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Before ever going to a show, young David Markey used to dream up punk-rock band names, and even the clubs where they'd play, in his room. One name, Sin 34, became a reality when Markey banged together a makeshift drum kit and joined the burgeoning Los Angeles hardcore scene in the early '80s.

It was through the connections he made there and his Super-8 camera that Markey met his destiny. He had already made an unreleased horror-movie parody, *The Omenous*, and *The Slog Movie*, which documented live performances of Black Flag, Red Cross (soon to change their name to Redd Kross, due to threatened litigation from the charitable organization of the same name), Fear, and The Circle Jerks, among others. But that was only a preamble to his one-two punch of greatness.

In 1984 he co-wrote and directed *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*, a fifty-minute Super-8 feature with what would become an infamous catch phrase: "Thanks for killing my mom." "Hey, no problem." It's a hilarious cautionary tale on the rise and fall of an all-girl rock group, complete with sex, drugs, and outrageous '70s fashion victims.

The movie led to the formation of a real-life Lovedolls band that toured the country, as well as countless bootleg videos that built a grassroots demand for more, and two years later Markey gave the public what it wanted. Now the sequel, *Lovedolls Supestar*, in a twentieth anniversary *Fully Realized* edition, is finally available from Markey's [WeGotPower Films website](#) and distributed by MVD [MVD](#), bringing the Lovedolls saga to an end.

Markey, however, keeps on going, from his documentary *1991: The Year Punk Broke* and *Blast Off*, a concert tour movie about Japanese band Shonen Knife, to music videos for Nirvana, Sonic Youth, The Breeders, Mudhoney, The Muffs, Black Flag, and At the Drive-In. And his films are screened internationally.

But is Markey ready for his Mr. Skin close-up? The answer is an enthusiastic yes from the Southern California filmmaker, who happily reminisced about the *Lovedolls* controversy that disrupted its Hollywood premiere, how come there's no nudity in the films, and why he feels sorry for the young

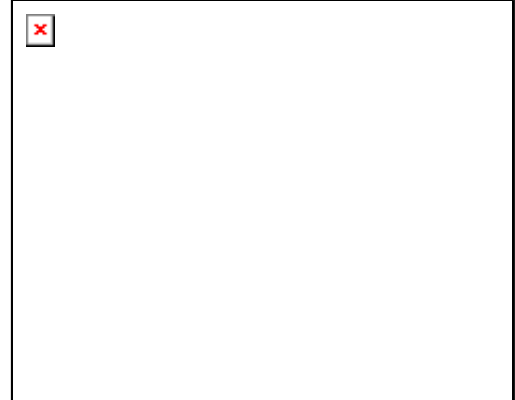
punks of today.

**Your film company, We Got Power, was first a fanzine?**

Yep, I was the editor and one of the main writers and photographers. It lasted a few years, from '81 to '83, which was basically the peak of L.A. hardcore, so there was a lot to cover in a short amount of time. I have every issue up on [www.wegotpowerfilms.com](http://www.wegotpowerfilms.com).

**How'd you take on the ambitious project of filming *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls* and its sequel, *Lovedolls Superstar*, which both capture the Los Angeles hardcore scene at its best and funniest?**

I had been making movies since I was eleven. The *Lovedolls* films came right on the heels of the magazine; so much was set in place aesthetically, and it's how I made friends with many of the people involved in the *Lovedolls* films, key being Jeff and Steven McDonald, Tracy Lea, and Janet Housden from the band Redd Kross.



I also knew them from playing shows with them at the time. I was the drummer in the L.A. punk band Sin 34. I was a twenty-year-old punk kid making this no-budget movie for fun with his friends. *Lovedolls Superstar* was made with the money the first film had made, so we actually had a whopping budget of ten thousand dollars to work with. It is also the most traditionally structured feature film I've done.

***Desperate Teenage Lovedolls* was originally titled *Desperate Teenage Runaways* until [mastermind of the rock group the Runaways] Kim Fowley hijacked your premiere. What happened there?**

Amazingly Kim Fowley showed up with a heavy-set black woman who he explained was his bodyguard. He was irate and spouting crazy things like how he had a bomb in his suitcase, and he would blow the building up and kill everyone inside. I was dumbfounded as he went on to say how I had ripped off his life story by making this film. Especially since he hadn't even seen the film yet. I gave him a VHS copy, explaining I made the film for a few hundred dollars on Super-8, and had used some Runaways music in it, but if he did not approve I would remove it and alter the title, which I did.

**How does *Lovedolls Superstar: Fully Realized* differ from the original?**

It's a non-fanatical director's cut that is actually shorter than the original. I completely redid the film from scratch, using the original as a reference. There is a new film score, and much work went into the sound. The film looks and sounds worlds better; you can actually hear the dialogue now and see the detail and the color in the picture. There was little post-production in the 1986 version, and the film transfer just looked awful. So basically I took a ten-thousand-dollar film and made it look like it was a million-dollar production in 2004.

**Originally independent record label SST distributed you, but I understand you've had a falling out with SST founder and member of Black Flag Greg Ginn.**

I never had a falling out with him. He ceased contact with me in 1991. Much of it had to do with a film I had edited that year, *Reality 86'd*, which chronicled the last Black Flag tour in 1986. It's a harmless, performance-based film, of which I had offered to Ginn for distribution. However he was adamant the film would remain unreleased and unseen, as he controls the music publishing, including that of my own band.

I was on that tour as the drummer/singer in Painted Willie, a band Greg signed and produced and brought on this six-month U.S. tour. Much could be said about this, and the fact I could never get a proper accounting from him for this project and the others I had ongoing with SST at the time.

Upon the DVD reissue of *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*, Ginn calls my distributor threatening litigation. Three thousand DVDs were destroyed, and I had to cut the Black Flag song that he agreed to let me use in the movie twenty years previously. I excised his music from all of my films at that point.

**Both films are indebted to Russ Meyer. Are you a fan of his hypersexual releases?**

One of the great directors of the twentieth century, and a true independent, huge fan of his work, even the lesser-known titles like *Wild Gals of the Naked West*. I was such a dork when I met him. The only thing I could think to ask him about was his cinematography--he shot all his own work--which I think is incredible. He had an amazing eye. He was also a very twisted writer. I love his dialogue.

**Who are other cult or exploitation directors that have influenced you?**

Obviously **John Waters** on so many levels, but at the same time I've always championed the work of **Stanley Kubrick**, **Hal Ashby**, **Robert Altman**, **Martin Scorsese**--who got his start in exploitation--and the like. I've always enjoyed **David Lynch's** films.

**This is Mr. Skin, so I have to ask, as trashy and campy as your movies can be, how come there is no nudity?**

Good question. There is nudity in my work, but none in the *Lovedolls* movies. I suppose they could have benefited from that. Actually, there are teases of nudity in *Lovedolls Superstar*.

Perhaps I was reacting against the titty movies Hollywood was producing at the time, like *Porky's*. That and I probably felt strange asking my friends to get naked. It just seemed gratuitous to me at the time. It's kind of cute to me how innocent those films are in that way.

**Do you remember the first time you saw nudity in a mainstream movie?**

I seem to remember the shower-stall rape scene in *Born Innocent* with **Linda Blair** most of all. And that was a TV movie! The '70s were like that. Let me see, I remember being blown away by the male full-frontal nudity in *Life of Brian*; you just did not see that at the time, or in this time. I also loved the "Catholic High School Girls in Trouble" sequence in *The Kentucky Fried Movie* (Picture: [1](#) - [2](#)).

**Do you have a favorite sex symbol?**

The era of the sex symbol has fallen from grace. I do not find **Paris Hilton** to be a sex symbol. It's like *Charlie's Angels* (Picture: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#)) was the last of it for me--the original TV show, not the remakes. I mean the cast of *Lost* are good looking, but I don't think they are sex symbols.

**You mentioned Painted Willie and the infamous last Black Flag tour in 1986. How wild did things get in and out of the van?**

It was great to be on that tour, and to be a part of the SST roster. Naturally at the time we were all riding high, and I would have had no indication of what was to come in the future. Within a year, every band on that tour would break up and fall apart.

**Most people probably know you from the Sonic Youth/Nirvana tour movie, 1991: The Year Punk Broke, but what have you been doing since then?**

Considering that was fifteen years ago now, it's odd how it doesn't seem that distant. I did make another feature and I directed twenty-five music videos. I've been working on a lot of my old films, refurbishing them for DVD.

I put out a little-seen film of mine, *The Slog Movie*, on DVD. My films have been playing to international audiences for the first time ever. More recently, I've written my first novel, and I am working on a book of photography. I am also compiling a DVD release of my short films of the last thirty years. It's a good thing I started at the age of eleven.

**What do you think about the mainstreaming of punk and sex on sites like Suicide Girls? How will my kids rebel?**

I feel bad for kids, as it seems every nuance of their rebellion is scientifically and instantaneously sold right back to them before they even have the time to digest it.

Another glaring reality is the fact that nothing is new. We are hearing the same shit all these years later.

What happened? It's just the way things are in this media-controlled, one-corporation-controls-all environment. If I were a kid now, I would be much more pissed off than when I was a kid. Conditions are much more extreme, and people seem a lot more dumb. I'd like to think they are plotting against us and are planning an overthrow.

**What's next, any chance of making a third *Lovedolls* and turning the series into a trilogy?**

*Desperate Housewives* is kind of *Lovedolls*-esque in a way. And the *Lovedolls* would be desperate middle-aged housewives at this stage in the game. But in all actuality, I could not see picking this story up twenty years later.

One of the *Lovedolls*--**Kim Pilkington**--is deceased. She sadly passed away last year. It might be interesting to see what someone else would do with it however, a remake with the strung-out Olsen twins or **Lindsay Lohan** perhaps? I mean, there is a band in present-day Orange County using the name *The Lovedolls*. I have no idea why they would want to doom themselves with that name.

### \* **Related Links**

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