

gowns, sidearms, and a guitar jam that might actually turn some Phish-heads.

But we hail this thief because his structural influences fold into a signature sound as wholly individual as folk-rock guitar gods Richard Thompson and Johnny Marr. For good and ill, this jumble couldn't come from anyone but Malkmus. We look into his blood-shot eyes and we're not afraid of the *Truth*: It's all right, ma, he's only baking. **JOE GROSS**
Grade: **B**

Alkaline Trio
Crimson

Vagrant



It's a strange musical moment when cartoonish metal chuckleheads like Mudvayne are taking off their makeup, while punk heart-throbs My Chemical Romance and Good

Charlotte are actively campaigning for MAC sponsorship. After years of emo's insistence on keeping it real (or real boring), a little over-the-



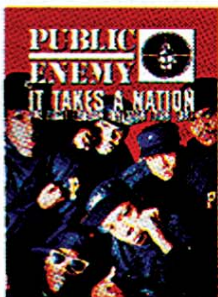
"Finally, a chair that really says 'undead': Alkaline Trio

boic pop punk rife with dark humor and a wicked body count. *Crimson*, the Trio's fifth and best album, still has its share of macabre word-play—"You live and you burn"; "I had time to kill / It's dead and buried"—but the real attraction here is the music, which sounds just as dramatic as the imagery,

spoken-word bridge on "Sadie." Even blink-182 fans would love the straightforward choruses on "Mercy Me" and "Fall Victim," about self-loathing and suicide, respectively. Misery this catchy demands a cult following. Though, for the band's fans, face paint is still optional. **ANDY GREENWALD**



if the earth's crust collapses by next Tuesday. The electro-zombie lope "Last Living Souls" is good B-movie fun, but "Fire Coming Out of the Monkey's Head," narrated by Dennis Hopper, is like Dr. Seuss relating the apocalypse to Tim Burton via Ouija board—except *really* dull. Fortunately, Albarn still has great taste in other people's music. His



PUBLIC ENEMY *It Takes A Nation: The First London Invasion 1987* (Music Video Distributors)

In the late 1980s Public Enemy had hip-hop in a headlock, dropping two critically worshipped albums in which raging sonics met fierce demands for social justice. The centerpiece of this DVD—which also includes music videos and commentary tracks—is P.E.'s three-night stand at London's Hammersmith Odeon in 1987 (on Def Jam's first international tour). Chuck D and posse act as funky ambassadors to the Old World, introducing Brits to the political theater of their military-garbed S1W security force and the aural assault of tracks like "Rebel Without a Pause," which later appeared on the classic 1988 album *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*. Though this pre-*Nation* performance simmers more than it burns, it nicely presages the explosion that would follow. **CHRIS RYAN** Grade: **B**