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## The Thieves

### *Tales From The White Line* (2005)

 Review by: [Michael Walls](#)

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The Thieves want you to believe that they are a trio of hard rockin', harder partying, delinquent outcasts from Oxford England – tearing up the beaches and bars of Los Angeles California with their 70's infused looks and sounds. And at first inspection, this may not be far fetched. Just read the blog of "Paul the Roadie" from The Thieves website and you'll get an inside look at life on a tour bus, where every night is a party. Hell, when we caught up with them back in March in Rochester, NY, front man and guitarist Hal Stokes was hobbling around on stage with a broken foot – sustained while doing wind sprints and

wall diving to avoid the long arm of the law. (See [Live at the Bug Jar: The Thieves and Electric Eel Shock.](#))

But despite the mounting evidence of delinquency and reckless lifestyles – one listen to The Thieves' *Tales From The White Line* will prove that they are actually extremely sophisticated and highly talented musicians.

I have been patiently waiting for this album since wearing out the grooves on the 4-song *White Line EP* I received several months ago. My plan was to expand on my short, but [glowing review](#) of that EP, regardless of what the full album sounded like. After all, four killer songs on an album should be considered a worthy effort.

Turns out – those four songs from the original EP that I became so enamored with – aren't even the best songs on *Tales From The White Line*.

The rough-around-the-edges, simplistic rock n' roll charade of The Thieves is highlighted on this album by raw opening guitar riffs, drumstick counts, false starts and fading feedback outtros. And right from the beginning of the CD we hear the rewinding of a reel-to-reel tape – where you can almost hear the decades zipping back to a time when rock n' roll was pure and simple and fun.

But it's all part of the image. They may have been influenced by the likes of The Rolling Stones, Zeppelin and AC/DC, but The Thieves aren't a novelty act. They're invading the States with an originality and energy that's been missing since we all became mesmerized by the touchy-feely hokeyness of the Coldplay and Jeff Buckley wannabees. It's time to get back to *raawk n' roll* basics and The Thieves are taking names and kicking asses.

The Thieves are a human drum machine named Jamie "Dirty Daws" Dawson; Sam Stokes an over-caffeinated bass player, and his brother Hal Stokes – guitarist, lyricist and lead singer whose vocal range will please everyone from radio station managers to hard rock groupies trying to piss off their parents. Going from a velvety smooth growl to a Robert Plant pitched howl is an easy and regular feat for Mr. Stokes, and only barely overshadowed by his blistering guitar work.

Yes, the original cuts from the *White Line EP* are still standouts on *Tales From The White Line*. Radio-friendly "You Get It Easy" has the catchy lyrics and air-guitar moments to make it a popular cut. While the title track "Tales From The White Line" with its pounding drum and bass lines, gravel-like guitar, coffee can vocals and absolute scorching end jam with a Hammond organ will be the track that gets blasted out of car windows this summer.

But I wasn't prepared for a windfall of other great tunes, including the opener "Gimme Some Lip" – a Van Halen-esque rocker with big, head-bobbing riffs and great lyrics. When Hal reaches the bridge, brings the music down low and growls into the microphone – "Gimme some lip, boy, and I'll give you a reason!" – you can hear him gritting his teeth and can almost see him raising his fist to pop someone.

"Don't You Lose Me" competes with "You Get It Easy" as most radio-friendly. Although it starts off as a simple rocker, with crunchy guitar chords and punchy lyrics – the chorus and bridge turns it into a full symphony of sound with layered guitars and swirling vocals.

"This Road (It Never Leads Us)" is probably The Thieves at their most sophisticated, with great backing vocal harmonies and melodic style. Hal shows off his vocal range, reaching some of his highest notes on the album, while the jam at the end is reminiscent of more psychedelic '70s moments, maybe even Pink Floydish.

Twelve tracks in all, and not a filler amongst them. I'd be hard pressed to pick a favorite, as each has a distinct hook and unique quality. So I'll simply pick the whole album as favorite of the year.

If you're looking for your "summer of 2005" soundtrack – look no further. The Thieves' *Tales From The White Line* will fill your ears with more than enough rock n' roll to last a few summers.

#### Links:

[The Thieves website](#)
[The Thieves: Live Review](#)