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■ **Murky Everclear**

As AAA was going to bed this week, the current status of recent visitors **Everclear** had become somewhat murky.

From all reports, Art Alexakis and company had quite a rough ride during the last leg of their Australian tour which ended prematurely on the Gold Coast on Sunday evening.

Without any official explanation, the band suddenly packed up and headed back home at the start of this week, cancelling a Brisbane date (scheduled for Monday night) and scrapping the whole New Zealand itinerary.

Both the tour promoters, Michael Coppel Presents, and the band's local tour manager played dumb when approached by AAA, simply reiterating the company line that Everclear cut short the tour for personal reasons.

But AAA's spies across the country have reported back that the cracks started appearing in Everclear's cheery exterior as early as last Thursday in Wollongong.

Performing at the university, the band cut short its set after a very loud, very messy on-stage screaming match erupted between

Alexakis and bassist Craig Montoya. Sources backstage said the war of words didn't subside once the two had left the stage.

On to outer Melbourne for the weekend's Offshore festival where Everclear was booked for the headlining slot. That show was also cut short when some fans started littering the stage with fireworks and a security guard was hurt after catching one of the missiles in his bare hand.

Up to the Gold Coast and the straw that apparently broke the band's back came in the shape of theft. It quickly became blindingly obvious to those present at the Xtreme Games 'gig' on Sunday night that Montoya wasn't too happy about having his favourite bass guitar pinched from his dressing room.

He walked on stage with expletives flying. The crowd reciprocated his tone and — surprise, surprise — Everclear stormed off stage again.

So, is this the end for Everclear? More details as they come to hand but doesn't the title of their last album, *So Much For The Afterglow*, suddenly seem all the more prophetic.

■ **Shocked reaction**

Michelle Shocked was asking all the questions when AAA caught up with her this week.

What's going on at the waterfront? How could your country do this to its workers?

"This is a pivotal moment in labour relations," Shocked claimed.

Up in Byron Bay, sister American musician Iris Dement was also briefed on the situation and gave the crowd a good old rave about workers' rights.

Meanwhile Shocked, who has had hits with *Anchorage* and *Come Along Way*, is a union unto herself and is bravely continuing the battle against the monolithic record companies.

Having originally been with Mercury, she cut free only to appear on BMG with the last record.

But Shocked says she is still a lone wolf. "There was a misperception because the last album came out on BMG, but I'd fought too hard for my free agency to give it up just to get a record out," she said.

"I only agreed to let them put that one record out. "And, I have a trilogy planned that I'm talking to a couple of labels about and then I have a couple of projects that would be more suitably independent.

"Basically I'm just continuing to operate as a free agent since I won my rights from Mercury."

Shocked said she may look to create a "boutique label" within another label. The precociously talented singer-songwriter said the trilogy would represent a move away from her more "Eurocentric" past.

"A lot of people only perceived the record *Captain Swing* as a blimp on the screen, but it was my way of reminding people that there was more to come."

The new stuff is more... I don't know, you name the style, it's folk, funk, blues, jazz, swing and I guess it all falls under the category of r'n'b.

Shocked plays with her band The Anointed Earls at the Metro on April 27 and 28 — get tickets early!



MICHELLE SHOCKED



■ **Vitamin benefits**

One of the Sydney rock scene's best-kept

hand from some heavyweight fans including Metallica, Primus and Sugar Ray.

There is also talk about Chef reincarnating his former existence as