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Wonderful Documentary

Posted on Wednesday, October 31, 2012, by [Darcy Staniforth](#)

If you know anything about punk rock, you know the Circle Jerks. They were one of L.A.'s most seminal and influential punks bands. Initially comprised of former members of Red Kross and Black Flag, this band helped define the sound the the L.A. punk scene. The Circle Jerks story is a winding and complex one that involves revolving members, addiction, and infighting. Debbie Gibson even shows up at one point, no joke. But would you expect anything less from original punks? I wouldn't.

David Markey has put together interviews with members of the band, other seminal punks stars, and some of the people that helped make the Circle Jerks career happen. He intercuts the interview storytelling with rare footage that spans the Circle Jerks long history.

Markey definitely has rare gems of important footage in this doc, but it came up a little short for me. Although, the story is compelling, the music breaks in between the interviews make the pacing of the film drag. It's a hard call to make because it's not as if the Circle Jerks songs are super long. However the use of the whole song in many places is just too much. I can understand why punk fans would want to see as much footage as possible, but I would have put the footage of the complete songs in the extras section and not compromised the pacing of the film.

Markey also has some very odd choices in regards to shooting the interviews at times. Keith Morris is shot in a typical medium shot for most of the film, but then Markey randomly throws in some odd effects and transitions that seem out of place and become distracting. Markey also shoots some of the other interviews from very odd angles. The interview footage of Henry Rollins looks like Hank is holding the camera himself. If these choices were made to make the film look more punk rock, it just made it look like poor filmmaking.

The camera pushes during several interviews are also very jerky and amateur. I know those do not take away from the content of the film, but it took me right out of those key interview moments.

The DVD extras on this film contain deleted scenes which are really just extra interview footage. A good amount of this footage would have really added to the overall fleshing out of this documentary. There are scenes where Keith Morris talks about how he originally became a front man, Henry Rollins and other members of the Circle Jerks talk about the skate influence and the LA scene, and Lisa Fancher shows and discusses the



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original artwork for their debut album *Group Sex*. All of these deleted scenes and a few others should have been used in this film. They are key elements of the punk rock story that the Circle Jerks are a huge part of. Plus, Markey actually does great editing in many of these deleted interviews. The pacing of many of these interviews is the pacing I was hoping for in the film.

There are also two trailers on the extras. They both feel more like mini docs than actual trailers. Again, the pacing here is off with both of these.

I know I pick on David Markey a lot in this review, but *My Career As A Jerk* is still very important to the history of the Los Angeles punk rock scene. I am much happier that this documentary exists because at its base level, it makes the punk rocker in me very happy.

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Yeah, the marketing is clearly bad for this release. Just look at the Blu-ray cover -- totally unrepresentative of the film.

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Glad to hear it worked for the most part. I saw a panel at WonderCon and the marketing was terrible

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The contest is closed. Congrats to Isaac, Shemp, and Steve

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BY DARCY STANIFORTH



About the author

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