

The **Hard** Report

ISSUE #382
\$6.95

708 Stokes Road
Medford, N.J.
08055

Phone:
609-654-7272
Fax:
609-654-6852

The Kennedys, Philly Style



TOP PRIORITY



Gilby Clarke
CURE ME... OR KILL ME

TRIPLE ACE



Jeffrey Gaines
SOMEWHAT SLIGHTLY DAZED

ALTERNATIVE PICK



700 Miles
UNNATURAL

HARD HITTER



Motorhead w/ Ice-T & Whitfield Crane
BORN TO RAISE HELL

© 1994 by Borealis, Inc.

Wynn

Chrysalis/EMI

604

Tom Kaczmarek/Atlantic



The Kennedy Compound

by bill hard

Anyone who's had anything to do with the Philadelphia music/radio community over the past two decades knows Biff Kennedy. After graduating from Temple University "magna cum barely" in 1974, Biff was hanging out at home when his mom saw an ad for a Promotion Assistant at Schwartz Brothers Distributors. The only job requirement? A driver's licence. 70 people showed up for the interview. As Biff turned to leave the guy's office, he was struck by the feeling that he had blown the interview, turned around and literally begged for the job. "And I've been begging ever since" says Mr. Kennedy. \$75 bucks a week later, Biff had his first job in the record biz, schlepping in the mail room. Fourteen months later, CBS called, and in the Summer of '76, at 23 years old, Biff was the local rep. "I was clearly in way over my head" comments Biff, "and that is ultimately the vibe I always enjoy returning to". Given that Biff's current agenda includes National Promo/Marketing for the young November Records, running Charterhouse Management and Marketing with his wife Helen Leicht, and producing major radio events for WXPX and WMMR, he's clearly quite comfortable in deep water.

How long did you work for Epic?

Biff: Fourteen years, all of it local.

A lot of locals seem to kind of burn out in a whole lot less time than that. What's the trick to staying interested?

Biff: Do whatever you can to stay a fan. I was a fan before I got into this business and, hopefully, will always be one. That is really what I have dedicated myself to doing. I'm not a musician myself, so for me there is still a lot of mystery and a lot of magic in people making music.

I know you were very frustrated by the time you and the label parted company — even though Blackrock had you A&R-ing advances, etc. Obviously, your work ethic wasn't at question.

Biff: No, it wasn't work ethic. I think ultimately what I had to tell myself was that if they really wanted my opinion, they would have been working for me. I was working for them.

And you found there were things you were telling them that they just didn't want to hear?

Biff: It's not so much that they didn't want to hear it or that they disagreed with it, it's just that it wasn't in the master plan. You can't have the inmates running the asylum. You know, the direction comes from above.

You found that ultimately you were frustrated that the home office wasn't listening to your suggestions?

Biff: No, it was the same frustrations that anyone goes through who works for the same label for a long time. Ultimately, what it was for me was I wasn't learning anymore. There were so many elements of our industry that I wasn't getting exposed to. I said to myself, "Jeez, how am I ever going to learn about any of this stuff, unless I take a leap?" It was frightening.

With so much airplay being bartered at the national level, how has the value of the local person — and their relationships — been affected?

Biff: Whether promotion happens at the local or national level, it's always been, and I think always will be, about the basics. It's got to be what I call "zip code by zip code." You've got to get in the car and go to those towns. You have to meet the guy who does overnights, and you have to have relationships with the people that are programming the station. You have to have delivered for them in the past, so you have some sense of credibility. You have to show them that you really want this record on their radio station, and if it means pushing the envelope of being annoying about it, sometimes you've got to do that.

Do you believe local guys still get records played based on their relationships?

Biff: I think they can still get records played, yes.

Do you believe that you have to do local promotion to be effective in a national position?

Biff: Yes. You have to be able to identify what kind of records are going to work at individual stations. I don't think with a national view you can say that if it works in Milwaukee, it's going to work in Harrisburg. You have to know where those records come from. They have to come up from the street on a station by station basis and a city by city basis. I don't think you can force them from the national headquarters back down to the street. They have to come from the street. You have to know the airstaff, you have to know the people who are programming the station, you have to know what the local hip mom and pop record store is, and what kind of records he sells and how that radio station effects what he or she sells. You have to know those kinds of things to know whether the record will work in that particular zip code. I don't think there is really any way to learn it better than to get in the car, drive there, listen to the station, sit in your hotel for an hour or two and really get a feel for what each individual radio station is trying to present to their listeners.

Do you see local promotion now as a means to an end or a meaningful career in its own right?

Biff: I think it can still be a career. After fourteen years, I hit a point where I was frustrated because I didn't feel I was in over my head any more, and what drives me, personally, is the challenge of attempting new things. Local promotion ran its course for me. I think there are plenty of people out there — in fact, Philadelphia is a great example of a market where people have made a career out of local promotion. With the way stations change, the market changes, and the niche formats come along, it can stay fresh at that level. Local promotion is the most important promotion gig in the business. You're charged with doing the basics. I used to love to stand in the back of the Tower Theater and watch 3,000 kids go crazy and drive home that night thinking I had something to do with it, or punch a button on a radio and hear a song that nobody wanted to deal with, but I actually talked somebody into dealing with. I get off on that.

I like that. How important was location to you in terms of the options and possibilities in Philadelphia?

Biff: I chose to work in Philadelphia, once I got into the business. I thought then, and still think, it is a very significant break out music market. Now, it goes in cycles, but there are heritage radio stations in this town — WMMR, WPEN, WFIL and WISG in the years when I was growing up — that really are the basis of what radio still is today. Now, we have the whole XPN phenomenon coming on board. In all my travels around the country, and with all due respect to everyone else I've met and every other station I've heard, I still think WXPX is the best Triple A station in the business. I haven't heard them all yet, but

so far they've got it, and a lot of what they have I think is because they're in Philadelphia. The architect of WMMR is a guy named Jerry Stevens, who now is on the air at WPEN. When he started WMMR, they were on Saturday nights from 10 in the evening till 2 in the morning. He created station IDs and bumpers 25 years ago that the station still airs today. To me, that is a testament to his vision as the architect of that radio station and to the loyalty and stability of a city like Philadelphia.

And how would you rate Philadelphia's national stature as a music/radio market currently?



Biff: I would say it still has great credibility as a music market. Although AAA radio doesn't deal in call letters that much, most people I've met are very respectful of XPN. One of the great things about Triple A is everybody is doing their own thing and nobody wants to be put into a box. What Michael Ellicott is doing in Pittsburgh is totally different from what Jody Denberg is doing at KGSR or what Mike Morrison and WXPN are doing. They all want to super-serve their own communities. Whether it's Jon Peterson in Columbus, or Barbara Dacey at WMVY, these programmers have chosen to be in their respective cities, and appear to be very well attuned to what their listenership wants to hear. They are there to serve. Whether they're public stations or not, they are there to serve that community, whether it is a local band or Storyville coming to Pittsburgh.

Having listened to WXPN for a very long time and having watched their tremendous growth over the last couple of years now, what does your gut tell you regarding Triple A's chances in New York and LA?

Biff: If the stations can have the patience to let the programming develop in any major city, it will work and it will work great. I don't think it is an instant on kind of a format. I think it needs to build, it needs to evolve, it needs to bring in listeners one person at a time. If somebody is looking for a quick fix format, AAA obviously isn't it.

How important do you think Mike Morrison's ability to pick great songs from the right artist was in Philadelphia?

Biff: Well, without talking out of class, Mike wasn't the only one picking great songs there. They have a very passionate staff of full-timers and part-timers. Mike, to his credit, is a man who's open to input from others. At XPN, it is a very passionate, very knowledgeable staff of people and they all have an opinion.

You were one of the first promo people to realize AAA radio's potential. At what point was it obvious to you that XPN was for real and that the AAA format was legit?

Biff: It might have been when they started appreciating the fact that they were breaking artists in Philadelphia. Of course, there was a time when it didn't matter to them.

Wasn't that at about the time that WMMR was in the midst of their ultra-conservative phase?

Biff: Yes, probably the lowest 12+ numbers they had in a long time.

How would you assess the state of radio in Philadelphia right now?

Biff: I think WMMR is sounding fresher than they sounded in years. Joe Bonadonna is taking chances again.

Do you think they can maintain their market dominance?

Biff: Yes.

How about WORE? To us, their market impact is way beyond their numbers. What do you think?

Biff: I would have to agree with that. I never had to be driven by numbers, in terms of Arbitron, especially with so many years as a local guy. I had to be driven by, 'We did a promotion. Did a hundred people call? Did fifty of them show up?' That's really what makes it for me. I ascertain whether the radio station is delivering or not by taking a look at the quality of their audience, which is one of the strengths XPN has had for so long. I'm sure everyone talks about this,

but it's the loyalty, the education, the quality of their listeners. For me, as a DRE listener, I find them to be at least fifty-fifty classic alternative.

Do you find that wears on you a little bit?

Biff: A lot of those records were kind of novelty. I don't really have a great need to hear them anymore. They're not in my library.

Do you think Y100.3 can make a serious dent with some of the harder rocking stuff they're playing?



Biff: Yes, especially with the support of the press, MTV and touring and all the other elements that you need to make a band break today. That station can pick the Meat Puppets and Smashing Pumpkins of the world just as easily as any other CHR station can. I don't think it can be done in a vacuum. I think you need the touring, you need the press, you need the video exposure. You need all the elements. It's still about the basics.

The Chestnut Cabaret just closed, and the club scene in general seems to be shrinking at an alarming rate. What's your theory there?

Biff: I would say part of it is probably the expense to the customer these days. After two \$18.50 tickets, dinner, parking and tolls, you could be talking a sixty to seventy dollar evening. One of the things the Cabaret had tried was moving up the start time of some of their shows. They were running some very late evenings. At one point, they came up with a policy that opening acts would be on at 9:00 and headliners would be on at 10:15. That was an early night for them.

But as the clubs continue to take it in the shorts, it seems as if the local music scene is healthier than ever. Jeffrey Gaines is getting ready to break big nationally, newcomers like Matt Sevier and Iota are attracting a lot of attention, and your band Echolyn will be out soon on Epic.

Biff: There are a lot of very happening things going on in this town.

Why now?

Biff: Stations like XPN, actually, have made a contribution to that because they will give those new bands airtime. As that happens, it raises the level of local talent. I think it happened in Seattle, I think it happens in places like Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Look at Live.

Earlier this year, your band Echolyn signed one of the biggest label deals in recent Philly history. Seven albums?

Biff: Well, we're only going to get two or three. If it doesn't work, we're gone, just like anyone else would be. But yeah, Epic is looking at this as a lifetime musical commitment.

Having spent fourteen years in the trenches, it must be fun to cruise the halls as the manager of an act the label went out to sign.

Biff: It's great. It is fantastic to walk down the halls of the 550 building and see my old friends and have them look at me as if I am still a member of the family.

Plus, they can't beat you up on airplay at WMMR.

Biff: I get to beat them up now.

What was Echolyn doing when you found them?

Biff: They had done one independent album on their own. The gentleman who has managed that band, and really kept them on course for the last four years, is a guy named Greg Kull. He realized that he had taken them as far as he could with his knowledge and his relationships. He knew it was time for some outside help. He sought out the Philadelphia music attorney I work with, Glen Goldstein, who heard something meaningful, and brought them to me.

And what was the first thing you did?

Biff: We helped get them focused.

Musically?

Biff: Musically and business wise. What were their goals? Where did they want to be? I think that in a lot of cases getting signed is when the real nightmares begin. One of things we had to do with Echolyn was to sit down and analyze what would they achieve by being signed and on what level of label. How much control would they start giving up as they worked their way up through the major label business? When you are an independent, self-managed, self-produced band, you get to make all the decisions and all the mistakes all by yourself. When you sign, then you start dealing with many other peoples' opinions and personal goals.

So, they are really the first band you took under your wing?

Biff: The second, actually. I also represent a singer/songwriter named Karen Farr, and I've since taken on a gentleman named John Flynn, who my wife works very closely with.

When is Echolyn's record set to go?

Biff: September. I just heard the finished masters this week and we can't wait.

Hey, you get to do a little personalized promotion.

Biff: I'm going to be calling some old friends, but, I don't think this is a band that's ultimately going to live and die with AOR radio. I want to get these guys out on the road immediately, and again go back to the basics. We want to play every town in America. They are extraordinary musicians and that needs to be experienced first hand.

Courtesy of Uncle Harvey.

Biff: Yup. This label is and has been for many, many years one of the finest, if not the finest artist development label in the business. They have the patience, they have the vision. That's what a band like Echolyn needs.

How would you describe their sound?

Biff: Everyone calls them a progressive rock band. I would certainly call them a progressive rock band in terms of the kind of bands you and I were raised on — King Crimson, Gentle Giant, Genesis. In a meeting I recently had with Richard Griffith at Epic, he called them a true alternative band because indeed they are an alternative to everything else that is out there right now. Everyone seemed to love his description. I have to salute our A&R man, Michael Caplan, for his vision. He saw the band play in their garage, he heard the demos, and he decided that there was a major label future for this kind of project.

He just did a great job with the Allmans, didn't he?

Biff: He's also done bands like Pre-Fab Sprout, and G. Love and Special Sauce. Epic's obviously given him the freedom to go out and find something different. But at the same time, in terms of the Allman Brothers, Michael anticipated the whole H.O.R.D.E. tour and knew that there were still ten million peo-

pile out there who'd go for this. He is not jaded, he is not put off by what is the current trend, and he's trying to stay about a step and half ahead of it.

You've produced big events for both WMMR and XPN. Details?

Biff: I started with XPN in '92. Mark Fuerst, the General Manager, came to me and said that he wanted to put on a concert to raise money for the World Cafe, and he felt that there was no one at the station who had the time to devote to doing it full time. He had apparently gone out and sought some opinions and the popular consensus was that I was the logical guy to put the event together. I had never done anything on nearly that grand of a scale before. Why did I get involved with it? It was because of the challenge of doing something for the first time. I wanted that feeling of being in over my head and proving to Electric Factory Concerts and the radio station and the artist managers and the booking agencies involved that I could, in fact, do something like that, plus I am a huge supporter of the radio station and of World Cafe, which I think is one of the most significant syndicated programs in the business. I wanted to do something to give back to them whatever effort I could. I just happen to love to listen to that stuff. So that is what sort of got me going in the production business.

And you wound up having...?

Biff: The first year we had 10,000 Maniacs, Live, Shawn Colvin, Jeffrey Gaines, Happy Rhodes, and we used Marshall Crenshaw as our special guest MC.

Nice package.

Biff: We called it the *Five Star Night*, playing on the idea of using five different artists and building its impact every year.

And you picked up a few bucks and some really valuable experience.

Biff: I got out without getting shot at or sued. That was encouragement enough to do it again. What was fun about the shows is that they had a beginning, a middle and an end. We created something from nothing. We worked it through the system. And when the evening ended at 2 a.m., it was over. It wasn't like doing promotion or management or any of the other things that I do, which are ongoing. These events had deadlines and they had a time when it was either a success or a failure.

You also produced WMMR's 25th Anniversary show?

Biff: I was so buzzed after doing the first XPN show that I had a conversation with Joe Bonadonna one day, and he sort of looked at me and I looked at him and we both said, "You know, I have a proposal." It turned out that he wanted to do the biggest event that the radio station had ever engineered in Philadelphia. We sat down with the sales department and station management and pitched them on doing the biggest free concert in Philadelphia history. We sent out letters, worked with 150 management companies, found five bands that were available, agreeable, and would do it for expenses. There would be rock and pop, there would be electric and acoustic, there would be black and white, there would be male and female — the same kind of balance that I tried to do with the XPN shows. We had Jethro Tull, Paul Rodgers and his new band at the time, we featured Jeffrey Gaines again, because of the Philadelphia connection, same with the Hooters and their importance to the WMMR audience. Jeffrey was sort of the up and coming. He was somewhat from the Triple A world, he was getting play on Sundays at the radio station. In fact, he was number one in phones on Sundays. And we used Warren Zevon, again, based on the heritage, the whole "Werewolves of Philadelphia" element.

How do you feel the event helped the station?

Biff: It took place at the time when they had just dumped the sports/rock morning show, and there was a lot of frustration internally at the station. It was as if they didn't like listening to their own radio station. I think that this concert was an opportunity to galvanize everybody and give them a focus and a common goal, something to work toward. Plus, the station had the highest Arbitronds they have had in five or six years, during those two months, and they haven't repeated, at least to my knowledge.

Listeners wanted tickets that bad, eh?

Biff: Yes, we gave away 17,000 tickets to that show. The first day, when we had 300 people lined up at 8:30 in the morning to win a pair of tickets to this thing. We knew that the WMMR fans, those passionate about that radio station, were going to come out, they were going to support it, and they went nuts!

That's interesting too, because with all due respect to Tull and Paul Rodgers, and that crew, those aren't exactly today's buzz bands.

Biff: But in terms of a band like Tull, which was really the anchor for the whole thing, they had a 25 year heritage in the city.

Do you think that the key ingredient in that station getting back into momentum was Joe's willingness to suddenly put a lot more new music on the radio?

Biff: Yes. His desire had been there all along. He needed a foundation. He needed other people to believe him. The station is consulted by everybody in the business, and its owners, Westinghouse, are a rather conservative operation. I think the show gave Joe the encouragement and staff support go ahead and say, "This is what I am going to do. Are you with me?"

Having pulled off the WMMR event and two WXPN shows, what would you say makes for an optimum event?

Biff: To get the best bands and the best music that you can present. There were many reasons that we used Ian Anderson and Jethro Tull, other than the fact

that I begged them. They brought 25 years of their own heritage to WMMR, who were also celebrating their 25th anniversary. They were one of the strongest bands in Philadelphia over a 15 year period. They had a great love for WMMR, and they wanted to give it back to WMMR.

What do you think is to be avoided?

Biff: You must superserve everyone. You have to commit to the date, the venues, the basic requirements of the show at the very outset, and stay with them all the way through. You can't start changing the day because one band is available on Thursday night and another band is available on Saturday night.

Is that a temptation to do?

Biff: Very much so. The shows that I have done probably would not have come off if we were trying to accommodate too many people.

How did you hook up with November?

Biff: I first met Jamie Biddle, who is the President of November, a couple of years ago when he came to me here in Philadelphia and asked me to help him in the Mid-Atlantic region with a band called Rival Sons. I was running Charterhouse, my marketing and management company, with my wife Helen Leicht. He sent me a tape, and I loved the music. I thought that they were a band with a great future, one that could ultimately rise above the standard indie/focal type of thing. I thought that the songs were that strong. We started working together on that project, going out and getting it played in the Mid-Atlantic at AOR and CHR. I went back to all my friends in this community and asked them to listen and respond and they did so very favorably. About nine months after we started on that project, he was out shopping the band for labels and not having any success. Based on our regional success with Rival Sons, we were able to get a great publishing deal for the band, but the labels were not coming around. It was at that point that Jamie decided to get financing and start his own label.

I meant to ask you about Charterhouse earlier. That's basically you and Helen?

Biff: Yes, she's my partner. Charterhouse serves as the marketing company that has been producing the shows, and also the management company that represents the three acts that we talked about before — Karen, John and Echolyn. Helen is my partner in that organization, and she does a lot of the bookings for our acts in Philadelphia and all over the Northeast. She is my sounding board musically. She still has the best ears of anyone that I have ever met. She's totally dedicated to the music and has her own twenty year heritage in Philly as an air personality.

Now, back to November. How's that structured?

Biff: Jamie Biddle serves as President, Rob Holt is the VP of A&R, Veronique Berry handles Press and Publicity with Melanie Vandemark, I do the Promotion and Marketing and Randall Barbera does all the touring and artist relations.

What, he got out of the cartoon business?

Biff: Actually we have a lot of famous names in that company. We have Biddle, we have Barbera, we have Kennedy, we have Youngman, we have Berry. And talk about Yuppie first names — Biff, two Jamies, Gigi, Sterling, Jay, and Randall.

But we know that Biddle is the bucks.

Biff: Biddle is not the bucks, but he is the organizer of the bucks.

Where does the money come from?

Biff: The company is owned by a corporation in New York, called the Mickleberry Corporation, who are primarily in the marketing and advertising business.

Were they anxious to get into the record business?

Biff: Yes.

And what are their observations thus far?

Biff: They seem to be very pleased, as I am, with the development and growth that we have had in the ten months that



we have been on the streets. In fact, last Friday, we hit our first million dollars in billing. Not bad, considering, our first record was last August, David Broza.

What is November's credo?

Biff: Artist development, focusing in on Triple A and adult radio and doing the basics — the touring, the marketing, the press, the radio, the MTV.

And don't get too antsy about return on investment, I would assume?

Biff: Well, it is a slow process, especially dealing with Triple A radio because they are not the forefront record selling for-

When week one rolls in and you get a couple of adds and you have four or five guys who have sucked a little wind, what do you do next?

Biff: Give them the reasons why they have to go catch up. Show them the markets where we did have first week success. Keep feeding them whatever Triple A success I got that will keep them at their comfort zone. One of the things with Storyville that we had been struggling with, that's now in place, was the tour. We have a band here with a great heritage with Chris and Tommy and David and David, they have to get out on the road, and that will make a difference. You saw them in Austin, you know that can make a difference.

Is 21,000 a number that makes economic sense?

Biff: No.

Need more, right?

Biff: A little bit.

Tell us about the future of November's roster?

Biff: We're totally committed to Triple A. We're now actively seeking Jazz artists, and heritage players who don't need \$250,000 recording budgets, but want to be marketing as front line, no dinosaurs. We've just signed two young ladies called The Syrens that we're very excited about.

Anything to touch on before we close?

Biff: The only other thing that we didn't talk about, which is one of the things that I do, is my work with the Philadelphia Music Alliance.

I totally forgot about that because I am always dodging your letters for contributions. How's that going?

Biff: Great! For the last six years I have been for the Executive Vice President of the PMA. We have been going for the last 12 months on bringing a NARAS chapter to Philadelphia, and we will know probably in the next 30 days if that is going to happen, and I believe it is going to happen.

Which is voting rights for the Grammys?

Biff: That's only one part of it. Really, the main issue to me, is medical benefits to musicians. The thing with NARAS is, above and beyond the fact that you can vote in the Grammys, they have these national programs, one of which is called Music Cares, which helps set up pensions for musicians, helps to provide medical benefits for musicians. I believe that they are also setting up retirement centers. They are really trying to invest in the future of the music community. They put on these programs called 'Grammy In The Schools.' We've done it now three times in Philadelphia, in conjunction with NARAS, where we go into high schools and do music presentations, and we have the students do the performances. They get recognized, they get credited for it, they get some notoriety for it. We have a scholarship program at the Music Alliance. We give out musical instruments and scholarship money every year. Larry Magid and I co-produce the auction with WMMR every year in December, which is one of the big fund raising events for the Music Alliance. In terms of what we do in Philadelphia, it's really an opportunity to honor and salute the heritage of all the Philadelphia musicians and give opportunities for the up and coming artists to get a shot, do some networking, go to seminars. I host panels a couple of times a year where we take a Saturday and have people come in and sign up as students and we line up all the big names in Philadelphia and we sit down and talk to them all, answer their questions, introduce them to people, give them tips on how to move forward.

Between November, Charterhouse, the PMA and all your various side ventures, how do you find enough hours in the day to get it done?

Biff: I work all day, every day, is basically what it comes down to. It's been a five year balancing act since I left Epic. In terms of keeping projects going simultaneously, that's where Helen can be so effective. That's where Greg Kull with Echolyn can do what he does. I got exactly what I wanted. In over my head. Everything I learn can be applied to another area of what we do. November has been an opportunity to meet and learn and grow at a very organic pace. You don't get too many chances like that.



mat in our business. However, I have identified numerous Triple A radio stations that have an immediate and significant impact on record sales in their towns. I just had a terrific conversation with Carey Owens at KQPT in Sacramento the other day and our SoundScan numbers on Storyville have tripled in the last three weeks based on their support on two tracks.

Any other stations that do that, that you could name?

Biff: That give us that kind of sales response? XPN in Philadelphia certainly, KGSR, KBCO, The Mountain in Seattle, KTCZ in Minneapolis, and I get phone calls off of YEP in Pittsburgh repeatedly. I see a reaction all over New England based on what goes on in Portland and Dover and Killington and Martha's Vineyard.

What's your read on how radio perceives smaller independent labels at this point?

Biff: Well, I've just gone to AOR for the first time with Storyville as a small independent label. I feel a lot of pressure on myself to be able to prove to the programmers who are willing to give me a shot that I am, first of all, knowledgeable enough to know what to do with that shot, and financially prepared to support that activity. It forces me to really want to over-sell myself in terms of having some credibility in their eyes. Even after working at Epic for 14 years, I have a great many unknown relationships in such a large part of the country. So I feel a certain rush to establish some credibility.

Not to mention getting the indies to truly prioritize your project.

Biff: That has a lot to do with it, and that's what I spend a lot of my time doing today.

'Come on you guys, we're serious!'

Biff: Yep. 'Pay attention to me, get me a radio station.' And what I have to provide to them is the comfort level that if they get me a radio station, I'll know what the hell to do with it.

What do you consider is a reasonable return on indie investment? One per station per player per week?

Biff: That's what I asked for to start, actually. After all, there are about 200 targets out there.

Yep, they are a strong band, entertaining.

Biff: They can't operate in a vacuum, there just aren't enough reasons. There are too many records out there that have many more reasons than we do.

Fortunately it's a great sounding record, and it's motivational. 'Bluest Eyes' is a song that gets the job done in it's four minutes.

Biff: It certainly has proven itself at Triple A so far.

What is it that you hope the stations will recognize in Storyville?

Biff: What I think they need to recognize with Storyville is the amount of passion that the people in this band inject into the songwriting and into the playing. That level of honesty will ultimately always rise above. These guys are not copping to someone else's plan. They are not the next grunge thing. They are taking a slightly 'off the beaten path' approach here, especially with the make up of what the band is all about. I think that what I hear in the songwriting and what I see on the stage is their total passion and commitment to doing this. That ultimately separates the real bands from the K-Mart versions.

David Broza is huge internationally. Israel's biggest star?

Biff: That's what they tell me, but I've never been there, so I have to take their word for it. We've also done well with him here, especially in cities where he played live. Every time this guy plays, the people that come to see him go home knowing and feeling and experiencing his intensity level. This guy is damned determined to get the word out.

Did Triple A give you a fair shot?

Biff: A terrific shot. We charted our very first record. About 21,000.

