

VIDEO REVIEWS



City by the Battlefield: DVD

Skate video from Fredericksburg, VA, reminding us all that sick skating and pure fun is not necessarily done near skyscrapers or muscle beaches. —Speedway Randy (Magic Bullet Records, magicbulletrecords.com)

Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music: DVD

I Walk the Line was a piece of shit movie; *Ray* with white people. It wasn't even a well-told story. Johnny Cash was arrested twice in his lifetime. Once, for smuggling speed in his guitar case, which the movie covered. The second time was for trespassing... for hopping a fence and picking flowers for June. It's this dichotomy that makes Johnny Cash so great. Yeah, he was a badass motherfucker. But he also was a hopeless romantic. He loved Jesus (and was a spokesperson for a Radio Shack doohickey that recites bible verses by topic), but he drank with the devil and raised hell. This DVD is live footage from a tour in an RV: live performances—from state fairs, to a duet by Bob Dylan, to a show full of Native Americans in full headdress—sprinkled with slices of life of him saving a crow to visiting the site of the Wounded Knee massacre. Besides the

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music being great and lively—any secular (and some of the religious) Johnny Cash song could be covered as a punk song—the most striking thing is that Cash *listened*. There are a couple of backstage scenes where singer/songwriters show their stuff to Johnny, he listens more than just respectfully, gives them feedback, and tells 'em to play another song. In this day in age where it's forbidden to hand a musician on a major a demo (for fear that it'll somehow be used by the star and the unknown musician will be assed out), this DVD's a telling document of how much the world of music has changed, and not for the better. It's sad to think that there *can't* be a now-generation equivalent of Johnny Cash (understood that he's timeless and all), at least not on a national level, due to how the industry is set up. Fuckit, dude. I'll just watch this DVD again when someone brings up *American Idol*, and remember a time when humans instead of a mix of machines, accountants, and focus groups had a chance to break big without being broken into tiny, uninteresting pieces for the dumbest of consumers to squeeze into their mouths like baby food. —Todd (Cherry Red, www.cherryred.co.uk)

Propagandhi: Live from Occupied Territory: An Official Bootleg: DVD

Well, shit, it's a Propagandhi video. For a lot of people, that's all I need to say, one way or the other. The footage is from a 2003 show (with the majority of songs coming from *Potemkin* and *Today's Empires*) and shot with two or three hand-held cameras. Despite their usual self-deprecation in the liner notes, the production values are pretty decent, if a little, um, dull. Not necessarily due to anything specific (I mean, Chris's guitar noodling is awesome to watch, the band performs virtually flawlessly, Todd bops around and provides witty between-song banter) other than the fact that, hey, I'm watching a video of a band that's still around and actively touring.

For me, the bonuses were what actually sold me on this disc—two lengthy, awesome documentaries. *As Long as the Rivers Flow* tells the story of the Grassy Narrows Blockade—a group of indigenous people who blockaded a series of logging roads in order to demand that Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources respect their treaties regarding land use rights and, frankly, to keep logging companies and their own government from razing the shit out of their forests.

The other documentary, *Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land* is the one that clinched it for me—it deals with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in relation to the U.S. media and is fucking flat-out amazing. In-depth, point-by-point coverage of Israel's use of public relations firms in the U.S. to alter our nation's view of the discord and violence that's taking place there, how Israel and the States (far from being an "impartial" third party in peace negotiations) have attempted—and in many cases succeeded—in portraying Palestinians as nothing more than a bunch of incendiary, instigative, violence-loving, suicide-bombing zealots. It's a fascinating piece of work: intelligent, scathing and, best of all, it allowed me to recognize my own inconsistencies and ignorance in regards to the situation—I was able to identify my own hypocrisies and buy-ins in regards to how the U.S. media has reported, altered, and slanted news coverage about this matter for years. When it comes down to it, this is ultimately exactly what a documentary should do: lend itself the opportunity to resonate in our own lives. To make us think, feel, question our own value systems. It's what punk music at its apex has always done and in that regards, *Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land* succeeds fabulously. Propagandhi deserves a nod for managing to use their particular stature within punk rock to bring us something more than just the music, and I'm grateful for it. —Keith Rosson (G7 Welcoming Committee, PO Box 27006, C-360 Main St., Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4T3, Canada)

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