

= The System Has Failed =

The System Has Failed is the tenth studio album by American thrash metal band Megadeth . Released on September 14 , 2004 , it was the band 's second and final studio album distributed by Sanctuary Records . The System Has Failed was the first of three Megadeth records not to include original bassist and co @-@ founder David Ellefson . Instead , the album features session players , including former Megadeth guitarist Chris Poland on lead guitar . However , Poland only provided lead guitar parts and solos on a contractual basis and did not rejoin the band .

The System Has Failed received positive reception from critics and managed to debut at number 18 on the Billboard 200 . The album was generally thought of as being a return to form for the band , after the release of more commercially accessible albums through the 1990s . " Die Dead Enough " and " Of Mice and Men " were released as singles .

= = Background and production = =

In 2002 , frontman Dave Mustaine announced that he was disbanding Megadeth due to an arm injury that rendered him unable to play guitar . In a statement published on April 3 , 2002 , he stated that doctors expected that it would take about a year before he would recover from the injury . However , it was uncertain as to how complete of a recovery it would be . Mustaine stated his hopes to regain the ability to play guitar . He subsequently recovered following months of physical therapy .

The album was recorded at Oceanway and Emerald Entertainment in Nashville , Tennessee and at Phase Four Studios in Tempe , Arizona . In a promotional statement from Megadeth 's then @-@ label Sanctuary Records , Mustaine clarified that recording the album had been " liberating " , due to having more control over the record than he had had since the first two Megadeth records . Mustaine also noted that he initially took a casual approach to the album , starting out working three hours a night , four days a week .

Originally intended to be a solo album by Mustaine , the record was re @-@ branded with the Megadeth name as a result of contractual obligations owed to Mustaine 's publishing company . Mustaine co @-@ produced the record with Jeff Balding , who had previously engineered Cryptic Writings and Risk . Upon restarting Megadeth , Mustaine contacted bassist and founding member David Ellefson about resuming bass guitar duties for the band . Those efforts were ultimately fruitless , however . Ellefson claimed that Mustaine was not financially willing to pick up " where it was when [the band] broke up " and did not return to Megadeth .

= = = Artwork = = =

The cover art was designed by Mike Learn , and features Vic Rattlehead at a podium in front of the United States Supreme Court building selling a not @-@ guilty verdict to then U.S. President George W. Bush . Saluting is Hillary Clinton , next to former President Bill Clinton . Behind President Bush , Vice President Dick Cheney holds a briefcase labeled " plan B " . Behind Cheney are several other Bush Administration officials : Then National Security Advisor (and later Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice , Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Attorney General John Ashcroft . The \$ 100 bills on the cover depict Vic Rattlehead 's face rather than the one of Benjamin Franklin .

= = Release and promotion = =

The System Has Failed was released on September 14 , 2004 through Sanctuary Records . Three days previously , on September 11 , the album was made available for streaming on the VH1 website . The album debuted at number 18 on the Billboard 200 , with 46 @,@ 000 units sold in its first week . By December 2005 , The System Has Failed had sold 171 @,@ 000 copies in the United States . In addition , the album had managed to chart in the top 20 in several other countries , including Canada , Finland , and Sweden .

Still needing a band with whom to tour , Mustaine hired longtime drummer Nick Menza , and newcomers James MacDonough (bass) and Glen Drover (guitar) . However , just five days before the start of the tour , Menza was sent home . His place was filled by Shawn Drover , brother of then @-@ recently hired guitarist Glen Drover . The album 's promotional tour , the Blackmail the Universe Tour , launched on October 23 , 2004 in Reno , Nevada and featured Earshot as a supporting act . This tour would also spawn the That One Night : Live in Buenos Aires double live album , released in 2007 .

Two music videos were also made to help promote the album . The first was " Die Dead Enough " , which was directed by Thomas Mignone . " Of Mice and Men " was selected as the second video from the album . In this video , the then @-@ new Megadeth lineup is shown performing . The majority of the video was filmed on January 20 , 2005 in Los Angeles . Many fans turned up to be in the video through a contest held by Sanctuary Records . A third video was made for " Back in the Day " in 2005 , but was unreleased until September 2014 , to celebrate ten years since the album 's release . " Back in the Day " was also featured in an episode of the Duck Dodgers TV series . The episode which the song was featured in , " In Space , No One Can Hear You Rock " , aired on November 4 , 2005 , after having been delayed a week .

= = Songs = =

" Die Dead Enough " was the lead single from The System Has Failed . Mustaine wrote it when he was asked to write a song for the movie Tomb Raider II , but the proposed budget for recording was too low and the deal fell through . Later on , the song was supposed to be featured in the film Saw , but ultimately was not for undisclosed reasons . This was later followed by the release of " Of Mice and Men " . Additionally , " Kick the Chair " was released as a free promotional download via Megadeth 's website in May 2004 , several months prior to the album 's release . This version of the song was described by Mustaine as being a final mix , but not the master that would appear on the record . " Tears in a Vial " was written by Mustaine shortly after Megadeth disbanded in 2002 about a decision to trade success for happiness . The next track on the album , " I Know Jack " , is an instrumental featuring a sample of a sample of Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen 's famous response to Indiana Senator Dan Quayle during a 1988 vice @-@ presidential debate . " Shadow of Deth " consists of Mustaine reciting Psalm 23 . The Latin phrase heard at the beginning of the track , " Auxilium meum a Domino , " translates to " My help comes from the Lord . "

= = Critical reception = =

The System Has Failed has received mainly positive reviews from critics , with some of them describing the album as a return to form . AllMusic 's Jason Birchmeier commented that Megadeth hasn 't sounded this vital since Countdown to Extinction , and called the album " damn near perfect " . Brave Words & Bloody Knuckles reviewer Martin Popoff described the album as a mix of several previous records , and praised a number of the album 's tracks . Popoff acknowledged the fact that Mustaine only used hired session players on the album was the album 's only low point . Jeff Kerby of KNAC gave a positive , if at times slightly sarcastic review , as well as a detailed track @-@ by @-@ track commentary . David E. Gehlke of Blistering said despite that Mustaine 's best days were behind him , this record comes across as a " warm return " ; although the album fails to recapture past glory , it succeeds in being a solid , reliable metal album . In addition , Gehlke noted that Mustaine 's vocals were " as strong as ever " , but panned the album for the lack of any " thrash burners " . Neil Arnold of Metal Forces had a slightly different opinion , and credited this album for putting Megadeth " back on track " . He praised the album artwork , which reminded him of the 80 's style of graphics . Another positive review was posted on Entertainment Weekly . Reviewer Nancy Miller called The System Has Failed Megadeth 's best since 1990 's Rust in Peace and praised Mustaine 's collaboration with Poland , calling the result " Righteous ! "

In spite of a largely positive reception , not all reaction was completely positive . Tom Day of musicOMH had a mixed reaction to the album . Day called " Die Dead Enough " a " slice of classic "

Deth " , while noting its slightly more mainstream sound . Later in his review , however , he noted that with " Shadow of Deth " , it seemed that Mustaine had run out of ideas . Nick Lancaster from Drowned in Sound also reacted unenthusiastically towards the album , saying it was a " severe case of St. Anger syndrome " . However , he added there were " occasional moments of the old magic , but they 're few and far between " .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Dave Mustaine .

= = Personnel = =

Production and performance credits are adapted from the album liner notes .

= = Chart performance = =