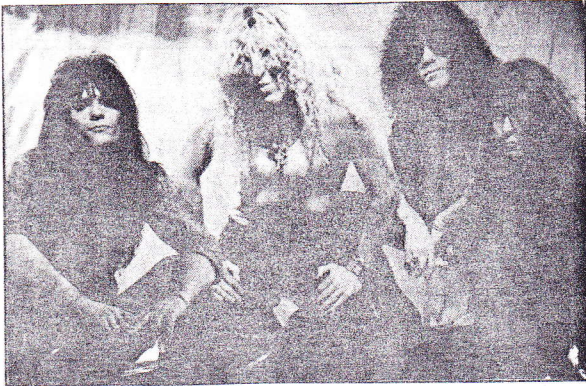


Interview

Dee Snider/WidowMaker

by Pat Kramer



After five years of relative obscurity, former Twisted Sister frontman Dee Snider is back with his new band, "Widowmaker" and a hard rock sound that takes a new direction, musically, philosophically and image wise for this rocker.

On tour to promote their debut album on Esquire/BMG Records, "Blood and Bullets", Dee Snider talked with Entertainment Today saying he is comfortable with starting over again. In the five years it's taken to get back on track, Dee says he's had time to readjust his priorities. For one thing, Dee says all the "bullshit" of rock and roll doesn't matter to him anymore. "The fancy hotels, limousines, 1st class flights which we aren't getting, it doesn't matter. My priority is I want to play, that's all I really care about. Five years away everything feels so fresh; it makes everything exciting again."

At the pinnacle of his career with Twisted Sister, the name "Dee Snider" was somewhat of a household word. After years of playing the clubs in New York, Twisted Sister went on to become megastars with their hits "We Not Gonna Take It", "Shoot 'Em Down" and "Under the Blade". A couple of years later the band died. If you ask Dee what happened, he'll try to tell you that the band spontaneously combusted. However, upon reflection he attributes it to reaching their goal: success. "The band was steeped in the struggle. Every song we wrote was about how we were going to make it, you couldn't stop us, we were going to rock, there was no way you were going to stop us from making it. When we did, it really took the wind out of our sails. I became much more of a celebrity than I thought. It became really huge, we became overexposed, burnt out and we just couldn't recover from it". There was also the issue of the parental advisory warning labels, a movement spearheaded by Vice President Gore's wife, Tipper. Asked to speak at the Senate hearings

regarding the anti-censorship movement, Dee says he became known as "Satan" to Mr. and Mrs. Middle America. Dee says it's a memory that he regrets. "I was asked to talk and I figured this was something everybody would rally against. I gladly took the flag and marched out in the front, knowing that the flagbearer usually gets shot. Unfortunately, nobody backed me up. Record companies folded before I finished my presentation. Other bands laid low, the fans sat around with their fingers in their nose saying, "well it's only a sticker", nobody got it." In addition, Dee says his phones were tapped, his mail checked, and his shows canceled. Not long after that, Twisted Sister ended.

In 1990, Dee resurfaced with a new band called "Desperado", signed to Elektra, but was suddenly dropped prior to their debut album's release. It was a time Dee says he felt like he was sinking in quicksand. "I planned on taking a couple of years off but it turned into this nightmare, I couldn't get out. It wasn't like I was just sitting back. I was working, trying to put things together. I knew I'd eventually get out. I just didn't know how old I'd be when I did." At this point, Dee flashed a tattoo on his shoulder which reads, "Illegitimus Non Carburandum Est" which means, "never let the bastards wear you down".

About his new band, Widowmaker, Dee is quick to point out that it is a "group effort", not a solo shot for him. "These are not paid sidemen. This is a band. We're all partners. These are the guys that are going to be on the next album and the next tour". Image wise, Dee says Widowmaker is very different from Twisted Sister. "With Twisted, we had the name and the look before we wrote song #1. Everything had to be perfect. In "What You Don't Know Sure Can Hurt You" we wrote the song to fit a lighting pattern. That tells you where our priorities were

at". While Twisted Sister was driven by image, Widowmaker is driven by the musicianship of lead guitarist Al Pitrelli, drummer Joe Franco, bass player Marc Russell and Snider as vocalist. Dee says energy wise, it's similar to Twisted. "I do what I do. I run around like a lunatic. With this band, I went and got the best musicians I could and then we started writing songs - incredible, heavy, musical metal songs, but still rock. There's really good playing on this record." The band is in L.A. for an upcoming show at the Roxy January 25th, and they've also put in an appearances at the NAMM show and the Randy Rhoads tribute show, held at the Palace January 13th.

Although Dee says he doesn't particularly like "hanging out" in clubs he did enjoy playing at the tribute show to the former Ozzy Osbourne guitarist who died in a plane crash 11 years ago. "It was kind of nice seeing the Class of '84 - a big breakthrough time for heavy metal. I saw members of Twisted, Ratt, Night Ranger, Quiet Riot, Vandenberg, Lemmy from Motorhead, a lot of the guys we toured with". Dee also has been on the air with his "bud" Howard Stern, a long time supporter of Snider. Most important to Dee at this stage, is that Widowmaker get the promotion and publicity it needs. "I'm really seizing high profile opportunities to let the public know that Dee Snider is back with a new band called Widowmaker." Dee anticipates their debut album, "Blood and Bullets" to be a big hit - in fact, to reach platinum status, as soon as the public gets a taste of it. "It's very entertaining, very energetic".

Despite the age gap between he and his fans getting wider every year, Dee says he doesn't see himself changing directions musically. "I have not got the desire to change yet. It's the only type of music that really appeals to me. I mean, I like blues, sixties and R&B but I can't really see myself getting up on stage with a Four Tops band". "Widowmaker continues their national club tour January 25th at the Roxy in Hollywood, then on to parts unknown. As far as when and where it will end, Dee says, "We've just barely scratched the surface". The band is hoping to hook up with a major tour somewhere along the way. After five years of isolation, Dee says it's good to be back. "I'm driving around in a van with a cheshire cat grin on my face. It's great to be back!". Then in typical Dee Snider style he adds, "This is what I'm doing for the next 5-10 years so get used to it, get into it, or suffer".

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