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# Charles Bradley: Soul of America

By Unknown

One, two. One, two, three, four!

If you enjoy James Brown music, you're going to have a good time tonight. We're tonight celebrating Black Velvet James Brown Junior's 62nd birthday! Whoo, 62!

So round about now put your hands together because we've got a young man coming to the stage. He's been on The David Letterman Show. Put your hands together and meet and greet Black Velvet James Brown Junior!

CHEERING AND APPLAUSE

# This is a man's world

# But it wouldn't be nothing

# Nothing... #

'I've been playing James Brown since I was 14 years old.'

# Yea-ea-eah!

# Yea-ea-eah! #

CHEERING AND APPLAUSE

'But now I want to do Charles Bradley.'

I've been struggling for over 42 years trying to make it in the industry and at the age of 62, I'm just beginning to find my way through.

I never made enough money to support myself in music, but I'm hoping that this album will make a turning point for me, that I can support myself in music.

Hey, man. I'm going to give you water, OK? Hey, man.

That's my bird. He make me mad.

I get mad, I go in the back room and close the door and let him scream all he want to.

I have my little place. It's not what I want, but thank God I got a roof over my head!

When I go in my little apartment and lock my door,

I'm in peace,

but going into the projects,

going into the elevator,

getting in there, that's when the trouble starts.

You never know what's going to happen.

There's a guy downstairs. His name is Alfred. Very good guy. Don't bother nobody. Church guy.

They shoot up his place. He showed me all the holes.

I said, "Wow, man! I couldn't live on the first floor."

When it get too crazy at the projects, I go to my mom's house and I sleep in her basement.

So I come here and this is where I crash.

Until the next day, I go take care of the errands,

take care of everything to keep a roof over both our heads.

I like to get a little of this...

a little ball.  
Just put these in.  
How's that rice?  
Let me see.  
Just a little bit more.  
I came from a family of eight.  
My main goal is watching over... is my mom.  
And I do the best I can.  
It's my baby boy.  
And I love him.  
'I'm just making her life peaceful,  
'so she can not worry about the bills and everything.'  
I took that upon my shoulder.  
I really didn't know what I was getting myself into, but now I'm in it, I  
won't change it.  
All I can do is try to make something work where I can make a decent  
income,  
where I can live and let live. That's all I can ask from life now.  
# Round and round the road we go again  
# Where it stop  
# Nobody knows  
# It's a cold, cold world  
# It's a cold, cold world...  
# How can we stop the changes going on in America today...?  
# Oh, oh-oh-oh  
# Go back  
# Go back to the golden rule  
# Go back  
# Go back to the golden rule  
# Bring it all down! #  
That's a song from the new record No Time For Dreaming, Charles Bradley and  
The Menahan Street Band.  
I can't believe you came out of nowhere as a virtual unknown to us.  
Have you recorded before?  
No. It's my first time, really, coming out.  
I know you've been performing.  
- Yes.  
- As Black Velvet.  
- Yes.  
- So, now you're performing as Charles Bradley?  
- Yeah, yeah.  
You certainly have a great band backing you here  
and with the folks over at Daptone, you know, what a great crew they are!  
And you've seen what's happened with Sharon Jones

who, you know, just like you, went from complete obscurity to...

Who knows what kind of heights you could scale?

So, that's got to be an exciting moment for you.

I think God just answered my prayer.

You know, it's just like...

I asked myself why it took so long, but you can't question God when he wants to do things.

So, at my late age, it just started coming.

- What's next? Are you thinking big?

- I'm thinking the sky's the limit.

Congratulations on this great record. No matter what happens with it, it's a fine piece of work.

Charles Bradley on WFUV.

# This world

# Going up in flames

# And nobody

# Wanna take the blame

# Don't tell me how to live... #

I don't know how many artists have ever been 62 years old and released their debut record. He may be the first.

The guy is just getting it going as far as I'm concerned.

He's worked very hard for a long time.

I hope that enough people can hear him sing,

so he can make the kind of life he wants and take care of his family.

# Huh!

# Yeah!

# I'm talkin' to you, girl

# Yeah!

# Only you... #

If you're into funk and soul music or Afrobeat and you live in New York, Gabe Roth is the guy you want behind the board. You want these guys pushing you in the direction

because their records were phenomenal.

I just started making the kind of records I like listening to.

I think a lot of those soul records have a certain sincerity that I always like.

One morning, pretty early, nine or ten in the morning, I got a knock on my door and it was Charles.

He said, "I heard you were looking for singers. I heard you were looking for me."

I had no idea what he was talking about, so he shows me a videotape of him singing James Brown songs. Sounds great.

Gabe Roth from Daptone Records brought him down to a rehearsal in Staten Island.

Gabe wanted us to record with a singer. Charles was a singer they hadn't found a band with on Daptone.

Charles had captured their attention.

I just figured, see how Charles works with them.

# Stop

# Stop it, baby

# Ooh

# I'm feelin' awful, baby

# And I'm locked up in a cage... #

I played with Tommy's band that he had over at Staten Island.

I just went over there one day and they was rehearsing, jamming.

They said, "Hey, man, sing on this, sing on this."

And I'm liking the music.

The lyrics were just popping in my head.

So, that all worked out well and we recorded those songs with Bradley at Daptone.

They were good songs, but they just didn't take off. Then we kind of went in different directions.

Two years went by

and I was doing James Brown in small clubs.

And then I got a call to come round and do a show with Sharon Jones.

We rehearse, we play the show, great. Me and Charles see each other for the first time in a couple of years.

We catch up a little bit. I say, "Charles, I'm working on some music.

"How about you come over one night and we give it a shot?" He said, "Yeah, Tommy, of course."

We magically recorded two songs in one night - The World Is Going Up In Flames and In You I Found A Love.

Charles was right here and I was right here pressing "record".

You know, we wrote it together and that was it.

The music was laid down, but he was just coming out with lyrics off the cuff.

And I was just putting it in the right place.

We haven't played so many shows with Charles up to this point.

We played a couple.

Charles wants to reach every single person in the audience.

What we rehearse and what goes down on stage is two different things. The band's going to be tight.

The only thing we tried to rehearse with Charles is to let Charles lead the band.

- # Bam, bam, bam, bam

- Bam, ba-a-am... #

Three, four.

THEY PLAY GENTLE INTRO

# In you  
# I found love  
# That makes me feel so real  
# Oh, baby  
# Sometimes  
# When I'm sleeping at night  
# I wake up  
# And you're nowhere to be found  
# You said you love me  
# And you'll always be around  
# In you... #

The new music, for once, it's me.

It's things that I have experienced, that I went through, heartaches and pains.

# I don't want to be a fool no more... #

- Yeah, Bradley, you waited twice for the horns.

- You told me that.

Yeah, that's perfect.

- Nine and a half...

- Mother, come on. You said nine, you said eight.

I get eight. Now you want nine, you want nine and a half.

What's wrong with those shoes right here?

**INAUDIBLE REPLY:**

You're going to drive me crazy.

Oh, Jesus...

It's hard sometimes. It's very hard because everything now is really depending on me.

But if I put her in a home, she would die and I know that.

And when...when my husband...

..died.

She said, "Son, let me spend my last days in the house."

I said, "OK, Mom. I'll do that."

But she don't know...

I have no life.

My life is her.

For me to be with someone,

I don't even know how to do it.

When Charles' mother first left Florida to go to new York,

Charles was only eight months of age.

Eight months old.

And she stayed away so long that when she came back for the first time, he didn't recognise her, he didn't know she was his mother.

He thought that his grandmother really was his mother.

She abandoned, actually, in a way, her children to follow...

..a man who had a wife that she was very crazy about.

Otherwise, she probably would never have gone to New York.

I was about the age of seven or eight years old.

My mother told my grandmother, "I want him to come back to New York with me."

My grandmother said, "No, let them stay here. They'll get a better education if they stay with me."

So my mother says, "No."

My grandmother says, "You're not taking them," so my mother stole us. That's what I did.

I really hate to say this, but I think at that time, it was hard to find jobs,

so there was only one way if you had some kind of dependents that you can get some welfare.

And I feel like that's what she was doing to get the welfare by having those kids there.

During his infancy,

now, he was the favourite child.

He received all the love and care from his older brothers and sisters and his grandmother

and his uncles and all of us because he was the baby.

When Charles went to New York, that's when he lost all of that.

I was living with my mom and I was afraid she would hurt me, so I left.

We couldn't see eye to eye. I was getting blamed for everything.

I was very bitter. It seemed like everything was rationed to us.

I was in a basement worse than this one.

You know, it was this sand basement. It was no concrete basement.

A 15-watt bulb of light and I said, "No, I can't take this."

I said, "I don't want it, I'm going." So I left.

I was 14 years old.

My home was the subway train. That's where I'd keep warm.

I'd get on the subway train some nights, winter nights, cold, riding the A-Train back up and down.

The police would hit the darn thing real hard and say, "Kids, you got to get off."

I'd go across the platform and get another train going back.

I'd sleep, get me a little corner.

I'd get the stick real hard and it'd penetrate through my head.

He'd say, "Get up. You can't sleep here."

So, I'd just keep going different routes to get a night's sleep before daylight come.

And I'd see myself what's going down  
because everybody in those days was getting high using hard drugs.  
I'd be watching while they're shooting up and they'd try to give it to me.  
I got scared and I was afraid of needles. I'd say, "No, no, no."  
That's when I went to Job Corps. I tried to get my mother to sign me to go  
to Job Corps.  
She was mad with me, she wouldn't sign, so I got my sister to forge her  
name.  
I learned to cook. For two years, I was a cook trainee up in Bar Harbor,  
Maine.  
That's when I started doing James Brown on the Job Corps.  
They'd say, "Man, you see that new guy that came in?  
"He looked just like that guy they call James Brown."  
And then they got me fired up one day. They gave me some gin.  
In the Job Corps, you were sneaky.  
They gave me some gin, they got me really high and they gave me the  
microphone and said, "Sing!"  
And I went crazy.  
They told me they'd take me to a girls' Job Corps centre to perform.  
I said, "How many people is there going to be?" They said, "20 or 30  
people." I said, "OK."  
And they called me on stage.  
And I looked out from that stage and I saw all those people.  
I froze. I said, "Uh-uh, I ain't going out there! Not me, not me."  
So, this guy named Moody came behind me and gave me a push.  
I see all the people just happy, they love me.  
They love me giving them my heart.  
And I said, "Wow, this is where I want to be at!"  
And I never stopped.  
I want to taste it when you open that...  
- The one that's pumpkin?  
- Oh, yeah.  
- I got to taste that.  
- We can open it now.  
- I never heard of pumpkin beer.  
- We can drink some of that.  
- I sure want to taste that.  
Oh, my God, this is delicious!  
- Seriously. This is unbelievable.  
- That's the pumpkin?  
- Yeah.  
- That's the pumpkin?  
- It is like uncarbonated. It tastes unbelievable.  
You like it? No? You don't like it?



- I don't like it.
- I think it's delicious.
- I'm going to taste the pumpkin in there.

Working with Charles Bradley as opposed to working with Sharon Lee or the other singers from New York that I so often work with, Charles has got the craziest stories.

Craziest stories.

So, you know, as a songwriter, I just sit around and I hear Charles tell these stories

and you're like, "We've got to write a song about that."

So usually before we do the vocals on the track, I'll play Charles' song and just ask him if he likes it first of all.

I'll sing him my ideas and say, "This is how I think it should go."

Not that he disregards my ideas, but he's got his own ideas and he instantly starts expressing them.

He'll just start singing and then we'll stop and get away from it for a second and just talk.

If you talk with Charles long enough, a story comes out about something.

Without me asking him, he'll start singing about what we spoke about.

Then I'll just grab a pencil and paper and let him freestyle over the track over and over again.

Then we'll go back and that'll become a song slowly, over the course of a couple of hours,

but it's his stories I'm always trying to translate into a song.

I was bouncing into different bands like that.

They'd say, "Man, we'll pay you 40 to do this show tonight."

This guy paid me to do this tonight. That's how I was doing out there.

And at that time, I don't know why...I got sick.

I called my mom and she said, "Son, come on back home."

Mom is getting old

and she's been through a lot.

It's not for me to crucify her for what she did in her life.

Then my brother Joseph, he came to hospital to see me

and he reached over and he kissed me.

He said, "Charles, no, no."

He whispered in my ear. He said, "Bro, if you don't want to live for yourself, please live for me."

He said, "Charles, I love you. You're my heart."

I said... I said, "Joe, I'll fight. I'll fight."

My brother just told me.

He said, "Charles, do something that you want to do. Follow your dreams.

You love music. Do it."

I said, "Joe, I'd like to be someone like you." He said, "You don't want to be me. Be you."

He said, "Cos I can't do it like you do it."

I remember when I was a kid, when I was in Florida, Joseph was going to piano school,  
and how I learned these little things I'm playing on the piano by watching him.

I was trying little tunes myself.

He said, "Follow your dreams and your music."

And he said, "Take one of these rooms in this house and fix it up."

He gave me this room. "People can come here for a rehearsal." And that's what I did.

Joe was like a father and a brother. He was a beautiful brother.

Yeah, sit down, Charles, and eat.

You know, I'm not hungry,

but you eat and then we'll start slowly talking about what you did.

- OK, I'll leave this here for you.

- That's fine.

'I'm tutoring Charles.'

He's at kindergarten or first grade reading level  
and reading comprehension level.

"Other writers interested in my story."

OK, you sounded it out. Did you understand everything that you read?

Um...

- Yes and no.

- Yes and no.

I think his number one goal is for him to be able to write his lyrics down  
fast

when they're coming into his head because he's got a lot of words up there  
he wants to get out on paper,  
but he doesn't know how to do it.

You didn't spell "an" right.

- Oh. Two N's?

- Just one N, no D.

- Oh, "an"...

- "And" is like when you put two things together like...

- Right, OK.

Fish AND chips.

- Thank you.

- Bye, Charles. I'll see you next week. Thank you.

You got it? You can read it later.

- Wrap it up. Get started.

- Get outta here.

You know I own you. You know I'm the boss.

- I bet you wish you were.

- Thank you, Mr Brown.

'Charles used to wear his James Brown wig all the time.'

Right? All the time.

'As the record draws near, it's like, "You've got to present yourself as Charles Bradley." He had a hard time.

'He wanted to come out with the cape and the James Brown thing.'

That's what he's used to getting up on stage and doing and we did not want that.

We wanted Charles to be Charles and it took a lot of convincing.

Charles has a record coming out January 25th,

so now starts the promotion leading up to the record coming out.

I'm going on tour with Sharon Jones to open up for her.

Sharon Jones is giving me a chance to expose some of my music,

to let the world know who Charles Bradley is.

It's real exciting for us as a label to be able to present these kind of packages

and Charles is the perfect guy to add to any of the shows

and get his name out on the heels of some of the other bands that have had success up to now.

If we go some place and we have 1,000 people come to see Sharon,

to be able to put him in front of that audience is a huge head start.

Sharon Jones and The Dap-Kings has been our most prolific artist and our most successful artist,

the artist that's been around the longest, toured the most and sold ten times as many records.

He hadn't had a proper show in about a year or so.

You know, to also put that in context, he hasn't played a lot of gigs as Charles Bradley.

Working with Bradley live is a little stressful because he can go off in a song at any time.

CHEERING AND APPLAUSE

America!

We've got to make this world a better place.

Come on, Tommy, bring it all in!

# No time for dreaming

# Dreaming, dreaming

# Gotta get on up, gotta do your thing

# No time for dreaming

# Dreaming, dreaming

# Gotta get on up, gotta do your thing

# Hey!

# Hey!

# And get...

# Why don't ya? Yeah!

# No time for dreaming

# Dreaming, dreaming  
# Gotta get on up, gotta do your thing  
# No time for dreaming  
# Dreaming, dreaming  
# Gotta get on up, gotta do your thing  
# Do your thing...  
# No time for dreaming  
# You gotta get on up  
# And do your thing... #

CHEERING Love you!

I love you too.

- I love you too.

- I love you, Charles.

I love you too!

CHEERING AND APPLAUSE

Put your hands together and give it up for Charles Bradley!

Show some love for Mr Charles Bradley!

OK, you're smarter.

- That was better than last night.

- Yes, it was.

- Killed it, Charles.

It was.

I know I made a few mistakes tonight, but I'm getting better.

The audience didn't see it, but I know it and Tom knows about it.

So the last one I was good on.

'Then there was one I made a mistake on, but I'll get better on it. I promise you that.'

We can't believe they didn't put you on more! Why didn't you come back on at the end?

- Tell her.

- That's the space they gave me.

- I don't care. We want more!

More of Chucky.

Thank you, my man. Thank you. You got the juices flowing for all of us. You just blew the roof off the place. Unbelievable. You're going to be huge, man.

I don't understand what people mean about diva. That diva word sometimes can be wrong.

- No, but it's right for you.

- Diva means...

- It all depends.

Yeah, when it's coming from love you gotta consider the source.

- Which one was yours?

- You didn't say "To Charles".

To Charles... How do you spell Bradley?

- B-R-A-D-L-E-Y.

- ..L-E-Y.

- Cool.

- You're a star.

- I love you.

- I love you, too.

- I wish the best for you.

- I wish the best for US.

- If I don't see you on the top, I will see you in heaven.

- You'll see me on the top AND in heaven.

- You'll see me down here, too.

- I love you, Sharon.

- Love you, too, Charles!

Poughkeepsie.

'I'm gonna stop by and visit some old friends

'I haven't seen in years.'

Hey, hey, hey!

How are you doing?

- I said, "God, I hope they're still there."

- Yeah. We're still here, bro.

Man, this smells good!

- What's going on, buddy? How you feelin'?

- It's been years!

- You look well, man.

- You look good.

Is that Jackie coming?

Ah! Look at Jackie!

How you been?!

My God!

I knew this guy, I know Ernest Washington, since 1968.

And you'd throw that cape off

and I don't know if one of us went and picked the cape up and laid it back on your shoulder...

- Yes, I remember that! I remember that.

- That's right.

You'd never know you went that far.

- God, I thank God I didn't give up.

- Thank God.

Let me speak to Tom. Tell Tom to put Mr and Mrs Washington on the guest list.

I found my friends.

They are totally my family. We maybe go away for so long,

- but eventually I'm going to find you. You know that, Jackie.

- We've been friends for a long time.  
I get goosebumps thinking about that.  
- I'll see you guys. I'll see you tonight.  
- Take care. I'll see you tonight.  
- Right, bud.

Oh, my God...

That's memory lane.

- #  
- I...I...  
- #  
- I'm just loving you, baby  
- #  
- Oh, I can't get enough of you, baby  
- #  
- Can't get enough of you  
- #  
- I was crying  
- #  
- When I felt your love  
- #  
- This time I know it's for real, baby  
- #  
- I...

Bring it down a little, fellas.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
may ever who you are...

I lived here. I came here, about Poughkeepsie,  
about 1968.

And I lived here for nine years.

You know,

this is like home to me, so I'm giving you my love.

You know... Bring it down a little softer, fellas.

And I worked in a little town they called Wassaic.

I worked at a little centre. I was cooking for 3,500 people a day.

There's a friend in here, two friends, I knew when I came here.

They was with me.

And their names are Mr and Mrs Ernest Washington.

Ernest Washington, I can't see you. Where are you at?

But thank you, brother, for the ride.

Thank you, Jackie.

Thank you for being my friends through the years.

And ALL of you out there.

- #  
- I LOVE you

- #  
- Aaaaaah, hey  
- #  
- I love you  
- #  
- Forgive me  
- #  
- Aaaaaah  
- #  
- Ooooh...  
- #  
Thank you. I love you.

**CROWD CHEERS:**

We love you!  
I got a touching moment  
when I got down and started talking to people. It got touching.  
So I said, "Leave it alone, Charles. Getting too deep now. Get off it." Cos  
it started getting touching.  
But that was the beautiful thing about Ernest Washington and Jackie. Oh,  
man.  
This is the first time they saw me in many years.  
This is the house my brother was killed in.  
That's why I don't like to come in this block no more.  
I looked out the window and I saw all these policemen and fire trucks  
so I came outside and I thought I've got to go see this for myself.  
I saw this thing says Morgue. And when it says Morgue  
what I did, I just saw... I came out to go in my brother's house and the  
detective let me in there,  
but I told him, "That's my brother and you can't stop me." So I pushed my  
way in.  
But I wish to God that I never did.  
Yes, I will, son.  
I think Charles depended on Joseph like his mother depended on him.  
Charles went out of his mind when Joseph got killed.  
I mean, he...  
For a while, he thought he was going to go crazy about him.  
'I'd really like to find the truth of why he got killed.  
'He was too young.  
'He was 48 years old.'  
There's a mic for you right here.  
You want to try that one or you want to play something else?  
We can come back to that. He always goes...like that.  
- Oh, you want to do Heartaches and Pain?

- Yeah.

All right.

BAND PLAYS INTRO

'Heartaches and Pain is by far the deepest song' on the Charles Bradley record. It was probably the third song that we had written together.

Charles tells me this story about his brother and says to me,

"I want to write a song about my brother Joseph."

I said, "OK, I will help you do it." As a friend.

And I said, "That song on the piano you've been playing your whole life? That's the music to the song."

Brought Charles in, added a couple of things to his piano. "This is the song for your brother."

And he did his thing then. He started screaming, running around, "This is beautiful. Oh, my God!"

And then we started working on it and it was hard, man.

It was really hard. That is a really personal, deep, deep, dark, haunting story

about Charles's older brother, that he admired and loved, that he needed to tell.

- #

- Life's full of sorrow

- #

- So I have to tell you this

- #

- Your brother is gone

- #

- Yeaaaah

- #

- Heartaches

- #

- Heartaches and pain...

- #

So the mortgage is hard on me and I don't think it's fair to me.

I never missed a payment. They told me if I did, they'd go up 18% on my interest rate.

I tried to get it remortgaged. They tell me I don't make enough money.

I said, "Well, how don't I make enough money and I'm paying all this high mortgage out?"

I'm going out to get every little penny I can get to keep this going.

When Joseph got killed Charles went on and took on the full duty of taking on what Mother needs.

Cos none of them would do it. Charles is doing it,

a lot of his personal money he puts into the house to help her to stay



there.

He's in the process, I would say, almost of buying this damn house for his mother.

And his older siblings that live there in the house don't want him there.

And so he is largely responsible for

taking care of all of my sister's...

..affairs.

**RINGTONE PLAYS:**

Hello?

Yes?

Oh, hi. How you doing, Paul?

She says if she won't be able to do the remortgaging... the refinancing of the house,

I'll have to wait for two months until the income tax come.

She'd like me to give up my apartment, but I don't want to.

I'd have to move over to my mom's house.

Yeah, cos this apartment is the only place I have to run to when I get depressed.

And there's pieces only of me here.

Whatever you decide, cos I know that you're trying to help me and I appreciate that.

All right, Paul. Thank you, Paul.

What's left for me to do is my life, take my life away.

Sometimes I do, I say, "God, just call me home."

Because every day I get out and I fight and fight to keep the honesty, the decency of a human being walking the planet. And loving everybody as God asked you to love.

But today they look at it as a weakness, I think.

How much more can one give before they find love on the planet?

How much more can you give?

I say, "Father, whatever time and hour you want me, I'm ready to go."

That's the way I feel about life.

And before I leave this world I said I'd let the world know. They can't change me.

I don't give a damn what you give me, there's no money on this Earth can take the love that I've got for God in my heart. I love everybody.

I never do nobody no harm.

All I try to do is just walk my straight line.

- #

- Why is it so hard

- #

- To make it in America

- #

- So I said to myself  
- #  
- I... I gotta move away from here...  
- #

Me and Homer were travelling around Europe with Sharon Jones and we had hung out one night and met some girls in Paris. They were like, "Is Sharon Jones as big in America

"as she is in France?" And we were like, "Nobody knows about Sharon." This was years ago.

We played around Brooklyn and small clubs, but at the time we were playing theatres in Paris

and it was a bigger thing in Europe.

So that led to us writing this little tune that night called

# Why is it so hard to make it in America? #

The second that Charles sang, "Why is it so hard to make it in America?" the song's meaning completely changed.

- #  
- Why-y-y  
- #  
- Is it so hard  
- #  
- To make it in America?  
- #  
- I try-y-y  
- #  
- So hard now  
- #  
- To make it in America...  
- #

Beautiful, Bradley.

#### **RINGTONE PLAYS:**

Oh, Tommy.

OK, I'm definitely... I'm definitely going to get it?

All right, Tommy.

Page six? OK, Tommy.

OK, Tommy.

I owe so much to you guys. You just... Oh, Tommy!

I'll see you.

Your bad self.

All right, Tommy.

Tommy said they got me in the Post on page six.

Ohhh...

Lord have mercy.

What can you say?

You got the Post? You got the Post?

Ohhh...

They don't have the Post.

- How's everybody doing?

- Hey, Charles! How you doing?

- I'm holding up.

Aaaah!

Shoot!

Oh...my...God.

Yes!

Oh, my God. Look at this!

- Ah, shit. They got me in the paper.

- They got you in the paper? Oh, my goodness!

- Oh, man. What you doing?

- That's me right there.

Jesus... I thank God for this.

Oh, my God.

This guy's been... He's been doing a lot of struggling within himself, but it's gonna be OK today. It's gonna be OK.

We were talking for years and I look at him and I say to myself,

- "He's gonna be there..." Is he in the paper?

- Yeah.

- He's in the paper?!

- Yeah!

- I'm talking and you're in the paper?!

- Right there.

My Lord.

- You couldn't have knocked on my door and told me that?

- I just found out!

I told you, honey! I told you, baby!

- Right.

- You know, I love you.

- What?

- You told me.

- I told you.

It's happening!

I told you. Keep the faith and never stop believing and you're already there! What you worried about?

- You've been there and it's already done.

- Congratulations.

- God has been good. And if you cry,

it's a good cry. When you do, hold your head up cos He has you still.

I love you, brother. I won't forget.

'Tonight is my first night.

'Me only on stage. Charles Bradley.

'My chance has finally come and I'm hoping everybody out there will come out

'to show me their support.'

You all right?

Are you coming tonight? You always tell me you're gonna come.

This is the place where, before they fixed it up,

I lived in here for about... God, about 2 years.

It was abandoned. And now it's a church. The guy that owned it sold it and they fixed it up.

But that... This was home one time and this guy, Jose,

he is the one that really gave me electricity from his place. It kept me going.

That's why we're such close friends today.

Most people could have given up and not done anything.

Just settle into a job. He's been plugging away.

It's hard enough for people in their 30s to launch a career. For someone in their 60s, it's almost insane.

- You like rhythm and blues?

- We're going.

- We've got our tickets.

- Ah, come on!

'I just hope it's a decent night,

'some people turn out and he's got a room to perform to and feels good about the record. Cos we do.'

Wow!

Wow!

Sold out!

- My God.

- 'No Time For Dreaming.

'Please welcome to the stage, Mr Charles Bradley!'

I was on the guest list and working for the label and had friends in the band and I had to wait outside

like, I don't know, 25 minutes before I could get in the door. It was sold out.

Ladies and gentlemen, I got a special lady in the house.

My mama's in the house some place.

Mama!

Mama!

Look around you. In the red over there is my mama.

But ladies and gentlemen, she gave me the start.

- #

- O-o-oh  
- #  
- Go back Go back to the golden rule  
- # Golden rule  
- Ay-ay, go back  
- #  
- Go back to the golden rule  
# Golden rule... #  
You know...  
Let me say a few words right now.  
You...you...you...  
- made me to be the person I am.  
- Love you, Charles!  
- Thank you.  
Thank you.  
I thank you and I hope to God that I can keep giving you love,  
decency and honesty.  
- #  
- Aaaaah  
- #  
- Aaaaah  
- #  
- What am I gonna do?  
- #  
- What am I gonna say?  
- #  
- Yaaaah!  
- #

**AUDIENCE ROARS:**

What love can I ask for around me right now? Tell me God ain't real.  
This love I feel around me will make me reach into my heart  
and give everybody a little piece to say I love you.  
It was one of my special shows.  
He changed my life. Changed my life.  
It's infectious, you know? He's in love with what he's doing and in love  
with his audience.  
When he says, "I love you, guys," you feel it.  
Amazing. I brought my friend from Italy and...what do you think?  
Amazing.  
'I think it was too small a place for the people that came there cos a lot  
of people were turned down.  
'It hurt me to see that, but for the joy, the love the people gave me that  
was there, oh, my God.'

They wanted more from me and I looked in the traces of their faces. Oh, my God.

It was a tear dropper.

Oh, man!

- #

- Ay-yi-yi

- #

- Oh, baby

- #

- This world...

- #

Lord have mercy!

- #

- And nobody wanna take the blame

- #

- Don't tell me how to live my life...

- #

'I knew the record was going to do real well, but I didn't know how quickly. People don't know him well'

and the sales for a guy just putting out his first LP, I mean, it's unbelievable.

- #

- Ooooh

- #

- Come on, baby...

- #

'It's really against the odds to think that a 62-year-old black man from Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn,

'is going to have his first record and within the first couple of weeks' sell more than most records are selling in a year at this point.

- #

- So what am I gonna do?

- #

I don't think it's a done deal and I don't think it's easy.

A lot more people have got to buy his record, he's got to sing a lot more shows, make a lot more records.

It's a long path, you know, and he's a late starter.

- #

- I can't turn my head away...

- #

'It's above any of our expectations already and I think the record's got wheels. It's not stopping now.

'We haven't seen the biggest sales.'

- #

- It's burning up in flames...

- #

Aaaaah!

Lord have mercy!

- Yeah!

- Oh, my God!

We're leaving to go to Europe to do some touring

and I hope Europe will love what I'm doing, what I'm giving to them.

And now it's clean as a baby's...tail.

- How long will you be gone, baby?

- About three weeks.

- Three weeks, baby? I'm gonna miss you.

Uh-uh, you live right here.

- Every three days, I'm gonna call you.

- OK, darling.

I'm a bad boy. You ain't got no water to throw on me now.

You ain't got no water. I can tickle you.

I can tickle you now.

And like my mom said today,

she never believed I would get to this level.

I want to see how far I can make myself go in life.

See can I go further than any of my family members have ever been  
and say, "I took me there."

Young peoples out there, watch out.

The old man's coming up for you. Do your job better. If you don't, I'll do  
it for you.

# I'll take the long road Yeah, yeah

# The long road

# But I am sure that I will get there

# Yes, I will

# You can take that short cut

- #

- I'll take the long road

# I don't mind You can take that short cut

- #

- I'll take the long road

# You take that short cut Yeah, yeah

# But surely, surely Surely I will get there... #