

Punk! Last Week This Week: 9/11 Music Edition

On 9/11–Punk, Protest, and Witness: WBT Editors Choose Their Jams

There was a chance, in 1991, for the US to take a responsible role in leading the world into the 21st century. Rather than do this, we worked instead to profit from former enemies' weakness. In doing so, in prioritizing our own interests over those of others, we lost an unusual opportunity to build a peaceful world based on trust and collaboration. Ten years later, with America atop an increasingly conspicuous global pyramid scheme, we breathed a collective sigh of relief when we were granted a reprieve from judgment. Rather than face the consequences of our behavior, we doubled down—and, on 9/11/2001, decided to assign blame outside our national borders.

On this, the fifteenth anniversary of our collective moral cowardice, a national giving in to neurotic fear of cultural or individual weakness unbecoming of exponentially the most powerful nation on earth, we recommend listening to the following songs and albums. On your way to work, during lunch, returning home from a profitable (or unprofitable) day at the grind.

Don't worry, an admission of guilt isn't weakness—it's evidence of strength. Like your 2nd grade teacher said, correctly, and many adults seem to have forgotten.

Adrian Bonenberger's Selections

Before 9/11—We saw it coming: Bad Religion [Recipe for Hate](#)

(1993)

After 9/11: Green Day [American Idiot](#) (2004)

Matthew Hefti's Selections

The last solid album release before a generation of teens all lost our innocence still takes me right back to that summer before 9/11, those few carefree months between high school and college. They changed the album and song name after 9/11, but it seems almost prescient: Jimmy Eat World [Bleed American](#) (2001)

Whether it be the wars, our apathy towards our nation's poor, or our xenophobia toward refugees, Rise Against is post-9/11 protest punk that comes closest to perfection. Rise Against [Appeal to Reason](#) (2008)

Drew Pham's Selections:

After 9/11, Sage Francis lamented the bigotry of our newfound nationalism, and presaged the longest war in American history: [Makeshift Patriot](#) (2002)

Himanshu Kumar Suri, otherwise known as Heems, was a student at Stuyvesant High School on 9/11. In [Patriot Act](#) (2015), he recounts that day, and the racially charged days that followed.

Mike Carson's Selections:

James McMurty's 2005 ["We Can't Make it Here"](#) pretty much sums up the anger of much of middle America over the last

fifteen years and does much to explain our current election.

And, though this might be cheating, I always think of David Bowie's 1997 ["I'm Afraid of Americans"](#) and Warren Zevon's 1978 ["Lawyers, Guns and Money"](#) this time of year.

<https://youtu.be/u7APmRkatEU>

<https://youtu.be/lP5Xv7QqXiM>