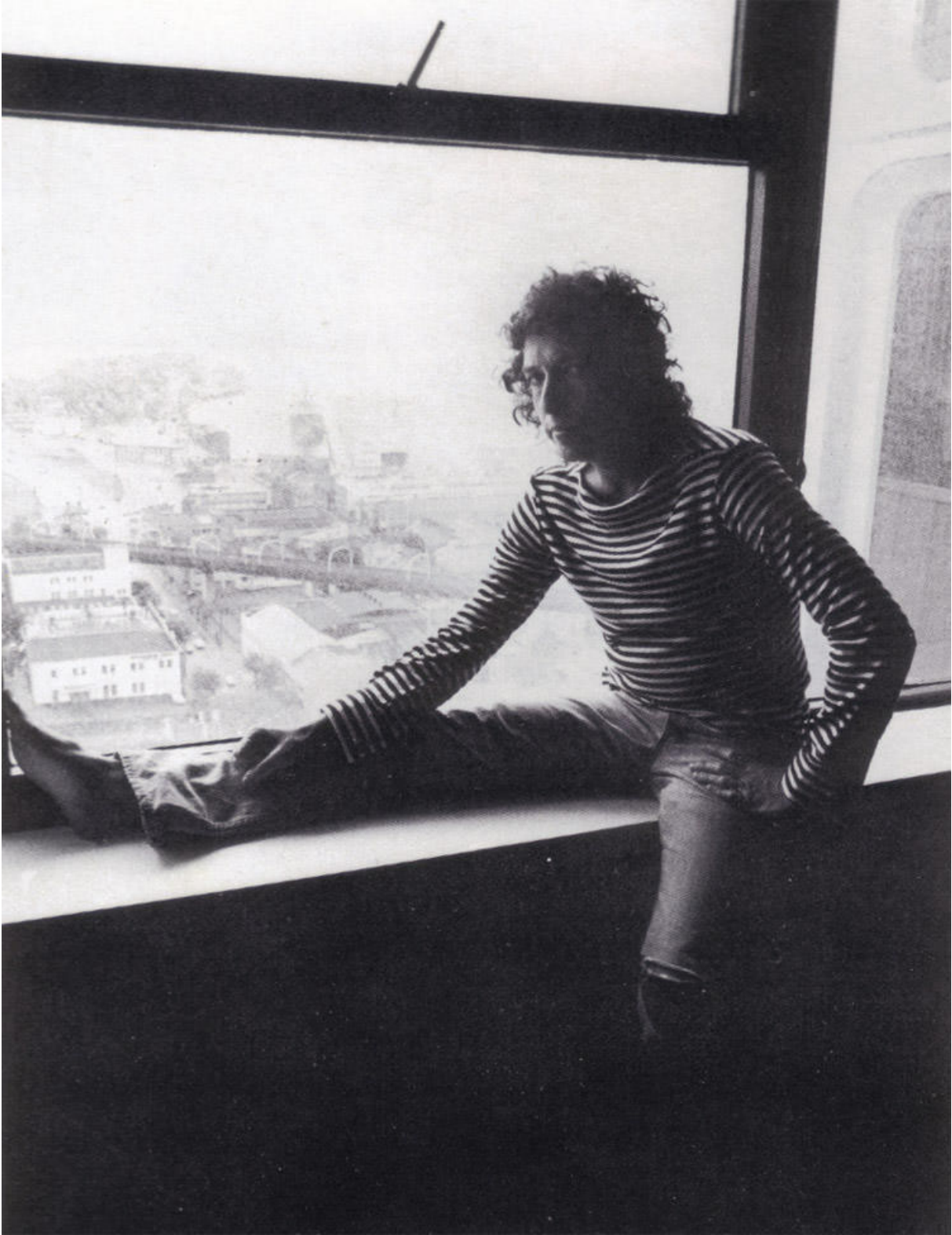


INTERVIEWS FROM THE 70's



INTERVIEWS FROM THE 70'S

p4. WEBERMAN PHONE CONVERSATION: jan '71

p13. PEOPLE MAGAZINE, November 10, 1975

p18. TV GUIDE MAGAZINE, September 11, 1976

p23. PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: Nov - Dec. 1977

p62. THE KAREN HUGHES INTERVIEW IN SYDNEY April 1, 1978

p77. THE PHILIPPE ADLER INTERVIEW June 16, 1978

p85. THE NILS CHIOLER INTERVIEW July 11, 1978

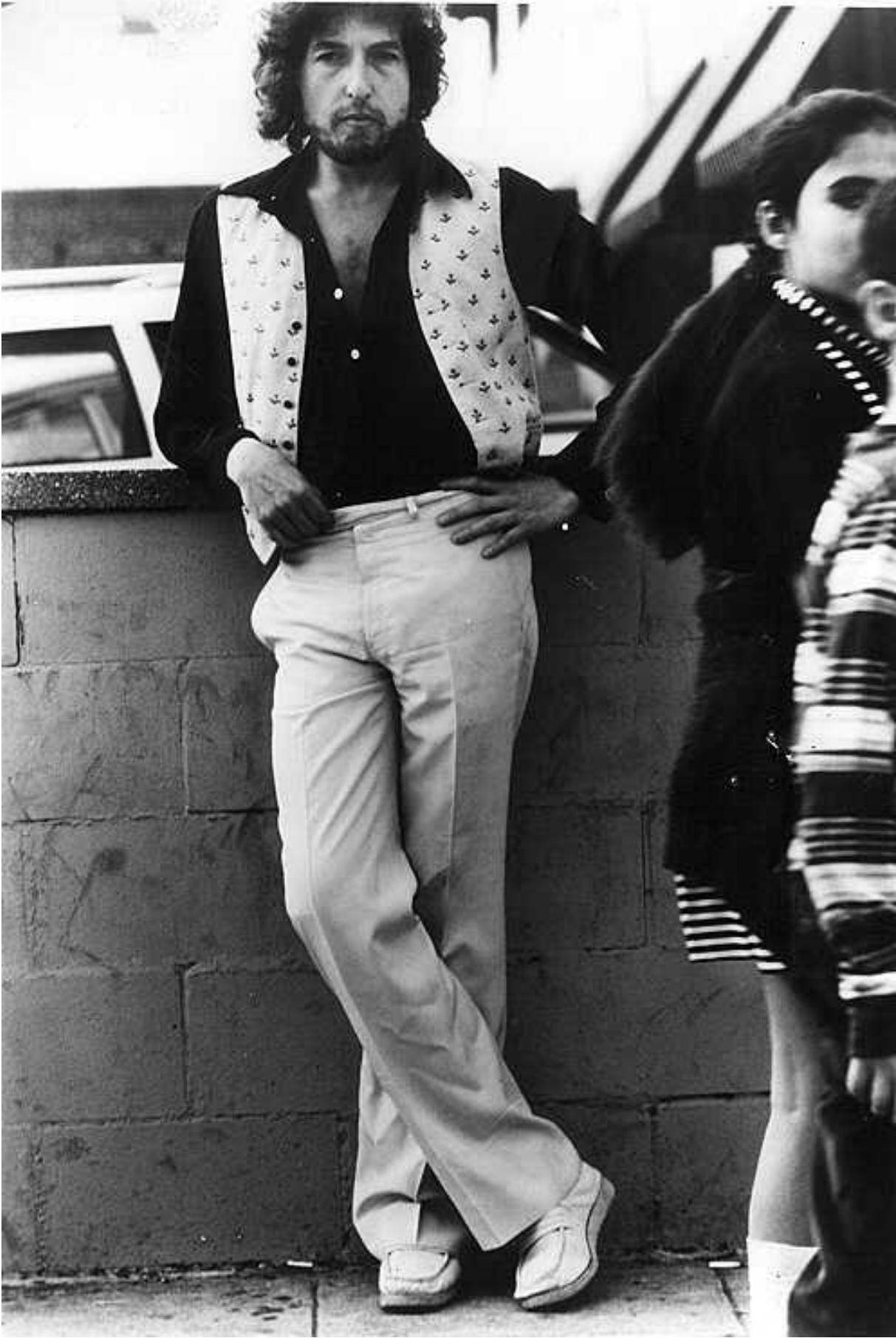
p86. THE METTE FUGL INTERVIEW July 11, 1978

p88. LYNNE ALLEN INTERVIEW, December 12, 1978

p96. THE BRUCE HEIMAN INTERVIEW, TUSCON, December 7, 1979

Source: <http://www.interferenza.com/bcs/interv.htm>





DYLAN/ALAN J. WEBERMAN PHONE CONVERSATION: JANUARY '71

Published in "East Village Other" 19 Jan 1971 Reprinted in "Retrospective" ed. by Craig McGregor 52 minute tape of telephone conversation available partly released on "Bob Dylan vs A. J. Weberman" By Folkways records

in this excerpt, weberman is reading dylan an article he (weberman) wrote about him (dylan)

WEBERMAN: 'Hey, Bob -- why not show the people your heart's in the right place and do a benefit for John Sinclair?' 'But, I don't have my thing together.' 'Bullshit -- all you gotta do is show up and plunk your guitar a little and a hundred thousand freaks will come out of their pads and go anywhere you are -- '

DYLAN: I-I don't want to say I don't have my thing together, man. I got my thing together!

WEBERMAN: -- so, why *don't y'do* the thing?

DYLAN: Well, I want to get back to that statement first.

WEBERMAN: -- yeah --

DYLAN: I don't want to say that thing that I don't have my thing together.

WEBERMAN: -- right --

DYLAN: See, you, you can make somp'n* else up, but, uh -- don't leave that in there.

WEBERMAN: What should I say, then?

DYLAN: Let's see -- what's the statement? (pause) How 'bout, uh -- let's see -- how 'bout --

WEBERMAN: You said -- you don't have your thing together. You said, you know -- you're not ready to -- you --

DYLAN: -- oh yeah -- right -- I m not ready to go play concerts, man. That's th**

WEBERMAN: -- all right, I'm not ready --

DYLAN: -- that's not the same thing as saying --

WEBERMAN: -- all right --

DYLAN: -- I don't have my thing together

WEBERMAN: -- I'm not ready to go play concerts --

DYLAN: -- I'm not about to --

WEBERMAN: I'm not about to -- go play concerts. -- all right --

DYLAN: -- at this time.

WEBERMAN: Right -- I don't blame you, man. You know -- you, uh -- you know -- y-you don t want to be part of the scene -- you know -- uh, all kinds of terrible things could happen to you in that hour, man -- *y-know --

DYLAN: No, man -- like, what for? Why should I go play th*-for twenty thousand people, man? I mean, what --

WEBERMAN: -- **it would be**

DYLAN: -- you know --

WEBERMAN: -- more than twenty thousand.

DYLAN: Hey, I've been there before --

WEBERMAN: You make people happy, man*.*

DYLAN: I've been there before, I --

WEBERMAN: You make people happy --

DYLAN: I've done it before --

WEBERMAN: You set the whole trend in rock, man --

DYLAN: I did --

WEBERMAN: -- if you started doing things like that --

DYLAN: You shoulda been at the Isle of Wight, man. I'd just like to see how much you'd still be talking --

WEBERMAN: The Isle of Wight --

DYLAN: -- if you were at the Isle of Wight.

WEBERMAN: -- was a capitalist rip-off, man. I'm not talking about that kind of a scene -- I m talking --

DYLAN: Were you --

WEBERMAN: -- about --

DYLAN: -- at Woodstock? (pause) Were you at Woodstock?

WEBERMAN: I-I wasn t at Woodstock, man --

DYLAN: Well, then you *never didn't* --

WEBERMAN: -- I'm not talking about Woodstock --

DYLAN: -- seen those kind of things --

WEBERMAN: I'm not talking about a free concert, man. I'm not talking about that -- I'm talking about a benefit, you dig -- at Madison Square Garden, or something like that, man --

DYLAN: Go, *on* let's finish the article --

WEBERMAN: (pause) Uh, you know -- 'but I don t have my thing together. Bullshit.

DYLAN: Uh, no, no -- we're going to change that --

WEBERMAN: *Uh*, right, right -- uh, somp'n in what you said before -- but, you gotta -- 'all you gotta do is show up and plunk your guitar then a hundred thousand freaks will come -- **hear the duh-duh-duh** ' 'Sorry, Al -- I can t do it. But I will write a song about political prisoners on my next album.' 'I don t want promises for nine months later. I wanna see some action, now. See, Bob -- you set the trends in rock -- and if you become, like, a human being -- a lot of other performers will go along. (pause) The sun had set and Dylan's wife had called him for dinner -- on the phone ***and *** --'

DYLAN: Oh, that -- that whole last paragraph -- that, man -- I didn t think that was necessary.

WEBERMAN: 'Bob gave me his phone number and asked me to call him when I'm on the radio -- or if something comes up. Ever hear me on the radio, Bob?' 'Just a couple of times on Alex Bennett's show -- I dug it when he asked if you had any personal messages for me. What do you think of Bob Fass?' 'He's a revolutionary brother, but he don't dig it when I attack you -- course* you were an old friend of his.' 'Well, Al, so long -- Uh, one more thing -- you re not gonna get into my life' -- 'Why?' --

DYLAN: (breath) **Le** those two sentences, man. I don't get them at all. I don't understand them, even --

WEBERMAN: -- why, if you do, I might gain a soul --

DYLAN: Yeah, well, that's shit -- those last two sentences. I don't think I said that.

WEBERMAN: Yes, you did. That's just what you said, man. You said, 'You re not gonna get into my life -- I said, 'Why?' -- * then you said, 'If you do, I might gain a soul.'

DYLAN: I don't understand that, do you?

WEBERMAN: (pause) Uhh -- I don't know -- I don't know -- it could be looked at in a number of ways, man -- you could *** --

DYLAN: Yeah, why don't you -- d'why don t you take it out of your article and look at it in a number of ways -- and let s d'uh -- you know, and -- and roll it around awhile -- and then when you -- when we know what it means -- why don't you tell me, and then -- ah, let's see if it's worth putting in an article --

WEBERMAN: (pause) Uh** --

DYLAN: Is that fair? I don t know what it means man.

WEBERMAN: So,* how would you have me in the article?

DYLAN: I don't know. It's your article. (pause) **Shit, I mean** --

WEBERMAN: ****, I just lost you. All right, man -- like, uh --

DYLAN: I don't know --

WEBERMAN: **but** **that's** what happened during our --

DYLAN: I know that's what happened.

WEBERMAN: -- first conversation --

DYLAN: But that ain't what happened, man -- ***?*** like, that last, uh -- that last sentence don't **end any** article -- you know that. That didn't happen like that. I re'member --

WEBERMAN: -- all right --

DYLAN: -- saying something like that, but it didn't have anything to do with how you're using it -- you're just taking it out of context.

WEBERMAN: **saytin now**

DYLAN: Then you re like some -- **

WEBERMAN: All right --

DYLAN: -- fucking Look Magazine --

WEBERMAN: -- **you want me to put it into context -- you **wanta do it back kinda ** -- then I say, 'Is that a threat?' -- and then you say, you know -- 'no, it is, but I know people who can kill you' -- that's what I remembered --

DYLAN: Oh no -- man!

WEBERMAN: -- or something like that, man.

DYLAN: No!

WEBERMAN: I was very paranoid -- in a very paranoid mood, man.

DYLAN: Well, don't take it out on me, man. I mean, come on --

WEBERMAN: Well, that's why I changed it around, man. I don't have you, uh -- comin' on like that. That's why I took it out, you know -- so, I left it -- I left it -- other interpretation -- I might gain a soul. You couldn't --

DYLAN: I don't want to say that, *man --

WEBERMAN: ***you couldn't????***

DYLAN: -- 'cause I don't -- that** sounds *shitty --

WEBERMAN: ***that***

DYLAN: -- what the --

WEBERMAN: -- ****that's**** ****so fucking**** quotable, man --

DYLAN: W-what does that mean -- I mean, like, I -- eh, uh** -- that don't -- aaoh -- it leaves me cold, man -- like, uh -- it s, uh -- doesn't even sound like me.

WEBERMAN: But you said it -- those are your exact words.

DYLAN: I gained a soul -- uh**, what could that mean?

WEBERMAN: Man, you know -- you ought'a stand behind things that you say.

DYLAN: (breath) Yeah, man, but I -- that was taken --

WEBERMAN: ****that's the truth****

DYLAN: -- right outta, right out of -- I do stand behind most of what I say, man -- but you know, I'm nyh-- ****stuff****

WEBERMAN: ****No,**** you don't stand behind anything you say, man.

DYLAN: Sure, I do -- sure, I do.

WEBERMAN: ******

DYLAN: -- I just don't dig it --

WEBERMAN: ****inaudible**** ****Dylan, man**** ***that s for sure --**

DYLAN: Man, I'm gonna do an article on you, man. I think I'm gonna write a song about you, too.

WEBERMAN: Well, I could use the publicity.

DYLAN: Yeah, ***well -- that s one reason why I wouldn't, man --**

WEBERMAN: (laughter)

DYLAN: -- but, uh --

WEBERMAN: (laughter)

DYLAN: -- I got a good song, man -- if I ever want* to do one --

WEBERMAN: What s it called?

DYLAN: It s called "Pig" --

WEBERMAN: I'm a pig, eh?

DYLAN: -- yeah.

WEBERMAN: Aw, bullshit, I'm a --

DYLAN: -- yeah, man --

WEBERMAN: -- pig, man --

****DYLAN:** -- yeah, man --**

WEBERMAN: You re the one who's a pig --

DYLAN: -- oh, no -- not at all --

WEBERMAN: -- Oh, yeah --

DYLAN: -- not at all, (laugh) man -- not at all. I don't think I'm gonna write it, though -- just because of that publicity thing. I don't dig that -- at all. But, I got the song, man.

WEBERMAN: **You re killing me*** --

DYLAN: -- I'll sing it for you. (pause) Well, I don't have it finished, actually -- but, uh --

WEBERMAN: -- I'm a pig, **man?

DYLAN: -- hey, man --

WEBERMAN: I don't have a million fucking dollars, man --

DYLAN: I don t ha -- ***d'uh *wait* -- what does that have to do with it?

WEBERMAN: 'Cause you have a million fucking dollars, man. See, you ain t'th' eh -- you ain't that much better than the cat who --

DYLAN: (breath)

WEBERMAN: -- has nothing, man. You dig it* -- the cat who's walking around the bowery, man -- it s true, like -- you know --

DYLAN: -- (whisper) waaht* --

WEBERMAN: -- in some ways you're better, but you ain't a million dollars better worth -- you know what I mean? Like, in times like this **?* like, you know, when you have a million dollars in this society, man -- it means, that other people don't have it -- you know -- (pause) uh -- don't you dig what I mean -- nobody should have, like -- a million dollars, man -- nobody should be allowed to accumulate that much wealth -- you know -- that much surplus wealth -- when, uh -- peop*le, uh*, when there are other people around that don't have shit. You know -- and not -- 'cau -- 'cause of their fuckin' skin color, man -- not because of, uh -- of anything else -- 'cause they're despised -- 'cause they're not like *straights* -- like hate anyone who's different than them in any kind of a way --

DYLAN: -- ay a* --

WEBERMAN: -- right?

DYLAN: -- yeah, man -- I think you're over -- you're overlooking --

WEBERMAN: -- no! **I'm telling you,** man**

DYLAN: -- a lot, man. You're overlooking a lot --

WEBERMAN: **I've had friends, man* -- I've had friends -- that got a lotta money together -- you know -- and, uh, I told them, man -- you -- you should put some of this fuckin' money back in the community -- most of it -- enough that, you know -- keep enough so th' you can live decently -- but don't fuckin' , uh -- you know, they didn't have peanuts compared to you, man. You know, and y' -- I told them to go fuck themselves if they're gonna fuckin' rip off, uh -- the, you know -- people not putting anything back -- but you're just a capitalist -- that's all, man. 'Cept, instead of producing, uh -- you know, yah -- instead of producing, uh -- uh, cars, or guns -- you produce, uh -- you know -- records -- music.

DYLAN: Hey man, that's, uh -- that's something, though.

WEBERMAN: It's somp'n, man -- but lately, it's nothin.

DYLAN: (phttt)*

WEBERMAN: **but** not only do you keep the money, but you d' - - the lyrics themselves have no kind of, uh -- redeeming value -- you're -- they're just -- in fact, they're reactionary -- you know. You're just, uh -- every -- all the shit is hitting the fuckin' fan -- and

you're singin' 'Hope it -- looks like nothin' but rain' -- you know --
uh --

DYLAN: -- that's a good song, man -- <_sign on the
window/_new morning_>

WEBERMAN: -- what are you --

DYLAN: -- like --

WEBERMAN: -- a weatherman?

DYLAN: -- a what?

WEBERMAN: -- a weatherman?

DYLAN: -- *do you mind?*

WEBERMAN: -- **if it's** nothin but rain --

DYLAN: (laugh)

WEBERMAN: -- but I wanted, uh -- if I want to fuckin , uh --

DYLAN: -- is your tape recorder still on, man?

WEBERMAN: **and it**

DYLAN: -- is it still running?

WEBERMAN: -- yeah.

DYLAN: Oh, it didn't break down?

WEBERMAN: Uh -- no, no -- it's -- it's a good one.

DYLAN: Yeah -- well, I ain't gonna call you no more, man -- just
because of that. I mean -- I don't trust yah.

WEBERMAN: Why, wuh -- don't tell me you didn't tape-record my
conversation --

DYLAN: -- no, man, I -- would, uh --

WEBERMAN: -- any conversations with me, man --

DYLAN: -- no, what do I want to do that for --

PEOPLE MAGAZINE, November 10, 1975

Interviewer : Jim Jerome

Printed in "People" 10 Nov 1975, reprinted in NME 31 Jan 1976

Author: Jim Jerome

BOB DYLAN: A MYTH MATERIALIZES WITH A NEW PROTEST RECORD AND A NEW TOUR

Bob Dylan at 34: "We each have our own vision and a voice inside that talks only to us. We have to be able to hear it."

It was a windowless recording studio, six floors above a deserted Manhattan side street. The artists were sealed off, as if under a siege that would not end until the tape was finally right. Meal breaks were out--instead, carrots, crunchy cauliflower, curry sauce, Camembert, French bread, beer, wine and tequila were brought in. The mood otherwise, though, was of a warm, conspiratorial intimacy. The harsh overhead lights were replaced by soothing red and green spots. A homey floor lamp illuminated the music stand of the lead singer. The producer was supportive: "Just hold that tempo, Bobby," He encouraged from the control room. "That last take was startin' to smoke." The star leaned into his mike and responded: "We're gonna get it, man, I know we are. Let's get this thing in the can and out on the streets." Bobby was Dylan and, after his latest 18-month retreat, he was returning to the streets again.

The recording is 'Hurricane', a protest song with the gritty urgency and outrage that had once enflamed a whole American generation. It pleads against the controversial eight-year incarceration for murder of ex-boxer Rubin ("Hurricane") Carter. Simultaneously, Dylan was readying his first road show since his tumultuous comeback tour of '74. The itineray would detour the megabuck impresarios, the multiseat superdomes, the computerized ticket networks and re-create the modest small-club mini-tours that characterized the years when he first left Hibbing, Minn. But his entourage includes friends like his ex-lady Joan Baez, plus Ronee Blakley, the discovery of the movie 'Nashville'. Undeniably, Dylan creates in a genre in which minimal

art is almost impossible, and so his latest comeback may live up to its ironic title--the Rolling Thunder Review.

Dylan is himself, after all, the most influential figure in American pop music (and thus pop culture) since 1960. His garbage was analyzed years before Henry Kissinger's. Every syllable or solecism of his life is subject to fearful scrutiny. Dylan, now 34 and as scruffy, wiry and taut as ever, looks back and sees it all as only a colossal accident. "It was never my intention to become a big star. It happened, and there was nothing I could do about it. I tried to get rid of that burden for a long time. I eat and sleep and, you know, have the same problems anybody else does, and yet people look at me funny."

If Dylan had his way, he would not be looked at--at all. He has granted very few major interviews in eight years, and this was his first in some 18 months. "I was playing music in the '50s" he begins, "and man, it was all I did. It saved my life. I'm not a hermit. Exclusive, maybe, but not reclusive."

"I didn't consciously pursue the Bob Dylan myth," he continues. "It was given to me--by God. Inspiration is what we're looking for. You just have to be receptive to it." While reports of Dylan's ardent Zionism are almost certainly exaggerated, he has unquestionably returned to his Jewish roots, or at least to a generalized spiritualism.

"I was locked into a certain generation," he says. "I still am. A certain area, a certain place in the universe at a certain time." The middle '60s, a period of drug-boosted frenzy, were reflected in Dylan's electric, clamorous rock'n'roll and in his manic jet-stream imagery--and they culminated on the edge of death on a shattered motorcycle in the summer of 1966. Then followed a two-year withdrawal which only intensified the myth. "I just wanted to be alone," he now says. He surfaced in 1968-69 with the subdued self-examination of 'John Wesley Harding' and, later his watershed country LP, 'Nashville Skyline'. Asked if he had it to do all over again, Dylan summons his samurai-quick sardonicism: "Maybe I would have chosen not to have been born at all--bypass the whole thing"

Dylan regards himself as an artist rather than a musician ("Put my guitar playing next to Segovia's and I'm sure you could tell who was the musician"), whose role is to create, not preach. "I can move, and fake. I know some of the tricks and it all applies artistically, not politically or philosophically."

He has a way of leaving reviewers as well as disciples in the dust. "I don't care what people expect of me," Dylan says defiantly. "Doesn't concern me. I'm doin' God's work. That's all I know." His classics like 'Blowin' in the Wind' and 'The Times, They Are a Changin'' became anthems of the opposition, and the terrorist Weathermen took their name from his lyrics. But pressed about his influence, Dylan says only, "You'll have to ask them, those people who are involved in that state of panic where my works seem to take them. It's not for me. I wouldn't have time for that. I'm not an activist. I am not politically inclined. I'm for people, people who are suffering. I don't have any pull in the government."

The accusation that he copped out from the antiwar and other protest movements which his music catalyzed leaves him livid--especially criticism of his refusal to participate in Woodstock. "I didn't want to be part of that thing," he says. "I liked the town. I felt they exploited the shit out of that, goin' up there and gettin' 15 million people all in the same spot. That don't excite me. The flower generation--is that what it was? I wasn't into that at all. I just thought it was a lot of kids out and around wearing flowers in their hair takin' a lot of acid. I mean what can you think about that?"

"Today the youth are living in a certain amount of fantasy," he adds. "But in a lot of ways they become more disillusioned with life a lot earlier. It's a result of the overload, the mass overload which we are all gonna have to face. Don't forget when I started singin', marijuana was known only in certain circles--actors, musicians, dancers, poets, architects, people who were aware of what it could do for you. You never went down to make a phone call at a phone booth and had some cop hand you a joint. But now it's almost legal. The consciousness of the whole country has changed in a very short time."

He is impatient with fans who expected his own expression to stay the same. "Those people were stupid," he snaps. "They want to see you in the same suit. Upheaval distorts their lives. They refuse to be loose and make themselves flexible to situations. They forget they might have a different girl friend every night, that their lives change too." Certainly there were formative changes in Dylan's life: marriage in 1965 to fashion model Sarah Lowndes; the accident; the growth of his own family to five (including one child from Sarah's previous marriage).

Yet, professionally, Dylan points out, "A songwriter tries to grasp a certain moment, write it down, sing it for that moment and then keep that experience within himself, so he can be able to sing the song years later. He'll change, and he won't want to do that song."

He'll go on." But Dylan is not speaking of himself. Of his own massive anthology of poems, he says, "i can communicate all of my songs. I might not remember all the lyrics," he laughs, "But there aren't any in there I can't identify with on some level."

"I write fast," he continues. "The inspiration doesn't last. Writing a song, it can drive you crazy. My head is so crammed full of things I tend to lose a lot of what I think are my best songs, and I don't carry around a tape recorder."

"Music," Dylan says, "is an outgrowth of family--and my family comes first." He moved them to the beach at Malibu from Woodstock several years ago, and has been intermittently rumored to be splitting from Sarah. He concedes, "I haven't been able to spend as much time with my wife as I would like to," but pinning Dylan down on personal matters is like collecting quicksilver. A sample colloquy:

[Note, Q: & A: added by EDLIS for readability]

Q: Are you living with your wife?

A: When I have to, when I need to. I'm living with my wife in the same world.

Q: Do you...

A: Do I know where she is most of the time? She doesn't have to answer to me.

Q: So you don't live...

A: She has to answer to herself.

Q: Do you live under one roof?

A: Right now things are changing in all our lives. We will always be together.

Q: Where are you living now?

A: I live in more that one place.

Q: Can you be more specific?

A: I don't want to give out my address.

Q: Region?

A: I live where I have to live, where my priorities are.

Q: Right now, is that in New York City?

A: Right now it is, and off and on since last spring.

"Traveling is in my blood," said Dylan, as he rehearsed for his latest tour. "There is a lot of gypsy in me. What I'm trying to do is set my standards, get that organized now. There is a voice inside us all that talks only to us. We have to be able to hear that voice. I'm through listening to other people tell me how to live my life." Did Bob Dylan, of all Americans, feel himself mortgaged to others? "I'm just doing now what I feel is right for me," he concludes. "For my own self."



TV GUIDE MAGAZINE, September 11, 1976

*Interviewer : Neil Hickey
Published in "TV Guide" 11 Sept 1976*

By Neil Hickey

"My being a Gemini explains a lot, I think," Bob Dylan is saying. "It forces me to extremes. I'm never really balanced in the middle. I go from one side to the other without staying in either place very long. I'm happy, sad, up, down, in, out, up in the sky and down in the depths of the earth. I can't tell you how Bob Dylan has lived his life. And it's far from over." Outside the auto's air-conditioned shell, the Malibu coastline of California, baking in 95-degree heat, is slipping past. Dylan observes the bathers idly. "I'm not really very articulate. I save what I have to say for what I do." What Bob Dylan does is write songs and perform them. Over the last 15 years, since he was 20, he has created a body of work unique among American artists: songs of such power and pertinence that they stand as a definition of the country and the man in those years: songs of rage over inhumanity; songs of inexpressible love, bitter vindictiveness and ribald joy; songs of spiritual longing, confusion and affirmation; songs in such extraordinary numbers that it often seemed miraculous that a largely self-educated youth--son of a Jewish furniture dealer from the Mesabi iron range of northern Minnesota--could have created them all: "Blowin' in the Wind" (an anthem of the 1960s civil-rights movement), "Like a Rollin' Stone" (one of the greatest rock songs ever written), "Masters of War," "With God on Our Side," "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right." He has been, in sum, the single biggest cultural influence on millions in his own generation. He has taken American music by the hand into uncharted regions. Dylan turns from consideration of the bathers, smothers a grin, and says: "Somebody called me the Ed Sullivan of rock and roll." He laughs loudly at the thought. "I don't know what that means," he says, "but it sounds right." Indeed, Dylan is both master and star of his own troupe, the so-called Rolling Thunder Revue, a company of strolling players who recently completed a 50-concert tour--one performance of which was taped at Colorado State University and will be visible on NBC Tuesday night (Sept. 14): Bob Dylan's first TV special, "Hard Rain." Rarely interviewed (the last full-fledged one was seven years ago) and rarely seen publicly or privately over long periods, Dylan has chosen to be one of the least accessible figures in the entertainment world. Born in Duluth, Minn., he grew up in nearby Hibbing and migrated early to New York's Greenwich Village, where he acquired a recording contract

and became a major concert star. After a motorcycle accident in Woodstock, N.Y., in July 1966, in which he almost died (indeed, rumors of his death were persistent), he remained in virtual seclusion for several years. In late 1969 he appeared at the Isle of Wight Festival of Music--his first paid concert in four years--and 200,000 people from Great Britain, the European continent, Canada and the U.S. showed up to hear him. Since then, he has toured the U.S. several times and issued a series of highly successful albums. "I don't really talk about what I do," Bob Dylan is saying. "I just try to be poetically and musically straight. I think of myself as more than a musician, more than a poet. The real self is something other than that. Writing and performing is what I do in this life and in this country. But I could be happy being a blacksmith. I would still write and sing. I can't imagine not doing that. You do what you're geared for." This year, along the Presidential campaign trail, Jimmy Carter has been quoting Dylan in many of his stump speeches, and even in his acceptance speech at the Democratic convention. "I don't know what to think about that. People have told me there was a man running for President and quoting me. I don't know if that's good or bad." He laughs broadly. "But he's just another guy running for President. "I sometimes dream of running the country and putting all my friends in office." He grins at the thought. "That's the way it works now, anyway. I'd like to see Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and a few of those other guys come back. If they did, I'd go out and vote. They knew what was happening." Sports cars bearing upturned surfboards stream along Pacific Coast Highway in the noon sun. "Over there," says Dylan, pointing to a roadside cafe rimmed with tables and benches. "There's a place to stop." Striding toward the cafe in a bent-kneed lope, Dylan--wearing jeans, sandals, a thin, frayed, black leather jacket and white burnoose swathing longish brown curls--resembles a hip shepherd from some Biblical Brigadoon. Settled with a beer, he fixes pale blue eyes on his companion and reflects on the press and its treatment of him. "The press has always misrepresented me. They refuse to accept what I am and what I do. "They always sensationalize and blow things up. I let them write whatever they want as long as I don't have to talk to them. They can see me any time--doing what I do. It's best to keep your mouth shut and do your work. It makes me feel better to write one song than talk to a thousand journalists." He rarely watches television, he says, including news. "I'm not influenced by it. I don't feel that to live in this country you have to watch TV news." How does he absorb the world's information before processing it into the topical songs that are so substantial a part of his work? "You learn from talking to other people. You have to know how people feel, and you don't get that from television news." (In 1963, when Dylan was a skyrocketing young folk balladeer, Ed Sullivan invited him to

appear on his show and Dylan accepted. He'd sing a new composition of his own called "Talkin' John Birch Society Blues," Dylan told Sullivan--a satire on the right-wing political group. Sullivan liked the song and scheduled it, but CBS censors refused to let Dylan perform it. Dylan refused to alter his choice of material and angrily chose not to appear on the show. Since then, he has consistently declined offers of network television, except for two brief appearances: one on ABC's old Johnny Cash Show--out of friendship for Cash; another on a recent PBS tribute to Columbia Records executive John Hammond, who gave him his first recording contract.)

What does he read? He laughs. "You don't want to know that. It would sound stupid." Still, the on-screen credits for this week's TV special carry "thanks" to (among others) Arthur Rimbaud, the French symbolist, mystical poet; and to American novelist Herman Melville. "Yes. Rimbaud has been a big influence on me. When I'm on the road and want to read something that makes sense to me, I go to a bookstore and read his words. Melville is somebody I can identify with because of how he looked at life. I also like Joseph Conrad a lot, and I've loved what I've read of James Joyce. Allen Ginsberg is always a great inspiration." Dylan visited Israel in 1971, an event that triggered talk among Dylan experts that Judaic tradition was about to become an overt aspect of his art. "There was no great significance to that visit," he insists. But, he says: "I'm interested in the fact that Jews are Semites, like Babylonians, Hittites, Arabs, Syrians, Ethiopians. But a Jew is different because a lot of people hate Jews. There's something going on here that's hard to explain." Many of Dylan's songs abound in religious mystical images: the album "John Wesley Harding" for example ("the first biblical rock album," he calls it, and the first to be released after his motorcycle accident), contains songs based almost entirely on stories and symbols from the Bible.

"There's a mystic in all of us," he says. "It's part of our nature. Some of us are shown more than others. Or maybe we're all shown the same things, but some make more use of it." How does Bob Dylan imagine God? He laughs abruptly, and then says, "How come nobody ever asks Kris Kristofferson questions like that?" After a pause, he says, "I can see God in a daisy. I can see God at night in the wind and rain. I see creation just about everywhere. The highest form of song is prayer. King David's, Solomon's, the wailing of a coyote, the rumble of the earth. It must be wonderful to be God. There's so much going on out there that you can't get to it all. It would take longer than forever. "You're talking to somebody who doesn't comprehend the values most people operate under. Greed and lust I can understand, but I can't understand the values of definition and confinement. Definition

destroys. Besides, there's nothing definite in this world." He sips at his beer and asks solicitously, "Want to go and sit on the beach for a while?" We return to the car and, Dylan driving, roll slowly northward. Dylan reminisces about Greenwich Village in the early 1960s and its role as the spawning ground for the great "folk boom" that swept the Nation in those years. One reason he had traveled there was to track down Woody Guthrie, the folk poet and balladeer who was Dylan's idol. The village's cafes and coffeehouses were home to scores of guitar-playing folkniks whose music was filtering out to the marketplace. The enormously popular Newport Folk Festivals, ABC's overslick TV series Hootenanny and hundreds of record albums by folk-style performers all fed the public's new appetite for simple, homemade music. (The folk boom ended, effectively, when the Beatles took the U.S. by storm in 1964, and when Dylan himself turned to the use of electrified instruments at about the same time.) "There was a lot of space to be born in then," Dylan is saying. "The media were onto other things. You could develop whatever creative interests you had without having to deal with categories and definitions. It lasted about three years. There's just as much going on now, but it's not centrally located like it was then." A few skeptics have suggested that Dylan wrote his so-called protest songs in the 1960s because his finely attuned commercial antennae told him there was a market for them. He denies it. "I wrote them because that's what I was in the middle of. It swept me up. I felt 'Blowin' in the Wind.' When Joan [Baez] and I sing it [as they do on the TV special], it's like an old folk song to me. It never occurs to me that I'm the person who wrote that. "The bunch of us who came through that time probably have a better sense about today's music. A lot of people in the '70s don't know how all this music got here. They think Elton John appeared overnight. But the '50s and '60s were a high-energy period." And how did the Beatles fit into all this? Dylan wags his head earnestly. "America should put up statues to the Beatles. They helped give this country's pride back to it. They used all the music we'd been listening to-- everything from Little Richard to the Everly Brothers. A lot of barriers broke down, but we didn't see it at the time because it happened too fast." Dylan draws up at the curb, exits the car and walks to a 20-foot-high bluff over a near-vertical incline leading down to the beach. He scrambles down agilely and turns to catch cans of beer thrown after him. Settled in the sun, burnoose in place, peering out at the ocean, he resumes: "I consider myself in the same spirit with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. That music has meaning for me. And Joan Baez means more to me than 100 of these singers around today. She's more powerful. That's what we're looking for. That's what we respond to. She always had it and always will--power for the species, not just for a select group." What records does he play for his own amusement? "Personally, I

like sound-effects records," he says, laughing. "Sometimes late at night, I get a mint julep and just sit there and listen to sound effects. I'm surprised more of them aren't on the charts." He is still laughing. "If I had my own label, that's what I'd record." A teen-age girl approaches Dylan, Frisbee in hand, and asks if it belongs to him. "No," says Bob Dylan politely, and the girl nods and ambles off down the beach, obviously unaware tht she has addressed (in the view of many) the generation's greatest rock-and-roll singer-writer. "I pass on crowded streets without being recognized. I don't want to be one of those big stars who can't go nowhere. Change that to anywhere. My mother might read this." How is it, he is asked, that the Bob Dylan one encounters today, recumbent on this Malibu beach, seems so much more serene than the turbulent, often self-destructive, angry young man one recalls from the 1960s. (He's now the father of five, married to the former Sara Lowndes, living in the languor of Southern California rather than New York's bustle.) He squints toward the horizon. "Anger is often directed at oneself. It all depends on where you are in place and time. A person's body chemistry changes every seven years. No one on earth is the same now as he was seven years ago, or will be seven years from today. It doesn't take a whole lot of brains to know that if you don't grow you die. You have to burst out; you have to find the sunlight." Where is he, musically, these days? "I play rag rock. It's a special brand of music that I play. I'll be writing some new songs soon, and then, look out! The music will be up to a whole new level." Does he write every day, and does it come easily? "Are you kidding? Almost anything else is easy except writing songs. The hardest part is when the inspiration dies along the way. Then you spend all your time trying to recapture it. I don't write every day. I'd like to but I can't. You're talking to a total misfit. Gershwin, Bacharach--those people--they've got song-writing down. I don't really care if I write." Pause. "I can say that now, but as soon as the light changes, it'll be the thing I care about most. When I'm through performing, I'll still be writing, probably for other people." Any regrets? "The past doesn't exist. For me there's the next song, the next poem, the next performance." Any messages to the world? "I've been thinking about that. I'd like to extend my gratitude to my mother. I'd like to say hello to her if she's reading this." Ever see her? Pause. "Not as much as when I was a kid." He plucks his beer can from the sand. "I hope there's not a snake in my beer," he says, apropos of not very much. Then he reclines languorously and watches the sun descend slowly to the Pacific horizon.

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: BOB DYLAN NOV/DEC 1977 , BURBANK, CA

Interviewer : Ron Rosenbaum

Published in "Playboy" March 1978 81 minute partial tape available

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: BOB DYLAN

a candid conversation with the visionary whose songs changed the times

It was in March 1966 that PLAYBOY published the first full-length interview with Bob Dylan. In the intervening years, he has talked to journalists only rarely, and, shortly before completing his first feature film, he agreed to talk with us. We asked writer Ron Rosenbaum, who grew up listening to Dylan songs, to check in with the elusive artist. His report:

"Call it a simple twist of fate, to use a Dylan line, but perhaps psychic twist of fate is more accurate. Because there was something of a turning point in our ten day series of conversations when we exchanged confidences about psychics. "Until that point, things had not been proceeding easily. Dylan has seldom been forthcoming with any answers, particularly in interview situations and has long been notorious for questioning the questions rather than answering them, replying with put-ons and tall tales and surrounding his real feelings with mystery and circumlocution. We would go round in circles, sometimes fascinating metaphysical circles, and I'd got a sense of his intellect but little of his heart. He hadn't given anyone a major interview for many years, but after my initial excitement at being chosen to do this one, I began to wonder whether Dylan really wanted to do it. "It's probably unnecessary to explain why getting answers from Bob Dylan has come to mean so much to many people. One has only to recall how Dylan, born Robert Zimmerman in 1941 in Duluth, Minnesota, burst upon the early Sixties folk-music scene with an abrasive voice and an explosive intensity, how he created songs such as 'Blowin' in the Wind' and 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' that became anthems of the civil rights and antiwar movements. How he and his music raced through the Sixties at breakneck speed, leaving his folk followers behind and the politicians mystified with his electrifying, elliptical explorations of uncharted states of mind. How, in songs such as 'Mr. Tambourine Man,' 'Desolation Row,' 'Like a Rolling Stone' and 'Just like a Woman,' he created emotional road maps for an entire generation. How, in the midst of increasingly frenzied rock-'n'-roll touring, Dylan continued to surround the details of his personal life with mystery and wise-guy obfuscation, mystery that deepened ominously after his near-fatal

motorcycle accident in 1966. And how, after a long period of bucolic retreat devoted to fatherhood, family and country music, he suddenly returned to the stage with big nationwide tours in 1974 and, most recently, in 1976 with the all-star rock-'n'-roll ensemble known as The Rolling Thunder Revue. How his latest songs, particularly on the 'Blood on the Tracks' and 'Desire' albums, take us into new and often painful investigations of love and lust, and pain and loss, that suggest the emotional predicaments of the Seventies in a way few others can approach. "The anthologies that chronicle all of that are littered with the bodies of interviewees he's put on, put down or put off. I was wondering if I were on my way to becoming another statistic when we hit upon the psychic connection. "Late one afternoon, Dylan began telling me about Tamara Rand, an L.A. psychic reader he'd been seeing, because when the world falls on your head, he said, 'you need someone who can tell you how to crawl out, which way to take.' I presumed he was referring obliquely to the collapse of his 12-year marriage to Sara Dylan. (Since the child-custody battle was in progress as we talked, Dylan's lawyer refused to permit him to address that subject directly.) Dylan seemed concerned that I understand that Tamara was no con artist, that she had genuine psychic abilities. I assured him I could believe it because my sister, in addition to being a talented writer, has some remarkable psychic abilities and is in great demand in New York for her prescient readings. Dylan asked her name (it's Ruth) and when I told him, he looked impressed. 'I've heard of her,' he said. I think that made the difference, because after that exchange, Dylan became far more forthcoming with me. Some of the early difficulties of the interview might also be explained by the fact that Dylan was physically and mentally drained from an intense three-month sprint to finish editing and dubbing 'Renaldo & Clara,' the movie he'd been writing, directing and co-editing for a full two years. He looked pale, smoked a lot of cigarettes and seemed fidgety. The final step in the moviemaking process—the sound mix—was moving slowly, largely because of his own nervous perfectionism. "Most of our talks took place in a little shack of a dressing room outside dubbing stage five at the Burbank Studios. Frequently, we'd be interrupted as Dylan would have to run onto the dubbing stage and watch the hundredth run-through of one of the film's two dozen reels to see if his detailed instructions had been carried out. I particularly remember one occasion when I accompanied him onto the dubbing stage. Onscreen, Renaldo, played by Bob Dylan, and Clara, played by Sara Dylan (the movie was shot before the divorce—though not long before), are interrupted in the midst of connubial foolery by a knock at the door. In walks Joan Baez, dressed in white from head to toe, carrying a red rose. She says sine's come for Renaldo. When Dylan, as Renaldo, sees who it is, his jaw drops. At the dubbing

console, one of the sound men stopped the film at the jaw-drop frame and asked, 'You want me to get rid of that footstep noise in the background, Bob?' 'What footstep noise?' Dylan asked. 'When Joan comes in and we go to Renaldo, there's some kind of footstep noise in the background, maybe from outside the door.' 'Those aren't footsteps,' said Dylan. 'That's the beating of Renaldo's heart.' 'What makes you so sure?' the sound man asked teasingly. 'I know him pretty well,' Dylan said, 'I know him by heart.' 'You want it kept there, then?' 'I want it louder,' Dylan said. He turned to me. 'You ever read that thing by Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart"?' I was surprised at how willing Dylan was to explain the details of his film; he'd never done that with his songs. But he's put two years and more than a piece of his heart into this five-hour epic and it seems clear that he wants to be taken seriously as a film maker with serious artistic ambitions. "In the 'Proverbs of Hell,' William Blake (one of Dylan's favorite poets) wrote: 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.' Eleven years ago, Dylan's motorcycle skidded off that road and almost killed him. But unlike most Dionysian Sixties figures, Dylan survived. He may not have reached the palace of wisdom (and, indeed, the strange palace of marble and stone he has been building at Malibu seems, according to some reports, to be sliding into the sea). But despite his various sorrows, he does seem to be bursting with exhilaration and confidence that he can still create explosive art without having to die in the explosion."

PLAYBOY: Exactly 12 years ago, we published a long interview with you in this magazine, and there's a lot to catch up on. But we'd like at least to try to start at the beginning. Besides being a singer, a poet and now a film maker, you've also been called a visionary. Do you recall any visionary experiences while you were growing up?

DYLAN: I had some amazing projections when I was a kid, but not since then. And those visions have been strong enough to keep me going through today.

PLAYBOY: What were those visions like?

DYLAN: They were a feeling of wonder. I projected myself toward what I might personally, humanly do in terms of creating any kinds of reality. I was born in, grew up in a place so foreign that you had to be there to picture it.

PLAYBOY: Are you talking about Hibbing, Minnesota?

DYLAN: It was all in upper Minnesota.

PLAYBOY: What was the quality of those visionary experiences?

DYLAN: Well, in the winter, everything was still, nothing moved. Eight months of that. You can put it together. You can have some amazing hallucinogenic experiences doing nothing but looking out your window. There is also the summer, when it gets hot and sticky and the air is very metallic. There is a lot of Indian spirit. The earth there is unusual, filled with ore. So there is something happening that is hard to define. There is a magnetic attraction there. Maybe thousands and thousands of years ago, some planet bumped into the land there. There is a great spiritual quality throughout the Midwest. Very subtle, very strong, and that is where I grew up. New York was a dream.

PLAYBOY: Why did you leave Minnesota?

DYLAN: Well, there comes a time for all things to pass.

PLAYBOY: More specifically, why the dream of New York?

DYLAN: It was a dream of the cosmopolitan riches of the mind.

PLAYBOY: Did you find them there?

DYLAN: It was a great place for me to learn and to meet others who were on similar journeys.

PLAYBOY: People like Allen Ginsberg, for instance?

DYLAN: Not necessarily him. He was pretty established by the time I got there. But it was Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac who inspired me at first-and where I came from, there wasn't the sophisticated transportation you have now. To get to New York, you'd have to go by thumb. Anyway, those were the old days when John Denver used to play sideman. Many people came out of that period of time. Actors, dancers, politicians, a lot of people were involved with that period of time.

PLAYBOY: What period are you talking about?

DYLAN: Real early Sixties.

PLAYBOY: What made that time so special?

DYLAN: I think it was the last go-round for people to gravitate to New York. People had gone to New York since the 1800s, I think. For me, it was pretty fantastic. I mean, it was like, there was a cafe-what was it called?-I forgot the name, but it was Aaron

Burr's old livery stable. You know, just being in that area, that part of the world was enlightening.

PLAYBOY: Why do you say it was the last go-round?

DYLAN: I don't think it happened after that. I think it finished, New York died after that, late to middle Sixties.

PLAYBOY: What killed it?

DYLAN: Mass communication killed it. It turned into one big carnival side show. That is what I sensed and I got out of there when it was just starting to happen. The atmosphere changed from one of creativity and isolation to one where the attention would be turned more to the show. People were reading about themselves and believing it. I don't know when it happened. Sometime around Peter, Paul and Mary, when they got pretty big. It happened around the same time. For a long time, I was famous only in certain circles in New York, Philadelphia and Boston, and that was fine enough for me. I am an eyewitness to that time. I am one of the survivors of that period. You know as well as I do that a lot of people didn't make it. They didn't live to tell about it, anyway.

PLAYBOY: Why do you think they didn't survive?

DYLAN: People were still dealing with illusion and delusion at that time. The times really change and they don't change. There were different characters back then and there were things that were undeveloped that are fully developed now. But back then, there was space, space-well, there wasn't any pressure. There was all the time in the world to get it done. There wasn't any pressure, because no body knew about it. You know, I mean. music people were like a bunch of cotton pickers. They see you on the side of the road picking cotton, but nobody stops to give a shit. I mean, it wasn't that important. So Washington Square was a place where people you knew or met congregated every Sunday and it was like a world of music. You know the way New York is; I mean, there could be 20 different things happening in the same kitchen or in the same park; there could be 200 bands in one park in New York; there could be 15 jug bands, five bluegrass bands and an old crummy string band, 20 Irish confederate groups, a Southern mountain band, folk singers of all kinds and colors, singing John Henry work songs. There was bodies piled sky-high doing whatever they felt like doing. Bongo drums, conga drums, saxophone players. xylophone players, drummers of all nations and nationalities. Poets who would rant and rave from the statues. You know, those things don't happen anymore. But then that was what was happening. It was all street. Cafes would be open all

night. It was a European thing that never really took off. It has never really been a part of this country That is what New York was like when I got there.

PLAYBOY: And you think that mass communications, such as Time magazine's putting Joan Baez on the cover-

DYLAN: Mass communication killed it all. Oversimplification. I don't know whose idea it was to do that, but soon after, the people moved away.

PLAYBOY: Just to stay on the track, what first turned you on to folk singing? You actually started out in Minnesota playing the electric guitar with a rock group, didn't you?

DYLAN: Yeah. The first thing that turned me on to folk singing was Odetta. I heard a record of hers in a record store, back when you could listen to records right there in the store. That was in '58 or something like that. Right then and there, I went out and traded my electric guitar and amplifier for an acoustical guitar, a flat-top Gibson.

PLAYBOY: What was so special to you about that Odetta record?

DYLAN: Just something vital and personal. I learned all the songs on that record. It was her first and the songs were-Mule Skinner, Jack of Diamonds, Water Boy, Buked and Scorned.

PLAYBOY: When did you learn to play the guitar?

DYLAN: I saved the money I had made working on my daddy's truck and bought a Silvertone guitar from Sears Roebuck. I was 12. I just bought a book of chords and began to play.

PLAYBOY: What was the first song you wrote?

DYLAN: The first song I wrote was a song to Brigitte Bardot.

PLAYBOY: Do you remember how it went?

DYLAN: I don't recall too much of it. It had only one chord. Well, it is all in the heart. Anyway, from Odetta, I went to Harry Belafonte, the Kingston Trio, little by little uncovering more as I went along. Finally, I was doing nothing but Carter Family and Jesse Fuller songs. Then later I got to Woody Guthrie, which opened up a whole new world at the time. I was still only 19 or 20. I was pretty fanatical about what I wanted to do, so after learning about 200 of Woody's songs, I went to see him and I waited for the right

moment to visit him in a hospital in Morristown, New Jersey. I took a bus from New York, sat with him and sang his songs. I kept visiting him a lot and got on friendly terms with him. From that point on, it gets a little foggy.

PLAYBOY: Folk singing was considered pretty weird in those days, wasn't it?

DYLAN: It definitely was. Sing Out was the only magazine you could read about those people. They were special people and you kept your distance from them.

PLAYBOY: What do you mean?

DYLAN: Well, they were the type of people you just observed and learned from, but you would never approach them. I never would, anyway. I remember being too shy. But it took me a long time to realize the New York crowd wasn't that different from the singers I'd seen in my own home town. They were right there, on the backroad circuit, people like the Stanley Brothers, playing for a few nights. If I had known then what I do now, I probably would have taken off when I was 12 and followed Bill Monroe. 'Cause I could have gotten to the same place.

PLAYBOY: Would you have gotten there sooner?

DYLAN: Probably would have saved me a lot of time and hassles.

PLAYBOY: This comes under the category of setting the record straight: By the time you arrived in New York, you'd changed your name from Robert Zimmerman to Bob Dylan. Was it because of Dylan Thomas?

DYLAN: No. I haven't read that much of Dylan Thomas. It's a common thing to change your name. It isn't that incredible. Many people do it. People change their town, change their country. New appearance, new mannerisms. Some people have many names. I wouldn't pick a name unless I thought I was that person. Sometimes you are held back by your name. Sometimes there are advantages to having a certain name. Names are labels so we can refer to one another. But deep inside us we don't have a name. We have no name. I just chose that name and it stuck.

PLAYBOY: Do you know what Zimmerman means in German?

DYLAN: My forebears were Russian. I don't know how they got a German name coming from Russia. Maybe they got their name coming off the boat or something. To make a big deal over

somebody's name, you're liable to make a big deal about any little thing. But getting back to Dylan Thomas, it wasn't that I was inspired by reading some of his poetry and going "Aha!" and changing my name to Dylan. If I thought he was that great, I would have sung his poems, and could just as easily have changed my name to Thomas.

PLAYBOY: Bob Thomas? It would have been a mistake.

DYLAN: Well, that name changed me. I didn't sit around and think about it too much. That is who I felt I was.

PLAYBOY: Do you deny being the enfant terrible in those days-do you deny the craziness of it all that has been portrayed?

DYLAN: No, it's true. That's the way it was. But . . . can't stay in one place forever.

PLAYBOY: Did the motorcycle accident you had in 1966 have anything to do with cooling you off, getting you to relax?

DYLAN: Well, now you're jumping way ahead to another period of time.... What was I doing? I don't know. It came time. Was it when I had the motorcycle accident? Well, I was straining pretty hard and couldn't have gone on living that way much longer. The fact that I made it through what I did is pretty miraculous. But, you know, sometimes you get too close to something and you got to get away from it to be able to see it. And something like that happened to me at the time.

PLAYBOY: In a book you published during that period, *Tarantula*, you wrote an epitaph for yourself that begins: "Here lies Bob Dylan / murdered / from behind / by trembling flesh...."

DYLAN: Those were in my wild, unnatural moments. I'm glad those feelings passed.

PLAYBOY: What were those days like?

DYLAN: [Pause] I don't remember. [Long pause]

PLAYBOY: There was a report in the press recently that you turned the Beatles on to grass for, the first time. According to the story, you gave Ringo Starr a toke at J.F.K. Airport and it was the first time for any of them. True?

DYLAN: I'm surprised if Ringo said that. It don't sound like Ringo. I don't recall meeting him at J.F.K. Airport.

PLAYBOY: OK. Who turned you on?

DYLAN: Grass was everywhere in the clubs. It was always there in the jazz clubs and in the folk-music clubs. There was just grass and it was available to musicians in those days. And in coffeehouses way back in Minneapolis. That's where I first came into contact with it, I'm sure. I forget when or where, really.

PLAYBOY: Why did the musicians like grass so much?

DYLAN: Being a musician means—depending on how far you go—getting to the depths of where you are at. And most any musician would try anything to get to those depths, because playing music is an immediate thing—as opposed to putting paint on a canvas, which is a calculated thing. Your spirit flies when you are playing music. So, with music, you tend to look deeper and deeper inside yourself to find the music. That's why, I guess, grass was around those clubs. I know the whole scene has changed now; I mean, pot is almost a legal thing. But in the old days, it was just for a few people.

PLAYBOY: Did psychedelics have a similar effect on you?

DYLAN: No. Psychedelics never influenced me. I don't know, I think Timothy Leary had a lot to do with driving the last nails into the coffin of that New York scene we were talking about. When psychedelics happened, everything became irrelevant. Because that had nothing to do with making music or writing poems or trying to really find yourself in that day and age.

PLAYBOY: But people thought they were doing just that—finding themselves.

DYLAN: People were deluded into thinking they were something that they weren't: birds, airplanes, fire hydrants, whatever. People were walking around thinking they were stars.

PLAYBOY: As far as your music was concerned, was there a moment when you made a conscious decision to work with an electric band?

DYLAN: Well, it had to get there. It had to go that way for me. Because that's where I started and eventually it just got back to that. I couldn't go on being the lone folkie out there, you know, strumming *Blowin' in the Wind* for three hours every night. I hear my songs as part of the music, the musical background.

PLAYBOY: When you hear your songs in your mind, it's not just you strumming alone, you mean?

DYLAN: Well, no, it is to begin with. But then I always hear other instruments, how they should sound. The closest I ever got to the sound I hear in my mind was on individual bands in the Blonde on Blonde album. It's that thin, that wild mercury sound. It's metallic and bright gold, with whatever that conjures up. That's my particular sound. I haven't been able to succeed in getting it all the time. Mostly, I've been driving at a combination of guitar, harmonica and organ, but now I find myself going into territory that has more percussion in it and [pause] rhythms of the soul.

PLAYBOY: Was that wild mercury sound in I Want You?

DYLAN: Yeah, it was in I Want You. It was in a lot of that stuff. It was in the album before that, too.

PLAYBOY: Highway 61 Revisited?

DYLAN: Yeah. Also in Bringing It All Back Home. That's the sound I've always heard. Later on, the songs got more defined, but it didn't necessarily bring more power to them. The sound was whatever happened to be available at the time. I have to get back to the sound, to the sound that will bring it all through me.

PLAYBOY: Can't you just reassemble the same musicians?

DYLAN: Not really. People change, you know, they scatter in all directions. People's lives get complicated. They tend to have more distractions, so they can't focus on that fine, singular purpose.

PLAYBOY: You're searching for people?

DYLAN: No, not searching, the people are there. But I just haven't paid as much attention to it as I should have. I haven't felt comfortable in a studio since I worked with Tom Wilson. The next move for me is to have a permanent band. You know, usually I just record whatever's available at the time. That's my thing, you know, and it's-it's legitimate. I mean, I do it because I have to do it that way. I don't want to keep doing it, because I would like to get my life more in order. But until now, my recording sessions have tended to be last-minute affairs. I don't really use all the technical studio stuff. My songs are done live in the studio; they always have been and they always will be done that way. That's why they're alive. No matter what else you say about them, they are alive. You know, what Paul Simon does or Rod Stewart does or

Crosby, Stills and Nash do-a record is not that monumental for me to make. It's just a record of songs.

PLAYBOY: Getting back to your transition from folk to rock, the period when came out with Highway 61 must have been exciting.

DYLAN: Those were exciting times. We were doing it before anybody knew we would-or could. We didn't know what it was going to turn out to be. Nobody thought of it as folk-rock at the time. There were some people involved in it like The Byrds, and I remember Sonny and Cher and the Turtles and the early Rascals. It began coming out on the radio. I mean, I had a couple of hits in a row. That was the most I ever had in a row- two. The top ten was filled with that kind of sound-the Beatles, too-and it was exciting, those days were exciting. It was the sound of the streets. It still is. I symbolically hear that sound wherever I am.

PLAYBOY: You hear the sound of the street?

DYLAN: That ethereal twilight light, you know. It's the sound of the street with the sunrays, the sun shining down at a particular time, on a particular type of building. A particular type of people walking on a particular type of street. It's an outdoor sound that drifts even into open windows that you can hear. The sound of bells and distant railroad trains and arguments in apartments and the clinking of silverware and knives and forks and beating with leather straps. It's all-it's all there. Just lack of a jackhammer, you know.

PLAYBOY: You mean if a jackhammer were-

DYLAN: Yeah, no jackhammer sounds, no airplane sounds. All pretty natural sounds. It's water, you know water trickling down a brook. It's light flowing through the

PLAYBOY: Late-afternoon light?

DYLAN: No, usually it's the crack of dawn. Music filters out to me in the crack of dawn.

PLAYBOY: The "jingle jangle morning"?

DYLAN: Right.

PLAYBOY: After being up all night?

DYLAN: Sometimes. You get a little spacy when you've been up all night, so you don't really have the power to form it. But that's

the sound I'm trying to get across. I'm not just up there re-creating old blues tunes or trying to invent some surrealistic rhapsody.

PLAYBOY: It's the sound that you want.

DYLAN: Yeah, it's the sound and the words. Words don't interfere with it. They- they-punctuate it. You know, they give it purpose. [Pause] And all the ideas for my songs, all the influences, all come out of that. All the influences, all the feelings, all the ideas come from that. I'm not doing it to see how good I can sound, or how perfect the melody can be, or how intricate the details can be woven or how perfectly written something can be. I don't care about those things.

PLAYBOY: The sound is that compelling to you?

DYLAN: Mmm-hnh

PLAYBOY: When did you first hear it, or feel it?

DYLAN: I guess it started way back when I was growing up.

PLAYBOY: Not in New York?

DYLAN: Well, I took it to New York. I wasn't born in New York. I was given some direction there, but I took it, too. I don't think I could ever have done it in New York. I would have been too beaten down.

PLAYBOY: It was formed by the sounds back in the ore country of Minnesota?

DYLAN: Or the lack of sound. In the city, there is nowhere you can go where you don't hear sound. You are never alone. I don't think I could have done it there. Just the struggle of growing up would be immense and would really distort things if you wanted to be an artist. Well . . . maybe not. A lot of really creative people come out of New York. But I don't know anyone like myself. I meet a lot of people from New York that I get along with fine, and share the same ideas, but I got something different in my soul. Like a spirit. It's like being from the Smoky Mountains or the backwoods of Mississippi. It is going to make you a certain type of person if you stay 20 years in a place.

PLAYBOY: With your love of the country, what made you leave Woodstock in 1969 and go back to the Village?

DYLAN: It became stale and disillusioning. It got too crowded, with the wrong people throwing orders. And the old people were afraid to come out on the street. The rainbow faded.

PLAYBOY: But the Village, New York City, wasn't the answer, either.

DYLAN: The stimulation had vanished Everybody was in a pretty down mood. It was over.

PLAYBOY: Do you think that old scene you've talked about might be creeping back into New York?

DYLAN: Well, I was there last summer. I didn't sense any of it. There are a lot of rock-'n'-roll clubs and jazz clubs and Puerto Rican poetry clubs, but as far as learning something new, learning to teach.... New York is full of teachers, that is obvious, but it is pretty depressing now. To make it on the street, you just about have to beg.

PLAYBOY: So now you're in California Is there any kind of scene that you can be part of?

DYLAN: I'm only working out here most, or all, of the time, so I don't know what this town is really like. I like San Francisco. I find it full of tragedy and comedy. But if I want to go to a city in this country, I will still go to New York. There are cities all over the world to go to. I don't know, maybe I am just an old dog, so maybe I feel like I've been around so long I am looking for something new to do and it ain't there. I was looking for some space to create what I want to do. I am only interested in that these days. I don't care so much about hanging out.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel older than when you sang, "I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now"?

DYLAN: No, I don't feel old. I don't feel old at all. But I feel like there are certain things that don't attract me anymore that I used to succumb to very easily.

PLAYBOY: Such as?

DYLAN: Just the everyday vices.

PLAYBOY: Do you think that you have managed to resist having to grow up or have you found a way of doing it that is different from conventional growing up?

DYLAN: I don't really think in terms of growing up or not growing up. I think in terms of being able to fulfill yourself. Don't forget, you see, I've been doing what I've been doing since I was very small, so I have never known anything else. I have never had to quit my job to do this. This is all that I have ever done in my life. So I don't think in terms of economics or status or what people think of me one way or the other.

PLAYBOY: Would you say you still have a rebellious, or punk, quality toward the rest of the world?

DYLAN: Punk quality?

PLAYBOY: Well, you're still wearing dark sunglasses, right?

DYLAN: Yeah.

PLAYBOY: Is that so people won't see your eyes?

DYLAN: Actually, it's just habit-forming after a while, I still do wear dark sunglasses. There is no profound reason for it, I guess. Some kind of insecurity, I don't know: I like dark sunglasses. Have I had these on through every interview session?

PLAYBOY: Yes. We haven't seen your eyes yet.

DYLAN: Well, Monday for sure. [The day that PLAYBOY photos were to be taken for the opening page]

PLAYBOY: Aside from the dark glasses, is it something in the punk quality of Elvis or James Dean that makes you dress a certain way or act a certain way?

DYLAN: No. It's from the early Sixties. Elvis was there. He was there when there wasn't anybody there. He was Elvis and everybody knows about what Elvis did. He did it to me just like he did it to everybody else. Elvis was in that certain age group and I followed him right from Blue Moon in Kentucky. And there were others; I admired Buddy Holly a lot. But Elvis was never really a punk. And neither was James Dean a punk.

PLAYBOY: What quality did Dean represent?

DYLAN: He let his heart do the talking. That was his one badge. He was effective for people of that age, but as you grow older, you have different experiences and you tend to identify with artists who had different meanings for you.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk some more about your influences. What musicians do you listen to today.

DYLAN: I still listen to the same old black and-blue blues. Tommy McClennan, Lightnin' Hopkins, the Carter Family, the early Carlyles. I listen to Big Maceo, Robert Johnson. Once in a while, I listen to Woody Guthrie again. Among the more recent people, Fred McDowell, Gary Stewart. I like Memphis Minnie a whole lot. Blind Willie McTell. I like bluegrass music. I listen to foreign music, too. I like Middle Eastern music a whole lot.

PLAYBOY: Such as?

DYLAN: Om Kalthoum.

PLAYBOY: Who is that?

DYLAN: She was a great Egyptian singer. I first heard of her when I was in Jerusalem.

PLAYBOY: She was an Egyptian singer who was popular in Jerusalem?

DYLAN: I think she's popular all over the Middle East. In Israel, too. She does mostly love and prayer-type songs, with violin and-drum accompaniment. Her father chanted those prayers and I guess she was so good when she tried singing behind his back that he allowed her to sing professionally, and she's dead now but not forgotten. She's great. She really is. Really great.

PLAYBOY: Any popular stuff?

DYLAN: Well, Nana Maskouri.

PLAYBOY: How about the Beatles?

DYLAN: I've always liked the way George Harrison plays guitar-restrained and good. As for Lennon, well, I was encouraged by his book [In His Own Write]. Or the publishers were encouraged, because they asked me to write a book and that's how Tarantula came about. John has taken poetics pretty far in popular music. A lot of his work is overlooked, but if you examine it, you'll find key expressions that have never been said before to push across his point of view. Things that are symbolic of some inner reality and probably will never be said again.

PLAYBOY: Do you listen to your own stuff?

DYLAN: Not so much.

PLAYBOY: What about your literary influences? You've mentioned Kerouac and Ginsberg. Whom do you read now?

DYLAN: Rilke. Chekhov. Chekhov is my favorite writer. I like Henry Miller. I think he's the greatest American writer.

PLAYBOY: Did you meet Miller?

DYLAN: Yeah, I met him. Years ago. Played ping-pony with him.

PLAYBOY: Did you read *Catcher in the Rye* as a kid?

DYLAN: I must have, you know. Yeah, I think so.

PLAYBOY: Did you identify with Holden Caulfield?

DYLAN: Uh,. what was his story?

PLAYBOY: He was a lonely kid in prep school who ran away and decided that everyone else was phony and that he was sensitive.

DYLAN: I must have identified with him.

PLAYBOY: We've been talking about the arts, and as we've been speaking, you've been in the midst of editing your first film, *Renaldo & Clara*. What do you feel you can do in films that you can't do in songs?

DYLAN: I can take songs up to a higher power. The movie to me is more a painting than music. It is a painting. It's a painting coming alive off a wall. That's why we're making it. Painters can contain their artistic turmoil; in another age, moviemakers would most likely be painters

PLAYBOY: Although *Renaldo & Clara* is the first movie you've produced, directed and acted in, there was a documentary made in 1966 that marked your first appearance in a film-*Don't Look Back*. What did you think of it.

DYLAN: *Don't Look Back* was . . . somebody else's movie It was a deal worked out with a film company, but I didn't really play any part in it. When I saw it in a moviehouse, I was shocked at what had been done. I didn't find out until later that the camera had been on me all the time. That movie was done by a mar. who took it all out of context It was documented from his personal point of view. The movie was dishonest, it was a propaganda movie. I

don't think it was accurate at all in terms of showing my formative years. It showed only one side. He made it seem like I wasn't doing anything but living in hotel rooms, playing the typewriter and holding press conferences for journalists. All that is true, you know. Throwing some bottles, there's something about it in the movie. Joan Baez is in it. But it's one-sided. Let's not lean on it too hard. It just wasn't representative of what was happening in the Sixties.

PLAYBOY: Don't you feel it captured the frenzy of your tour, even though it focused on you in terms of stardom?

DYLAN: I wasn't really a star in those days, any more than I'm a star these days. I was very obviously confused then as to what my purpose was. It was pretty early, you know. The Times They Are A-Changin' was on the English charts then, so it had to be pretty early.

PLAYBOY: And you didn't really know what you were doing then?

DYLAN: Well, look what I did after that. Look what I did after that. I didn't really start to develop until after that. I mean, I did, but I didn't. Don't Look Back was a little too premature. I should have been left alone at that stage.

PLAYBOY: You were involved in another movie around that period-1966-that was never released, called Eat the Document. How did that happen?

DYLAN: That started as a television special. I wasn't the maker of that film, either. I was the-I was the victim. They had already shot film, but at that time, of course, I did-I had a-if I hadn't gotten into that motorcycle accident, they would have broadcast it, and that would have been that. But I was sort of-I was taken out of it, you know, and-I think it was the fall of that year. I had a little more time to, you know, concentrate on what was happening to me and what had happened. Anyway, what had happened was that they had made another Don't Look Back, only this time it was for television. I had nothing better to do than to see the film. All of it, including unused footage. And it was obvious from looking at the film that it was garbage. It was miles and miles of garbage. That was my introduction to film My film concept was all formed in those early days when I was looking at that footage.

PLAYBOY: From looking at those miles of garbage, you got your concept of film?

DYLAN: Yeah, it was mostly rejected footage, which I found beauty in. Which probably tells you more-that I see beauty where other people don't.

PLAYBOY: That reminds us of a poem you wrote for the jacket of an early Joan Baez album, in which you claimed that you always thought something had to be ugly before you found it beautiful. And at some point in the poem, you described listening to Joan sing and suddenly deciding that beauty didn't have to start out by being ugly

DYLAN: I was very hung up on Joan at the time [Pause] I think I was just trying to tell myself I wasn't hung up on her.

PLAYBOY: OK. Would you talk some more about the film concept you got from the rejected footage?

DYLAN: Well, up until that time, they had been concerned with the linear story line. It was on one plane and in one dimension only. And the more I looked at the film, the more I realized that you could get more onto film than just one train of thought My mind works that way, anyway. We tend to work on different levels. So I was seeing a lot of those levels in the footage. But technically, I didn't know how to do what my mind was telling me could be done.

PLAYBOY: What did you feel could be done?

DYLAN: Well, well, now, film is a series of actions and reactions, you know. And it's trickery. You're playing with illusion. What seems to be a simple affair is actually quite contrived. And the stronger your point of view is, the stronger your film will be.

PLAYBOY: Would you elaborate?

DYLAN: You're trying to get a message through. So there are many ways to deliver that message. Let's say you have a message: "White is white." Bergman would say, "White is white" in the space of an hour-or what seems to be an hour. Bunuel might say, "White is black, and black is white, but white is really white." And it's all really the same message.

PLAYBOY: And how would Dylan say it?

DYLAN: Dylan would probably not even say it. [Laughs] He would-he'd assume you'd know that. [Laughs]

PLAYBOY: You wriggled out of that one.

DYLAN: I'd say people will always believe in something if they feel it to be true. Just knowing it's true is not enough. If you feel in your gut that it's true, well, then, you can be pretty much assured that it's true.

PLAYBOY: So that a film made by someone who feels in his guts that white is white will give the feeling to the audience that white is white without having to say it.

DYLAN: Yes. Exactly.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about the message of Renaldo & Clara. It appears to us to be a personal yet fictional film in which you, Joan Baez and your former wife, Sara, play leading roles. You play Renaldo, Baez plays a "woman in white" and Sara plays Clara. There is also a character in the film called Bob Dylan played by someone else. It is composed of footage from your Rolling Thunder Revue tour and fictional scenes performed by all of you as actors. Would you tell us basically what the movie's about?

DYLAN: It's about the essence of man being alienated from himself and how, in order to free himself, to be reborn, he has to go outside himself. You can almost say that he dies in order to look at time and by strength of will can return to the same body.

PLAYBOY: He can return by strength of will to the same body . . . and to Clara?

DYLAN: Clara represents to Renaldo everything in the material world he's ever wanted. Renaldo's needs are few. He doesn't know it, though, at that particular time.

PLAYBOY: What are his needs?

DYLAN: A good guitar and a dark street.

PLAYBOY: The guitar because he loves music, but why the dark street?

DYLAN: Mostly because he needs to hide.

PLAYBOY: From whom?

DYLAN: From the demon within. [Pause] But what we all know is that you can't hide on a dark street from the demon within. And there's our movie.

PLAYBOY: Renaldo finds that out in the film?

DYLAN: He tries to escape from the demon within, but he discovers that the demon is, in fact, a mirrored reflection of Renaldo himself.

PLAYBOY: OK. Given the personalities involved, how do you define the relationship between you, your personal life, and the film?

DYLAN: No different from Hitchcock making a movie. I am the overseer.

PLAYBOY: Overseeing various versions of yourself?

DYLAN: Well, certain truths I know. Not necessarily myself but a certain accumulation of experience that has become real to me and a knowledge that I acquired on the road.

PLAYBOY: And what are those truths?

DYLAN: One is that if you try to be anyone but yourself, you will fail; if you are not true to your own heart, you will fail. Then again, there's no success like failure

PLAYBOY: And failure's no success at all.

DYLAN: Oh, well, we're not looking to succeed. Just by our being and acting alive, we succeed. You fail only when you let death creep in and take over a part of your life that should be alive.

PLAYBOY: How does death creep in?

DYLAN: Death don't come knocking at the door. It's there in the morning when you wake up.

PLAYBOY: How is it there?

DYLAN: Did you ever clip your fingernails, cut your hair? Then you experience death.

PLAYBOY: Look, in the film, Joan Baez turns to you at one point and says, "You never give any straight answers." Do you?

DYLAN: She is confronting Renaldo.

PLAYBOY: Evasiveness isn't only in the mind; it can also come out - in an interview.

DYLAN: There are no simple answers to these questions....

PLAYBOY: Aren't you teasing the audience when you have scenes played by Baez and Sara, real people in your life, and then expect the viewers to set aside their preconceptions as to their relationship to you?

DYLAN: No, no. They shouldn't even think they know anyone in this film. It's all in the context of Renaldo and Clara and there's no reason to get hung up on who's who in the movie.

PLAYBOY: What about scenes such as the one in which Baez asks you, "What if we had gotten married back then?"

DYLAN: Seems pretty real, don't it?

PLAYBOY: Yes.

DYLAN: Seems pretty real. Just like in a Bergman movie, those things seem real. There's a lot of spontaneity that goes on. Usually, the people in his films know each other, so they can interrelate. There's life and breath in every frame because everyone knew each other.

PLAYBOY: All right, another question: In the movie, Ronnie Hawkins, a 300-pound Canadian rock singer, goes by the name of Bob Dylan. So is there a real Bob Dylan?

DYLAN: In the movie?

PLAYBOY: Yes.

DYLAN: In the movie, no. He doesn't even appear in the movie. His voice is there, his songs are used, but Bob's not in the movie. It would be silly. Did you ever see a Picasso painting with Picasso in the picture? You only see his work. Now, I'm not interested in putting a picture of myself on the screen, because that's not going to do anybody any good, including me.

PLAYBOY: Then why use the name Bob Dylan at all in the movie?

DYLAN: In order to legitimize this film. We confronted it head on: The persona of Bob Dylan is in the movie so we could get rid of it. There should no longer be any mystery as to who or what he is—he's there, speaking in all kinds of tongues, and there's even someone else claiming to be him, so he's covered. This movie is obvious, you know. Nobody's hiding anything. It's all right there. The rabbits are falling out of the hat before the movie begins.

PLAYBOY: Do you really feel it's an accessible movie?

DYLAN: Oh, perfectly. Very open movie.

PLAYBOY: Even though Mr. Bob Dylan and Mrs. Bob Dylan are played by different people....

DYLAN: Oh, yeah.

PLAYBOY: And you don't know for sure which one he is?

DYLAN: Sure. We could make a movie and you could be Bob Dylan. It wouldn't matter.

PLAYBOY: But if there are two Bob Dylans in the film and Renaldo is always changing....

DYLAN: Well, it could be worse. It could be three or four. Basically, it's a simple movie.

PLAYBOY: How did you decide to make it?

DYLAN: As I said, I had the idea for doing my own film back in '66. And I buried it until '76. My lawyer used to tell me there was a future in movies. So I said, "What kind of future?" He said, "Well, if you can come up with a script, an outline and get money from a big distributor." But I knew I couldn't work that way. I can't betray my vision on a little piece of paper in hopes of getting some money from somebody. In the final analysis, it turned out that I had to make the movie all by myself, with people who would work with me, who trusted me. I went on the road in '76 to make the money for this movie. My last two tours were to raise the money for it.

PLAYBOY: How much of your money are you risking?

DYLAN: I'd rather not say. It is quite a bit, but I didn't go into the bank. The budget was like \$600,000, but it went over that.

PLAYBOY: Did you get pleasure out of the project?

DYLAN: I feel it's a story that means a great deal to me, and I got to do what I always wanted to do-make a movie. When something like that happens, it's like stopping time, and you can make people live into that moment. Not many things can do that in your daily life. You can be distracted by many things. But the main point is to make it meaningful to someone. Take Shane, for example. That moved me. On the Waterfront moved me. So when I go to see a film, I expect to be moved. I don't want to go see a movie just to kill time, or to have it just show me something I'm not aware of. I want to be moved, because that's what art is supposed to do,

according to all the great theologians. Art is supposed to take you out of your chair. It's supposed to move you from one space to another. Renaldo & Clara is not meant to put a strain on you. It's a movie to be enjoyed as a movie. I know nothing about film, I'm not a film maker. On the other hand, I do consider myself a film maker because I made this film: So I don't know.... If it doesn't move you, then it's a grand, vie was made in the spirit of "All right, if all you people out there want to talk about Dylan breaking up with his wife, about his having an affair with Joan Baez, I'll just put those people into my film and rub people's noses in the gossip, because only I know the truth?"

DYLAN: It's not entirely true, because that's not what the movie is about. I'm not sure how much of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez concern anybody. To me, it isn't important. It's old news to me, so I don't think it's of much interest to anybody. If it is, fine. But I don't think it's a relevant issue. The movie doesn't deal with anything current. This is two years ago. I'm smart enough to know I shouldn't deal with any current subject on an emotional level, because usually it won't last. You need experience to write, or to sing or to act. You don't just wake up and say you're going to do it. This movie is taking experience and turning it into something else. It's not a gossipy movie.

PLAYBOY: We began this discussion of your movie by comparing film makers to painters. Were you as interested in painting : as in, say, rock music when you were growing up?

DYLAN: Yeah, I've always painted. I've always held on to that one way or another.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel you use colors in the same way you use notes or chords?

DYLAN: Oh, yeah. There's much information you could get on the meaning of colors. Every color has a certain mood and feeling. For instance, red is a very vital e color. There're a lot of reds in this movie, e a lot-of blues. A lot of cobalt blue.

PLAYBOY: Why cobalt blue?

DYLAN: It's the color of dissension.

PLAYBOY: Did you study painting?

DYLAN: A lot of the ideas I have were influenced by an old man who had definite ideas on life and the universe and nature-all that matters.

PLAYBOY: Who was he?

DYLAN: Just an old man. His name wouldn't mean anything to you. He came to this country from Russia in the Twenties, started out as a boxer and ended up painting portraits of women.

PLAYBOY: You don't want to mention his name, just to give him a plug?

DYLAN: His first name was Norman. Every time I mention somebody's name, it's like they get a tremendous amount of distraction and irrelevancy in their lives. For instance, there's this lady in L.A. I respect a lot who reads palms. Her name's Tamara Rand. She's for real, she's not a gypsy fortuneteller. But she's accurate! She'll take a look at your hand and tell you things you feel but don't really understand about where you're heading, what the future looks like. She's a surprisingly hopeful person.

PLAYBOY: Are you sure you want to know if there's bad news in your future?

DYLAN: Well, sometimes when the world falls on your head, you know there are ways to get out, but you want to know which way. Usually, there's someone who can tell you how to crawl out, which way to take.

PLAYBOY: Getting back to colors and chords, are there particular musical keys that have personalities or moods the way colors do for you?

DYLAN: Yeah. B major and B-flat major.

PLAYBOY: How would you describe them?

DYLAN: (Pause) Each one is hard to define. Assume the characteristic that is true of both of them and you'll find you're not sure whether you're speaking to them or to their echo.

PLAYBOY: What does a major key generally conjure up for you?

DYLAN: I think any major key deals with romance.

PLAYBOY: And the minor keys?

DYLAN: The supernatural.

PLAYBOY: What about other specific keys?

DYLAN: I find C major to be the key of strength, but also the key of regret. E major is the key of confidence. A-flat major is the key of renunciation.

PLAYBOY: Since we're back on the subject of music, what new songs have you planned?

DYLAN: I have new songs now that are unlike anything I've ever written.

PLAYBOY: Really?

DYLAN: Yes.

PLAYBOY: What are they like?

DYLAN: Well, you'll see. I mean, unlike anything I've ever done. You couldn't even say that Blood on the Tracks or Desire have led up to this stuff. I mean, it's that far gone, it's that far out there. I'd rather not talk more about them until they're out.

PLAYBOY: When the character Bob Dylan in your movie speaks the words "Rock 'n' roll is the answer," what does he mean?

DYLAN: He's speaking of the sound and the rhythm. The drums and the rhythm are the answer. Get into the rhythm of it and you will lose yourself; you will forget about the brutality of it all. Then you will lose your identity. That's what he's saying..

PLAYBOY: Does that happen to you, to the real Bob Dylan?

DYLAN: Well, that's easy. When you're playing music and it's going well, you do lose your identity, you become totally subservient to the music you're doing in your very being.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel possessed?

DYLAN: It's dangerous, because its effect is that you believe that you can transcend and cope with anything. That it is the real life, that you've struck at the heart of life itself and you are on top of your dream. And there's no down. But later on, backstage, you have a different point of view.

PLAYBOY: When you're onstage, do you feel the illusion that death can't get you?

DYLAN: Death can't get you at all. Death's not here to get anybody. It's the appearance of the Devil, and the Devil is a coward, so knowledge will overcome that.

PLAYBOY: What do you mean?

DYLAN: The Devil is everything false, the Devil will go as deep as you let the Devil go. You can leave yourself open to that. If you understand what that whole scene is about, you can easily step aside. But if you want the confrontation to begin with, well, there's plenty of it. But then again, if you believe you have a purpose and a mission, and not much time to carry it out, you don't bother about those things.

PLAYBOY: Do you think you have a purpose and a mission?

DYLAN: Obviously.

PLAYBOY: What is it?

DYLAN: Henry Miller said it: The role of an artist is to inoculate the world with disillusionment.

PLAYBOY: To create rock music, you used to have to be against the system, a desperado. Is settling down an enemy of rock?

DYLAN: No. You can be a priest and be in rock 'n' roll. Being a rock-'n'-roll singer is no different from being a house painter. You climb up as high as you want to. You're asking me, is rock, is the lifestyle of rock 'n' roll at odds with the lifestyle of society in general?

PLAYBOY: Yes. Do you need to be in some way outside society, or in some way an outlaw, some way a

DYLAN: No. Rock 'n' roll forms its own society. It's a world of its own. The same way the sports world is.

PLAYBOY: But didn't you feel that it was valuable to bum around and all that sort of thing?

DYLAN: Yes. But not necessarily, because you can bum around and wind up being a lawyer, you know. There isn't anything definite. Or any blueprint to it.

PLAYBOY: So future rock stars could just as easily go to law school?

DYLAN: For some people, it might be fine. But, getting back to that again, you have to have belief. You must have a purpose. You must believe that you-can disappear through walls. Without that belief, you're not going to become a very good rock singer, or pop singer, or folk-rock singer, or you're not going to become a very good lawyer. Or a doctor. You must know why you're doing what you're doing.

PLAYBOY: Why are you doing what you're doing?

DYLAN: [Pause] Because I don't know anything else to do. I'm good at it.

PLAYBOY: How would you describe "it"?

DYLAN: I'm an artist. I try to create art.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about your songs when you perform them years later? Do you feel your art has endured?

DYLAN: How many singers feel the same way ten years later that they felt when they wrote tile song? Wait till it gets to be 20 years, you know? Now, there's a certain amount of act that you can put on, you know, you can get through on it, but there's got to be something to it that is real-not just for the moment. And a lot of my songs don't work. I wrote a lot of them just by gut-because my gut told me to write them-and they usually don't work so good as the years go on. A lot of them do work. With those, there's some truth about every one of them. And I don't think I'd be singing if I weren't writing, you know. I would have no reason or purpose to be out there singing. I mean, I don't consider myself . . . the life of the party. [Laughs]

PLAYBOY: You've given new life to some songs in recent performances, such as I Pity the Poor Immigrant in the Rolling Thunder tour.

DYLAN: Oh, yes. I've given new life to a lot of them. Because I believe in them, basically. You know, I believe in them. So I do give them new life. And that can always be done. I rewrote Lay, Lady, Lay, too. No one ever mentioned that.

PLAYBOY: You changed it to a much raunchier, less pretty kind of song.

DYLAN: Exactly. A lot of words to that song have changed. I recorded it originally surrounded by a bunch of other songs on the Nashville Skyline album. That was the tone of the session. Once

everything was set, that was the way it came out. And it was fine for that time, but I always had a feeling there was more to the song than that.

PLAYBOY: Is it true that 'Lay, Lady, Lay,' was originally commissioned for *Midnight Cowboy*?

DYLAN: That's right. They wound up using Freddy Neil's tune.

PLAYBOY: How did it feel doing *Blowin' in the Wind* after all those years during your last couple of tours?

DYLAN: I think I'll always be able to do that. There are certain songs that I will always be able to do. They will always have just as much meaning, if not more, as time goes on.

PLAYBOY: What about *Like a Rolling Stone*?

DYLAN: That was a great tune, yeah. It's the dynamics in the rhythm that make up *Like a Rolling Stone* and all of the lyrics. I tend to base all my songs on the old songs, like the old folk songs, the old blues tunes; they are always good. They always make sense.

PLAYBOY: Would you talk a little about how specific songs come to you?

DYLAN: They come to me when I am most isolated in space and time. I reject a lot of inspiring lines.

PLAYBOY: They're too good?

DYLAN: I reject a lot. I kind of know myself well enough to know that the line might be good and it is the first line that gives you inspiration and then it's just like riding a bull. That is the rest of it. Either you just stick with it or you don't. And if you believe that what you are doing is important, then you will stick with it no matter what.

PLAYBOY: There are lines that are like riding wild bulls?

DYLAN: There are lines like that. A lot of lines that would be better off just staying on a printed page and finishing up as poems. I forget a lot of the lines. During the day, a lot of lines will come to me that I will just say are pretty strange and I don't have anything better to do. I try not to pay too much attention to those wild, obscure lines.

PLAYBOY: You say you get a single line and then you ride it. Does the melody follow after you write out the whole song?

DYLAN: I usually know the melody before the song.

PLAYBOY: And it is there, waiting for that first line?

DYLAN: Yeah.

PLAYBOY: Do you hear it easily?

DYLAN: The melody? Sometimes, and sometimes I have to find it.

PLAYBOY: Do you work regularly? Do you get up every morning and practice?

DYLAN: A certain part of every day I have to play.

PLAYBOY: Has your playing become more complex?

DYLAN: No. Musically not. I can hear more and my melodies now are more rhythmic than they ever have been, but, really, I am still with those same three chords. But, I mean, I'm not Segovia or Montoya. I don't practice 12 hours a day.

PLAYBOY: Do you practice using your voice, too?

DYLAN: Usually, yeah, when I'm rehearsing, especially, or when I'm writing a song, I'll be singing it.

PLAYBOY: Someone said that when you gave up cigarettes, your voice changed. Now we see you're smoking again. Is your voice getting huskier again?

DYLAN: No, you know, you can do anything with your voice if you put your mind to it. I mean, you can become a ventriloquist or you can become an imitator of other people's voices. I'm usually just stuck with my own voice. I can do a few other people's voices.

PLAYBOY: Whose voices can you imitate?

DYLAN: Richard Widmark. Sydney Greenstreet. Peter Lorre. I like those voices. They really had distinctive voices in the early talkie films. Nowadays, you go to a movie and you can't tell one voice from the other. Jane Fonda sounds like Tatum O'Neal.

PLAYBOY: Has your attitude toward women changed much in your songs?

DYLAN: Yeah; in the early period, I was writing more about objection, obsession or rejection. Superimposing my own reality on that which seemed to have no reality of its own.

PLAYBOY: How did those opinions change?

DYLAN: From neglect.

PLAYBOY: From neglect?

DYLAN: As you grow, things don't reach you as much as when you're still forming opinions.

PLAYBOY: You mean you get hurt less easily?

DYLAN: You get hurt over other matters than when you were 17. The energy of hurt isn't enough to create art.

PLAYBOY: So if the women in your songs have become more real, if there are fewer goddesses -

DYLAN: The goddess isn't real. A pretty woman as a goddess is just up there on a pedestal. The flower is what we are really concerned about here. The opening and the closing, the growth, the bafflement. You don't lust after flowers.

PLAYBOY: Your regard for women, then, has changed?

DYLAN: People are people to me. I don't single out women as anything to get hung up about.

PLAYBOY: But in the past?

DYLAN: In the past, I was guilty of that shameless crime.

PLAYBOY: You're claiming to be completely rehabilitated?

DYLAN: In that area, I don't have any serious problems.

PLAYBOY: There's a line in your film in which someone says to Sara, "I need you because I need your magic to protect me."

DYLAN: Well, the real magic of women is that throughout the ages, they've had to do all the work and yet they can have a sense of humor.

PLAYBOY: That's throughout the ages. What about women now?

DYLAN: Well, here's the new woman, right? Nowadays, you have the concept of a new woman, but the new woman is nothing without a man.

PLAYBOY: What would the new woman say to that?

DYLAN: I don't know what the new woman would say The new woman is the impulsive woman....

PLAYBOY: There's another line in your movie about "the ultimate woman." What is the ultimate woman?

DYLAN: A woman without prejudice.

PLAYBOY: Are there many?

DYLAN: There are as many as you can see. As many as can touch you.

PLAYBOY: So you've run into a lot of ultimate women?

DYLAN: Me, personally? I don't run into that many people. I'm working most of the time. I really don't have time for all that kind of intrigue.

PLAYBOY: Camus said that chastity is an essential condition for creativity. Do you agree?

DYLAN: He was speaking there of the disinvolvement with pretense.

PLAYBOY: Wasn't he speaking of sexual chastity?

DYLAN: You mean he was saying you have to stay celibate to create?

PLAYBOY: That's one interpretation.

DYLAN: Well, he might have been on to something there. It could have worked for him.

PLAYBOY: When you think about rock and the rhythm of the heartbeat is it tied into love in some way?

DYLAN: The heartbeat. Have you ever lain with somebody when your hearts were beating in the same rhythm? That's true love. A man and a woman who lie down with their hearts beating together are truly lucky. Then you've truly been in love, m' boy. Yeah, that's

true love. You might see that person once a month, once a year, maybe once a lifetime, but you have the guarantee your lives are going to be in rhythm. That's all you need.

PLAYBOY: Considering that some of your recent songs have been about love and romance, what do you feel about the tendency some people used to have of dividing your work into periods? Did you ever feel it was fair to divide your work, for example, into a political period and a nonpolitical period?

DYLAN: Those people disregarded the ultimate fact that I am a songwriter. I can't help what other people do with my songs, what they make of them.

PLAYBOY: But you were more involved politically at one time. You were supposed to have written Chimes of Freedom in the back seat of a car while you were visiting some SNCC people in the South.

DYLAN: That is all we did in those days. Writing in the back seats of cars and writing songs on street corners or on porch swings. Seeking out the explosive areas of life.

PLAYBOY: One of which was politics?

DYLAN: Politics was always one because there were people who were trying to change things. They were involved in the political game because that is how they had to change things. But I have always considered politics just part of the illusion. I don't get involved much in politics. I don't know what the system runs on. For instance, there are people who have definite ideas or who studied all the systems of government. A lot of those people with college-educational backgrounds tended to come in and use up everybody for whatever purposes they had in mind. And, of course, they used music, because music was accessible and we would have done that stuff and written those songs and sung them whether there was any politics or not. I never did renounce a role in politics, because I never played one in politics. It would be comical for me to think that I played a role. Gurdjieff thinks it's best to work out your mobility daily.

PLAYBOY: So you did have a lot of "on the road" experiences?

DYLAN: I still do.

PLAYBOY: Driving around?

DYLAN: I am. interested in all aspects of life. Revelations and realizations. Lucid thought that can be translated into songs, analogies, new information. I am better at it now. Not really written yet anything to make me stop writing. Like, I haven't come to the place that Rimbaud came to when he decided to stop writing and run guns in Africa.

PLAYBOY: Jimmy Carter has said that listening to your songs, he learned to see in a new way the relationship between landlord and tenant, farmer and sharecropper and things like that. He also said that you were his friend. What do you think of all that?

DYLAN: I am his friend.

PLAYBOY: A personal friend?

DYLAN: I know him personally.

PLAYBOY: Do you like him?

DYLAN: Yeah, I think his heart's in the right place.

PLAYBOY: How would you describe that place?

DYLAN: The place of destiny. You know, I hope the magazine won't take all this stuff and edit-like, Carter's heart's in the right place of destiny, because it's going to really sound

PLAYBOY: No, it would lose the sense of conversation. The magazine's pretty good about that.

DYLAN: Carter has his heart in the right place. He has a sense of who he is. That's what I felt, anyway, when I met him.

PLAYBOY: Have you met him many times?

DYLAN: Only once.

PLAYBOY: Stayed at his house?

DYLAN: No. But anybody who's a governor or a Senate leader or in a position of authority who finds time to invite a folkrock singer and his band out to his place has got to have . . . a sense of humor . . . and a feeling of the pulse of the people. Why does he have to do it? Most people in those kinds of positions can't relate at all to people in the music field unless it's for some selfish purpose.

PLAYBOY: Did you talk about music or politics?

DYLAN: Music. Very little politics. The conversation was kept in pretty general areas.

PLAYBOY: Does he have any favorite Dylan songs?

DYLAN: I didn't ask him if he had any favorite Dylan songs. He didn't say that he did. I think he liked *Ballad of a Thin Man*, really.

PLAYBOY: Did you think that Carter might have been using you by inviting you there?

DYLAN: No, I believe that he was a decent, untainted man and he just wanted to check me out. Actually, as Presidents go, I liked Truman.

PLAYBOY: Why?

DYLAN: I just liked the way he acted and things he said and who he said them to. He had a common sense about him, which is rare for a President. Maybe in the old days it wasn't so rare, but nowadays it's rare. He had a common quality. You felt like you could talk to him.

PLAYBOY: You obviously feel you can talk to President Carter.

DYLAN: You do feel like you can talk to him, but the guy is so busy and overworked you feel more like, well, maybe you'd just leave him alone, you know. And he's dealing with such complicated matters and issues that people are a little divided and we weren't divided in Truman's time.

PLAYBOY: Is there anything you're angry about? Is there anything that would make you go up to Carter and say, "Look, you fucker, do this!"?

DYLAN: Right. [Pause] He's probably caught up in the system like everybody else.

PLAYBOY: Including you?

DYLAN: I'm a part of the system. I have to deal with the system. The minute you pay taxes, you're part of the system.

PLAYBOY: Are there any heroes or saints these days?

DYLAN: A saint is a person who gives of himself totally and freely, without strings. He is neither deaf nor blind. And yet he's both. He's the master of his own reality, the voice of simplicity. The trick is to stay away from mirror images. The only true mirrors are puddles of water.

PLAYBOY: How are mirrors different from puddles?

DYLAN: The image you see in a puddle of water is consumed by depth: An image you see when you look into a piece of glass has no depth or life-flutter movement. Of course, you might want to check your tie. And, of course, you might want to see if the make-up is on straight. That's all the way. Vanity sells a lot of things.

PLAYBOY: How so?

DYLAN: Well, products on the market. Everything from new tires to bars of soap. Need is-need is totally overlooked. Nobody seems to care about people's needs. They're all for one purpose. A shallow grave.

PLAYBOY: Do you want your grave unmarked?

DYLAN: Isn't that a line in my film?

PLAYBOY: Yes.

DYLAN: Well, there are many things they can do with your bones, you know. [Pause] They make neckpieces out of them, bury them. Burn them up.

PLAYBOY: What's your latest preference?

DYLAN: Ah-put them in a nutshell.

PLAYBOY: You were talking about vanity and real needs. What needs? What are we missing?

DYLAN: There isn't anything missing. There is just a lot of scarcity.

PLAYBOY: Scarcity of what?

DYLAN: Inspirational abundance.

PLAYBOY: So it's not an energy crisis but an imagination crisis?

DYLAN: I think it's a spiritual crisis.

PLAYBOY: How so?

DYLAN: Well, you know, people step on each other's feet too much. They get on each other's case. They rattle easily. But I don't particularly stress that. I'm not on a soapbox about it, you know. That is the way life is.

PLAYBOY: We asked about heroes and saints and began talking about saints How about heroes?

DYLAN: A hero is anyone who walks to hi' own drummer.

PLAYBOY: Shouldn't people look to other to be heroes?

DYLAN: No; when people look to other for heroism, they're looking for heroism in an imaginary character.

PLAYBOY: Maybe that in part explains why many seized upon you as that imaginary character.

DYLAN: I'm not an imaginary character, though.

PLAYBOY: You must realize that people get into a whole thing about you.

DYLAN: I know they used to.

PLAYBOY: Don't you think they still do?

DYLAN: Well, I m not aware of it anymore.

PLAYBOY: What about the 1974 tour? Or the Rolling Thunder tour of 1976?

DYLAN: Well, yeah, you know, when I play, people show up. I'm aware they haven't forgotten about me.

PLAYBOY: Still, people always think you have answers, don't they?

DYLAN: No, listen: If I wasn't Bob Dylan, I'd probably think that Bob Dylan has a lot of answers myself.

PLAYBOY: Would you be right?

DYLAN: I don't think so. Maybe he'd have a lot of answers for him, but for me? Maybe not. Maybe yes, maybe no. Bob Dylan isn't a cat, he doesn't have nine lives, so he can only do what he

can do. You know: not break under the strain. If you need someone who raises someone else to a level that is unrealistic, then it's that other person's problem. He is just confronting his superficial self somewhere down the line. They'll realize it, I'm sure.

PLAYBOY: But didn't you have to go through a period when people were claiming you had let them down?

DYLAN: Yeah, but I don't pay much attention to that. What can you say? Oh, I let you down, big deal, OK. That's all. Find somebody else, OK? That's all.

PLAYBOY: You talked about a spiritual crisis. Do you think Christ is an answer?

DYLAN: What is it that attracts people to Christ? The fact that it was such a tragedy, is what. Who does Christ become when he lives inside a certain person? Many people say that Christ lives inside them: Well, what does that mean? I've talked to many people whom Christ lives inside; I haven't met one who would want to trade places with Christ. Not one of his people put himself on the line when it came down to the final hour. What would Christ be in this day and age if he came back? What would he be? What would he be to fulfill his function and purpose? He would have to be a leader, I suppose.

PLAYBOY: Did you grow up thinking about the fact that you were Jewish?

DYLAN: No, I didn't. I've never felt Jewish. I don't really consider myself Jewish or non-Jewish. I don't have much of a Jewish background. I'm not a patriot to any creed. I believe in all of them and none of them. A devout Christian or Moslem can be just as effective as a devout Jew.

PLAYBOY: You say you don't feel Jewish. But what about your sense of God?

DYLAN: I feel a heartfelt God. I don't particularly think that God wants me thinking about Him all the time. I think that would be a tremendous burden on Him, you know. He's got enough people asking Him for favors. He's got enough people asking Him to pull strings. I'll pull my own strings, you know. I remember seeing a Time magazine on an airplane a few years back and it had a big cover headline, "IS COD DEAD?" I mean, that was-would you think that was a responsible thing to do? What does God think of that? I mean, if you were God, how would you like to see that written

about yourself? You know, I think the country's gone downhill since that day.

PLAYBOY: Really?

DYLAN: Uh-huh.

PLAYBOY: Since that particular question was asked?

DYLAN: Yeah; I think at that point, some very irresponsible people got hold of too much power to put such an irrelevant thing like that on a magazine when they could be talking about real issues. Since that day, you've had to kind of make your own way.

PLAYBOY: How are we doing, making our own way?

DYLAN: The truth is that we're born and we die. We're concerned here in this life with the journey from point A to point Z, or from what we think is point A to point Z. But it's pretty self-deluding if you think that's all there is.

PLAYBOY: What do you think is beyond Z?

DYLAN: You mean, what do I think is in the great unknown?
[Pause] Sounds, echoes of laughter.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel there's some sense of karmic balance in the universe, that you suffer for acts of bad faith?

DYLAN: Of course. I think everybody knows that's true. After you've lived long enough, you realize that's the case. You can get away with anything for a while. But it's like Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* or Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*: Somewhere along the line, sooner or later, you're going to have to pay.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel you've paid for what you got away with earlier?

DYLAN: Right now, I'm about even.

PLAYBOY: Isn't that what you said after your motorcycle accident-"Something had to be evened up"?

DYLAN: Yes.

PLAYBOY: And you meant. . . ?

DYLAN: I meant my back wheel had to be aligned. [Laughter]

PLAYBOY: Let's take one last dip back into the material world. What about an artist's relationship to money?

DYLAN: The myth of the starving artist is a myth. The big bankers and prominent young ladies who buy art started it. They just want to keep the artist under their thumb. Who says an artist can't have any money? Look at Picasso. The starving artist is usually starving for those around him to starve. You don't have to starve to be a good artist. You just have to have love, insight and a strong point of view. And you have to fight off depravity. Uncompromising, that's what makes a good artist. It doesn't matter if he has money or not. Look at Matisse; he was a banker. Anyway, there are other things that constitute wealth and poverty besides money.

PLAYBOY: What we were touching on was the subject of the expensive house you live in, for example.

DYLAN: What about it? Nothing earthshaking or final about where I live. There is no vision behind the house. It is just a bunch of trees and sheds.

PLAYBOY: We read in the papers about an enormous copper dome you had built.

DYLAN: I don't know what you read in the papers. It's just a place to live for now. The copper dome is just so I can recognize it when I come home.

PLAYBOY: OK, back to less worldly concerns. You don't believe in astrology, do you?

DYLAN: I don't think so.

PLAYBOY: You were quoted recently as having said something about having a Gemini nature.

DYLAN: Well, maybe there are certain characteristics of people who are born under certain signs. But I don't know, I'm not sure how relevant it is.

PLAYBOY: Could it be there's an undiscovered twin or a double to Bob Dylan?

DYLAN: Someplace on the planet, there's a double of me walking around. Could very possibly be. **PLAYBOY:** Any messages for your double? **DYLAN:** Love will conquer everything-I suppose.



Copyright by Cal Deal, Fort Lauderdale FL • www.graphicwitness.com/carter

THE KAREN HUGHES INTERVIEW IN SYDNEY APRIL 1, 1978

Published in "Rock Express" (partially) Tape of broadcast sections and also of complete interview available; transcribed in "Talking Bob Dylan 1978" by Gavin Diddle

What was it you wanted? #3)

Hughes: Sometimes when you speak, it's as though words are energy and too many words are wasted energy which could be better put into your songs. Is that how you feel?

Dylan: Absolutely, yeah. I seldom talk. I seldom like to talk to anybody also because it's false, because when you talk and you speak, that's all that's all you're doing. And it has to be direct. I can't do it in any other way unless it's direct. And most people don't want to be direct... you find yourself drifting.

Hughes: Into social conventions of communication?

Dylan: Yeah, into opinions and ideas. I don't care about those things (pause) I do and I don't.

Hughes: Or do you care about them if they have feelings to back them up?

Dylan: Well, feelings, yeah, and experience. If they have experience to back them up alright. It's like somebody telling you about Australia is one thing, but you being there and seeing it for yourself is another. I don't like to be told things.

Hughes: Do you think that you've got to be selfish and shut everything off in order to write?

Dylan: I think so, don't you?

Hughes: Yeah, but don't you find that paradoxical?

Dylan: To what?

Hughes: Communication.

Dylan: Well, you need something to communicate to so ... no I don't think so at all.

Hughes: What kind of outlet does touring provide for you?

Dylan: It's hard to explain to someone who doesn't do it. Since I was just a kid, just a little kid, I used to watch touring bands come through my home town. It always seemed like that was where to go. And the only escape out of it was to get down to the bus ...

Hughes: What about now then?

Dylan: It's the same thing.

Hughes: Ray Davies once said about touring "when I tour I realize that I have to communicate with the outside. If I don't have an audience and I just write, my mind meanders round and round the subject, but when I know I have to communicate it to people, it goes straight to the subject. So I like to tour". Would you agree with that?

Dylan: I would agree to that. I like to sing to the people. I just don't like to sing into microphones in a studio.

Hughes: Many people who come to your concerts here regard it as a kind of pilgrimage. Most would like to meet you. What do you feel you have to offer your fans on this kind of individual level?

Dylan: In India they have men that live in the Himalayas and people make long journeys to sit at their feet. And what happens when they sit at their feet? Nothing. Nothing happens, they're usually given a big dose of silence.

Hughes: That's an answer of a kind, throwing it back at the questioner?

Dylan: I don't know whether that's an answer. Sometimes it's better to be quiet than to make a lot of noise; because when you're quiet, you're usually more in tune with the birds and the bees and the phantoms of life.

Hughes: Do you meditate?

Dylan: Oh, I know a little bit about these things, but I don't follow any daily ritual.

Hughes: You can't see any parallel between your fans seeking a private audience with you and the time long ago when you went to visit Woody Guthrie in a New Jersey hospital?

Dylan: No, when I went to see him there wasn't many people seeing him. He was sick. No one had heard of him in those days, except just a few people who played folk music. So I went to see him, and it wasn't like seeing the king you know.

Hughes: What kind of feeling have you been getting back from the audiences in Australia?

Dylan: (long pause) That they understand without having to be told what it's all about, what the music's all about. Why I'm different from all the rest of the groups of people playing around. I mean, I mean I've been at this now a long time. What usually happens is that you are at it until someone else comes along, and I'm still at it. And I'm still going to be at it until someone else comes along.

Hughes: But surely no one else ever comes along that's the same?

Dylan: Well, that's true, but usually the way things go is that someone else comes out, out of the crowd, of considerable ability who can cover what you're doing and take it another step

(pause) When the fire's burned out, I'll just be doing this until the fire's burned out. Muddy Water is still playing, he's 65-66.

Hughes: Do you think you can stand it that long, the touring?

Dylan: If those people can do it, I don't see why I can't do it.

Hughes: Yeah, it doesn't take a lot out of you, physically?

Dylan: Well, it takes more out of you when you're young because you don't know yourself that well. If you're dealing in the whole and not just fragments I don't see why you can't last as long as you want to last. It's not uncommon to be 65 to 70. Muddy Waters, I keep coming back to Muddy Waters because ... Lightning Hopkins was very old. I don't know how old he is cause he doesn't really say, but he's gotta be beyond 50. Bill Munroe is still going and he's in his fifties.

Hughes: How does the audience reaction here in Australia compare with Japan, New Zealand and the United States?

Dylan: The States I can't tell you, I haven't been in the States with this show, I've been in the States many times. In Japan they were very reserved, as if something was destroyed. I don't know what. Well, you know what, I know what, Everybody know what it was. Yeah, they were very reserved, but maybe there was a language barrier. There probably was, I don't see how there couldn't be really. But they were great, they got better and better with every show.

Hughes: What about New Zealand?

Dylan: New Zealand was an outdoor show. We played one outdoor show in New Zealand and the audience was very supportive.

Hughes: Did you like New Zealand as a country?

Dylan: Well, I was only in Auckland, but the sky was deep and ...

Hughes: They have mountains and sea together.

Dylan: Yeah, the flowers are strange and the birds were interesting. I have never seen those kind before.

Hughes: Do you find that touring gives you a more direct communication and therefore speeds up the creative process?

Dylan: One feeds the other.

Hughes: You were saying touring was a way of getting out of where you lived in Minnesota.

Dylan: Well, it was an escape, it was like sitting all day ... like when the train rolled through town you always looked at those faces that were peering out of the windows.

Hughes: Yeah, like when you sit in airports and see all those people going.

Dylan: Yeah, it was like that, that was it.

Hughes: How do you feel about Minnesota now, do you feel some kind of attraction?

Dylan: Yeah, I still go back now and then.

Hughes: Because you've got some land there haven't you?

Dylan: Yeah, I still know some people there, I go back every now and then.

Hughes: Do you still go to class reunions?

Dylan: No, I don't do that.

Hughes: You did once?

Dylan: I went to one in er... I did go to one, I went to the 10th one.

Hughes: When was that, in 63?

Dylan: 1969, I justed poked in, poked my face in.

Hughes: Do you draw much these days?

Dylan: No.

Hughes: Why not?

Dylan: Time.

Hughes: Would you like to?

Dylan: Yeah.

Hughes: What kind of satisfaction do you get out of it?

Dylan: One time I was doing it all day for a couple of months in New York. This was a couple of years back, it was 74/75. I did it every day from eight till four with a break or something, and it locked me into the present time more than anything else I ever did. More than any experiences I've ever had, any enlightenment I've ever had. Because I was constantly being intermingled with myself and all the different selves that were in there, until this one left, then that one left, and finally I got down to the one that I was familiar with.

Hughes: Who are your friends these days?

Dylan: I just have the same old friends that I've always had. People who are akin to me. None of my friends look at me in awe, there's no one hanging around me that thinks I'm the leader. It's hard to explain who they are; they're just people; people like you and me.

Hughes: You're working very hard at the moment, what are you working on?

Dylan: Trying to get another album organized.

Hughes: Can you tell me something about the songs and ideas involved?

Dylan: They're hard to define. Some ballads, some narrative ballads, and some which aren't. I don't really write about anything. I don't know where these come from. Sometimes I'm thinking in some other age that I lived through. I must have had the experience of all these songs because sometimes I don't know what I'm writing about until years later it becomes clearer to me.

Hughes: Do you find that as a composer, you're more like a medium, tuning into something greater happening?

Dylan: I think every composer does that. No one in his right mind would think that it was coming from him, that he has invented it. It's just coming through him.

Hughes: What kind of force compels you to write?

Dylan: Well any departure, like from my traditional self, will kick it off.

Hughes: How do you go about composing these songs, working them out?

Dylan: Well, I usually get a melody. A melody just happens to appear as I'm playing and after that the words come in and out. Sometimes the words come first.

Hughes: Does it come quickly or do you have to work on it?

Dylan: Well sometimes it doesn't come quickly and other times it does come very quickly. I've written songs in five minutes complete, other songs I've had laying around for months.

Hughes: Does it relate to anything going on outside of you?

Dylan: No, just when I have the time to finish it or the inspiration or whatever it needs to finish it.

Hughes: Previously when you recorded you just used to go into the studio and do it once - put down each track completely with no overdubbing.

Dylan: I still do that

Dylan at this point noticed my copy of Brian Vesey- Fitzgerald's "Gypsies of Britain" lying on the coffee table, which he picked up, became quickly absorbed, flipping through the pages, taking in the contents with astounding speed. Occasionally he stopped at significant points, while still continuing with the interview, for closer scrutiny and comment

Yeah in the gypsy way of life, death is a very happy thing.

Hughes: It's nice. Lots of nomadic cultures are like that.

Dylan: Yeah, I can see that point of view.

Hughes: Didn't you once visit a gypsy king in the south of France?

Dylan: Yeah, he was an old man at this time and the person I went to see him with knew him when he was young, not young but 10 years earlier, when he was still vital and active. And at that time he had maybe 16 to 20 wives and over 100 children. At the time we saw him He'd had a heart attack so the smell was all around and most of his family abandoned him. 15 or 16 of his wives had left him and gone, and he only had about 2 or 3 children there, so he was

pretty much alone. But he still had his scene going; he was into dealing in antiques and junk-metal junk.

Hughes: Getting back to the album, is there anything else you can tell me about it?

Dylan: Is this your book? You didn't bring it for me, did you?

Hughes: No, but you can have it, would you like it?

Dylan: Sure, I'd appreciate it.

Hughes: What kind of arrangements will you be using?

Dylan: Well, they're all new songs, very simple arrangements.

Hughes: Similar to what you've done in the past?

Dylan: Yeah, the arrangements are ...

Hughes: You're not going to change drastically like Joan Baez has on her last album, more towards funk?

Dylan: I didn't think it was all that funky. Oh, maybe it was for her ... (pause) ... Funk is not something that you capture on record, funk is a way of life. It's a way you feel, you can't just make a funky sounding record. But I know what you mean. Funk has to do with throwing coins into the coffin, that kind of thing.

Hughes: Throwing coins into the coffin?

Dylan: Yeah, funk has to do with different beliefs.

Hughes: Do you think there's still a lot to say about people that hasn't yet been said?

Dylan: Individual people, yeah, but not people in general. Yeah, you can go on and on about individual people because of the really different characteristics and different attitudes of many people. And then of course once you get two people together there's some different types of relationship between different types of people. There are many different levels of how people can relate to one another. Some are casual, some are business, some are adventurous, and some are romantic, some are ...

Hughes: So that what you choose to be involved in?

Dylan: Well, I'm just aware of the different areas of relationships.

Hughes: Do you think that films are an ideal medium to explore that?

Dylan: I do, yeah.

Hughes: What's the significance of the title Renaldo & Clara?

Dylan: Well, people keep asking me that. There isn't any more significance to that than what's the significance to Queen Jane, why she had that name. Tolstoy wrote a book called "Anna Karenina" and what was the significance of that name? Renaldo is a fox and Clara is supposedly the clear understanding of the future which doesn't exist.

Hughes: What kind of relationship do you have with women?

Dylan: What kind of relationship?

Hughes: How do you view women, what do you get out of relationships with women, do you think that they're equal or ...

Dylan: Well, I do think that everybody's equal, but I get past the attraction kinds rather quickly. I don't have time for that any more.

Hughes: And then what?

Dylan: How many relationships can you really have in your life and what kind are they?

Hughes: Why I brought that up was because the other night you were saying how difficult you found it to have girl-friends because they always had to fit into YOUR life. And I was wondering if, given your belief in equality, you should expect that?

Dylan: No, but anyone who is in my life at all respects that. That I don't come home every night.

Hughes: You seem in your songs to have a capacity to love many women. Would you like to have many wives, like the gypsy king?

Dylan: Well, yeah, I'd like to have a wife for every degree.

Hughes: Do you have a home?

Dylan: A home? I don't have all my possessions in any one place. My clothes are all over the place, but I thrive in different places. I'd love to have a home somewhere ideally.

Hughes: It can be a person or a feeling or a

Dylan: You know that old corny saying "a home is where the heart is"?

Hughes: It's true.

Dylan: (nods).

Hughes: You once said after visiting Rubin Carter in prison that you left knowing that "this man's philosophy and my philosophy were running on the same road, and you don't meet too many people like that". Well, how do you feel about your fans who buy your records? Surely there's some kind of empathy there?

Dylan: I'm not sure if they think like me. They might feel as I do, but thinking like me? I don't think we can talk about thought, we just have to talk about feeling. I'm only dealing in the feeling aspect. I'm only dealing with feelings that seem to be unbreakable and the people that follow me and feel that way, feel that. And that is what I think combines everything.

Hughes: Do you think that in any way the public and the press have made you into something you're not?

Dylan: Uh, no, I don't think the public are that gullible. If I wasn't doing what it is that they think I'm doing, I'm sure that no amount of press would be skilful enough to say that I was. What do you think of this shirt?

Hughes: I like the penguins, where did you get it?

Dylan: Off the street.

Hughes: Here?

Dylan: Yeah.

Hughes: Are you going to wear on stage tonight?

Dylan: This shirt with the penguins? No, I don't wear my street clothes on the stage any more.

Hughes: Do you have a designer?

Dylan: Somebody made up all these clothes. I just got too depressed having to go on in my street clothes all the time.

Hughes: What's the name of your designer?

Dylan: A guy in L.A. named Billy, he designed these clothes.

Hughes: I was wondering if you exercise a lot? Is your body in good shape?

Dylan: I hope so ... I'm running around so much you know that I guess ... I don't know, [....] I can't remember ...

Hughes: In the songs that you've been writing, have you written anything about your experiences in Australia?

Dylan: No, not as a traveler. I haven't had that much time to experience too much.

Hughes: Have you managed to hear any live bands or artists while you've been here?

Dylan: No, just on television. But a couple of the guys went to see this guy, Dave Warner, and somebody managed to get a taped cassette and it sounded pretty good.

Hughes: Have you heard Richard Clapton at all?

Dylan: Yeah, I heard Richard Clapton in Auckland. I liked him very much. In fact I tried to get him on the bill for Australia, because you know what the law says that you have to have an Australian support act.

Hughes: He always cites you as an influence.

Dylan: I thought he was real good, no pretense.

Hughes: You met him too?

Dylan: No I didn't, I just heard his records. I like the harp ...

Hughes: What do you think characterizes the Australian that you know?

Dylan: Well, in Brisbane, I noticed that everybody has a great ability to laugh.

Hughes: What about elsewhere?

Dylan: Elsewhere I find it ... it's very (pause) ... I don't think it's a land for explorers.

Hughes: You mean you don't consider it a land for explorers because there isn't much to discover?

Dylan: No, I find you have to have permission for everything.

Hughes: Creatively?

Dylan: No, just a general feeling in the air, I can't explain it. It's like a feeling when all the windows are closed and you can't open them. And I can't explain it but it seems to be very large too. I've seen a lot more and I've got a lot better feeling for it this time than the last time when I was here and I probably will come back again.

Hughes: When do you think you will come back?

Dylan: Well, the next go around.

Hughes: You have no idea when that will be?

Dylan: No, whenever resembles the right time. I like Australia, I like all the towns that we've played in and I liked all the people that we've played to.

Hughes: Do you think that feeling of having to ask permission for something is linked with the inferiority complex that Australians are refuted to have? Like "No, you can't do that, because this is Australia" - going back to the convict days?

Dylan: Yeah, because we have some friends. I have a good friend who wanted to come to a concert, who wanted to see this show and he couldn't get a visa - he was coming from Singapore. He couldn't get a visa and it was outrageous of them and he said, well they didn't understand why he just wanted to come for a few days.

Hughes: If you could think of one image to sum up how you see yourself, what would it be?

Dylan: During the last 100 years or the next 100 years?

Hughes: Both.

Dylan: I don't know. Basically I just have common qualities. I feel primitive in a lot of ways and in a lot of ways I feel advanced and neither one of these feelings really matter to me. I can imagine every situation in life as if I've done it, no matter what it might be: whether it be self punishment or marrying my half sister, I mean, I

can imagine, I can feel all these things for some reason. I don't know why.

Hughes: You once wrote in *Idiot Wind* "What's good is bad, what's bad is good, you'll find out when you've reached the top, you're on the bottom". Does that sum up how you feel about the cyclic way of things?

Dylan: Yeah, everything that goes out comes around. I feel that way, don't you? I mean, I don't feel that I have to be quarantined for thinking that, that's just a very common way to think. And it isn't all that irregular either, it happens to be true. The simple things which are true usually astound people. "What's good is bad, what's bad is good". Sounds very simple really.

Hughes: Yeah, it struck me as being very true, that's why I noted it.

Dylan: Right, it's a piece of raw meat.

Hughes: Frank Zappa once said he thought the universe was based on a Mobius vortex.

Dylan: Yeah? I don't understand that. <---- excluded in printed interview

Hughes: [tries to explain the Mobius vortex ...] <----- ditto

Dylan: Oh, yeah. Well, I can see that. I also find it very uncertain. I had a great flash into what the universe was all about when I saw a man burning a fiddle on a roof, but I can't explain to you what it was that I felt.

Hughes: What other artists around at the moment do you find exciting musically?

Dylan: You mean contemporary?

Hughes: Yeah, around at the moment, doing things now.

Dylan: Well, everybody can be exciting on a certain night.

Hughes: But for you?

Dylan: For me? Usually the old people every time are the only people exciting musically. Of my crowd, Eric Clapton's always pretty exciting musically, but I usually listen to older records.

Hughes: You mentioned liking Joan Armatrading?

Dylan: I like her, yeah. I only have heard her records. I haven't seen her in person. I liked her.

Hughes: What about Roy Harper? Have you heard him?

Dylan: Isn't he an English ... er ... Yeah, years ago, I heard his records and I liked them.

Hughes: Ray Davies?

Dylan: I think he's a genius. Nobody ever asks me about him. I've always been a fan of Ray Davies ever since way back when. I've always liked him and his brother and that group.

Hughes: What do you admire about the Kinks?

Dylan: Well, whenever you come up with something it's like being a chemist. Whenever you come up with something new you've created something new so I have to admire anyone that can do that. And that song - like I say I don't know what he's doing these days, but he did those songs, 'You Really Got Me' and the one after that, that was new, that was different - it was new and it had never been done before. So I admire that when I hear that and I appreciate that ... (pause) ... Yeah, I was going to try to contact him next time I go over there, to see what he was doing.

Hughes: Do you find people working in other areas interesting, like scientists for example?

Dylan: Well, I don't recognize too many of those people so ... yeah, people who are working on cancer research, I'm not gonna put that down.

Hughes: How self-sufficient are you?

Dylan: In what way?

Hughes: Mentally I suppose.

Dylan: Well, I'm not under any narcotics.

Hughes: That's not really what I meant.

Dylan: How do you mean it then?

Hughes: How much can you exist in isolation without needing other people?

Dylan: Without drinking any hemlock?

Hughes: Yeah.

Dylan: I don't know. I really don't know. I mean I have to go out and see people, but I still need to pull the night shades down too.

Hughes: With each successive step do you feel that you're coming closer to working out your own destiny?

Dylan: Yeah, 99% of the time I do.

Hughes: Do you believe in reincarnation?

Dylan: In a casual but not astonishing way.

Hughes: Can you recall other lives?

Dylan: No, personally, I can't.

Hughes: No even flashes?

Dylan: Um, the flash without the desire to once in a while no, I can't say as I do. I don't pretend that I have been living in some other time although I admit that it's possible.

Hughes: Do you find that most things come from within?

Dylan: Most things come from taking chances.

Hughes: And you're always taking a lot?

Dylan: Yeah.

(Conducted at the Boulevard Hotel before the last show of the Far East leg of the 1978 world tour. Karen Hughes was a young journalist in the very beginning of her career who happened to run into Dylan in Adelaide and to her astonishment found herself not only asking for an interview but getting promised one in Sydney! This interview was originally printed in Rock Express No 4 and is an edited version of the actual interview, of which some 45 minutes are circulating. The interview was reprinted in the bookleg "Talkin' Bob Dylan ... 1978".)

The above is a reprint of version with a few things from the original tape edited in.)



THE PHILIPPE ADLER INTERVIEW JUNE 16, 1978

Published in L'Express 3 July 1978 Translation published in "Fourth Time Around 2" (TWM 331 mentions 2 interviews for L'Express?)

(What was it you wanted #8)

Adler: When you came on stage last night in London you received a fantastic ovation. Intoxicating, wasn't it?

Dylan: No, because I didn't think it was for me. It was an ovation for someone or something else.

Adler: In the English press this morning they're talking about you as a living legend, an electric poet...

Dylan: I don't care. It even annoys me a little. As soon as people start sticking a label on me that puts up a barrier between me and the public.

Adler: No you seem to be returning to the stage. Does that mean that the journey through the wilderness has ended?

Dylan: Yes, I believe so. I'm back on the tracks.

Adler: Is it for the money?

Dylan: No. Of course I need the money and I know how to spend it, but basically it's because I wanted to do the only thing I've ever known how to do; sing and play. I'm a musician that's all.

Adler: We won't need to wait another 12 years to see you again?

Dylan: No, no. The amnesia is finished (laughs).

Adler: In your new band there's a lot of percussion ...

Dylan: That's essential for me. My songs need a lot of rhythm. Next time I'll come with three drummers.

Adler: It's been said that in taking on three pretty singers you're paving the way to Las Vegas.

Dylan: Pfff! Ummmmm!

Adler: Are you going to present the same programme in Paris as in the States and in London?

Dylan: I still don't know. I might put in a few more songs from the new album, now that it's out. But that means I'll have to take out other ones, and I never know which ones to take out. There are so very many.

Adler: Legend has it that your very first song was dedicated to Brigitte Bardot.

Dylan: That's right.

Adler: Could you sing it again for me?

Dylan: I can't remember it anymore. I only know that it was very short (laughs).

Adler: How old was you when you bought your first guitar?

Dylan: I was 12. It was an electric guitar. I was mad about Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly and I played rock. And then, one day, I heard a record by Odetta, and everything changed.

Adler: I thought that you had been influenced at first by Woody Guthrie?

Dylan: No, it was the rock and rollers, then Odetta, The Kingston Trio, Harry Belafonte, The Carter Family. Guthrie only came along afterwards but what a shock! I learned off by heart more than 200 of his songs.

Adler: When you gave up the folk guitar for the electric, your early fans didn't appreciate it.

Dylan: Oh, no! They threw me off the stage in Newport in '65 (laughs). After that I got used to the whistles. Deep down I think that people enjoy whistling. Like at a ball game.

Adler: Why have you changed your name from Zimmerman to Dylan?

Dylan: Why do people change their towns, nationalities, lives? I don't possess this name. It just fell off my tongue one day, it rained on me, I kept it.

Adler: Is there any link with Dylan Thomas?

Dylan: No, none at all! If I were a fan of Dylan Thomas I would have sung his poems or I would be called Bob Thomas.

Adler: You've always remained very mysterious about your childhood. At one time you even pretended to be an orphan. Your biographies say that your father was a chemist or a miner or an electrician...

Dylan: No, none of these. My father was a very active man, but he was stricken very early by an attack of polio. The illness put an end to all his dreams I believe. He could barely walk. When we moved from the North of the country two of his brothers who were electrical fitters, opened a shop and they took him with them so he could mind the shop.

Adler: Before that, had he been a student?

Dylan: No. You know my grand father had come over from Russia in the 1920s. He was a peddler and made shoes. He has 7 sons and one daughter, well, my father never had the time to go to

college. He used to do odd jobs to bring home some money to his mother. He died in '68.

Adler: Your motorcycle accident in '66 happened like a sign of destiny, at a time when you were burning the candle at both ends.

Dylan: I couldn't have kept going for at that pace...

Adler: Well, there was this long period when you seemed to disappear into thin air.

Dylan: Yes. That was the amnesia (laughs).

Adler: After Paris are you going to take a rest?

Dylan: No, not at all! I'm going to Sweden, then I return to England for a gigantic festival in the open air on a disused airfield. They are expecting more than 100,000 people. After that I'm on tour in America until the end of the year. Then I'll cut a new album.

Adler: Where and when do you write?

Dylan: Anywhere and anytime.

Adler: Do you often have ideas for songs?

Dylan: All the time. I put all my ideas down on paper.

Adler: Do you have a note book?

Dylan: No, loose leaves. Like you and the same pen as you (laughs).

Adler: Do you think that your recent songs touch on current events like those ones when when you were starting out?

Dylan: Yes, I think so. This will be even more obvious with the ones on my next album. I think these really ought to reflect the way people think about things today. At last the people I see.

Adler: Who are they?

Dylan: Musicians, painters. People who travel. I go everywhere where there are people. I listen to them talking. I listen to them chatting and I pick up on their feelings.

Adler: A song like "Times They Are A-Changin'" is 15 years old now. You're still singing it. Doesn't that bother you?

Dylan: Each time I sing it, I feel like I wrote it the day before.

Adler: What do you think of punks?

Dylan: I don't know much about this movement. I've heard some records and I've seen some groups. I think that above all they're releasing a lot of energy and that's important, but, to be frank, I mostly listen to good music. Rhythm & Blues, Hillbilly, Blues.

Adler: And those dark glasses you wear all the time, should they be seen as a sign of aggression?

Dylan: No, of insecurity, above all else (laughs). I really think that I wear them because I like wearing them.

Adler: You once said that you were a "guy under 30" and that you were counting on staying that way as long as possible. How do you feel now that you're 37?

Dylan: Well, now I'm a guy under 15 years old!

Adler: During your "amnesia" some of your fans formed a "Dylan Liberation Front" to force you to come out from your retreat, to take up your engagements. At one point they made a lot of noise about you having bought shares in an arms factory that was making napalm bombs.

Dylan: I've never done that (shrugging his shoulders). I've got my own armoury at home (laughs). I've got revolvers, pistols like all Americans. But there's no napalm, no, no.

Adler: Are you still living in your amazing house at Point Zuma?

Dylan: Yes, but I'm not often there. It's just a place to sleep.

Adler: It appears to be topped by a rather mysterious copper dome. People have said that it's an eagles' nest, an observatory, a peeled onion. Which is right?

Dylan: A landmark, so that I can recognize it (laughs).

Adler: At the time of your divorce from Sara, didn't your wife want to keep it?

Dylan: She'd gone elsewhere. Anyway, she hadn't lived there much.

Adler: Do you see your children often?

Dylan: Everytime I get the chance to.

Adler: What would you do if you learnt that one of them was taking drugs?

Dylan: Really ... (He looked like he was going to give a couple of claps, almost tenderly, then a burst of laughter). It depends on what kind of drug he was taking. You know. You can only talk, explain, people want to go through their own experiences themselves. In any case I've also acted in this way myself (pause). They need to have enough experience, a sense of their identity to have confidence in themselves. As for me, that was different, people were taking drugs and saying that they are creating these experiences. But I never got hooked on drugs. Yet I took every sort (grimace). In any case you can't lay down the law to make people live according to your own rules. (a silence). For my children I don't know what I would do. Perhaps they have already taken them (laughs). My oldest daughter has undoubtedly already taken them but I haven't been on the spot.

Adler: Knowing the influence that you exercise over millions of young people, don't you think it's dangerous to go on singing "Everybody Must Be Stoned"? (sic)

Dylan: But that song has lot of other meanings.

Adler: Maybe, but it does have a precise one.

Dylan: Marijuana isn't a drug like the others (a pause), today there are drugs that are a lot more dangerous than in my time. There's one called "Angel Dust". It's a tranquilizer that they give to elephants. People take it to get high (a pause). I think you can do what you want up until the moment when you realize you have to be responsible for yourself, or otherwise you've had it.

Adler: Did your film "Renaldo & Clara" get a rather cool reception in the States?

Dylan: At first I was disappointed about it, now I don't care. They didn't want to be impressed, but I didn't make this film to impress anybody. And then, they took exception to it, they only wanted to see the affair of Bob, Sara and Joan Baez - as though the film had nothing to see but that, I know that's a beautiful film. People need to get used to it that's all.

Adler: Is it still being shown over there?

Dylan: Yes, you can see it in some places. Let's say that it's not in the process of engulfing the planet, but one can see it (laughs).

Adler: Rumour has it that you're preparing a shorter version?

Dylan: It's done. Now there's a choice between a "Renaldo & Clara" of 4 hours and one of 2 hours (laughs).

Adler: As compensation, it was rather well received at the last Cannes festival.

Dylan: Oh yes, what do you want ... Nobody's a prophet in his home country (laughs).

Adler: Are you going to make another?

Dylan: Yes. Painting has always been my passion. For me a film is a painting that comes alive from a wall. If Michelangelo and Cezanne were alive today they would be film directors.

Adler: You often list Henry Miller amongst your influences.

Dylan: Yes. I think that he's the greatest American writer.

Adler: I believe you've met him. What did you talk about?

Dylan: We played table tennis (laughs).

Adler: You're still keeping to your definition of the role of the artist to instill disillusion into the world?

Dylan: Yes.

Adler: And President Carter, you've even met him.

Dylan: Yes, he's a friend. I once said his heart's in the right place. That's important.

Adler: Have you seen him again recently?

Dylan: No. He hasn't phoned me (laughs).

Dylan: If President Giscard D'Estang offered you an invitation during your stay in Paris, what would be your reaction?.

Dylan: Oh, but I don't think he would ever have heard of me.

Adler: You're surely mistaken. Once he invited Leonard Cohen.

Dylan: Oh, good! Well, he'll have to see about that with my agent (laughs).

Adler: Have you met many people since you've been on tour?

Dylan: No, I'm working. I haven't got the time.

Adler: Do you take your meals in the hotel or go out?

Dylan: I don't like restaurants or hotels. I enjoy eating when I know the person who's prepared the meal.

Adler: Have you friends in France?

Dylan: Yes, some in Paris, Marseilles, St Mares-des-la-mer, but I repeat that unfortunately I'm here to work (a pause). There's only one person I'm sure I want to meet in France, that's Mr President. Now there's a really good guy.

Adler: When are you going to see him?

Dylan: Where and when he wants. I am entirely at his disposal. Definitely and without discussion (laughs).

Adler: Did you say that failure was preferable to success?

Dylan: Yes, because failure engenders success, whereas success is the end of the line. I've not had the feeling of having succeeded and I'm very happy about that. If I had had that feeling, I would no longer be around. Already long gone.

Adler: Do you believe in God?

Dylan: Let's say, as he shows himself.

Adler: Do you often think about death?

Dylan: Yes, often.

Adler: Do you feel you're ready to face it?

Dylan: Me? Oh, no not at all. I've still got some time, eh? (laughs).

THE NILS CHIOLER INTERVIEW July 11, 1978

Landvetter Airport, Gothenburg, Sweden Broadcast by Swedish Television later that same day.

Q. Bob Dylan, the symbol of the sixties.

Bob Dylan: To who?

Q. To the youth of the sixties.

B.D.: Who said that? I never said that.

Q. Wasn't it you? Do you think there is a difference between you of the sixties and the Bob Dylan of today?

B.D.: I couldn't tell you. Is there a difference between you in the sixties and today?

Q. Oh, I think so, yes. Don't you think your music has developed, from the sixties.

B.D.: Possibly.

Q. When you are around touring, as you are now, do you think it's another audience than the one you met in the sixties.

B.D.: No. It's the same, basically same.

Q. Are you failing to reach the new, youth generation.

B.D.: I Don't know.

Q. You don't think there's a difference between you and the songs you write?

B.D.: I don't think so.

THE METTE FUGL INTERVIEW July 11, 1978

Landvetter Airport, Gothenburg, Sweden Partially broadcast by Danish television on July 12 and 16 (TV-Aktuellt)

Q. Okay, once you wrote songs about your dreams. You wrote "Bob Dylans Dream," "115th Dream," what are you doing these days?

Bob Dylan: Same thing.

Q. What would be your 1978 version of a visionary song?

B.D.: All of them.

Q. Anyone. Okay. Whatever you do almost it has been categorised as pure genius. Is there space in your great success for self criticism for artistic development?

B.D.: Mmmm, surely.

Q. When everybody says it's genius it's pure genius?

B.D.: I don't think everybody says that.

Q. You have said in interviews that your songs have no political content and no social significance. But still you attract one of the largest crowds in the history of pop music. Doesn't that indicate that your songs have a certain social significance?

B.D.: What do you mean?

Q. Is it only your admirers, your audience that find an interest in the content of your songs or are you just caught up of the contents?

B.D.: Possibly.

Q. Is it that you just don't want to discuss it?

B.D.: Well, no. You never know what's happening in the minds of men.

Q. No and you don't want. But you have written songs about Hurricane Carter and Joey Gallo and you've dedicated your last album to Emmett Grogan. They have one thing in common those

three men. They are sort of outlaws. Do you have an outlaw syndrome?

B.D.: No, not really.

Q. Not really. How come you dedicate your songs to the sad eyed drifters, the rough riders?

B.D.: Well, who ... they just happen to be in the forefront of my imagination.



LYNNE ALLEN INTERVIEW, December 12, 1978

Source: Trouser Press June 1979
Interview Date: December 12, 1978
Location: The Omni, Atlanta
Author: Lynne Allen

INTERVIEW WITH AN ICON Bob Dylan grants an audience

If I'd thought about it
I never would have done it
I guess I would 'a let it slide
If I'd 'a lived my life by what others were thinkin'
This heart inside me would 'a died
I was just too stubborn to ever be governed by enforced insanity
Someone had to reach for the risin' star

I guess it was up to me
(c)1974 Ram's Horn Music

Bob Dylan is a legend in his own time. Not a full-fledged commercial superstar, for he doesn't make platinum records nor sell out all of his live performances, Dylan is merely a legend, enigmatic and mysterious. Familiar, yet strange. It has been said that Dylan is not half the myth he believes himself to be and that he himself is the myth-monger, selling us his every new phase while, like his descendant in style, David Bowie, he casually discards each old mask with the ease of an actor changing roles. He has also at various times been accused of having sold out, of being too removed, aloof, of not revealing enough, of being cold and calculating, allowing us to see only what he wishes and no more. No matter, in the final analysis he is what he has created. If the '60s were his formative years, the '70s have seen Dylan subject to many changes in his life. From the laid-back family man of 'Nashville Skyline' and 'New Morning', Dylan slowly turned and headed back into the more complex reaches of his mind, starting with 'Planet Waves', which signalled the return within, and following with 'Blood on the Tracks', which brought him even closer to his anima, his muse, who finally appeared to him as Isis on 'Desire'. (In a dream-scape not unlike Robert Graves' 'White Goddess', who could be found "among pack ice or where the track had faded," Dylan united with his goddess after he "came to the pyramids all imbedded in ice.")

With 'Desire' in the stores, Dylan took to the road with his own gypsy troupe. The Rolling Thunder Revue brought to mind the "Indiani Metropolitanani," groups of young people who do street theatre in Italy. They toured the U.S. playing moderately sized halls, picking up and dropping different performers along the way. 'Renaldo and Clara', Dylan's mammoth and controversial movie, was filmed on the road with Rolling Thunder, during a tumultuous period in which his marriage reportedly took a turn for the worse and his life (along with his newly-built dream house) began to slide. Seemingly none the worse for wear and tear, Dylan embarked on the most extensive tour of his career early in 1978. Beginning in Japan, New Zealand and Australia, it finally wound up matters in the southeastern United States in December of last year. The first time I saw Dylan was in Binghamton, New York, in September 1978. I had always admired him. How could you not? No matter how one views Dylan and/or his music, it's difficult to deny the charismatic mystique that has afforded him widespread recognition and critical acclaim. Personally, I had always responded favorably to whatever courses Dylan had chosen to take, so approaching him live, I was already biased in favor of the man. I was shocked at his appearance. He seemed ragged and worn (which later proved to be deceptive. Make-up, heavy black around the eyes, cast strange shadows over his face under the lights). The music, though, was even more startling. My initial reaction was thoroughly negative, to put it mildly. In comparison to what was then currently happening in rock, the music seemed, bluntly, quite lame. The new arrangements seemed clumsy and awkward, overriding the simplicity that had originally made the songs work. But as I listened closer it rang with a clear resonance. The sound in the hall was exceptional, and the musicians excellent. This was certainly not, as many reviews and reviewers had suggested, "Las Vegas" nor was it disco. It was just Dylan, older, to be sure, scraggly and unkempt as always, even in his new black and white stage suit, his band playing behind him like a mini-orchestra in perfect synch. I met Dylan a week later, at a typical record company bash held for him and his band after one of the Madison Square Garden shows. A friend introduced me to him and, sitting at an adjacent table, I had ample opportunity to observe him at close quarters. I sensed no animosity from him, no aggression nor defense; indeed, he seemed rather shy. His expertise at deterring conversation from himself, at keeping the talk light and meaningless, was obvious. He chain smoked and drank red wine all night. He appeared drunk at times, slurring words and laughing a lot, but it could easily have been an act, a way of retaining his one-upmanship in any situation. Dylan, the enigmatic cynic, the infallible put-on artist remained in control. Three months later, I caught up with the Bob Dylan tour once again, this time, down south in Birmingham, Alabama. Looking

disheveled as ever, the Jack of Hearts had once again trumped those in his audience who had been led to believe press reports of his new "slick" image. The tour had almost reached its end and the band was much tighter than they had been earlier. The songs no longer felt stiff, they were flowing now, having settled into their new forms. Dylan spoke to the crowd a lot that night, introducing songs with brief stories or parables,

breathing new life into songs 10, even 15 years old. He ended the show with 'Forever Young,' which he dedicated to one of his children. "This is our last--look for us," he said, "We may be back. I'm not quite ready to be put out to pasture just yet!" On the way out of town, I left a note for Dylan with the desk clerk of his hotel, saying that I wished to interview him, that I had no ulterior motive at all other than an interest and a desire to talk. I left a number for him to call and headed back home to Atlanta. A week later, backstage at the Omni in Atlanta, an hour before going onstage, Bob Dylan sat alone in his dressing room, strumming an old Martin guitar that had yellowed with age, the wood around the pick-guard chipped from years of use. Dressed in a green flannel shirt, black leather pants and boots, his eyes hidden behind dark aviator shades, he was relaxed and friendly, the antithesis of the guarded creature which the media so often portrays him as. His old black leather jacket lay crumpled up on one of the chairs, a small notebook peeked out of one of the pockets. What appeared to be chicken scratchings made their way across the open page. "I'm always writing something" he explained as he continued to pick a haunting blues melody on the guitar.

I mentioned to him that I had noticed a definite theme running through his more recent albums, culminating on 'Desire'. He didn't seem too happy with the idea, though, and emphasized his disagreement with a forceful strum. "That album didn't have a concept. It didn't have that type of concept. Of course I wrote it with somebody else too, but I always kept it kinda on the track of where I thought it should be going. I can look back on it just like anybody else...but when that particular album was happening, I didn't know what was happening at the time. We tried it with a lot of different people in the studio, a lot of different types of sound and I even had back-up singers on that album for two or three days, a lot of percussion, a lot going on. But as it got down, I got more irritated with all this sound going on and eventually just settled on bass, drums and violin. "That was new," he stressed. "I didn't take that out as far as I

wanted to, I didn't have a chance to do that. I wanted to do more harmonica and violin together but we never got a chance to do that. But, yeah, all that time, those songs like 'Isis' and and all

that--gee, I haven't done that for a long time--I used to do that song all the time..." 'Desire', Dylan's collaboration with writer Jacques Levy, was a deeply mystical statement, the violin capturing the free, gypsy spirit so inherent in the songs and later in the whole Rolling Thunder idea. "Yeah, it was that. It definitely was that. Oh you know, we did it all night long, into the morning. I never slept when I made that album, I couldn't sleep. I would have to listen to it again to really answer these questions in a coherent way." "You've left it behind in a way," I said. "No, I haven't left the songs behind. I never leave the songs behind. I might leave the arrangements and the mood behind, but the songs, I never leave them behind." At Newport in 1965, he unleashed his new-found electricity on an unsuspecting audience. Or as he put it in Atlanta, when introducing 'Maggie's Farm': "I was invited to Newport in 1965. I had been invited there before and never caused too much fuss, but I was invited in '65 and I went and I played this particular song. Anyway, people booted me out of town, actually, for playing this particular tune and it was hard to believe that this song caused such a disturbance, but it did! It's called "I Ain't Gonna Work on Maggie's Farm No More." Years later, after a seemingly endless flow of changes in direction, he is still meeting with the same type of criticism. Dylan steps in and out of musical forms these days with an unusual ease, echoes of carnival music blend harmoniously with primitive jungle rhythms and Chicago blues, while Dylan the Folksinger and Dylan the Newport Electric Poet still exist. As at Newport, Dylan has not met with much favorable response to his new sound. People are disturbed by the strange changes. The unfamiliarity. He refuses to stagnate, to be pinned down, categorized: "Art is the perpetual motion of illusion," he once observed. And he truly lives his belief. I mentioned a line from 'Idiot Wind': "Your chestnut mare shoots through my head and is making me see stars!" (Dylanologist A.J. Weberman claims that equine references in Dylan songs refer to heroin.) Interestingly, 'Idiot Wind' was written before Dylan's teaming with Jacques Levy, co-writer (with Roger McGuinn) of 'Chestnut Mare' years earlier. "That's right! Yeah!" He laughed delightfully. "I'm sure it's all connected up y'know, way down the line."

"But yeah, I had a couple of years there, where I went out to be by myself quite a bit of the time, and that's where I experienced those kind of songs, on the 'Blood on the Tracks' album...I'll do anything to write a song..." he laughed. "I used to anyway." 'Street Legal' seems to backtrack through all the aforementioned albums. It is an acknowledgment of changes, both internal and external. "You're right. Let's say with a song like 'True Love Tends to Forget'..." He lit a cigarette. "The mood I was in on that song is--I mean, that means a lot, if you think about it, y'know. True love tends to forget--it isn't like a possession trip, when you've been

wronged, that type of thing--I was trying to get the most out of that. I thought that was my best album." I agreed. "I hear it sometimes on the radio or a record player and I see that it's badly mixed and it doesn't sound very good, but what can you do? I've got, on Columbia Records alone, 21 or 22 albums out. So every time you make an album, you want it to be new, good and different, but personally, when you look back on them--for me--all my albums are, are just measuring points for wherever I was at at a certain period of time. I went into the studio, recorded the songs as good as I could, and left. Basically, realistically, I'm a live performer and want to play onstage for the people and not make records that may sound really good." I mentioned how the current show had changed each time that I had seen him, and how much tighter the band had become as the tour progressed. "Yeah, well it's never gonna be the same two nights in a row." Dylan has made many comments in the press recently about the 1980s. In his 'Rolling Stone' interview with Jonathan Cott he said, "Anyone who's going to be doing anything will have his or her cards showing. You won't be able to get back in the '80s." What did he mean by that? "I don't know what I meant by that," he chuckled. "Me and Jonathan, every time he does an interview, we just get drunk. I don't think you should show all of your cards all of the time, I didn't mean that." He continued: "It's like, when I started out playing--it's hard to put into words--I don't know what the eighties are going to be like. I imagine a lot of the glue is gonna hold a lot of things together which are sort of scattered now. Appearances of people you know, some wearing blue uniforms with badges, they are probably going to be standing side by side with housewives with their hair up in curlers, wanting the same things. All these different elements are going to--I think--be molded together. I think people are going to be more honest in the '80s." Like the '60s, I wondered? "No, never. I don't think so." He answered adamantly. Dylan remembers the '60s very well. They were years that shaped him, that produced the inspiration for him to create some of the most potent art of the decade. His strange song-poems mirrored the turbulence and chaos of the times. He spoke for an entire generation, it seemed, and then suddenly he wanted no involvement with the movement he had given voice to. Some say it was the motorcycle accident. That it almost killed him, sent him crashing headlong into a nightmare of his own making. Others just say that he fell in love, settled into a more even existence in which politics and protest had no part. Radical critics like Weberman flatly accuse him of "drifting into indifference during a period when resistance was called for."

"I was always more tied up with the Beat Movement," he admits. "I don't know what the hippie movement was all about, that was a media thing, I think, 'Rent a Hippie'--I don't know what that was

about. A lot of people, people that I knew, were in the early '60s up 'til '65 or '66. There was a different comradeship. There was drugs, but drugs were something that was just a playful thing or something which wasn't that romanticized. Drugs were always in the folk clubs and in the jazz clubs, but outside of those places I never really saw too many drugs." "The drugs at the end of the '60s were artificial. They were those--ah--L.S...acid, all that stuff made in a laboratory. Well I guess it's all made in a laboratory one way or another. I don't know. I was never involved in the acid scene either." By 1968 the Beatles had released 'Sgt. Pepper'. Rock and roll had moved primarily into studios and electronics began to become more and more a part of the music. Acid rock flourished on the West Coast and the new art form was just becoming self-consciously aware of itself with a little help from its friends (often in the form of a little Kool-Aid). Dylan chose this time to put out the album he had been working on since the cataclysmic accident. 'John Wesley Harding' totally contradicted everything happening musically at the time. The deceptively simple folk melodies only served to draw one's attention even closer to the intensity of the lyrical message. Eventually, the '60s came to a close, the Beatles broke up, the war ended in a stalemate and we stumbled into the '70s in a catatonic daze. The music reflected the times. Rock had a few casualties of its own. Madison Avenue and Wall Street moved in as the voice of the people turned into a multibillion dollar industry. A few couldn't handle it, and destroyed themselves by becoming victims of their own myths. Others, like Jagger and Dylan, survived. "People are always talking about the '60s and now we are almost into the '80s and everybody wants to know what happened back then. Well," he answered himself, "in the '60s, everything that happened you did because you wanted to. You didn't do it because you thought you should do it or because it was the thing to do. Something inside of you told you you wanted to do it. There was a network all across the country--really. Very small, but very close, I still see those people travelling around y'know, they're still hanging in there. But as far as what happened, it will always be felt just the same as the Civil War was always felt into 1870 and 1880. It was just something which was felt by everyone whether they knew it or not and a lot of people in the '60s started all this which is happening now. They just don't realize it, you know." He put down the guitar, lit another cigarette. "But the '50s gave birth to the '60s too, don't forget, and in the '50s it was even rarer...like in the '60s it was people caught up on all the be-bop and the beat movement, or the subterranean culture that was going on, but it was home-like and it gave you identity." It is interesting that Dylan's material has always dealt with the opposing forces of black and white, whether on a material level--as during the '60s when songs like 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll' clarified the issues of the civil

rights movement--or on the spiritual level of his most recent work. Dylan has taken to wearing black and white on stage of late, costuming his entire band in the same. The effect is one of total balance. Yin and yang, darkness and light. "Well, I think I'm more of an extremist. But no, I'm more active than someone who is balancing," he said. "If you play the game all by yourself and you're the only one playing the game, then you want to balance the game, but if you're playing the game with someone else, you've got to ride up when it's time for someone else to ride down." Like a see saw? "Yeah right, and then you get the same kind of balance, but if you're playing by yourself then you've got to move to the middle." Which you don't do. "No, I'm uncomfortable in the middle, too easily blown down." When questioned about his unusual relationship with his record company--of being able to release any product he wants--he became edgy, his answer accompanied once again by the guitar. [As I am writing this, Bob Dylan is in the process of forming his own record company, Accomplice, to be distributed by CBS.] "CBS doesn't pay me, except for a royalty rate. They don't support these tours for me so they don't have any say. If they supported them, maybe they'd have some say in it." With 'Renaldo and Clara', Dylan took a new approach by filming the characters of his dreams. The film was an unconstructed, symbolic comment, a bold and original epic (its original four-hour length was the major complaint from most of its critics), visually combining the same elements Dylan uses in the written word. The actors and actresses, real people from his life, cast in fantasy roles. American film critics on the whole were not impressed with Dylan's work. They accused him of over-indulgence and blamed his "careless treatment" of people close to him for the break-up of his marriage, which followed shortly on the heels of the film's release. The 'Village Voice' sent an entire battalion of reviewers to see it and they all came back with negative impressions. However, the film was hailed at last year's Cannes Film Festival as one of the most innovative presentations there, an honor bestowed on Dylan by Europe's most discriminating cinema elite, which must have more than made up for the confused and confusing reviews it received in the US. Filmed by Sam Shepard, Dylan claims 'Renaldo' was 10 years in the works but has decided that, "For me, film wouldn't be the right thing to do right now. It's not live enough. You're acting for a camera, a director, you can't really see the results." 'Renaldo and Clara' seemed to be spontaneous. "That was great! Yeah, but I can't do that no more. It costs too much money for one, to make your own movie, and then if you make a movie for another man who's putting up the money, then he'll want what he wants." As the '50s gave way to the '60s, the age of the media superstar was born. James Dean gave way to Elvis Presley who gave way to Bob Dylan, each gigantic myths in their own time. While Elvis

found his way into Middle America's heart, the chasm James Dean left wasn't filled until Bob Dylan formed a new link in the ever-growing chain of super-anti-heroes. When compared to the people he once strived to be like, he denies all similarity of public persona. "It's not as heavy as it probably was to deal with being Elvis Presley. Elvis didn't write any of his songs don't forget, I write all this stuff so I know what I'm saying. I'm behind it so I don't feel like I'm a mystery or anything." Does he consider himself an artist as opposed to a musician or a songwriter? "Well yeah, it's like all the artists have had their periods right, and that they've changed--most people in history that have done anything at all have always been put down--so it don't bother me a bit. I don't care what people say. Whether I'm an artist, or a musician, or a poet, or a songwriter or just anything..."



THE BRUCE HEIMAN INTERVIEW, TUSCON, DECEMBER 7, 1979

Telephone interview conducted by Bruce Heiman from the KMEX Radio in Tuscon Arizona on December 7, 1979, the day before Dylan's show in Tuscon. Broadcast the same day (?).

Sources: Transcribed in The Telegraph #29, Spring 1988, by Clinton Heylin in his fascinating series of articles about Dylan's Christian period. Tape.

Heiman: OK, my name is Bruce Heiman. I'm with KMEX radio here in Tuscon. We got a press release from the Tuscon chapter of the American Atheists and they said in response to your recent embrace of the born-again Christian movement they plan to leaflet your upcoming concert. They say they recognize the need to inform those in the audience that the new Dylan cause-celebre is a repressive and and reactionary ideology and that members intend to draw attention to the contradictions between the previous content of your art form and the message which your songs now expound.

Dylan: Uh-huh. I still don't quite grasp what you're saying or who's saying it or ...

Heiman: OK. It's the American Atheists in Tuscon.

Dylan: Is this a group?

Heiman: Yeah. Actually the American Atheists is a worldwide group headed by Madelaine Mary O'Hare, and they have a chapter here in Tuscon, and I think basically what they are talking about is your stand in the past and the type of music you played and the message you tried to get across and the music you're playing today and the different message you're trying to get across.

Dylan: Yeah, well, whatever the old message was, The Bible says "All things become new, old things are passed away". I guess this group doesn't believe that. What is it exactly that they're protesting?

Heiman: I think what they're against ... there's another statement, that they make. It says ...

Dylan: Are they against the doctrine of Jesus Christ, or that he died on the cross or that man is born into sin? Just what exactly is it they're protesting?

Heiman: Well the Atheists are against any sort of religion, be it Christianity

Dylan: Well, Christ is no religion. We're not talking about religion ... Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Heiman: There's another statement they made that maybe you could shed some light on. They said they would like to remind Dylan fans and audiences that one's right to say something does not per se lend any validity to the statement. So in essence what they're saying is that you have followers who are going to be at the concert and are going to listen to the message of your music.

Dylan: Right. I follow God, so if my followers are following me, indirectly they're gonna be following God too, because I don't sing any song which hasn't been given to me by the Lord to sing.

Heiman: OK. They believe that all religion is repressive.

Dylan: Well, religion is repressive to a certain degree. Religion is another form of bondage which man invents to to get himself to God. But that's why Christ came. Christ didn't preach religion. He preached the Truth, the Way and the Life. He said He'd come to give life and life more abundantly. He talked about life, not necessarily religion ...

Heiman: They say that your song now expound passive acceptance of one's fate. Do you agree with that? I'm not exactly sure what they mean by that.

Dylan: I'm not exactly sure what they mean by that either. But I don't feel that that's true. But I'm not sure what that means - "passive acceptance to man's fate" What is man's fate?

Heiman: I don't know. These aren't my ideologies. They are just a group of Atheists.

Dylan: Well, this ideology isn't my ideology either. My ideology now would be coming out of the Scripture. You see, I didn't invent these things - these things have just been shown to me. I'll stand

on that faith - that they are true. I believe they're true. I *know* they're true.

Heiman: Do you feel that the message of your music has changed over the years from music which talked about war to music that talks about Christianity?

Dylan: No. There's gonna be war. There's always war and rumors of war. And The Bible talks about a war coming up which will be a war to end all wars ...

tape breaks

... The spirit of the atheist will not prevail, I can tell you that much, It's a deceiving spirit.

Heiman: Why do you maintain that it will not prevail?

Dylan: Is it anti-God? Is an atheist anti-God?

Heiman: Yes, I'm trying to think ... I interviewed Madelaine Mary O'Hare a couple of weeks ago and she said it's anti-religion, anti-God. I think that she was saying that anybody who believes in a Supreme Being is - to use her word - stupid. So they are against anything to do with religion.

Dylan: Uh-huh.

Heiman: Sometimes it's hard for me to grasp what they're saying.

Dylan: Well, a religion which says you have to do certain things to get to God - they're probably talking about that kind of religion, which is a religion which is by works: you can enter into Kingdom by what you do, what you wear, what you say, how many times a day you pray, how many good deeds you may do. If that's what they mean by religion, that type of religion will not get you into the Kingdom, that's true. However there is a Master Creator, a Supreme Being in the Universe.

Heiman: Alright. In another one of their statements they say that: "For years Dylan cried out against the Masters Of War and the power elite. The new Dylan now proclaims that we must serve a new master, a master whose nebulous origins were ignorance, foolishness, stupidity and blind faith. The Dylan who inspired us to look beyond banal textbooks and accepted ideologies now implores us to turn inwards to the pages of The Holy Bible, a book

filled with contradictions, inaccuracies, outrages and absurdities". Now this is what they're saying.

Dylan: Well, The Bible says: "The Fool has said in his heart, There's no God ... "

Heiman: OK. They're saying the movement is a fraud and evasive ...

Dylan: Well, I don't know what movement. What movement are they talking about. The American Atheists?

Heiman: No, the Jesus Movement.

Dylan: Well, it isn't a fraud. There's nothing fraudulent about it. It's all true. It's always been true. It is true and will be true.

Heiman: They're calling upon your admirers, the people who support you, who will attend your concert, to go on and appreciate your art form but to avoid the psychological and social pitfalls - this is their words - or being victimized by your new-found religious fantasy.

Dylan: Well, they can't do that. You can't separate the words from the music. I know people try to do that. But they can't do that. It's like separating the foot from the knee.

Heiman: You're saying it's all one.

Dylan: It is all one. **Heiman:** OK, Bob, I appreciate your time, I really do.