



***Return of the Living Dead Boys Halloween Night 1986 (MVD Visual DVD)***

This one-camera shoot looks like a bootleg, and the band's '86 comeback at New York's Ritz Theatre, appropriately enough, on Halloween night, finds the group far from its late '70s heyday. That said, the DVD offers an intriguing glimpse at one of the early punk era's seminal bands, who came from Cleveland, camped out at CBGB, and immediately made a name for themselves (and signed to **Seymour Stein's Sire** label) thanks to a savage, full-throttle, take-no-prisoners, **Iggy and the Stooges**-inspired brand of glam garagecore. Lead singer **Stiv Bators**, who was being referred to as Mr. **Martha Quinn** by this time, as he shockingly dated the MTV VJ pin-up back then, would distinguish himself by wrapping a belt around his neck and trying to hang himself from the pipes along CB's low-lying ceiling, while the now-shineheaded ("Uncle Fenster" Stiv calls him) lead guitarist **Cheetah Chrome** dazzled with his abbreviated speed-metal runs. I remember one memorable night when the band, as opening act, blew **The Damned** off **Hilly Kristal's** Bowery club stage when the touted U.K. group was making its stateside debut. Bators was always trying to out-Iggy the competition, and he manages to succeed here, a cross between a *Springtime for Hitler* Nazi commandant and **Al Pacino** in *Cruising*, wearing black vinyl pants buttoned on the side and a **Village People** policeman's cap. After a brief introduction from the late **Joey Ramone**, you may remember the rumbling riff from the set-opening (and closing) "Sonic Reducer," most notably sampled by the **Beastie Boys** for "Open Letter to NYC," but you're forgiven if you don't recall the equally memorable "Caught with the Meat in Your Mouth." Songs like "What Love Is," "I Need Lunch," "Anything To Do," "Down in Flames," "Son of Sam" and the anthemic "3rd Generation Nation," lead to rumble-worthy covers of the **Stones** "Tell Me" and a hellfire-and-brimstone "Search and Destroy," before returning for the encore, a reprise of "Sonic Reducer," in which Stiv ups the stakes by ripping off his pants to bare his pubic hair with a microphone placed where his much-ballyhooed member should be. If you weren't there then, it might be hard to imagine what it was like, but if you were, this is a great reminder of a band that may not have sold millions of albums, but certainly deserves its own wing in the Punk-Rock Hall of Fame. The late Bators, who died the perfect rock & roll death in 1990 when he was sideswiped by a laundry truck while crossing a Paris street, insists, "I am the world's forgotten boy." If enough of you see it, this DVD could just change that.

- Roy Trakin