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The Wrecking Crew!

By Unknown

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This sound we're going
to record with a tape recorder.

- Brad?

- Here we go.

- Brad?

- Yes.

Do you want me to lay out again
after that instrumental break,
and then come back in
with the fours
toward the end of the, uh...

like, before "C"?

We'll have you wail on
that baby, for the instrument...

Here we go!

This'll be what?

Okay, take two.

- Alvin!

- Okay!

It's 5:

The Wrecking Crew was
the focal point of the music.
They were the ones
with all the spirit,
and all the know-how,
especially for rock and roll
music.

In the hardcore producing area,
everybody knew
what went on there.

I mean, everybody knew
that the best musicians
played on all the sessions,
but we as the general public
didn't know.

I had no idea
that certain people
didn't play their own records
until The Monkees came along.
They played so well, and
they played so well together.
I think they were so into that.

They all respected each other,
and they all would
sit and hang...
You know, talk
in between takes and hang.
I mean, it was like...
it was a social event
for these guys too.
What was nice about that unit
was that they played
together a lot.
And so they were
an established groove machine.
They knew each other.
So you could really count on
what they had to offer.
We played on everybody's.
The Lazy-Crazy-Hazy Days
of Summer album
with Nat King Cole,
it was the same guys doing that
that was doing The Beach Boys.
The musicians were really
the unsung heroes
of all those hit records.
When I listen to the records,
it is so apparent
that these guys
were just really so good.
And you can see why
everybody used 'em, you know?
Because they were so tight.
They were the stone cold
rock and roll professionals,
and there may never, ever be
a group of rock and roll
musicians
of that caliber again.
The chances are,
you didn't know his name.
But it's likely you sang and
hummed along with his music.
Famed studio guitarist
Tommy Tedesco has died.

I'm Kurt Loder
with an MTV news brief.
Tommy Tedesco was arguably
the king of Los Angeles
session guitarists.
You've probably never
heard his name
or heard him speak, but listen.
He is someone
you've heard before.
He was featured
in the theme to Bonanza...
in Batman.
The chores!
The stores!
Tedesco died of cancer Monday
at his home
in Northridge, California,
at the age of 67.
While his name may not be
immediately familiar
to everyone, some aspect of
his music almost certainly is.
Here's the irony.
You spend your whole life
playing guitar,
creating guitar licks
that people
all around the world recognize.
But nobody knows your name,
until you're dead.
And then, even in the end,
they misspell your name
and call you...
- " Tony Tedesco."
- ...instead of Tommy.
Tommy was not only
a legendary guitarist.
He was my father.
And he was also a member
of an elite group
of studio musicians.
So what follows
is the story of my father

and his extended family,
The Wrecking Crew.
Hondells, Marketts, Routers...
We'd cut the tracks
and the records,
and then they'd form a group
to be that group.
People were really not focused
on the long, drawn-out album
recording sessions.
Four songs in three hours.
It's only a certain group
of guys can do that.
A lot of the recording
came out here.
That's when you had an influx
of a lot of New York musicians.
That was in the mid-'60s,
when they started
flowing out here.
Then it became a flood
around that time.
This led to a surge of work
for the L.A. studio musicians.
Not all of 'em,
but a small group,
who later became known
as The Wrecking Crew.
It wasn't an organized band
of musicians
that set out
to take over rock and roll.
And I can't tell you
exactly who was part of this
hit-making machine.
Even the musicians
that were part of this scene
couldn't come to an agreement.
Twelve, 15 people.
Maybe what, 20 of us?
Thirty, maybe?
It was probably 20 musicians,
or maybe a few more,
counting the string players,

of course.
They were doing
all the sessions.
They were a product
of the '40s, '50s, and '60s.
And they were great musicians
who came of age
when rock and roll came of age.
And here they are at the height
of their physical powers
with all of this talent.
And they're in the right place.
And it's the right time,
and so they get to do this.
On the first day of shooting,
I brought
four of L.A.'s greatest
session players together.
Carol Kaye, Plas Johnson
and Hal Blaine,
along with my father.
It was probably the first time
that all four
had been in the same room
in about 20 years.
Do you recognize me...
You've lost weight!
And all you have to do is
just get sick.
Rolling.
- Rolling.
- Okay, the question is...
This is not, uh...
You know, if all the guys
that had been in the studios...
God bless 'em all...
For 20, 30 years,
they all wore the blue blazers,
the neck ties,
and there was no talking,
no smoking, and no nothing.
And we came in there
with Levis and t-shirts,
smoking cigarettes,

whatever we're...

- Yeah.

- And the older guys were saying, "They're gonna wreck the business."

You know, "They are gonna wreck the music business."

We didn't have the respect that the older guys had.

Remember the older studio players, Barney Kessels, and the Lloyd Elliots,

- all these people?

- Yeah, exactly.

Well, that's how that whole wrecking crew thing came in.

Even though the term

"The Wrecking Crew"

gained popularity

with rock historians,

many of these musicians

never heard the term

until years later.

I think Hal Blaine was

the first one I heard it from.

- Yeah, it...

- He probably

came up with the name.

I think it kind of evolved

really.

- There was...

- The first time I heard

the name, I think

was at The Baked Potato,

where they had

that get-together.

They used the expression

"the wrecking crew."

Well, it was used before that.

It was used

while we were recording.

And the definition of who was

a member of The Wrecking Crew,

there really isn't
any definition.
Between the engineers, producers
and musicians themselves,
each has their own take
on how this all went down.
Together, they form
a snapshot of a time
that will never be repeated.
Anybody could do
five or six different things
on as many different
instruments also.
There were a lot of producers
at that time
that were not really musicians,
so these guys were able
to decode...
He's talking about me,
by the way, so...
No, I mean, there were
some producers
that really just, you know,
didn't really know
the musicians' language,
and these guys were able
to just quickly interpret it.
The people we're talking about
played for so many people
in so many different styles.
That's a fascinating thing.
They could walk into, uh,
a pop sound, and play it.
They could do rhythm and blues.
They could do soul music.
I guess they could have done
classics if they'd had to,
but they had the magic touch.
We injected
a lot of ourself into it,
because we were
experts at doing it.
We were doing it all the time.
A guy would give us

a lead sheet or something,
and we'd know what the song was.
We made up a lot
of arrangements and so forth
on that set,
ourselves on those things.
Here's the way
that The Beat Goes On sounded
when we first heard it.
I said, "Uh-oh,
we need to pull
a rabbit out of a hat
for this one," you know?
It was our job to come up
with riffs and stuff,
so about the third line
I came up with was:
And Sonny loved it
and he gave it to Bob West,
the bass player, to play it.
And both of us are playing it
throughout the tune.
And without a good bass line,
the tune doesn't pop, you know,
it doesn't snap, you know,
like a big hit record.
I've always said,
"They put notes on paper.
They put notes on paper,
but that's not music."
You make the music.
What do you do with the notes?
- Right.
- What you do with the charts?
- Absolutely.
- What you do with the chords?
Other than that,
they can call the union
- for a guitar player.
- That's right, so...
So it's what you put into it,
because how many days are,
in fact, we're all here.
And it's what you put into it

that's not written.
Yeah, well, in fact, everybody
can... that's sitting here,
I remember doing
different things
that weren't
ever even thought about.
And then, all of a sudden,
become part of the record,
and part of signature
of the record.
We all used to produce our own
parts. It's that simple.
- Oh, yeah, yeah.
- To make it swing, yeah.
You know, the first thing
that I ever did
that smacked of any kind
of rock and roll
was some kind of date,
which I don't even know
who the artist was.
There wasn't a minor 7th chord
in the bushel, you know?
It was all pretty vanilla.
That's when I knew
something was different.
At the time, I was doing
the Ozzie And Harriet TV show.
- Ah.
- Then all of a sudden,
you know, I'm doing this show.
And then, they...
One day, they come up with...
Well, Jimmie Haskell comes up...
- with Ricky Nelson.
- And with Ricky Nelson, said...
- It's rock and roll.
- "We're doing
this rock and roll stuff."
I don't know
what they're talking about.
Just laid out a chord sheet,
and says,

"Play behind Ricky Nelson."
So pretty soon,
you've ended up...
We were starting
to get involved in this.
That's what took me to L.A.
in... In 196...
Summer of 1960, uh, to play
in the Ricky Nelson band.
Working with those people
like that
was a perfect showcase
for what would happen later.
Which I had no idea
that I would ever be
the "session" player.
I didn't even know
what that meant.
We learned how to play
rock and roll
right there on the job.
Hey, you know,
if they want this...
I can do that.
You know, that's Latin...
That's Latin music.
That's nothing, you know.
You can do that all day long.
There were some purists,
like there is
in every way of life,
some people will not compromise.
Not that they couldn't.
They wouldn't, most of the time,
permit themselves
to, you know...
They felt that they were
at a certain level.
And playing rock and roll
was perhaps a little bit
beneath them.
And they didn't want
to get into it,
whereas, our guys,

we welcomed the rock and roll.
They didn't play that shit.
they didn't know about it.
They didn't like it.
And I started out
playing demos mainly,
you know, \$10 a song,
and I got to eat that day, and...
I had three kids to earn
a living, and that's it.
And the money was important
to pay the rent.
And so I did what
all the rest of the guys did.
I got, uh, a fender guitar
and put the light gauge strings
where you could
bend 'em from here to Christmas.
And listened to some of
the people that were doing this,
and the rock groups, and I got
so I could play that stuff
better than they could.
The very first call
I had ever had at Disney,
we got there a quarter to 12:00,
and all the blue blazers
were leaving.
And we're all sitting there,
and he makes a little speech
about, "Ladies and gentlemen,
we brought you in here
because in this particular film,
we're gonna do a little...
Some of your...
- your rock and roll music."
- "Your rock and roll music"?
"It is this"... Yeah.
"There's a little scene here..."
- It always happens to me.
- "...and we're gonna show it
to you," And it was
a quick, little scene,
so he says, "Now, we have

all the music for you.
It's there in front of you.
And we're gonna do this to what
we call a 'click track.'"
Like, we didn't know
anything was going on.
"We're gonna run
the click very slow
so that you can all learn,
study, and memorize this music."
And then he said, "Mary Anne,
play the click much slower."
Well, she accidentally hit it,
and the minute
we heard eight clicks,
ding-ding-ding-ding-ding-
ding-ding-ding, we're in.
And we play this thing
front to back.
And when we finished,
this guy said,
"How in the...
man, you did it perfect.
- I wish we'd have made that."
- "Made it."
"How in the world
could you do that?"
And Tommy said, "We practice
a lot during the day."
It was perfect, 'cause they...
they thought you were
a complete idiot.
I mean, it was unbelievable.
Most of the music
and the money...
I was about to say... It was
a Freudian slip, but true...
came out of the Brill building
in New York.
It was New York-based,
New York writers,
New York singers,
New York musicians.
The music business was

in New York city,
period, at that time.
Rolling master "A."
Master "A," take one.
Here we go, rolling.
Say, Chess Records
back in Cincinnati.
But there were only maybe
one guitar player,
one bass player,
one piano player,
so it could almost get held up
by those one or two guys.
Well, they could come
to Los Angeles,
and they... It wouldn't
matter if they could call
a matter of 10 or 12
different guitar players,
all of them would be
equally as good
to do what they wanted done,
plus we had more studios
out here.
A lot of the musicians
that were back east,
and in Nashville,
a lot of 'em came out here
to seek their fame and fortune.
This was
an untapped place for...
for new artists to record too.
Lee Hazlewood told me
he went back to New York
to do a session,
and he just kind of walked
over to the guitar player,
and said,
"Hey, could you play me
this little thing?"
And the guy said,
"Write it out."
And the guy just refused
to experiment and try anything.

Like, if it wasn't written out,
he wasn't gonna play it.
You had young musicians
who were willing to contribute
and come up with ideas,
you know,
and I think that
was the difference.
I don't think it's any secret.
The '60s called
all of the music to the west.
L.A. was the place to be.
If you wanted the best, they
were right here, in Los Angeles.
It was a rougher, looser sound
than what was
coming out of New York,
having a lot to do with,
I guess, the musicians
that we were using, 'cause
they were fresh to the sound.
Hal, you started the surf
and Earl started
that double time, you know.
You know... You know, we
doubled it up and made it sweet.
Yeah, it was sort of like
east coast/west coast jazz.
There was really
a distinct difference.
And at... for those years,
the record producers
- chose the west coast.
- Yeah,
and the hits started
coming out of here.
This was where
the youthful movies
were being made.
Everybody wanted to be a surfer.
Whether you were white
or black or lived
in the middle of the desert,
you wanted to have a surfboard.

It was crazy.
And along with it
came young music,
and it was created here.
Beach beauties everywhere,
and art lovers willing to look.
This is paradise for thousands
of sun worshipers,
Californians by birth
or adoption.
I remember the perfumed air,
the night-blooming jasmine,
and all the kind of plants
that grow
in Southern California,
and how dreamy it all was.
It was the sound
of The Beach Boys
kind of wafting through
from house to house,
you know, almost the same record
just repeating,
and the idea that,
"Hey, this is real.
this is the culture here,
is this beach thing."
The Beach Boys!
Thank you very much.
Right now, we'd like to show you
how The Beach Boys
go about making a record.
We start with Denny Wilson
on the drums...
...followed by Al Jardine
on rhythm guitar...
...helped out
by Carl "lead guitar" Wilson...
...and filled out instrumentally
by our leader,
Brian Wilson on the bass.
When we're ready to sing,
we step up to the microphones,
and it comes out
something like this.

I went to Gold Star,
and I met musicians' favorite,
Phil Spector,
And I immediately had
Steve Douglas start booking,
you know, the re...
They're called the regulars,
The Wrecking Crew.
And he started booking them
for me in my studio in Western.
Session players were
brought in by producers
for a variety of reason.
In fact, most of the mid-1960s,
beach boys backing tracks
didn't feature
any of The Beach Boys.
It was Brian Wilson's decision
to push the music
to another level.
And to do that,
he enlisted the best of L.A.
We were on the road
150 days a year.
Brian was getting a little bit
more complex
in his arrangements. And
it just got to be too difficult
to... to coordinate
our itineraries.
And that's when
The Wrecking Crew stepped in.
When I heard that
some of the guys sat in
for some of The Beach Boys,
that surprised me.
But in truth, at that point,
The Beach Boys were
Brian Wilson.
He created it all.
He was very self-assured,
very much in control.
He brought in the charts
that he wrote himself.

And most of the time, I mean,
the music was entirely his.
I mean, there were
very few times that we made up
- licks on his stuff. Yeah.
- ...musically correct.
He had in his head
what he wanted.
First album, it was...
Summer Days,
The Beach Boy album.
Ray Pohlman was a great
bass player, really good.
Steve Douglas was,
like, so on-the-mark
as a saxophone player.
He just blew my mind.
He played with such finesse,
you know?
And he used to get real close
to the microphone
to get the best benefit
of his instrument.
They were all... The Wrecking
Crew... They were just great.
Brian was a genius.
I mean, he would just...
He was just good
as I've ever seen, I believe,
about putting things together.
Western studio,
and there was probably...
fifteen, 20 guys in that studio.
He'd start at the first guy...
and he'd sing 'em their part
until they got it,
and second guy,
he'd sing their part,
and the third guy,
all the way around the room.
Then he'd go back
to the first guy.
Well, the first guy
had forgot his part

and he'd sing it again,
sang a second...
He taught the whole thing
by rote.
And all of a sudden,
that whole band
could play that shit.
I mean, Brian is...
When you want to talk
about genius,
he's... There's not any more
like him that I know of.
I mean, he's unbelievable.
Pet Sounds was
an incredibly important record,
and still stands there, like,
"Okay, top this," you know?
George Martin told me
Sgt. Pepper was an attempt...
It was an attempt
to equal Pet Sounds.
So it was an incredibly
influential record
and I think it had
an electromagnetic field.
And people were drawn here,
and wanted to be a part of that,
and wanted to make records
like that.
Good Vibrations, we must have
done 25, 30 sessions.
It might take six months to do.
Some days,
we worked five minutes.
- Some days, four hours.
- Yeah.
- On the same song.
- We just... We experimented.
And they would ask me,
"Well, what do you want?"
And I'd say, "well,
I don't know," you know?
and we'd go home, and
the next time we get together,

then we would fall together,
and we'd do the thing.
Three months,
two, three dates a week,
but Capitol Records
was picking up the tab.
And we liked to work for him.
The word was,
"Do you have the date
with Brian Wilson
tomorrow?"
I'd say, "Yeah, I do."
"Oh, good."
Well, Carol played
on Good Vibrations
and California Girls,
and she was, like,
the star of the show.
I mean, she was
the greatest bass player
in the world.
And she was
way ahead of her time.
She would play
a tonic in a fifth
or a third instead of a fifth,
you know.
She was one
of the first bass players
to start playing that way.
But he definitely wrote out
some neat lines on the bass,
like, for instance:
I'd never played that.
I'll just go into this...
Now, that's a jazz walking line.
You knew that this kid was into
something really, really great.
The room had a spirit to it,
with Hal being the leader,
you know, and all the guys
working together,
and thumping and pumping.
He would get things

like he wanted to hear them.
And when he got 'em that way,
it was good.
When I heard Good Vibrations
the first time on the radio,
I just...
It just blew me away.
Now.
Very good.
I remember Carol though.
I still have to remember,
'cause your favorite thing,
no matter what day we went on
after that, "Would you like me
to use my Beach Boy pick?"
And so she'd
impress the shit out of...
This one, and...
She picked it up
on her way to the studio.
And they're looking
at this pick,
- and they're looking at her.
- You have to sell it,
- you know.
- She was selling this shit
like I couldn't believe.
One little pick made this girl
hundreds of thousands
of dollars.
I was very jealous of the guitar
when we were first dating
and got engaged,
and he paid a lot more
attention to the guitar, I felt.
So I gave him an ultimatum,
"It's me or the guitar."
And he said, "Honey,
the guitar doesn't have legs.
you do."
I got so upset with him,
I took my ring
and I threw it at him.
Then I went looking for it.

And I was one of these
late starters in life.
I wasn't one of these guys that
you read about in the books.
You know, you read
these articles
in Guitar Player magazine,
the guy says,
"Well, when I was 12 years old,
I had the chops of a reindeer
and all this stuff, you know."
When I was 12 years old,
I was playing marbles myself,
I don't know, you know.
And when I was 24,
I was at Douglas Aircraft,
you know, moving boxes
and trying to play guitar.
I was 24, I was still into this.
"Wow, I'm in seventh position."
And I finally learned
one hip chord.
Whoa.
So I'm not one of them guys
you read about.
We went to the prom,
and Ralph Marterie
was playing the dance.
We found out
that their guitar player
was leaving that night.
And he tried out, auditioned,
and he was hired
right then and there.
It was on a Friday night,
and the Saturday night,
he left for New York city.
- Tell the truth.
- Okay, you got to let go.
Marterie was going to get
a guitar/singer,
so that he could only pay
for one guy.
He decided he knew

there was nothing there
in Niagara Falls for him.
He wanted to go
to California to play.
While my father struggled
to find work playing guitar,
he had to make ends meet
working in a warehouse.
He always said it was
the best job he ever had.
He hated it so much,
it made him practice every day.
I was told by two guys
before we left,
"He's never gonna make it."
So after seven months
of struggling here,
daddy wanted to go back,
and I said, "There's no way,"
because I wasn't giving in
to those two guys.
And that's why dad said,
"My stubborn Sicilian wife."
In fact,
my wife was behind me 100%,
like, all the time I work.
And she's... It was "You tour."
She was working,
she took the calls,
she didn't... never complained.
I would come in

at 11:

I'd see my kids whenever.
My wife accepted it,
this was our living,
our whole family took it
exactly that way.
Every once in a while,
a musician's wife
would come and complain to her,
and she'd talk to them.
She'd say,
"Well, look,

that's his living."
Well, Carmie never talked
to Barbara the Barbarian.
Whoa-ho-ho-ho.
My father would say,
"There are only four reasons

to take a gig:

For the money,
for the connections,
for the experience,
or just for fun."
I got to tell you a story
about your dad.
We were in Western studio
three there,
and, uh, Jan Berry
of Jan and Dean,
he counted the song,
"Everybody ready? Yeah. Okay."
Tedesco started playing,
and Jan says, "Stop, wait."
And he went over and looked,
and he said, "Tedesco,
what are you doing?"
He... Tommy...
The music was upside down,
and Tommy was
reading it backwards.
Now, that's a true story,
but you talk about
getting a laugh out of it.
Tommy was a cut-up.
Hold it, cut it.
There was an energy
that Phillip would get.
I remember, Phillip would be
so excited about every session.
There was just a vitality
in the room that was...
would lift you off of your feet.
And also there'd be
so many players
and the sound would be so huge.

I mean, it was definitely...
That wall of sound was really...
It was really there.
I never was in the studio
that there were
any different guys.
it was the same guys always.
The "wall of sound" was
the Gold Star echo chambers,
- mainly.
- Well, it was wall-to-wall
- musicians first of all.
- Yeah, that's true.
Most people'd use
a four-piece rhythm section.
He had four guitars,
or six, or seven.
There were four pianos always,
one upright bass,
one fender bass.
I mean, it was only
one drums, usually.
Fifteen people playing
percussion instruments.
- In a very small room.
- Yeah.
Not a small room,
but an average room.
And a huge echo chamber
that Gold Star
was famous for,
that was the wall of sound.
Ceramic walls.
One, two, three.
- Good.
- The wall of sound
of Phil Spector's
more like a lost feeling.
it's heavy on You've Lost
That Lovin' Feelin',
and it was...
He used the echo so much,
and it was swimming
all the time.

In spite of the baffles,
we all leaked
into each other's mics,
just enough to give it
the combination of leakage
and echo, plus we were tired.
By the 30th take,
you're tired, you know.
So it had a real
relaxed feeling on his hits.
It's the most played song
of all time.
Oh, I believe it, yeah.
Most played record of all time.
They were the whole sound
that Phillip had.
Phillip was also
really, really superstitious,
and he didn't...
He wanted those guys,
and he always wanted
those guys, you know?
He felt only secure when
he was playing with those guys.
Same musicians,
same engineers, same studio,
same, probably, brand of tape.
- Yeah, probably.
- Um...
It was just a thing
that he figured if he didn't
do it that way,
it wouldn't be a hit.
- And he was probably right.
- He was probably right.
And we're grateful for that.
G-minor seventh.
You know, Phillip was walking
in a different universe
than everybody else. And so
in his mind, it was all him,
you know, and the guys
were just some sort of
an extension

of what he couldn't do.
Phil would never record anything
for the first three hours.
I mean, he worked these guys
so that they weren't playing
individualistic.
They were too tired.
And so they just
melded into this...
this wall of sound.
Phil leaned on Howard
very, very heavy
about how to play, and just kept
on it, and on it, and on it.
And wasn't satisfied
or something,
and made 'em kept playing over,
and over, and over,
and over again for hours
until Howard's hands
were just a mass of pain.
"No, no, no, no, this way."
Howard says, "Look, man,
"if I can't play it,
and you know what it is,
why don't you play it?"
Howard Robert's the only guy
that I ever saw
walk out of a session,
where he just
put everything down,
picked up his guitar
and his amp,
and he walked out. He said,
"I've had enough of this."
He was very demanding.
I had no problem with Phil.
I guess it's because
he knew that I always knew
that I wasn't
the original drummer,
'cause if I'd have had
a problem, I'd walked out.
Who was he gonna get?

He'd already, you know,
had his argument with Al,
maybe Al wouldn't have
came back.
So... So, we got along fine.
They made fun of him
all the time,
but they really liked him.
I think they really
respected him.
They thought he was nuts,
which, of course, he was,
but I think they always
looked forward to it
because it was always gonna be
something really cool.
It was like
a total thing friendship too,
'cause they would come in
and they would be talking about,
you know, "What'd you do
on the golf course?"
or, you know, that someone
had this car or so...
There was always
a Mad magazine too,
being passed around that
somebody brought, you know.
I was in awe of them
because of Phil Spector, that...
It took me a couple times
to get used to,
you know, being with the guys,
you know.
Any memories of Be My Baby
the first time you heard it?
Oh, I pulled my car
over to the side of the road,
said, "What am I
listening to here," you know?
I couldn't believe it.
I instantly wrote
Don't Worry Baby
after I heard that. Yeah.

I was so inspired.
I couldn't believe it.
By the time we got
to River deep - Mountain High,
we all thought that was gonna be
a giant of a hit.
It was another
wall of sound hit,
but it flopped.
It was a big hit in the U.K.,
but in the USA,
it was his first downer.
And it was like, "Okay,
that style is going then.
The wall of sound
was over then."
One of the boys.
One of the boys.
One of the guys, yeah.
If sexual harassment suits
were in there, she'd be
seven millionaires right now,
...after what we put
her through.
She'd have all the lawyers
working for... Against us.
I don't think anyone
ever really felt
that she was a woman-woman, and
I don't mean that detrimentally.
- No, we were musicians.
- Yeah.
Everything was music...
music, really.
- Yeah.
- Worse than that
would have been...
shutting her out
and not sharing the camaraderie.
And this is the only one
I had to really palm mute
to get the treble out.
So you can hear that.
Yeah.

Anyway, that's what I did, yeah.
And it's Earl Palmer
on drums on that one.
I heard music as a kid
because my mother was
a professional piano player.
She'd play in the back
of the silent movie houses.
And my dad was
a trombone player.
He played Dixieland bands,
things like that.
So I heard music all the time.
If they didn't fight,
they played music,
so you know... you knew
where it was coming from.
My mom and I were living
in this housing project.
But my mom saved up her pennies
and there was a steel guitar
salesman that came around.
And about three or four lessons
for ten bucks,
so she opted for that.
And I was about 13 then.
About that time, I started
playing gigs on guitar.
And little Latin things.
So it was a lot
of great experience, you know...
...that kind of stuff,
heavy-duty jazz.
And it was fun,
and I was playing
a lot in the black clubs.
And very accepted too,
by the way.
I had made a name for myself.
There were a lot of women around
that played jazz
and were in pop bands
of their own,
so it wasn't that unusual.

But most women
back in those days, in the '50s,
would play
until they got married.
it was more important to have
a "Mrs." in front of your name
than it was to have a career.
Then the chance came
to do studio work
in late 1957 for Sam Cooke.
And I'd never heard
of Sam Cooke,
but they were short
a guitar player.
As soon as I did
my first date with Sam Cooke,
I got more money
in three hours' work than I did
in a whole week's work
of my day job.
Except they've got
more than two dates a week.
They wanted
our particular group of people
to cut the hit records,
because we got good at it.
Ray Pohlman had a great sound.
He was the very first
electric bass player
playing hits from about '57 on.
I'd say that he did maybe
85% of the hit records.
But Ray Pohlman got to be
the musical conductor
for the Shindig show
about the same time
I accidentally got on bass,
so there was a big hole there.
People ask me all the time
about being a woman
in a man's world.
I felt equal
with the rest of the guys,
and they felt it too.

Sometimes they got
a little testy.
They'd say, "Oh, you play good
for a girl, Carol."
"Yeah, you play good
for a guy too."
I love musicians and the humor
and the way that they play.
And they all knew that.
And I think
it was like a sister...
having a sister there.
I had my two kids and my mom
to support by that time.
We would do
three, four dates a day,
and I'd manage to get home
to have dinner with the kids.
That's the only thing I regret,
is that I didn't
spend more time with the kids.
But they were
very well taken care of,
and they had good lives,
you know.
Most of... most of the time,
they were fine.
You know, after looking
at my father's work logs,
I came to realize
he wasn't around
as much as I thought he was.
But when he was home,
his focus was on his family.
He was one of the few
studio guys
who found a balance
between working crazy hours
and maintaining
a pretty decent home life.
The truth is,
I don't know how he did it.
Time was money,
and you wouldn't last long

in any studio
if you couldn't keep up.
The studio musicians
in this town
were really looked up to
and respected.
We were treated like...
"Our life depends on you guys."
Well, they were
real session players.
They were guys that were going
from gig to gig,
you know, playing
on all the good music.
Gosh, there were
so many things went on
and we were so busy.
I mean, we would go from one
to the other to the other.
We used to call
going from session to session
"dovetailing."
Jesus, when you leave the house

at 7:

and you're at Universal

at 9:

Now you're at Capitol Records

at 1:

you just got time to get there,
and then you got a jingle

at 4:

and then we were on a date
with somebody at 8:00,
and then The Beach Boys
at midnight,
and you do that
five days a week...
Jeez, man, you get burned out.
At one time, we did an album
in a day, for Liberty Records.

Five, six weeks in a row,
we'd do an album a day...
six tunes in the morning
and six tunes in the evening.
When all the guys realized
that we were doing
most of the dates, said,
"We'll get scale,
or you'll get somebody else."
And, course, they didn't,
'cause that was
the tightest rhythm section
I believe I've ever played with.
I would not go in a studio
if I didn't have Tommy Tedesco,
Hal Blaine,
people of that nature.
I just wouldn't go into a studio
until they weren't busy.
But they were busy all the time.
No matter which producer
I worked with,
whether it was Lee Hazlewood
or Snuff Garrett,
they all used
the same musicians.
They were all just the best.
If they couldn't get the guys,
they didn't book the date.
They'd wait
until the guys were available.
Which was wonderful.
Of course, their wives
never saw them.
I don't know how those guys
could've worked any more,
unless they didn't sleep at all.
If you want to be successful
in this business,
you never say no until
you're too busy to say yes.
And I learned that
by watching guys
who talked themselves

out of careers
by saying,
"No, it's not good enough.
I'm gonna wait till
such-and-such and so-and-so."
Because if you wait at home
for the phone to ring, it won't.
If you're a freelance musician,
you can't turn nothing down,
because there's somebody
standing right behind you
who is salivating
to do this work.
One day, I get a call
from Ernie Freeman.
It was, like,

8:

"Hi, Tom, I need
a guitar player here at United.
How long will it take you
to get there?"
I said, "20 minutes,"
which, you know,
is a lie.
It's gonna take an hour.
But once I made
my commitment, they've got
- to wait for me, right?
- That's right.
When I go up there,
I did my date, and he loved it.
And then he tells me,
"You won't believe
what Bill Pitman said.
"I called bill and asked him,
'Can you come down?
I'm stuck.
How long will it be?'
And Bill says,
'Well, I'm having breakfast.
I should be finished
in about 45 minutes,
and I'll be there in an hour.'"

And if anybody ever
figured Bill Pitman out,
that was a Bill Pitman...
straight life, not thinking.
And I'm the opposite, like,
"What will work right now?"
Now it's time for another take
of what probably will be
another smash hit
in the wondrous world
of Sonny and Cher.
Sonny himself writes
most of the songs
he and Cher record.
Musicians often work
with the couple,
and they're excellent
sight readers.
Today, they're recording
several songs
that will be part
of an album called
The Wondrous World
of Sonny & Cher,
the second album
they've made together.
Now they're ready to record.
The engineer is set...
and they call, "Take one."
Were you ever intimidated
by the guys?
No, I was too stupid to know.
Well, I was kind of shy
of everybody.
First of all, they were
a lot older than me too.
I mean, the first time...
session I went to,
I was 16 years old,
and I didn't...
I'd never been
inside a recording studio.
You know, I just didn't want
to step

any place I wasn't
supposed to step,
which I thought was everywhere.
And they all knew each other,
they were really relaxed.
I mean, everybody
was nice to me.
I really don't think I knew
for a long time
just how great they were.
And then later,
when I would meet other players
who would ask me, you know,
did I...
Was I ever on a session
with any of these guys?
There was a lot of honesty
in those records
and that's why
a lot of 'em were hits.
When I thought of the music,
I thought I was a 13-year-old
trying to learn
how to play music.
Every time I'd play.
You know,
there was all them hits
that was on...
The Marketts, Routers,
all them solos. And then,
- I brought myself back.
- Tongue in cheek.
I said,
"How would a kid play this,
that's so stupid, that
doesn't know what he's doing,
and play that?"
I did that shit,
didn't know what I was doing,
bending notes,
didn't care, didn't...
Awful, out of tune.
- Yeah.
- What is this tune?

- Beatles? Cockroaches?
- Some young group.
- I had no idea.
- Cockroaches.

I didn't know
them kind of names then.
Well, my personal feeling
about the music
was that it was all wonderful
and I was making
millions of dollars...
period.

I didn't give a damn
if Tommy liked it or not.
I didn't make it for him.
Like the artist.
Cher said she didn't like it.
Well, I didn't make it
for her anyway.

I made it for people to buy,
not for Cher to listen to.
She never listened
to Gypsys, Tramps & Thieves
or any other record
I made with her... again.
It was Diamond Ring.
We cut that record, and I said,
"Oh, my God. I hate this shit."
Two weeks later,
it was number ten or something.
So I have to give it to Snuff
in terms of
a certain kind of pop awareness.
He had it, but it was not
exactly my cup of tea.
The music that we cut
in the '60s,
nobody thought that was gonna
last, like, past ten years.
In fact, Bill Pitman says...
We were doing a
chugga-chugga-chugga date,
he says, "Can you see the kids
dancing with their wives

20 years from now,
saying, 'Darling,
they're playing our song'?"
I remember coming home
from a session one day,
and it was just one
of those three-chord sessions.
And when you're sitting there
playing rhythm guitar,
there's not much you can do.
You just do it, get your money
and go home.
And I remember coming home,
and I was not in a good mood.
I said to my wife, "I could do
this when I was 14 years old."
And she said, "Yeah,
but not nearly as well."
I didn't care
for rock and roll that much.
I was basically a jazz drummer.
But I realized that I'm
making my living off of it.
If I'm gonna continue
to do that,
I got to play that
like that's my favorite music.
That's not professionalism
to me.
It's not beneath you
if it's supporting you.
If it's beneath you,
don't play it.
I actually enjoyed it,
because when I heard the records
on the radio,
I realized, really,
what an incredible sound
that group of people had.
We're going
up to Capitol Records
- right up here.
- Oh, right.
God, the streets

are so friggin' torn up,
it's unbelievable.
This is where
we used to do all of,
you know,
Glen Campbell's records
and Ray Anthony
and everybody, man.
Peggy Lee, Nat King Cole.
We did everyone
down in the bowels.
Pretty amazing.
As soon as we got
in those studios
and we found out
that this made a lot of bucks,
it was like, "Hey, man,
we don't have to go on the road.
We can stay home
with our kids," you know.
Unfortunately, I didn't.
I went through six wives.
Yeah, but that was 'cause
of your personality...
...not your playing.
No, I had two major marriages,
and they both fell apart
because I was in the studio
too much.
I think
it's a very hard balance.
Yeah, it was tough.
When I got out of the army,
I took my G.I. bill,
went to Chicago,
went to a percussion institute.
I was going to school

from about 8:

to 4:

then I was playing strip clubs

from about 8:

4:

which was pretty wild.
But it was great
sight reading training.
You got all these new women
coming and dancing,
throwing this music at you,
and you got to, you know,
read it immediately.
It was great training
to relax you and to play,
because to this day,
I could sit down,
you can throw any kind of music
in front of me,
and I will...
You know, it might be
the hardest thing in the world,
but I'll be completely relaxed.
Nobody will know that inside,
I'm saying,
"Holy cow, this is
really something."
So there was a lot of great
basic training going on
while I was there,
which really was preparing me
for the studios.
I wound up at "the" nightclub
in Hollywood,
where all the movie stars
hung out.
There was a manager,
called me over one evening,
and he said,
"Look, I've got a kid
who's gonna be signed
by Capital Records pretty quick,
and we need a drummer."
This kid's name was Tommy Sands,
a wonderful young man,
became a major teenage idol,
and we went on the road.

But it was during that time
that I was with Tommy
that I got to work with people
like The Diamonds,
who were really hot
in those days. The Platters.
These were shows
that I was playing.
Great experience. And now
I was learning rock and roll,
which was still a dirty word
to most of the musicians.
When I got back to L.A.,
there was a man
by the name of H.B. Barnum.
And H.B. started using me,
Carol Kaye on bass,
and Glen Campbell on guitar.
There were a bunch of us that
were sort of demo musicians,
but we played rock and roll.
Usually, every guy that sat
down in one of those sessions
in that group
was a great musician:
Studied, practiced, taught well,
loved what they were doing.
Everybody wanted us.
Do you remember when my dad
was doing the Jobim album?
Oh, yeah.
And all of the "A" team was in.
And at the end of that session,
we were doing Somethin' Stupid.
And the "A" team left,
and our little "B" team came in,
The Wrecking Crew
came in and sat down,
and we cut a number on record.
And what most people
don't realize,
that was our dad's
first number one record.
And we just marched on in there

and made our little hit.

- Daddy.

- Sorry.

I've got to sing
a little louder then.

- You have to sing...

- You too, you sing

I did Somethin' Stupid
with Frank and Nancy Sinatra.

And that little lick
that I played on the intro,
I had already played that
on another record of the song
by the guy that wrote it,
Carson Parks.

And Frank heard it and wanted
that very lick on the intro.
Billy Strange was the arranger
and the guitars were me
and Glen Campbell.

And Billy had just written,
like, El Paso style guitar
for the intro.

So Glenn, of course,
played something real nice,
but it wasn't
what was on the original record.

And Frank said,
"No, that's not it,
that's not it. Let's try it... "

So Glenn tried something else
and Frank wasn't
real happy with it
'cause it didn't sound
like we'd heard.

So finally, after a while,
I said, "Glenn,
I don't want to be pushy
or anything,
but that's me
on the original record.

I know exactly what he wants."

He said,

"Well, then you play it."

Then, we switched parts real fast and I played it.
Do you want to hear the guitars just to make sure everything's cool?
One real fast start, then we'll go.
All right, letter "A."
- That did it, all right.
- Pretty sound.
Yeah, that's the whole trick of the record.
Chuck Berghofer, who was the star, you know, that bass line became infam... As a matter of fact, it's probably... Simple as it sounds, it's probably one of the hardest things a bass player ever has to do.
- Nobody can do it.
- They never do it correctly, you know, or they make an attempt at it.
The engineer came out and said, "Gee, I love the sound of your bass."
He says, "I'm gonna give your name to my friend."
And it turned out to be Jim Bowen.
And I wound up doing some dates for Jim Bowen.
About the third date, I did was Boots Are Made For Walking.
And that put me on the map.
I went from doing two dates in my life to doing three a day.
Yeah, if I wasn't available that day, I'd probably be selling insurance somewhere.
That "chunk-a-chunk-a-chunk,"

that rhythm chunky sound
that was so...
Lee used to call it "dumb."
He wanted that dumb sound.
It really made...
made the records,
and it's very hard to capture,
especially live.
Lee didn't want me
to do the song.
I kept saying, "I want to do
that boots thing,
that one about the boots."
And he said, "No,
it's not a girl's song.
I said,
"Well, it's certainly not
a guy's song."
He used to sing it live
in his performances.
And I said, "It's wrong
for a man to sing it.
It's harsh and abusive,
but it's perfect for
a little girl to sing."
The feeling of a live session
was unlike anything else
because you'd hear it back
instantly, and there it was.
And it was either magic
or it wasn't magic.
And I never will forget,
when I drove to Las Vegas,
on the marquee, it says,
"Nancy Sinatra
With Hal Blaine On Drums."
This big marquee
all over the thing,
at Caesars Palace.
Now, he's making
like \$2,500 a week.
Now, Irv Cottler's work
with Frank, the father,
he's making \$750 a week.

- And I...
- Who said life was fair?
Oh, my God in hell...
And then, all of a sudden,
here's this "Hal Blaine."
And I just laughed.
"Hal Blaine"
all over the Caesar's marquee.
- It was great.
- What a gig.
You got to get it when you can.
I didn't realize it until later,
but New Orleans was a great town
for a musician to grow up in.
My brother and I were 12 and 13,
and we already had gigs
on the Mardi Gras floats.
Not gigs, one gig.
My mother was a singer
and a pianist.
And the city was raging with
soldiers, sailors, and marines
coming through there to get
shipped out to World War II.
And the clubs
in the French Quarter,
they were making a lot of money
and they were hiring
a lot of bands.
My mother had a job
in the afternoon
playing and singing a matinee,
and my father had a night gig.
And I think it was the first
time in their life
that they were fully employed
as musicians.
I went to a black
Catholic high school,
and all the public schools
were segregated.
I couldn't wait to get away.
My brother and I
soon established a band,

you know. He played piano.
He mostly played blues
and boogie and...
We wanted to play be-bop,
but really,
nobody wanted to hear it.
People always tell me
how great I was and, you know,
"That boy's really
going places," and...
of course I believed that.
In 1954, my brother and I
moved down to Los Angeles
and proceeded to starve
around town for about two years,
made all the jam sessions.
That's what you do
when you're new in town.
And that sooner or later
gets you work
because the band leaders
come to the jam sessions
looking for horn players
or rhythm players.
And that's where they found 'em,
at the jam sessions.
The rock and roll thing
was getting really big,
and they needed
the kind of horn I play.
So it was really being
in the right place
at the right time.
Particularly when I got
on the Merv Griffin Show,
which started

at 3:

Well, that's the time
my kids came home from school.
And it ended at 8:30 at night,
and I'd get home maybe 9:30.
Well, that's the time
my kids would go to bed.

Many days, I didn't see my kids.
I'm a better grandfather
than I was a father.
That's great.
Oh, amazing.
I remember taking this picture.
I took it through a record,
through a 45.
These were all yours.
Hey, that's nice.
Yeah.
The first band I had
was just an experiment.
We opened the show
for Dave Brubeck,
and people went crazy for the...
our, you know, half hour set,
however long we played.
And I remember coming offstage,
and Paul Desmond was...
was standing off to the side.
And as I passed him,
he was scratching his head,
and said, "I don't know
what I just heard,
but I think I like it."
That was the first cue I had
that maybe we were
on to something.
A jazz musician loved it...
or liked it.
The first date I ever did
for Herb Alpert,
Shorty Rogers called me up
and says,
"Bill, would you do me a favor?"
He says, "There's a guy,
he's a friend of mine."
He says, "He's a trumpet player
and he doesn't have any money.
Would you do it
as a favor for me?"
I said, "Sure, I'll do it."
Herb gave us each 15 bucks.

It was a scab date.

- Oh, well, most of 'em were...

- Right, yeah.

When we first started
way back then, you know.

- Right. It was \$15.

- Two for a quarter.

Yeah, two for 25.

And that was The Lonely Bull.

That was the first huge hit
that Herb Alpert ever had.

It was huge!

He became a millionaire
on that one record.

And you know what he did?

He went to the union,
said what he did,
paid the union fine,
and then had checks sent
to all the musicians for scale,
that... that they were supposed
to have gotten and didn't.

A signature moment
in A Taste of Honey
is when the bass drum
is knocking four to the floor.
We didn't have a way
to get back to the time
without, you know, a count off.
And Hal, you know, said,
"Let me just hit the drum,
the bass drum.

Everyone will know
when to come in."

Larry Levine thought...

The engineer,
that we should keep that,
and it was, you know,
one of the things that people
remember about the record.

And it became kind of
a trademark of the T.J.B.S.

It was all because
these professional musicians

couldn't come in together.
I met Julius in high school.
We started playing a song
and he took a solo,
and I thought, "Wow, man,
this guy sounds
like Lionel Hampton."
He wrote Spanish Flea,
although his first title
was "Spanish Fly,"
and I said, "I... I don't know,
I'm not sure...
I'm not so sure
that title's gonna work.
You know, when The T.J.B.
became famous
and he had to create a group
to go on the road,
none of the studio musicians
would do it
because they were too busy.
We did 13 albums,
and this was something
that bothered me my whole life,
my whole career.
We'd come back to town,
and I would call
guys like Lou and Hal.
And the guys on the road...
Yeah, were really upset.
They were a little offended
that they were not used,
but you know,
recording musicians had
a certain sound
that was important to get.
No matter what shape
your stomach's in,
when it gets out of shape,
take Alka-Seltzer.
I saw a commercial,
and I thought it was a smash.
I called Dave Pell,
who was my supervisor,

and I said, "What instrumental groups do we have here?"
And he said, "Well, we have a name called The T-Bones."
And I say, "All right."
So I got Tommy Tedesco and the boys,
in the studio we went,
and we did No Matter What Shape."
And that was the number-one instrumental of the year.
The T-Bones!
What is their name,
"Willy Vanelli"
- or what the hell the shit is?
- Milli...
- They had nothing over us...
- Right.
...right?
We did that all the time.
I wanted The Marketts to be like a working group.
And, you know, if the public knew it wasn't so,
it would be like a "Mini Vanilli" or whatever.
I think it's a little different when you're a horn player and you're asked to play the introduction
- and play the first chorus...
- I can understand that.
...and play the first solo, and then play the fade on the end.
And the damn thing comes on and it doesn't have your name on it.
Surfer's Stomp... Plas Johnson was the lead saxophonist,
and I said, "Plas, how about calling it The Plas Johnson?"
And he's says, "no," he says, "I don't want to be associated with that type of music."
I mean, he was a much better

player than that,
but it became a hit and so we
call it The Marketts.
And then I start getting calls.
So, the song writer, who
co-wrote Surfer's Stomp with me
called Mike Gordon,
he got a group together,
went on the road.
Worse than not getting
the money,
is to have... to played on a hit
record which sold
a million copies, and not even
have your name on them.
And they go dig some white kids
up out of high school
and put them on the road
and call them the name.
And it was quite easy
for the producers
and the companies to hire us to
read this music.
And play these things down,
in three hours
and get out of that studio
in three hours
than to have them come and spend
three weeks doing it.
We would either augment
or totally replace a group.
We do a new group, say
The Association, for instance.
None of them played
on the record.
We replaced the entire group.
Well, these are the guys that
played on Windy
and Never My Love and
Everything That Touches You.
And all the things that were
in those two albums
that I did with them, those are
all those studio musicians.

It's Al, Joe, Larry, Tommy and...
and those guys.
I wanted to put their names
on the back of the album
when it was finished
and they wouldn't let me
because they said, "Well, we
don't want those kids out there
that buy our records to know
that we didn't
play on the record."
I went out and took Brian's
place with The Beach Boys.
And I can understand that
probably why Brian had studio
guys come in, because they would
fight like cats and dogs, man.
Rather than Brian to go through
the hassle to get the tracks,
he would hire the rhythm section
to come in and do the tracks.
One of the guys... At first they
were a little jealous,
you know what I mean?
But I explained to them, I said,
"You know, I want to get the
best I can get for the group."
And they go, "Well, I can
understand your point, Brian,"
you know.
So we went ahead and did it,
and sure enough,
the guys liked it.
I mean, that's one of the most
asked questions,
"Well, didn't Dennis get mad,
wasn't he mad
because you were doing
The Beach Boys records?"
Dennis did not have the studio
chops that we have, you know.
The proof of the pudding
is that Dennis
called me to do his album when

Dennis did his solo album.
I played the drums on that.
A lot of times the guys would
be sitting around the studio,
we didn't know they were the
guys in the band.
The guitar players that were
in these various groups,
when they realized guys like
Tommy Tedesco
was gonna be playing, they
wanted to sit around and watch.
And the drummers would want
to sit around
and watch myself or Al.
They were there, like, more or
less they were learning.
You know, it would be something
that I'd like to see too
if it had been
the other way around.
Terry Melcher wanted to use
session musicians
for Mr. Tambourine Man.
I'd been a studio musician
in New York,
prior to being in The Byrds,
so...
they let me play on it.
So my feeling was,
"Great. I get to play
with this great band,
The Wrecking Crew."
Of course, the other guys,
David Crosby,
Michael Clark and
Chris Hellman, were livid.
They hated the idea because
they didn't get to play
on their own record.
We got a number one hit with it,
right off the bat.
But we knocked out two tracks
in one three-hour session.

To compare that with what
happened when the rest
of the band got to play,
it took us 77 takes
to get the band track for
Turn, Turn, Turn,
which was also a number one.
People assume that just
because my dad made his living
playing guitar, I can also play.
For me, and some of the other
kids of studio musicians,
we didn't take it up
as a profession.
What my father did teach us
was common sense.
I got called many years ago.
I show up on this date and now
there's 70 musicians
sitting there.
And I'm looking
and I say, "70 musicians?
Wow. Where do I sit?"
And they said, "Over there.
There's the guitar."
You know, I sit there
and I look at a part.
The only problem is starting at
bar 95, you know,
and all the rest, rest.
Now the guy starts, right.
And you know what this is to me
at the time.
This is in a nightclub, you
know, you see a chick,
"Hey, there she is.
Hey, hey..."
When he did this and there was
no music, I said,
"Oh-oh, they're at bar 95,
I knew it."
"Guitar. Where's the guitar?"
"Over here."
"We're at 95,

I didn't hear you."
"Oh, okay," you know.
One, two, three, four,
"Okay, forget it.
Let's go from 96.
And they have somebody come in
the next day to do it."
Elvis Presley came back there
a few years
and I started getting hot
in records, and Elvis
started using me when he'd come
to the coast for movies.
So nobody told Elvis who to use.
To that day I never knew if they
knew I was the same guy, though.
But I wasn't about to tell them,
"Remember me?
About three years..."
Oh, no, no, no.
You see, the one thing I have,
common sense.
I studied common sense more
than I did guitar.
In the '60s,
The Wrecking Crew played
on thousands of recordings,
but you would never
have known it.
Producers made a big mistake
when they didn't put
the credits on the back
of the albums
of all the people that have
played on the albums.
Not only did they deserve it,
but I think it was misleading.
Maybe one of the reasons they
left the names off was
the same musicians played on so
many people's records
it would have been an
embarrassment if anybody
had ever listed them.

I was used to it
'cause when a guy hired me
with his last \$25
and he had a bomb,
I never gave him his
money back, you know.
So I really treated it
as a business
and I understand how you
feel too. But I just felt,
"Just give me my money
and I get lost."
Snuffy always let myself
and The Playboys
lay down all the basic tracks.
And then Snuff said,
"Now we're gonna sweeten it,
do some overdubs and stuff,
and I'm gonna bring in
the people that I want to use."
And I had no experience in this,
and Snuffy had.
So I said, "Well, great.
If you think that's the way to
do it, let's do it."
The drummer came in, but
Snuffy let him, you know,
play some kind of percussion
like a tambourine
so it could say,
"Gary Lewis and The Playboys."
But it was really studio guys
that made the track.
And I remember my guitar
player and our keyboard player,
after hearing the session
musicians coming in
and putting down the parts,
you know, they were saying,
"Oh, my God, I never could have
done anything like that."
I'll never forget working
with Gary Lewis and The Playboys
- doing all that record.

- Oh, yeah.

And I'll never forget I had
one real, real hot lick
on this one record... Spanish
stuff all over the place.

And finally, his guitar player
come up to me, he says,

"You drove me crazy
with that thing.

First of all, I can't play it,
so I don't play it.

And then, everybody comes up to
me, complimenting me
on what I did on the thing."

I said, "Well, just take the
compliments and forget it."

So, while my guitar players
played a much simplified
version of it, because nobody
could play that.

That was inside stuff.

I think that the public at large
was oblivious to the fact
that there was a secret star
maker machinery,
that a very important component
of that were these teams,
like hitmen, studio hitmen.

Nobody cared.

All they wanted was the product.

They just wanted the name
and the sales.

Who created it?

Psh.

That was incidental.

Tell him your story, Hal,
about The Monkees.

Because the newspapers came in
to talk to them
and we were in the next studio
cutting their stuff.

And then they were pretending
that they were doing it
there in the studios.

- Well, you just told it.

- Tell him the story.

Well, you told the story.

Did you get it?

I'd never considered myself
a musician.

I... You know, 'cause to me a
musician is someone
who does session work,
who shows up and reads charts.
And I always approached
The Monkees as an actor,
playing the part of a drummer
in this imaginary group,
that lived in this imaginary
beach house
and had these imaginary
adventures.

To me, that always... always
been what it's about.

Peter does tell the story of
going into some
of the early sessions. And he
walked in with his guitar
and his bass, and they said,
"What are you doing here?"

"Well, we've already done the
track. Micky's gonna sing."

"So, what...? You invited me
for a recording session."

He said, "Yeah." I said,

"Well, what are you doing?"

He said, "We have the record, we
just need to put a vocal on it."

They said, "Just go home.

Relax."

One, two, three, four.

- Mikey, you like it?

- You like it?

That's terrible.

That's the worst thing...

I had no idea who these guys
were in these early sessions.

It was my first session.

And I was introduced to them,
"These are the musicians."
I was the vocalist.
I remember Hal Blaine giving me
some pointers
in the sessions, and Earl Palmer
would give me some pointers.
But I didn't have to play
at that point.
They said, "You're gonna start
drum lessons on Monday."
And I did.
And I had about a year.
So, by the time I had to
actually play on stage, live,
I wasn't that bad.
I mean, I only had to play
our songs, obviously,
and they were pretty simple
pop tunes.
Hal and Earl do this stuff
with one hand in their sleep.
The fans, they didn't know
or care, and I was like,
"What's the deal?
This is a television show
you know.
What is the big deal?"
But you know, back then,
and even to this day,
a lot of people take their
rock and roll very seriously
and, you know... And it's,
you know,
rock and roll is
no laughing matter.
You're not supposed
to have fun, you know.
It has to be very serious.
It makes sense now to me.
If I were doing the project,
I would do it exactly
the same way.
Uh, but, uh, at the time, it

didn't make any sense to me.
I didn't understand.
- Were you upset?
- Yeah, I was upset.
I thought that... I mean,
I was very naive.
I regard how upset I was as a
function of my naiveté.
I always thought I was gonna be
in a recording session,
and play the guitar,
and do the things,
and sing the background vocals,
and all the rest of that.
I had no idea that they had
just gone
and made the tracks without us.
I don't think there was any
backlash to the discovery
that The Monkees didn't play
their own instruments initially,
because everybody knew
it was common practice.
I saw them in everybody's
session.
I remember in RCA Victor going
to The Mamas and Papas,
who were next door,
and there was Hal Blaine.
And then, he'd come over
and do one of our sessions.
And then off to do
somebody else, I guess.
I knew they played on virtually
all The Beach Boys records.
You know, we got a lot of shit
for it,
but I think finally, you know,
some of those guys
are coming clean.
Barry McGuire had found this
song called California Dreamin'
that he wanted to record.
And these four,

kind of scruffy looking,
two guys and two girls
came to the studio
because Barry wanted
them to sing
background parts on his record.
And he said to Lou, "They're a
great sounding vocal group.
You should hear them sing."
John Phillips wrote this song,
California Dreamin'.
So while the band was on a ten,
Lou and I went down the hall
to studio two,
with the four of them.
And John had a guitar and they
sang California Dreamin'.
Lou said, "What do you think?"
And I said, "If you don't take
them, I will," you know.
After hearing their vocals...
their background vocals,
I thought it should be
their record.
When I started to do
The Mamas and The Papas,
I put Joe Osborn in that group
with Hal Blaine.
And that's when Hal, and Larry
and myself worked together
as a group for the first time.
I wasn't really busy.
At that point,
I wasn't busy
as a studio player.
And Hal helped get me
into that area.
Those kinds of combinations of
what Joe brought to Hal Blaine,
and what Hal Blaine brought to
Joe Osborn was great.
In the case of
The mamas and Papas,
John Phillips would run the song

down on rhythm guitar.
At the same time,
Hal would be taking notes,
Glen Campbell
might be taking notes.
And then we say,
"Okay, let's run it down."
They had parts in mind
so that you could then edit,
"Yeah, that's good,
let's keep it.
That's not, can you try
something else?"
But they had a lot to do with
the arrangements.
Members of The Mamas
and The Papas teach the song
to the musicians.
There is no arrangement
or score.
The musicians decide
what they should play
against the vocals.
A rhythm gets going.
Producers presented the
musicians with a road map.
It was just chord symbols.
And that was about as far
as it went.
Now, these musicians
took that information and, you
know, added a little flavor
to it that was unexpected.
A lot of times it was,
you know, much more than you
had hoped for.
People come over and say,
"Did you this?
Would you work with this group?"
I said, "I don't remember."
"Well, I saw your name
on the album."
"Then I did."
You know, that's...

- Right.
- 'Cause you work so much,
you have no idea.
The studio player of 1999,
they would...
If they're not playing all
the time,
they would need to do
what we never needed to do,
was practice.
All the time you're practicing,
while being paid.
It's funny. Earl and I were
talking one time.
It's like, you couldn't judge
anybody by how much
they were working 'cause
everybody was working
all the time.
You had to just go by how much
work you turned down.
Most of us were so fortunate
to have been in
at the original beginnings of
rock and roll.
Fuck, I say it, I made more
money playing rock and roll
than I ever made playing jazz.
There was one point
in the mid '60s that
I was making more money than the
president of the United States.
I remember I used to kid
Carol. I'd say,
"Do you realize, Carol,
if I got a divorce and you...
We could get married and
what a year we'd have of money.
Between all your money
and my money,
we'd be killing everybody."
Including each other.
This is where we did Sinatra,
Dean Martin,

Sammy Davis Jr.
We did everybody in there.
It's just an amazing place.
In my particular case,
I bought an incredible mansion
in Hollywood.
I had a magnificent yacht.
I had a gorgeous Rolls Royce.
But, out of nowhere,
I had a wife who all of a sudden
declared, "I want a divorce."
"What? What are you talking
about?
I just went for a sandwich
and..."
It's, like, impossible
to believe.
And in order for her
to get paid off,
you sell everything you own.
I had 170-something gold
records.
I had to sell them all.
The house was sold for a third
of what it was worth.
I had to let the yacht go.
The yacht was repossessed.
I never had anything
repossessed in my life.
It's just a shame to get
wiped out that seriously.
I had been working with
John Denver,
almost 5 grand a week
for almost ten years,
and all of a sudden,
that job ended.
Terrible, terrible thing
to have to go through.
I mean, it's...
You certainly,
in the realm of suicide,
you certainly think about it.
I was working

in Scottsdale, Arizona,
and I was a security guard,
plain and simple.
Here I went from...
all this money
and this magnificent estate
and everything else involved,
and all of a sudden
I was reduced to
living in a clothes closet.
Came out of about 23 rooms
in Hollywood.
And it was like
the end of the world.
This was Gold Star.
So this is it.
This is what's left.
And it was an amazing time,
and it was such
a historical place.
They had a lot of first-time
big hit people
come here and make their
records.
Across the street, we recorded
The Captain & Tennille
doing Love Will Keep Us
Together.
Boy, they had a number one,
it was record of the year
that year.
It was my last record
of the year.
In L.A., I'd heard that things
were picking up again...
you know '82, '83,
something like that.
And then I was also
getting a few calls,
and all of a sudden,
I was working again.
One of the great highlights
was when I was inducted
into the Rock and Roll

Hall of Fame.
So in the year 2000,
me and Earl Palmer
were both inducted.
You know, Earl was just...
I can't thank him enough.
Earl recommending me
in the beginning,
it made a name for myself.
It really was that simple.
You know, I've always said...
if you love your work,
it's not work,
you know?
We loved our work, man.
That's how we could work
day and night,
'cause we loved it.
I'll never forget a session
we were all doing
with Don Costa.
And I start playing rhythm
and he stopped and he said,
"Glen, you got the lead there."
And, boy, I said...
I said, "Mr. Costa,
I can't read notes."
He said, "Well, you know
the melody, don't you?"
And I said, "Yeah."
He said, "Well, just...
That's the melody."
I said, "Oh, okay, great."
He would ask Tedesco,
"How does that figure go
- or this figure go," you know?
- Right, exactly.
And then he would sit there
and work it out.
And we'd make the records
and it was always perfect.
Yeah. Well, he had
a certain thing that he offered
that they wanted.

Wonderful ear and a wonderful
facility on the instrument.
Glen came up with great ideas,
and his solos were just super.
And then all of a sudden,
he's a singing star.
Well, he always could sing.
We used to kid him about,
"Oh, he's standing up
and singing now,
he's gonna be a big star."
But he became a big star.
Good evening,
ladies and gentlemen.
I'm Glen Campbell.
I'd mixed, actually,
the first record.
That record that he made
for Capitol...
I mixed that record.
And it was like a really
surprise to see him come in
and say, "I'm singing
on this record, I'm gonna..."
you know...
And the record was a hit
and his vocal career
was launched.
And when he got out
and became a singing star,
guess who he called
to back him up?
- That's right, yeah.
- We were all there for him.
I remember Tedesco playing on...
I forget what it was.
He said, "You still talking
to us peons?"
I said, "Well, some of 'em."
But it was great having
the guys do the sessions.
I knew who all the good
players were.
Playing Wichita Lineman,

it had a chord to it.
I don't think
it had any part written.
you know. She says,
"How about this for a kickoff
on Wichita Lineman?"
She came up with that.
Glen Campbell was a heck
of a guitar player,
and I had this Dano bass guitar
that had special pickups
and bridge and strings on it
and it got a really great
guttty sound.
And he picked it up
and did the solo on it.
It was great.
I heard W ichita Lineman
at a drugstore one time
and it just brought tears
to my eyes,
'cause that tune
meant a lot to me.
I did all that early
Glen Campbell stuff,
all of it...
up to Southern Nights,
when he changed producers
and I didn't do anymore.
Glen by this time was trying...
recording... using his own band.
I'm sitting in Martoni's
one night there in Hollywood,
and Steve Turner, his drummer,
walked in.
And he said, "You're not gonna
believe what just happened."
"What?"
And he said, "I'm just coming
from a session with Glen,
and we're trying to get this kid
to play some decent
rhythm guitar."
Glen says, "Well, give me that

big, full Al Casey sound."
I said, "Does he know that
I'm available tonight?"
you know.
But I understand
he was trying to use
his own band.
But when stuff like that
starts happening,
that's... that's a signal.
I think a lot of us felt
this just might go on forever.
And that was
the first great shock
for many of us who had
setbacks in our careers
and realized that,
"Hey, this is an up-down...
up-down thing."
Sports figures seem to have
a ten-year period
when it all happens for them.
So what you get
is you get the ramp up,
you get ten great years,
and you get the ramp down.
And the trick is to make
the ramp down
last as long as
you possibly can.
Who would hire me
at my age then,
to be in a rock group?
They weren't doing that anymore,
because now the rock guys
were doing their stuff.
And writing,
which they always did,
but they were able
to perform it.
As Dylan said, "The times,
they are a-changing."
it just changed.
New game.

new way of doing it.
I don't think it was
a conscious decision
that, you know, these musicians
play a certain way
and now we better
get more contemporary.
In my case, it had to do
with the artist
or who the artist
brought with them.
In the case of Carole King,
she brought a rhythm section
with her.
She brought James Taylor
on guitar.
I think the bands
learned to play.
It was more important
for the public to know
that the bands were really
playing the music.
You had these groups
that came up
in the late '60s
and into the '70s...
The Buffalo Springfield that
became Crosby, Stills & Nash.
And these were all
self-contained groups that,
for the most part,
never used studio musicians.
And those things became huge.
And that's where album artists
became really big.
Well, it had a huge effect
and...
you know, the singer/songwriter
acts
became very important to people.
They started wanting bands
that played their own stuff.
It really had an effect
on the session musicians.

I'd kinda left by then.
We all went into it
knowing it could stop
any second.
It was never meant to last.
I was just like this
magical bubble
that just kind of...
blossomed for a second...
hung there in the air...
Hal plays on seven
records of the year in a row.
Seven in a row...
and then the bubble... poof.
Pops.
It's new people.
it's a new regime.
We came in at a certain time,
when we were all new.
All the new people
are coming in now,
when they are new...
Young, vibrant,
playing today's sounds.
It's that simple.
As the record dates with
The Wrecking Crew diminished,
my father was one of the more
fortunate musicians.
His versatility,
combined with his ability
to read music in seconds,
led to thousands of recordings
in film and television.
He worked with some of
the greatest composers
in American music:
John Williams, Jerry Goldsmith,
Henry Mancini, Bill Conti,
James Horner, Burt Bacharach,
Lalo Schifrin,
just to name a few.
In the '70s,
my father started playing

for his own enjoyment.
It was the first time
I remember seeing him at home
with the guitar.
He got into doing seminars
and that's what he really
enjoyed.
He was flying around
the country.
And he arranged his seminars
on weekends
so that he could be home
during the week...
in case there was any calls.
Let me give you what I call
"the creative
studio guitar player".
About a year ago,
I got the call
to do a John Denver special.
It was John Denver in Mexico,
and they wanted some...
He was on a fishing vessel
and they wanted some Mexican
music, so I gave them this:
Got a call to do
Charlie's Angels.
They were in Puerto Rico.
They wanted Puerto Rican music,
Starsky & Hutch
was in a big revolt
in Bolivia in one show.
They wanted Bolivian music.
In 1975, my father, in jest,
wrote a song called
Requiem For a Studio
Guitar Player.
Always looking to carry
a joke a little further,
my dad dressed up
as a 280-pound ballerina
and went on The Gong Show.
You should think about
what he's saying

in the lyrics to his song.
Don't dwell on the costume
too much...
because it tells a lot about
the way the business
in this town works.
And for being a person
with a sense of humor,
I think Tommy's
had to put up with
a lot of really stupid things.
It was not until I tracked
these musicians down
to tell their story
that I fully understood
Frank Zappa's words.
In 1992, my father had a stroke
that pretty much ended
his career as a guitarist.
Two months before
my father passed away,
he said to me, "You know,
the stroke came
at the right time
in my life."
I knew exactly what he meant.
The phone had stopped ringing,
and his day as
the Los Angeles session king
had come to an end.
Now he had an excuse as to why
the phone didn't ring.
It was something
he had no control over.
If I learned anything
from my father,
it was to give more
than you take.
He loved his family and friends
and would always help
the younger guitar players,
knowing it was only
a matter of time
that they soon

would take his place,
just like he took someone else's
seat 40 years earlier.

Right on!

This is the moment
we've been waiting for.

With 30 points,
the winner today is...

Hot dog!

...Tommy Tedesco!

What do you call
a trombone player
with a beeper?

An optimist.