

## Casey Chaos Interview Uncut

Laura Snow



### **What was it like playing at Damnation Festival?**

CC: "Very good, to be honoured to play as a co-headlining act, to play second to Kreator, come on that's an honour."

### **I was surprised to hear that Amen are viewed predominantly as an underground band in America, how does the reception of Amen differ in countries such as the UK?**

CC: "Well, you know Jimi Hendrix as I saw on the back wall here, seems to have made an impact here, and The Ramones, bands that never meant anything to America. Johnny Thunders And The Heartbreakers, as \$peedranch has (tattooed) on his arm, those bands meant nothing to America in the beginning. They came here. This was the market. The English are much more intelligent than Americans. Americans are fools.

I'm an underground band. I am not famous. I am nothing. Me and you we are the same. I am nothing. I can't sing, I admit to that. I am nothing. I just try hard and do what I can and when I feel like destroying everything someone like Henry (Rollins) comes into my life and has me be one of six bands that he gets to choose to be on a serious show. That is just such an honor, that, ok I am going to go for a little bit longer, but it has always been like that in my life. It's been those little Henry Rollins moments-- he knows" (motions to his guitarist and longtime friend, Duke Decter)

### **Your appearance on the Rollins show as you just mentioned, you said you had almost come full circle and would stop making music, were you serious?**

CC: "I'm not joking. Scum, do you know my record with Scum? It's with the guys of Turbonegro and Emperor. Doing something like that for me... I was at the tail end of just saying goodbye and singing with Nocturnal Culto in the vocal booth, him singing my words, that just makes it that much more (pause) surreal for me in my life. I was wow, you know, this guy is the guy I grew up listening to. I really love his work.

When it's honest music. It is just about what you connect with. It doesn't matter how famous it is. It's just what you connect with. Him and I grew up together (motions to Amen's

guitarist Duke Decter) he was 15. I was 15. We had our first band, Disorderly Conduct, a hardcore band out of Florida and we just didn't care. We just wanted to make noise, just like the best we could. It wasn't very good but it made a racket in Florida and now I get to work with Rat Scabies, I get to sing with The Damned."

### **I heard you have been working with The Damned?**

CC: "We did a live record together which you know, come on, some stupid fucking countless fuck like me getting to sing with The Damned. Brian James and Rat Scabies, who the fuck can sing with those guys? Not many. I asked Henry to help me out, but he wouldn't. I was scared to do it."

(Amen's guitarist Duke Decter, adds: "Yeah but you did, the whole set and the whole night. Not just any night but an anniversary night.")

"Yeah it was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of the 1<sup>st</sup> Damned album."

### **How do you view the music scene today, do you feel music has become more of a "fashion accessory"?**

CC: "We are living in the age of record companies and record stores closing and it really makes me sad. I met all my friends in record stores. These were friends that lasted my lifetime. They were the people that I connected with. You can't meet friends through the Internet like that..."

When I was a kid and I got to see Black Flag, that was life changing and I will never forget it. Those were the important times. It's not about what you sell. It's not about what you make as far as money or as far as (Nielsen) SoundScan, all this bullshit people are telling people to pay attention to. It's about the integrity of your art. And as far as that goes, I'm a rich man.

### **As a man who has overcome great hardships in life and has subsequently achieved so much what advice would you give to the youth of today?**

CC: (laughs) Achieved so much?? I can't even pay my electricity bill! (laughs)

I have got virtual riches with working with great people, no doubt. I have been blessed in being able to work with people, that are absolutely the people that changed music but I have never been able... I've got a Grammy, it doesn't mean jack-fuck-all... I didn't get a penny from it. It's like, I'm the guy that... Doesn't really... I do this because I just happen to run into people and we bang instruments together and we make a racket and all of a sudden it becomes a song. Sometimes it's good and then sometimes people make gold records and platinum records and do BYOB's and stuff like that but I don't get any of the fame. That's not why I am here, I guess.

I would say in this climate of music, destroy everything that you read and follow your heart. That's the only thing you can do with music, is follow your heart and not listen to what the radios play and not listen to what people say is cool. Listen to what your heart tells you. Hopefully you'll be the next David Bowie. You'll be the next Tom Waits. You'll be the next Johnny Rotten. You'll be the next Henry Rollins. You'll be the next (Casey's friend Jo, shouts out: "Justin Timberlake") Exactly. Someone beautiful like Justin... (everybody laughs) But, you know, someone that can make a change with power. I don't have that. I get black listed because I am too dangerous, I have too many problems and people don't want to hear it from me. It's cool, I still do what I do and for people like you, that are smart and recognize what the real and what the joke is...

My dad died last week and I am sitting here talking to you. I'm not gonna fucking walk away now. I am gonna try to carry on as best as I can. I just want to be able to express whatever it is that I feel at the moment and if I can survive that'll be great, and if I go down in the flames that'll be the way it is but I am not going to follow their rules. I am not going follow those slaves, fucking "you want to rock n roll", "how many of you are drunk tonight?", "how many of you feel good?" We are all too tired and sick of that and we are all too tired and sick of the trends. As long as Amen has been around, I have been fortunate enough to be with people like this who hate me, (motions to Jo) and people that drive us around and head butt me, like him (grabs man who is walking past) and no matter what, all that matters is in the end and being able to contact people that have a real soul and real music. Rat Scabies didn't call me because I was top 40. I'm not top 40. Brian James didn't call me because I'm top 40. I don't hang out with Gaye & Tim Advert because they're top 40. It's because it is the only real thing left, everyone is bonding together because we are at the end of times. There isn't anything left. We have done it all. 9/11 started it off and lets just have the best time we can with our families and friends... I am going to try to make a document of it musically and if I can, I can and if I can't, I'll die trying."

**I've heard you have begun to write politically orientated songs, how do you view the world's current state of affairs?**

CC: "I think that America and Dick Cheney should be murdered at the ultimate of pain. They make Hitler look like a smiley face bumper sticker. They are the Carlyle Group. They are everything that the worst stands for-- the profiteers. Why did Dick Cheney make more money than George Bush this year? Because he invested in war. He is setting up industries in Iraq. We are going to sit there and take as much as we can. So as long as that happens we are going to make as much death as we can I think."

**Obviously you're here to promote your greatly anticipated next studio album after the success of "Death Before Musick", what can fans expect from the new album?**

CC: "It's a turn of the times, it's... it's just my... I want to... and I mean, you know, that's a fucked up question... Fuck you... No I'm just kidding, alright."

It's what I wanted to do when I was 12/13 years old. Music that was primitive and very, very, very aggressive but I never had the balls to do it. Now I don't care. I want to make music that is the music that inspired me. I wrote 68 songs. I recorded them and I hope to release two albums this year. One of them for free on the internet and one of them through a record company. With all my tours and everything, hopefully I'll be dead by that point and everything will just be a cobble stone, that'll be covered with piss and dust, but it'll be a good piss and dust because everyone will be having a good time.

It'll be... It is honestly just what I grew up on, I hope. I hope it inspires people the way that I was inspired by Black Flag, Minor Threat, Conflict, Discharge and The Adverts, all the true bands that really moved me when I was a kid. That's what I tried to do with this new record, so it sounds sonically a little different."

**Amen's guitarist Duke Decter, was keen to add this about Casey Chaos:**

DD: "I just wanted to get one point across. I'm probably the one person that can testify to knowing him so long, since we were little kids and it's just that reason I am playing with him again. As his life unfolded like a tragedy that he can't stop and as much as he wants it to end, these things keep happening that make him do this and that's how I know he is destined-- because as much as he wishes this nightmare would stop, it doesn't. I was done with music ten years ago but had to come back because he is so much the real deal. I am sacrificing my personal life to do this. But I know he's real because I've worked with those who aren't. It's shocking to me that my friend has become this crazy artist. More than anyone I know. His life has unfolded in such a way it is proof to me that he is destined. Could be good, could be bad. The

only way I can describe this to people is that his life is so unbelievable, it's just not believable. But I have watched it happen. And I'm telling you, he lives in another reality from what other people do. On another planet. That's why we played that song on the Rollins Show. He is *forced* to do what he does. It is his unfortunate destiny. Mine too it seems."