

## FFanzeen: Rock'n'Roll Attitude With Integrity

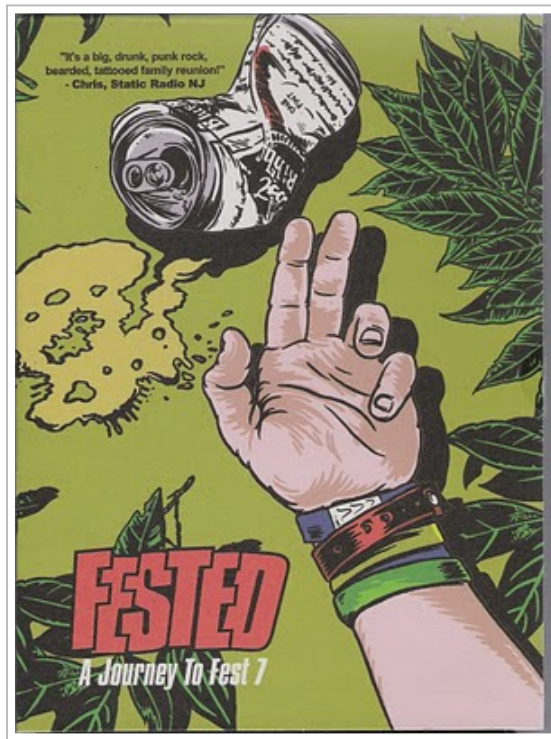
Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2011

### DVD Reviews: *Fested: A Journey to Fest 7*

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Images from the Internet



#### **Fested: A Journey to Fest 7**

Directed by Reese Lester

Blue Elephant Media, 2010

109 minutes, USD \$14.95

Wildeyereleasing.com

NationalUnderground.org

Getfested.com

MVDvisual.com

"It's a big, drunk, punk rock, bearded, tattooed family reunion"

X - Chris, Static Radio (NJ)

This release begs the question, at what point does recording an event go from snapshot to document, and then to documentary? With the

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#### About Me

Robert Barry Francos

Currently living in Saskatoon

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address). From 1977-88, I used to

availability of digital recording technology being ever increasingly omnipresent, this becomes more of an issue. For me, *Fested* lands somewhere in the middle, near the document level.

But first, to the topic at hand: during a weekend in late October, there is a drunk punk festival (aka “The Fest”) held yearly in the redneck setting of Gainesville, Florida, for which people come from all over the world (both to play, and to view). During the 2008 gathering, there were 3,000 fans and 270 bands playing in 12 venues ranging in size from the size of a storage unit to large theaters. Reese Lester and a bunch of his friends attended that year, with digi-cams in hand. They documented many moments, sometimes in snippets, no matter how great, no matter how mundane.

The issue of the “mundane” is why I pose the question at the beginning of this review. They start shooting four days before the Fest, so for the first 20 minutes or more of this DVD, we watch them eat and yak with friends at a taco stand, a drunken yet unexciting party to watch, hanging out at the band Dirty Money (after the Fest they would change their name to Spanish Gamble) where we watch shots of them get drunk and yakking, buying drinks and yakking, and later a jumbled volunteer orientation meeting. All this is pretty much a waste of time for the viewer, actually.

It finally gets interesting when we watch Dirty Money practice in what is called a warehouse, but actually is that storage unit I mentioned earlier. This is the first point of real significance, even though only part of a song is shown.

Dirty Money meet the band OK Pilot (from Exeter, Devon, UK) and they pass around a bottle of Night Train, while we watch their reactions. I’ve had it myself, and could commiserate with them. For those who haven’t, its taste is somewhere between cherry cough syrup and Nyquil. If that sounds disgusting, well, it is until you get used to the taste, but it’s cheap (it was \$1 a bottle when I drank it in the late ‘70s) and gives a buzz quite quickly.

After watching them pick up some people at the airport in a scene that is full of jump cuts and dialog that is simply impossible to follow (i.e., a waste), we get to see some of the pre-first night show at the 1982 club; well, actually, not *inside* the club, just talking to people outside. Fortunately, this is followed by another pre-Fest warehouse show with The Anchor, from Austin, TX (playing “This is For My Friends”). The song is good, but the vocals are drowned out. The filmmakers use the mic on the cameras, so depending on where they stand is what you hear, so since they were near one of the speakers that didn’t spit out the vox, we don’t really hear it well.

The morning of the registration, we see interviews with members of bands such as OK Pilot, the Flatliners (Trono, or Toronto to non-

magazine in New York called FFanzeen, which dealt with the wide-ranging independent music scene. I also photographed many bands from the period (and since). Now I write this blog, and have a column at jerseybeat (dot) com (slash) quietcorner (dot) html. And the beat goes on.

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top of the review comes). Following is a registration drunken pool party where people fall over and dialog is almost impossible to follow (i.e., a waste).

Now we're a third into this (just over 30 minutes) and nothing much has really happened. If you're watching *Fested* for the second or more time, this is probably where you'll stop jumping chapters.

The first song, natch, is by Dirty Money at The Venue club ("123 Fest"). The song has a good chant-along anthem chorus. This is followed by OK Pilot at 1982. They have a more punk style, and could be considered dissonant post-hardcore. Again, the sound varies from venue to venue, dependent of the system, and where the camera is placed.

.From there, lots more music flows and the reason for getting this DVD becomes clear; I'm grateful that most of the songs are complete, not just clips. Sure, there's some crap in between (i.e., a waste), but the music holds out. A list of the bands that perform is at the end of this review. The first band who is captured with a really decent sound is pop punkers The Falcon (Chicago) at the Common Grounds ("The La-Z-Boy 500").

In fact, many of the bands are pop-punk, as that seems to be the *punk genre du jour*, which I like better than, say, grunge, so no complaints. There are some other punk variations, like hardcore (such as the Flatliners and Hour of the Wolf), but the presence of beards after beards say it all. Curiously, there is very little moshing or stage diving shown, nor are there many bands with women.

One of the few funny drunken entertainment moments is when Lester interviews a few street winos who are joking about their friend lying unconscious on the sidewalk in an awkward position. One says, "He hit is tree on the head." I do admit that including these guys could be seen as in questionable taste as they didn't really have anything to do with the Fest, but it's compelling, nonetheless. Sad that these alcoholics are some of the more engaging people we meet on this journey.

An unfunny drunk moment towards the end is at a party where we have to hang out with soused Dirty Money and OK Pilot, who Lester tries to interview. Everyone gives up at some point, however, when they realize there is nothing happening.

What starts as one of the better scenes is when Paint It Black tries to play a show in a parking lot from the back of a U-Haul truck after a Bouncing Souls gig. Soon, there's technical problems followed by the arrival of the police on horseback who break the event up. The entire thing is nearly 6 minutes long, but it really could have been cut down to 4 or so, as it just goes on and on past the point of anything happening.

There are three bonus extras included. The first is "The Stage Dives of Fest 7," which is in very slo-mo, to the soundtrack of Vangelis's "Chariots of Fire" (a song I was tired of when it was overused during slo-mo scenes in the '80s). I found this 3:15 B&W short more interesting at 2x speed, which is not quite normal, but fast enough not to grow tedious. Second up is the humorous "Get FESTED Drinking Game," which is text-based, gives some suggestions on when to take a hit, such as every time someone says "dude" or "bro" (just two of many). The last is 1:35 of the band Hour of the Wolf doing a cover of Black Flag's "Fix Me." The mic on the singer sounds terrible and you can't hear it, though I guess the main, interesting point is the bassist stage diving stark naked.

So, to sum up, the event itself is important to document, and I appreciate and enjoyed quite a bit of the effort made. The extraneous shit was exactly that, and thank goodness for the fast forward and skip buttons. Please, Lester, don't sop filming, especially shows, but some serious editing out of anything that has nothing to do with anything would be greatly appreciated. Y'know, if we don't know these people, we are not going to be interested in snippets of them. This 109 minute opus would have been a very nice 50 minute or so documentary. I am hoping that Lester continues to shoot events like this, and has someone helping him in the editing room. Dude, I'm with ya, bro (hic).

**Bands performing on DVD:**

*The Anchor*

*Dirty Money*

*OK Pilot*

*Static Radio*

*The Falcon*

*Hour of the Wolf*

*The Lawrence Arms*

*None More Black*

*Paint It Black*

*New Mexican Disaster Squad*

*The Flatliners*



Posted by Robert Barry Francos at 12:01 AM

Labels: [Dirty Money](#), [DVD review](#), [Fested](#), [FFanzeen](#), [Florida](#), [Gainesville](#), [OK Pilot](#), [punk rock](#), [Reese Lester](#), [Robert Barry Francos](#), [Spanish Gamble](#), [The Fest](#)

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