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Photo by Shirley Mae Owens

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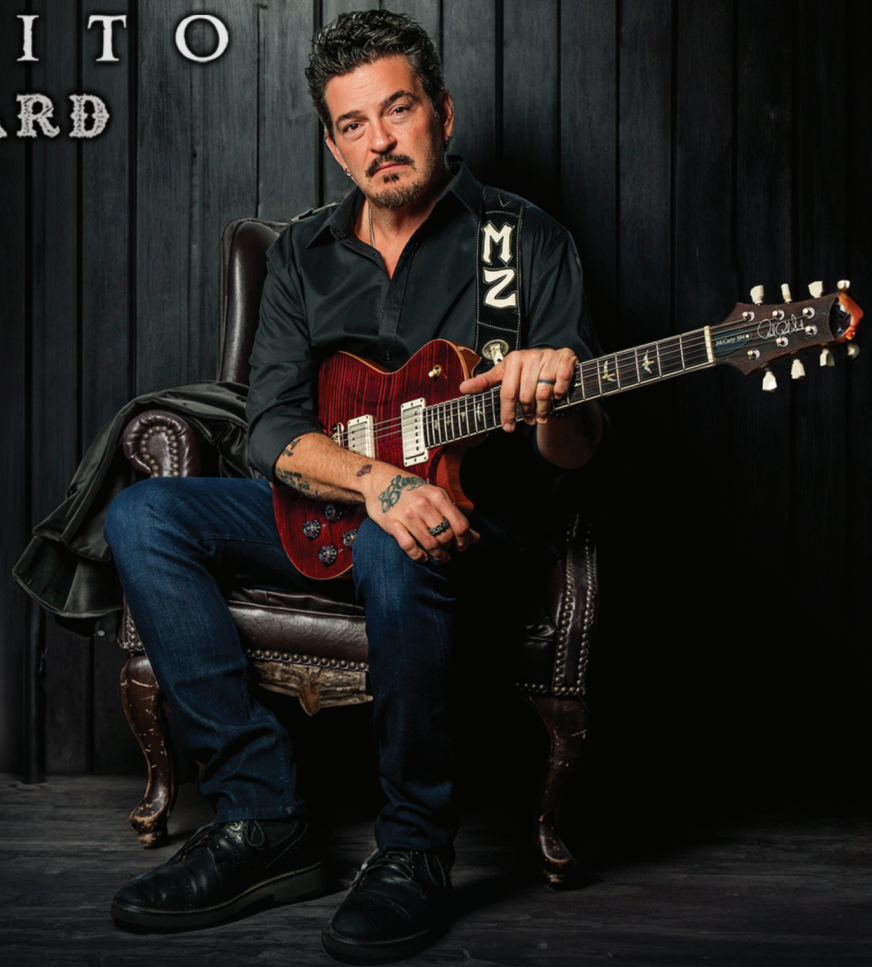
VISIT  
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Jimmy "Duck" Holmes | Blue Front Cafe | Bentonia, Mississippi

# MIKE ZITO

## LIFE IS HARD



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**OUT NOW!**



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# BIG CITY **BLUES** VIEWS

## I Ain't Complaining, I'm Just Explaining!

*"It was the best of times and the worst of times..."*

We left Michigan behind just in time as the winter was quickly closing in. It was time to start driving south to sunny Florida for the epic **40th Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise (LRBC)**.

Before we could break through to the other side of the snow/ice, we stopped overnight at a frozen Nashville Hampton Inn where instead of getting a snowplow or ice melt, they just wait until it warms up for the sun to melt it! And after all our travels we found our first bed bugs and immediately moved out. Big thanks to **Patrick Caringer's** Clearwater hospitality! To say the least, unfortunately I haven't been on top of my game due to being treated for cancer. Thanks to Sugar and friends for keeping me alive and many thanks to all the **#40 Legendary Rhythm & Blues Krewe and Cruisers!** As usual the LRBC was smooth sailing and over the top with the best of the best musicians. Visit - [www.bluescruise.com](http://www.bluescruise.com).

After working nonstop for a week, Sugar had packed up and counted 11 bags and boxes to be picked up at the port warehouse after disembarking. However she forgot to do the count and somewhere in the Everglades, she got a call from a cruiser from Philly on her way to Miami who mistakenly picked up one of our black bags and returned it to the terminal.



**Jon Fohl & Robert Jr. Whitall, Big Chief Monk Boudreaux's house, Mardi Gras Day, 2/13/24**

Photo/Shirley Mae Owens

Luckily our great assistant **Bob O Walesa** was still near Port Everglades and retrieved it. Thanks again Bob O!

Sadly, two days after we left the LRBC, I learned that our friend **Donald Kinsey** had passed on 2/6/24. I have been talking to Donald often for many years and while he was recently recovering from a car accident after the 2023 Chicago Blues Festival. Donald arranged for the **The Kinsey Report's** song "**Nobody's Fault**" from their CD "**I'll Be Standing**" dedicated to **Ralph Kinsey**

who died on 1/16/24 for our new **Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine's CD Sampler #35 "Got Mojo."** RIP Kinsey Brothers - Ralph & Donald.

Our next planned adventure was to go to New Orleans to celebrate life and our 25th engagement anniversary when in 1999, before **Harry Connick Jr.'s Orpheus Parade** on Lundi Gras that featured other celebrities like **Whoopi** and **Sandra Bullock**, I threw Sugar a ring and she caught it! This year we met friends at **Big Chief Monk**

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**On the cover:** Photo by Shirley Mae Owens

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**John Primer & Robert Jr. Whitall, #40 LRBC, 2/1/24**

Photo/Shirley Mae Owens

Boudreaux's home to see his new suit and the Golden Eagles where they begin a second line through their neighborhoods. We met Bill Wax and his wife Sheila for their first Mardi Gras and Baltimore friends Bob Sekinger and his wife Kathy plus Jon Fohl, Johnny Sansone and Eric Johnson. Later that afternoon, I started having serious back pain and was admitted to New Orleans Ochsner Medical Center where doctors have been trying to figure me out since then. It's not the first time that I finished a Big City Rhythm &

Blues Magazine in the hospital. I have done several at Detroit's Henry Ford Health too. Thanks to Charlie Auringer, Guy Powell, Bob Monteleone and all the writers who faithfully participate and support my efforts to promote the music scene.

While I convalesced in the hospital Sugar shot the cover with the Lost Bayou Ramblers at the historic Maple Leaf Bar that is celebrating their 50th Anniversary! The Maple Leaf has music 7 nights a weeks and is one of the longest continuing New Orleans' music clubs.

**Donald Kinsey, Robert Jr. Whitall, Shirley Mae Owens, Ralph Kinsey and Ken Kinsey, Slippery Noodle, Indianapolis, IN, 12/15/2013**

Photo/Dave Fields



6 Big City Rhythm & Blues • April-May 2024

### Top 11 Songs on Junior's Jukebox

1. Mavis Staples - Have A Little Faith
2. Danielle Nicole Band - The Love You Bleed
3. Mike Zito - Life Is Hard
4. Bobby Rush - All My Love For You
5. Chris O'Leary Band - The Hard Line
6. Kevin Burt Big Medicine - Thank-you Brother Bill - a tribute to Bill Withers
7. Kingfish - Live in London
8. Coco Montoya - Writing on the Wall
9. Blood Brothers - Live in Canada
10. Jason Ricci and the Bad Kind - Behind the Veil
11. Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine's CD Sampler #35 Got Mojo?

Established in 1974, so many legends have performed there such as James Booker, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Walter "Wolfman" Washington, Henry Butler and many more. Today you can see Grammy Lifetime Achievement winner George Porter Jr. every Monday Night. Sugar was hoping to shoot the cover outside "The Leaf" but the weather did not cooperate. We first met The Lost Bayou Ramblers last year at Shaggy's NOLA Crawfish Festival. Congratulations for their second Grammy win this year, a tie with Buckwheat Zydeco, Jr.!

It's festival time and looking ahead is the Tampa Bay Blues Festival (April 12-14, 2024) held annually in scenic St. Petersburg by the Bay, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (April 25 - May 5, 2024) featuring the Rolling Stones and Blues On The Fox, Aurora, IL (June 14 & 15, 2024) and King Biscuit Blues Festival, Helena, AR, (October 9-12, 2024). Big thanks to these not-to-be-missed festivals that have supported Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine's work for many years. Get out there and let's go festing!

Spring is here! See you down the road. Take the high road, when you get to the crossroads - take it! May the river be with you, may the wind be at your back, surf's up, mahola, aloha and don't forget to boogie!

Hope, peace, love & happiness,

Best,  
Robert Jr. Whitall

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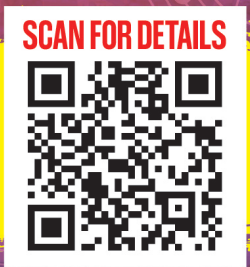
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