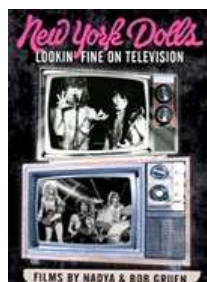




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Case Number 22855: Small Claims Court



## New York Dolls: Lookin' Fine On Television

MVD Visual // 1973 // 70 Minutes // Not Rated  
Reviewed by Judge Victor Valdivia // December 3rd, 2011

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### Scales of Justice

Judgment: 90

### Perp Profile

Studio: [MVD Visual](#)

#### Video Formats:

- Full Frame
- **Audio Formats:**
- Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround (English)
- Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo (English)

#### Subtitles:

- None
- **Running Time:** 70 Minutes
- **Release Year:** 1973
- **MPAA Rating:** Not Rated

#### Genres:

- [Concerts and Musicals](#)
- [Performance](#)

### Distinguishing Marks

- Interview

### Accomplices

- [New York Dolls](#)

### All Rise...

Judge Victor Valdivia is actin' like a king, but that's 'cause he's a human being.

# Music Converter

Last Updated: Aug 23, 2011  
License: Free  
OS: Windows 7/Vista/2003/XP/2000/NT  
Requirements: No special requirements



### The Charge

The legendary and infamous New York Dolls at their best!

### The Case

It's crude, lo-fi, difficult to look at and listen to, and thoroughly unpolished. Which, of course, is *exactly* why you should see it as a true representation of the New York Dolls. This was a band that made its reputation in the early '70s as one of the crudest, rawest, most ramshackle rock 'n' roll outfits of the era, and you'll get no better idea of just how ferocious they were live than this DVD collection.

**Lookin' Fine on Television** compiles videotaped performances from the New York Dolls from various concerts in 1973 and 1974. Singer David Johansen, guitarists Johnny Thunders and Sylvain Sylvain, bassist Arthur "Killer" Kane, and drummer Jerry Nolan perform these songs:

- "Lookin' for a Kiss"
- "Babylon"
- "Trash"
- "Bad Detective"
- "Vietnamese Baby"
- "Bad Girl"
- "Chatterbox"
- "Human Being"
- "Private World"
- "Subway Train"
- "Personality Crisis"
- "Frankenstein"
- "Who Are the Mystery Girls?"
- "Jet Boy"

These are early-'70s videotapes, which means black-and-white video and very grainy and fuzzy video at that. Similarly,

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the sound quality is less than stellar. The disc comes with stereo and 5.1 surround mixes (although there are no menu options to choose one; you'll have to use your "audio" button to cycle between them), and both are fairly rough. The surround mix does sound "fuller" but the stereo mix sounds closer to what the original quality is, so in many ways the sound quality is a bit of a wash. Back then, videotape was in its infancy and lacked the quality of film, but was at least cheaper. For a struggling band like the Dolls (who only released two albums, neither of which sold particularly well), it was an ideal way to catalogue their live shows.

The live shows are the reason to patiently endure the less-than-optimal quality. Sure, the Dolls were never superstars, and imploded due to drugs and financial problems after barely two albums, *New York Dolls* (1973) and *Too Much Too Soon* (1974). Those two albums, however, changed the face of music significantly. The punk movement that emerged at the end of the decade owed everything to the Dolls' music; bands like the Sex Pistols and The Smiths flatly stated they would not have existed without the Dolls. Similarly, the wave of glam-metal artists that emerged in the '80s, such as Mötley Crüe and Poison, owe much to the Dolls' fusion of glam theatrics and three-chord stomp.

You can hear that influence in these recordings, which, although not of sterling quality, still show the band at its peak. Thunders' snarling guitar, Johansen's sneering vocals, Nolan's pummeling backbeat—this is the sound of modern hard rock in its infancy, delivered in a series of live performances that are not consistent (they wouldn't be exciting if they were) but thrilling in their unevenness. There are no notes about when and where these songs were recorded, and some of the video performances are not complete (though the audio is), so there are random shots of interview footage scattered throughout, but even with this little information, you can still get a feel of just what it was like to see the Dolls back then. Shot by photographer Bob Gruen and his wife Nadya, these recordings, along with the band's two albums and incidental demos and live tracks that have leaked out throughout the years, are all that remains of the original Dolls' legacy, but they are well worth the investment. Even the disc's sole extra, "Interview with David Johansen and Johnny Thunders" (8:32), is worth seeing. It's a chat between the two musicians from 1976, after the Dolls had disbanded, in front of the legendary punk club CBGBs, discussing their solo careers. It's probably the only time the two were together after the band's breakup, and it's fascinating to see.

**Lookin' Fine on Television**, then, is a must. Though Johansen and Sylvain, the only two surviving members of the Dolls (the others having passed on years ago), have put together a new version of the band with new supporting players, it's this classic lineup that changed rock music with their music and theatrics. If you can withstand the video and audio quality, you'll get to see one of the best and most influential bands in their prime onstage. Newcomers might want to start with the music first, but once they do, they'll want to watch this collection.

#### The Verdict

Not guilty.

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Did we give **New York Dolls: Lookin' Fine On Television** a fair trial? [yes](#) / [no](#)

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