

Who are the band members and what do they play?

Steve Harrell (guitar), Mr Kessel (vocals), Matt Elmes (bass), Garry Miles (drums).

How and where did you get together?

We started out as a post-punk group in 1980 in Boston called "007" (later "Dub7"). We were part of the American punk scene along with the Bad Brains, FEAR and the Circle Jerks (all of whom we opened for). But our sound was more British than American.

What are the band's main influences?

We sounded like a hybrid of the Kinks, the English Beat and Public Image, if you can imagine that -- mod/art/post-punk/dub.

Have you played any notable gigs, festivals or other events? Likewise radio or TV appearances?

We opened for the Clash on their Combat Rock tour in 1982. We opened for the Specials at the last show of their US Ghost Town tour in 1981, and that was their last show ever with the original lineup. Many other notable gigs. Please enquire for more info.

Are there any other interesting or amusing happenings – no matter how small – that the band have been involved with that would be of interest to those who like your music?

"Loosen up with the Kessels" was a side project. It was the closest we ever got to creating a catchy "hit" type of song. But we didn't have the right audience for it, so we shelved the master reel. It was never pressed. Never released. Then we split up. I quit playing, quit writing songs, went back to university, and then moved to Japan and started a business. In recent years we aging Kessels have been in contact via social media. The reel finally turned up and was sent to me. I had it remastered. And here we are.

Do you have any favourable quotes from previous reviews of the band that you'd be happy to share?

American playlist curator Common Sense says, "Strong! Love the gritty vibes and solid beats in this piece. I love the well crafted lyrics and strong vocals in this piece!"

Where was the single/EP/album recorded and who was involved in its production?

Very few people outside the studio in 1986 has ever heard this until its release two days ago in 2023. We spent many hours honing this song at Polymedia Studio in Boston. The track was mixed by Tim O'Heir, who went on to win a Tony Award (for sound on Hedwig and the Angry Inch on Broadway). He's also a Grammy nominee.

Is there a particular ethos behind the single/EP/album or any particular music styles or events that inspired it?

The reason it was shelved was that we had built a large following that expected that fast, loud, mod, post-punk, rocksteady/dub sound. College radio stations in America who had been hugely supportive of our earlier work were suddenly telling us that the tape of this new Kessels thing was "too mainstream" for them. We didn't have enough backing to go fully mainstream. So, we shelved this. Then the reel went missing for three decades.

Can you briefly describe what the song/each song is about? If you are releasing an album then either describe the thinking behind the project or choose a couple of lead tracks to focus on.

It was unrequited love, tough love. It's caring about the other but this encouragement to "go out and get around town" actually means please piss off.

Were there any notable or amusing happenings surrounding the recording/production of the EP? As above, list whatever might be of relevance.

Yes, the reel was vintage Ampex and we had to send it to a restoration specialist in Bristol, UK. There, the tape had to be "baked" to avoid stickiness gumming up the tape heads. To everyone's relief, the 15ips (high quality analog) master reel sounded as good as Tim left it in 1986. With the lossless .wav now available, I sent it to one of the most skillful mastering professionals for this type of music, Sam Moses, in Nashville, TN. So, this was produced in Boston, Osaka, Bristol and Nashville. And it's a rare super high quality digitization of an analog source. Usually you see this only from artists more important than us. In order to produce this level of crisp lossless audio, every link in the chain had to line up -- the performance, the recording, the restoration and the mastering. Skilled professionals at each step.

Please provide a one or two-line personal quote that can be attributed to a band member, about either the band themselves or the release. Obviously the more eye-catching this is the better.

"My lyrics were very close to the bone on this one," Larry reveals, "It was a moment of major transition in my life. The desperate tone of the vocal was genuine."

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