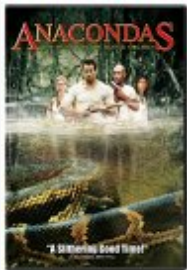


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Fishbone - Critical Times - Fishbone's Hen House Sessions

[Music Video Distributors](#) // Unrated // \$19.95 // November 30, 2004Review by [David Walker](#) | posted November 28, 2004 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

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The Film:

Over twenty years ago Fishbone exploded on the scene with a bold original sound that mixed ska, punk, funk and rock into an eclectic musical gumbo. At the time they were one of leading pioneers of the hybrid music style that would eventual catapult bands like the Red Hot Chili Peppers and No Doubt into superstardom. Unfortunately, the same sort of mainstream success that the Chili Peppers found eluded Fishbone, and despite their legendary live performances and a catalog of exceptional recordings – including *Truth & Soul*, one of the greatest albums ever recorded – Fishbone has remained on the fringes.

Critical Times: Fishbone's Hen House Sessions captures the band's 2001 recording sessions at a free community recording studio in Venice, California. After years of ups and downs, members quitting, the band breaking up and getting back together, the recording session finds only three of Fishbone's original members still in the band. For Angelo Moore, Norwood Fisher, and "Dirty" Walt Kibby, Fishbone has remained one of the central components of their lives, which would explain why they've stuck it out for 25 years, when other members have come and gone. But the problem with *Critical Times* is that even though the interview footage that comes between the recording sessions sheds some light on the band, it never really says that much. For the most part all you get is footage the band recording six new songs, intercut with interviews, and some bantering back and forth. Other than a few fleeting comments by Angelo and Norwood, you never learn too much about the band or its history. And when you compare *Critical Times* to such recent documentaries as *Metallica: Some Kind of Monster*, *End of the Century: The Story of The Ramones*, or even some VH-1 shows, it really comes up short.

If you're a diehard fan of Fishbone you'll no doubt enjoy watching *Critical Times*, and even though you'll like what you see (and hear), prepare to be disappointed. This is not the documentary film fans like myself have been longing to see. Still, it's great to see one of the best bands of all time getting a little attention – now if someone would just give them some more.

Video:

Critical Times: Fishbone's Hen House Sessions was shot on video and is presented full frame. The picture quality is that of a home movie shot on digital video, so don't go expecting anything that will know you on your ass.

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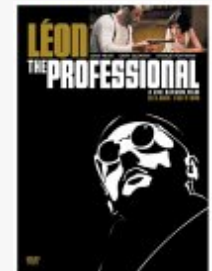
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Audio:

Audio for *Critical Times: Fishbone's Hen House Sessions* is presented 5.1 surround sound. The audio presentation would be more greatly appreciated if there was uninterrupted performances by the band, perhaps some live concert footage, or maybe even a music video. But there is none of these things. Sorry.

Extras:

The bonus extras on *Critical Times: Fishbone's Hen House Sessions* include four outtakes of different recording sessions. Based on what is already in the film, the only reason to get excited about the bonus footage is that it features two session of the infamous band Trulio Disgracious. Those of you that have never seen or heard of Trulio don't know what you're missing. An ever-changing collective of musicians that tours but never records, Trulio Disgracious has had in its ranks members of Fishbone, Spearhead, P-Funk, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Super 8, Circle Jerks, Weapon of Choice and a whole host of other bands. This extra material in *Critical Times*, to the best of my knowledge, contains the only footage ever filmed of Trulio recording anything in the studio.

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