



Scanner zine

Larger than life and twice as natural

GOVERNMENT ISSUE - Live 1985 *{MVD}* It's great to see some of these old Flipside videos re-issued on DVD by the folks at MVD. I've never seen this one before either, so that's even better. This compiles two shows by this great DC band, both recorded trips to California in 1985, with sets culled primarily from the 'Joyride' and 'The Fun Never Ends' releases.

The first show, recorded at Fenders Ballroom in June, features ten tracks. The sound is way too vocal heavy and guitar thin but the footage more than makes up for that. The crowd is up close and personal and an overhead pipe provides ample opportunities for some physical gymnastics by vocalist John Stabb. It's a pretty intense looking performance with 'Mad At Myself', 'Fun And Games' and 'Sheer Terror' providing set highlights.

The second show, recorded at the Olympic Auditorium in August, is probably the better show from a viewer's perspective. The sound is greatly improved, the filming is sharper with more artistic camera shots and visuals, and the set has ballooned to 16 songs. The only negative is the fact that the Olympic is a virtual stadium so there is little crowd interaction due to barriers. What is heard of the crowd sounds distant and weak, although Stabb does manage to get them involved towards the end, which is credit to him as a frontman. Highlights here are many - the closing 'Plain To See', a stunning 'Understand', 'Familiar' and 'Notch To My Crotch' to name just four. Stabb also provides a brief write-up on the DVD's insert which displays his contempt for the larger venue (and to a lesser degree, his band mates' rock star attitude) and also features his famed barbed, dry sense of humour. There isn't anything else in the way of extras, which is a shame. It would have been neat to have seen an interview with Stabb reflecting on these shows and of his part in the 80s USHC explosion, but it's not to be.

This is an unpretentious document. It displays a shit-hot USHC band doing what it did best - playing some blazing and well-developed USHC. There's nothing in the way of trying to 'sell' the band - it's just a visual document for those who already rate the band.