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Documentaries I Like: Wesley Willis's Joy Rides – It's A Rock-You-Mentary

by [Chris Higgins](#) - December 10, 2009 - 4:55 PM

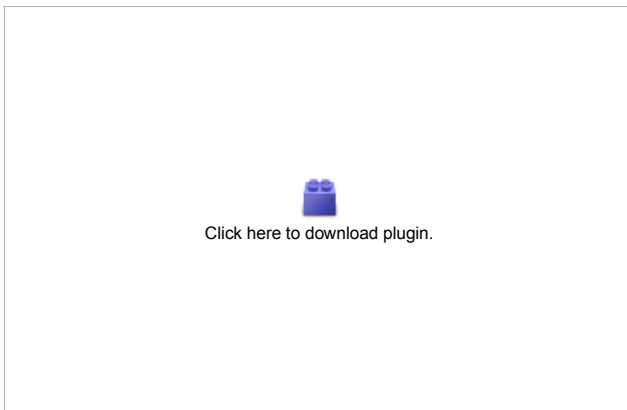
CHRIS HIGGINS' Documentaries I Like



So yesterday I posted **The Late Movies: Rock On, Wesley Willis**, featuring some of Wesley Willis's bizarre-but-awesome [music](#). But the real treat comes today, when **you can watch an entire documentary about Wesley Willis online — this week only**. (Later, you'll have to buy the DVD.) The new documentary is called **Wesley Willis's Joy Rides**, and I think you should **watch** it.

Surprise: Wesley Willis was a skilled visual artist. His drawings, featured in this film, have a powerful architectural style, generally showing Chicago cityscapes, McDonald's, the Dan Ryan Expressway, and other visions of Willis's life. "I draw buses, [trucks](#), cars, and buildings," says Willis in one voiceover. His knowledge of perspective is fantastic. His drawing implement of choice? A blue ball-point pen. Why? "Because architects make blueprints."

In *Wesley Willis's Joy Rides*, we learn where Willis came from, in the words of his siblings, his father, his musical and artistic colleagues, and Willis himself — he participated in the making of the documentary in the years up until his death in 2003. We learn about his childhood, his visual art, his music, and generally just the human side of an artist who was hard to figure out. There are plenty of surprises here (for example, Willis on MTV being interviewed by Tabitha Soren). Watch the film below (click the "more" link and the video will load and start playing automatically) this week only (courtesy of Pitchfork), or **just watch it at Pitchfork**. You can also **buy the DVD**. Note: **there is some spicy language in this film**, but not much. I mean, it's the south side of Chicago, there's gonna be a few f-bombs dropped.



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