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At its inception in 1984, Concrete was primarily a management company. Their initial clients included Grim Reaper, Percy Jones, and Cities. Bob and Walter remember, "We were starving...we opened a small office that we shared with a computer company....We were plugging like crazy on Grim Reaper, and although things were going great with the band... Their first record sold about a quarter of a million and their second record sold about a hundred seventy five thousand... but we weren't seeing any money as it was being filtered through a small independent label in England and then supposedly back to us." Although there was no money coming in, Concrete was developing valuable connections in the then relatively underground area of heavy metal music. It was and is an area where traditional record marketing doesn't work. They developed relationships with the "fanzines" (underground fan magazines), non-traditional record stores and college radio stations and began to realize they had found a special niche.

At the New Music Seminar in 1985 Concrete distributed a write up on the area of music they were becoming specialists in, and at one of the cocktail parties Rick Dobbis offered them their first outside marketing project on Armoured Saint for Chrysalis. Almost at the same time they also picked up marketing on the group Anthrax for Megaforce/Island through their friend Jonny Z. Suddenly things took off. Bob points out, "The problem was that the majors were hearing about all these independent metal bands that were selling 60-70-80 thousand records and they would sign them and try to market them through AOR radio and nothing would happen." As a result, almost overnight, Concrete was marketing and promoting heavy metal groups for practically every major label. Throughout 1985 and into '86 the management end of the company took a back seat to the marketing and promotion functions and their offices expanded as did their staff. In '85 Tommy Kealty came in as an intern and in March of '86 Jim Bradt came over from Blue Sky with Mindy Glasberg following in May.

Management of Grim Reaper was reduced to no touring or recording but considerable "legal volleyball" as contractual problems developed in England. In the summer of '86, however, Elekta-Asylum helped Concrete take over management of Metal Church. More staff was also added as Jamie Beckett came in to work in marketing and Eddie Javaruski (the lighting director for the club L'Amour) took over the mailroom. This year, with their legal problems for the most part behind them, Grim Reaper has their third LP coming out soon on RCA. Although numerous other groups have approached them, Bob and Walter have purposely kept the management roster to a minimum.

When asked to further explain their promotional activities there are a number of bases to touch. At the colleges it means staying in touch with the heavy metal radio shows and usually very late night concerts. There are numerous "fanzines" such as 'Kerrang!', 'Metal Rendevous', 'Aardshock', 'Whiplash'. Bob goes on to note, "There are some little sheets run off on a mimeograph machine that may only reach a thousand kids." Walter interjects, "But those thousand kids probably buy one each of every record that's in there." Concrete also reaches specialized heavy metal record stores that the majors are often unaware of. There are also heavy metal clubs to be serviced with videos and promotionals. Road tour tie-ins and any special projects co-ordinated with live performances are of utmost importance. "It's important to note", Bob points out, "that we go into a project knowing that we are not going to get any major radio play"

To put things in perspective, the average sales figures for a minimally successful heavy metal act are somewhere around 25,000 copies. Bob and Walter then point out that sales tend to reach plateaus. The next being 60-80,000, then 120,000, the next level would be 160,000 and so on, with each level requiring another promotional push. It is also important to understand, in Walter's words "By nature metal is a suburban phenomenon. It's the kids on Long Island. It's the kids in Long Beach. It's not the kids in Hollywood. It's not the kids in Manhattan."

Concrete also publishes a heavy metal retail chart which has recently been picked up by the 'Bill Hard Report'. They intend to put a bit more effort into their charting activities in the near future. Also in the future, Concrete intends to become more active in the film area. This will include both promoting certain films well suited to the heavy metal record fan, as well as promoting the use of heavy metal music in appropriate soundtracks.

WALTER O'BRIEN - co-owner



After leaving college Walter's first job was in 1973 working promotion for Jem/Passport Records. He next became label manager for Passport when they began their distribution deal with Famous Music, then later with ABC Records. From there he moved to ATV/PYE Records to try and help launch their US offices, as National Album Promotion Director. After a little over a year, when the US operation didn't work out, Walter returned to Jem/Passport as label manager. During 1977-78, Passport was distributed by Arista through their then independent network and O'Brien worked as liaison with the Arista operation. He also met Tony Smith and the people from Genesis since Anthony Philips (original guitarist of Genesis) and Brand X (backup band for Phil Collins) were on Passport Records at the time. Walter then left Passport in 1978 to help run the US offices of Hit And Run

Management where he remained until 1980. He next did some writing for 'Music & Sound Output' and in '81 spent six months as General Manager of Hannibal Records. After another brief stint that year booking lecture tours at colleges, in late '81 - early '82, Walter accepted a position at Important Records to help establish their P&D deals. This included work with Jonny Z in organizing Megaforce Records. Walter then established Relativity Records and Combat Records, and signed the group Talas. O'Brien began working closely with Bob Chiappardi on the Grim Reaper tour and a friendship and good working relationship developed. They then split off together to set up Concrete Management.

BOB CHIAPPARDI - co-owner



Bob started as a messenger for Warner Brothers' Pictures for six months from which his career "skyrocketed" to the mail room at Arista Records. He eventually worked his way up to publicity co-ordination for Arista. While there he also began managing local bands, including the Freelance Vandals, who's record was put out through Important Records. Bob also performed managerial services for Dean Friedman and signed management on Percy Jones, who was formerly with Brand X. Chiappardi's company was Go-Rilla Music which was half publishing and half management. In April of 1984 when Bob and Walter joined forces they first used the name Go-Rilla\Concrete. By September 1984 the company was primarily Concrete Management with Go-Rilla Music as simply a secondary publishing operation.

CONCRETE STAFF

MINDY GLASSBERG - Management relations  
 GAYLE MILLER - Marketing  
 JAMIE BECKET - Marketing  
 DEREK SIMON - Radio Promotion  
 TOM KEALTY - Marketing  
 ED JAVARUSKI - Tech. Support  
 ANDY INGKAVET - Intern  
 CLARA JULIO - Administration

MANAGEMENT ROSTER: GRIM REAPER (RCA), METAL CHURCH (ELEKTRA)

