

## FILM CLUB: Don't Look Back

When *Criterion* release a film you know it's a worthy classic and *D.A. Pennebaker's Don't Look Back*, the iconic portrait of Bob Dylan's 1965 tour of England is long overdue this treatment. Thrust into a world of stuffed shirts and cigar smoke, *Bob Dylan* and his entourage go from hotel room to stage, followed by adoring fans and journalists eager to over analyse the next big thing without ever fully appreciating what they see and hear. The British press aren't quite ready, they laud *Donovan*, much to the amusement of *Dylan*, who proclaims, 'give it to Donovan' when at an upmarket awards ceremony for best folk album of the year. At first *Dylan's* relationship with the press is affable, he seems happy to talk and discuss. 'Do you read the bible?' is a question on more than one reporter's lips. In one scene, *Dylan* is holding a giant lightbulb and ends the interview with classic line, 'my motto is keep a good head and always carry a lightbulb'.

*Don't Look Back* is greatly improved by the transfer to Blu-ray. From the opening chords of *Subterranean Homesick Blues*, the sound quality is razor sharp. The picture quality is rich and warm. The great thing here though is the hours of extra footage. You'll be a *Dylan* scholar by the time you've finished this treasure trove of delights and for long-time fans of *Dylan*, this truly is worth its weight in gold. Stand out moments include an interview with Patti Smith as she details the influence and impact that *Don't look Back* has had on her career. 'Bob Dylan was Arthur Rimbaud alive' she enthuses. What is evident here is *Smith* talks like a fan, as she heaps praise on *Dylan*. 'I had found my guy', she states at the beginning. As a viewer, you can see the passion and spirit. There are rich alternate audio takes, of five tracks recorded on the 1965 tour but not included in the original cut. An alternate take of the *Subterranean Homesick Blues* video (there were three recorded in total), begins with an ambulance siren (an accident?) and shows *Dylan* in the garden of the *Savoy* hotel, struggling to hold the cards and *Allen Ginsberg*, struggling to know where to put his jumper.

Lovers of film in itself are treated to a documentary about the director, which includes the evolution of his work, three shorts and a recording of the 1966 electric tour, with *Dylan* singing *Ballad of a Thin Man* and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Normally reissued versions aren't always worth the money but you will be spoilt for choice here and in the month that *Dylan* won the *Nobel Prize*, you owe it to yourself to delve in and relive exactly why he did, just stunning.

*Don't Look Back* is out now, via *Criterion*.