



# LIVE IN CONCERT OCT 7 POWERSTATION

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## NO SLEEP TILL

Arrive at Frisbee 6am Tuesday morning. Things don't usually kick off so early round here and we're not due to leave till 11am but I've been up all night due to a friend's party and now I dare not go to sleep. Tour organiser Johnny (Psycho Daizy) Baker has also been up all night — worrying. Nothing to do but wait for the Hard Ons and Dead Moon to

their set the dance floor is seething with demented punters. Dead Moon are totally awesome — primitive, fierce, primal punk rock. They stick a candle on Andrew's drum kit and give away beers to the kids. Nobody here had heard them before but afterwards they're reeling from a great show and getting the band to sign posters. Fully satiated by

we New Zealanders must seem pretty decadent. We don't look any good to them, that's for sure. Without so much as a bat of his inscrutable half-Korean, half-Italian eyelids, Ray calmly tells me he hasn't seen one beautiful woman in New Zealand (hey, just 'cos the Hard Ons didn't get lucky in NP last night). Not only do New Zealand audiences

## NEW PLYMOUTH

Tour Diary: On the road with the Hard Ons and Dead Moon

turn up, load their gear, drink coffee (Dead Moon), kick soccer ball around car park (Hard Ons) until it's time to roll.

I opt to travel in the Dead Moon van after being told that the Hard Ons farted and belched their way round the country on their last tour. Tegal Chicker from the Psycho Daizies is driving our van. Fred and Toody settle into the back seats, Andrew the drummer is hung over from the same party the night before. No sleep till New Plymouth! We putter around Auckland for another half hour picking up gaffer tape and Bridget to do door duties and putting air in tyres. I learn that they don't have home brew in America (Andrew is telling Fred and Toody how he drank beer last night made from "powder").

It takes about five hours to get to NP but it's a beautiful day and the Moon are impressed by the countryside. They don't say much though. None of us has remembered to bring any tapes so we are reduced to playing Tegal's NZ pop hits compilation ('Bliss', 'Shark Attack', 'See Me Go') as we burn through little towns with lime green houses and signs announcing "Sheep Shearing Centre of the Universe" or "Gumboot Capital of New Zealand". Fred and Toody recommend service station meat pies — something else you don't get back home. Andrew learns you can't buy beer in our gas stations.

6pm, White Hart, sound-check. The Hard Ons — as Roddy who is driving their van calls them — are already milling about in pert little ski caps, bundled up against the cold. Roddy tells us later that all they talk about is "pussy" and "tits n' ass". He's pretty bummed out about it, seeing as he's got many more driving hours to endure with them (tomorrow Wellington). I decide not to travel in their van even though I'm supposed to in order to, you know, get the full picture.

The gig kicks off at 7.30 and the Blue Room fills up pretty quick for a Tuesday night. We chant along to the Hideously Disfigured chorus ("fuck off — no you fuck off!") before Sticky Filth raze our ears with a hardcore set that gets the skinheads dancing like bears. I worry that maybe they won't dig Dead Moon who are full-on in a different kind of way but seconds into

two intense sets, I sneak off to bed. I'll get to hear the Hard Ons tomorrow night and I haven't slept for 38 hours. Three songs into their set, I'm asleep.

A noisier drive today — Johnny Psycho at the wheel, the Sonics on the sound system. 11am and Andrew is drinking the Jack Daniels Fred uses to gargle with pre-gig. He gives me a swig and one of his stash of NZ beers and Fred says I'm "so rock and roll". I learn that GG Allin, famed American performance artist and obscene rock star, is related to Barbara Bush (Way! Toody says he's the First Lady's second cousin). This is wild when you consider his act consists of stuff like smearing English muffins with his own excrement and lobbing them at the audience.

Wellington is groovy as ever, and wet. We're staying in Trekkers Hotel in Cuba Mall, a few doors along from Stax, tonight's venue (billed as Ali Babi's on the posters). It's still kitted out in original 60s cave decor, long silver grotto entrance passage, the room itself all swollen "rock" outcrops and concrete stalactites. I'm glad I'm not in a band and don't have to start unloading equipment. Instead I can go and have a cup of coffee at Midnight Espresso. Which turns out to be a rip off — \$4 for a piece of cheesecake and snotty staff. Cuba Cuba across the road is much better and it's licensed. Why don't we have licensed coffee shops in Auckland?

A wet Wednesday night and the punters are dribbling in. Museum case punk rockers in studded leather stamped with words like "Exploited" and "Crass", green mowhawks, docs etc, the Smut support corp. I ask Andrew if Dead Moon attract this sort of crowd back home and he says punks like this don't exist in America any more. Kind of embarrassing. But Smut play their speed punk rock pretty well, greatly enhanced by the presence of Sinead O'Conner look-alike vocalist Simone.

Then I get embroiled in conversation with Ray, the Hard On's bass player. I tell him I heard that all they talk about is tits n' ass and he retorts "Well if you believe anything a 20 year old piss-head tells you..." referring to our Roddy! This strikes me as pretty self-righteous, but Ray is drinking raspberry and lemonade and the Hard Ons are non-smoking vegetarians so I guess

look bad (but not as bad as the Irish) we're passionless as well. Ray admits they've been spoiled by their tour of Europe, which was great culture and great girls, the language barrier only serving to enhance the international language of love. Ray says he saw the best looking girls in Spain and France. He pulls out a photo of his French girlfriend. She is almost as beautiful as Ray himself, who, it has to be said, is looking totally cute in a white fake fur Brian Jones coat he picked up in a Paris flea market ("he was a white man trying to look black, I'm a coloured man trying to look white"). We stop talking about sex for a while (Ray's in love and sworn off one night stands) and I learn that if he wasn't in the Hard Ons he'd be teaching school. Ray says they're making a lot of money but not enough to be rich, which they'd like to be, and they may give it up if they don't hit the big time soon. On stage later they play totally compressed, accelerated Ramones-ey rock with zero audience interface. It's exciting but kind of cold. I know they can't wait to get back to Australia. It's as if they think the faster they play the quicker they'll get there.

Later that night in the bar of Trekkers. Hard Ons an exclusive gaggle of ski-hats in the far corner, shunning our shabby table of Smut punks, Dead Moon's Andrew, Steak's lead singer etc. I'm not feeling too good (too many takeaways, too much beer) and go to bed early, missing out on the opportunity to accompany Roddy and Andrew to a late-night transvestite bar.

The biggest drama happens on the ride home. Dead Moon and the Hard Ons have flown to Christchurch. Roddy, Bridget and I are bringing the van back to Auckland, eating potato chips and shielding our eyes from the sun until we near the Desert Road when it starts to rain and then, incredibly, snow. Suddenly we're plunged into white countryside, as if we stepped through Alice's looking glass into another world. We take service station advice and detour into Ohakune National Park. We drive past a giant carrot alerting us to the fact that we are entering "Carrot Country." That's the last interesting thing I see before we get back — sigh, moan, grumble — to Auckland.

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