

Aural Fix-
September 2002-
By Mike Ferrari-

Fear OF FRED? What the hell kind of name for a rock band is that anyway?!-

The myth has something to do with an irate Pitt Bull named Fred that bit frontman Bill White in the ass in the sixth grade...in any case it's the name of a tight indie rock band that kicks ass today with a style that captures the classic college rock sound of bands like the Replacements.-

Fear of Fred formed in the Fall of 1996 when Bill White who handles the vocals and guitars met lead guitarist Chris Mc Grath and bassist Mark Illiano through a musicians ad. The band began to perform without a permanent drummer until they found Matt McCluskey from the band Swim.-

On this night at the Downtown the band held a CD release party for their latest, Another Bad Day, for which they worked with Jim Sabella on (Sabella has worked with major acts like Public Enemy, Marcy Playground and Nine Days.)-

Stand out songs this night featured tracks off the new album including the opener "I Don't Care", "She Don't Know", "Another Bad Day", and a great remake of Tommy James classic "I Think We're Alone Now" (made famous by that Long Island mallrat Tiffany.-

One of the best songs of the night was "Superstar" off Another Bad Day, which was really rocking live with an almost metal riff – it was an extended version of the cd cut which segued into a little U2 "Bullet the Blue Sky" and back again.-

The only major disappointment was not hearing the fast and furious "Desperate" live, a fan favorite. Overall an outstanding performance from one of Long Island's veteran indie rock bands.-

Newsday--August 2002-
By Kevin Amorium-
FEAR OF FRED "Another Bad Day"-
(Spin Around Sound)-

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Don't be scared. Fear of Fred is still around, playing out and finally, releasing new songs. It's been a few years since the quartet's fine self entitled debut (the one with the mean-looking pooch on the cover), but the boys haven't lost their knack for guitar-fueled, alt-flavored pop. The title track rocks like the Offspring when it was cool and Weezer's Green Album, but Story is as melancholy as they come. FoF also has a good

sense of pop history: The band beefs up Ritchie Cordell's "I Think We're Alone Know". Tommy James would be proud.

Inside Connection Magazine

March 2002 Spotlight Series, Show No. 1 by A.E.

The Inside Connection presented the first show of the 2002 "Spotlight Series" on January 19 at Dave Glicker's Downtown in Farmingdale, Long Island, where everything revolves around live music. We pumped four bands through their state-of-the-art sound system from 9:30pm until 2am. Artists featured in this series were FEAR of FRED, Ucada, Another Engine, and Advocate. FEAR of FRED was a pleasure to meet and work with. Their tight musicianship and the raspy vocals by frontman Bill White pleased every fan at the show. Notable players in this set include their bassist and rhythm guitarist; this is evident in their song titled "Story". White introduced "Story" as a "corny" song, however, it had a huge response from the audience. Before closing their set with a super-speedy cover of "I Think We're Alone Now", FOF played an original song that highlights their songwriting talent. Though they failed to mention the title, it was a tune that offered a mix of genres, including funk and disco, into their modern rock sound. Who said a rock band can't play funk, anyway?... Even with the sudden onset of a winter snowstorm, a great time was had by all.

Aural Fix Sept 2001

by Mike Ferrari

Harlan Firedman presented the latest Tri-State Sound Showcase, V. This one was possibly my favorite in terms of the music with a solid lineup of alternative sounding acts hinting at what WLIR could be today. First to take the stage was FEAR of FRED, a tight indie rock four piece with a pop edge. Currently working on their new CD the set included songs from it like "Another Bad Day" and the "I Think We're Alone Now" cover as well as older tunes like " the Day" and " Living A Lie". The band plays solidly and their music has that indie rock hook... The night proved there are high caliber alternative bands on Long Island- labels and radio be advised.

Good Times Magazine

Kate Donohue

9/17/2001

"...The Tri-State Sound Showcase at the Vanderbilt run by WLIR-FM host and DJ, Harlan Freidman, is a great vehicle for local bands and performers. Freidman and WLIR believe strongly in the original music indigenous to the area and have given it a showcase of its own at the Vanderbilt. Both deserve lots of credit for helping to bring more attention to so many talented bands. This was an evening of putting on the hits,

and no, we're not talking pick up lines here; we're talking hit songs! Fear of Fred from NY/LI is Bill White (lead vocals/guitar); Chris McGrath (lead guitar/vocals); Mark Illiano (bass); Matt McCluskey (drums). White, a charismatic performer, was very comfortable on stage and interacted with the audience. His gravelly voice captured the angst of growing up. This well-rehearsed band featured a tight rhythm section and lots of good lead guitar from McGrath. The hit song of the evening from Fear of Fred was undoubtedly 'Living a Lie' off the first CD. If you're thinking 'There She Goes' by The La's, you're thinking right. With each band member kicking in a hundred percent, White sang in the best pop voice, 'there's a girl I know/she can't let go/of the pain she felt a long, long time ago.' As the audience swayed to the music, White drove the song home with the chorus: 'Are you living a lie, or loving in vain?'

Another crowd favorite, aside from the astonishingly funky, rocked-up version of 'I Think We're Alone Now' was "Another Bad Day" off the new Demo EP. The band showed off their polish on this one with guitars churning out the melody and the drums and bass keeping it bouncy. White interspersed a couple of playful "woo-hoo's" into the vocals. The audience loved it."

Nightbeat- Nightcrawler

Fear of Fred-What's in a name?

Fear of Fred singer Bill White knew what he was doing with his band's name. Invariably, people want to know just what the heck Fear of Fred is supposed to mean, and that's just fine with him. "I like that, anything that creates conversation or creates interest," he says. "In songs, I like to write things that have more than one meaning. It makes it more interesting."

As for multiple meanings of the band's name, White can name three. First, there's his old man, Fred, who's a tall, imposing guy. Even though Dad has a sweet disposition ("I wasn't like scarred for life or anything", White says), his large frame often spooked White as a kid.

Second, there was this dog that bit a teenage White on the butt. It happened to be named Fred. Finally, there's Fred Guarino, the engineer who helped make Fear of Fred's self-titled, self-released debut a radio-worthy collection of alt-rock pop in the vein of Bush, Counting Crows and, for good old three-chord rock traditionalism, the Smithereens. "Fred's just this really quirky personality, and a few times there was some miscommunication with the other guys," White says, referring to guitarists Chris McGrath and Geoff Fitzgerald, bassist Mark Illiano and drummer Matt McCluskey.

"They'd be playing something, thinking everything was going great, and then all of a sudden he'd stop the tape and say, "All right, we're doing it again", he recalls. "They were afraid of the engineer." Unlike most local bands, which book a studio for a week or two and pour everything they've got into a burst of creativity, Fear of Fred

approached the recording process with unusual deliberateness.

Over a two-month period, the band spent a few days each week in the studio, recording tracks at its own pace. "I find that if you do it over a longer period of time, it gives you time between the sessions to think things through," White says, "to work on lyrical styles and back-up vocals. It gives you time to develop and experiment without having to do it in the studio."

Besides Guarino's being an unpredictable guy, Fear of Fred's other members have their oddities, as well. McCluskey, for example, is known as Matt, The Angry Drummer. "He's just got those piercing eyes," White says. "He's not always angry, he just looks angry. The bass player, though sometimes looks overly happy. We call him Snoopy. So the two of them together kind of balance each other out."

The Inside Connection --March 1999

Volume 2, Issue 4

GROWING UP!!!

The music business was once compared to an elevator. On the lower level, unsigned bands play to empty rooms and disreputable club owners scam them out of money. On the 15th floor, executives who drive sports cars sit in their marble-floored window offices. Long Island's club scene is overflowing with lower level and first floor people. How can a struggling band afford not to promote their act and, worse still, why do some display a "rock star" attitude? In order to advance, musicians must come to terms with the fact that everyone begins on the lower level. The biggest step toward advancement is promotion, creating a "buzz" of some sort. This is how bands get more gigs and greatly increase their chances of getting signed. Professional unsigned bands like Geheliononcentric, Fear of Fred, The Rob Balducci Band and The Bullfrogs distribute fliers, consistently draw great crowds, and always rock the house. If you're starting a band, go check them out, ask them about promotion and how it's done. If music is what you love and you truly strive to "make it", you will make that effort. Unfortunately, many L.I. bands don't bother. It's apparently easier to blame failed shows on the scene itself. This brings me to another point: the overabundance of attitude in L.I. bands. I can't even begin to count the number of rude comments I've heard when I was asking about mailing lists, or giving them a compliment. While covering a show, I asked a vocalist the name of his band. He told me to go have "relations" with myself. The beers he bought me after he found out I was a writer soothed my anger, but I would never recommend his group to anyone, ever. This behavior will ruin you. Who wants to see a band who thinks they're mightier than The Rolling Stones? Why pay money to support an asshole? An even better question is, which A&R rep would sign a five-piece attitude problem when there are a million other bands who play just as well, draw better, and aren't causing unnecessary drama? You have to make the people want to see you play. Be approachable, because you never know who might be sitting in the back of the bar. Also, "if you promote it, they will

come." Get the people there, and keep them coming back. Instead of wasting creativity on excuses, apply it to your music. Then, you can press the buttons for those upper floors.— Rob Solow

The Inside Connection -March 1999

Volume 2 Issue 4

Fear of Fred Self-Titled Debut

Anybody who knows me knows I like any music that has an 80's feel to it. As soon as I put on Fear of Fred's CD, I instantly heard Alice Cooper. I'm not saying vocalist Bill White sounds exactly like Alice Cooper, but I definitely heard a slight resemblance to him and Tom Kiefer of Cinderella. The band is made up of Bill, guitarists Chris McGrath and Geoff Fitzgerald, bassist Mark Iliano and drummer Matt McCluskey. They are tight and come together on the record really well. These songs are well written and the production is good. The disc opens with the catchy "Stray". There's a cool speaking effect on the track giving it that little extra. "Strong" is a slow-tempo song with a tasty guitar solo that fits in perfectly. The bass-led "Talk Is Cheap" is another quality track showcasing the band's songwriting ability. The material is definitely radio-friendly, contains all the needed hooks, and there's no overplaying. Expect to hear more good things from Fear of Fred. -Keith McDonald

Newsday's Nightbeat -Thursday December 31, 1998

Local CD's

The Artist: Fear of Fred

The Disc: "Fear of Fred"

Performance: A

Songwriting: B+

Sound Quality: A

Hometown: Huntington

Buying It: Sam Goody/Roosevelt Field Mall, Sam Goody/Huntington Village, Sam Goody/Greenwich Village, NYC.

E-mail fearoffred@aol.com or write FOF PO Box 904 Huntington, NY 11743

The fivesome Fear of Fred isn't afraid to wear its collective heart on its sleeve. And it does so on this eight-song debut without wearing out its welcome. For those hungry for what-you-see-is-what-you-get rock, the three-guitar bite of Bill White, Chris McGrath and Geoff Fitzgerald is mighty tasty. The finest treat here is "Living A Lie",

which emits such a warm glow you'd swear these guys are from the midwest. It's an excellent effort. The fun, rollicking romp "I Don't Care" (sample verse: "Don't mind the misery/She's so self-absorbed/You could call her name/But she'll never turn around") could have been written about yours truly, if he were a she. One digression, "Happy Funky Party" — this has to be a bas thumping jab at jam bands — is a well-tossed grenade at the old Phish-ing hole. Nice aim. -Kevin Amorim

Live Review

Mike Dejewski Freelance Music Critic

LI/Voice/Good Times 8/8/98

For many original bands, too much time is spent trying to reinvent the wheel, often with mixed results. Well, what if a band accepted the wheel for what it is and just concentrated on making the best wheel possible? Fear of Fred has done that, and Saturday night they treated a huge crowd of fans at New York Avenue to a hefty serving of Pi. FOF, a Huntington-based four-piece, performed a tight set of catchy, radio-friendly pop-rock tunes which showcased many reasons to believe this band is on the verge of breaking it big. From singer/guitarist Bill White's just raspy enough to know he's not posing voice, to Chris McGrath's tastily restrained lead work, backed by Mark Iliano's thumping bass in all the right spots and Matt McCluskey's creative and sure-handed drum work, the band has what it takes to hit big, and that's before mentioning the songs themselves. This where the band really has it together. As I sat in the crowd watching these guys perform, an image kept running through my head. I pictured principle songwriter White driving through an endless summer listening to a radio blasting out a continuous string of pop-rock hits from the past twenty years or so, songs from the past like "My Sharona" by the Knack and "Let's Go" from the Cars, to the Wallflowers' "One Headlight" and Semisonic's "Closing Time". As he listens to the songs I can hear him say to himself, "I can do that." And you know what? He can. He has an uncanny ability to capture the essence of a pop-rock song, and put it out in a fresh and original way. Not an easy thing to do. Fear of Fred opened their set with a hard-edged number called "Breakout" which featured Cream-y, wah-wah distorted guitar riffs from McGrath. Then they proceeded to play through a long disk's worth of could-be hit songs with confidence and not a hint of pretentiousness. Some of my favorites were: "The Day", a powerful song about a good thing gone bad; "Happy Funky Party", a very danceable number which reminds the crowd "The wall won't fall if you move away/Listen up to what I say/It's time to take a chance/So get up off your big fat ass!"; "Bite On The Bone", if for nothing else but the innuendo and possible implications of White's pre-PC invitation to some girl of questionable morals; and the song they closed the set with, "Stray", which sounded like a combination of Tommy Tutone's "867-5309" and the Cranberries "Zombie". The band is currently putting the finishing touches on a CD which they hope to have done by October. In the meantime, they currently have a few songs in rotation on CW Post's radio station, WCWP 88.1 FM, and they'll be aired on upcoming broadcasts of WLIR's Sunday Night Showcase, Sunday's @ 10 p.m. Better yet, go see them live at New York Avenue on Wednesday

night Aug. 19th before you miss the chance to say "I saw them back when..." They will be showcasing, along with some other excellent LI bands, for some record people. Get out and show some support!

Good Times April 21-May 4, 1998

Fear of Fred

3 Song Demo

Sometimes you just get a chill listening to a new band. This is one of them. Just looking at the art work on the cover, you know there was a lot of planning and thought went into this project, but it needed a little bit of guidance in the vocal production stages. Fear of Fred are a 3 guitar powered band out of the Huntington area. Guitar players Chris McGrath, Bill White and Geoff Fitzgerald, with bassist Mark Iliano and drummer Matt McCluskey. White and Fitzgerald are the vocalists. This is a text book example of what happens when you try to be your own producer. The songs are great, but the vocals are muddy. Fear of Fred are a quintet out of Huntington. They have 3 guitars, bass and drums. Making excellent use of their instruments they come on as a powerful force locked deep into a groove. The first tune is a blazing guitar attack called "Stray", followed by "Living a Lie" where the strained vocal work really detracted from the song. The closing cut, another rocker called "Talk Is Cheap" also need a vocal tune-up. The tape was well presented with a great package, and I really want to see these guys live. I just think an objective voice would have been helpful in refining the raw talent that abounds in this group. For more info call 631-941-0440. It's a band that will be big. -Joe Grandwilliams

The Island Ear #21

March 2-15,1998

RECORDINGS Fear of Fred

Fear of Fred

The only negative aspect of this rockin' EP is its shortage of tracks. At the conclusion of the third and final cut, "Talk Is Cheap", you'll be begging for more. This Huntington quintet, comprised of vocalist/guitarist Bill White, vocalist/guitarist Geoff Fitzgerald, bassist Mark Iliano, guitarist Chris McGrath and drummer Matt McCluskey, are the freshest, most talented group of musicians to hit the local scene in a long time. "Stray", the opening number, will command your attention instantly with its irresistible hook, while "Living a Lie", the album's most delicious song, is sure to make you ponder why FOF isn't signed to a major label. A+ Joe Puccio

-THE JERSEY BEAT-

By Rev. Keith A. Gordon-

FEAR OF FRED - *Another Bad Day* (Spin Around Sound Records) exiled from the NYC/NJ music scene, this humble scribe wouldn't otherwise have heard of Fear of Fred and *Another Bad Day* if not for the infinite grace and mercy of Mista Testa and his magic package of promo CDs. The bands sophomore effort *Another Bad Day* is a mighty fine collection of alt-rock tunes drenched with pop hooks and whip-smart melodies, easily appealing to fans of Cheap Trick, Marvelous 3, Weezer, etc. -

Bill White's fabulously imperfect vocals lend each song a flawed excellence, Chris McGrath's six-string work is razor-sharp and riff happy, and the rhythm section of bassist Mark Illiano and drummer Matt McCluskey are as tight as a clenched fist. -

The bands chemistry is explosive, whether they're throwing out infectious originals like "She Don't Know" or joyfully revisiting a classic pop gem like "I Think We're Alone Now." A real find by any measure, Fear of Fred is the sound of a new rock revolution - don't wait for it to steamroll over you, go ahead and check out *Another Bad Day* now. On the web: WWW.Fearoffred.com. - -

Rev. Keith A. Gordon-