

Brian and Ben Straight formed Witch-Hunt in 1992 in Virginia. With Brian on guitars/vocals and Ben on drums, the band initially operated as a two-piece. In 1994, the band became a power trio when Erik Sayenga joined on bass. In 1995, Ben Straight exited, Sayenga moved to drums, and Seth Newton entered on bass. In 1997, Brian Straight departed and Sayenga and Newton took over all songwriting and instrumentation. In the early 2000s, Witch-Hunt's final official lineup congealed with Sayenga on drums, Newton and Eric Buchanan on guitars, Kristel S. on keyboards, Dave Schmidt on vocals, and Dave Camulus on bass. Non-recording members over the years included Ryan Baker, Phil Farley, Paul Vanderslice, Richard Johnson, and Austin Duffield. Witch-Hunt disbanded in 2002.

Witch-Hunt's catalog of recorded material features 29 songs spread over two CDs on Mexico's X-Rated Records - *Prophecies of a Great Plague* (1996) and *Souls Enshrouded Fire* (2000) – plus five demos - *First Kill* (1992), *Born Dead* (1993), *Fearless* (1993), *Darkened Salvation* (1994), and an untitled promo (2002). Witch-Hunt's DIY ethic – like circulating 23,000 hand-cut ads and hundreds of home-dubbed cassettes to a global network of supporters - afforded the band fanzine coverage, radio play, and distribution thru mail order catalogs and specialty stores in 44 countries spanning North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Witch-Hunt performed roughly 60 live shows in Virginia and the U.S. East Coast during its active years, including opening for internationally recognized outfits like Immolation, Grave, Deceased, Internal Bleeding, and Dying Fetus – the latter two still in their demo days and performing in Virginia for the first time thanks to Witch-Hunt's invitation. The band also shared the stage with established regional acts like Horror of Horrors, Insataniy, and Stentor, along with northern Virginia fixtures like Forgotten Souls, Decapitate, and Skraelinx.

Witch-Hunt's relentless activity posited something akin to a legacy. Drumming for Dying Fetus in 1996 and 2001-2005, Sayenga was approached by fans and musicians worldwide lauding Witch-Hunt. The band has an entry in the Metal Archives' *Encyclopedia Metallum* since 2003, was included in Dan Nelson's book *All Known Metal Bands* in 2007, was referenced in one of the final issues of extreme music publication *Metal Maniacs* in 2008, and website *DCHavyMetal* posted a Witch-Hunt history article in 2011. Acclaimed graphic designer Mark Riddick discussed his artwork on *Darkened Salvation* and *Prophecies of a Great Plague* in an interview in Togo Jinzo's book *Decade of Death*, published in Japan in 2017. And eBay vendors in the United States and Europe market used copies of Witch-Hunt's two CDs as high-dollar collectors' items.

25 years after the Straight brothers first jammed, Witch-Hunt's music clearly continues to resonate. Celebrating that is what brought Lost Apparition Records and Witch-Hunt together for *Darkened Anthology 1992-2002*. The 15 songs in this collection do not intend to compete with contemporary bands benefiting from virtuoso musicians and technology that permits recording pristine-sounding albums with a cell phone. Instead, this release commemorates a group whose arduous labors turned Witch-Hunt into a tiny part of death metal's historic memory. This release gives fans, friends, and collectors access to recorded material from all Witch Hunt's eras in a single product.

So raise your horns... AND LONG LIVE THE DEATH METAL UNDERGROUND!

#### **Tracks 1-4**

From 5-song *Prophecies of a Great Plague* CD, released July 1996 by Mexico's X-Rated Records  
Recorded April 1996 at Clearsound Studios in Manassas, Virginia  
Remastered March 2018 at Salamone's Recording Studio in Fredericksburg, Virginia  
Recording lineup: Brian Straight (vocals, guitars), Erik Sayenga (drums), Seth Newton (bass)

### **Tracks 5-8**

From 9-song *Souls Enshrouded Fire* CD, released 2000 by Mexico's X-Rated Records. Recorded from 1999-2000 at Neptune Studios, Studio Shadows, and Night Sky Studios in Virginia and Maryland. Remastered March 2018 at Salamone's Recording Studio in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Recording lineup: Erik Sayenga (drums, guitars, vocals) and Seth Newton (guitars, bass, keyboards).

### **Track 9**

From 2-song *Born Dead* demo, released April 1993. Recorded April 1993 at Pierce Recording in Arlington, Virginia. Remastered March 2018 at Salamone's Recording Studio in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Recording lineup: Brian Straight (guitars, vocals) and Ben Straight (drums).

### **Track 10**

From 7-song *Fearless* demo, released December 1993. Recorded December 1993 at Pierce Recording in Arlington, Virginia. Remastered March 2018 at Salamone's Recording Studio in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Recording lineup: Brian Straight (guitars, vocals) and Ben Straight (drums).

### **Tracks 11-14**

From 4-song *Darkened Salvation* demo, released December 1994. Recorded December 1994 at Neptune Recording Studio in Occoquan, Virginia. Remastered March 2018 at Salamone's Recording Studio in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Recording lineup: Brian Straight (guitars, vocals), Ben Straight (drums), Erik Sayenga (bass).

### **Track 15**

From 2-song *Promo '02* demo, released October 2002. Recorded October 2002 at band's rehearsal space on 8-track. Remastered March 2018 at Salamone's Recording Studio in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Recording lineup: Erik Sayenga (drums), Seth Newton (guitars), Kristel S. (keyboards), Eric Buchanan (guitars), Dave Camulus (bass), and Dave Schmidt (vocals).

*Darkened Anthology 1992-2002* copyright 2018 Lost Apparitions Records. All music by Witch-Hunt. All art and band logo by Mark Riddick – visit <http://riddickart.com/> for more. Layout by Erik Sayenga and Brian Straight. Band history, photo/videos, and other relics available on Witch-Hunt's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WitchHuntVirginia/>, or search via @WitchHuntVirginia. Contact the band at [WitchHuntVA@gmail.com](mailto:WitchHuntVA@gmail.com).