

It's only Rock and Roll. DIG! it!

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At the nucleus of Ondi Timoner's Sundance documentary "DIG!" are questions of musical artistry and integrity and selling out and keeping the faith and, when the rock hits the roll, whether kicking the shit out of your band-mates is tough love or fear of mass acclaim.

In DIG!, a seven-year film in the making, Timoner follows two cutting-edge rockers, Anton Newcombe of the "Brian Jonestown Massacre" and Courtney Taylor of the "Dandy Warhols," as they initially form a mutual adoration society before selecting quite different paths to artistic fulfillment.

Where vision meets commerce and Anton won't give an inch, Courtney adjusts to the playing field. And therein lies the crux. Although releasing an astounding 11 albums over ten years, Anton and BJM remain under all but the underground radar while Courtney and the "Dandys" find favor in the marketplace.

This does not go down well with Anton. He feels that Taylor has abandoned their collective vision of rubbing their art, like a Cagney grapefruit, in the face of the music industry. He senses betrayal for, of all things, fame and fortune. Courtney's take on the plotline is somewhat less harsh.

As Newcombe's destructive and violent episodes send him deeper into the darkness of his uncompromising art, Taylor and his outfit perform on big buck videos and big time tours. DIG! gives us a vérité peek into their world as art and industry confront Anton and Courtney.

Ondi Timoner has produced a document that, culled from 1500 hours of footage and narrated by Taylor, gives notice of both her own high level of artistic integrity and those of her very singular subjects. It is an important film in that it takes the filmgoer deep inside that lair of personal demons who stand guard on the shoals of naked truth.