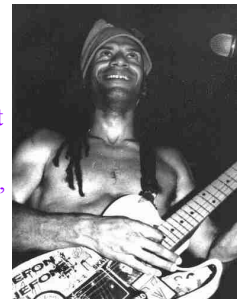




This interview with Jeff Williams was conducted via e-mail, AUG 25th 2000. It originally appeared in the book for the 217 Represent Compilation. (photos by Corey Howell)

EKNB:How did you get involved in the punk movement?

JW: I remember watching t.v. with my brother [Bruce] in 1979 and there was a show on about punk rock. The show was trying to make that sort of thing look bad and that parents should be afraid of the punk rock and steer your kids clear. But it didn't seem scary or bad to us. Bruce and I didn't know much about it but we thought the music was different and good and raw... we were young and knew of NOBODY else who liked that sort of thing, but it was fascinating. Then we saw Devo on Saturday Night Live. We skated, and our mom subscribed SKATEBOARDER MAGAZINE for us AND THAT DID IT. Any hope for us becoming part of the classic rock scene [which dominated Central Illinois with a near death grip hold, as you can well imagine].... went out the window. We went to APPLETREE RECORDS with Gary Swaggerty and met this guy, Larry [who was old enough to actually work there!]... and we told him what we liked.... and he would order it for us. So around 1980, we started listening to the likes of THE DAMNED, THE DICKIES, DEAD KENNEDYS, THE BUZZCOCKS, STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, ELVIS COSTELLO, DEVO, DEAD BOYS, THE CLASH. Then Bruce started ordering vinyl direct from labels like SST, X-CLAIM and DISCHORD, bands like MINOR THREAT, 00, SCREAM, VOID, FAITH.... SSD, THE F.U.'S, JERRY'S KIDS [Boston version], GANG GREEN, also NEGATIVE APPROACH, NECROS.. and they would write letters back saying THANKS. So we loved it, and we didn't care what the people at school would say about us we would get made fun of sooooo bad that it was just funny..... and I used to get into arguments at school with this guy Thom who would say 'THAT IS JUST A STUPID FAD SO YOU MUST BE GAY'... or 'GOD YOU GUYS SURE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT ROCK AND ROLL.'. One time a car load of guys pulled a gun on me and a couple of my friends and they were not happy about the punk rock AT ALL. Well, to make along story short, as the cops took this one guy and threw him in the back of a cop car he screamed 'PUNK ROCKER YOU SUCK MY COCK!!!!'. In 1984 at the ILLINOIS STATE FAIR i was wearing a BLACK FLAG shirt [which i fashioned myself] and these guys followed me around just totally confused and mad reading my shirt over and over again, and saying, BLACK FAGGOT????????Ah, the early years were fun! Then we would start going to shows in St. Louis. My first show was JODIE FOSTER'S ARMY... and it was great!!!! Everyone was having fun and getting worn out, and then we would go down and see bands quite a bit. THE DESCENDENTS [pre-ALL], THE RAMONES, THE DICKIES, AGENT ORANGE, FISHBONE, BATTALION OF SAINTS, and I got to meet and talk to Henry Rollins when he first joined BLACK FLAG!!!! Most of the bands were American, there weren't a whole lot of British bands coming through at the time, though we liked ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE, G.B.H..... but we never thought they would play in the States. Then, we got to open for DR. KNOW [nard-core from oxNARD California}. You have to understand, it was sooooo exciting for me to get to meet these people!!! So, whatever style of music NIL8 is, I don't care to classify it, but, these were the bands that inspired the hell out of me as a song writer, and I owe a lot of what we have done [as a band] to their influences on me and I thank them.....!!



EKNB:How were the shows back in the beginning?shows around springfield?

JW:Well, we got a chance to open for MILLIONS OF DEAD COPS [friscopoliti-core] and THE CRUCIFUCKS [Michigan band fronted by DOC DART] on the ROCK AGAINST REAGAN when their tour stopped in Springfield in 1983!!!! That was unbelievable to me!!!! There were people there who I had never seen before!!!! We got to meet new people that had some of the same ideas....like I said earlier i was young and these things were very big inspirations to me.To meet people who were REALLY mad at corporations like MAC'DONALDS.... and were knowledgeable about the shady practices that some of these corporations were doing, that i never even would have thought of before. So it wasn't just about music... it was about information that, well, at the time, you didn't hear much about.... at least I didn't until then..

EKNB:What changes in the Springfield scene have you seen over the years?

JW:When NIL8, and the SUKKWHOLEZ, and FLAWLESS CATSUP, and even BACKWARDS DAY were starting, well, if there were 15 people, that was good, because at least you knew that those 15 people were REALLY into this music, and not just there because it was the cool thing to do. But you can't really call 15 folks much of a scene. But it did start to grow. Shows got bigger for us... but I think that when FAGALONIOUS P. HECTOR and THE STIFFS and INGOT started playing shows, that is when I thought there was a stable and growing base. I felt like that was when bands and people in the all age scene started to be more visible and people realize that shows were possible for more than just one or two bands.

It seems like after 95, the shows died, it went from up to what 500 kids at shows to maybe 25. Do you see more kids at the shows today, do you see it gaining momentum once again? More kids getting interested in the scene again?

JW:I think so. A lot of times it is just how the cycle of good bands + good places to play pans out. Good bands that are motivated to try to bring other bands into town help a lot also. Promoters who know what the good bands are to bring to town, but for Springfield, it hasn't really been the promoter type angle, as much as some other towns. There are exceptions, like Jeremy Ward for a bit, and actually Buffy Nickel did a good job for awhile and Jennifer Ruechel/George at skanks, but now with MILLWALL BRICKS, POUND FOR POUND, the somewhat local GUNGA DINS, TIMMYS to name a few. There seems to be a growing amount of bands who can bring other bands through in a show trade situation, and more people know they are going to see quality bands from the area.. and quality bands that are passing through. So people might not know about a particular band, but they know it will be a quality show. So they go!!!

EKNB:Back in 93-94 there were places to play a dime a dozen, you guys had a lot of shows at the Atrium, there was the Beach House, Skanks, numerous KofC Halls, VFW halls, On Broadway, and the list continues, now it appears there's only The Asylum, and Skanks and occasionally Vieles for All Ages shows, do you think the scene gained a reputation and many places decided to quit allowing shows?

JW:Well, remember back then? Like you said, you could set up a show almost anywhere. It was great and you could count on a turn out. Just about any day of the week, but, I think a lot of these people who actually rent halls out, they might not be great friends, BUT I DO KNOW THEY TALK TO THE OTHER VENUE PEOPLE., and so when a hanging light and table gets destroyed at the Beach House, it send ripples, and then all of a sudden, they start raising prices to rent the venue, or they just say screw it, let's have bingo!!! The thing that sucks is, that you don't need to have that much self control, just DON'T fuck up the place, you don't have to stand there with your hands in your pockets, but when you start throwing tables and breaking major fixtures, well, there goes the venue, see ya in about 6 years when the new owner might take a chance again. Does it sound like i am bitching? i just know if things like that didn't happen, there would be more places to play. It's just stands to reason.

EKNB:Although there have been several lineup changes, NIL8 has been around for around what, 14 years now?? (86 right, as the Gargoyles?) (if I may sound like a daytime talkshow interview-ist) can we expect NIL8 to be around another 14?

JW:We are putting out this live cd, and then I would like to put out one more new cd with all new material, and hopefully a tour to support it, but that will probably be about all she wrote.



for more information on NIL8

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