

**Oral History Interview of  
Bob Livingston**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson  
October 7, 2008  
Austin, Texas**

**Part of the:  
*Crossroads of Music Archive***

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## Interview Series Background:

The Crossroads Artists Project encompasses interviews conducted by the Crossroads of Music Archive Staff members. They hope to document the creative process of artists and songwriters from all across the Southwestern United States.

## Transcript Overview:

Bob Livingston discusses his introduction to Michael Murphey, the subsequent tour and breakup, his involvement and gigs with Ray Hubbard, and later experiences playing with Jerry Jeff Walker. He delves into the formation of the Lost Gonzo Band, recounting the cut records and tours and frustrations that would lead to the band breakup. He concludes discussing his reunification with the Ray Hubbard band and Jerry Jeff Walker.

**Length of Interview:** 01:58:12

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### Keywords

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**Bob Livingston (BL):**

Um, it was in green for a while?

**Andy Wilkinson (AW):**

Yeah, I'm not very familiar with that museum but—

BL:

Some nice folks, and somehow maybe Craig raised some money for them or something and he's working on his Ph.D.

AW:

Oh, cool.

BL:

So he's been trying to get—and this is sort of, as much as anything a project of his so he can get it.

AW:

Well let me—since I turned this recording on Bob, let me preface it by saying this is Tuesday, October the seventh, it's a little after four o'clock in the afternoon. Andy Wilkinson with Bob Livingston at Bob's hacienda on the North side of downtown Austin. And we're going to talk a little bit today about the Lost Gonzo Band. But since we're both Lubbock guys, when we were sitting at the restaurant at Taos, no, in Red River, at the festival, sitting at the bar and you told me about going out to California.

BL:

Yes.

AW:

Yeah, is that a good place to start? Getting to the Gonzos?

BL:

That is, it's kind of a first time for everything. I guess it was 1969, the first draft lottery and all you old timers will remember, where were you on that fateful night and everyone was watching on all three networks and they come out with a big cylinder, some guy pulls out a birthdate, I think I found out the first date was something like September twenty-third or—because someone told me that he was number one the other day. I've been asking different people about where they were and what happened to them. For me I got number 309 and the long and short of it was that I'd never get drafted and I was going to Texas Tech and had a student deferment, so if I was going to leave school I'd lose that deferment, which I did lose that deferment, but because I had a high draft number it just meant that they'd probably never get to me, and if they got close I'd

have time to get back in school probably. So I had met Ray Hubbard and Rick Fowler and Wayne Kidd that played in Three Faces West. I'd been out there the year before—the summer before in '68.

AW:

Out to?

BL:

Red River, New Mexico. Three Faces West were a folk group from Dallas, had great songs from—they didn't write many—they wrote a few but mainly they just picked some really great songs and the ones that really impressed me were Mike Murphey's songs.

AW:

[AW coughs] Excuse me. Do you know how they knew Michael?

BL:

They all went to North Texas State together. See Murphey had gone to North Texas State, B.W. Stevenson, Steve Fromholz, Travis Highland, who, Travis played bass with everybody, and Murphey. And so when Murphey had become—you know he was in creative writing, and he decided to go out to UCLA and so he went out to UCLA and I'm not sure exactly what year this is, but suddenly he left the scene and he's out in L.A. writing for Screen Gems and he wrote, "What Am I Doing Hangin' Round," for the Monkees, and wrote "Boy from the Country," for Patti Page, songs like that. So he was honing his craft, and as he says, I turned into a left wing Pinko at UCLA, and so he was living out there. His wife, Dianna, had been personal secretary to Brian Epstein back in England. She's from England, she's a Brit. And so all her in-laws were English and so when the Beatles would come to Los Angeles, I heard stories that that they'd call her up and say, [British accent] "Come on love, we're up at the hotel let's have fun," and Murphey wouldn't go. [Laughter] He was sort of intimidated—he wasn't going to be the big—I don't know, but he wouldn't go. So he missed out on some stuff like that. But I hadn't met him yet, I just heard him through his music. So he had already written "Wildfire."

AW:

Really?

BL:

He had written "Texas Morning." This cat is growling, [Laughs] he doesn't understand what I'm doing. [Laughs] Look you better get out. But, so I had gone out and played at a club in Red River in the summer of '68 and met Ray, Rick, and Wayne. They had their own little club called the Outpost, and they would do at least two shows a night on the weekends, sometimes three shows a night. And they would work their bits out in a little grain room off the thing and they would say, "Let's do this, let's do 'Wildfire' then we'll do this, and then we'll do the Creosote bit"—

you know dip the grandmother in the creosote for some reason. I just remember you know they had all these funny lines and they would play off each other. Family entertainment—the place was packed every show. So I had met them and gone out and played in a place called the River View Inn, got a gig, and it was basically for room and board and tips. And I followed in the path, not knowing it, of the same thing that these boys had done, Three Faces West, because when they had originally come to Red River, probably around '64 or '65, maybe '66, I'm not sure, they had run these Jeep tours during the day, and played in some funky place in the same capacity. So I was just kind of carrying on that tradition I showed up—of course never heard of Three Faces West. I had written my own songs, I got the gig, but I—okay you can go I'm not—Go! Dipstick!

AW:

For the tape, Bob was talking to the cat and not me.

[Laughter]

BL:

Yes. Go! Psh-psh! [Cat growls, AW and BL laugh] The cat turns. Go, go go! You can go now! All right, thank you. But, so one night, this was in summer of '66 I think, or summer of '68, I was going to Tech, Texas Tech, and when I was in Red River the guy that I was playing for, Jack Emory and Riverview Inn, he kept talking about the “Boys. The boys down the street.” “Who are you talking about?”, “Let's go, I want to introduce you to the boys.” So we went on down and I saw one of their shows and I was completely blown away. It was such a step up—notch up from what my frame of reference was, and I really had no frame of reference I was just making my way. And so, when I saw them and then we stuck around and I met them and talked, and they were dressed really cool, they wore leather pants and leather vests and had kind of long, scruffy hair and bandanas and stuff and they wore boots, you know these Frye square toed—they all kind of looked the same, and that that look.

AW:

Uh-huh.

BL:

And I was really impressed and so we stuck around and met the guys, and of course I'm still a hayseed from Lubbock. And Jack Emory said, “Bob why don't you play 'em song. Come on and sit on this stool, [inaudible] [00:08:26] on your guitar and why don't you do 'em that 'Early Morning Rain.’” And I go, “Okay,” and I sit down and I start singing, [sings] “In the early morning rain, with a dollar in my hand,” you know, very earnest.

AW:

Mm-hm.

BL:

And I look at them at some point and I see them kind of rolling their eyes and just kind of looking at each other like—and I realize I am—this is not hip, I am doing something that, unbeknownst to me I am getting a lesson here you know, sort of. And when I finished the song, Wayne and Rick kind of melt away, but Ray stays around and he goes, “Come over here, I want to give you two pieces of advice: number one, don’t ever sit down when you sing, and number two, don’t ever do ‘Early Morning Rain’ again.” [Laughter] And so, I became friends with all three of them, they were really fun loving great guys and started writing songs together and we wrote “Life in the Pines,” a song that Ray and I wrote which was their first single, Three Faces West, and when they put it out—it’s worth a lot in Germany I understand now. [AW Laughs] And then I wrote some songs with Rick too, and that was in I guess ’68. Well ’69, draft lottery comes. And when I—

AW:

And all this time you’re still going to school?

BL:

I’m going to school, I go back to school and I start up again I guess. And whatever time of year the draft lottery was I don’t know, but when the semester ended, I had sense enough, though the lore is that some of my fraternity brothers back there said, “Livingston left the next day. Draft lottery got number 309 and we never saw him again. He’s the only guy that he kept saying, ‘I’m going to leave, I’m going to leave’ and he really did it!” I heard this guy telling that. [AW Laughs] But it wasn’t that dramatic, I did wait till the end of the semester, and I took off. And where I went was—the first place I went was Aspen, Colorado. My brother was a musician, Don, he’s from Lubbock. And he worked at Harrod Music Company and taught guitar to everybody. He was Jesse Taylor’s first guitar teacher.

AW:

Really?

BL:

And Jesse says, “Your brother Don gave me one the greatest piece of advice. He just told me, ‘You don’t need any lessons, just play what you feel.’” [Laughter] So, Donald played some of those rock and roll bands out there and knew all those guys in The Sparkles and everything. And so I went to Aspen, he was playing in a club up there and I got an Après-ski gig and I was playing one day and a guy walked in and said, “Hey, I think I can get you a record deal, I live in Los Angeles, I used to be an agent, I’m a manager, I’ll take you out and get you a record deal.”

And I go, "Okay." So, I remember, the season had finished, the gig was over, it was a Saturday morning, and he was supposed to show up by about ten o'clock and give me the keys and directions to his place out in L.A. And so I remember going out in the car, it's ten o'clock, its ten-thirty, it's eleven. I don't know if he's coming. I had some hitch hikers that were going to go out with me, a boy and a girl and I said, "You know, it doesn't look like he's coming, I may have to go to Lubbock." And they went, "That's fine we'll go there." [Laughter] It was like, "Wherever!" And so about noon, the car's going, I'm fixing to drive away, there's snow on the ground and stuff and he comes barreling up in this Buick Riviera, his name was Randy Fred, and he goes, "Man I'm really sorry, I got held up, here are the keys, here are the directions, meet me in Los Angeles. I'm going to stay here a couple more weeks, you just stay out there." And so I go out and I find his place and he lives in Beverly Glen, which is, you know the Beach Boys live up the road and this guy had been, Randy Fred had been an agent for the International Famous Agency, they call it IFA. [Coughs] Excuse me. That's going to sound great on this tape. [AW Laughs] And he had been an agent for people like Anthony Quinn and Jack Palance, Peggy Lipton. I remember driving around Beverly Hills and we drove up, and there was Jack Palance in the front yard and he went, "Hey Jack," and he pulled up and Jack Palance comes up and he goes, "Randy, what's happening." And he goes, "This is Bob Livingston he's a guy, a musician I'm working with," and he goes, "Dr. Livingston I presume." [Laughter] And he was divorced from his wife—going through a divorce, and he wasn't even supposed to be there, and I remember him going, "I'm just here just to talk to her," and then all of a sudden from a second floor window comes, "Jack what are you doing here?" And this is Jack Palance, and he goes "I'm just here I need to talk to you about something." And he's like, "Guys I've got to go, see you later." And it's like, she goes, "Jack you go away." And then he goes, "Just let me come in and talk to you." And she goes, "Oh okay," and puts down the window and as we drive away Randy goes, "It's all an act." [Laughter] He comes over and she lets him in but they have to make the neighbors think that they're not really seeing each other or something it was really bazaar. So that was my introduction sort of to Los Angeles, and so he got me—Randy started working on it—got an agent. I got an audition for Capitol Records, I walked in, major studio, Capitol Records, the president of Capitol Records was a guy named Saul Ananuchi [?] [00:15:05]. "Saul." And he comes in, I play him about four songs and he gets up and he goes, "I think we can work with it! [Snapping fingers] Work out a deal." And so I have my manager and my lawyer there and they work this deal out with Capitol and I get this record deal, and they give me ten thousand dollars. So I have ten thousand dollars, a record deal; I go out and buy a Datsun pickup truck, an a Martin guitar, and I'm getting a few gigs here and there and I'm like working in these Reuben's Restaurants. And you know out there they have chain of restaurants and they have a lounge and they always have music in every one, some of the best music. And I got a gig doing that and it's kind of like the guy that booked it, his attitude was, "The Beatles couldn't sell a record if they couldn't sell booze. You got to sell booze. That's the whole reason we're here." And he also had a show band and would play in some of the larger versions of these places. So I was playing that, didn't know really what was going on, trying to get this record deal, it didn't

happen, didn't happen. You know not making a record. So at some point I pick up a hitch hiker, and he's this German auto-mechanic. And he basically says, [said in mock German accent] "The only other Texan I know is Mike Murphey. He's from Dallas, he's musician too." And in my show I tell this story and I say, "And that guy became the governor of California but that's another story." So but he really did, he says that and I go, "Gah, I can't believe it Mike Murphey? And if you ever see him, give him my number." So I gave him this thing, and that night Murphey calls me. He must have gone just right over to his house or something. And he said, "Who are you? What are you doing here? Why are you here?"

AW:

That sounds just like Murph doesn't it? [Laughs]

BL:

And I said, "I'm a musician, I've got a record deal with Capitol and I'm out here and I love your music.", "Where have you heard it?", "Three Faces West.", "Oh really? Where are those?", "Those guys are in Red River, fantastic, I just love 'Texas Morning,' and I love this." And he goes, "We got to meet." And so he was living in Wrightwood, which is the foothills of the San Gabriel's up there past San Bernardino I think or somewhere around there and I went out that weekend and drove up there and met Murphey and his wife and his son Ryan, he had just had his baby and he was living up in the mountains, was playing in a band called Tex. And Herb Steiner was the steel guitar player, and Murphey and a guy named Stoney Edwards, or something like that, on drums and Boomer Castleman. I don't know if you've ever heard of Boomer.

AW:

Yeah.

BL:

He invented the Boomerizer. It was this pedals on his guitar. And the guy would play steel guitar licks like you wouldn't believe on the guitar and they had a steel player and they would play these harmony things together and they were a burning band and you know after I met Murphey once it's like, "Come and visit, come up and see us, we're playing at the Palomino." And I came to see them at the Palomino and Murphey's the bass player. And so Murphey's playing bass and he says, "You got to move up here." I say, "Okay." So I move up to Wrightwood, get me a little A Frame, rent a place, become a desert rat, hanging out in the desert. I go down there and buy stuff, buy a piano, bought a barber chair, bought all these antiques up there and furnished my house. Living up there you'd get snowed in in the winter, but the Mojave, you could see it all down below. And I was playing, Murphey was playing, all of a sudden my record deal falls through and a guy named Artie Mogull, big time record guy, still I think, might be gone now but until a few years ago I still heard his name. See, Capitol was awash in music from the Beatles, they were signing everybody they could and they weren't making any money on any of it, and so

this guy Artie Mogull was hired—everybody was fired, Saul, the whole art department, the A&R department, practically everybody and they released 152 artists and I was one of them. That was the first time I got my name in public—in *Rolling Stone* as far as I can recollect, when they gave a list of the people that they got rid of. [Laughter] Because they interviewed him, it was a big shake-up. So suddenly I'm without a record, but they got me a little more money.

AW:

So you had a record deal, but never had a record?

BL:

I had a record deal, got the money, but never made a record. And one of the reasons that I lost the deal was, that when Artie Mogull came in, I wrote him and I didn't hear from him, didn't hear from him and I tried—you know they didn't even know who I was. And I wrote him personally and said, "I'm living in Wrightwood and I've got new songs and come on up here and discover trees with me, and it's great and I'll play you this stuff." I just was kind of trying to appeal to his humanity or something and he was incensed that I breached the sacred artist-record relationship, not having a middle man. "Who does he think he is"—you know this should all come—and then my lawyer was really absolutely pissed. His name was Richard Trugman, he goes, "How could you do that? You should know better than that! You've screwed it all up now. We were working for a release to get you a lot more money, we were working on a release." I said, "Well why didn't you tell me? I didn't know I was going to get released." And so I got a little bit more money and Murphey, meanwhile, I take him—I had gone down and met an old desert rat named Calvin—Calico Cal, is what he called himself [phone rings] Hold on just a sec, let me see, I'm going to have to take this real quick.

AW:

Sure that's all right. I'll just put it on pause.

BL:

Hello.

[Pause in recording]

BL:

Let me just go ahead, and that's a good idea, we'll put it on Airplane mode. And so I had me this guy, Calico Cal and he lived on the highway down in the desert and he had this vast array of dolls that he had carved that were just villages. He was one of those guys that has two or three trailers and a little town that he'd made himself and played guitar and he was a little off. Murphey wrote a song about it called, [sings] "Goodbye old desert rat, you half-crazy wildcat you knew where it was at, what life's all about," and he ends up quoting him saying, [sings]

“Success is survival, and we all toughed it out.” And so Murphey goes down there and meets they guy and introduced me to him, and further down the road was Calico Silver Mine, ghost town, that Knoxberry Farm had taken over. Murphey goes there and goes walking in the place and sees the whole thing is a ghost town, all this history, silver mining town, and goes to the graveyard, the cemetery, and there are all these epitaphs and he starts writing, they start speaking to him, and the first thing that comes to him is, [sings] “Write me down, don’t forget my name.” Write me down, don’t forget my name, brother can you hear me, sister. And it’s the ghosts are speaking to him. And he writes down some of the epitaphs and he goes back and he gets this idea to write this whole concept and he sells it to Kenny Rogers, some way or another, his lawyer, and Kenny Rogers in the first edition cut the “Ballad of Calico” and it’s their last record, it tanked big time. And I thought it was brilliant.

AW:

Yeah, I’ve got a copy of it.

BL:

Yeah, I mean, you know great songs. So when it tanked, I just remember Murphey being dejected, didn’t understand it. I’d lost my record deal, and he goes, “Bob, I’ve got some gigs back in Texas, why don’t you come and play bass with me?” And I said, “I don’t know how to play bass.” And he goes, “You’ll learn, it’s easy.” And he handed me this old Precision Bass that he had played. So we took off and this is when I need to know, because the first time we took off has got to be ’70, we go and we do this little tour and we play the Rubaiyat, we go to Colorado, we play some gigs, somewhere in there we meet Craig Hillis.

AW:

So this was just the two of you—

BL:

The two of us. Murphey had gotten involved with some people that had some money and a guy named Marty Machat who was Roger Miller’s drummer and kind of business manager, formed a publishing company and we called it the Mountain Music Farm and it was me, Murphey, Guy Clark—and Guy Clark somehow shows up. And we all cut some demos, nothing ever came of it as far as I know. But we all cut some demos but some of this stuff was happening and I was getting a little better as a songwriter and Murphey and I were making an attempt to write a song or two, and we go back to Texas, well we come back and at some time during that tour we went to a fortune teller and she basically said, “You need to get out of California.” And we go back and in 1971—

AW:

So where do you see the fortune teller, in Colorado?

BL:

Maybe Colorado, somewhere on the trail we go see a fortune teller. And she tells me—

AW:

Wait, you've got to describe in more detail Murphey at the fortune teller. This is just too good.

BL:

Well Murphey—we come in and we sit down and this woman comes out and we're sitting around this little table, and she looks at Murphey's hand and looks at my hand and it was kind of a duel thing, maybe she talked to him, maybe she talked to me, I can't quite remember, but I know at some point we're sitting around this table. And she says, "One thing for sure, you need to leave California." And so, Murphey and I were just saying, "Wow." And he took it sort of—he was open, all of us were at that time, he was like, this is really—this is a sign. We go back and in 1971, I can't remember the date, but my manager Randy, we are in, and once again I want to say there's a possibility that we saw the fortune teller after, but to my recollection the fortune teller was before this happened because early in the morning, about six-thirty in the morning we were staying, Murphey stayed in Los Angeles and I was staying there and Randy was the manager and the whole place started going [grumbling noise] just shaking and we woke up and Randy's going, "This is it, this is it," and we're going, "What's it? What is it?" It was the California earthquake of 1971. A hundred people were killed. Out in California at the same time are Three Faces West and Buckwheat, B.W. Stevenson. And they're living in a little place up in the hills, Hollywood Hills. We were all there and with that with the fortune teller, I mean Buckwheat left the next day. And then Three Face West also got in their van and they took off. And we made plans, "Let's go back." Now here's were my recollection wavers a little bit, because this is really important what happened, because we go back and do another tour, I'm not sure if we had packed up and gone yet, but we come back, and we play the Rubaiyat again, and there was a guy that, the times we had played there, his name was R.D. Caldwell, and R.D. would always say when we were taking a break and we'd sit around outside, he said—the Rubaiyat was the folk club in Dallas, the premier like a little hippy, beatnik joint. Wasn't a hippy—but it was a beatnik, sort of a folk singing place. Black walls, very small. And he said, "Bob Johnston is a brother," This R.D. Caldwell said, "Yeah he's a brother," Bob Johnston who had produced *Nashville Skyline*, *Blonde on Blonde*, *Live at Folsom Prison*. He's the one that put the drums on "Sounds of Silence" when Paul Simon had left and cut "Sounds of Silence" and he put a rock band on it. It was a big hit but Simon was pissed. But it became a big hit so what could he do? So this guy has extreme power and finally I just got sick of listening to R.D. go, "He's a brother." Well if he's such a brother get him here. Somehow or another when we had gone to Colorado and played some more gigs and come back through to play the Rubaiyat yet again, this R.D. contacts us and says, "Bob is going to be here in town and he wants to hear you," you know like a private meeting, audition. We say, "Tell him to show up at two-thirty in the afternoon, at the Rubaiyat the night before we play. Nobody will be there." We get in there

and it's just dark, and it gets to be two-thirty, three and getting close and once again we're saying, Ah you know, doesn't look—once again. The door bursts open and this character comes in the door, he's kind of got long hair, I don't know if you've ever seen pictures of Bob Johnston?

AW:

No I haven't.

BL:

He's just this kind of little batty rooster kind of guy and he comes in the door and the first thing he says is, "Is there a piano in here? I just wrote a song on the way from the airport." We said, "Yeah there's one here on the stage." And so he sits down and he plays this kind of gospel song and he sings it to us, and we say, "That's kind of cool." And he goes, "Yeah I'm into gospel now these days and here's one I wrote last week." And he starts another one and Murphey just kind of picks up his guitar and I pick up the bass, pretty soon we're playing with him and we play a couple more songs. And he goes, "Anyway, I'm not here to play songs for you. My name is Bob Johnston, which one of you is Murphey?" And he's like, "I'm Michael Murphey and I'm with Bob Livingston," And he goes, "Okay, let's hear what you've got." And he goes and we can't see anything, it's dark and lights are in our face, and Murphey sings, [sings] "No rain and the weather got warm, I broke down and sold my farm, I headed for the silver strike, I took my wife, Calico silver gave us life," It has this beautiful progression it goes, [sings tune] At that point out of the darkness we hear, "That's the most beautiful thing I've ever heard, I don't need to hear any more. As far as I'm concerned you've got a record deal." [AW Laughs] And Murphey goes—he goes, "But keep playing I've got to hear the end of the song." He plays the song, and he goes, "That's the most beautiful thing I've ever heard. What a song!" And then he goes, "What else?" And he plays him like "Texas Morning" or something, and he plays him like three or four songs and after every song he goes, "That's better than the last one, this is incredible." So he says, "Let's talk about this." So we sit at this table and we're sitting at this table and Murphey's sitting across from Johnston and I'm sitting here and Johnston says—and he's just talking to him, and I'm invisible. He's just talking to Murphey, and he goes, "I want you to come to Nashville on Wednesday," this is in a week, and he goes, "I have a George Jones session there but I'm going to reschedule it, and that would be a little window we could go in and cut this record. And Murphey goes, "Well this is great." And he says, "Okay," and so Johnston says, "All right," then he goes—and he's looking at Murphey the whole time and he says, "What about him?" [AW Laughs] And Murphey goes, "Who, you mean Bob? You mean him?" And he goes, "Yeah." And he goes, "Well what do you mean, what about him?" And he goes, "Is he funky?"

AW:

[Laughs] He doesn't say anything to you?

BL:

Yeah, he doesn't say anything to me but he says, "Is he funky?" And Murphey goes, "Well just look at him, what do you think?" And he goes—he looks at me and he goes, "Okay, you come too." [AW Laughs] So at this point, and this is sort of off the record, but at this point he reaches in his coat pocket, in his sport coat and he pulls out a block of Lebanese hash about this big. [Laughter] and he breaks off a little piece and he had this tool that looked like a fountain pen with a needle sticking out of it, and he broke off a piece and he's talking about how this is Lebanese hash from the sacred tomb of the forgotten prince of the blah-blah-blah, and he sticks this thing in here and lights it with a lighter and gets it going here in the middle of this club, nobody's there, and gets it smoldering and then blows it out in this giant plume of smoke and he just inhales this big thing. [Laughter] And so we go to Nashville the next week and Murphey, we had known this guy Charles John Quarto, and Quarto was a living room poet living out of Los Angeles that had been friends with Crosby, Stills & Nash. Graham Nash had produced an album on him of poetry. He had all this great stuff, "At night animals moo-an at the moon, I moan there with them." And very strange, very dramatic poetry. And he looked like Einstein, deep set eyes, big kind of hair like that; brilliant, but I think he had taken too much acid, I know he did. But so, somehow or another he shows up and we get in Murphey's mother's Buick and drive to Nashville.

AW:

You and Charles John and—

BL:

And Murphey. And we drive to Nashville and we got to Johnston's house and we stay with him; he puts us up. And he loves us. He's like, he's totally blown away. And one of the things I remember, we were staying there, and he had also produced Leonard Cohen, so Cohen was in town. Leonard Cohen was in town. He had produced "Bird on the Wire," all those records that he had done. And Johnston took me down in his little room and he says, "I want you to hear some stuff," and he had all these outtakes. And the first thing he played me was "Mr. Bojangles" by Bob Dylan singing it. And it ended up on some record later, and he said, "Listen to this." He played Mr. Bojangles, and it was like, [sings in impersonating voice] "I knew a man Bojangles and he'd dance for you." And it was just with all these black chicks singing in the background and everything, and this was, of course, not out. And he played some other stuff and he plays—he had produced *Nashville Skyline* and Johnny Cash and Dylan had done "Girl from the North Country," he had about twenty more cuts of other things that they had done in that session, all this Cash and Dylan stuff. I think it eventually came out too. But you know he was playing me these things. And so he always spoke in kind of magical terms, you know, "This is magic," and "This is special. All this is special." And when we got to the studio the next morning, we got into Studio A Columbia, we walk in, and I can't remember the name of the engineer, but it's just me and Murphey, and we went in and we're tuning up and we're sitting in the studio and we're

feeling a little intimidated. And Bob walks in, and in one hand he has a metal folding chair and in the other hand he has this lamp with two bulbs on opposite ends sort of this old funky lamp. One of 'em's white, one of 'em is red. But it's out. And he puts the folding chair there and he puts the lamp there—we have time?

AW:

Yeah. I'm just checking the battery.

BL:

And he says, "Now boys, some of the greatest musicians in our country have been in this studio and made records and watched this light go on, and that's when we're engaged in the recording process. And there's magic in this room." And he talked a little bit about Dylan and the people he had produced in that room. Both *Blonde on Blonde* and *Nashville Skyline* were in that room and so he said, "Just sit back and enjoy it and have a great time and let's make some records." And so I can't remember what the first song was, but when we finished [he said] "That's it! We don't need to make another take." And it was just like Murphey playing, singing, and me playing bass and singing harmony. Boom, that's it, every song. So in two days we cut twenty-five songs. Usually no more than a second or third take maximum on one of them. And the last day, we did two days, and the last day, Leonard Cohen showed up and he was with this beautiful woman, dark kind of woman with a black dress on, and he's wearing a suit and we went to lunch with him and we went to eat Chinese food, and I remember we got the fortune cookies and when he pulled his out it said something like, "You will have the good fortune of making new acquaintances and new paths," or something and he goes, "Oh my fortune has already been fulfilled." And he tells stories about being in the Buddhist monastery, he had very short hair. He had been in the Buddhist monastery, told us all these great stories. So I mean this was really special, and we go back and the last song we did was "Lights of the City," [sings] "I can almost see the lights of the city," and Murphey just sitting at the piano, big grand piano, with everybody just sitting around Cohen and this woman, and I was playing bass and we all sang the song.

AW:

Cohen's on the song?

BL:

Yeah. So he's on it.

AW:

Wow. I don't remember that in the liner notes.

BL:

Maybe not, but he was there.

AW:

I'll have to look. I have the vinyl of that.

BL:

Yeah we need to look, I might have it here, I do have it here but I'm not sure where it is. But so that happens, well now, there are definitely tense times with Murphey, and Murphey is—we would go play these gigs and I mean I was like a neophyte, I was learning this stuff. Murphey is writing songs with the bass in the third and like “Calico Silver” starts with the bass in the third, [sings] “No rain and the weather got warm,” And so the sound is, if it's in C [plays note on piano] Instead of it being the root it's [plays in another key on piano] [sings in another key] “No rain and the weather got warm, broke down and sold my farm,” and a D over in F, right?

AW:

Mm-hm.

BL:

So to me that's like—

AW:

Rocket Science.

BL:

Rocket Science and so I would make some mistakes every once in a while and I'd get so nervous because he was so much of a purist and he was so great. You know a great finger picker. And you know incidentally, a little side note, since the Australian company has come out with *Geronimo's Cadillac* and *Cosmic Cowboy* on CD and the bonus tracks on there are, that he doesn't even give me credit for or say anything about it, it just says, “Recorded at the Rubaiyat,” but there's about four or five tracks on each one of those records that were recorded at the Rubaiyat, “Blood Brothers,” songs that never saw the light of day, incredible song[s]. And so I was getting really antsy playing with Murphey. And he had actually, before we had gone on one day, said, “Get that bass in tune man,” and grabbed the A string in order to stretch it or something and ripped it right off the bass. And so along about that time Ray Hubbard calls me up and he says, “We got a drummer, we got another band going. Wayne is quitting, he doesn't want to go on the road. What are you doing?” Somehow Hubbard comes in a couple of times like that in my life and I said, “Well I'm with Murphey but—” And he goes, “Look we got all these gigs—” And you know I just love those guys and it was a four way split, and he said, “Look we're going to make money, you're going to be making a lot more money,” He said, “So how much does Murphey pay you?” And I go, “Well, not much,” and he goes, “You'll be making a lot more money, we got a lot of gigs and we'll do it.” So Murphey had moved—basically we were still, “What are we going to do?” Kind of. I'm living nowhere, Murphey has, I guess by this

point is deciding the same thing, I'm going to move out of Los Angeles. And I remember going back to L.A. one more time after we recorded that stuff, we say we're going to move to Austin and I was packing up lock, stock, and barrel, and taking off from California. And he had a big—

AW:

This was about what, '72?

BL:

This has got to be right after the earthquake sort of. You know all this stuff is happening at the same time but we record, I guess we cut *Geronimo's Cadillac* in '72 so we move back then and that's what I've got to look at, you know these dates—

AW:

Yeah. I just remember when I bought the record. I think it was '72.

BL:

And so somewhere in late '71, '72ish, because it was cold outside, so I don't know. Maybe it was the winter of '72, right there at the beginning, because—and so Ray said, "Come play with us." And I told Murphey, "I'm going to go play with these guys." And I had just played on this record. *Geronimo's Cadillac* had not been written yet. We had gone and recorded these twenty-five songs so we have a gig at Saxon Pub, the one that used to be on 38<sup>th</sup> ½ Street on the Highway, on I-35 there in Austin and it was going to be my last gig with Murphey. So I'm nervous, I'm feeling weird, Murphey's feeling weird, we go to play this gig; the place is packed and on the front row of the audience is Gary Nunn. And Gary Nunn who I had become acquainted with later in life had been a hero to me, he was in The Fabulous Sparkles and I'd come to the Village Swinger and the Music Box.

AW:

Yup, me too.

BL:

And you know and watch those guys and just—and then when Gary joined The Sparkles he was—that was everything you know. And but he was two or three years older, so to me that was a light year in a way. So suddenly there was Gary Nunn sitting, and I imagined him like a vulture on a fence sitting there perched, because I figured he knows I'm leaving and he's after my job. What really happened is, according to Gary, Gary was fed up with the music business and had packed up and was going back to Texas Tech to go back to pharmacy school. He had played in all these rock and roll bands in Austin; Genesee, The Reasons Why, I can't remember all the names. And great bands, but he just was sick. And when he saw Murphey, it was such an epiphany and I think, Leonard Arnold, Layton DePenning, I know Rusty Wier was in the

audience, all these musicians and Murphey just blew everybody away. And I remember Gary telling me, "I was going to go to pharmacy school and then I—you know here's this guy playing these songs, and they're his songs, and everybody's into them. And I'm thinking, god I've got my songs I wish that people would listen to me like this." This is you know, blowing his mind. And then he says that Murphey walks up to him and says, "My bass player Bob is leaving, I heard you're a good bass player, would you like to play with me some?" I thought that Gary knew the whole thing, but according to Gary, Murphey approached him. So I leave, I'm out of the scene. Murphey and Quarto write *Geronimo's Cadillac* and go back to Nashville to finish the record and they overdubbed drums and lead guitar on the tracks we had and then cut *Geronimo's Cadillac* with Gary playing bass, Leonard Arnold on guitar. I think the drummer was Kenny Buttrey or something, somebody like that. And so, I'm not sure if that was true, but I know it was a Nashville drummer. And so they're getting the record to come out. Well I go off with Hubbard, now the way this all starts to intersect is, about a year before, or six months before, Hubbard had written "Redneck Mother." We got this band, Michael McGearry is the drummer, they found him from Los Angeles, Silver Lake, he's this kind of swishy guy that I still don't know how he came into their lives, but he was the drummer and I was the bass player. I was so in awe of the Three Faces West guys and now it was just Rick and Wayne. And they had had a shtick, and Wayne was the straight guy and would feed them lines and everything. I didn't think I could do it, and I just said, "Look, I'm not going to do this, don't think that I'm coming to be part of your comedy act because I'm going to play bass." And I was so blown away from the Murphey experience. And I see these pictures now and I had real long hair, long beard, I'd go barefoot, and I would sit down, and so I would be sitting there on stage and I got to do my songs and Hubbard would make a joke of it you know he would do it purposefully, use me as the punch line of one of his jokes of not saying something, and people would laugh, and I would just kind of—so as time goes by, we'd be in these places, I started standing up, we were playing in you know, Buckets of Blood in Kearney Nebraska, and Broken Bow, and all these middle Midwest things. And Hubbard had written "Redneck Mother" but he wouldn't sing it, he was afraid. He thought he'd get beat up again. [AW laughs] And he was going, "No way," and I'd go, "Come on Hubbard it's a funny song, it's funny." "No, no, I don't think so." So I learned it and I learned the song. Well at some point, I'm playing with Hubbard, and Texas Fever is the name of the band. And at some point Bob Johnston calls Murphey up and says, "You need to get Livingston back in the band." And he goes, "Okay. Yeah you're right." And he calls me up and says, "Bob Johnston just called me and said you need to get back in the band. You need to come back, we're fixing to put this record out and we're going to go on a major tour and it's going to be on A&M, blah-blah-blah." And I leave Texas Fever and I go get back with Murphey.

AW:

So what happens to the Jeepster?

BL:

The Jeepster is playing bass right. The Jeepster goes back to, we get a keyboard, and we have piano and the songs that Gary played bass on, he played bass, the songs that I played bass on, I played bass. So we'd switch around. I would sit on piano—and like we're rehearsing and we get this thing together and so Gary and Murphey moved in, they had a place over on Sixty-fourth Street, North Lamar, behind a motorcycle shop, you drive down there and there was this big rock house and a bunch of little outcropping houses and they rented the whole place and Murphey and Gary actually lived in the same house and they built a little rehearsal studio in the garage. And we were rehearsing, well I'm going to jump backward in time here. When I first met Murphey and we became friends, Murphey called me up one night and said, we were living in Los Angeles, and he goes, and we were actually living up in the mountains and he calls and says, "Jerry Jeff Walker is playing tonight at the Troubadour, he's opening for Linda Ronstadt, let's go down and meet Jerry Jeff." I had never met him. I knew he wrote "Mr. Bojangles," that's the only thing I knew about him. So we went down and we met Jerry Jeff and he did a pretty good set and I remember he was wearing—I remember those boots. Because I think he had just got them and it said "J.J.W." Charlie Dunn boots. And I thought he looked cool, he was real cowboy-ish but—So he said, "Yeah let's have a party," and so Murphey and I go, "We're going to you know." And we told him where we lived in Beverly Glen and we'd have the party there, and we left and Jerry Jeff never showed up. And Murphey wrote a song called, "Empty Handed Compadres," [sings] "We're just empty handed compadres, thought we'd be bringing back something good for the shack, looks like we're out of whack again," is what that went, you know. [Laughs] And but I'd met him. Well, Red River, all the time that this was happening with going back and hanging out with Hubbard and Hubbard writing "Redneck Mother," all about that same time, Jerry Jeff shows up in Red River. And he rents a place up in a canyon and he comes down and one of the first things that happens to him is he walks into this bar, the Last Run, and there is a guitar leaning up against the wall and it's this guitar that Roy Smeck Stage Deluxe that he had owned that had an angel painted on it and—what's the name of that old blues singer from New Orleans—had done it—anyway there was the guitar. I had had that guitar as well. I had traded—

AW:

Oh really?

BL:

I had traded Hubbard a D-18 for it and missed my old D-18 so I traded him back. So here was this guitar, and Jerry Jeff walks in, sees the guitar, takes it, begs Hubbard for it, gives him a high dollar guild guitar that was made for him. They trade it, he goes back up to the ranch and he writes, "Hill Country Rain, "Charlie Dunn," "Old Beat-Up Guitar," maybe a couple more, can't remember. So that's happened, and meanwhile I'm going with Murphey, so I leave and all this stuff happens with Murphey and we record *Geronimo's Cadillac* and all that and we're getting

ready to go out and we were rehearsing—and in Jerry Jeff's book he says Gary Nunn called me up. So I told him, I told Jerry Jeff one day, and I said, Jerry Jeff, "You say Gary called you up," and he goes, "Yeah he called me up and told me to come to this rehearsal." And I said, "When did you meet Gary?" And he went, "Uh, well, I—" and I said, "I'm the one that called you up you dipstick!" [AW Laughs] At least give me credit for that and—because I had met him and I had known him and I knew he was in Austin. I called him up and said, "Hey man, come and check—you'd love these guys." So he pokes his head into this band rehearsal.

AW:

This is at Murphey's place?

BL:

What we call "public domain" what we called that place public domain and it came to be known as, and he poked his head in the door and it was an instant band. And he goes, "I've written all these songs, and I've got this record deal at MCA I'm going to be recording and I want to record it in Austin, could you guys play on it?" We said, "Yeah." So we go in to the most primitive recording studio on the planet. It had been an old cleaners called Rap Cleaners it was on sixth Street, it's right across from Mad Dogs and Beans was the name of this place. Mad Dogs and Beans is another business, but the recording studio is no longer there, it's a parking lot and it was on West Sixth Street. And everything—it was an old cleaner's that had been gutted, and it was all burlap on the walls and the ceiling, you know kind of hammered on there, nailed on there. And this big 16 track tape recorder in the center of the room, no board—

AW:

No board?

BL:

Everything plugged straight into it. And so here enters—

AW:

That sounds like Alexander Graham Bell.

BL:

[Laughs] I know. Are we doing okay? I mean I'm just kind of going with it.

AW:

No, no, this is good.

BL:

So Michael Brovsky was Jerry Jeff's manager a New York, big bearish New York manager-agent type, done a lot of wild stuff, shows up—he's a big bear guy but he's wearing platform shoes and got big hair and kind of real New York-y and almost Carnaby Street clothes—really sticks out. He shows up and he has brought with him some noise reduction units, and he's going to go with it. And to Brovsky's credit he takes one look at this thing and goes, "Whatever, let's do it." He's going to let Jerry Jeff do—Jerry Jeff's got this vision, he's going to do it. And they want him to record in New York or L.A. or Nashville. He's going to record where he's going to record. So the engineer—they hustle around, everything's plugged straight into it, it's such a painstaking event to listen to a playback because everything has to be switched and it has to—and the VU meters have to be set again and maybe the mix changed and so we never listened to playbacks until the end of the evening.

AW:

Wow.

BL:

So we would go in and we would—

AW:

So you didn't know what you had?

BL:

Didn't know what we had. We just—Jerry Jeff would show up about seven o'clock, big tub, had a big corrugated—you know one of those washtubs, make us five gallons of sangria. Make us a concoction—you know, fruit floating in it—make that outside and so the doors are open. Everybody would just have a few glasses of sangria and we'd go in and we'd start cutting. And we would cut everything once or twice and then people would come in—the Gray Ghost came and played piano on something or other—just happened to show on "Moonchild," this song. And so we are cutting these songs, and Jerry Jeff had just written really interesting stuff. Well so we had this run and I can't remember how many tracks we got—a lot of music, "Good Lovin' Grace," lot of stuff, had the tape rolling all the time, catch all the talking, everything. And the Murphey tour is coming up so we take off for parts East, and I remember we play in Georgetown, Washington D.C. And everybody there, they don't have any idea who we are and it's just like almost a dance club, a disco or something. And we're playing, and I remember one funny thing is someone yelled out, "Hey, play Grand Funk," And Murphey just said, "This is the grandest funk you'll ever hear," and he played "Harbor for my Soul," [sings] "So many—" The greatest version there is, "Can you believe it, yes I do—" And so we go to New York to play the Bitter End. Jerry Jeff shows up and says, "Guys, I got some studio time booked tomorrow night, and I found a band here from New York, upstate New York and there's some guys playing and

Bob why don't you and Gary and Hillis come down." So we do, the drummer on the session is Andy Newmark who had played with Lennon and he was a big New York session player, so he's the drummer. We cut "L.A. Freeway," "Old Beat-Up Guitar," I can't remember what all we cut. "Salvation Army Band," I'm not sure. But that was the New York session, so we did that and we finished the tour with Murphey and so once again these are the years I need to figure out, it's '70, at this point this is the record that comes out on MCA called *Jerry Jeff*, I think it's '72 as well.

AW:

Yeah, maybe so.

BL:

And so we come back to Austin and we start playing with both Jerry Jeff and Murphey. And some people call us the Interchangeable Band, Austin Interchangeable Band. And I remember doing a show at Mother Earth, and it was with both of them, and it was called Double Concert and we have a—we played and that was when Willie Nelson came that night Eddie Wilson brought him to see us, took him to Armadillo. And it was the same kind of situation where he saw hippies and rednecks all in there digging. Because when *Geronimo's Cadillac* came out, Murphey was the biggest thing in Austin for a while until Willie showed up. And then Jerry Jeff records that and we recorded that album, and then suddenly two nationally released records in practically the same year—

AW:

How did you work, working with both Jerry Jeff and Murph? How did, just practically, how did that go about?

BL:

I'm not sure how it all worked out. Mainly our loyalty was mainly to Murphey but Murphey wouldn't play all that much. He would do tours, but they were all—you know more or less, they were putting him in showcase rooms, stuff like that. They didn't pay a lot of money so we were all on a really subsistence living salary. We'd play a few gigs like—Bitter End didn't pay anything you know. You go up there and play and the place is packed but you're not really—you make a splash and you get press and that kind of thing. But Jerry Jeff was playing more and his record took off great guns. Well me, Craig Hillis, and McGeary go off on a Jerry Jeff tour. At some point Gary flies in and plays part of it and we're in New York, and I remember Gary being there and the record had just—

AW:

And by Gary you mean Gary P.?

BL:

Gary Nunn, yeah. He didn't play always with us, I'm not exactly sure what was going on. That's why I need somebody to really look at the dates with me because it's so fast, it gets kind of convoluted when did we—why did this happen you know. And so Gary goes to New York and we play a show at Kenny's Castaways and the record had just come out and Jerry Jeff gets reviewed by the New York Times and they just say, "This is fantastic." And when the record came out just sold a ton of records. And even people like *Stereo Review* gave it a great review, which is surprising. These are the days that Crosby, Stills & Nash put out records with like fifteen, sixteen, minutes on sides of the tracks, it's going to be really fat, the bass response is great, we almost had thirty minutes of music on a side, on that first record. And it was so slam banging and so loose and so real that people really related to it. And so Jerry Jeff, suddenly, and somehow we are playing with both of them. I know I'm doing tours with both of them. And Gary is sometimes there, and maybe Gary, I don't understand where he is when he's not there. But at some point we go and we do the West Coast and we're in Seattle and Jerry Jeff breaks a string and he tells me, "Bob do a song," and I sing "Redneck Mother." And the place goes crazy, and they're all singing along and pouring beer on their heads and rolling around the aisles. [Laughter] It has a big reaction. And Jerry Jeff was like, "Wow." And so the next night we're in Portland and he said, "Hey do that song again," and I did, same reaction, and the third night I remember being at the Palomino and went on down in North Hollywood, played the Palomino and he said, "Hey let's do 'Redneck Mother,' but this time I'm going to sing it." [AW Laughs] So he started singing it, and but it wasn't like it—it was still kind of out there. He was getting ready to maybe do a new record and meanwhile we go off to play with Murphey again and I remember Jerry Jeff played a lot of solo stuff, and occasionally we'd run across him on the road when we were with Murphey and that's when we'd play with him and he would be booked into some of the same places, you know, even. He was doing a lot of solo, folky stuff. So at this point, we've made *Jerry Jeff*, we've made *Geronimo's Cadillac*, Murphey decides to do a new record. He gets nodules on his vocal chords and the doctor tells him, "You can't talk for six weeks." Meanwhile the schedule is, we've got to rehearse this record and go and record it in Nashville within about two months. So I lived at Lake Travis at the time and so did Murphey. We decide to have the rehearsals at my house. I don't know—it's like I'm remembering all this stuff—I'm living at Lake Travis, we decide to have rehearsals at my house. At the same time, or maybe just before, Jerry Jeff's reels of his first record had come in. He wanted to have a listening party and listen to it. So we said we'll have it at Bob's house out on Lake Travis. Jerry Jeff says, "I'll get a tape recorder and beer, you get the food blah-blah-blah-blah." Gonzo band—or what is sort of that, were playing at Castle Creek, Jerry Jeff comes to my house, all these people come, brings the tapes, we have a few drinks and then it's like okay let's listen to it. Where do you plug these speakers? There was no amplifier. There was no way to listen to it. When Jerry Jeff—when the realization sunk in, he completely snapped and went absolutely ballistic. He was so, you know frustrated, and he ran everybody off, and big things happened that night. And you know I've had three fights in my life, two of them have been with Jerry Jeff.

AW:

[Laughs] Really?

BL:

And so that night we got into it big time but then we're best friends after. He called me the next morning and went, "Bob I'm out in the middle of a field I got four flat tires can you come get me?" [Laughter] And he had just driven off into the—you know after all this happened. So that was the house, we lived at Lake Travis and we had the rehearsal at that place after that. So we show up, Murphey shows up about an hour before each rehearsal and he has a yellow legal pad, I still have a lot of them. "Bob, I wrote a new song, it's called 'Blessing in Disguise,' come over to the piano I'm going to whistle the tune to you." I go over to him—

AW:

Because he can't—

BL:

I'm singing it, I sing everything. I did all the rehearsals, I sang all the songs. And so he sits down at the piano and goes [whistles tune and sings] "It was a blessing in disguise," he shakes his head, doesn't say a word. [Whistles tune and sings] "It was a blessing in disguise," nods his head real vigorously you know. And we'd play the piano and we'd have rehearsals and everybody would come in and I'd say, "Okay here's a new song," and I would sing it and Murphey would play the piano, I'd play bass on that song. And we had all the rehearsals. John Inmon cut— John Inmon recorded—the first time I met John, John comes in to record with his brother Jim, they have a little 4-track tape recorder and they recorded all their songs. So somewhere those exist, we'd have to look for them you know. So the day comes, we finish rehearsals and we're having to go to Nashville and Murphey's talking by now and he says something like, "All right meet us in Nashville, next week, blah-blah-blah-blah." And we hadn't made hardly any money this entire time. We were really desperate. I think we were being paid something like seventy-five dollars a week to do these rehearsals. And we show up in Nashville and he says, "Don't worry you're going to be making a lot of money on this record." We go, "Great." Murphey was really stressed, really spaced out that he couldn't sing, freaked out. So when he sat down to do the first song, he said, "We're going to cut 'Cosmic Cowboy' and if we don't get it in one take it's not going to be on the record." That's how we started the record. And we recorded it, and it obviously wasn't there, we were just getting used to the studio. It was in Ray Stevens' studio in Nashville this time. Johnston says, "Come on Mike let's relax, let's have some fun and blah-blah-blah-blah." So from then on, though we cut what becomes as *Cosmic Cowboy Souvenir*, we record that record there in about two days, three days, we know this shit. We rip it out and at the end of the rehearsal, his manager comes up and gives us each a check for 250 bucks and so we all go back to the room and we go, "What happened we were supposed to make—what about all the great money?" Well they had really only paid us for two sessions or something, thought that we would

stand for it. Well McGeary and Herb Steiner go to the Nashville Musicians Union, and they talk to them and the—I just remember this like it was yesterday. We're in the studio, we had finished the recording, we're sitting in the studio, we don't know what's going to happen but we know something is going to happen, and we're all there. Johnston, we're talking about it and everything, and Murphey. The phone rings. It's the president of the Nashville Musicians Union and he gets Johnston on the phone and says, "You've screwed the last musician—your last musician in Nashville." And he goes, "What are you talking about?" And he goes on to say how much we made. Johnston didn't know about it, Murphey didn't really know. If Murphey knew, we don't know. But the management was definitely taking advantage of the band. Murphey goes into a rage, and he says, "Who did this?" And Herb or McGeary or whoever did it said, "I went and talked to the union." And he goes, "You're fired and anyone that agrees with this is fired." So it was like he drew a line in the sand. We all agreed, we had all agreed, and we all walked to the other side of the line. He goes, "You're all fired, get out of here." Gary Nunn doesn't walk to the other side of the line. So, he says, "Somebody needs to be with Mike. Somebody needs to be with him and help him." Another thing I find out years later, Gary said the real reason he stayed—and this is one of the most important decisions in Texas progressive country music that he makes, because he stays with Murphey. The reason he stays is because Murphey had cut "Song of the South Canadian River," which he wrote the music, that beautiful opus. [sings] "Drink life one drop at a time," we just recorded it, got that funky recording, and Gary said, "If I'd have left him, I was afraid Mike would take it off the record. This was my big chance to have a nationally released song. It was what I had been dreaming about all my life." He says, "I wasn't about to leave. And suddenly everything just fell apart in front of my eyes. I couldn't do it. I couldn't leave." We all leave and we're walking back all dejected, tails between our legs, and I remember Johnston catching up with me and says, "Don't worry, I'm going to get you back in the band. You guys go back now." So we go back to Austin, I called Jerry Jeff up and he says, "Great, I want to make a record and I want to do it in Luckenbach, Texas." And we go, "Luckenbach, what's that?" And Jerry Jeff had run into Hondo, and he became like a father figure to him and he was always hanging out with Hondo and they talked about it and they wanted to make a record in that old dance hall down there. And so Gary goes to England with Murphey to see his in-laws, the British in-laws. Murphey leaves him to his own devices, it's the coldest winter in twenty years or something he said. And they turn off all those old steam heaters in the hotel rooms and the apartments—

AW:

Oh yeah, I've been there. They come around and ask you, "Are you cold, love?" And if you say yes they say, "Here's another sweater." [Laughter] They never turn up the heat. I didn't realize, well that's obviously the "London Homesick Blues" but I didn't realize—I figured he was over there doing a gig.

BL:

Huh? No he's there—they did play. They played a few—you know what they did? They recorded the strings to "Blessing in Disguise" and a couple other things and so they played some little studio deal, and then they might have played once but it was basically just, "Come with me." The band has left, I'm freaked. Gary, my friend is going to come with me. So he did. And Gary, the first thing he wrote was, "It's cold over here, and I swear I wish they'd turn the heat on." That's the first thing that came to him. That was the first verse so we go back and we get with Jerry Jeff and we getting ready to make this record. Gary gets back, totally dejected. Murphey had kind of shunned him. He's packing up again to go back to Texas Tech to go to pharmacy school for the second time. [Laughter] And Jerry Jeff called him up and I called him up. But Jerry Jeff called him up and said, "We're making this record, man. You got to come out here we're in this dance hall and blah-blah-blah." And Gary says, "Well I don't know." But he shows up and in the afternoon—and the scene there was the same thing, go out there in the afternoon and Jerry Jeff would make a big pot of sangria. [Laughter] We'd all drink sangria then we would cut during the afternoon in that studio. We cut "Sangria Wine," it sounds all live but we cut "Sangria Wine," all the basic tracks were—everything was live—none of the leads were overdubbed or anything but we cut them during the day and we had—we were actually set up on the dance floor and we had bales of hay. The drums were set on the stage and he was completely baffled off behind bales of hay. We were all in front of the stage on the dance floor. So we recorded during the day, and then it was decided that, that night, that Saturday night, the last night, we would go in and do a live show and just cut everything we knew. Sing everything but do a regular show. And do "L.A. Freeway," and all that stuff, which had already been recorded. So we [Coughs] I'm sorry I have so many bad allergies, it's going to sound terrible.

AW:

No, I'm the same way. I'm over here hacking on my side so.

BL:

But so Gary had come down and he had that song and he played it. And Jerry Jeff that night, and I once again, I was the one that suggested, I think that, "When you're down on your luck," should be the first verse. Why it's important to me to put that down is obvious to me. So they change it and we sang it for the first time. We'd never even rehearsed it, that Saturday, and we sang it—the place went absolutely crazy. They sang "home with the armadillos" over and over for ten minutes at the end, the people singing along. And then at the end they go completely crazy with the most loud, thundering applause. Jerry Jeff had broken a string. And we didn't really know it that well and he says, "Gary, I broke a string let me change it, and now we know it, let's do it again." And that's when Gary says, "I got to put myself back in that place," and does the song.

AW:

Yeah. So that's the recording that we hear?

BL:

That's the recording that we hear, is the second time. And it's real slow and plotting but everybody loved it and so that's the recording that we hear, and then at the end I say, "That was Gary P. Nunn." To Jerry Jeff's credit he kept that on the tag and so it gave Gary—that was Gary P. Nunn. He wasn't Gary P. Nunn before that he was Gary Nunn. But Gary P. Nunn became known to millions of people, suddenly, because that was Gary P. Nunn. And likewise when we did "Redneck Mother," which we decided to do it, I said, "That song was by Ray Wylie Hubbard," and Jerry Jeff kept that one there too. So you know one interesting thing about "Redneck Mother" is that Jerry Jeff said, "Let's cut that song but you know it needs a second verse—I mean a third verse. It only has two verses, and a chorus and you do that weird spelling thing but it needs a third verse." And I said, "I never knew the third verse, I don't know," and he goes, "You got to call Hubbard." And so on the little pay phone there I called Ray and I said, "We're recording 'Redneck Mother'." He said, "You're kidding." I said, "No, we're doing it but he wants a third verse." And he goes, "Well I was kind of working on a third verse," and so he whispered to me the lost third verse of "Redneck Mother," and you'll quickly realize—I'm going to recite it to you now and you will quickly realize why it never made it on the record. But it said: "There wouldn't even be any rednecks if redneck mothers weren't around to go their bale like Jerry Jeff and Ray Wylie, and David Allen Coe and all the other Merle Haggards that every went to jail and it's up against a wall, redneck mother," you know so but we never—he goes, "Ah, that's too weird." [Laughter]

AW:

That was a good decision. [Laughs]

BL:

So we only had two verses and we spelled it. And so those two songs kind of anchored it.

AW:

So how did this group officially become the Lost Gonzos?

BL:

Well, at this point we're pretty much playing with Jerry Jeff. We've cut—after the fact it becomes Lost Gonzo Band, we don't have the name Lost Gonzo Band yet, but still, the cover hasn't been done yet. We always had a different name for the band. Rodeo-dee Riff Raff one night, the Unborn Calves the next, always coming up with—and I always said, "Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, Jerry Jeff Walker and the Rodeo-dee Riff Raff," I always did that so he said, "Come up with a new name, I don't like it." So I was reading Hunter Thompson,

*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, and it was Dr. Gonzo, and Gonzo this and Gonzo that and Gonzo states of being and I thought it was a cool word and I thought we were kind of Gonzos so as we were driving to the gig one night, Castle Creek in Austin I said, "Well let's be The Gonzo Band tonight, let's be The Lost Gonzo Band." So everybody goes, "Okay." So that night it was Jerry Jeff Walker and The Lost Gonzo Band and that stuck. We had already cut, I think, we'd cut *Viva Terlingua*, but when we went to—when Jerry Jeff went to make the album credits he wrote Lost Gonzo Band on it and included himself, Jerry Jeff Walker, Gary Nunn, Bob Livingston, John Inmon—blah-blah-blah and everybody that's in that picture. Everybody was credited as being The Lost Gonzo band. So really that's the first Lost Gonzo Band, the band that played in Mary Hattersley, Sweet Mary? Joanne Vent, Kelly Dunn from California, and McGearry on drums. Craig Hillis on lead guitar; Mickey Raphael was there, played on something and so that became the record and that just really then we were all with Jerry Jeff and it was Jerry Jeff Walker and The Lost Gonzo Band. And so from about '73 when that record came out, and '74, we toured really hard, playing everywhere. And then at some point Michael Brovsky who is the manager responsible, also the producer, and everything is his production company, we say, "We want to make a record. We want to be The Lost Gonzo Band, we want to do this." So he gets us a record deal, and so I believe in '74 we put out the first Lost Gonzo album, and we went to Nashville. When we did Gonzo records we weren't playing much on our own. We did a lot of—we were a jam band, when we would play on our own everybody got to play a lot of leads, and we would just—each song was fifteen minutes long you know. And so we got this record deal and put out this record in '74 and it was a sleeper of the week in Billboard magazine we got a lot of reviews, a lot of press, we got a lot of airplay. But we weren't really playing that many gigs, we were still with Jerry Jeff. But what we did was we started opening all the shows. So Jerry Jeff Walker and The Lost Gonzo Band we come out and we do forty-five minutes or so, take a break and come back with the full thing. And I believe that Jerry Jeff didn't like this in hindsight, and I believe that might be why he tended to get a little more out of it sometimes because he wanted to be The Lost Gonzo Band. He always—he was in the Gonzo band

AW:

That's interesting. Because the conventional idea would be that the lead guy would want to be the lead guy and not be a part of the band.

BL:

He wanted to be both [Laughter] That's the thing. He probably didn't like the records we did and he thought that he should be involved in it, and, "Yeah okay you guys can sing but I should be the one producing this and I should put the Jerry Jeff stamp on it because I'm in the Gonzo Band." So we did that album, then we did, in '75 I guess, *Thrills*, and on the graph if you look at it, it was just kind of a flat line, if anything it didn't do us much good. The first record shot us up there, the second record just kind of kept us out there but not really much and we ended up losing

or changing record labels and went to Capitol in '76. It was decided at the beginning of '76 that we would leave Jerry Jeff and go on and start doing our own thing.

AW:

And why did you decide—was that a group decision?

BL:

It was a group decision, we wanted to do our own thing. We wanted to play our own shows, we wanted to do it. And we were playing so much with Jerry Jeff, that it was impossible to like play our own—really develop as artists ourselves. And we really wanted to do that. And Jerry Jeff—

AW:

Now what was the personnel at this point?

BL:

Well at this point, it's John Inmon has gotten in the group, Tomas Ramirez, Donny Dolan is the drummer, McGeary left for one reason or another, Donny got in the band on drums, Craig had to leave the road, he didn't like touring so much. John Inmon got in the band—Michael McGeary had brought a keyboard player named Kelly Dunn, called him up and said, "Man there's all these crazy Texans down here and they're making records and stuff maybe you can get in on some of them." So he brought his B3 organ and his Moog synthesizers, the first one in Austin I think, and he could really play great. And suddenly he was in the group. He never played with Murphey but he was on—his first record was *Viva Terlingua*. So he played keyboards. And so that was the start of the band there. Me and Gary—

AW:

And you and Gary.

BL:

And so we're getting ready to leave Jerry Jeff. And that was a crazy year, 1976, the bicentennial year, and Jerry Jeff was really had a hard year because he knew we were leaving and he didn't like it and he started really—that's when he got really crazy. We were flying, we had airplanes. And I'll just tell you this one story. I said I had two fights. And the second fight we were playing Carnegie Hall. I might as well tell these stories—

AW:

Yeah. If you're going to have a fight, Carnegie Hall's a great place to—[laughs]

BL:

Well you know the thing is—*Esquire Magazine* did a story when I was playing with Hubbard—did a story on him and I told Pete Dexter who was the writer of this story and he put that in the *Esquire* article so this is already been published somewhere so I can go ahead and say it. But we were going to play Carnegie Hall the next day, and we were staying at the Plaza Hotel, and Jerry Jeff had a suite. So me, Jerry Jeff, Gary Nunn, and Susan, Jerry's wife, were watching—were up in his suite, drinking champagne and watching the Dallas Cowboys get soundly defeated by the New York Giants. And Jerry Jeff was getting really—he was just freaking out at Landry—you know going, "That's stupid!" Because he was such a fanatic, you know. Even though he was from New York, he wanted the Cowboys to win. So, at some point, he's getting crazier and crazier, and he picked up a lamp and hurled it at the television. It bounced off the back of the wall and came back and hit him in the head that quick. And it drew a little blood, and I just remember him looking at his hand and saying, "I'm bleeding," and then look at me and say, "You're not so tough," and he jumped on me and started to strangle me. Chased me around the room and I'm going, "What is wrong with you?" And Susan and Gary are looking, and we finally end up on the bed and he's on top of me and he's kind of strangling me but he's real—very loose and he's not causing much, but I snapped and threw him off of me and he came at me again and I hit him. He came at me again and I hit him again, and he went down on two knees and he stepped [sic] struggling and I looked at Susan and Gary and they were looking at me with just these horror stricken faces and I reared back and hit him again and he kind of went limp. And then he got up, and I'm breathing [huffing sound] and he gets up and he goes, "[growling sound] All right, oh yeah, all right!" And he picks up this little Martin guitar he had, a little double '0,' something or other, triple '0,' maybe that big. And he starts whirling it around his head like a bull whip and he says, "All right, let's go have a party, let's go. I know places to go tonight." And I was like, "I'm not going anywhere with you," and no one would go with him and he goes, "Ah, [growling sounds]" Just kind of one of these, "Bah-humbug," and gets up and leaves and goes down the hall. And we go, "Jerry Jeff, don't go anywhere," and he's got that guitar, and we're saying, "Don't go." What he does is, he goes and he gets in a cab and he goes to The Bottom Line; Steve Goodman is playing The Bottom Line that night and he walks in with this little guitar, Goodman's on stage, Jerry Jeff walks through the crowd, through tables, and walks up on stage in the middle of his set. And Goodman is going like, "Jerry Jeff, what are you doing here?" And he said, "Here, you take it, I'll break it," and he gives him the guitar, and gave it to him, and walks out. And then that next day he had to go to makeup, he had a black eye. And so he got on makeup and we played Carnegie Hall and absolutely blew the roof off. And it was the last they allowed that kind of music in Carnegie Hall for a long time. People were standing up and rushing the stage and the manager was going, "Oh my god." But it was like, every once in a while if you happened to get into a fight with Jerry Jeff, it wasn't hard to sock him a few times and then he was your best friend. He just somehow loved it. And, I don't know loved it, but it was what really happened. So that's setting up that second fight. Nineteen seventy-six comes along and Gary Nunn and the whole band were getting down to the end, we were fixing to leave.

We have two airplanes; Jerry Jeff's so crazy, no one wanted to fly with him. We'd all pack into another plane. We play Phoenix at a rodeo and Jerry Jeff had taken to just inviting all these cowboys back to his room because we weren't fun anymore. We didn't want to hang out and raise hell. We're in the middle of you know, every night, night after night you know. And we had more sense so we'd go to bed. And he needed some hang out people so he invites the cowboys back, and I remember staying in Phoenix—a few days before we had been in Tucson, and we had some days off and we stayed at this really nice resort they put us up in. Our road manager, his name was Jack Borders, we called him, "The Miserable Pud," and he was one of those guys that was like, "Be at the airport at seven o'clock, seven a.m.," and we go, "Gah I can't believe it!" And he goes, "The flight's at eight." We'd get there at seven, and the flight wouldn't be till ten. So we called it being "Pud-icized." So, Jack was bald-headed and had a big wart on his head, we had a doctor with us on the road—Dr. Don Counts who was this local doctor here that was a music nut and had all kinds of old ancient guitars.

AW:

So he just liked to go along?

BL:

He just liked to go along. And he went on this tour with us, and these are crazy times, and he would give us B-12 shots, and give us great foot massages, he knew all this acupressure, acupuncture. Jack had a wart on his head, and he goes, "I can take that off," so we had an operation one day, and we're all around him while he takes out his stuff and cuts the wart out of Jack's head and stitches it back together, we watched it. So he has a big bandage on his head. Three days later we're in Phoenix—we play the rodeo, Jerry Jeff invites all these cowboys back with him; we're staying at a Holiday Inn, one of those—outside you know where all the rooms—doors are outside, room after room after room—the whole band. It seemed like there was a ton of us. I'm next to Jerry Jeff's room, so all night long, he went out and found him a big metal trash can and filled it with ice and beer, and all night long he's over there banging and the cowboys are coming out, "Yee-haw," you know practically shooting guns off. They were the craziest, these bull riders that—Larry Mahan, Pete Gay, all those guys—

AW:

Donnie Gay—

BL:

Donnie Gay, all those guys and you know, "Oh Jerry Jeff! Redneck Mother!" [Laughs] You know, and so they're all howling at the moon; I couldn't sleep. So I go down and sleep on Gary Nunn's floor down at the other end of the hotel. The next morning we have to be up—we're supposed to leave at eleven o'clock. We're going to Santa Monica to open for The Birds at the Santa Monica Civic Center, whatever incarnation of The Birds at that time, '76. So we're all out

in the parking lot and we're talking and we're walking by and we're laughing and everything. Suddenly the door opens up and Jerry Jeff pokes his head out and he's like purple. He's just—you know his hair's all matted, he's bleary eyed, and he goes, "Shut the fuck up! Can't you see I'm trying to sleep, shut up!" You can tell he has a terrible headache or something; slams the door. And I go, "Oh now the shoe's on the other foot, Jerry Jeff, yeah now the shoe's on the other foot." And I'm kind of taunting him from outdoors, and then I walk on out in the parking lot, and here is Jerry Jeff, flings open the door and comes screaming out into the parking lot and all he's wearing, Andy, is a T-shirt, a very short T-shirt.

AW:

[Laughs] That must have been an ugly sight.

BL:

All these people are coming to eat lunch after church, people with their wives and everything, they're all out in the parking lot arriving, they have suits on to do the buffet, you know. Jerry Jeff is out there screaming at us, and he's naked. And he comes up to Jack who he thinks has been the one to yell. So it's only now being told—to yell at him, "Now the shoe's on the other foot now," and he starts poking at Jack on the top of that bandage, saying, "Wart-head, you wart-head!" And he's poking his bandage. [Laughter] "You don't know shit." Somehow he just picks that. Well Gary snaps. And from the crazy year, it all boils down to this point. And that one-sixteenth Cherokee that the Nunn family doesn't like to talk about kicks in, and Gary lets him have it. And Jerry Jeff hits the asphalt really hard and Gary—we had to pull him off of him. Gary was ready, I think ready to kill him, and Jack takes control at this point and tells Bobby Lemons, who is our other roadie, who ended up with Willie Nelson being runs sound with Willie all these years. He says, "Bob, take him back in there, get him to sleep! Get up at six o'clock, go out and get in the plane, you've got to be on the premises at eight o'clock, but let him sleep all day." We're going on, so we go out and we fly, and Gary's just like, "Oh I can't believe it, oh no, oh no! What have I done?" And so we fly to Los Angeles, we do the sound check by himself, it gets to be seven-thirty, eight o'clock, and at eight-fifteen he walks in the door with Bobby. He's got his arm in a sling, he's got a cane, and he's just kind of limping, and he's got some asphalt embedded in his—you know that kind of—and he just looks mainly looks really bad and he's really down. And Gary goes, "Gah, I'm so sorry Jerry Jeff," And Jerry Jeff goes, "That's all right Gary, I guess we got to play it, let's just get out there and do it." [Laughter] So we go out and he hits the guitar and we play the set, we open for The Birds. So a few weeks later it's really winding down, and it's really crazy and we do the last show—is a the Summit in Houston, we open for Linda Ronstadt on New Year's Eve. And that's it. And we start and we go—in 1977, by that time, in '76 we had got the new record label and we were going to make a new third record and make it for Capitol, I was back on Capitol. And we had made some demos, really good demos, and they signed us. And at about this time, Donny Dolan, our drummer, had passed out, he got hypoglycemia, something bad happened, he got really sick and passed out in a Nashville hotel

didn't know who he was. He woke up with amnesia, and we were playing this big show, and so we had to get—we limped by with drummers, but we—The Gonzo Band, we auditioned for drummers and we got Paul Percy—no, I take that back. We got a guy named Michael Holleman and Gary and I decided—it was a group decision with Brovsky's urging, "You guys don't need to be passing that bass back and forth and everything, you guys need to be front men, we'll get another bass player, and you guys will be the front guys and it'll be you, John, and Gary up front, that's what we'll promote." Why I couldn't play bass and do that, I didn't know, and why Gary couldn't—because it was fun to do that anyway. But we got Bobby Smith who had been The Fabulous Sparkles bass player, came into The Gonzo Band. So he was the bass player, Michael Holleman on drums—

AW:

Now that's not Bobby Earl Smith?

BL:

No. This is Bobby Smith that just recently passed away. He got cancer and just recently died. But he was the original Fabulous Sparkles bass player. Another big hero and suddenly he's the bass player. And we made this record called *Signs of Life* and Brovsky said, "You guys can be the Moody Blues of Country Music." And so we were encouraged to be as out there as we could and we cut fifty songs.

AW:

Wow.

BL:

And we did it when we cut a bunch with Bobby on bass, no—actually for the—I'm wrong there—we put that record out, *Signs of Life*, and we start touring to back it up, but once again, showcase rooms we can't make any money, and we're trying to promote this record. We get ready to start to do another record sometime, so that must be '77, '78 we get started ready to do the fourth album for Capitol, that's when we're encouraged to be the Moody Blues of Country Music and we cut fifty songs, and at this point I don't think Bobby's in the band anymore. We've got a new drummer, Paul Percy, we go and we cut a lot of stuff and then we get a whole new session team in to be the rhythm section, which was Roscoe Beck, and Steve Meader on drums. Roscoe Beck on bass, great bass guitar player. And we cut a lot of that same stuff with those guys. Along about that time—

AW:

And where are you cutting all of this?

BL:

This is back in that same studio in Austin but this time Michael Brovsky owns it and it's a state of the art studio.

AW:

Oh okay, so it's not the same old machine sitting in the middle of the floor?

BL:

State of the art, Odyssey Sound. Brovsky is one of the owners and we say, "Well, we have good budgets, why don't we take some of this money and buy some equipment and go out like Jerry Jeff does and go out to my house in the country and we'll make—" "No way, you're not going to do that, we have to have these great tracks." Of course he's getting paid, he's making the money, so of course he wanted us to go in there. We cut *Collectibles* in there too with Jerry Jeff and maybe even one more, but so you can kind of tell the mood everybody was in and the shape everybody was in on some of these records because when we did *Collectibles*, it's really loose and really ragged, and the songs were not prepared, and we were just in there, we couldn't even believe we were recording. We said, "Are we really making a record with this stuff?" And it had "Wingin' it Home to Texas. [singing] Wingin' it home to Texas, home and on the morning plain, I'm wingin' it home to Texas and I lost my bags again, and that Dallas airport sucks," is the way it goes. Somewhere in the middle of that song completely falls apart and picks back up again but Jerry Jeff left it, "It's great! It's perfect." We were winging it! So he's the driving force and somehow people love what he does. Well The Gonzo Band made that record in the middle of making the record the MCA, head of country music—Capitol came to town his name was Flood, last name was Flood, I think Chuck Flood. And he said, "I want to hear the record." Well instead of going and playing maybe eight or ten selected cuts, Brovsky goes in there and he plays them all fifty songs that were rough mixes. And what this guy says is, "Where is the country band we signed?" The direction we were getting is, "Go out there experiment, be out there." Where's the country band we signed? So they dropped us from the label. Now just about the same time this happens, we're dejected, and feeling—you know it's just crazy, we're broke, we're starving. I have a family, I have two kids.

AW:

This is what, '78?

BL:

Seventy-eight, seventy-nine something like that, by the time I have two kids. Trevor was born in '78. So about '79ish we were on a Midwest tour and we're up in Lincoln, Nebraska or Wichita, Kansas, somewhere, and the vehicles break down, we're up there in the middle of nowhere, making no money, and the band just, as John T. Davis said, Because he was our roadie, John T. Davis was our roadie. And he said, the band all got on separate planes and left. We were all at

each other's throats. Basically it was a very difficult time. So we all left, and I go back and I'm dejected and we have no record deal. I've said 'dejected' a lot haven't I? [Laughter] Strike all those dejected and put a different adjective. But basically, I had no way to make a living really, and none of us did. We were all on the edge. Hubbard calls me up out of the blue, "Bob, I've got—" This has got to be '79, end-ish of '79. "I've got some gigs, what are you doing? Are you playing with Jerry Jeff much?" I go, "I'm not playing with Jerry Jeff, I'm not playing with The Gonzo Band, I'm not playing with anything, everything has kind of fallen through." And he goes, "Well I've got tis gig this weekend could you come and play with me?" I did, it was a lot of fun, suddenly I made some money, better money than I was making with Jerry Jeff, because basically what he did was he split everything. So he says, "What do you think about playing with me?" This sounds great, and he says, "Can you get us a guitar player?" And I go, "Look I can get Paul and John, we don't have anything to do." So I call Paul and Paul says, "Count me in," I call John and John says, "No I've got another gig, I'm going off with—" Somebody like, it was either Delbert or Omar or something. I said, "Fine." So we get another guitar player the next day he calls back, "Bob, have you got that other guitar player?" I said, "Well, I think we're going to get him," and he goes, "My gig fell through, you've got to get me this gig." So I said, "Okay," well that became the Ray Hubbard Band, we made a record called *Something about the Night*. And Hubbard was a great guy, really funny, and booked all the time and sometimes we'd go up to Dallas, we'd play Friday night at Whiskey River, Saturday morning we'd get up and go do an opening at Northcross Mall, dash over to Highland Park and do another opening with a bunch of models at Guy LaRoche's studio, and then that night play the American Cancer Society benefit, and they'd pay us all these big bucks and Ray with the four of us in the band, he would take a double cut and give us all—so we'd cut it five ways, he would take a double cut. Suddenly I'm making more money than I've ever made, and it's not on a level where we've got a national record out but this is basic, this is the way it should be. And I'm really happy. So we go off with Hubbard, '79 '80, '81, somewhere in there and times are great, times are fun. Me, John, Paul play all these places and he's got a great family. He's married to a woman named D'Ann, and her mother married a lawyer, a big time lawyer in Dallas and they have a penthouse at Turtle Creek. The law offices are down below their house, and so they have two floors that they own, and they loved us so much, and it was so great for Ray they thought to have this really snapping band, we were hot. That John was tearing it up by this point, and he's the only lead player and he's happy, and Hubbard's in his Springsteen period, and so they put us up in this penthouse and buy a bus for Hubbard, and we're on the road and we're kind of styling, it was a funky bus, but we're opening some shows for Willie, and you know having a good time. And one day, this has got to be '81 or '82, I'm not sure, I lived up off of Southwest Parkway here, down a dusty dirt road, and I see a cloud of dust coming, and I say, "Who's coming up here?" And in my driveway drives Jerry Jeff in a Cadillac convertible and all I think he's wearing is a swimming suit and cowboy boots and his hat. He dressed like that a lot [laughs] with a vest—cowboy hat and boots. And he comes up and I come out and go, "What's going on?" He goes, "I came to find out, what are you doing?" And I went, "What do you mean, what am I doing?" And he goes, "I want to

know what you're doing, what you're up to. Why you're doing what you're doing." [AW Laughs] And I go, "I'm playing with Hubbard," and he goes, "You should be playing with me!" I said, "Well, I don't know what to do." He goes, "I got a new record deal, we're going to be playing, we're going to make a record," all this stuff and, "You need to come and play with me." So I say, "Well," and once again I'd played with Hubbard for two or three years and you want to move on, once again I'm not playing—

AW:

Not playing your stuff—

BL:

I'm not playing my stuff, and I'm not playing these giant halls and everything—Jerry Jeff is promising me the world, "Come back and play with me. New record." I go, "Okay." So I give Hubbard my notice and I quit way before it's time to quit because Jerry Jeff didn't have anything together. There were no gigs; his manager was trying to get him a record deal, and I remember finally something coming up, and it was the Cheatham Street Warehouse in San Marcos, and Jerry Jeff goes, "I'll come pick you up," and he comes and picks me up and he has this Mercedes 600SL, some really expensive car, I think he was leasing it. He picks me up, we drive down there, it's pouring down rain when we drive down there, we play the gig, and it's pouring down rain when we drive back. And I'm saying, "Jerry Jeff would you like me to drive?" And he goes, "You drive this car? Do you realize how much this car's worth? No way are you going to drive my car." And so I'm going "Eh," and so we go to this party and I just remember that Jerry Jeff has had a few drinks and I remember Bobby Lemons the road manager saying, "Welcome back, as you can see, nothing has changed." [Laughter] And the next morning, it was a cold March day, I woke up and I just said, "I've got to find out what's going on," and I go to his house, he lived on a camp near [?] McCullough Road [1:54:48], this beautiful ranch house, swimming pool, really fixed it up nice, great house he had. I get out there, freezing cold March day. All the doors and every window in the house is open, wind just blowing through this house. Not a light on, not a sound, like it's abandoned. And I get there, "Jerry Jeff? Jerry Jeff?" And I come creeping through, and there he is laying on the couch in the living room and he wakes up and he goes, "Oh, I was dreaming, I was dreaming that my head was in Jessie Jane's lap," that's his daughter, "And she was stroking my head saying, 'It's going to be all right daddy, it's going to be all right.' It was such a beautiful dream." [Laughter] So I said, "Jerry Jeff I just came to find out what's real." And he goes, "Huh?" I said, "I came to find out what's real. You've promised me these gigs and there's nothing, when are we going to do what you said we were going to do?" He goes, "What's real? You want to know what's real? I'll show you what's real," and he ran out and dived into his swimming pool, freezing cold. And he gets out, in all his clothes, and he gets out and he goes, "[Shivering sound] Now that's real!" [Laughter] And he starts yelling and he goes down the hall dripping wet, and he comes back and he has that *Esquire Magazine* article, and he goes, "You want to know what's real?" I said, "I could have been playing with Hubbard, I

could have stayed there, he had gigs.” And he yells at me, “Don’t you know that I tell you what you want to hear?” And I go, “No, I didn’t know that,” and he says, “They write an article about Hubbard and it’s all about me!” And it was me telling the story of how I beat him up. [Laughter] So he says, “It’s all about me,” and he goes, “You will be much better off. You just got to give me some time! I’m getting it together!” And so I go, “Okay.” Well, he does get it together and we go out and we start playing, and at this point we have cut *Ridin’ High*, we have cut, I guess, *It’s a Good Night for Singing*, and *A Man Must Carry On*, that was our last kind of record with him, *Man Must Carry On*, we had had all those records behind us. So I’m getting out—chronologically I’m getting out of—but *A Man Must Carry On* was the last record we did with him for a while. He went on and got the Bandito Band, Freddie Krc, Ron Cobb, Bobby Rambo from Dallas, and they made a couple of records, and when I got back with him—uh he wants to be fed—

AW:

Want to take a break and feed him?

BL:

Yeah we can take a break.

AW:

Yeah I need to hit the—

BL:

Yeah I need to pee anyway.

AW:

All right, I’ll put this on stop for a minute.

***End of Recording***

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