



Hated

Rating: 8.5

Years before his big studio comedies *Old School* and *Road Trip*, while at NYU, director Todd Phillips made a little student film called *Hated*, a documentary about the notorious punk singer GG Allin. Allin was best known for his intense live shows, brutal displays where he abused his own body and the bodies of audience members, fighting, kicking, spitting, shitting, and vomiting with aplomb and bile. As Allin himself described it, he viewed his physical being as a rock and roll temple, his flesh, blood, and fluids as a communion to the people.

More than a decade ago (the film was originally released in 1993) Phillips was clearly fascinated with this punk-rock icon, following him and his band with his cameras and creating an engaging portrait of a man who skirted the line between nihilistic punk-rock performance art and mentally unbalanced sideshow freak. And therein lies the conundrum. Throughout the film, Phillips includes footage of Allin's "spoken word" performances and concerts, which are perhaps more honest and revealing than the interviews with his bandmates and high school friends. At an NYU performance that the director set up, Allin appears unbalanced and incoherent with very little to say - instead he can be seen putting a banana up his ass. People flee, the cops show up; another GG Allin show for the books. A similar scene ensues at an infamous concert included near the end of the film, where Allin takes a shit onstage, smears it on himself, and throws it at the crowd, narrowly avoiding the police who show up soon afterwards. It just never really appears that he has much of a point to make besides a scatological campaign of shock and awe. This, however, may be the whole point. It's not like he is setting out to change the world, just to "bring danger back into rock and roll," as he proclaims during footage taken from a Geraldo Rivera Show taping. And that he does, and not always in front of a crowd: throwing beer cans at hookers and drinking piss are two activities he participates in with just friends and band members present.

Allin claimed that he would commit suicide on Halloween night, 1992, but he ultimately flamed out in typical rock star fashion, dying of a drug overdose after a night of partying. Phillips, in voiceover narration, expresses his disappointment at this clichéd death, seemingly out of character for this icon that just didn't give a fuck. *Hated* is a good first effort from Todd Phillips, who seems to have sacrificed edgier fare for remakes of *Starsky and Hutch*. The film isn't a celebration of the man, exactly. Instead, it's a warts-and-all look

at a disturbed figure in punk whose point was being pointless, leaving the viewer to decide for him or herself just what Allin's legacy is, and gape at his antics along the way.