

Guttermouth

Get Your Mouth into the Gutter

By Annie Abbondante

The Orange County CA band Guttermouth has been together in excess of twenty-five years now, and has just put out their tenth album, *Shave the Planet*. They have become mainstays in the annals of angry and offensive shock punk, becoming famous for saying all sorts of politically incorrect, purposely insulting, and ridiculous things to ruffle the feathers of fans, music critics, and other musicians.

For example, *Shave the Planet's* title track contains the lyrics, "Because we're Americans/ We don't give a shit about each other / We don't give a shit about the Earth / And all I want to do is rip you off/ And fuck you in the ass while you're not looking." Cute, huh? Also on the disc are songs teasing people with autism, eating disorders, depression, and erectile dysfunction. Though perhaps offensive and ridiculous, the songs are also clever and tongue in cheek,

showing the intelligence and humor of their creators.

Mark Adkins, lead singer and founding member, explains, "We're just an old school bunch of guys. We're a punk band." After all, punk rock is founded on being subversive, aggressive, anti-establishment, and gritty. For example, the Sex Pistols put out their 1977 single "God Save the Queen" to coincide with the Queen's Silver Jubilee. It was regarded at the time as an attack on the British monarchy. One of the very tenets of punk music is to be an upstart. To be punk rock, the band must steep themselves in controversy, rebellion, and dissidence. And of course, Guttermouth has no problem fitting that bill.

Guttermouth was one of the bands on 2004's Vans Warped Tour (along with NOFX, Bad Religion, Anti-Flag, Pennywise, and many more), but

they reportedly left the tour for some unsavory political reasons. The band wore pro-Bush tee shirts while playing on stage, and made comments about the liberal views of most of the other bands. This made them rather unpopular with many of the other musicians, and apparently with some of the tour execs.

However, Adkins swears that "if there's anything political" that comes out in his band's song lyrics and public performances, "it's accidental." He says that the band pulled the Bush-loving stunt just because, "It was very Guttermouth."

The political tensions, combined with an emerging hip-hop style battle with another band on tour were enough to make Adkins leave the Warped Tour. Guttermouth and the self-proclaimed "What-else-ya-got-emo" band My Chemical Romance became rivals, which led up to Gutter-

mouth's departure. My Chemical Romance is a band that formed as a response to September 11th and has a cult-like following to their theatrical, horror movie-esque indie rock. Perhaps this is all too showy for Adkins, who declares, "I'd be really surprised if they put out two more records. They're just lame! I don't have time for people like that in the real world."

About the whole Warped Tour ordeal, the typically punk rock Adkins shrugs, "We made a lot of enemies... we don't really care." They used their duel as fodder for the song "My Chemical Imbalance" on their new record, which taunts users/abusers of Zoloft and other selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. The break from the Warped Tour fit right in to the band's schedule, so it wasn't too much skin off their noses. They tend to record, tour, and take breaks in spurts, in order to keep the fun in their career. Mark Adkins admits that although he's into real estate, runs his own screen printing company, and works about twelve hours a day, music is definitely his favorite thing. "It takes years off your life, though," he laughs.

Adkins reports that he and the guys currently "have the itch to play." They are planning a tour to support their *Shave the Planet* album, which they wrote by coming up with song titles first, and then writing the music and lyrics to go along with them. "We had a board up, and we would write our ideas on there," says Adkins. From that point, the band made their tenth album. As Mark says, "The style of punk we play is 'there.' You can label it as something." This proves their status as powerful dealers in angry So-Cal punk.

