

The Behrend Beacon

# Old-school punk band Bad Religion tells it like it is



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Bad Religion comes from the old school of punk, which is loud, fast and infused with political awareness. Formed in Los Angeles in 1980, the band released a critically acclaimed LP on its own label, Epitaph, within a year and quickly joined the fertile Southern California punk scene that included such legendary bands as the Circle Jerks, the Dead Kennedys, Black Flag and the Minutemen.

By Rod Harmon  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

The members of Bad Religion aren't ones to mince words, whether it's about their critics, their beliefs or their companions on the Vans Warped Tour, which guitarist Brian Baker describes as a "roving pack of 600 like-minded people who are chasing each other in buses all across the country and frightening the locals."

The Warped Tour is what Lollapalooza was before big business got involved - an alternative festival featuring dozens of bands, sideshow attractions and extreme sports athletes at an affordable price. There are critics who say it's heading the way of Perry Farrell's lost dream, but Baker refutes them.

"There have been times when the Warped Tour has had a few token, quote, 'normal bands,' unquote, but that's not the case this year," he said. "What's interesting is that this tour is doing better business than any of the tours that preceded it, and yet there is no 311 or Green Day or anything that brings in people from the suburbs. It's pretty much an all-punk thing, which is good."

Bad Religion, which formed in 1980, comes from the old school of punk, which is loud, fast and infused with political

awareness. By 1983, however, the band was imploding. A synthesizer-laden album, "Into The Unknown," was hated by many (including the members themselves), and contributed to a breakup that would last five years. It wasn't until 1988's "Suffer" that Bad Religion really hit its stride with a combination of power chords and Beatlesque harmonies.

The new album, "The Process of Belief," marks a return to that sound and to Epitaph after a string of spotty albums on Atlantic. Everyone attributes it to the addition of original guitarist and Epitaph president Brett Gurewitz - including Baker, who replaced Gurewitz in 1994.

"There is a thing that happens when Greg (Guffin, lead vocalist) and Brett are writing songs together and against each other," Baker said. "There's collaboration, but there's also individual study where they try to one-up each other. What you get when you have this healthy competition is 'The Process of Belief' ... it's my favorite Bad Religion album since 'Recipe of Hate,' which came out in 1993."

Don't expect Gurewitz to show up at many Warped dates, though. He's so busy running Epitaph, one of the biggest indie labels in America, that he only makes about 10 percent of the band's

shows, Baker said.

There's another aspect of "The Process of Belief" that's testament to Bad Religion's longevity: the lyrics. At a time when rock bands string together obscenities and call it a song, Bad Religion continues Graffin's goal to "make catchy songs that are infectious but make you think."

In one album, the band touches on politics ("I'd like to watch a thousand cable channels, but there's nothing on/And my high speed connection's monitored daily by the Pentagon"), depression ("Please listen to me, there is no such thing as human debris/I'm not broken/A little cracked, but still I'm not broken"), and religious dogma ("The process of belief is an elixir when you're weak/I must confess at times, I indulge it on the sneak.")

Such diversity makes it hard to categorize Bad Religion, which is probably why it hasn't achieved widespread commercial appeal. It may surprise both fans and critics alike that Baker gets most excited when he talks about his favorite pastime - collecting books on the Civil War and 19th-century architecture.

It doesn't sound like your typical rock lifestyle, but then again, Bad Religion isn't your typical rock and roll band.

"I think the reason the band never really made it into that 'you can't go to the grocery store because there are screaming girls' category is because we're fat, old, bald men," Baker said. "We're not cute, and we were never out to be cute. That's not how you get on the cover of Teen Beat - and I also submit that I have absolutely no interest on being on the cover of Teen Beat."

"We're not a music product, we're a band. And I'm proud of that."

Of course, some people never get past the name. That's their prerogative, Baker said, as long as they let others decide for themselves.

"There's a Christian in this band, actually," he said. "I would never, ever want to deny anybody whatever spiritual joy they might get out of whatever their beliefs are."

"Basically, people aren't digging quite as deep, and we're kind of hard to dig into. I like not being that easy, I like not being able to be served in the buffet line. It's a cross we have to bear - if you will excuse the glaring reference."

## Through the looking glass

by Mike Pingree, KRT Campus

### NO! NO! DON'T LOOK DOWN THERE!

Salvador Bravo returned to his Yakima, Wash., home to find the police inside. They had initially responded to a burglar alarm. There was no burglar, but the cops decided to investigate the strong odor of harvested marijuana coming from the basement. When they informed him of this, he fainted. They arrested him when he came to.

### BUT OF COURSE, SIR, RIGHT THIS WAY

A man robbed the Wells Fargo bank in Salem, Ore., and then fled to a nearby restaurant where he raised the waiter's suspicions by tipping him \$100 for a table away from the window. When police showed up by looking for the robber, the big tipper came immediately to the waiter's mind.

### I'M MAD, VERY MAD, DARLING, BLAM!

In the Don't-Date-People-at-Work Department, a Pennsylvania narcotics officer got into a spirited discussion with her boss - who used to be her boyfriend - outside his condominium. She fired three shots at him before he wrestled the gun away.

### CAPTAIN RIDMAN - Clash Of The Titans



### THE BOXING PROMOTER



### THE BELLA BROS. ARE THE VILLAINS OF THE WEEK!



Martha Stewart Living Safely.

# Fear factor: When it comes to tipping, Americans lack confidence

By Melissa Kaman  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

After receiving bad service in a popular East Bay restaurant recently, my boyfriend and I were faced with an awkward decision: What should we leave for a tip? I know from experience how challenging waiting tables can be. A professional server must be a master in multitasking, communication and patience. My inclination is to leave at least 20 percent. I like to think of myself as an empathetic diner, but, in researching this article, I've discovered I'm also fearful.

"For good service, you should always tip 20 percent on the total bill," one waiter had told me. "If you don't, I'm going to think you're cheap."

Tipping once represented a deal between two people, a promise for one person to give quick, attentive service to the other. Nobody knows exactly where or why tipping began, but one popular theory suggests it originated in English pubs, where patrons would wrap coins in a note saying "To Insure Promptitude." In America it has evolved into something quite different - a social expectation.

We don't want that waiter to think we're cheap. Consequently tipping is no longer a reflection of the service.

Tim Zagat, co-founder and CEO of the best-selling Zagat guides, says this is all too common. "Too many people tip out of fear for what the waiter will think of them," he said. "They tip out of fear, not confidence."

Tipping fairly requires knowledge and clear thinking, but typically emotion plays the stronger role. Mike Lynn, associate professor at the Cornell Hotel School in New York, has performed numerous studies on tipping. "The correlation between quality of service and size of tip is about as strong as the correlation between good

service and whether it's sunny or cloudy outside," he said.

What is related, Lynn said, is the interaction between server and customer. "People don't want their server to think ill of them," he said.

According to Lynn's studies, anything that increases social interaction between the server and guest has proven to increase tips. Smiling, introduction by name, kneeling down to the table, even touching, has been shown to make the customer tip more.

Touching? Many would cringe at the idea. But Lynn stands behind it. "People's willingness to sign petitions has proven to increase when they are touched. If you ask them later if they were, they can't remember," Lynn said.

Gender is also at play. If you're a woman waiting on a man, you'll probably get a bigger tip than you would from another woman. "Men tip female servers more, and women tip male servers more," Lynn said.

Before automatically leaving a big tip, remember that servers are the highest paid employees in most restaurants, usually taking home even more than their managers. A study by the Golden Gate Restaurant Association in 1990, when minimum wage was \$5.75 an hour, found that servers make an average of \$23.66 an hour. When minimum wage rose to \$7.25 an hour, kitchen employees didn't get a bump in their pay. Most everyone, except dishwashers, was already paid well above that amount. But servers, whose base pay is typically at the bottom, get a significant boost when the minimum wage rises.

"This means that the only people getting a raise are those who already make \$23 an hour," said Patricia Breslin, executive director of the Golden Gate Restaurant Association.

But don't think all that money you

leave is going into the waiter's pocket. At the end of a shift, a server adds up all tips and distributes set percentages to their co-workers, through a process called "tipping out." Busers, hosts, bartenders - all the dining room workers that played a part in your meal - receive a percentage of your tip. Some servers also tip-out the kitchen. Depending on the restaurant, servers can tip-out up to 50 percent of their daily income.

And what they end up with is taxed. The IRS figures waiters are making a certain percentage of their total restaurant sales in tips. So, for every \$1,000 a waiter brings in for the restaurant, for instance, the IRS will assume he is taking home, say, \$100. If the tip you leave doesn't meet the percentage the IRS calculates, the waiter is essentially paying taxes on income never received. Stiffing a waiter actually costs him or her money.

Also, that \$23 an hour is usually for a shift lasting only six hours. Calculated out to an 8-hour shift, the daily take would come out to less than \$18 an hour. And few waiters receive any benefits. Without health insurance, retirement plan, sick days or vacation, that high hourly wage doesn't look so great.

When you dine at restaurants like Chez Panisse in Berkeley, Calif., these factors are null and void. Twelve years ago, Chez Panisse decided to add a 15 percent service charge to the price of dinners, al-

lowing the restaurant to pay everyone an elevated wage. "It bothered Alice (Walters) that the front of the house made so much more than the back of the house," said Lee Ann Phillips, floor manager at Chez Panisse. As a result of the service charge, there's more harmony among the staff. Everyone gets a check twice a month, receives medical and dental insurance, paid vacations, and 401(K) plans. "This is one of the reasons why we have such little turnover," Phillips said. "Some waiters have been here for 20 years."

This kind of security is virtually unheard of in the restaurant business, however. Most waiters depend on individual tips to make a living. If tipping less than 10 percent, be sure you're sending the right message.

It's not fair to punish the server for a slow kitchen, sold-out menu items or bottles of wine, or long waiting lists - it's frustrating, but it's more than likely a management issue and should be brought to management's attention. You should expect, however, that your server will politely inform you about problems or long waits and give you a reasonable explanation.

One restaurant regular, who worked in the business herself for many years, left no tip once. "It was really bad," she said.

"He made five or six mistakes, one after the other, and he didn't even apologize. I wrote him a note explaining why I hadn't left him a tip."

Tipping what is fair is fine, but leaving less than 10 percent without an explanation is behaving like a rude waiter. Rather than learning a lesson, they'll more likely just to think you're a jerk.

"I have an issue with people who remain silent about bad service, undertipping or not tipping at all," says Jason Keadjian, who managed an award-winning East Bay restaurant for several years. "You should always give the server an opportunity to correct the situation."

Zagat says a fair tip is 15-20 percent of the total bill. "People should think about the waiter and the job he or she has done," he says.

"A tip is earned, not guaranteed," one waiter told me, who's served for 22 years. So with all this in mind, on that slow Monday night, I recounted our waiter's performance. He obviously was disinterested in his job, took forever to come to the table, finally took our order then disappeared. While our drinks waited at the bar, he popped his head out of the kitchen a couple of times, blatantly chewing on a mouthful of food and sipping on a cocktail.

Before researching this article I still probably would have left 20 percent. It's late, he's hungry; I've been there.

My extremely irritated boyfriend wanted to leave 10 percent. I pushed for 15, but I didn't push hard.

Looking at our waiter, when we got up to leave, I felt no fear. But I'm still kicking myself. Not for leaving \$4 on a \$40 check. What's fair is fair.

But I should have left a note.

