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KISS AND TELL...

Interview by Arash Moussavian for FIREHOUSE MAGAZINE

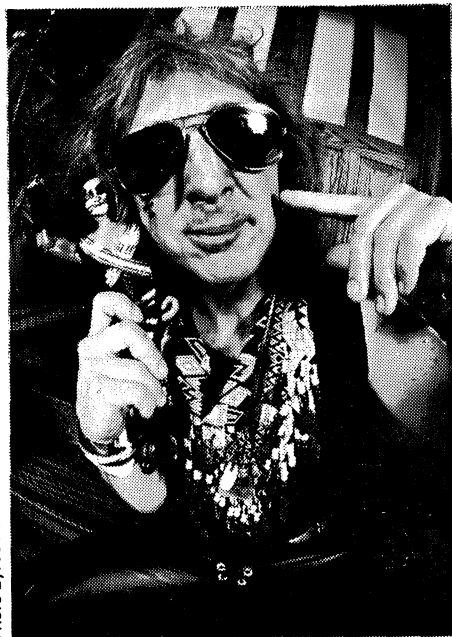


Photo by: Joe Marshall

Since his official departure from KISS on May 17/80 Peter Criss has maintained a fairly low profile. Aside from the release of his two solo records, *Out Of Control* ('80) and *Let Me Rock You* ('82), and the short-lived jaunts with The Alliances, Balls of Fire and a few other bands, Peter mainly has been out of the public eye. However, that has all changed with the formation of CRISS a year and a half ago. The band recently undertook a three-month club tour which began in Las Vegas in April, and concluded in Reno on July 11/92. The following interview was conducted with Peter following the second to the last show in Oakland, California on July 10, 1992.

Arash Moussavian: How is the tour going so far?

Peter Criss: The tour is over. Three weeks ago we finished a three month tour (New York, Chicago, Detroit, Ohio, Texas, and Canada). Excellent, sell-out everywhere. We came home, my agent called me and said, "Look man, I know you just got back, I know you're burnt out, but I got a couple of shows that I really need you to fill in and do them." One was in Redland, two hours from my apartment in Hollywood. I also have a house on the ocean in Redondo. And the next was here in Oakland and that's Mark, my bass player's home. So I said, "Alright, fuck it we'll do that." And then there's Reno and that's it, that's tomorrow. Then I'm off to see my girlfriend in Canada.

AM: Can I ask you something now that you brought up your girlfriend? Lydia has been passing around a rumor...

PC: Lydia Criss is my first wife.

AM: Right. A rumor that Debra is divorcing you. Is that true?

PC: Yeah.

AM: What was the first show you played on this tour?

PC: That's hard (question), we've been out for three months... it could've been... oh it was Vegas. Vegas was the first one. It was fun too, it was good.

AM: Reviews so far have said that the shows have been good; the only show that was somewhat tough for you was the one in New York at the Ritz.

PC: Yeah. It broke my heart because it is my home, and there's half the house in attendance. But then I lived in Connecticut for ten years and the following night we played there and the people lined up, they couldn't even get in.

AM: Was that at Toad's Place?

PC: Yeah. It was a great show man. They loved us and they treated me better (than in New York). I only lived ten years in Connecticut and I lived all my life in Brooklyn, New York in the ghetto. Nobody showed up and it really hurt, it hurt my feelings.

AM: What is the main reason (motivation) that you formed CRISS now?

PC: I couldn't get in a band because I was bigger than the band (laughter). That may sound crazy to you, but have you ever read Ringo Starr's autobiography? And I'm writing an autobiography now. Hopefully it will be published by the end of the year. It's called KISS And Tell.

AM: Wasn't it A Face Without A KISS?

PC: No. It's now KISS AND TELL. I'm working with my fifth writer. (At this point Peter returns to answer the previous question) I was gonna go with Foreigner and was gonna drum with this and that (band). But every band I got to play with they got so pissed off because I was bigger than their names.

AM: Like with Balls of Fire.

PC: Yeah, bullshit, it was all ego. So I said, "Fuck you, I'll get my own band." So five years ago I decided to do this, and the last year and a half these guys have been with me and I love them. In fact, we have already recorded eight songs. I am recording with Bill Dupley over at Madonna's studio. But he opened it up and he also shares it with Lionel Richie. So we've been recording there. There's a lot of interest (in this band) and there is a lot of record people that want us. So while they are waiting to dick around and figure who wants us we are gonna go out and work and make money.

AM: That was my next question. So you positively have a record deal?

PC: Oh yeah we definitely got one. But I just want to keep working the guys because I (already) paid my dues. I got a Grammy and I got a People's Choice, I got fifty-two gold and platinum records on my wall. But these guys (have) got to pay some dues man. But I'm paying them too with them. So I'm suffering just as badly (laughter), but it's worth it.

AM: So the band consists of Ray Carrion (lead guitar), Phil Anthony (lead

vocals and rhythm guitar) and Montague (bass).

PC: Yes.

AM: How has touring changed between the seventies as compared to now?

PC: Oh the seventies were better. There was no AIDS. You could fuck anybody you want. You could get a blowjob any way you want. It was much better, it was much looser, it was just cooler. Now everything is ... you know ... a fuckin' scumbag. It's all bullshit. I think the sluts are still there, the groupies are still there. That is still there. But a lot has changed.

AM: I know the band needs a break now from touring ...

PC: I am leaving in two weeks to go fishing with my girlfriend up in the mountains of Canada. We have a cabin up there. So we'll fish for a couple of weeks.

AM: You seem to really enjoy Canada because you did extensive touring there.

PC: Well I got a lot of gold records in Canada, and I got a real sweetie there who I love very much. Her name is Carrie. We have been together for two months. I was going through a divorce and she seems to have filled the gap... filled it real well. She is twenty-three which is nice and beats a thirty-five year old wife so I'm not bitchin'.

AM: Peter, I give my condolences for the passing away of your mother.

PC: Oh thank you man that means a lot. I miss my mother. My mother is hanging over us. I am suing Star magazine, right now as we talk. It's getting very heavy. I'm suing them for a lot of money, and I'm talking about a lot of money. So it's real big. They bothered me when I buried my mother, and I was robbed. I didn't need that at the funeral or at the burial. They hurt my family and they hurt my father. My father is dying of cancer and it's all caused by those bastards!

AM: With respect to the two records you put out after you left KISS, Out Of Control and Let Me Rock You, not so much the first record, but the second record had a potential to do so much better. Is the reason for it that it was only released in Europe?

PC: Yeah. They (the record company) fucked me.

AM: You had the song "Tears" on that record co-written by Vinnie Vincent.

PC: Yeah, I know, but they lied to me. I also had Steve Stevens, Steve Lukather...

AM: And the track "Feels Like Heaven" written by Gene Simmons. You also had "Tears", the song that broke John Waite big and you had it first.

PC: Oh yeah, I know... I had it and I think mine was better. But that's the way

it goes. SO you have to keep on trying. It's not an easy business. You might think it's like "Oh great, you do drugs, you fuck the broad... you're having a great old fuckin' time." But it's hard fuckin' work man getting up there, sweating your balls off, playing every fuckin' night, driving eighteen hours, doing a concert, driving another eighteen hours, doing another concert, driving another ten houses, doing another concert... try it! I like to see some people try that and (I would) like to see what they feel like after they try it.

AM: How many shows did you play a week on this tour?

PC: On this last tour we were doing five shows a week.

AM: That is a lot of shows during a three months period.

PC: Fuckin' A!

AM: Also the fact that you are going on stage really late.

PC: It was killing my vocals. I mean we were going on at one o'clock.

AM: You went on at one o'clock tonight.

PC: We drove eight hours to get here. Then we didn't eat dinner, and we finally got some dinner. It was a nightmare. So the band is burnt out, we're tired. "Is that o.k.?" It's like people may go "Well oh!" (in a skeptical tone). Well "Fuck you." I'm normal, I throw up, I get over the bowl, I eat, I shit, I get laid, I get sick, I'm not superman (laughter). I come from the ghettos. I grew up in a poor neighborhood. Nothing came easy to me.

AM: What was the reason for the concluding OUT OF CONTROL with a brief rendition the classic song "As Time Goes By"?

PC: To bust Gene's balls.

AM: But you met during the recording sessions for Black N Blue's Nasty, Nasty album, and he reportedly hugged you and gave you a kiss.

PC: He's a good phoney, but he plays the game well. He doesn't talk from the heart.

AM: Didn't they contact you about including "Beth" on the Smashes, Thrashed & Hits album released in 1988?

PC: Yeah. But they didn't let me know that Eric (Carr) was doing it. They just let me think it was gonna go on the album, that they were going to re-release it.

AM: I noticed that you changed your brand of drums. You obviously played Pearl with KISS.

PC: I'm with DW now, the best, I'm with the fuckin' Rolls Royce. It takes one year to make a set of DWs. They are not coming on a conveyer belt. They are being custom made. You pick them out. That is why Tommy Lee plays them,

that is why Rikki Rokett plays them, that's why Kelpman plays them, that's why some of the best drummers in the world play them, because they are great drums. And they are American.

AM: What type of cymbals are you using?

PC: Zildjian... I mean Sabian, but I used those (Zildjians), and Bob Zildjian asked me to go with Sabian because Sabian is their baby company so they wanted me to help push the company along. I could always go back to Zildjians. And I use Pro Marks drums sticks, and they are made in Texas. So I use everything made in America. I'm into that, the fuckin' Japs have had enough (laughter). What are they gonna do, blow me up? Fuck 'em, they own seventy-five percent of Los Angeles. I hate the Japs. Fuck 'em.

AM: You know, Ace was at the KISS convention in New Jersey in April. Did you hear that he had a lung collapse a few days after the convention?

PC: No.

AM: I know he's going to be touring the east coast. Is he still going to use Richie Scarlet and Sandy Slavin?

PC: I don't know.. I don't keep in touch.

AM: You sounded disgruntled when his first solo album came out and the fact that he didn't ask you to be his drummer.

PC: Yeah, I was pretty pissed.

AM: Did you ever approach him and ask why he didn't?

PC: No. He should have known. I've stuck up for him many times. He should just know. It should be respect. It should be common knowledge.

AM: When do you think your new record might be out?

PC: Tomorrow if I could (laughter).

AM: After you go fishing right?

PC: Yeah. I don't know when it's gonna come out. As soon as my lawyers get off their ass and fuckin' make a deal we'll do the album. 'till then, they'll be doing lunch. My first CD that goes out is gonna be major because every KISS fan in the world has been waiting for fuckin' twelve years for it. It's gonna be huge, probably go double platinum.

AM: So the record deal is happening right now.

PC: Oh yeah, absolutely.

AM: What label is it with?

PC: There's a bunch of them. There's RCA, these Geffen, there's Virgin, there's Sony, there's a bunch of them.

AM: As for your book I recall interviews in '85 saying you were working on it.

PC: I've been working on my book nine years now, and now I've got my fifth writer because no one can grab the essence of what I'm doing.

AM: But I thought it was an autobiography?

PC: It is an autobiography, but I'm working with a ghost writer. I want it to be what it is. It's not KISS, it's about my life, it's about Kennedy's assassination, it's about Martian Luther King getting killed, it about the fuckin' riots, it's about everything, it's about seeing the Beatles at Shea Stadium, it's about seeing Iron Butterfly open up for Led Zeppelin for two dollars, it's the whole interesting story that everybody would love to read. It's about sex and drugs. It's a good story.

AM: There are rumors going around that KISS is paying you "Under the table" to prompt you not to release the book.

PC: I wonder why? Are they scared about something?

AM: Is there any validity to those rumors?

PC: NO, but they're scared I'm gonna say something. I'm not gonna hurt them.

AM: In one interview Paul said that he would be interested to read it but he also said, "Peter would be the first to admit that he has a great imagination."

PC: Put it this way, when it's done, produced and finished I will send him a copy and he could sign it.

AM: Thank you very much Peter for the interview. It's been an honor to meet and interview you.

PC: Thank you very much.



Photo by: Joe Marshall