

★BUZZ- a new series

starting Friday, 4 May 6 pm (repeated 1.50 am)

"Life is like a big old Jersey submarine sandwich." This from Jon Bon Jovi, teen metallar, in a new MTV import for Channel 4, BUZZ.

The co-producers of this presenterless montage of global culture and opinion claim that they have taken the world as their set and made the man in the street their pop star.

What we get is a thirty minute pop video, short segments of ordinary people talking about themselves and their world interspersed with facile late '80s video artwork - the usual fare: subliminal flashes from B-movies, Vietnam (and other rock'n'roll wars), the visual arts, i.e. shaven heads, fluorescent plastic bags and sparks flying from heavy industrial equipment.

Every now and then the discharge is interrupted by a 'data' flash: "If you inhale a deep breath today, the chance of it containing one molecule of Hitler's breath: 99 in 100" or "The average of a Rolling Stone: 46." All this accompanied by a relentless contemporary soundtrack, a sample laden mixture of hip-hop and heavy metal driven by the drum machine from hell.

The features for the first episode include interviews with the U.S.'s top computer hackers, taped unnecessarily in black and white on low definition video, and displaying the camera's digital counter in the bottom left hand corner of the frame; some entertaining reality theatre from 'La Fura Dels Baus': simulated torture on stage and audience bombardment with Rubber offal, slime and socks full of flour; evil pop sven-gali Malcolm McLaren, on art and plagiarism is one of the few interviewees qualified to talk about his subject.

BUZZ must assume we all want to become pop stars. When a tricky point of international importance needs clarification it is to those who are grinding of hip and polyped of larynx that we turn - David Byrne explores morality, Terence Trent

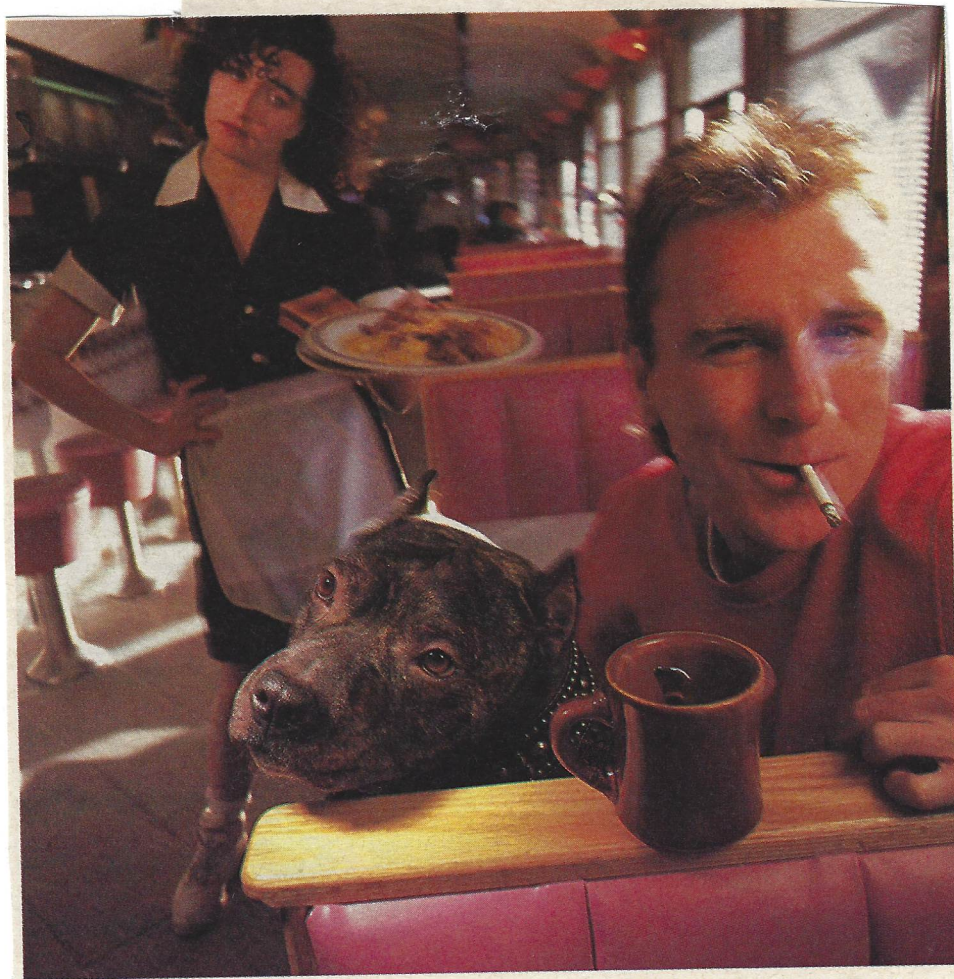
d'Arby explains the condensation of communication and its political ramifications.

But even platitudes from pop stars are preferable to the ruminations of 'ordinary people': "I worry about all the negative people", "I want the future to be fine." It is this which turns a garish but inoffensive piece of post-pub background telly into a toe-curling cry for help from Hollywood about the state of the planet.

"BUZZ gets to the heart of the matter:", says Jon Klein, co-creator, "there aren't any ghettoes any more." Even Jon Bon Jovi has got more sense. William Mount

A SIGN ON THE DOOR TO MTV STAFF PRODUCER MARK Pellington's dark, cluttered office says, THE BEST OF THE BRAINWASHERS.

Pellington, 27, a large, intense man who is dressed entirely in black, is MTV's resident bohemian-intellectual-experimental-filmmaker type - the kind of guy who drags a copy of William Burroughs's *Job* around with him and talks about being influenced by the beat writer's



THE NEW BREED: VIDEO JOCK COLIN QUINN TAKES A COFFEE BREAK.

cut-up theory. He's about to leave for London to produce a new show, *Buzz*. Described in MTV promotional material as "a spin through the pop culture blender," *Buzz* is a hyperkinetic look at modern-day international culture, crosscutting kids from all over the world talking about topics like style, fashion, music, sex, media and politics, with microfeatures on everything from Japanese torture game shows to the latest New York clothing designer. "I want to challenge people's conception of what a show is," he says.

One of Pellington's co-workers, John Payson, recently completed a promotional spot in which a distraught executive apologizes to the MTV viewer for "that last video if it offended you. . . . In fact I think we should just apologize for the whole evening of programming," while a black-and-white Pellington spot called *Words* consists simply of sentences appearing on the screen, criticizing how language is used in TV commercials.

It is this kind of thing, along with the animated MTV logos and other onscreen self-promotional spots constantly seen on the network, that give MTV its seemingly modern, up-to-date feel.