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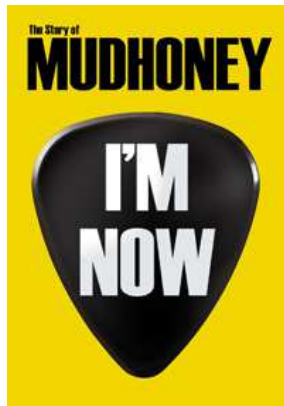
A Fast-Paced, Thorough & Often Funny Story About an Important Band: 'I'm Now: The Story of Mudhoney'

By [Jedd Beaudoin](#) 7 March 2013

Some would say that Mudhoney issued the opening salvo of grunge way, way back in 1988 via the single "Touch Me I'm Sick". Since forming on the first day of that year the Seattle quartet has never had a breakup and thus never had to face the indignities of a reunion. There's been one lineup change in the group's entire history--bassist Matt Lukin left the ranks in 2001. (And on good terms at that!) Simply put: There really aren't any bands like Mudhoney--and that's not just from a sonic standpoint. These guys have fallen victim to some of rock's most dangerous vices, true, but they've emerged OK, remained loyal to each other and--more or less--to the label that launched them.

When the fellas landed a major deal in the early '90s (with *Reprise*) they didn't blow their advance money on recording in exotic locations or through frivolous lawsuits. They recorded on the cheap, pocketed the change, and made down payments on homes. (Maybe one of the most scandalous moments in this whole documentary is when we learn that a few of the members invested in stocks.)

You probably know some of this if you've read Michael Azerrad's indispensable 2001 book, *Our Band Could Be Your Life*. Mudhoney was featured in those pages, of course, right next to Sonic Youth, The Replacements, Hüsker Dü, and Dinosaur Jr. But you could make the argument that there were two stories being told in that particular section: one about the band and one about its label, Sub Pop. Well, brace yourself, because there's plenty of Sub Pop in *I'm Now* as well, but there's also plenty that didn't come across in those pages--including the musical renaissance the band has experienced since 2002 via albums such as *Since We've Become Translucent* and *Under a Billion Suns* (arguably the band's best record).



I'm Now: The Story of Mudhoney

Cast: Mark Arm, Dan Peters, Steve Turner, Guy Maddison, Matt Lukin, Kim Thayil, Jonathan Poneman, David Fricke, Bruce Pavitt

(US DVD: 19 Feb 2013)

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Directed and produced by Ryan Short and Adam Pease, the men who brought you the excellent *Tad: Busted Circuits and Ringing Ears*, this feature stretches all the way back to the pre-Mudhoney days, all the way back to Mark Arm's first band Mr. Epp and The Calculations (albeit briefly) before moving on to the ill-fated Green River, which, of course, begat Mudhoney and Mother Love Bone before the latter begat Pearl Jam.

Short and Pease capture the era rather well, thanks in part to footage and photographs from the early era of the band as well as through the clear memories of Arm, Lukin, guitarist Steve Turner, and drummer Dan Peters.

The band's initial ambitions were simple--stay together long enough to make a single. And, yes, what a single it was. Before long the group was gaining a strong following in Europe and even--yes, it's true--headlining (for one night only) over Soundgarden in the UK. Mudhoney's 1989 debut album followed amid all the frenzy--a record that Turner, it turns out, isn't all that keen on--and more touring followed. There were also other early career highs, including *Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge* in 1991, and *Piece of Cake* in 1992.

Somewhere in all of this Arm had spiraled into heroin addiction, which he discusses rather frankly here; the group also grappled with whether to leave the struggling Sub Pop or to join the ranks of those leaving the indie imprint for the majors, and there were moments of tension with record execs and, naturally, Courtney Love. Although there were a few points when the group could have stopped--Turner went back to college for a spell in the early '90s, Peters joined Nirvana (briefly) and Screaming Trees (also briefly)--there was never a point when it actually did. Even in absence of making records or touring the quartet still practiced and continued to write songs.

Despite the apparent demise of the grunge--be careful how you use that word around these parts--bands of the early the '90s, Mudhoney recorded one of its best albums, 1995's *My Brother the Cow*, and one of its most underappreciated, 1998's *Tomorrow Hit Today*. Fashion, industry politics, and common sense saw the group leave Reprise circa 1999, around the same time that Lukin--a riotously funny man who is, whether he's playing music or not, truly rock 'n' roll--hung up his bass.

All of those points--and many more, including the arrival of new bassist Guy Maddison--are covered in *I'm Now* with the narrative wrapping during the outfit's 2009/2010 world tour. One of the real gifts of this film is that you actually find yourself engaging with guys in the band, all of them coming off as likeable and intelligent, driven and worthy of our respect. They, along with Sub Pop co-founders Jonathan Poneman and Bruce Pavitt, peers such as Tad Doyle, Kim Thayil, Stone Gossard, Jeff Ament, Kim Gordon, and Thurston Moore, tell this fast-paced, thorough, and often funny story about one of America's most important bands.

Extras on this DVD include a music video for the song "I'm Now" as well as bonus footage of touring in Europe, Brazil, and Japan.

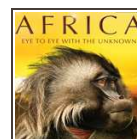
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