

Pilgrimage to Perfection

Iron City Blues

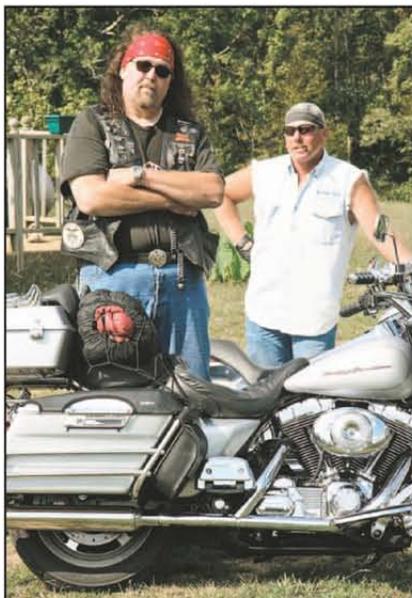
Big Mike Griffin
 Gemini Production Group, Inc.
 (52 minutes plus bonus footage
 and a CD of the soundtrack)
www.ironcityblues.com
www.bigmikegriffin.com

Reviewed by Bill Hayes

Bluesman Big Mike Griffin has rolled through many years and miles playing every major biker rally and get-together from coast to coast. He is in a very elite class of artist. Very few performers are so completely dedicated to playing 100 percent biker music 100 percent of the time with 100 percent of their playing venues being motorcycle events. There aren't many that show that kind of passion for this lifestyle. After Big Mike, Charlie Brechtel, and the Fryed Brothers, the list gets pretty short.

Big Mike's music is pure biker blues/rock. With CDs like "Harley in the Rain," "Livin' Large," "Twin Brothers of Different Mothers" and "Two Lane Road," Big Mike has added many important notes to the complete soundtrack of this lifestyle.

Big Mike is a Southern boy, but a couple of weeks ago at a bar in northern Los Angeles County, I walked in to get a drink and heard one of Big Mike's classics, "Cool Guitar," playing on the jukebox. His music has definitely had a nationwide impact.



Big Mike Griffin and his riding partner, Jason Neese

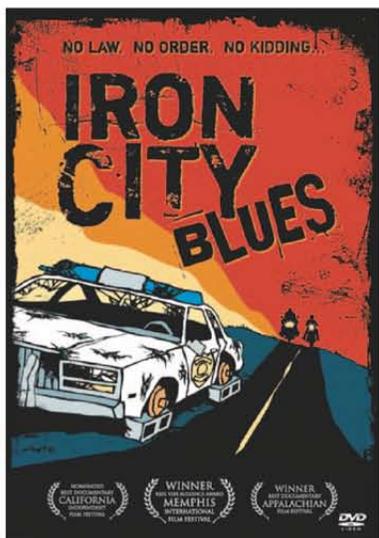
The new film documentary "Iron City Blues" shifts Big Mike's artistry, creativity and understanding of the biker world into a higher gear. There's music in it, of course, and bikes and bikers, but there is also one of the coolest storylines and concepts that I have seen in a biker flick in a long, long time. It's so cool because it's so real.

Yes, Big Mike is a bluesman. Being involved in the blues requires certain emotions and certain obligations. One of the mandatory emotions is a love for the heritage of the blues. And there is an obligation to keep up the near-religious quest for the perfect blues song; like a surfer always seeking the perfect wave. B.B. King

found his personal best in "The Thrill is Gone." Buddy Guy rode to shore on "Damn Right I've Got the Blues." Howlin' Wolf became "Evil."

"Iron City Blues" is Big Mike's pilgrimage to perfection.

But the twists and turns on this quest are what make this documentary one of the best biker flicks I've seen in years. To begin with, Big Mike shows us another one of those "blues obligations," in that he has to actually live the experiences he writes and sings about.



"One of the best biker flicks I've seen in years."

-Bill Hayes, Thunder Press



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Iron City Blues

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“It was time to record a new album and I needed a tune that people would remember,” Big Mike says in the film’s introduction. “So I decided to write about a hellhole that I’d been hearing stories about for years: a town tucked into the middle of nowhere down on the Tennessee/Alabama border. A place where even cops are afraid to go. I figured that a lawless town with a sky-high murder rate would make a perfect subject for a blues tune. So I decided to ride down there and see it for myself... you’re gonna witness the creation of a blues song about the most notorious town in the South: Iron City.”

And Big Mike definitely makes good on his promise. His journey, the people he encounters along the way, the town of Iron City and the classic tune that evolves from all of this is pure biker, pure blues and purely real.

Now not to be insensitive, prejudicial or politically incorrect here, but I’m sure a lot of us have found ourselves feeling just a tad uneasy when we’ve stumbled into a rural Southern town after sundown or alone or with a mechanical breakdown or with any other kind of problem or situation that may have made us feel especially vulnerable. It’s one thing to be in the middle of a place like New York City or Newark and hear the question, “Hey, are you talkin’ to me?” It’s something else altogether different to be way down South and hear a slow and deliberate: “Y’all ain’t from around these parts, are ya... boy?”

Things usually go downhill in a hurry after that.

“Iron City Blues” takes us for quite a ride; straight into the jaws of a place like that.

The way this story is told is so reflective of Big Mike’s personality and the way in which he translates the blues. There’s power, strength and command, but there is also the always-present element of humor and homespun back porch “tale tellin’.”

“Iron City Blues” has already stirred up a lot of attention on the documentary film circuit, having been nominated for the Best Documentary at the California Independent Film Festival; winning the Reel Vibe Audience Award at the Memphis International Film Festival; and winning the Best Documentary Award at the Appalachian Film Festival.

The honors are well deserved. “Iron City Blues” is the best of Big Mike, bikers and blues, on a wild road trip to “a place where even cops are afraid to go.” ▶

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pure blues and
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-Bill Hayes, Thunder Press

Myrtle Beach event map... center pullout
MAY '08
THUNDER
FREE PRESS.
Harley-Davidson and American Motorcycle News
DAYTONA BIKE WEEK 2008
At Least the Weather's Wild
Turnout declines, diversity the theme
by Shilke
DAYTONA BEACH, FLA., FEB. 29-MARCH 10—It's the first Sunday of Daytona Bike Week, and I'm cruising across International Speedway Boulevard, headed east to the beach. The weather is pretty close to perfect—sunny and in the 60s—and has been since I arrived in Orlando the morning before. The ride is a familiar one, yet there's something different this year. Generally, Bike Week brings gridlocked traffic around the Speedway and the
See "Daytona," page 13, column 1

Snake's Shriners Easter Run
Baskets full of hope
The world's fastest parade
by Robert Hill
SCOTT'S HURSTON, MARCH 22—What has 400 wheels, migrates south once a year at speeds near 80 mph and makes children smile? Well if it's the day after Good Friday, the answer would be Snake's Shriners Easter Run. And that was the
See "Snake's Shriners," page 66, column 1

THUNDER MOUNTAIN CUSTOMS' NEW SHRITERE
EXTREME SPORTY!
See page 66

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