

Final 24: Jim Morrison, His Final Hours

Season 2, Episode 2

Directed by Michael Allcock, Michael McNamara; Chris Bould

Cineflix International, 2007

60 minutes, USD \$14.95

MVDvisual.com

This is now the fourth of the two-season Canadian series on famous deaths, shown in the States on the Biography Channel. The shows deal with infamous deaths in modern (1960s and on) times, using a specific formula that has the last 24 hours dramatized, and each historical segment filled with footage (still, film, and music in this case) and modern (2006 or 2007, depending on the shows release date) interviews with some key figures in the subject's life.

Sometimes in the recreated vignettes, the actor looks nothing like the real person (such as when they did Janis Joplin), though Christian Skott does look a bit like him, but he overdoes Morrison's slinking style of walk (perhaps it's the tight leather pants?). British narrator Danny Wallace (as listed on the box, though IMDB still gives credit to Dave McRae) somberly and often reminds the viewer of the time frame until tragedy strikes (e.g., "In just six hours, Morrison will be dead").

The action jumps back and forth between the dramatized last day and documentary scenes of Morrison's life up to that moment. Before each commercial break, the story takes us to a different period of Morrison's life, whether it be childhood, forming the Doors, over-indulgences, girl friends, and the like. Mixed in – and this is one of the parts I like the best – are the real-person interviews, including his high school sweetheart (who explains how he was reading Allen Ginsburg's *Howl* in 8th grade), road manager Vince Treanor, ex-*Rolling Stone* editor and rock historian Ben Fong-Torres, bodyguard (and drinking buddy) Tony Funches, and even one of the firefighters first called to the scene in Paris, Alain Raison. A former VP at Elektra Records, Steve Harris, has quite a bit to say, and all of it interesting in a sort of smarmy way (such as "He had these masculine traits with the feminine wiles; that's what made Jim unique").

But my favorite is (Miss) Pamela Des Barres, who discusses her affair with him while he was still with his girlfriend, Pamela Courson (who would claim to be his wife and go by Pamela Morrison until her death in 1974, though for some reason this controversy and her passing via heroin OD are never mentioned). Des Barres talks more extensively about her relationships (rather than one-night stands) in her wonderful autobiographies; I recommend both *I'm With the Band* and *Take Another Little Piece of My Heart*.

There are other interviews I would have liked to have been added. For example, I remember seeing sensationalist (in part) local television show, *Good Day New York*, where reporter George Ciccarone interviewed actress / stripper Kitten Natividad, who described how Morrison would come into her bar every night and hit on her, but she always refused because, thanks to bad hygiene, he stank. Also, there is a great interview with Melody Patterson ("Jane," female lead of *F Troop*), who discusses why back then she would rather go see Bobby Fuller than Morrison, in an issue of Miriam Linna and Billy Miller's classic *Kicks* fanzine.

A central theme through the 60 minute program is that Morrison wanted to be known as a poet more than a musician, which caused him to move to Paris, where he died (I don't believe I'm giving anything away here). But lots of controversy is what this series craves, so there's mention of the infamous Miami concert where he allegedly exposed himself (Treanor has a point to make about that here) and the backlash, but they make sure to present the mysteries of his death, such as Courson's role and the infamous "is he really dead?" theory (Harris makes the best statement concerning that).

In today's world of Web gossip sites and overexposure of sensationalism on television, I'm surprised this show isn't revived; I bet it would do a lot better now than just 3 years ago. And there's always new fodder as stars and starlets veer ever closer to the final darkness.