

Completely Ignored

Cam: ok, let's jump right in. why did we start talking about this? do you remember? I think maybe I asked you about the beloved **SIANspheric** and it went from there

Gary: that sounds about right, although it doesn't take much for me to talk about 90s Canadian Alt

Cam: you're from Burlington. what was HAPPENING there circa 1993-1995? I must know!



talk about Gary's high school music age of discovery!

Gary: It was actually an amazing scene back then. I should preface that I'm sure most people felt that way about their local scene, but it felt like so many great bands were coming up in the area - I was in a band too

Cam: what was your first band?

Gary: I was in a band called **North of the Border**

very **Hip/Odds/Watchmen**-esque

Cam: so kinda rootsy with cryptic lyrics?

Gary: HA - dead on

Cam: it's a classic!

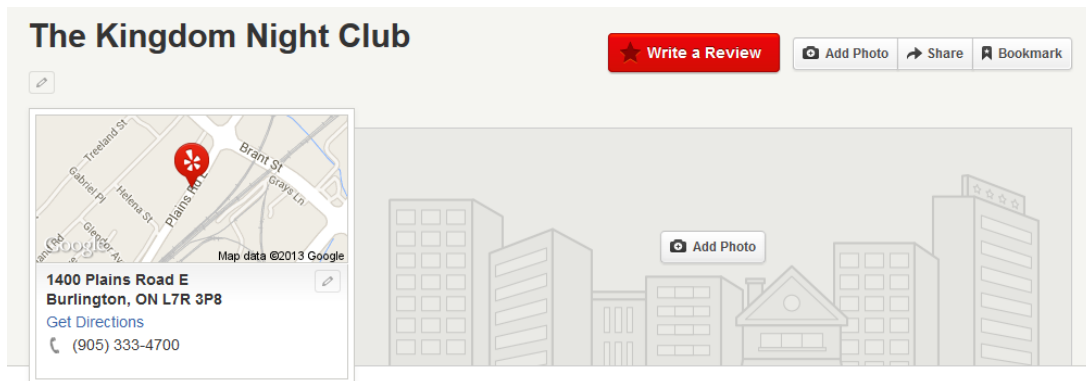
Gary: But it seemed like everyone I knew was in a band and there were shows every weekend

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Cam: what kind of venues? did any CFNY-type bands ever play Burlington?

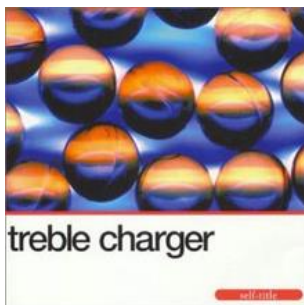
ooh, remind me to ask about Martin Streek/The Kingdom club nights at some point



Gary: Yeah, there was some bleed from the Hamilton scene too - All the Sonic Onyon bands (I never know where the y goes)

Cam: it always seems as if **Tristan Psionic**/Sonic Unyon was a pretty immediate parallel with Superchunk/Merge....at least during the 1990s

did you own **treble charger** *Self=Title* EP.... with CD-ROM?!?!?!?



enhanced 

Gary: I did, I remember a bunch of CDs came out with stuff like that

Cam: totally. the songs were great and the visuals were like a fucked-up Encarta. I got it shortly after we got a computer with a CD drive and was pretty floored. Confused but floored.

Encarta = limited shelf life

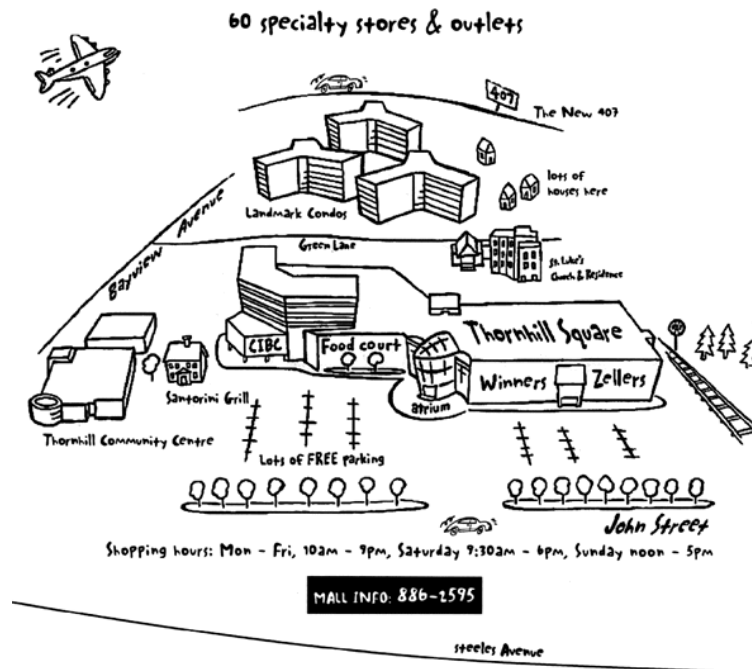
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Gary: yeah, it was some pretty next level stuff, seemed like the future at the time

Cam: I remember that was my first time hearing **Thrush Hermit** all those **Speedbuggy/Poledo/Shortfall**-type bands

Poledo had a Thornhill mailing address that got me REALLY excited



Gary: There was always something great on the radio to discover, and the fact that so many of these bands were from nearby just blew my mind

Cam: I was a pretty great, exciting time. no need to beat the "Edge 102.1" dead horse but the influence of CFNY can't be understated to anybody into this shit during the 1980s and 1990s

Gary: Do you remember those samplers you'd get at concerts that were just jammed with "up and coming" acts

and they were amazing

Cam: for sure. You remember a band called **MAdE**? They had this song called "Half an Hour" on one of those samplers that still holds up. I remember another... a band from the Maritimes called **the Grace Babies** and a tune "Super Bright"

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Gary: YES!

I'm sure I saw **MAdE** in concert open for someone



Cam: not to sound like an old man but it was more satisfying because it was effort to "get" music. you needed to, y'know, go somewhere, know somebody.

a lot of bands were big into varied capitalization in those days... **MAdE**, **rusty**, **treble charger**, etc.

Gary: Oh I was just thinking that the other day. I love having every song ever at my fingertips for free. But when you spent hard earned dollars on a CD and you laboured over what to buy because you wanted it to be good top to bottom

it made the music...sweeter maybe?

Cam: yeah, you needed to choose and you'd actually make an effort to give bands a chance. because you paid for their stuff!

Gary: totally

Cam: what were some of the early CanCon bands you remember seeing?

Gary: **Rheostatics** was the first CanCon show I saw where I was like "Wow" - they just put on such an amazing show...I saw a bunch at festivals like Edgefest (back when it was at the Ontario Place Forum) with bands like the **Odds**, **King Cobb**, **Steelie**, **The Waltons**

Cam: right, it'd be 8-10 bands playing. all Canadian and then some random Hothouse Flowers or Neds Atomic Dustbin appearance.

Gary: yeah - I remember the year that The Lemonheads played one of the Canadian bands suggested fans rush the stage on Evan Dando. Evan was definitely not impressed

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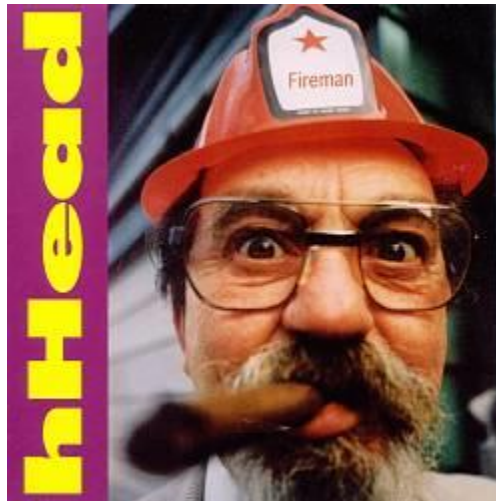
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Cam: I remember seeing a fee all-ages shows at Lee's Palace in late high school. Saturday afternoon. \$5 or something. Off the top of my head, bands included **Scratching Post**, **Len**, **Hip Club Groove**, **Eric's Trip**, **treble charger** (under an alias!!!), **Shortfall**



Gary: that's a stacked line-up, Did you ever see **hHead**?

Cam: Strangely, I kinda don't think I ever did. The singer Noah.... his brother had some affiliation with my high school or went there or something



They were very popular in my crowd. That album with the fireman on the cover. Featuring the key track "Fireman".

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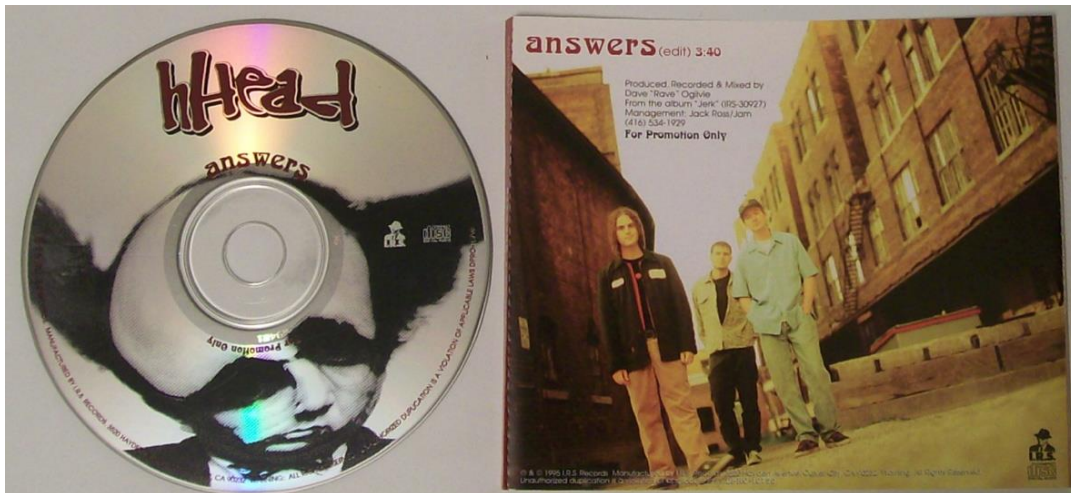
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Gary: Yeah, the singer for the band I was in was a massive fan. He used to play tracks off that album for me as if he was dissecting Sgt Peppers

Cam: Remember the single from the last album called "Teasing"? Underrated! I think they were held in reverence because they won the CFNY new rock search thingy. Maybe bands studied them closely, hoping it could happen to them!

Gary: Maybe, it definitely created a sound that a lot of bands emulated which I think stands up to music of today for bands that still use guitars

Cam: Very grunge. Lots of quiet choruses, crunchy guitars, sad/confused lyrics. Air Walk sneakers, etc.



Gary: HA, always the sneakers

Cam: Name drop alert: Brendan Canning helped rescue me from a Sonic Youth mosh pit in high school. I got kicked in the head... hHead?

Gary: WOAHH - brush with game. Brendan Canning has to be amongst a rare breed - bassists who go on to bigger things brush with fame

it's like him and Sting

Cam: Seriously. I'm sure you felt the same way when **Broken Social Scene** broke. Happy for them but it was really just a bunch of guys and girls who were... always around.

Sting.... more like STINK.... LOLz.... tantric bastard!!!

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Gary: LOL

Cam: Did you ever go to any of the Exclaim! parties at the old Concert Hall?

Gary: No, were they good?

Cam: Ya, I remember the first one I saw featured **jale** and **Change of Heart**. A band called (I think) the **Heatseekers** (ex-**Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet**) were supposed to play but it was rumoured they got in a fight backstage and broke up.



Gary: Seriously?

Cam: Could have the details wrong. It was all these different rooms upstairs at the Masonic Temple. Lots of zines, art, people smoking, saw Chris Murphy and Ken from **rusty** walking around. At 18 or whatever, I was pretty star struck.

holy eff, old eye weekly listing of this event...

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/tor.events/-SDxqRY5jJQ>

why is this still online?!?

Gary: I'll bet, I know seeing other bands at shows was always really exciting. The **Sloan** guys were always frequenting shows - which brings up an interesting point...we haven't even touched on the "East Coast" scene of the say

The Internet always remembers

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Cam: Seriously. Yeah, **Sloan** especially seemed on a different level than the bands in Toronto. Them (them **Sloan**, not Them the Van Morrison band), Pavement, Sonic Youth, Pumpkins... those were my gateway bands. When *Twice Removed* came out, I didn't even realize they were Canadian.

I sorta missed anything 1993 or prior as I was 16 and way too much of a sports nerd to pay attention.

Gary: They're still a band's band - I think Dave Grohl is a massive **Sloan** fan

Cam: Occasionally I'll hear a latter day **Sloan** track. Sounds like they still got it. Maybe.

Did you like any of those other bands?

Thrush Hermit?



Gary: Loved **Thrush Hermit** and I'm still a big **Joel Plaskett** fan now

The Inbreds

Local Rabbits (was that the name)?

Cam: Yeah, **Local Rabbits**. Think they were Montreal or Kingston but adopted by Sloan/murderrecords

Gary: The **Super Friendz**

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Cam: **Super Friendz** were solid. Fun videos!

Gary: Oh yeah

Cam: Always liked **Eric's Trip** but took me a long time to "get" them. They were pretty weird for a band that got quite popular.

Gary: Yeah I remember one that was them in a Japanese restaurant or something?

Cam: The slightly racist "Karate Man"

Gary: That's it!

Eric's Trip was something I chased down after they were referenced in a **Tragically Hip** song

I was always big on bands my bands were listening to

Cam: That track predicted 2013 when everybody calls everybody a ninja in an attempt to be wacky... "Oh, she's a real kitchen ninja!" etc

Gary: LOL



ERIC S TRIP

Cam: Yeah, I remember that lyrics "I listened to *Love Tara* by **Eric's Trip**.... ON THE DAY THAT YOU WERE BORN!!!!" or something

clearly Gord trying to boost his indie cred

Gary: YUP!

Cam: that said, the **Tragically Hip** were always great about supporting a lot of these bands

they'd take Change of Heat, Rheos, ET on tour

Gary: yeah, they had that festival in the later years too right?

Cam: Yup, another Roadside Attraction. Lost a money belt stuffed with mad scrilla (\$200) in a mosh pit for Matthew Sweet.

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Gary: Moshing to “Girlfriend”?

Cam: Probably. The kids probably freaked to those crazy guitar licks. **Inbreds** played that too!

Gary: that sweet guitar solo

They were pretty out there at the time

Cam: Remember the **Inbreds** video where they were on that push rail car? I liked that one!

And they bought the ACME hole, I think?



Gary: now it's pretty common for half a band, but just a drummer and bassist that was messed up

Cam: ya, they were pretty awesome. you'd never guess the bare set-up just by listening to the music.

bad band name though

Gary: no not at all, great voice, very haunting

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Cam: **Hayden**? Thoughts?

Gary: he was a nice counter-balance to all the angsty, guitar buzz
again, something - at the time - that was just way out there

Cam: I always wanted to like him more because he went to my high school. First two albums were good and the *Moving Carefully* EP was awesome.

Gary: yeah, I feel like he got the career he wanted, maybe not the one he deserved

Cam: we used to drive by the house in Thornhill where they filmed the "Bad As They Seem" video and honk the horn. Our version of "pouring one out for our homie" I guess

Gary: I actually knew a guy who worked on that video as a grip... strange

Cam: hehe..... grip!

Gary: Have you gone back and listened to stuff of that era recently? Anything you're surprised you like now, or don't like now?

Cam: That year (1995??) that video must've been Top 10 in rotation for MuchMusic. It was on all the time!!!



Cam: They were a bit before all this but I don't think I ever appreciated how great the vintage **Pursuit of Happiness** stuff is

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Gary: Yeah, I'd still group them into this convo - they laid the ground work them and the **Northern Pikes**

Cam: I'd put the Top 10 TPOH tracks against all the other power pop of that era.... Teenage Fanclub, Matthew Sweet, Posies, Jellyfish

Cam: Remember the **Northern Pikes** tune "A Girl with a Problem"? Garth Hudson from the Band plays on that track and is in the video!

Gary: barely.

Cam: <http://youtu.be/hlHt0bkJWBc?t=2m19s>

Gary: You know what band I found a new respect for

Cam: Who?

Gary: **Age of Electric**

My wife was a fan and she got me listening to their stuff again

Cam: Interesting. Did you have the albums back in the day? They seemed like Ugly Kid Joe-esque butt rock when they did the song "Ugly" and then got a new rock makeover!

There was a song where they played in front of a lake? It was called "Enya" or something?

Gary: yeah, I think I thought they were a bit disposable at the time, but without the pretence, they're actually musically solid



Cam: Vancouver, right? Two dudes were also in **Limblifter** and then drummer dude in New Pornographers. I think?!?!

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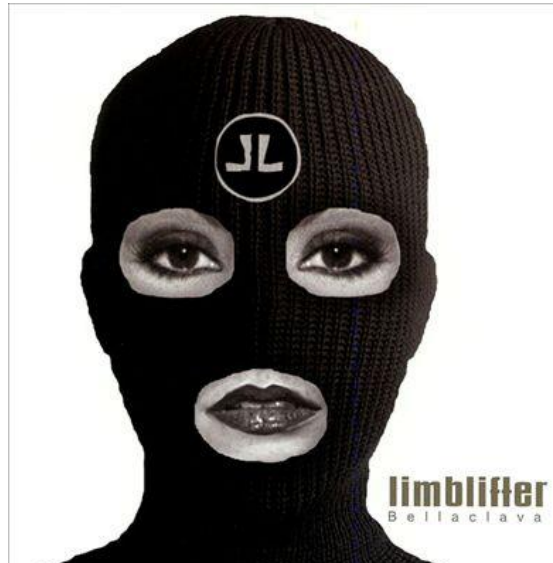
Limblifter were another "terrible name/solid band"

Gary: Yeah - pretty solid music resume for a the drummer

totally

"Tinfoil" was the greatest song with the shittiest lyrics

Cam: I actually went back and listened to **Cowboy Junkies** when Lou Reed died. They were really unique too. Amazing that stuff got on MuchMusic, radio, Saturday Night Live, etc.



"Tin foil.... so we won't spoil!!!!" **Limblifter** were all about freshness

Gary: and lip piercings

Cam: yeah, "*The Juno award for most random lip piercing goes to....*"

did they have free outdoor shows in Burlington? free CanCon outdoor shows in the summer were a rite of passage

Glueleg..... "come with mmmmmmmmm..... TO THE GARDEN!!!!!!!"

Gary: yes - we had tons of all-ages shows, and the annual Sound of Music Festival that showcased some really decent bands

holy shit - I think you and I are the only two people who remember that band

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Their song "Dragon Fly"??

Cam: they're still probably in my Top 10 of bands I've seen most often. I bet I saw them 4-6 times circa 1994-1997

Gary: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Phf_LrCR2Uw

amazing

Cam: "dar-agon feh-ly!!!.... dar-agon feh-ly-yai-yai"



there was a guy named Ruben in the band. he looked like a less menacing Rob Zombie

totally could have the facts wrong on this one.

Gary: who knows

How about **I Mother Earth**?

Cam: Off the top of my head free concerts I saw 1994-1997: **Glueleg** (x54), **I Mother Earth**, **Gandharvas**, **Our Lady Peace**, **Watchmen**, **13 Engines**, **TPOH**, **rusty**, **Gowan**!

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I actually quite liked the singles from *Scenery and Fish*, especially the track "Another Sunday"

Gary: **Gowan** - wow! OLP was the one Canadian band I just couldn't get behind

Cam: the dude's voice....

Gary: Edwin IME is great, everything after, not so much



Cam: Not a "Summertime in the Void" fan?

Gary: nah

Cam: I remember the video had a weird interlude with the new singer dancing. I think, uh, the Prodigy was big at that time. An equivalent?

Gary: My wife actually prefers the new singer

Cam: The album cut of "So Gently We Go" is 7:00+ minutes

In terms of looks?

Gary: voice if you can believe it

Cam: He gasped a lot from what I remember. I think he became a country singer.

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Gary: really? fitting

Cam: Pretty sure. We haven't really talked about Vancouver aside from **Age of Electric**.

I really liked the **Smugglers** but not until the early 2000s somehow.

54-40?

Gary: Who were the big ones, **Rymes with Orange?**

Cam: **Moist, Art Bergmann, 54-40, Cub, Evaporators, Zumpano, Payola\$, Bryan Adams**, Pavel Bure, Lui Passaglia

Terry David Mulligan!!!!

Gary: Pavel Bure - amazing

Cam: Jrki Lumme

Gary: what was the Vancouver based show he hosted - TDM not Lumme

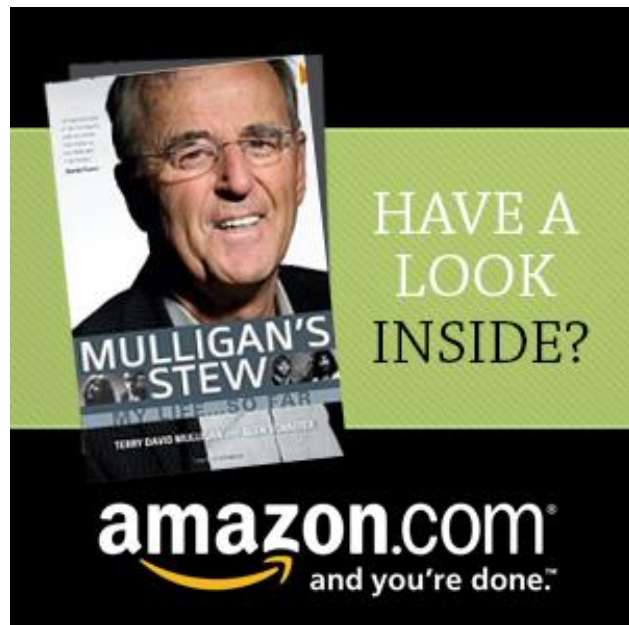
Cam: Much West?

Gary: yes

Cam: There was a kids show he hosted too. In the 1980s

Gary: really?

Cam: Fuck, remember this... *Zig Zag*



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zig_Zag_\(Canadian_TV_series\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zig_Zag_(Canadian_TV_series))

A kids show named after a rolling paper

Me and my sister used to watch it.

Gary: all great kids shows are based around drugs - I can see that now as a parent

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I mean, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bqu_GgQEH6w

were you a music video guy? a MuchMusic guy?

Gary: yes totally - didn't the big guy in that clip host the Much Music game show?

Cam: no, I remember him now. Biff and Barf, or something. Maybe you're thinking of Dan Gallagher? Also hosted Video Hits on CBC, I think?

Gary: yes...I gotta wrap up soon - two other bands popped into my head - **Tea Party**...but also, **By Divine Right**

Cam: **Tea Party**... never had any time for those guys.... too theatrical... plus they're from Windsor, which is uncool

you like 'em?

Gary: I thought they were a bit of a joke in the early days, but when the song "Temptation" came out I was pretty impressed

Cam: They'd have a hard time getting booked in the non-"red states" these days, I guess. Not an issue in 1996.

Gary: Ha, the name has been sullied

Cam: **By Divine Right**. They were fine. Jose Contreras went to my high school and has the same name as a decent MLB pitcher.

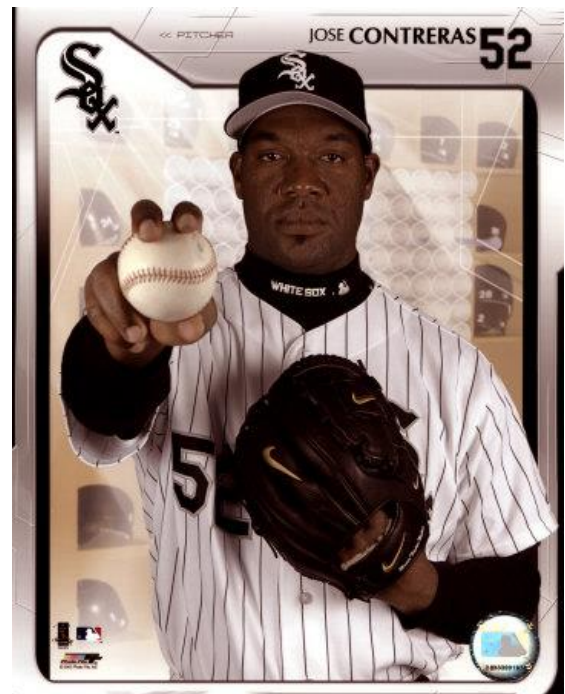
The video with the donuts? Solid. **Feist** and Brendan at their most playful.

Spooky Ruben

Merlin

Gary: I feel like if BSS doesn't happen, BDR is a band NO ONE remembers

Merlin yes, Spooky Ruben no



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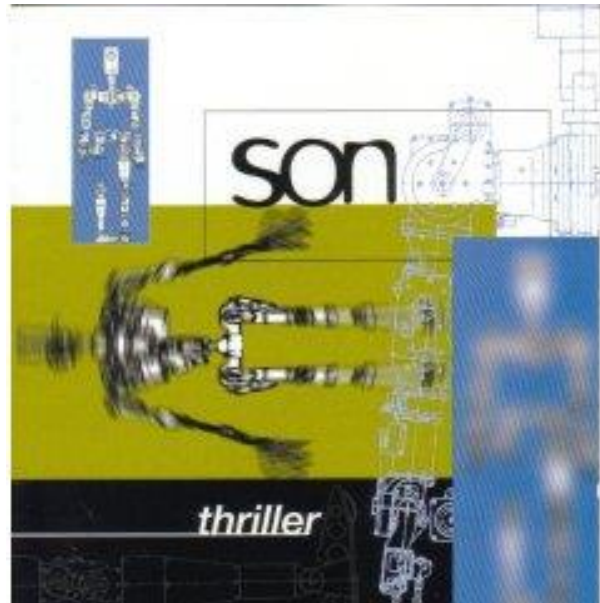
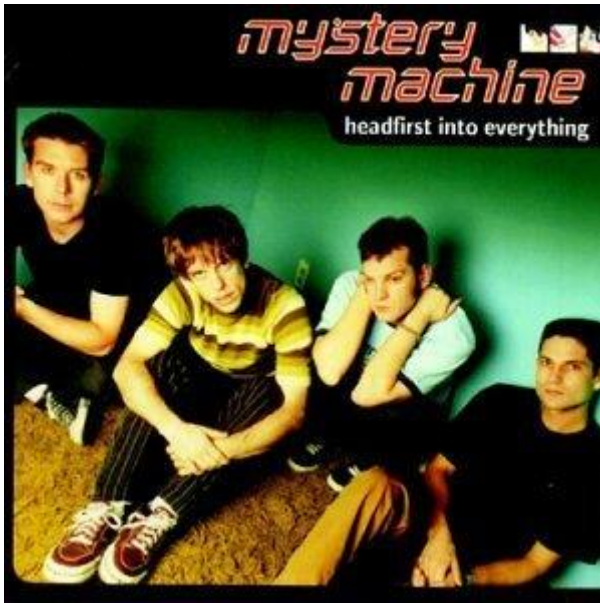
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Cam: Yeah, they were always just around but just bubbling under.

Starkicker and their hit "Get Up"..... LOVE IT SO MUCH!!!!!!

One of those songs that just works. Greater than the sum of its parts.

Ooh, final thought RE: Vancouver. **Mystery Machine**. Loved them!



Gary: I have a vague memory of them - do you remember **Son**? The song "Pick Up the Phone? Who I think was **Chilly Gonzalez**, who is part of the whole BSS scene too that might be wrong

Cam: Ya, I remember that one. Kinda weak but got on the radio.

Gary: odd that song stuck with me

Cam: "Why don't you pick up the phone.... something-something-something ALONE!!!"... whatever?!?

Gary: ok...final thoughts on 90s Canadian Alt?

Cam: Well, I think the reason we had this idea because considering how prominent this stuff was, it now seems a bit obscure. Lots of hazy memories and overall, not all that well captured online. A bit before the Internet became the Internet, I guess

There's a s**t ton of music though. In hindsight, very dense era!

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Gary: It is sad it isn't chronicled a little better, when you consider how many of these bands stuck with us. So many great songs

Cam: This blog entry is the first step!



Gary: it's amazing that all these bands were Canadian too - have we ever been so well represented?

Go Canada Go!

Cam: Yeah, was a bit all over the map but kinda similar at the same time. OK, thanks.

LMK when the next **North of the Border** gig is.

Gary: will do! Thanks this was fun.

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