



- Left of the Dial Magazine

**April 1, 2008**

### [Flipper/Live, Target Video, 1980-81: MVD](#)

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With a crucified anti-punk aesthetic, in which billowing noise and the prospect of thunderous no fun became the single riveting purpose, Flipper unleash their sub-circus of mayhem and maelstrom on this tour-de-force of lo-fi video dream tubes. Like sublime conduits of the wasteland, Flipper reveals that some flamethrower poetry happens to exist in the sheer electric apocalypse as the band one by one dismantles the cretinous notion that craft, skill, or nimbleness has anything to do with interesting expressionism or inflamed art, especially when clogged with beer. Sure, their “hits” show up, such as their menacing, clownish “Ha Ha Ha,” which maniacally laughs in the face of suburbia, or “Love Canal,” a fiendish look at the rancid, chemical-infested, superfund housing project abandoned in the 1970s that crashes head-on with the lore of postcard perfect, romantic bliss-outs on some Venice-like canals of our imbecilic imagination.

The camera is hand held, diving to and fro at times in miniature epilepsy, and the band seems intoxicated as horses fed tranquilizers the size of Ohio, but that’s the point. If you want something more “potent” and “focused,” check out the monstrous, muscular, and fully Beowulf-proportions of “Sex Bomb” shot in 1983, with its early digital graphics and full-on entropy. If that doesn’t provide fecund ground for your angst, then run over to the footage from 1981, when the band somehow opened for PIL in San Francisco, using their opening set to defoliate the audience. If the feedback meltdown doesn’t make you feel at least halfway sane in comparison, check yourself into the clinic, soon. Beware the imminent danger of Flipper! When Will Shatter bellows, “Life is the only thing worth living for,” you feel so depressed that those horse pills will appear in your fried frontal lobe like a magnolia flower, OR, you’ll think, this is a Zen moment, and reclaim your hold on things. To partially poach James Joyce, I’ll leave with: “Watch Flipper spread the terrifying beauty of their wings.”

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