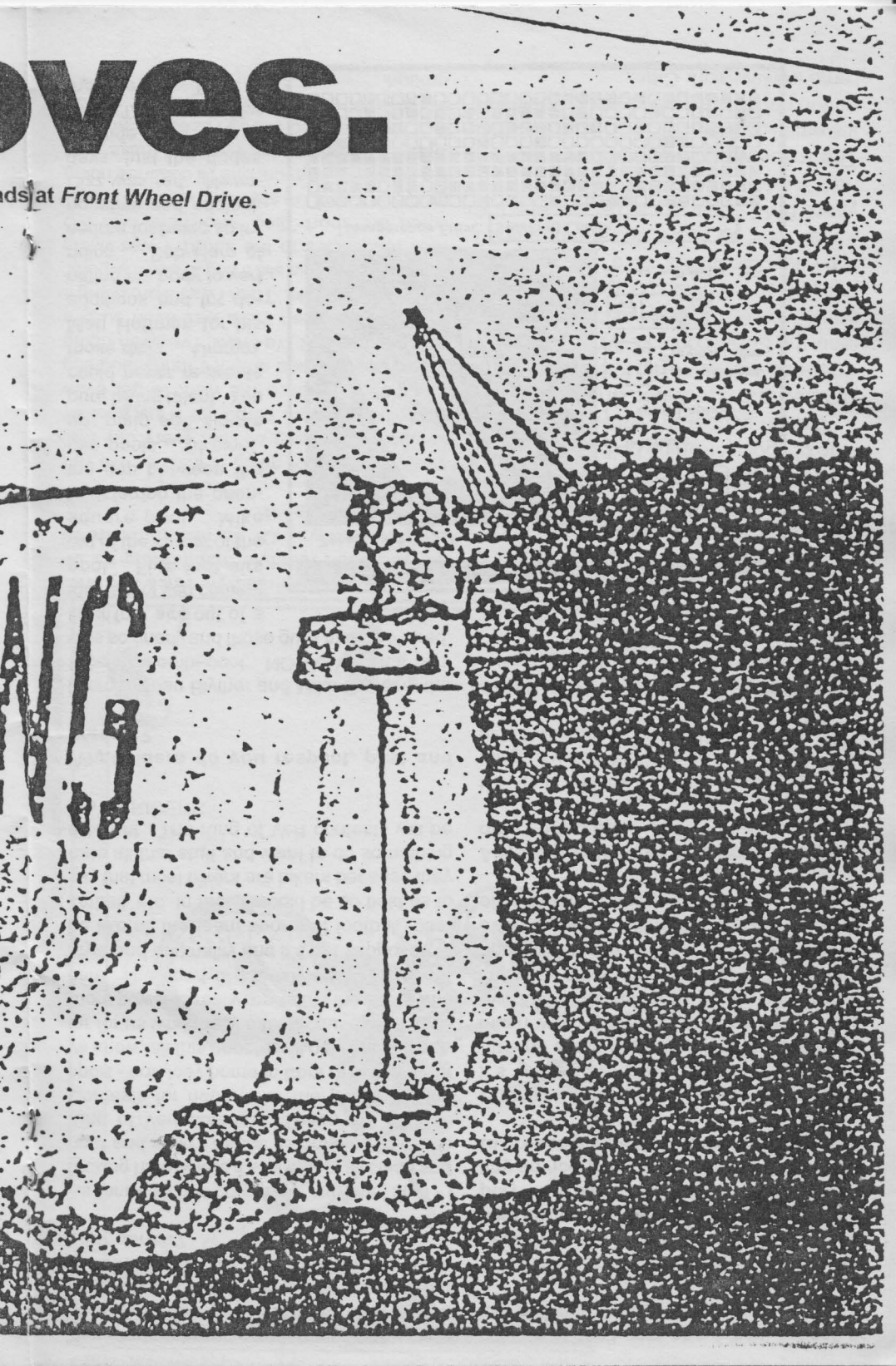
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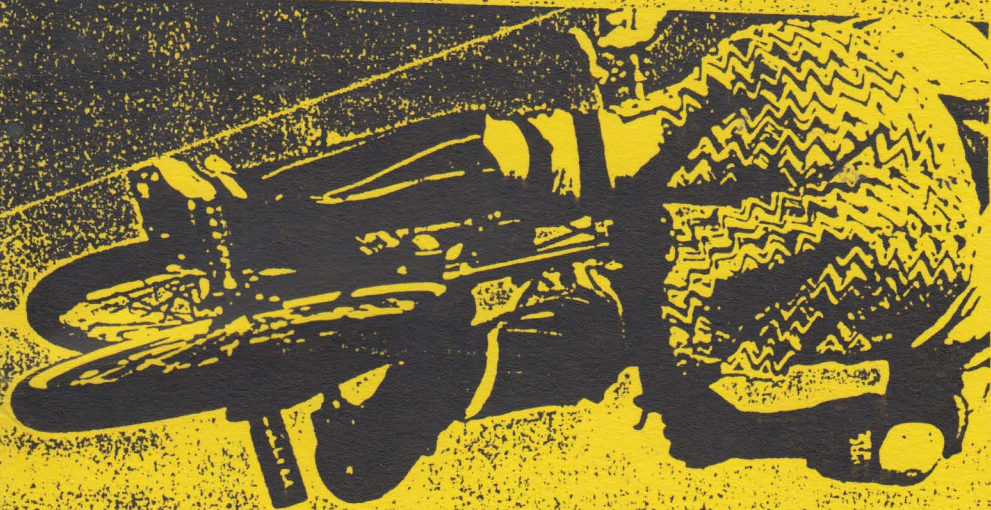


# oves.

ds at Front Wheel Drive.

MS





ron wilkerson

**FROM**  
**WHEEL**  
**DRIVE**



**all for nought  
and for the  
nonce, waiting  
in the line of  
duty, in the line  
of fire, or just  
waiting in line for a  
world I don't really  
want. gridlocked**

**days and landlocked dreams clog  
my routine-ridden mind.**

**let this world keep on pushing me down, I'll only  
spring higher when my time comes...**

*-caper*

**front  
wheel  
drive**

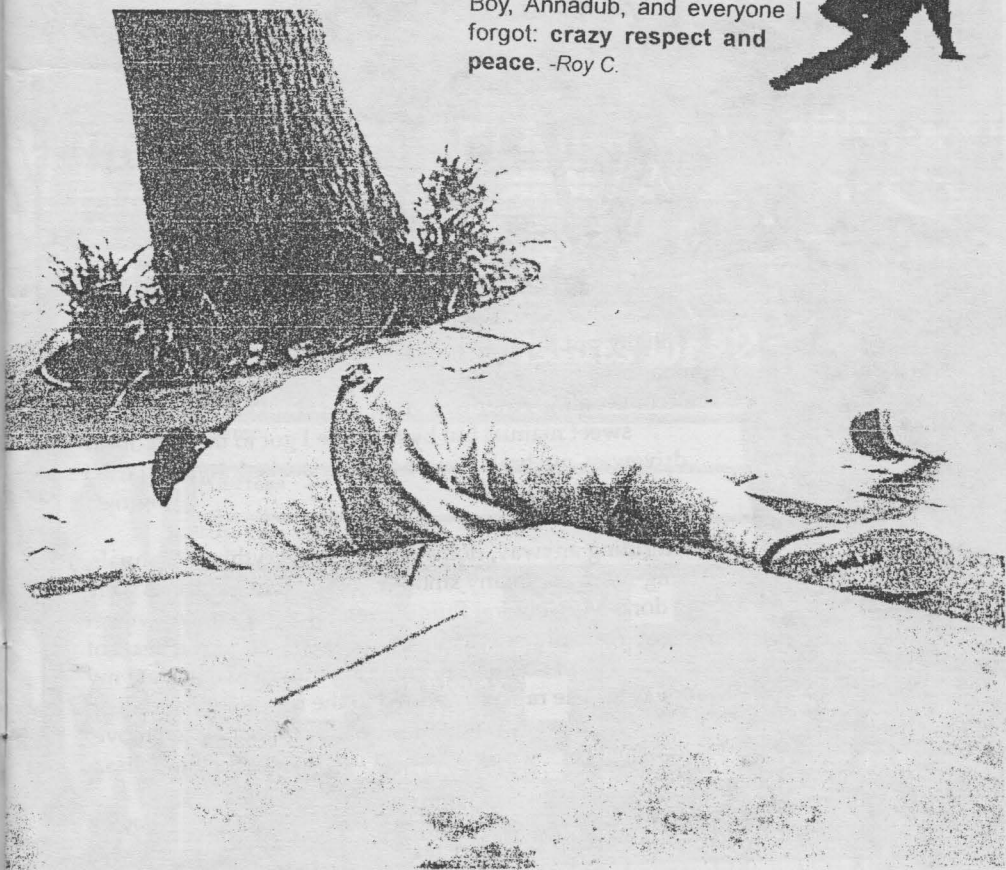
photo by eric be. [cover photo of wilkerson also by eric]

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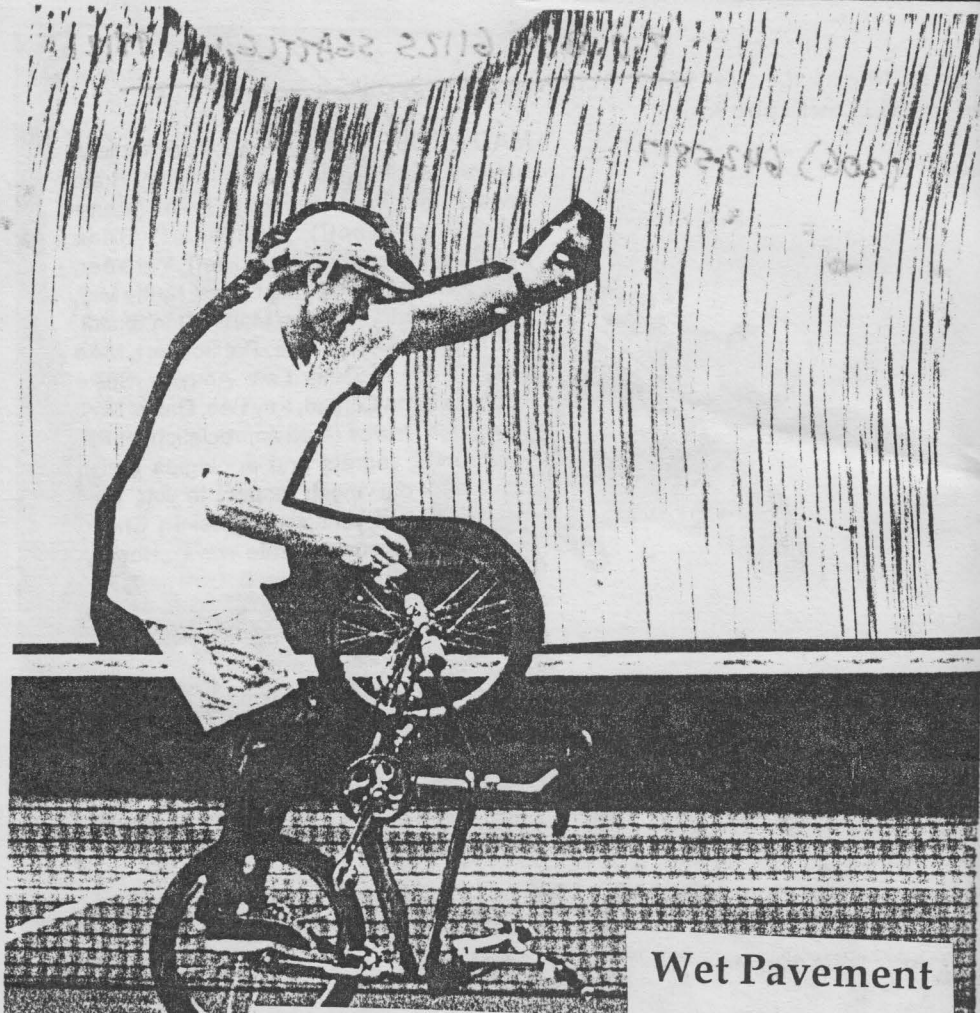
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Roy See gets kicked to the curb after a frontside 50-50. Photo by Gordon Martin.



## Wet Pavement

I finally put my new tires on my bike last Saturday night. Pumped those babies up to about 3000 psi, and rolled out into the cool evening. After two good, full cranks, I locked into a sweet manual but by the time I got to the end of the driveway, my brakes were already soaked. It had started raining...

I went riding anyway, doing brakeless everything. Manuals, hang-fives, and many smooth, rolling flatland tricks were done with a literal fluidity heretofore unknown on wet pavement. Headphones firmly in my ears, blaring the beats of choice. I paid no mind to anything but the sweet state my head was in. The rain only added to the tranquility and deep concentration required to complete each move. Pure, soaked, rolling bliss...

-RoySee

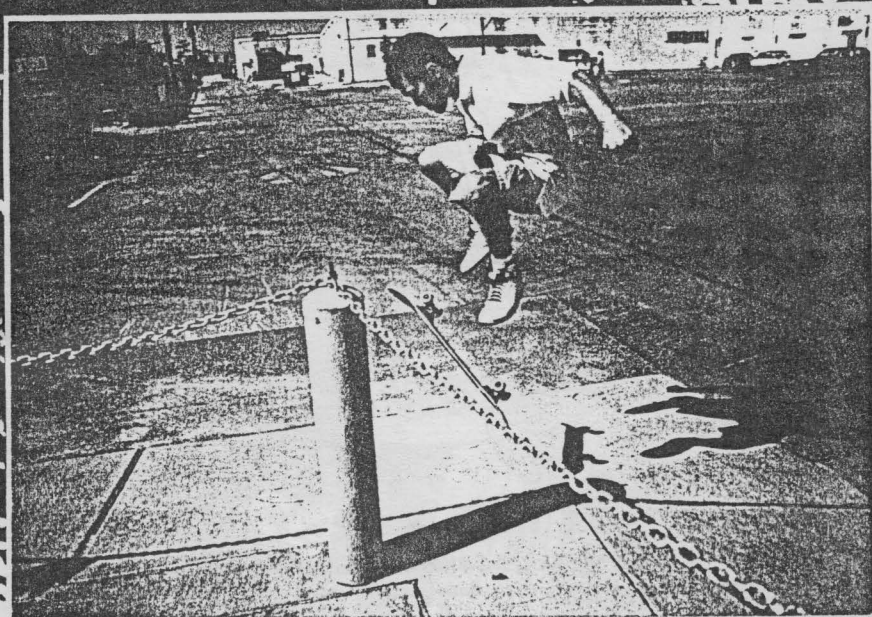




# sealand

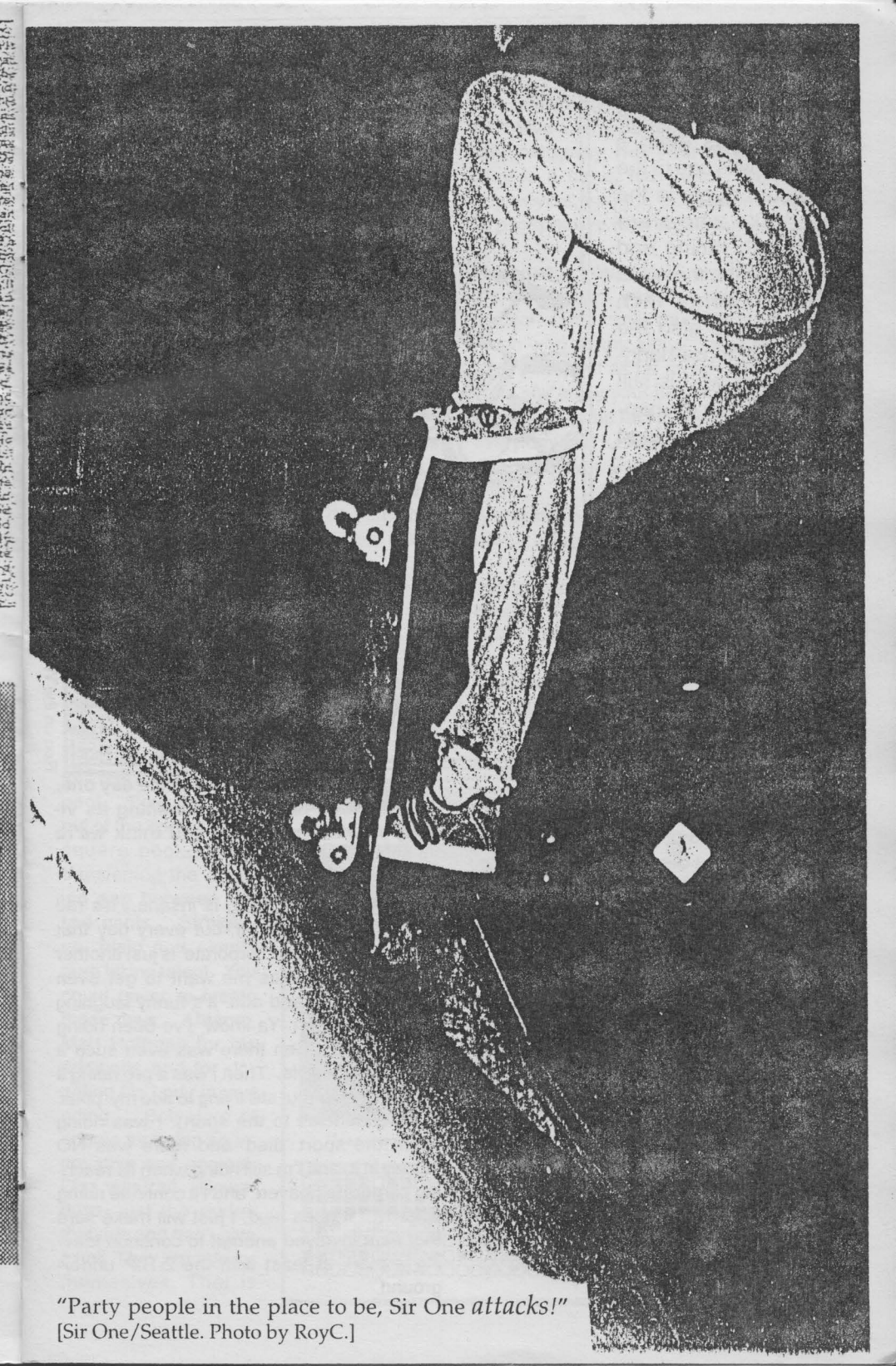
(the Seattle/Orlando axis)

[Ray Showalter/Orlando, FL. Photo by Scott Griffin.]



"I can take a phrase that's rarely heard, *flip it* now it's a daily word."  
[Scott Griffin/Orlando. Photo not by Scott]





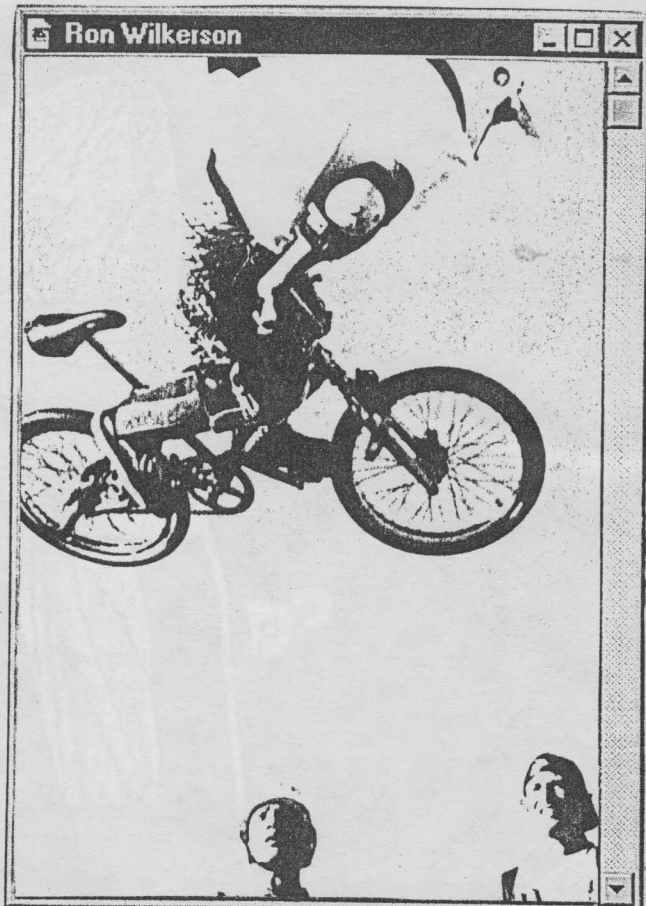
"Party people in the place to be, Sir One *attacks!*"  
[Sir One/Seattle. Photo by RoyC.]

Ron Wilkerson has been with the sport of Freestyle BMX since before it was even a sport. He was one of the handful of riders in the early 80's who were bored with racing and wanted a little more out of their twenty inch bikes. Ron is also the only one of those handful of riders who is still an active force in shaping the sport he helped start.

The first large, sanctioned Freestyle event I ever attended was a Haro show and contest in October of 1985. I was 14. Ron Wilkerson and Dave Nourie journeyed to the hinterlands of Dothan, Alabama to show us backwoods BMXers what this shit was all about.

Ron has followed Freestyle's ups and downs (for those of you that don't know, Freestyle all but disappeared in the late 80's/early 90's). When the competitive side of sport (of which he's always been a staunch supporter) was lacking, Ron stepped in and provided what he thought it needed with his 2-Hip King of Vert, and Meet the Street contests. When the companies weren't providing strong enough parts, Ron's Wilkerson Airlines and 2-Hip Bike companies have tried to do so. At just over 30 years old, and nearly 20 years BMX experience, he remains the rider's rider.

The following interview was conducted via email on May 19, 1997. Ron had just gotten back from riding a really good vert ramp in New York City...



Ron on the Warp tour. Photo by Eric Be.

**You've been with Freestyle since day one. Do you see Freestyle maintaining its vitality nowadays? Or do you think we're all living in the past?**

Yeah, the level of riding is insane. It's rad seeing riders going off, but every day that the sport gets more 'corporate' is just another day that just makes me want to get even more hardcore and anti. It's funny laughing at the stupid shit. Ya know, I've been riding since before when there was even such a thing as 'Freestyle.' Then I was a pro riding it when it got big (but still trying to add my 'punk' rock tendencies to the sport). I was riding when the sport 'died' and there was NO money in it, and I'm still riding when its reaching corporate heaven, and I'll continue riding wherever it goes next. I just will make sure that I am involved enough to continue leaving a mark at least with the 2-HIP underground.

**You obviously see problems with the state of competition (given the fact that you're bringing back the 2-Hip contests). What specific goals are you shooting for with your series?**

As far as all this corporate 'extreme' stuff - I fucking hate where it's all going: all clean and neat and stale - hence us bringing back the King of Vert contests. These will be fun. Contests for riders - for the people IN the sport - not Joey home in front of his TV. But ya know, all this hoopla will only make it better for us who really ride because we'll have more power to really represent the riders who care. The sport of Freestyle BMX is about style and originality and it's not supposed to be like all the team sports of football, basketball, etc. In fact, I would be so bold as to say that most bikers are bikers because they hate all that stuff and want to do something different. The King of Vert contests will be fun for RIDERS.

**What riders do you respect, past and present?**

Hmm... Brian Blyther and Mike D. riding the Pipeline combi-pool: NO WAY!! That pool was so gnarly and those guys had it so wired. Four foot airs out of a four feet of vert cement pool... Five foot airs out of the corner of the square pool... Mike transferring the opening gap between the two pools... Straight-up, plain and simple pure biking talent. You could never re-create those days... Ummm, Matt Hoffman for his additions and for donating his body to vert riding... Bob Haro of course for being so innovative and original. Dizz was rad. Nowadays, just the dudes that ride and don't give a hell. They just ride for themselves. That is

cool. they don't care about 'new school' or 'old school'. They just ride...

**You live what most pre-teens/teens would perceive as the perfect life (own your own bike company, ride your bike all the time, play in a band, tour, etc.). Do you have any advice, insight, or caution to dole out to prospective Ron Wilkersons out there?**

Hmmmm... Well, life IS pretty damn good. It's not always been so good. I've been through some really rough times and pretty much worked my ass off to be here (wherever I am), but as far as advice and all that, I just say enjoy your fucking life. Never stop appreciating the fact that you get to wake up every day and fucking live. Set goals and go after whatever shit you really want.

**Anything you'd like to add to this that I didn't bring up?**

If there is one thing I can say more than anything, it would be - if you don't have it, you didn't want it bad enough.

Check out 2-Hip on-line at [www.2-Hip.com](http://www.2-Hip.com)  
- Roy C. Usery

