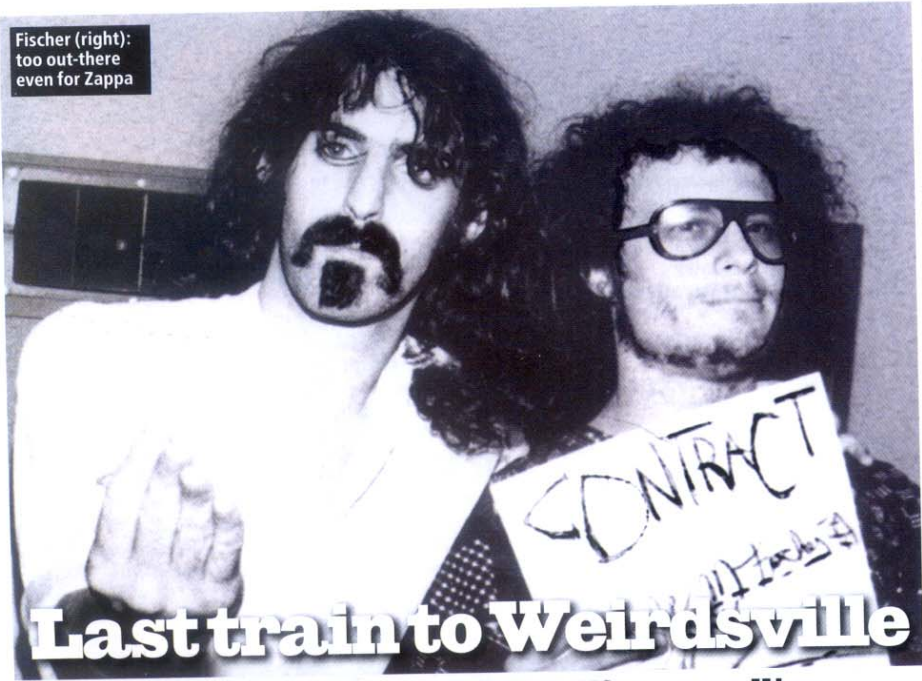


Reviews **MUSIC DVD**



Fischer (right): too out-there even for Zappa

Last train to Weirdsville

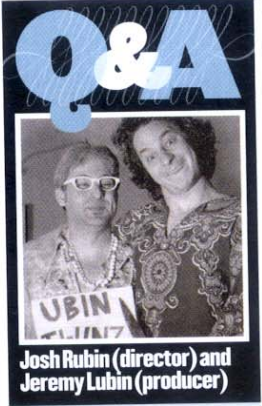
Stunning document of an outsider's life unravelling



LARRY "WILD MAN" FISCHER
Derailroaded
 ★★★★★
 RETAIL DVD (PLEXIFILM, WIDESCREEN)

"AN INTERESTING MIX of energy," comments a psychiatrist during this hour-and-a-half analysis of the life, music and (incredibly) strange times of outsider troubadour Larry D "Wild Man" Fischer. Fischer became the prize catch in Frank Zappa's freaky circus in the late '60s, announcing on the cover of his first LP that he was bigger than The Beatles, the Stones and Dylan. A whiff of fame set him on a goose chase that's seen him record with talents as diverse as filmmakers Barnes & Barnes and Rosemary Clooney. By any reckoning, he's high-maintenance. At first he suspects director Josh Rubin and producer Jerry Lubin might be

part of a plot by Steven Spielberg to destroy him. *Derailroaded* portrays a survivor – but only by the skin of his teeth. Committed to a mental institution in 1963, and given medication and ECT, he was let loose on America just in time for the countercultural revolution. Too weird for Zappa, he fell out with everybody who tried to help him. Mid-film, he vanishes onto the streets of LA for several months. Eventually he reappears, a haunted husk living in the care of his terminally-ill aunt. The cameras capture his panic attack, and he's reluctantly persuaded to enter a retirement complex, where he remains to this day – on medication, but drained of creative pep. Compared to other recent 'American misfit' docs on Roky Erickson, Daniel Johnston and Jandek, *Derailroaded* shows – without undue voyeurism – the tragedy of a life at the final unravelling. **ROB YOUNG**
EXTRAS: Deleted scenes, taped telephone conversations. ★★★★★



Josh Rubin (director) and Jeremy Lubin (producer)

UNCUT: How easy was it to secure Larry's cooperation?
RUBIN: Almost impossible. He would tear up our contract and, moments later, change his mind and want a new copy.
LUBIN: Rumour has it HBO was interested in creating a programme based around Larry called *Interviews With A Paranoid Schizophrenic*, but when he failed to show up at the initial meeting, they furiously killed the idea.
How did you get away with filming Larry having a nervous breakdown?
RUBIN: Throughout the film, we see that Larry has faced obstacles none of us can dream of. He is a manic depressive paranoid schizophrenic, which prohibits reciprocating social relationships. In the hospital scene, he's making an emotional connection to Aunt Josephine, who's shown him unconditional love. To us, it's the crux of the story.
UNCUT: How is he doing in the care facility?
RUBIN: He no longer writes or sings many songs, but if he hadn't been admitted, he wouldn't be alive today.