

THE PILFERS' Coolie Ranx.

October 10 1998 in Oswego, NY

Conducted by D. Kress, A. Wegner & J. Huber
solely for Hoi Polloi! Skazine #6. Edited for clarity.
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Interview with Coolie Ranx take one.

Yes, take one

Alright the first question is..

Yeeees?

How's it been going?

It's been going great! I gotta tell you it's been going really well. We've been received well by a lot of people who have never heard of us. First time out they come to see us, they kind of like us and stuff, so we're building up a following. We've been around for like a year and eight months since I left The Toasters, where you said you first met me.

In the beginning before you guys started playing out shows, it was a big thing to hear Coolie Ranx, Vinnie (Nobile, ex-Bim Skala Bim thone) in a band together, The Pilfers, it's gonna be good. Everyone was hyping it up.

I don't... Sorry, sorry (*apologizing for jumping in*)

No you.

No you (*laughter*) No when we left the bands it was more of, I don't know what was going on in the ska world, but for him to even say he wanted to work with me like that, I was... I was blown away. Know what I'm sayin', and I didn't know if people were gonna receive us well, what the whole thing would amount to.

Right.

It's been great, it has turned out great. We've got some good people working with us sowe work with them, and with each other.

Just how long was it from after you left the Toasters until you formed The Pilfers?

I took about one whole full year off & started writing songs, and I did that at my leisure. I wasn't pressured to write songs, I just wrote songs when I felt like writing them. Everything was inspiration so. Actually... it was probably only 6 months [whiney voice] 'Oh my god what am I going to do should I call them? Should I say I'm sorry? You know I wanna come back.' In the Toasters, I totally didn't know what the hell I was doing, why I was doing it, I just knew that I had to leave. It was all about I gotta get out of here so then after I had finished getting out of my dark depression, my suicidal stage, I thought I should start living again. And from then on I did.

What label are you guys on?

We just got signed to Mojo Records, We weren't on any record label prior to that.

Is that how you got set up on this tour, through Mojo Records?

No, No, that contract hasn't kicked in yet.

'Cause I know Spring Heeled Jack and Reel Big Fish are on Mojo

No, no, not like that.

(SOMEONE) Spring Heeled Jack is on Ignition, ignorant fool. SMACK!

See this whole tour right now, these are a bunch of friends doing a tour together, you know what I mean? (SOMEONE) Alright, that's what ??? said, he knows Reel Big Fish.

Exactly. It's not about no record label thing right

now. Even when I did vocal on SHJ's record. It's not about no record label politics. It's all about just saying yo we like your shit, I mean excuse me, we like your product and we wanted this too.

Oh no, you like shit, shit sounds good. (laughter) You were talking about offers. Did you get any offers from Moon Ska or BiB Records? Comments about that?

I wasn't trying to hear, I didn't hear their call. No disrespect to any labels, it's just that I had already done that and I wasn't intending to go back and do the same thing over again. I might as well have stayed with the Toasters if that's what I wanted to achieve, that's not what I was trying for. I didn't want to hear from anyone that was dealing with what I was dealing with before. It wasn't anything against them, it was just me saying, if that's the case, I might as well be staying with the band, go back to the Toasters.

What about BiB Records with Vinnie?

Again, BiB is just The Toasters in Boston. Moon Records in Boston version. As far as I saw it, it wasn't appealing to me. No disrespect to anybody, I was just thinking of something else.

The Pilfers had a demo tape out called 'Rude By Association'. I heard that, but do you have a CD coming out?

Yes, after that we did do our own self-released CD, and we have that available now.

Okay cool.You said you got signed on Mojo, any upcoming plans for a new disc there?

Yeah, we're gonna do a disc there and alot of thought must go into that as well. We've got all the tracks, but it's more than that now, it's risen to a new level, so..

Do you think you'll take any tracks from your current self-released CD?

Uhhh... maybe. It's not a thing we have to do. There are some songs I really truly like on this disc. Actually, I personally would have done the CD over again, and release it again, but there are alot of people that know us and our families, they don't want to hear that again. Out of courtesy to them I wouldn't do that, there's no reason that they should have to pay for it again just repackaged. Whoever doesn't have the first CD, they missed out. You know what I mean? We have at least 10-12 songs that we could potentially release as a totally new CD and.. (*pointing*) Um he's kickin lyrics (*laughter*). There's alot of new material that we could release. He's smooth.

Any inside opinion on Hellcat Records? How they recently signed The Slackers, The Pietasters and Hepcat.

Again, no disrespect to anybody else, it seems to be much of the same thing happening. Now Hellcat is the Moon Records of the West Coast. All they did was inherit what Bucket and Moon Records did you know, so they'll have their Moon bands. So it seems to me much of the same as what was happening on the East Coast. It's just that Hellcat jumped to sign them and gave these guys undisclosed sums of money, I don't know how much I can't speculate. But I think they did sign them, as opposed to Moon just having them do like a development deal with them. Now those bands on Hellcat are fully pledged bands, they're signed now. To me it's the same as Moon Records. I could be wrong, maybe a couple steps off..

What do you think of your replacement by Jack Ruby Junior?

Oh Jack Ruby's alright, nice guy.

(A) Do you like the way the Toasters are going now, or not?

I don't have... I don't even know where the Toasters are going.

You haven't heard the latest album 'Don't Let The Bastards Grind You Down'?

Yeaaa. I heard that album, I heard that album but you know, it still sounds like a Toaster thing to me. I'm going somewhere totally different, so I don't know if I wanna be looking at that Toasters stuff still.

Right. All I can say is I love the Toasters, I love everything they do, even up to today but honestly, after 'Dub 56', even after 'Hard Band for Dead's 2Tone Army single, yeah then it got kind of down. But the latest CD, when I heard that, DLTBGYD is good too.

Though... Dub 56 is the finest.

Yeah, that's my favorite album too, not to give my own self praise but I thought we were a real unit when we recorded that album. It was just like that chemistry is pretty hard to find. Maybe if I started to drink again, maybe the second album would've been phat too... (*laughter*) Because when I did *Dub 56*, I was wasted. I was in studio drinking 2 bottles of wine, I was blasted! He just kept giving me wine to sing. I was making stuff up on the spot, man. I did the *Dub 56* remix, I did that shit on the spot. I did *Dancin'* on the spot, I did *Goody Goody* on the spot. I was just blasted, like YEEEEAH! 'wit my groove on and I was just fuckin' shit. I was just totally wasted.

Goody Goody, that's a good song. But as far as The Pilfers though.. See um...

You haven't heard us right?

My band opened for The Pilfers a while ago, but I'm not too up on ska these days.

Okay.

So how was it playing with the Specials? The new Specials.

It was... I'll tell you the truth man, it was bangin!
Was it? I saw you both on Long Island, it was hot.

Which one on Long Island? Outside?

Yup, the outside one.

Yeah that sucked though, yo!

You didn't like it?

Yeah, that shit sucked. I gotta say.. no for real that place sucked. Yea, yea, they was treatin' me bad.
I went to see the Specials and you guys.

Yea, yea, The Specials is hot man, The Specials is hot, but that was booty yo. For real. I didn't like that spot.

Why didn't you like that spot?

I'll tell you the truth.The sound system sucked, don't you remember that? Alright, it's coming back toyou now. The sound system sucked, the stagehands sucked, you know the cops sucked.

(D) Cops always suck though. (A) I didn't like the clientele.

Yea, the clientele sucked but they did have a couple cuties up in there. I wish they were sucking (*laughter*) Excuse me. 'scuse me.

When you play a show and you look out on a crowd, does that effect your performance as an entertainer?

(*Pauses*) ..Not who's out in the crowd, what really effects me personally is a how they feel towards us. What the vibe is. I'm just really personal with that, you know? For instance, if they don't like us I'm gonna take offense. Yea, I take serious offense if they don't like what I'm doin'... (*continues into patois chat*)

So you think fan response is keeping you going?

(*laughter*) Let me tell ya, if it wasn't for people being in the audience, I couldn't do this. I mean if there's 2 or 3 people being in the audience and its all good, I could do that. But if the vibe's ain't right, I'm not doing it. Fi real, some nite ev'rybody look nice out dere y'know? (*trails off patois*) Whine!

We can put this in the interview right?

Yeah, its all good yo, it's just my personality. (*laughter, all having a great time*) This is one time, this is one person right now, I'm having fun. This is my first day on the the tour, I just came from homeya locked down, so the first day's... That's why I'm hyped... So do I keep kickin' it or what? 'Cause there's so many distractions out here. (*laughter*) This is our manager, Randy.

Oh what up Randy, my name's Alex RANDY: Oh you found him.

Yes, perfect. Good job.

Now what were you saying here? (*pauses*) Oh you're checkin' the chicks out too... so fans of the fan-zine, it's not just me. There's mad honeys up & down this place.

I can't concentrate on the interview.

And they're not wearing anything you know?

Everything's just legs & ass you know what I'm sayin'?

There's all these girls you know, I'm like...

Excuse me, buttocks.

I'm like fuck the interview.

You know, we should actually be sitting in the key spot. This ain't the spot, if you really want the spot... come... with... me.

Let's go. We're now following Coolie Ranx to the key spot. It's keyin' up. We gotta get Vinnie in here too if that's a possibility.

(*in patois*) Gwannn-o, make it worse dey all westindian. Please stop me that, stop it I'm gonna be kicking some lyrics. (*laughter, more indistinguishable patois*)

So, uh...

(*laughs, aside in patois*) 'Scuse me do dey have de vegetarian food upstairs? Yeoh, wat dey have upstairs? Hold on...

We should probably be taping this huh?

Coolie is now talking to a chick and he's ignoring us..

Discussing food & probably her sexy apparel.

LATER THAT NIGHT...

So, d'ja get any booty?

She's comin' down.

Are you gonna get booty?

Naw, I ain't. I ain't trying to hit it right away. I just like to meet the females and exchange words and you know...

But the prospects are definitely high

Oh, my heart is beatin' yo! My heart is beatin! It was a good encounter. See, I meet girls, I don't have sex with them you know, they have to be special. She was special (*laughter*)

Out of Reel Big Fish, Spring Heeled Jack & The Pilfers, who parties the hardest?

I don't know about partying man, I don't think all about partying. I think on any given night, I'll... (*interrupting*) **This is choice information.**

Tell you one thing, it ain't The Pilfers. As a band, we ain't partiars 'cause as soon as I get off the stage I'm in bed. Once the show is over I'm in MY bed. I just try to do the show, have alot of fun & bug out, have total innocent fun you know what I'm sayin'? After that that's it. Yeah totally. And it's like kickin' lyrics to chicks...

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So you're not friends with the devil?

No, he don't know me. (*laughter*)

Alright, that's a rap.

(*A guy enters says "stage in 15, I don't see you, I don't see Anna, we have to do soundcheck!*)

Any further comments on the man who just gave you shit?

Oh that's our drummer, you'd think he was my father. That's the drummer, he gets a little ticked when things don't run right according to schedule.

Schedules suck!

That's what I'm sayin'..Fuck that. Like it's going to be perfect for me anyway. I'm gonna go there and be like 1,2..1,2 oh well. Then they say thank you, thank you soundcheck's over and that's it.

How long will you be playing for tonight?

Not long. Not too long. They're not giving us enough stage time, if it were up to me, I'd play for 2 hours.

Two hours?

Interesting question, but I fear it spoiled the mood.

Where are you going tomorrow? How many shows do you play after this?

We've got a month's worth of shows.

Next stop?

Detroit Michigan, tomorrow night

So you're leaving right after the show

I don't know, maybe not.

(D)You should stop in Rochester. (A)That's what I was going to say... Why don't you guys come to Rochester?

We might just crash.

We've got plenty of space around here.

Well how far is Detroit?

Detroit's far. (D) But it's college town man

So we're gonna have to jet man, sorry I'm ranting here.

(D) How far is Detroit? (A) Detroit's 10 hours away maybe.

(D) Any other questions Alex? We usually have a standard question we ask every time. We already asked you once...

What did you ask me?

...So I wasn't planning on asking the same question twice.

Ask me.

You want me to?

You're burning to do it, go ahead. Ask me.

I don't have to because if readers have HP issue #2, they already know the answer.

Issues? what about?

When you take a shit, do you crumple, roll or fold the toilet paper?

(*laughter*) I remember you now.

I believe it was a crumple?

(*still laughing*) I remember you now. Okay, just use what I said the last time.

Has the information changed? What about you guys?

ANNA (*bassist*) I've read your zine before
Alright we're gonna cut the recording here (Coolie laughs) We still want to talk to you, but the interview tape has to be saved.

thanks Coolie.

(*still laughing*) You don't have enough tape?
THE END.

Photos by E. Mearns, winter 1999

Read more at HPSKA.COM

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