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I Need That Record! The Death (or Possible Survival) of the Independent Record S

Score: **100%**
Rating: **Not Rated**
Publisher: **MVD Entertainment Group**
Region: **A**
Media: **DVD/1**
Running Time: **77 Mins.**
Genre: **Documentary/Live Performance/Musical**
Audio: **Stereo Sound**



Features:

- Extended Interviews:
- Ian MacKaye
 - Mike Watt
 - Thurston Moore
 - Legs McNeil
 - Glenn Branca
 - Lenny Kaye
 - Patterson Hood
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Music fans will both love and hate this great documentary from Director Brendan Toller, **I Need That Record**. It comes branded with some curious subtext: "The Death (Or Possible Survival) Of The Independent Record Store." This struck me a bit like the Dr. Seuss story "The Lorax," where the message is largely dour, but with a hint of hope for the future. Toller's perspective is much like the old Once-ler in that he remembers a time when culture was ripe for the picking in communities, and people crowded into independent record stores for their daily or weekly infusion of fresh vinyl. The downfall of these independent stores parallels what may be the downfall of the music industry, and Toller doesn't dance around the possibility that, as one person says on camera, "we brought it on ourselves." The Thneed that everybody needed is showcased in example after example of how greedy corporate interests may have signed the death warrant for an entire industry.



Camera work, editing, and sound in **I Need That Record** really speaks to serious devotion and an artistic mission. This is a fanboy movie for people that probably say they hate fanboys... It comes down to adoration and respect more than anything else, as Toller begins by tracing the loss of several local stores in Connecticut to a larger epidemic across the country. It would be fascinating to see Toller take his show on the road, to determine if this is just a national phenomenon, or if stores like those featured in **I Need That Record** are dropping off all around the world. Even with its domestic focus, the documentary takes us on a grand tour. Trash American Style in Danbury, CT was closing its doors during filming, while Electric Fetus in Minneapolis, MN appeared to be holding its own. We hit Nashville in time to see the Black Keys performing a live set at Grimey's, and hear interviews with artists like Thurston Moore (*Sonic Youth*), Ian MacKaye (*Fugazi*, *Minor Threat*), and Chris Frantz (*Talking Heads*, *Tom Tom Club*).

Toller splices in some dramatized segments and lots of archival footage to punctuate the stories told about cultural shift in the music industry, radio pay-to-play scams, and the pillaging of customers by big box retailers. The theme of community and cultural transmission in the arts wends its way through **I Need That Record**, making us realize how many great moments we experienced in various small towns and big cities, browsing

records and planting roots in front of listening stations. If you love independent stores, you've no doubt experienced the struggles of these retailers in your own town. **I Need That Record** speaks to the experience that many of us had, as we watched a local icon drop off the map. Noam Chomsky even makes several appearances in **I Need That Record**, connecting the dots between Toller's narrative and what appears to be happening in every segment of American life. Small merchants that reflect their community are giving way to mega-retailers, and we're all complicit. **I Need That Record** is to the music retailer what *Food, Inc.* was to the small farmer.

Toller may only be talking about record stores, but **I Need That Record** seems like a parable for what may become our future. It brings to mind one of my favorite depictions from the movie *Demolition Man*, in which Sylvester Stallone wakes from a cryo-sleep to find that Taco Bell has won the "Franchise Wars," meaning that every restaurant is now Taco Bell. Unless you want your kids' kids to have nowhere to buy music other than Wal-Mart, you need to pay close attention to what Brendan Toller is showing you.

-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications AKA Matt Paddock

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