

# DVD REVIEWS



## The Meatmen: *The Devil's in the Details, Vol. 1*: DVD

If there was a Punk Rock Mount Rushmore featuring the giant busts of the Kings of Tastelessness, right alongside El Duce, GG Allin, and Blag Dahlia would be the leering mug of the "Dutch Hercules," aka: Tesco Vee of the Meatmen. No doubt about it, Butch. (Frank Discussion, Lee Ving, the Angry Samoans, and a few others, of course, deserve to be up there too, but for random and poorly thought out reasons, right now I'm restricting it to the aforementioned four. Besides, I think it's funny imagining the likeness of Mr. Vee eternally carved into a mountainous sandwich of love with the likenesses of Eldon Hoke and Kevin Allin—two competitors in the schlock rock trade for whom he had nothing but stinking heaps of disrespect.)

And what better time than now to have the Evel Knievel of Political Incorrectness come careening in on his satanic superbike, squashing all that is innocuous, fetid and fake beneath his screaming wheels. A world wobbling dangerously out of balance with a tsunami-like influx of new breeds of Instant Celebrities—along with new breeds of dim-bulbed gawkers to pay attention to them—is a world in dire need of a quick-draw sacred cow killer with a fast mouth and a high threshold for embarrassment. So when I say that *Devil's in the Details* is something of a Tesco Vee vanity project—or in his own words, an "orgy of one"—that is not in any way to be taken as an indictment or jibe. Our precious World Wide Web—with its Facebooks, Youtubes, Myspaces, and legions of bloggers—has, in many ways, become a piss-filled kiddie pool crawling with horrible little toddlers splashing and screaming for attention—and getting it. And I, for one, have no problem redirecting some of that over-valued attention from the wannabe celebs of cyberspace and "reality" TV to someone like Uncle Tesco. Sure, he might be as much a Dutch Narcissus as a Hercules, but he built his infamy from the bottom up, one scathing insult at a time, using nothing but a wicked wit and a keen eye for soft white underbellies.

That being said, calling this a "Meatmen" DVD is a bit of a misnomer. Here and there, throughout the DVD, The Meatmen are indeed present, performing in their many line-ups that spanned over the 28 years since their inception, as is Tesco's other band the Hate Police. But playing behind the spastic Mr. Vee in murky clips culled from old VHS tapes, they're little more than the house band in this feature. The various Meatmen band members come across as little more than anonymous cogs in the flamboyant Tesco Vee Entertainment Machine, much in the same way as the various Joe Lunchboxes who showed up to play behind GG in the Murder Junkies all those years (brother Merle being the notable exception.)

So while you do get to feast your eyes and ears on plenty of Meatmen live footage—rough as it may be—the bulk of this three hour Tesco Extravaganza is a masturbatory montage of mean spirited cartoons, vintage toy commercials, serial killer puppet shows, and countless skewerings of various pop culture icons. But what this DVD delivers most of all is seemingly every scrap of video that ever captured Mr. Vee's likeness. That includes *Way USA*—Uncle Tesco's seamy little runt

of a travelogue show that lived a very quirky but short life on MTV back in the late 80s. Also included is a ripping good parody of a VH1 *Behind the Music* documentary, featuring the life and times of Mr. Vee, naturally. And, of course, throughout the DVD the Meatman's testicular fixation with ABBA's Agnetha Faltskog crops up again and again, in various lowbrow vignettes. The only more frequent theme is Tesco's obsession with that "Satan" character from *The Bible*. The whole tired Beelzebubba thing is somewhat lost on me, but Tesco obviously feels that it "still has legs," as they say, and that it still has the power to make morally upright Bible Belters wet the bed. And he's the Master, so I'll assume he knows what he's doing.

As amusing as most of this smutty smorgasbord is, I still have to say that *Devil's in the Details* has more filler than a vat of Alpo. Keeping in mind the verity of the old saying "one man's trash is another man's treasure," I nevertheless contend that this thing could've been trimmed down by 20% or so. While I found, for example, the tour of his kitschy toy collection to be very interesting, too many spots in the DVD seemed to be filled with random "out-take" type material that was a bit snooze-inducing.

What was interesting to watch was the evolution of Tesco from a snide, kinetic almost frat-boy-looking asshole in the early 80s to the slightly calmer middle age asshole we have now—still full of piss and vinegar, as he's quick to add. But if anyone can pull off "punk" and "avuncular" at the same time, it's Tesco Vee. In the words of the Rotters' Phester Swollen "the whole idea of middle age punks is offensive.... but that's the point." And I'll drink to that. It's entirely possible that a 50-something Tesco Vee can jerk people's chains even better than the youthful Tesco who wrote "Tooling for Anus" and "Cripple Children Suck" all those years ago.

Among the many things that are made clear by watching *DITD*, is that Tesco Vee is the Bozo Satirist Laureate of not just the world of punk, but the world of pop culture in general. And even after a 10 year hiatus, his agitator/shit-stirrer/entertainer skills are still in top notch form—so much so that it would be a crying shame if he didn't somehow wind up with his own "T. Vee" show again. Twisted talent like his doesn't come down the pike all that often. And maybe Triumph the Insult Comic Dog could be his sidekick. The only question would be whether the current crop of dough-heads that make up the Myspace generation would have the neuron power to sense that, underneath all debauchery and homo jokes, Tesco might just be putting us all on—*maybe*.

But most surprising about this DVD—next to the fact that there is very little nudity here—might be the fact that the Clown Prince of Libertinism—Mr. Evil Incarnate himself—actually comes across as a pretty damn likable guy. Imagine that.

If you like your punk rock served up with a strong shot of gravitas, then you might be better off passing on this video and looking for something by some stodgy, self-righteous straight edge band. This is *not* for uptight weenbags with no taste for lowbrow humor. But if you like things crass and/or juvenile, you're in luck. In fact, might I be so bold as to suggest that all the covers of this DVD have a warning sticker that reads "*Devil's in the Details* is *Pee-Wee's Playhouse* for perverts." I think that more or less sums it up. —Aphid Peewit ( MVD Visual, PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456)

## Shelter: *A Squatumentary*: DVD

Among the many ludicrous ideas that society has tried to shove down my throat and make me buy into is the concept of "ownership." Yes, you read that right. *Ownership*. The soft gooey chocolaty center to "being an American" that makes all that we do make sense. It's the thing that is in the sticky middle of all advertising and it's the sick marshmallow clown-tumor that is at the very heart of the "American Dream."

It's also the thing that, next to our stunning good looks, supposedly makes us superior to all those languishing third world countries where the dearth of Ipods and cell phones and lavish Martha Stewart-like houses is pathetically counterbalanced by an overabundance of rickety shacks, teeming flies and malnutrition. *Those* people are just not clued into the potential spiritual glories of gluttonous ownership, according to a sweetly ass-stupid ex-coworker of mine. We're smart enough to own as much as we possibly can and they're not, simple as that. Just ask that Rush Limbaugh bag of gas.

Whether you fancy yourself on the right side of the political spectrum or