

- 01. Detestimony – Fini Tribe:** This was the “A” side of an EP called “Let the Tribe Grow,” written and recorded when the Fini Tribe was going through great musical changes. We had acquired an Ensoniq ‘Mirage’ sampling keyboard, and as was the same for a lot of bands at the time, it changed everything, opened up a lot of doors, and led us into some very uncharted waters. The actual piece was whittled down from a fifteen-minute opus we had written. I remember being in Philip Pinsky’s bedroom one night with John Vick. Philip’s then-roommate, Lindsay, gave us an old quarter-inch reel of tape he had. On it was a beautiful recording of the church bells you hear on the song; we sampled them and came up with the melody. The EP actually did better than any of us had anticipated and became a sort of hit in the Ibiza clubs at the very advent of the acid house/rave phenomenon. We actually went ahead and re-wrote/re-structured the song for the WaxTrax! Records release (“Make it Internal/Detestimony Revisited”) a couple of years later.
- 02. Mania – Murder Inc.:** Certainly what I feel is the most compelling song on the one and only album released by Murder Inc. The band was basically Killing Joke, minus Jaz Coleman (Killing Joke’s singer), plus me, as well as the original drummer, Paul Fergusson, and newer drummer, Martin Atkins. The sessions took place at Pachyderm Studios in rural Minnesota during September of 1991. It was kind of idyllic: the weather was beautiful and the band would record during the day while I explored the countryside and wrote lyrics, usually recording by myself with Steve Albini (with whom I loved working; an amazing engineer with an unlimited supply of dirty jokes) at night. Unfortunately, Murder Inc. was not to be, and it all went kind of pear-shaped after five U.K. shows and one U.S. show. I can’t quite remember where it all went wrong, but I loved doing it at the time.
- 03. At The Top – Revolting Cocks:** Recorded on Labor Day 1987, a couple of days after the very first Revolting Cocks show (documented on the “You Goddamned Son of a Bitch” double album and video). The basic tracks were done by Luc Van Acker (bass and guitar), David Collins (drum programming), and me (piano and vocals). The tom-tom, piano overdubs, and the mix were done later with Al Jourgensen (piano and mix) and the late Jeff Ward (drums). There was a really washed-out but intensely creative vibe in the studio. We had gone down to record as a band, but a few of the guys couldn’t make it. Luc and I were just playing around with this riff in the live room and it started to take shape. We had been talking about the band CAN a lot, and I think this song has a strong CAN influence (Luc kept referring to “Alpine Reggae”). The lyrics were written almost spontaneously: improvising a verse, stopping, writing and singing again. We wrapped it up silently at 8 AM the next morning and stumbled into the offensive sunlight. I had yet to move to Chicago, so I was still a bewildered visitor.
- 04. Stick – Revolting Cocks:** Is this the Revolting Cocks? I don’t know, but it was the first thing I ever recorded with Al and this was recorded about two hours after I first met the guy. I had visited the WaxTrax! office in London to try and drum up interest in Fini Tribe. I was already a fan of the “Big Sexy Land” record by the Cocks, and when I heard that Al was in the studio downstairs, I asked if I could meet him. Upon meeting him, he immediately suggested going to the pub – this was about 11 in the morning. By 5 PM, I was layering vocals on what would eventually become “I Will Refuse” by Pailhead, with the wonderful Iain Mackay singing. No one seems to remember the exact personnel on this recording (gleaned here from a very cheap cassette – the only document of this song) but Bill Rieflin thinks it is just he and Al, with Roland Barker on sax. After I was done, a very drunk Connelly had to run to catch the Tube to take me to the bus, which was leaving to go back up north to Scotland. Kind of a perfect ending to a beginning...
- 05. I Can Do No Wrong – Pigface:** This was originally supposed to be a slightly more up-tempo version of the song “Bedazzled.” Martin and I had been brainstorming with David Sims (The Jesus Lizard), and clearly things did not work out as planned. The song became this rather angry onslaught, with Martin and David as the rhythm section and me singing and playing the guitar. I was always nervous that the lyrics came off as being self-pitying when they were really not meant to be, but I liked the delivery, and I think the music reflects the mood perfectly: those jackhammer drums against a really dismal autumn day. Oh yeah, we decided to stick it on the Pigface “Fook” album, after a couple of years of it languishing around, doing nothing.
- 06. Stainless Steel Providers (Live) – Revolting Cocks:** Wasn’t reeeeeaaally recorded in the “great state of Texas” after all! It was recorded at the Holiday Star Plaza in Indiana, the same night that the live Ministry album, “In Case You Didn’t Feel Like Showing Up,” was recorded. “Stainless Steel Providers” had been an encore for the whole of the “Mind” tour of 1989/90 and the Star Plaza show was one of the last gigs. The band and crew were at a boiling point; it was chaotic and marvelous. The photo of William Tucker and me in the CD booklet was from this show in the dressing room afterwards.
- 07. Rubber Glove Seduction – PTP:** Recorded a few months prior to “The Mind is a Terrible Thing to Taste,” it seemed that, at the time, Al, Paul, and I would get together a couple of nights a week and do something – ostensibly for Ministry or the Cocks – but sometimes things just went off in a strange direction. Listening back to this makes me laugh; it’s a really brazen disco song, in an Eighties gay-bar sort of way.
- 08. All Fours – Fini Tribe:** I think it was May 1984... I know it was pre-sampler and I know that it was part of a three-song demo we were recording. There was a certain sound we were going for – Test Department and Neubauten were fairly new and it was an exciting time in music. For me, it was all about using dissonance, but making it atonal; trying to make it all tension, but different shades: like the high-pitched keyboard against the tribal-sounding drums, and then having it all burst with the child’s voice and the crash in the middle. (The ‘kid’ was me in the street outside the studio, sped up.)
- 09. Ignore The Noise – Damage Manual:** Left off the album, I like this one. As I listened to the music whilst writing the lyric, I felt like some madman living underneath the floorboards in secrecy whilst being driven to agitation by the sounds above him. It has a very claustrophobic and subterranean feel, and I wanted to deliver the main vocal as if in a state of suppressed excitement. There is another vocal where I read it from top to bottom over and over again, in a way that’s kind of like the way Captain Beefheart delivers the song “Hey Garland I Dig Your Tweed Coat” on the “Ice Cream for Crow” record. The version you have here is the only one; it remains proudly un-mixed and somewhat disheveled.
- 10. My East Is Your West – Chris Connelly/Chris Bruce:** This is the same version that’s on “The Ultimate Seaside Companion,” which originally came out just under the name The Bells. Some genius with whom I had dealings at the time told me that I needed to “shake off the shackles of my industrial past” and reinvent myself. That may have been well intentioned, but it was a really stupid idea and I was really stupid to listen. I don’t think I have ever listened to anyone since that (except myself, of course). The song was written for Jonathan Melvoin, it was my way of saying goodbye to him. I had written a few songs for him, but this one seems to say all that was needed. As usual, Chris Bruce delivers a beautiful arrangement and some beautiful playing. We recorded this at his apartment.
- 11. To Play A Slow Game – Chris Connelly/Bill Rieflin:** Again from “Seaside Companion,” and recorded at Bill’s house in Seattle, the title comes from a line in the Patricia Highsmith book “Found in the Street.” The drum pattern is the same one as used on “Model Murmur” from “Shipwreck.” We just taped down a key on the organ, played the guitars live, and the vocal is just the room sound. The guitars are in this weird tuning I invented that I could never find again; eventually Bill worked it out and sent the details to me, which I promptly lost...
- 12. The Call Girls – Chris Connelly/Bill Rieflin:** This may be my favourite, I think, because of Bill’s sensitive arrangement and Caroline Lavelle’s devastatingly beautiful cello solo. I have never met Caroline, and I believe she recorded the solo in England and sent it to us. I am glad and proud to have enigmas on my work.
- 13. A Mutual Friend – Chris Connelly:** From the Wire tribute “Whore.” I have no idea if the guys in Wire ever heard this or what they thought of it, but I wanted to approach it how they might approach a cover version. The Wire song (from “154”) is a song filled with light and dark movements – at moments sparse, lush and orchestrated – so I did mine a cappella, with a chromatic harmonica to give it a sort of nautical feel, and whistles to sound like the deserted pre-dawn streets I would wander down.

- 01. 2000 Light Years From Home – F/I:** F/I were/are a band steeped in orthodox psychedelia hailing from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A mutual friend asked if I would sing on a track of theirs (they are typically an instrumental band). I was overjoyed to find out it was one of my favourite Stones songs, and was delighted to oblige.
- 02. Paperself – Fini Tribe:** Actually, we were not even called Fini Tribe back then (1983), we were Gallery Macabre (sigh!). I think I was 17 at the time; we were all still at school, except Davey Miller (who was a little older and on the dole). This song had been growing and changing for about four months into this version; it just seemed to keep growing, and then we tagged the fast bit onto the end. I loved playing this live: we always used it as an opener, which threw the Prefab Sprout/Everything but the Girl-listening, P.C., student bastard audiences clip-clopping towards the union bar to escape (I think – actually, maybe no one cared either way). I wish the recording were better; this is from a cassette (thanks Andy). Perhaps the masters will appear again one day, but I really wanted this to be on here. I think this song might explain to a lot of people who ask me about the difference between my solo material and the more aggressive material I have participated in: I always saw the Fini Tribe as being a very unselfconscious version of the two. Philip and I both play bass on this song; it is also Davey's debut with the band! And nothing comes close to Andy McGregor's outstanding guitar...
- 03. Me And My Shadow – Fini Tribe:** From the same session as "Paperself." Again, Andy's guitar wins it for me, although in places it sounds a lot like "Lucifer Sam" by Pink Floyd (although none of us had heard "Piper at the Gates of Dawn" yet).
- 04. Confessions of the Highest Bidder (original demo) – Chris Connelly:** Not really a demo version – I wasn't "demo-ing" anything at the time – but I had a few ideas and my friend, Marston Daley, had an eight-track studio and he was happy to engineer my madness. The piano solo is me; the rest is made up of cassettes I made and some old records. (The wolf sounds later reappeared on "The Hawk, the Butcher, the Killer of Beauties" on "Whiplash Boychild.") I suppose what it has in common with "Confessions" is the linear sound: a lot of tape loops running simultaneously, but weaving in and out.
- 05. No Man's Land – Chris Connelly/Bill Rieflin:** Recorded during the same sessions that yielded parts of "Seaside Companion." This was a way of getting in the mood to write and record: do someone else's song, so we could concentrate on playing and arrangements. I think Bill and I had talked about doing this one before, and we both love Syd Barrett...
- 06. What's Left but Solid Gold (acoustic version) – Chris Connelly/William Tucker:** Recorded at the studios of Q101 in Chicago, Tucker and me at 10 in the morning during a snowstorm in February, both of us a little bewildered. This was for a rape crisis benefit album called "Random Acts;" the original version is on "Shipwreck." This version is live to tape, the same arrangement as performed on the "Swingin' Junkies" tour.
- 07. The Long Weekend – Chris Connelly & the Bells:** This song features Henry Polk (bass), Kim Ambriz (drums), Gary Marks (piano), Brett Andrew Grossman (organ), Chiyoko Yoshida (vocals), Mark Henning (guitar), and me (vocals, guitar, harmonica). Written after I saw Sam Shepard eating in the same deserted restaurant as me, the lyric deals with my lifelong romance with geography... I chose this track because of Chiyoko's voice, which never ceases to amaze me.
- 08. Twilight Shiner – Chris Connelly/Chris Bruce:** Off "Blonde Exodus," an obligatory post-breakup song. I like the almost obnoxious buoyancy coupled with my feelings of rage and cynicism at the time, I think I was hungover... the girl in question and I have long since become friends again.
- 09. Partick Roullette – Chris Connelly/Bill Rieflin:** First, the title: Partick is an area of Glasgow in Scotland, and Partick Roullette is when you come home drunk and attempt to make chips (French fries) on the stovetop, which can often result in a kitchen blaze... this has nothing to do with the music, it just makes me laugh. An outtake from "Largo," this was written together in 1995. It seemed only right to leave it off, but I like the way it stands on its own.
- 10. About the Beauty of Laura – Chris Connelly:** From "Private Education." The title, "About the Beauty of Laura," is, again, a line from a Patricia Highsmith book (*This Sweet Sickness*) – it just read so well. Laura is one of the many fictitious women that haunt my songs; maybe they are an amalgam of many, I have no idea. With "Private Education," I wanted to create a very black and white collection of songs, I wanted it to be sparse, and I wanted the rhythms to be simple and repetitive – kind of like this one beautiful album by Timmy Thomas, which is just him playing organ and singing against the drum machine that's in the organ – plus I was really sick of people at the time...
- 11. The Fortune (demo) – Chris Connelly/Bill Rieflin:** We originally recorded this song in Bill's parents' basement (where we recorded all the "Largo" demos, and some of "Seaside"). The voice, piano, and guitar are all live; we were playing along to an ancient (steam-powered?) drum machine and Bill added everything else later. This song has a very autumnal feel, the chord changes really reflect the fall weather outside; his parents' basement looks out onto a large playing field, and it was generally raining. This song was originally called "The Cowboy Song," perhaps because of its inherent Marconi feel.
- 12. Niddrie Street Tape Loop Experiment – Chris Connelly/Andy McGregor:** Yes, well, no one is going to quite remember who was there, but you can hear a guy hammering next door. There were two streets in the old part of Edinburgh: Niddrie Street and Blair Street, both of which housed almost every band in Edinburgh in its dark, dank catacombs. We would spend a lot of time there as a band and also just to play without having a parent tell us to be quiet. But often we would pair off and go down for a smoke and a play; I think this is Andy and me, because it sounds like us playing off each other. I had this old WEM copycat echo unit that had been modified so you could take the erase head off and build these loops up into this degenerative mass. I found this on the back of a Fini Tribe rehearsal cassette – there's about ten more minutes of random guitar noodling, but this was the best part.

DISC TWO

So there you have it. Yes, of course, there are many more tales to tell, and I hope I have mentioned everyone who deserves a mention. A lot of these records are still available, a lot are not, but if you are interested, you will find them. This is not a 'best of,' it's just a convenient way of tying up loose ends and presenting my output in a very convenient (5"x5") and perplexing way. It jumps around from different extremes to others, I know, I know, but that's me, it always has been. I am flighty and faithful.

I have thanked everyone in the CD book, but I would like to dedicate this collection to my friends with whom I was part of THE FINI TRIBE. It was there that I learned so much, and I have to say I miss it a lot, but I have the comfort of knowing they are all still around and I am still friends with them. Although we have obviously shot off in different directions, I would do it again in a second. I love you, Andy, Simon, John, Philip, and Davey.

Chris Connelly
November 15, 2002