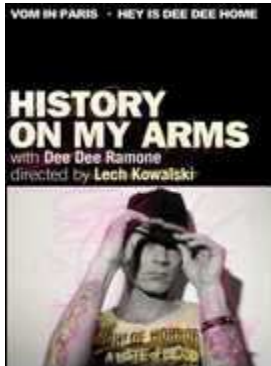



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Case Number 16732: Small Claims Court



History On My Arms

MVD Visual // 2008 // 115 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge Daryl Loomis // July 2nd, 2009

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Somebody once called Judge Daryl Loomis a punk. That guy doesn't have too much to say anymore.

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Scales of Justice

Judgment: 95

Perp Profile

Studio: [MVD Visual](#)

Video Formats:

- 1.66:1 Non-Anamorphic

Audio Formats:

- Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo (English)

Subtitles:

- French
- Italian
- Spanish

Running Time: 115 Minutes

Release Year: 2008

MPAA Rating: Not Rated

Genres:

- [Concerts and Musicals](#)
- [Documentary](#)

Distinguishing Marks

- *Dee Dee Blues* CD

Accomplices

- [IMDb](#)

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[Polish Music](#)
[Pop Rock](#)

The Charge

*I'm livin' on a Chinese rock
All my best things are in hock
I'm livin' on a Chinese rock
Everything is in the pawn shop—lyrics to "Chinese Rocks"*

The Case

Before the music had a name, bands like the Ramones, the New York Dolls, and Television were screaming out punk rock to sweaty teenagers in clubs across New York City. Their art influenced two generations of music, from the second-rate knockoff that is the Sex Pistols to the third-rate knockoff of them called Green Day (now playing over the intercom at your local grocery store). Those pioneers laid the groundwork for popular music for the next three decades. They paid a price for their greatness, however. They lived the life they sang about, existing for copping heroin, shooting up, and playing some damn fine music. Many of these artists are dead today, most by drugs, including Dee Dee Ramone, bassist for The Ramones and the subject of **History on My Arms**. This collection of three interviews by Lech Kowalski, two with Dee Dee and one with Vom Ritchie,

drummer for Die Toten Hosen, tell a dark but funny tale of the early days of punk.

Kowalski catches Dee Dee at one of the few sober moments of his life; the artist is bright and absolutely engaging, a great storyteller with an incredible memory considering what's been done to those brains. The first piece, called *Hey, Is Dee Dee Home?* makes up the bulk of the disc, lasting a little more than an hour. This is one of the finest rock star interviews I've ever seen. Dee Dee sits in his torn t-shirt, prominently displaying his tattoos and collapsed veins in front of a solid black background. With this simple setup, Kowalski lets Dee Dee talk to his heart's content, interjecting only occasionally to keep things going, since our subject can tend to ramble. The stories he tells—some scary and some hilarious—are universally interesting. The highlight is an infamous incident in 1989 at a German hotel with Dee Dee, Johnny Thunders (New York Dolls, The Heartbreakers), Stiv Bators (Dead Boys), and Ritchie that is absolutely unbelievable, and all too true, I'm sure. Animated, fun, and likeable, Dee Dee is a fantastic subject and *Hey, Is Dee Dee Home?* is an ideal format for his stories.

Playing off of Dee Dee's likeability, Kowalski recut his footage from the original interview to make a shorter piece called *History on My Arms*. This is less coherent, but an interesting edit, focusing more on Dee Dee playing the guitar and interacting with the camera. On a certain level, it is kind of pointless; there's no new information here, just footage we've seen before. It does, however, give us a deeper perspective on Dee Dee as an individual and that does make it valuable.

The final piece is the interview with Ritchie, who discusses the hotel incident from a different side (it makes for a great contrast), as well as his time with Dee Dee and being a part of the scene in general. He doesn't have the same kind of instant lovability that Dee Dee has, but his stories are certainly worth the listen.

MVD is on a roll with releasing archival music footage. **History on My Arms** has average picture and sound in a bare bones presentation. The only extra, and it's not bad, is a three song EP with some music from Dee Dee plays during the film. It doesn't matter about the lack of supplements, though; the footage is what's important here and it's worth every second.

The combination of three pieces gives us a very clear picture of an unclear, drugged up time. **History on My Arms** is highly recommended for fans of the roots of punk, but even more highly for people who only know punk that they can buy at Wal-Mart to give them insight to a time when this music wasn't suitable for your six-year old.



The Verdict

Gabba gabba not guilty.

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