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Drop Dead Rock

While rock 'n' roll has outlasted almost all of its early critics, it would be difficult to exhaust the possibilities for parody in the men and women, boys and girls who make, buy and sell the music. Some, like Rocky Horror Picture Show and Spinal Tap, have been memorable. Most, however, have been hideous. Fact is, the true stories behind the hits are pretty hard to top, and the circumstances that produced such extreme cases as Metallica and Anvil are beyond parody. Adam Dubin's 1996 parody, Drop Dead Rock, is far more watchable than other micro-budget rock-comedies I've seen, if only because its writer-director was comfortable behind the camera and among musicians of the head-banger persuasion. The story, such as it is, revolves around a band so desperate for attention that it kidnaps a British rock star, Spazz-O, and demands that he listen to a demo tape. Adam Ant plays the hostage's unethical manager and Debbie Harry is the record-company weasel who wants to sign him. The only hitch is that Spazz-O, unbeknownst to Harry, died of an overdose while in captivity. (This doesn't stop a former porn actress from hitting on him, however.) Drop Dead Rock won't make anyone forget Rocky Horror, which it vaguely resembles, but, as decent stoner entertainment, it fills the bill.

- Gary Dretzka