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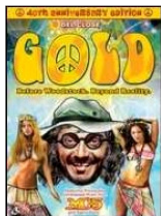
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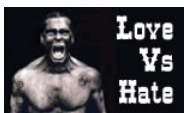
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Gold: Before Woodstock. Beyond Reality.
2/10

It's certainly a crock of something

Gold certainly has an interesting history. Filmed in a month in 1968 by Bob Levis, Gold is a self conscious attempt to break down the conservative attitudes prevalent in American culture. It was banned in America, made its cinematic debut in London in 1972 and is finally making its DVD release for its fortieth anniversary. It was considered a lost film for 40 years and its legend fore-shadows it as the craziest, most out-there blast of counter-cultural craziness ever committed to celluloid.



Have you seen **Gold: Before Woodstock. Beyond Reality.**

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And it is almost unremittingly awful. In 1968 America was entrenched in the Vietnam war, the civil rights movement had reached a boiling intensity after the assassination of Martin Luther King and in Paris the students were fighting the police in the streets. The smell of cordite and burning hair was in the air and the world seemed ripe for revolution. The tag-line for this movie is: "The Revolution has Begun – Clothing Optional". It's that level of bone-headed, stoner credulousness that scores through this film; there's no script, no jokes, no story. There is no technical aptitude or anything worthwhile conveying – that's what society wants them to do with its rules!

The dialogue is inaudible, even when it's been re-dubbed, the acting is like a fourth-form drama club sponsored by Red Bull and the politics equates to "Hey wouldn't the world be a better place if, like, uptight squares could just like mellow out and go skinny dipping?"

And yet there's a lot more of the "the Man" lurking in these hippy's make-up than they realise. The women here have nothing to offer the revolution but their tits and some occasional backing vocals. In one scene Jinks, having rigged the elections introduces a stripper named Miss Gold-Nugget (Caroline Parr) to entertain the bovine local electorate. Back stage he beats her into unconsciousness for acting like a whore. Oh the hypocrisy, but whose is it: the reactionary Jinks or the revolutionary film-makers who play violence against women for laughs?

A plot coalesces eventually like a scab on a wound: Jinks imprisons the local hippies on trumped up charges of public-indecency in what looks suspiciously like an over-grown tennis court. It's up to limping local half-wit Hawk (Del Close) to save them which he does using his home made bombs. Eventually Jinks is captured by the naked mob and forced to skinny dip until he likes it. He does.

The film does have one thing going for it: the soundtrack is uniformly excellent with tunes from the MC5, David McWilliams and Beastly Times. But these songs are all available else where and really have no bearing on the film other than making it more palatable than it has any right to be.

You know what they say: if you can't remember the sixties you're probably trying to block out the primal trauma of seeing this film.

John Higgins

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