

Scissorfight
Potential New Agent for Unconventional Warfare
Tortuga Recordings
By Joseph Lorenzo Hall

The fifth release from New Hampshire punk rockers Scissorfight, *Potential New Agent for Unconventional Warfare* --a reference to a CIA term for LSD -- has its moments. Unfortunately, they are few and far between.

There's not a lot of originality in this release. The guitars will start and stop in unison over constant drums in the vein of bands-past like Helmet. Scissorfight also has this tendency to do really lame choruses where other band members crow over the main refrain. This ends up sounding more like an out-of-place *Oh Brother Where Art Thou* nouveau-bluegrass chorus put over punk rock than a good vocal exchange. Another minus is the lead singer, Ironlung, actually attempting to sing at times and ending up sounding like the singer from the Stone Temple Pilots (if that was their goal, they hit the nail on the head).

The most annoying part of this Scissorfight release is the strings. Scissorfight has one guitar and one bass played by Geezum H. Crow and Jarvis respectively. I can't tell if they overdubbed a rhythm guitar track or if it's straight bass and guitar but whatever it is, the solos are blatantly reminiscent of bad '80s cock-rock.

Probably the most teeth-gnashing horrid part of the guitars is that 90% of the time they follow each other verbatim, note for note. One guitar plays in a high register and the other in a more agreeable grungy tone while playing the exact same progressions track after track. This gets old really, really fast. I had to look at my CD player a few times to make sure it wasn't stuck on single-song repeat. In fact, I'm sure they could get away with just a lead guitar and an octave pedal to mimic bass.

Like I said originally, *Potential New Agent for Unconventional Warfare* does have a few good moments. The end of the first track, "Hex" is particularly cool, devoid of bullshit, expressive, heavy, it got my head nodding. It's too bad the whole track doesn't sound more like this. "Riverhorse" starts well but then gets worse as the guitars launch into that annoying synchronization.

Scissorfight's press kit claims *Potential New Agent for Unconventional Warfare* "peels back the latus of coincidence to reveal tales of backwoods motherfuckery, maritime disasters, and all manner of civic trauma to an ossified citizenry while the ruling elite choke on the cock of the revolution." Yeah, right. Is it we citizens who are ossified or is it Scissorfight?