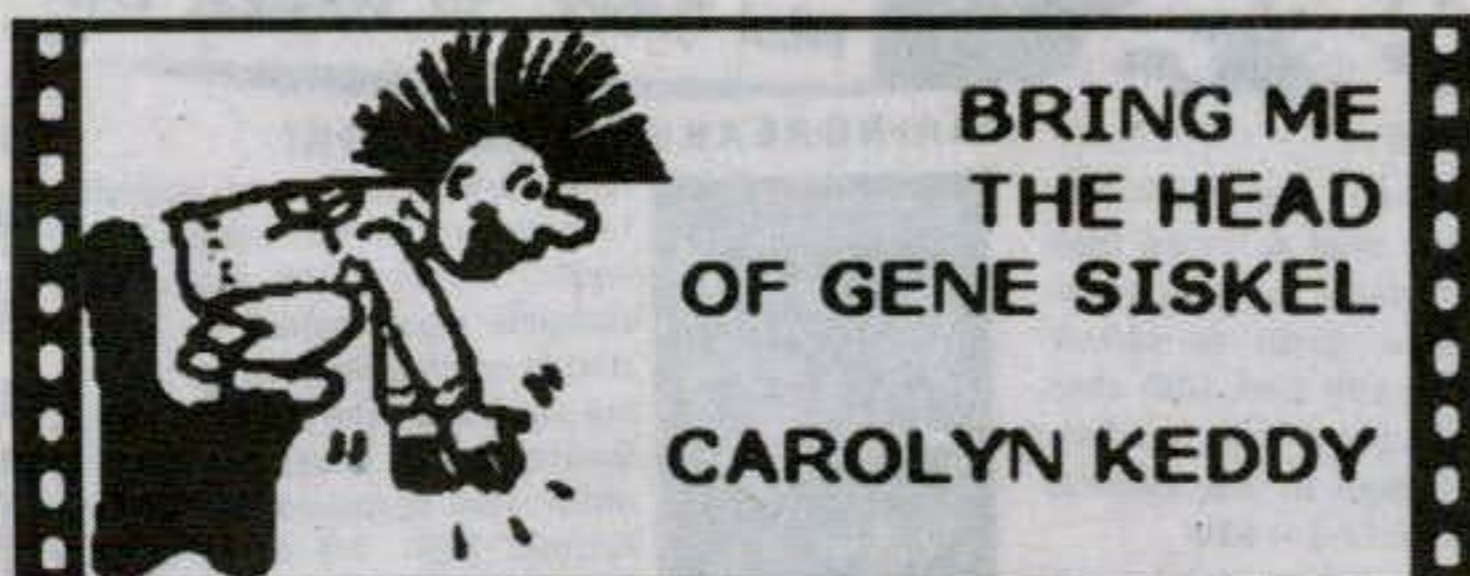
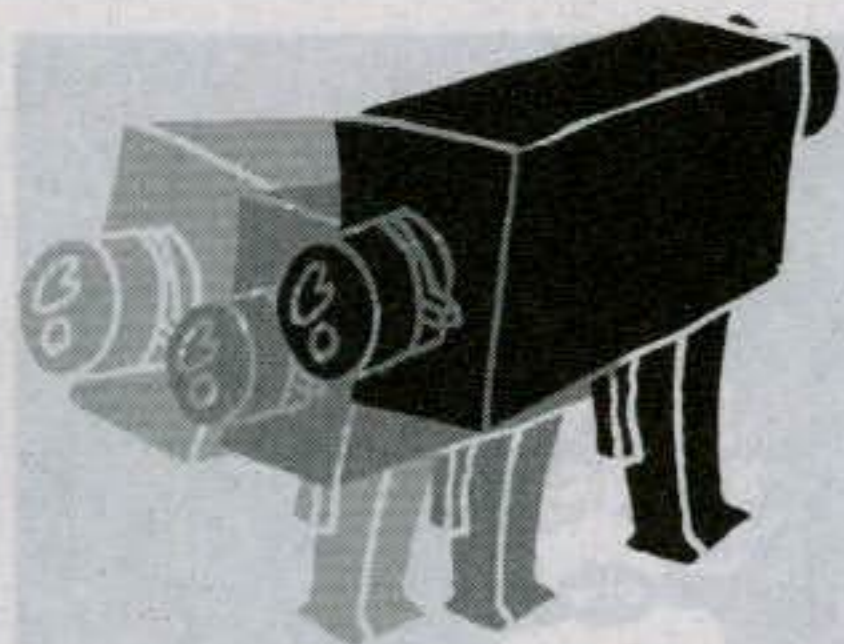


# MOVIES



## THIS IS THE WAY—STEP INSIDE

I would never have the insensitivity to pretend to know why someone committed suicide. My good friend and roommate hung himself in our flat. It's ten years later and I still don't know why he did it. Of course, I have looked at all the events and situations that were going on at the time. It would be possible to draw some conclusions, but I never will truly know. Filmmaker Anton Corbijn takes the same attitude toward Ian Curtis' suicide in his first feature film **Control**. Corbijn knew Curtis and has had some time to reflect on what happened. Corbijn presents the facts as best as he can and allows the viewer to draw her/his own conclusions.

**Control** is a film about the life of Ian Curtis, lead singer of Joy Division based mostly on the memoir of his wife Deborah. The story follows him from schoolboy to husband to lead singer to father, up to his death. As a teenager, Curtis' friend, who is also his future wife's current boyfriend, introduces the two. At the time, Ian seems more into smoking cigarettes, listening to records and writing poetry. "If you don't smoke you can't be in my gang," Ian tells Debbie when they first meet. "I don't want to be in your gang," she replies. Ian becomes interested in Debbie. After taking her to see Bowie and claiming that she belongs to him, he proposes marriage. They wed. She is 18 and he is 19.

Curtis has a job at the employment agency. He seems content until he sees the Sex Pistols. He talks to some guys who have a band, but need a singer. He volunteers and Warsaw is born. As the band progresses and begins to tour Europe, Curtis develops epilepsy that seems to be the thing that really gets him down. He is prescribed five different drugs to try to help with it. The doctor admits that he doesn't know what to prescribe. It is all a matter of trial and error. Then he meets Annik Honoré, a Belgian embassy worker posing as a journalist, and they began an affair.

**Control** combines band performances with more intimate, less exciting and troubling domestic scenes. Domesticity at a young age when success is on the horizon seems hard enough. The band scenes add an element of humor that is very much needed in this story. The actors portraying Joy Division learned to play the music. It is them you hear along with Sam Riley singing throughout the film. The music sounds pretty good and gets progressively better as the film goes along, like a real band would. The only surprising and utterly disappointing addition is the Killers covering "Atmosphere." It's a terrible version and even though it is only over the end credits, it is completely out of place with the rest of the film.

It helps to know about Curtis and Joy Division to understand what exactly is happening in the film. There are a few in-jokes for the more aware. At one point manager Rob Gretton jokes with Curtis that it could be worse, he could be the lead singer of the Fall. It's a semi-obscure reference to actor Sam Riley's portrayal of Mark E. Smith in the film **24 Hour Party People** that was cut from the film. If you know nothing of Joy Division or the circumstances surrounding Ian Curtis, the film seems almost timeless. There are no references to current events. We know it is based on actual events, but aside from

brief mentions of David Bowie and Sex Pistols, performances the film doesn't seem settled in a particular time. This could be the story of any person in any band at any time. Except that it is the story of one man in one band.

**Control** is not an uplifting movie. Not that anyone would expect it to be. No matter how much you know about the story, **Control** is a heartbreaking and depressing film. My boyfriend said he never wants to see it again. I enjoy wallowing in sad movies sometimes, so I am sure I will watch it again. Plus it is just so nice looking. The film had to be in black and white because when I think of Joy Division that is how I see them.

(momentum.control.substance001.com)

**Smash The State: The Raw Original DOA 1978-'81** is a DVD collection of live performances of DOA filmed mostly in San Francisco. This is the heyday of the band when they were at their best. The DVD features varying degrees of video footage. The performance at the On Broadway in 1980 is the best looking and sounding, probably recorded on professional equipment (perhaps a Target video?). But it also the most sterile. Shot from the back of the club, it is best for the home viewing audience because you get to see everything. However, the club seems too big and the stage too high for a punk band. The Old Waldorf 1981 footage is shot from the stage, probably with a cheap video camera. The picture is washed out. It is shot on the side of the stage providing a better, more involving view. The sound is pretty good too. "Bay Area Mystery Concert 1981" is shot from the front of the stage giving the best perspective, but because of that the picture and sound suffer. The camera flails about probably when an audience member smashes into the cameraperson and the sound cuts out at times. 10th Street Hall 1981 footage is shot from further back in the crowd. The picture is shaky and the sound muffled, but it is only one song.

The live footage is nice, but it is the other stuff that interests me more. The Anarchist Anti-Canada Day build-up where the band and organizers have to negotiate with the cops to have their show. The cops threaten to ticket the cars if they aren't moved. Joey Shithead goes up to a motorcycle cop and puts his arm around him. The cop just smiles. Then later the cops can be seen smiling while watching the bands. The 1979 news report on punk is equally entertaining. The punks back then look so tame compared to today, but it's funny to remember punk was more threatening then. It also amuses me as an American that the newscaster introduces Joey Shithead without any form of censorship beep. You'd never hear anyone saying that on American TV ever today.

There really should be some credits for the camera work on **Smash The State: The Raw Original DOA 1978-81**. I like to know who shot what. Also one very small thing that bugs me is that the track listings are off by one. For some reason when the band is starting the first song "New Age" the track jumps to 2 leaving all the others one behind what they are listed as on the DVD case. (www.mvdvisual.com)

The film I was most looking forward to seeing this month was completely ruined by one of the worst audiences I have ever had to deal with in the Bay Area. I would hope people who would go to see William Shatner's Esperanto film **Incubus** might actually be attending a screening because they wanted to see the film on a big screen. I know I did. But this wasn't the case with this crowd. So I recommend that if you like films and enjoy watching them, steer clear of anything put on under the guise of Thrillville.

After enduring an hour of pre-film ridiculousness, it was up to the audience to act like jerks. The crowd that attended this screening constantly talked throughout the movie, yelling out things that they thought were really funny but weren't. The character William Shatner plays is Marco. When his sister temporarily blinded by an eclipse and yells out his name, audience member started yelling back "Polo." Thinking they were oh-so-clever this continued