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Case Number 14081: Small Claims Court



Punk's Not Dead

[MVD Visual](#) // 2007 // 96 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge Daryl Loomis // July 17th, 2008

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Judge Daryl Loomis believes that if somebody uses glue and a can of hairspray to do your hair, you care too much about being punk.



Scales of Justice

Judgment: 88

Perp Profile

- Studio:** [MVD Visual](#)
Video Formats:
 • 1.85:1 Anamorphic
Audio Formats:
 • Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo (English)
Subtitles:
 • None
Running Time: 96 Minutes
Release Year: 2007
MPAA Rating: Not Rated
Genres:
 • [Concerts and Musicals](#)
 • [Documentary](#)

Distinguishing Marks

- Deleted Scenes
- Featurettes

Accomplices

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



- Ads by Google** [Garage Punk](#) [Pinoy Band](#) [Band Merch](#) [Band Members](#)

The Charge

Gabba gabba hey!

Opening Statement

Back in '92, this judge was a 16-year-old whippersnapper in Eugene, who loved going to the local shows at a tiny place called Icky's Teahouse. Grimy as hell and twice as hot, they would pack 250 kids into a place that should, by any fire code, hold about 50. I went about once a month, maybe less, and never knew who would be there, but I always saw cool stuff. On one occasion, the place was hosting a gay pride celebration with a number of queer punk and riot grrrl acts, most of whose names escape me now, but they were very loud and very intense, even if they weren't technically very good. After a few of the bands had come and gone, they took a break so they could have a safe sex demonstration. From one side of the stage came one of the groups of women, carrying a 10-foot phallus on their shoulders. From the other side, a group of guys came out with a massive pink condom and, together, they showed all of us the proper way to protect ourselves from disease. After a few more bands, headlined (if I remember correctly) by local success [Bratmobile](#), we all went home sufficiently rocked with sore necks, hoarse voices, and a little wiser. These days, through experience, this whole thing seems a little tame to me, but it was a really big deal to my younger version. This was the definition of punk in my mind: playing loud and hard, riling up the kids, and opening their eyes.

Director Susan Dynner's [documentary Punk's Not Dead](#) captures the spirit of punk rock from its grass roots inception in the late '70s to its mainstream, Hot Topic current state. Dynner looks at the history of the genre to see how, from its DIY beginnings, the [music](#) became so mainstream. Using the connections she made as a photographer in the early '80s punk underground, Dynner paints a clear picture of punk's origins, the attitude that came along with it, and its subsequent acceptance in the status quo. The music remained underground until Ian MacKaye of Minor Threat and Fugazi started Dischord Records in Washington D.C. and Brett Gurewitz of Bad Religion started Epitaph Records in L.A. Attaining national distribution for the bands in this scene took the music out of the underground, onto college radio and, from there, ascension into mainstream culture. Today, piercing and tattoos are mainstream, torn clothes and spiky purple hair is mainstream. The core attitude, however, the in-your-face intensity and the real disregard of authority has never become mainstream. Mega-huge modern "punk" bands like [Green Day](#), Good Charlotte, and My Chemical Romance may have the look down. They may have the twinges of the sound, but they have none of the attitude. Instead of disregarding authority, instead of doing it themselves, they left themselves beholden to authority, taking every step possible toward maximum success. I can't fault a bunch of kids for wanting to be rock stars, but comparing them in any way to what bands like The Damned and UK Subs had done (and are still doing) is difficult at best. At the same time, taking the example of Green Day, their breakthrough [album](#), *Dookie*, came out 14 years ago,

longer than most of the bands represented in this film were ever around. It is this album that many of the young punk bands attribute as their first, so their influence on the genre is undeniably important. Without their help in making the genre acceptable, there is no way The Business would ever have been able to open for a band with the box office power of Good Charlotte. It may be a sad juxtaposition in quality between the two bands, but The Business got the biggest payday of their lives for those dates. I may think the new bands fly in the face of what their predecessors stood for, but their selling power and influence on the culture is clear. **Punk's Not Dead** does a very nice job giving the new bands a place to stand alongside the old, creating a thorough study of punk's evolution.

Through interviews and concert footage, Dynner lets the bands speak for themselves, both philosophically and artistically. Bands from different times and places are cut together, which keeps it from feeling like just a timeline at any point. While it sometimes feels chaotic to have an interview with members of Pennywise followed by a Black Flag performance, followed again by the people of My Chemical Romance, it does lend the sense that all of these groups are thoroughly connected, Dynner doesn't comment much on the action but, when she does, it is to humorous effect. Old footage of *Quincy, M.D.* talking about the horrible reality of slam dancing and modern shots of little kids with blue mohawks and cell phones really make light of the absurdity of both the punk look and the establishment's reaction to it. The film is at its best when following around the (so-called) longest, still running, punk band, The Addicts. No longer the young punks, though still in their [A Clockwork Orange](#) getup, their kids imitate them and diminish them while they tell stories of nearly 30 years on the road. They were and are a great band, they have a great perspective on what they've done through the years, and their presence is the most fun part of this documentary. The farther punk culture veers from its origins, the more it is romanticized by fans of the early days, and by myself included. It's refreshing that Dynner doesn't do the same, giving the new acts the same credence as the old, no matter how I feel about these kids' music these days.

Punk's Not Dead has been given a very nice presentation from MVD Visual. The video and audio qualities vary greatly, of course. There is footage from thirty years of music and it's valuable no matter lo-fi quality. The modern interview footage all looks very good and shows that there are no transfer issues with the film. About two hours of additional footage accompanies the film. Featurettes on punk rock hair and punk rock bowling are hilarious, along with deleted scenes and trailers round it out. This release will delight any and all punks out there (though owning a DVD player, I suppose, isn't very punk).

On the charges of obscenity, subversive behavior, and jeopardizing the public health, punk is found absolutely guilty and is free to go. Case dismissed.





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Did we give **Punk's Not Dead** a fair trial? [yes](#) / [no](#)

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