



INTERVIEW with JIM GOAD
Art by STEVE HUSSY in SAVAGE KICK #3
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THE SAVAGE KICK #3

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Savage Kick Talks To Jim Goad: 23/01/2006

Savage Kick: *When did the idea of ANSWER Me! first hit?*

Jim Goad: I wanted to publish my writing without having my fangs ripped out by editors. They ALWAYS took out the good shit. Always. They had a radar-like ability to zero in on my favorite passages and destroy them. Every time I'd write something and look it over a few times, there was always a line or paragraph that struck me as the best part. And it was ALWAYS the part they removed. I figured I knew better than they did, and I was right.

As far as the magazine's title, what I wrote in *ANSWER Me!* #2 was true — it was usually the last thing I'd say before I'd hit someone. And I'd wind up hitting them because they were too dishonest or frightened to offer an adequate answer. Either that, or they didn't even understand the question.

But I was entirely unaware of “fanzines” when I published it. I intended it to be something you could buy on every newsstand. It was very reluctantly that I was dragged into the godawful “zine” world.

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SK: *What had pissed you off most in the lead-up to ANSWER Me!?*

JG: What didn't? Everything did. Lousy parents. Horrible teachers. Backstabbing friends. Stupid moralists. Overpopulation. The lies that people managed to tell themselves as a matter of course. At that age — the first issue of *ANSWER Me!* was released when I was 30 — I was very angry at the way my peers had sacrificed their youthful dreams in order to become boring adults squeezing out boring babies. I was also furious that everyone else I knew had a much more extensive support group of family and friends. I had been living on my own wits since my late teens, and I didn't think it was fair that those with a hundredth of my brains were permitted to sail effortlessly through life because of trust funds and suchlike, while I had to struggle for everything. There were definitely some class-based resentments there.

SK: *Were you influenced by any other writers in the early years?*

JG: Pretty standard influences — Hunter S. Thompson and Tom Wolfe. Probably my biggest influence was CREEM magazine — hilarious and irreverent. Their record reviews were always better than the records themselves. But my biggest influences were my life experiences. I saw the world much differently than other writers were portraying it. And so I felt the need to lay it all down on paper.

SK: *Did any reaction to ANSWER Me! surprise you? Did many people understand the passion of it?*

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JG: I was really surprised that people loved it as much as they did. It was frustrating — here I am telling everyone how much I hate them, and yet they love me for it. I'm not sure people *understood* the passion, but they couldn't help but *feel* it. And *ANSWER Me!* was set loose into an environment of smirking, passionless, effete irony. At the time — and I still think it holds true — white hipsters felt very uncool being passionate or sincere about anything. And out of nowhere comes this scary married couple — a white boy and a Jew — who are as angry as Public Enemy or NWA. It didn't compute for many people. Ironically, all these strident anti-racists expected white people to be a little more *civilized* than we were behaving.

SK: *ANSWER Me! #2 runs the response to the typo challenge... complete with typo-laden responses from readers. What was the most moronic feedback you had to the four issues of ANSWER Me!?*

JG: A lot of responses were disconcerting if not exactly moronic — the three British kids who killed themselves and were apparently influenced by the “Suicide Issue.” The ex-soldier who shot at the White House and quoted a line from the “Murder Issue” in a note he’d left in his van. And the criminal obscenity trial regarding the “Rape Issue” in which both the defense and prosecution were arguing over my intentions, while both of them were wrong.

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve read accusations that the Rape Issue argued women secretly enjoy rape. WHERE in the issue is this stated? Many people stated — as fact — that my intention was to encourage rapists to continue raping, as if they actually seek or need encouragement. All sorts of retarded reactions, really. As

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many retarded reactions as there are retarded people, which is a lot.

SK: *Did you face any kind of censorship over the years? Any legal shit? How did you fight it?*

JG: *ANSWER Me!* was seized by Customs in England, Canada, and Australia. It was unsuccessfully prosecuted for obscenity in America. But I think that the deepest sort of censorship comes from those who'll make laughably misguided statements about me or my writing but who don't have the decency to back up their statements and DEBATE me about it. I've never met a critic of mine who can hold their own against me in a debate. I've worked long and hard arriving at my viewpoints — editors at major publishing houses and magazines have told me I'm the most thorough, accurate reporter they've ever dealt with. Which blows people's minds, naturally — this evil Nazi woman-beater actually backs up his shit far better than the peace punks. Ha ha!

SK: *What reaction did Redneck Manifesto provoke?*

JG: I'm most proud of the fact that it was embraced by both white supremacists and black nationalists. There were communists and fascists who both found things of merit within it. I'm all about breaking down arbitrary boundaries like that. White supremacists and black nationalists aren't SUPPOSED to like the same things. Neither are communists and fascists. But I brought some of them together.

SK: *Were you surprised when some people labelled Redneck*

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Manifesto as racist/white-supremacist... despite the historical evidence, the meticulous bibliography, the straight-up approach?

JG: Of course not. There are many, many people in the decaying, self-loathing West who feel that unless a white male wears a dress and eats feces, he deserves to be shot in the head. There are many, many people who think that any effort to complicate simplistic Good Guys vs. Bad Guys scenarios is automatically an endorsement of everything that's bad. There are many, many people who think that any effort to show that history was actually worse than is commonly perceived, and that there's actually more guilt to go around than is commonly thought, is somehow an underhanded way of saying, "The atrocities we constantly hear about really weren't all that bad when put into perspective." By pointing out that Stalin and Mao were each responsible for more deaths than Hitler, many people think I'm trying to make Hitler look better. WRONG — I'm just focusing on a strong tendency of social groups to focus on only ONE SIDE of what happened. In reality, THEY are the ones denying all the other Holocausts except the one we're constantly force-fed.

SK: *Do you think the sense of "white guilt" is getting worse? If so, do you know why? Is there any answer to it?*

JG: Yes, I think it's getting far worse. Ironically, it's always in the whitest places, too — never anywhere that whites are actually forced to live side-by-side with significant numbers of nonwhites. I was recently in Australia, a much whiter country than the USA, and I heard the phrase "multicultural society" repeated more often in my first 36 hours there than I had in my entire LIFE before arriving.

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I can't say for sure that I *know* why, but I suspect it's evidence of a culture in decline. Historically, when a society begins feeling guilty for all its conquest and triumphs — rather than the natural reaction, which is to feel proud and brimming with life — it begins apologizing to everyone. And historically, such guilt-ridden apologies are interpreted not as evidence of noble character, but as a sign of weakness. Guilt immobilizes people and sets them up for slaughter.

Is there an answer? Yes — don't feel guilty, white people, for acts you haven't personally committed. The concept of historical guilt or collective guilt is a dangerously medieval idea. Your sworn enemies are using the idea of your guilt to manipulate and eventually conquer you. And if you think they'll be any less despotic than white people were when *they* were at the top of the heap, you're fooling yourself.

SK: *In Shit Magnet you talk about how you enjoy pissing people off by simply being honest... by exposing their self-deluding lies. Does the (moronic) criticism help fuel what you do?*

JG: More often than not these days — because the standard reaction to me is more moronic and histrionic now than at any point in the past — it fuels my *comedy* writing. It doesn't anger me as much, because I've accepted their stupidity. I've accepted the fact that most people aren't equipped to understand me. And so instead of letting it raise my blood pressure, I've learned to make sport of my antagonists. I'm much more adept at satire than any of them.

SK: *Do you miss Debbie... even despite the latter days when she*

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tag-teamed with Anne?

JG: There are several occasions where I'll become wistful for how much we loved each other and how stupidly hopeful we were at the beginning. And I'll wince at how brutally ugly it became when it all fell apart. But if you trust nothing else I tell you, believe this — nothing in prison was as stressful or infuriating as having to live with Debbie. She was easily the most negative, morbid person I've ever met, and her self-pity made me savagely unhappy for over a decade. And ultimately, she never, ever cared that she made me unhappy. My biggest mistake was staying with her for as long as I did.

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