

## Brainwashed - Jim Haynes, "Inconclusive"

Written by Creag Dunton

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Compared to the last two albums I have heard from the always-fascinating Jim Haynes, this new tape features him pushing his penchant for rusting, decaying sounds into a slightly new direction. Always one for tactile, crackling sounds and unsettling noises, *Throttle and Calibration* and

*Flammable Materials From Foreign Lands*

were colder, sparser affairs that heavily featured field recordings and a distinct sense of isolation.

*Inconclusive*

, however, is a more commanding and forceful cassette. Besides featuring Haynes back into chaotic, harsher noise territories, it also shows him working in more rhythmic, vaguely industrial and power electronics sounding contexts as well.

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The pieces that open and close *Inconclusive* both have the sound that I most often associate with Haynes's work. Right from the sputtering analog crunch that opens "Blotched" it feels entirely consistent with his previous body of work. A distinctly analog sheen covers the whole piece, with what sounds like fragments of Morse code and radio transmissions appearing here and there within the walls of static, overdriven noises, and the occasional hushed, ghostly apparition far off in the mix.

On "An Isolated Failure," he leads off with a somewhat structured loop that sounds like the slow death of a 1970s computer mainframe before throwing in the harsher elements: a wet, almost rhythmic electronic loop and passages of shrill feedback and heavy distortion. With that sense of chugging progression and emphasis on the shrill, higher frequency sounds, the overall sound veers into power electronics territory. However, unlike that style's often-simplistic repetition he keeps everything dynamic, building to crescendos and then stripping things back apart to conclude the tape on a high, if occasionally painful, note.

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The three pieces between these two are where Haynes seems to step out of his usual zone and embraces more rhythm and structure. This is apparent right away on "And Then, Theranos," when an honest to god drum machine rhythm appears. Around this he conjures up acidic static and buzzing electronics, keeping a constant flow but grounded by the robotic beat. The following "Through Diana's Stare" also has a sense of rhythm, but here generated by a distorted noise that Haynes shapes into what best resembles an EBM bass sequence. The whole thing is caked in dirt and grime but there is an undeniable sense of musicality to be heard as well.

The 11-minute "At Nerve Ends" is unsurprisingly the most varied composition here, leading off from a hushed, distant rumble and the occasionally jarring outburst. Haynes dials up the frequency and intensity of these harsh outbursts, eventually erupting into full on rhythmic, chaotic noise. It is distorted, sure, but there is a distinct, structured undercurrent to be heard that is not far removed from the early Ant Zen scene. Haynes keeps this in place but swaps out layers and segments, allowing the piece to fall apart and then to be built up again carefully, keeping a fresh dynamic for the entirety.

Perhaps it is indicative of the way his Helen Scarsdale Agency label has expanded its repertoire into some more traditionally musical sounds, but Jim Haynes's work on *Inconclusive* seems to brush up against more conventional genres, but in an extremely subtle, tasteful sense. I do not expect him to attempt any sort of crossover outside of his crumbling building and radioactive landscape aesthetic (nor would I want him to), but these little smatterings of rhythm and song structure work extremely well here, and result in a brilliant tape that is among his best work to date.

[Samples Available Here.](#)