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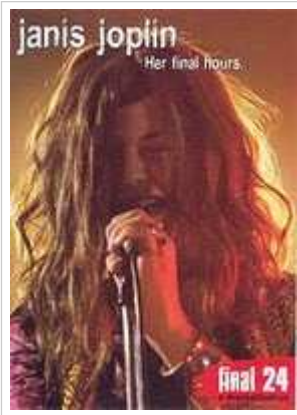
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Monday, May 24, 2010

Janis Joplin - Final 24: Her Final Hours



I don't know what or why it is, but it seems that we tend, as a society, to like every thing morbid. We have a fascination with death, especially if it is related to celebrity. Maybe it comes with our glorious way of life, or maybe it just human nature – I simply can't explain it. Sometimes celebrities tend to live forever after their death, and when it comes to rock music, Janis Joplin fits the pattern. "Janis Joplin - Final 24: Her Final Hours" is a fascinating and

well-researched documentary about this legendary singer.

The film opens with several people that knew Janis Joplin, voicing their opinion about her. Perhaps the most striking was offered by publicist Myra Friedman, when she said that Joplin "was a very troubled girl and a genius." And it sounds right, I shall say, as we watch the following minutes, when we are transported to Hollywood, California, during the day of October 3, 1970. It is there that time begins running out for the singer, with the clock marking hour by hour her final moments in life. She is in town recording what would be her last album. We are taken to her room in the hotel she was staying at, and, through a well-done dramatization, with a well-chosen actress, we find her bored in the hours preceding her death. She calls her then boyfriend, Seth Morgan, in San Francisco, and they have some kind of argument – they are planning to get married. She then calls her dope-dealer, and buys, apparently unknowingly, uncut, and almost 50% pure heroin. Joplin then leaves her hotel, and goes to the Sunset Sound recording studio, and has a good time with the musicians – it seems that she is enthusiastic about the work in progress. She then goes to eat at Barney's Beanery, returns to her room, injects the heroin, and the rest is history. These last moments take place on a fateful October 14, 1970.

"Janis Joplin - Final 24: Her Final Hours" is not only great due to the way that Joplin's actions during her last 24 hours of her life are chronicled. It also great because in-between her every move during these hours, the filmmakers inject historical footage of the artist's life, including her seminal participation in the Monterrey International Pop Festival, her initial years in her hometown in Texas, the influence of black music early in her life, her college days and her beginning in music, her move and life in San Francisco, and how she got together with Big Brother & Holding Company, the group with which she became known and famous. Her work with the Cosmic Blues Band and others is also examined. Special attention, of course, is given to her known and tragic intake of drugs, beginning with speed, moving on to alcohol, then

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