

## 'Smoke Signals' no drag; full of energy, creativity

By Bryan Peterson  
Staff Reporter

### MDC, "Smoke Signals" (Radical Records)

MDC's newest LP, "Smoke Signals," gets me excited! 1986 has seen more punk bands than ever on vinyl, and more punk albums than ever are starting to sound the same.

### Record Review

Meanwhile, more bands are releasing vinyl, something that renews my faith in hardcore punk as a source of hope in this crazed world.

MDC's new album is full of energy and creativity. Most of the songs are long and more complicated than those on past releases. One of the few all-out thrashers on this album is "Skateboards From Hell," a humorous look at one of America's latest

fads.

There is even a love song (for tofutti) on this LP — a remake of Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti." "Countrysquak" and "Missile Destroyed Civilization" both appeared on previous releases, but there are plenty of original songs on "Smoke Signals."

"Smoke Signals" is used as the title for an instrumental and the theme of this album. The album's cover is filled with scenes reflecting this theme: an exploding space shuttle, the Statue of Liberty grasping a handgun, smoldering nuclear reactors, and a space "defense" system.

As for lyrics, MDC continues to provide its audience with sincere words, not Reaganesque rhetorical babblings. "Acceptable Risks . . . the Challenger lost/Acceptably risky O-rings in frost/ . . . They sing a song of apple pie and mom/Reactor disaster or hydrogen H-bomb/ . . . That's

acceptable, though quite regrettable." A bit more straightforward is "South Africa is Free," a celebration of human struggle and a realization that apartheid is not limited to South Africa — it can be found at Big Mountain, in Atlanta, in Omaha and Lincoln — anywhere that skin color is used as a basis for one's status in society.

**' . . . should serve as a real eye-opener for those willing to listen'**

The "Smoke Signals" LP should serve as a real eye-opener for those willing to listen. With all the smoke signals this world is putting out, it is time we opened our eyes to the need for change in this world.

## Here come the judges; justice for 90 minutes

By Charles Lieurance  
Diversions Editor

It's afternoon TV's 90 minutes of justice. Judge Wapner, Keene and "The Judge" unrelentingly mete out punishment to the wicked, rewards to the deserving and lengthy platitudes to all in a modern reaffirmation of the Sermon on the Mount. The meek shall inherit \$75 in damages and court costs, the simple at heart get to keep the suburban duplex, the family station wagon and the sobbing little girl named Beverly.

### Tube Talk

The wicked get to stand in shame before the omniscient microphone of Doug Llewelyn. They get a story from the judge about how black the world has become, how bleak are the prospects, when he was a boy growing up in the soggy hills of West Virginia . . .

The 90 minutes begins with "Divorce Court," in which actors too awful to hawk Charmin and dishwashing soap recreate actual divorce cases before Judge Keene who spent his whole "real" life doing that job for California. X wants a divorce because Y is a vampire, because he uses his/her comb, shaves in bed, gives his/her children illicit drugs, mouths the words to popular songs, because she is a dragon lady, because he is the Marquis De Sade.

And fidelity, don't mention it. His best friend spotted her in a motel room with stiletto heels and a leather bra, fornicating with the plumber, the milkman, a Shetland pony, the boys from the recording studio, Fernando Llamas, Bert Convey, the cast and crew of the Broadway musical "Sweeney Todd." He was involved in a permanent indiscriminate rutting ritual since the day after their honeymoon. He had diseases that make scientists cry.

She is lucky to have been risen from the dead for this divorce hearing. He began to undress on their honeymoon, saw television for the first time and fell into a 20-year trance that doctors diagnosed as "voodoo death."

After this half hour comes the tricky part. You see, "People's Court" and "The Judge" are on at the same time. How can you miss a half hour of justice? Even if you switch back and forth you miss valuable testimony. How can you be a fair, prudent juror if you're missing the tale of how this unscrupulous dry cleaner washed her satin party dress in indelible ink by accident. Meanwhile you're missing "The Judge" who is asking a 10-year-old child to show him with

the G.I. Joe and Barbie doll exactly what went on that night when Uncle Ken babysat.

How's a potential afternoon juror to cope?

It's enough to make a person turn to the After School Special, but it's your duty to find a way, to make a fair, prudent decision based on the facts. You have to ignore the fact that the husband looks like Bela Lugosi and the wife looks like Pollyanna. You have to ignore the fact that the dry cleaner looks like Fu Manchu and the customer looks like Rebecca De Mornay. Just the facts, ma'am.

Let's rate the judges. Let's reach a verdict on that score. First, Judge Wapner. He's a kindly old codger with a sense of humor and, hey, these aren't fidgety actors he's dealing with. These are "real" people, as far as that adjective goes. Half the time he looks like he wants to wad his robes up in a ball, toss 'em in the dumpster and hobo around the country in empty cattle cars. He shakes his head, "Now, ma'am, it's this gentleman's turn to speak, you had your turn, remember . . ." and there's a gleam in his eye like Santa Claus. The lady's mumbling something in Serbian.

Wapner's the best for my money.

Then there's "The Judge." "The Judge" is like a cranky guidance counselor. He only likes children. Everyone else is suspect. Parents are evil turnkeys capable of incest, torture, bestiality, battery and non-nutritious grocery shopping. Children are pure and innocent, incapable of lying.

"The Judge" is the sort of old man who would spend whole nights at his window facing your house, trying to see what you were doing to your children. He's tell gossip about unspeakable acts he'd heard. Actually it was the blender pureeing.

### How's a potential afternoon juror to cope?

Then there's the great Judge Keene, whose job is all too easy. He rarely faces the familial atrocities "The Judge" faces and he doesn't have the burden of real-life justice that Wapner has. In short, he's just lazily his way through retirement. He's the smartest. Even though he pretends to pay attention, you know that condo of his in Acapulco is the main thing on his mind.

"You say you husband's a vampire, ma'am. Well, live with it. My IRA comes due next season."



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