

THE ENEMY

If you happen to be young, intelligent and restless, Coventry is a surprisingly inspiring place to be today- if only for all the wrong reasons. What was a once proud, vibrant town that was known around the world for its motoring exports (Jaguar, Peugeot) has succumbed to economic progress and is fast becoming an identikit British city of chain stores, franchised nightlife and abundant apathy. After spending the early years of life watching the soul get ripped out of their hometown, the three members of The Enemy are determined to connect their own frustrations up with that of an entire country.

Already mutual friends beforehand, The Enemy became genuine music allies in February of 2006. Andy Hopkins brought along his bass and boyish good looks, Liam Watts added a fearsome drumming prowess that blows away tub-thumpers twice his age and the young Mark E. Smith look-a-like Tom Clarke provided all the swagger and sneer that anyone could possibly expect from someone who has to sing and play guitar at the same time. Initially, the main motivation for the band was simply boredom in its many forms. "There's nothing to do," states Tom bluntly. "Although I did most of my growing up in Birmingham, it's still very similar to Coventry when it comes to being bored. You're either down the pub or you're not so starting a band represented doing something a bit different to everyone else we know." What started out as an exercise in keeping yourselves occupied soon developed into something more serious as the band realized that a) what they were doing was really, really good and b) they preferred it more to their day jobs by a distance of several light years.

Just eight months (eight months!) later, The Enemy are releasing their sinister yet pulverizing first single '40 Days, 40 Nights' on the newly rejuvenated punk label Stiff records that once brought the world of the seminal early work of The Damned and Elvis Costello. Proof that they are already making a racket loud enough and impressive enough to awaken a sleeping giant. With the songs continuing to come thick and fast and the lofty comparisons to such luminaries as Oasis and Kasabian adding an element of early vindication, sticking with it seems like the only sensible option because as Tom continues, the alternative is a painfully stifling one. "It's either this or get some shit 9-5 job, work your arse off for a relatively small amount of money and not have any real aims or ambitions... just like everyone else. If you look at most people that you know, they work in jobs that they either dislike or hate and their only goals are to get a decent girl and settle down in an average house. Everyone just seems to think 'that's life' but it doesn't have to be at all." Having seen various members of their families live and work to this unsatisfying blueprint (until the grave in the case of Tom's grandfather who worked at the recently closed Browns Lane Jaguar factory), The Enemy intend to reiterate that being working class doesn't have to be merely another incarnation of adult slavery. "Why should you just accept that life is just work and work and work until you die? If you actually stop to question your regular routine, you'd be pissed off. All you're doing is making someone else a lot of money. I'm not trying to be Billy Bragg or even to be political necessarily, we just want people to wake up."

The time to rise, has been engaged.

Hardeep Phull, 2006.