



## Dead Boys: Live At CBGB's 1977

Reviewed by: Erik Swift

January 2005



**Video:** Standard 1.33:1

**Audio:** Dolby Digital Stereo

### DVD Features

Great Interviews of the Band From 1977

1977 Promotional Dead Boys Clip

New Interviews With Cheetah Chrome & Hilly Kristal

Bonus Clip of the Steel Tips

Alternate Camera Angle - The Johnny Blitz-cam!

#### **Tracklisting:**

1. Sonic Reducer
2. All This and More
3. Not Anymore
4. Revenge
5. Flame Thrower Love
6. I Need Lunch
7. Ain't Nothin to Do
8. What Love Is
9. High Tension Wire
10. Search & Destroy

DVD released on 11/02/2004 by Music Video Distribution

Running Time: 45 Mins

1977 was quite a year for New York City. A massive blackout shut down the metropolis on July 13 and 14, and fires set by looters lit the darkened skyline. The NYPD had it bad enough trying to arrest over 3000 people that week - serial killer David Berkowitz a.k.a. Son Of Sam was still on the loose. On the brighter side, The Bronx Zoo edition of the New York Yankees was making consecutive trips to the World Series and downtown at 315 Bowery a musical revolution was happening at a dump known as CBGB's. Can a rock fan that hasn't strolled through this hallowed hall call themselves a rock fan? Up there with The Cavern Club, The Roxy, The Whiskey-A-Go-Go and The Stone Pony, it's a place that a genre can call home. The recent news that owner Hilly Kristal may soon have to shut its door for good is disheartening. During its late-seventies peak, locals like Blondie, [The Ramones](#) and Television and outsiders like The Talking Heads and The Police claimed this joint as their own. Many groups still do today.

The five Clevelanders known as The Dead Boys were one of the few external acts that could swing into New York and throttle it with their guitar necks. "I just wish we could have been around long enough to make sure Limp Bizkit didn't exist," laments Cheetah Chrome in a new interview during The Dead Boys' DVD "Live At CBGB's 1977." So do many. The guitarist is a walking wonder who somehow lived to view this incredible find, and in it he rocks harder than Wes Borland can ever hope to. Wearing a "Rock And Roll Saves Lives" t-shirt, he recalls the filming because the place never looked that bright. The biggest shock here isn't vocalist Stiv Bators chowing down a few boogers - it's that these incredibly well preserved tapes made for "60 Minutes" ever saw the light of day. Their 1977 debut, "Young, Loud And Snotty," would take the punk scene by storm, but within three years they would be history. The Dead Boys' all-too-brief stay now has a visual accompaniment, somehow found and restored by the Music Video Distributors magicians. While not as grandiose a find as The Rolling Stones' "Rock And Roll Circus," its value is close. Three cameras filmed this particular gig, and for a punk band to have that kind of film crew at its disposal was uncommon. Given the technical limitations of the period, "Live At CBGB's 1977" looks as good as it possibly can, it sounds kick-ass in 5.1, and the group doesn't disappoint.

Not that they could - the quintet storms the tiny stage with triple the energy of an average (white?) band and lights into "Sonic Reducer." Bators, Chrome, rhythm guitarist Jimmy Zero, bassist Jeff Magnum and drummer Johnny Blitz smolder, tearing through a landmark song with incredible ferocity. Chrome's work during the instrumental section on "Not Anymore" defies typical thudding three-chord punk guitar playing, and his blissful look as his eyes close would make anyone swear he was passing out. Zero unleashes some of his best stuff when a fuse blew during "Revenge," and the guy plays in the dark like he's used to it - but hey, CBGB's has never been well lit. Blitz's drumsticks are a big part of why "I Need Lunch" cranks, but "Ain't Nothin' To Do" and "What Love Is" are rockers The Dead Boys own.

Watching the bellowing Bators leap around is captivating. This guy lived to see his fortieth birthday? From stretching a gum wad off the floor and popping the other end in his mouth to pouring beer in his crotch or spitting pieces of twice-chewed lunchmeat onto the stage, he definitely hit Front man 101 in high school. Whether Bators graduated or not is surely another story, and there are bunches in the bonus features area. Applaud Chrome just for being here. Every thoughtful word from his mouth about life as a member of The Dead Boys is an inspiration for musicians but especially for anyone strong enough to survive drug addiction.

While it was a party, he thankfully knew when to stop. A chat with Kristal illustrates that his tenure as the Dead Boys' manager was trying but productive. His mutual love for the band and sorrow for their messy end still lasts today. The post-show interviews with the guys are great, and Bators transforms himself into a little kid when discussing his idols. The guys have that brash sort of swagger; a cocky confidence in what would be a short-lived future. But they didn't care and that's just so cool.

Their second album "We Have Come For Your Children" would tank, but The Dead Boys – and most great punk bands - were too far ahead of their time for a record-buying public satiated with "Hotel California," "Rumors" and the soundtrack to "Saturday Night Fever." Sire Records pressured them to make their sound more mainstream and subsequent drug and alcohol use would add to the band's growing discord. Although they sporadically reunited after a 1980 breakup, Bators' death in 1990 (from injuries sustained in a Paris car accident) iced anything further. Their far-reaching impact ([Pearl Jam](#) and Guns 'N Roses have covered their songs) continues today. Punk bands don't come much better than the Dead Boys; music DVDs don't either.

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