

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Mike Zito - First Class Life



Mike Zito - First Class Life released on the [Ruf Records](#) label is a masterful release for [Blues singer/songwriter/guitarist Mike Zito](#). Joined by **Lewis Stephens**, **Matthew Johnson**, **Terry Dry**, and **Bernard Allison**, the 11-track release showcases Mike Zito's rich story telling lyrics, the talent of the musicians, and has enough chops to keep you repeatedly hitting the replay button. The release hits stores on May 11, 2018.



Mike Zito - First Class Life: *Mississippi Nights, First Class Life, I Wouldn't Treat A Dog (The Way You Treat Me), The World We Live In, Mama Don't Like No Wah Wah, Old Black Graveyard, Dying Day, Back Problems, Time For A Change, Damn Shame, Trying To Make A Living*

Personnel **Mike Zito** - vocals, guitars, **Lewis Stephens** - piano, B3 organ, Rhodes/Wurlitzer, **Matthew Johnson** - drums, **Terry Day** - bass guitar, **Bernard Allison** - rhythm and lead guitar on *Mama Don't Like No Wah Wah* (track 5)

Mike Zito - First Class Life was produced by **Mike Zito** and **Executive Producer Thomas Ruf** and released on the [Ruf Records](#) label. Mike Zito wrote all the songs with the exception of *Mama Don't Like No Wah Wah*, which he co-wrote with Bernard Allison, and the last track, *Trying To Make A Living*, written by T. Daniel, N. Eatman, and Leonard James LaCour, Sr.

I first encountered Mike Zito several years ago during a live performance when he was with the **Royal Southern Brotherhood** (playing with Cyril Neville, Devon Allman, Yonrico Scott, and Charlie Wooten) and thought, wow, that guy can really play the guitar and I loved his voice. My impression of his talent and ability continued as he branched out on his debut solo release *Gone To Texas* (released in 2013) and later on Mike Zito and The Wheel on his 2015 *Keep Coming Back* release.

As a songwriter, singer, and musician, Mike Zito has an interesting backstory that provides the backbone for his Blues music. He is someone who has encountered and successfully battled many demons along the way, with the result that his music has a genuineness to it and is somehow richer and deeper from his many experiences.

Straight out of the package, *Mike Zito - First Class Life*, kicks it into high gear on the opening track *Mississippi Nights*, which shows his prowess as a talented songwriter, singer, and guitarist.

Next in the playlist is the title track, *First Class Life*, of which Mike Zito writes, "The title track is a nod to where I've come from and where I'm at. It's a rags-to-riches story, and it's certainly true. I grew up poor in St. Louis, and now I'm traveling the world to sing my songs. In the world of excess America, I may not look

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'rich,' but in my world, I most certainly am. I have a beautiful family, I'm clean and sober, and I get to play music."

Mike down shifts into third gear on this song to allow the full impact of the lyrics, "... I've got a second chance at living a first-class life..." to hit the listener dead center on the emotional target.

I Wouldn't Treat A Dog (The Way You Treat Me) has great lyrics about fair weather friends, and *The World We Live In* is funky Blues about the highs and lows of life and has a kick-it up wailing guitar riff. Bernard Allison and Mike Zito share co-writing credits on *Mama Don't Like No Wah Wah* with Bernard joining the band playing rhythm and lead guitars. The band shifts into high gear on this song which has a killer of a long guitar opening.

The band takes it slow on *Old Black Graveyard*, then picks up the pace again on *Dying Day*. Other tracks include *Back Problems* and *Time For A Change*. Coming into the home stretch, the band slows the pace on the sultry number *Damn Shame* that lets the listener sit back and get into the listening groove.

The release closes with a rollicking finish with the industrial strength song, *Trying To Make A Living*, written by T. Daniel, N. Eatman, and Leonard James LaCour, Sr. As a warning, put on your dancing shoes before this song starts because you will not want to miss a beat as this song will have you on your feet dancing until the last note is played.

Until next time, keep enjoying the music!

Websites where you can procure **Mike Zito - First Class Life**: [Mike Zito Online Store](#), [Amazon](#), [Barnes and Noble](#), [Best Buy](#)

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