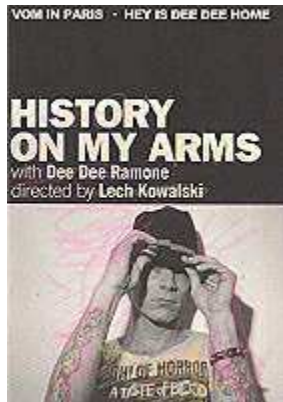


SCANNER WEB ZINE - THE PLACE FOR PUNK ROCK, HARDCORE, ANARCHO AND SCUZZY GARAGE ROCK 'N' ROLL

TV PARTY - R



RAMONE, DEE DEE - History On My Arms {*MVD* (<http://mvd2b.com/b2b/>)} While director, Lech Kowalski, was filming the JOHNNY THUNDERS film, 'Born To Lose', one of those he interviewed was ubiquitous RAMONES bassist, Dee Dee Ramone. Filmed in 1991, 'Hey Is Dee Dee Home' was released in 2003. This repackages that film with two other shorter documentaries and a CD.

Opening with stills from Dee Dee's past spliced over real-time footage, the title piece, 'History On My Arms', starts with about ten minutes of footage of setting up the shoot. Lasting less than 30 minutes, Dee Dee basically tells the history of his tattoos and the tracks they hide. Being Dee Dee, there are plenty of amusing tales, notably his wanting of a gravestone tattoo inscribed with Mother (while his Mom was still alive) and it ends with the classic: "Getting tattoos is like shooting dope - you don't get just one." Some of the visual editing didn't work though; the layered imagery of Dee Dee's tattoos was just visually complicating.

The main feature, 'Hey Is Dee Dee Home' lasts just over the hour. Dee Dee pretty much opens up about his relationship with Thunders. It seems a tormented friendship, with Dee Dee initially in awe of Thunders, before realising the Thunders rock-star ego was trying to dominate him - and his quest for smack. To quote Dee Dee, "That's why I left him turning blue in a bath tub." The origin of 'Chinese Rocks' is an issue for Dee Dee as Thunders never gave him writing credit. The song eventually became an albatross around Dee Dee's neck making him feel a 'Heroin Guru'. The last part of his interview focuses around the 'super-group' he was to form with Stiv Bators (DEAD BOYS) and Thunders. Thunders was apparently depressed and there was some kind of 'evil presence' at Stiv's place in Paris. The end came when Thunders allegedly stole a jacket of Dee Dee's, which he reclaimed and *accidentally* broke a guitar in the process.

The final feature is a 20 minute chat with Vom, the drummer who was lined-up for the above super-group. He says the opposite of Dee Dee. Seemingly, Dee Dee was the dazed one - his 'Manson Period' as Vom puts it - with the scary presence about him. As for the jacket? It wasn't his! Dee Dee stole Thunders' possessions to get dope money and trashed all of his belongings (including Thunders' favoured guitar) that he didn't steal. But who do you believe? Smack addict Thunders or Smack addict Ramone?

The CD is no more than the film's soundtrack, which is Dee Dee strumming and doing a few half-hearted songs. It's great for RAMONES obsessives (I've played it a lot!), but for the casual listener it's probably worse than his Rap career!! Finally, there's a neat photo booklet with some of Dee Dee's dialogue to round out the package.

Dee Dee was diagnosed with Bi-Polar disorder, which helps explain his split personality. One minute he is naive and convincingly innocent. Within the space of a sentence, he becomes snide, bitter and verbose, over-stating whatever fable may fall out of his mouth.

Most tellingly of the Dee Dee psyche is, when talking of (or possibly chastising) Thunders' addiction, he states, "Sobriety is the best revenge." Very soon after filming, Dee Dee OD'd.

This is an intriguing look at what was possibly the most complex of all the individual RAMONES (and, considering the others, that is one helluva title!) that fans will revel in and, maybe, even shed a tear. But, if it is music you want, don't

look here! (06.11.09)

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