

going
platinum

after nine years of playing tiny clubs, being practically disowned by their first record label, and almost splitting up last year, California's new wave ska/punksters No Doubt have finally hit it.

It's not just that *Tragic Kingdom* (Trauma/Interscope) is on the verge of going double platinum. (Their third single is out this month.) Or that their videos are all over MTV. Just look at all the high school girls who've cut chunky bangs into their hair and are spending nights gluing rhinestones onto their bras in homage to the band's lead singer and their platinum-blond style guru, Gwen Stefani.

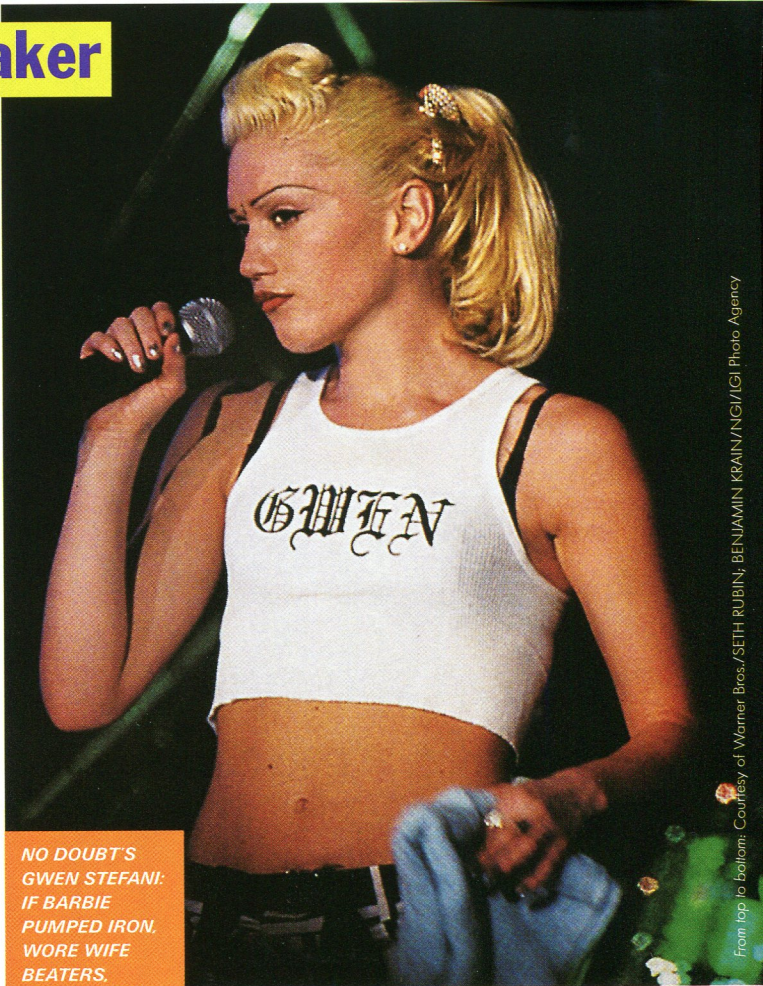
"For the longest time, we were the nerd band," says Stefani, 27, in her raspy-cute voice, fresh from playing a radio festival in Oregon. "Coming from Orange County—you know, like, the Land of Punk—we were never tough enough to be a *real* punk band." And it didn't help that their first record came out when Nirvana hit. "We were illegal! *Nobody* wanted to hear happy ska."

But times have changed, grunge is over, and the band's first single, "Just a Girl," was a runaway hit last February—largely thanks to the video, in which the MTV audience got to see fierce, leggy Stefani in full force. Striding around a girls' bathroom, belting out the lyrics dressed in punker pants, a T-shirt made out of a pair of guy's briefs, and her signature sparkly bindi, she instantly embodied a new female rock icon—a combination tough rock chick and "girlie girl" (her words).

Even Hollywood noticed: Casting agents started calling within weeks of the video's debut. "It's weird, 'cause I've never acted!" says Stefani, who insists that her ambitions remain, for now, strictly musical. Still, she is getting "a lot" of calls, most recently one inviting her to try out for a part in "some movie with Al Pacino." —CATHERINE HONG

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NO DOUBT'S
GWEN STEFANI:
IF BARBIE
PUMPED IRON,
WORE WIFE
BEATERS,
AND LEARNED
TO ROCK



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