

Was (Not Was)

- 1980 A1.WHEEL ME OUT (LONG VERSION) B1.Hello Operator
12: US Antilles 805
B1.Where Did Your Heart Go?
(1981) 12: UK Island 12WIP6716
- 1981 A1.OUT COME THE FREAKS (Edit) B1.Out Come The Freaks (Edit Mono)
7PRO: US Island IS 49756
A1.Out Come The Freaks (Vocal Version) B1.Out Come The Freaks (Dub Version)
12: UK Ze Records 12WIP6709
- 1981.08 **OUT COME THE FREAKS**
1.Out Come The Freaks 2.Where Did Your Heart Go? 3.Tell Me That I'm Dreaming
4.Oh Mr. Friction 5.Carry Me Back to Old Morocco 6.It's an Attack 7.The Sky's
Ablaze 8.Go...Now!
- (orig lp) UK Island ILPS-7015
(expanded) 1.Wheel Me Out (Long Version) 2-8.[same as above] 9.Hello Operator (Short
Version) 10.Out Come The Freaks (Again) 11.Tell Me That I'm Dreaming (12" Remix)
12.Out Come The Freaks (12" Remix) 13.(Return to the Valley of) Out Come The
Freaks (Semi-Historic 1983 Version) 14.Christmas Time in Motor City 15.Out Come
The Freaks (Dub Version)
2004: UK Pinnacle ZERECCD-05 [CD]
- 1982 A1.TELL ME THAT I'M DREAMING B1.Out Come the Freaks
12: US Island 50011
B1.Tell Me That I'm Dreaming (Version)
12PRO: US Island 1000

† Below with tons of guests including Ozzy Osbourne, Marshall Crenshaw, Wayne Kramer, Mel Torme, Branford Marsalis, etc.

- 1983 **BORN TO LAUGH AT TORNADES** US.134
Produced by Don St. Was, David St. Was and Jack Tann
A1.Knocked Down, Made Small (Treated Like a Rubber Ball) A2.Bow Wow Wow Wow
A3.Betrayal A4.Shake Your Head (Let's Go to Bed) A5.Man vs. the Empire Brain
Building B1.(Return to the Valley of) Out Come the Freaks B2.Professor Night
B3.The Party Broke Up B4.Smile B5.Zaz Turned Blue
- (orig lp) US Geffen/Ze GHS-4016 [lyrics], NET Geffen GEF-25592

4 stars. Boobytraps abound on Born To Laugh At Tornadoes. Funk, pop and jazz get rolled into a single album, pinned together only by the top-notch production of the would-be brothers Was. Although the two albums are dissimilar in many ways, this always reminds me of Godley & Creme's Snack Attack, as both share a smartalecky wit and irreproachable pop sensibilities. However, where the 10cc refugees tried to go it alone, Was (Not Was) rolls out an illimitable red carpet for an army of accomplices. The revolving cast of vocalists alone would make the album eclectic, but Was (Not Was) are out to reinvent themselves with each song. Are they the intelligent R&B band of "Knocked Down, Made Small," the cute pop band of "Smile," the arty absurdists of "Man Vs. The Empire Brain Building?" A: All of the above. Only in the warped world of Was (Not Was) can Mel Torme (whose straight reading of "Zaz Turned Blue" is hilarious) out-cool Ozzy Osbourne (shackled here with the synthetic "Shake Your Head"). In fact, I don't even know what Ozzy's doing on here; maybe they had a compromising photo of him reading The National Review. Toss in a welcome reprise of the irresistible "(Return to the Valley of) Out Come The Freaks," and Born To Laugh At Tornadoes is literally a whirling blender of fun. The prologue on the back cover between a poet and a clown seems to set the album's tone: there's a place for poetry and entertainment in the world. There's certainly a place in my collection for an album this consistently eye-opening and entertaining. Unencumbered by image, freed from preconceived notions of what constitutes pop, Was (Not Was) released one 1983's real sleepers with this record. In my book, this easily outlaps The Golden Palominos experiment.

- 1983 A1.SMILE B1.Smile (Mono Version)
7PRO: US Geffen 7-29477
- 1983 A1.KNOCKED DOWN, MADE SMALL B1.Knocked Down, Made Small (Mono Version)
7PRO: US Geffen 7-29407
- 1984 A1.(RETURN TO THE VALLEY OF) OUT COME THE FREAKS B1.?
7PRO: AUSL Geffen GEF-4178

- 1984 **(THE WOODWORK) SQUEAKS (EP)**
 1.Tell Me That I'm Dreaming 2.Where Did Your Heart Go? 3.Wheel Me Out 4.Out
 Come The Freaks 5.Dance or Die 6.Hello Operator
- (orig ep) UK Ze Records IMA-10
- 1986 A1.ROBOT GIRL B1.Earth to Doris
 7": UK Mercury WAS-1 [ps]
 A1.Robot Girl (Paris Mix) B1.Robot Girl (E.Grinstead Mix) B2.Earth to Doris
 12: UK Mercury WAS-112
 4.Where Did Your Heart Go
 12PRO: UK Mercury WASR-112DJ
- 1987 A1.THE BOY'S GONE CRAZY B1.What Up, Dog?
 7": UK Fontana SFSP-9 [ps]
 2.THE BOY'S GONE CRAZY (A Walk and A Dub in the Black Forest Mix) 3.What Up,
 Dog?
 CDS: UK Fontana SFSPC-9
 A1.THE BOY'S GONE CRAZY (A Walk and A Dub in the Black Forest Mix) B1.What Up,
 Dog?
 12: UK Fontana SFSP-912
 (1989) 7PRO: US Chrysalis B-23388
- 1987.10 A1.WALK THE DINOSAUR UK.10 US.7 [1.28.89-16w]
 B1.11 Miles An Hour
 7": UK Fontana WAS-3 [ps], AUSL/NET Fontana 888 809-7 [ps]
 A1.Walk The Dinosaur (New York Dangerous Mix) B1.Walk The Dinosaur (Bruce's
 Prehistoric Dub) B2.11 Miles An Hour (Abe Zapp Ruder Version)
 12: UK Fontana WAS-322, GER Fontana 888 809-1
 CDS: GER Fontana 888 809-2
- (1988) 1.Walk the Dinosaur (Jeffrey B. Young Hearts Run Free Mix) 2.Walk the Dinosaur
 (A-Capella Saurus) 3.Walk the Dinosaur (Full Instrumental) 4.11 Miles an Hour
 (Abe Zapp Ruder Version) 5.Walk the Dinosaur (Video)
 CDS: UK Fontana 080452-2 [cd video]
- (1988.12) B1.Wedding Vows In Vegas
 7": US Chrysalis VS4-43331 [ps]
 A1.Walk the Dinosaur (The New York Dangerous Version) A2.Walk the Dinosaur
 (Bruce's Prehistoric Dub) B1.Walk the Dinosaur (The Debunking of Uri Geller Mix)
 B2.Walk the Dinosaur (7" Mix)
 12: US Chrysalis 4V9-43332
- > There is a period in pre-adolescence when a child can rattle off the names of twenty or more perfectly serviceable dinosaurs: brontosaurus, stegosaurus, allosaur, dimetrodon, elasmosaur, plesiosaur, etc. I'm a long way removed from adolescence, but I'd guess I'm still good for at least a dozen dinosaurs. (Never trust anyone who can't name more than five.) Which brings us to the four dinosaurs I found this morning. Mercifully, there aren't a million versions of "Walk the Dinosaur" roaming the earth. (Merciful because I don't have time to play the dino tracker today.) The US 12-inch contains most of them: the new york dangerous mix (clubosaurus), bruce's prehistoric dub (instrumentosaurus), the debunking of uri geller mix (oddosaurus) and the 7-inch version (megahitosaurus). Unfortunately, I have no idea what this song is about because there's so much junk culture floating in it: miami vice, elvis presley, nuclear missiles. Destiny collided with the dinosaur again when the song (natch) was nicked for The Flintstones soundtrack.
- 1988.02 A1.SPY IN THE HOUSE OF LOVE UK.21 US.16 [10.1.88-17w]
 B1.Dad I'm In Jail
 7": UK Fontana WAS-2 [ps], US Chrysalis 43266 [ps], CAN Fontana 870 091
 3.Spy in the House of Love (Jeffrey B. Young & Dangerous Mix) 4.Spy in the House
 of Love (In House Mix)
 12: UK Fontana WAS-212
 1.Spy in the House of Love (Jeffrey B. Young & Dangerous Mix) 2.Spy in the House
 of Love (Streetsahead Mix) 3.Dad I'm In Jail
 12: UK Fontana WASX-2
 4.Walk the Dinosaur
 CDS: UK Fontana WASCN-2
 A1.Spy in the House of Love (Jeffrey B. Young & Dangerous Mix) A2.Spy in the
 House of Love (Streetsahead Mix) B1.Spy in the House of Love (Derek
 B Mix) B2.Spy in the House of Love
 12PRO: US Chrysalis 43262
- 1988 1.(STUCK INSIDE OF DETROIT WITH THE) OUT COME THE FREAKS (AGAIN) 2.(Return to the

Valley of) Out Come The Freaks 3.Out Come The Freaks (Ze 12" Version) 4.Earth to Doris
CDS: UK Fontana WASCD-4

1988

WHAT UP, DOG?

[US.43](#)

1.Spy in the House of Love 2.Boy's Gone Crazy 3.Anything Can Happen 4.Somewhere in America There's a Street Named After My Dad 5.Out Come The Freaks 6.What Up, Dog? 7.Love Can Be Bad Luck 8.11 Miles An Hour 9.Anytime Lisa 10.Shadow & Jimmy 11.Walk the Dinosaur 12.Dad I'm in Jail

(orig lp)
(orig cd)
(orig csx)

UK Fontana SFLP-4 [lyrics], US Chrysalis OV-41664 [ps], Fontana 834 291-1 [ps]
US Chrysalis 41664
w. bonus tracks & different order: A1-5.Same as 1-5 above A6.Love Can Be Bad Luck A7.Shadow & Jimmy B1.11 Miles an Hour B2.Robot Girl B3.What Up, Dog? B4.Anytime Lisa B5.Wedding Vows in Vegas B6.Walk the Dinosaur B7.I Can't Turn You Loose B8.Dad I'm in Jail
1987?: UK Fontana SFMC-4

1988

A1.ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN

[US.75 \[5.6.89-6w\]](#)

B1.The Death of Mr. Ping Pong
7": UK Fontana WAS-5 [ps]
B2.One White Crow
12: UK Fontana WAS-512, CAN Fontana 870 518
4.Land of the Free

(1989.04)

CDS: UK Fontana WASCD-5 [tin box]
B1.Anything Can Happen (R&B Version)
7": US Chrysalis 43365
1.Anything Can Happen (Album Version) 2-5.Interview clips including Anything Can Happen (R&B Version) 6-8.Interview clips
12PRO: CAN Fonta DJF 328

-> That's right, I own two different twelve-inch singles of this song. Let's just say anything can happen twice. It's not that I really enjoy "Anything Can Happen." It's all right, sort of a return to the endless returns of "Out Come The Freaks." There's the straight R&B arrangement from Don Was, the silly lyrics from David Was, and the band playing it like no one let them in on the joke. The two twelve-inchers I own include the promotional interview version (articulate, informative) and the UK retail twelve-inch that includes nonalbum tracks "The Death of Mr. Ping Pong (as absurd as you'd think) and the "mutant disco" (their word, not mine) of "One White Crow." Since I couldn't find the lyrics to this last song on a quick search of Google, I've transcribed them below (with all apologies if I missed a word somewhere).

ONE WHITE CROW

work all day...

hot december ice cold july
things are upside down and I don't know why
bitter honey worthless money
steak's all bone and the jokes aren't funny

Chorus:

things seemed okay just a minute ago
now all I see is one white crow
white as the fallen snow
all I see is one white crow

mountain low and river high
con man preach and the preacher lie
wood don't burn kids don't learn
work all day not a penny do you earn

Chorus

spoken:

there's something wrong there's something wrong
it's high noon and my shadow's long
nothing's right nothing's right
the tigers talk and the people bite

black and white rainbow reaching cross the sky
cleopatra's dressed up like a guy

friendship's gone love is up for sale
freedom's dead the president's in jail

Chorus

one white crooooooow
mountain low and the river's high
con man preach and preachers lie
things seemed okay just a minute ago
now all I see is one white crow

1989 A1.WHITE PEOPLE CAN'T DANCE
12PRO: US 4th Broadway PRO-493

1989 **NEW STEAK TREND**
1.Anything Can Happen (Acid Mansion Mix) 2.Walk the Dinosaur (The Debunking of Uri Geller Mix) 3.Spy in the House of Love (Jeffrey B Young & Dangerous Mix) 4.One White Crow 5.Out Come The Freaks (Ze 12" Version) 6.(Return to the Valley of) Out Come The Freaks (1983 Version) 7.White People Can't Dance 8.Spy in the House of Love (Streetsahead Mix) 9.The Death of Mr. Ping Pong

(orig cd) JPN Fontana PPD-1057

1990.05 A1.PAPA WAS A ROLLIN' STONE **UK.12**
B1.Ballad of You
7": US Capitol 23550, UK Fontana WAS-7 [ps]
B2.Papa Was a Rollin' Stone (Instrumental)
12: US Capitol 23540, UK Fontana WAS712
3.Papa Was a Rollin' Stone (Instrumental)
CDS: UK Fontana WASCD-7
1.Papa Was a Rollin' Stone (The Full Rub) 2.Papa Was a Rollin' Stone The Richie Rich Remix) 3.Papa Was a Rollin' Stone (Richie's Bass-Apella)
12PRO: UK Fontana WASRDJ-712

1990 **READINGS FROM CHAIRMAN WAS (EP)**
A1.PAPA WAS A ROLLIN' STONE (Extended Radio Mix) B1.You, You, You B2.Elvis' Rolls Royce
12: US 1990 Chrysalis V 23541

-> This is a promo 12-inch for the upcoming Are You Okay? release. It features three songs that appear on the subsequent CD. As it turns out, the extended radio mix of "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone" is identical to the unextended album mix that appears on CD. Guess I was reading too much into that whole mix thing. Gullible little lemur that I am, I thought that maybe the extended radio mix would be, I dunno, different. After all, they don't call it the extended radio mix of "Elvis' Rolls Royce." Or chestnut the extended radio mix of brown. Unless the idea is that the words cancel themselves out: extended, radio. That's a possibility.

1990.07.03 **ARE YOU OKAY?** **UK.35** **US.99**
Produced by Don Was and David Was
1.Are You Okay? 2.Papa Was a Rollin' Stone 3.I Feel Better Than James Brown
4.How the Heart Behaves 5.Maria Novarro 6.I Blew Up the United States 7.In K Mart Wardrobe 8.Elvis' Rolls Royce 9.Dressed To Be Killed 10.Just Another Couple Broken Hearts 11.You! You! You! 12.Look What's Back

(orig lp) UK/GER Fontana 846 351
(orig cd) US Chrysalis F2 21778 [lyrics], UK Fontana 846 351

3 stars. Apparently everything was not okay with Was (Not Was), and the band broke up after this album. You wouldn't know it from Are You Okay?, which runs like a well-oiled watch through a dozen different modern dance numbers. Instead of the wild blender of styles whipped up by Tornadoes, Are You Okay? keeps both feet firmly in the R&B/dance camp (save for "You! You! You!"). The surprises come in the lyrical content and the strange sensation that stems from listening to music that simultaneously tickles your brain and shakes your booty. A cover of "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone" became a minor hit, though the rap sections from G Love E are L Am E (so was a lot of rap in 1990 I suppose). More interesting over the long haul are tracks like "I Feel Better Than James Brown" (one of those spoken surreal vignettes from David Was), "How The Heart Behaves" and "Elvis' Rolls Royce." Having settled on a core band for the studio, Was (Not Was) doesn't lean on outside contributors so much. The cameos are still interesting: Iggy Pop (Don was producing him at the time), Leonard Cohen, Syd Straw, The Roches. Despite its prickly interior, the smooth exterior of Are You Okay? is likely to please R&B/dance/funk fans who followed "Walk The Dinosaur" and thought The Time were the bomb. If songs like "Professor Night" and "The Party

Broke Up" from Tornados didn't float your boat, then Are You Okay? may not either. There's nothing here as catchy as "Out Come The Freaks," though "How The Heart Behaves" comes close and "Maria Novarro" uses a similar melody. But it's all so intelligent, so professional, and so dang funky that I'm okay with everything Was (Not Was) offers up here. It's also a pleasure to hear Sir Harry Bowens and Sweet Pea Atkinson utilized across an entire album. I couldn't get a grip on the glossy exterior the first few times I heard this, but the more you listen to Are You Okay?, the more the sheer musicality of it will win you over. If it seems miles removed from prog, consider this: Was the later work of Godley & Creme so much different?

- 1990 A1.HOW THE HEART BEHAVES B1.The Weird and Wonderful World Of (Triple Whammy Rave Mix) B2.Anything Can Happen (R&B Mix)
12: UK Fontana WAS-812
CDS: UK Fontana WASCD-8
A1.How The Heart Behaves (12" Vocal Mix) A2.How The Heart Behaves (Bonus Rub Mix)
B1.How The Heart Behaves (7" Club Mix) B2.How The Heart Behaves (That's How The Boilerhouse Behaves Mix)
12: US Chrysalis 23641
- 1990 A1.I FEEL BETTER THAN JAMES BROWN (7" Version) B1.I Feel Better Than James Brown
7": UK Fontana WAS-9 [ps]
1.I Feel Better Than James Brown (The Locomotion Mix) 2.I Feel Better Than James Brown (Berwick Beat Mix) 3.?
CDS: UK Fontana WASCD-9
- 1992 1.LISTEN LIKE THIEVES B1.Hello Operator
7": UK Fontana WAS-10 [ps]
3.Go...Now! 4.Wedding Vows in Vegas
CDS: UK Fontana WASCD-10
- 1992.07 1.SHAKE YOUR HEAD UK.4
2.Spy in the House of Love 3.I Blew Up the United States
4.Robot Girl
CDS: UK Fontana WASCD-11
- 1992 1.SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA (THERE'S A STREET NAMED AFTER MY DAD) 2.Shake Your Head
3.Where Did Your Heart Go 4.I Blew Up the United States (live)
CDS: UK 1992 Fontana WASCD-12
- 1999.12 **HELLO DAD... I'M IN JAIL**
(orig cd) Polygram International 512 464
- 2004 **THE COLLECTION**
1.Shake Your Head (Let's Go to Bed) 2.Spy in the House of Love (Streetshead Mix)
3.Love Can Be Bad Luck 4.Robot Girl 5.The Boy's Gone Crazy 6.Ballad of You
7.Land of the Free 8.I Blew Up the United States 9.The Death of Mr. Ping Pong
10.One White Crow 11.Hello Dad...I'm in Jail 12.What Up, Dog? 13.Out Come The Freaks
14.Papa Was a Rollin' Stone
(orig cd) UK Universal 9813655
- 2004 **(THE WOODWORK) SQUEAKS**
1.Tell Me That I'm Dreaming (12" Remix) 2.Out Come The Freaks (Predominantly Funk Version)
3.Wheel Me Out (12" Version) 4.(Return to the Valley of) Out Come The Freaks (Extended Version)
5.Hello Operator (12" Version) 6.Dance or Die 7.Tell Me That I'm Dreaming (Souped Up Version)
8.Out Come The Freaks (Dub Version) 9.Out Come The Freaks (12" Version) 10.(Stuck Inside of Detroit with the) Out Come The Freaks (Again) 11.White People Can't Dance
(orig cd) UK Pinnacle ZERECCD-06