



Damned, The—Don't You Wish That We Were Dead: DVD

Like the Sex Pistols, The Clash, Black Flag, and a handful of others, the Damned are one of those bands that one must have at least a working knowledge of if they intend to delve deeper than dipping their toes into the punk pool. Their influence cuts across punk's many subgenres and scenes (anyone knowledgeable about Los Angeles's scene can attest to the huge impact they had following their first visit to the city in the mid-'70s). Their oeuvre showcases one way a band can "progress" and make ever-sophisticated music yet not lose sight of where they started out.

Their tale is deftly recounted here by director Wes Orshoski—their formation out of the myriad proto-bands churning in the earliest days of the U.K. punk milieu, assorted career highs and lows, and the tenacity which has resulted in them being one of the last of the original wave still standing as their home scene enters its fifth decade.

Orshoski somehow manages to keep things moving at a quick pace while still allowing the lion's share of those who've shuffled through the band's many lineups get their piece in, as well as others who've drawn influence from them. He goes the harder—yet emotionally and historically honest—route of using the decades-long rift between original drummer

Rat Scabies and the rest of the band over royalty payments as an anchor for the second half of the film's narrative. It's an irreparable situation, says guitarist Captain Sensible, but Orshoski offers up both sides' version of the situation. It's used as an effective example of the complex, tentacled relationships that still shape the band. He also knows not to let it sour the overall tone of the film, which is true to the Damned's anarchic, messy, and still very funny *raison d'être*. As punk bio docs go, this is one of the better ones out there, and it also serves as a great crash course on the Damned, their history, and their music. —Jimmy Alvarado (MVD Visual, 203 Windsor Road, Pottstown, PA 19764)

Ted and Brenda: DVD

Gosh, this is rough. It's a six-minute short film. I had trouble watching it since the filmmaker made the stylistic decision to drop a layer of corny fake film wear over everything, despite nothing in the plot that would merit such a choice. Nothing particularly retro or grindhouse about it. Basically, putting the string of clichés that is the dialogue aside (oh fun, telling the unconscious guy not to go anywhere. Never heard that one before), it's just a couple scenes of a guy and a girl getting ready for a date, except, surprise! the girl has a bloody knocked-out guy in her bathroom. The end. Oh yeah, spoiler alert: that's the whole movie. Sorry. —MP Johnson (TBR Video, twitter.com/TBRvideo)

The girl has a bloody knocked-out guy in her bathroom. The end. Oh yeah, spoiler alert: that's the whole movie. Sorry.

—MP Johnson, *Ted and Brenda*

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