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**Brick And Mortar And Love** (MVD Visual)

**Last Shop Standing** (Convexe)

These two documentaries are two sides of the same coin in some respects - yet totally different from each other in others. Both look at the challenges of running a record shop in modern times: **Brick And Mortar And Love** focuses on the US. **Last Shop Standing** on the UK. Where they go from there differs quite radically.

**Brick And Mortar And Love** focuses on ear X-Tacy Records in Louisville, Kentucky. While director Scott Shuffitt does interview a few other store owners, ear X-Tacy is the meat on display. We follow along as the shop needs to downsize to exist. I must say, even at its smallest, it's still larger than most record shops I've been to in my life. A large staff. A stage for bands to play. I couldn't really get too sympathetic here. The owner gripes about how tough things are while his store is a good five times the size of most any indie music shop I've been to in my life! I agree that it's a sad day when any record shop goes under. I've been to Tower Records outlets smaller than the 2 ear X-Tacy locations shown in the film. I'm just sayin'!

In contrast, **Last Shop Standing** takes a long look at the guts of the music business. It opines more than whines. Shop owners, industry folk, and musicians provide insightful analysis about what has gone wrong and what remains right in the day to day task of running a record shop. Billy Bragg, Paul Weller, and Johnny Marr offer intelligent perspectives.

Both films have much to offer and are worth your time. If you are looking to make a case for actual brick and mortar stores to buy music at, **Last Shop Standing** makes a far more eloquent argument here.