

# POWER FROM HELL – QUESTIONING THE LAWS AND DOGMAS OF THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

Power From Hell from São Paulo, Brazil was formed in 2001 by main songwriter Sodomie, as a raw and primitive studio-only vehicle for early era Bathory-worship. After twenty years, with the band now an established touring entity, the raw Black/Thrash sound of yesteryear gave way to a darker, more complete path within Black Metal, leading to a newly-formed alliance with the French Debemur Morti Productions. Power From Hell's new album "*Shadows Devouring Light*" scours the depths of the abyss, bringing forth what is most disgusting, profane and terrifying to human experience. (JOKKE)



(c) Victor Denardo

Sodomie, before discussing the new album "*Shadows Devouring Light*", I'd like to go back to the beginnings of the band. Power From Hell was formed in 2001 in São Paulo, Brazil. How was the situation back in the days in the metal scene in Brazil? Was it a rich and vibrant scene with many concerts, bands, labels and musicians, making it quite easy to come into contact with likeminded individuals to start up a band?

After the end of the 90's, which here in Brazil were dominated by the Death Metal scene, the Black Metal scene regained strength when many bands from other countries started playing here and many bands emerged or resurfaced at that moment. I was a young boy with an idea in my head and I got together with some friends just to play some songs and so, without any pretension or commitment, Power From Hell was born and we recorded the album "*The True Metal*"; the rest is history.

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**What's the current state of Brazil's extreme metal scene compared to when the band started? Is it easier now to play in a band compared to 20 years ago?**

Due to the technological factor, nowadays it's much easier to publicize the work of a band, make contact, promote, etc. An ocean of bands is being shown and released every day, as it's part of the current world wherein everything is consumed in seconds without the proper attention to detail as it used to be. So, I could say that today it's easier to promote a band or album, but it's much harder to stand out and make your work have a relevant impact.

**Can geographical location be a factor limiting the evolution of a band? Do you think that being a band from Brazil, you had to work harder in order to get noticed in the underground compared to, for example, European or North American bands?**

For sure, let's be honest here: if anyone analyzes the history of Extreme Metal worldwide, they will realize

that South America and Latin America occupy a very small place in the number of bands that were exported and achieved due recognition around the world, because a monopoly was created in people's imagination. When thinking about Death Metal, the first country that came to mind was the United States, and for Black Metal everyone automatically turned their eyes to the Scandinavian countries. Until today, you can see how much this still has an impact on people and the media specializing in Extreme Metal. A band that does reasonable or even mediocre work but comes from the right country or region will receive much more attention than a band with an incredible album coming from continents like Latin America or Asia for example. So yes, the geographic factor matters 1000% in Extreme Metal: it's much harder for Latin bands to stand out and show their work to the world.

**In 2010, Fenriz from Darkthrone revealed himself to be a big fan, regularly wearing a shirt of your 2004 debut album "The True Metal" and highlighting the band in a succession of interviews and articles. Did this give the band's worldwide interest a big push? Have you been in contact with him ever since?**

Yes, I can't deny that the fact that Fenriz liked and promoted Power From Hell between 2010 and 2012 helped the band at that moment. We spoke by email until 2016 / 2017, after that we never spoke again. We played in Norway last year and I tried to make contact with him, but I couldn't. But he was an important help in the beginning.



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When Power From Hell started, the band's sound could easily be described as a tribute to old Bathory, Slayer, Sodom and Venom with a lot of 1985-era Satanic Speed Metal influences. The band name was taken from an Onslaught record. Are these the bands that sparked your interest in extreme metal? Which path led you to metal music and the will to become a musician playing in a band?

Yes, as I said before I was just a 13-year-old kid when I first came into contact with Extreme Metal through the MTV "*Headbanger's Ball*" show, where I saw music videos of Death and Black Metal and instantly thought "I want to play this kind of music". The bands you mentioned were the first I met and bought records from, so it was natural for me that my sound at that time sounded like a kind of "tribute" to these bands, and the name of Power From Hell was taken from the first Onslaught album which was the record that at that moment I was listening to every day, so the choice of name was something natural at that moment.



For some years, Power From Hell seemed to be more like your one-man project, isn't it? What made you decide to go for a full line-up?

During ten years, the band only released albums, without any live activities. My idea was to keep the band like Bathory, only releasing albums, but ten years later many invitations and many people wanted to see Power From Hell on stage, so I decided to start doing shows and it has been that way since 2014.

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As of 2019's "*Profound evil presence*", released by High Roller Records, Power From Hell's sound started to shift away from this somewhat childish take on metal music from previous albums to more advanced and mature song writing. Although still firmly with both feet on the ground of the blackened Thrash territory, songs were smoother than before, flowing excellently and adding a new facet to the overall feel. What resulted in this shift of sound for this peculiar record? Was it a natural evolution or a deliberate choice to steer Power From Hell into a new direction?

It was a natural and gradual evolution. In fact, since the EP "*Blood N' Spikes*", we had already started to try some things. On the next album "*Profound Evil Presence*" the compositions were appearing a little more extreme in a natural way. For the new album "*Shadows Devouring Light*" it didn't make any sense for me to make the kind of sound that Power From Hell did on the first four albums. It was a natural process; I was 19 when I recorded "*The True Metal*". Twenty years have passed, the world and I as an individual have changed, and this is totally reflected in my music.



(c) Victor Denardo

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**Did you ever consider starting a new band with a new name when you wanted to go into this new direction? Do you consider Power From Hell anno 2022 as the same band as twenty years ago?**

As I said above, the band's sound is totally different from twenty years ago. A teenager making music is different from an adult man making music; they have completely different worldviews and experiences, and this will always be reflected in the musical compositions. About the name, I know it's a name that will always refer and make people almost automatically associate it with a "Black/Thrash" band, but I don't see the point in changing the name twenty years later. I like the idea of surprising people who don't know the band or haven't heard the band yet and will think "ah ok, another Black/Thrash band" but if they listen they will be surprised by the current and more extreme sound.



*Anarkhon*

**Not only the sound changed, also the bondage themed artworks and lyrical approach about infantile rape fantasies were abandoned and some H.P. Lovecraft inspired lyrics were written for this record. A similar evolution took place with Anarkhon, a Death Metal band featuring three quarters of the current Power From Hell line-up. Anarkhon took shape in the underground during 1999, initially devoted to brutal Death Metal under the influence of such bands as Cannibal Corpse. But after releasing a number of demos, splits, and full-lengths between 2002 and 2013, a hiatus of six years ensued. When you revived and began working on *"Phantasmagorical Personification of the Death Temple"*, Anarkhon pursued a different path, one in which you embraced the mythos of H.P. Lovecraft. Why did you want to explore the H.P. Lovecraft universe with both bands in stead of distinguishing the lyrical approach for both acts? Is there a difference in perspective in the lyrics of Anarkhon and Power From Hell?**

Actually, on Power From Hell's album *"Profound Evil Presence"*, the nod to Lovecraft is only subtle and a small reference in the cover art, but the album's lyrics are mostly about witchcraft, vampirism etc... Anarkhon is 100% built on the influence of Lovecraft's work, as I've always read his books. The very name 'Anarkhon' has no meaning in any specific language, we invented that name in '99 because we wanted it to sound like the name of the kingdoms or creatures of his, but at that time as we were very young, we couldn't absorb and understand their works so we followed the easiest and most popular path at that time, and that was gore/splatter. After the 6–7-year break of Anarkhon, we returned more mature as adults and built our work 100% based on Lovecraft's cosmic horror. But in lyrical terms, Power From Hell and Anarkhon are bands with totally different themes.

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**What are some of the themes covered in the lyrics of your latest records “*Shadows Devouring Light*”? Is writing this new style of lyrics more difficult or challenging compared to past writings? Is there a certain message you want to bring with your lyrics?**

The lyrical approach of the new album is 100% based on questioning the laws and dogmas of the Abrahamic religions and how they affected and still affect the worldview and behavior of many in society. In most of the lyrics the idea of total loneliness is defended and the abandonment of the human being by the supposed "creator", and this feeling of abandonment and emptiness causes absolute terror in the minds of many.

And yes, writing lyrics with a deeper meaning and with some criticism is always more complicated. The lyrics on the first albums were simple. I was a young kid who didn't speak English well and wrote any nonsense without a greater meaning, as most lyrics are usually of bands when they're young. Just an example: look at the lyrics from the Bathory “*self-titled*” album and compare it to the lyrics on the “*Hammerheart*” album, so it's an evolution and natural maturing process.

**Although lyrics are more mature, I still notice a sexual undertone in some of them. Take for example the following lines from the song “*Primordial Impurity*”: “*Celebrate the heinous and immoral practices / With a cosmic and explicit erection, the "creator" witnesses / How a father rapes his children's flesh and spirit / And how women copulate with animals in profane bestiality.*” Which meaning has sexuality in the Power From Hell universe?**

Sexuality has a meaning in the universe as a whole, not just in the universe of a band. It's still a topic (and will always be) that causes extreme discussion, horror, pleasure, etc... in human society and of course widely criticized and persecuted by many of the most hypocritical religious doctrines possible. Just look at the number of crimes and acts involving priests and children over the last few decades in the Catholic Church. In the band's first albums, the sexual themes were just to try to "impress" without great meanings. Nowadays, it's used sometimes in the lyrics as a criticism of the idea of human imperfection and impurity, especially of those who cry and scream to the world that they are pure and criticize others. Men and women "of god, good and religion" are usually no different and can do (and do) totally filthy things when no one is looking. It's from this critical point of view that sexual themes are addressed in Power From Hell today.

**Where does this interest in bondage and SM, that were a big part of your older releases, come from? Is it something you practice in your daily life?**

I must admit that, when I was young, I participated briefly in this BDSM universe, but not for a long time. When you are young, sexual themes have much more impact and influence on an individual, so at that time I was just portraying a little in music what I lived in my personal life, but of course putting an exaggeration in a fanciful way in the lyrics because deep down that's what a lot of people want: to fantasize about things they'll never do in real life or know they couldn't do.



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**Did you ever receive negative reactions due to the way woman were portrayed in your lyrics, being merely lust objects?**

Not at first, but after 2014/2015 when this wave of overly "sensitive" people appeared on the internet and strangely appeared in the Extreme Metal scene hunting and criticizing people and works from the past, yes there was some criticism, but I don't waste time or energy paying attention to it, but the band has always had a huge female fan base around the world.

**To me "*Shadows Devouring Light*" is the first Power From Hell record that really struck a chord with me and showing improvement on almost every level. The band's raw Black/Thrash sound has given way to a darker, more complete path within Black Metal: blending the primitive, lo-fi mysticism of the first wave, the unearthly melodic conviction of the second wave and the dissonant arpeggiation of modern innovators. Did the record turn out exactly as it was envisioned?**

Yes, the record came out exactly as I wanted and that's very important, because it 100% marks the rebirth of the band. The next works will be as extreme and deep as this one.

**Was "*Shadows Devouring Light*" a difficult record to write? Are you the sole writer?**

In total, it took me two years to create this album in terms of lyrics and compositions, and yes, I am the only songwriter in both Power From Hell and Anarkhon.



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**The atmospheres on the record and especially your vocal timbre, remind me a lot of Germany's Ascension and their "With Burning Tongues" demo. Was this band of great importance for the new direction of Power From Hell? Did you change your way of singing?**

Ascension is a great band, their album "*The Dead of the World*" in my opinion is one of the best Black Metal albums of the last decade, but I didn't have Ascension in mind when I wrote "*Shadows Devouring Light*". I was focused on what I was feeling and looking around me at that moment to create and write the songs, but at the end of the day we know that a band's record will always resemble another in some way, it's something natural.

**What can you tell me about the artwork of the new record? Is there a link with the title and some of the lyrics?**

The idea of light and purity in the western world is usually associated with the Christian religion and especially with the Nazarene, so the concept behind the cover is the shadows destroying that light when it is still in its origin, soon after its birth, still in the arms of the mother, before he developed and spread the word and doctrine.

**There will also be a special edition that comes with an exclusive silkscreened hand-printed and numbered slipcase, 2-page insert and a download card, pressed on exclusive transparent red heavy vinyl with black splatters and limited to 107 copies. Can you shed some light on the symbolism used for this special cover?**



I must credit this idea to Debemur Morti, because it was their idea to make this special edition, and I thought it was awesome. That's why they are one of the most respected Extreme Metal labels in the underground world, due to the quality of the material and works they release.

**How did you team up with the label and did you sign for multiple records?**

It started with the previous Anarkhon album. I sent it to Debemur Morti and they liked it, so we signed a deal. I then mentioned that I was working on the new Power From Hell album, and they asked to hear it and they liked it too and here we are: Power From Hell and Anarkhon working alongside one of the best underground Extreme Metal labels in the world.

**Did you ever play shows in Europe and are you planning to tour for "Shadows Devouring Light"?**

Yes, in 2021 we did 29 shows in 18 European countries and in 2023 we will return to Europe for sure, we will start working on this project soon.

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**When playing live, do you focus on the last two records, or do you also play older material?**

I have to confess that 80% of the songs are based on the last two albums, but we also played some classic songs from the first album.

**Brazil is currently in the middle of elections (*the interview was conducted before it was known that former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva defeated Bolosnaro; ADDERGEBOED*). Current president Bolsonaro provoked the public many times with his controversial views on how to deal with the COVID-pandemic, woman, religion, political violence, homosexuality, birth control for the poor, etc. Did he do any good for your country in the past couple of years and do you think he will be re-elected? Is politics something you're interested in?**



Brazil is too complex to be summarized in a few lines of an interview. I have lived here for over 30 years, and I still try to understand the laws, corruption and other social atrocities that happen daily in this place. What I can say is that politics here are a farce, it always has been, political parties no matter which side, are true criminal organizations involved in all kinds of absurd things, from drug trafficking to murders. I believe that all of Latin America has a strong history of corruption and extreme violence in its governments, and Brazil is no exception. No matter which president wins the elections, the country will remain poor, corrupt, violent and unfair for many decades to come.

**Did your goals and ambitions with Power From Hell change during the past 2 decades? What kept the band going all these years and how do you look at the future?**

My first and last passion is for music, for the art of creating music, that's what keeps me working with these bands over the years, and I will continue as long as my heart beats. The future is impossible to predict, as 2020 showed us, and your plans for the future literally depend on everything around you and the world not falling apart, but if things continue to be reasonably calm around the world in the next few years, I hope to continue making albums and traveling around this planet playing with Power From Hell.

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