Smokey Wilson - 88th. St. Blues (1983)

A1 Standing At The Crossroads 3:10 A2 You Better Watch Yourself 2:57 A3 Sun Is Shinning 3:04 A4 I Didn't Know 3:22 A5 You Know What My Body Needs 4:10 B1 Going Back Down South 4:05 B2 I Got Something On You Baby 3:46 B3 You Don't Love Me 4:08 B4 88th Street Blues 4:38 Smokey Wilson – vocals, guitar Hollywood Fats – guitar Honey Alexander – piano Rod Piazza – harmonica Larry Taylor – bass Richard Innes - drums

The barbed-wire vocals and slashing guitar of Mississippi-bred Smokey Wilson blend well with harpist Rod Piazza and company on this 1983 set first out on Murray Bros. Records. Not quite as stunning as his more recent work for Bullseye Blues, but definitely has some incendiary moments. ---Bill Dahl, Rovi

When Los Angeles-based guitarist Smokey Wilson really got serious about setting a full-fledged career as a bluesman in motion, it didn't take him long to astound the aficionados with an incendiary 1993 set for Bullseye Blues, Smoke n' Fire, that conjured up echoes of the Mississippi Delta of his youth.

Robert Lee Wilson lived and played the blues with Roosevelt "Booba" Barnes, Big Jack Johnson, Frank Frost, and other Mississippi stalwarts before relocating to L.A. in 1970 when he was 35 years old. But instead of grabbing for the gold as a touring entity, he opened the Pioneer Club in Watts, leading the house band and nobly booking the very best in blues talent (all-star attractions at the fabled joint included Joe Turner, Percy Mayfield, Pee Wee Crayton, Albert Collins, and plenty more).

Wilson recorded sparingly at first, his LPs for Big Town not doing the man justice. A 1983 set for Murray Brothers (recently reissued on Blind Pig) with harpist Rod Piazza and Hollywood Fats on rhythm guitar may have been the turning point; clearly, he was gearing up to leave his Mississippi mark on Southern California blues. --- coblues.com

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