



# "A 289 With Glasspacks... Sweet. Very Sweet."

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## SXSW Film

Daily reviews and interviews

BY MARK FAGAN

### Wesley Willis's Joyrides

D: Chris Bagley & Kim Shively

Wesley Willis was an imposing figure onscreen and off. The 6-foot-6-inch 300-plus-pound Chicago native enjoyed a relatively successful – financially and otherwise – cult career, producing beautifully and meticulously drawn outsider art and startling Casio-driven songs about bestiality and "Rock N Roll McDonalds," among other offbeat topics. Willis suffered from schizophrenia and a difficult family life, which filmmakers Bagley and Shively brilliantly and respectfully document in their loving doc, *Wesley Willis's Joyrides*. His demons antagonized his mind with insulting and profane "hellrides" at times; at others, he playfully head-butted anybody and everybody who shared space with this mammoth artist – which his tumorlike bruise on his forehead attested to. Eventually he added another adversary to his list: leukemia. Bagley and Shively handle this painful turn of events with equal regard and leave viewers with a touching and reverent homage to this troubled head-butter extraordinaire.

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