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Pop DVD

New York Dolls, All Dolled Up

★★★★★ (Wienerworld)

Dave Simpson
Friday February 17, 2006
[The Guardian](#)

In the early 1970s, filmmaker Bob Gruen shot 40 hours of the New York Dolls. Now culled to a couple for this DVD, and despite occasionally grainy quality, they provide an absorbing portrait of life in and around what one outraged newsreader calls "a rock group with an aura of bisexuality". The influential pre-punk band are captured applying makeup, arriving at a gig on a VW Beetle toting "machine guns", baring bottoms, trimming armpits and drawing gasps from passers-by ... and that's just the first 60 seconds. In documenting their trajectory from innocent cavorting to increasingly empty debauchery, Gruen captures a young band's ultimately misplaced sense of immortality. In some highly candid interview sequences, the Dolls appear less like a new, wilder rock group than an exotic species, which was probably the point.

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