

METAL'S DARK SIDE II: THE DEEPLY DISTURBED (DVD)

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Given the roster of featured interview subjects--Shadows Fall, Exodus, The Black Dahlia Murder, Arch Enemy, and Suffocation - I thought this might be worthwhile and somewhat informative. How mistaken I was. From the outset this is an endurance test.

The artists, overall, are cool subjects who offer up what they can in response to hostess Jasmin St. Claire's strings of mostly meaningless questions that don't cover anything new except to the most clueless of all metal neophytes.

The first featured band interview with Shadow's Fall (sic) suffers from an annoying buzz in the right channel and a ton of background band noise (Brian and Paul are questioned in a backstage room at a House of Blues).

Bona fide legends Frank and Terrance from Suffocation follow in another hospitality room elsewhere, and this is actually the closest to a meaningful segment as the program gets: the evolution of Frank's vocal technique is discussed. Following this is the complete "Surgery of Impalement" video. Nice to have that on DVD.

Intro to next segment: "I'm Jasmin St. Claire, here with the fuckin' awesome...most awesome death metal Bay Area thrash band, Exodus!" Exodus...death metal?!?! It degenerates with Jasmin questioning Gary and Rick about how often they shower, and multiple choice questions about women they would go to bed with if each had a gun to his head. The only things that rescue this segment are a couple of wisecracks by Rick and Gary and the complete "War Is My Shepherd" clip at the end.

3 members of Sacramento's Deconstruct, a lesser known band influenced by Alice In Chains and Soundgarden, are the next subjects. They handle the "gun to the head" multiple choice test brilliantly, but it's more of a funny conversation than any legit interview. A live cut of theirs follows the conversation.

Trevor and Brian from The Black Dahlia Murder are the heroes of all the interviewees, "a few beers deep" and offering some amazingly funny answers to Jasmin's queries.

Jasmin plays the "gun to the head" game with Sharlee from Arch Enemy, too. Not much else to report on this segment.

The extras are mostly forgettable except for some extra Suffocation interview footage and "Jasmin's Asylum," where Jasmin responds to one particular fan's email:

FAN EMAIL-Jasmin, I noticed that you do a lot of modeling for B.C. Rich and Coffin Case, and are the definite definition of a 'metal babe.' Is there any chance you'll ever be on the cover of Guitar Player magazine? Because they always have those hoes and I'd much rather see you...

JASMIN (absolutely straight-faced, without even a hint of self-deprecation)-Well, thank you...that's not up to me, unfortunately, but (with disdain) I guess maybe if I spread my legs for money like some of those girls, maybe they would put me on the cover. Who the fuck knows?

?!?!?!?

It is important to note here that Jasmin is a FORMER PORN STAR credited at iafo.com as appearing in 55 non-compilation porn videos, and according to Wikipedia.org is "best known for her appearance in World's Biggest Gang Bang 2...in which she performed a record-breaking 300 sex acts with about 51 men."

Am I the only one who finds Jasmin's response even somewhat bizarre? Sure, she's not in skin flicks these days...but ISN'T SHE POSING SPREAD-LEGGED IN A SEE-THROUGH BLACK BIKINI BEHIND A GUITAR ON THE COVER OF THIS VERY DVD TO SELL IT?!

I'm so glad I'm done with this review so I don't have to watch this disc again. Apparently, Part III is already in the works, although I can hardly understand what merited this franchise reaching beyond its first installment. The aforementioned highlights are the only things that save St. Claire's puerile and jejune product from an absolutely failing grade.

D+ -Mark Fields