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"For Those Who Are A-Twitter..."

what am I doing...

In tradition of @billmaher, new rule: Companies can't place freelancers on radically different pay cycles than editors booking assignments.

about an hour ago

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Gold: Before Woodstock, Beyond Reality

This entry was posted on 7/29/2010 12:15 PM and is filed under [DVD](#) [Reviews](#).

The success of *Easy Rider* spawned all sorts of indulgent, wonky and mostly terrible "free love," anti-establishment knock-offs, but one of the more notable arrives on home video for the first time in any format in *Gold: Before Woodstock, Beyond Reality*. A goofy, loose-limbed, nudity-filled western musical dramedy, the movie stars improvisational godhead [Del Close](#), who would populate only bit roles and cameos in TV series and movies (mostly those that came through Chicago, like *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and *The Untouchables*), but through his teachings come to influence some of the biggest names in comedy over the past 30-plus years.

In the summer of 1968, filmmaker Bob Levis led a rag-tag band of drop-outs and drug-happy darlings (some with professional acting experience, some not) into the California wilderness to make a movie loosely centered around the notion of a killjoy police captain, Harold Jinks (Garry Goodrow), and his battles with a crippled eccentric, Hawk (Close), in bringing an end to all the debauchery in his community. The result is *Gold*, a bizarre journey into the mind and madness of the late 1960s — a project overflowing with fantasies of revolution, recreation and sexual experimentation, and fueled by a groovy, funky soundtrack that includes MC5 and more.

In all honesty, while the movie itself is a profound potpourri — and thus holds some interesting standalone lessons from a certain academic and anthropological point-of-view, mostly for the manner in which it sets out to systematically shatter various filmmaking rules — it doesn't hold up that well, narratively speaking. Close's performance is a cracked, wily thing, though, and the disc itself holds such an abundance of colorful reminiscences that aging boomers — even those who missed out on all the partying the first go-round — may want to give this title a spin.

Housed in a regular plastic Amaray case with snap-shut hinges, *Gold* comes to DVD presented in 1.33:1 full screen, divided into 18 chapters, with a main menu screen music loop that repeats every eight seconds or so, and will infiltrate your brain if you get pulled away to a string of emails upon start-up, and leave it playing in the background. The movie boasts **two superlative feature-length audio commentary tracks**. The first, with director Levis and star Goodrow, contains plenty of warm production anecdotes and other behind-the-scenes stories (Levis used to date star Caroline Parr), and tangentially provides an intriguing sort of time capsule snapshot of DIY production from that era.

There's also a special commentary track from Upright Citizens Brigade founding members Matt Walsh and Ian Roberts, each of whom studied under Close. While this chat takes a while to warm up, the nature of the duo's recollections is broad-ranging and fascinating, especially when they get into **Close's battles with addiction** (he kicked alcohol through aversion therapy, gave up speed and other drugs, but kept smoking weed and cigarettes, and would also lecture passersby on the so-called "hobo code" of not rubbing out a butt with the heel of one's shoe) and depression (he would attempt suicide a number of times). Close was a fascinating character, full of contradictions, and this presentation of *Gold* hearteningly allows him one final curtain call.

The other supplemental material is just as engaging, starting with a wide-ranging hour-long 2008 interview chat with Levis by Harold Channer from a New York City public access cable show. There's also 10 minutes of material from a good-natured roast of Goodrow, plus trailers for *Gold* and a half dozen other films, and a self-scrolling presentation of lobby card art from the movie's original release. To purchase the DVD via Amazon, [click here](#). **C-(Movie) A-(Disc)**

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