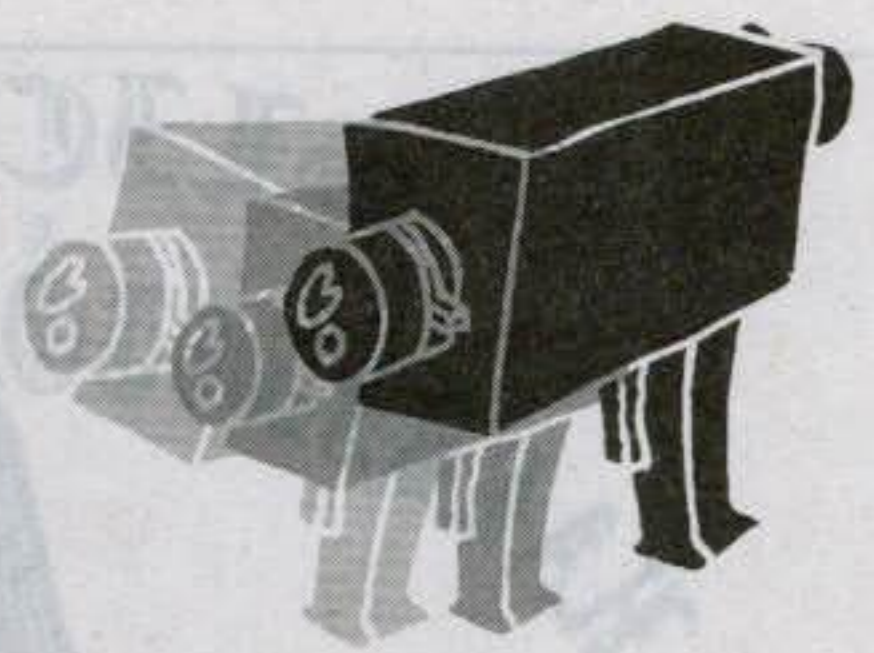


MOVIES



Warts & All: The Films of Danny Plotnick collects ten of Plotnick's short films made between 1986 and 2001. The films are mostly shot on 8mm film. The collection amusingly starts off with trailers for two films that appear later on the DVD. Each film is a fun glimpse at life in the city.

I, Socky follows a rebellious sock monkey for a night out on the town in San Francisco. After being tucked in bed for the night by his mom, Socky sneaks off for a night of drinking, peepshows and hard partying. After passing out at a friend's house, Socky stumbles home. **Steel Belted Romeos** puts you in the driver's seat of a car that cuts off a car driven by two guys from Jersey. The boys take it as the worst kind of insult and head off to get revenge. While the cars are stopped at a red light, the driver anxiously waits for the light to turn green while the boys hurl insults at him. The tension is heightened as the Jersey boys suddenly change into clowns. **Pipsqueak Pfolies** follows a regular guy as he tries to get his laundry at the local laundromat. A gang of local preteens torments him. They steal his soap and battle him on the street. **Pillow Talk** is the story of apartment living. The building's thin walls hide nothing from the neighbors bringing one woman to the edge when she can't sleep because of her neighbors' late night sexual and violent activities. She is further annoyed by another neighbor's lack of laundry room etiquette.

Ironically the least appealing of the films is **Swingers' Serenade** the only 16mm film in this collection. It is the most technically proficient as well as one of the longest, at twenty-four minutes. The idea was a good one. Plotnick took a script from a '60s amateur filmmaking magazine and made it. Whether included in the original script or not, the smarmy narrator constantly interrupting to remind the audience what we were watching is beyond annoying. Just as you are getting into the fun of the film he appears again and again.

If you are a true independent filmmaker it really helps to have talented friends who want to act in your films. Fortunately for Plotnick his friends are talented and funny. When a film calls for dressing like a clown, being beat up by a gang of elementary school kids or even wearing a KISS t-shirt from the non-makeup days, Ray Wilcox was there. Anthony Bedard told me that his scene in **I, Socky** came about when the filmmaker showed up unannounced at his door one afternoon. But how could he refuse?

Missing from **Warts & All: The Films of Danny Plotnick** is my favorite Plotnick film, **I'm Not Fascinating - The Movie!** After inquiring around town I was told a special edition DVD of the film is in the works. I can't wait. (www.dannyplotnick.com)

Stuffed is short film by Arwen Curry (of *MRR*) and Cerissa Tanner about people who hoard. There are three different types of hoarders shown in the film. Betsey has her "stuff" in a storage space. Her house has no clutter because her husband won't allow it. Jim lives in an apartment that is very cluttered, but he is still able to move around and do things around the house such as cook. Judith is the worst of the three. Her apartment is floor

to ceiling filled with stuff. She has a small passageway to walk through the apartment. In order to get into her bathroom she needs to move things that block the door.

Stuffed looks at the habits of the hoarders while also looking at what causes this need to keep more than you really need. It is an interesting topic because I know I have way more things than I need. When I moved three years ago, I got rid of what seemed like so much crap. Yet, I still have too much. **Stuffed** makes you look at yourself and your habits instead of judging those on screen. I wouldn't want to end up like the reclusive Collyer brothers who kept so much in their house that eventually one of the brothers Langley was crushed by a pile of it in 1947. Then his brother Homer died since his brother could no longer care for him.

Variations VII by John Cage is a fascinating performance film even if you aren't into noise music or performance art. Filmed in 1966 as part of a series of ten artists' performances John Cage incorporated into his performance electronic appliances, telephone lines and tape recordings. Cage gave little instruction to the other participating in his piece allowing for an unrehearsed and unexpected element in the sound. The black and white footage of men in suits harshly lit leaning of over tables while twisting knobs is engaging.

The DVD **Variations VII** by John Cage contains footage of the performance as well as a documentary explaining who was involved and how things were set up. There is also an audio recording of the full performance. (<http://www.microcinema.com>)

There is no arguing, the Dead Boys were one of the great punk bands. They recorded a bunch of classic songs in the short years before drugs and whatnot broke them up. Unfortunately, under those circumstances a reunion is usually only seen as a desperate need for money. The band's New York reunion show, **Return of the Living Dead Boys: Halloween Night 1986**, would be easily seen that way if the band didn't sound great. They do, even if they don't look that good. Stiv Bators is wearing a full leather (or is that pleather?) biker's outfit. The rest of the band goes through the motions except for Cheetah Chrome who still rocks out. They are older and perhaps not as wild, but at least Bators gets naked on stage.

Amusingly, there appears to be some sort of tension between Stiv Bators and Cheetah Chrome. Bators introduces Chrome as Uncle Fester and he gives out Chrome's hotel room number as well as the name he is registered under during the show. It seems as if Chrome might punch Bators at one point, but he just walks past him off stage. Bators exits the opposite way.

The reason to get the **Return of the Living Dead Boys: Halloween Night 1986** DVD is for the sole extra. It is a 1980 appearance on the TV show *Good Morning Youngstown* by Bators and his post-Dead Boys musical collaborator Frank Secich. The host Gary Cubberly is genuinely amused by Bators referring to him as a sex symbol and mentions that Bators has been on his show a few times before. They show the video for "Sonic Reducer," which is a funny combination of the band performing live with flight simulation video, nazi youth, bombs exploding and money being printed. The only disappointment is that the quality isn't that good. It comes off of a videotape with lost of static. (www.mvdvisual.com)

The Gits Movie is finally being released. It is screening at the Embarcadero Cinema in San Francisco on July 7th and Northwest Film Forum in Seattle starting July 4th, plus many other locations throughout the country and Canada. Check their website www.thegitsmovie.com for all the screenings.

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to