



Case Number 26715: Small Claims Court



## All the Labor

**MVD Visual** // 2013 // 96 Minutes // Not Rated  
 Reviewed by Judge Daryl Loomis // December 23rd, 2013

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Scales of Justice

Judgment: 85

Perp Profile

- Studio: [MVD Visual](#)
- Video Formats:**
- 1.78:1 Anamorphic
- Audio Formats:**
- Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround (English)
- Subtitles:**
- None
- Running Time:** 96 Minutes  
**Release Year:** 2013  
**MPAA Rating:** Not Rated
- Genres:**
- [Concerts and Musicals](#)
  - [Documentary](#)
  - [Performance](#)

All Rise...

Judge Daryl Loomis is writing this review while sippin' on gin and juice.



Distinguishing Marks

- Additional Footage
- Trailer

Accomplices

- [IMDb](#)
- [Official Site](#)

The Charge

"Midnight drive down Jewella Rd.  
 Methamphetamines and carryin' a lonely load  
 Roaches in the ashes, truck jamming "Limelight"  
 Looks like it's gonna be just me and Geddy Lee tonight."-The Gourds' "Shreveport"

The Case

In 1994, four young musicians from various spots in Texas and Louisiana converged onto Austin, Texas, and formed a band called The Gourds. A hard to describe mixture of roots rock, country, blues, with a little zydeco thrown in, they didn't exactly set the charts on fire, but their fun, energetic performances brought audiences through the door. Then, when Napster was a thing, they actually had a cult hit in their cover of Snoop Dogg's "Gin and Juice," which went viral on the service before that was even a word. Nearly two decades later, you can still hear fans call out for the song at Gourds shows because, all these years later, they're still going strong and are more fun to watch than ever.

**All the Labor** captures The Gourds as they are today, older and graying, and revisits the band when they were first coming up, all fresh-faced and not balding. They look different today and they're much more practiced musicians, but the one thing that connects The Gourds of today with those of yesteryear is the element of fun that exudes from their personalities. This feeling of joy at making music permeates their interviews and their live performance, which is incredibly rare for a band that's been around as long as they have.

I live just a couple of hours north of Austin, so I've had a number of chances to see them live over the last decade. I can personally attest to the level of enjoyment they bring to a barroom. I've never regretted buying a ticket to one of their shows and, even if they aren't my favorite band, really by a long shot, they are one of my very favorite shows.

Director Doug Hawes-Davis (**Libby, Montana**) presents a straightforward music documentary with **All the Labor**, which is a good thing since the band can speak for itself. So we have the band, which includes Kevin Russell on vocals and guitar, Jimmy Smith on vocals and bass guitar, Claude Bernard on keyboards and accordion, Keith Langford on drums, and Max Johnston on fiddle, lap steel, and mandolin, though they all play multiple instruments both on record and at shows. They all get their time to speak, though the two singers get the most screen time, and we hear both their current and past selves sounding remarkably similar in attitude, which is why they've had the reasonable level of success that they continue to enjoy today. In between the interviews, in which we learn about them as individuals and as a unit, we get live footage, which is fun to watch, but doesn't really do justice to their performances. Still, it's a good mix of old songs and new, though the live scenes are mostly new.

The Gourds aren't necessarily a great band filled with virtuosic musicians, but they are a very solid group that is eminently listenable and just about the most fun live show you're likely to see. They aren't the kind of band that appeals to one group of people, either. In their crowds are cowboys, hipsters, stoners, and all sorts in between, who can all easily

group of people, either. In their crowds are cowboys, hipsters, stoners, and all sorts in between, who can all easily coexist on the same floor because the band makes danceable, singable music that is plain fun to experience. If you ever get the chance to see them (and there's a good shot, because they tour constantly), do yourself a favor and get a ticket. It'll be the best two hours you spend all week. Until then, **All the Labor** gets the job done, delivering both an interesting portrait of a unique band and a great ninety minutes of music, as well.

**All the Labor** arrives on DVD from MVD in a decent, unspectacular edition. The 1.78:1 anamorphic image looks good enough, with decent clarity and solid skin tones. The archival and concert footage look a little rougher than the modern interviews, but that's expected. The surround sound mix is pretty good, though, with a lot of work in the subwoofer and, if there isn't a lot of work in the surround channels, the music always sounds good, which is the most important thing here.

Speaking of good-sounding music, **All the Labor** definitely delivers on that in the bonus features. In all, it come out to over a hundred minutes of additional footage, which comprises deleted scenes, alternate takes, and a whole bunch of live material, some of which is included in the film, but some of which is not. If you're into The Gourds, this is a must-see documentary, if only to have a piece of their great live act.

Unlike some bands, I contend that The Gourds, given a fair shake, can be appreciated by anyone of almost any musical taste. Their shifting style, danceable songs, and phenomenal attitude toward what they do is the difference between a regular ol' alt-country act and something like The Gourds, one of the most enjoyable touring bands running. Until you get the chance to experience what they have to offer for yourself, **All the Labor** will scratch the itch.

#### The Verdict

Case dismissed.

#### Give us your feedback!

Did we give **All the Labor** a fair trial? [yes](#) / [no](#)



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