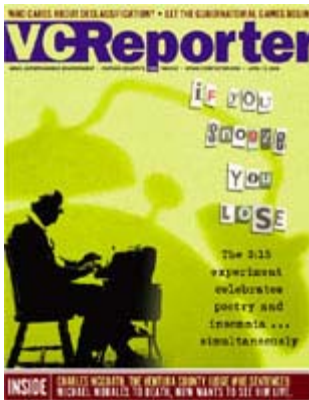




VCR Reporter

VENTURA COUNTY'S NEWSWEEKLY

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HOME

COVER STORY

Burning the midnight oil at 3:15 a.m.

Writing in the middle of the ... zzzz ... is an experiment in ... zzzz

The conversion

Charles McGrath, the Ventura County judge who sentenced Michael Morales to death in 1983, is now petitioning for his life

NEWS

All signs point to stop

The likely delay of a new college campus in Santa Paula is on the horizon

Where's the leak?

MOLE TRACKS

Music in the message

~ By MATTHEW SINGER ~

Boots Riley, leader of Oakland-based agit-hip-hop muckrakers the Coup, is not a “political rapper.” He’s a rap politico, an Afro-sporting Marxist who’d probably be publishing dissertations on U.S. economic policy if he thought it would help his ideas reach the widest possible audience. Hip-hop is simply his communicative medium of choice, and as such, the ironically titled *The Best Coup DVD Ever* — it’s also their first and only DVD ever — isn’t so much about the group’s music as it is the left-wing ideology that has fueled it for more than a decade. Coming together in 1992, Riley, DJ Pam the Funkstress and the since-departed E-Roc emerged in the era of the gangsta, swaggering with a similar streetwise confidence (and the same affection for thick, ’70s-style funk) but speaking with a deeper social conscience and toting a way bigger bookshelf. Picking up more from where Jello Biafra left off than Chuck D, Riley’s narrative, often satirical lyrics obsessed over the everyday conspiracies of capitalism, from bogus wage structures to asshole repo men. Too intelligent for mass consumption, the Coup has remained an underground phenomenon, a status counterproductive to their goals. “I’m not here to try to make new in-roads for indie music,” Riley admits. “I’m here to try to get a whole bunch of people thinking about overthrowing the system.”

Despite its title, with only three programs — a career-spanning video collection and two featurettes — totaling about 90 minutes, it’s hard to imagine this is the best introduction to the Coup’s revolutionary polemics that could’ve been assembled. As a historical overview, some important stuff is left out; namely, the controversy that earned them a flash of national recognition, when the anti-capitalist symbolism of the cover for 2001’s *Party Music* — a picture depicting Riley and Pam blowing up the World Trade Center using a guitar tuner — manifested into a real human atrocity on September 11. The artwork was completed months prior to the terrorist attacks and changed before the album was released, but that didn’t stop the FBI from briefly investigating the duo. The seven low-budget videos included on the disc display Riley’s knack for illuminating larger issues through humanistic storytelling, and the bonus interview proves

Ventura residents respond to a murky issue hot off the Capitol

Just a warm-up

Local environmentalists prepare themselves for upcoming LNG public hearings

Pizza party gone wrong?

~ SAY WHAT ~

EDITORIAL

Fourteen words

OPINIONS & LETTERS

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

~ WEEKLY
HOROSCOPE ~

PLANET VENTURA

You smell funny

ART & CULTURE

**Touched by his noodly
appendage**

The Gospel of the Flying
Spaghetti Monster

Comedy bombs

While entertaining U.S. troops, two LA comics get a firsthand look at the war in Iraq

MOLE TRACKS

Music in the message

MUSIC

Not too pretentious

he's just as articulate off the mic, but for an artist whose been using his voice as a weapon for so long, it doesn't feel like it's enough.

However, the accompanying no-budget doc *Eating Forever*, in which Riley uses a gig in South Africa as a backdrop for an examination of post-apartheid class divisions, is a fascinating bit of DIY journalism. Between clips of young Africans freestyling in the streets and tourmates Talib Kweli, Jeru the Damaja, Dead Prez and Black Thought of the Roots clowning around, Riley interviews the local activists who invited them to perform as well as a group of middle-class twenty-somethings whose view of their country's poor is strikingly reminiscent of how many wealthy Americans think about poverty. At the end of the half-hour film, when the crew throws a free concert outdoors for fans who couldn't afford a ticket to the official show, it becomes apparent that when Riley talks about "overthrowing the system," he's not just referring to the White House. ★

Got a tip? E-mail Mole4life@aol.com

04-13-06

Moorpark's Los Olvidados
look up to ... Alex P.
Keaton

~ PICKS OF THE WEEK

~

~ WORTH THE DRIVE ~

FILM

Ballroom blitz

Charming drama dances
into your heart

Home movies

Giving the gift of faith

THE ADVICE GODDESS

Malcolm in the Middle
Ages

PRINT

Chlorine and filters

BODY POLITICS

WHY ME?

The challenge of changing .

..

ON THE RECORD

Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Show
Your Bones (Interscope)

LISTINGS

~ HAPPENINGS ~

~ AFTER DARK ~

~ MOVIE TIMES ~

DINING

So fresh and so clean

Cholada is Thai food that
floats on air

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