

1) Kazoo, 1993, dual tape deck.

Recorded as a song for the band Manos, which was basically a strange combination of wannabe industrial funk rock. Done while I and Phil Sowers, the only other member, were juniors in high school. The left and right outputs from a delay pedal were used for the stereo effect, going into the left and rights of a dual deck cassette recorder. The mic used in this recording was pilfered from the school, and when its cable connections failed, Phil soldered it, hardwiring it to the xlr. Phil made the beat on a very old cakewalk program. Lyrics were made up literally as I went along. Oh yeah, and we had a whistle.

2) Ape shall not harm Ape, 1995-6, tascam cassette portastudio. (tcp)

Off to the races. First day with the new 4 track tascam and this is what happens. Every take is a first take, with the exceptions of the overdubbed wah guitar and the sample at the end, which is from sonic youth's long form video "1991, the year punk broke." Thurston is talking about ape shaped carnival rides in Germany, which leads us to...

3) Herman Z. German, 1996, tcp.

Of course, you know him as the drummer for The Scorpions, but due to the semi-glamishness of this tune, he is also its namesake. Recorded with one shit mic placed between two amps. Here the second official member of Suburban Death, Mike Picante, enters the fold for the first time, playing rhythm guitar like he's in Cinderella, and introduces the tune. Mike and I were henceforth the nucleus of the group. All live, one take...as you can hear.

4) (I wanna get you) Stoned, 1996, tcp.

Mike wrote the music, I wrote the words, we overproduced (if you can call it that) the shit out of it, and got it played on WMRE in Georgia, thanks to good friend and compatriot Andy Keiler. The interview accompanying the track got us banned from the air. I don't remember much, but I think a Fischer-price microphone was involved in this recording. In another multiverse this was a hit single.

5) Dead 80's Rock Star, 1996, tcp.

Not much can be said about this song except the Jacksonville, FL band Whimsical Fetus covered it. That must be a testament to something. Guitar and vox simultaneously, Picante adding some bass later. One of about three songs (none of the others are here) cut in a late night session hunkered over the tascam. Still a favorite of mine, almost 15 years later.

6) Shrub (synth version), 1996, tcp.

This is how I used to demo songs. Words came first, and then I would dick around on a keyboard just to see what was up. The lyrics were inspired by a dream (first verse) and a late night wine-drunk stumbling session in the woods years before (almost everything else.) the production is getting fancier here, with some panning, and many layers. I am not a singer, and I certainly wasn't then! This song survives to this day.

7) Lifted (live w/overdubbed vox), 1996-97, tcp.

All the music was recorded live in one take. The drums are provided by Sean McMillan, who was our official third member (even if he didn't know it.) the standouts here are Picante's then trademark space bass a la Bootsy Collins, and one of the best fitting solos I've ever freestyled out since the whole Herman z. German tune. Too bad I butchered this with my voice. Live and learn.

8) Kickback (wahvox), 1997, tcp.

Another prime example of the lyric before the tune. I seem to remember going for a mellow Nine Inch Nails vibe. As I hated my voice I used the only effect lying around, a Dunlop wah pedal. Some real random percussion snuck in there as well.

9) Saxon (tunnel version), 1997, tcp.

Why tunnel version? Cause it sounds like it was recorded in one. Generic chords don't do the lyrics justice. I think I had just scored an alesis nanoverb and obviously decided to use the plate settings pretty heavy. There are some diamond moments in here. This song still lives.

10) The Apple Falls Close to the Tree, 1997, tcp.

Music first, for a change, in my early songwriting process. Double vox are nice, except for the affor mentioned singing. This song is straight up about my relationship with my father at the time.

11) Kickback (switch mix), 1997, tcp.

I love older boss delay pedals. I love to feed em back and then cut to another time parameter to get that rutting sound. Basically this is a showcase of that and the noise guitars make when played with vibrators, or more specifically vibrators held over the pickups. Some pitch shifting too. I prefer the vocals on the other version of this song except what might be referred to as the breakdown.

12) Stalker, 1998, tcp.

Words first again. This is all about a situation a close friend of mine had at the time. She was literally being stalked by an ex-boyfriend and crazy stuff was happening. I guess I felt like getting into his mind for a minute. The riff is throwaway, except the distorto chord. I love the lyrics. Still wishing I could sing.

13) Saxon (electro version), 1999, tcp.

Beat programmed on cakewalk. Ebowed guitar and the song that wouldn't die. I like the desperation in this version. I had just moved back from Richmond, VA. where I was attending VCU. In the year I was there I only recorded one song, and it's up at the end of the album.

14) For the Man, 1998, tcp.

My first job, many years before this recording, was at a dollar store at a local mall. Towards the end of the day, I would rove the store cleaning up. One day I happened upon this self help tape, and couldn't resist putting it in my pocket. I dicked around on the keyboard one day and then later to do some delay infused tape samplings. Very fun ditty. "I never beat you!!!"

15) Bust dat Ass, 1997, tcp.

High as hell, r&b-ing out with slowed down tape speed during recording the vox to get a false falsetto. Beat from a record! Pre-sampler for me. Mr. Mike Picante on the "yeah," and space bass. Dance ho!

16) (We're all Fucking) Animals, 1997-98, tcp.

No, it's not about interspecies lovemaking. Another favorite of mine. Check out the video for this song on YouTube shot and produced by previously mentioned cohort Andy Keiler. This song survives to this day as well.

17) Welfare Rhymes, 1997, tcp.

Beat from a Richard Pryor vhs. Gate reverb for the puff percussion. Mike Picante is MC for the most part, with me backing a bit...and turning into a pirate before it was cool. Did I mention the drugs we smoked? Yeah, we smoked a lot of drugs...all the time.)

18) Herbicidal Tendencies, 1997, tcp.

The opening sample is from the classic Robert Downey Sr. Film "Putney Swope." One of the best flicks to ever exist. I sound like Pierre the gay French MC on this, trading off with Mike. Dropping the N bomb in the heat of the moment, but whatever's man...my blood is black! The best joke in a hip-hop song ever.

19) Fanfare for the Common Break, 1998, tcp.

I got a Dr. Sample! Google it. I like Aaron Copeland and Ali Khan. This is what happened. All of the different loops had to be hand triggered. It was like playing drums underwater on a calculator. The mixing is nice. A clean first try with the sampler that I would later use to abuse people and law enforcement personnel at parties with movie dialogue samples. Nothing is funnier than hearing "you smell like piss!" blaring out of a 4x12 cab and echoing thru a residential neighborhood.

20) Open and Relaxed Mind, 1998, tcp.

Here we have music created by my friend Elaine McBrian on a program called Rebirth, which was a precursor to Reason. I was bored and rearranged it and added a nice flow of Ravi Shankar dialogue from sampler to delay/pitch shifter to tape. Once again, one take. There's also a This Mortal Coil sample in there. She didn't like it. Tough shit.

21) Robert Johnson is Dead (simple mix), 1999, tcp.

Another simple folkie type of song, and another one of my favorites that will eventually be expanded and then finally put to bed. I have no idea why this is labeled the "simple mix" as it's drenched in reverb. Inspired by a newspaper article I happened to read about a DC cop who was shot named Robert Johnson. I guess his deal at the crossroads went the same as the other Robert Johnson's did.

22) She was a Genius, 1999, Tascam Digital eight track.

This marks the first time I used my upgraded Tascam Digital 8 Track. Unfortunately I don't remember the model, but it served ok for this and the next two tracks. Recorded with a very talented friend of mine by the name of Rashaad Jones. We were living together at the time, and I believe we were drunk on Grey Goose. I had the riff sitting around, and recorded it with an ovation acoustic electric overdriven. He then added bass and we both played keyboard drums. Lyrics, which I believe are "Glittery fragments of dirt stick into my eyeballs as I try to climb inside yer behind" were pretty obviously spontaneous. The title is inspired and ripped off from something John Fruscante says in the Red Hot Chili Peppers long form video "Funky Monks." I believe he was referring to an "exotic dancer" he saw in The Netherlands fisting herself. That's class.

23) Attention to De-tail, 1999, td8.

From the same "recording session" as "She was a Genius." Rashaad on rhythm guitar. I play the backwards ebow and forwards faux Neil Young break ins. Lyrics were inspired by a gentleman's magazine Rashaad had purchased catering to the African

American "reader," with some lines actually quoted straight out. Once again, lyrically and melodically on the fly, with tape speed down for falsetto. Drunker than the last one.

24) Hospital, 2000, td8.

Written and recorded after a friend's girlfriend had gotten into a car accident. Hospitals are depressing. So are people, parents especially, who verbally and emotionally abuse kids for making innocent mistakes instead of being happy they're alive and not maimed. A Korg multi-effects pedal was used for all the guitar effects. I went very textural to make an otherwise totally depressing song a little more listenable.

25) Stop that Bullet, 1998, tcp.

Why I chose to end this compilation with the most depressing song I've ever created I cannot fathom. Written while in Richmond Virginia, where I felt very alone and unhappy, and where the sky glows red at night due to the paper refining chemicals and the humidity. This song was actually conceived to test an instrument I had purchased second hand called a Keybass...much like the one Ray Manzerik used in The Doors. Unfortunately it's so bassy it blew my 4 tracks input and also wasn't able to be captured very well on tape. I gave it a way less than a year later. I love the lyrics to this song even though it reminds me of how god-awful desperate I felt at the time. The accent on the titular lyric is great.

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Suburban Death is Dead, Long live Suburban Death.