

# CARBON 14

ART  FILM  MUSIC  SMUT  WRESTLING

## T.S.O.L. – The Early Years Live

(MVD Visual; [www.MVDvisual.com](http://www.MVDvisual.com))

True Sounds of Liberty were always an unsettling and contrarian band, especially in the sound-alike early-'80s hardcore scene in Southern California. On their first EP, they came off like the fiercest, most militantly committed punk anarchists. By their second album, they were suddenly into death rock and songs about necrophilia. After that, they added keyboards and explored psychedelic pop sounds to the dismay of the macho, macho men in the pit. With each release, lead singer Jack Grisham cheekily changed his name, leading to more complaints from loyal fans who missed the "previous" singer. To confuse things further, mad Jack really did leave T.S.O.L. in the late '80s, with the remaining band members carrying on for a few years as an unremarkable hair-metal band with Joe Wood before reuniting in the past decade with Grisham. This DVD, culled "from the vaults" of Flipside and Target Video, follows the band circa 1983, when they were just starting to experiment with goth-pop styles but still playing a lot of the early hardcore favorites. The Flipside portion is a daytime show on a college or high school campus in front of an initially polite, seated crowd of students. Backed by keyboards, T.S.O.L. mix darkly romantic songs like "Beneath the Shadows" and "Forever Old" with early anthems like "Code Blue" (no "80 Times, though). A couple of dudes begin to slam lazily, and after awhile it doesn't seem quite so alien to see T.S.O.L. in sunshine. The Target segment has just three songs (including the spooky ska-pop lark "Word Is"), but it has multiple camera angles and better sound than the more basic Flipside footage.

**BONUSES:** There's a funny version of "Abolish Government" recorded in Long Beach, California, in 2007, where Jack makes a scrawny kid come back onstage. The boy had just stepped off the stage in a very cautious approximation of a stage dive, so Grisham insists that he do it again in "a more masculine way," and the kid gamely complies. There's also a 1983 interview with the band, and, even better, an audio track where Jack reads short, stylish sketches from an upcoming book involving surfing, crime and suicide.

- James Moreland