

## Backbeat: Richard "Handsome Dick" Manitoba Launches Line of Bobbleheads

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By Ed Christman, New York



Richard "Handsome Dick" Manitoba, center, listens to the marketing plans for his bobblehead from Aggronautix owner Clint Weiler and Ed Seaman, GM at Oaks, Pa.-based Music Video Distributors, which distributes Aggronautix. (Photo: Ed Christman)

Retail Track is very popular and gets invited to many events but hardly ever makes an appearance because of an unwavering commitment to break the latest news before it happens, which often entails many late hours at the office. Consequently, Retail Track chooses to attend only the most important and/or the most eloquent events, especially those where my discerning palate will be well rewarded.



As you can see above, there was plenty of merchandise on hand to supply the faithful, who lined up to purchase their autographed bobblehead. While everyone knows the item in question is very handsome, some were wondering how large it is, but you could read that information off the side of the carton. But I later learn, as is the case with every quantity ever used in the music industry, the measurement is exaggerated. When it's out of its packaging, the naked Handsome Dick bobblehead in all of its glory stands at only 3/4 of its promised (7") size. (Photo: Ed Christman)

So when Retail Track received an invite to celebrate the release of the **Richard "Handsome Dick" Manitoba** bobblehead at an event that would serve White Castle hamburgers and cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon, it was clear that the ingredients to entice my attendance had been well thought out by whoever planned the event. Even better, the celebration would be held at Manitoba's own bar, the aptly named **Manitoba's**, on Avenue B in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, a short hot, skip and jump from the Billboard offices. It's a favorite watering hole frequented by the Lower East Side rock scene, music industry types who lean toward the rock 'n' roll side of the business, and other characters of questionable repute, including yours truly.



Retail

Track tries to get a shot of the autographed poster of legendary wrestler Dick Beyer, AKA the Destroyer, one of many pictures of rockers, punk rockers and wrestlers adorning the walls of Manitoba's, but the cause celebre stumbles into the frame with SW Production president Steve Weitzman, the concert promoter who has booked some of the most important shows seen by music cognoscenti in New York City in the last 25 years. (Photo: Ed Christman)

Sadly, some music industry know-it-alls might not, in fact, know who Manitoba is, so let me introduce him. In addition to running one of the finest dives on the Lower East Side, Manitoba, currently is a DJ on Sirius XM radio's **Little Steven's Underground Garage** channel, which is the only radio channel Retail Track has the time for. Once upon a time, Manitoba was the lead singer in **the Dictators**, a New York-based rock band--whose first album came out on **Epic Records**-- and served as the bridge between the **New York Dolls** and the city's punk rock scene that came to the fore in the mid-1970's. He also headed up **Manitoba's Wild Kingdom** and is currently fronting a band named after himself. Thankfully too, the Dictators reunite every once in a while and their most recent cult hit was "Who Will Save Rock 'n' Roll," and as any knowledgeable fan understands, the answer, of course, is the Dictators.





Here Manya Kuzemchenko, a freelance senior designer who in the past worked at AOL and Sony Music and is also in the punk rock band Dead Tricks, tells Aggronautix principal and MVD Entertainment Group director of publicity Weiler, on the left, how many Handsome Dick bobbleheads she intends to purchase. The \$20 price tag for the bobblehead is a bargain at the price, even without considering that its purchase entitled attendees to half-price drinks at the bar. On the right, a perplexed Jason Consoli—a PR specialist who heads up his own firm, Perpetual Media Relations—wonders which will afford more drinks, not buying the bobblehead versus being entitled to half-priced drinks, a complicated calculation to maneuver without the benefit of pencil and paper. (Photo: Ed Christman)





Above,

MVD's Seaman makes sure he is up to date with what Cherry Hulseley is working on. Hulseley was a producer on the "Rockers" documentary, now a DVD distributed by MVD. Then Seamon moves onto chatting with Kenn Rowell, who works at the newly-reborn CBGB to see if there are any up-coming business opportunities the two companies might explore together. (Photo: Ed Christman)

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