

10 DAYS OF  
TOUR HELL WITH  
**WHITE ZOMBIE**

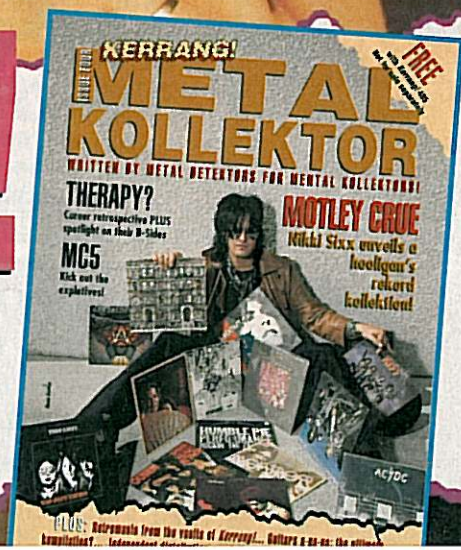


"IT'S LIKE DIRTY SEX!"  
**GUNS N' ROSES!**  
SLASH: NEW LP EXCLUSIVE!

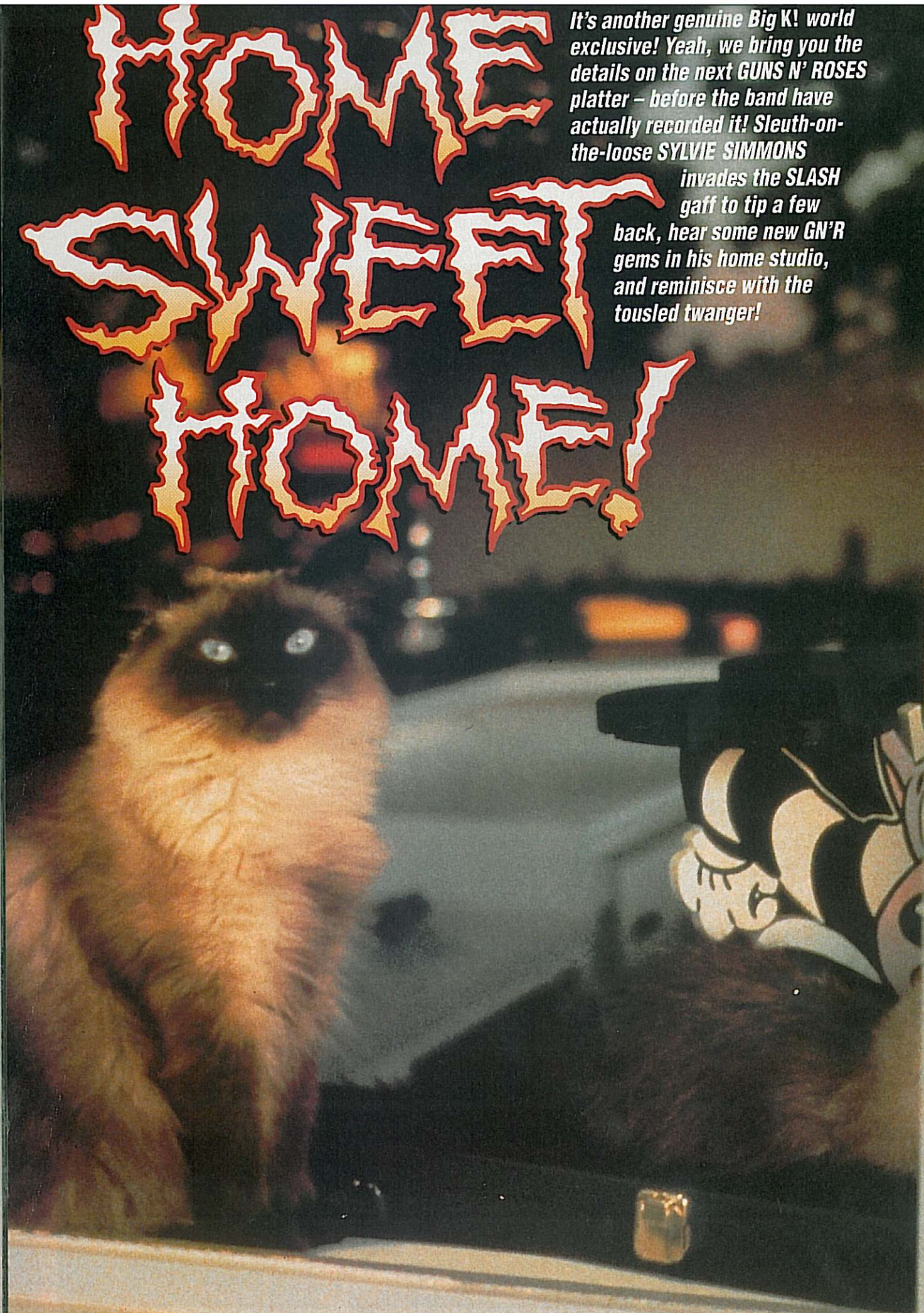


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It's another genuine Big K! world exclusive! Yeah, we bring you the details on the next GUNS N' ROSES platter – before the band have actually recorded it! Sleuth-on-the-loose SYLVIE SIMMONS

invades the SLASH gaff to tip a few back, hear some new GN'R gems in his home studio, and reminisce with the tousled twanger!



**S**LASH, GUNS N' Roses' lead guitarist, is standing in his kitchen, looking for a drink. He's totally surrounded by pussy! A dozen cats at least are lined up against the kitchen wall, tucking into a long row of food bowls. A baby cougar, its paws the size of frisbees, pads into the room and tries to muscle in on their Whiskas.

"You've just eaten two whole chickens!" the guitarist yells.

Someone comes in and leads the animal off, and the cats, oblivious, just carry on eating. It's just another normal day at Slash's house.

"I still can't adjust to being at home," he shrugs.

Home for Slash and his wife Renée is a glorious house at the top of a winding road in the Hollywood Hills, with the kind of view of LA's long straight roads and twinkly car headlights that you'd normally go up in an aeroplane to get. It's got cats, it's got snakes – the snakes almost got one of the cats at one point, but that's a whole other story! – and, probably most important of all to Slash, it's got a studio.

Since the longest tour in Rock history finally came to an end, the guitarist has been spending most of his time working here, on what will in time (and, if Slash has anything to do with it, not much time at that) become the next Guns N' Roses album.

We grab a couple of drinks and go upstairs to the studio. It's a dark, relaxing, well-equipped room, really comfortable. None of the harsh lights and strange smells that studios usually have.

**E**VERYBODY COMES up here and hangs out in this room", says Slash, 'everybody' meaning the rest of GN'R. "What we've been doing so far is very spontaneous. If we can keep that..."

He fiddles around with some of the knobs on the equipment and picks up a signed photo of Janis Joplin, the brilliant '60s singer whose legendary booze and drugs binges finally killed her.

"Every time my wife yells at me for drinking," he laughs, "I show her this! She was great."

Drinking aside, Slash has been busy. Not just on GN'R stuff either. He's also been working on material with Guns keyboard thumper Dizzy Reed. In fact, Reed has also been active, playing the odd show in LA clubs under the monicker of D-F-R (Dizzy F\*\*kin' Reed), as well as penning solo stuff.

"I've just been recording two of Dizzy's songs," beams Slash. "I'll play you one. It's only piano and acoustic guitar." He cues it up. "I heard it when we were on the road."

"When we got really f\*\*ked up, we'd party in Dizzy's room. He was like the sucker in the bunch – you know how there's one in every band?" he laughs. "We'd all party and charge it to Dizzy's mini-bar tab!"

"It's really pretty," he says as the track comes to an end, and it is. A sad, evocative 'Sweet Child O' Mine' kind of feel.

But what of the new GN'R material?

"Most of it's not like that," says Slash.

"Most of it's really sort of slinky groove things, but real mean. They're cool."

"They're sort of like dirty sex," he laughs, "and there are some that are just fast and hard. There's a lot of really brash stuff that we've finished already that's really killer."

What I want to do, as opposed to last time with all the distractions and shit, is get

**K**ONTINUEZ OVER



# GUNS N' ROSES SLASH SLAMMER!

**MURRAY ENGLEHEART ducks for cover as SLASH tears into Hanoi Rocks and Johnny Thunders, whose songs were recorded for GN'R's hit album 'The Spaghetti Incident?'**

"We did a Hanoi Rocks tune but we decided not to put it on the album because we didn't wanna give Andy McCoy (former Hanoi guitarist) the money! McCoy's an asshole! The basic track was done but we never did any vocals on it. We also recorded a basic track on Iggy's 'Down On The Street', but we didn't finish that either. We stuck with 'Raw Power' – it just sounded cooler."

"I didn't even play on the Johnny Thunders song ('You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory') cos I hated that little f\*\*ker! So I really wasn't all that concerned when he died. We worked with him a coupla times, and I didn't like him at all. No disrespect for the deceased, but he's not one of my heroes, let's put it that way! I did like the Dolls (Thunders was guitarist for Sleaze Rock legends the New York Dolls), but I just wasn't very interested in Thunders."

"Iggy knew we were doing the Stooges tune. I talk to Iggy all the time anyway, he's a good friend. He was happy that we doing anything in the first place, so that was cool."

"Steve Jones (ex-Sex Pistols axeman) was just like, 'Well, when's it coming out? When's my first cheque due?'. So he was happy with it!"

"I never did talk to Lee Ving of Fear, who I really wanted to talk to after I picked Fear's 'I Don't Care About You' for the record. I tried to call Marc Bolan, but it just wasn't possible!"

"70s teen icon Bolan is, of course, dead! 'We never did talk to Soundgarden about doing 'Big Dumb Sex'. It was one of those spontaneous things. We were in the studio and it just sounded good. Of all the bands we played with during the '...Illusion' tour, Soundgarden were one of the coolest, just personable and down to earth. I was just happy to pay homage to them in the first place, although I did wonder what they might think when they heard it!"

"The only thing that we didn't record that we should have done is 'Heartbreak Hotel' (the Elvis Presley classic). I'm going to try to get us into the studio to record it for a B-side. We used to do a killer version of that song, but we haven't played it in a long time."

"You can buy it on bootleg. There's an old demo tape we did that was bootlegged. It had 'Welcome To The Jungle', 'Think About You', 'Anything Goes' and 'Heartbreak Hotel'."



**SOUNDGARDEN: big with Guns!**

between eight and 12 songs done, get in and record them real simply and quick. "Because of all the work we've been doing up here, when we go into pre-production and we're sitting in a room with a stack of amps and a real drum kit, it should be that much better. I can't wait!"

**U**SE YOUR Illusion', the last real Guns album(s), was the Album From Hell. If the band had burn out, broken up, killed themselves or each other before those records were completed, no one (themselves included) would have been surprised.

"Yeah. Me and Clink (producer Mike Clink) were saying, 'When this is all over, we'll sit back and have a beer and laugh about it', but we haven't laughed about it yet! It really was crazy."

The problems with drummer Steven Adler have been well documented. So too have the arrival of ex-Cult sticksman Matt Sorum, the departure of guitarist Izzy Stradlin and the recruiting of ex-Kill For Thrills six-stringer Gilby Clarke.

The GN'R work rate on the LP is something which has perhaps been forgotten in the rush and the rumours. Slash was at the heart of the frenetic activity.

"At one point, we realised we didn't have all the vocals finished, so I started mixing the songs that were finished in the studio opposite, while Axl was still singing the other ones," he states, illustrating the band's frenzied studio state.

"And we started touring before the record was finished! It really was as ass-backwards as it gets!"

"I remember playing in a stadium in Mannheim, Germany, playing all new material – which I thought was the coolest way of getting your material accepted, playing a bunch of songs people had never heard and winning them over with that."

"But I couldn't go through that last record again. I mean, I've got a lot of stamina, but those last records and that entire tour, it was such an endurance thing."

He planned to go into pre-production with Mike Clink this month, though LA's January's earthquake, which forced Slash to evacuate his house and set up temporary home in a Hollywood hotel, has set things back a bit. But he's still talking of having a new album out by the summer.

It'll be all new songs: "Some written on the road, some since we've been off". No covers – 'The Spaghetti Incident?' took care of that one – and no left-overs; anything even vaguely resembling an earlier-era song was squashed onto one of the two '...Illusion's."

"It's really important not to look back. When we did the '...Illusion' records we cleaned our whole slate. We did all the songs that Izzy ever wrote – because Izzy was really on the way out at the beginning of that; he started to phase out and we grabbed a bunch of his old songs, some of the ones that we were currently doing, some old songs from before Guns N' Roses, so we'd never have to think about it again. This is all

**"They're sort of like dirty sex, and there are some that are just fast and hard. There's a lot of really brash stuff that we've finished already that's really killer!" – SLASH on the new G N' R material**



just new stuff.

"You know how a lot of bands go, 'This is our best stuff'? It's such a cliché, so I hate saying it, but I'm really happy with this, so let's just see what happens."

**S**LASH MAY not be into dealing with what's past and gone, but what's past and gone seems to have a habit of wanting to deal with them. Not all of it they ask for – for instance, the lawsuit from former drummer Steven Adler which left them a couple of million dollars poorer – but wasn't asking Izzy Stradlin to stand in for the injured Gilby Clark (the man who replaced him) asking for trouble?

"It was my idea to call Izzy; I thought it would be interesting. I didn't know he hadn't picked up his guitar in the last f\*\*king year! It was really nice at first, because regardless of whatever animosity, it wasn't anything so deep-rooted that it didn't blow over."

"So, we hung out, we went shopping in London together, we had fun. Then right towards the end he turned around and did certain things that were so f\*\*ked. Right towards the fifth date, because of his hand Gilby still wasn't sure if he was going to be able to play, and Izzy all of a sudden turned around and stabbed us in the back again, asked for an amazing amount of money to do one show – it's like, 'I can't believe this, go home!'"

"That's the last time we talked. I don't know what's going on in his head... I have this great photo of Gilby, Izzy and Ronnie Wood together – the flunkies from hell. Gilby and Izzy got along great. Gilby didn't feel intimidated, which would have been an easy thing to do in the circumstances."

Gilby got to re-do the parts on '...Spaghetti...' that Izzy had originally recorded back at the time of the 'Use Your

Illusion' sessions, when they were just thinking of releasing it as a Punk EP.

"Actually," says Slash, "Izzy didn't even play on most of them, only the first ones that we recorded during '...Illusion', and they were very heartfelt. So Gilby never even heard Izzy's stuff. We just gave him the songs."

**T**HE SONGS in question are a melting pot of GN'R's influences. From the Stooges to Johnny Thunders. From Fear to T-Rex and Nazareth. The initial intention to release a safety-pin festooned Punk Rock EP fell by the wayside in favour of the band laying down a whole LP. So how come the Punk EP turned into a Not-Quite-Punk covers album?

"It just evolved into something else. Aside from the fact that there's a certain element of Punk in all music I like anyway – a certain kind of attitude, no matter what type of music it is. You can't really say Nazareth are a Punk band, can you?"

"It was just us doing a bunch of songs that we sort of grew up on. Bands that were out then that you don't hear from any more. Bands that were icons when I was getting into this stuff, that were hugely significant in the late '70s."

"It basically started out as simple warm-up jams for 'Use Your Illusion'. There was no master plan to it. The only reason there's 13 songs on the record is because once we'd recorded one, we had to do another one!"

"The whole thing's really gotten blown out of proportion. We're analysing it at this point to where you could go round in f\*\*king circles for ever. Give us a f\*\*king break! It was the first really good time that we've had as a band without any outside pressure in ages. That's basically it."

"The coolest thing about that whole record is that the songs that we picked to do were

"I mean, now we're not so shocking, but they still expect us to do bad even when we don't. Like I said 'f\*\*k' on MTV – big f\*\*king deal! But now they expect it from us. If we stray away from being the predictable bad guys, then they get freaked out about that too. The whole thing is ridiculous. Everybody is just sitting there waiting to pounce on everything we do. People say, 'What's the gimmick?', you know, but there was no f\*\*king gimmick!"

The Charles Manson (legendary Hollywood psychopathic killer) song on '...Spaghetti...' isn't a gimmick?!

"No, it's not. We buried it on the album."

Burying it would be not putting it on there!

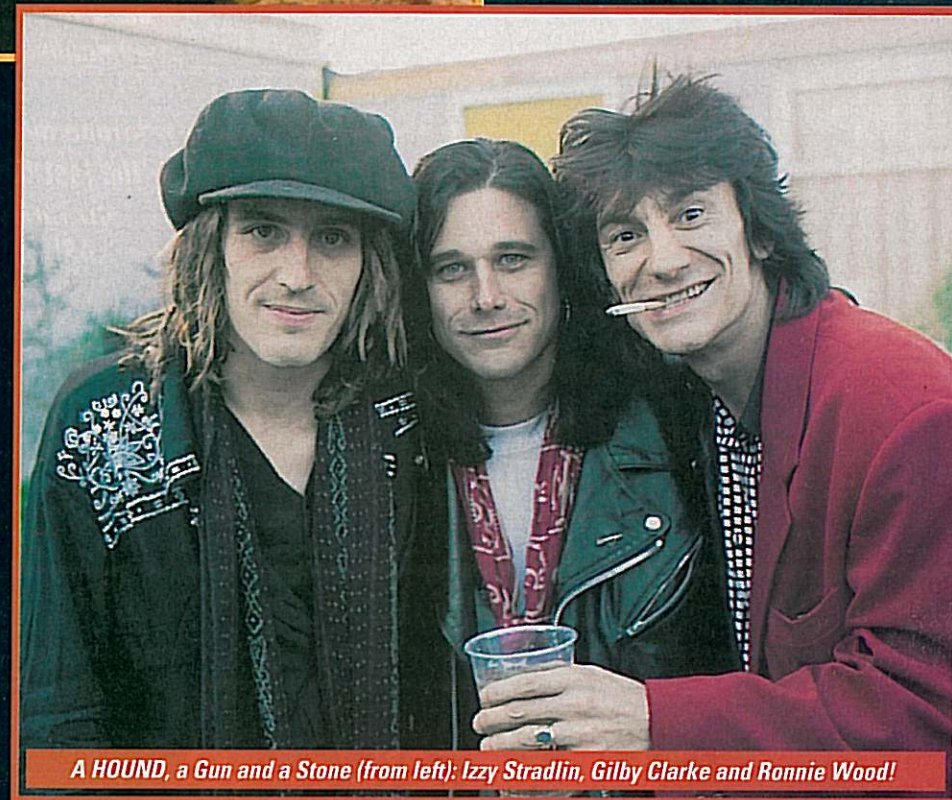
"We didn't want to draw attention to it. If you're that f\*\*ked-up that you're going to sit there for seven seconds after the CD ends, you deserve to hear it."

"The dark humour behind the idea of someone as psychotic as him writing a love song like 'Look At Your Game, Girl'... I mean, it's *entertaining*," he grins. "The Lemonheads already covered a Manson song before we did, and I don't hear anybody moaning about them!"

True, but you said this is an album about people who were important to you. What does Charles Manson mean to you, then?

"He's so f\*\*king Hollywood! He was the antithesis of the end of the '60s. All of a sudden, everybody had to wake up and realise that this whole little fantasy was not really happening. The world was not going to change that much. He was the perfect psycho for that period of time, everything about him."

"I remember how my parents reacted – I was only four or five years old, and I remember how heavy that was in the circle of



**A HOUND, a Gun and a Stone (from left): Izzy Stradlin, Gilby Clarke and Ronnie Wood!**

more indicative of what GN'R was about, and the lyrics explain more about us, than even our own songs do. You can look at the band from a completely different perspective. This is us just blatantly picking a page out of a book and going, 'This is us'."

"It's hard, because we get hassled for our lyrics, our attitude and our conduct – we have done, ever since we started – so we turn around and do a bunch of other people's material and then we get hassled for that too, like we wrote it!" he shrugs. "You can't win."

people that they knew, which was this sort of Hollywood music business hippy scene.

Has Manson been in touch with the band? Sent them a thank-you letter?

"He complained because we didn't ask his permission. So f\*\*k him!"

Aren't you a bit worried about pissing off a madman who made a successful hobby out of sending nutcases into the Hollywood Hills to murder celebrities?

**KONTINUEZ OVER**



# GUNS · N · ROSES

**"There was something in People magazine which said I was going out with this porno chick, and they said I stuffed spaghetti in her! In public! Can you imagine the time it would take to do that?"**

**— SLASH on the title for 'The Spaghetti Incident?'**

"Well, I didn't mean to do that," says Slash. "I can't take it seriously at this point. Although, if any weirdos show up outside my house..." He hesitates. "You have to understand it wasn't something I picked, and it wasn't something I even played on."

**W**E GET talking about Punk and how weird it is that Slash — who was as Punk as a person could get attitude-wise — should be settled down with a wife and pets and stuff in a typical Rock star house at a time when he was mixing Fear and Damned and Pistols covers. He says it's still strange being in a place called 'home'. He still picks up his phone in the morning and tries to dial room-service.

"It's ridiculous!" he says "It's so f\*\*king hard just to be able to try to have somewhat of an existence outside of what we do as a band — on top of the fact that I live and breathe this band. As far as being settled and stuff, we were just trying really hard to have some sort of foundation to come back to after the tour — because God knows I don't want to be strung out again like the last time we got off the road..."

At the end of the tour before the '...Illusion'

marathon, he had the limo driver who picked him up at the airport drop him off at the cheapest, sleaziest apartment on Sunset Boulevard he could find, and proceeded to pump himself full of alcohol and drugs, until he was hauled off to rehab.

"It's hard to get to this point where I'm not completely f\*\*ked-up and confused again. I can't hang out on the street like I used to be able to do without getting hassled. So I've got this house and this studio — I've even got a pinball machine! I don't go anywhere any more. Post-road depression hit me as soon as I landed.

"That was a hell of a long tour. A lot of stuff went on. Nine kids were born, a dozen people got divorced, a dozen people got married. I got married! I'm the last person I'd ever expect to get married — it's funny! All this stuff went on while we were still doing the tour. It was like watching real life going down in this mad kind of environment — such a contradiction in terms.

"When I got home, I went straight back into the studio. That was my antidote for post-road depression. We finished up recording the '...Spaghetti...' album, and then I got completely wrapped up in mixing it. I was also busy building this studio so I could record material for the next record, and trying to keep the band together as a cohesive unit so we don't splinter off. So here I am. And now I'm just trying to get us back on the road!"

Another mega-stadium tour doesn't look on the cards at this time.

"I'm thinking maybe we should go back to doing some medium size arenas or whatever with this record," says Slash, "so enough people can get in but I don't have to play in front of a hundred f\*\*king thousand people a night. You get so far away from the reaction of people that I go out and jam. I go to little bars down the street and play with people I don't know."

True, the boy will play with anybody! He recently got up and jammed with Mum and Dad

fave Billy Joel, and was going to play ukulele (!) onstage with another M&D-fave Bette Midler, "but there was no place in the show!"

"Everyone's so amazed that I go to these things and want to do it; I'm so totally out of place, but it's really cool. It's just grounding for me. It keeps me focussed on what I'm supposed to be doing. When I'm home, I can't just sit around and take it easy to the point of kicking back and doing the housework. I'll never change to that extent. So I just keep myself playing all the time, and then I'm happy."

Night's falling over the Hollywood Hills. It's probably time to feed the cats again. Time to ask just one more question, so it might as well be a mega-crucial one — what the hell was the spaghetti incident?

Slash laughs. "It was something they mentioned in the court case (with Steven Adler). I don't want to say exactly what, since we've been having a great time getting tons of letters from people as to what they think the spaghetti incident is! We've been getting these sex ones. It's unreal!

"There was something in People magazine which said I was going out with this porno chick, and they said I stuffed spaghetti in her! In public! In a club in New York! Can you imagine the time it would take to do that?"

Depends if it was in the can or not.

"Yeah! Some of them are so perverted, they really start you thinking..."

**"We were just trying really hard to have some sort of foundation to come back to after the tour — because God knows I don't want to be strung out again like the last time we got off the road..."**

**— SLASH on home life**



Pic: Robert Johnson/TN Beag

