

THE RIVERBOAT

GAMBLERS!

So the new CD drops on April 25th, that's gotta be exciting—

Mike: Yeah, really, especially because it's been done since January, easily since January. It feels like it was a really long time ago.

And you've been super busy lately. Obviously you got where you are by hard work and touring, how long have you been pounding the road?

M: We've been touring about 3 or 4 years, consistently touring. We've been a band for a long time, but for the first few years it was just a house show, party band type of thing.

Just for fun. It wasn't too much later that we were like, we could actually do this, you know.

Touring is super tough starting out. Lots of dives, trying to string dates together—

M: Exactly, exactly—and then work really crappy day jobs when you get home.

What was touring like in the early days when you guys first got started?

M: It was so rough, we booked our own shows.. And yeah it was just a complete crap-shoot. There were a couple of towns we had some friends in, so we knew at least there would be a couple of people at our shows.

Yeah, booking your own shows, which we did for a really long time is tough. But even now, you can count on most places, but playing new towns – who knows? You don't know if you've reached anybody there at all.

Well putting in a good 3 or 4 years, hitting the same spots, you've worked hard to build it up.

M: It grows slowly but surely, you know. It definitely hasn't been the buzz band, breakout "explosion" you hear about. It seems to keep baby stepping better and better all the time.

I don't know, that sounds modest. I started hearing about you guys about a year and half ago on the west coast. Speaking of, I saw you guys during SXSW, at the Jackalope.

M: Oh the Jackalope, yeah that was really fun.

I have to say it was one of THE best live performances of the entire fest, and it was standing room only! Glad I got there early.

M: Thanks, thanks.

You guys just flat out rock, and pretty much leave everything on stage. It's refreshing to see that kind of raw, unbridled energy these days.

M: Yeah, I hate to go to shows and be bored. Hopefully it's something entertaining to watch and be a part of [for the fans.] We try to make everybody in the crowd a part of the show. That's what I always liked

when bands did that.

As far as the rock goes, what other bands inspire you guys, not necessarily musically, maybe in spirit or passion?

M: I like, there's a whole pantheon of stuff that's good in different ways.. As far as bands that we've played with lately; The Bronx are really cool, The Briefs, The Streetdogs are really good. There's a band called Throw Rag, we've played a bunch of shows with them. Bands that might not even be together and that we've never played with; Rocket From the Crypt, they have just been a huge band to me.

With the CD around the corner, I guess you're going back out on the road?

M: Yeah, we're not really taking a break, just kind of waiting on our hands... I think we'd be out doing it if we could be. Just waiting for the record to come out so people can actually get a bunch of the songs that we've been playing for the last couple of years, they're not on anything. Some of the stuff we wrote right before the record was recorded, and some of the songs we've been playing and refining for the last couple of years. I'm just excited to finally have those songs out, and I'm kinda ready to start working on some new stuff. Kinda crazy, by the time you get done recording you're so over playing those songs that you just want to write new stuff.

The title of the CD is already somewhat famous...

M: Yeah, well I don't know if it was that famous. I'm really into Frank

Sinatra lore and all the awesome stuff he used to do with his life. I read the book, "The Way You Tip Your Hat." It's not like some of the biographies that are kind of trashy about him, it's more of a glorification of all of his vices and stuff like that. The CD title was his favorite toast, which I've never actually heard him say it, something that he just said amongst friends. It was just something I stole and having been using it for years. I always got raised eyebrows when I said it. [Laughs] It's a little less positive than most toasts, but I kind of like that about him.

Sinatra lore, interesting. There's probably a ton of stuff that most people don't know about him.

M: Totally. He definitely had a very rock and roll lifestyle for a crooner.

So I have to ask, how is working with that fucker Mark Baker?

M: [Laughs] It's horrible! No it's awesome, it's been really great. We played with a bunch of people, it's a different guy on the record, the old drummer. We tried out a whole bunch of people. From the first try on the first song when Mark came and auditioned for us, we were all kind of looking at each other grinning and giggling because he just nailed it! Nailed it so hard.. So have you known him for awhile?

Yeah, way to long. We go way back to the starving artist days. He's great, just a phenomenal drummer. I've always been amazed at his talent.

M: He just killed it, I mean, just killed it. It was just—Wow, just jaws down.

He's definitely insanely good. Especially after writing and touring with Ministry.

M: Totally. I'm excited, it's probably a ways down the line, but I'm excited to write with him.

I can't wait for that myself. He also told me during SXSW about the performance you guys did at ME Television...

M: Oh yeah, that was fun! I'm ready for Saturday Night Live!

That would be awesome!

M: No kidding, man. It was fun. It's cool to get a huge break while they change cameras in between songs. It would be a lot easier if live shows were like that!

So where did the moniker Riverboat Gamblers come from? Anybody in the band into poker or gambling in general?

M: I don't exactly know exactly where it came from, other than when we were sitting around discussing names— At the time in Denton, emo was just really blowing up like crazy, and all these emo bands kept coming in and they all had these flowery, pretentious names like Snow Falling On Leaves and Midst of June. These wistful, vague sounding names, and we just thought The Riverboat Gamblers was a great, dumb reaction to those. It seemed like the most opposite you could get, you know. I think that's why we went with it, there's probably all kinds of theories at this point, but I don't know if anybody exactly knows. And yes we are all gamblers. We

definitely play poker and go to casinos. Not to successfully I might add. [Laughter on both sides] Gambling isn't about winning, the term gambling doesn't me you actually win.

That's true, it's all about the rush while you're doing it.

M: Exactly, exactly. I sort of feel like traveling and touring, you're living by your wits— gambling, losing, that sort of thing.

Could be a theme of this issue... We interviewed the great Vinnie Paul who made a record with David Allan Coe and he talked about how he's a crazy gambler..

M: We did a radio interview and he[Vinnie] was coming in to do his interview right as we were leaving. I used to see him all the time at the Clubhouse, the strip club he owns up in Dallas.

Oh the strip clubs, you guys hang out there a lot?

M: No, I'm way too broke to do anything like that. Not that I'm against it by any means. Honestly I can go out and meet girls who can lie to me and pretend to like me for free! They can pretend to like me for the price of a drink in a regular priced bar, as opposed to \$7.50 for a Bud Light.

On a complete side note, there's a couple of strip clubs here in town that have free roll tournaments with daily winners to Vegas.

M: That's cool. I've heard of that , some people were telling me about

it. I actually met two strippers that work there.

There you go, did you met them at a show?

M: Yeah, yes they were. We've made it, we have strippers at our shows!

That's the career defining moment right there! [Laughter] Strippers, and you guys are on the Warped Tour this year.

Yes, we're going to do some of it. We were going to do all of it, but we're thinking we might just want to do some of it. There's going to be a lot of touring, but we're still trying to nail down the specifics of when and where... But we are going to do a bunch of it.

Cool, cool. Can't wait to see you guys live again.

Thanks man.