



So how much 70's hairy, homemade porn do you take in your indie doc??

A lot?

Then "American Swing" is for you!

The Marc Cuban-produced doc traces the rise and fall of NYC's legendary swing club, Plato's Retreat. Run by former meatpacker (yes, really) Larry Levenson, this hallmark of the "me" generation was a symbol of 70's excess. For \$35, secretaries, debutantes, jet setters and truck drivers stripped down and strapped on to rub elbows and anything else they saw fit. They viewed themselves at a Dionysian Epic-center of counter culture. Free love had turned into orgies and pot had turned into blow.

The story is the kind that you would like to see Martin Scorsese make into a feature. "American Swing" is an eight-year epic in which regular guys from the neighborhood hit the hot clubs feeling like movie stars. A blue-collar egomaniac is at its core and the story features just a spurt of Mob influence. It is accentuated with talking head witnesses, (now in their seventies and looking much like your grandparents) who revel in the good old days with pride and nostalgia. In addition, the filmmaker incorporates a slew of Super-8 actual club footage.



Overall the flick is a compelling time capsule. For those of us who don't really know sex without AIDS, it is truly amazing that people used to live their lives like this. These folks involved engaged in highly unsafe sex practices with several partners every night. For example, the film

FLIX: American Swing

Written by Dave Howard

explores the hardcore, anything goes “mattress room.” I kept asking myself, “How they clean those? A hose filled with bleach?” The answer is “They didn’t.” To my and subsequent generations there is an unsanitary creepiness throughout this film which is quite powerful.

Filmmakers Mathew Kaufman and Jonathan Hart focus on the club’s fraternal lifestyle and miss some opportunities to tell some compelling B-stories. A reference to former employees being on the run from the mob is never followed up. Swing King Levinson is beaten within an inch of his life by his wife’s extracurricular lover. The tip of the story is exposed and squelched. Perhaps he was going for some kind of cinematic cock-tease. However, like all good doc filmmaking, it should leave you hungry for a larger slurp.

Overall, “American Swing” is a show worth a peep. Most will catch it on DVD or cable but for those into the group thing you can throw down on the mattresses April 3 at Laemmle's Sunset.