



By Sally Roesch Wagner

The Yeastie Girlz at the time of this interview in December were CamMaster Cliff, Joyce Vagina, and Labia Jane. Shortly after we spoke, Jane left for an extended visit in Nicaragua and has recently been replaced by a new member, Kate. The Yeastie Girlz live vaginacore acapella rap demo tape, "Suck My Smelly Vagina," is available for \$2.00 from: Yeastie Girlz/ PO Box 7813/ Berkeley, CA 94707.

**MRR: How did the Yeastie Girlz happen?**

**Cammie:** One night at Gilman Street Jane and I were talking for a long time about yeast infections, about what we do to get rid of them, and just general yukiness and stuff, and Joyce came along, we put our arms around each other and all of sudden we became the Yeastie Girls. (Joyce, remembering the story earlier, thought there was Beastie Boys music playing.) Then the Fourth of July there was a big show at Gilman Street and Jane just out of the blue wrote Yeast Power, and we stood there and practiced it on the street outside Gilman, and practiced and practiced, and then we said, all right we're going to go up and do it.

**Joyce:** We had a little inspiration. Remember, we sang it to a couple of people before, because I know I didn't want to do it. I was nervous. I had butterflies.

**Cammie:** We just stood up there and read it.

**Joyce:** And I was shaking.

**Jane:** Because it was at Gilman Street everybody liked it, because it's such a warm atmosphere there, and it was all our friends, so they're always 'Yeah, yeah.'

**MRR: So without that environment, you might not have sprouted?**

**Jane:** Definitely not.

**Cammie:** I'm sure it wouldn't have.

**Joyce:** I'm positive it wouldn't have.

**MRR: It's an environment designed to produce yeast?**

**Jane:** It's like a giant womb. There are a lot of bands actually that have come out of that environment. The second time we performed was at a big Gilman Street benefit, there were seven bands, a lot of people showed up.

**Joyce:** Yeah, and I was scared. Cammie and Jane put fliers up in Berkeley and a lot of people just saw "Yeastie Girlz" and they didn't know who it was, but just the name, a lot of people came because of the name.

**Jane:** People have a real immediate reaction to the name.

**Cammie:** So we did that show and we talked about yeast infections, and we had yogurt and we went through this whole thing about, how you figure out when you have a yeast infection, and then, what do you have to do like going to the Dr. and the Dr. will give you some stuff, or you can use yogurt. At which point Jane was wearing shorts, and Joyce splattered yogurt all over the inside of Jane's legs.

**Jane:** Joyce was demonstrating...

**Cammie:** ...yeah, to show what it's like when you wake up in the morning after having put yogurt in, and we said, yeah, it's kind of messy, and we threw yogurt at everyone in the audience, and you could hear people saying "What the hell is that?" They didn't know it was yogurt. They thought it was something else. They thought it was yeast. We threw wet tampons at people. We dipped tampons in cups of water and we showed people what a speculum was. That was the first time we showed people what a speculum was.

**Joyce:** This guy Jimmy who's a roadie for another group, he was also in a rap group in Fresno, where he lived. He asked if we'd like to do a show with him.

**Cammie:** So we rented a car and a couple of our friends drove us there. We wrote a new song on the way up, the Deukmajian one. We were totally nervous about it, we just knew we were gonna fuck it up.

**Jane:** We were nervous anyway.

**Joyce:** They got us an interview on the college radio station in Fresno. We did the FCC rap.

**Cammie:** It was at a bar, this show. We were gonna be just before Vincent Van Go-Go, and it turns out there are all these other people with acoustic guitars and stuff that were gonna be playing before us. And it was just packed. It was a free show, a benefit show for No More Censorship, and they passed around the can. They wouldn't let me in because I'm not 21. So I had to wait around outside. Jane stayed out in solidarity with me.

**Joyce:** I stayed in and drank.

**Cammie:** By the time we got in, the crowd was really drunk. This was just like a local bar, you know, where men in trucks show up.

**Jane:** In Fresno, a scary place.

**Cammie:** We went on and everyone was just like yu-yu-yu-yu.

**Joyce:** Yeah, at first I thought it was gonna be really fun, everybody was fucked up and...

**Cammie:** ...we thought we were gonna charm them or something.

**Joyce:** Yeah, we got up there and did our first song and they started throwing lemons at us. And then this one guy that's known for beating women...

**Jane:** ...the guy was really huge, with tattoos, he was a walking cliché...

**Joyce:** ...he was jumping on the stage

**Cammie:** ...he came running up and calling us dykes, and I saw a whole bunch of people trying to grab him, because they knew that he was really violent against women, and they were holding him, going "No, no, don't do anything!"

**Joyce:** We were so scared, we were screwed up, man, like this was gone.

**Jane:** He talked to me afterward and said, 'You know I was just joking around.' I didn't get the impression that he was violent when he was there, I thought that he was just a macho jerk.

**Joyce:** There was this other guy, though, that was violent.

**Cammie:** He kept hassling us throughout the show, calling us dykes. He said, "Why are you dykes?" and Jane said "Because you're the alternative." Everyone just cracked up.

**Jane:** Afterwards we got a lot of compliments, people said they really liked it, but while it was going on, personally I felt like a teacher with an out-of-control class. I was just yelling as loud as I could into the microphone. It was a really small sound system and there were just these two speakers facing out, so I couldn't hear myself very well. And the crowd was so loud. They were so loud that I was just like, "Shut up and listen, shut up and listen." It just felt so out of control. It was so different from Gilman Street where everyone just stands there attentively, and sings along and laughs and claps at the right parts.

**Cammie:** We didn't even get through "Deukmajian", we got through three lines of "Deukmajian", and there was no way.

**MRR: What did you do?**

**Jane:** We did "Sperm Brain."

**Cammie:** We dedicated it to those jerks, and then we did "Yeast Power" and "Defecation." I remember they were pretty quiet during "Defecation." I think they were just going "huh?" Another funny thing happened. The guys that came up with us were wearing Yeastie Girlz shirts, that said Yeastie Girlz and had tampons with red paint on them on the shoulders. They wanted to have dinner before they came to the show, and they went to three restaurants, and got kicked out of all three because of the shirts. So that kind of caps it all to me, that's how Fresno was.

Joyce: After the show I got into a little trouble. While I was inside, I went to light a cigarette, and one of the guys that had been hassling us, he just knocked it out of my mouth and it just flew, and then I was just like "You're a total jerk." I was ready to pound on him, but I thought "Just keep it cool, don't start anything." So I went outside to smoke a cigarette and he came outside, too, and he started screaming at me, saying all this stuff like, "You're a dyke" and I was really calm like, "Whatever you say, you're not going to insult me because I think you're a piece of shit" and so he started to get more steamed and more steamed, and as he did that, he pushed me, just as a friend of mine came out. My friend goes, "Hey, leave her alone," and then they got in a fight.

Cammie: Jimmy picked up the guy, cuz he's really big, and did a full body slam, and then they were really at each other. Heavy duty macho violence. And then two other fights chained out from that.

Jane: It was just like total cowboy bar scene. It was so funny. All these brawls. Everyone was so drunk and they were so far gone when we went on.

Joyce: I even whipped out my mace at one point. That was Fresno...

**MRR: What else is happening?**

Cammie: Like the record came out, (Maximum Rock N Roll's Turn It Around with "Yeast Power" on it) a bunch of guys in L.A. want to marry us. All three of us.

**MRR: Do you see yourself as a feminist group?**

Cammie: I see myself as a feminist person, and I think what we're doing is pretty damn radical, even though we didn't intend to be feminist, it just sort of happened.

Jane: I don't really see it as feminist so much. I don't consider myself a feminist anymore. I don't like the set of rules that accompanies feminism that I don't like to abide by anymore. The Yeastie Girlz to me just blows it all apart. I mean, like "Defecation Rap" doesn't have anything to do with feminism.

Cammie: And we use some words, like cunt, and we call ourselves girls.

**MRR: So you see yourselves as "breaking the rules" that feminism has?**

Jane: Yeah, breaking all the rules. Things like almost prudery. Like "cunt" is not an accepted word, because somehow it's considered violence against women. But it depends upon who uses the word, and what context they use it in. The Yeastie Girlz is just like, who cares about feminism, we're just gonna do this thing because it rocks and it's raw and it's doing it in people's faces.

**MRR: Why are you doing it?**

Jane: It was to shock. There are things that people don't know about or talk about, people are ignorant about. There are all these things that people are embarrassed about, things even I'm embarrassed about in spite of myself. I'm always working to break the embarrassment about it. That's it. Breaking that wall. It's hard to do it on just a personal level. When women can bridge over that thing like asking for a tampon out loud in public. "Does anybody have a tampon I can borrow?" instead of whisper whisper. Or "I've got a really bad yeast infection" when everybody else talks about their injuries, like "My leg really hurts." Or talking about shit, "I had the worst diarrhea this morning, you wouldn't believe." People are just embarrassed and so tense about it.

Cammie: And it's so natural.

Jane: Right. The most obvious stuff. And that's what I see almost as our purpose being, is just breaking all that down. If you throw it in people's face enough, maybe they won't be embarrassed.

Cammie: It's opened up so many lines of communication, especially after a show. People will come up to me and say things like, "Yeah, I read about the cervical cap" or like Cecilia from Flightwig who yelled out in the show about using vitamin C as a contraceptive.

**MRR: Where did you learn about using yogurt for a yeast infection?**

Jane: It was handed down through the ages.

**MRR: At the last concert, when you asked what was the weirdest thing people had put in their vaginas, they were putting some amazing stuff out there.**

Jane: The audience was really funny. I think it's hilarious that we got people to admit so much stuff about what they'd put in their vaginas.

**MRR: It was incredible!**

Jane: You couldn't get people to admit it in a normal context, but somehow we took things to some level where suddenly people wanted to have something

to admit. They were bragging, and it was cool, all of a sudden it was turned around, and probably if they would have stopped and thought about it, like, "Do I really want all these people in this room to know that I..."

Cammie: ...put an electric toothbrush...

Joyce: ...drumstick in my vagina.

Jane: I think that people just got to some level where they just weren't thinking about being embarrassed.

**MRR: And you do that, you somehow create that because of what you're doing.**

Cammie: And maybe it carries over into the audience.

Joyce: I think when I walked out with that big vagina on they KNEW that we didn't give a fuck about nothing.

Jane: People were really liking the door, too. (The audience had to climb through a fabric vagina to get into the show, which had all women bands.)

Joyce: Yeah, they really got off.

**MRR: Your audience give-and-take is great. That thing about Fred Flintstone, when I gave my grandson his vitamins last night before he went to bed, and he was looking for Wilma, and...**

Cammie: We were talking about Vitamin C, and putting vitamin C in your vagina as a contraceptive, and then somebody said "chewables", and somebody said "Flintstones", and I said, "No only Betty, only Betty"; and then someone said, "No Bam-Bam, we know the sperm would go up there with Bam Bam".

Jane: I've had people say they really like it because we don't have music. It's more like a comedy routine.

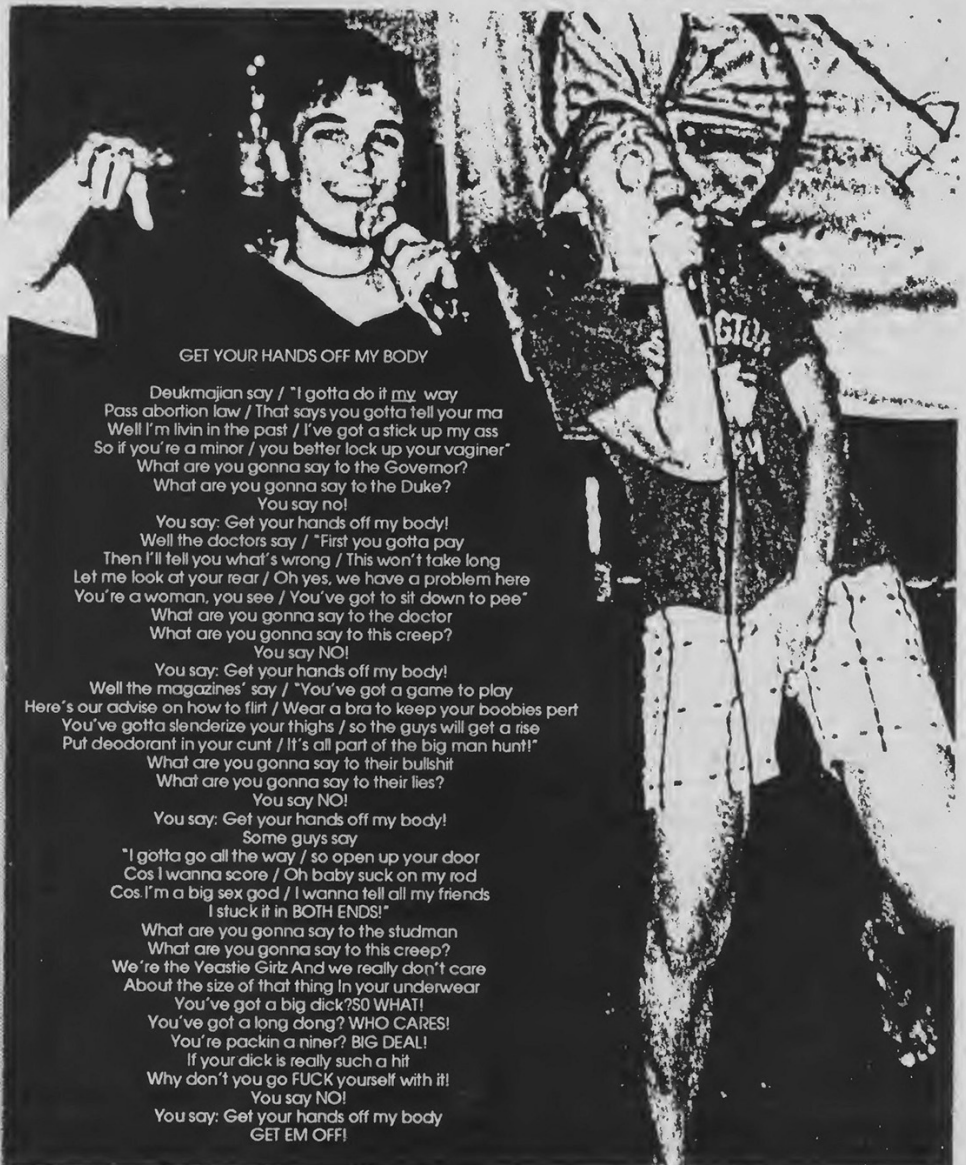
**MRR: How did your friends react?**

Jane: A lot of guy friends said afterwards, "You really embarrassed me."

Cammie: That's a compliment. When someone tells me "You're so gross," I think that's great, because you know that you've affected them. In retrospect about Fresno, I figure that we did something there because those people were so offended and so shocked, that they had to react like that. We did something there.

Jane: A lot of people liked it, too. They felt, especially in Fresno, that it was so needed there, that they were just grateful to us for coming there and blowing it away like that. I had a really interesting experience in Fresno. I was standing outside, just being obnoxious, before we went on. I was smoking a tampon like a cigar and watching people's reactions. And I was playing with a speculum for awhile, just kind of twirling it around, and I was talking to a couple of women outside. They didn't seem like feminists at all, and one of the women saw the speculum and she said, "Oh, god, I've seen those too many times." And I said, "Yeah, but have you ever held one in your hand?" and she said, "No, actually, I haven't." And she took it in her hand, and looked at it and figured out how it worked, and she said, "Wow, this is kind of neat." And she told me that she had cervical cancer, and so she had had a lot of really bad experiences on the other end of those things, and on the other end, I assume, of ass-hole doctors, since most doctors are ass-holes. So it was a really beautiful symbolic moment of women taking their health care into their own hands.

**MRR: Do you see what you're doing related to the Free Speech Movement of the sixties at all?**



GET YOUR HANDS OFF MY BODY

Deukmajian say / "I gotta do it my way  
Pass abortion law / That says you gotta tell your ma  
Well I'm livin in the past / I've got a stick up my ass  
So if you're a minor / you better lock up your vaginer"  
What are you gonna say to the Governor?  
What are you gonna say to the Duke?  
You say no!

You say: Get your hands off my body!  
Well the doctors say / "First you gotta pay  
Then I'll tell you what's wrong / This won't take long  
Let me look at your rear / Oh yes, we have a problem here  
You're a woman, you see / You've got to sit down to pee"  
What are you gonna say to the doctor  
What are you gonna say to this creep?  
You say NO!

You say: Get your hands off my body!  
Well the magazines' say / "You've got a game to play  
Here's our advise on how to flirt / Wear a bra to keep your boobies pert  
You've gotta slenderize your thighs / so the guys will get a rise  
Put deodorant in your cunt / It's all part of the big man hunt!"  
What are you gonna say to their bullshit  
What are you gonna say to their lies?  
You say NO!

You say: Get your hands off my body!  
Some guys say  
"I gotta go all the way / so open up your door  
Cos I wanna score / Oh baby suck on my rod  
Cos I'm a big sex god / I wanna tell all my friends  
I stuck it in BOTH ENDS!"

What are you gonna say to the studman  
What are you gonna say to this creep?  
We're the Yeastie Girlz And we really don't care  
About the size of that thing in your underwear  
You've got a big dick? SO WHAT!  
You've got a long dong? WHO CARES!  
You're packin a niner? BIG DEAL!  
If your dick is really such a hit  
Why don't you go FUCK yourself with it!  
You say NO!

You say: Get your hands off my body  
GET EM OFF!

Camille: No, I see it as an extension of who I am, my personality.

Jane: And it's kind of almost a reaction to the punk thing, which is pretty masculine. Punk originally was supposed to shock people and offend people, but then if we can come along and shock people and offend people more than any other kind of punk does, like the Sex Pistols. Like we started doing "Defecation Rap" and people were like "Aaahhh, what are they talking about?" So in a way it blows away the whole punk thing, too.

Camille: Another thing is I feel really good about doing it because I feel it's really productive. In order to feel happy about myself, I feel like I have to be out there. It's usually in a teaching form, getting information out there. It makes me feel really satisfied day by day knowing that I'm at least doing that.

Joyce: Same with me.

Jane: You know what you said about AIDS education, that would be incredible to have something like that go on. Because it's so hard to get things across, especially to young people, it's so hard to get education across or information. Even when they're being well-behaved, they're just sitting there twiddling their fingers. But if we did it, it would be a totally different thing.

MRR: They'd hear it.

All: Yeah, that's something that we should write a rap about...we should work on...yeah.

MRR: You know when people were arrested for doing civil disobedience on the steps of the Supreme Court after the Gay and Lesbian March in Washington...

Joyce: I couldn't believe the cops did that. That really bugged me. Here they are trying to educate everybody on TV and in papers about how you can't catch AIDS if you hug somebody, they have those big billboards with that little kid that says, "I have AIDS, give me a hug," and then the cops go arresting people with rubber gloves on, you know, it's like a total contradiction.

Jane: So many people are so reactionary that if they see something like that, an authority figure taking that precaution, they see it as, that's a precaution that should be taken, when really it's just a totally ridiculous thing.

Camille: It just shows how people just can't deal with AIDS. Why are people so scared, and why is the Reagan administration trying so hard not to educate the people? Why?

Joyce: Because the CIA invented AIDS.

Jane: Well, I sure have no reason to disbelieve it. The CIA are not friends of mine that I want to defend. There's no way that you can prove or disprove any of that stuff because they have their ass covered in so many different directions. They could be doing anything. There's just no way to tell. You can look at it on the one hand that they're really running this country, and nothing really makes any difference, and you can get really depressed about that, but at the same time you just have to think, ok, they have a lot of power and they're well-hidden. No point being obsessed about it.

MRR: You're going to Nicaragua. What are you going to do? How does it fit in with your politics?

Jane: I've had a hard time taking political action. I feel so alienated the times I've been at demonstrations. I can't relate, and I have a really hard time with that. I've gotten a lot more active, which is not to say that I'm very active now. In the two years being on Maximum Rock N Roll doing typing and general shit-work. What I want to do is to put myself in a situation where I really feel what's happening. I was reading about it in the papers, and it bothered me and I was concerned and angry, but I couldn't feel it. I could think it, but I couldn't feel it. So I wanted to go there and experience it. I'm not going to save the world, I'm not going for anything other than so that I can feel it and so that I can relate that feeling to other people. A lot of people seem to be doing things, not just in a political sense, but just talking about things and not getting the feeling across. Here's the classic example: So many punk bands have political lyrics, but that's all it is. It's like they've got political lyrics and nobody reads the lyrics anyway. But if a band comes along that can get a feeling across that something's hurting them, personally they feel pained by what's happening in Nicaragua and they can get that across on stage, and other people will feel that pain, then other people will do something. But unless they feel it,

they're not going to do anything.

MRR: Your music seems to come not because you sit down and say "We should write a song about this" but from stuff that you feel like you want to talk about at the time.

Jane: We've actually tried to do it like, "We should write a song about this," and it's never worked.

Camille: The way it usually works is that Jane will come up with a line and she'll throw it out to us, and we'll develop it...

Jane: ...like a line that has a little bit of some kind of rhythm or melody to it, some kind of little catchy line...

Camille: ...like "Sperm Brain" or "Bitch Twitch."

Joyce: That song happened in five minutes.

MRR: Do you talk this openly with everybody?

Joyce: I talk this way with everybody, except that I try to hold my language down with my parents.

Camille: Yeah, most people. Like today in class I was talking to this guy about us and what we sing about. I just talked about it and he was really receptive to it. He was saying stuff about, "Yeah, I heard about this kind of birth control," and we were talking about the sponge and about sex and it was just really easy. Even talking about what we're about brings it out in people.

MRR: Somebody said after the concert on Sunday night that you were like Dr. Ruth on acid. Do you think that describes you?

Joyce: Probably, yeah probably.

Camille: I like that a lot.

Jane: It's sort of like taking that thing and blowing it wide open. Fucking with your reality or something like that.

MRR: Do you all get your periods together? Women who live together usually do.

All: You know, it's funny, last time we did. We get yeast infections together.

Emily: (who sat in on some of the interview) Going through past issues of Maximum Rock N Roll, I found that almost all the bands with girls in them, they got their periods together. That was something they talked about.

MRR: You know, when you were doing it with the duck on stage...

Jane: Was it convincing?

MRR: It was more than convincing.

Camille: People were saying stuff like, "I wouldn't be surprised if she really got off."

Jane: Well, I wasn't, but I was definitely going through motions that I've gone through a million times before, since I was six years old. It was like almost primal. I didn't have any sexual feelings. I don't think I'd be embarrassed to admit it if I did. I was nervous and I was really spaced-out, maybe because I'm leaving so soon.

Camille: I didn't know what to do with the ducky. I was sucking on his head and stuff. I knew before-hand that I was going to do something with the duck to get the point across, but I was just kind of rubbing it on my boobs and stuff, but nowhere near what Jane was doing. I couldn't do it.

MRR: While you were doing it, I was thinking about how Jim Morrison got busted in Florida in 1969 for supposedly masturbating on stage...

Jane: Well, the thing that was behind it for me was just this visual image I had of Joyce sitting there singing the rubber ducky song, and I pictured us with big rubber duckies (which would have been better visually on the stage, but it's kind of hard to get ahold of big rubber duckies) but just this image of Joyce singing the Sesame Street song, and us masturbating on rubber duckies, and I knew that it would just be the strangest thing people had ever seen, and they wouldn't be able to deal with it at all...

Camille: ...they didn't really clap, a girl masturbating on stage is just like the ultimate mind-fuck. So I figured that would be a good thing to do.

MRR: ...the whole de-sexualization of childhood, kids get ripped-off from their sexuality, and so to claim that, to say this sweet rubber ducky, you know what kids really do with their rubber ducky.

Jane: I didn't really think of it from that perspective, but yeah, that's...

Camille: ...except that you did say afterwards, in a joking way, you didn't know that's what they were really singing about when you heard that song.

Jane: But it's true, there is a really strange thing there because if you admit that children have sexuality, then there's this whole reactionary thing about sexual abuse of children, and so people think that you have to deny that children are sexual, because if you don't, then you're saying it's ok for adults to sexually

manipulate kids. I've never been sexually abused, and I've been masturbating since about age six, so to me, it's obvious that kids are sexual.

Camille: My mom's told me that she saw me masturbating when I was really little and took me to the doctor to ask if this normal, and he said "Fine", so I've been masturbating since before I was even walking.

Joyce: My experience with sex was mostly a rebellion against my parents, because of my religion. Ever since I was little, my dad's friend when I was about four years old gave me a ride on his shoulders and my grandma flipped out and said, "Girls aren't supposed to touch that part of their body on any man", and that really tweaked me out. My whole family, they're from Costa Rica and real Catholic.

MRR: You have some male groupies that are picking up on the paraphernalia of the Yeastie Girlz?

Camille: There's one guy who wears a tampon on his leather jacket.

Jane: Yeah, a lot of guys are really into it.

Camille: After a lot of the shows, guys will come up and say, "That's the best thing I've ever seen." Or "I've learned so much, thank you."

Joyce: One guy said, "I'm a Sperm Brain, but I really like you guys."

MRR: You gave him a name for himself.

Joyce: Some guy from New York just heard the name and said, "Look, you can make it big, you just can't say that kind of stuff on the radio, if you just change your lyrics, then we can put you on the radio."

Jane: Just write songs about love, or guarded references to fucking men, now I'm sure that would go over big.

Camille: "Push, push your love thing."

Jane: Yeah, there you go, you've got a hit.


MRR: The Yeastie Girlz go gold.

Joyce: That's not why I'm into this.


Camille: I'm into it because of the lyrics.

Joyce: I'm into it because it's totally fun and we're gross, and I like to be gross, I'm a disgusting person.

**YEASTIE**



**GIRLZ**  
**SAY:**  
**JUST SAY**  
**NO**



**TO**  
**SPERM BRAINS**