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[DVD Review: RAT SKATES - Born in the Basement](#)

Posted by Cosmo Lee on April 11th, 2008



Every up-and-coming metal band should watch *Born in the Basement*. The DVD, by original Overkill drummer Lee Kundrat (aka Rat Skates), is a metal version of your grandpa's "when I was your age, I had to walk five miles to school" story. When you're young, the story seems like elder posturing. Eventually, though, you learn what grandpa meant.



That's the hope, anyway. Technology and times have changed so much since the '80s that most bands now won't go through half of what Overkill endured. Imagine a time without computers, MP3's, CD's, Photoshop, and the Internet - basically everything bands use today to promote themselves. When Overkill formed in 1980, they did *everything* by hand.










More specifically, Rat Skates did everything by hand. What he lacked in resources he made up for with resourcefulness. He hand-drew Overkill's logo, screenprinted t-shirts himself, and used an ink stamper to make stickers and custom guitar picks. He made cassette tape inserts with copy machines, and shrinkwrapped the tapes by hand. Those big banners that hang behind bands? He made a 20-foot one for Overkill using *magic markers*. Most impressively, he constructed a huge, bad-ass stage set for Overkill using milk crates. No doubt he'd be in shock at a band like Job for a Cowboy, who've gotten where they are through the hard work of...making MySpace friends.

Born in the Basement isn't a documentary about Overkill. However, it includes plenty of material from the band's salad days, including riotous photos featuring KISS-like makeup. There are pictures of a very young Don Kaye, Alex Perialas, and Jon Zazula (look 'em up). Radio and video interviews with the band reveal a bunch of snotty, confident kids. Overkill are thrash's dinosaurs now, so it's a trip seeing them like how we see, say, Animosity or Black Tide today.

True to its subject matter, the DVD feels home-made. The interviews with Skates feel canned, and the editing works in horribly cheesy American flag-type visuals. But Skates' passion is so infectious that you'll be on the edge of your seat wondering what crazy DIY solution he'll whip up next. Once Overkill "made it," Skates only stayed on for two albums. He left disillusioned that his hard work had yielded so little in an unforgiving music industry. In the short term, he was right. In the long term, though, he was wrong. From the foundation he literally built with milk crates, Overkill is still going strong. Hopefully now with this DVD, Skates will get his due, too.

[Rat Skates on MySpace](#)

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Comments (2)

1. [April 11th, 2008 at 3:45 pm AVERSIONLINE](#) says:

I'm actually curious to see this. I love documentaries, I love thrash... I don't know... it just seems like it should be an entertaining one to watch. I'll have to pick it up sometime.

2. [April 11th, 2008 at 8:43 pm Invisible Oranges](#) says:

It's totally worth it, dude. I wasn't bored for a second and was laughing much of the time (in a good way). It makes a great complement to that Get Thrashed documentary.

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