



Leather Angel vocalist Terry O'Leary living that hair metal life to the full

HAIR RAISING HELL RAISING!

The 1980s hair metal scene that grew out of the clubs on Hollywood's Sunset Strip has become one of the most iconic youth culture movements ever. As a new book and album, 'Bound For Hell: On The Sunset Strip', is released documenting the period, *Rock Candy Mag* talks to book author and Strip veteran **Katherine Turman** and vocalist **Betsy Weiss** from the band Bitch about what it was really like to live through those extraordinary times...



BETSY WEISS'S DOG IS called Marcel, and he looks like a cute wee fella. Perched on her knee and staring intently into the camera of Betsy's computer, he's enjoying the attention he's getting just before I start to interview his owner. As an added bonus, Marcel's presence is giving Betsy ample opportunity to crack a few puns.

"I can't call Marcel a bitch, because he's a boy," she laughs. "But you've already got one bitch here and that's more than enough!"

Betsy Bitch wears her stage name with pride. It's not something that's mothballed, kept in a drawer somewhere only to be dusted off when she's playing a show with her band called - you won't be surprised to hear - Bitch. No, Betsy Weiss looks more than comfortable answering to the name she's been associated with since the early '80s. Back then as the frontwoman of Bitch, and fully embracing the band's S&M-influenced image, Betsy became one of the early creators of a movement that would change the face of heavy metal music forever.

If we're being kind, the Sunset Strip metal scene lasted maybe nine years. That's quite a long time for a youth movement if you compare it to, say, punk in the UK, which was all done and dusted after the three years of 1976, '77 and '78. But given the commercial and anthropological impact that hair metal - the musical genre and fashion movement the Sunset Strip scene

gave birth to - undoubtedly had on the world, it's a relatively short period. After all, we're still talking about it today, more than 40 years after the scene first started, and as the recent issue of a new hybrid project titled 'Bound For Hell: On the Sunset Strip' shows, general

fascination for this defining era shows no sign of abating.

"THERE WAS SOMETHING HAPPENING DOWN ON THE STRIP EVERY SINGLE EVENING. ALL THE CLUBS WERE REALLY ANXIOUS TO DO THINGS THAT WERE METAL-RELATED BECAUSE METAL WAS ATTRACTING MAJOR CROWDS. THE DEMAND WAS HUGE."

BETSY WEISS

PRODUCED WITH

loving care by The Numero Group, a company perhaps surprisingly based out of Chicago in the

American east, the project consists of 21 songs spread over two vinyl LPs, together with a 144-page book written by US metal journalist Katherine Turman. The idea seems to be more about trying to re-live rather than re-appraise the Sunset Strip phenomenon in music, words, and images, though in the book Turman does offer some context for the movement's historical importance while primarily concentrating on interviews with all the bands featured on the LPs. Her intent appears to be to try to capture what it was like to be there in the eye(liner) of the storm.

'Bound For Hell' makes no attempt to represent the Sunset Strip's big hitters, the ones who landed major label deals and went on to become *bona fide* '80s rock stars. There are only fleeting mentions of the likes of Mötley Crüe, W.A.S.P., and RATT; bands who used Hollywood as a launchpad for stellar musical careers.

Photo courtesy of Leather Angel