

Red Rockers influenced SHELLSHOCK — who put out a 7" EP in '81, and played a handful of shows in Texas. After breaking up due to lack of interest, they somehow remained inspirational, as kids who'd attended Shellshock gigs included future Pantera frontman Phil Anselmo and COC's Pepper Keenan.

Starting out northeastward from New Orleans, little HC action happened until one hit Atlanta. In BIRMINGHAM in the summer of '84, No Trend played The Pit, literally four concrete walls off the interstate. Inside, it was hotter than hell — I remember someone throwing up from the heat. There were tales of fucked-up gigs in Louisiana redneck bars, in BATON ROUGE and SHREVEPORT, where bands had their lives threatened. In the Deep South, rednecks and jocks comprised an omnipresent enemy.



Joey Shithead (D.O.A.) second from left, 1982
Photo by Edward Colver

NORTHWEST

There was little reason for Hardcore outfits to go to the Pacific Northwest. It was way off the beaten track, and there wasn't much going on.

It rains there all the time, and there's nothing for kids to do but cruise in their cars, listen to music, drink beer after beer and smoke joint after joint. Northwest HC came out of that incredible ennui — a reaction to redneck loggers/truckers, hard-ass cops, and drunken frat boys.

VANCOUVER was the only Canadian city to embrace Hardcore, partly due to its proximity to Portland and Seattle. But D.O.A.'s tours and records propelled the scene across the Northwest — and the rest of North America.

*Nobody wants you
Nobody needs you
Nobody's gonna live for you
— DOA, "Liar For Hire"*

The D.O.A. story begins in Burnaby, British Columbia, ten miles from downtown

Vancouver. In 1976 came a high-powered combo of rowdy Burnaby North High grads, Stone Crazy — known as The Stoned Crazies for all the herb they smoked. Hearing The Ramones, of course, changed everything. Within weeks, Joey "Shithead" Keighley, Ken "Dimwit" Montgomery, Gerry "Useless" Hannah, and Brad "Kunt" Kent had added a cover of "Beat On The Brat" to their repertoire of bonehead Rock, like "Rock 'N' Me" by Steve Miller Band or Led Zep's "Rock & Roll." They played shitty bars in the logging town of Merritt until early 1977, when one club fired 'em for brawling with drunken rednecks.

JOEY SHITHEAD (D.O.A.): Interesting times — Dimwit had long hair. We were all really straight at our school and this guy was a pseudo-Hippie. He introduced us to the world of Black Sabbath and pot smoking. His little brother Chuck, this rugrat, used to listen to us practice. Chuck had learned to drum, so we got him in D.O.A. — he was 15 years old. Another Montgomery brother, Bob, roadied for D.O.A. for a long time.

With the bar gig over, Shithead and Dimwit hooked up with Burnaby pals Brian

"Wimpy Roy" Goble and Simon Werner to form The Skulls — who along with The Dishrags, The Modernettes and The Furies fueled a small-but-active Punk scene who hung out at Vancouver's version of CBGB, The Smiling Buddha.

In late '77, The Skulls moved east to Toronto, Canada's music biz capital. They made a big impression during their four-month stay, blowing away The Viletones at The Crash And Burn Club, and trashing a hip soiree thrown for local New Wave stars The Diodes — an incident D.O.A. wrote "Let's Wreck The Party" about. In Toronto The Skulls recorded three songs: "Fucked Up Baby" — later reworked by D.O.A. as the anti-Reagan "Fucked Up Ronnie"; "Waiting For You" — which resurfaced on D.O.A.'s *Hardcore 81* album; and "No Escape."

With Toronto conquered, The Skulls moved to London, England, but Shithead and Dimwit went home in February '78. Within weeks, Wimpy was back at his parents' house, broke and humiliated. Werner remained in London, teaming with Jim Walker of early PiL fame to achieve minor New Wave acclaim as The Pack. Meanwhile, back in BC, Dimwit, Wimpy, Gerry Useless and Mike Graham formed SUBHUMANS (not the Brit group of the same name).

Shithead began his rival outfit D.O.A. in summer '78 with Dimwit's younger sibling drummer Charles "Chuck Biscuits" Montgomery and peroxide-blond bassist Randy "Rampage" Archibald, and Brad Kent, who later moved to SF to join the Avengers' final lineup. By '79's end, D.O.A. added second guitar Dave Gregg (of Private School), completing the cast on 1980's epic *Something Better Change* LP.

The Skulls' London debacle and subsequent breakup ignited a legendary rivalry between Subhumans and D.O.A. Hating each other only made for a more competitive environment.

Early D.O.A. was incredible. A brawny hockey-player type, Joey Shithead (what a great stage name!) would spit beer and urinate on the crowd. He was an engaging singer and guitarist, who'd snarl and growl his way through D.O.A.'s rapid-fire, Clash-on-meth assault. Not just the best drummer of the HC era, Biscuits was a consummate showman, twirlin' sticks and makin' silly faces. Although not a great bassist, Rampage had true star quality. Dave Gregg had an ultra-cool vibe. Too bad those guys never got along.



D.O.A., 1981
Joey Shithead, Randy Rampage, Chuck Biscuits, Dave Gregg
Photo by Edward Colver

DUFF McKAGAN (The Fartz): D.O.A. were so amazing. I wanted to be Randy Rampage — he was a huge influence on me. The first time I met Joey Shithead in 1980, I was totally shaking. They should not be overlooked.

D.O.A.'s excelled at politically-minded Hardcore. Like other such artists — MC5, The Clash, Stiff Little Fingers — a third party carefully orchestrated their revolutionary fervor, in this case, anarchist activist manager Ken Lester, a close Dead Kennedys associate.

JOEY SHITHEAD: Ken helped us focus on politics. He helped us with song titles. He was a newspaper editor when we hired him. He saw us as a [MC5 manager] John Sinclair-type situation. He told us that Sinclair said, "The problem with The MC5 is they only wanted to be

as big as The Beatles, but I could've made them as big as Mao.' Ken was our mentor. There was a funny rivalry between The Subhumans and D.O.A. Both had anarchist managers: we had Ken Lester, they had David Spanner. There was trouble between the two because Ken had gone out with David's sister, and Ken opened a yogurt shop, so David thought Ken had become a capitalist. We'd call him an anarcho-capitalist.

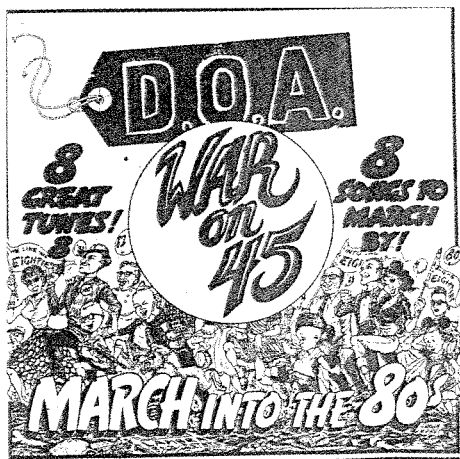
Groundbreaking early tours took the quartet to SF by '78, and to Portland and Seattle the following year. D.O.A., the first HC band to hit most Midwest and East Coast markets by '80, were pioneers on par with Black Flag or DKs.

The first D.O.A. records came out on obscure Canadian indies, so most people's first exposure came when Jello Biafra signed them to Alternative Tentacles in late '81. That year D.O.A. redid their first single — '78's "Disco Sucks" (on Joey's own

Sudden Death imprint) — for AT as "New Wave Sucks" on *Positively D.O.A.* Their '82 LP for AT *Bloodied But Unbowed* combined tracks from the Canadian discs: the "World War III" and "The Prisoner" 7"s and cuts off *Something Better Change* and *Hardcore 81*.

D.O.A. made a tactical error in relying on others to release their music — and they suffered for it. One constant prevails in their career: a bad run of luck with labels — Friends, Quintessence, CD Presents, Faulty Products, Rock Hotel, et cetera. Finding their shit remains difficult today.

JOEY SHITHEAD: Sudden Death was my label. Nobody had put out an independent record in Vancouver or even had an idea how to. I just went to pressing plants and checked out prices. My first wife's unemployment checks came in all at once — she had over 1000 dollars. I said, 'I have a plan for your money...' We printed the records and were so eager when we packed 'em up that there were thumbprints on the first copies 'cause the ink was so fresh. That was the "Disco Sucks" single. Then a



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Zine ad for D.O.A. *War On 45*, 1982
Collection of the author

record shop called Quintessence put out the "13" single and distributed the "World War III" single. They ripped us off, so we got even by going into the store and stealing 800 albums. They couldn't call the cops — the phone'd already been cut off. We sold the 800 records to our second label, Friends Records, for 1300 bucks. A lot of things made no sense about these deals. Quintessence was run by Ted "The Nose" Thomas and Friends by Roy 'The Bigger Nose' Atkinson — all the money they made went into cocaine.

Vancouver, as earlier noted, segued into the American continuum — unlike the rest of Canada. Even the most ambitious US acts had trouble touring those vast expanses. Gnarly HC outfits trying to cross the border in shoddy vans full of cheap gear with no working papers were targets for harassment. More often than not, Americans bailed at the last moment on their Canadian dates.

D.O.A. steadily toured the Canadian heartland, inspiring a generation of Canuck outfits — all who had little success in the Lower 48: SNFU (Edmonton), PERSONALITY CRISIS (Calgary), YOUTH YOUTH YOUTH (Toronto), FLESH COLUMNS (Windsor), THE NILS (Montreal), STRETCH MARKS (Winnipeg), and NOMEANSNO and THE NEOS (Victoria). Most appeared on BYO's '84 comp, *Something To Believe In*.

Subhumans were very active, but far less successful than D.O.A. "Slave To My Dick" on *Let Them Eat Jellybeans* spread Subhumans' name, and they toured a lot for *Incorrect Thoughts* (Friends, '80) and *No Wishes, No Prayers* (SST, '83) — but no one seemed to give a damn.

Gerry Useless quit the band in '80. Girlfriend Julie Belmas introduced him to her anarchist friends in nearby Squamish, BC. That gang, a guerrilla-style cadre of aspiring revolutionaries, become known as The Vancouver Five after being busted in '83 for firebombing video stores, a hydroelectric plant, and a Litton Systems facility. In the latter, 80 pounds of dynamite maimed five employees, three cops, and two passing motorists, and caused \$3,000,000 damage. According to *The Vancouver Sun* of May 24, 1984, police wiretaps revealed plans of "sabotaging the defense department building in Ottawa, blowing up CF-18A fighter jets at the Canadian Forces Base at Cold Lake, Alberta, and dynamiting the icebreaker Terry Fox, under construction at a North Vancouver shipyard."

D.O.A. turned out to be the only true friends of The Vancouver Five in their time of need — recording a benefit EP and sponsoring several "Free The Five" concerts, including one with DKs. But The Five were found guilty — Useless got six years, Belmas got ten, comrades Brent Taylor, Ann Hanson and Doug Stewart each got twenty. Fortunately, all received early release; Belmas did the least time, testifying against the others before turning to religion.

JOEY SHITHEAD: Brian and I knew Gerry Useless since we were six years old. We were in Detroit when I got this call from Ken Lester saying, 'Gerry's been arrested with a huge cache of weapons...' They'd done a bombing, and whether you agree with it or not, they were unfairly vilified in the press. It wouldn't be far from the sensationalism of the Oklahoma City bombing. I knew one of the other guys really well — Brent Taylor, who got twenty years. Brent's uncle's one of the richest men in Canada — a fact covered up by the Canadian press. They blew up Litton Systems, which produced the guidance system for cruise missiles. They also firebombed two porn-video stores and blew up a power station under construction. Nobody died, fortunately."

VANCOUVER FIVE UPDATE

The Sun THURS, MAY 24, 1984

Jailed couple traded punk rock for terror

By JES ODAM and TERRY GLAVIN

The anger of punk rock was not enough for Julie Belmas.

So she laid down her guitar, picked up a gun and started reading books with titles such as *How Terrorists Kill*.

She practiced shooting at targets with human figures

drawn on them.

Lailed about how it would be

"total action" to blow up military

planes and "real

deal" to blow up the

icebreaker named after

carrier victim Terry

Fox, rehearsed

robbing an

armored car

ward and was

the voice that

warned that a van load of explosives was due

to go off at the Litton plant in Toronto.

In the words of a Crown prosecutor, she

became an urban guerrilla soldier.

And a judge, saying it was necessary for

him to deter others from practicing

"anarchy and terrorism," has given her a 20-

year jail term.

Belmas, just 21 years old, is appealing its

length.

The boyfriend she took with her from the

world of punk to the world known as "Direct

Action" has also been jailed.

Gerry Hannah, 27, bass player and writer

of lyrics such as "— You" for a band

known as the Subhumans — once banned

from the Commodore in Vancouver because

of its "obnoxious" lyrics — was sentenced to

10 years by the same judge.

During their trial in B.C. Supreme Court in

New Westminster both had changed their

pleas to guilty from not guilty on a number of

charges.

As well as the Litton bombing, Belmas

admitted conspiring to rob the guard in order

to finance other activities — as well as the

attempted arson of a video store, possession

of weapons and explosives, possession of a

stolen truck, a stolen two-way radio and

other equipment and theft of three cars.

Hannah admitted the attempted arson,

robbery conspiracy, the vehicle charges and

possession of stolen guns and the other equip-

ment.

Both got 10 years for the robbery conspiracy,

which the Crown said was not carried out

because the two were arrested just days be-

fore it was to be committed, with lesser con-

current sentences for the other B.C. of-

fences.

Belmas got a second, consecutive, 10-year

term for her part in the attack with 250 kilo-

grams of dynamite on the Litton plant,

where the guidance system for the U.S.

cruise missile system is manufactured.

Five employees were injured in the bomb-

ing, as were three police officers and two

passing motorists. Damage was estimated at

\$3.87 million.

Before sentence was passed, Belmas

apologized for the injuries, which have caus-

ed permanent injury to five of the victims.

As friends looked on from the gallery, she

read a prepared statement that said in part:

"I meant no harm to any people. I was acting

against a war machine, not against the peo-

ple held within it."

Her lawyer, John Conroy, asked for a term

of no more than 10 years and characterized

her as a woman who was passionately com-

mitted to the ecology and anti-nuclear move-

ments as well as an unusual lover and ardent

feminist.

The judge rejected her apology, saying it

was of little relevance to the inquiry.

And he said that other Canadians share

the concerns of Belmas and Hannah, but do

not resort to the same violent means to reach

a political objective.

The court had been told earlier that a

police planted electronic bug picked up a

conversation in which Belmas agreed with a

friend more than a year ago that she was

proud of her role in the bombing.

The bug also relayed to a listening post in

the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit

headquarters talk by Belmas in December,

1982, and January 1983, about sabotaging

the defence department building in Ottawa,

blowing up a number of CF-18A fighter jets

at the Canadian Forces Base at Cold Lake,

Alberta, and dynamiting the icebreaker

Terry Fox, then under construction at a

North Vancouver shipyard, the judge was

told.

Senior prosecutor Jim Jardine said

Belmas concluded she preferred the Cold

Lake proposal to the Ottawa one and said

blowing up 40 CF-18As "would be a great ac-

tion."

Belmas was heard also to say she thought

blowing up the icebreaker, to be used in oil-

well operations in the Beaufort Sea, "was

real neat" because it showed strength and

conveyed the public image of a group fight-

ing for northern native peoples and against

environmental damage.

How did Belmas, who once worked with

mentally-handicapped children, and Han-

nah, described by his mother as one of the

kindest people in the world, get involved in

acts of political terrorism?

Belmas, born in New Westminster into a

large, Roman Catholic family, later grew up

in Port Coquitlam and North Vancouver.

She canoodled, biked, studied guitar and

coached softball. Then she got a job at Wood-

lands school, working the night shift to look

after the handicapped patients while taking

an ethics course at Douglas College during

the day.

But her life was changing. From helping

organize benefit concerts by punk bands, she

went into a magazine calling for radical

activism, the feminist movement and El

Salvador protests.

She met Hannah through the Subhumans

and gradually both became disillusioned

with what they were to later call the punk

movement's lack of commitment to "real

radical change."

In 1981, the pair left Vancouver for Jasper.

She worked as a highways flagman, he on

maintenance at a nearby ski resort — later

the scene of the theft of a number of radios

and other equipment that were eventually

found at a home the pair shared in New West-

minster.

While in Jasper, Belmas filed grievance

against her supervisor on the road crew,

charging him with sexual harassment. The

man later committed suicide.

One lawyer who later acted for Belmas

said the situation had a great deal of emo-

tional impact on her.

Hannah was born and raised in Burnaby,

the youngest of five children.

His mother, Luss, says he grew up loving

the environment but watching the world

around him change for the worse. As a boy

he would come home with stories of turtles

aplusing in ponds near his home, in an area

now covered by a shopping mall.

His frustration led him first to the angry

music of the punk movement and fellow

Burnaby North high school student Rick

Zimmerman remembers he always "had

some hand on other going."

After dropping out of school in Grade 11,

in 1974, he worked at various jobs. Then he

chose the name Gerry Useless and joined the

Subhumans, playing bass and writing lyrics

such as one that goes:

"You call us weirdies, call us crazy.

"Say we're evil, say we're lazy.

"Say we're just the violent type.

"Kind of dumb, not too bright.

"We don't care what you say.

"— you."

With Belmas, whom he called his wife to

be, he became active in environmental,

feminist and native-rights campaigns.



BELMAS

Press coverage of The Vancouver 5

From a "Free The Five" flyer; reprint of May 24, 1984 article in *The Vancouver Sun*

Collection of the author



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DOA

D.O.A. press shot, 1984
Collection of Joe Keithley

The mid-80s saw D.O.A.'s decline as a viable entity. Though respected scene vets, their music lost its edge — starting with 1984's Bachman Turner Overdrive-style *Let's Wreck The Party* — signaling the beginning of the end. As no young local groups arose to pick up the slack, the scene withered away.

Biscuits went on to Circle Jerks, Danzig and Social Distortion. Dimwit replaced Chuck in D.O.A. for a while, joined Rick Rubin's ill-fated The Four Horseman project, then OD'd in 1994. Rampage reappeared as the falsetto-Metal frontman of Annihilator, who had a minor late 80s MTV hit, "Alice In Hell." Dave Gregg became a Rock merchandising honcho. Joey Keighley, changing his last name to Keithley, continues with ever-changing D.O.A. lineups.

KEN INOUE (Marginal Man): D.O.A.'s overlooked 'cause of the way they kinda faded away towards the end. Latter-day D.O.A. is just not all that good, whereas *Hardcore 81* is brilliant. They toured constantly. They were fucking incredible.

SEATTLE Hardcore, though not the biggest or most amazing scene, made history for what it spawned: the late-80s Grunge of Nirvana, Soundgarden, Mudhoney et al. The HC vibe and ethic of inspired those Sub Pop bands.

Rock history in Seattle prior to HC offered little. Ze Whiz Kids, a 70s gay glam theater troupe that dished out confrontational performance, represented the only local subculture. Whiz Kid David "Tomata DuPlenti" Harrigan moved to NYC with boyfriend Michael "Gorilla Rose" Farris, and became key Downtown figures. According to rumor, Tomata outfitted and named The New York Dolls.

The two returned to Seattle in '76 to play the first-ever Punk shows in the region as The Tupperwares, dressing like Brian Jones and performing Iggy covers and Ramones-fueled originals. By early '77, Tomata and Gorilla split for LA, where they took their place in history as The Screamers.

In their wake came The Enemy, The Lewd, The Mentors, and the crappy New Wave of The Mice, Chinas Comidas, and X-15. The best — The Telepaths, later The Blackouts — spawned Paul Barker and Bill Rieflin of Ministry. The scene congregated at a tiny dive, The Bird.

Most everyone from Seattle who was serious about artistic expression moved away, usually to California. Expatriates included Penelope Houston of The Avengers, Eldon "El Duce" Hoke of The Mentors, Mötley Crüe's Nikki Sixx, Fartz bassist Duff McKagan (later of Guns N' Roses), and The Lewd.

ART CHANTRY (Seattle artist): Penelope Houston from Bellingham was in one of my art classes at Western Washington U. One night her and some friends were watching this show *Weekend* with a segment on English Punk — America's first exposure to the Sex Pistols. Many who saw that show dropped out, moved to San Francisco, and formed a Punk band. That was Penelope's trip: she just said fuck it and formed The Avengers.

By '81, Seattle had a Hardcore scene of 200 or so fucked-up kids; many went to Roosevelt High in the city's north end, but most came from the burbs. As