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[Film: Documentary](#)

Wesley Willis's Joyrides Film Screening

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Despite impossible odds, Chicago native, WESLEY WILLIS became an underground rock icon, revered artist and hero to many before his untimely death in 2003. Through his force of personality and his artistic talents, WESLEY'S music and art attracted people from all walks of life. *Joy Rides* follows the prolific artist on his journey from obscurity to fame. As the **SF Bay Guardian** raved, "The film will inevitably be compared to *In the Realms of the Unreal* and *The Devil and Daniel Johnston* for its profile of an outsider artist and its clever

animations of WILLIS'S colorful cityscapes, but WILLIS was simply too one of a kind for *Joy Rides* to be anything but."

“

The fascination with — or arguably, fetishization of — mentally ill artists is nothing new (call it the Prinzhorn effect). But over the past few years, that impulse has especially taken hold of the rock-doc genre. See Daniel Johnston, Roky Erickson, Larry Wild Man Fisher, et al. Chicago's own Wesley Willis was actually among that company before *Joyrides*, with *The Daddy of Rock 'N Roll* also chronicling the Casio-wielding schizophrenic/cult favorite. This account, which sees its DVD release this week, is unpolished, but the directors' obvious love for their subject still moves. And while some fans' emphasis on the profane and insular side of Willis did border on exploitative, Willis' trademark theme was pretty universal — to hold an enthusiasm for life, music, and friends and overcome the "demon hell rides" of daily life. And the music, of course, whipped a wild horse's ass. Rock over London. Rock on, Chicago.

” - *Stephen Gossett*

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Price

[Free](#)

When

Saturday Dec 5 (7pm)

Where

[The Empty Bottle](#)

1035 N Western Ave

773.276.3600

Directions: We are located at the corner of Western and Cortez in Chicago, three blocks south of Division and just north of Augusta. The Empty Bottle is most easily accessible from Interstate 90/94 (The Kennedy Expressway). More options here: <http://emptybottle.com>

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