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Rat Skates

Born in the Basement DVD (Kundrat Productions)

By [D.X. Ferris](#)

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Born in the Basement documents the early days of Overkill, a New Jersey outfit that emerged from New York's punk scene in the late '70s to become also-rans in the thrash-metal movement of the '80s.

Subject(s): [New Jersey](#), [thrash metal](#), [Overkill](#), [Rat Skates](#)

The hour-long DVD is basically an autobiography of original drummer Rat

Skates, who bailed after the band's major-label debut in 1987. It's a Rat's-eye view of the band and the era, and he nails the story with steel studs. Over the course of eight years, Skates hustles his ass off behind the kit and behind the scenes, producing T-shirts, cassette covers, and giant backdrops -- all with a DIY aesthetic.

While Overkill morphs from leather-clad longhairs to ghouls in corpse paint, Skates and his bandmates build the tri-state area's most elaborate stage show out of empty amp cabinets, theater foam, custom-fabricated iron gates, and many stolen milk crates. When the band scores a deal with a major, it turns over merchandising duties to outsiders. Skates can't deal with touring life, and -- details here are frustratingly vague -- he quits the band to become a longhaired family man. End of story -- although most Overkill fans will gladly take two more hours.

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