

- [Home](#)
- [featured](#)
- [interviews](#)
- [reviews](#)
- [listening party](#)
- [adventures & rants](#)

- [Posts](#)
- [Comments](#)

Wesley Willis's Joy Rides

By
Frankenstein's Monster

Published: February 9, 2010 **Posted in:** featured, reviews **Tags:** [eating a polar bear's asshole](#), [headbutts](#), [sucking a doberman's dick](#), [whooping batman's ass](#)



- [Comments \[0\]](#)
- [Digg it!](#)
- [Facebook](#)

"I love to have fun, it keeps me out of prison."
Wesley Willis

"Forget Springsteen. Wesley Willis is the alter ego of America."
Jello Biafra

T's Take: I own one Wesley Willis album. It's one of his Greatest Hits that Alternative Tentacles put out. I have about 20,000 songs on my iPod but no matter we are as long as my wife is with me a Willis song will come on shuffle. Only when my wife is with me. I've tested it out with other people and by myself. What does this mean? Nothing, but that my wife is convinced I have his entire discography with me at all times and not just 50 or so songs (20 of which are about sucking various animals dicks). I don't think I ever put him on purposely but he's always welcome when he pops in there on his own accord. You can't deny this man had a knack for catchy songs. Like most good commercial jingles they get stuck in your head, which is probably why he ends each one with a line from an actual commercial. Prior to watching this documentary I thought Willis was just a funny dude that liked headbutting people. Turns out there was a lot more to it than that.

"Wesley Willis's Joy Rides" is both enthralling and at times difficult to watch. Difficult in the way that Willis's schizophrenia and self-dubbed "hell rides" are depressing to witness even if only through the lens of a camera. Probably what makes them have such an impact on the viewer is that Willis is such a likeable character. He's a genius of a man that rose above his circumstances and hustled his art and music 24/7 to garner a modicum of success many musicians and artists would envy. Tragically in 2003 he would die early at the age of 40. In his life Willis over came an absent father, an abusive stepfather, having his family broken up by social services, and a box cutter to the face, but sadly was no match for leukemia. His story shouldn't be remembered for starting and ending on a down note though, because during his 40 short years Willis in many ways fought his way into becoming the embodiment of the American Dream.

What "Joy Rides" showcases best is the lives Willis's overwhelming charisma touched. From his old professors to band mates to roommates and so forth, everyone in this documentary is overjoyed to talk about his impact on their lives (and foreheads). And I can't help but think that anyone who watches this film will be impacted by Willis as well. Any time you want to sit there and bitch that you can't are unable to do something think about Willis. Here's a guy who literally came from nothing, I mean just started at the very bottom and before you know it he's being showcased as an artist in local papers and interviewed on Mtv News. To just look at him sitting in a Kinko's or McDonald's you'd assume he was homeless and not all there, but in fact many times he would roll with ten to twenty thousand in cash from selling his own CDs after shows in far off places like London. Armed with a bic pen, folding chair, and art boards he would draw some of the most amazing Chicago cityscapes you'll ever see. Armed with a notepad of lyrics and keyboard he was a self-proclaimed rock and roll god. He didn't need much to create something larger than life.

Whether you're a fan of Willis or have never heard of the guy I'd still highly recommend "Joy Rides". Rock over London. Rock on Chicago. Beef. It's what's for dinner.

- [Buy Our Shirts!](#)



- [Facebook](#)

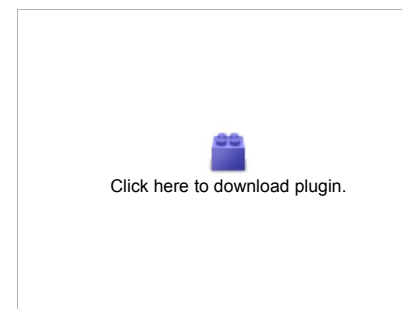


Frankenstein Sound System
Facebook

Become a Fan

Frankenstein Sound System on Facebook

- [Videos](#)



- [Recent Posts](#)

- [FSS Interview – Kim Coletta of Jawbox](#)
- [Murder City Devils – Live in Philly and NYC \(2/12 & 2/13\)](#)
- [Freddy Got Fingered](#)
- [Wesley Willis's Joy Rides](#)
- [Dag Nasty – Live at Lupos, RI 2/23/86](#)

- **Archives**

Select Month

- **For A Good Time**

[Contact Frankenstein](#)

- **Who Is**

[This Is](#)

- **Copyright**

Copyright Frankenstein Sound System. All Rights Reserved.

[About Arras.Theme](#)