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## Wesley Willis Joy Rides Documentary coming to DVD



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**Wesley Willis's Joy Rides will be released on DVD December 8, 2009 from Eyeosaur. The trailer is above.**

An underground rock icon and revered artist, the late, great Wesley Willis attracted and offended people the world over. Wesley Willis's Joy Rides follows the life of the prolific and controversial artist on his journey from obscurity to fame.

A Chicago native, Wesley Willis became an underground rock icon, revered artist and hero to many before his untimely death in 2003. Termed by some as an "outsider artist" due to his schizophrenia, the film examines Wesley's ability to draw people in despite his intimidating facade.

Through his force of personality and his artistic talents, Wesley's music and art attracted people from all walks of life. Greeting people with a headbutt and a request to say "rah" and "roh", Wesley quickly stood out in a crowd. Through interviews with friends and footage from the last four years of Wesley's life, a portrait emerges of a man whose day-to-day existence was wrought with pain and joy. Although his life was troubled, Wesley never stopped creating. He continued to draw pictures and write songs up until his death.

Wesley Willis's Joy Rides won the Gold Hugo for the Chicago Award at the 2008 Chicago International Film Festival. It premiered at the Slamdance Film Festival in January 2008, and has since been shown at Noise Pop Film Festival, Hot Docs, SXSW, and The Starz Denver Film Festival.

**Brown Cuts Neighbors** opened for Wesley Willis when he played upstairs at Valentine's in Albany, New York on October 14, 1999. We had a great time hanging out with him and the fellas from Today is My Super Spaceout Day who were touring with him. I bought a CD from Wesley. When I got home, I opened it, and found out the case was empty. I was very lucky to discover Wesley's work very early in his career in Chicago in 1994. He had a magical way of putting words together to bring out the hidden obvious truth of things.

Alternative Tentacles has a wonderful [set of pages dedicated to Wesley](#) including many downloadable MP3s and Jello Biafra's personal tribute to the man.

This news came to us via Paste magazine's Twitter feed. [Their article](#).

Rock over London. Rock on Chicago. New Grape is Ice Cold the whole year 'round. Mmmm mm mmm mmm mmm mmm mmm.

By **Marc Arsenault** | December 3rd, 2009 | [Leave a comment](#)

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