

GRIZZLY BEAR
POOR LAZARUS
COLUMBUS STOCKADE
BUDDY BOLDEN BLUES
YOU GOT TO HURRY
2:19 BLUES

NOBODY KNOWS YOU WHEN YOU'RE DOWN & OUT
WASN'T THAT A MIGHTY STORM
FRANKIE & ALBERT
WHO'S THAT YONDER
MAKE ME A PALLET
HE WAS A FRIEND OF MINE

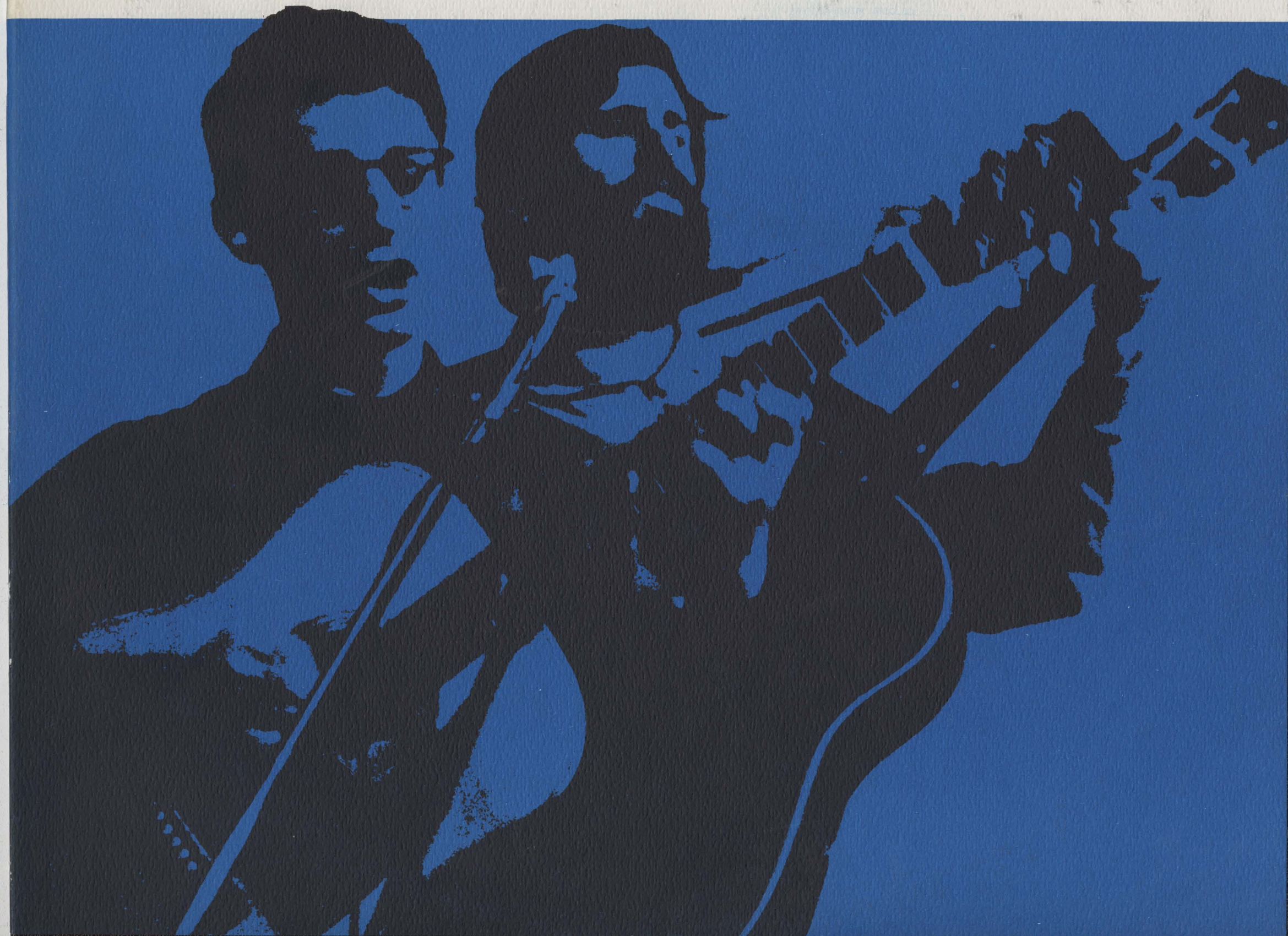
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**CAHN & VON SCHMIDT
DESCRIPTIVE NOTES
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Eric Von Schmidt and Rolf Cahn

I first met Eric Von Schmidt in the winter of 1959. For weeks people had gently informed me that whatever I played and sang in the blues was all right, but "wait until you hear Ric do that." I was ready to be coldly polite to this Teuton upstart, who probably played with true Germanic precision. I even speculated whether he had a duelling scar on his left cheek.

He turned out to be a bearded madman, a genuinely golden person, and a genius with a direct truth in his music, his paintings and his movies, that still stuns me.

We had a great deal in common: the night we met we got lost because, instead of following a "Route 3", we followed a "Route 2", since the mathematics of the thing seemed unimportant.

We both worshipped K.C. Douglas (Who's That Yonder is adapted from K.C.'s singing and playing), Huddie Ledbetter (Frankie and Albert), Jelly Roll Morton (Buddy Bolden's Blues, The 219 -- Mamie's -- Blues), and the many great ones who had been recorded for the Library of Congress in the prisons of the South (Grizzly Bear, Poor Lazarus, You Got To Hurry, He Was a Friend of Mine). Especially fascinating to both of us had been Sin Killer Griffin, and we had separately worked out an arrangement of his Wasn't That a Mighty Storm. Ric's version, in the major key and accompanied by knife guitar, is on the record.

But, above that, what we had in common was a feeling about life, and this wonderful direct music that expressed our experience in that life, or rather, that phase of our experience which we could not evoke in other forms of music and art in which we were active.

A collaboration of two people is of so many things ... the night we were to record for the Harvard radio station, and were apologetically informed that after 11:00 P.M. there could be no females in the building and that there could be no alcohol consumed. Ric got up, put on his Southern planter's hat, and told the young man that he could take the radio station and its rules and shove them up John Harvard's; I could at the same time merely echo such poetic profundity with "Ole!", and we left in a dignified huff.

Oh yes, the night I found Ric hovering with tragic resignation over his car. It had refused to start for psychosomatic reasons. He then made one of the few didactic statements of his life: "Cars are so beautiful when they work." We expertly maneuvered the car into the only blind alley in that part of Boston. This alley was so obscure that even the AAA couldn't find it. The car may still be there.

The night at the Club 47 when Ric came in during a set of mine, refreshments and guitar in hand, carefully put down his planter's hat, opened his guitar case, placed his refreshments on the piano, and walked on stage to play one of the greatest choruses ever. He hadn't been there for several months, and

some of the new local muscle was preparing to throw this derelict out into the street.

The actual recording sessions were an ironic reverse. Ric and I arrived, very happy, for the first session, to be confronted with huge booms, very electronic-looking devices and cameras, and several very bright young men and their wives. They even took a thing called "room sound", which consists of high fidelity silence. That session was a disaster. So was the next, although the bright young men had come without their ties. But the third session, which represents half of this record, was wonderful, because we were stone cold sober and they were three sheets to the wind: we just played and sang while they tried to find the right buttons.

Ric pulls something out of me with his music. Listen to the opening chorus of Nobody Knows You, and the incredible drive and pathos of Frankie and Albert. The picking I do behind him there is still a mystery to me. More than that, we are so different in our styles that we supplement each other in sound. Ric pulls his ideas mainly from picks and arpeggios on chord patterns, and his attack on the string has a subtle, lyrical quality that drives through its rhythmic phrasing. My own playing is through scales and keys, with a heavier thumb and a sharper, punching, almost angry approach to strums, picks, and single string choruses. Yet -- I have always felt that we each play what the other feels in the immediate and intensely musical sense that creates the deep joy of "Yeah! That's it! The one idea of the one moment that I wanted."

Rolf Cahn

SIDE I, Band 1: GRIZZLY BEAR

Grizzly Bear is actually a work holler, with the words "Grizzly Bear" answering the lead line. Ric has changed the song completely, as I did with the jump blues choruses.

I'm gonna tell you a little story 'bout a grizzly bear,

Tell you a little story 'bout a grizzly bear,
Well a great big grizzly, grizzly bear (repeat).

Well, my mama was ascaresd of a grizzly bear, (repeat)
So my daddy went ahunting for a grizzly bear,
And looked in Louisiana for a grizzly bear.

Well he looked everywhere for a grizzly bear, (repeat)

Jack of diamonds ain't nothin' but a grizzly bear,
(repeat)
Had great long hair like a grizzly bear, (repeat)
Had big blue eyes like a grizzly bear (repeat)

I'm gonna tell you in the mornin' 'bout a grizzly bear,
(repeat)

Well, I been everywhere (improvising here with "Yea,
Lord,") (repeat)

I'm gonna kill that grizzly bear, (repeat)
That great big grizzly, grizzly bear. (repeat,
improvising close.)

SIDE I, Band 2: LAZARUS

Lazarus has been completely changed by Ric, who doesn't even remember the original melody. When prison food and other conditions became too much for a man, he would literally walk on the counter, kicking the food onto the floor. Since this resulted in violent objections from the other convicts, as well as thorough preventative measures from the guards, only a very tough and very angry man would "walk the commissary counter".

Well, Lazarus, good partner, walked on the commissary counter,
And he walked away, then he walked away.

High sheriff told the deputy,
"Go out and get me Lazarus,
Dead or alive, oh, dead or alive."

Well the high sheriff began to wonder
Where in the world they'd find Lazarus.
I don't know, well, I don't know.

They found poor Lazarus, well, between two mountains,
They blowed him down, and they blowed him down.

Well they shot poor Lazarus,
Shot him with a great big number:
Number forty-five, number forty-five.

They taken poor Lazarus, dragged him back to the shanty,
Right by his heels, right by his heels.

Then Lazarus told the captain,
"Give me a cool drink of water,
Before I die, well, before I die."

Then Lazarus told the sergeant,
"I don't blame you for blowin' me down, sir.
That's your job, well, that's your job."

Then Lazarus' old father heard his son was dying,
Said, "Let the fool go down, let the fool go down."

Lazarus' little sister couldn't go to the funeral,
Didn't have no shoes, she didn't have no shoes.

And Lazarus' old mother heard her son was dying,
She commenced to cry, she commenced to cry.

"I knowed he was a bully, was a bully from a baby,
But he's my only son, he's my only son."

SIDE I, Band 3: COLUMBUS STOCKADE

Columbus Stockade, first learned in this form from Jack Langen in Berkeley, California. The changes from the country song "Columbus Stockade Blues" were made over the years. I seem to keep changing the melody every month.

Way down in Columbus, Georgia,
South of sunny Tennessee,
No-one to care or comfort,
No-one to give a damn for me.

CHORUS:

Then go away and leave me if you want to,
I never let you cross my mind.
If in your heart you love another,
Then go and leave me darling, I don't mind.

I am shackled down here in the Columbus Stockade;
The chains on my legs are making sores.
I am laying in the Columbus Stockade,
The jailer man ain't coming to my door.

(CHORUS)

Last night as I lay sleeping,
I dreamt I held you in my arms.
When I awoke I was mistaken,
I was peering through the prison bars.

(CHORUS)

Tell me, darling, who will love you,
Who will hold you in their arms,
Who will take your future over,
While I'm behind these prison bars.

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 4: BUDDY BOLDEN BLUES

-- based on the performance by Jelly Roll Morton.

I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say, (repeat)
Well, I thought I heard King Bolden say
"Let Mister Bolden play."

I thought I heard Frankie Dusen shout,
"Gal, gimme that money before I beat it out.
Gimme that money like I explained you, before I
beat it out."

I thought I heard him shout.

I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say,
"Nasty bunch of dirty, take it away,
You're terrible, you're awful, take it away."
I thought I heard him say.

In the early days down in New Orleans, pick up a guy carrying a pistol without a permit, now, they put him in jail. Fine him about ten dollars now. And if he couldn't pay that fine, they'd give him a broom and tell him to go out and sweep up the French Market. Well, he get out there, there'd be nobody around, and he'd take that old broom, and he'd lay it down and walk away. Kept the jails relatively unpopulated in those days in New Orleans.

I thought I heard Buddy Bolden shout,
"Open up the window, let the bad air out,
Open up the window, let the foul air out."
I thought I heard him shout.

And I thought I heard Judge Fogarty say,
"Thirty days in the Market, now take him away.
Give him a good broom to sweep with, take him away."
I thought I heard him say.

I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say,
"You're a nasty bunch of dirties, take it away.
You're terrible, you're awful, take it away."
I thought I heard him say.

SIDE I, Band 5: YOU GOT TO HURRY

-- from a recording at the Mississippi State Prison.

You got to hurry, hurry, hurry, well,
To get in touch with the son of God.
You got to hurry, hurry, hurry,
Time is drawing near.

Let me tell you, false Christians,
What makes the time so hard:
Well now, you spend more time in pleasuring,
Than you do in trusting God.

(CHORUS)

Come back, Jesus, consume the flood,
Turn the moon into gold, turn the sun into blood.
Come back, angel, bolt the door.
The time has come, won't come no more.

(CHORUS)

Going 'cross that river,
I'm going to stick my sword in the sand,
I'm going to shout my troubles over,
I made it to the promised land.

(CHORUS)

I said, won't you meet me, Jesus,
Meet me in the middle of the air,
And if these wings should fail me,
Won't you meet me with another pair.

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 6: 2:19 BLUES

The 219 Blues, or Mamie's Blues, is adapted from Jelly Roll Morton's Mamie's Blues. I added the fourth verse from the traditional blues verses.

Two nineteen took my baby away. (repeat)
Two seventeen bring her back someday.

She was standing on the corner, feet was soaking
wet, (repeat)
Talking to every man, every man that she met.

If you ain't got a dollar, give me a lousy dime.
(repeat)
I gotta have some money to feed that hungry man of
mine. (repeat)

Wonder where that daylight special gone. (repeat)
You don't need no coaching, baby,
You know just what you done.

SIDE II, Band 1: NOBODY KNOWS YOU WHEN YOU'RE DOWN AND OUT

Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out is mostly based on Bessie Smith's performance. I made a few changes, most of them unconscious.

Once I lived the life of a millionaire,
Spending my money, I didn't care.
I carried my friends out for a mighty good time,
Buying bootlet liquor, champagne (and) wine.
Then I began to fall so low,
Didn't have no money and no place to go,
If I ever get my hands on a dollar again,
I'll hold on to it till the eagle grins, because

Nobody knows you when you're down and out.
In your pockets not one penny,
And your friends you haven't any.
But when you get on your feet again,

Everybody wants to be your long-lost friend.
It's mighty strange without a doubt,
No man can use you when you're down and out,
I mean, when you're down and out.

SIDE II, Band 2: WASN'T THAT A MIGHTY STORM

Wasn't That a Mighty Storm, from the singing of Sin Killer Griffin, a visiting preacher at the Darrington State Farm, Sandy Point, Texas, with congregation. Ric accompanies with knife guitar here, and interprets the melody in the major scale.

Well, Galveston had a sea wall
To keep the waters down,
But the high tide from the ocean
Spread the water over the town.

CHORUS:

Wasn't that a mighty storm,
Wasn't that a mighty storm with water,
Wasn't that a mighty storm,
Blew the people away.

Well, the trumpets they give warning,
I said you better leave this place.
But no-one thought of leaving
Till Death stared them in the face.

(CHORUS)

The year of nineteen hundred,
That was fifteen years ago,
Death threw a stone at my mother,
With Death she had to go.

Now the sea began rolling,
The ships they could not stand,
I could hear the captain crying,
Please save a drowning man.

(CHORUS)

The trains they were loaded,
With people leaving town,
But the tracks gave way from the ocean,
The trains they went on down.

Death, your hands are clammy,
You've got them on my knee.
You threw a stone at my mother,
Death come back after me.

(CHORUS)

Well, Death, the cruel master,
And the winds they began to blow.
He rode out on a train of horses,
I cried Death won't you let me go.

(CHORUS)

Lord, the trees fell on that island,
And the houses they give away.
Some people they strived and drowned,
Some died most every way.

SIDE II, Band 3: FRANKIE AND ALBERT

Frankie and Albert is based on the performance of Leadbelly.

Well, Frankie was a woman, everybody knows,
Paid one hundred dollars for every suit of Albert's
clothes.
Loved that man, done her wrong,
She loved that man, but he done her wrong.

Now Frankie been working in the white folks' kitchen,
and Albert come in just before day, she said now lay
down Albert, take your rest. I'm going out, but I'll
be back in a little while. So Albert get in that bed
and he covered up his head, but he's looking at
Frankie, and he's peeping out. Now Frankie get up
and go, now Albert jump out of that bed, and he run
down to Alice Fry's house, where his girlfriend's at.
Now Frankie come back and see her man gone -- can't
stand to see her man gone -- now she's going down to
the Hurdy Saloon.

Frankie went down to the Hurdy Saloon,
Called for a bottle of beer,
Said to the loving bartender,
Has my loving man been here.
He's my man, doing me wrong,
He's my man, doing me wrong.

I'll tell you about a bartender, you like him and he
like you. Well, don't tell him nothing, somebody
going to come along and sweet-talk him, he'll run his
hands through the front of his hair, and he come out
with the whole truth. Frankie talk to the man like
that, and he said,

I ain't going to tell you no story,
Ain't going to tell you no lie,
Albert was here about an hour ago,
With a woman named Alice Fry.
He's your man, doing you wrong,
Well, he's your man, doing you wrong.

Now Frankie going walking with blood in her eye.

Well, Frankie she went walking,
Wasn't gone for fun,
Underneath her apron,
Had Albert's forty-one,
Kill her man, cause he done her wrong,
Well, kill her man, cause he done her wrong.

Now Frankie got down to the corner, she didn't want to
give no alarm, so she walked up real slow.

Frankie went down to the corner,
Didn't give no alarm,
Looked through the window glass,
Albert's laying in the woman's arms.
Was her man, doing her wrong,
Well, he was her man, doing her wrong.

She come in and shot him now.

Frankie she shot Albert,
Fell down on his knees,
Cried, Lordy, Lordy, policeman,
Don't let this woman kill me.
I was her man, doing her wrong,
I was her man, doing her wrong.

Frankie come back and shot him one more time.

Frankie she shot Albert,
Fell all in a knot.
Come on down, Mrs. Johnson,
See where your son is shot,
He was your son, and the only one,
Well, he was your son, and the only one.

Now Mrs. Johnson come on down, couldn't hardly recog-
nize her son rolling from side to side. He looked
up and he said,

Roll me over, Mother,
Roll me over slow,
Roll me over for the last time,
Never roll me over no more.
I was your son, and the only one,
I was your son, and the only one.

I'll tell you now, Frankie had nerve enough to go to
Mrs. Johnson: beg your pardon for killing the last
child you had in the world. I said now,

Frankie went down to Mrs. Johnson,
Fell down on her knees,
Cried, Lordy, Lordy, Mrs. Johnson,
Will you forgive me please,
I killed your son, and the only one.

Mrs. Johnson talk back, said,

I can't forgive you, Frankie,
Forgive you I can not,
You done killed my Albert,
Only support I got,
And he's my son, and the only one,
Well, he's my son, and the only one.

I said, they taking Albert to the graveyard.

Well, they taking Albert to the graveyard,
Went there to lay him down,
Frankie was ascreaming,
With such a mournful sound,
I killed my man cause he done me wrong,
I killed my man cause he done me wrong.

Well, Frankie went to the headpost,
Fell down on her knees,
Speak one word, Albert,
And give my heart some ease.
He was my man, done me wrong,
He was my man, done me wrong.

Now Frankie and Mrs. Johnson, just pulling a sukey-
jump, they didn't want to go home; everything they
had was six feet in the graveyard ground. Mrs.
Johnson come up and says,

My son, my son, my son, my son.

Frankie come over and says,

Eye bye, bye bye, bye bye, bye bye.

SIDE II, Band 4: WHO'S THAT YONDER?

Who's That Yonder, adapted from the singing and play-
ing of K.C. Douglas.

Well, who's that yonder, coming down the road?
Well, it looks like Mattie, swear she's walking slow.

Well, I ain't going down the big road by myself,
If I can't carry you, carry somebody else.

Well, I'm going down to see Aunt Caroline die,
She's a two-headed woman, and she never told a lie.

Well, tell me baby, where you stay last night,
Your hair all down, you know you ain't talking
right.

Well, followed my rider to her burying ground,
I didn't feel sorry till they let her down.

SIDE II, Band 5: MAKE ME A PALLET
Make Me a Pallet, adapted from various performances,
including Jelly Roll Morton's.

Make me a pallet down on your floor,
If your mean man come, swear he'll never know.
Yes, make it for me, baby, make it soft and low,
Make it for me, baby, make it by the kitchen door,
And if your man come in the front door,
Oh, it's out the back door I go,
If you will make me that pallet all on the floor.

I will wake up in the morning, cook you a red-hot
meal, (repeat)
Just to show you I appreciate all the things you
done for me,
I will wake up in the morning, cook you a red-hot
meal.

SIDE II, Band 6: HE WAS A FRIEND OF MINE
He Was a Friend of Mine, sung with the title 'Shorty
George' by Smith Casey, Glemens State Farm, Brazoria,
Texas, 1939.

Well, he was a friend of mine, (repeat)
Every time I think now, I just can't keep from crying.

Well, he died on the road, (repeat)
He didn't have no money, money to pay his board.

And I stole away and cried, (repeat)
I never had no money, never been satisfied.
Yes, he was a friend of mine, (repeat)
Every time I think now, I just can't keep from crying.