

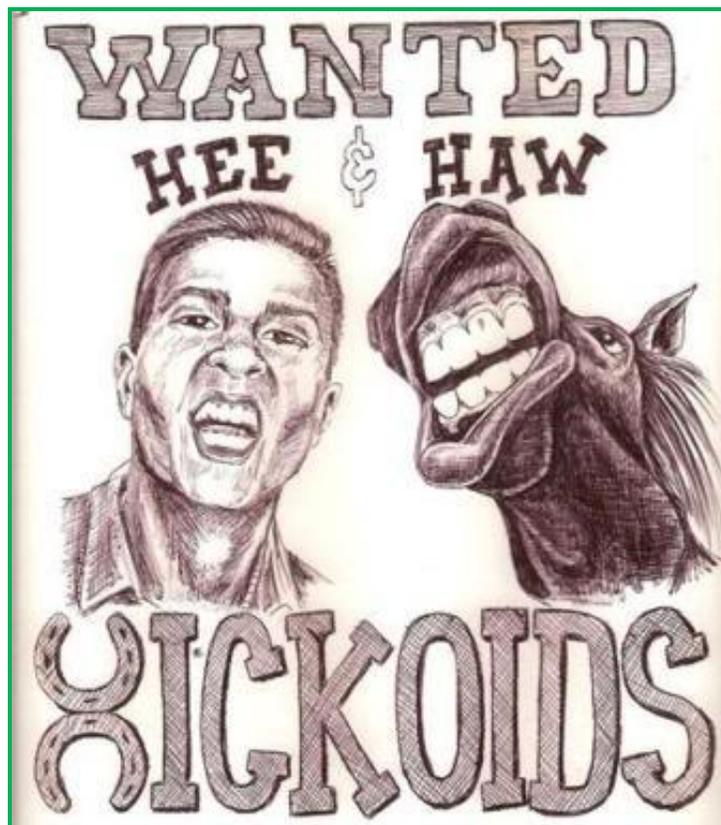
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# **THE REAL 411 ON THE HICKOIDS AND SAUSTEX MEDIA**

JEFF SMITH

## **TELL'S ALL!!!!!!!**

**By: Ginger Coyote**



I jumped at the chance to ask Jeff Smith a few questions about one of my favorite bands from Texas The Hickoids and his label Saustex Media.. I hope you enjoy....

**Punk Globe:** Thanks so much for doing this interview Jeff. You were an original member of the Hickoids, right? How did you come up with the name?

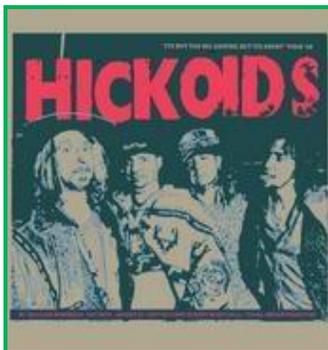


**JS:** It's my pleasure, thanks for the opportunity. The band was originally conceived as hard-core meets hard-country by myself and a fellow named Jukebox. As to the name, we had begun practicing and discussed some pretty unsuitable options...JB and I were over at Davy Jones' (who would soon become our permanent guitar player) apartment one afternoon and we saw a bum in a crumpled cowboy hat digging through the dumpster. Davy said "That's one real hickoid looking son of a bitch", and we instantly took the newly coined word for our name. In retrospect, that bum was an oddly prophetic omen of the

lifestyle Davy and I would pursue in the band.

**Punk Globe:** Can you tell us who was in the original Hickoids? I know that you were from Texas but what city were you located in?

**JS:** As I mentioned earlier, Jukebox, myself, Pat Deason of the Dicks on drums, Flynn Mauthe of the Marching Plague and Mystery Dates on bass and Harry Wilson of Burn Center on guitar. I had played Harry with for awhile in the Bang Gang. After the six months or so we solidified the line-up that would appear on the first album with Richard and Arthur Hays (of Raul's era punk bands Sharon Tate's Baby and the Next, respectively), playing bass and drums respectively, and Davy now in the band as rhythm guitarist. Richard and Arthur had also played with me in the Bang Gang. We were located in Austin, and most of our early rehearsals took place at a sort of punk co-op/party house type of place called the "OAF House". It was located in the midst of a bunch of the frat houses and student housing in Austin. It was a perpetual eyesore and we always seemed to be having little run-ins with the (other) kids.



**Punk Globe:** What year did you form?

**JS:** We began practicing in late '83 and played our first show in March 1984.

**Punk Globe:** The Hickoids, Big Boys, Dicks and MDC (The Stains) were quite the legends for making people in the south think. Can you tell us about your shows back then?

**JS:** The shows back then were all events, because normally you didn't know if it would be the last show at any given venue, people were hungrier for the music and of course, it was all new to us. There was no internet, MTV, Hot Topic, etc...and punk was truly outsiders' music...basically everybody who didn't fit into the regular rock scene seemed to find their place in the punk scene. So, I guess the simplest way to describe it would be to say that every show seemed like a party, a celebration of that outsider status and an escape from the musical oppressiveness of the era. There wasn't all the "careerism" you

see displayed by even the most hopeless of musical acts nowadays. It didn't really matter what you played or how well you played it as long as it had balls and heart, people would pay attention to you, at least the first few times you played. The Big Boys were a particularly great live band...their records never really did them justice. Every show I saw them play was great fun and Biscuit put so much into it to make every show special. The Dicks were less artsy and a pretty inconsistent live act, but possessed a soulful and visceral kind of anti-beauty and projected an air of true danger. I think I only saw the Stains once or twice before they changed to the hardcore thrash sound, which seemed to sacrifice definition for speed in many cases and wasn't really my cup of tea. But they were an undeniably important band that changed the face of rock music forever, and probably much more influential in that respect than the Big Boys or Dicks.

### **Punk Globe: Where does Harvey Hardcock fit into The Hickoids?**

**JS:** I don't know if that was supposed to be a pun or not, but let me state for the record that Harvey Hardcock NEVER "fit into" the Hickoids. (LOL). I think what you're asking is what's our relationship...It seems like the first couple of times I met Harvey is when he and Texacala had first started dating and he came down to Texas with Texorcist on one or two of their trips to Austin. We stayed at their place, "Castle Grayskull", a couple of times when we were out there. (Hollywood) Then later after he and Tex had parted ways and he moved to Texas for a year or so, we were both floppin' in the back room of a friend of mine's place in Austin.

**Punk Globe: I remember Harvey coming to a White Trash Debutantes show in LA wearing a bra and girdle. He was hilarious! He supposedly had quit the band to be a cook at Raji's do you know the story?**



**JS:** I think you're talking about Jukebox (or maybe Steve-O from the Vandals?) having quit the band to become a cook at Raji's... which if you happen to know Jukebox is pretty laughable. Dude

talks a hell of a game, but work of any description is not in his repertoire. Harvey was never actually in the band...As memory serves, and that is not very well because that was a particularly blurry point in my life, Harvey's escalation into the cross-dressing thing went something like this: We showed up in LA to play some shows, I think we had five or six in one week. I seem to recall that Wade Driver (our drummer), maybe Dick Hays (our bass player ) and myself had occasionally been wearing some gingham, kinda' full-length BBQ dresses for grins...So we're hanging at Tex's and some make-up gets pulled out, then Tex's lace dresses...by the end of the week, muscle bound, teeth missin', skinhead Harvey had become "Harvella"...I remember one night we walked into the Seventh Veil (legendary Hollywood strip club) which was right down the street from their house on Sunset and "Harvella" is pounding on the doorman's desk demanding a job application. The rest of us were laughing so hard we were almost crying. Also, that same trip the cops kicked in their door about 10 AM on Sunday after we had been raising hell all night and discovered Wade in Tex's red lace dress, so that's kinda' the genesis of the song "Queen Of The Bar-B-Q" and the album "Waltz-A-Cross-Dress-Texas", where Harvey is pictured on the cover doing the do-si-do with Willie Nelson in drag. The other main thing that I remember is that he and Greg (Poison 13 and Junkyard's drummer) were literally fighting over Tex's make-up by the time we left. When he was living in Texas a couple of years later he got arrested while wearing a metal bra and skirt for picking bluebonnets (the state flower) which is illegal in Texas. They made him sit in jail for a week in that outfit. Still, I kinda' doubt anybody fucked with him. Homeboy really took the ball and ran with it.

### **Punk Globe: Who released your music back then?**

**JS:** I released our first album on the Mataka Mazuri and it was later picked up by Toxic Shock, who repressed it and put out a couple of later releases. They also came out via some licensing deals in the UK and Germany in slightly altered editions.

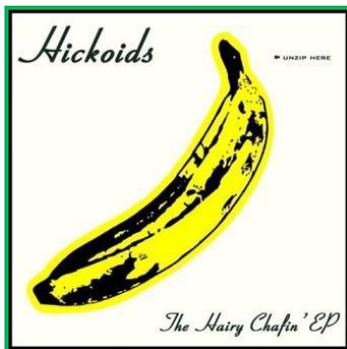
### **Punk Globe: Did The Hickoids tour alot?**

**JS:** During the 80's and first couple of the years of the 90's we did. We toured the Mid-West and East Coast about 3 or 4 times. We probably went out to California 5 or 6 times, and then weekend stuff around Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas. Of course the circuit wasn't nearly as well developed back then, so it was

either major cities or college towns. We also cancelled another couple of long tours for one reason or another; money, vehicle, personnel or jail.

**Punk Globe:** Did you go through a lot of line up changes?

**JS:** It would crash your server if I tried to list all the different line-ups...I think there is a complete list of everyone who was ever in the band on our Myspace page.



**Punk Globe:** When did you start doing Saustex Media?

**JS:** Right at the end of 2003.

**Punk Globe:** Who was your very first release?

**JS:** The first release was Stevie Tombstone's "7:30 AM" album.

**Punk Globe:** How did you come up with the name Saustex ?

**JS:** It's sort of a combination of San Antonio and Austin and Texas, which is the regional focus of the label artistically. People ask me how to pronounce it and I tell them to take the first syllables of sausage and Texas and say them together.

**Punk Globe:** Can you tell the readers some of the artists that are on the labels?

**JS:** On the Saustex label, which is oriented towards roots, singer/songwriter, garage and cow-punk: Stevie Tombstone, The Tombstones, Eric Hisaw, T. Tex Edwards, Loco Gringos, Hickoids, Snowbyrd and the Sons of Hercules. On Sauspop, which I launched in 2008 for slightly slicker projects I have the Service Industry and the Summer Wardrobe.

**Punk Globe:** Who does your distribution?

**JS:** A company out of Portland, OR called Burnside. I really like working with them. They're very honest, accessible and open to helping me with whatever I want to do. Through them we have sub-distribution agreements with other folks throughout the

world. And of course, everything is available on iTunes and all the other major download stores, probably thirty-plus of those worldwide.

**Punk Globe: Are you looking for new bands to release product with?**

**JS:** I'm always willing to listen, but have to be realistic about how much time, energy and money I can dedicate to any new band or project I take on. I'm one guy, with a part-time staff of one. I've been approached by some national and international acts that seemed to be thumping along pretty good, but prefer to keep my focus on more under the radar acts from Texas.

**Punk Globe: The Hickoids have resurfaced. How did that come about?**

**JS:** Once again, your server would crash if I gave you the entire sad story, but basically Davy and I had kicked around the idea of making a new record a few years back. We began playing semi-regularly again in 2006. He lives in Austin and I live in San Antonio, only about 80 miles apart, but with our day gigs, side bands and the other responsibilities of being solidly middle-aged men, life gets in the way of rock and roll quite often. So, we just try to play as much as we can and concentrate on having fun and bringing a humorous, entertaining and musically solid show to our audiences...any and everything good that happens beyond that is a bonus.

**Punk Globe: How was your summer tour? And how is your new CD doing?**

**JS:** We had an excellent time and enjoyed catching up with a bunch of old friends along the way. We wish it could have been longer. The scheduling was such that it was drive, play, crash, drive, play, crash...we would have liked to have been able to spend an extra day or two in L.A., S.F., Portland and Seattle but it just wasn't possible. The new CD is a limited edition release, really just something to let the folks know that we actually have been recording something. I only mailed out about 30 promo copies (less than 10% of what I do on a normal release) to folks like yourself...people that have shown an unhealthy interest in the band (LOL)...So, it's something you can't really quantify. But the reaction has been generally positive.

**Punk Globe:** Tell us what original members are back in the band and can you also tell us about the new players?



**JS:** Davy and I are the only original members (at least from the first album). Jonie Hell now plays drums for us, he's an old friend from early 80's Austin, but lived in L.A. a long time and played with Junkyard when they first moved out there and later with Haunted Garage, among others. Rice Moorehead has been playing bass with us for around a year and a half now... he's a singer/songwriter from Knoxville, TN who has lived in Austin since the early 90's and played in Big Foot Chester and some other lesser known bands. Lately we've played as either a five or six-piece with Stevie Tombstone (of Atlanta's legendary gothabilly band, the Tombstones) on lead guitar and then Scott Lutz, my San Antonio homeboy from the band Snowbyrd on guitar, pedal steel and keyboards.

**Punk Globe:** What does the future hold for The Hickoids?

**JS:** The main priority is finishing the full-length release, hopefully in time for SXSW this year. I've been kicking around the idea of making an album of glam covers done Texas-style for some time now...the working title is "Kicking It With The Twits", but I suppose just finishing up the new album "Hairy Chafin' Ape Suit" would make me and Davy pretty happy. Keep on writing, keep on playing, keep on recording...

**Punk Globe:** What new releases are coming out on Saustex in 2010?

**JS:** I have an album by a kick ass conjunto-punk band from San Antonio called Pinata Protest coming out early in the year, the Hickoids album I just mentioned, a new one from the Service Industry and some other stuff that's not firmed up yet. I've been doing about four releases a year for the past few years, I'd like to try and get six out this year if everything comes together.

**Punk Globe:** Can you give the readers your Website,

## My Space and Facebook addresses?

JS: <http://hickoids.com/>

<http://www.myspace.com/hickoids>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hickoids/72187477001>

and the label & mail-order website:

<http://www.saustexmedia.com>

**Punk Globe:** Do you have any parting words of advice for the readers?

JS: The world is full of bastards, don't get the bastards get you down. Thank you so much for the interview Jeff.

[back to home page](#)