

# A penny for your thoughts

Pennywise is having some trouble getting into Canada, but fear not: they have a plan in mind

## Pennywise

With Circle Jerks, Ignite and Brown Brigade  
Friday, 6 October at 7pm  
The Venue (formerly Red's)

MIKE KENDRICK  
Design & Production Editor

According to Pennywise front man Jim Lindberg, having your lead guitarist on bad terms with the law is just one of the many downfalls of leading your band across countries. "Fletcher [Dragge]'s having problems getting into Canada as usual, with his lengthy criminal record," Lindberg reports. "We're talking to the consulate right now; if all else fails, we might have to devise a plan involving a hot-air balloon."

Working off the success of 2005's album *The Fuse*, Lindberg and his troupe of roguish miscreants have been privy to plenty of antics—that is, in addition to smuggling members across international borders. The punk rock quartet has risen to fame as one of Epitaph Record's most significant bands after finding its roots in California's skater scene in 1988, but even though their music has focused largely on political matters as of late, Lindberg feels it's time for the band to return to its roots in revivalist punk.

"It was probably rough for certain fans at times to see us take a more political stance, but I think that was just the nature of the scene," Lindberg says. "But at the same time, I hope that people realize that we're a band

that tries to stick to our ideals and talk about things that we think are important. We've been lucky enough to have a really loyal following that followed us through the different stages in our progression. There's a way to present the music and have it be interesting, but not bang you over the head with politics."

This year marks a mournful anniversary for the band as well. Ten years ago, founding bassist Jason Thirsk was killed by an accidental, self-inflicted gunshot during an alcoholism-fuelled relapse. Following the band's loss, the scene came together to record "Bro Hymn," a tribute to their fallen brother and a demonstration of how tightly-knitted the punk community has become, especially considering they've remained with record label Epitaph, managed by Bad Religion's Brett Gurewitz, since their inception.

"We like the way Brett runs the label," Lindberg says. "He's very fair and honest with his artists, which is absolutely rare in the music industry. Why would you go somewhere else to be treated like a commodity?"

Nearly twenty years later, Jim and his bandmates have settled into a newfound sense of maturity and responsibility as younger generations of fans appear at each show. Lindberg himself is a UCLA graduate in English, and is now a father. He's currently working on his own book, entitled *Punk Rock Dad*.

"It's about the challenges for someone who's been brought up in the punk world, and then is raising kids,"



Lindberg explains. "How do you sing a song called 'Fuck Authority' and then teach your kids to respect your authority?"

And in addition to schooling parents, Lindberg instructs fellow arts students to not "take any crap from any of those science nerds." As a member of a band that's been through the ups and downs of the political roller coaster, Lindberg can relate to the importance of staying informed. He stresses the importance of reading, in any topic, and says that information is key to the human experience.

Pennywise is currently in the early stages of working on their ninth studio album, slated for a 2007 release. Until then, they're each caught in the middle of their own side projects, as well as the production of a live DVD, entitled *Live in Oz*, which recounts their adventures in the land down under. However, although good fortune has been on their side, Lindberg's plan to get Dragge into the country still remains. If Pennywise's luck runs out before that, though, they might have to seriously consider using the hot-air balloon method to get him to Edmonton.

## MAKING CENTS

Like their contemporaries—Green Day, the Offspring and Rancid—Pennywise has been one of the most celebrated punk bands to come to rise during the early to mid-'90s. In honour of their reign, here are a few little-known facts about the quartet.

- Pennywise was one of the key bands of punk-revival of the '90s.

- Their last record, *Fuse*, was recorded with longtime co-conspirator Darian Rundall.

- Pennywise's moniker comes from the Stephen King horror novel *It*, in which Pennywise the Dancing Clown is a guise taken on by the monster.

- The band consists of Jim Lindberg (vocals), Fletcher Dragge (guitar), Byron McMackin (drums) and Randy

Bradbury (bass)

- Pennywise was formed in 1988 in Hermosa Beach, California.

- All of Pennywise's members attended the same high school.

- In 1996, Jason Thirsk left Pennywise to try to quit drinking. He was initially successful, but after a relapse, died on 29 July of the same year from a self-inflicted gunshot wound while cleaning his gun.

- After the release of *The Fuse*, there were some rumors of a breakup when their Australian tour was cancelled. However, front man Jim Lindberg has later denied this statement.

- As a tribute to Thirsk, the band re-recorded the song "Bro Hymn."

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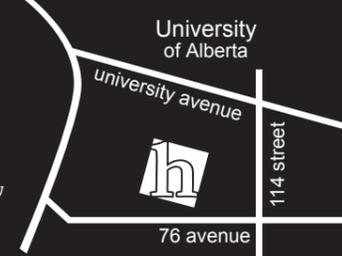
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