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FAITH NO MORE

What It Is

By Rich Maloof

Pressure accompanies success. It's been a long year now that Faith No More have been working in support of *The Real Thing*. That means non-stop touring, interviewers and photographers out the kazoo, and little time to regain normality. For Michael Patton, a talented 22-year-old catapulted into the spotlight, the avalanche of attention and responsibility is almost overwhelming. He keeps the TV on for comfort and his sense of humor on for sanity.

"The only thing on my mind right now is vacation. We've been doing this for a year. It's not that I'm not looking forward to playing, because playing's great. We're going to be going to some great places soon: Australia, then we're going to do *Billy Idol*. Things are going to get much more fun. But at the same time, I can't help wanting to go home sometimes."

Patton's home in Eureka, California, is far from this cluttered hotel room in New York City, where he speaks softly over Edith Bunker and the phone rings every five minutes. It sounds like most of the calls are people telling him what obligations they've scheduled him for today. The industry which rallied so strongly all year for FNM is keeping a tight hold.

"Actually, it's kind of ... pathetic sometimes, because we really don't have any control over what's going on at all." Michael laughs with disbelief. "Right now we're caught up in this huge machine that just keeps churning and churning, and we can't get out of it no matter what. Now that the album's doing so well, we just gotta keep going with it."

"It's good and all, we all want it to happen, but sometimes you feel really helpless. Completely powerless. That sucks, 'cause I mean, I guess that's what the industry is all about is just other people taking control of you. Pimping you. But you've got to draw the line somewhere."

Right on cue, the phone rings again, this time the caller urging Michael to get ready to go. "Where are we going? We're going somewhere? Where?" he asks with a little annoyance, like a kid whose folks are making him to to church. "I've got to eat something."

Then there's a knock at the door.

"WHAT?!!"

"Room service, sir." This guy hasn't even got time to complain. Michael regains his polite composure and pays the bell hop, though he's clearly dumbfounded that two eggs over-easy could cost \$11.62.

Returning to the topic at hand, Patton expresses his surprise that the band has not had much recognition outside the metal community. "I never expected to be recognized *inside* metal, to tell you the truth. That kind of got thrown upon us, y' know? I don' t know if that' s a cage or whatever, but someone enveloped us with that, that word ' metal' ."

Where did it come from, Jim Martin' s guitars?

"I don' t know, could be. I think the record company more than anything. They have to struggle to find something to call it. They call it alternative or metal or whatever. I guess it' s all a fuckin' prison. We don' t really care though. I mean, I don' t care anymore. I used to be like, ' God, why are we in these glossy magazines with Sebastian Bach on the cover?' It used to confuse me more than anything."

Given that Faith' s music is definitely eclectic, it' s obvious that they are the sum of very different parts. But they must converge somewhere, must share the same idea of what they should look like, sound like

"Absolutely not. If Jim had his way, I think we' d sound a lot more like Metallica or something like that, and we' d look like 70' s reject" he laughs. [Interviewer silently thanks the Maker that frown-laden Jim is not there.] "I think that' s why we sound like we do, because everybody' s stubborn and we' re going five different ways at once rather than just in one direction. We just cancel each other out. One big, null set."

"Everyone is real paranoid of stepping on each other' s toes in this band," he continues over his expensive eggs. "Everyone has a real sense of duty and your little cubicle, what you do, your job. And I mean we do fight a lot, and we don' t get along like a normal band and that' s because we probably overstep our boundaries. But we respect each other and let each other do what he or it thinks best."

It? Who' s the it?

Michael laughs again. "Every one of us is an it, every now and then."

Patton himself steps on a few toes when it comes to his other band, a funky bathroom-wall outfit called Mr. Bungle (don' t ask). No need to panic- he' s not exactly planning to run away, but it sounds like his heart may be in two places at once.

"Everyone cringes a little bit, but they never say anything to me, so ... They [the guys in FNM] are all interested and I think most of ' em like us, but ... I don' t know. I guess it' s natural to be paranoid. And I guess I would be a little paranoid too. But I' ve got to do it. It' s just something I' ve got to do."

Reasserting some of the aforementioned tensions in Faith, Michael compares the relationships within each of his two bands.

"In Mr. Bungle, it's more like a family thing, more like incest," he smiles with an appropriate analogy. "It's not such an employee kind of thing. In FNM, I kind of get the sense that it is more like five separate jobs that need to be done. There's a 'we' in Mr. Bungle. In FNM there's not really one collective 'it'."

In order not to harp on this topic, the conversation shifts gears. I ask if he has anything to add, anything he's dying to say.

"Ask me how I like my eggs."

Okay. How do you like your eggs, Michael?

"Not like this! And not for twelve bucks! As long as they're [making stirring motion] sssssshhhhhhed a lot. I think I like the smell more than anything. Is that pepper in there, or ... no, that's just my toe stub. No, no, pepper. Oh well."

The phone rings yet again. After finally acquiescing to the persistent caller, Michael looks up from the rolling "All in the Family" credits and tells me what transpired.

"He just said, 'Michael, your day is going to get even more miserable than your food.'"