

On with MUSIC

DVD REVIEW:

LARRY "WILDMAN" FISHER

By Dorothy Hernandez

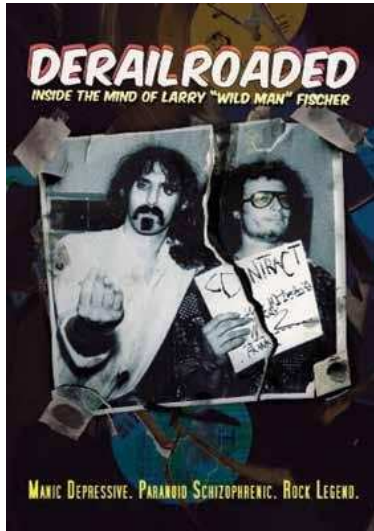
If you know who Larry "Wildman" Fischer is, you are probably a big music nerd. You most likely worked for your college radio station at some point. Most people don't know that Larry Fischer was playing guitar on the streets of Hollywood in the late 60s, peddling tunes for ten cents apiece to passersby, when a guy who'd bought two dollars' worth of songs signed him to a record deal.

At this point, you might be thinking you've heard the name Larry Fischer before. Most likely, you are confusing him with Bobby Fisher, the chess player. Both were eccentric, to say the least. To say more, Larry Fischer was diagnosed with two mental disorders — severe paranoid schizophrenia and bipolar disorder more commonly known as manic depression. At age 16 he had attacked his mother with a knife and was institutionalized.

The story of Larry "Wildman" Fischer is a tragic and wild one. The story came to an end last month, on June 16, when the Wild Man died of heart problems.

But the story is available in the new documentary, *Derailroded: Inside The Mind Of Larry "Wild Man" Fischer*. It's a shocking and sensitive journey getting to know this talented musician who developed a cult following, but simply couldn't act normal enough in public to have a career.

A precursor to punk, Fischer became an underground club and concert favorite, earning him the title of "godfather of outsider music." Over the course of his 40 year career, Fischer has performed constantly, is the first artist ever recorded on Rhino Records, was featured on "Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In," had a top hit in the UK on John Peel's Festive Fifty, was the subject of his own



comic book, was a mainstay on the Dr. Demento Show, and even sang a duet with the late Rosemary Clooney.

Derailroded traces Fischer's life from neglected child to troubled genius through archival footage and personal interviews with family, friends, and industry professionals, including: Weird Al Yankovic, Mark Mothersbaugh of Devo, Solomon Burke, Dr. Demento, and Barnes and Barnes, plus Frank Zappa, who by the way, was the guy on the sidewalk who signed Fischer to his first record deal. Zappa later cancelled their deal after Fischer threw a jar at his daughter, Moon Unit's head.

The documentary offers a look at Fischer's torturous childhood, his strange adventures in show business, his struggle to be heard, and his constant battle with his own demons. The film includes interviews with Fischer and his admirers, as well as vintage performance clips.

Buy this DVD and you can tell your friends you're a real music nerd.

LARRY "WILD MAN" FISHER

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