

MONOGRAFIE

MELLIE CATALOGUE OF UNSOLVED CRIMES



OLIVIERO
TOSCANI



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The Start

From a very young age, I've had more sympathy for the villain than the hero. As a kid, I would draw crooks and pirates looting bounty islands, dreaming of getting my own gang together. The idea of a group of kids joining forces to reach their goals always seemed like the most ultra thing to do. So that's what I did.

The first gang me and my friends started was the Golden Eagle in 1984. Me and a bunch of boys from my class would come together to put the eagle logo that I designed on T-shirts and make comics. We were looking for mischief, although we didn't really know what that entailed. At a sleepover, a friend and I snuck out of my Utrecht home at five in the morning to walk around with a stick and a pocket knife. It's what we thought gangs did. After an hour or so, a cop car stopped and took us home. I was with MEL a.k.a. MelOne. He would introduce me to graffiti a few years down the line.

Because I thought that music was the way to keep the gang together, I obediently attended weekly saxophone lessons. Although I was pretty good for my age, it was more about the image than the music for me. I was into ska and punk and dreamed about forming a band, wearing tuxedos and smoking lots of cigarettes. We would talk about it endlessly. But we spent more time thinking of the perfect band name though than actually playing our instruments.

At a certain point, our unnamed band transformed into a graffiti crew. I never had real ambitions as a writer, but I became part of the scene. Our crew's first name was THE STUF (with one F), and we just tried to copy anything. I remember seeing some neon Inca graffiti in an episode of *Miami Vice* and reading *Subway Art*. That book introduced me to SEEN, who became a hero. I started drawing wild things like dragons with ghetto blasters and B-boys playing the guitar. I copied tags like MAD, SEEN and ZAP (which I turned into SAP), and referenced the music I listened to, writing U2, MADONNA and MADNESS.



