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**DOWN**  
**DOWN III – Over the Under**  
 ILG/Warner Music Group

After a horrific tragedy, it is apparent there is a shift in the mind and spirit of the survivors. Those who have been battered, burned, nearly drowned or have lost loved ones to a disaster are profoundly changed. Most everyone has seen the horrific footage of war, genocide, famine, terrorism, and natural disasters—the supposed acts of God—and some have experienced these things firsthand. Well, blessed are those who grieve and then go on to live like they're going to die.

Having survived Hurricane Katrina is a common bond that DOWN members Phil Anselmo, Jim Bower, Rex Brown, Pepper Keenan, and Kirk Windstein share, but it seems that this band of the heaviest motherfuckers from New Orleans has emerged from its collective tragedy stronger than ever. The weaker would have disbanded.

You could say that DOWN's five year "down" period was a necessary time for the band to rack up more collective life experience, and each member has brought an

enormous amount of wealth one can only acquire from paying the admission price of pain. Frontman Anselmo declared after Dimebag

Darrell's death that the world wouldn't be hearing from him for a long time, yet less than three years later he has once again joined his old Pantera bandmate, bassist Rex Brown and friends from EyeHateGod and Crowbar, making DOWN more than just a side project. *DOWN III—Over the Under* is undoubtedly a comeback album, and is the band's most personal work ever.

The follow-up to 2002's *DOWN II—A Bustle in Your Hedgerow*, this record is steeped in Sabbath and is a soulful bowlful of heavy metal loaded with the bluesy flavor and grittiness of the bands from where these guys came from, particularly COC. Is this swampy Southern rock derivative of Lynyrd Skynyrd or Molly Hatchett? Not a



cotton-pickin' chance, Jethro, even though the initial tracks for the album were laid down at Nodferatu's Lair, Anselmo's studio in the swamps. While these New Orleans residents would never deny their roots, the depth of the songs' lyrics and the powerful grooves make this third album one that will satisfy the longtime DOWN fan and turn a first time listener into a new fan, from any state, country, or climate. Play it once and you'll want to play it over and over.

The infectious opener, "3 Suns And 1 Star" starts off sounding like the bruising Geezer/Ward rhythm heard toward the end of "Children Of The Grave" before picking up tempo and exploding into a song that makes it apparent that the band's five year hiatus hasn't been detrimental. The stony, fuzzy crunch of Keenan and Windstein's guitar playing in "In The Thrall Of It All" is mystifying. DOWN is showing exuberance like it hasn't shown previously, while keeping the mood dark and appealing. It's a pleasure to hear Anselmo out front singing once again delivering a message of depth and power. Evidently, the hard times have been liberating for both he and his bandmates. So out of the darkness and into the light... —Charlie Steffens

