

SICK OF IT ALL

Wake the Sleeping Dragon!

Available as: Ltd. CD Box Set, Standard CD Jewelcase, LP+CD, Digital Album

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By Chris Dick

New York City hardcore legends SICK OF IT ALL aren't slowing down with age, the long-standing quartet are still pissed off, and the genre stalwarts still see many years ahead. SICK OF IT ALL remain a beacon of continuity, integrity, and resolve. That's good news for SICK OF IT ALL fans and the hardcore scene. Since forming in 1986, SICK OF IT ALL have traveled the world many times over, played in front of hundreds of thousands, and released 11 acclaimed full-length albums, the latest of which is the riotous if anthemic *Wake the Sleeping Dragon!*. That SICK OF IT ALL continue to live by the standards in their original charter isn't a matter of course, it's part of their respective DNA. Hardcore is SICK OF IT ALL. "We're a band that thrives from frustration," says drummer Armand Majidi. "Aging seems to work well with our message, as opposed to a good-time band who sings about partying all night. There are so many horrible aspects of the world that become more obvious to us year after year, which we didn't see or understand before, which fuel our frustration every day. We've lived long enough now to see through the matrix, and thank goodness we have this band, so we can vent about it."

And SICK OF IT ALL will voice, express, and declare their anger. As with pivotal albums *Blood, Sweat and No Tears* (1989), *Scratch the Surface* (1994), and *The Last Act of Defiance* (2014), the New Yorkers aren't afraid to cut the crap on *Wake the Sleeping Dragon!*. Written and arranged with friend and producer The Jerry Farley (Lamb Of God, Every Time I Die)—a first-opener "Inner Vision," "Hardcore Horseshoe," and "The Snake (Break Free)" retain SICK OF IT ALL's signature sound but add melody, heaviness, and speed to the equation. Guest vocals by Tim McIlrath and Chuck Ragan add a new dynamic as well. Across *Wake the Sleeping Dragon!*'s 17 songs, SICK OF IT ALL have an album that observes tradition but has its eye on the future. "We didn't shy away from stronger melodies on this album," Majidi says. "So, there are some strikingly musical moments. Basically, we chose not to limit ourselves. The songs stand apart from each other by representing many different musical styles that have influenced us."

On *Wake the Sleeping Dragon!*, SICK OF IT ALL opted to change up the lyrical approach. While daily frustrations, political idiocy, war, power imbalances, and general inequality have long fueled SICK OF IT ALL's no-bullshit lyrics—the album title *Wake the Sleeping Dragon!* refers to a protest mechanism—today they're focusing on the bigger picture while also injecting a bit of levity into the songs. "On this record, we had a more open, communal, tongue-in-cheek approach to lyric writing," says Majidi. "So many different topics were covered, some way more lighthearted than others. We've done 'serious' so often, that what might stand out most to people is how much fun we had with the lyrics. It's always time for revolution, so that message is loud and clear on multiple songs, but we also sing about musical heroes like the Bad Brains ('That Crazy White Boy Shit'), inner demons ('The Snake (Break Free)'), our distaste of animal abuse ('Bull's Anthem'), annoying narcissism on social media, friends we've lost, life on the road, impending wars for resources, as well as mosh pit patterns that can be linked to male pattern baldness. We've allowed ourselves greater lyrical freedom on this record for sure!"

For the cover, SICK OF IT ALL wanted it to tie directly into the lyrics. Designed by Ernie Parada from Hellgate Industries but inspired by Lou Koller and Parada's '50s era monster movie poster idea, the cover to *Wake the Sleeping Dragon!* is striking in its use of yellows, oranges, reds, and black. That it also brings in SICK OF IT ALL's Alleyway Dragon mascot captures not just the mind but part of the band's history as well. "Lou and Ernie came up with the idea of doing monster-movie styled art as the cover," Majidi says. "The dragon climbing the Empire State was a concept I always wanted to see brought to life, so the two ideas were destined to come together this way. I love the fact that although it's the same artist, there's no obvious aspect linking Ernie's style from his first cover (2010's *Based On A True Story*) to this one."

Wake the Sleeping Dragon! was put to proverbial tape by The Jerry Farley at Nova Studios in Staten Island, New York over two weeks and a half, while Danish producer Tue Madsen (Meshuggah, The Haunted) mixed and mastered SICK OF IT ALL's latest rager at Antfarm Studios in Aabyhøj, Denmark. What helped the process run smoothly was Farley's early involvement, the two five-day pre-production sessions, and the ability to record as SICK OF IT ALL progressed with the songwriting. "The Jerry Farley also became a very important part of the creation of this album," Majidi says. "This is the first time we've ever had a producer involved from start to finish, including the songwriting process. His objective viewpoints helped settle a lot of little issues that could have easily become stumbling blocks, and the songs themselves ended up benefitting from them. SICK OF IT ALL and Tue Madsen have maintained a long-lasting relationship based on understanding, friendship, and most importantly, good results—three factors any band would be very happy with."

As for SICK OF IT ALL's next steps, the picture is clear. Majidi and team are looking for a warm reception to *Wake the Sleeping Dragon!* and more rounds of tours around the globe. The sleeping dragon is awakening! And SICK OF IT ALL want you to join the rebellion!

Line-Up:

Lou Koller - Vocals
 Pete Koller - Guitars
 Craig Setari - Bass
 Armand Majidi - Drums

Selected Discography:

Blood, Sweat and No Tears (1989)
 Just Look Around (1992)
 Scratch the Surface (1994)
 Built to Last (1997)
 Call to Arms (1999)
 Yours Truly (2000)
 Life on the Ropes (2003)
 Death to Tyrants (2006)
 Based on a True Story (2010)
 Last Act of Defiance (2014)
 When The Smoke Clears (2016)
 Wake The Sleeping Dragon! (2018)

**SICK OF IT ALL "Wake The Sleeping Dragon!"
 (33:06)**

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Inner Vision | 01:54 |
| 2. That Crazy White Boy Shit | 02:05 |
| 3. The Snake (Break Free) | 01:57 |
| 4. Bull's Anthem | 02:02 |
| 5. Robert Moses Was A Racist | 01:28 |
| 6. Self Important Shithead | 00:58 |
| 7. To The Wolves | 01:39 |
| 8. Always With Us | 02:26 |
| 9. Wake The Sleeping Dragon | 02:02 |
| 10. 2+2 | 01:49 |
| 11. Beef Between Vegans | 02:12 |
| 12. Hardcore Horseshoe | 01:52 |
| 13. Mental Furlough | 02:16 |
| 14. Deep State | 01:53 |
| 15. Bad Hombres | 02:01 |
| 16. Work The System | 01:46 |
| 17. The New Slavery | 02:38 |

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