

Better Late Than Never: The Official Newsletter of the Slackers: Issue #24



2023.

It's a new year and there's new tours for the Slackers. We are planning on playing around 80 gigs this year and we are gonna be all over the United States, Canada, and Europe.

It's a bit of a challenge. We were getting our road chops together through the last 3rd of 2022. It really felt like it was a long time coming and we were starting to hit our stride. So after some rest, we are going to have to pick up in April where we left off.

We are also in between albums. We got a 12" single coming out in the summer which will be the last of the material from the Sunlight album sessions.

In February, we are heading back to the studio, trying to figure out what the next project is going to be.

And then in April, we go on tour. We aren't going to be able to get everywhere but we will try to get to a lot of places. See ya on the road. #weareslackers #youareslackers



Slackers Spring Tour 2023!

the SLACKERS →



ON TOUR! 2023

APRIL 17 • ATLANTA • MASQUERADE	APRIL 30 • ITHACA • DEEP DIVE
APRIL 18 • CHARLESTON • TIN ROOF ALLEY	MAY 17 • ST LOUIS • ????
APRIL 19 • CHARLOTTE • NEIGHBORHOOD THEATRE	MAY 18 • KANSAS CITY • ????
APRIL 20 • BLACKSBURG • THE LYRIC	MAY 19 • OMAHA • ????
APRIL 21 • BALTIMORE • SOUNDSTAGE	MAY 20 • DENVER • ????
APRIL 22 • CROYDON SOLD OUT!	MAY 21 • COLORADO • ????
APRIL 23 • PITTSBURGH • CRAFTHOUSE	MAY 23 • ALBUQUERQUE • ????
APRIL 25 • CLEVELAND • GROG SHOP	MAY 24 • ??????
APRIL 26 • BUFFALO • MOHAWK PLACE	MAY 25 • PHOENIX • ????
APRIL 27 • TORONTO • OPERA HOUSE	MAY 26 • FLAGSTAFF • ????
APRIL 28 • KITCHENER • THE HUB	MAY 27 LAS VEGAS PUNK ROCK BOWLING

Starting April 17, the Slackers' will be back on the road touring. We start out in the Southeast in Atlanta and we start working out way north. We cut inland in Pennsylvania, touch along the Great Lakes, and then head up to Canada. The second leg we start in St Louis and then work our way west to Las Vegas and Punk Rock Bowling.



We will be touring with a mix of bands. In Baltimore, we have a co-headlining show with Fishbone. This will possibly be the first time the two bands have done a club date together and we are looking forward to it.



In Blacksburg, we are with the Pietasters, our old label mates from the Hellcat days. That's always a party to the say the least. We have known each other for 25/26 years at this point. Old friends!

Our first leg through to Pittsburgh, we will be with the UK's Faintest Idea. After Pittsburgh, we are with the Operators from Buffalo. And then in May, we are on the road with the Freecoasters from Florida.

I know its frustrating to a lot of people when we post gigs because they don't see their own city on the list. We try to get to as many places as we can. We really do.

We try to do around 80 shows a year. Around 50 are gonna be in the States, 25 in Europe, and 5 in Canada.

And yes, we are aware that there are a bunch of cities that we haven't been to in many years (Florida, I'm looking at you). We got some more gig announcements that should make you happy!

if you want to book the Slackers email john@soundtalentgroup.com

Ara Says:



It's the Slackers off-season and I'm in Miami with my daughter, eating grilled octopus and beef carpaccio and drinking Bloody Marys on a deck overlooking the ocean. Perry Farrell recently made a really wise distinction between knowing your kids when they are children and getting to know them as adults. So I'm here this week getting to know my daughter as an adult, and what a lovely human she has turned out to be. But even as I vacation, I'm constantly plotting out Slacker strategies for the upcoming tour season, which starts on April 16th in Atlanta. The band is always in my thoughts, like some bizarre, smirking, ball-breaking, shiftless yet high-achieving 6-headed specter. So, I'm on the beach, but I'm really thinking about that third song in the encore that will best set up Have The Time as the ultimate closer. Love, love and more love. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Spin Cycle Selections (From your friend Glen)



Here are a few vinyl selections that I have been spinning recently. Always a little bit of this and that. January is shaking out nicely.

1) David Crosby 'If I Could Only Remember My Name'. RIP Mr Crosby. His solo album from 1971, features the cream of San Francisco and Laurel Canyon (Los Angeles) musicians. A searching and introspective work. What songs, what harmonies. Beautiful.

[DAVID CROSBY - If I Could Only Remember My Name.... \(1971\) - Full Album - YouTube](#)

2) Nygozi Family '45,000 Volts'. A Zamrock (Rock from Zambia) classic from 1977. This slab of fuzzy fuzzy garage/proto-metal/funk, never sounded so good. On time and retro-modern sounding. Ahead of the curve.

3) Sun Ra 'The Singles'. An amazing compilation of Sun Ra's singles/45s that will take you on a cosmic journey from Doo-Wop to the outer reaches of Jazz. A true genius and interstellar trailblazer. Wild and compelling stuff

[Sun Ra \(with The Nu Sounds\) - A Foggy Day - YouTube](#)

4)Steel Pulse 'Handsworth Revolution'. This important reggae band's debut platter does not disappoint. A revolution in song, harmony, and sonic exploration. I love David Hinds' voice and delivery. A huge inspiration. What a band.

5)Herbie Hancock 'Crossings'. Part of his Mwandishi period, this album from 1972 is wildly imaginative and experimental. He has assembled one hell of a band on this one. Bennie Maupin, Eddie Henderson, Julian Priester, etc. Also enjoy the early synthesiser contributions by Patrick Gleeson on it. Well worth tracking down this challenging piece of music.

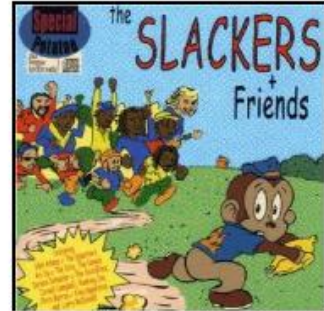
What are you listening to?



Lawful Good



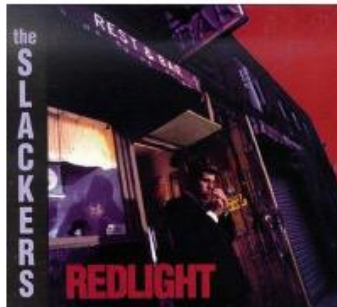
Neutral Good



Chaotic Good



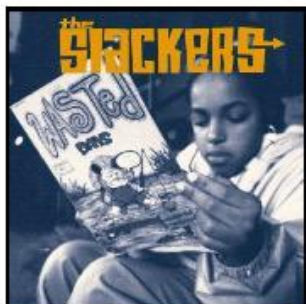
Lawful Neutral



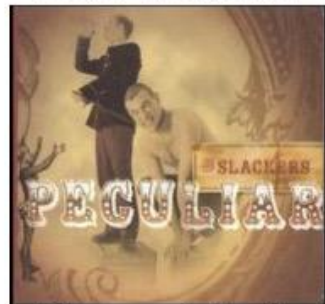
True Neutral



Chaotic Neutral



Lawful Evil



Neutral Evil



Chaotic Evil

In the studio with Agent Jay



Happenings down at Stabby Road Studio, Brooklyn:

Since finishing up 2022 touring in December I've gotten back to work on a bunch of projects sitting in queue in my basement studio... First up was getting a couple mixes done for my side-side-band, CABRON BROTHERS. The good people at The Craig Charles Funk & Soul Show on BBC6 were asking for any pre-release music they could possibly feature in their upcoming 2023 releases show they do early in the year. So I knocked out a couple that were close to finished — a hard Funk instrumental called HEADHUNTING, featuring Eddie Ocampo on drums; and a funky Pop-Dance toe-tapper called YOUR TIME, featuring the multitalented Josephine on vocals. Hopefully those will see air on the Beeb', otherwise they will show up on CABRON BROTHERS II, the follow up to our debut EP, SONG OF THE BASTARD.

My old REGGAY LORDS partner and sometime CRAZY BALDHEAD vocalist ('CUT BACK'), Jah Point, passed through to voice another anti-capitalist Early Reggae anthem, YOU DON'T HATE MONDAYS. That will be out digitally on oldneighborhood.net soon, and may see a vinyl release on my label, OLD NEIGHBORHOOD MUSIC.

I've also been working on a Rub-A-Dub Ska would-be club banger with Ali of STOP THE PRESSES. I made the rhythm years ago on an old Korg Univox analog drum machine, and had Dave Hillyard come in to lay down a Klezmer style soprano sax melody. We're scheduled to cut vocals tomorrow and have a final mix in February.

Lastly, I've started mixing the first full-length release by THE CAPTURERS, recorded at Stabby Road. THE CAPTURERS are a Reggae/Ska outfit fronted by The Bronx's (borough, not band) own Jewels Depietro. I hope to have this record in the can in the next two weeks.

Till next time...

- Agent Jay

Dave Hillyard's History of US Ska Part 1:



Dave has been listening to Ska music since 1982 and playing Ska music live since 1985. In another life he was also a historian, ethnographer, and urban sociologist. Originally published back in February, 2008 he started writing a history of American Ska and posting it on his Myspace Blog. Gonna repost his 12 part series here in the newsletter and see if we can continue the writings up to the present day.

So back in 2008 Dave said,
A lot of other people have written histories of American Ska. So why bother? Well, to start with most of them got it wrong. So I'm call it

from my perspective. I'm not gonna bother with any sort of neutrality and just call it as I see it.

Ska is funny music, against all odds it has managed to survive and persevere. How the hell has this once obscure music from Jamaica managed to capture so many people's imaginations and win over so many hearts?

In case you are reading this and have no idea what the hell Ska is or just associate it with a mix of marching band horns, heavy metal and plaid suits, let me make a few things clear. I'm gonna give a quick run down of Ska's origins before it made it to the States.

Ska began in Jamaica sometime around 1959 and lasted in its classics form until around 1967. It was the soundtrack for Jamaican independence. It was kicked off by the sounds of RnB shuffle sounds of American artists like Rosco Gordon and then added influences from Mento (Jamaican Calypso), Jazz, Jamaican folk hand drumming traditions like Burru, Latin especially Afro-Cuban, and Gospel.



There is a persistent myth, mostly started by UK music critics, that somehow the Jamaicans got RnB wrong that somehow on crackly radio signals from the States they heard a skank but when you listen to Rosco Gordon you can hear what was gonna become 'Ska' in a

lot of his tunes. He toured Jamaica in 1956 and 1957. Coincidence? No way. Contrary to myth, the Jamaicans did pretty good versions of Jump Blues Tunes. They were just picking up parts of RnB that weren't as well known to music critics a decade later. So Ska has always had influences from America.

[Rosco Gordon "Let's Get High" - YouTube](#)

The first thing most people notice about Ska is that the guitar plays rhythm on the offbeat. I mostly pay attention though to the bass and drums. Old Jamaican Ska is somewhere between swinging and not, it has a beautiful elasticity of time. If you don't know what I'm talking about listen to Lloyd Knibb from the Skatalites play. If you don't hear it then, well I'm sorry for you. [The Skatalites - "Ska La Parisienne" \[Official Audio\] - YouTube](#)



Ska fell out of fashion in Jamaica in 1967 and got replaced by Rocksteady, Reggae and then literally hundreds of other Jamaican styles. For a small island, Jamaica's got a lot of music. Its constantly taking influences from all over the place but somehow its own Jamaican identity pulls through.

Yes, you can stop me if you've heard this before. Just skip to the American stuff, it starts in a couple paragraphs.

So where was I? Oh yeah, Ska. It came back in the UK in the late 70's with 2Tone bands like the Specials, Madness, Bad Manners, and the Beat. In some ways, the only thing that came back in the UK was the name. The "Ska" the UK bands were playing

was influenced by the Sex Pistols and Ian Dury, punk and pub rock, plus all of the Jamaican music that had happened between 1967 and 1978.



Ska was the name but only part of the musical picture. UK Drummers tended to play fewer rimshots and more open snare hits. Bass players would sneak in octavers from funk and disco, plog like punkers, or add bits of Reggae. The Guitar Skank became more trebly and nasal. Whatever this new Ska was (and I like it a lot) it didn't swing the same way as the 60s stuff. But hey, they sold a lot more records. At least for the 2-3 years the 2Tone bands were popular before the trendy British moved on.



In the States, Ska had never gotten too far outside of Jamaican Immigrant communities. There were Ska songs in America in the 1960s up into the 1970s but not a scene. Millie Small's My Boy Lollipop made the charts

(Aside...Millie's version is a cover, check out American artists Barbara Gaye's My Boy Lollipop from 1956 which sounds so 'ska' yet ska hadn't been invented yet! [Barbie Gaye - My Boy Lollipop \(1956\) - YouTube.](#))

The Beatle's played the easily Ska identifiable Ob-la-di-Ob-la-da but it was marketed as a Rock song. Ska was one of several dance crazes that were being sold in 1960s America alongside the Cha Cha Cha, the Watusi, the Calypso, the Merengue, and many more.

For example, 1940s big band leader, Woody Herman recorded a ska song in 1964. [Woody Herman Orchestra - Come On And Ska - YouTube](#)

One of the first American bands to play Ska songs that I know of is the Blue Riddim band from Kansas of all fucking places. Can you believe that? Not from NYC or LA! They used to do a cover of the Ska version of Simmer Down. They were around starting in the mid1970s and are mostly remembered for being one of the first

American based bands not composed of Jamaicans to convincingly play reggae. But Blue Riddim weren't part of a ska movement. Maybe they were a pioneer of what was to become 'World Beat' in the 1980s, they definitely were pioneers of Reggae in the states. But they didn't have that much impact of the nascent Ska scene. Their 1981 record was floating around bargain bins in California by the late 80s. My first response to seeing it was 'Who the fuck are these guys?' They were actually pretty good and should be better known than they are.



[Blue Riddim Band - Alive In Jamaica - Reggae Sunsplash 1982 - YouTube](#)

From my experience, talking to the people who are around 4-5 years older than me, most of the germs of an American based Ska scene started in the aftermath of the the 2 Tone bands doing their first US tours in 1980. For the English bands, apparently most of these tours were big disasters. Outside of a few pockets on the coasts and the odd college campus in the interior, the US didn't get it.

Well, at least it wasn't a big scene initially. A few people did get it. Here and there the 2 Tone uniform of suits with skinny ties became popping up. 2 Tone flavored anglophile bands began forming. More on that later because more importantly the English bands kept on coming over after 1981.

The Beat, Madness, and Bad Manners had not given up on the US of A. They kept plugging away and as 2 Tone faded to memory in the UK, it began to gain some popularity in the States. Between 1982-1983, you had hits by Madness with Our House. The Beat with Save it For Later and I Confess. Bad Manners with That

Will Do Nicely Son. Of course, the Irony was that by this time the 2 Tone bands were going for a slicker pop-rock sound that downplayed Jamaican references. Our House is trying to be the Beatles. I Confess wouldn't sound of place on an ABC album. Save it for Later has the confident guitar strum of 80s pop rock. Bad Manners had the most reggae/ska influence at this time but they also had crossover dreams (check out their mid-80s lp Mental notes for some pure dreck.) Bad Manners kept on touring into the mid 80s in their original lineup and probably kept the sounds of the 2 Tone era going the longest.

Ska was popular enough that it was trendy for a couple months in a Junior High School in the suburbs on San Diego. I saw the Beat at the Del Mar Fairgrounds in early 1983 and my life was changed. [The English Beat - Mirror In The Bathroom \(Live at US Festival 9/3/1982\) - YouTube](#)



So from the 1980s, American conceptions of Ska were far from the source. I'm not gonna say they are 'wrong' cause all things change. Sometimes getting things 'wrong' leads to beautiful places. The initial Ska scene in the States though of Ska as English first and Jamaican second. It was thought of some sort of mix of rock and reggae. It was a brief fad in the 80s and it went out style sometime right after the US festival in 1983. So how the hell did Ska survive?

People in the US made a scene. It wasn't just a song here and there it was a Ska scene. Or rather many small communities and scenes that became more connected as the 1980s went on.

End of Chapter 1

The Latest in Slackers Merch



Get Your Slackers' Merch when we are not on the road!

We just got a new batch of patches!

We also got.....

Wasted Days Double LP Reissue

New York Berlin 12" single

Red Light Special Silver Vinyl Reissue

And a new Hoodie design!

We have www.theslackers.com/store
For tshirts, hoodies, vinyl, and other slackers' merch!

and www.theslackers.com/merch

this includes our....

Discogs Store – Collector Vinyl, Cassettes, and CDs

Ebay Store – Tshirts and Vinyl. Have overstock listing of out of print
tshirt styles.

Bandcamp Store – downloads of over 20 Slackers titles! Early
Demos, Unreleased Studio Tracks,

Check them all out! I know we got something you ain't got!

A Note from Our Agent



Hello everyone and welcome to another newsletter. I come to you from 2 Different Road Trips – Tokyo and Guadalajara. Look at me going around the world everywhere.

Yes, the concert business is back up and running on a large scale. Every weekend seems to bring us more opportunities from old friends as well as new markets in new venues. I figured it would be a good idea to give you a quick overview of what Tokyo was like now, And what Guadalajara feels like.

In both cases, DO NOT EAT ON THE PLANE. It's all crap that they are serving you. If the flight is longer than 10 hours, then take an edible before you get on the plane and wash it down with as much free whisky as possible. When they start charging for the whisky, do not pay. That's the sign to sleep. If it's just a 3 hour flight, dont bother. Just do your emails and listen to your sports podcasts. When you land, TAKE YOUR TIME IN THE BAGGAGE AREA. Breathe deep, go to the bathroom, use the airport wifi to clear the emails, change your money. Do as much as you can prior to going through customs, so that you're in a good mood and you hit the ground running once you leave the sacred cave that is the Airport Arrival Area.

Then you head out. Tokyo is happy that they are back up and running. The country just opened up its borders to people with a minimum of three vaccinations this last month, so it was much easier to enter the country. The collapse of the yen is no joke – a large latte at Starbucks is \$3.50, a good ramen is about five dollars, and people at the ska club complain if the beer costs more than three dollars. In short, you need to come out to Tokyo if you are in America. Spend some time ahead on instagram to find the ska and mod shows - you will want to see the younger shows there to get a great experience as to what the music is like. The Autocratics were great and so was Oi Skall Mates at their practice session (hint - they're coming out in 2023).

Guadalajara is right around the same economically for coffees. Their OXXO makes a quality large latte for \$2 and they have tallboys of Indio beer (which you can't get in the US) for \$1.50. Large wings is \$7. Happy people that want the economy to be back on the move. I'm still looking for new bands out here, and hoping I can find some good stuff. There's already great ska in mexico which you already know about (like PANTEON ROCOCO) but I'll dig in some more for you guys in the next episode.

If you want to book the Slackers, email John at john@soundtalentgroup.com

Slackers 2022 Tour Dates



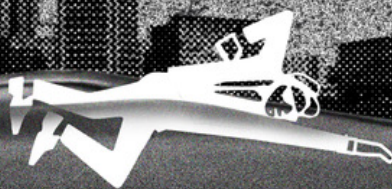
We have announced around the first 3rd of the shows we are gonna play in 2023.

- April 17 Atlanta Masquerade
- April 18 Charleston Tin Roof Alley
- April 19 Charlotte Neighborhood Theatre
- April 20 Blacksburg The Lyric
- April 21 Baltimore Soundstage
- April 22 Bensalem Croydon Fest **SOLD OUT**
- April 23 Pittsburgh Crafthouse
- April 25 Cleveland Grog Shop
- April 26 Buffalo Mohawk Place
- April 27 Toronto Opera House
- April 28 Kitchener The Hub
- April 30 Ithaca Deep Dive

May 17 St Louis Blueberry Hill
May 18 Kansas City Madrid Theatre
May 19 Omaha Slowdown
May 20 Denver ????
May 21 Colorado ????
May 23 Albuquerque Launchpad
May 24 ??????
May 25 Phoenix Crescent Ballroom
May 26 Flagstaff Yucca North
May 27 Las Vegas Punk Rock Bowling
July 21 Lichtenvoorde, NL Zwaarte Cross
July 29 Barcelona, CAT Barna N Roll
Aug 4 Duffel, BE Brakrock Fest
Aug 5 Blackpool, UK Rebellion
Aug 8 Tolmin, SLO SOLD OUT
Nov 8 Miami, FL Flogging Molly Cruise
More Tour Dates to Come!

FRIDAY APRIL 21
FISHBONE
the
SLACKERS →

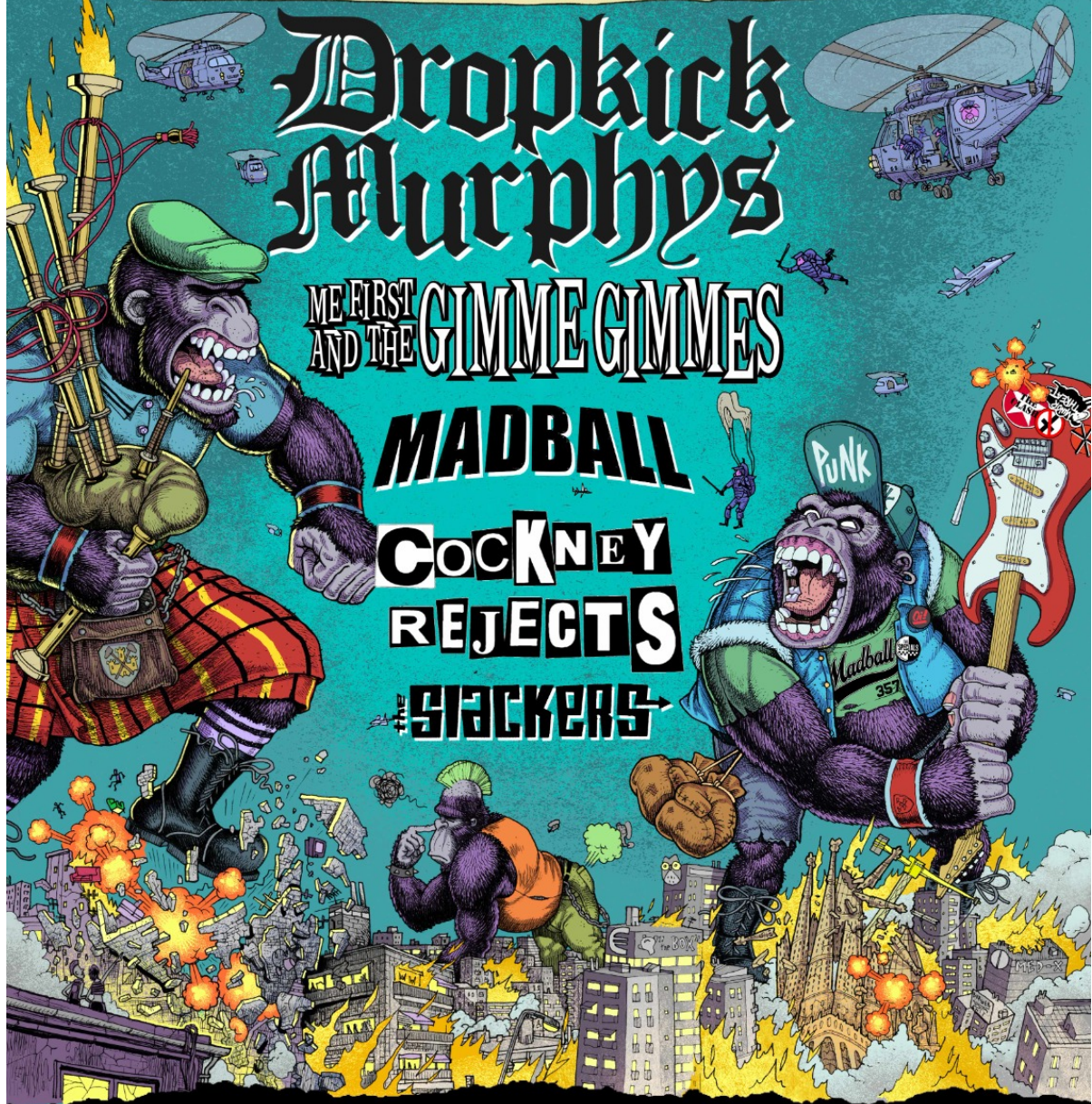
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Postscript: Slackers playing in other bands than the Slackers
When we aren't on the road with the Slackers, many of the Slackers go on the road with other acts. This spring, Dave, Vic, and Glen all

have shows. Check them out!

A SHOWCASE OF SKA, REGGAE, SOUL



David Hillyard
and the
ROCKSTEADY
Seven

FEATURING:
Larry McDonald



FEB 8 • SAN DIEGO • SODA BAR
FEB 9 • YUMA • RED MOON ALE HOUSE
FEB 10 • INGLEWOOD • THE MIRACLE
with Roger Rivas, Jackie Mendez
FEB 11 • SANTA ANA • OBSERVATORY
with Hepcat

SOLD OUT!

West Coast Tour 2023

Deals Gone Slack

Performing Live!



March 5th - Chicago IL @ Beat Kitchen
w/ The Three Blue Tourists and DJ Chuck Wilson

March 7th - Council Bluffs IA @ Maloney's Irish Pub
w/ The Bishops

March 10th - Seattle WA @ Lofi
w/ The Sandolus, The Georgetown Orbits & DJ Young Royal

March 11th - Eugene OR @ Sam Bond's Garage
w/ The Sandolus & DJ Young Royal

March 12th - Portland OR @ The Fixin' To
w/ The Sandolus, Impact Sound & DJ Young Royal

March 13th - Sacramento CA @ Cafe Colonial
w/ TBA, DJ Young Royal & Gesso Hill

March 15th - Oakland CA @ The Golden Bull
w/ The Incubers, Lou Lou & Her Spicy Bays & DJ Young Royal

March 16th - Santa Cruz CA @ The Crepe Place
w/ The Incubers, & DJ Young Royal

March 17th - Long Beach CA @ Supply & Demand
w/ TBA & DJ Young Royal

March 18th - San Diego CA @ The Cordova
w/ TBA

Featuring members of
Slackers
and
Deals Gone Bad



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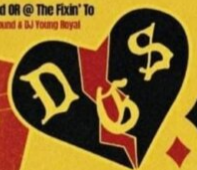
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Featuring members of
Slackers
and
Deals Gone Bad



vic ruggiero

stuff in my pockets tour

Feb. 3rd - Los Angeles @ Knitting Factory NOHO
w/ The Aggrolites & Chris Murray

Feb. 4th - Santa Ana @ 616 Bar
w/ Chris Murray

Feb. 5th - Tarzana @ Corbin Bowl
w/ The Amalgamated

Feb. 7th - Twitch.tv
w/ Scott Klopfenstein

Feb. 9th - San Diego @ Kava Collective
w/ Lauren Napier



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w/ Scott Klopfenstein

Feb. 9th - San Diego @ Kava Collective
w/ Lauren Napier

Feb. 10th - San Diego @ Black Cat Bar
w/ Chris Murray & Lauren Napier

Feb. 12th - Long Beach @ Alex's Bar
w/ Chris Murray & Lauren Napier



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