



Frank Rogala

WON'T ANYBODY LISTEN

Dov Kelemer, 2001

Our rating: ★★★★★

► [REVIEW](#)► [SHOWTIME & TICKETS](#)► [CAST & CREDITS](#)► [POSTERS & MEMORABILIA](#)

REVIEW

Behind the music

A sobering documentary about Anaheim-based metal band NC-17, a six-member group fronted by Michigan-born brothers Frank and Vince Rogala. First-time feature filmmaker Dov Kelemer followed them for the better part of seven years as they wrote, performed in local clubs, laid down tracks in a garage recording studio and tried to get the attention of music industry bigwigs, efforts that were met with a soul-sapping lack of interest. In addition to interviewing the band members — the Rogalas, guitarist/keyboard player Robin Canada, violinist Robert Aviles, drummer Chuck Horn and bassist Ron Perron — Kelemer spoke to a surprisingly candid cross-section of music industry types, from much-loathed Artists & Repertory reps (A&R for short; it's their job to find new talent) to managers, attorneys and music journalists. The result should be an antidote to widespread fantasies about making it in the recording industry, where everything conspires against musicians and even beating the odds and signing a contract with a label is no guarantee of success. "It's possible that you can sell half a million records or have a gold record and not be rich," observes lawyer C. Tucker Cheadle. "In fact, you may not make any money." But NC-17 slogs on, undeterred by rejection and financial hardship. The beauty of Kelemer's choice of subject — probably accidental, since he befriended the band while he was still in high school, but propitious nonetheless — is their fundamental ordinariness. They're talented, but not phenomenally so. Their music is easily categorized without being completely generic. They're dedicated musicians who'd like to be successful — not rock star rich, just able to quit their day jobs, which range from legal assistant to boiler repairman. No one's a crash-and-burn junkie, and for all the inevitable friction between band members, there isn't a flaming jerk in the bunch. Over the course of the film they get some solid breaks, every one of which evaporates. And yet with the exception of Perron, who has a crisis of faith and goes home to Colorado, the band plays on. Though visually a little harsh — some of the B&W cinematography is so grainy it looks as though it's been shot through a screen — the film is beautifully edited and, appropriately, the sound is unusually well recorded and produced. That the odds are stacked just as high against independent documentary filmmakers like Kelemer as musicians is the film's final irony. — *Maitland McDonagh*