



Life, Love & Dessert

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MUSIC: FEATURE

Blowfly



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Born freaky

By [Omar Perez](#)

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Like Norm at Cheers, Clarence Reid spends a lot of his days at Miami Jai-Alai, and all of the employees of the facility seem to know him as a regular -- ironic, in a place where many of the visitors are anything but.

"She taught me the Spanish that I know," says Reid, introducing a Hispanic woman behind the wager ticket counter. "All along I thought 'Opendejo' was a dance."

While the staff at the fronton knows him on a first-name-is-Clarence basis, the rest of the world knows Reid best as Blowfly, the father of dirty rap who was writing songs like "Can I Come in Your Mouth" and "Burnin' Pussy" while acts

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like 2 Live Crew (whom he later inspired) were still learning potty jokes during the early '70s. Reid wrote vividly explicit tunes as his alter ego Blowfly while also penning chart-topping hits like Betty Wright's "Cleanup Woman" and cuts for K.C. and the Sunshine Band.

But Reid, 59, isn't exposing the tamer side today -- or any other day, more than likely. Sitting with Reid, one is subjected to a barrage of stories, such as the time he claims to have found Frank Sinatra's wallet, the crazy days of a strung-out James Brown and, of course, stories about pussy. Naturally, Reid's foul mouth explains each tale vividly in a grandfatherly yet warmly expletive way. Asking this writer his sign (Libra), Reid quickly replied, "He was born on the sign of Libra the scale, he learned to suck and fuck and inhale." Ironically, Reid never partook in drugs or alcohol, and is a devout Christian.

While Reid's career peaked in the '70s and went through a minirevival with the 1990 "The Twisted World of Blowfly" collaboration with Flea from Red Hot Chili Peppers and several members of Fishbone, he's spent the past few years playing the occasional tour with hired hands and collecting royalty checks, which adds up to a modest living. But if Reid has it his way, this will be the year of the Blowfly comeback. Reid, with a full-time band in tow, has played his first South Florida shows after a 20-year absence, and is set to record "Blowfly for President: 2004."

Reid's dirty rhymes took shape while he was a youngster (the youngest of 18 kids) picking cotton in Georgia fields, where he passed the time writing obscene lines. Gradually he started singing his songs for the rednecks and charging money. While the black folks didn't care for his rhymes, the young white girls enjoyed them, although as Reid explains, he didn't pull a Michael Jackson on them, and not because they weren't young boys. (Reid recalls an instance in which he brought along a young girl on a tour years later, and when she came back home, asked her family to have her examined by a doctor, who said her hymen was intact. "Why, if she's on tour with the world's baddest nigger, would she come back a virgin?" he asks.)

Reid moved to West Palm Beach and took a job at a cafeteria, where the owner suggested Reid meet Henry Stone, head of disco label TK Records. Though Reid, then 14, initially packed records at the warehouse, Stone picked up his talents as a songwriter, eventually releasing "Nobody but You" in 1969. Later, Stone took note of Reid's "Shittin' on the Dock of the Bay" (his parody of Otis Redding's "(Sittin' On) the Dock of the Bay," which led to the acclaimed "The Weird World of Blowfly" (1971). Subsequent efforts like "Porno Freak" (1978), "Blowfly's Disco Party" (1978) and "Blowfly's Party" (1980) distinguished Blowfly (like Red Foxx and Rudy Ray "Dolemite" Moore) as the torchbearer for party albums, his soulful voice reconstructing songs like "Soul Man" into "Hole Man" and "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" into "My Baby Keeps Farting in My Face."

So how do you get your song lampooned by Reid? Oftentimes, just by unintentionally asking for it. "You have to be a fuckup in some way," Reid says. (His recent targets include R. Kelly -- "I Believe My Dick Can Fly" -- and Whitney Houston -- "The Greatest Fuck of All.") While we're discussing the honor of becoming a Blowfly target, a photographer from a South Florida alt-weekly shows up.

"Should I whip it out?" Reid asks.

Despite growing older and wiser, although not necessarily any tamer, Reid remains legitimately surprised that anyone could have found his music offensive over the years.

"If you had all the nasty shit that people did in the history of the music business and put it all together in a reel, compared to what we do in real life, it's like a speech by the Pope," he says. "If you watch "The Young and the Restless," everybody there has fucked everybody, and that's a daytime soap opera. The mamas let their daughters watch it with them."