



JESSE JAMES DUPREE

THE CHAINSAW-WIELDING FRONTMAN OF JACKYL TALKS ABOUT THAT VERY RUDE SONG OF HIS, WORKING WITH AC/DC SINGER BRIAN JOHNSON ON A NEW SOLO ALBUM, AND WHY HE REALLY DOESN'T WANT TO BE A ROCK STAR 24/7...

THE SPARK THAT LIT THE FLAME

"In the early '70s when I was just a kid, my parents moved from Georgia to Gadsden, Alabama after my dad lost his job. They bought a little café and we moved into a mobile home in the asphalt park out the back. Now the café had a jukebox, and I started hearing everything from Grand Funk Railroad to the Rolling Stones, Wilson Pickett, James Brown... What was coming out of that jukebox changed my life. The guy who supplied the discs for the jukebox used to give me the ones that were being replaced, and I'd keep them in these five-gallon buckets that had originally been full of dill pickles to put on the hamburgers. Music was all I had because my friends were all back in Georgia, so I would sit in the mobile home and try to emulate everything I heard. My favourite artist was Joe Tex. Let me tell you, Joe Tex has *the* greatest rock'n'roll voice of all time. He was the king of powering up and he had the best scream. And once I'd heard him it was all over for me. The genie was out of the bottle!"

BEING A ROCKER

"I originally committed to the idea of being a rock musician because I worked in construction early on in my life and immediately knew that I did *not* want to do that. That's what drove me to never let up until I'd achieved some success. At first I wanted to be a guitar player, but I could never find a singer who didn't keep losing his voice. And when singers hadn't lost their voice they'd always be saying stupid stuff between songs. Eventually I decided I was going to do it myself, and in the end that paid off for me. I still wake up each day and look at my hands. They're not calloused from pouring concrete and I'm thankful for that every single day."

JACKYL

"Jackyl was, and is, a Southern-based blues rock band, like a Southern version of AC/DC with a mouthful of dirt. When all you got is two guitars, bass and drums, you make it work, right? Our influences are all over the place, but I don't think we play hard rock. I think we play country music really, *really* loud. I'd say that scientifically speaking we can do what we say we're going to do. When you come see Jackyl, you're likely to get all hot and bothered, and you won't even make it back home before you jump into the back seat of your car and knock out the old dirty dirty. Being able to play and sing every night, and have thousands of people come out and see the band is amazing. But I've also found out that I've written songs that mean something to somebody – and that's really special. I may have written numbers like 'When Will It Rain' or 'I Stand Alone' from a personal perspective, but when a soldier coming back from Afghanistan or Iraq tells me that one of my songs was important to him while he was over there, well that's a heavy thing. That's why I hate it when musicians get polarising with their politics, because it can kill what a song means to somebody."

THE CHAINSAW

"The chainsaw started out as a joke. Long before we ever recorded an album, we set the attendance record at a place called Charley Magruder's in Atlanta. The guy who owned the place was a Vietnam vet called Butch Weaver,

who was an excitable fella. To get a rise out of him, I used to threaten to bring in a chainsaw and cut up some of the wooden furnishings. So I got hold of a chainsaw, went to Walmart to get some mailbox letters, and then put them on the bar of the chainsaw to spell out the Jackyl name. When we were playing one night I started cutting stuff up during the performance. Bruce fined us something like \$300, which was almost everything we made. And then at the end of one evening we were jamming on a version of Jimi Hendrix's 'Red House' and the guitar players were taking their lead breaks. Well I grabbed a chainsaw and took a 'solo' myself. My dad was in the audience, and afterwards he told me I should keep doing it, and that's how it became part of the Jackyl show."

'SHE LOVES MY C*CK'

"You can blame Iggy Pop for that song! When I was a teenager I had an old bootleg tape of Iggy's featuring a song called 'C*ck In My Pocket'. Right away that showed me that there were no boundaries. America was really regulated back then; you couldn't say 'son of a bitch' on the radio without getting fined. But Iggy showed me that there was another way. Now the bass player of a band I was in one time had this VHS porno where a woman

was giving a guy the once over. She stopped for a second to say to him, 'Oh Skinner, I love you.' And the guy said, 'You don't love me. You

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love my c*ck.' And we thought it was hilarious, just how arrogant men can be about their members. It became a joke catchphrase in the band, so I wrote the song because it was *funny*, and because Iggy had taught me that I could get away with it! And then 'She Loves My C*ck' became a big hit in all the bars I played with Jackyl. Everybody loved it, but we weren't brave enough to put it on the first Jackyl album. Our A&R guy at Geffen was John Kalodner, though, and John said that we absolutely *were* going to put the song on the album. We couldn't believe it! And of course when the first Jackyl album came out, stores in America like K-Mart refused to stock it, even though it's obvious that the lyrics are a parody and can't in any way be taken seriously. They're just a fun way of celebrating the fundamentals of rock'n'roll. Surely you don't have to look too hard to see that."

ROCK STARDOM

"I don't worry too much about being 'a rock star'. There are guys out there who are being 'that guy' 24/7, and god-dammit, that looks like a lot of hard work. I like people who are real guys. Ted Nugent's a real guy. Brian Johnson's a real guy. Darryl McDaniels from Run DMC is a real guy. Those guys don't travel with bodyguards. They don't make a hoopla. They come stay at my house, and we go eat dinner and act real normal. I've got some pesto in my refrigerator that Brian Johnson made from scratch, right? If you want to be that guy who shows up at a restaurant in a limousine wearing stage regalia, well good luck to you. But to me that seems like an awful lot of work."

WRITING WITH DESMOND CHILD

"Many years ago, I got invited to this writing session at a fancy place in France owned by [I.R.S. Records founder] Miles Copeland. There were a bunch of writers there, and each morning you'd be put together with two of

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photo: Courtesy of Jesse James Dupree