

SOCIAL DISTORTION

BAND HISTORY

In the late 1970s the first raw, sloppy, speeding guitar chords began to blare from the garages and backrooms of a Southern California suburb called Orange County. They echoed a sound forged in the preceding years in the seminal punk undergrounds of New York City and London.

By 1979, a 17 year old kid named Mike Ness had formed Social Distortion with drummer Casey Royer and brothers Rikk and Frank Agnew. The band's world centered around Mike's one-bedroom pad, dubbed "the black hole," in a nondescript Fullerton, CA apartment complex.

After meeting Dennis Danell, a punk loving classmate, Ness insisted Danell, who at the time didn't play an instrument, join the band on bass. Royer and the Agnew's soon split from the band and eventually form The Adolescents.

Local Los Angeles KROQ-FM deejay Rodney Bingenheimer embraced Orange County music, playing highlights from its major local bands, including Social Distortion, on his Sunday night radio show. In 1981, Social Distortion released their first single, "Mainliner/Playpen," on the Posh Boy label. Around the same time, Mike Ness developed a reputation as a brawler resulting in a chunk of his left ear being bitten off during a confrontation at the Cuckoo's Nest bar.

In 1982, Social Distortion, along with LA's Youth Brigade and DC's Minor Threat, are the subjects of the documentary "Another State of Mind," which captures the band's first stormy cross-continental tour in a beat up school bus.

By late 1983, Social Distortion's line up consisted of Mike Ness, Danell (now on rhythm guitar), bassist Brent Liles, and drummer Derek O'Brien. Released on the 13th Floor label, their debut album, Mommy's Little Monster, gained the band a national name in punk circles. Returning home, the line up now included a nasty heroin habit for Ness. The madness that followed resulted

in Brent Liles and Derek O'Brien bailing out of the band in the middle of a New Year's Eve 1983 show.

Ness and Danell soon recruited John Maurer, another old school buddy from Fullerton to play bass and Christopher Reece, of the San Francisco band The Lewd, came in on drums. This lineup weathered Social Distortion's toughest years, as Ness struggled with heroin addiction and the resulting series of jailings and detoxes, which finally ended in 1985. Ness is able to continue writing and hold the band together to begin work on a new album.

In 1988, Social Distortion emerge with the release of *Prison Bound*, an album whose moving title cut about a wasted life is one of the greatest songs ever to come out of Orange County. Ness turned Social Distortion's albums into an ongoing dialogue about impulsiveness, its consequences and the hard struggle to overcome.

In addition to the early punk of The Ramones and The Clash, the band's sound was culled equally from Ness' love of roots music, specifically early country music greats like Hank Williams and the early blues recordings of the South. As Ness would later declare to Social Distortion audiences, "Without good black music, there would be no good white music."

The self titled Social Distortion album followed in 1990. It is SD's first release on a major label. The success of singles "Story Of My Life" and "Ball And Chain," along with their remarkable cover of Johnny Cash's "Ring Of Fire," make the album Social Distortion's first Gold record. The band are asked to join Neil Young on tour, beginning the process of bending punk expectation. They soon return with 1992's *Somewhere Between Heaven and Hell* lead by the blistering single "Bad Luck," the album also goes Gold. A co-headlining tour with The Ramones follows.

The band took an extended hiatus following the release of *Somewhere Between Heaven and Hell*, and did not return to the studio until the fall of 1995. Earlier that year, Time Bomb Recordings re-issued *Mommy's Little Monster*,

Prison Bound, and released the singles compilation Mainliner (Wreckage From The Past).

Social D return in 1996 with a new album, White Light White Heat White Trash, and a new drummer, Chuck Biscuits of Black Flag and D.O.A. fame. The album is a success atop radio favorites "I Was Wrong" and "When The Angels Sing." The band sign up as one of the main draws of the 1997 Warped Tour and then record and release the live album Live At The Roxy in 1998.

A solo record, Cheating At Solitaire, was released by Mike Ness in 1999. The album is an homage to the classic country, blues, rockabilly, and folk that shaped him as a songwriter. Later that same year Ness released Under The Influences, a collection of cover tunes further showcasing his love of American roots music with songs written by legends Hank Williams, Marty Robbins, and Carl Perkins among others.

On February 29, 2000, then 38-year old guitarist Dennis Danell dies suddenly of heart failure. At the time Mike is quoted: "I am saddened beyond any possible form of expression. Dennis and I have been friends since boyhood, starting Social Distortion while we where in high school. My deepest regrets to his family."

In the Fall of 2000, Jonny "2 Bags" Wickersham (guitar) and Charlie Quintana (drums) officially join Social Distortion. 3 years later Social Distortion head into the studio to record a new record - their first full-length studio record in 7 years and the first record without Dennis Danell. A live DVD, Live in The Orange County, is released in 2004. On August 5, 2004, after 20 years of serving as Social Distortion's bass player John Maurer decides to leave the band for personal reasons after having completed the recording of Sex, Love and Rock'n' Roll, the new Social Distortion album.

The album is well received nationwide, bolstered by the success of the single "Reach For The Sky." Brent Harding of Ness' solo touring band joins Social Distortion as their full time bassist. In 2005, the band go on to sell out a

record 6 nights at The Wiltern theater in Los Angeles, that's in addition to the record 37 shows sold out as part of their regular year end multi-night stands at House Of Blues clubs across the Southwest - an almost annual tradition since 2001.

This Greatest Hits album is the FIRST EVER career spanning collection from Social Distortion. The new single, "Far Behind" was recorded just for this album. But, as always with Social D, there is more to say and more to do.