

FFanzeen: Rock'n'Roll Attitude With Integrity

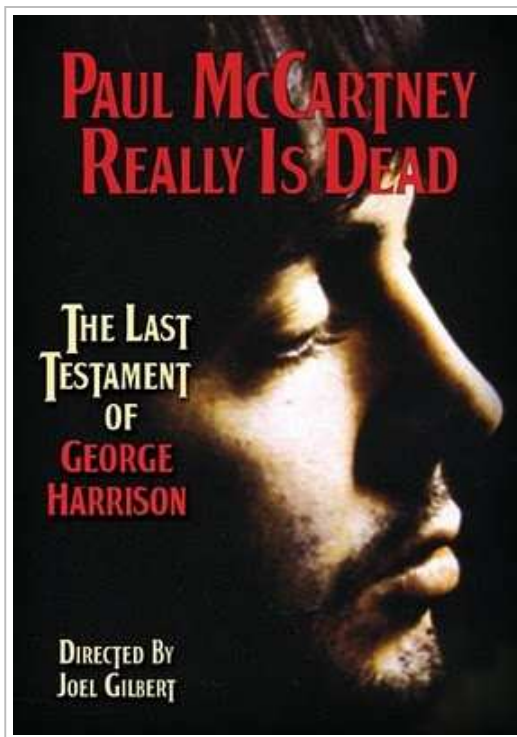
Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2010

DVD Review: "Paul McCartney Really is Dead: Last Testament of George Harrison"

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Images from the Internet



Paul McCartney Really is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison

Directed and produced by Joel Gilbert

Highway Entertainment, 2010

95 minutes, USD \$14.95

Highway61ent.com

MVDvisual.com

According to this documentary style film, someone sent a package to Highway 61 Entertainment which contained some audio tapes supposedly recorded by ex-Beatle guitarist George Harrison while he was in Reading Hospital after being stabbed by a reportedly insane man. This DVD is based on those tapes, and includes them within.

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About Me

Robert Barry Francos

Producer / Director Joel Gilbert describes these events in the prolog, claiming that the tapes had been to three voice analysis labs, and the tests were "inconclusive." Thus we are launched into a history of the Beatles, as told by George [Note that from this point, I will just use "George" when referring to the narrator of this DVD, and Harrison when talking about the man] in a very dissonant tone as he is preparing the listener for a shocking revelation.

Now, I consider myself a Beatles fan, but would hardly say I was an expert (someone chided me for making a mistake about Lennon in a recent blog), but even I could tell the voice was not Harrison's; it was a worse impression than the '60s Beatles cartoons. It didn't even sound Liverpudlian, but rather someone from the States trying to sound like it. For example, bubblegum comes out as "boobleboom."

That being said, let me set this clear: this DVD is great, truly. I enjoyed it from beginning to end, it was such a hoot. I've always enjoyed conspiracy theories, from the JFK assassination to the question of Americans on the moon, from Reagan being our "best" president (yeah, sure) right through to the destruction of the WTC. I rarely agree with the theories, but they are fun to hear. And even if I argue with what this film states, it still brought a smile to me face (sorry I thought I was channeling Ringo, who does not come across too well in this, by the way).

The first question about this DVD is, well, why was the tapes sent to Highway 61 Entertainment? Why not *The New York Times*? *Rolling Stone*? Oliver Stone? This made no sense to me, and I kinda wish Joel Gilbert would have at least given some theory to that effect, and that he didn't bring that up seems suspicious, right from the gate.

Getting back to the narrative, George goes on to discuss Paul's mid-'60s trouble with the law and teenage girls in Minneapolis, some detail about how the Jesus protests effected the Beatles and their fans, and so on. In fact there are quite a few news clips of the band, and as so many have seen those same interviews so many times, it is the clips of the fans that are more enjoyable (though my favorite one is not there: in front of the Plaza Hotel in New York, some hysterical teen with a thick Brooklyn accent complaining that she'd been waiting for hours to see the band and the police wouldn't let her). There is even a very short clip of Lennon and Dylan stoned out of their minds in the back of a limousine [see at bottom of this blog].

Then, in November of 1966, apparently Paul left Abby Roads Studio in a huff at 5 AM, and was killed dramatically in a car crash after picking up a fan named Rita, who caused the accident that would not only take Paul's life, according to this, but would graphically destroy Paul body, which is given in sharp detail. This leads to someone from MI5, British Secret Service, calling up the band to identify the body. His name is Maxwell, and he forces the boys to silence for fear of Paul's death causing teen girls to commit suicide on a global scale. A Paul

c/o 62 Timber Ridge Rd,
Commack, NY 11725. From 1977-88, I used to publish a music magazine in New York called FFanzeen, which dealt with the wide-ranging independent music scene. I also photographed many bands from the period (and since). And the beat goes on.

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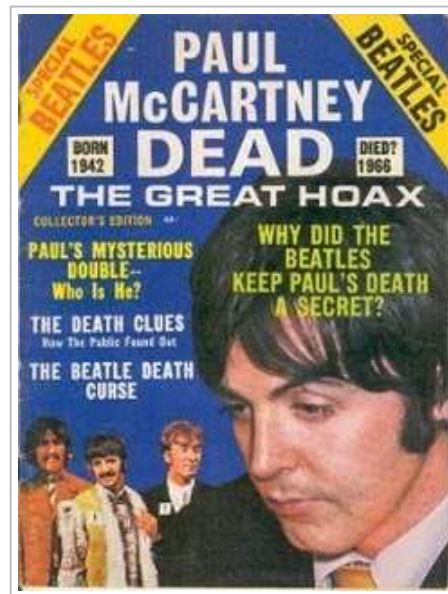
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look-a-like contest is held in the States, including on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*, and though a winner is never announced, supposedly someone named William Campbell is selected, flown to England, and is then given extensive surgery to make the transition complete. And of course everyone involved is sworn to secrecy under threat of death by - er - Maxwell's "silver hammer."

John, being John, rebels and he nicknamed the new Paul - who is never really accepted by the rest of the band - Faul (short for False Paul), and then he leaves lots of hints of the occurrence, such as calling the album *Rubber Soul* after "Rubber Paul, and Apple means "A-Paul" (as opposed to "the" Paul). Lots of songs are credited to trying to give hints, including "Nowhere Man," "and the overly abstract "Come Together." Backward masking in the recordings is added in, and examples are a-plenty on this DVD (including subtitles, I'm happy to say), some successfully and some questionable.

Much of the "Paul is Dead" theorizing has been discussed before over the years, since Detroit DJ first came out with the story in October 1969. But there is much stretching of credulity as far as I'm concerned, such as *Revolver* meaning the "Revolving door" of replacing Paul, *Yellow Submarine* meaning Paul's coffin (rather than a more widely held belief that it has a drug reference), and that's just the start of it.



Later on, George...I mean George states that the reason they went to India was to get the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi to transfer Paul's soul into Faul, because it seemed that Faul is not as smart or loveable as Paul ("We all loooved Paul," George states more than once). The tape states the reason they left the ashram in a huff was because the switch didn't work, not because of the Yogi making a pass at Mia Farrow, or Brian Epstein's suicide (which is not mentioned, I'm surprised; I half expected him to have been offed by Maxwell).

George states that when the information came to light of Paul's death by Russell Gibb, that is why John divorced Cynthia, to save her and Julian's life, and then he moved to the U.S. That is also why the States was trying to deport John, as a favor to MI5 so he could be sent to England where Maxwell had more control of him. When John told George he was going to tell, he was killed by Mark David Chapman two weeks later; and when George told Faul he was going to confess, that

is when *he* was attacked and stabbed.

But my favorite stretch is of having rabid fan Rita undergo facial surgery and come back as Heather Mills. That is like the Broadway show *Tommy* that had the title character marry Sally Simpson. Just doesn't work for me, and as Tom Bingham points out in his review of this DVD, "I might point out that Internet bios of Heather Mills have her being born in 1968, two years after the accident." [<http://genecdvd.blogspot.com/2010/08/paul-mccartney-really-is-dead-last.html>].

I envision it this way: in 1966, the band is bored, stoned, or both, and hear about the Paul look-a-like contest. They figure, like the old *Prince and the Pauper* story, what if they pretended like Paul was dead, and would give clues to see if anyone would catch on. Creative wiseass John kept it going when the others gave up, got bored, or sobered up, and then it blew up in their faces when someone actually started to put the "clues" together in their own obsessive moment, added by their *own* imagination. Surely a prank by an art student gone to the nth degree. That is my theory which is mine, too.

The DVD's Website clearly states that this is "Not affiliated with estate of George Harrison, Paul McCartney, William Campbell, Apple Corp or The Beatles" [paulreallyisdead.com]. While none of the music of the band (or their solo material) is used (i.e., licensed), Wayne Peet does a fine job *hinting* at it enough through instrumentals to make the connection, but not enough to get sued (one would think), much like the Rutles.

But this DVD is entertaining, don't get me wrong, but part of the joy is the side-splitting connections that are made to reach the conclusions, no matter how thin. In the same way the Kingsmen's version of "Louie Louie" was a blast despite that there was nothing really going on to elicit the salacious accusations, *The Last Testament of George Harrison* makes bold steps and is a fun piece for just what it is, rather than what it is trying to imply.

Also on the DVD is a link to MP3s of Peet's music, and a short documentary of and interview with the late music historian icon Al Aronowitz (who I once met at an Andy Pratt concert, of all things). Al tells of how he introduced Bob Dylan to the Beatles, and how at the confab, Dylan introduced the Beatles to pot. Only a few minutes long, but it kept me interested, despite Al's slurred speaking (due to age); thankfully, the entire conversation is captioned.



Bonus video:



Posted by Robert Barry Francos at [12:01 AM](#) 

Labels: [Beatles](#), [FFanzeen](#), [George Harrison](#), [John Lennon](#), [Paul is dead](#), [Paul McCartney](#), [Ringo Starr](#), [Robert Barry Francos](#)

Reactions: interesting (0) cool (0) informative (0)

0 comments:

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