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**Punk's Not
Dead**
MVD

Grade: B+

There have been so many exegeses of punk rock—including the recent documentary *American Hardcore*—that there wouldn't seem to be much need for Susan Dynner's "people's history" *Punk's Not Dead*. But Dynner brings a broader perspective. Rather than breaking punk down into its UK, NY, DC, and LA golden ages and leaving other scenes and eras out to dry, Dynner treats punk as an ever-evolving, eternally relevant movement that keeps producing great bands and vital scenes. Few would put modern million-selling pop-punkers on the same plane as U.K. Subs or Minor Threat, but *Punk's Not Dead* rightly notes that for some kids out there now, The Offspring are old-school and The Used changed their lives.

Punk's Not Dead starts with the first punk explosion in the late '70s—complete with scenes from tongue-clucking episodes of *CHiPs*, *Donahue*, and *Quincy*—then jumps ahead to Rancid and Green Day, covering the first generation of punks to break into the mainstream. From there, Dynner structures the rest of the film dialectically, balancing the experiences of veteran politicized punks like Subhumans with the "Just because we're on MTV doesn't mean we're lame" rationalizations of Good Charlotte and Sum 41. She also contrasts the corporate-sponsored appropriations of Hot Topic and the Warped Tour with the underground network of punk bands who still tour America one basement at a time.

There's a smidgen of "So what else is new?" to *Punk's Not Dead's* embrace of decades-old soul-searching about when populism shades into selling out, but Dynner smartly keeps bringing the story back to the reason kids are still drawn to punk: It makes them feel like they've been let into a secret club. When Henry Rollins reminiscences about buying records by mail order and getting hand-written notes from the bands, or how he felt like his favorite acts had gone commercial if more than 300 people came to their shows, it's easy to see how the punk scene never dies, no matter how much its participants keep pointing fingers.

Key features: Two hours of bonus interviews, many of them hilariously digressive.

—Noel Murray