

DVD Review: 'Sam Kinison Unleashed' Brings Comic Genius to DVD

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 27, 2009 - 10:29am

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DVD Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Anyone who has ever seen a Sam Kinison stand-up special knows the truth. The man was a genius. Finally, people unfamiliar with the mad preacher will get to see for themselves and those of us old enough to remember Kinison's all-too-brief time in the spotlight can revisit this inspirational and hilarious comedian on DVD with "Sam Kinison Unleashed".

The release from the small company Mill Creek Entertainment includes both of Sam's HBO specials, "Breaking the Rules" from 1987 and "Family Entertainment Hour" from 1991 with never-before-seen footage which is released for the first time on DVD. Kinison would die just a year later in a car accident. I firmly believe that if he was still alive, he'd be rocking audiences with his trademark brand of humor to this day.



Sam Kinison: Unleashed was released by Mill Creek Entertainment on January 27th, 2009.

Photo credit: Mill Creek Entertainment

Don't believe me? Watch these two specials, three hours of entertainment that has lost *none* of its comedic power in the two decades since the first comedy hour was produced. With quotes of admiration on the back of the DVD from Robin Williams, Jay Leno, and Johnny Carson, Kinison was widely adored by his peers. And all good Howard Stern fans know how unbelievably funny the man could be on Stern's show. He was creative, powerful, and always interesting.

Sam made frequent appearances on Howard Stern, "Saturday Night Live," and "In Living Color," and even has his own short-lived show, "Charlie Hoover". Only seven episodes were produced. When's *that* coming out on DVD?

Sam was a comedy rock star. He could fill arenas and play with bands like Motley Crue, Guns n' Roses, and Ozzy Osbourne. He made music videos and dated Jessica Hahn. He was to comedy what Ted Nugent was to rock - a little crazy but impossible to ignore. Sam was a hard-drinking, hard-partying, angry s.o.b. He cleaned up his life near the end and even got married. Most people think Kinison's days were cut short by his own demons, but it was actually a head-on collision with teenaged drunk driver that stole this talent from us way too early.

How influential was Sam Kinison? I swear this is not a lie. While writing this review, he was just mentioned on the radio during an interview with another stand-up comic. How many comedians still resonate like that almost two decades after they died?

Find out why with these two stand-up specials.

Now, my love for Sam is clear, but "Sam Kinison Unleashed" is a little lackluster as a release. Just having these HBO specials on DVD is great, but the video and audio could have been remastered a little bit better and there's not a single special feature to speak of.

With all of the quotes about Sam's influence on the back of the DVD, couldn't they have strung together a retrospective featurette? Mill Creek is releasing more Kinison material later in the year, including the documentary "Brother Sam," but it would have been nice to have a special feature or two on the first DVD of the master. The best way to look at "Unleashed" is that this is just the start of a year of Kinison releases, not the complete picture.

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