



Heavy Nedal

All the neighborinos (from left): Dread Ned, Bed Ned, Head Ned, Zed Ned and Shred Ned.
PHOTO COURTESY OF OKILLY DOKILLY

Metal chops meet *Simpsons* quotes with Phoenix's Okilly Dokilly

Head Ned, the lead singer of *The Simpsons*-themed metal band Okilly Dokilly, says the group was conceived while he was standing in line at a grocery store and joking about names that wouldn't match "a heavy death-metal band with pyrotechnics and a *Metalocalypse*-type

by
Howard Hardee

Preview:
Okilly Dokilly performs
Tuesday, Feb. 12,
8 p.m. Playboy
Manbaby opens.
Tickets: \$12
(ticketweb.com)

Lost on Main
319 Main St.
jmaxproductions.net

"It started as, 'What if the lead singer of the band was dressed as Ned Flanders?' Then it became, 'What if we're all Ned Flanders?'" explained Head Ned. "He's the antithesis of everything associated with metal—Satan, aggressiveness, things that are coarse and brutal. Ned Flanders is the least aggressive person, the most PG-rated guy, so that's why we thought it would be interesting to combine the two things."

Okilly Dokilly is playing Lost on Main with Playboy Manbaby on Tuesday, Feb. 12. The Neds will come ready with onstage props such as an inflatable TV, like the one in the cartoon family's living room, a fog machine and a pack of inflatable donuts. Head Ned says their live

shows draw a mix of metalheads and fans of *The Simpsons*, and that there's usually a surprising amount of crossover between the crowds.

"The crowd is in the mood to thrash, but also have a good time and chuckle," he said.

Head Ned never thought Okilly Dokilly would make it beyond a one-off show in Phoenix, the band's hometown. "We thought this would only appeal to our weird sense of humor, that you would have to be a metal fan and a *Simpsons* fan. How would we ever reach such a small group of people? But we put it on the internet, there was a huge reaction, and we realized how wrong we were about that."

Indeed, their first music video for the single "White Wine Spritzer" has nearly 6 million views on YouTube. After recording their 2016 debut album, *Howdilly Doodilly*, they went on an international tour and played to enthusiastic audiences as far away as Dublin. Perhaps they unwittingly tapped into a cultural undercurrent; *The Simpsons* was a full-on phenomenon when most millennials were growing up, so the references aren't as obscure as they thought. Now they're on the verge of dropping sophomore album, *Howdilly Twodilly*.

Head Ned doesn't identify as a songwriter, per se—rather, he's the band's vocalist "and Ned quote compiler." In composing the band's forthcoming album (due out in late March), he watched the first 10

seasons of *The Simpsons* and wrote down all of Flanders' quotes, which he uses as lyrics "pretty much verbatim." This time around, the excerpts resulted in such fine titles as "I Can't Fit the Geo" and "Purple Drapes."

"There are two types of quotes that go into the songs—just silly stuff Ned says that sounds funny as death metal lyrics, and then anything Ned says that can be taken out of context to sound pretty creepy," he said. For example, one of the new songs is called "Here's the Noose." It references an episode in the third season of the show during which Flanders struggles to get his new left-handed store off the ground.

"There's a small bit where he takes off his tie and says, 'Here's the noose I had to wear for 10 years.' That became the chorus because the quote is pretty dark and it drove the song," Head Ned said.

Instrumentally, he says the band has upped the musicianship compared with its debut album. "It's a little bit more technical, there's a little bit more to the songs this time," he said. The joke band has gotten more serious than Head Ned could have imagined, but he still has a hard time picturing how far it will go. "We're just taking it month-to-month," he said. "I don't know how long we'll keep going."

But he already has the next project in mind, drawing from another animated show created by Matt Groening—*Futurama*: "I've always wanted to do a Scruffy-the-janitor-themed band called Boilin' Toilet." □

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