



Scanner zine

Larger than life and twice as natural

DEAD KENNEDYS - In God We Trust, Inc - The Lost Tapes {MVD} For me, 'In God We Trust' was always the best DK's release. It took the thrashy, ultra-fast HC bands on at their own game and proved that songs of less than a minute could be intelligent, structured, witty and more than just a hyperbole of machismo, noise and fury.

To understand fully what's on this disc, you need to know the history of the record. In June 1981, the band recorded the original version of the EP but, come mixing, the tape was discovered to be defective and already deteriorated. In August the same year, the tracks were re-recorded and formed the official release. Those original versions were preserved, albeit as rough mixes direct from the recording console, onto a portable video recorder - which is what we have here.

There seems to be little difference in composition between these versions and those on the actual record, but it's interesting to watch the interaction among the band's members - especially in light of the big acrimonious split between Biafra and the rest of the band a few years ago. Jello and Klaus definitely seem close in the studio laughing and talking, while East Bay Ray appears slightly withdrawn. This could be due to the presence of the cameras, or his lack of a microphone, but the minor bust up he and Jello have before 'Religious Vomit' kinda tells a tale.

The other half of the DVD features some blazing live performances of tracks from the EP dating from 1979 to 1986. All the live performances are, as you would expect, intense and essential viewing. You get 'Nazi Punks Fuck Off', recorded in Texas 1982, which is unbelievably confrontational; a crazed 'Kepone Factory', recorded with original drummer Ted at San Fran's legendary Mabuhay Gardens in 1979, that sees Ted and Ray with gaffer tape over their mouths; 'We've Got A Bigger Problem Now' also from a crazy, phlegm-flying angst-ridden Mabuhay Gardens show in 1981, that's less jazzy and more direct than its studio counterpart. Only 'Hyperactive Child' is not featured live - instead you get a montage of live footage over the studio recording. Jello is visually captivating as the songs literally shred the senses. Musically the band is tight and on the nail. Ray also appears more animated and inclusive here, but it still seems Jello's and Klaus' band.

The last addition is a five-min feature about the contents of the DVD which has a few additional points about the recording process.

The DVD is worth more than a single viewing for the music alone. Given a bit of hindsight and the aforementioned bitter split between Biafra and the band, it becomes a great visual document of a legendary band, a fantastic recording and a glimpse of how the unit worked, communicated and ultimately fell apart.

For the record, going back to my initial statement, if 'In God We Trust' is my favourite release, then 'Frankenchrist' is my least favourite with 'Bedtime For Democracy', 'Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables' and 'Plastic Surgery Disasters' continuously changing places in between the two - just in case you were wondering!