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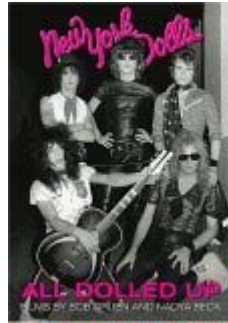
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THE NEW YORK DOLLS: ALL DOLLED UP

Directed by **Bob
Gruen and Nadya
Beck**
(MVD)

A proper documentary about the infamous New York Dolls has long been in demand, and now we finally have one. Rock photographer Bob Gruen and his wife Nadya Beck were Dolls intimates in the early 70s and filmed 40 hours' worth of footage using a then-new portable video camera. Now Gruen has culled through that footage to assemble **All Dolled Up**, a candid look at a couple of years in the life of one of the 70s' most notorious and influential rock & roll bands.

There's no narration here—Gruen lets the Dolls speak for themselves at interviews, backstage confabs, parties and, of course, onstage. (There's even an excerpt from a New York news report, fronted by Joel Siegel.) A large portion of the footage comes from the band's first jaunt to California, when the Dolls had week-long residencies at L.A.'s Whiskey a-Go-Go and San Francisco's Matrix and recorded for the TV show **Midnight Special**. This segment in particular shows the group at its most optimistic and exciting, as it takes its turbocharged rock show out of its familiar NYC environs into the glittering heart of American show business. It's a marvel to see a babyfaced David Johansen, oozing campy wit and charisma in equal measure, and a mostly sober Johnny Thunders, leagues away from the waste-case he would become in his solo career. Needless to say, the outfits alone are often eyepopping. Some of the film isn't the greatest, as you might expect from 32-year-old videotape, but overall



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the video and audio are good. **All Dolled Up** is an exciting, affecting work, and it's just as compelling for a newcomer to the Dolls as it will be to the diehards.

The DVD has plenty of extras to round out an already extraordinary package. Gruen is interviewed by Dictators singer Handsome Dick Manitoba about his time with the Dolls; he also narrates a wonderfully extensive photo gallery. The photographer and the surviving Dolls (Johansen and guitarist Sylvain Sylvain) provide audio commentary tracks, and the performances excerpted in the film are shown in their entirety in a special section, allowing longtime fans too young or unhip the first time around to see the original band in its full rock & roll glory. Hallefuckinlujuah! *Michael Toland* [[buy it](#)]

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