



GUIDED BY VOICES

“I’M NOT SAYING this is the way you should live your life, but drinking and rock ’n’ roll? That’s the way you should live your life,” says Robert Pollard, the self-proclaimed “Dean Martin of indie rock” and brains behind Guided by Voices. They officially ended their 21-year career in 2004, but that hasn’t slowed down “Uncle Bob,” who has continued to be as prolific as ever, releasing 10 full-length solo albums and many others with his numerous collaborations, his primary one being Boston Spaceships.

GBV recently got back together with its “Classic ’93–’96 Lineup” for a reunion tour, delighting their vast army of fans. The performances were complete with coolers of booze, crowd surfing, hugging, cheering, crying, chanting, stage swarming, high leg kicking, a twirling microphone, a marathon set list and all of the uncondensed energy and passion that the famous Dayton, Ohio band has granted us throughout the years. Give it up for the legacy of GBV. Give it up for Uncle Bob. —Anne Borremans

What’s your beef with computers? I don’t have a beef with computers. They bring people together. They may or may not help bring an end to wars. I’m just firmly lodged in the ’60s and ’70s. We had better music back then. I like the human touch.
Are you familiar with *Thrasher*? If so, do you remember your first mag or any bands you discovered through it? Yes. I think maybe Motorcycle Boy? Rocket From The Crypt?

Did you ever skate? No. I can’t even roller skate or walk on a fucking treadmill. I like my feet planted solidly on the ground except when I jump or run.
If you were a pro skateboarder, what song would you want in your skate video? Something by Unsane or Helmet. Or Bubble Puppy’s “Hot Smoke and Sassafrass.”
What’s the most outrageous thing that’s happened to you on tour? I got lost somewhere in Australia close to Sydney. Some girls picked me up and took me back to their house about 25 or 30 miles from the venue. In the middle of the night, after I had passed out on the couch, something started licking on my face and I thought it was one of the chicks so I responded and then I realized it was a huge black dog. I had no cell phone and no idea where the fuck I was.

“Something started licking on my face”

Have you ever had any run-ins with Neil Blender or the Alien guys in Dayton? Yeah, a few, but I haven’t seen any of those guys in a while. I used to buy Vans from their store. Now I order them on a fucking computer.
How long does it normally take you to write a song—start to finish? I start off with rough sketches and I might write 15 or 20 in a half hour or so. Sometimes, within that span, a couple of them might be completely finished. Others, I might elaborate on or flesh out. Some I shit-can.
Do you scratch a lot of the songs you write? Not a lot. Some. And then sometimes I might go back to the ones I scratched. Sometimes I’ll combine two or three songs.
You still manage to do the famous leg kick these days—how do you stay in shape? The kicks aren’t quite as high or as frequent as they used to be, but I occasionally get a little excited on stage and am moved to the point of a jump or kick. I’m actually not in very good shape right now. I lost some weight and I’ll dance around every once in a while.
How long has it been since the “classic” GBV lineup (Tobin Sprout, Mitch Mitchell, Kevin Fennel and Greg Demos) last played a show together? Where did you guys practice to get ready for the upcoming *Hallway of Shatter-Proof Glass Tour*? Are Doug (Gillard), Nate (Farley), Chris (Slusarenko) and Kevin (March) bummed that they’re not playing on the reunion tour?

It’s been 16 years for that particular line-up. We practiced at Mitch’s house. I suppose some of them are slightly bummed. We’ve always had a bit of a problem with the tag “classic line-up.” But you know, that’s the way this tour is being billed. That’s what the kids want and that’s what we’re going with. We’re doing only the songs from that era.

The GBV performance at Matador Records’ 21st birthday festival, “The Lost Weekend,” in Las Vegas is probably the most anticipated show on the tour. Are you friends with any of the other musicians on Matador Records? What do you think of Vegas? I don’t do Vegas. But I’m making an exception this time, because it’ll be a blast. I’ll see some people I haven’t seen in a while. I felt like a member of the family at Matador. It was—and is—a band-friendly label. It was a close-knit stable when we were there. Pavement, Superchunk, Chavez, Spoon, Railroad Jerk, Cat Power, are all good friends.
How have you gone about finding band members for all of your projects throughout the years? Are they usually friends of yours? Have you ever been

in a band with a chick in it? How is your current band, Boston Spaceships, different from GBV—do you approach the songwriting differently at all? A lot of times people approach me for collaborations. When it comes to what I consider to be an “official” band, I’ll hand-pick. I’ve never officially had a chick in the band. I’ve worked with them. Kim Deal and a few others. I’m not completely adverse to the idea. I don’t come in contact with many female artists. Boston Spaceships is different from GBV in the fact that I send finished boombox songs to Chris (Slusarenko) and John (Moen), they record the music and then send it back to me to overlay the vocals, and then we mix the two. In GBV, we rehearsed together and recorded together.
What’s the status of Steven Soderbergh’s proposed 3D film *Cleo*, which GBV was planning on writing the soundtrack for? Is it still happening?

GBV is not writing the soundtrack. I am. Unless you consider me to be GBV, kind of like you may think Ian Anderson is Jethro Tull. You know, I don’t know what the fuck is happening with *Cleo*. The concept continues to linger in a very nebulous manner. I’ve heard instrumental demos.
What’s your beer/liquor of choice these days? Miller Lite and Cuervo Gold.
What music do you listen to? Right now I’m into late ’70s new wave—the goofiest shit I can find. I bought The Buggles, The Brats, Hilly Michaels. I’m looking for stuff on Stiff and Bomp records. Aside from that, I eagerly anticipate any new Wire-related release.
What’s one thing fans don’t know about you? I lose my shit sometimes watching my favorite football teams play. Some of them know that though. ♠