

F: where are you from etc.?

G: I was born in Morocco, my father was a US- marine officer. He got polio in Morocco when I was two months old, they transferred him to Frankfurt, he died in a Frankfurt hospital. My mother flew back to the US with me as a two month old baby. My father was German, DuBose is my adopted name, my original name was Walz.

I wasn't into photography until I was 18/19. I was in NYC with a friend of mine who wanted to buy a camera. He bought the camera and then we walked around the East Village, we were taking pictures with his brand new camera and I saw ten metal garbage cans and they were old but somebody had painted them brand new, with brand paint, so they were yellow with red tops, and I thought that was the strangest thing I ever saw so I took a picture of it and that was my first photograph.

F: How old were you back then?

G: I was 19, that was in 1969.

F: What was the atmosphere in NYC like in the 60's?

G: I didn't live in NYC: When I was in my late teenage years.. in 1964 I saw the Beatles on the Ed O'Sullivan television show and this inspired me to play the guitar. So I did little jobs around the neighborhood and saved my money and went to the guitar shop.. and I'll never forget the two guitars I was looking at: one was a Gibson Les Paul and the other one was a "Mosright?????", they were played by the Ventures, which is a surf band from California. M. was more expensive than the Les Paul, both of the guitars were more than \$700, more than I had earned doing my little neighborhood jobs, so I bought a broken guitar from the shop for \$100 and repaired it, I replaced the tuning packs.. Then I took guitar lessons, I learned how to read music, I had learned to play the guitar with the Ventures' records, where they played the song and then they played it again minus the lead- guitar.

By the time I was 16 I moved from Michigan to Maryland, it was near Washington, D.C.. And in Washington, D.C. funk was huge, Motown was the only sound they were listening to. My aunt had given me Jimmie Hendrix "Are you experienced?", "Fresh Cream" and another album to borrow.. they blew my mind, that was really something different from the Beatles, it was hard, it was interesting... At the time I lived in this big, suburban development with all new houses, and all the kids living there came from different cities, so nobody had any old connections and we became new friends.. a young guy from this neighborhood, he was a drummer, he played in a funk band with twelve black guys and he was the only white guy, which I thought was pretty cool...but when I listened to his music the guitar did this little jingles like Motown, you know tsching tsching, and he was nothing like Jimmie Hendrix or Eric Clapton.. so I found other guys in my neighborhood and we made somebody's basement all with black lights, ultraviolet lights and spinning wheels of color jells that made the lights change color...and we started experimenting with drugs, hash and LSD and everything we could get our hands on.. and listening to Jimmie Hendrix we tried to play this music...I remember teaching the drummer to play "Gloria" by Shadows of Night??? With three chords on the guitar.. and I taught the drummer these three chords and within six months he was better than I was and I've been practicing for six or seven years up this point.. and within a year he was playing Jimmie Hendrix' "No for No" and the band was reforming and they kicked me out.. I had to realize at that time that I couldn't keep up with the other guys learning the songs.. So I thought I'd better look for something else to do because my talent was not playing music as much as I wanted to.. it was too difficult, so I started taking photographs...I started taking pictures of these bands that I knew, and I went to university for two years, I wanted to be a lawyer but then I think I took some LSD some time and decided not to become a lawyer...

F. labert über seine tragische Ex- Existenz als Rapper.. oder die beste Entscheidung seines

Lebens...

G: then I joined the Navy only to become a photographer...but what I didn't know: the Navy, they give you three choices for a job and they always give you the third choice.. unfortunately photography was first choice so I didn't get it.... after the Navy I was living in Florida and I went to this night- club in Pensicola, Fl , where cover- bands touring all around Florida were playing old songs on Friday and Saturday night, so Friday I used to go the club, take the pictures and develop them until Saturday, and on the second night I would go the club and give the pictures to the band.. after a while this got pretty expensive, so I began to sell the pictures to the band for \$1 each.. that was in 1971/72...then I moved back to Washington D.C. and worked in a passport studio taking photographs with a big irdendwas camera- da fällt das tape aus- ... I've never got the training in the Navy so I was teaching myself how to develop color slides and color dias and I made my own b/w pictures... and then I read in the newspaper of Washington D.C. that 90 per cent of all the professional photography in the world goes on in NYC... a friend of mine was working for the biggest photographer in Washington, he was his assistant and he was working for free and his boss made \$50, 000 a year, and that's what the average photographer in NYC made, so I thought I'd better go to NYC...so I went there, I went to a photo- school for two months, but it was very expensive...1975... I couldn't find a job at first so I had to quit the photo school.. then I worked in a printing company with a giant camera that they used before they worked with computer technology...so it wasn't really photography...my uncle had a friend who was a fashion photographer in NYC and he told me "These photographers do fashion" and he gave me a list, I called these photo studies on the list and I said I was looking for a job as an assistant and usually it was the assistant that answered the phone and they hung up on me...then I went knocking on doors, but it was very difficult because they always asked if I had experience and I said, "well, I can do my own blala- work, I can do my own printing, but I have never really worked for a photographer yet in New York... so it was pretty tough to get my first job, but eventually I did, I worked for two photographers, they shared a studio, and the best thing about this was that they let me have keys to the studio and I could use all the film and paper I wanted .. what basically happened, I worked for 24 hours a day for two years, I had no vacation, I had no free time.. I was working for the photographers during the day and then at night I would go out to clubs and shoot jazz- groups.... I was taking pictures of models to build my portfolio coz I still wanted to be a fashion photographer.. so one day I had worked for Andy Warhol's magazine "Interview", I had met the assistant art director, he had a party and we became friends..... the magazine started out to interview movie stars, so Andy could get invited to the movie openings...it was a famous magazine about actors and artists.. Richard Bernstin was doing the covers every month, he was making portraits of the artists.. and "Interview" asked me to do photos of their models to advertise the andy warhol- movie called "Bad"...so I was taking pictures of those models and young actresses with these t- shirts on so that they could use it in the magazine to advertise the movie.... and this went on for some time and one day my friend at the Interview called me and asked if I wanted to go to this club Maxi's Kansas City, that was in NYC, and see this band from Georgia... I used to live in Georgia and thought that was interesting but I said, "Yes, but I don't have any money"...and he said, "No problem, you could be on the guest list".. and I said, "Guest list? What is a guest- list?" coz I have never heard of a guest list before...so I went to see this group in Kansas city and it turned out that they were the B52's....that first band that played was Lydia Lunch and her band was called "Teenage Christ Living In The Jerks", Lydia was Nick Cave's girl- friend for a long time, she was a poet and a musician...her band was really horrible, their songs were like 40 sec. long and I just didn't get it and I thought it was awful.. then the B52's came on stage , and before they came on stage there was a sound like bees buzzing, then the guitar- player came out and the drummer came out with the Peter Gun- theme, written by

Henri Mancini.. and this was the first song I ever learned to play because as a six year old my father watched the Peter Gun- Show on television before i went to sleep.. when I bought my first guitar I couldn't tune it but I could play Peter Gun because it's only on one string...and when the B52's started with this song I said, "This is my band", and so I took pictures of them at the show, I went backstage, I asked when they were coming back to NYC, I talked to them for a while... I saw every gig they played in NYC for quite some time.. since I had this relationship with "interview" I asked the group if they would come to my studio for a photo and they said "Sure".. but when they came Cindy Wilson, one of the girls, had gone back to Georgia.. and rather than taking a picture of only 4 people I asked the manager Maureen xy to stand in.. and since nobody had ever seen a picture of them before, they wouldn't know that it was really the right people...and this picture came into Interview magazine and then it went to a Japanese magazine.. so a few months later I begged the group to come to the studio again, I bribed them with making pina coladas and daiquiris, so they came and i did this color shots and B/w- shots... then i had the idea to help the group i was going to print 50 mal 60 cm posters at my own cost.. coz I wanted to print this text that says B52's and had these three Japanese characters from this Japanese magazine "Studio Voice"... we didn't know what it meant, but these letters looked cool.. and then there was a big white space on the paper and then there was a picture of the group... and in the white space we could write in the name of the club.. and i wrote it in by hand and went around Manhattan with a stapler. coz I didn't know about wheat- paste- and put posters all around the block of the club where they were going to play...but when i got back where I started they were gone...so I stopped putting the posters out on the street and started selling them, 50 cents each... then I told the manager one day, " I know it's expensive for you to come to NYC and stay in a hotel, why don't you stay in my apartment when you come here to book the gigs?".. one day in 1978, I was on vacation at the beach staying with a friend and I called my answering machine and Ricky Wilson, the guitar player, answered the phone... I said "what are you doing in my apartment?"...he said, "Oh, we are all here".. the whole band had moved into my apartment while i was on vacation, so I canceled my vacation and went back to the city to my apartment, but nobody was there... but the apartment was clean I couldn't believe how clean it was... I went to the bathroom and I had this funky old bath top that was brown and Cindy had cleaned that thing like a German Putzfrau.... so i let them stay.. I'm still friends with them, but it was a little disappointing that I did their first album cover, the yellow one, with a b/w picture that was recolorized, and they never paid me for that...the record company paid \$750, what i thought was a lot of money, because at that time I earned only \$120 a week, but the group never called me for another album- cover and they never came to stay in my apartment either... twenty years later, in 1998 Warner Brothers called me and asked me to see all my B52's pictures and I have thousands from clubs, from photo shoots in the studio.. so I sent probably 500 negatives, prints, dias to Warner Brothers and a few months later I came back from a job to my office in NYC and there was a big package with CD- booklets, posters, dvd- boxes , records and things.. another photograph of mine was their "Greatest Hits", they had chosen a photograph of mine of the B52's for the cover...the record company paid me very well for that photograph... n March 26th, 1998 while I was opening this package the phone rings and it was the art director of WB. He said his name was Steven walker and I said, "Hi Steven", he said," George, I have bad news for you".. at first I thought they paid me all this money for the cover and now they've changed the cover and want the money back...but he said" I lost original negative that I used to make the cover"...he said" I got some prints I made I make scans of these ..". I said "Steve, stop right there, I gotta call my lawyer".... this was 1998, now it's 2003 and we still haven't settled this problem with WB, but they have lost 4 of my B52's negatives.. that's my retirement fund right there, it will take a few more years to get it...the law suit is still going on.. a lil funny side story: the WB's lawyer

does not know anything about photography, his name is Richard Roff, he is really ignorant about photography, or at least he pretends he is.. he got Fred Schneider to sign a legal paper that says GDB has no rights to any of the B52's negatives Fred didn't really know what he was signing.. the funny thing is: this paper could be a problem for a jury, if the jury does not understand, but what has happened: in the past few weeks an Italian fashion company contacted the B52's manager, because they wanted to make this T-shirts with the original b/w- picture of the first album cover.. the manager called me and said, "Can we do a deal with this fashion company to make T-shirts?" .. on the one hand the WB's lawyer got Fred Schneider to sign a paper that says G. has no rights to these photographs, on the other hand the manager called me coz I do have the right...so they shot themselves in the foot on that one...besides, there's a law in the US that says if a photographer sends his pictures to a magazine without the magazine having asked and the magazine loses these pictures, they have to pay him \$ 1500 for each photograph.....so WB says, we lost four negatives and pay you \$6,000, but in my case they already paid me \$11, 000 to use the picture, so they must be worth more than \$ 1, 500, coz they had paid me ten times more...so we had a great judge, who said that this law, that says a negative is worth \$ 1,500 is not always the case, sometimes it is worth more.. so if we win this case, what I'm sure we will, and the jury says a photography is sometimes worthier than \$ 1, 500 this will help all the photographers in the world...

F: schmatzt

F: What happened after the B52's ?

G: Tony Wright was an art- director for Island Records, and they signed the B52's for the first time... Tony paid me for the first album cover and he liked my photography and he gave my a job to shoot Kid Creole and the Coconuts... they wanted to go to the Bronx Botanical Garden , but it was winter time and I said to Tony, "Why don't we just rent artificial plants?"... I knew a canvas backdrop that looked like a volcano, it was advertisement and I knew that I could rent it, so I rented them all and put them in my studio, 23 people came for this Kid Creole cover, Kid Creole himself, August Darnell, was still under contract with another company, so he couldn't show his face on the record, so I put a black mask on his face... so there were 23 people in the studio so I decided we couldn't get them all in the front of the photo, so we put 12 in the front, 11 in the back.. there were so many people, they were all musicians, artists, there was the record company president Michael Silker from z- records.. I was standing on a ladder and blew a whistle to get everybody's attention, I said three times " I'm taking a picture, you can look but you don't have to look"Tony wanted that he was impressed but I never questioned the fact that I could do it... I just organized it and made it happen and didn't think about the possibility that it could be a problem... then Tony gave me Lydia Lunch, her first album was called "queen?? As I Am". And what's interesting I saw Lydia Lunch and the B52's both the same night at the Kansas City.. I hated Lydia Lunch, I loved the B52's, but I shot both of their first album, so it's kinda a coincidence there... I did many album covers for Tony Wright and Island records, at different times of my career I was art director there.. Polygram bought Island records when I quit to go freelance as an art director but then Polygram called me back because was getting the reputation of being a specialist for black artists... I got hooked up with the Ramones' management, they needed an album cover, the album is called "Subtrainian Jungle", I had a meeting with the Ramones and Tony Wright and they wanted to be photographed in a subway car, they were often photographed in subway cars but it had nothing to do with graffiti.. I suggested to the group that we go, where the B train stops at 57th street and 6th Ave.. I knew from living in NYC that the B train would come into the station, sit for 20 min and then go back downtown... so I knew that we had 20 min windows to photograph the Ramones.... we went into the subway station, the group gets on the train, I 'm standing on the subway platform and we were taking pictures.. but then

this police man comes out and he says “ What do you think you’re doing”, I said “I ’ m taking pictures or a magazine” , “What magazine?” “The East Village Rucker” he says, “Where ’ s your permit?”, “What permit?”, “You have to have a permit to do this!” , “I didn’t know”, I mean I knew but I was just playing dumb... he said, “I have to call the station”.. that was the time when the radios didn’t work in the subway stations, there were no cell phones, so he went to a payphone, he had to call his precinct station, he was speaking to someone, and then he said, “The sergeant wants to speak with you” and I said, “ Yes, sir?”, “What do you think you’re doing there?”, I said, “I ’ m taking pictures of a rock band for the East Village Eye, but we’re not holding the doors, we’re just jumping on the B train, taking a few pictures and then get off when the train has to go”.. he asked, “What kinda rock- band?”.. I said” The Ramones”, he said “Okay, go ahead”...so the sergeant told the officers to let me do this, and it turned out that the ramones had recently played charity concert to buy the NYC police department bulletproof vests.. so they were in good standing with the police...

F. Why did they play that concert?

G: Johnny Ramone is very right- wing, it ’ s not a big secret... you talked about graffiti before.. what happened was that Tony Wright took my picture of the Ramones on the subway car, but the subway was all clean... so they sprayed with an airbrush a graffiti on a big print.. and the next year the Ramones called me up to shoot another album cover for them ,but they asked; “ do you know another art- director?”.. and I said; ”Why?”, “Because we didn’t like what Tony did with the graffiti on our subway car, it looked fake”...but I felt responsible for Tony because he had given me so many jobs, and I didn’t feel comfortable taking a job away from him, so I said, “ If you had a problem with what Tony did on ‘Subtraining Jungle`, just tell him”.. and it turned out that the next album was “Too tough too die” and the Ramones wanted to have a photograph that had the feeling of “Clockwork Orange” with these bad boys waiting to mug somebody..... we went to this tunnel in Central Park and I had a caravan, beer, pizza, a crew that would help me do the shooting, we had smoke machines, blue lights in the background, white lights in the foreground. So I started shooting some photographs, and at one Polaroid the white lights in the foreground didn’t shoot, it was just the blue lights in the back, and it looked so cool, because you have this blue tunnel, with blue lights bursting from the back of the tunnel and four black shapes, and the Ramones really liked it.. the next year the Ramones called me to shoot the cover for “Animal Boy” and they asked if I knew an art director that could do hand writing, coz they wanted to have the title in hand writing...so I thought, “what the hell”, I gave Tony the job for the Ramones last year, this one I will do on my own.. so I did the hand writing for the album and I had somebody else helping me with the design, but I did most of it myself.. and the concept of the cover was the Ramones wanted to go the Bronx Zoo to shoot with a baby chimpanzee , so it would be the animal boy...so I asked the Zoo if we could a photograph in their monkey house and they said, “No, absolutely no way”.. so I built a monkey cage in the studio, and I asked some guys to get in the gorilla costumes and we hired a professional chimpanzee called Zippy, Zippy is on NYC television often, to be the chimp.. so I got everything organized and the Ramones came and one of them was picking up Zippy.. the great thing about the Ramones is they never smile, they never worry about clothes, it ’ s always blue jeans and black leather jackets and they were all standing in a row, there was nobody in the front...so it was always easy for me, but at one point of the shooting.. Zippy was getting too comfortable with the group, he was fooling around and not looking at the camera so I said something to the trainer, “Can you get Zippy to look in the camera?” and so he slapped Zippy right into the face, really hard, and said, “Zippy, look into the camera!” and Zippy did...and then I did “Halfway to Sanity”, “Ramones Mania”, “Mondo Bizarro” and then I did a few publicity shots for the Ramones..

F: What were they like?

G: they liked what I did, and they liked that I was fast.. for the cover of “Halfway to Sanity” they wanted to be photographed in Chinatown.. so I was walking around in Chinatown looking for different locations, so there was a stairway with no doors that went up into a building...so I got the permission from the city coz I knew that was gonna have to have an electrical generator, a smoke machine in the street...so I got my permit for this location and three other ones in Chinatown.. the first location was at the stairway, I put the generator and the red lights up the stairway, so the red light is beaming down the stairway, so we arranged all perfect.. the group comes with their van, they get out, they stand four in a row as they always do, I took a Polaroid of them, I had to wait one min. for the Polaroid and Johnny was already like” What takes so long???”, I said “I have to wait for the Polaroid”, I showed the Polaroid to the group and when it got to DD Ramone, he said, “This is great, I can go home now” and I said, “ No, DD, I have to shoot some real film”.. so I shot three rolls of hasablatt?? Films, which is 12 pictures per roll, I got 36 shots done and Johnny said, “This is enough”, I said ” Okay, Johnny, let ’s go to the next location”, he said, “No, this is fine”, I said, “Johnny, WB is paying way too much money for 36 pictures, they’re gonna freak out. “.. he said; “That ’s enough, if they have a problem they can talk to me”.. that was that..

F: What was your relationship like?

G: Johnny had been up in the streets before I met him, so he became some kid of a Einzelgänger, he lived in his little apartment, he had a million dollar baseball card collection and he never seemed to go out very much, never seemed to socialize...Joey on the other hand was very much more extroverted and Joey would go to parties, have parties, sponsored other groups.. Joey and I became friends, we hung out at his house from time to time.. DD was always kind of out of it, on drugs, I liked Richie the drummer a lot but then he quit because the guys didn ’t want to share the t- shirt royalties with him, and that’s where they made all of their money, not from selling records.. in one week they sold 100, 000 copies and then nothing, with the t- shirts they sold the hell out... Johnny and Joey in the end were the ones making all the money with the t- shirts , so they are both millionaires...

F: Are you still in contact with them?

G: DD overdosed two years ago, Joey died from cancer... but what was interesting, I mean I love Joey and it’s sad that he died.. I was always telling Joey that he did the best cover songs, he did a beach- boys song whenever they were fooling around at a party, they were great songs, so I said,” Joey, you should do a solo album” and finally after the Ramones broke up, Joey was working on a solo album.. and I asked, “Can I do the cover???” over and over again, and he kept saying, “We’ll see”....so Joey died before the record was finished but because I was such good friends with Joey’s bother, Mickey Lee, and I had done covers and publicity shots for Mickey Lee’s band for free, that I told Mickey that I wanted to do the cover for Joey’s solo record, and then Mickey told Joey’s mother,... she didn’t really know much about me, she knew that I did all the Ramones covers. And so she told the manager that she wanted to work with me...

F: Do you like their music??

G: some songs I like a lot, but not everything they do...

F: How important is it for you as a photographer to know or like the music?

G: I never photographed a group until I listened to their music...sometimes groups have concepts for the photo first, but then I still listen to their music.. my specialty which I discovered after years of hard work is to make the cover look like music sounds...there’s way too many records out there in the street, when you look at the cover you have no idea whether this is jazz or something, you get no idea what kind of music that is...

F: labor, labor... you try to create this perception already with the photo?

G: If you look at my pictures you will see that there is no specific style, because the music on the

records is not the same...I mean if there is anything about a style at my work, then that it's colorful.. before I photograph a group I listen to their music, then we talk about the ideas that the ideas that they have....if they have an idea, will try to work with it...there was a good example of a cologne group of older guys, that played music to the lyrics of Hermann Hesse and other German poets.. they had a photograph by another photographer they wanted to use for the front cover, it was a picture of the three people of Liederschlag playing acoustic guitars but it was from the back and then you see all the theatre seats behind them, but there was no crowd in the seats.. so I thought this photo was totally whack .the cover says nothing about the music and they are playing in an empty theatre which is not a good thing to show... so I suggested that we should dress them up as people from the 20's coz that was the time of their poetry.. so we went to a kneipe in old that looked old and had them guys reading a book, playing cards, writing music, just old things.. and now you have a cover when you look at it you see that they are musicians but they are old- style.. you get the feeling...

F: control of artists?

G: I worked with Michael Monroe for Henri Rocks????, I did his solo projects, the group is called "Demolition 23", and Michael sat in my office for a month, 30 days changing his mind.. but he knew what he wanted but he kept changing his mind.. I didn't have a problem with it.. many of the artists I worked with they have an idea. And I help to get it...in the end of the day I want the artist to be happy with his cover.. I can choose whether I put that picture in my portfolio or not, the artist has to live with the cover for the rest of his life...he's gotta be happy with it, whether it is his idea or mine, he 's gotta be happy with it...

F: change from vinyl to CD.... does that influence your work?

G: Before CDs WB or record companies sent me credits, I had the photos, they sent me the photos with the name of the album, the artist 's name.. they said in their credits that the artist's name and the album title must be in the top third of the cover.. this was in the days when you had bins of records and people flip through the records and see the artist's name at the top...I was great doing 12" photos, in my portfolio I show vinyl if I can..... but when the CD came two good things happened: first, you got rid of this putting the artist 's name at the top, that didn't count anymore, because people looked at CDs differently.. the best thing was: with a CD you could do a 4, 8, 16 page booklet.. my first artist that I got into this with was MC Shan, we got the permission form WB to a 24 page booklet and I went around with Shan for three days in his neighborhood, in his house, in his apartment, at his pizza shop, at his record shop, with his buddies... and by the end of that project you look at the booklet and get a great idea of where Shan is coming from.. more than on one album cover

F: So it was a good development to show more of the artist?

G: You could capture the artist more, you can show more of him... this also helps the fans because they buy a CD because they love the artist, they wanna know more about the artist, but since they can 't meet the artist backstage or in the street, they wanna look at the CD package.. and you get all these pictures, and you get different looks different feelings, you know more about them..

F: laber laber... wie soll ich denn das zusammenafssen??? Mien Freund, in der Kürze liegt die Würze... many pictures vs. One cover vs. Creative expression...

G: People often ask me why I don 't do videos.. there are too many people involved, the video is too long, it takes days and days and days.. I think it 's harder to get the artists look their best in one photo than to make them look their best in a video...if you look at video, you don't study one picture, but if you got a 12" album cover or a 5 mal 5" CD to get that best shot is difficult.. to me it was never about the size... you know who makes the most money doing graphic design??? the guys that do stamps, little, tiny stamps, they get paid he best...

F: titel oben... hääää???is the real photo bigger??

G: Being a photographer and being an art director, it was always on my mind where I 'm gonna put the type...there are times when you take a photo you don 't think about where you put the type, but generally I 'm thinking I must leave some space...but do I make it much bigger? No, I don't leave that much extra room around, but I always leave room around for the graphics...I mean, when you have an album like Joey 's solo album, I didn't take that photograph, somebody took... I didn't take it because I like Joey.. so when I got the picture there was really no way to crop that picture closer and still have room for the type.. so we put the type in a black space at the top and at the bottom.. I mean there are times when we have to put the type at the side of the jacket, which is acceptable.. Ende Teil 1

F: focus on vinyl or CDs?

G: The CDs quickly became the most powerful part of it, so ultimately focus on the CD and then sometimes make it bigger for the vinyl.. the Ramones always pressed 1,500 copies of their CD on vinyl, so there was always groups that still would put out a little bit of vinyl for the collectors.. in Europe vinyl has always been important.. but then you have the hiphop scene and they need vinyl for scratching but all of that scene in the US is specially produced singles.. they make a single for the DJ and put the CD on the market..

F: What kind of artist did you work with after the Ramones? Madonna?

G: No, it was kind of mixed up, I worked with the Ramones for probably 15 years so I just didn't do only Ramones covers.. from end of 70's to the 90's .. Subtrainian Jungle to Mondo Bizarro.. Madonna

Was kind of a strange situation: it was kind of getting a reputation around NYC.-1981/82..so people knew me, and there was a bouncer at the famous club called Horaz??, it was a big black guy, his name was John Phillips, he became my friend I was always coming to the club.. and it turned John had a side job of promoting records for independent record companies and he recommended me to Madonna 's manager, she had not played before anywhere.. her manager called me up and asked me if I would go to small town outside NYC of the singer of a band, but not the band.. I said, "Sure, where should I go?" she wanted to pay me \$ 250... so I took the train to Rosland???, Long Island and took a cab to Uncle Sam 's Blues ... I went into the club, this singer came on stage with a band, they were rocking, she was dressed in a leather skirt and a leather top and she was really sexy.. I went backstage after the first show and I said, "Hi, I 'm George the photographer, what 's your name?", she said" my name is Madonna, my real name is Madonna".. so I sat there talking to her and I said, " You're really sexy ,and it seems you're trying to be really sexy, but you seem to be quite nervous about that. I just wanna let you know that it 's working, you're great, so don 't be nervous about this".. so when her manager heard me talking to Madonna like this, she threw me out the dressing room, saying, "get the fuck outta here".. so I went back to the club and I shot the second set, too the train back to Manhattan, never heard from the manager, never got paid...Madonna blew up, I'd like to say that I helped her to blow up a little bit... there were some guys in Boston they took over a night club for the evening and called it "Club NYC" and they brought different artists from NYC to Boston, they flew them up from NYC to Boston, they put them in a hotel.. I brought these promoters from Boston to a Madonna concert at a place called "The Underground", they loved Madonna, they came back and saw her again playing on the roof of "Dancerteria", another night club, until they said, we're gonna take Madonna to Boston.. so Madonna went to Boston, they made a three camera video at this club in Boston of Madonna 's concert, but at this performance the band was gone, she was dancing to a track, and she had her brother and another woman as dancers.. but the band was gone, the band was called "The Breakfast Club", but they went on without Madonna...in Boston they did video shoot, it still exists and it 's of very good quality, I went backstage, I said, "hello

Madonna”, Madonna said, “That are you doing here?”.. I said, “Madonna, I got you the gig”.. I never heard from her after that.. also Klaus Noemi, I saw his show at Maxi ’s Kansas City, the B52 ’s were staying at my apartment the night, they said, “You gotta come to the Maxi’s tonight, there ’s an artist, he ’s really great”..

F: Have you ever had any contact with Madonna after that? Has she never seen the pictures you took at the show?

G: No, I never saw her again... I don’t know if she ’s ever seen them or not...they were in this film for the US biography channel, so i ’m sure she has seen them.. her record company Maverick called me up years ago and said they wanted to buy one of these pictures...I said the prize is \$ 1,000.. they didn’t call me back.. they called me back the next year, and I said, “The prize is still \$ 1,000”.. they never called me back.. next time they call me it ’s \$ 2,000 but anyway... actually, I was kind of in love with Madonna at the very beginning, but then she started acting like such a slut....

F: Falk hat das Falsche bestellt.. und bestellt ne Latte und ein Eis

F. Klaus Nomi, in which year was that?

G: 1981, some of the B52 ’s were staying in my photo studio, I had given up the apartment and moved into a photo studio next to the empire state building, and I had lots of extra rooms in the studio that I could let the people rent or stay in.. Fred Schnyder and his friend stayed there, and one night they said, “You gotta come to Maxis, and see this singer”.. I got there early, I saved a table right in front of the stage, I went there with the B52 ’s and they brought a guy called Steve Mass, and before the show he told me that he owned a new club called The Mud Club and that I could come there any time for free...Klaus came on stage and what was really interesting about Klaus ’ gig was that I never heard of him before, never saw him before,, he was wearing a black one- piece suit, and his tow sidemen Adrian and Joey arias were wearing two black overcoats with silver balls on their head and looked like they couldn’t see out of these balls, so they looked like some kind of an alien...after the first or second song, they took of their coats and their whole bodies were wrapped like mummies with plastic folio ..the two sidemen didn’t sing but they moved like robots ..the first song he performed was “Lightning Strikes” by gene Pitney????.. gene has a falsetto voice in his original song, so what Claus was trying to do was to get the audience used to him singing in very high falsetto, it ahs never been done before in rock...Claus covered songs like “these boots are made for walking” by Nancy Sinatra, but then at the end of the show, he sang this Samesenon Delila, this aria with his very high voice, that was so powerful that it made me cry...and every time again I saw this aria it was still bringing tears to my eyes... Klaus just got a record deal with RCA, he was popular in NYC and sold out clubs with 3, 000 people within 6 month, but at first he didn’t have a record deal.. RCA France signed him first, and Claus went o France and did a promotion tour and he blew up in Paris and other French cities.. I heard Claus was back in NYC and I called him back and said, “ Claus, there’s this cool thing going on, they are those guys in Boston, they fly in artists from NYC for a night”.. and Claus said, “I can ’t do it”.. I said, “why can ’t you do it?? It’s \$ 3, 000 and I know that you don ’t have any money”.. but he said, “ i ’m sick”.. I said, “When you get better”, “I won ’t get any better”... he was the first artist I knew that died from AIDS...

F: Was he a close friend to you?

G: Well, we were part of the same scene downtown, he was new wave, I wasn’t a punk either, I had a birthday party once, I think it was my 30th birthday.. at the time I was working for a famous Vogue photographer, so all these fashion and music guys came to my party.. and there were a whole bunch gay guys there.. and I was walking down the line shaking hands, and suddenly someone kissed and I thought, “Shit, no, I gotta kiss the next guy, because I didn’t want this guy to be jealous, why didn’t I kiss him??”.. so I was kissing about 20 guys, it was okay in the end,

but it was kinda freaky at the time..

F: So you have never been homophobic?

G: No, I accept people as they are.. if they start trying to put their shit I get upset sometimes, yeah..

F: Was he gay scene thing?

G: No, the thing about new wave... there's a movie coming out next year about Claus and what the movie really points out to me, more than I could see when I was in that scene: people were coming to NYC from small towns all across the country, they were gay, they were artists, they were too weird for their little towns.. those people could go to NYC and get lost in the crowd...and at the same time they were all together and what happened was, there was a show called "New Wave Vaudeville Show" where anybody could do an act...like an open mic show.. and Claus performed there and he blew up...people could get there and dress anyway they like, could do anything they want.. people were open to it, nobody booedbut Claus, who you think people may start booing, just blew everybody 's mind... he had a great voice, he was a really talented singer and was singing these songs like "These Boots Are Made For Walking", so he went over really quickly...

F: Why was he so different??

G: Claus said he was an alien, he was an alien in NYC coming from Essen, but he made this bigger.. his buddies were Nomies as he was Claus Noemi, I think there was Adrian noemi or whatever.. it was cool to freak people out, Joey Arias could speak like a robot, he had a really funny voice.. and they looked totally freaky, Claus had these really expensive costumes made... it was just anything goes...a very unique time, I mean before that we had disco and heavy metal, that was popular in NYC...but then comes this new wave stuff.. anything that was different could be new wave.. they started a whole music convention, the "New Music Seminar", because there was no way that guys like Claus could get a record contract, because none of these idiots from the labels wanted to listen to this...they wanted the next heavy metal, the next disco.. this new wave stuff wasn't really breaking out.. the Police mixing reggae with rock, you know, it took some special artists to break into this record market coming from new wave...

F: Did it matter that he was from Germany?

G: I don 't think that it had anything to do with it.. it was his falsetto voice, and his tenor and contratenor?? Together.. nobody knew where he was really from.. I mean, you heard a bit of an accent and he sang some real arias in German, Italian and French.. but the fact that he was German didn't mean anything...

F: Have you ever talked BOUT PERSONAL ISSUES?

G: No, we were just hanging out in the clubs, chit- chatting about whatever, the music and the scene, but didn't really get to the philosophical part of it...

F: Was he always that superficial?

G: In the beginning there was Claus Sperber, that was his real name, and Claus Noemi was the stage thing.. but as time moved on he became Claus Nomi more and more and Claus Sperber less and less.. I think towards the end he became full time Claus Nomi..

F: So you only talked to Claus Noemi and not to Claus Sperber?

G: the first time I saw hi he was on stage and so I knew that he was capable of being very strange.. but then again I saw him at my birthday party and he was dressed normally, he combed his hair in a different way..

F: so you couldn't recognize him on the street?

G: No, not really... NYC was full of young artists and actors, many people had their day job personality and their night life personality..

F: Let's come to the next important person you worked with..

G: Well, coming from Claus Noemi and you compared him to Kraftwerk, another German group that was part of the new wave scene... one day I was standing on the corner of 34th street, where Broadway and 6th Ave cross, the whole area is called Herald Square, there was such a horrible traffic jam I couldn't walk across 6th Ave to get to my studio on 34th street... and all of a sudden I hear this pumping out of the car and i thought, "I know this music, it's Trans Europe Express", but then I heard the words, "rock rock, rock the planet rock".. so what the fuck is this? but then a month later i got a phone call from Tommy Boy records i had never worked for before and never worked for after.. they said they had a job for a photograph and the group was the "Soul Sonic Force".. so we had a date, they didn't ask me for a meeting, they just wanted me to take pictures.. then there were four of the biggest black guys I ever seen show up in my studio and they brought these huge trunks with them.. and they started pulling out these costumes, that were unbelievable .. Afrika Bambaataa was dressed as a Viking, Mr. Biggs was dressed as a Roman soldier, another guy called Globe had a costume that like part of a globe with continents on it... and Pow Wow was dressed as an Indian chief.. they were so big and the costumes made them even look bigger that wouldn't fit on my photo paper.. I kept saying "Get closer, get closer", but they just couldn't, they were so big.. anyway Tommy Boy used the pictures.. and it turned out Pow Wow got arrested for robbing banks a the time when they got the record deal.. that was just when we took the pictures, so I had the robbers in my studio.. that was the beginning of my hiphop work.. But I wanted to come to new wave now: I was doing a lot of photographs for Andy Warhol now, almost a monthly picture for the music column, so I got to meet many artists, I got Tom Waits this way, I had the pictures of the B52' s "Interview" used for the article...and one day they called me and told me they had this group "Duran Duran" .. I had never heard of Duran Duran before, they were never played on the radio.. anyway, there were these five guys coming to my studio, and they looked normal, and they said, "Do you have a bathroom", i said, "Sure".. so the five guys went into the bathroom and stayed there for 45 min, and I thought, "What the hell are they doing there? If they take drugs , they should give me some".. finally one guy came out and asked, "Do you have any more hair spray ?"..I said, "Are you guys using my wife's hairspray?", they said, "Yeah", I said, "There's a drug store right down the street, go and buy your own make up and hair spray" I couldn 't believe that they were wearing make up and their hair was way up high, I couldn 't believe it.. this was the time before ADAM Ant came out and he did the whole make up thing.. that was in the early 80βies and I had never seen a band wear make up before...

F: What kind of photos did you take from Noemi?

G: I photographed every show, I would have loved to photograph him in the studio but I never had the chance..

F: What is the difference between a studio and a live shooting?

G: With a cover you try to create picture, that the artist hopefully wants.. we have a plan, we have props etc with the artist 's permission, whether it is his idea or mine, but we are all on the same page.. when you have artists on stage you only try to capture what they are doing, you have no way of controlling, whereas in the studio I can talk to them and get them to do certain things, but when you 're shooting live you just have to catch them when you think they look good.. this is also a trick my musical study helps with.. I don 't like to shoot a group unless I 've seen the concert a night before, because many times the group will do the same thing from night to night e.g. once I saw the Police in concert and went to the back of the concert hall to the balcony and I had a very long telephoto lens, I don 't remember what song that was, but I saw Sting do something very interesting at the first chorus and close to the end of the song he climbed up on the drum platform and I just began to count to the beat, because I knew that he was gonna do something. And at the peak he jumped off the drum platform and I counted one, two, three to the beat and I caught him at the apogee of the jump.. so I caught him from 200 meters away frozen in

space...that 's my musical experience coming into my photography capturing an artist at a special moment...when I photograph groups in the studio even today I still count one, two, three, click.. because many time musicians are not into the photo session but one thing musicians always pay attention to is a countdown..

F: What percentage of one session can be used?

G: Geoffrey Aroff, a creative director, once gave me the job to photograph Joan A:.. and she was a lesbian.. the record company thought that she wanted a woman photographer but I just spent the day with Joan going to radio station doing all the promotion stuff.. I didn 't know Joan but I could tell right away that she was shy in front of the camera...so I just told Joan, "Don 't ever look at the camera, look at the DJ or whatever" and I took some pictures, knew that I had a good one and left right away.. so when it was time for her to do the studio session, she asked the guy from the record company if I could do studio pictures.. so then I had Joan in the studio and the only refreshment she wanted was chocolate ice cream and orange juice.. and I made some very nice pictures of Joan and I took the pictures to the creative director and he said to me that he had never seen so many good pictures in one session.. I don 't use a motordrive, I learned from another photograph that if you use a motordrive, you take too many pictures that are the same.. work slowly, let the artist be comfortable, and with every picture move your head, move your eyes, and do a little change...

F: How much depends on you and how much on the subject?

G: It 's all about the subject.. it 's a lot of psychology, you have to make the artist feel good, get them to relax....first you have to organize everything correctly, you get everything set before the artists arrives.. a perfect example of this Melissa Etheridge.. she is a lesbian, she was 19 years old, she was discovered in L.A. by Chris Blackwell from Island Records, they recorded her album, Tony Wright sent her to me in the studio, she didn 't want any styling, no make up.. she was just wearing a black leather jacket, I had red background, I was photographing her in b/w.. she was so uptight, because here she is with two older guys and she was just not comfortable, I could tell. I knew there was no real good picture, there was nothing happening between her and me, so I said, "Do you have your demo with you" .. she gave me a cassette, I turned it up all the way and said, "Melissa, sing" .. then she got comfortable, she sang her ass off and I got the cover..

F: Have you ever met Andy Warhol?

G: I photographed him many times.. one of my best experiences with him I have to talk about.. I told you that I knew this assistant art director.. I developed films that Andy had shot at the Studio 54 the night before.. one day they called me in the morning and said, "George, we got a rush job for Andy, can you get us the pictures back by three o ' clock?" I had to ask my job, he said "Sure, go ahead" .. I developed the film , it was like three rolls, I hung the film to dry, I made the contact sheets, my boss got busy, I forgot about three o` clock, I looked at my watch it was three- thirty, I said, "Boss, I gotta run down to Warhol' s studio" .. it was like five blocks. I ran down Broadway, I went up the elevator, entered the studio, Andy stood here with his both hands on his hips saying, "You wanted to get me the film at three o` clock, it' s quarter to four, what the hell you think is going in here, when you say you can do something on deadline, you have to be on deadline or you 're out of business" .. I took my legs and went out of the door, the next day I went to Interview because I had a little job to do, I went to the magazine office because I didn 't want to meet Andy, and when I got there they all started laughing at me.. I said, "What do you guys think so funny?" .. they said, "Andy was yelling at you yesterday", I said, "Yeah", "He said, he was just doing that to teach you a lesson, he is not angry with you" .. then I photographed him at Studio 54 when he was taking pictures...

F: What was your relationship with him like?

G: You never really talked to Andy, you answered his questions.. he never talked about his shit,

he talked about what you were into, he didn't really answer your questions, he was pretty quiet about his personal life...

F: have you ever met Jean- Michel Basquiat?

G: Yes, it's a funny story: he started out as a kind of graffiti artist but he cut out some words and spray through this stanzal?? on a street corner.. it was like little poems...and he had a group of a couple of these guys, there were called SAMO, I don't know if that's street artist something...Tana Xy was a writer and she wrote books, one was called "Slaves Of New York" and a book about a cannibal in Manhattan coming from the South Pacific.. Jean Michel Basquiat's father Gerard Basquiat had played the cannibal and we had dressed him up for the pictures in the book, so I became friends with him.. I met Jean- Michel at parties but I didn't really hang out with hi that much, but I got friendly with Gerard Basquiat because he was from Haiti and my mother was from Haiti, so we had a connection on that.. I went to Gerard Basquiat's house in Brooklyn for Thanksgiving dinner, they were all there and we had a big turkey.. on the wall there was a big Andy Warhol painting of jean- Michel, but it was what Andy called piss paintings.. what Andy or his assistants did was to take a canvas, let it dry, then anyone who needed to take a pee, peed on the canvas... and at the house I wanted to ask Gerard if he knew if that painting still smelled like pee.. but I never smelled though..

F. Have you ever talked to Andy about this?

G: No, not really.. Andy liked to fool people, he wouldn't talk about this, but one thing I saw when i went to his studio was that his assistants did most of the work.. I'm sure there are Warhol paintings out there, where the only thing Andy did was to sign it...there's an artist called Marc Castabbi who copies him in this way.. Castabbi had a studio in NYC some time ago, when you into that studio, you put 25 cents into this little hole in the wall and a window opens and you can see in the window his assistants painting.. until this day Castabbi has contests, he now lives in Venice, Italy, he sends me an email with six pictures and asks, "Which picture do you like the most?".. so I choose the picture I like the most, he did this for several times and I finally asked, "What do I win by entering this contest?" and he said," you don't win anything, the assistant who painted the painting gets it going to the market!" Costabbi does not even sign the paintings sometimes.. e wanted to be like Warhol, he even dyed his hair white like Andy did..

F: labert über früher und seine romantisierenden Vorstellungen... kommt mal wieder nicht zum Punkt.. what was your scene like?

G: My scene was the CBGB, Maxis Kansas City and the Mud Club and Studio 54 sometimes...

F: Have you ever got in contact with rap or graffiti at that time?

G: that was from Uptown, I didn't go up 96th street and that shit started at 125th street.. I was new wave on my stereo, I liked some disco .. the first hip hop artist I worked with was Alfonso Robierro, he was 14 years old, he was the tap dance kid on Broadway, but i never had heard his music...he did this dancing so well that he was the star of a Broadway show.. this label called Cold Chillin` somehow signed him, and they distributed him by Island records, which was distributed by WB.. so Tony Wright gave me the job to photograph this tap dancer, I did this album, I don't know if it ever came out then I got a phone call from Cold Chillin records they wanted me to shoot MC Shan.. we heard songs like Rapper's delight sometimes in the Mud Club, or Blondie was big, but it wasn't big in general.. there wasn't that much hip hop on the radio and if I didn't go up on the roof tops, where Bam was spinning, which I couldn't because I didn't know where they were anyway.. I wasn't listening to it like I said I didn't hear anything about Alfonso Ribiero's album.. Shan had a single called "Jane stop that crazy thing", for that I had to go to QB projects into this old building, where Marley Marl had his apartment.. MM was cutting or mixing in his apartment an Shan and his pregnant girl did a photo.. the pregnant girl was smoking a crack pipe supposedly, it wasn't really crack and Shan is like yelling at her, that

was the front cover, and on the back cover Shan is smashing that pipe on the floor...I heard that song and that was probably the first song, besides Planet Rock, Fab 5 Freddie and Blondie.. but that was the first rap I heard from any artist that I was working with... and I heard it after the photo, it was their idea and they wanted to do that.. and then Biz came with "Make the music with your mouth, Biz" and Biz had TJ swan as his co- singer, and Biz I got into, Biz was funny..
F: NYC was really dirty back then

G: the dirtiest NYC you ever had was in the seventies.. there was no law to pick up your dog shit, you could tell the difference between a tourist and native New Yorker was that the tourist was walking around looking at all the tall buildings, but the New Yorker looked down on the street not to step into the dog shit or they were looking for money.. sometimes in February you had a meter of snow and all the dogs were shitting and shitting and on one sunny day the snow would melt and all the shit started to smell at the same time...that 's how dirty it could get..

F: But most of your pictures look really clean

G: I tried to avoid graffiti, not because I hate it or anything, but when you 're doing a photo, you don 't want it to be in there, because it 's too distracting .. we're talking about musicians and their album covers, as an art director you wanna put the text in and don 't let some graffiti artist do that..

Ende zweiter Teil

F: What was it like back in the days?

G: I hate to answer that question, I get this question frequently what it was like hanging out in the hip hop scene in the 80ies and I think the only answer I can say that I didn't hang out in the hip hop scene..

F: laber, laber....

G: seufzt.. I knew Fab 5 Freddy when he came downtown and probably the number one downtown club in the late 70ies, early 80ies was the Mudd Club...it wasn't well decorated, it was almost a raw space, they had a bar and a stage, it was very industrial designed, they had a garage door that rolled down the stage and the owner said, if he didn't like a band, he could just pull the door down and they had to stop playing because they couldn't see the audience anymore.. and Fab 5 Freddy hung out at the Mudd Club often, he was friendly with Deborah Harry, and many of the downtown artists photographed Freddy.. at the same time I became aware of hip hop through my photo shoots with Soul Sonic Force and my work with Cold Chillin... we began to see breakdancing before this time, you didn't see on television and you didn't see in the streets of Manhattan.. we saw graffiti on the trains and as it became more of an art form and the graffiti artists became a little older, they shifted from painting trains to painting canvas.. Futura 2000 started painting canvases and a guy named Bill Blast.. I think in the early 80ies there were some promoters from Boston, who came to NYC to check new scenes and then take artists from the downtown to Boston.. e took some breakdancers to Boston and he took Bill Blast to Boston to do graffiti on the spot and this was when white culture was getting face to face encounter hip hop culture.. in my daily life I didn't really have any contact with hip hop... in the early 80ies the American economy was in a recession, and the interest rates were very high up to 19- 20 per cent...this was a big stress on the economy, the unemployment was very high, and businesses were moving out of Manhattan.. so there many empty manufacturing buildings and these spaces became available to artists, musicians etc., people who were able to almost camp out in the apartment, you made your own living room, you only had one heater for a thousand square meters, and maybe one toilet with no shower.. people lived in these spaces, the costs were very low.. my apartment on 34th street right next to the Empire State Building, it was the top floor of a five storey building, it was a whore house before with many little rooms and naked women on the wall paper.. it was about two hundred square meter and I paid \$500 a month, which was very

cheap.... I tore out all the little rooms and made a photo studio with a dark room, and still I had three bathrooms left, two of them I rented out to people i knew they needed some place.. I had no kitchen, but two bathrooms, two giant showers in the darkroom... this was the time when I struggled to survive as a photographer, sometimes I got paid well, but only once in a month, sometimes I had no jobs, and I think a lot of people were in the same position... the economy was bad, people lived in rough places, some people bought their clothes in second hand shops.. but at the same time money didn't get in the way, if you had no money to go to Studio 54, you found other places to hang out.. a lot people tried to get friendly with the doormen, so they get free entrance, or to get friendly with the barmen, so they could get free drinks...but this poverty also created a more creative atmosphere, money can be a distraction if you have too much, but if you have nothing, then you gotta be creative...

F: alte, gelangweilte Kuh!!! Selba!!!!

G: I think this situation was also stimulating the hip hop movement in the Bronx.. the kids there couldn't go to clubs, so they had their own entertainment....

F: How did Interview react on hip hop?

G: The only reaction in the magazine came from Glenn O' Brian, who is the music editor...he was always interested in new music, he became friends with Jean Michel Basquiat, he introduced him to Warhol.. at the same time in the early 80ies I remember going to the Mudd Club and seeing a little poem of two lines sprayed on the street corner.. that was from SAMO and Basquiat was one of that group, the he began as a painter, and I don't know if he had any formal training, but Glenn O' Brian started to collect his paintings.. he gave Basquiat money to buy drugs, and Basquiat gave him paintings.. and I think Warhol became friends with Basquiat probably trying to connect with this hip hop scene.. but I don't know Warhol personal movements if he went to any roof top parties or something, I mean I doubt...

F: How did this scene react to the attitude of hip hop, costumes etc,?

G: At this time it was a change over from the 60ies pop artists to the next generation.. in those days NYC was full of people who wanted to know everything new, they weren't afraid to go to strange places, they weren't afraid to look at something new and decide whether they like or they don't like it.. barriers between culture were coming down and some people jumped first because they didn't need a group opinion...

F: Did the barriers come from the audience?

G: well, NYC club scene has the reputation that the audience watching a band will not dance.. no matter how strong their music was from dancing, it wasn't cool to dance.. people were only dancing to disco music in the clubs, but when they saw a band for the first time they didn't dance... the first time I saw a group affect people in another way was the B52 's and at their very first shows you had small audiences and their music was so powerful for dancing that people just could not not dance..

F: Did you work with the NYC Breakers?

G: I met Michael Holman... I had a reputation a the downtown photographer because I was often in the clubs and everything and the NYC Breakers needed some studio photos so I was the guy they called... I never saw breakdancing before but they were spinning on my studio paper... so were just posing and some were doing some action..

F: How big was the influence of drugs on the daily life and the art scene?

G: Marihuana, cocaine, opium were part of writers ' and artists ' life since the 19th century.. in that century there was a club of writers in Paris who was called the "Hashishan", and they had a dinner party and discuss their arts and after that they had a tea or coffee and the waiter put a tea spoon of hashish oil in their tea or coffee and they get all whacked out.. when I lived in NYC at various times heroin became very popular among the artists, I personally didn't like the effect of ,

I tried it but I avoided it... Jean Michel Basquiat died from a heroin overdose, I knew many artists that became heroine addicts and some still are heroine addicts, some are still working artists and some are not.. myself, I was making very little money as a photo assistant, I was making \$125 a week, my rent took three weeks pay.. I got the food from the photo shooting, what the models didn't eat at lunch time, my boss bought me a sandwich for lunch, that's how I survived... so then I went home at night a six o'clock and took a disco nap, I slept from six to ten, took a shower, took the subway train downtown to the Mudd Club, at the Canal Street there was a restaurant and I had a potato caniche??? and a coca cola with cherry juice, it cost me about \$2 for the whole thing and the potato was good because it soaked up the alcohol I was going to drink when I was in the Mudd Club... I could get in the club for free because I worked there as a bartender or doormen sometimes, I knew the bartender so I could get free drinks, so I partied there from 11 to 3 or 4 in the morning, took the subway train back home, sleep until 7 or 8 in the morning and then go back to work...and many times I went to work I was still drunk from the night before.. Cocaine was pretty popular because it kept people partying till four in the morning, they sniffed it quite openly in the Mudd Club or Studio 54, it was fairly common to see them sniffing in the seats or in the bathrooms.. they drank a lot, because they said cocaine makes you edgy and alcohol takes the edge off.. what was also very popular was something called amo nitrate?? and it usually comes in a little glass and it s covered with cloth, and if someone has a heart attack, you break this ampoule under their nose and it stimulates the heart and revives them.. in the disco people did this while they were dancing.. eventually you could buy a jar of butyl nitrate, and I remember once somebody dropped a whole bottle of this in Studio 54 and everybody on ten meters circle was getting stoned on this smell.. and when AIDS came out they thought AIDS came from this butyl nitrate, because there were all the disco boys getting AIDS..

F: Were drugs ever affecting your photo shoots e.g. with the Ramones?

G: No, when the Ramones came to my studio, they were with Marty Melnek, their tour manager, and also Joey Ramone was very strict, there was no smoking marihuana or sniffing anything .. but if DD was on pills I had no idea...and didn't I tell you about Professor X of the X- Clan? I worked with all of his and the X- Clan's records, and at my first meeting with him and his posse, we talked about concepts for the album cover, one of the concepts was that they were riding in a pink Cadillac into space.. and there were some other concepts and one of them was that Lumumba told me he wanted to be photographed in front of a red, black and green flag...so a month later we did the shooting, one day I photographed them in a pink Cadillac , and the next day they came to my studio and I had experimented with red, green and black paper but it didn't look good, so I had a flag made of cloth, and when my assistant brought out the flag for the last picture of the day, Lumumba asked, "What's that?" and I said, "That's the flag you asked me to do for you a month ago", he said, "I didn't tell you to make a flag of those colors".. I said, "Lumumba, I didn't make it up, I didn't choose those colors, I would have chosen some others, but I didn't pick those colors".. he said, "But I didn't tell you to make that flag." And he said, "Don 't give me that white racist honky shit!" So I said, "Lumumba, you're an African born in America, that makes you an African- American, right?", "Yeah", "Well, I'm an American born in Africa that makes me an Ameri- African!".. so, we laughed and that broke the ice and we became closer and closer and I began to understand his ideology, and the more I understood where he was coming from and the message he wanted to give to the people it helped me to do better album covers for him...

F: How did you get in contact with him?

G: I was freelancing for Cold Chillin , I wasn't there everyday, I was working as a senior art director for Island records, X- Clan was signed to Island records, besides being the in- house photographer I was also recognized as the "Black" photographer, and I think my interest in their

culture helps me break down the barriers between the races...

F: How did you get in contact with Cold Chillin?

G: Cold Chilling signed the "Tap Dance Kid", he was the star of a Broadway show, he had a recording and Island records signed this kid from Cold Chillin and I did his first shooting.. and then I met Lenny Frickerberg, who is one of the presidents of Cold Chillin along with Tyrone Williams, and he liked the photos I was doing of that tap dance kid and asked me if I would do some for MC Shan for "Jane stop that crazy thing", where a woman is smoking a crack pipe.. and then I designed this cover, and a few weeks later Lenny called me up and asked, "George, what kind of film do you use for your album covers?", I said, "It's not about the film, it's about the camera, it's a hasablatt, it makes square pictures, you got square album covers and square CD's " And I think Lenny went out and tried to shoot his own album covers for one of his artists, but a few weeks later he called me back, "George, I got another album cover for you to do", that was Biz' "Make the music with your mouth, Biz"..

F: What was it like working with Shan?

G: Shan was supposedly discovered breaking into Tyrone Williams' car to steal it.. and when Tyrone caught him, it turned out that Shan was Marley Marl ' s cousin, and instead of getting in trouble with the police, Tyrone decided to give him another chance and gave him a record contract, I think, I'm not sure of all the details..

F: What kind of picture did you take in connection with the battle?

G: Cold Chilling release a record called "The battle", and this record was supposed to look like a boxing poster, and I think I took a picture of Shan, but the picture o KRS 1 was from a shooting with Sly and Robbie for an Island records release.. so I cut the KRS out of that picture and made a picture of Shan and put these two together for the boxing poster..

F: What was it like working with Biz Markie?

G: Biz was 19 years old, he was also called the "Human Beatbox", I met him in the office and talked about his single cover, and the record was called, "Make the music with your mouth, Biz" and made all these funny noises, and I took pictures of him doing that and I also took pictures of him dancing with his DJ called TJ Swan, and TJ also had a very good voice, he was good imitator.. so that was his first single.. now people often ask me about the gothic type, people in Germany often say this is nazi. Type, but the reason where it came from was because Biz bought a cap at Times Square and they ironed your name in it .. and he wore this on the photo shoot, so I said, "Biz, where did you get these letters from?" coz I had to do the cover design, and so i went to this shop at Times Square and bought the letters to make the album title... I think that was the first time you saw a gothic type on a hip hop record but this became more and more popular, Tupac had a tattoo of this type...

F: What kind of guy is he on a personal level?

G: He was a teenager, and his first record released by Cold Chillin did pretty well.. his second record "The diabolical Biz Markie".. he always had a great sense of humor and was full of funny ideas.. I remember when he got his first big money with the single "Just a friend", Biz wanted to do an album cover where he's having breakfast and he is pouring little musical instruments into this bowl.. and I said, "Biz, we need to make the cereal box first" and he wanted to call the box "The diabolical crunch".. so I took a picture of Biz wearing a white wig, a lap coat with all kinds of bottles and test tubes and everything, that was gonna be the cover of the cereal box.. then I made the cereal box, and put all these instruments in the boy and had a breakfast table set and he is pouring the instruments in the bowl.. then I got the pictures back and went to Biz and said, "These pictures of you as the mad scientist are way cooler than the breakfast ones".. so we used the breakfast pictures as the back cover and the scientist photos as the front cover of the record.. the video crew saw the picture and they said, "Let's make the hair a white powdered wig that

Mozart etc. used to wear and have Biz playing some clavichord, some kind of piano, and Biz did this singing of “Just a friend”.. and to tell you the truth that was the first time I heard hip hop cross over.. when this record hit America I was in a deli, and there was a white guy standing in front of me and he was humming the melody of it, and I said, “Wow, if he’s listening to Biz Markie, Biz is gonna sell a lot of records...” “

F: The “Going Off” cover is with this mirror effect?

G: the original concept for this record was Biz and Cool V on the cover.. and the back cover was supposed to be Biz and Cool V with white boxer shorts, and they wanted to put the song titles on their butts.. the art director said, “ I’m not doing an album cover with a photo like that” so I took all of these photos in underpants, and just as a funny thing I had this plastic film of silver, it’s called Milard and it’s made by Dupon, it was popular in the sixties... and it reflected but not flat like a mirror, it has waves, so they are distorting the image.. so I just made so pictures of Biz with this Milard for magazines or something but then when Biz, who is not the most handsome guy in the world, and Tyrone Williams saw these pictures they said, “Wow , these pictures are really great”.. so you see a little bit of the real Biz in the corner, but then you see the reflection totally whacked out..

F: Then there’s the “I need a haircut”- LP..

G: Where his hair was so tough that it broke all the clippers, so they had to use a chainsaw... that was his idea.. he had a hair salon already organized in Brooklyn, the guy that ran the hair salon had twelve electric cutters that were broken in different pieces.. so Biz’s concept was that his nappy hair was so tough that it broke all the cutters and Cool V is standing behind him with a chainsaw to give him a flat top.. the funny thing was that the chainsaw cost about \$ 350 that WB paid and Dee Joseph who is the office manager of Cold Chillin, she lived in the country and she wanted to have the chainsaw, when we were finished with it.. but Cool V took the chainsaw and we had a big argument, and eventually Biz got in the middle of it because he knew that it was his record company, so he said, “Give it to Dee”

F. Then there is “All samples cleared”

G: This was after the Gilbert O’ Sullivan process and on the cover of this record I built a courtroom with a judge and a witness ox because I looked at all the courtrooms around Manhattan, and the judge was never close enough to this box.. so we built a courtroom like this and the idea was that Biz was gonna be the judge and the criminal at the same time and that Cool V was gonna be the lawyer... so I took one picture of Biz dressed as the judge on a tripod .. I didn’t move the camera at all and then I dressed Biz as the criminal, Cool V was in the picture, and I made two very big pictures and cut them together with a knife... but the interesting thing is on the album you can see Cool V holding a paper that says Cold Chillin – logo at the top of the paper, has some tags on it you can read and at the bottom in big letters F_G_ O` S_... fuck Gilbert O’ Sullivan... that was my little joke..

F: Then there was the toilet picture

G: Biz’s first promotional poster was not a picture of the album graphic, it was a painting of Biz sitting on the toilet, with his pants down, picking his nose..... so for the next four or five years while Biz was putting out records I was waiting for Biz to do another toilet song, so that I could do a photo of Biz on the toilet.. so Biz made this record “toilet stool rap” and I said, “ Biz, I wanna take a picture of you on the toilet in your house”, he said, “Fine”... so I had pajama and a sleeping cap custom made, and I had three roles of towel paper together and around this I put a role of music paper, where you write music on.. so Biz was sitting on the toilet writing on this paper like some people do their best thinking sitting on the toilet and I had Biz write music.. I got all this material together and drove to his house in Newark, I knocked on the door, his cousin opened the door, I said “is Biz here?”, he said, “Yeah , he’s upstairs on the telephone with WB”...

so I prepared everything in the bathroom, I waited about forty minutes, but Biz ' door was still closed... I went downstairs, and the cousin went into Biz' bedroom and comes out again and says, "Biz doesn't wanna do the photo", I said, "What?".. I went back to knock on his door, he said, "Who is this", I said, "It's George", "Go away I don't wanna do the picture anymore" I said, "I came all the way from Manhattan, I got everything ready, these are gonna be nice pictures".. e said, "Go away, I don't wanna do these pictures".. so I opened the door and asked, "What's the matter, this is your friend George", "WB wont give me the budget for my next video", I said, "Biz, this has nothing to do with our photos" he said, "I'm in a bad mood, I don't wanna do this", I said, "Biz, I've been waiting five years to take these pictures of you on the toilet... Ende dritter Teil