

## Link Wray

Fred Lincoln 'Link' Wray, Jr. (May 2, 1929 – November 5, 2005), was an American rock and roll guitarist, songwriter and vocalist who became popular in the late 1950s.

Building on the distorted electric guitar sound of early records, his 1958 instrumental hit "Rumble" by Link Wray and his Ray Men popularized "the power chord, the major modus operandi of modern rock guitarists, facilitating the emergence of "punk and heavy rock". Rolling Stone placed Wray at No. 45 of the 100 greatest guitarists of all time. In 2013 he was a nominee for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Wray was born on May 2, 1929 in Dunn, North Carolina, to Fred Lincoln Wray, Sr. and his wife, Lillian M. Wray (née Coats). They were Shawnee Native Americans. Three songs he performed were named for American Indian tribes: "Shawnee", "Apache", and "Comanche". "Apache" was an instrumental composed by Jerry Lordan; it was originally a hit in the United Kingdom for The Shadows in 1960. Wray recorded a cover version 30 years later, when it was also associated with The Ventures and the Incredible Bongo Band.

Wray served in the US Army during the Korean War, and contracted tuberculosis, which laid him up in a hospital for a year. His stay concluded with the removal of a lung, which doctors predicted would mean he would never be able to sing again.

### Career:

Wray's first hit, "Rumble", was banned in New York and Boston for fear it would incite teenage gang violence. The record was first released on Cadence Records as Cat # 1347 (as Link Wray and the Ray-Men). Before, during and after his stints with major labels Epic and Swan, Wray released 45's under many names. Tiring of the corporate music machine, he began recording albums using a three-track studio he converted from an outbuilding on his brother's property that his father used to raise chickens.

While living in the San Francisco Bay Area in the early 1970s, Wray was introduced to Quicksilver Messenger Service guitarist John Cipollina by bassist James Hutchinson. He subsequently formed a band initially featuring special guest Cipollina along with the rhythm section from Cipollina's band Copperhead, bassist Hutch Hutchinson, and drummer David Weber. They opened for the band Lighthouse at The Whisky a Go Go in Los Angeles from May 15–19, 1974. He later did numerous concerts and radio broadcasts in the Bay Area including KSAN (FM) and the Bill Graham venue Winterland Ballroom, with Les Lizama later replacing Hutchinson on bass. He toured and recorded two albums with retro-rockabilly artist Robert Gordon in the late 1970s. The 1980s to the present day saw a large number of reissues as well as new material. One member of his band in the 1980s, drummer Anton Fig, later became drummer in the CBS Orchestra on the Late Show with David Letterman. In 1994, he played on four songs of the album Chatterton by French rocker Alain Bashung

### Personal life

Link Wray was buried in the crypt of the Christian's Church, Copenhagen.]

### Legacy

Jack Rose cited Wray as an influence, as did Iggy Pop and Neil Young. Jimmy Page says that Link Wray had a "real rebel attitude" and credits him in It Might Get Loud as a major influence in his early career. According to Rolling Stone, Pete Townshend of The Who once said, "If it hadn't been for Link Wray and 'Rumble,' I never would have picked up a guitar."