



DVD Spotlight

“Paul McCartney Really is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison” (Highway 61/MVD). 0 stars.

There ought to be a law against releasing a DVD as deliberately dreadful as this, and since no one loves lawsuits more than the Beatles, don't be surprised if there's eventually some litigation filed to try and halt its sale.

“Paul McCartney Really is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison” takes those “Paul is Dead” rumors that first surfaced on U.S. radio in 1969, rehashes them and gives the whole storyline a few bizarre new twists.

The focus here is on two audio tapes that in 2005 “mysteriously” arrived at the Hollywood office of Highway 61 Entertainment, labeled as “The Last Testament of George Harrison.” Right. Those tapes, which don't even remotely sound like George Harrison's voice, supposedly feature Harrison telling the full story of the Beatles' elaborate plot to cover up McCartney's secret death in a 1966 car crash. As we all know, he was of course replaced by a look-alike named William Campbell, who nevertheless had to undergo five trips to the plastic surgeon to complete the job.

Honest.

The DVD, which has none of the tongue-in-cheek humor of all those early radio rumors, goes way beyond the boundaries of good taste, and now tries to tie in the Queen of England, Britain's highest intelligence agency and a super secret agent named Maxwell. It seems they all conspired with Harrison, John Lennon and Ringo Starr to keep McCartney's death a secret, along with a witness named Rita, who later turns out to be everyone's favorite demon, Heather Mills (McCartney's second wife). How she eventually makes her way into the plot may be its only amusing moment because it is truly wacky.

Relying primarily on visual and audio clues that most serious Beatles' fans have seen and heard 1,000 times before, the dark tale gets weirder by the minute, eventually tying it all to Lennon's murder, and a true life knife attack on Harrison by a deranged fan.

All those “Paul is dead” rumors really were pretty funny in their original incarnation in the 1960s and there are some legitimately weird things buried on Beatles' records. But there's nothing funny about this crass, classless and amateurish attempt to cash in on the Beatles' name.

Avoid the year's worst DVD at all costs.

- Kevin O'Hare

(This column, which was printed in the Springfield, MA "Republican" and is also available to more than two dozen newspapers through Advance Publications as well as 1 million unique visitors per month on MassLIVE.com. The combined potential audience represents a total circulation of more than 3 million with a total readership of 7 million.