



The Suspects

Be forewarned, this is not your "typical" DC band interview. The

Suspects are a relatively new DC band whose musical style is in the '77 Oi vein.

While most of the group have been in other lesser-known bands, their drummer, Kent Stax, was the beat-master in the mighty *Scream* before the arrival of Dave Grohl. They are nice people who disagree with each other on many things. While this can make interviews a bit confusing, it can also make for some good fun and interesting discussion. The Suspects make an appealingly classic punk noise in hopes that the listener will think a bit as they have a good time. Our talk took place after the Youth Brigade Suspects show at the Black Cat on May 19, 1994. Enjoy...

Interview by Mark Andersen, with transcription by Brendan Hoar
6 1 94 through 10 27 94! The Sus- pects are Bryan
Harbin-guitar and vocals (BH), The Real McDi!!?
Brian Gayton- vocals and guitar
(BG), Chris Condayan-bass and vocals (CC)
and Kent Stax-drums (KS). Photos by Chris Henderson.

MRR: Where'd the name "Suspects" come from, what does it mean?

BH: (with mock suspicion) Now, why do you ask that? (laughter)

KS: It was originally made up by a friend of ours named Sean Epstein and for some reason I thought it was a cool name and we all agreed on it...because it sounds neat.

MRR: Part of why I ask is because that the term turns up in your song, "Day Jobs".

CC: I kinda wrote that song and put it there, not because we're just "the Suspects". It has a little more to it. Like we're suspects, we're all suspected of being lazy or not working, just lying around the house and watching TV or drinking all day. Stuff like that.

MRR: In society's eyes, you're suspected of these kinds of things?

CC: You know, everybody is. Anybody. It's kind of directed towards people - I wrote that song for people who can do something else but are just sitting around just getting wasted and kinda wasting their lives when they could be doing something else.

MRR: Tonight you seemed to take special time to note that "Day Jobs" wasn't an attack on people on welfare or homeless people. Have some people been misinterpreting it?

CC: Yeah...

BH: Onstage I said "get a job!". I'm more or less... a lot of people should be more self sufficient, I think. When Chris said that when he was writing the song, I said "Yes!".

CC: (a bit skeptically) Yeah, I mean, that's part of the decision.

BH: I mean, people are kinda like - they want to suck the system. And I think they should get off their butt and do something with themselves. Even if it's climbing through bullshit. They're still making ends meet and at least they're self-sufficient upon themselves.

KS: And also making the effort to do it, you know.

BH: Right.

CC: I mean, it doesn't matter if you're working for the Man or something like that, or if you're just like...like you, Mark, for instance. You don't really have a job or anything right now but you work really hard at Positive Force and that's doing something.

BH: Right.

MRR: So, in a sense, it's an "anti-slacker" song?

KS: Exactly.

MRR: A couple of things strike me about your band which are fairly unusual for DC. One of them is the sound that you have. I would identify it as sort of '77 punk Oi kind of sound. How come you have that sound?

BH: It's our favorite--well, my

favorite music--I don't know about theirs....

KS: It is my favorite. I'm 31 and it came out when I was 12 and 13. I was kinda getting tired of listening to Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin when punk came out, it blew my head off. I'd get all full of energy...

BG: ...and wanna do something!

MRR: Is that something that you'd like to pass on to the folks who are listening to you all now? To energize them?

BH: They just sit around when we play. It really pisses us off when we just see people just sitting there...duh! I mean, we really get off when we see people move. We move around--but I get tired of that when I'm moving around and they're not doing anything.

CC: I don't know - DC's kind of hard to judge a reaction from the crowd. A lot of people will just stand around - like tonight, you know. It's great when you're when you're looking at someone and seeing them dance or move or something. It doesn't necessarily have to be slamming or diving off the stage, just as long as they're into it, but I notice, like when I came to see Jawbox here, everyone's just standing around. I remember going to shows in the past and it was like everybody was just moving or doing something...

BH: Shows like... three bands that were killer--Jawbreaker, Trusty and I don't know--that show was great. It got my emotions flying, but everyone just sat there like bumps on a log. It seems like its become like the "DC thing" not to do anything. I can't say why...

MRR: But it seems that one of the things that comes into that is that there's a cliched response and the struggle has been to avoid that, but then the challenge is...

BH: What's the "cliched response"?

MRR: Well, like running into each other and diving off stage...

BH: We want that bad. Really bad. (laughter all around)

MRR: In a sense, then, the Suspects are about a punk revivalism of like bringing back an old-time sound and audience reaction?

CC: It's punk rock.

BH: It's retro.

CC: It's got a retro aspect to it, but we're doing it in 1994 and we're not doing covers. You don't call a blues man "retro" because they're playing blues now.

KS: Good point.

MRR: Looking at your lyrics, many seem to have some fairly clear messages of different types. Like "Riot 94", the song tonight you ended talking about your concern about class war urban disintegration. "Body Parts" seems basically like a pro-choice song and "American State of Mind" a kind of anti-nationalist. Do you hope that your lyrics spark... like, for example, when you were talking I sensed that the energizing force in punk made you want to do more than just dance, it made you want to play, it made you want to create, made you want to engage the world. Is that part of what you'd

like to pass on too?

KS: Basically, yeah, because it's positive at the same time.

BH: Don't sit around and criticize, get into it.

KS: Right, and then do something about it, you know.

MRR: Do something about the problems?

All: Yeah.

CC: Or if there are problems, you know, and they just happen to lie within yourself, you know. Like that song, "From The Heart", is kinda like dealing with yourself as an individual. That's the way I understood it. Songs that I write the lyrics for, I'd like that message to get passed along, you know, whether you agree with it or not. If you don't agree with it, that's fine--I'm not here to be a role model or a spokesperson or anything, it's just about the way I feel. If you want to listen to it, that's fine, take my advice or whatever. It's up to the individual. If they find something in it, then it's there for them. If not, well, if you just like the music, that's fine too.

MRR: In a way, that's different than some DC bands right now, the more pop-oriented ones or the more "emo" ones. With a song like "Uncle Sam", there is a message. The first verse is criticizing the government, then the second verse is criticizing business it exists in our society. And it's straightforward.

CC: I'm "emotional" too, and, like, singing about my personal problems to everybody around is a great release and stuff, but...

BH: It's a cliché, too.

CC: Well, it's a cliché around here. I like to say something that people can grasp a hold onto because, how many people are going to understand your emotions? I can relate to a lot of them, and some of them I just can't relate to at all, but its more of an individualistic thing whereas, like, the worst thing about us...

BH: We're very bipartisan, too, we see both sides of... I know he does... (pointing to singer Brian) Say something, Brian!

BG: About the songs we're talking about... Personally, I didn't want us to be a big banner. The songs we write are about personal experiences... So, it's like, "Uncle Sam" is about how America's kind of screwed up and all. But I'm not anti-American at all. There are bombs out there and things that the USA is wrecking and if people take it



that way, that's cool. But there's no way I can tell how people are going to react to it. What I write is just personal stuff I've gone through, what I've seen in this world. I never wanted to be a "spokesman"--I want to be able to start riots and throw stuff...

BH: At the show, that's cool. (laughter)

MRR: So, rioting at the show, but not afterwards?

BG: I want people to get into the music.

BH: Just total mayhem, kinda.

KS: Just slamming and having fun. Is that what you're saying?

BH: Yeah...controlled chaos.

CC: "Controlled chaos"?

(light hearted laugh)

BH: Personally, the way I look at lyrics is that a lot of times it is something meaningful that I want to get out, but sometimes it's really nothing, it's just something to say something. Like "Bondage", someone else wrote that, it was just something to write about.

MRR: That was a song I was actually going to ask you about, because it kinda stands out. You say you didn't write it...so where did the words come from?

KS: A friend of his (pointing to Bryan H.) that died.

BH: Me and him used to jam all the time - we used to jam with Kent. We didn't have the lyrics for it--he wrote it later when we were in this other band called something like... "Broken Skull". (laughter) We had this band for about 2 days...

BG: Kent never showed up to practice. BH: We ended up just folding and he died about a year later and so...

MRR: Is it sort of like a tribute to him?

BH: No, I've always liked the song.

CC: The music.

KS: No...

MRR: What do you like about the lyrics? I'm curious because I don't like it very much.

BG: I don't like the lyrics at all. MRR: Brian G. and Chris were laughing onstage during the song tonight...

BG: I think it's kind of goofy. I'm not into bondage or anything and I feel stupid singing about it. It doesn't apply to me at all.

KS: I got something to say about it... I kinda like being tied up and being fucked with by my wife. (intense laughter) I'm serious. Look, I really do. I also like to get a little spanking every once in a while. You know what I'm saying? It's nothing too violent, it's personal.

CC: You can call it our "emotional" song.

BH: To some people, like Brian and you,

Mark, "Bondage" doesn't do anything for 'em, but Phil, one of our friends, he lives for the song. He's like this bondage-type person. He's like "Yes!"

CC: There's a couple of people I've met that are sort of like "Yeah! I love that song, I love that song, that's the best song I've ever heard. To me, it really doesn't mean that much, but...I don't know.

BH: See, that's filling the void. You get something real deep and you don't understand what the hell the deepness is about. Like Brian's song "Mommy", people dig up all these deep things about it, and he was just being tongue-in-cheek in the whole thing. People are thinking all these things when he's really not saying anything. Well, he's saying something, just not what they think.

MRR: Have you been approached by anyone who was offended by "Bondage"?

CC: No one's been offended by it. Either they say it's dumb or...

BH: They love it.

CC: ...they love it. There's actually no "in-between" on that one. Like in Positive Force house, you've got David Curtis who loves it and then you and Brendan that hate it.

MRR: What concerns me about it is that while what two concentrating adults do is their own business,

within a male-dominated punk scene, in some ways, a song like this might be alienating to women girls--some of whom may have been raped or otherwise abused. I'm uncomfortable with the song because I see it reinforcing certain male/female roles that I don't like, which is also why I'm uncomfortable with a lot of the slam-dancing...

BH: The male dominated punk scene is only "male dominated" because there aren't enough females getting involved with it.

MRR: I think if I were a woman and I came to do a show and there were all these boys running into each other and me, I wouldn't feel very much into it. In fact, as a man, I'm not into it either! But, if I were a female, why would I even want to be involved with punk?

BH: When I used to go to shows, I used to see a lot of girls getting involved in slamdancing as well..

KS: Yeah, but how long did it last--about three seconds?

BH: Didn't last long, but they had fun when they were doing it.

CC: I mean, it all depends, that's kind of a sort of a touchy issue, man, because how far can you take slamming, without being like...

BH: Let's face it, women are generally (smaller) physically than men. Not brain-wise, but physically, they are mostly smaller. They're not going to be able to take the blows. So, what "guys do" is what "guys do". If girls want to join, as long as they can, OK.

CC: I wouldn't say we want slamming to, you know, keep out women from the show. I mean, when I saw Women Of Destruction, there was only women slamming at that show...and the guys who jumped in the pit were totally pretty much demolished. And the women were bigger than them, you know.

BH: You're kidding.

CC: No. It was here, at the Black Cat.

BH: Probably the only pit this place has had.

CC: It was a small one, but still. I mean, is the solution not to slam at all? I dunno, it can get violent and, like, I've had my eye totally black and swollen and couldn't see out of it. And I kinda thought "maybe that's not for me any more". I kinda try to avoid it, but I mean like, if it's going to go on, I don't want to tell them not to do it. I'm not trying to be a spokesperson or thought-police-type of person, you know, like "slamming's bad". Figure out for yourself, if you don't want to do it, you don't necessarily have to do it.

MRR: What if you saw someone in the crowd getting hurt?

CC: I would stop.

BH: I would go and yank his stinking ass out of the pit: "are you alright buddy? No? Oh, well, you'd better stay outta there."

CC: If someone's getting hurt, I'd stop playing and be, like, look at this, this ain't cool.

MRR: Personally, I don't like being in a football game. It keeps me away from being up front where I'd like to be. And so, speaking as a man, what I'd like to see is a dancing that everyone can join into, cause it seems like slamming is really cliched and alienating.

BH: Yeah, but it's something else for me to view. What I like now is when I do see slamming, which is very frequently...I enjoy watching that as well as watching the band. I mean, that's another show and amusement in of itself. It's like, I get two entertainments for the price of one. And I can get up there and get around to where they're not going right into me and I can see both things.

CC: You know you're at the 9:30 club - yeah, slamming there can suck because you can't see the band. But I think in a much bigger place, you could have the option - I used to go see shows at WUST, where the first 10 rows of people were just standing there and behind them were people slamming and behind them were people standing around.

BH: There was a circle, you could get up in front and you'd get shoved...but...that's the price you have to pay for a good seat.

MRR: (laughing skeptically) If each of you had to say, what would you say your purpose is for being in The Suspects is?

KS: I'm in it for fun. I enjoy playing drums. I was out of it for a while, and when I stepped back into it, it just made me feel good, it really did, you know. That's basically it.

CC: Well, I was in another band, K.A.S.H., before I joined the Suspects. To me, in the Suspects, everyone's more involved and sort of accomplishing the same goals--playing, having fun, you know, singing. I got to sing, I never sang before, that was great, you know. I thought it was more like everybody in the band is together, everyone is writing lyrics, and so, it's like, if that person wants to get across a message, that's part of it too.

BH: None of us dominate it.

CC: Yeah, no-one dominates in this band, there's no band leader or anything. I don't know if I'd like it that way, you know. And I like playing punk rock, it's a lot of fun, a lot of energy. What I like best about it is the people that are involved in it are really creative and standing up for what they believe in. You don't see that anywhere else. There's a lot of two facedness everywhere else. People go to a show, a Pearl Jam show or something and pick up some lyrics from Eddie Vedder and be like "I totally agree with him" and then the next thing you know, that person goes off and does the exact opposite. At this time, people who come to punk rock shows pretty much stand up for what they believe in when they are there or not there.

MRR: More so than in "mainstream rock"?

CC: Yeah, and that's what I like about it. I like participating in it and like

a lot of the causes associated with it and benefit shows and stuff and I think it's great.

MRR: What about yourself, Brian?

BG: The reason I joined was cause I really like playing music. I was in a couple bands before this, and took about a year and half off. I was sitting around, bored off my ass, I'd get loaded every night. Then Chris told me he was putting this band together and playing punk rock and stuff, a lot of my friends don't listen to it, and I was like, it'd be a good chance just to get back into it, you know? I wanted to learn to play guitar, I got a lot of guitar opportunities with these guys, I love playing. I basically want to do it to get off of my ass, have fun--and we always have a great time when we play. I just didn't want to be a lazy slob like I was, I wanted to do something. I've always did some kind of - I used to draw a lot, and I just quit playing music and I stopped doing everything, just sitting at home, just getting loaded, watching TV... And I was totally ecstatic when Chris asked me and it just turned out to be totally excellent.

MRR: So, it was a way to get out of a rut?

BG: Yeah, a total rut. A total rut, on the road to alcoholism. Not that I'm not there, but at least I'm not sitting at home every night drinking, I'm doing something. And that's what I like people doing, doing something, and I'm having a great time.

MRR: I see a little bit of what you're saying reflected in a couple of your songs, like "Catfish" seems to be talking about drinking as a destructive lifestyle that's gone too far and is "sinking" you.

BG: I wrote the lyrics for that one. I don't care if people drink, do drugs or whatever, but personally for me, when I wrote that song, I needed...I was doing nothing, and so I wanted to do something or something a little more creative than just hanging out, watching tv. Man, I used to watch television 8, 9 hours a day - that's all I did. I just wanted to do something else, and that's kind of the reflection in that song. If you want to get loaded all day, that's great, but for me, I wanted a little bit more, you know, I love playing music.

MRR: Just for what it is?

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BG: If I get rich off it or something, hell, that's fine, but I don't care. I just have a great time doing it.

MRR: Well, Bryan H., you were saying that for you it's to have fun?

BH: Yeah, I've been in a couple bands too, I played bass in this band called the Brethren. Didn't really like bass too much, I kinda like writing songs on the bass and stuff, but, basically I've always wanted to be in a band and be in a punk band. I've wanted since I was very young and, now, I've got the best of both worlds and I have fun.

MRR: I'm really curious about something. Kent, you were in one of the great DC bands of all time, *Scream*, for many years. How do you compare this band to playing with *Scream*?

KS: The feeling is exactly the same. I'm going to say the energy level, I keep talking about energy, but that's me, OK. The energy is there and I'm afraid to say it cause somebody is going to read it actually, I'm happier in this band than I was in *Scream*, not that we didn't have a lot of good times, and I grew up with them and stuff

like that, but its...this band I have more musical freedom. I must have written 20 or 30 songs that I showed to Pete and Franz (Stahl) while in *Scream* and just got shoved back in the closet.

MRR: The song "Graveyard", when I mentioned to you that I thought it carried some of the spirit and sound of *Sham 69* that it seemed to make you happy because, I guess it's one of your big inspirations.

KS: It is, but when I wrote that first part of the song, it was more along the lines of actually Black Sabbath...

MRR: Really?

KS: Really, it was. You know it was kind of slow and...

BH: It comes off like a UK Subs "Endangered Species" song.

MRR: Yeah, that's true - UK Subs, I can hear that in there too.

BH: The last album, before they lost Nicky Garratt - I mean our producer for the 7" also produced that song too, for a compilation maybe. He said "this song sounds like UK Subs...before they..."

MRR: Before they were...when they really were the UK Subs, before they just became the "Charlie Harper band"...one of the things that's really cool is that in songs like "Mommy" or "Graveyard" or "Uncle Sam", there's a real sense of melody, a catchiness...

BH: A "singing in the shower" type of thing.

MRR: Yeah, like a sing a long kind of thing. That's why *Sham 69* comes to mind particularly for me with "Graveyard."

KS: That's what I figured it would. That's the idea.

BH: A lot of hardcore loses that. A lot of it just becomes muddy noise.

CC: I mean its also a chance for people to get involved too. If they know our lyrics, man jump on stage and sing it with us! We don't care. I mean if you're having fun, you're into the tune and the lyrics are catchy and they go to your head and you hear it once and you know 'em and it sounds good, feel free to jump up on stage and sing, cause you're part of it too, you know. You're not like...like an emotional band is, they're kinda like on the outside of whats going on with the band - with us, we'd rather have...I mean, we wouldn't exist if it wasn't for people coming to see us. I want them to be part of us too.

MRR: So, it's more like a participatory, do-it-yourself spirit that you want to pass on, that brings the audience and the band together?

CC: That's why I put the price of the recording on the single, because it's like, hey, this is how much we paid for it, you know? If you're fortunate enough to have a bit of money, you can do it to.

MRR: Sure. How did you get hooked up with Torque Records as their first release? Obviously I know, but go ahead and tell us, for the benefit of MRR's readership.

CC: Torque Records is basically, uh...we played this Club Heaven

show and Brendan Hoar and David Curtis, two friends of mine asked, "why don't you guys have anything out?" And I told them, well, I really can't afford, living in the Washington DC area, to save any money and try to put something out. So they said, "let's work together and put it out." So, Torque Records started on that concept of all these people chipping in, and as far as like everybody getting money back, we're all going to do it equally, and any profit that we make from it, which probably won't be... anything, really, we're just going to throw back into another recording. And I'd like for other bands to get involved and have it more like a type of a uh... collective, where other bands work together to put out music from DC that otherwise wouldn't be heard, you know. Dischord kinda has their own thing going on and I like Dischord a lot and I like the bands on it too, but I mean, like... I don't want to ask to be on Dischord or anything, I mean, I'd rather do it myself, you know. I want Torque Records to be there for bands that want to do it themselves too. We'll show them the ropes and how we did it, but its going to be you all that really make it a success or not.

MRR: What you're articulating seems to be a very different attitude than the attitude that's kind of prevalent in the more popular areas of punk rock these days. Now its the era of punk on major labels and bands that seem to have been barely together for two weeks signing to majors. What do you think of all that?

CC: I think it's up to the individual, the band, as far as signing to a major. As far as I'm concerned, I wouldn't, I really wouldn't want to sign to a major... the only way I'd sign to a major is if: 1) I would take all their money and invest it in something, earn money back, and record for as little as possible, take that money, do something positive with it and not go buy like a big house down at Nag's Head or something like that, like, put it back into the scene or something.

MRR: Put it back into the underground?

CC: I mean, I would try to use them to accomplish, you know, goals such as these, cause I'm tired of seeing

rock stars coming out of their limos and stuff and then coming on stage and trying to sing something... being a rock star is the farthest thing from what I want to be. Even signing that record tonight (*one person approached the band to have them autograph a single*) is, like, I don't even want to do this. I guess it's ok to do it, but I don't want to make it a habit.

MRR: This is more for Chris whose been involved with PF, although I know Kent attended a Positive Force meeting once in the past, and certainly *Scream* played dozens of benefits, and you all were going to play a Pro-Choice benefit that got snowed out. How does the idea of doing benefits fit into what you are talking about?

CC: Well, I think it's great that bands get together and try to do something for less fortunate people. You're doing something for somebody else and taking your talents and giving them a gift or money that might not be so accessible to them.

BH: Philanthropy is cool.

CC: That's why, if I got signed to a major, I would take their money and do something completely opposite with it. Send it...

MRR: To MRR?

CC: Send it to MRR...and buy PF a big xerox machine.

KS: I'd buy a house and bigger hammers, buddy. (*Kent is a carpenter by trade.*)

BH: I would buy a boat. My Boston whaler. Kent would have the house and I would have the boat. Then I'd rent...

CC: I'd at least buy a car for transportation, but I'd try to do something positive with the money and set it apart. That's why I like Torque Records, I want it to be like a collective where it's, like, just people with more of an anti-rock and roll attitude.

BH: But rock and roll is cool if it wasn't for rock and roll, we wouldn't be here right now.

CC: That's true, too.

MRR: I sense some different points of view here.

CC: Look how it gets twisted around.

BH: Yeah, but don't blame it all on rock and roll.

CC: Let's start with the guy in the shack that made rock and roll, like playing in the shack and singing about whatever and then all of the sudden, people with money came in and exploited it.

BH: It got twisted, but...but don't twist it again, is all I'm saying.

CC: How am I gonna twist it? By twisting it back?

BH: By pointing too many fingers.

CC: I'm not pointing fingers at anybody. I'm telling that...

BH: Mainstream rock and roll you're pointing fingers out. Mainstream rock and roll has a few good qualities.

CC: It does, like Nirvana is good quality mainstream rock and roll.

BH: Even they were trying to be "anti-anti" the whole time anyways, which was cool.

CC: That's what I liked about it...

MRR: I do recall that in the beginning that punk rock had a critique of rock and roll...no Elvis, no Beatles, no Rolling Stones in 1977...

BH: But it went back to the '50s,

straight 44 rock and rollers. With original melody.

KS: It is...written in the same way, you know. Same pattern, exactly.

MRR: So punk took things back to basics, stripping away the bullshit?

BH: Everything had turned into an opera.

CC: These days, nothing seems back to basics any more, man, rock and roll wise. You got punk bands like, No Means No or Don Caballero that are technically wonderful but they're calling themselves punk rock and it's really not quite punk rock. They don't want to be called "alternative" so they call themselves punk rock.

MRR: What do you think of Rain Like The Sound Of Trains?

CC: I love them, but I wouldn't call them "punk rock".

MRR: Because for you, punk would be a label of a musical style?

CC: Yeah.

BH: 44 time, three or four chords, maybe five.

KS: It is a sound anyway, it really is. A sound and an attitude.

BH: It's a cool amp with distortion.

CC: Rain Like the Sound Of Trains is more like a hippie-sound to me. I think it's great. I'm not going to call it punk rock, though.

MRR: Like what Kent was saying, that punk was a sound and an attitude and it seems like what you're saying is that Rain Like The Sound Of Trains has the attitude but not the sound?

CC: Yeah, exactly - their lyrics are definitely punk rock, I would say, but I wouldn't call their sound punk rock.

MRR: There is a line in "From The Heart" that particularly seemed to speak to me and to the punk rock attitude that, in a sense, we are talking about: "so don't believe all that you're told no matter what your age is please don't grow old".

KS: In other words, don't follow the typical role model of some 50-year-old man.

BH: In your '30s, you're supposed to "geeze". Don't geeze. Always keep your youth in your heart. That's why it's called "From The Heart". Don't become stuck in shit like your father: "it'll never work, I'm getting old..."

MRR: When you say "geeze", you mean losing the optimism or the energy of youth and moving towards cynicism and going through the motions, spinning into the system and following the flow?

BH: Yeah. Stand up once in a while and speak your point.

CC: Keep an open mind and don't grow old in your thoughts, don't become so set in your ways that you can't accept anything else.

BH: Then again, we are kind of closed minded because we like older music better than new music, I don't know how everybody else



feels, but I'm kinda... musically, I'm kinda set in my ways. I don't think anything's really progressed too far...

KS: You know, everybody is going to have their own persona....

MRR: What you're saying with "From The Heart" is "do what you feel inside"?

BH: And that's what we're doing. Even though we're going back, we're not really set in our ways.

KS CC: What?!

BH: Because nobody else is doing it. We're kinda retro in a way.

CC: I wouldn't call us "retro" man, 'cause we're not... a retro band, to me, is someone who covers songs...

BH: We're covering an era.

CC: An era?! I don't think we're covering an era... we're not covering nothing, we're doing what we want to do.

KS: We're here, we're here now.

CC: I know Bryan H. says that in rock and roll, nothing new can be done, man, but I don't think that's true.

BH: What do you think, Kent, do you think anything new can come out of rock and roll? Or is it basically all rehash, rearranged?

CC: You listen to RLTSOT and they sound hippy-ish, but

it's also something new.

BH: Rehash, rearrange...

KS: There's one thing I can say about it, because punk has a set pattern, you know what I'm saying, of the way the song is written.

BH: There's the rules, constructs that you have to follow.

CC: But you can break those rules.

KS: You don't have to, man.

BH: The Suspects follow some heavy rules.

CC: I'm not saying that we're breaking any new ground in this band, but I am saying that you can't say it can't be done. I mean look at, you know, like..

BH: Give me an example, a real good example that really has...

CC: I mean, when King Crimson came out for instance, they...

BH: That was then though, I'm saying all that's been done.

CC: That was then, but even back then people were saying the same about rock

after the Beatles: "ain't nothing new gonna happen..."

BH: I'm talking about 1994.

MRR: For example, I would argue that the style that Fugazi continues to define wasn't done before.

CC: That's true too.

KS: Say that again?

MRR: The style that Fugazi is kind of defining is... there are elements of other things, like you can hear Gang Of Four, you can hear DC hardcore, you can hear go-go, but they've taken those pieces and turned them into something new, kinda like what Bad Brains did...

KS: Wait a minute, that's what I was

getting ready to say 'cause it has the Bad Brains type of attitude and I'm gonna hate to say this, but it's got a little bit of that sound in there... (Kent makes drum or bass sounds and everyone laughs) Know what I'm saying? Fugazi reminds me a lot of Bad Brains in 1982, it has a lot of the Bad Brains sound.

BH: Anyhow, it's not really new.

CC: You're set within boundaries of like six strings, four strings, five piece drumset or whatever, but you can create whatever you want within the context of what you have to work with...

BH: You're starting to sound like Freud when you're getting too far out into the realms of music.

CC: Techno was something new that was never done before, man.

BH: And it sucks, and I'd like to end it on that.

MRR: On that note, is there anything else that you would like to say?

KS: I want to say something. Old punks don't die, we just move forward!

The Suspects can be reached at 6021 Lebanon Drive, Falls Church, VA 22041 or via Torque Records, 3510 N. 8th Street, Arlington VA 22201. Their single, with "Uncle Sam", "Bondage", "Catfish" and "Mommy" costs \$3 postpaid. More Torque releases, including a possible Suspects CD, are in the works. Now, go do something yourself!