

# THE IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS II

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HOT LIST

## 3 Immortal Lee County Killers

Love Is a Charm of Powerful Trouble

An Excellent garage-punk duo chops up the blues something fierce, driven by Boss Sherrard's psychopathic drums and Cheetah Weise's fuzzed-up-guitar: total destruction to your mind.

Nemu.com  
Jenny Tatone

Alabama's The Immortal Lee County Killers II, known for their dirty, thrashing blues-rock, will have their second full-length recording, *Love Is a Charm of Powerful Trouble* (Estrus), released on Feb. 18. A single featuring "Shitcanned Again" off the album, as well as a live version of the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil" (with Nebula's Eddie Glass on second guitar), will be out on Spain's Safety Pin Records in January.

The new album comes a year after the Killers — guitarist-singer Chetley "El Cheetah" Weise and new drummer J.R.R. Tokien — debuted with the well-received, rough and screeching *Essential Fucked-Up Blues*. Recorded on eight-track in a shack in Auburn, Ala., the band's first album aimed at breaking down any traditions or standards that may have been set for the blues over the years. The Killers, initially comprising Weise and drummer Doug "the Boss" Sherrard, formed in 2000; Tokien, better known to the group's fans as "the Tokien One," replaced Sherrard last year.

The new album was recorded in Opelika, Ala., where the duo is based. "Six amplifiers broke during the recording, one rehearsal/studio space was demolished by the City of Opelika, one important and hard to find guitar effect pedal 'disappeared' while on tour, and an unhappy landlord almost evicted the Tokien One from his home," the band reports on their Lee County Killers site. "Not to mention, the difficulty of working around the church services held next door, the searing heat inside the second rehearsal/studio space, the gremlins devouring the Cheetah's 8 track recorder, Peak's code 666 error, and despite the usual difficulties of creating and documenting music, the ILCK2 finished 11 songs. In hindsight, the record's title is particularly fitting."

The Killers toured extensively during 2002, stopping at EngineStudios in Chicago to lay down three tracks. "She Likes It" and "OOO-WEEE" will appear on a split EP with Cash Audio on Orange Records. A version of the late John Lee Hooker's "Never Get Out of These Blues Alive" was also recorded, but, according to the band, "has been placed in the 'vault' until a good home" for the recording is found.

Hoping to remove any boundaries set by genre classification, the Killers — they say they named themselves "after their home, Jerry Lee Lewis (the original killer), and a burning desire for immortality" — use the original emotional power of the blues to fuel the invention of something new and, frankly, to fuck things up. "The two have broken from the Mississippi Delta blues and rock 'n' roll tradition," according to the Estrus Records site. "Fuck punk rock. Fuck blues. Fuck rock 'n' roll. Try something new."

Or, as the Tokien One puts it: "When the dust has settled and all the smoke has cleared, you'll know who the Killers are," the Estrus site quotes him as saying.

The *Essential Fucked-Up Blues* garnered critical attention for its ferociously dark sonic onslaught of gritty, noisy punk-tinged blues. It's an album that went a long way towards achieving the Killers' goal of capturing the blues at its rawest.

NME - 25th January 2003

THE IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS

Love Is a Charm of Powerful Trouble (Estrus)

Not for TILCK the usual bluesman moping. Nope, when these guys get dumped, instead of strumming tearfully on their porch they write a song called 'Shitcanned Again' a moonshine-soaked stomp that makes the likes of Jon Spencer Blues Explosion sound like pigeon-chested pantywaists. This Alabama quartet deal in dirty rusty trucker punk-blues wailing which makes no concessions to Clapton-style worthiness. Instead they play the blues like they're supposed to be played: very, very fast. Ferocious. 7/10

ROCK SOUND - February 2003

THE IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS

Love Is a Charm of Powerful Trouble (Estrus)

With a title inspired by Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (go on, get your old schoolbooks out to check and re-read you cultural heathens), here's an album by a band that are soooo cool it hurts! They may be a duo, but the ILCK II (dubbed II as their second album features a different drummer) don't have to rely on press hype from certain rags, no sir - the ILCK II have done that on their own merits - by creating a kickass record! This is a scuzzy concoction of the blues combined with punk rock feedback and attitude, to make for a superb, honest, grassroots sound. Bred on an intravenous drip of John Lee Hooker, John Coltrane, Hound Dog Taylor, Stooges and Black Sabbath '...Love...' is an electrifying album that shows there is still some soul left in rock 'n' roll. Amazing stuff. 8/10

Alternative Press - February 2003

The Immortal Lee County Killers

Love Is A Charm Of Powerful Trouble

Detonating the real blues explosions.

If the blues is wounded music, then the Immortal Lee County Killers are a pack of knife-riddled wildcats. The Alabama two-piece wail, lash out and grow woozy under the weight of their own bombastic passion, with frontman Chetley "El Cheetah" Weise warbling like Elvis on a speed-binge breakdown. Unlike relatively more tempered punk/blues professionals the White Stripes, the Killers come unhinged at every turn, from Weise's virtuosic guitar work (which piles on extra heavy distortion when the mood is especially stormy) to drummer J.R.R. Tokien's supreme reigning on the traps. That's not to say *Love Is a Charm of Powerful Trouble* is one big tantrum of wounded and wily expression; the slower tracks are just as intriguingly tormented for any fan of primitive Delta-blues meltdowns. 5/5

Jennifer Maerz

The Immortal Lee County Killers II

Love Is a Charm of Powerful Trouble (Estrus)

By Ken Shimamoto

Punking up the blues wasn't a new idea when the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion broke the card in 1992. Even before that, Austin punk eminence grise Tim Kerr dabbled in something similar with Poison 13 and Monkeywrench. (Of course, the Stones did it first on *Beggar's Banquet*.) Post-JSBX, faster than you could say "Wang Dang Doodle," everybody and his sister was getting into the act: Twenty Miles, Big Foot Chester, the Soledad Brothers, the overhyped White Stripes, the Black Keys, Mr. Airplane Man, etc.

My fave among this bunch has long been the Immortal Lee County Killers, led by ex-Quadrajt member, liquor store employee, and doctoral candidate Chet "Cheetah" Weise. Alabama blueschild Weise got pulled into punk by his love of noise and climbing on top of things -- re-

frigerators, amplifiers, bars, the fountain at Austin's Casino El Camino. The "II" in the band's name comes from the ILCK getting a new drummer, ex-Quadrajt J.R.R. Tokien, who replaces Doug "Boss" Sherrard, the main man behind everything since ILCK's debut, *The Essential Fucked-Up Blues* (2001; also on Estrus). Personally, I preferred the Boss' hip-hop DJ-like approach to the trap set, but that's quibbling.

There's not much subtlety or finesse here, nor is there anything as strong and startling as their reimagining of "Catfish Blues" from the debut. They do almost pull off that same trick on an Otis Redding chestnut, in "That's How Strong My Love Is." One thing you'll definitely notice about this disc: ILCK show signs of giving in to O Brother, Where Art Thou-ism with a relatively straight reading of the bluegrass "What Are They Doing in Heaven Today?" Mercy!

NME - 1st Feb 2003

London, Buffalo Bar Jan 21

and so out attention moves south from Detroit to Alabama to be precise. The Killers part of their name is a nod to the original rock n roll rebel - Jerry Lee Lewis - and they certainly share that Killer's sense of righteous but hellbound spiritual confusion.

Singer/guitarist Chet 'Cheetah' Weise looks like Gaz Coombes if he'd been weaned on moonshine, while drummer JRR Tokien looks appropriately like a serial killer. Southern grit pumps through their veins in a way it never could for their contemporaries from the motor city (the White stripes) and New York City (Jon Spencer Blues Explosion).

There are raw, mangled versions of blues standards by John Lee Hooker and RL Burnside, there's audience participation and theres showmanship - including Tokien Time', a mid set spot of testifying from the drummer. Most importantly, there is a whole lot of soul among the hollering and preaching. 'Don't nothing Hurt Me Like my Back Side' and the fearsome closer 'let's get Killed' take on much more of a groove and a swagger that their recorded counterparts and, like their idol Jerry Lee, the Killers shake your nerves and rattle your brain.

Tangerine Magazine

The Immortal Lee County Killers:

Love is a Charm of Powerful Trouble CD (Estrus)

Fantastic fractured blues. These two Lee County, Alabama blues busters burst every seam and gut while wrenching torture and torment out of the gutter and hammering it home into your wounded heart and soul. This is true visceral emotion laid down as bare and sparse as possible. Primitive and primal, as real as pain and as pure as rain. Not primitive as in simple, but primitive as in profound, profoundly powerful and passionate. Think down and out, without a friend in the wicked world, penniless and hobbing through some small town train-yard or hiding out in a grubby Greyhound bus terminal. These two Bama boys must have seen some serious hard times to be able to slam out blues as authentic and gritty as this. This may be the most authentic blues a white man has ever produced. This is not some cover tune copy of Delta depression. This is more like an evolved step backwards into a new/old form of blues expression, an amalgam of modern worries and troubles clothed in music colored by Captain Beefheart, Hound Dog Taylor, Jandek, Blue Cheer, John Lee Hooker, Robert Johnson, and MC5. Frontman Chetley "El Cheetah" Weise wails and wobbles like a man possessed by black blues ghosts with hellhounds on his trail, slamming out distortion dripping heavy guitar while drummer J.R.R. Tokien pounds the pus out of his infected trap skins. The Devil's music never sounded so raw and rabid. The most meaningful blue note meltdown you will ever hear. - Glenn Tillman.