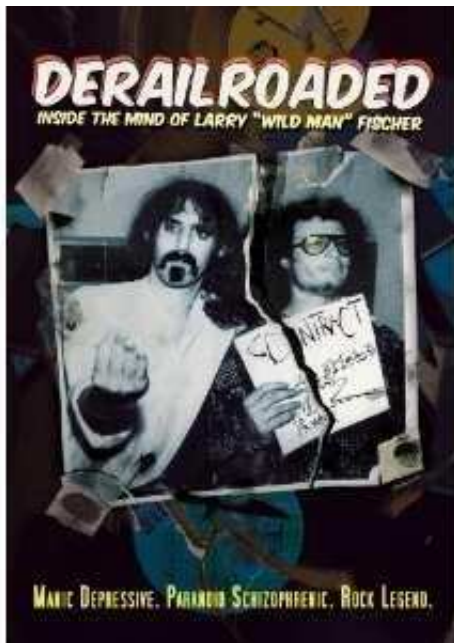


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Derailroaded: Inside the Mind of Larry “Wild Man” Fischer DVD Review

March 22, 2011 1 Comment



When his parents didn't understand that his violent and odd behaviors stemmed from severe mental issues, Larry Fischer was left to live in the streets and forbidden to return home. He tried to make a living doing the one thing that gave him joy, which was writing and performing music. He began hanging out at the boardwalk, offering to sing an original song for a dime. Eventually his unique delivery was picked up on by others in the music business. Frank Zappa offered him a contract and together they released an album of Wildman's music. When Larry became paranoid about something he became defensive and threw a bottle that landed near Frank's daughter Moon. Not willing to expose his family to Larry's unpredictable violence, Zappa abandoned future projects with Fischer. Already suffering from paranoia, Larry became convinced that Frank was out to ruin him and harm him physically. Larry received other opportunities to perform in the studio and on stage but all eventually were ruined by Larry Fischer's mental challenges.

Prior to this documentary, my only exposure to Larry Fischer was in hearing a couple of his songs on the radio as

a 13 year old listening to Doctor Demento on Sunday nights. The only one I really remembered was My Name Is Larry, which I thought was a joke at the time. Apparently though, Larry Fischer was not joking. He was, in his mind, a serious musician who was creating new and original material.

The show features a lot of footage of Larry Fischer from the last few years, where he lived in constant paranoia at his aunt's house. He checks the windows whenever he hears a car or a helicopter passing and even accuses the filmmakers of being involved in the plot to kill him. This is a constant in Larry's life as he has accused novelty musicians such as Doctor Demento and Weird Al Yankovich of similar conspiracies. Most of the accused are on hand in interviews to confirm that, no, they never actually planned to kill Larry.

The interviews that are included are interesting. In addition to some vintage Frank Zappa interviews, the directors speak with Barnes and Barnes, Dr. Demento and Weird Al Yankovich among others. As revealing as these clips are in revealing Larry's erratic behavior the true meat of the documentary. He is consumed by his mental issues practically all the time and while it is sad to see, it is just a trainwreck that one cannot turn their head away from.

When I started watching the movie, I was amazed to see the clips from Larry's live performances. It seemed to me that most of his "songs" were just ramblings from a damaged mind, so I was surprised to see him able to repeat them word perfectly years later. It was also surprising to see the turnout at Larry Fischer's appearances, as many knowledgeable fans gathered to request songs and sing along. The majority of songs have a very similar tune and feature Larry screaming the lyrics. You will find after watching Derailroaded that a few songs will inexplicably become lodged in your head, so be warned.

Special features are comprised of some material that just didn't make the final cut. My favorite bit features Weird Al doing an impressively spot on impression of a Larry Fischer song while hanging out in an inflatable ball pit. There is a rambling answering machine message from Larry to Josh Rubin from Larry included that has to be heard to be believed. Also included are additional musical numbers and an interview with Blacksploitation star Rudy Ray Moore.

Derailroaded is a jarring look at a man who spent his entire life suffering from manic depression and schizophrenic paranoia. I was impressed at the professionalism of Josh Rubin and Jeremy Lubin, who treat the production professionally, when it would have been very easy to just play it off for laughs. Larry Fischer is a unique performer that I can only tolerate in small doses, however this is an interesting look into his strange life and musical exploits. If you like documentaries, especially those that focus on odd people and fringe culture than you will want to give Derailroaded a watch.

Special Features:

Rudy Ray More interview

Deleted Scenes

Outtakes

Commentary Tracks

Directors liner notes

Derailroaded: Inside the Mind of Larry "Wild Man" Fischer is available on DVD as of March 22, courtesy of MVD Home Entertainment.



[Fischer, Wild Man - Derailroaded](#)

Wild Man Fischer, ...

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1.  *rock* says:

[March 22, 2011 at 11:37 pm](#)

Had never eard of Larry Fisher , sounds like quite an interesting doc .

Reminds me a bit of the Toronto schizophrenic musician star Willis (i think) one of his key songs and most known is called Alanais Morrisette

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