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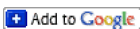
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Sex Pistols - The TV Tapes

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Review by [Kurt Dahlke](#) | posted August 20, 2014 | [E-mail the Author](#)

The Sex Pistols on TV:

The Sex Pistols on TV: The TV Interviews Uncensored is just sadness; sadness pure and simple. Any devotee of the band knows about their famous Bill Grundy interview on the BBC, the one where he invited the band to be outrageous and got an earful of profanity for his trouble. Well, yeah, that's here, but it isn't uncensored, and this two-hour cash-grab only goes downhill from there.

Composed of seemingly every bit of interview footage given by the band, (not much) and more significantly Johnny Rotten/ John Lydon, this disc is certainly of interest to fans of that flash-in-the-pan known as punk rock. Witness the same few glimpses of Sex Pistols performance footage every fan has already seen. Hear the same generic, stock-footage punk song over and over, since rights to any authentic punk songs were not granted. See John Lydon age from a truly captivating punker with a belligerent, disaffected attitude into an elder-statesman of who-knows-what, whom clearly begins to enjoy his time with interviewers a little too much.

So yeah, the Grundy footage is censored. Other bits and bobs of interview footage from '77 are also bleeped, really bringing the lie to the whole 'uncensored TV interviews' notion. And anyway, the only one who ever does any talking is Lydon. And boy does he like to talk! Over the course of these two hours I went from thinking he was a pure genius, to ultimately losing a little respect for him in his elder years. He's certainly more than willing to give an interview, and his penchant for stalking off set when lazy journalists don't have good questions for him gradually gives way to repeated sound bites, such as his assertion that Pete Townshend was a fool to say he hoped to die before he got old. Other luminaries from the era - members of Stiff Little Fingers, and Dave Vanian from The Damned, for instance, (not to mention a segment on Vivian Westwood) are also given a few minutes to ramble.

By the end of the disc we finally arrive at the true uncensored TV interview, about 15 minutes of raw footage of Lydon in a pub, opining on the vagaries of touring, belching and mugging for the camera, and generally acting like the rich, self-satisfied yob he was destined to become. Yeah, there's also plenty of cool shots of 'Original London Punks' and one brilliant sequence where a young Rotten is trailed by seriously obnoxious British kids - kids who ultimately represent the true spirit of punk: kids being dicks. This time capsule certainly isn't a must have for punk historians, but it's a nice rent. As for Lydon, I still love you, just not as much. Bollocks.

The DVD

Video:

This 16:9 presentation on a DVD 9 disc runs the gamut both in actual ratio and picture quality. Of course much of the archival footage is in a 4 X 3 ratio, and looks pretty rough. As interviews progress into the 21st century, the image expands to true widescreen, and the image quality gets much better. Colors are generally rich throughout.

Sound:

Dolby Digital Stereo really highlights the one fake punk song used throughout the presentation to represent the music of the Sex Pistols. Audio is otherwise sharp, and it's usually easy enough to sort out what Lydon and others are saying.

Extras:

The sole extra is a 20-minute preview of an upcoming **Sid Vicious Documentary**. It somehow makes this entire release seem nothing more than a come-on to check out the Vicious documentary. Huh.

Final Thoughts:

These TV interviews aren't exactly uncensored, and there isn't all that much here that fans of the band haven't seen elsewhere. There isn't even any actual Pistols music to be heard. What the punters will get, however, is a ton of John Lydon, who metamorphoses from the captivating lout of the '70s into an elder statesman of dissent, and finally, as this collection would have it, into someone who's pretty content to talk about himself. **Rent It**, punkers, or maybe just boost a copy from your local video merchant.

- Kurt Dahlke

~ More of Dahlke's DVD Talk reviews here at [DVD Talk](#) I'm not just a writer, I paint colorful, modern abstracts, too! Check them out here [KurtDahlke.com](#)

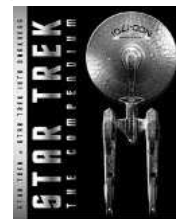
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