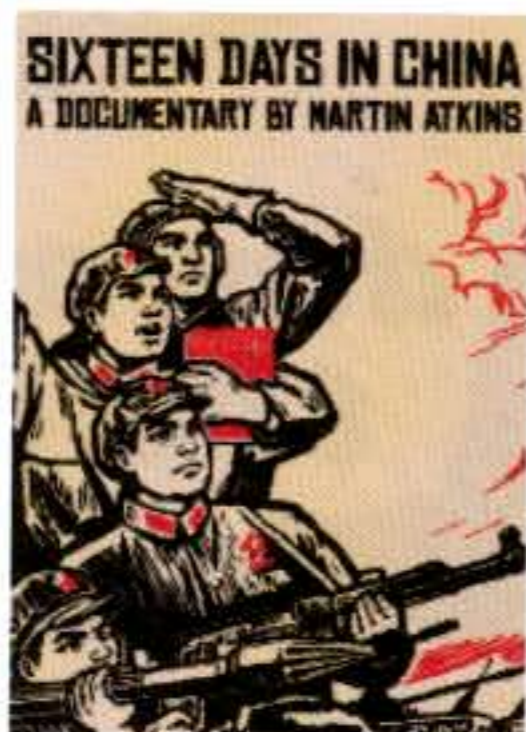


SHORTCUTS



**SIXTEEN DAYS
IN CHINA: A
DOCUMENTARY
BY MARTIN
ATKINS**

Martin Atkins

DVD

68 minutes

\$17.99

Invisible Records

In 2006, Martin Atkins traveled to China in search of new music. What he found in Beijing was a scene reminiscent of London in the late '70s and New York in the early '80s—great punk/post-punk ideas, people, and sounds blaring inside a republic insulated from much of the world but also from self-righteousness. With a resumé that includes post-punk legends Public Image Limited and other big names like Ministry and Nine Inch Nails as well as his own ongoing project Pigface, Atkins runs the Chicago-based Invisible Records. This slapdash documentary chronicles his attempt to find, record, and sign Chinese talent.

The film, like the bands for which he searches, is pretty raw. Chaos and a feeling of being pressured for time—he only has 16 days—underlie the whole effort. There are some tense moments with Atkins yelling at his American assistant

and expressing frustration at trying to find and set up a studio to get recording done. The documentary aptly depicts what happens when language and cultural barriers separate someone from imposing his vision of what music should sound like on people with whom he can hardly communicate. But Atkins manages to find some amazing talent—groups made up of regulars at a CBGB-style Beijing club called D-22. These bands are the real deal; in just a few minutes of footage, viewers get a sense of their integrity and the risks taken to make art inside of an oppressive regime. In the end, Atkins manages to sign three bands and record a compilation called *Look Directly Into the Sun*. The DVD includes two videos.

- Brendan Dabkowski