

arts
and
entertainment

By Pax Wasserman
Reporter

Not glam. Definitely not thrash. They prefer to call themselves suburban white alcoholic trash (as in S.W.A.T., a former project which gave birth to the current Ugly Kid Joe). It's a livelihood that got them a two-album deal with Mercury/Polygram Records, one out of a slew of labels looking to sign them over their short nine-month existence (guitarist Klaus played a total of 10 gigs ever before getting a contract). And why change? They're arguably the hardest rocking band Santa Barbara has seen in years (although that might not be saying much), and they've gotten enough attention to have everyone either love them or hate them.

"Other bands would try to be all surfer and shit — that's a bunch of bullshit — I'm an alcoholic," spouts outspoken lead singer Whitfield Crane III, in reference to the S.W.A.T. motto. But, between the fact that he turned down my generous offer of a Keystone Light, and the confident business couth with which they talked about their future, I found that there was more to this band than a heavy hair sense and an equally heavy live show. Kickin' back at their Seville practice spot, they improvised a blues-

See UKJ, p.3A

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By GARY LARSON



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Pretty Boys Making Noise

U.K.J.

Continued from p.1A

funk riff, "Fred" (named after the drummer in the next spot over), that would frankly put the funk in your urine. That's where I caught them for some quotes n' brew. They are: Whitfield (vocals), Klaus (guitar), Roger (guitar), Cordell (bass) and Mark (drums). All were present except Roger, and they deny all rumors that he is, in fact, deceased due to hair spray inhalation from an Ugly Kid Joe groupie he spent the night with.

arts: So here's the standard interview question. How did the name come about? I've heard it had something to do with Pretty Boy Floyd.

Ugly Kid Joe: (Whit) Yeah, we were supposed to open for them once, and Klaus, in his oracle-like ways, decided to call us Ugly Kid Joe for that show just to spite them, since they're posers that don't even play on their album.

arts: The Mercury/Polygram signing — how did it happen?

UKJ: (Klaus) This guy Willobee Carlan (former KCQR program director) was interested in Overdrive (of which Klaus and Whit had been members), and when we started Ugly Kid Joe, he stuck with us. He got us in contact with a

guy named Dennis Rider, who is now our manager, but at that time was an entertainment lawyer.

(Whit) The "hotshot" lawyer Dennis Rider. He's like the best at getting young bands signed with good deals. He got us this great gig at Carnival, and said, "Let's do it." He just wanted to get his teeth into it. He's still got his practice, but now he's managing us too. He's going over all the marketing ploys, the art, everything.

(Klaus) Dennis solicited our tape (to the major labels). It was a conglomeration of the S.W.A.T. tape that me and Whit did, and two of the songs from the Overdrive demo that Whit wrote. He got a lot of callbacks from labels that were interested, but the one label that showed the most interest was Mercury and a guy named Bob Sciorro, the head of A&R. We set up a gig at the Graduate pretty much just for him, and a week later we got an offer. We got a two-album deal, and now everything's changed so much. We're doing a mini-tour, and an E.P. We're recording some live cuts (at Carnival tonight), and we're going into the studio for five days. Whatever comes out after that we'll use.

arts: You've got a new bass player (Cordell). How many auditions did you have to go through before you found him?

UKJ: (Klaus) 92 calls, about 50 auditions.

arts: How long was the shortest one?

UKJ: (Klaus) About 10 minutes.

(Mark) One second.

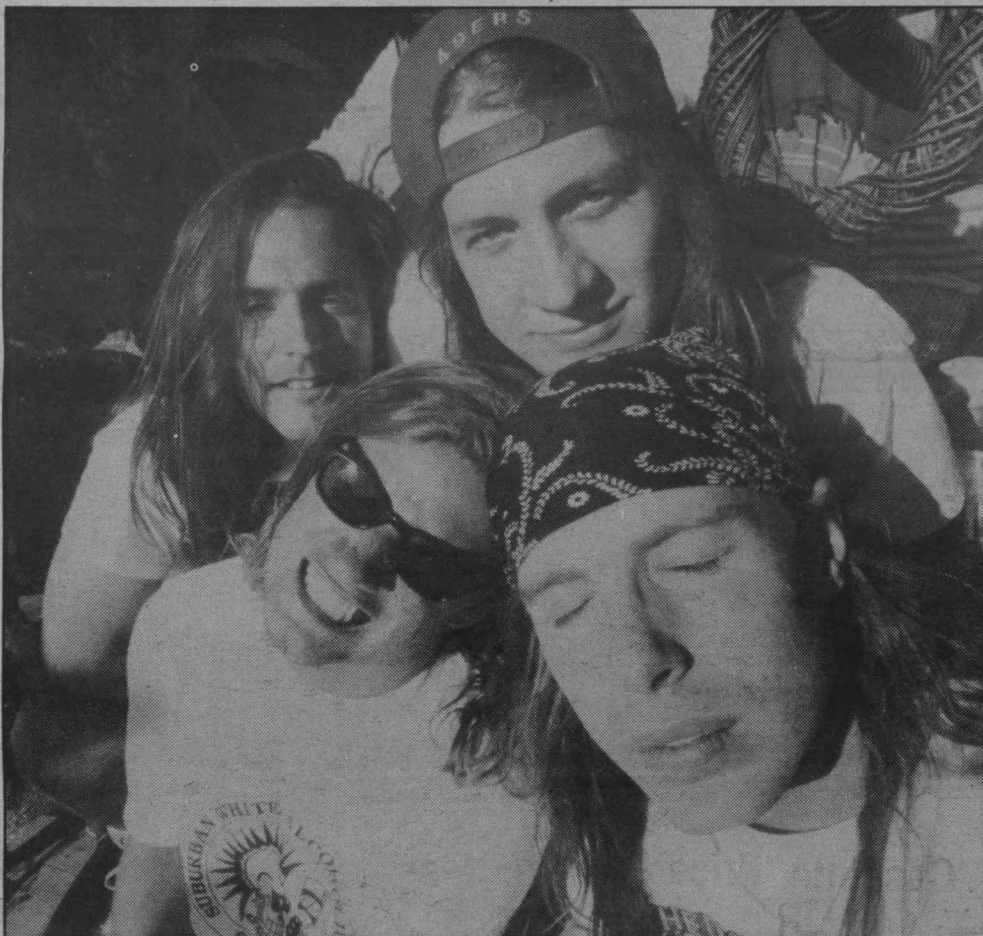
(Whit) The dudes would come from far away, and you would know within one note if they were kooks, and I would just leave. But Klaus was all nice and shit, and would stay and jam about six songs with them.

arts: One of my favorite songs of yours is "God Damn Devil." What's your special relationship with the devil?

UKJ: (Klaus) It's totally humorous. Especially that one line, "There's one way out, if you dare, we'll make a deal, you'll grow your hair. Satan's child, you'll start a band, we'll spread the word across the land." He (the devil) has this job, and he does it for free. And he likes it.

arts: I really like your new cut, "Heavy Metal."

UKJ: (Klaus) That was three months of sheer writing. We had to get the exact,



RYAN GOLD/Daily Nexus



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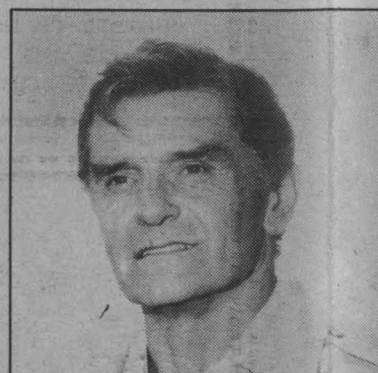
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thick balance — the texture, the loud parts, the speed, the power.

arts: So how long is it again?

UKJ: (Klaus) About 10 seconds.

arts: So, say the E.P. picks up, and you're playing down in L.A., and —

UKJ: (Klaus) Whoa ... L.A., shmell-ay. We're gonna play all over a lot. We're not just gonna do night clubs in L.A. (sarcastically) It's not like we're trying to get signed or anything. Heh-heh-heh.

(Mark) We're doing a Denny's tour in North and South Dakota.

arts: So, if the album picks up, and you get a chance to help out another local band, who would it be?

UKJ: (all) Famous Hollywood Dogs and Leadhead.

(Whit) Alan Reed (Leadhead guitarist) is the best all-around guitar player I've ever seen.

(Klaus) You said I was the best.

arts: What are some of your influences?

UKJ: (all) Ozzy, AC/DC, Black Sabbath, early Crue.

(Cordell) I like the Ohio Players.

arts: What do you think about this new Satan Metal, coming out of Clearwater, Florida, which happens to be where I'm from?

UKJ: (Klaus) Those guys are serious ... It's either for the money or the fun. The whole thing about rock n' roll is you can say shit that you're not allowed to say. The only reason that stuff is popular or fun to do is because everyone complains about it.

arts: Anything else you want to add?

UKJ: (Whit) Yeah, get those 76 balls (at the gas station chain) turning. If you're working there, that's your livelihood — you best fuckin' get those balls turning, dude. Cause how could you work there everyday and the balls don't turn. Do not go to 76 if the ball's not turning; that's ridiculous, they could turn them on if they wanted to.

Indeed. Ugly Kid Joe will be vending their rock and roll wares tonight at the Carnival downtown, because that's the kind of band they are.

Rocketeer: Dang Good!

Film Review

By Ross French
Staff Writer

The problem with most movies based on comic books is that they lose something in the translation — especially if they're in Swahili! The actions on paper tend to lose their magic and intensity in the move to the big screen, with actors and performances getting buried under mounds of special effects and Burger King promotional tie-ins. Both Batman

and Superman, for all their expensive sets and big actors are fine examples.

But fortunately for Disney and director Joe Johnston, *The Rocketeer* succeeds where the others have failed, and should be the frontrunner in the race for summer movie dollars.

The plot is standard superhero stock. Set in late 1930s, a young racing pilot, played by Bill Campbell, and his crusty-but-kind, crotchety-but-endearing mechanic, played by Alan Arkin, stumble across a futuristic rocket pack, keep it out of the hands of a Nazi spy

(Timothy Dalton) and save the world from Hitler's domination.

It appears that a great deal of money was spent to ensure that, when the Rocketeer flies, it doesn't look like someone tossed an Official Disney Rocketeer Action Figure across the room. Still, what sets this film apart from its kin is that the balance between special effects and acting performances is kept in mind. Dalton's performance as the "number-three actor in Hollywood" is virtually flawless, complete with a sinis-

ter German accent when he is discovered. Arkin and Campbell are the perfect buddies, playing all the father figure-son angles. Perhaps the most underrated performance comes from Paul Sorvino's supporting role as an "all-American" gangster.

If you are looking for an introspective, thought-provoking movie, well, go rent some sub-titled Swahili film about a guy who loses his soul. But if you want a fun summer movie for about the cost of a Garfield comic book, then check it out.

Upcoming!!

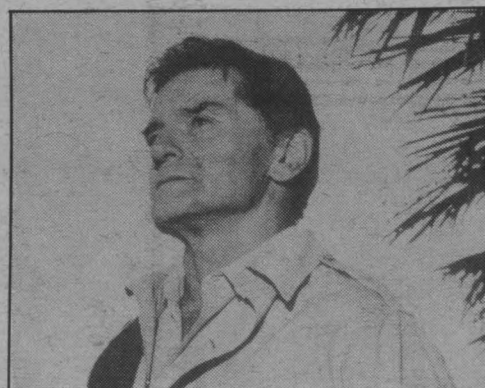
... Tonight, maybe you should go down to **Carnaval** and see Isla Vista's own bunch of long-haired hessians **Ugly Kid Joe**, or maybe we should shut up about them already. They are recording something for their big, big record so get out there and show some support! Or not!

... Tomorrow night would be a good night to go check out the hilarious Kevin Costner in the sidesplitting feel-good hit, **Dances with Wolves**. There's only one dance number in the whole movie, but it might behoove you to head over to **Campbell Hall** around 8 p.m.

... Santa Barbara kids are great! And cute! The crazy little ankle-biters at the Peanut Gallery will be putting on a production of **The Little Mermaid**. The musical will have performances today through Friday at **La Colina Junior High**, 1425 Foothill Blvd. For information call 965-8313.

... **The Acousticats**, a contemporary bluegrass band, will be playing this Sunday at Music at the Farm on the porch at **Fairview Gardens Farms**. Tickets are \$6 at their fruit stands or \$7 at the door.

... Remember who played Mike Bauer on "The Guiding Light?" Well, our man, **Don Stewart**, will be singing such hits as "Some Enchanted Evening" and "This Nearly Was Mine" in Music Theater of Ventura County's 1991 season opener, **South Pacific** (see photo). Don also flew jet bombers. Look out for this direct hit!



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"Hood;" Sherwood Like a Better Performance



STACEY TEAS/Daily Nexus

◆ Film Review

By Dylan Callaghan
Staff Writer

In preparing this year's summer assault on the American pocketbook, Hollywood Execs have reached into their well-used recycling bin and swooped up yet another old, universally-known story. This time it is called Robin Hood.

And while the shiny new version of this classic story of good does not ruin the inherent magic of the original tale, it certainly fails to capitalize on it totally or take it in any substantially new creative directions.

Originality and revisionism aside, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* is nearly two-and-a-half hours of film that, despite the alleged marksmanship of its main character, seems to wander, change direction and, ultimately, miss its target.

A good deal of the problem lies with Kevin Costner's weak, uncharismatic portrayal of Robin of Locksley. During the adventures unfolding, Costner seems caught somewhere between the plains of *Dances With Wolves*, the mythical Sherwood forest and his next acting lesson. Because the entire story is based on the romantic, humanistic nature of this medieval superhero, Costner's drowsy pre-

sence simply detracts from the potential impact of the film.

Though Costner's uninspired American accent, which occasionally slides into a poorly done British hillbilly twang, works to leave the film without a likeable lead, the actors surrounding him skillfully create a highly enthralling safety net of supporting characters. Outshining virtually every other element of the film is Alan Rickman's animated and perfected presentation of the morally perverted Sheriff of Nottingham.

In addition, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio delivers a sensitive and charming performance as Robin's virtuous love interest Maid Marian. All told, it would seem all in all the only disappointing performance given by the large group of actors in the movie was Costner's.

Also dampening the fiery impact of the cast is a good deal of inconsistency and sloppiness in Kevin Reynolds's direction. The mood and tone of the picture waver from a serious, epic melodrama in the first 30 minutes to a near slapstick, *Princess Bride* approach during numerous later scenes. At two-and-a-half hours, the film does leave you wondering how much more might have been cut from the very loose, spread-out adventure.

At the bottom line, *Robin Hood* moves viewers, however narrowly, through the overgrown, and overhyped, forest of its production and leaves them entertained.

I.V. Video Fun!

◆ Feature

By Steven Coulter
Reporter

It's funny the things that you'll remember when you play a video game for the first time in years. For instance, I was playing *Space Wars* at the Anacosta Theater a few nights ago when suddenly I was reminded of the time that my friend Darryl got in big trouble for stealing \$28 from his mother, Pat. He had taken the money so that he and I could play a few games of *Star Castles* at the local arcade-sandwich shop, *Daddy Cools*. We spent every dime on video games and sandwiches — what a strange and beautiful day that was!

Indeed, it seems that most of my happy childhood memories are in some way connected to video games. For instance, I was on my way to the arcade the day that I found my stolen bike.

Many of my recent happy memories are also connected with video games, and as I look up

from my game of *Tron* and see all the smiling faces who are playing *Gorf*, *Ms. Pacman* and *Neo-Geo*, I am pretty sure that everyone around me is pretty happy, too.

Since the late '70s, video games have been a major part of youth culture. They have helped youngsters make it through their adolescence by allowing them an avenue of escape, or letting them interact with others on a level at which all parties involved can feel comfortable.

It is probably because most of Isla Vista's residents grew up feeling secure with video games that most students will find time each day to make a trip to Video Madness or Time Out to play a rousing game of *Kung Fu Champ* or *Capcom Video Bowling*.

There are over 100 video games and pinball machines in the various shops and restaurants around Isla Vista alone, not to mention the dozens of miniature basketball machines, foosball and pool tables, all of which are being enjoyed by hundreds

of people daily!

"It was funny during finals week, because you would see the same people in here every couple of hours to play a game on a study break," said Video Madness employee Jake DeMoe.

As far as Isla Vista is concerned, Video Madness is the Taj Mahal of the video world, boasting 45 (Count 'em — FORTY FIVE!) video games, including classics such as *Moonpatrol*, *Spaceduel* and *Tetris*.

Video Madness also has five pinball machines, one of which is Isla Vista's newest sensation, Gilligan's Island, which DeMoe claims is the most frequently played game in the joint.

"I like to play Gilligan's Island because it makes me happy," said UCSE alumnus Leum Barksdale.

Although video games can be considered a mindless waste of time and money, I would like to point out that it was video games that first taught me the value of the almighty quarter, thanks to Darryl's mom, Pat.

Jungle Fever: Lee Me Alone!

◆ Film Review

By Morgan Freeman
Staff Writer

Jungle Fever, Spike Lee's fifth film, is nothing unique or special for any Lee fans, unless they enjoy the bleak and depressing, hate-filled world Lee portrays. For those new to the Lee bandwagon, the film once again transmits his belief that the world offers no possibility for Blacks and whites to live in social harmony.

The story revolves around Flipper Purify (Wesley Snipes), an up-and-coming, ambitious architect, who falls for his new secretary, Angie Tucci (Annabelle Sciorra). Flipper is Black and lives in Harlem and Angie is an Italian-American from the predominantly Italian Bensonhurst.

Their relationship sparks a series of sub-plots, each hammering the same point, which gets a trifle boring, if not irritating, after two hours. Everybody has something to say about their relationship, but everybody says

the same thing. Basically, Lee spends two hours filming different characters explaining over and over again why the relationship is unacceptable.

Both Flipper's and Angie's families incessantly rage over the interracial relationship. In one scene, Flipper's father leaves during dinner, refusing to eat at the same table with a white woman. The father later decides to murder Flipper's older brother, Gator, because of the boy's drug and stealing problem.

A brilliant solution which plays no part in the theme of the film.

Once Angie's father learns of her relationship with Flipper, he brutally attacks her, sending her to the living room floor with back of his hand. He throws her out of the house.

To set up another controversial relationship, an Italian man who Angie had broken up with to go out with Flipper, asks a Black female for a date. As if Lee hasn't yet made his point, a group of white men, in-

formed about the date, jump him on his way to pick up the woman.

Every level of discourse in the film carries the same message of unsolvable racial tensions. And the film, like his others, fails to offer a single solution to the problem which, although certainly a major social concern, is a total downer.

Deep within the monotonous interracial problems, Lee also plants several instances of young, ambitious Black prostitutes.

The film ends with Flipper being approached by a young Black girl no older than 13 who proposes, "Hey mister, I'll suck your big black cock for two dollars."

In Lee's world, in which everyone, regardless of color, is a complete racist, there is no hope or focus. In dealing with such an explosive topic, there needs to be a balance rather than the one-sided coin Lee flips here and in his other movies. If there isn't any hope, why make a movie?

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