

The summer of 1988 was the perfect time for Gore to settle down on an industrial site in Weesp, just outside Amsterdam; Holland was winning the European soccer championship and public life had ground to a halt. So here, in the Dureco Studio, the group could work in total seclusion, recording the monumental *'Wrede'/'The Cruel Peace'* under the supervision of producer Steve Albini. It was the band's fourth album since 1986, taped within a year of cofounder Pieter de Swart's abandonment of drummer Danny Lommen and bassist Rob Frey (aka Marij Hel). Two new guitarists, Frank Stroobants and Joes Benli, came aboard to replace him. In addition, *'Wrede'* was Gore's firstling for Megadisc, which sought to put them on the international map after the acclaim reaped by its predecessors, *'Hart Gore'* and *'Mean Man's Dream'*. The band, which came from a punk-oriented background, had unquestionably moved up the ladder and was treated to all the pampering enjoyed by a promising rock act - quite a change of scenery. They had a private cook and a lady whom they could send out for any shopping, there was a sauna and a relaxation room with a bar, a TV, and stacks of VHS tapes. Including *Aliens*, James Cameron's sequel to Ridley Scott's science fiction masterpiece. Frey: *'Although not my cup of tea - I don't like to be startled nor do I like extraterrestrial nonsense - I was fully blown away by James Horner's score, which blended perfectly with the movie audio of screaming people, hissing machines, and exploding God knows what, creating an auditory pandemonium of climaxes that were ruthlessly short or excruciatingly stretched with a continuous menace. And I just heard it, bringing this live onstage....'* Even before Gore finished *'Wrede,'* Frey had created a new ordeal for himself: *'Lifelong Deadline,'* comprised of 20 short tracks that would consist only of intros and outros, whereas *'Wrede'* became a hard-core symphony, *'Lifelong Deadline'* had to become a hard-core opera. For the first time, voices would be added to Gore's instrumental pursuit as Frey had written their parts to correspond to the music of a Babylonian radio play, which would preach chaos in as many as 20 languages.

*'Wrede'* was constructed as four long tracks in 70 minutes, its epic quality already a break from the band's original concept. It was a deepening of sound and structure but still a logical continuation of their fundamental, one-dimensional origins. As a concept, it couldn't be stretched further, so *'Lifelong Deadline'* had to return to or, more significantly, had to improve upon Gore's original form while exuding a kind of finality. It turned out to be a slightly suicidal gesture and a personal reckoning when, in the months after finishing *'Wrede,'* Gore slowly fell apart. To Frey it came as no surprise: *'It was the culmination of a process in which I simply ignored the signals. What the others did, I do not know; I do not care and do not reconstruct. Where I failed, I know very well.'* Determined to score his masterpiece, Frey transformed into a ruthless jerk around anyone who got in his way. Simple as that. Specifically, Danny- with whom Frey had resurrected Gore after De Swart left them to die - got fed up with his tyranny and sought to continue on his own terms, understandable but unworkable. After Megadisc released *'Wrede'* in the fall of 1988, Gore embarked on a four-month European tour. The situation became grimmer and more grotesque with each new day, and four weeks into the trek, the band finally popped. But that wasn't the end of it: Lommen didn't take his loss for granted and went to court, accusing his former partner of malpractice. It took the court four years to rule his case inadmissible. Frey: *'That was bitter. But on the other hand, in spite of the frustration at the time, it was quite edifying, too, and significantly, it took me exactly these four years to put together a new line-up and eventually record 'Lifelong Deadline.''*

For starters it took two years of auditioning to find the right guys. Although *'Wrede'* had been worth the trouble, Frey was determined not to repeat the same mistakes twice. At long last, drummer Bardo Koolen and guitarist Johan van Reede rounded out the third and final incarnation of Gore. Koolen: *'The ad mentioned an audition for a crossover between Depeche Mode and Black Sabbath, which triggered me to respond. Well, whatever became of that idea I am not sure, but I do know now that it changed my perspective on music entirely.'* Rehearsals started in January '91. The 20 tracks covered approximately 90 minutes, and it took the band a year before they mastered the music according to Gore's razor-sharp standards. Unfortunately, in the meantime, Megadisc had ceased operations, and Gore had to find a new home for its work. Frey searched everywhere, scouring the U.S. from coast to coast without any luck. The only real interest came from Bill Laswell, but regrettably, Frey rejected his proposal to cut the album

in two weeks' time. Some choices never wear out. Eventually, the German label SPV invested heavily in Gore by putting them in an Amsterdam studio for eight weeks and releasing the resulting *'Lifelong Deadline'* in late 1992. But although Frey had meshed with Koolen and Van Reede to form Gore's most competitive line-up, it was too late to hook back into the hype ignited by *'Wrede,'* which had, by then, blown over entirely. Even if supported by nonstop touring, *'Lifelong Deadline'* was a complete commercial failure, even more so because the outspoken band was quick to avow its complete artistic failure. What needed to be Gore's magnum opus turned out to be an overproduced, rudderless monstrosity. Van Reede: *'The magnitude of what we tried to accomplish would have been possible using the technology available to anyone nowadays. But we faced too many factors we couldn't control. The balance got lost and so did the impact. By the time we heard the final results, the damage had been done.'* Still, touring the album for three years and working those audiences was very comforting, and it was a confirmation of how well the album could have actually turned out. Gore tried to make up for the miscarriage by releasing new material as soon as possible. But the band lacked ample confidence, and the next album didn't materialize promptly enough. Four years again passed before they saw themselves forced to issue *'Mest/694'3'* as a fully independent release on their own MessBack Music label. But despite the continuously favourable press and head-turning performances, it was obvious that Gore had reached its expiration date. After a little more than 10 years, Gore came to an end with the release of *'Slow-Death,'* its eighth and final album, in the spring of 1997.

In the 20 years since, Gore has received and rejected approximately the same number of reunion requests. Frey: *'Gore was never part of the establishment, and a reunion seemed too opportunistic. Moreover, the typical reason for a reunion is to relive a certain success story, which, with all good will, Gore was not. It's a fact that our albums and performances were solid, groundbreaking, and fairly striking to those who were present, but it's also a fact that the media tried to create more of a buzz than the audience actually were up to.'* Let's face it. The only buzz that remained resonating was that of Johan van Reede, who kept saying he wanted to rerecord *'Lifelong Deadline'* - a monk's task that he eventually began executing in the summer of 2016. Van Reede: *'At first, both Rob and Bardo gave me their blessings but little to no encouragement. However, this changed when I played them the first results which were surprisingly convincing. The songs hadn't lost any of its vitality and sounded so much more believable, as if it needed to sink in over all those years. The more I recovered from beneath the original production's ballast, the more excited we got.'* And slowly, the notion registered that they could rehabilitate *'Lifelong Deadline.'* Initially, they considered reproducing the entire album, but this would've been a pointless challenge. The original release successfully captured an element of pandemonium, so revising every moment of that sprawl didn't make much sense. Where *'Lifelong Deadline'* really fell short was in its lack of conviction as a comprehensive production. So, after picking 10 songs that had been thoroughly restored by Van Reede, they decided that in order to deliver a truly competitive album, they needed a heavy-weight to really top it off. Van Reede: *'It was surreal discussing who to ask, more so because we didn't have a clue about what it would cost.... But we were lucky enough to have a like-minded option: Terry Date, and fortunately for us, he asked a like-minded fee ....'* In August 2018, Date finished the mix. As a complement to the results, Gore decided to let Howie Weinberg, who had cut so many of Date's golden discs, master the album. Meanwhile, word got out that Gore had been planning a rerelease of *'Lifelong Deadline.'* For the first time in more than 25 years, it seemed like everything was vibrating at the same frequency again. Having silently kept the fire burning for years, several die-hard Gore fans were now displaying remarkable grassroots interest and opening the doors to a, finally very real Gore reunion. Frey: *'We were still self-evident and as before unwilling to complicate things. The ego asks no questions, the ego is, the necessity to prove ourselves right was strange to us, if there's something you don't want to waste time on it's your own gain because if you shut up you're right to begin with. So we didn't gave in but rectified 'Lifelong Deadline' to 'Revanche', - not as in 'revenge' but as in 'break even', got rid of all ego and freed ourselves of the burden of proof.'* And that's what this is all about. Nothing more, nothing less. Enjoy!

Val Hard, Casablanca, January 2, 2019.