

22/02/08

Tigertailz interview – Kim Hooker



Q1 – Kim, can I start by welcoming you here, this is your first interview for the site. First question, inevitably – 2007 – your thoughts?

A. “Yes I know our best year ever and our worst. We had some great times and bad. Pepsi started saying he had pains in his stomach, he would sit on his chair at rehearsals which as you know isn’t him at all. He tried everything, doctors, dieticians etc. He’d been ill for about 6 months and I thought nothing of it. We all get ill don’t we? We did a show with Vain in Nottingham and a friend of his had to drive him there. He started changing in the dressing room and it suddenly hit me. He was so thin. I knew then something was badly wrong. I said to Mark (Captain Insano) one of our crew that it looked to me like he had cancer. But how could he? The doctors would have found it by now. Mark said “I’m being serious guy he’s dying”. About a month later the doctors said he had cancer of the pancreas. How can an idiot like me who screams and plays a guitar – know what doctors don’t? Maybe I knew him so well I could see the change in him more than they could. Bless him.”

Q2 – So what was it like for you all?

A. “Well you’ll have to ask the others that too. Pepsi said they were going to make a small incision to see how bad it was. I went to see him in hospital and he had a huge scar across his stomach, so that wasn’t a good sign. After that it was just bad news and more bad news. Jay said his doctors wanted us to keep him busy so the Thrill Pistol album and the Y&T tour were all an attempt to do so. Sadly the Y&T tour turned into a celebration of his life. Y&T were great to us - many thanks and much love to them and Jill Meniketti. Phil Kennimore told us he’d written a song about Pepsi called “One of the boys” isn’t that great? The ‘Godz of Metal’ festival we did with Motley Crue and Velvet Revolver was a weird time for me. I walked along the dirt road and saw trailers, Motley Crue, Velvet Revolver, Thin

Lizzy and Tigertailz. Nikki Sixx was hanging out of his trailer at 4 in the afternoon all decked out and ready to rock saying he was bored at the hotel and was asking for some vegetables. Jay was having his photo taken with Mick Marz which was hysterical – separated at birth those guys! Through all this Pepsi was nowhere to be seen. Anyone who knew Pepsi would tell you he'd give Nikki Sixx a run for his money in the old days and now there's Sixx eating vegetables and Pepsi back at the hotel sleeping. It should've been a great day for me. Every time I looked at him on stage all I could think was I'm never going to do this with you again. I knew it was the end. We finished the last song and I just stayed on the stage staring at the crowd saying a final goodbye. I knew it was over. There are some photos around of us backstage after the show – have you ever wanted to read someone's mind? Well in all those pics, all I was thinking was "I'll never see you like this again will I?" It's the story of my life really. I'm never allowed to get to happy."

Q3. And the Thrill Pistol album - was that hard too?

A. "He was in and out of hospital at the time. We'd be in the studio and he'd just turn up in a taxi. He walked in one day from hospital and said "can you take me home? I want to get my keyboard and a sound module". I took him home then back to the studio for a few hours then back to the hospital. When I got back to the studio I realised he had to play bass on the song 'Natural Born Animal', I could hardly go and break him out again so I played it, but apart from that one song it's all him. He wasn't going to let a small thing like dying beat him."

Q4. What about the Y&T tour with the new bass player?

A. "We didn't know what to do. One day we'd say, 'Let's do it' then the next, 'No let's pull it'. In the end Jay went to see Pepsi's wife Shan and she said, 'Of course you must do it'. We used an old friend Glen Quinn who we'd known for years. Pepsi always said if he couldn't do any shows to use Glen so it was with his blessing. We used Glen before for a tour of Spain and St. Davids Hall that Pepsi was too ill to do. So he knew the stuff better than we did. He's a great musician and more importantly for us a great guy who's been in our circle for years. As for a new bass player – how could you replace Pepsi Tate? It's not a job I'd want. We waited for Sixx to call but he didn't so what do you do? I called Justin Hawkins and asked would he fill in for a while. He said he'd love to but he was really busy with his new album which will be out this year. So Jay said, "Let's do what Bon Jovi do and just use a bass player when we play", so Glen was the only choice. Justin Hawkins has been great to us but really you need to speak to Jay about the bass player thing. He started Tailz with Pepsi, so it's his call. I know Pepsi will never be replaced as such. Jay even had the idea of staying as a 3 piece and me playing the bass, but I know I'd be killing Sixx, he's been through a lot so I'll let him off. I must say though I love playing bass. I was kidding. Sixx is the coolest Rock 'n' Roller ever."

Q5. What are your fondest memories of Pepsi?



A. "I think about him all the time, mostly I laugh, sometimes I realise how it's all turned out and I don't laugh. Sometimes I feel happy for him and the fans, then sometimes I think about the other guys in the band and his wife and it's not so good. The one thing I was lucky enough to realise was towards the end of his life was that he never did it for himself so I thought I'll keep playing your songs for as long as I'm able to. I can hear him now, I say 'I don't know if I can carry on' and he just says, 'ohh fuck off come on lets get on with it I'm getting bored'. The truth is he was such a huge part of it all he'll always be here in everything we do."

Q6. What about the funeral? ..That must have been hard.

A. "It was a lovely summers day at 'The Point' club in Cardiff Bay which is an old converted church. There were a lot of people there. There was a choir and some Tailz stuff was shown. Ace Fincham was there too which was pretty cool. Jay asked me if I wanted to speak but I just couldn't do it. How he did I'll never know. The bottle of whisky I stuck in his hand might have helped, you'll have to ask him. The truth was the service was at 11.30 and by 10.00 I'd taken a shit load of painkillers and drank a bottle of whisky and it was still awful. I'd been dreading that day for months..NEXT"

Q7. So what now?

A. "After the Y&T tour we didn't see each other for a while which is something we had to do. We all needed to be with our own thoughts for a bit. At the beginning of this year, myself, Jay and Matt got together to talk about the way forward. Jay said we've got 2 choices, we can either turn the site into a tribute page and forget it or re-launch it I'm glad to say we chose to carry on. You'll have to ask Jay about the site really. He loves all that. I don't. We'll also be finishing the DVD documenting everything we've done since we got back together. Pepsi didn't have enough time to do it but he did try."

Q8. So what can we expect from Tailz in 2008

A. "Expect to see us out gigging the same as before festivals, clubs and anything that sounds fun to us. We've started writing and demoing songs for a new album too."

Q9. What will it sound like?

A. "Good question. Funny thing is we all write extreme songs. Pepsi would write 'Love Bomb Baby'. Then he would walk in with 'Dirty Needles'. We're all like that so I don't know if we'll sound too different from before. We'll just sound like TIGERTAILZ I think. Pepsi left us some songs so we'll stick them in too. The idea was in the studio I'll play bass but I'm working on a song at the moment and I've written something I can't really play so I don't know. The good thing about us is we all know when we can't play something well enough. Most people don't know or don't want to know. We learnt this off our friend and producer Tim Lewis."

Q10. So who will release the album? We all enjoyed Jays rant on the Y&T tour...

A. "Well again you will have to ask him about his rant. I understand it's on YouTube. It frightened the fuck out of me. He's a very angry dude you know. Seriously he's been on about giving our music away for years now which is something I've resisted. My thinking being, 'would you value something that's given to you?'. I've been writing for the new album and it hasn't been easy with Pepsi not around. The kind of stuff I find easy to write is far too heavy for Tailz. At about 4o'clock one morning when I was staring at the wall I thought, 'why am I doing this? what is the point?' then I realised that the whole point of writing a song is that what I done in my own mind in my house at 4o'clock should be herd and enjoyed by as many Metal-Heads in the world as possible. So yeah let's give it all away and go and play all over the world for whatever people will pay us. Let's enjoy life and go wild. What else is there? None of us know when it will end so enjoy it while you can. To be honest we've never made any money out of record companies anyway. So fuck 'em (for more on this – see Jays rant). Also the things I value most in my life I've never paid a penny for. There are people around me today who used to be my heroes of mine, I'm sad to say I now see them for what they are. Money grabbing wankers who's only interest in the fans is how much money they can 'steal' off them. You all know who I'm talking about. The only record companies I'd deal with over here are Sanctuary (who've gone) and Roadrunner. There's some good ones over-seas like SPV and Nuclear Blast etc.. who know how to deal with metal bands. They're cool companies but when you consider a record companies function is to get your records in the shops - most of the ones we've dealt with can't even do that – so you may as well give your stuff away. When a girl asks you to fuck her then afterwards asks you for money it's not the same is it? You realise she doesn't like you – she's a whore. When I was a kid I actually believed my heroes liked me. Now I realised they liked my money, sad really. When I write a song it's for the people to share and enjoy. So have it. Your welcome."

Q11. Ok right Any last words Kim?

A. "Id just like to thank everyone for sharing this whole Tailz thing with us. It was great to see you all on the Y&T tour. And remember whenever you see us in the future – we're only there to have a good time and celebrate the heavy metal music we all love. So don't be

afraid to join in with us – You'll love it.. Also I'd like to thank -- Pepsi Tate, Jay Pepper, Matt Blackout, Ace Finchum, Tim Lewis, Mark Kane, Keith Stewart, Mikey Evans, Y&T, Andy Skinner, Simon Dannaha, Chris Stone, Mic Hourihan, Max Rhead, Eddie Kelly, Richard Ellis and to anyone I've missed. You know what I'm like!
Was that OK Boy? You know how rare I am! x.”

Transcribed by Pete Conce for www.tigertailz.co.uk