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*Fear & Loathing
at the*

BIG DAY OUT

BLACK CROWES
CRANBERRIES
SIMPLE MINDS

Photo by Becky Nunes



growing paths

the cranberries



The Cranberries have topped charts around the world with their often sweetly melodic brand of pop, but the Irish quartet don't always have the sweetest disposition when it comes to interacting with the music business.

They've actually become part of showbiz lore in Toronto by cancelling no less than four gigs in just 14 months. Not always their fault, as reasons ranged from Simon Le Bon's laryngitis (The Cranberries were supporting Duran Duran at the time), to immigration problems, to singer Dolores O'Riordan's thyroid problems. Along the way, however, they managed to annoy local promoters, radio stations and their own record label, with their somewhat prickly attitude.

Anyway, they finally fulfilled their gig obligations in Toronto in December, and squeezed in some interviews, albeit reluctantly. Lead guitarist Noel Hogan made it clear he'd rather have been home Christmas shopping and downing pints with his Limerick mates, but here's what the lad had to say for himself.

"We've been on tour about four months, and everyone's really tired. We leave early tomorrow and get back home for Christmas. Next year we'll leave all December free. We don't have time to do shopping or anything. Everything is a rush."

Will you get to play Downunder in 95?
"Yes, March — Australia and New Zealand. [The single has] really gone well down there. 'Zombie' is No. 1, we hear."

Your second album, *No Need To Argue*, has come out pretty fast. Is that to prove you're not a one-trick pony?

"What happened was that we recorded the first album, *Everyone Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We*, two years ago, but it wasn't released in North America for a long time. Then it took months to grow. So that's a two year span between when we did it and when it hit, so we already had a second album ready. We hadn't recorded it, but had all the songs. This time last year we were at home and knew we weren't going to tour till the summer, so we had January to March 94 to do this album."

Was it an easy process, having worked with Stephen Street as producer before?

"Yes. We were used to each other, and were really good friends. Since we did the first album, every time we were in London, we met up with Steve. That made it so much easier."

Has he had a big influence on your sound?

"Definitely with the first album, because we didn't have a clue. We just walked in off the street. With this album, he helped us as well, but he lets you do most of it and he'll be there to keep everything going, to keep the band charged. We come in with a song and play it, and he never changes it, never says: 'Well, do this.'"

Was it fun to record at [legendary English studio] The Manor?

"It was great, a really beautiful place. Spent three weeks there and got most of the album recorded. It was in the country, so there's nothing else to do. If someone else was putting something down, you'd just watch TV. It was our first time in a residential studio, where you live and eat there. We loved it. If you got hungry in the middle of the night, you could just go help yourself!"

What is the songwriting process within the band?

"There are two different ways of doing it. One is that I get something on guitar and bring it in to [rhythm section] Mike and Fergal. If Dolores is around, she'll take it home and write lyrics and a melody, and she'll go: 'Change it here, put the chorus there.' When I do it, I don't know where the verse and chorus will go because I don't have any lyrics. I'll give her 30 odd bars here and there, so she'll have loads of space to figure out what to do. The other way it's done is if Dolores comes in with the melody and lyrics done, and we'll add in. But never does it happen where one comes in to the others and says: 'Well you do this,' or, 'you do that.' Otherwise it wouldn't really be a band. It'd be like session men."

Have you ever suggested changes to her lyrics?

"Never. They're her lyrics. She's the one that has to stand there and sing them, so far be it from me to tell her what to say."

You've had such a strong response to 'Zombie'. Did you anticipate that?

"Yes, it was different to anything else we had done, or have done after it. To us, it's just a good song, and you don't really worry about anything else. People outside the four of us tend to worry more about those things than we do. The response has varied. It's a song about Ireland, but you could apply it to a lot of different situations. A lot of people get that, but others think it's like 'up the Irish' — that it's a big rebel thing, and it's not. You try to beat that into people's heads [unfortunate imagery]. The video was banned by the BBC and [Irish TV network] RTE. The video they show has the bits of us playing, and that's all there is."

That must have been frustrating.
"The video actually has something to do with the song. Like, the next day the record company are trying to change it. We were saying: 'This is it,' but they insisted we do an edit. We said we didn't want to, but they went off and did one, then came back. We said it was crap but knew we were fighting a losing battle."

Was that a difficult lesson learned?

"Yes. It's just really stupid. You can't smoke in a video, or drink. You can have a cigarette or drink in front of you, but you can't touch it."

Do you ever find it overwhelming, coming so far so fast?

"For us, it happened slow. It's been four years now. We were around for three years and we played every dodgy club in England. Did seven or eight tours of England alone, then a tour of Europe last year that wasn't much better. So, we've been to all those places. To us, nothing was happening at all. This was just before we broke in North America. After touring like eight times and feeling we'd come no further than when we started two years earlier,

seen as 'culchie' — as useless. We were just generally slagged off — 'get rid of them' — because we weren't hanging around in Dublin in the right clubs. A lot of that goes on. So we were annoyed with that long before we had even released an album. But at least we can say we did what we wanted. We never compromised. We never had to go to the clubs that everyone goes to. We all still live in Limerick. It worked out for us, and it was great to be able to go back and laugh at these people. We do go as far as to say: 'No, we're not doing an interview with you.' You don't forget what they do to you, instead of giving us a break when we needed it. Then, in London, they took to us first, then kind of got sick of us. They give you the hype first, then cut you down. Even when we had quite a lot of press early on, we weren't really selling anything. No-one was coming to the gigs. It didn't mean anything."

Irish bands always had to move to London. Is it hard to operate from Limerick?

"I think it's very important, to us anyway. If we wanted to move to London we would, but none of us really like it there. We just told our managers and record company, we were going to stay there. They all accepted it, but they had no choice! We told them: 'There are phones there! I live at home with my parents, and I tell them to say I'm not here if people call!'"

Were your parents supportive?
"I've gone through many jobs. I left school when I was 17. Had one year left, but I never went back after the summer holidays. Got a job in a bar. I thought: 'Great, I've got money now.' I soon realised I hated the job, but it was too late. I worked myself through another few jobs before ending up on the dole. I thought: 'Oh no. What am I going to do now?' But, with the band, they never said: 'Why don't you stop and get a real job.' I think they thought I'd just do this for a few months, then go on to something else."

How did the first line-up of the band, without Dolores, differ?

"A lot. We borrowed instruments and didn't know how to play. We met this guy we knew who said he could sing. He'd show us a chord, and he'd wail over it. We used to have a good laugh. Wasn't serious in any way. We were 17, so it was just ridiculous."

It sounds like something out of *The Commitments*.

"Yeah. He was with us a few months but, as the weeks went by, we realised we were doing something we didn't really love. So it was kind of coming to an end when he said he was going to leave, down to the three of us. That's when we started writing. 'Linger' was the first thing. I just had a few chords on the guitar and the others added to it. We had that one for ages, till we met Dolores. That was the first song we did."

If someone said it would be a hit, would you have laughed them out of the room?

"Very much so. We just played it in this little room. Never thought it'd get played around the world."

Do you have any favourite guitarists?

"Johnny Marr is probably my favourite. I was really into the Smiths. He really stands out. I came close to meeting him a couple of times. Probably better off I didn't, in case he turned out to be horrible, or you just won't say anything. Even meeting Stephen was weird. I didn't know how it was going go, but it was fine."

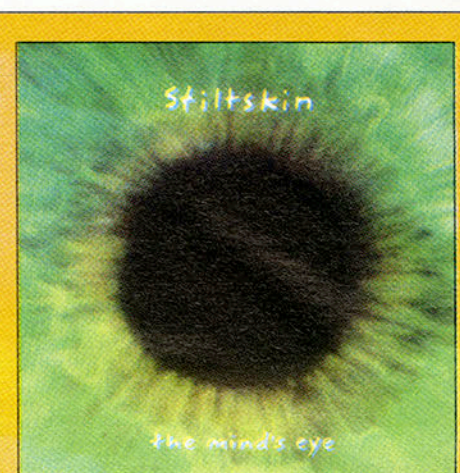
Have you played with any Irish superstars?

"I've met Bono, and I met Sinéad O'Connor very briefly. I met Bono at these awards in Ireland last year [93] — that's about all. Did a tour with Hothouse Flowers, and they're really nice guys, but haven't met Van Morrison or any-



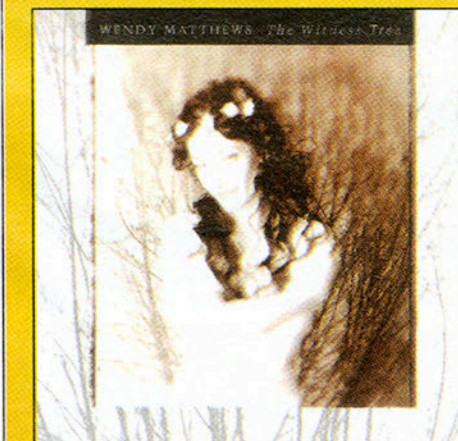
VAN HALEN BALANCE

BALANCE IS THE LONG-AWAITED 11TH ALBUM FROM VAN HALEN, THE WORLD'S PREMIER ROCK GROUP. RECORDED AT EDDIE VAN HALEN'S 5150 STUDIOS, BALANCE IS A COLLECTION OF PUMPING, SOLID ROCK TUNES, AND A WHOLE NEW CHAPTER IN THE VAN HALEN SAGA. FEATURES THE NEW SINGLE 'DON'T TELL ME.'



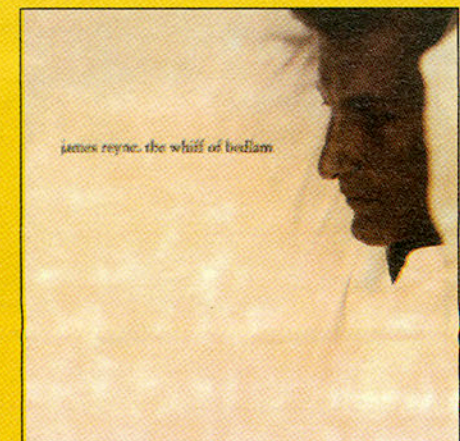
STILTSKIN THE MIND'S EYE

FORMED IN 1989, STILTSKIN ARE MOST FAMOUS FOR THE TRACK, 'INSIDE', THAT WAS FEATURED IN A LEVI'S JEANS COMMERCIAL. WITH *THE MIND'S EYE* THEY PROVE ONCE AND FOR ALL THEY'RE MORE THAN ONE-HIT WONDERS. BOASTING A MIXTURE OF ANGRY SEARING GUITAR, AND MORE MELLOW ACOUSTIC TRACKS, *THE MIND'S EYE* WILL BE THE ALBUM TO OWN IN 1995.



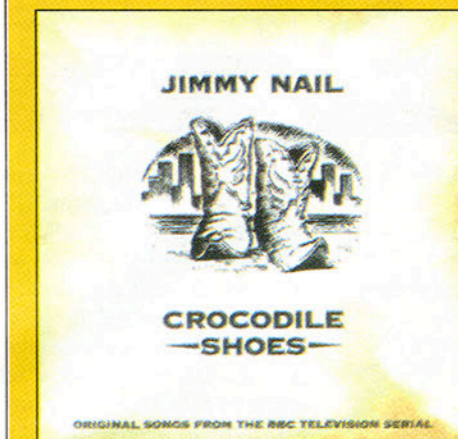
WENDY MATTHEWS THE WITNESS TREE

THE WITNESS TREE IS WENDY MATTHEWS THIRD SOLO ALBUM, AND IS A MAGNIFICENT MASTERPIECE. EXQUISITE BALLADS AND BIG DANCE GROOVES SIT PERFECTLY WITH CLASSIC GOSPEL NUMBERS ON THIS STUNNING NEW RELEASE. *THE WITNESS TREE* FEATURES THE FIRST 2 SINGLES 'STANDING STRONG', 'LOVE WILL KEEP ME ALIVE' & THE TIM FINN PRODUCED 'STAND BACK'.



JAMES REYNE THE WHIFF OF BEDLAM

THE GENIUS BEHIND AUSTRALIAN CRAWL IS BACK WITH HIS FIRST SOLO ALBUM IN THREE YEARS. JAMES REYNE'S *THE WHIFF OF BEDLAM* SIGNALS THE RETURN OF ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST RESPECTED SONGWRITERS. RECORDED IN LA, *THE WHIFF OF BEDLAM* FEATURES THE STUNNING NEW SINGLES 'RED LIGHT AVENUE' AND 'DAY IN THE SUN'.



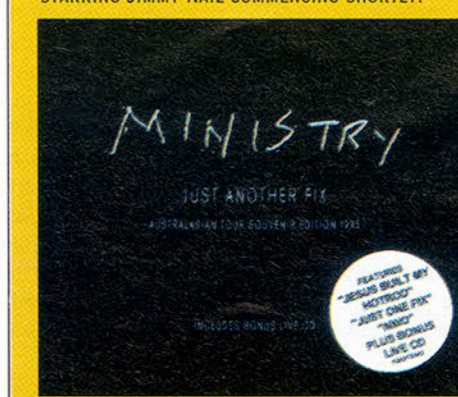
JIMMY NAIL CROCODILE SHOES

AUF WIEDERSEHEN PET'S JIMMY NAIL RETURNS WITH HIS SECOND ALBUM, *CROCODILE SHOES*. DISPLAYING NAIL'S PASSION FOR R&B, BLUES, SOUL AND ROCK, *CROCODILE SHOES* WILL BE ONE OF THE FINEST ALBUMS YOU HEAR THIS YEAR. FEATURES GUEST APPEARANCES BY GEORGE HARRISON, GARY MOORE AND PINK FLOYD'S DAVE GILMOUR. LOOK OUT FOR THE TV PROGRAMME 'CROCODILE SHOES' STARRING JIMMY NAIL COMMENCING SHORTLY.



KULCHA KULCHA

TEEN SENSATIONS KULCHA, WHO HAVE HAD THREE HIT SINGLES IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, HAVE RELEASED THEIR DEBUT ALBUM ON INTERACTIVE CD ROM. THE CD FEATURES THREE NEW TRACKS, A CD BIOGRAPHY OF THE BAND, AND THE FIRST EDITION OF DOOM, THE MOST POPULAR PC GAME IN THE WORLD. LOOK OUT FOR THEIR NEW HIT 'SOUL FEELING' ALSO ON THE ALBUM.



MINISTRY JUST ANOTHER FIX

AUSTRALASIAN TOUR SOUVENIR EDITION
THIS LIMITED EDITION RELEASE OF JUST ANOTHER FIX CONTAINS THE CD PSALM 69 PLUS A BONUS LIVE CD.



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We do go as far as to say: 'No, we're not doing an interview with you.' You don't forget what they do to you, instead of giving us a break when we needed it.

you kind of wonder if it's ever going to happen. When we released our first album at home, we didn't expect it to do well, but thought it'd get our name known at least. But we were playing clubs to 14 people, so that plan wasn't working."

Are you bitter it took American acceptance first?

"Yes, it's a bit annoying to practically travel to the other side of the planet to get noticed. In Ireland they still slag us. We live in Limerick, which is about 120 miles from Dublin. In Ireland, that's a very long distance. We were

thing."
Do you have any theory about Ireland producing such great singers?

"Singing is such an important thing in Ireland. Everyone is encouraged to sing growing up — somewhere or other you'll have to sing. That goes back years and years. You can go into a pub and there'll be a guy who just starts singing after two pints!"

I gather you can't see yourself leaving Ireland?

"For now, as long as I'm left alone, it's fine."

KERRY DOOLE

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Simple Minds

The phone rings in a hotel somewhere in Paris.

"George, how ya doin'? You're nearly as old as me."
 "I'm older, Jim."
 "I know."
 "And what's age got to do with rock 'n' roll?"
 "These days, nothin', in fact it seems to be a good thing."
 "So, how old are you?"
 "Thirty-five, I'm wet behind the ears compared to Mick Jagger."

"Aren't we all."
 So, Simple Minds are back as a functioning unit. They have a confident new year album, *Good News From the Next World*, that has taken Jim Kerr to Paris as part of a European promotional tour. America will be taken care of by a forthcoming band tour.

"To be fair, we've never given America the shot it deserved. For the first time in 10 years it looks great, as we're now on Virgin in America instead of A&M and, without making excuses, being a licensed band, you don't get the same treatment. Taking America hasn't been a burning crusade, but it's an exciting prospect for the sheer novelty value."

Not exactly the philosophy that stadium mates U2 have followed in their 15 year demolition of America.

"Not only do they make great music and work their balls off," rationalises Jim, "but from day one, they always believed America was their main place and they worked the whole Irish thing in Boston and New York. They would've played that card like a politician. Fair play to them because up until then the Clash, the Pistols and the Jam had failed to take America, whereas you'd probably see U2 play in Boston before you saw them in Glasgow or Manchester."

Taking stock, it's been four years since the last new Simple Minds album. The less than startling *Real Life* sounded like a tired and predictable, business-as-usual pretence that keyboardist Mick McNeill's departure hadn't altered the balance of the band's music.

"It was the first album we'd done without Mick, as he decided he didn't want to live life that way any more.

Unfortunately, I didn't believe him and I thought he'd be back after a few months break. Not only did he not do that, but we contrived his sound, which made the whole thing a bit still-born instead of saying, as we have on this record, we're not a keyboard band any more.

"We had a mental block, as we thought Simple Minds without keyboards would be like the Doors without keyboards. But you put on this new record and it doesn't strike you instantly that there's no keyboards. It just strikes you that it's Simple Minds, but it's spikier, more muscular and rougher, yet it still has the big sound, and the drama and the epic, where it's required.

"I'm really chuffed with it. It's the first step on a new journey for us. A lot of people ask: 'Why are you still doing this?' The question implies we've had a richly rewarded, enduring career. I say to them: 'Why does an eskimo fish? 'Cause that's what he does.'"

So, precisely why did Mick leave?
 "All the usual reasons. He felt he'd given enough of his life to the band. He got married and they were planning a kid. I think he was sick of me as well, which I can understand. I don't see him and it ended not acrimonious, but awkward. There was so much emotion involved, and little camps and wives and ex-wives and all that Spinal Tap stuff.

"But it's worked out for the best as the new album seems much more vital without the padding. We've got an enforced economy without Mick and I think Charlie [Burchill] the man anyway. When Mick left I thought: 'Fuck, are we a duo now?' I've never been much for duos, as I've always loved bands, but now there's just the two of us instead of five, the concentration is like a laser beam. When there's five, there's always a political thing. If there's three or four of you, you tend to bend with the flow — although great things can come from the chemistry of that. The irony is that just the two of us started the band in Charlie's bedroom. He's got a bigger bedroom these days, but we're still back there.
 "When you're 19, it's easy. You're all together and every-one's up for the crusade. Everybody believes the same and

it's the band against the world — very tribal. It's also very adolescent, because the reality is people develop and want to pull this and that way. It tends to come down to who wants it more gets it his way. I could never have given this up, whereas people like Mick could and did.

"Yet, on my high horse a bit, there's something in me that's a bit naff, saying: 'You make a few bob and then you fuck off.' But what's that to a fan?"

If your music's to be worth anything there's got to be a commitment that goes beyond the cash motive.

"There has to be. I can't think of anything more nouveau riche than making a few bob, buying yourself a wee castle, then pulling up the drawbridge. If that's what I wanted, I would've stuck to the dog racing."

Good News From the Next World is better than average Simple Minds craftsmanship. It's given a focus, edge and continuity by Charlie, who plays out of his skin, filling gaps, crashing chords and generally making sure Jim's doubts, claims and wilder assertions are carried by the appropriate muscle. 'Hypnotised' and 'My Life' would be fine songs in anybody's book, the latter a Kerr affirmation driven home by a haunting guitar line.

"In that song, I'm reflecting about the band and what I do. I'm generally an optimistic writer, but some of the back biting did get to me and I lost some of my confidence. There was so much going on and I was taking stock of where it puts us individually. It's a statement that: 'This is what I do, and I'm not going to budge, whether it's fashionable, or selling, or not.' These are my values, hopes, fears. There's something very youthful about that song. It's usually the sort of statement an 18 year old would make."

The dreamily romantic 'Hypnotised' is equally fine. A reflection of stable domestic life with second wife Patsy Kensit, perhaps?

"If it was, I'd never admit it. When I'm writing I'm almost meditating and I hear the words in the music. Initially, there's not a lot of logic involved, as it's an emotional response. I see the character in the music before I decide

Simple Minds

it's myself, or what I want to express.

"The character in the song could be 100 percent me or 10 percent. There's a couple of rough characters in this record, in songs like 'Criminal World' and 'This Time', unloving characters I don't think are me, but are maybe part of me. On 'Hypnotised' the bass drive was very hypnotic. It has a great sense of longing on it and something fatal — edgy."

Very *New Gold Dream-ish*?
 "Yeah, very Roxy Music. It's funny, but we're in Paris just now and Bryan Ferry played last night. I didn't see him 'cause I was working, but a couple of people have said 'Hypnotised' is the perfect Roxy Music song they didn't write. It's due for a remix as a single and I think it's gonna be really big. The man that has to do it is Brian Eno or some of those guys that did *Avalon*."

The Virgin press people stressed there were to be no questions on Patsy Kensit, but to what extent does your personal life impact on your music?

"Was it Mick Jagger who said domesticity is the enemy of the artist? I could see how that could come to be the case. When you're 19 or 20, the band is the only thing in your life, so you put 100 percent concentration into it. Then, when the band becomes a business, that takes 15 percent of your time away. Then, if you've got a wife or family, that takes away another 15 percent. Take away 10, because you're a rich slob anyway, and you're down to 60 percent. The trick is to organise it. Charlie and me disappear to the studio Monday to Friday — it's a domestic set up there. It also happens that both my ex-wife and my current wife lead very busy lives of their own, in terms of their jobs.

"My life is very much on the run, and split and moving around. If my family is on a movie set, it could be anywhere, as they were in Australia last year and Canada at the moment. Last year was Patsy's busiest year. There are real challenges as these enforced separations can cause a lot of problems. We were laughing and talking about it with a couple last week and they said: 'Listen, we see each other every day, and we're continually fighting [laughs].'"

Back to the album, why didn't you release it for the Christmas rush?

"On the one hand, Christmas is great, in that it's the busiest time for the record industry. But there's also a lot of

competition, so why make it harder for ourselves? I think the record's good enough. It's not going to go mouldy in six months and we need the help to make it in places like America, where you're fighting for radio and in-store attention — it's a mad house. So I think, let it come, so we can shine like a diamond in the new year."

Whose idea was it for the delayed release — yours or management?

"I had the suitcase in the hallway waiting for the taxi, so at first I took it badly and I thought: 'Aw, fuck.' But then Charlie and I started writing songs for the new album, whenever that comes. So the decision's been made now, and the rest is up to how the experts want to put it across. But we'll be touring the record. It won't be extensive, as we want to get out of the album every three or four years rut, but we'll be coming down your way."

You've said that coming off a tour is like cold turkey.

"I think you're mad and moody for about six weeks, like some anorexic model. You find it hard to settle again. When you're touring, the oxygen is thin, and there's a whole camaraderie and bond, not only with the people on stage, but the people next to you. There's also something cold hearted about touring, because for a year you don't have a problem and, if you do, someone's gonna sort it out for you. You get back home and the washing machine door doesn't work, and it's like a fucking major trauma."

Then there's stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens...

"They say the whole thing went back to the early blues guys, to keep up with travelling and fight fatigue. Then, of course, it became de rigueur. I've noticed, when we're tour-

ing, there's two types of people. There's one type that's determined to get extremely fucked up and see you at the other side, and there's another lot that are walking around rattling with vitamins and going to gyms everywhere [laughs]."

The Proclaimers were like that. Their idea of a wild time was jogging around the hills of Dunedin.

"I know wee Stuart, their guitar player and band leader, and I've never seen anyone drink like this guy. He's working with the Proclaimers, so he's at a bit of a loose end.

"I like three nights of one and three nights of the other. If I have a really late night, by the fourth song the next night on stage, I'm really struggling.

I'm the dying Scotsman. Yet Charlie Burchill's got the constitution of a pit bull. He doesn't even get a hangover and, if he does, he enjoys them."

Do you still get sick before you go onstage?

"I get nervous in a much more pleasant way. It used to cause me misery before, and the wee clubs were the worst. The big ones make it easier, as there's thousands, and half of them have decided they like you before you've even played a note. In the wee ones, you're going into foreign territory, with people seeing you for the first time, and you may be incidental, so you really had to prove it."

And you still don't believe in the razzamatazz that surrounds so many 'stars' in rock 'n' roll?
 "That's right, we don't. Some of the Virgin people have just come off a year working with Janet Jackson and they haven't knocked her, but when I hear about these people... get a life."

It's showbiz Jim.

"It'll end in tears."

GEORGE KAY

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