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## [Hickoids Interview: SXSW 2010](#)

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 First came on the scene, no one was sure what to make of the cheeky lyrical badmen of Hickoids. They were called cow punk, white thrash, hard corn, hick rock, honky tonk hee haw glambilly, psychobilly, acidbilly, Tex-



Mex on meth and out on bail. But in 1983, there was little crossover of genres. Despite being outsiders, they went

on to win critical acclaim and found ardent fans in influential rock stars like Krist Novoselic of [Nirvana](#). They partied hard and ultimately succumbed to the ravages of recklessness. By 1991 it was over, and they went their separate ways for over a decade. In 2002, frontman Jeff Smith packed his bags and headed back to San Antonio. In late 2003, he launched his record label, Saustex Media. While dusting off the Hickoids' first releases, Smith felt there was unfinished business to tend to. He reunited with former bandmate Davy Jones, re-released the early albums and started playing again. As they return back to [SXSW](#) with the resurrected Hickoids, Spinner had a chance to catch up with Jeff about where they've been and where they're heading.

### **How did you know your life would be in music?**

I was a jock in high school but got laid playing music, and that decided it for me.

### **How did you form the band?**

I grew up in San Antonio and in 1982, when I turned 17, I went off to the University of Texas in Austin. I was hanging out in the punk scene with my friend Jukebox, who played guitar. We started doing shows together with Davy Jones, Richard and Arthur Hays. That was the beginning of the Hickoids. We were actually one of the first punk bands to play the legendary Taco Land in San Antonio. We got good write-ups in the LA Weekly and other big city newspapers for our first albums. 'We're in it For the Corn' and 'Hard Corn.' Critics either loved us or hated us. We had the spotlight for a while. In 1985, we were voted Best Country Band at the Austin Music Awards, [and] we played with just about everybody who emerged from that era, including Black Flag, the Meat Puppets, TSOL, the [Flaming Lips](#), Soul Asylum and the Reverend Horton Heat. [Nine Inch Nails](#) even opened for us on their first tour. We had a lot of fun but it was ultimately unsustainable. In 1991, the band collapsed under the weight of substance abuse and poverty. In 2006, Davy Jones and I reunited to revive the band. We felt we had overcome our demons and had unfinished business. Our current lineup includes me on vocals, Davy on guitar, Jonie Hell on drums, Rice Moorehead on bass, Scott Lutz on pedal steel and Jacob Schulze on keyboards and guitar.

### **How did you come up with the band name?**

One day, Davy Jones saw a bum in a crumpled cowboy hat digging through the dumpster at his apartment and said, "That's a real hickoid-looking S.O.B." We immediately knew that would be our band name, and it turned out to be oddly prophetic.

### **Why did you feel like outsiders?**

Punk and roots were very different things back then. If you were punk you were punk, and if you were country you were country. There were no hybrids. We were trying to do something different and that wasn't cool with a lot of folks.

### **Describe your sound.**

A little bit country, a lot of cacophony. Our songs are meant to make people laugh. They're tongue and cheek. They don't inspire deep emotion.

### **[Beatles](#) or [Stones](#)?**

Stones, because they're dirty and we're dirty.

### **What are your musical influences?**

The Fugs, [Iggy Pop](#), [Alice Cooper](#) [and] the Damned.

### **Who was your first celeb crush?**

All three of the daughters on 'Petticoat Junction.'

### **What's your musical guilty pleasure?**

I find no guilt in pleasure. But if you're talking about music the editors of Pitchfork might find distasteful, I guess it would be '70s hard rock and disco.

### **What's in your festival survival kit?**

Plenty of socks. If my feet are not happy, then I'm not happy.

### **Any vices?**

Cigs and slots. The ones that threatened to kill me immediately are currently dormant.

### **What's the craziest thing that's ever happened to you on tour?**

On one occasion, we got pulled over between Houston and Dallas [at] about 10 in the morning. We had been tripping all night, had a case of beer and a case of empties rolling around the van. All of us were drunk and still high. The cop made us pull all the equipment out of the van. Then he looked through the suitcases and nearly puts his hand on the stuff that will have us all sitting in jail for a long time. Finally, he lets us pack it back up and writes one of the guys a ticket for not wearing his seatbelt. Then he points his flashlight at the bale of hay sitting in the van and says, "If that's all the grass you boys got, you're all right with me."

### **How do you stay in touch with your fans?**

Smoke signals, drums. I'm a bit of a rock 'n' roll caveman but I really do like ReverbNation. We were the #1 band in San Antonio for awhile.

### **What are you most looking forward to at SXSW?**

I haven't been there every year, but have been there a good 18 to 20 years, and played at the first or second festival. I've worked every end over the years as artist, doorman, bartender and in production. This is my first year my label is having a showcase, and I'm very excited about the lineup. We have Hickoids, Snowbyrd, Sons of Hercules, the Summer Wardrobe and Pinata Protest on the bill. I always enjoy being immersed in Austin for the better part of the week where most of my friends live.

### **What's next?**

After we finish the album we've been working on forever, we want to do a record of British glam covers called 'Kicking It With the Twits.'