Miami has earned its fair share of notoriety over the last 30 years, but most of it has been nothing to brag about: The Liberty City Riots, the Mariel Boatlift, and the Cocaine Wars of the early 1980s recast the formerly sleepy beach town/retirement colony as a lawless urban hellscape crowded with pimps, powder queens and cutthroats, where liquor-store shootouts, revenge bombings and police corruption threatened to drown the tourist trade in an ocean of blood, booze, and yayo. But now the peace-loving citizens of Miami finally have something they can hoist high as an enduring emblem of cultural and civic pride (besides KC & the Sunshine Band, Gloria Estefan and 2 Live Crew, obviously) …  
  
Enter Torche, the four-pronged Floridian Riff Colossus that has steamrolled its way across the international underground. Led by vocalist/guitarist Steve Brooks (formerly of doom dropouts Floor) and featuring the myriad talents of drummer Rick Smith, bassist Jonathan Nuñez and guitarist Juan Montoya, Torche unfurled their self-titled debut in 2005 via Richmond, Virginia’s Robotic Empire. The glorious half-hour of blissed-out power-grooves, triumphant vocal harmonies and cosmic resonance within was variously hailed as “stoner pop,” “thunder rock,” and “doom pop,” but a consensus was quickly reached within the Fourth Estate: Both the underground and mainstream press had their hands halfway down their pants just thinking about listening to Torche. The band was immediately lauded as giants among men, leaders among sheep, and powerbrokers of a deadly new sonic idiom founded upon Brooks’ signature “bomb-string” detonation-detune. As Decibel magazine so righteously pointed out in May of 2005, Torche “carries on in the dizzying Sabbathian tradition of Floor, only potentially more bottomless and epic.” Seven months later, the same publication would declare Torche as the # 7 album of the year in its annual top 40.  
  
“Never let it be said that bong-rock types hate hooks,” Spin magazine announced. “Torche set their guitars on ‘dirge,’ work their vocal harmonies, and say amen to Foo Fighters’ riff-o-matic preaching.”  
  
“At long last, we know what life would be like in a parallel universe where the Melvins became a pop sensation instead of Nirvana,” Revolver magazine added.  
  
With the verdicts in, Torche swiftly set out to slay, punish & conquer. Stateside tours with Scottish post-rock marvels Mogwai and hypno-metal heroes Isis ensued, as did a European invasion with Savannah sludge captains Baroness. “[Torche’s] debut jaunt to the UK will undoubtedly leave a monumental impression on the audiences they have played for as they mix the pop-tinged catchiness of tracks such as ‘In Return’ and ‘Erase’ with the likes of ‘Iron Girl’ and boil it down to a cocktail of raw and powerful sludge-filled beauty,” Terrorizer magazine gushed after witnessing the band’s show at the Manchester Attic. Rock Sound issued similar proclamations after the London Underworld show: “Louder than a really loud thing, Torche hit the stage with all the grace and subtlety of a misfired nuclear warhead. Sounding far fiercer than on record, the Florida outfit’s ‘bomb-string’ assault is truly a thing to behold.”  
  
So: Citizens of Miami, rejoice. Music fans, exult. Torche are about to rule your stereo and your face all over again.