

EXCERPTS FROM CROSSED PATHS

Oscar's Cornhusker

CROSSED PATHS

DESPERATION SQUAD
AND THE AGE OF FORTUITISM

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Crossed Paths: Desperation Squad and the Age of Fortuitism by Kevin Ausmus

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Front Cover

- *top photo of Mr. P at the Wckr Spgt tribute show 2010 by Andy Whitson*
- *untitled painting by Bob Jones, 74 by 33 in., acrylic on found panel, 2014*
- *SX70 photo from Arts Building, 1984, photo by Art DiLion*
- *Panda Man photo by Dylan Skrab, manipulation by Kevin Ausmus*

Back Cover

- *SX70 photo of Mr. P at the PVA by Dave Alvin, 1986*

Photo of Courtney Love © Bob Gruen / www.bobgruen.com

Layout and design by Mark Givens

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L to R: Jeff Hayes, Laura Kovach, Mr. P, Ian Carlson, Bob Jones. The same lineup would play the Warped Tour 17 years later.

Desperation Squad didn't have to wait too long

to follow up on their 1984 "Rock Wars" PVA triumph. Shortly after the gig they were contacted again by Bacich to play a show at a shuttered steakhouse located on Route 66 in Azusa called **Oscar's Cornhusker.** It

was the first of several unlikely settings Bacich converted into showcases for a newly burgeoning San Gabriel Valley music scene. For the next year or so Oscars hosted most of the bands commonly associated with D-Squad at that time:



1984

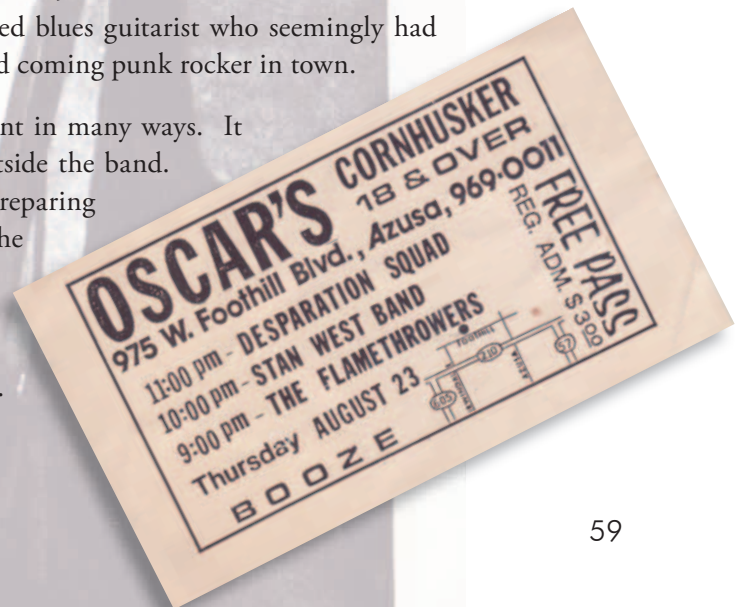


John Henry Jones, Just Jones, Johnny Hickman of the Unforgiven get first glimpse of D-Squad

The Unforgiven, The Dull, Silver Chalice, Psych 201 and the bands who comprised the rest of the bill that night - The Flamethrowers and the Stan West Band.

The Flamethrowers were led by singer Kurt Ross, who had previously fronted Red Brigade, Kent State and the Wild Ones, and Steve Alba, the legendary skateboarder, who Mr. P had met in 1980 when he worked at Music Plus in Pomona. Stan West was a respected blues guitarist who seemingly had given music lessons to every up and coming punk rocker in town.

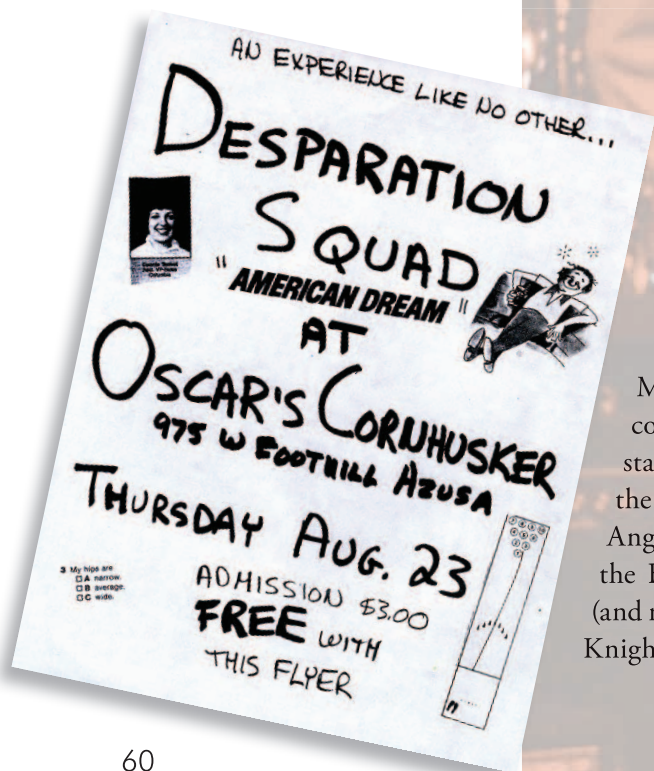
The Oscar's show was significant in many ways. It came amid a flurry of activity outside the band. Alan Waddington was busy preparing for the debut performance of The Unforgiven, which was only a week away. Bob Jones had just staged a solo art show at Claremont Graduate University.



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Bob, Mr. P and Jeff Spiszer



Mr. P had landed the lead role in another community play, "The Good Doctor" being staged at St. Paul's Church in Pomona. Also, the '84 Olympics had just blown through Los Angeles, with Mr. P and Waddington attending the Brazil-Italy basketball game at the Forum (and running into a befuddled USA coach Bobby Knight in the parking lot!)



Bob Jones confers with Brutus Cheiftain of Poets In Distress.

The Olympic game between Brazil and Italy provided inspiration for the gig. During the game Brazil fans busted out with their chant, “Whoa-whoa- Brazil!” For the show, the band acquired a tape of the official Olympic theme music and entered Oscar’s like it was the opening ceremony, high-fiving clubgoers as they filed in. Their first song was the Brazil chant, which led into the song “Mr. Fireworks”, where Mr. P employed pyrotechnics for the first time, or at least tried to, as the sparkler he brought in took forever to light.

The show was recorded directly off the

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Alan Waddington



Mr. P

mixing board and remains to this day an incredible document of the ragged, extraordinary sonic explosion that was the Squad at the time. For the Oscar's show the band had brought a keyboardist named Dave and brought back Ian Carlson to play trumpet. Jeff Hayes' guitar was buried in the mix as Bob Jones' erratic "Desperation" guitar was blasted. The combination of moody keyboard, Jones' guitar and occasional trumpet



Bob Jones plays "Desperation" guitar

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Laura and Ian



Jeff Hayes

bursts on the one hand, and the solid rhythm provided by Hayes, Waddington and Laura Kovach as a counter balance, synthesized into territory later explored by groups like Sonic Youth. In 2012, the band made “Desperation Squad Live at Oscar’s Cornhusker 1984” available online.

In the long run, Alan’s involvement with The Unforgiven led to the band’s first major personnel change. When The Unforgiven signed a contract with Elektra Records, Waddington left Desperation Squad and was replaced with 15-year old protégé, Ian Carlson.

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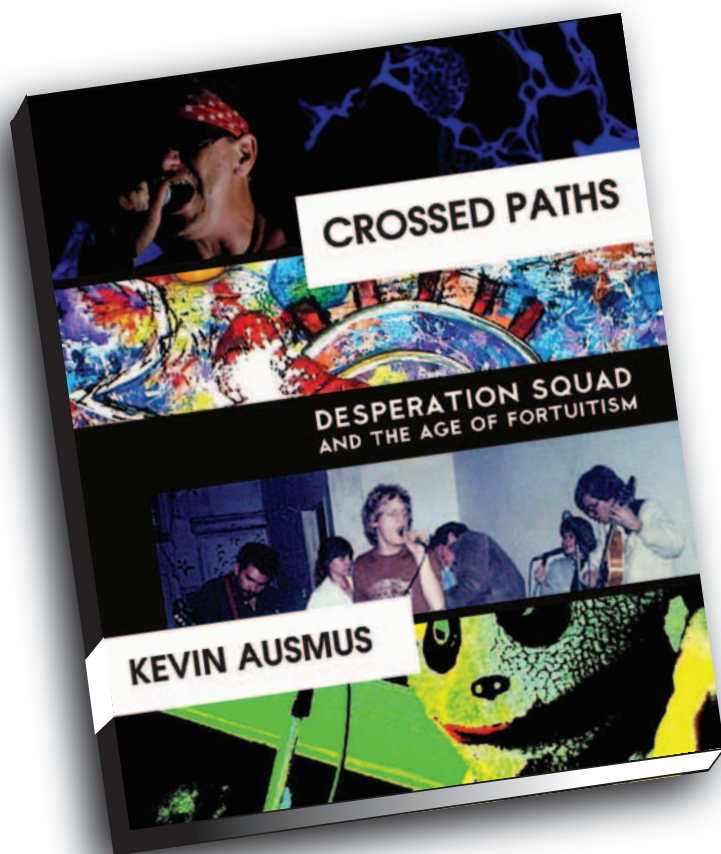
Art Show Opening

May 9, 2015

7pm

A landmark event documenting and exploring a slice of the underground art and music scene in the Pomona Valley, beginning in the early 1980s and moving into the 21st Century with a particular focus on The Desperation Squad.

Highlights include stories from The Warped Tour, America's Got Talent, and Mr. P's run for mayor of Pomona (the "Rock and Roll Mayor"). The show will feature photographs, flyers, music, handwritten lyric sheets, and plenty of legendary tales.



Space Gallery

250 West Second Street

Pomona, CA 91766

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What is Fortuitism?

The lines that are drawn upon the globe, the signals zipping around from one node to another, the paths that cross every day, the people we meet, and the sounds we hear - these are pieces of the world we live in, the world we embrace, and the decisions we make. How we interact with the pieces—which pieces we touch, which pieces touch us—determines how we see ourselves moving through life. Some decisions are out of our control. Some decisions are the lesser of two evils. How we use the results of these decisions are ours, and interact to shape who we are and how we live.

Fortuitism allows for a certain amount of serendipity and spontaneity to enter the art we create. The decisions we make are the signposts along the path.

Fortuitism is a different way to tell a story. Create art, save things, find a venue. You need not be famous or even enduring. Rock and roll is everyone's story. If you are fortuitous enough, you can tell your story in a way that makes it great art as well.