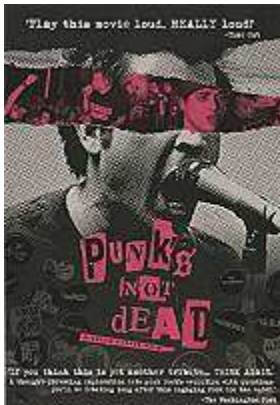


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Punk's Not Dead {MVD} Now this was a turn up!! With an incredibly crass title, rather cliched imagery and purporting to tell the 'story of Punk' (along with a million others!) my hopes were not high. As it happens, while it doesn't strictly offer much new insight into what Punk is, was, could be and should be, it is a highly entertaining and informative film. It all starts with some choice visual editing as vintage clips cut to current imagery, followed by the RUTS classic 'Babylon's Burning' played under a myriad of newspaper cuttings, clips and footage. There are essentially six chapters that follow, each analysing a different facet of Punk and its culture. The first chapter, which discusses what being Punk is, its evolution and how USHC exploded while the majors remained oblivious, didn't promise too much.

But Chapter Two, discussing the sparse Punk scene of the early 80s, the release of BAD RELIGION's 'Suffer' and ultimately the Punk explosion of RANCID, GREEN DAY and ultimately NIRVANA added some interesting perspectives from Dexter of OFFSPRING and Fletcher of PENNYWISE who both struggled with the internal conflict of mass acceptance and their Punk Rock roots. It proceeds to discuss Punk as a marketable commodity and interviews Kevin Lyman (the man behind Warped and syncs parts of his interview to the corporate brands displayed at Warped (Vans, Mastercard, Nintendo, Samsung etc).

Chapter Three looks at the older bands - in particular Ipswich band THE ADICTS, and also UK SUBS. There's actually some real vintage footage of THE ADICTS live at Murrayside Youth Club in the early 80s - I may have even been there!! Chapter Four attempts to define what being Punk is and looks at the bands that have co-opted a Punk influence in to their mainstream sound in an attempt to achieve some coolness - you know the scumbags - GOOD CHARLOTTE, MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE, SUM 41. The oddest thing about this section is you get that fuckwit Wattie outta the EXPLOITED decrying these bands for not writing political songs??!! Sorry mate - 'Exploited Barmy Army' and 'Fuck A Mod' is not 'The Ungovernable Force'!

Chapter Five looks at DIY ethics, shows at house parties and, all too briefly, politics, finishing with TV SMITH doing a blazing 'Not In My Name'. It would have been a great place to end cuz Chapter Six is all a little muddled. You get lots of international commentary (including Rupe of New Zealand's RABBLE) and then stuff about Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame.

Bands offering commentary during all this (besides those mentioned) include John Doe (X), YOUTH BRIGADE, Jack Grisham (TSOL), NAKED AGGRESSION, Jello Biafra, Henry Rollins, ANTI-FLAG, DAMNED, Ian MacKaye (MINOR THREAT/ FUGAZI), NOFX, RANCID, VOIDS, BRIEFS and, making the most impact with some concise, witty and spot on opinions, Dick Lucas (SUBHUMANS/ CITIZEN FISH).

But that is not the end - you get about two hours of extras which contain some real gems - least of all THE ADICTS being totally pretentious about planning their set (well, Kid being pretentious at least who comes across as quite a twat) when compared with Dick Lucas. There are plenty of additional interviews too with a whole chapter dedicated to LA's Canterbury Hotel where GERMS, GO-GOs and all manner of Punks stayed and includes GEZA X adding a great interview. You

also get Dave Vanian on forming THE DAMNED, Ian Mackaye on Straight Edge, Brian Baker and his devious plan on joining BAD RELIGION and a dude outta TOTAL CHAOS giving a lesson on how to use soap and spray to spike your hair!!

The main negative of the film is not placing Chapter Six as an extra. That may sound a minor gripe, but that performance of TV's is definitive of what the movie attempts to be about - defining Punk as a movement, as a music, as a social networking group of people and it's longevity. Other parts are a little naive but that's easy to say in hindsight.

The film does succeed impeccably in bringing Punk Culture and all its fractions, dogmatic contradictions and generation spanning influence to the screen. I think the real strength of the film lays in the fact that it doesn't dictate about what is right and what is wrong - it leaves the viewer to form their own opinions and alliances. For those who are new to Punk, or want to find out what makes it tick, that openness makes this a prime place to start. Excellent work in general that succeeds in retaining the interest on repeated viewings also.

- Steve Scanner