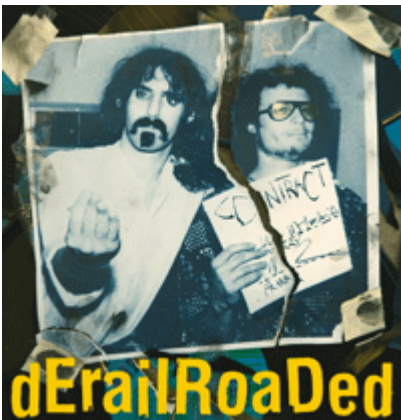


## Rock 'n' Roll Story

Filmmakers who met at Hillel Day School screen film biography of Larry "Wild Man" Fischer at Detroit Docs International Film Festival



Frank Zappa and Larry "Wild Man" Fischer



DerailRoaded Director Josh Rubin

Jeremy Lubin's entry into professional filmmaking has a definite Hollywood twist. The former Hillel Day School of Metropolitan Detroit student met the subject of his first documentary while eating alone in a Hollywood restaurant.

Lubin was approached by a man aggressively identifying himself as Larry "Wild Man" Fischer and became curious about the man. That curiosity led to some research with the help of Josh Rubin, a friend from Hillel and another aspiring screenwriter.

The two, who learned about Fischer's recordings and long battle with mental illness, worked almost four years on *DerailRoaded*, a biography that will be shown 9 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 5, and 1 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 6, at the Birmingham 8 Theatre as part of the Detroit Docs International Film Festival.

The film explains how Fischer, who is Jewish, advanced his career with the help of rock star Frank Zappa, who came up with the "Wild Man" label.

Lubin and Rubin, both 28, pursued different educational opportunities after leaving Hillel but came together in California to pool their resources. Lubin, a loan officer for a mortgage company, graduated from Michigan State University with a communications major. Rubin, a marketing specialist for a production company, studied film at New York University.

*DerailRoaded*, produced by Lubin and directed by Rubin, premiered at the 2005 South by Southwest Film Festival and was screened at the London Film Festival. The intensity of working together on *DerailRoaded* has sent the two in different directions for the time being.

Lubin, who lived in Farmington Hills, and Rubin, who grew up in Huntington Woods, talked about their film with the Detroit Jewish News:

### **JN: What do you like about the way the film turned out?**

JL: I think that "Wild Man" Fischer is an amazing musician with an amazing life, and I think that we did justice to him as far as telling his story. Knowing his history of unpredictable behavior and paranoia, I'm pretty amazed we got through it, and I think it's a big accomplishment.

JR: I like that it's an original piece, the kind of documentary that is rarely done. We employ a lot of unconventional, creative devices, such as animation, that I think work really well. We did that because we're dealing with an unconventional subject. I think the overall feel of the film is unique.

### **JN: What motivated you to tell this man's story?**

JL: We found a copy of his first album, *An Evening with Wild Man Fischer*, and put it on the turntable. We were blown away by it, especially the song called "The Wild Man Fischer Story," which is autobiographical. We found him and started hanging out with him. Slowly, we earned his trust, and he let us start filming him.

JR: We had a kinship with his ideology, what he stood for and the music that he made. We became fans of his music and music like his. We wanted to make a film that would parallel that music as best we could.

**JN: What do you like about his music?**

JL: It's the purest music I've ever heard. Larry makes up songs on the spot. They are very unstructured. Some of them are 10 seconds long. Some of them are 10 minutes long. A lot of his songs are relevant to his illness. He has a song called "Ping Pong Ball Head," which has him saying, "Maybe if I didn't have a head like a Ping Pong ball, I would be a star." He was trying to explain what schizophrenia feels like and how his thoughts are going back and forth. He's very indecisive, and a Ping Pong ball would be a good analogy.

JR: Jeremy and I love the notes being played and the raw emotions that can be communicated from artist to listener. At a time of cookie-cutter pop stars manufactured in boardrooms, it's inspiring to find a human being who is his own person expressing his own thoughts and not caring what anybody else thinks. He's communicating his emotions, and I'm feeling them. That's what works for me.

**JN: What do you hope viewers will get out of seeing your film?**

JL: This is a great rock 'n' roll story that most people have never heard. It's also a great piece about mental illness. We would hope to destroy a lot of myths about schizophrenia. Viewers really get to see what it's like to suffer with mental illness.

JR: We want to bring a face to the illness and show that the guy sitting on the corner talking to himself or singing songs to himself is not to be dismissed. We wanted to humanize Larry Fischer. There are some disturbing scenes, but I think it's a wakeup call to a lot of people.

**JN: How did you get the money to make this?**

JL: The money we used to make the film was money we made on day jobs. We actually made the film at night and on weekends after work. As first-time filmmakers, we found it hard to find investors.

JR: I ended up quitting a job to finish the film. I took off around four or five months and worked with an editor on a daily basis to fine-tune the picture.

**JN: What are you working on now?**

JL: I'm working on getting into narrative films.

JR: I've begun work on three other films. They're independent, but one is planned for PBS.