

INSTANT KARMA!

THIS MONTH'S REVELATIONS FROM THE WORLD OF UNCUT
FEATURING... Jakko Jakszyk | The Mountain Goats | Bab L'Bluz | 7" art

Adam Ant
at WMBR
Radio,
1981



**“The bands
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MICHAEL GRECCO



Prints charming

Michael Grecco's new photobook captures the youthful vitality of the post-punk era

"IT was definitely a wild time," says Michael Grecco of the five or so years he spent on the Boston post-punk and new wave scene, as both hedonistic club kid and photographer for local mags like *Boston Rock*. The city was a jumping-off point for British bands hoping to break America, and Grecco was there when The Police launched their first US tour with four shows at The Rathskeller, nicknamed The Rat – a "dirty

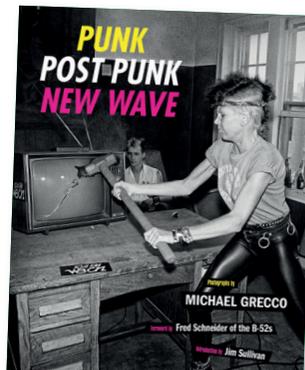
shithole that smelled of puke, smoke and old beer".

Despite its off-putting aroma, The Rat was where Grecco would hang with local bands such as The Del Fuegos and Human Sexual Response, as well as visiting dignitaries like Billy Idol. When British acts wanted a snapper to document their first steps on American soil, they'd call Grecco. Hence the day he spent with Adam Ant, as the king of the wild frontier spun records on local college radio station WMBR and turned heads while posing on the steps of MIT. "We loved Adam – the songs were a little cheeky, but they all had that amazing two-drum sound. After his gig at the Paradise, the two drummers came over to my apartment to drink and do blow all night!"

Another great picture shows The Slits goofing happily backstage after a show at the Bradford Ballroom. "They were great performers," says Grecco. "[Ari Up] had that rough, rude-girl look and when she started singing off-key it was disruptive, like dissonant jazz."

It was a time when bands were much more unguarded in the presence of a photographer, especially if he was one of their own. Grecco's book contains numerous images of drug-taking, equipment-smashing and nudity,

including a particularly debauched Cramps gig when "Lux is performing and his fricking pants come off. Their live shows were just ridiculous." In 1983, Grecco "gave up drugs and drinking all night" to become a staff photographer at *The Boston Herald*, later moving into celebrity photography and portraiture. Looking back, he's amazed at how close he got to the action. "The bands recognised that you were part of that scene and you just wound up getting access – I'm sure it's not the same now." **© SAMRICHARDS**



Punk, Post Punk, New Wave: Onstage, Backstage, In Your Face, 1978-1991 by Michael Grecco is out on November 10 (Abrams, £30). It's available to pre-order now from Waterstones

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