

The Hellcopters – Goodnight Cleveland

Directed by Jim Heneghan

Music Video Distributors



The gag here is that the **Hellcopters** are one of the biggest hard rock bands in Europe – they routinely win whatever you call the Euro equivalent of the Grammy award, and probably they're fuckin' rich over there, too. But in the USA? Not so much. Now, you'd think that a band so steeped in the sound and lore of American rock n' roll would have some sort of problem with this. You'd think, seeing as they so easily conquered the rest of the world with their twin-guitar Detroit scorch n' roll attack, that the **ACTUAL** Motor City would be the final, and finest, conquest.

No, not really. Mostly, they just want to go the fuck home, and sleep in a bed with clean sheets.

See, this isn't one of those documentaries with a dramatic arc. There is no three-act rollercoaster ride of ascent, defeat, and redemption here. In fact, there is hardly any tension or conflict at all. It's just a week on the road in the USA with a scruffy-but-polite, semi-famous Swedish rock

n' roll band. You see 'em check into motels, eat at Denny's, endure lame-o radio show hosts, and suffer drunken Yank rocker fools lightly in low-rent dressing rooms. Inter-band conversations usually go something like this:

"Do you want to go to the Rock n' Roll Hall of fame?"

"Naw. Looks boring."

And fan/band interactions go like this:

Nicke: "Have you ever been to Sweden?"

Dumbfuck: "I have, yeh. I went with my family when I was a kid. We went to the...what do you call them? The Alps."

And that's the way it really is out there, for most bands, which makes this one of the more honest rock-docs I've seen. There's no chicks, no parties, no rock n' roll decadence. Just a show, and a motel, and another show. It's futility and awkward pauses and gum-chewing publicists and go-nowhere interviews. The only thing that makes it all worth it is the Big Show, and in the various live, raw '**Copter** clips, you get glimpses of why these scraggly

young Swedes have traveled halfway across the globe to wear the same pair of pants for 6 days straight and budget themselves on \$10 per diem and eat greasy diner food – because when the fuckers finally get to rock, then rock is king, and long live the fuckin' king.

Director **Jim Heneghan** opts here for a dark, scratchy, retro-fitted style that is perfectly unobtrusive, making for a very personal looking film. It's not throwing hands in the air, cock-out motherfucker stuff, even though it could have been (and would have been, if I had made it), but it is pretty goddamn real, which is, after all, the highest compliment you can bestow on a documentary.

Extras: Bonus early live footage and a reel of out-takes. What's on the out-takes? **Gaza Strippers** mustache dude **Rick Simms**, mostly. That's why they're out-takes.

-Sleazegrinder

HOME
