

RESIDENT

On The Town

When Punks Attack

Marky Ramone Shares 10 of His Years on the Road with the Ramones
by Stephen Pitalo

Marky Ramone is the genuine article. Long black hair in a grown-out pageboy, jeans, and black leather jacket. A Matt Groening portrait of himself and Homer Simpson adorns the jacket's back, a gift from the show after Marky's band, the Ramones, made an appearance with Bart and company.

We meet at Acme Underground to talk about his docu-

mentary, *Ramones Around the World*. Recently released by Rhino Home Video, the film chronicles the band on the road from 1986 to '96, culminating in their final show in New York.

In the rock landscape, the Ramones stand tall as three-chord bubblegum punk without apology. Formed in New

American music.

To interview Marky about the Ramones is not hard. The answers come with Jack Webb tone and speed. It's like interviewing the house band for *Dragnet*. If I was to choose a speaker for career day at an elementary school, Marky could speak to the class in simple, honest terms. No subtext.

didn't make it to be a music video, I meant it to be a collage, so 10 years ago I started carrying a camera around, and when the Ramones retired in 1996, I had 200 Hi-8 and regular tapes. We edited maybe 30 down to 70 minutes into *Ramones Around The World*.

I was the only one with a camera. People were always saying to me, "Ah, what are you doing? It's such a pain in the ass. Stop shooting that thing in my face." And I'd say, "Guys, someday you'll like to look back." Not that they were the greatest looking guys or anything, but they realized later that there were many things captured that they'd want to remember. There are some things on here that money just can't buy. And now looking back on that, it was the right thing to do.

R: Was there a conscious effort to focus on any particular facet of Ramones life and music?

MR: When focusing on the concerts, the concert footage is shot from the side stage and from balconies. The thing



Kodak Moments: Marky Ramone captured the mania that is the Ramones on tour over the course of 10 years. Highlights included playing "Surfin' Bird" and getting trapped in their van by fans in South America.

York in 1974, the Ramones (different incarnations have included Joey, Johnny, CJ, Dee Dee, Marky and Tommy Ramone) are often cited as one of rock's most important bands for their attitude, simplicity and faithfulness to their style.

Helping define an original rock band look and sound, their consistently short songs still stand as cartoon-like teenage anthems: "I Wanna Be Sedated," "Rock and Roll High School," "Blitzkrieg Bop," and countless others. The foursome are largely revered, often imitated, and only recently acknowledged as a major influence in modern

No hidden meaning. What you see is what you get — quite reflective of the Ramones' style.

Resident: How did the documentary come about?

Marky Ramone: "I wasn't thinking about doing it, but when I first started filming the band, video cameras had first come out, like '86 or '87. I figured I'd buy one and just use it for myself. And it was laid back, you know, just see how much fun I had, remember things, see how backstage is. The video footage of the live gigs isn't that good, but I

that I really wanted captured was that we were really close. A lot of characters get into our circle. I wanted people to see the faces, hear the voices, hear the comments and the smirks, the situations — how it is to tour, do shows, being around the personalities, the day-to-day life.

R: What are the Ramones' defining moments in this documentary?

RESIDENT The Week of November 24, 1998 15

continued on page 20

on the town

When Punks Attack . . .

continued from page 15

MR: Playing "Surfin' Bird," the general craziness in Japan, and getting trapped in the van by fans in South America.

R: *The scene in the van is pretty scary — how many times has that happened?*

MR: It happened a few times. I lent that footage out to a video called *We're Outta Here*, a Ramones documentary on MCA from a while back. They needed it because their video was boring. On theirs, it's second generation.

It happened three times in South America, the fans attacked the van. They were even on top of the van, but I obviously couldn't film that, because we were inside of the van. So my road manager is screaming at the top of his lungs, but they weren't after him, they were after us. They didn't want leather jackets or T-shirts — they wanted a

piece of us. [The van eventually escapes.]

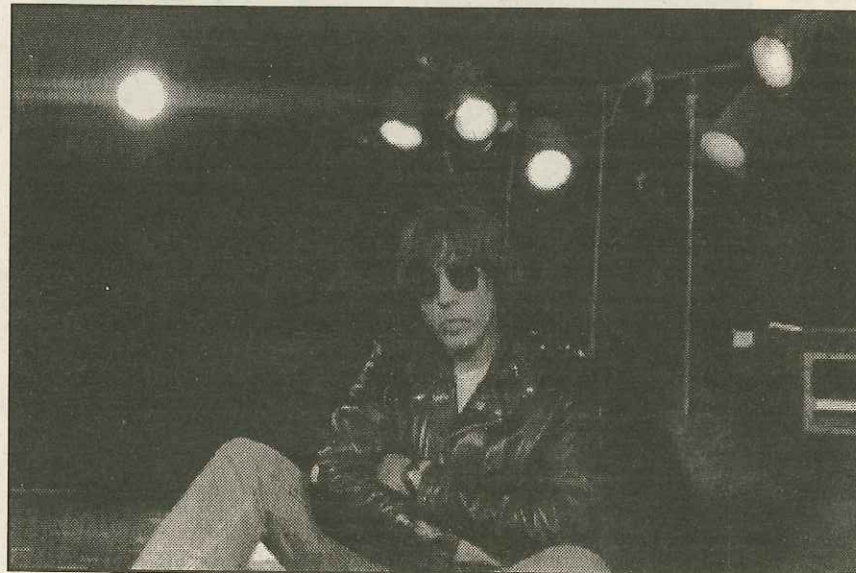
It happened a few times. We couldn't go outside of the hotel. Why do they go insane? They love the Ramones. They feel so passionately about the music and the band. Something they could relate to. It's really something to see kids that are 15 and 16 years old who saw something in a band

The answers come with Jack Webb tone and speed. No subtext. No hidden meaning. What you see is what you get — reflective of the Ramones' style.

that was together for 18 years. Maybe it was the song content, maybe it was the way we looked, maybe it was the speed we played, but there was something they could relate to in their own lives. I guess it brought something out in them. But that's how insane

they were.

We were extremely well-received in South America. We sold



Still Going: "I'm the only one still recording, touring and promoting Ramones music ..."

out 50,000 seat stadiums there.

R: *What happened to the guy who jumped off the balcony? You were kind of lucky to capture that moment of rock and roll abandon.*

MR: That guy got hurt, obviously. He jumped 25 feet into the audience. You get hurt, unless you're a paratrooper. Which he wasn't.

R: *Anything in the documentary that will surprise people about the Ramones?*

ting high. So we stopped all that.

To do 2,500 shows in our career, you have to be pretty together. You have to have some foundation. I mean, how could we do these songs, these videos, be there for sound checks on time, unless we were organized? We were a tight unit thanks to Johnny Ramone. He was the leader of the band and made sure that everyone had their shit together.

Marky's plate is currently full of projects. He has a part in a movie with Henry Thomas, called *Fever*; he'll be embarking on another tour leg with his band, The Intruders; and he has begun writing his autobiography. He also produced albums by the Travoltas and the Bullies. But does Marky ever miss playing with the Ramones?

"I'm the only one still recording, touring and promoting Ramones music, which is what this band is," Marky says of the Intruders. "When fans come up and ask me whether the Ramones will ever get back together, I usually say, 'Never say never.'" ■

MR: We were very organized. People thought we were stupid, crazy nut jobs drug-taking glue-sniffing freaks. Maybe in the beginning we were, but as time went on, we realized that the Ramones had to mean more than just get-