

# Netflix and Nachos: "Dog Pound"

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Sometimes after a hard day of classes and studying, it's nice to just relax a bit. So grab some nachos and enjoy the movie being reviewed this week, "Dog Pound."

"Dog Pound" is a movie directed by Kim Chapiron about the life and times of three kids in a juvenile prison. This gritty drama tracks these kids' experiences as they go from mutts on the street to dogs in the dog pound. Now, as a trend of this series, there won't be any spoilers of any of the movies getting reviewed, so don't worry, this won't ruin this gritty emotion-packed film for you even a bit.

What seems to be just another prison movie on the foreground, "Dog Pound" does a lot to separate itself from the pack (last dog pun, swear.) The setting of a juvenile prison is the most noticeable difference, as the cast of teenagers pulls the heart strings even more as you witness the life of a bona fide criminal in the eyes of a high school dropout. The film also does a great job of fusing the problems

that any teenager would usually have with the strifes of a prisoner, molding together bullies and adolescent fantasies with prison violence and guard brutality in compelling fluidity.

The movie is well made by design, but the actors are where it really shines; young



bloods Adam Butcher and Shane Kippel are both actors that deliver inmate performances that rival some of the greatest prison dramas. The dark reality of all the things that happen in a prison can be seen in these actors' eyes, as they deliver the psychological aspect of the movie that really drives home the idea of the

effects of juvenile detention on kids. Their characters are not just bad, they're broken, each dealing with personal demons that heavily effect the direction of the plot. But the plot, woe is he that couldn't be; it isn't that the plot was bad, it was just fulfilling. The movie has

the potential to deliver on a powerful plot that can really captivate an audience and put you in the story, but at the same time the story almost leaves a hole in the heart, as one yearns to get more out of a plot that just won't share the love.

It's like a birthday party with only enough cake for 5 kids, sure the party was fun,

but something feels missing. Nonetheless, the acting and delivery from the thematic design is enough to create a film worth at least cheese and beef with the nachos. Be warned though, this is not a movie for the faint of heart or the easily offended. There were points in the movie that could even have a grown man shielding his eyes. That being said, despite it being a movie about kids, it is not for kids. This movie is also quite dark, so any plans with a date should not include a romantic screening of this film. Unless you're into that, in which case nobody is judging.

If the idea of a dark, gritty, suspenseful drama that has you on the edge of your seat and the nub of your nails, feel free to take a look at "Dog pound," currently available on Netflix, a subscription-based streaming site for movies and TV series that if you're interested, can get a free trial by signing up to enjoy thousands of movies. Or just get your best friend, parents, siblings, girl or boyfriend's password. They won't mind right?

*Image courtesy of thepeoplesmovies.com*

# Band review: Soul Coughing

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The abstract, percussive music generated by 90s rock band 'Soul Coughing', I dare to say, is some of the most transcendental and consistent ever created. In the decade they were together, they released three magnificent albums, each so full of insight, at what can be accomplished when everyone in a band becomes their individual part in the music while, in kind, elevating each of the other members so that the finished product is one piece of tight, amazing harmony.

To say that it's a rock band seems somewhat misleading. All sorts of artists that are held in the 'Alternative Rock' genre, like to pick and choose elements from whatever genres that suit them, but the sheer power of the funk, the abstract noise, the rhythmic chanting and beat poetry that came together to create Soul Coughing deserves its own genre entirely—some direct offshoot from jazz that reinvents it in a way, that is somehow fundamentally different from what other Soul of Ska bands may claim to do—perhaps under the guise of what singer and guitarist Mike Doughty has dubbed 'Slacker-Free Jazz.'

A good drummer lets the rhythm flow through him/her into his/her motions; Yuval Gabay becomes the rhythm. The primal, indelible, funky hook played by a true expert really gets to you no matter how much you may hate the concept of dance music: It almost makes you want to dance yourself. Not at all to say that he played homogeneously though. In fact, one of their most famous and popular songs "Super Bon Bon" has actually a very atypical drum beat, but Gabay makes it work.

The only thing better than a good drummer is a good drummer with a good bassist to back him/her up. It's so important that the two might want to pair up and form a "freelance rhythm section", like Reggae duo Sly and Robbie. Gabay and Upright Bass player Sebastian Steinberg definitely had formed that relationship with some of the Grooviest rhythms imaginable. He was a musician with an astounding flexibility and intuition in his playing, and with each song, fell into the perfect niche.

Perhaps the interview with Sebastian "Flexible Agendas" by Anil Prasad on the website "Innerviews" sheds some light on that fact when our Bassist describing his interactions with "sound guys" in his time with Soul Coughing explains, "So, the house guy would always think 'Oh, he must want a jazzy, stringy tone.' I'd say 'No man. Think Aston Barrett. Think reggae—that's what I'm going for. I just happen to be playing the bull fiddle." Together, Sebastian and Gabay were both catchy and unconventional, blending the rhythmic styles of numerous genres together seamlessly, and

laying the foundation which would let the in-depth sonic experimentation, the band would become known for flourish without sacrificing the popular aesthetic.

The blunt of that experimental style of the music is manifested in the Enoesque (Which is defined on Urban Dictionary as "Music which is similar to the later ambient music of British musician and all-round genius Brian Eno") keyboarding creations of keyboardist Mark De Gli Antoni. Sometimes, he will use general keyboard sound in unconventional ways—the application of forced chords and catchy riffs—, most of the time, his contributions range from dissonant samples that often create dissonant punctuating to the general rhythm and adding to, nay, establish the overall tones of the song that work out perfectly. The metal scraping sounding aerial accents in "Is Chicago, Is Not Chicago," the fluctuating minored horn notes looping and building upon each other in "Screenwriters Blues," the castrated samples of Raymond Scott's classic song Powerhouse, (or as you may know it, that



jazzy sounding Looney Tunes song) that he layers magnificently throughout the song "Bus to Beelzebub," and so many more happenings of pianos, horns, synthesizers, voices, beeps, boops, effects etc. improvised and/or looped, emphasized and diminished with feeling and expert precision that truly make Soul Coughing's song catalog unique.

De Gli Antoni is a true genius of sampling and keyboarding if there was ever one, and in that way, bridged the gap between Jazz and Hip-Hop that even music forces to be reckoned with, like Miles Davis, never could (Miles Davis made a poorly received Hip-Hop inspired Jazz albums in the 90s called "Doo-Bop," which attempted to do a similar thing). It plays with the basic idea of what music can mean, using both the primal meanings and associations we have for sounds, with the infinite possibilities and feelings attainable with being an active, live, imperfect musician.

The most memorable aspect of Soul Coughing's music and the most apparent example of the wonders of building a song from the ground up, from a jazz-influenced notion of flexibility is Mike Doughty's truly inspiring contributions lyrically. His guitar playing, as instinctive, and with a thoughtful prowess

reminiscent of the alternative art rock playing of Fugazi, don't come anywhere near to being as instinctive, and as meaningful as his lyrics. As De Gli Antoni explains in an email to The Pitch, "I could enter a rehearsal with Sebastian and Yuval begin playing a shell of something, and the two of them would then completely invent a whole drum-bass world around that. I would then drop what I was initially doing and do something else. Mike would then start riffing words, and eventually we would have a 'Super Bon Bon,' one of their most famous songs. This emphasis on free formation, especially in the vocals and lyrics, is a powerfully audible factor of the music and sets it apart from so much of the other popular music of the era.

Doughty's style may enact a free-flowing, visceral, powerful, unpredictable poetry like mechanic such as in "Screenwriter's Blues," which contains lyrics like, "Gone Savages for Teenagers with Automatic Weapons and Boundless Love, Gone Savage for Teenagers who are aesthetically pleasing, in

other words fly." Sometimes they will take the forms of actual raps, as is the case in the chorus of "Super Bon Bon" and the end of "Trues Dreams of Wichita." Sometimes it's a definite, but struggling singing like is the case in "Janine" and "Soundtrack to Mary." Most of the time though, it's a combination of all three to the point that you cannot tell which one he believes he is using, and it is always great.

Choosing a best album is really just based more upon distinctions and tastes than anything. Soul Coughing's first album 'Ruby Vroom' [1994] can only be described as an experimental introduction for the band that establishes their jazz side as well as their willingness to experiment with song structure and sampling. This album, with its feeling of not knowing what they wanted to do, mixed so much poetry, feeling, so many different styles, and so much more time to experiment on a basic level falls into the typical notions of the first album, for most bands, being, if not their best, then at least one of the most personable, before they seem to start falling into either trying to recreate the effect of that one, or trying to write what will actually be popular. It is considerably funkier than what they would later put out and seems to have more experimental insight

into music, such as the awesomeness of the songs "Is Chicago, Is Not Chicago" and "Moon Sammy" starting off with the exact same guitar strum, but then later, suddenly switching a few seconds in, with the addition of the other instruments, showing how much the rhythm section really does effect the song entirely. This is why "Ruby Vroom" is my favorite and why it is a must listen definitely.

The second album 'Irresistible Bliss' [1996], really launched them into the level of fame they achieved, and unsurprisingly: its songs definitely push more in the direction of the mainstream while still remaining so unique and tight. All of the amazing elements are still there, but applied a little more conservatively than the first album. More of the songs seem to be about girls and love and all its implications than the first, and were sung more typically to the rhythm, which is not necessarily a negative, but when its music still basically to the same end as the first, seems like a step backward in the artistic department. Still endlessly more entertaining than most other music and reeks of freedom and personality.

The last studio album, 'El Oro,' [1998] cannot be said to be another exercise in towing along that direction. It is different than the albums in a way that is undeniable, going against that notion of a band trying to recreate an album and instead, reinventing themselves. Whereas 'Bliss' and 'Vroom' seemed to be towards the same end goal musically, 'Oro' seemed to be something fundamentally different in that effect they were trying to generate. Everyone in the group changed ever so slightly enough not to undo any of the positive they had created, but reinforced a reimagining, both in the production as well as the conceiving of the music. Generally, the album seemed much happier, such as "Circles" which, as Doughty claims in one of the many live albums that exist, was written because his mother was disappointed that his songs were too depressing.

Probably the first thing someone listening will recognize, is the propensity for the repetitive Doughty vocals going on and on in such areal way. The true measure for the success of an album or really any art, is whether it succeeds in doing what the artist was intending it to uncompromisingly with an inspired grandeur and genuine personality. This album was not compromising in its repetitive vocal style and direction towards a powerful, ever existent chorus as heard in songs like "I'm Rolling" and "Monster Man," and it is obvious that as much time and commitment and personal growth went into making this album as went into "Ruby Zoom." Soul Coughing, for their last album, seemed to reinvent themselves in a versatile way which has only been done successfully by a few artist. For this artistic prowess, they deserve recognition and props.

*Image courtesy of last.fm*