

# BOYSETSFIRE

A lot has happened in the 10 years that this band, ubiquitously named Boysetsfire, has been a band. Imagine a country before 9-11, before “emo” was a term used to describe music that is for the most part completely emotionless, before punk broke, then broke down, and finally broke again. When the underground was underground and not a mass marketing term.

This is the story of Boysetsfire, a five piece that started in Delaware, a state known more for its gay beaches than its thriving music scene. But before I get ahead of myself, let me just let you know that I have absolutely no interest in rewriting a bland boring promotional piece of garbage. I guess if you like that kind of stuff, you can check out some other web sites on the internet.

I can't even remember the year we started. It was a long time ago, let me just tell you that. It was me and Chad on a porch in Elkton, smoking cigarettes and maybe having an adult beverage. “You wanna start a band?” “Sure.” I don't know who said it. Doesn't matter. Do you care? I doubt there is a Boysetsfire trivia game out there and this is the final question. The important thing is that we would start a band, get the hell out of Delaware, and talk about things that nobody was talking about.

The next thing we did was get the other dudes in on it. Nathan was in, Darrell was in, Matt was in. He was sixteen when this thing started. I guess it is a shame that we ruined his life at such a tender age.

We were pretty freaking naive in those days. We thought you simply made a demo, sent it to labels, and they signed you immediately. So we recorded a four-song demo and immediately sent them to our favorite labels, and sat back, expecting a chorus of yeses and unsigned contracts to flood our mailbox. Pretty funny, huh? Because all we heard was a resounding no from every label we sent it to. Doghouse said no twice, I guess just to make sure the point was driven home with enough emphasis.

Undeterred, we brought a van on credit from our friends at Switch Skateboards and started touring. We made dubs of our demo in the van as we drove to shows, made t-shirts on the road the same way; by the skin of our teeth. There were no discussions over points. There were no debates concerning cross-collateralization. It was seven friends in a van doing what we loved.

Not to say it was the easiest thing in the world to do. On the contrary, it was the hardest thing in the world to do. Eating peanut butter and jelly with non-brand name bread on the side of the road while waiting for a tow truck is not the most glamorous thing. Nathan and I would beg change off kids going to our shows just to get enough money to buy taco-bell for dinner. If life was good we could buy a forty or two.

Memories are filtering back slowly. Having a show at a bed and breakfast in South Carolina that had neither a bed nor a breakfast. Finding a river to swim in after every show. Darrell almost drowning in one of those rivers. He was literally not waving but drowning. Arguing politics with just about everyone. We played a show in an empty trailer in July and it was the hottest I have ever been. Nathan singing in his boxers until people expected it and then refusing to sing in his boxers because people expected it. Heart-Attack Zine trashing our second demo tape and actually caring what they had to say. Pressing our own seven inch, only pressing like 700 copies, but only making like 250 with original pamphlet and liner notes (so if you got one of those, that is awesome). Meeting Mike CTW and agreeing to do a record. Hating it. Doing it with Magic Bullet. Meeting Andy Initial and agreeing to do a record with him.

We recorded *The Day The Sun Went Out* for twelve hundred dollars. Can you imagine? That was unheard-of money back then. The most intense memory I have of that recording session was attempting to play along with the other tracks and always sounding out of tune. I tried different guitars, different fingering, nothing. Well, it was because the other tracks were out of tune. So everyone had to start over. Still, it only took us a couple of weeks from start until mix. Funny, huh?

We toured and toured and with every tour it seemed a few more kids knew who we were. Toured with Avail who really taught us how to be a real band. Went to Europe after our friends in Avocado Booking invited us over. Met a guy named Robert who will figure in our story later. Continuing our incredible string of stupid decisions, we had t-shirts made with the slogan “European Tour” emblazoned on the back. Turns out European kids hate that kind of thing and we sold almost nothing. Hilarious, huh?

Starting a sad tradition of one record stands with labels we left Initial Records and went with Victory Records, who were

actually something of a tough guy label back then. That is funny to think of, huh? Now the bulldog has tears leaking out of its sad smile. Darrell left the band due to what was, in retrospect, a massive miscommunication. Really no one was right and no one was wrong in that situation. We got Rob Avery in the band who we loved. He recorded *After The Eulogy* with us at the Carriage House in Connecticut. After that record came out we started to see some really positive things happen which was incredibly humbling. We would play music anyway, even if no one else gave a fuck. Fortunately others seem to give a fuck.

We toured our butts off for *After the Eulogy*. Made so many friends throughout the years it is pointless to list them all now. Fought a lot, drank a lot, did a lot of interviews and even managed to write another record called *Tomorrow Come Today*, which we put out on Wind-up Records. Remember that thing with one record per label? We played the industry game a little bit for that record, recorded it in LA because that is what you are supposed to, used a producer and all that. We definitely learned a lot during that time, but it always felt a little uncomfortable. Like a tight pair of shoes or itchy underwear to church, you know you are supposed to be comfortable, but you just....aren't. Rob quit soon after the record was released and the less said about that the better, I guess. In his place we got a long time friend and roadie Robert Ehrenbrand, which was wonderful.

Which brings us to today. Kind of. We toured again, made a video with all our friends here in Newark, Delaware. Did this tour called Lollapalooza. Played all those festivals they have in Europe. Finally went to Australia, which was great. Nathan and Chad pet a koala.

After Australia the label let us know that they were in affect giving up on the record. There would be no second single. It was "write another record, kids." Ok, we were ready. It was a blast writing this record. Ideas came fast and the songs were up a couple notches in intensity. We were broke, Bush was the president, and our personal lives were in shambles. Sucks for us, but great for our music. We had every intention of writing for a couple of months, recording, and then immediately going out there again. Not so fast.

"We don't hear a single." Was the common refrain we heard from label and management. "We don't care," that was our reply. None of us listen to the radio, or if we do, we don't like it. Boysetsfire will never sound like watered down Nirvana or stop singing what we sing about. "Ya gotta go easy on the president." We heard that more than once.

Not that I blame Wind-up. They were great to us. They just didn't really know or understand who we were. The idea of a co-writer was broached. Do we look or sound like Ashlee Simpson? Maybe Nathan is as cute as she is, but come on....

So the story continues. We were given the go ahead to record. And then told no. And then the go ahead. And then told no. Third time told yes and then no. That broke it. We asked to be released, and they, being very gracious and in their hearts, kind, let us go our separate ways. Remember the whole one record one label thing? Oh yeah, life is weird.

So here we are. We signed a deal with Equal Vision Records...not because they gave us the most money, but because we felt they cared the most about our band and the direction we want to go. We talked to a lot of good people, but in the end we went with our gut reaction.

We poured our anger, pain, and yes joy into the writing and recording of our fourth full-length *The Misery Index: Notes from the Plague Years*. The record was born from intense frustration, anger and tears. I hope you like it. We do.

New Album ***The Misery Index: Notes From The Plague Years*** out March 7th, 2006



Equal Vision Records PO Box 38202 Albany, NY 12203

Ph. 518-458-8250 Fx. 518-458-1312 [www.equalvision.com](http://www.equalvision.com)

Publicity: Perry Serpa and/or Regan Meador for Good Cop PR Ph. 212.229.1862 e. [perry@goodcoppr.com](mailto:perry@goodcoppr.com);  
[regan@goodcoppr.com](mailto:regan@goodcoppr.com) / [www.goodcoppr.com](http://www.goodcoppr.com)

Booking: Ron Opaleski for William Morris Agency e. [ro@wma.com](mailto:ro@wma.com) / [www.wma.com](http://www.wma.com)

Official Web site: [www.boysetsfire.org](http://www.boysetsfire.org)