

**HILLBILLY DIGTATORS  
JIHAD**

**FINAL REPORT  
SPRING HAJ 2003**

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## *Forward*

# The Dictators, the Jihad and Me

-or-

## “Rock and Roll Made a Man Out of Me”

It was a sultry June Atlanta morning in 1976. The kind of day you could cook a whole mess of chitterlings under the hood on your way home. Killing time in the oppressive heat waiting for my ride to DC to show, I desperately sought reading refuge in the very back pages of my newly delivered copy of *Cream*.

The predictable tardiness of my buddy proved most fortuitous on this occasion, for in a three inch review, Lester Bangs, **YES!, THE LESTER BANGS**---hey I was 17, and Lester was real cool then---reviewed *Go Girl Crazy* by concluding The Dictators were “the best heavy metal rock n’ roll band in America.”

I was sold, and some 48 hours later, while bumping around in a Georgetown record store, there she was: *Go Girl Crazy*. I had \$40 to make it three weeks, and by recollection the record cost \$5, but Lester Bangs said...

Some two hours later, my new cherished 12 inch piece of vinyl (see, boys and girls in the olden days music came on big, black, pieces of plastic called records) was on the turntable with the stylus skating towards cut number 1 (see previous historic reference).

Some ten minutes later the verdict was in: this album cannot suck enough! This was my first insight into Lester’s substance abuse issues that would prematurely end his life, but of more immediate concern was tracking down the mother fucker to get my \$5 back.

Some 4 weeks later (there is a fine line between parallel construction and tedious style; but making the call here is getting much easier) I had returned to Atlanta, survived my bout with malnutrition created by funds depletion and was in proud procession of two tickets to see Uriah Heep.

A quick review of the ducats revealed that that the Heep, sans David Byron, would appear: “with special guests The Dictators.” Going Ethiopian no longer being a possibility, I decided to put my prejudices aside and re-visit the album.

Some 40 minutes later the governor had issued a pardon. Lester was right. These guys are fucking unbelievable. Sure the production sounded much like one of Edison’s early efforts, but it became intuitively obvious to even an idiot such as myself that if not yet fully formed, the strands of DNA were in place to create a Master Race of rock.

Much to my surprise each of the usual suspects of girls I called had each planned to wash their hair on the very same night of the show. With no skank .....errr.....date in sight I invited my good old Washington traveling companion. Dickie gratefully accepted and said he would drive. Per usual Dickie was late and we ran through the Fox Theater to hear that famous Tator tune: “We’re The Dictators from New York City. Good night everybody.”

As a result, the record will show that I did indeed see The Dictators in 1976 for five seconds. Thanks Dickie, may the lice of a thousand crack ho’s infest your armpits!

The rest is history, as opposed to all the above bullshit, which is...well, history. Soon there was Manifest Destiny, which, much to the chagrin of the majority of those who shall read this tedious tome, was even greater. Sure, at times, MD is awkwardly out of place in the bigger scheme of things, but, in this hillbilly’s humble

opinion, it also unmask Ross as the true ax murderer that is his essence, contains Adny's greatest lyrical triumph (theater of the mind and all that crap...) and has really neat cover art.

Blood Brothers? But, of course---1977 baby! Streamlined and sounding much cleaner, this was The Dictators, Faster and Louder. The Pistols had come and gone. The Ramones had busted loose, so it was now just a matter of time until the world came to share my secret.

Then they just went away. Where was the next LP? Letters to the PO box in Brooklyn were returned to sender, and then Michael Schenker made the music die and took with it my desire to pursue those endeavors for which I had such passion.

See, UFO was coming to Atlanta! UF fucking O! It was a general admission club date, but tickets went on sale a month in advance, and I was in line to buy mine on day one. The show started at 10:00 and the door's opened at 8:00. I was in line at 7:30.

Given confession is good for the soul, it is most therapeutic to finally issue a public apology to Mr.Schenker. Mea culpa! I should never have insisted you come take my money (and that of my fellow attendees) to perform that demanding 30 minute set in which you never once looked at the audience and showed all the enthusiasm of a chain gang member.

Say goodnight Gracie. Now freed of the bondage of having to see every act that passed through town, there was time to work on the golf game and lend greater study to the intricacies unique to baseball.

The paradigm shift began to bear fruit. My hearing improved, my handicap dropped and I had a much better feel each April whether the Braves would lose more than 100 games.

Some 25 years later (later than the setting of the first paragraph in this Dictators thing---you remember the Dictators?...this is a story about The Dictators...) a friend relates information that there is a new Dictators CD and a web site and everything!!!!

Good God man, do not toy with me in that fashion. Call and tell me my mother has been in a hideous accident, or that the lab results came back positive for Ebola, but I beg of you to spare me this most cruel of what is surely a hoax.

But, GOLLLLLY (as we are apt to exclaim in the land of the shoeless)!!!!!! IT IS TRUE. THEY LIVE. The new CD is soon in hand (still think Ave A is one of the best rock n roll songs I've heard in 20 years) and thedictators.com is monitored daily in eager anticipation of announcements when and where the boys would come out and play.

And come out and play they did. In doing so I can now go to my grave having seen the world's greatest rock n roll band. Knowing that would come to pass would seem to be the best of all possible worlds. But it was not.

The better world has come in the many kind and generous souls encountered on each haj. I GOT TO MEET THE DICTATORS MANY TIMES! From my quiet idol Andy, to the ebullient JD, to the leaner, meaner but always kind Ross (he is THE BOSS you know), to the appropriately named Dick: Johnny New York. In an odd and tedious manner, the first encounter pushed me towards a very positive lifestyle change making the future meetings all that more fun. No Michael Schenkers here, just a group of genuinely friendly good guys.

Now how much would you pay? But wait! Fortunately I ordered before midnight, so at no extra cost I also got the chance to know,

meet and embrace other good people who share my dementia. Sal and Rob: you guys did all the work collecting, and shared it with me like brothers though you knew me not. It is a relationship I shall always cherish. It goes a long way in reaffirming my notion of the basic nobility of folks. Dictators folks anyway.

Last, but far from least, a shout out to my fellow Jihadists. First to my friend Bill. Growing a dearer friend with each passing day of now 31 years, I am a much better person for time well spent in his always thoughtful and funny companionship. A good and kind soul, Bill Stands Tall among his fellow humanoids. Finally there is the Yolanda thing. My roommate/girlfriend/ex-wife (don't ask) is largely responsible for my still sucking up air on the planet. Though this may bring dubious distinction (see Dr. Mudd), I am rather appreciative. Just so happens that I love her very much too.

New Orleans, Nashville and Lexington in 2002. Philadelphia and Boston in 2003. If it ain't in Spain, I don't complain. Oh yea, and five seconds in Atlanta in 1976---stupid Dickie!

Twenty-seven years, endless hours of toe tapping yucks, the fall of the Soviet Union, two wives, 4249 miles to five gigs later I am now fully prepared to MAKE SOME NOISE!



# **SPRING HAJ 2003 FINAL REPORT**

Oh yea, this was supposed to be some sort of log of the wild and wacky extravaganza that was the spring haj 2003. Philly and Boston were great. Bill and I had a good time. Please see above.

Though airfare was reasonable, we decided to make this a roadie. The first leg of the trip was from Atlanta to Chapel Hill, NC---my father's home. There we rested overnight and traded vehicles to one with a bit fewer miles than the 215k currently on my stylish 1988 Legend. No, it did not escape me that I was cruising in my daddy's car and doing my homework in the bar. I was the boy with the sandwich in his hand.

Finally, Bill and I got to reunite with our dear friend Paul---another Peachtree High School alum. Moving away to Vermont pretty much sucked, but I cannot complain of any highly intelligent, productive and devout man and his equally lovely wife, Jennifer, producing kids. Smart folks just don't reproduce enough. Well done guys.

## **Dictators Forever Forever Dictators**

