

Amanda Huron Interviewed by John Davis
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Washington, D.C.
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Davis: Today is January 18th, 2019. My name is John Davis. I'm the performing arts metadata archivist at the University of Maryland. Today I'm speaking with Amanda Huron, co-creator of *Brickthrower*. Also the Movement Empowerment Solidarity Through Art or *MESA* zines, during your years in D.C. Am I missing anything zine-wise from the D.C. years?

Huron: Not from the D.C. years. I did a zine when I was living in Minnesota, and then I did the final issue of it when I had moved back to D.C. And that was called *Splatterspleen*. Issue number five, I did when I was here. But the rest of it was Minnesota-based. And then what else? Yeah, no, that's it for D.C.

Davis: You were mentioning Minnesota.

Huron: Yeah.

Davis: So let's talk about getting into punk in the first place, and what interested you in punk. How did you get into it?

Huron: I got into punk in high school here in D.C. I think in 11th grade was when I first heard about Fugazi, so that would have been '88 or '89. And a friend of mine—actually, let's see—10th grade, a friend of mine gave me a tape of the first Fugazi—*13 Songs*. And the first time I saw them was at All Souls Church, a show with Jawbox and Shudder to Think. In September. It was either '88 or '89.

And I was—so I had a couple friends at my high school, and then we also were hanging out with a bunch of kids from Blair High School in Silver Spring who seemed to know a little bit more about punk than we did. So we were kind of hanging out a lot in Takoma Park and Silver Spring with those kids. And then just going to shows when we heard about them.

But yeah, what was it? I mean, I was—like many of us, I was a weirdo in high school. [laugh] I just did not—felt rebellious against my high school, and against sort of the mainstream

expectations, culture, et cetera. So I also was working around that time at a summer camp, a Quaker summer camp in Maryland, where there were people who were into punk too. So it was kind of like people in different parts of my life were into it, and encouraging getting into it. So yeah. I loved the music.

Davis: Did zines play any role in getting you interested? Did you read them back then?

Huron: No, no, they didn't. I didn't really become aware of zines until I left D.C. in 1990 to go to college. And I guess it was like the early '90s was when I started realizing zines were a thing and started doing my own zine and stuff.

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But before then—I mean, maybe that's not entirely true. I had a friend in high school who read *Maximum Rocknroll*, and so I was sort of aware of *Maximum Rocknroll*. But in terms of more dispersed kind of zines, I wasn't really aware of them in high school.

Davis: And you would get your information about the scene essentially from going to shows or from friends?

Huron: From friends and going to shows.

Davis: Or mix tapes or whatever other things...?

Huron: Yes, exactly. [laugh] Yeah, friends, going to shows, mix tapes. That was about it. Definitely not the radio or anything like that.

Davis: When you did start doing your own zine when you were in college, were there certain zines that it had made you want to do that?

Huron: God! That is a really good question. Why did I even get the idea to do a zine? [laugh] That's a really good question. I don't know. OK. I can't say necessarily which zines inspired me very early on, but I do know that some of the zines that inspired me as I was doing a zine around that time—*Cometbus* obviously was a big one. Melissa Klein, who's my good friend now, who also grew up in D.C. but I didn't know her when we were growing up together—she was living out in San Francisco and doing a zine called *Inkling* that I liked a lot. And then there were a lot of—like early '90s was definitely the rise of riot grrrl, so there were a lot of like riot grrrl feminist zines out there, many of which I was into. So yeah.

And then I would—I was in bands, and we would go on tour, and we would meet people who were doing other zines and trade them. There was a zine—these guys in North Carolina were in a band called Hellbender, and they did a zine called *Foodbox* that I really loved. And then Al Burian from that band went on to do *Burn Collector*, which is a zine I really love. And Al has become a friend over the years. I mean, it's funny how like people just—it's like I've never lived in the same city as Al, but I was in Berlin a year and a half ago, and spent like all this time hanging out. You know? It was just like a—because we have this super shared history thing, which includes the zine stuff. But yeah.

And then I would just—when I was doing a zine, I would just be constantly trading zines with other people, and writing letters back and forth and stuff. So there's a guy John whose last name I can't remember—he did a zine called *Pants That Don't Fit*. I don't know, it's like these just [laugh] zines you come across and connect with. Yeah.

I'd have to—I of course had hundreds and hundreds of these, and then a couple years ago, I pared it down to like a basic core of zines that fit in one box, which I have. The ones that really meant something to me. *Scam*. Iggy Scam was doing a zine out of San Francisco that was really incredible. *Scam* zine. *Doris* zine I liked a lot.

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Davis: So you moved back here after college?

Huron: Yeah, moved back here. Right. So I moved back here in the summer of 1995, yeah. I spent an extra year out in Minnesota after college just playing music and going on tour and stuff, and then I moved back here in the summer of '95. And yeah, moved into my dad's basement, and started playing music with people. And then met Natalie [Avery, co-editor of *Brickthrower*] in the summer of '96. So that was really when I started connecting with a lot of people.

Well, actually the first punks I connected with when I moved back to D.C. in '95 were like those University of Maryland punks, like Luci Fort and Nick Pimentel and like these—and we got connected because they were fans of the band I was in in Minnesota, and they had seen us play here. So I sort of knew them vaguely. And then I got more connected with other folks over the course of the next year or so. But Natalie, I met that summer of '96, and that was when we—we basically just hung out every day. [laugh]

Davis: So you started [Huron and Avery's band] Stigmatics right around that time?

Huron: I guess it was that summer, yeah, because we met through that band. I mean, I had met Cristina Calle—I forget even how I met Cristina. It was at some like bike courier party I was at. And then she and I talked about playing music together and then she mentioned, “Oh, I know this woman, Natalie, who plays guitar, and maybe she'll want to play with us.” And so then we played with Natalie. And then we just became friends through that.

Davis: And it was pretty unusual for a band to make its own zine. That was sort of one of the defining characteristics, even, of Stigmatics, I feel like, at the time, was that it was cool that not only did this band make music but they also worked together to create a publication.

Huron: Yeah.

Davis: But I assume you all were just sort of in the throes of inspiration at that point, right?

Huron: [laugh] Yeah. I mean, cause we were all really interested—we all lived in Mount Pleasant, and we were all interested in sort of what was going on in the neighborhood in terms of neighborhood politics of the mid-'90s. And it's funny, because now [laugh] when you study D.C. history, as I do, and then people talk about D.C. history, they're like, “Oh, the mid-'90s was like the absolute nadir of D.C...”—you know, the Control Board took over the city in '95, and it was this like murder capital of the world, and all this stuff. The HIV rate was going through the roof. We still were dealing with the ravages of crack and the violence of that.

But our experience of D.C. in the mid-'90s was one of thinking about gentrification and all these INS raids, people getting deported, and Clinton ending welfare as we knew it. And all this stuff. And we were really concerned with the gentrification we saw happening in Mount Pleasant at the time, which was definitely going on even though so many other parts of the city were so devastated then. So anyway, we were talking a lot about that.

And then Natalie and I both like to write, and Cristina was an artist, so it sort of seemed like, “OK, this could be a good thing to do.”

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And then we also—Andrea Blatchford was our other friend who kind of started *Brickthrower* with us. And we played with her a tiny bit—music—a little bit, at the beginning. But then she did not end up being in the band, but she was part of putting the zine together. And she lives in L.A. now. But she had also grown up here and was into punk.

Davis: It seemed like issues were often timed to an event.

Huron: Yeah. They were almost always—we released—I think always, we put together an issue for a show. So the idea was we wanted to create—when we did a show, we wanted to play our music, but we also wanted to have something tangible that expressed something in a different way—so like writing, that we could hand out at the show. And we saw the show as an opportunity to distribute our zine, basically. And we wanted to give people something that they could—to provide some context for the show, I guess?

We were really—this was also a period of time in the ‘90s when there was lots and lots of talk of like punk selling out and all that stuff, you know? And thinking about, “Well, what does it mean to even be doing this thing the we experience as an anti-capitalist phenomenon?” But obviously lots of other—you know, that’s quickly changing. Like the Nirvana thing, and like the Green Day thing. I mean, Green Day—I never really cared about Green Day. But Nirvana—I mean, that was a big deal that Nirvana signed to a major label and all that stuff. So we were thinking about, “Well, how do we emphasize the political context of what we’re doing and how important that is to us?” And so creating a zine that had these ideas in them was one way to emphasize that, I guess. Yeah.

We did one—there was a Fort Reno show we played—we had a *Brickthrower* for that show. We played a show with Fugazi at the Wilson Center. I think we had a zine for that show. There was one—the last one we did was just for a tour that we did, so we put it together to take with us on tour. But yeah, we liked—cause also that was a—if you have a show, then there’s like hundreds of people there—maybe, depending on the show—to get the zine, too. So it’s a way to do distro, basically. [laugh]

Davis: Did you engage often with people at the shows about the content? Did you get much feedback?

Huron: You know, that’s a good question. I think not so much at the shows. ‘Cause you know, we were like organizing the show and playing the show, so you’re just kind of—you don’t really have that much time to actually talk to people [laugh] at the show,

unfortunately, when you're doing that. But I guess we would give it to people and say a few words in explanation, but I don't remember having super long conversations with people about the content at the show, I guess just cause of the nature of—it's hard to have a long conversation with anyone at a show that you're playing.

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Davis: Right, yeah.

Huron: [laugh]

Davis: The issue that you took out on tour—that's also interesting to me, because although a lot of the content in the zine was hyper-local, the concepts were not, right? You were certainly going places—not every city you played with Fugazi would have those issues in quite the same way as D.C. would, but do you know if it really translated at all to people elsewhere?

Huron: That's a really good question. I wish I could say if I knew that. I do remember people being generally positive and interested in it. And I definitely remember having conversations with people about gentrification in different cities that we went to. And that was one of the things we talked about or wrote about, although there were a bunch of other things, too. But I don't remember if there was specific content that people really resonated with. I think in general, people sort of appreciated the like, "Oh, they're doing something that's—they're thinking about something beyond..." I mean, I hate to say "beyond the music," because the music really is the whole point, you know? [laugh] It's like why we are doing this stuff is the music. But to be having another dimension, bringing that piece in—a more kind of explicitly political dimension—I guess it seemed like people appreciated in general. So whether or not the specific issues were something that they were thinking about or working on.

Davis: When I talked with Natalie about the production of the zine, it sounded like some of the purpose of it for her was also to engage with your community in Mount Pleasant.

Huron: Mmhmm.

Davis: So my question is—what is the audience for *Brickthrower*? Who were you hoping would be reading this? It seems its format and its aesthetics are from a punk world. Were you mainly hoping to get people from the punk world to pay attention to something real that was happening right around them?

Huron: Yeah, I would say that that was the case. Yeah. Because it's clearly a punk aesthetic and vibe and everything, and we were passing it out at our shows. So we were expecting the people to be reading it to sort of get that punk thing. That said, we also really made an effort to organize shows that were not just punk bands, necessarily, and to kind of try to mix things up.

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And that was a lot of what we were doing with this group Stand For Our Neighbors, was trying to create these like nights of music where you brought together a lot of different styles of music and different—you know, different kinds of people. Different cultures, different races of people who are living in the same neighborhoods but not necessarily hanging out together.

So for instance, when I look at this *MESA* zine, I mean, it's a zine, so it's clearly—and it's got these photocopied photographs that you can barely see what the hell's going on with them. So it's got a very much like a punk kind of aesthetic. But I mean, half of the zine is in Spanish. So the idea was like this would actually—we were going to distribute this at this particular show that—I don't even know if we played this show or not; I don't know who played it. But this benefit for Centro de Arte at the—I assume it was at the Wilson Center.

Anyway, we were passing this out to like a much broader variety of people who would have been at that show. But yeah, I think in general, the audience would be punks. It would be like people—activist types who were living not necessarily in Mount Pleasant but sort of in D.C. And yeah, I think the sort of activists kind of broadly defined.

Davis: You had a group of people collaborating on this. Did each person have a distinct thing that they brought, or was everyone doing everything?

Huron: Let's see. Cristina did more of the art. I think we would sort of take turns on like laying things out and that kind of thing. I definitely laid out that fabulous cover right there. [laugh]

Davis: Issue 4. Yeah.

Huron: Issue number 4. Yeah. I mean, it's like—OK, that's kind of basic. And I remember laying out actually this whole—like doing the layout for this whole zine, which is just, you know, columns. Not that exciting. But you know. And like putting the art in there.

Davis: How were you doing that at that point?

Huron: Just cut and paste. I had a computer, and so I guess I would type it up on the computer and format it in columns, and then print it out and cut out the columns, and you know, do the cut and paste thing. This is a good one. I actually like this issue. This interview with Roby [Newton]—ended up being a friend, from North Carolina. I didn't know her too well at the time.

Davis: Who was later in Milemarker, right?

Huron: That's right. Exactly, exactly. Super inspiring person. Really cool artist person. But—[laugh]. Yeah. Oh—"February 28th, over a dozen local female artists performed a benefit at Centro de Arte."

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OK, maybe that was—maybe that was that benefit. I don't know. Oh, I see. We made *Brickthrower #4* for our tour through the Midwest. I thought we made a different—#5 was for our tour. Maybe that was for our tour through the South. Anyway. Huh.

But yeah, in terms of the writing, Natalie and I would just kind of like write about something we were interested in or working on or researching or whatever. I was volunteering at Bancroft Elementary School, like tutoring there, which is the public elementary school in Mount Pleasant. And I wrote a piece about a kid who I was tutoring there. Natalie wrote—in a bunch of different issues, she wrote about gentrification. Sort of the neoliberal city. I wrote about Radio CPR a bunch.

But yeah, I think it would just come out of these constant discussions we were having about stuff, just—and then we'd just be like, "Oh, I want to write about this." "OK, great." There wasn't like any real like editorial process or anything. [laugh] It was just kind of like, "What do we want to do? Do it." Yeah.

Davis: How many copies would you typically make of an issue?

Huron: I don't know, maybe 500 or so? I don't know if even that many. We had a friend who worked at a Kinko's who made them all for free for us. [laugh]

Davis: So shows were clearly a place where you would do a lot of the distribution.

Huron: Mmhmm.

Davis: But were there other places that you distributed the zine?

Huron: There was—I can't remember—I forget when DCCD opened.

Davis: It was right at the time that this was all happening.

Huron: Yeah, yeah.

Davis: Maybe '98?

Huron: Yeah, that's what I'm thinking. Maybe '98, yeah. Because we had broken up by '98, I think. But then we were—but *Brickthrower* went on longer than the band. OK, that's interesting, too. I think *Brickthrower* went on longer than the band. Maybe it didn't, though. No. But this *MESA* thing was put—because this is Winter '99. We were definitely broken up by then. This was like a kind of post-Stigmatics thing.

Davis: That you worked on together?

Huron: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Right.

Davis: So the last issue of *Brickthrower*, which was #5...

Huron: I think was #5, yeah.

Davis: ...would have been a Stigmatics production, if you will.

Huron: Yes, yes. [laugh]

Davis: But that was it.

Huron: That was it. Yes. For Stigmatics productions, yes.

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And *MESA* was like more Natalie's project than mine, but we did this zine together, as I recall. And I have a piece in it, so—but I don't think I laid this one out. I think Natalie did that. Sorry, you had asked a question?

Davis: What had made you stop doing *Brickthrower*? It felt just too tied to the band?

Huron: Yeah. It was like a band project. The band was over. It was sort of done. Yeah. But Natalie and I wanted to keep working on stuff, and so the *MESA* thing was one of the things that came out of that.

Davis: How many zines did you make connected—I feel there are a number of—there’s a very small format one.

Huron: Well, there was one really small and that I can’t find. Well, I made one that it was just—I just sort of made by myself, but it was like a—it was a very small format that we passed out at one of our shows. So it wasn’t like a *Brickthrower* or *Stigmatics* thing, but I made it. It was connected to the whole thing, but it was basically a very small thing about taxation without representation [laugh] in D.C.

Davis: What was it called?

Huron: The zine didn’t have a name. It was just—it just said something like “Taxation without…” It had some reference to taxation. I think the show might have been on April 15th. It was some sort of thing that tied the issue to the show. It was a show at La Casa. And it was just a very simple—it was more graphically interesting than a lot of our zines were. It had like a map on it, and some info in it. I’m sure I have a copy of it somewhere. But it was very simple. It was just like one piece of paper that kind of folded out, like this.

Davis: Were there any articles or—there aren’t that many interviews.

Huron: Yeah.

Davis: There are some. Usually sort of with people from the neighborhood or people you were working with or something. But are there any interviews or articles that you wrote or that someone else wrote for it that stand out in your memory from these zines?

Huron: I did an interview with El Vez, the Mexican Elvis. He was awesome. He was an incredible—I don’t know what happened to him. He was an incredible performer. And that was a really cool experience. The interview with Roby was taking place while she was in town with a bunch of people from North Carolina at one of these massive anti-war—actually, it wasn’t one of the massive—it was a big anti-war demonstration. Anti-Iraq War demonstration? And she had come up with all these people, and they made all these puppets and all this craziness.

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But that was a—I enjoyed—well, we did the interview sort of in Dupont Circle where this protest was beginning, and that was kind of—it was just an exciting kind of situation.

Davis: That’s in…?

- Huron: That's in *Brickthrower #4*. Yeah.
- Davis: That pre-dates the Iraq War, so what was the protest?
- Huron: I know, I'm trying—I'm like, what war was it, actually? It was an anti-war protest, and people came from all over for it. And it was in Dupont. And then there was a march.
- Davis: Bosnia?
- Huron: I know, right?
- Davis: I'm trying to think.
- Huron: I know. Yeah, right—it wasn't Iraq.
- Davis: There were protests against the sanctions in Iraq, but—maybe? I don't know.
- Huron: Well, maybe...
- Davis: Anyway, I'm just curious.
- Huron: I mean, it would have been—right. It would have been ninety...
- Davis: It was probably '98 or something.
- Huron: OK, here it is. Protesting Clinton's apparent willingness to bomb Iraq.
- Davis: OK.
- Huron: [laugh] That's what it says here. Yeah. Trying to prevent Clinton from bombing Iraq. So I guess that was, yeah, what it was.
- Davis: So what was it about those interviews that makes them stand out? Just that the subjects were so interesting, or was it...
- Huron: Yeah.
- Davis: ...something about the conversation, or...?
- Huron: I think the subjects were so interesting. I think with Roby, it was the context of just being in the midst of this very exciting demonstration. And I mean, El Vez was just like—he was just—he was so—I don't know, he had this really awesome combination of great music and incredible style. Like he had these dancers, the Elvettes, who were these women up on stage with him who just did these incredible dance moves while he was playing. But he was

also super highly charged political guy, so it was just—and it was this super fun, entertaining kind of political thing. And so it was really inspiring to talk to him about that combination of things. So yeah.

And then the other pieces—I mean, I wrote a fair amount—I wrote at least a couple things about radio and Radio CPR. I was getting really interested in neighborhood radio as a way to share music, culture, get together with people, work on a project.

Davis: And can you describe what Radio CPR was—is—was?

Huron: [laugh] Yeah, was. So this was—oh, god. So we were working on this stuff in Mount Pleasant, this sort of neighborhood organizing, and we had—I had gotten interested in this idea of having a neighborhood radio station.

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I had done college radio at my college. We had a 10-watt radio station at my college. It was one of these very low-power stations. And I got involved in college radio. My first radio show was doing a show all of D.C. music. And then I worked in a community radio station in Minneapolis called KFAI when I was in college.

And then so I came back, and I was interested in radio and thinking about like, well, could we have a neighborhood radio station as a way to kind of also cross some communication barriers in our neighborhood? Because the internet was a new thing in the mid-'90s. Some people had email; some people didn't. Most people didn't have it at home. But the email was increasingly how people were communicating—people with education and money were communicating in Mount Pleasant on this new Mount Pleasant bulletin board listserv thing, and saying a bunch of just racist shit, you know? And not entirely, but that was—it was a sort of assumption that “Oh, the people who I'm speaking to in this internet forum are like me,” you know? And of course, it was all English.

So we wanted to like create some form of communication that was more accessible than that. [laugh] And we were like, “Well, the radio's free. Anyone can listen to the radio.” So Stigmatics had gone on tour, and we were coming back, and we played our last show of this tour in Philadelphia. And I saw a flyer—we played at this like—at the time, like sort of long-standing punk warehouse in Philadelphia, and I saw a flyer on the wall for this East Coast microbroadcasters convention that was taking place in Philadelphia

the following weekend, that was bringing together all these pirate radio operators from the East Coast. So I was like, “Man, I want to come back to Philly next weekend for this thing to check it out.”

So Natalie and I drove back up the next weekend to Philly. She went to—the Kensington Welfare Rights Union was this like radical welfare rights organization group in the Kensington neighborhood of North Philadelphia. They were also having a conference that same weekend. So we drove back up, she went to the KWRU conference, I went to the East Coast microbroadcasters conference, and then we like drove back together. And that was like quite a formative weekend, I think, for both of us.

So I was introduced to all these people doing pirate radio up and down the East Coast and some who came from as far away as Iowa, including my friend Jamie Schweser who I had met through punk, through playing shows together, and who had lived in D.C. briefly and written a book with a friend called *Tales of a Punk Rock Nothing*, which is like this book about being a loser D.C. punk in the ‘90s. [laugh] Which is great. So anyway, Jamie was living in Iowa City helping run a pirate radio station in Iowa City. He was there. Lots of people were there.

And then so when I came back—that was the summer of ‘98. Yeah. And when we came back to D.C., I was like, “OK, we gotta start this radio station.” And then we helped organize this big protest outside the FCC and the National Association of Broadcasters in October of ‘98.

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And as part of that protest, the evening after the protest ended, we organized this neighborhood cabaret at La Casa and broadcast that cabaret out to the neighborhood through FM, an FM signal. And that was—we sort of date it as like our first broadcast of Radio CPR, because then we started organizing in the neighborhood to see who was interested in helping start a community radio station.

And we through—anyway, ultimately started one, that really got going like with regular broadcasts and everything, in 2000. And that was Radio CPR. And then that just disbanded like last year, I think. I wasn’t involved for the last few years, but...

Davis: Did that essentially replace the zine as your platform?

Huron: I think that’s probably accurate. Yes. I think that’s a good way of putting it. Natalie and I put like—yeah. Once the zine was over, the band—we weren’t doing Stigmatics anymore. But like we

threw ourselves into that radio station project, big time. And that was like what we did for a couple years. [laugh] Like we just worked part-time jobs and did the radio station. [laugh]

Davis: Did you ever do a zine again after this period?

Huron: Yes. I moved to North Carolina in 2000 to go to grad school, but also because I just wanted to, you know, leave, get new perspective. And I had a bunch of punk friends in North Carolina, like Roby, who I had interviewed, and my friend Nora, and some other people. So I knew there were people down there who I could live with and be friends with. So I moved to Chapel Hill in 2000, and I didn't do a zine while I was in Chapel Hill, but I was in this master's program at UNC and in the Spring of 2002, I spent the semester in Berlin as part of that master's program.

And when I was in Berlin, I did a zine called *Probation Area*, and I just did one issue of it. And that was named in honor of the performance artist Vito Acconci, who had a performance piece called *Probation Area*, which was basically about like testing out things, and experimenting. So that was my name for the zine. And I wrote a bunch about—that was a good zine, actually, but I didn't really—I barely distributed it. And I didn't really know how to, because it wasn't—I mean, it was a zine, and it came out of a punk thing, but it was more like—I was more focused on like the writing, and it was a little more literary in some ways, and more like arty-farty, I guess I could say.

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And I think *Probation Area*—that is the last zine that I ever did. Yeah.

Davis: Whatever energy you had that went into those...

Huron: [laugh]

Davis: ...zines, how do you channel that today?

Huron: That's a goddamn good question! That is a goddamn good question. I really like to write. I wrote a book last year, or that came out last year, and that took a lot of my writing energy. But I'm really actually thinking a lot right now about writing, and writing—I mean, the book I wrote was for an academic press and was based on my dissertation. And it was a good project, and I'm glad I wrote it and did it, but I wasn't really paying attention that much to the actual writing, you know? Like the—yeah, the words.

So that's something I've been thinking a lot about, actually, is wanting to do more writing.

But I guess I'm like—the thing that was nice about the zine was like you just created your own context for it, you know? Like you would write—you'd be like, "I've written this thing, but what do I do with it?" "Oh, just put it in the zine." And now it's like—one would think—and there are, of course, way more outlets. You know, you can write something and put it on Facebook, I guess, or a blog. If people do blogs still. And there's all these different outlets and stuff. But I don't know. But then sometimes it just feels like people are overwhelmed with like words. I'm like, "What's the point of like...?" You know, are people going to read what I wrote? I don't know. But I do have some projects that I'm thinking about now.

But it's also like I just want to learn stuff. You know? I just really like learning stuff. I just want to immerse myself in things and learn things and then we'll see what comes out in terms of any writing. So. My job takes a lot of my creative—I like my job because it's a very creative—a lot of my creative energy goes into it. So it's a similar kind of energy that would go into that kind of thing.

And I still play music, and I guess especially my band, Weed Tree. Like we've really tried to organize some shows that are—where like putting on the show itself is like this really fun, creative kind of experimental process. And for a while, Mike and I lived in a different building, and we were putting on—Layne and I from my band Weed Tree were putting on shows in the basement of that building, in this space called the—that we sort of rechristened the Back Alley Theatre. It had been this theatre called the Back Alley Theatre in the basement [0:36:00] building in the '70s and '80s, and then it had shut down at some point.

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And then Mike and I moved into the building, 2010, and I found out about this history of this theatre, and then Layne and I started shows, mostly experimental music shows, down there in the basement. Did them for a couple years. And that was like a beautiful awesome thing. And so that was that similar kind of—I don't know, it was in some ways the same kind of energy that would go into making a zine, because you're sort of creating something that people are coming to. And I don't know, that was cool. But then we left that place, and so I haven't put on a show in a while, actually. Because doing the zines also seemed connected

to playing music, but also putting on shows. So like that kind of organizing stuff.

Davis: You mentioned reading riot grrrl zines, many of which were produced here in D.C.

Huron: Yeah, yeah.

Davis: Were there other zines from D.C. that you ever recall reading?

Huron: I guess I should say specifically—because when you think about what inspired you to write a zine, that question you asked earlier—I should say specifically the *Bikini Kill* zine was specifically very interesting to me. And I remember seeing Bikini Kill play with Nation of Ulysses at 7th St. Entry in Minneapolis in whenever that was—'93 or something? Or '94? Whenever that tour was that they did together. And Kathleen Hanna had given me the last copy they had of that issue of *Bikini Kill*, and that zine like really blew my mind. Like, it really, really blew my mind, and it was really good. So I just wanted to mention that one.

Davis: What about it do you recall blew your mind?

Huron: Yeah, it was just like—there was something so raw about it. And just the way—I don't know, man. I mean, that band was incredible. And like—and so—and the zine was like—the way that they—they just had this really awesome feminist analysis, but they were also like—I don't know. It felt like this emotionally raw open thing that was really exciting to see in print. Yeah. And maybe in some ways, actually, that was—I mean, I never—I don't know if I really thought about it this way before, but that was another band that—I don't know if the band made the zine, quite, you know, but the band was called Bikini Kill and the zine was also called *Bikini Kill*. So it's like—you know. But there was this really like—there's obviously like a super tight connection between the zine and the band. So I think that probably inspired me, in retrospect thinking about that, to have our band do a zine. But yeah, any other zines from D.C.? And then the Bratmobile—or was it called Bratmobile?

0:39:00

Davis: It was *Girl Germs*.

Huron: *Girl Germs*. Right, *Girl Germs*. But that was from Washington state.

Davis: Right, that was more when they were out West.

Huron: Like Olympia. Yeah. I liked *Girl Germs*. Oh! Yeah! Daisy Rooks did a zine...

Davis: *Not Even?*

Huron: Yes, *Not Even*. Yes, yes. And I knew Daisy from high school. So yeah, I really liked Daisy Rooks' zine. Her sister Margaret was one of the people who first—I think Margaret Rooks was who gave me that Fugazi tape in 10th grade. And that might have been it, though, in terms of when I was living in Minnesota and—yeah. It's sort of funny; even though I was like really into D.C. music at the time—I was from here—I wasn't like, you know—I don't think I was really communicating with many people who were making zines in D.C. except for Daisy and maybe some of the riot grrrl stuff.

Davis: Do you remember what it was about *Not Even* that appealed to you?

Huron: Yes, I do remember. What appealed to me about *Not Even* was [laugh] Daisy wrote these articles and she used footnotes. [laugh] I was like, "That is badass." Like I had never seen that in a zine before.

Davis: [laugh]

Huron: I was like, "This woman is writing these articles, and she's telling us where she got the information from. I really like that a lot." [laugh] So. So yeah. I like footnotes. [laugh]

Davis: We're about out of time.

Huron: Yeah.

Davis: Was there anything else you think we should talk about?

Huron: I don't know. I wish I had the other copies in front of me. I could—I mean, I assume Natalie talked to you about like why we named it what we did and all that stuff.

Davis: Yes.

Huron: I guess the only other thing—and this is probably common for anyone who ever made one of these things—is just the like total thrill of making it, you know? And just the total thrill of going to Kinko's and just like spending hours laying it out, and then just like seeing this thing you made like come out in these multiple copies [laugh] was just like super exciting, to see these like thoughts and ideas replicated in this way. And then to be able to

like have this very nice, neat, beautiful little product that you could just like give away. I mean, there's just something very thrilling about the whole process. Yeah. It's like deeply sort of exciting to make these things.

Davis: Mmhmm. And something that still years later, you can still look at...

Huron: Yeah!

Davis: ...and hold the actual zine that you made...

Huron: Yeah.

Davis: ...and have those ideas in one place is great.

Huron: Yeah, it's very cool. It does make me worried about how electronic stuff is preserved, and—I don't know.

Davis: That's an issue. Yeah. And so much of it is ephemeral.

0:42:00

I mean, granted zines were ephemeral in their way, as well. But this information is produced at such a greater rate than it was then. We are going to lose more of it. So part of what is appealing about print is that I don't think it's as ephemeral.

Huron: Yeah.

Davis: Yeah, we are going to lose a lot because of this. That is why social media or things like that don't seem to me to be the—an evolution, in a way.

Huron: Yeah. That said, one of the things that sort of appealed to me, in sort of an absurdist way, about the whole radio project, was I liked the ephemerality of it. Like if you don't tune in at this time, you're just gonna miss it. It's here; it's gone. You know? So there is something that I appreciate about the ephemerality of all this stuff. But at the same time, as someone who's interested in history and studying something that happened in the past, it's quite nice to have paper to look at.

Davis: It's a paradox, in a way. This is a genre of music and a culture that is ostensibly about the moment, about the present.

Huron: Right, right.

Davis: Or even the future, maybe, but hopefully not the past.

Huron: Right.

Davis: There's so much focus on the past of punk as well, but it's valuable. I think that focusing—or studying the past—maybe not focusing, but studying the past—can enable you to create new things and create things for the future, whether it's books or something else; I don't know. But it is just interesting that—the ephemeral nature of social media like we're talking about is kind of true to the ethos of that. That it's just like—it was there and it's gone. Like you talk about these riot grrrl zines; my understanding is that was kind of what they were thinking when they made them. That it was just like, “It's just for now.” It's not to sort of write this down and remember it later. It's just to spread an idea now.

Huron: Right. And you know what's funny about that, though, is that that *Bikini Kill* zine that I was talking about—I—and I've never done this before in a zine—before or since—but I actually—when I have a book, I usually write my name in it, to be like—if I ever lend it to someone, they know it's mine. And so that zine, I wrote my name in it. That same reason. Because I was just like, “I...this is mine.” Like, “And I can't—I don't want to lose this. It's so important to me.” And so I was treating it like a book. I was treating it like something that was like [gasp] this object that was not at all what they intended. [laugh] Which is funny.

Davis: And you still have that?

Huron: Mhmm.

Davis: Good.

Huron: Oh yeah, definitely. Definitely.

Davis: Well, I don't have any other questions. Are we good?

Huron: Yeah, I think we're good. I don't know how useful that was, but...

Davis: It was useful. Thank you.

Huron: OK. [laugh]

[End of recording]