

CULTURAL INVASION ISSUE!

The Best of Western Culture
Westerner

AUGUST 2017

**He Taught Me
How To Yodel...**

Catch Up With Record
Breaking Australian
Country Singer
Frank Ifield

Beating the Beatles:

Brian Poole and the Tremeloes
shifted the Beatles from number
one. Now he's back.

The Enigmatic Connie Francis

Catch our interview with the legendary
singer inside this issue.

**How The American Western Is
Conquering The British Market**



THE WESTERNER®

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JOHN DEERE

FROM THE EDITOR:



This month, I've bounced Bruce out of the editor's chair to write the introduction for the July issue of "Westerner" magazine. Not that I'm used to this kind of work—but I could get used to it. This is a damn comfy chair. This month, the magazine is all about achievement. Now, I don't lay claim to many achievements. I've promoted a lot of hit books—I represented half of the books in the top one hundred bestselling Westerns, and I've dabbled with some super sellers—but that's not achievement in the same league as the interviewees in this issue. This issue is about achieving one's dreams. Now, achievements, dreams and ambitions are all very interesting—but what about the way people view achievement? Sometimes something you or I may be very proud of means nothing to the next person. For example, my wife was very excited when I worked on consecutive number one books. She told my mother, who had no understanding of the impact those books had achieved. But when my mother found out I had interviewed Frank Ifield, our cover star, she thought that was the greatest thing her boy had ever done. What's he like? How does his voice sound? How tall is he? What's his favorite candy bar? All of that jazz... So my mother now thinks her son is notable for having spent time on the phone with Frank Ifield. Every time she calls, she wants to know how he is, what he's doing and when he's going to come to England. It's wild.

And that is wonderful because it was an experience for me, and for her, and for you who are about to read his interview. I think small experiences all add up to the greatest of life

experiences. Let me tell you that this issue of Westerner is filled with people who have had great experiences, awe-inspiring careers and fantastic dreams. From Brian Poole who, with the help of his band "The Tremeloes," managed to knock the mighty Beatles from the top spot of the record charts to Fred Staff who, from a country far away, managed to score a top-twenty bestselling book—sorry... *three* top-twenty bestselling books. Then there's Connie Francis, who managed to maintain a huge career with foreign language hits, albums and concert appearances around the world, and Frank Ifield who dreamed of coming to England to sing at the London Palladium and managed to become one of the best known singers in the country with hit records, a movie and a career that has spanned a lifetime.

Boy... It makes me very tired to think about the amount of knowledge and experience in this issue. But it's in here, and next month there will be more, because Westerner magazine is not tied to a demographic or a budget. This magazine is designed to pull together interesting people from around the world and present them to you in an interesting way. Come to think of it... this magazine is an achievement for a publishing company like Dusty Saddle Publishing, and we are proud of it. Just as we are proud of having moved ten million pages of Western product this year, and that we managed to score several dozen hit Westerns. Those are all achievements, but it couldn't be done without the help of you—the reader. This magazine is, in many ways, our way of saying "thank you" for making our company successful. And you do, every time you buy our books, write fan mail to our authors, send in story ideas for our authors, review the books we publish, and generally let us know that you are rooting for us. So, it's our pleasure to introduce you to the July issue of Westerner—from our house to yours—free of charge and filled with the dreams of a generation.

Best wishes,

Nick Wale

Acting Editor

INSIDE THIS EDITION OF THE WESTERNER©:

From the Editor

Inside This Edition of the Westerner

Letters to the Editor

Special Featured Article:

Frank Ifield

He taught me how to yodel... but what is he doing now? Australia's very own Frank Ifield steps in for a chat with our editor, Nick Wale.

The Book Promotion Corner

with Nick Wale

Fred Staff

How the King of Bolivia Conquered the American West—Fred Staff talks to Stone Jacobs about the great success he's had with his Westerns.

Robert Hanlon

How Hanlon, a million-selling Western author views the Western market. How do you make your book a hit? Pick the brains of one of the biggest names in the genre...

Special Feature Article:

Connie Francis

Catching up with one of the great icons of the 1960s. Rediscover the great music of Connie Francis—who has a new memoir on the way!

Feature:

Judy Mastrangelo

The Magical Illustration of Judy Mastrangelo

Catching Up with the Times:

Brian Poole

How Brian Poole and the Tremeloes beat the Beatles, kept singing and just finished a U.K. tour with another one around the corner.

Feature:

G. Michael Vasey

The Paranormal Corner

The Latest from David Watts

'The Long Ride' Has Been Unleashed

Feature Review:

The Long Ride

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



I'm excited to present the second summer edition of the Westerner© because it's full of my favorites. First, we'd like to thank our sponsor Deere and Company for helping us keep the Westerner© free for our readers. Next, I'd like to thank top singer Frank Ifield for taking part in this issue. He has a new album out—you'll want to get your copy of "Encore" after reading his interview so the [link is here](#).

We've received an overwhelming amount of emails regarding articles in our past few issues. First up is the most popular topic of the past issue, Bernard Cornwell's interview about his work and new TV show, "The Last Kingdom." I've picked a few of the more representative offerings but could have made up a whole issue of your comments.

Bobby Rydell also seems to have made a splash. That's fantastic to see as he's

still out there working the clubs and making great music.

Let me just take this opportunity to say thanks! We appreciate hearing from you. If you would like to contact us, please send your email to dustysaddlepublishing@gmail.com

Dear Westerner Magazine:

I grew up in the late fifties and early sixties and loved Bobby Rydell. My mom bought me my first 45 record when I was seven years old. The record was Bobby Rydell singing Wild One. I played that record until the grooves wore out on the vinyl.

Then *Bye Bye Birdie* came out, and I went to see it with my friend Susie and her mom. I thought it was the greatest movie I'd ever seen. We saw it at the Pearl Theater, which isn't even there anymore. I liked Fabian and Frankie, but Bobby was my favorite.

It was so cool to hear about how he grew up in South Philadelphia and how he got his start with singing. I didn't even know he played the drums. Now he has some health problems, but I know he still sings around places. I hope you keep doing articles like this one. Your magazine is a joy to read and I loved this article.

Mrs. A. Walker, Hattiesburg, MS

Mrs. Walker, it's great to hear from you. We are all glad to hear that you enjoyed our interview with the intimitable Bobby Rydell. You may be interested to know that he is still touring around the country with the "Golden Boys," a singing group made up of superstars Frankie Avalon, Fabian and Bobby Rydell.

Dear Editor,

Man, you guys are the coolest. Who else would have a picture of Gene Krupa in their magazine? What a great article. I remember those days when my dad played swing records on the record player and I saved my lawn mowing money to get the latest single out of Philly. Leave it to you guys to bring back those great memories.

I'm glad to hear that Bobby Rydell is still around and doing good. It would be great if you guys could interview Frankie Avalon or Fabian. Music was different then, but had a cool that kept the vibe going – if you know what I mean. My granddaughter listens to Bruno Mars and those guys, which is OK, but if I put one of those old records on she dances along with me.

Keep up the great work.

Harry G., Youngstown, OH

It's a pleasure to keep bringing you the interviews you like to read, and kudos

to you for keeping your granddaughter listening to the music we all love and enjoy. Mr. Avalon is on our interview list and we may be featuring him in the near future.

Dear Sirs,

I am a huge Bernard Cornwell fan. You could have knocked me down with a feather when I came across your interview with him in the last Westerner. I've loved your articles on 80s stars and movies, but never thought you'd have my favorite author in your magazine.

I've been watching the Last Kingdom series on Netflix. It's not as great as the books but it's pretty true to the story. Then, I picked up your magazine and there it was. I like that you asked questions about all of his books. I've read a lot about him, but didn't know what a nice person he was until I read your article. It makes me like him even better.

Samuel C., Madison, WI

Mr. Cornwell is certainly a nice guy. We will pass your sentiments onto him.

What is the Westerner really about? You describe the magazine as the best of western culture. I went back and picked up all the magazines and you have different type articles in each one. It's very entertaining, but I was hoping you'd do more authors like Bernard

Cornwell. You did a great job on that interview.

Buster J., Joplin, MO

Thank you. We will keep trying to bring you more interviews like the one you enjoyed.

Dear Editor,

Wow! Bernard Cornwell? You have to be kidding me? Only one of the greatest writers on Earth. I've been reading your interviews with authors and I'm really beginning to like buying a western or two on Kindle based on your recommendations, but Bernard Cornwell? Your mag got some major cred off that interview.

One more thing, I loved the article on Cindy Morgan from the previous issue. Is there any way you could interview Bill Murray or Chevy Chase? Those guys were my favorites. I was a big fan of the original *Saturday Night Live*. Anyway, you're fast becoming my favorite magazine. I can't wait for the next one.

Mack K., Couer d'Alene, ID

Thank you for your compliments. We have been trying to get in touch with Mr. Murray for an interview. I have your email on record and will let you know if we manage to clinch him.

COVER STAR
INTERVIEW:

DREAMS,
AMBITIONS
AND
SUCCESSES
WITH
SINGING
STAR
FRANK
IFIELD



"How should I write this?"

Nothing is more Australian than Frank Ifield, and no singer ever captured the imagination

of the British audience like he did. The first artist to score three consecutive number ones outside of America, who turned out bestselling records, hit singles and even scored a major movie after having a dream of singing at the London Palladium—the “mecca” of great singing stars...

Having been a successful singer in Australia for many years, he decided to break through into the British market—and he did—“I Remember You” was the first British record to sell a million copies. He was then booked to appear at the London Palladium but not just any Palladium concert. He was booked for a Royal Variety Performance that would be seen on TV sets across the country.

The hits came thick and fast after that... “Lovesick Blues,” “The Wayward Wind,” “I’m Confessin’,” just to name a few. The albums sold, the concerts were fully attended, and he kept moving forward.

He achieved his dream and probably a thousand other dreams... and he is still achieving. He has a successful TV show on “Keep It Country TV” called “Australian Country Showcase,” he just finished a successful tour of the United Kingdom, has a new album of his hits and rarities called [Encore](#) on release, and now he’s in the Westerner magazine. Let’s go meet him.

It’s great to meet you, Frank. I’m very excited about this interview. I grew up listening to your records.

Thank you! It’s great to meet you, too.

You’re actually from Coventry, just down the road [from me], aren’t you?

I was born in Coventry, but I moved when I was around three years old—so I don’t remember much about Coventry.

How did you first become interested in singing?

We moved to London during the Blitz. That's where I first started singing—in the air raid shelters. I was around six years old, singing Ten Green Bottles in front of the class.

How did you start your actual recording career?

I came out to Australia in 1948. I was ten years old. I spent the next ten years in Australia. When I was thirteen, I made my first recording that was with Regal Zonophone. I was still going to school, and my dad wasn't giving me a lot of encouragement at that point as he thought showbusiness was too precarious. I pursued my dream, and what I wanted to do, and it worked. He was quite happy with it in the end. The first recording I did was Australia's Amateur Hour, on the radio, which I didn't win by the way. I came second on it. It was a bit of a downer—but the recording company heard what I did and enjoyed it and got me to record for them. So, in one sense, I won.

It must have been the same feeling for you as the Eurovision Song Contest...

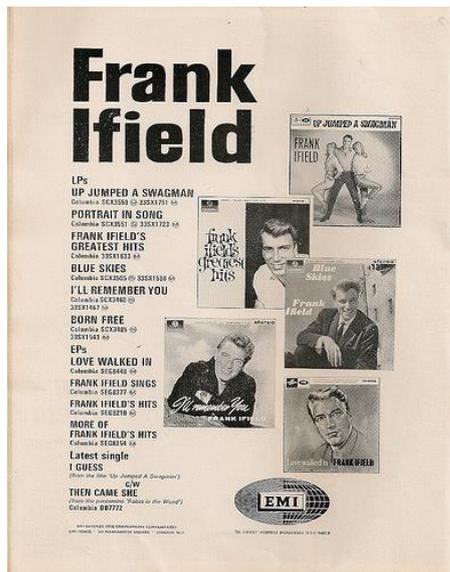
That's right. It was strange that. That was when I was with singer Matt Monro, 'A Song for Europe.' I remember Matt very clearly. I had a song called "I Can't Get Enough of Your Kisses." We were betting on each other's songs. I thought he would win and he thought mine would win—and neither of us won. Matt had a big hit with his song when it was released, and I didn't release mine as it came third. However, I found out later that my song went to number one on the sheet music charts. Later, I did it with "Alone Too Long," which missed out too. I never won a contest in my life.

But you did score three consecutive number ones...

Which was quite incredible. I'd been making records for ten years before I came to England. I never thought records were all that important—they kept your name out there—but I never thought of myself as a pop star. When it did happen, it was as big a surprise to me as it was to anybody. "I Remember You" went to number one within two weeks of coming out, and it stayed in the charts for weeks. Norrie Paramor called me and told me that I was the first artist to sell one million copies alone in Britain. I was knocked sideways—but I only expected to get the one number one. But you get one, and you start to get a feel for it, and you get on a roll.

How did you find material to record at that time?

We were always on the lookout for material. Do you remember a show called "Cool For Cats?" It was a television program that used to play the hit records at that time. They got me in to do "I Remember You." I was in the dressing room with Ronnie Carroll and Matt Monro. I was sharing the dressing room and going through a warm up before going in. I was doing a warm up with a song—Matt Monro turned to me and said, "You've got your next hit!" I said, "I've been using that song as a warm up for years!" It was called "Lovesick Blues," and I went to Norrie Paramor and he agreed. We put a twist beat to it and it became my second number one. It also became a big hit on the Continent as the Twist was starting to take off.



Advertising for Frank Ifield products. He was one of the major album sellers on the U.K. market.

Do you remember “In The Snow”? That was my earliest memory of one of your songs...

I don't think “In The Snow” became a hit. The interesting thing about that song—I've always liked it—but I found out in recent years that quite a few people like that song. I didn't think anyone would take any notice of that. Particularly with the younger generation—they seem to like that one. Why? Why that specific one?

Having it played twenty times a day at home is the reason I liked it—

(laughs)

Let me ask you this... How did you pick songs for your albums?

They were just songs I wanted to record, and I would go in and record several songs and put them together. There was no theme as such. It was just songs I liked—all kinds of songs—standards, a bit of country—big band stuff. It was quite a mixture, wasn't it?

Yes. You tended to do several styles on each album.

There were so many things I liked to do. I liked stage, which is why I came to Britain in the first place because I wanted to play the Palladium. Making records was a side issue—but once I got the hits, it helped with the stage concerts. I was influenced by country music in Australia—that was my roots. But at the same time, I used to listen to a lot of jazz, and a lot of pop singers of the day. I was very influenced in many different directions. Remember, the nightclubs were very fashionable in those days. You would tailor your performance to suit each nightclub. Each club had a different audience—one minute it would be jazz—the next would be country—I found it very interesting. Later, people knew what they wanted so that dictated the act.

You could really sing anything—you had a great voice—so it must have been a lot of fun picking all kinds of material and putting it out there.

I loved that lack of restriction—working with Norrie Paramor never put any restrictions on me. One minute, we would be doing some big orchestral thing; the next minute, we would be doing something with a group. We just wanted to do something that was different and interesting.

It sounds like it all came together beautifully!

It did then when I was working with Norrie. He was able to read my mind and know what I was trying to project—and go away and write it and have an orchestra come alive in front of me. I used to think, “How did he get inside my head and make that happen?” He knew I was interested in country music and put me together with the Hickory label in Nashville. I was with them for the longest time I was with any recording company. I kept making records with them for many, many years for the American market. The people I was working with on that label were people like Roy

Orbison, Don Gibson, The Everly Brothers—all the big names of the time. They'd be writing songs and coming along to my sessions. I really did enjoy that part of my life.



Frank Ifield with British singer Tommy Steele

A lot of that material wasn't released in England, then?

It was—usually alongside the standard albums I had coming out. They all had Hickory label stuff on them. What I was recording in England was different to what I was recording in the United States.

What was your driving force?

My dream was to come to England to play the Palladium. That was my mecca. I gave myself three years to do that. "I Remember You" clinched that dream for me. It wasn't just a regular Palladium concert—it was a Royal Command Performance. Imagine how I felt when I first walked out on that stage to do the rehearsal—keep in mind it was a TV performance, Royal Command Performance and the Palladium—you can imagine how daunting it must have felt. It came exactly how I dreamed it would be when I was in Sydney. I had a dream about working the Palladium and that dream came true—sheer magic.

I'm surprised they never did a live album with you.

They did a couple. I had one that was Live in Japan. But I recorded one from the Talk of the Town, which was never released.

Really? They didn't release that? It sounds like a killer disc.

I wasn't keen on it myself. The balance, to me, wasn't what it should have been. I was so used to studio quality rather than live quality. The thing was that I put a hold on it at the time—and forgot to lift the hold—and it was never released, and I doubt it will be released now. You're in the lap of the gods when you do a live recording.

How did the live recording in Japan turn out?

It actually worked out very well. It's called "*Live in Japan*." I don't know if they'd had any British artists before. It was very early in the stage of Japan listening to western music. It was daunting to say the least to walk out on stage, not to applause, but polite nodding. I couldn't communicate with them—they were happy to listen to English being sung—but couldn't understand me when I spoke to them. I asked if anyone could understand English. Some college students who were studying English translated for me. I asked them to tell the audience, "It's not impolite as far as we're concerned to have applause. If you'd like to applaud, please do so." So, they did.

How did you enjoy your time on Decca Records?

There were two albums on Decca—one was an album and one was a CD. I thought they came up with some very interesting, different stuff on those albums. I worked with Dick Rowe—

The guy who turned who turned down the Beatles?

Yes! That's right! You know I was the guy who gave the Beatles their first work outside of Liverpool, didn't you?

In Peterborough, right?

That's right—you know that story?



“Jolly What” on the VeeJay record label contained songs by both The Beatles and Frank Ifield. It is now considered one of The Beatles’ rarest pieces of merchandise.

Yes, I loved that you were given a copy of the rare Beatles/Frank Ifield Veejay album for your birthday not long ago.

Yes, they did. That was a very awkward thing that happened with Veejay, though. It started off being very promising. I never knew the full story about that. “I Remember You” was released by Capitol [Records] in America and wasn’t doing very well. Norrie and I went to visit Capitol in America and they told us “Nothing from England sells very well.” Norrie said, “If that’s your attitude, then I might as well take them off you and find someone who will promote them.” That’s what we did, and Veejay in Chicago was interested in taking them on. They had a group called “The Four Seasons” who had turned out two major hits, and they wanted “I Remember You” to follow those as they were similar to what Frankie Valli was doing with the falsetto. “I Remember You” came out and shot up the charts. I could never understand why Capitol never achieved that. But it opened the doors for British artists in the United States in a way. Listeners wanted to know what else there was. Veejay called me in

and told me that they had purchased my record in a job lot with a group called The Beatles. He knew they were doing well in the United Kingdom and asked if I minded if they released a record of myself and The Beatles together. They called it “Jolly What!” It started off being called “The British Invasion,” which I liked... much better than “Jolly What!” I can tell you. (laughs) The record did very well initially. But the company went bust. So, we had a whole heap of stock that was out there—bankrupt stock in the shops. Among those were a couple of copies, still sealed, of “Jolly What!” and it became a very valuable piece of memorabilia. A copy sold for something like twenty thousand American dollars. There’s only four songs from The Beatles on the album—and the rest are mine. It was probably good because it made me think of getting another recording company in America. When Veejay went bust that’s when I moved to the Hickory label.

I worked with Spark [Records] later, which was a lot of fun. I had some major hits with them—not in England but I had a major hit on the Continent with “Her Name Was Joanne,” which was nice at that time—1976. It was nice to get another big one under my belt at that time. I don’t think it was ever released in England.

That was the Someone To Give My Love To album, right?

Yes.

It was a very strong album. Very different.

Yes, it was a very different album. There were two albums on Spark.

How about the album you made with Barbary Coast?

That wasn’t an official album—we just sold it around the gigs. It was just for selling at concerts. They were the band I was working with at the time. It was a very different album.

You've turned out some great work, haven't you? A lot of it was really good stuff.

It's funny because some of the records really come off—and you really like them. Others you can say, "It didn't quite come off the way I wanted it to... but it sounds good anyhow," and some you can say, "I could work on that for another week and it still wouldn't sound right." But it's out there and you can't do anything about it. Someone will come along and say, "That's my favorite song," and you think... "You've got to be kidding... that's the one I like least of all." But it's the wide variety of my work. There's bound to be songs people like, and dislike, and they're all going to be different.

You had a lot of great songs, though. There can't be much you dislike about your recorded work.

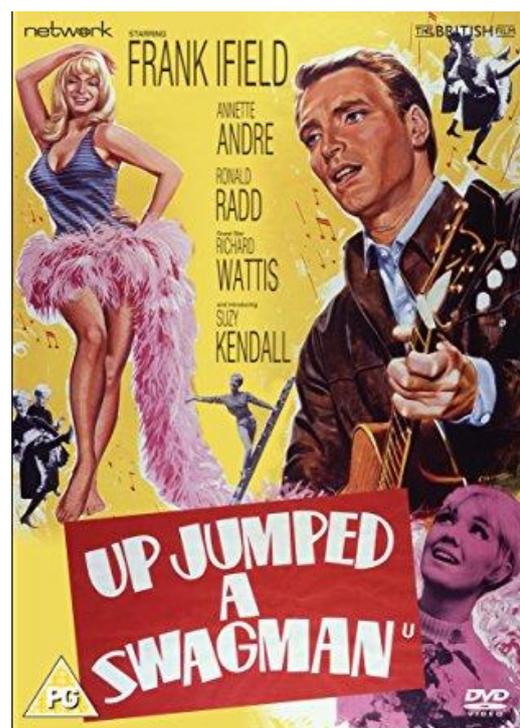
Oh... yes there is! I must tell you—In 2012, I came over to Britain because it was the 50th anniversary of "I Remember You." I came over to do some promotion, and I ended up going to Coventry where I was inducted into the Wall of Fame there. The audience there were asking me questions and one of them was, "Have you ever made any songs you'd wished you'd never made?" I said, "Truthfully—yes, probably. I could probably knock out around fifteen songs—enough for a CD," and a bloke there put his hand up and said, "I bought that CD." (laughs heartily) I thought that was the funniest thing! There are songs that you hadn't wanted to go out—and they get released anyway—at the end of the day you have no say if the company owns the recordings you are saying. If you don't like something and don't want it released, they'll release it anyway if they want to.

You have a great sense of humor about it. I've never had an interview with anyone who is so laid back, calm and cheerful.

Thank you—but my life has been a lot of fun. I love entertaining and singing—the whole package. It's been fun. If it wasn't as much fun I don't think you'd survive. It's too hard. (Laughs)

You made a movie, didn't you?

Yes... well... it was in the early stages when I'd got the hits going. What happened was Leslie Grade was my agent, and they said they wanted to make a film of me. I was very excited about it—seeing myself as a film star. I didn't expect to take the lead role in it. I thought it was going to be a cameo—I would have preferred that anyway. But I didn't understand what the story was all about—and I still don't—but people seem to like it. What was good, though—I wrote most of the songs in the movie myself. I really didn't have that much opportunity to record things I've written. They were usually 'B' sides, which was good because if you had a million seller on the 'A' side you'd done well.



"Up Jumped A Swagman" was Frank's first movie. He composed much of the music contained in the movie, and the DVD is now available on Amazon.

“I Listen To My Heart” was a big flip-side for you, right?

Yes, I learned that little trick early in the piece. I actually wrote a lot of the songs for “Up Jumped A Swagman.” It was all put to production stuff, and I enjoyed doing that. Seeing something you’ve written for a film being used in the movie. I found it very interesting that given the opportunity, you can manage to whip up enough songs for the movie.

How about the acting side?

I didn’t know much about the acting side. I had some very good people working with me, though. Richard Wattis was very good at giving me pointers. I learned a lot listening to the old timers explaining how it should be done. I enjoyed making the movie, but I don’t think it set the world alight. It’s still available, though.

The soundtrack?

No, the actual film is available on DVD now. I’ve seen copies of it.

I’ll be getting that then. I didn’t see the picture.

Oh, didn’t you? Let me know what you think of it... You’ll probably say, “What was it about, Frank? I watched it...” I have no idea... so don’t ask me! (*laughs*)

I’ve never seen it roll around on TV.

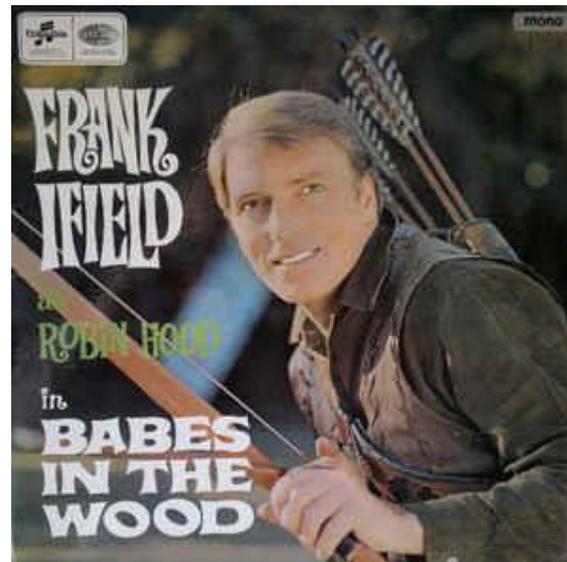
It comes around regularly in Australia. It’s probably cheap enough for them to show. Stick it on at 4am in the morning. It usually gets played around Australia Day.

It has the perfect title for it.

Yes, “Up Jumped A Swagman.”

Then you did Babes in the Wood?

I... loved that! I’d never done pantomime before I worked in England. One of the first things I did was with The Shadows. We were up in Stockton at the Globe Theatre playing Dick Whittington. I really enjoyed it as I’m a bit of ham—I loved dressing up and playing the part. I just loved doing Panto. I did several of them. “Babes in the Wood” was on at the Palladium, which was a long running panto—it went on forever. Then I did “Sinbad the Sailor” in Norwich. Both were clinchers for me. They appealed to my swashbuckling nature. I loved all that stuff. The archery and all that... I took it all very seriously.



“Babes in the Wood” had a long run at the London Palladium and spawned a bestselling album for Frank on Columbia.

The pantos must have brought you a lot of fans.

That’s right! I was a solo performer and didn’t have a band of my own, so I was free to do all of those things. It was nice in a sense—but when I was out on tour, I found that very difficult because half the time I didn’t know the bands I would work with—I just knew the musical director. I used to be jealous of the groups who could enjoy all the things that were happening and commiserate with each other. I didn’t have that until I got together

with Barbary Coast in the late '70s. I enjoyed going around with the guys.

I can't imagine Frank Ifield and a rock and roll group—that would be interesting...

Neither can I in terms of a rock group. I never regarded myself as a pop singer. I was a country singer and enjoyed working with all kinds of bands and groups. It was all very exciting and different. When I first got to Britain, I couldn't find musicians who could play steel guitar—you could find them in Ireland, but not in Britain. When I worked in Nashville, they tried to be un-country for me, and I wanted them to be more country. Because when I turned up, they thought I had country appeal but I was a pop singer—but I wanted fiddles and steel guitars and all of that. It happened on several of the songs I did.

There were two distinct personalities almost to my records. When I went to America, it brought out my roots. In Britain, I was told even with my first record "Lucky Devil," which was a cover song—Norrie said it was too country. "People in Britain don't like country music," but in the States and in Australia, that's a selling point. It was like a release for me going to America and recording music that was in line with my roots. Does that make sense?



I'll Remember You was Frank's first British album. It was also a bestseller that spent months on the charts after the success of the million-selling single "I Remember You."

It really does. They say country music doesn't sell here—but then you see how well Slim Whitman did in England.

That's right. There are a lot of examples of country music that did well in England. It's crazy, isn't it?

It certainly is. "I Remember You" is a standard with a country twist, really, isn't it?

I loved it the first time I heard it. It was written by Johnny Mercer for a film called "The Fleets In." Did you ever see the film?

No, I never saw it.

It's a shocking film—not particularly good. It was the flop song of the film. To me, I loved the lyric and the tune, but I didn't like the arrangement so I came up with a very basic country beat with my guitar. It germinated from there. I took it from a classic jazz standard to a country song. It worked... God knows why it worked—but it did and thank goodness it did as it came at the right time.

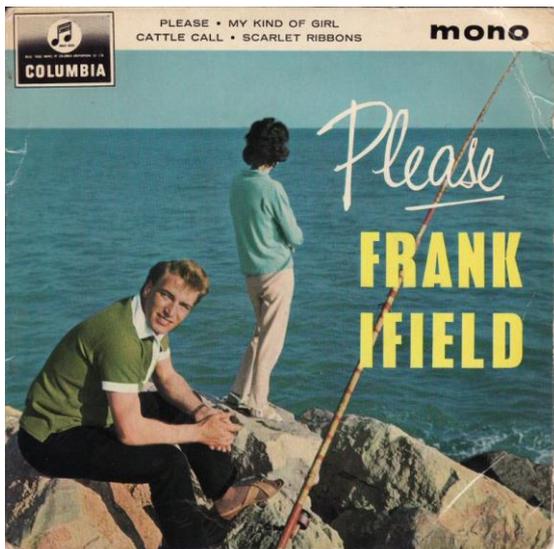
That worked for "Confessin'" too...

It was very similar. The structure of that song was very similar to "I Remember You." I don't know if you know this, but "I Remember You" came as the last song of my recording contract. I was told by Norrie that if we didn't come up with a hit, there would be no further contract. The pressure was on me, so I got down and decided to do something that I wanted to do, which was "I Remember You." When that happened, I had a new contract they signed me to. They gave me carte blanche because "I Remember You" was such a big hit. We used to go to the studio and cut whatever songs we liked. I wanted to release "Confessin'" as the follow up to "I Remember You," but Norrie said, "Do something different—let's not do a carbon copy—we can always come out with Confessin' later." It became my fourth number

one. Which is quite incredible. I wasn't expecting it at all.

I was always sorry that “Angry at the Big Oak Tree” didn’t go to number one. That was a beautiful song, too.

It's funny you should mention that because here in Australia, it's one of my most popular songs. It was released here and obviously a lot of DJs got behind it because it did well on the charts. I was surprised just how many songs I did in Britain that were released in Australia that made the charts in Australia but didn't chart in England—or climbed higher than they did in England. One of my biggest songs was called “Please.” It was an enormous hit for me on Capitol in Canada. Capitol kept me in Canada and “Please” went to number three on the charts over there. “Please” went to number one in Australia, but it never got released in Britain.



“Please” hit number one in Australia, was a huge hit in Canada—but was never released as a single in the United Kingdom.

It could have been the fifth number one?

Yeah... the funny thing is that you can go through these hits and things, but at the end of my life when I kick off the old mortal coil, they'll probably remember me for a few years

by “I Remember You” then I think (when they've forgotten about “I Remember You”) they'll remember me for the yodel. “She Taught Me to Yodel” was only a ‘B’ side on the other side of “Lovesick Blues,” but it's made more impact than anything else I've done. I used to use it in the act, and even today people tell me about that song.

It's funny you should say that because when I was a teenager, you were very well known for “She Taught Me to Yodel.” Everybody knew that song.

(laughs) That's right!

You hit all kinds of demographics.

There's several assorted styles to my music, isn't there? I suppose it may look like I was clutching at anything to see what would work. But in actual reality, it was because I had all those influences and styles. I wanted to record them, and I didn't care if they were hits or not. That was not the aim of the game. It was about going out and doing a song that I wanted to do.

Here's a big question for you. How do you make a hit record?

A record man said to me, “We have a policy here—it's like throwing mud up at the wall. We throw a heap of records out. The ones that stick, we put money behind. If it doesn't stick, we just let it fall to the ground.” That's the truth. What makes people take up on a sound? We'll never know. It doesn't have to be a good recording. It just has to be different, sometimes.

You have written a book about your life, haven't you?

I have. I published it myself. I'm just in the process of finishing that book off. I never did finish it. I only used it to sell around the gigs. It had been on Amazon, but I'm looking to turn it into a full book. I've nearly finished it. When I

first released that book, the girl I was writing with, Pauline Halford, was a damn good writer—but when she passed away, I suddenly felt alone. I'd always had someone to show me how to put things together, you know? But I've looked at the book and the structure, and I've managed to finish it in the same light. I'm hoping that it's going to work.

I'm sure it will. You're still very popular here in England—I'm sure it will have a good reception.

I still come out to England. I was out there in May this year. I do a one man show, like an "evening with..." which deals with the main parts of my story. We link up the segments of my story with music. We did quite a few shows in the south. Next time, we are going to do more shows in the north. We had so many people coming south to see me that I thought we should go north.

Well, the Midlands is Frank Ifield territory...

Yes, it is!



Ifield in action—he followed his dream and travelled halfway around the world to sing at the London Palladium and became a singing star against the odds.

So many people around my home county [Leicestershire] have your records.

It's amazing, isn't it! (laughs) Who would have thought that would happen? I would never have believed it myself. If I'm looking back on my story, when I tell my story... I ask myself "How can that be true?" but it was! A guy with a guitar singing Hillbilly songs had a dream to sing at the London Palladium and pulled it off. It happened.



Queen Elizabeth II talks to Frank Ifield at the London Palladium after the Royal Variety Performance in 1965.

It's the magic of life—if you go for it— and you get it. Let me ask you this: What was it like recording back in the 1950s before you became a star in England?

The 1950s gave me an appreciation of the recording industry from its infancy. When I started, we just had 78 records. The records were pressed initially on a waxing, which is what they made the pressings from. You had two chances to do the song that would become the final recording. They only had two machines that could cut the waxing. Once you'd recorded a song, they would ask you which of the two recordings you liked and then they'd press the first record. Strange, isn't it? The other thing was that I wanted to make an echo. But they had no way to make echo on a record at that time. So, (begins laughing...) what they did was that they found there was a lot of echo in the toilet. (continues laughing...) They put the speaker at one end of the

bathroom and the microphone at the other end of the bathroom so as it came up and I yodelled, they put the sound through the bathroom with echo. That was the way we made our first records with echo. It would be so obvious as my voice would be dry... then it would go into echo and the echo would be cut short. (laughing hilariously now...) It wasn't quite what I expected!

Interesting! It must have been a fascinating time to be working in the recording industry with all of that innovation going on.

It certainly was. It was the beginning.

So, what current projects are you working on?

I do a TV show in England each week on the country TV channel. It's shown twice a week in Britain, and it's getting a lot of viewer response. I'm still promoting Australian country music. I love what we do here. It's slightly different to American country music, and it's nice to have a variety of different kinds of music.

I completely agree. You have a new album out too, I believe?

Yes, my current CD release is called "[ENCORE the ultimate collection](#)." It features 22 tracks - some we've spoken about - such as "JOANNE," "I REMEMBER YOU" (THE ORIGINAL STEREO VERSION), "ANGRY AT THE BIG OAK TREE" and "PLEASE," plus some Nashville tracks such as "CRYSTAL - I CAN SEE THROUGH YOU" and "FORGETTING ABOUT YOU".

It is manufactured in Australia on FANFARE RECORDS distributed via SONY and available now in record stores, or an autographed copy can be purchased by going to www.frankifield.com

Well, folks will be able to purchase their copy by clicking [here in the interview](#). I better let you get back to your evening. Thank you so

much for sitting down for this interview with me.

You're very welcome. Thank you for calling and have a wonderful day.



"[ENCORE the ultimate collection](#)" the new album from Frank Ifield is available now from Amazon, iTunes and record stores worldwide.

THE BOOK PROMOTION CORNER WITH NICK WALE



People ask me all the time—why do you want to promote books for a living? What do you enjoy about such a tough business? What makes a man go out and become a book promoter? It's simple. It's because it's the closest thing to the greatest job in the world. It's a combination of the general publicity business and being Columbo. Huge problems that need solving, huge headaches and fantastic possibility. That's the most important reason for working in the book business. The business of possibilities. That's the key to the whole book business. Possibilities.

Consider this for a few minutes. You have written a book. We know someone will read the book. Maybe a few more people will read the book. Maybe a few more... but what's the hook? It isn't easy. It isn't solved with just money. It's solved with problem solving. Now, everyone can be a problem solver. It's easy—you just solve the problems. Wait? What is the problem? That's the first step. You can't solve your problem until you know what your problem is.

Now the way I see it, pardner, is that the first problem you have to solve is this: Who is your audience? Western? Historical romance? Woman who likes to read about her favorite singer? Man who likes books about gorillas?

Next problem is how do you reach those people? Social media? Mailing lists? Advertising? TV? What do you do to get your book in front of that segment of society?

The way I see it, by now you've discovered that the guy who likes the gorillas probably reads National Geographic. He enjoys watching documentaries about gorillas, yes? Okay, so what are the possibilities there? Well, you could buy advertising in the middle of some PBS documentary. Too expensive. You could buy ad space in National Geographic. Too limited. You could use social media to advertise the book to users who say they like gorillas who happen to be male. That may work, but it's hit and miss. How about advertising on a website that specializes in pictures of wild gorillas? Maybe. How about getting zoos to stock your book? How about doing talks at local zoos? How about making sure your keywords on Amazon bring up the book when people search for books about gorillas? How about writing a free sample book and giving that away to get your book in front of your readership? The possibilities are endless.

And that's why I enjoy the book business. The possibilities. I've been lucky. My clients sell books. If you've written a book, you may want to look into Possibility Promotion. It's free. It's just a case of using your brain and concentrating. Start by writing your problem on a piece of paper. Then put a line down the middle of the page. On one side, you should write an idea and on the other side an action.

How do I get my book in front of male readers who enjoy gorillas?

Idea	Action
Stocking my book at zoos	Call zoos

That's all you need to do. My good friend and client, Fred Staff, was talking to me earlier today. He was telling me that he had gained

over three hundred new readers from actions he took through Possibility Promotion like this. How can it help you? What does it cost to give it a try? You may come up with the breakthrough you've been looking for. Come up with a list of possibilities on which you can take action, then take some action! The possibilities are waiting...

If you need help or advice, just holler. You can catch me through the wonderful world of email. Yes... you can email me at Nick@nickwale.org.

MINING FOR WESTERN GOLD WITH MILLION- SELLER FRED P. STAFF



A few months ago, Fred Staff had been a successful author but he hadn't become accustomed to living in the top 100. Now, just a few weeks later, he has been riding high on the bestseller list. His popular trilogy has been thrilling Western readers around the world, and he has a new book on the way. Few interviews have been conducted with Staff—who lives in Bolivia—so this is a first. An exclusive interview with the man who has helped pull Bass Reeves out from the wilderness into the spotlight, a living, breathing legend once more...

Fred, thank you for agreeing to this interview. It's an absolute pleasure to finally have you in Westerner Magazine.

It's my pleasure.

I loved all three books in the Bass Reeves trilogy. You must be incredibly happy with the way those books have performed on the market.

I'm very happy about it. I needed a hit, and all of a sudden, I got three of them. When it rains it really, really pours, doesn't it?

It really does. Are you ever surprised by the success your Bass Reeves trilogy has had?

Yes. Probably. Yes. When I started writing, there was only one book about him. It was his autobiography, and it was extremely well researched but... alas... it's boring. I took that dull book, the events, the historical truth and turned it into action. It was a straightforward process. But I did have to go through the pain of reading his dry book. When I write historically based novels, it's pretty easy—you can find the facts, you know the story and then you just have to go back to who, what, where and why. Who did it? Where did he do it? Why did he do it? It's quite easy.

The writing process seems fairly easy for you—would you agree with that?

Oh, yeah! This book I'm working on right now is one of the first times I've stalled. The only other time I've stalled was during Cherokee Bill. Why? Because he's a psychopath. I had four sessions with a psychologist to learn and understand how psychopaths work. I wanted to really get that across to readers—and it was difficult. However, once I'd gotten through his childhood, I was off and running.

What is the biggest problem you personally face as a writer?

Discipline. I get sidelined all the time. I like to play poker. My breaks are full of poker and video games. Sometimes, I get too carried away and don't get back to writing.

That's the only problem?

Yep. Writing is easy for me. I'm not a flowery writer—I just tell a story. As I've told you,

basically these books become a movie [in my head], and I've got my characters, where they are, where they are going and I write down what's in my mind. It's a movie playing in my mind. I'm not a great writer, but I'm a pretty good storyteller.

Let's go back to the beginning. How did you get into the writing business?

Very good question. A friend of mine is one of the most avid readers I've ever met. I'm not much of a reader—I read a lot of history, but not fiction. We've been friends for years. He told me, "You know, you should write a book—you're one of the best storytellers around." I thought that sounded like one of the worst assignments I'd ever been given.

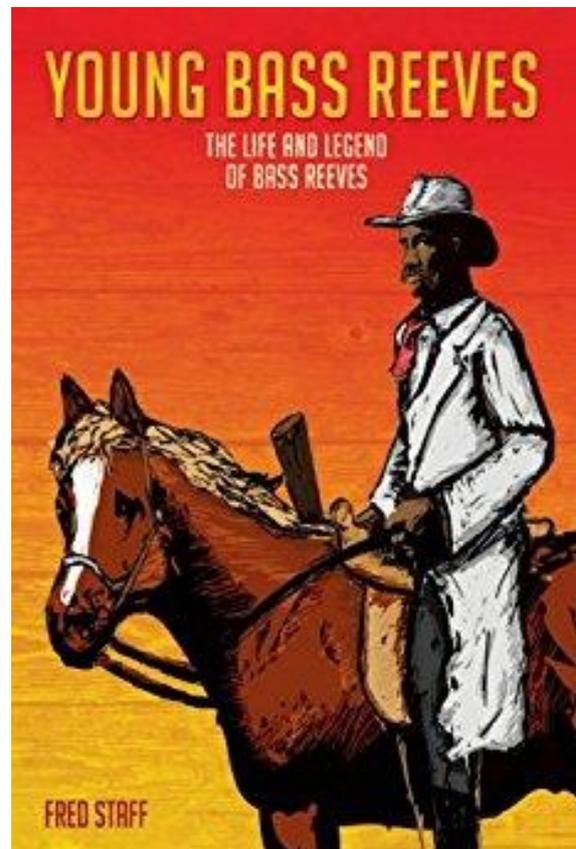
Did you know you could write, though?

Back in the '60s—1965 to 1967—I wrote proposals for government funding with some success. I managed to get thirty million dollars in funds—everything from 25,000 dollars to 250,000. It was very easy for me to write proposals because I used Hemingway's process—who, what, why, when and how. I had very few proposals turned down.

But what was the first step in your writing journey?

In 1993, I made a trip to Potosi, Bolivia. That city is virtually unknown today, but in the 1500s it was one of the most industrialized cities in the world. It had the richest silver mine in history, and it's where Spain got most of its economic wealth back at that time. They have a thing called "blockados" here where they block the highways if the populace is upset about anything. About three miles out of Potosi, there were rocks across the highway. I thought it had been a rockslide. I got out to move the rocks and was told it was a blockado. I ended up walking to Potosi. I got a ride on a truck farther down the road. If it hadn't, I may have died because at 13,000 feet carrying two bags up a mountain, you aren't going to last long. When I got to Potosi, everything was shut down except a hotel. I was sitting out on the

street one day, and a Bolivian guy came down the street. He was an ex-miner who had gotten out of the mining industry. He spoke English to some degree—I have no idea where he learned it. We became good friends. Neither of us had anything to do. We would meet every day and tell stories. He loved my stories, and I loved his stories. He told me the story behind one of the books I would eventually write called "Rocha's Treasure." From '93 to 2012, I kept mulling his story over in my mind. During a summer break, I decided to write that book (which took four months), put it on the market, and it became a bestseller in Bolivia. That's a huge achievement as few people in Bolivia read—but I had a lot of sales. I had success, thought it was fun, and decided to keep doing it.



One of Fred's three million-sellers based on the life of legendary marshal, Bass Reeves.

What was the process you went through to get that first book onto the market?

All it took to get that book published was money. I invested about \$3,000 in that first book. I learned a lesson there, but I had

success. I would have never thought I could have gotten it published.

How did you get interested in Westerns in the first place?

My addiction to Westerns started when I was a kid. Every Saturday I had to see the Western movie or my week was ruined. Later, I had a professor when I was at Central University of Oklahoma who was considered one of the best Western historians. In fact, he could seat thirty in his class, and if you didn't sign up on the first day of his class, you'd never get a seat. He was a fantastic presenter. I was almost fifty when I took that class, and I was surrounded by a bunch of teenagers. The professor and I became friends, and I went from an Old West fan to becoming obsessed with it. After that first book, I wanted to write a Western, and I'd read about Bass Reeves as part of his course. I was fascinated by it. But I decided to write about Cherokee Bill first—but during my research for Cherokee Bill, I discovered Bass Reeves again and thought it was damn interesting, so I wrote the three Bass Reeves books. They were successful, so I decided to write the Cherokee Bill novel—then I discovered his father, George Goldsby, and ended up writing about him—then I finally got around to writing the Cherokee Bill.



Fred Staff, doing what Fred does best. Taking care of business at his desk in Bolivia.

So, it wasn't for the sales or success—you wrote for the love of it?

I just loved the research and I loved telling the stories. It's taking dull facts and turning them into action. I just got a real kick out of that. I

was enjoying it. It wasn't like I needed the money. I just enjoyed learning about history and people liked what I did, so I kept going.

Would you have kept writing even if you'd never sold a copy?

No. If no one had ever bought it, I would have quit. I got some nice reviews and sales, and that kept me going. The reviews on the Bass Reeves book were so good. I didn't write to make money—but I have no kids and wanted to leave a legacy that someone could enjoy in thirty or forty years. Just something people can remember me by down the line.

You've had a varied career—does that help you with your writing?

I've had more crazy experiences than anyone should have. I'm sure it helps.

Can you tell us all a little about your life?

I was born in Seminole, Oklahoma. This was the heart of the homeland of the Seminole Indians. I was raised in Pawnee, Oklahoma, and the heart of the Pawnee Tribe. My early years were spent in a small town close to Ada, Oklahoma. At that time, it had the third largest rodeo in the world. I lived for that. My grandfather was mayor of Stonewall, Oklahoma and this was home to Dick Truit and Evert Shaw. They were both world champion rodeo performers. I knew these people through my grandfather and was in awe of them and their abilities.

My great uncle was an outstanding poet and he exposed me to the power of words through the writings of Robert Service. I never realized that words could paint pictures until this experience. Of course, it was also the kinds of pictures a young man full of adventure wanted painted.

My father's office was next door to a saddle shop, and I spent many an hour there. The men who came in and sat and visited had great influence on me. They talked of old times and

things that just pushed me deeper into the Old West and all the things that they actually were a part of. Like all kids in my day, the ten cent Western comic books and the Saturday movie was a must. It was always a Western, and that also shaped my love of Western stories. I remember that “Shane” blew my mind. It made me realize that riding a pretty horse and wearing a white hat wasn’t what the West was really about.

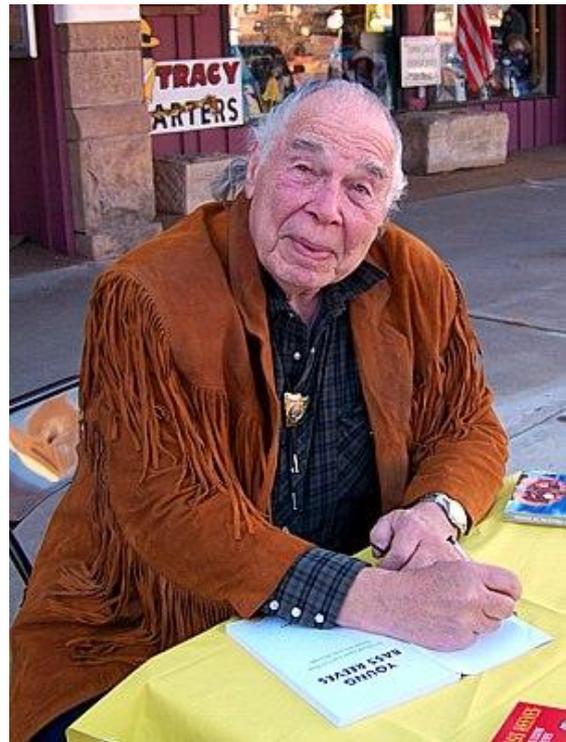
Agriculture and sports pretty much filled my early years. From the time I was twelve, I worked in the fields and was involved with raising animals. An example of how much I was into animals, I was recruited as a football player to the University of Oklahoma and they would get you the best job around for the summer so you could make money to have for school. I chose to work for HEREFORD HEAVEN—it was the top Hereford ranch in the country, owned by the past governor of the state, Roy Turner. I made very little money, but got room and board. My main job was shoveling million-dollar bull shit, and I have been doing it ever since.

I ended up being a member of a National Championship football team and am now a member of the university’s Athletic Hall of Fame. While in university, I had a professor, Royce Peterson, who took my love of Westerns and turned it into a passion. He was a man who could stand in front of a class and keep you mesmerized with the stories of the Old West. It seemed that he knew every story that ever happened. I owe any success in writing to this man, because he showed me that history was not a dry subject, but a vivid, living experience. You know in Spanish, history is the name of story and I believe with all my heart that this is the correct use of the word.

After university, I taught history and then worked for people projects, sold real estate and dabbled in oil. As soon as I could get together some funds, I went into the Registered Angus cattle business and did that for 28 years.

How did you end up living in Bolivia, of all places?

I was doing very well in the United States—but in ’82, things went to hell in Oklahoma. You could have bought the whole state for a dollar and they’d have thought they were cheating you. I went to Bolivia and mined gold off and on for five years. Fell in love with the country. I returned to the States and taught again. I ended up working in the prisons in Missouri and Kansas. I am probably the only Western writer who has worked with forty convicted murderers. I am sure I learned more from them than I taught them.



“That’s the publicity shot,” Nick Wale said when he was handed this photo of Staff on a book tour.

Okay, let me ask you this one: Are sidekicks just throwaway devices in a tale? Can they become more? Do they need to become more?

I hope that every character in my stories is there for a purpose. In fact, there are always at least three people in a story who are key elements. My first book, ROCHA’S TREASURE OF POTOSI, had a terrifically powerful sidekick whom the protagonist depended on for advice

and protection. There will be a sequel to the Rocha book, and his sidekick will be the protagonist in it. His brothers will also be strong characters in the following book. The book became a bestseller in Bolivia. This really got me into writing, because there aren't that many readers in Bolivia and even fewer that read English.

My BASS REEVES TRILOGY had so many real and famous people in it that a book could have and/or has been written about several of them. This series has had tremendous success, and I am so proud of the fact that I took a lot of pretty dry facts and was able to bring the most exciting parts of his life to the attention of so many readers.

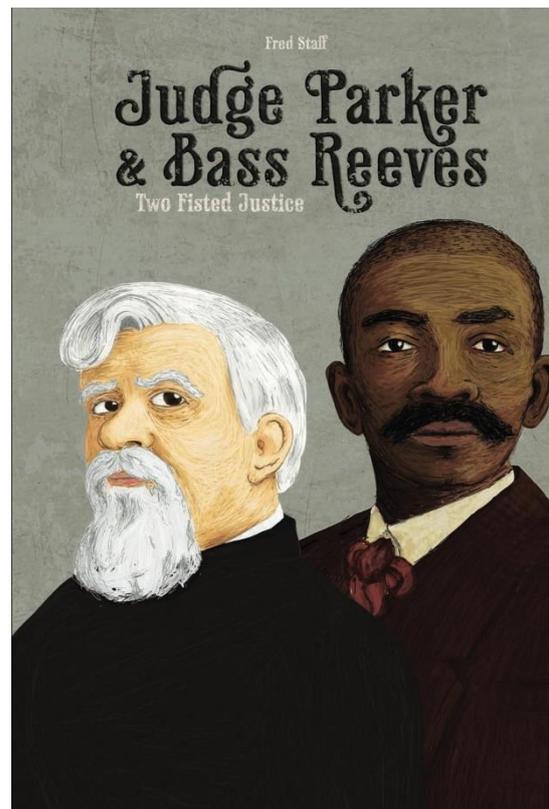
SERGEANT GOLDSBY AND THE 10TH CAVALRY is also filled with real people who played an important part in the development of the West. The cover on this book was done by Fredric Remington, a famous name of the West, and he said when the story of the West is written that this story had to be told. Interestingly, I had already written the story, when I found his sketch and statement. Its sequel, THE OTHER GOLDSBY, CHEROKEE BILL, will have many of the same characters, plus some other notorious people from the time. This book is an adult novel, as he was a psychopath and the most feared man of the time in Indian Territory. This is the most complete story of his life ever written and took me months of research. The photograph used on the cover sold for 30,000 and the rifle in his hands sold for 70,000 dollars at a recent auction, and since I am the one who wrote his story, I take credit for his fame (laughs).

INDOMITABLE is based on the unbelievable story of Larcena Pennington. It is set in Arizona in the mid-1850s and involves the most challenging quest for survival I have ever researched. It also covers the Bascom affair, which lead to the Apache war. It has several famous Arizona people throughout the book. I have often said that if you liked the movie REVENANT, you will love this story, as Larcena goes through a lot more in her quest for

survival than Hugh Glass did, and her story goes on into the most violent time in the history of Arizona. She proves that there is no such thing as the weaker sex, or if there is, it is placed on the wrong gender.

QUANTRILL'S REVENGE is based on the early life of William Clark Quantrill up through the Lawrence raid. Many famous people are in this book, and the story was put together with readings from the Kansas and Missouri historical societies and newspaper articles as well as writings from people who were on the scene. It was an interesting research project and what I present may change some people's minds about the man.

I am presently writing my first fiction novel. It will have a lot of famous names in it, but is totally fiction. The title of the book is BASS REEVES AND KATIE QUANTRILL. I promise my readers a trip that won't be forgotten. It should be out by the time this magazine is published.



The second major bestseller for Fred Staff.

Well, you certainly came up with something I didn't know about you. What would your advice be to a younger writer starting out in the business?

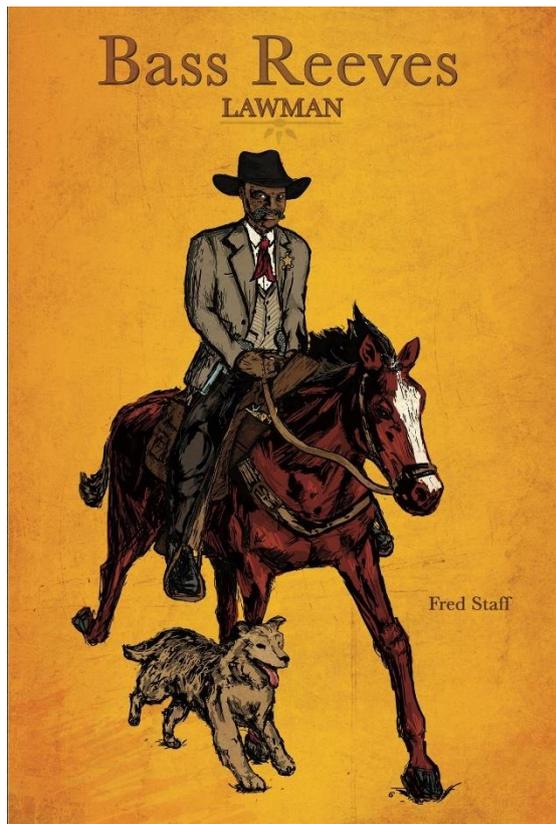
Hemingway gives the best advice of anyone I've read: You write everyday—you never, never stop when you run out of words. Always have something you're going to write the next day. Always read what you wrote the day before, and then it's back to answering those questions—Who? What? Where? Why?

What's the greatest compliment you've been given as a writer?

Reviewers have told me how well my books flow—I think that's the greatest compliment.

Let me ask you this: Do you enjoy other Western writers?

Yes, at times I think they are better than me. I am always checking out other writers, and I'm often impressed by the books other writers are releasing.



The third major bestseller for Staff—he has made an industry out of Bass Reeves.

Now to the million-dollar question. How do you promote your books?

I worked for a guy when I sold real estate who was very wealthy—back when the oil business ran the state. He decided that he would drill oil and he hired a top-notch oil engineer. They would have drilling meetings and the engineer would tell him where to drill, and he would ignore the advice and drill wherever he wanted to. You don't hire an expert to ignore what they have to say. That's how I operate. I write the books, and my publicist promotes them. We don't interfere in each other's business.

Western book sales are said to be going through the roof—

Well, I guess I'm in the right business then.... By accident (laughs).

Does it surprise you that Westerns are still such strong sellers?

I'm shocked, because in my mind the only guy I knew who ever really read Westerns had a bookshelf with over one hundred paperback books on that shelf. He'd read every one of them. Just an old country boy. In my mind, I visualized all Western readers as guys my age who had lived the lifestyle to some degree. I didn't realize how popular Westerns were with the female readership. I'm surprised by the Westerns, their success and the readership every single day.

What would your advice be to a new up-and-coming writer?

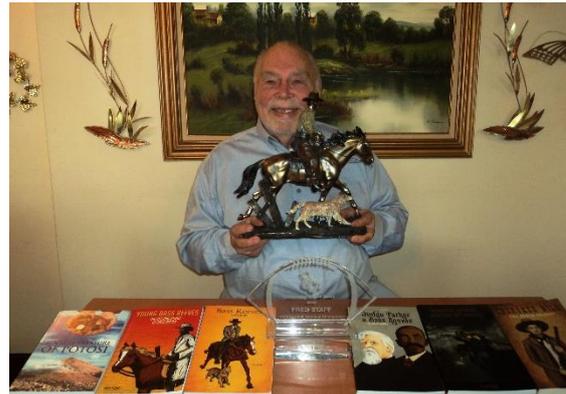
The best advice I have ever gotten came from a friend, Dennis Hambright, who is a very good mystery writer. He told me to write. Don't worry about spelling or punctuation; just get your thoughts down. An empty page is just that. You can always go back and add, delete and correct. Ernest Hemingway's style is the one that I use most. Answer the questions. Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. I have had a lot of people compliment me on my flow of the story, and I submit that these are the reasons. Editing is far harder than writing.

Wait at least a day before trying to edit, but it is best a week and read it out loud. Hemingway said never write until you run out of words. Always know where you are going to start the next day. Read the work you have done before you continue. If it is too long, at least read the chapter before.

Well, thank you for your time, Fred. It's been an absolute pleasure talking to you.

And you! Thank you for a great interview. I'm pleased as heck to be accepted, and pleased as heck that readers and writers have written nicely about what I've done. I respect them and I hope I learn a little bit from them. I'm writing to please people, and when I find out I did, it

makes my day. Pleasing the audience is more important to me than money.



The relaxed Staff, at home in Boliva.

A MILLION WESTERN READERS CAN'T BE WRONG: IT'S ROBERT HANLON

Robert Hanlon is one of the mighty stars of Dusty Saddle Publishing. He has scored several hits this year with an estimated 5 million pages read over the last few months. His biggest hit "[Clint Cain: Texan Avenger](#)" rose all the way to the #2 position, and "Texas Bounty Hunter" was actually a number one at the beginning of the year. Also he would be upset if I left "[Crooked Creek](#)" out of this list—his personal favorite, which was also a top ten hit!

As a stalwart of the top one hundred, I wanted to talk about the process he goes through when he writes his books. As one of the few authors who can juggle books, it should be interesting for you to take a look inside the mind of a man who has cracked such a huge audience.

You may also be interested in his latest hit, "Man Hunter," which was recently released and will be a pleasure for Western authors to read.

Let's meet Robert Hanlon...

Great to meet you, Robert.

Howdy.

Do all Western authors start with howdy?

Yes, (laughs) it's bred into us as kids.

When did you first get the idea of writing Westerns?

It didn't really click with me about writing until I got into my late fifties. I started to think about the fact that ranch work was getting harder to do and that I should find something else to do with my time. Writing certainly fills that void.

When you released your first book, how did it develop? Did it have to mature? Was it a success straight off the bat?

Well, my PR guy would have a better idea about how it developed numbers-wise. It was just a story that I had running around my head after growing up in west Texas and seeing all the things that went on over there when I was a kid. It seemed to catch the public's attention right away and grew from there.

How do you approach writing a Western? They're highly acclaimed but what's the process behind them?

I don't actually use an outline of any kind. I use a storyline in my head. I think about writing it for several weeks then I sit down and start fleshing it out. When I find it's working, I continue that direction. If it isn't working, I try a different direction and see how that works.

You don't tie yourself down—you go where your mind takes you?

Within reason. I pick out characters I want to have tell the story, or be the story. Then I try to stay close to that, but if it's one point where they have to shoot someone—or not shoot someone—it comes down to how I feel at the time.

Do you write for the market, or is it pure creativity?

It's creativity. I don't really care what the market says. I think about the Westerns that most of us watched as we were growing up. How every story had a moral background to it. Good always comes out on top. That's the theme of all my books. The good guys always comes through.

You're a traditionalist in that sense—the good guys always win and the bad guys always lose?

Yes, exactly!

Have you ever considered switching that and having the bad guy win?

Some of my good characters aren't exactly the best role models you could find. But in the end, when the chips are down, they make the right choice.

Do you ever make revisions to your books?

Well, I do some rewriting. I do a first draft, read through and change things that don't quite fit. Then I'll read it over again and send it to my publicist and publishing company.

Do you ever read your books for entertainment?

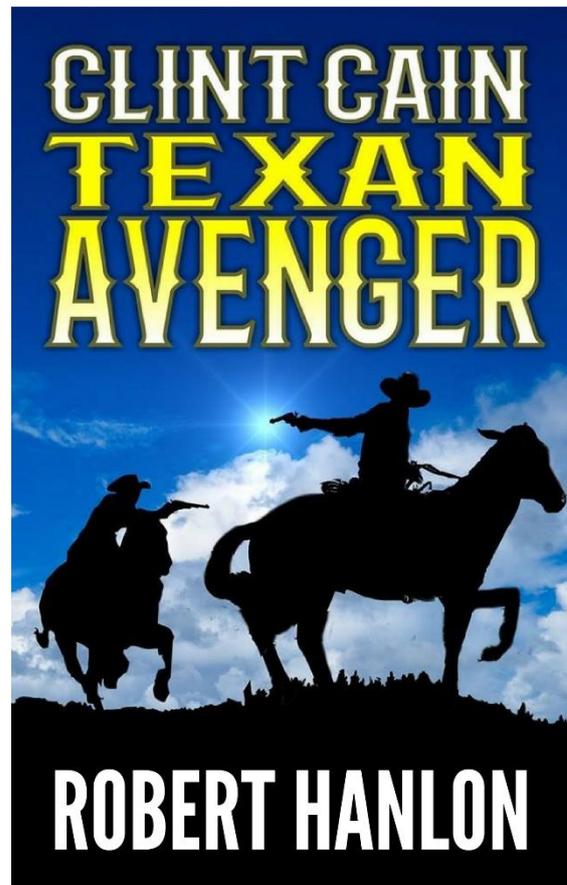
Not usually. By the time I'm done with them, I'm sick of reading them. I usually read other writers for entertainment.

How many manuscripts do you have on the go at any one time?

Five or six, sometimes more, rarely less. I start them, and if I get to a point where I'm not sure what to do next, I start another one. Then eventually I get back to each story and fill them in. I like to have multiple projects on the go. It makes life interesting.

Let's talk about marketing for a few minutes. Many authors struggle with the marketing of their books. How do you pick your titles?

I pick the titles I'd like to have. Occasionally they're not good titles, so I discuss it with my publicist.



"Clint Cain: Texan Avenger" is a major seller for Robert Hanlon in both Great Britain and in the United States.

The title comes first?

Yes, sometimes it does. Like *Bounty for the Preacher*. That popped into my head one day, I loved it, and I wanted to write a story around it, so I did.

That one was a major seller for you, top ten I believe?

Yes. It was very good to see that book getting the attention that it did.

There are still those who don't believe that Westerns sell.

Mine seem to be doing quite well (laughs).

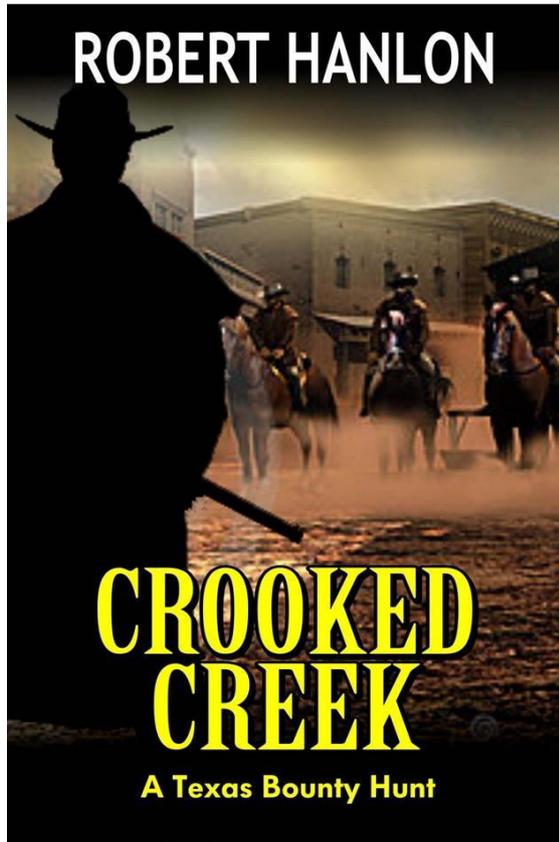
Does the success you are having as a Western author ever surprise you?

Not really. I grew up in the West, I live in the West, I spent my whole life in the West. I knew it all along, and I've been an avid reader of

Westerns my whole life. It's natural for me to write Westerns.

Where do you think the majority of the people who buy your novels are located?

I'm not sure where my readership is. There seems to be a great number of them. It could be anywhere. I really don't know. You'd have to ask my publicist.



A current top 100 success for Hanlon.

Are you ever surprised by the success you have abroad?

Very much so. I never really thought about my books being successful in other countries. I didn't think anyone outside of America could appreciate them. Westerns are so personal to America and American culture. Yet, I sell a great deal of books in Australia and in Great Britain. It's a blast.

How do you feel about the promotional techniques used in the book business?

Until I got with my current publicist, I thought it was a complete mess. There seemed to be nothing an author could do to promote their books. It was completely haphazard. This guy is more consistent, and he takes his time to get things going. He has developed the readership, and now they read book after book after book. It's a breath of fresh air.

You release book after book after book. Have you been able to pick out the ones that would be hits?

It's interesting. Clint Cain was a book I didn't think would be a huge hit, but it was. I have other books that I thought would be huge hits and they were moderate hits. I know that if readers take the time to read my books, they'll want to read others. But I never know which book will be a major success. They have all sold well, but some of them have really turned into monsters.

Do you think you have simplified success in the book business? You make it look very easy...

It's hard to say it's easy as it takes a lot of time and effort to write. You have to really think about the story and how your characters are going to develop. It's a labor of love. It's something you really want to do. I don't think I make it look easy, but I think people think I have a knack for doing it and perhaps want to know my secret technique of doing it. There's no secret. I just do it.

Is editing important?

It's extremely important. The public is fickle. The majority of the public want something they can read. I push hard for a good edit on my books. It's essential.

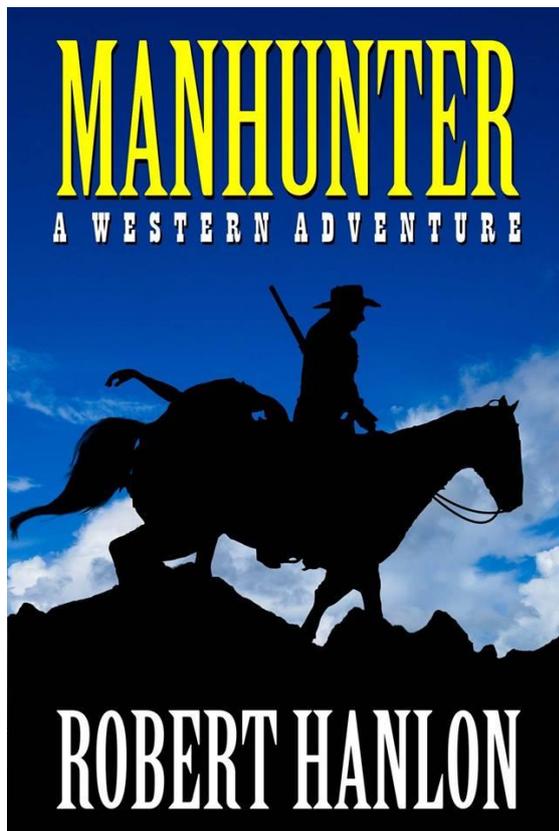
Do you think writers who don't use editors are making a mistake?

A huge one. People are going to see those grammatical errors and spelling errors. They are going to put your book down, no matter how good the story is, and pick up a book they

can actually read. There are lots of authors out there who have amazing stories who won't be read because they didn't have their book edited.

Would you ever consider signing with a large company like Harper Collins?

I've turned them down. Their arrangements are minimal. Royalties are next to nothing. You're covering the costs for them, and they're keeping the money. They don't have my interest as an author at heart. I have a very nice deal with *Dusty Saddle Publishing*. They let me write what I want, they cover the costs, I get a great royalty, and I get the support I need from them.



The latest release from Hanlon is pleasing fans around the world.

Who are your favorite Western authors at the moment? Who do you groove to?

There several I really like... John D. Fie, Jr., G.P. Hutchinson, Paul Thompson, Robert Vaughan, Brad Dennison. I also still like the classics from

Zane Grey. I try to read a cross section of the genre.

What are you currently working on?

Several Westerns at the moment, and some ideas are forming for non-Westerns. I have a great Civil War story I'm working on that I'm eager to get back to...

Well, thank you for your time, Robert. I'll let you get back to work.

Anytime... it's been a pleasure talking to you.

Learn more about the Robert Hanlon Western catalogue by visiting his official author page. You can get there by clicking [here](#).

STAR INTERVIEW:

**WHERE THE
READERS
SHOULD
BE... AN
INTERVIEW
WITH POP
ICON
CONNIE
FRANCIS**



One of the most exciting singers of the early sixties was Connie Francis. Her ability to pull together a wide range of material, to perform with emotion and perfection, made her a top star. This interview is our attempt to try and

piece together her long and successful career as one of the greatest record sellers of the 1960s.

But we also tried to highlight some of the important causes she supports. For example, don't skip over Connie talking about the many problems facing veterans today in the United States. Take her words in on that front and understand that these are issues we should all be aware of.

And yes... enjoy this interview as it's far-ranging, covers a lot of ground and should come as a great educator to those who only know her passing hits. If you get a chance, you may want to try some of the albums mentioned during this interview. I think you'll like them.

Now... let's meet the legendary Connie Francis.

Thank you for agreeing to this interview, Connie. It's a pleasure to meet you.

You, too. Thank you for asking me.

You're just about to release your new book. How was the writing process? Did you enjoy it?

It was a rollercoaster ride. It was lots and lots and lots of heartache. I would find myself laughing hysterically as I was writing it. I wrote every word of it myself, sometimes having to go bed with PTSD from reliving certain things I wrote about. It's a three-volume book, and I'm releasing the first volume of 650 pages and I still have two more volumes to go.

That's one helluva journey...

Yes, it is. It was an eight-year journey.

How did you approach writing your new memoir?

Well, I've written my book as non-fiction, but it's been written like a script.

I read your first biography...

That was terrible. That one I wrote on planes, trains and in green rooms. I sent it to the publisher, and he printed it as I sent it in. I don't consider the first memoir to even be a book—it was a joke. I learned how to write writing this new book.



A major bestselling album from Connie Francis, and the follow-up to her biggest selling album "Italian Favorites."

How do you actually view your life?

I view my life as two extremes. The most exhilarating times you could hope for, and the depths of depression. Nightmare experiences. It was a real rollercoaster of a life. Although, if I had to do it all over again, of course all of us say there are things we would do differently. There are many, many things I would do differently, but if I could not change anything except for the death of my brother, I would still have lived every moment of my life, because the exhilarating part of it could never be matched by any other field by very few entertainers.

I think you certainly reached great heights with your career. You were very involved in the business side of your records, too, correct?

Yes. I was able to choose my own recordings. I didn't have to ask MGM permission. If I wanted to record an album, I would just call the studio and book it. Nobody ever gave me any problems. I wish there had been a good producer up at MGM who would have told me, 'Connie, instead of recording the twist album or the children's album, you should do the Harold Arlen songbook or the George Gershwin songbook or the Cole Porter songbook.' I would have definitely changed the course of my career if I could do that all over again. But I didn't have any input; it was all on my own. There were A & R men, but all they did was time the records, not produce the records. I wish I had a Columbia or a Whitney Houston or a Barry Manilow producer. I wish I'd had input, but I didn't. Nobody ever suggested anything to me. The songs they did give to me, I didn't like enough to record. In all those years.

Interesting that one of the biggest problems in the book industry, which I'm familiar with, is the books aren't promoted properly. Is that a similar problem with albums?

My albums were hid[den]. They didn't even send them to the disc jockeys, very many of them, because they cut into the sales of the single records and that's where the profits were. Some of my albums like the Les Reed album, which I love—I love Les Reed, and I love that album—got very little airplay because they weren't shipped to very many radio stations. They got shipped to just a select few stations which played basically album music rather than single music. But they didn't get the promotion or the exposure.

Do you think if the albums had been promoted more widely, you'd have had different hit records, and that your career would have moved in a different direction?

Yes, definitely.

I'm surprised you didn't have hit records from your Bacharach and David recordings.

That was a miserable failure on my part. I had lunch with a columnist who was a friend of mine, and he told me his son was writing songs. I said, "Everybody's sons are writing songs." He said, "No, my son is writing some pretty good material, Connie. Will you give him a chance?" So, I said, "Of course!" So, he came up to my office with his writing partner, and they played me songs into the night. I was trying really hard to find a record I wanted to record for his father's sake. Finally, I said, "Look, fellas, your music might be a little far out for today's market but keep trying and you'll get there." That was Burt Bacharach and Hal David. So, Dionne Warwick has a lot to thank me for. *(laughs)*

(Laughs) I wish they'd promoted your album of Bacharach and David because your version of "The Look of Love" is beautiful.

Thank you. That's another album that very few people have, or have heard of. Polygram chose not to release any of my better albums on CD format, so the radio stations don't have those albums.

But they all have "Robot Man..."

Yes, exactly. They all have "Robot Man."

I know you recorded several albums in the United Kingdom—what was the difference between recording in the United Kingdom and in the United States? Was there a big difference?

Yes. First of all, I could use seventy-two pieces in England as it was less expensive to record. But England had the best string sound in the world, and still does; it can't be duplicated anywhere else. Of course, Nashville was a different experience entirely. It was almost like a different country. That's another sound that can't be recreated anywhere else. But it was great recording in New York and Los Angeles, too. Those New York musicians were just phenomenal, like on the Connie and Clyde album with Don Costa. I consider the best recorded album that I did [to be] my "Spanish and Latin American Favorites" that I did in London.



One of Connie's favorites from her own catalog.

That was a classic album—but what made it so great in your opinion?

Most of the players were from the philharmonic orchestra, and there were seventy-two pieces there. That was thrilling. To be twenty-one years old and to record with that kind of sound and the quality of those musicians was a thrill beyond belief.

You were working with Geoff Love on that album, correct?

Yes, Geoff Love, Tony Osbourne and Brian Kay. They were all wonderful.

Around the same time, you recorded an album that you never released called “One For The Boys.” Why wasn’t that album ever released?

It was never released because I was an idiot. I didn’t release it for a reason that I don’t even want to tell you because it’s so embarrassing I don’t want to tell you the story. But now it should be released, and I’ve asked PolyGram to release it but they’ve refused. So, I’m going to eventually, within the next year, release it on my own label and make a deal with PolyGram to release it.



The icon. Connie Francis.

I was always curious about why it didn’t get released because it seemed like a complete winner for you to record songs made famous by some of the biggest male singers.

It’s one of the very best albums I ever recorded with Ray Ellis. It was just gorgeous.

You are world famous for your recordings in many different languages. How did you come to record all those great foreign language records?

That was my dad’s idea. He was a genius. He only had a fifth-grade education, but he was a genius. I was fourteen years old when I started making demonstration records, and my father said to me, “If you ever do make it on records, and that’s a long shot, you know how much the United States is envied and hated around the world?” I said, “Sure, they hate us because we won... Hooray for our side.” He said, “Sure, they hate us, but you have to think bigger. You have to use your music to make friends around the world. England is a given, but Germany and Japan are going to be our biggest allies one day.” It seemed unlikely at the time—but when I did make it and I started doing the language records, it was the reason for my unprecedented acceptance throughout the world.

Your movies must have helped a lot, too, right?

My movies were a joke. My movies were used as capital punishment in certain jurisdictions. They were terrible.

I saw “Looking For Love” about nine times as a teenager.

You are a glutton for punishment. You’re probably the only one who saw it. Johnny Carson was in the movie, and one time he was hosting the academy awards. He said, “I’m not familiar with the movie industry. I’ve really had no association with it except that I appeared in one film with Connie Francis. I wouldn’t say the picture was bad, but it’s the only picture in motion picture history that wasn’t pirated.”

You did a great album called “The Greatest American Waltzes.” What made you go for waltzes?

I recorded that one in Nashville, Tennessee. I tried to cover a large segment of the audience and after my first hits, when everyone considered me a bubble gum singer, I wanted to expand my audience and reach an adult audience. I did that album without arrangements. In Nashville, they didn't use arrangements, they just use a number system. I think it was a pretty good album. Thank you for choosing that album.

I was always wanted to ask you something— Bobby Darin did an album called “That’s All” with Richard Wess. You did an album called “Songs to a Swingin’ Band” with Richard Wess. Did the Darin album influence your choice?

When Bobby recorded “That’s All,” he had to fight his record company for a year because they wanted him to keep doing his big hits. “Mack The Knife” and “Beyond the Sea” were on that album and were two songs he would own forever. Bobby called me the day after recording the album and said, “Connie, I just did an album with a crazy man called Richard Wess... He’s phenomenal. I’m sending over a couple of dubs from the album and I think you should do album with him.” So, we did “Songs To A Swinging Band” with Richard Wess.

Did you enjoy making an album with Hank Williams, Jr.?

Yes, he was only nineteen years old when we did that album. I finished the album in one day, and Hank was there for three weeks, finishing the album without me because he was just starting out.

Did you find recording easy then?

It was amazing... the amount of records I could record in any given session. In 1961, I went to Nashville for six days. I recorded three albums and four singles. “The Folk Album,” “The Singalong Album,” “Never On Sunday” and four

singles in six days. They used to call me ‘*one take Connie.*’ Yet, on “My Heart Has A Mind Of Its Own” there were forty-nine takes. It depended.

“Never On Sunday” was a major bestselling album for you, wasn’t it?

Yes. Every song on that album was a number one in the far east.

Do you remember a beautiful song that you recorded called “Theme from Flight of the Phoenix?”

Yes.



Connie at a recording session.

Where did that song come from?

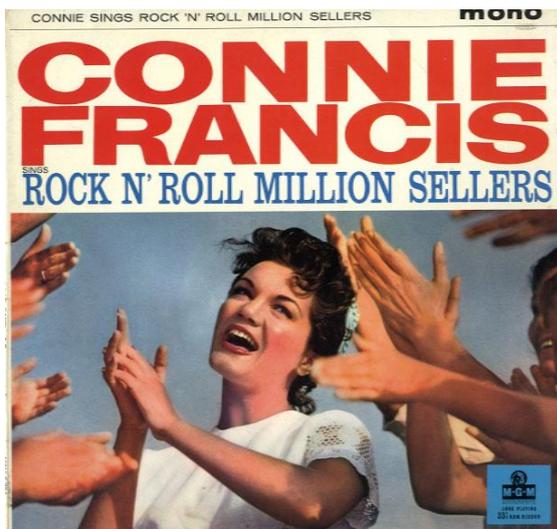
20th Century Fox gave that song to me. They were doing the movie, and they chose the song. It’s a beautiful song, but it wasn’t nominated either. But then again, “Where the Boys Are” wasn’t nominated, either, and it should have been nominated because the basis for a song to be nominated is that the song that did the most to make a motion picture a success, and “Where the Boys Are” was number one in fifteen countries before the movie was even released. But like everything else, the Academy Awards are a lot of politics.

I can imagine. Later, after you left MGM, you made some records for United Artists. How do you think those recordings panned out?

Not well. I wasn't singing well. I didn't like the album, and it wasn't the fault of United Artists. It was my fault.

You were playing music and singing before the Rock 'n' Roll era began... How did Elvis Presley and the birth of Rock 'n' Roll change the music industry in your opinion? It must have made a huge impact on what you chose to do.

It was like night and day. I mean, I was on television when I was ten years old. A weekly show when I was fourteen years old. I was doing songs like Minnie the Moocher and Golden Earrings before Rock and Roll was even heard of. When Elvis came out in '56, that was the turning point in music. Everything prior to Elvis became yesterday's showbusiness. All the singers I'd grown up listening to stopped selling records. First of all, the adults have bought all the records. The kids didn't have the money. After Elvis, the kids bought all the records. It went from album selling to single record selling.



Rock 'n' Roll Million Sellers was an early album from Connie Francis.

How do you feel about those early doo-wop records now, after all these years?

You hear them now and they're very primitive compared to today's recordings, but they still hold tremendous nostalgia. When you hear songs like "It's Only Make Believe," or so many of those great songs, it's like hearing from an old friend.

It really is. Talking about the changing market, we've talked about your albums—let's touch upon the singles. You had a long slew of big hits. Did you ever have any problems finding material?

After the Beatles, it became very hard to find anything that would sell. Some of my best recordings were post-Beatles and sold nothing. Just like every other artist, including Elvis. The Beatles and British music wiped every American artist off the charts. Prior to the Beatles, it was very easy to find material. Neil Sedaka and Howie Greenfield—I could always go to the well and find a great song for me by them. After the Beatles, folk music came in, which wasn't my bag. It was a major disaster for every American artist.

It must have been very frustrating when the Beatles came in to be at the top of the tree to suddenly having to fight to get hits?

It was. Then of course American Bandstand came off the air, which was a tremendous help to me and to many other American artists. When Dick Clark played a song, he could make—or break—any record.

How did you adapt to the changing times? Many artists didn't seem to adapt very well but you kept flourishing.

I became a Vegas and Copa performer, and my audiences just grew and grew and grew in Las Vegas. I would play there two months a year. I basically became a nightclub performer. Much more so than during the years I had been making hit records.

Let me ask you this question... Which of your records do you play for relaxation?

I don't play my records, but I do have a radio show that is on every week called "A Visit with Connie" on Baltimore Net radio. It's streamed around the world. They send me these programs that are hosted by fans from around the world. Each week we have a different host. Those are the CDs I listen to. I don't listen to my own records as much, as I'm too critical and I don't enjoy them. I prefer listening to my favorite singers.

Who are your favorite singers?

I like Michael Bolton, Ray Charles, Bobby Darin; I love Sinatra. Since you are so knowledgeable about albums, Nick, you may have heard of my favorite album, "A Touch of Nilsson" by Nilsson. When I was writing my book, I played that album constantly as it was so relaxing to me.

Of course. Moving back to the book, I have to ask you this: What does it feel like to have had such an accomplished career? It must be quite amazing to look back on.

It is amazing. Sometimes I don't believe it myself. I had a girl, a friend of mine, who did a chronology for me from 1958 on. Every day she covered what I did, what songs I recorded, who my boyfriends were (or weren't), who the magazines said were my boyfriends, and family squabbles. I looked at 1967 the other day, and I said, "How did I possibly do all of that?" It was such a whirlwind experience, and it was great.

You're still very active today...

We have an auction incidentally, too. I'm auctioning off all of my memorabilia so my fans can have these things that they want while I'm still alive. A company called *Heritage* is going to be sponsoring the auction in Beverly Hills on

October 1st. It will be worldwide on the internet.

You must be quite excited for your fans to have a part of you—you must really love your fans.

I do. I don't know if anyone appreciates their fans like I do. Many of them have become like my family members. They come and stay at my house. They have been so loyal during the ups and downs, and even during the lean years they never deserted me.

Fantastic... What else are you up to lately?

I'm working very much with veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq. We have twenty-six soldiers a day killing themselves. The suicide rate is through the roof with those suffering from PTSD. I want to devote a lot of my time to that, and to the mentally ill. Those projects are more important to me than any concerts I could ever do.



Connie Francis in Vietnam—an experience that changed her life.

I completely agree. You sang for the troops in Vietnam, too, right?

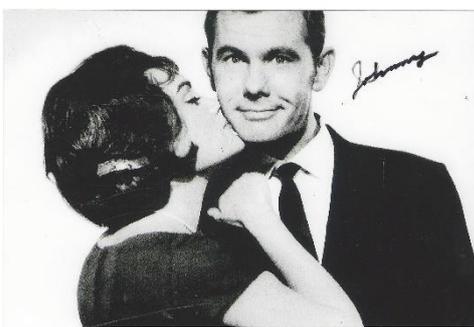
Yes. That was one of the most life-altering experiences I ever had. I went on that trip a child and came back an adult. I had never felt so needed before in my life. It was the most spectacular experience of my life. It was horrendous, too. But it was a life-altering experience.

When did you first become aware of the amount of help veterans need?

When I was ten years old, my father taught me how important it was to always defend our troops. So, I began playing my accordion and singing at any veteran's hospital within driving distance from our home from the age of ten. I think the way they are treated is a disgrace. I think we could do so much more for our veterans than we do. The backlog of cases handled by the VA is always a million strong, and the records aren't even computerized. They're lying on floors, strewn about, in veteran's hospitals and mental hospitals around the country. Fifteen percent of the people in mental hospitals are veterans. We have 600,000 homeless people in our country, and fifty percent of those are veterans. In Miami Beach, we have hardly any homeless veterans because of the programs we have been working with.

I wish someone would do the same for veterans in England...

Yes. Very similar story.



Connie Francis with Johnny Carson... her co-star in the motion picture "Looking For Love".

You have always been an ambassador for American music around the world, haven't you?

I actually introduced American music to much of Europe when I recorded in German. I had a record, "*Everybody's Somebody's Fool*," which

was number one in America and became the most played record in Germany in 1960. It won the Radio Luxembourg award for the most played vocalist and that had never been won by a non-European before. I'm still the bestselling female vocalist in German history. I used to do a radio show on Radio Luxembourg each week which had fifteen million listeners a day. Half of them were behind the Iron Curtain. That's why I did the show. Entertaining those listeners was very important to me. In Germany and in Europe, there were no American records on the charts at all when I first visited. The obvious barrier was language, and German is so widely spoken in Europe that it just took off. When the Berlin Wall came down on CNN they had a program I have been trying to get a copy of for years. On the eastern side of the wall it was printed, "*We Want Connie Francis*." That was a thrill.

Your dad was a huge influence on your recordings, wasn't he?

Without my father's input, I would have never had a hit record. He pressed for "Who's Sorry Now" for a year and a half. I was trying to run out of time at a recording session. I said, "That's it, fellas. There's only sixteen minutes to go. That's a wrap." My father said, "If I have to nail you to that microphone, you're going to record 'Who's Sorry Now.'" We did it in sixteen minutes. Sixteen minutes that changed my life.

Before that record, you had several records that hadn't done anything, right?

We had nine or ten that didn't do anything. That's twenty sides. I could pick out my own material, which doesn't say much about me. But it was Dick Clark who was the most important influence in my career, other than my father. Without Dick Clark, it wouldn't have happened. I was thinking yesterday that it struck me during writing the book—in December 1957, I was a secretary taking

shorthand in an office, and by the end of 1958, I was the world's top female vocalist according to the New Musical Express.

How did you keep such a level head with such success?

My mother and father kept both my feet on the ground. They never let me get too important for my own good. The day Dick Clark played "Who's Sorry Now," I said, "Okay, everyone line up for an autograph." My mother said, "You have to take the garbage out." I said, "I don't have to take the garbage out. After today, I'm a star." My mother said, "I'll make you see stars. Take the garbage out." (laughs)

If a young performer came to you and asked for advice about maintaining a career like yours, what would your advice be to that performer?

To make sure they have a lot of good friends outside of the business. I have very few friends in showbusiness. In showbusiness, you can

make a lot of friends as long as you're in the top ten. I have had friendships for forty, fifty years and I never really had a life in showbusiness. I skipped the parties and all the ways to get into trouble, and the people who get you in trouble. I surrounded myself with people who wouldn't get me into trouble.

Well, soon we will be able to read all about your life in your new book. When will it be on sale?

The first volume will be out on the first of October 2017. I'm self-publishing the book. There's a lot of details to see to. The quality of the paper, the binding; it's a big process, but I didn't want to go with a traditional publisher. I hope everyone enjoys it.

Well, thank you for a fantastic interview, I truly enjoyed it.

I did, too. Thank you.

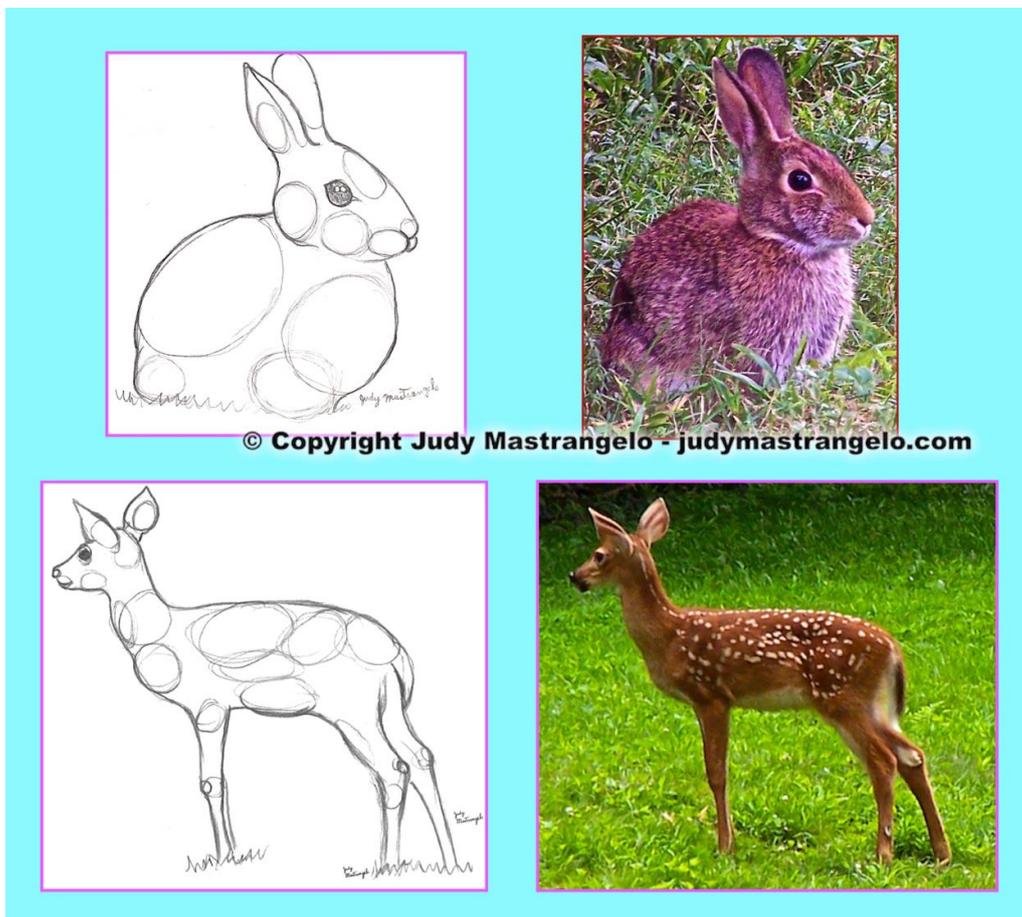
INSIDE ILLUSTRATIONS WITH ARTIST JUDY MASTRANGELO

I'd like to talk about **DRAWING FIGURES**.

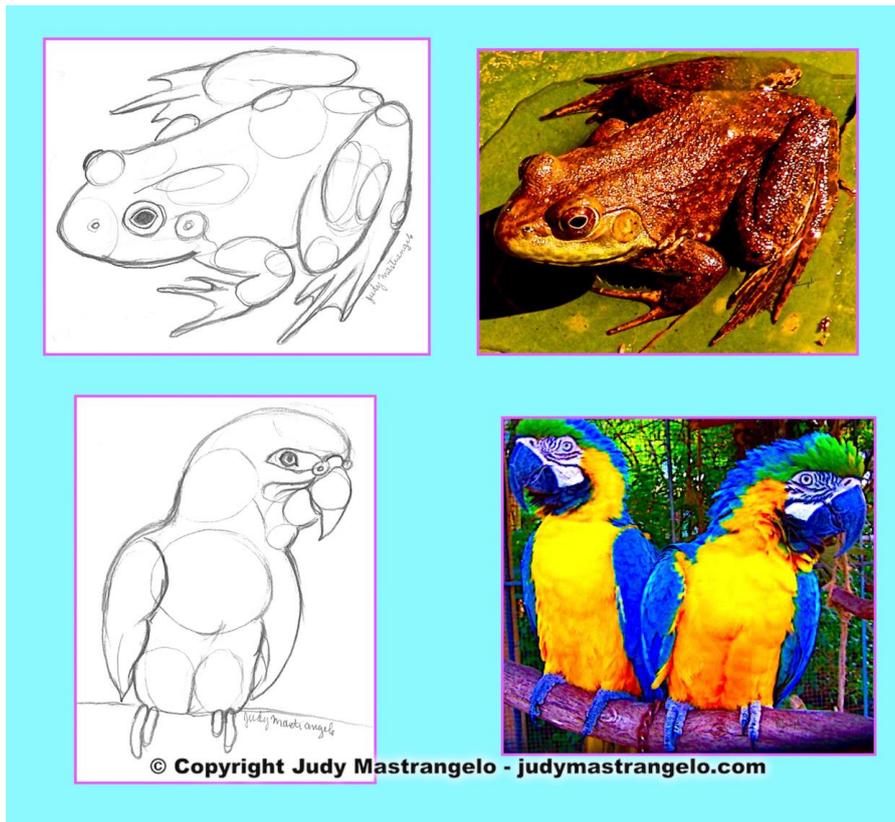
After you've read my previous article on Drawing Figures, you will have a good idea about drawing any kind of living form. The human figure has a very similar anatomy to other animals, be they Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, etc. As I've mentioned, the study of anatomy is a fascinating one. And I urge you to make a study of the skeleton and muscle structure of any animal you wish to draw or paint. That will serve you as a wonderful aid in drawing animals, because no matter how much fur or how many feathers an animal might have, if you have a knowledge of how their bodies are made, you will be able to depict them in a better way. We can study the drawings of the great Leonardo da Vinci again https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci who was a master anatomist. And you can also research other information for yourself about the animals you wish to draw.

Here are some of the steps I take in order to draw animals:

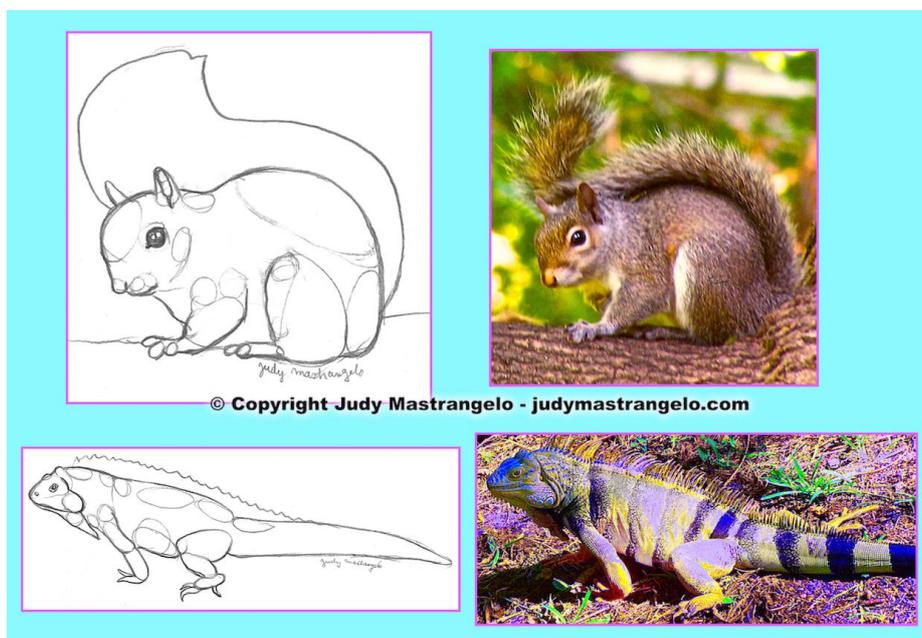
1. I often take photos of animals that I will draw, as reference guides.



2. I then look closely at the animal photo to see what are his basic shapes, such as circles, ovals, lines, squares and triangles.



3. Once you have gotten your picture the way you like it, then draw the good lines darker, and erase any shapes or mistakes that you don't want to keep.



4. In my animal drawings that I show you, I haven't erased the inner shapes, scribbly lines, and mistakes, so that I could show you what I'm talking about.



5. For our first step, we are just getting the basic shapes down. After you get all that done correctly, add in all your details of fur, scales, etc.



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Unicorns

Pegasus

Griffin

You will see in these pictures what I am referring to. I've shown photos that I've taken of a rabbit, fawn, frog, parrot, squirrel and lizard. I've also included drawings that I've done of each of these animals, which I have broken up into shapes as described.

I suggest you practice drawing animals as often as you can. It really helps, just like learning to play a musical instrument. After you get the basic structure of an animal, you can then draw them in various positions, such as I show in my paintings of horses. I also show the horses in motion, which is another wonderful and exciting way to portray animals.

Since I enjoy painting fantasy art very much, sometimes I depict fantasy animals, such as unicorns, Pegasus, griffins, etc. I do this by having fun in incorporating several animals together into one imaginary one. As you can see in my paintings:

UNICORNS are drawn as they did in the Medieval days, which is a combination horse, with a lion's tail, a golden horn, and cloven hoofs.

PEGASUS is a flying horse with wings of an eagle.

GRIFFINS are a combination eagle and lion.

The art of drawing and painting gives me great joy, and I know it will give you the same.

I have recently recorded several series of podcasts on YouTube about my painting techniques, and the steps I take in the creation of my artwork. Please visit them and let me know what you think. My most recent series of 5 podcasts is about the creation of my painting "WELCOME TO MAKE BELIEVE."

<https://judymastrangelo.com/category/podcasts/>

I speak about my painting techniques in my book "PAINTING FAIRIES AND OTHER FANTASIES." I think you will find it interesting.

In it there are also some downloadable tutorials that are very helpful.

<https://judymastrangelo.com/books-2/painting-fairies-other-fantasies/>

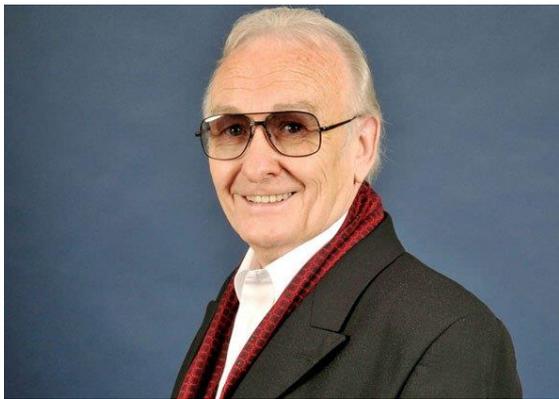
My books are going to be published by DSP very soon, under the new imprint title of "IMAGINATION BOOKS." They will include many exciting titles in several formats, including AUDIO BOOKS, EBOOKS, HARDCOVER FANTASY, and fun filled ACTIVITY books for the entire family. I'm also now developing a wonderful series of creative COLORING BOOKS for both adults and children. They will have themes such as: FANTASY, ELVES and FAIRIES, ANGELS, FAIRY TALES, LANDSCAPES and FLOWERS, and WHIMSICAL ANIMALS. You can get an idea of my current books in print on my website book page:

<https://judymastrangelo.com/portfolio/books/>

To find out more about my artwork, please visit my website at: www.judymastrangelo.com

While you're there, please sign up for my newsletter to discover what's happening in my magical world: <http://judymastrangelo.com/newsletter/>

CATCHING UP
INTERVIEW:
**HE BEAT
THE
BEATLES,
TOURED
WITH ROY
ORBISON
AND NOW
HE'S BACK!**



You broke my heart 'cause I couldn't dance,

You didn't even want me around...

*And now I'm back to let you know I can really
shake 'em down...*

Those immortal lyrics by Berry Gordy have been sung on the radio hundreds of times by the man we are about to interview. He was part of the British music boom of the early 60s, had a score of hits, recorded some fantastic music and... he's still doing it. Along

with his group "The Tremeloes," he was called in for an audition with Decca records. The other group being considered by the label was the Beatles. The Tremeloes got the prestigious recording contract, and the rest is history. "Do You Love Me," "Someone, Someone," "Candy Man," "I Can Dance," the hits just flowed for them. We sat down for an interview, and it ended up being a musical voyage through the 1960s. And I have to say that, although I loved his records anyway, Brian Poole is one of the nicest guys in town. Let's meet him... You're not going to regret reading these pages. I can promise you that!

Brian, it's great to meet you. How are you doing?

It's great to meet you. Well, we just finished a U.K. tour.

Let me start by asking you this... did you always want to be a singer?

Well, no, I have to say when I was at school I was very interested in sport. I used to box, I still box, but my sports were football and rugby. I played both of those sports at county level. I would have loved to have been a footballer, but I wasn't good enough. I was much better at singing and playing guitar than I was at sport.

How did you get your start?

In the late '50s and early '60s, we were touring mostly American air force camps around Great Britain. There were fifty or sixty camps all over the place. We used to go to Milden Hall, Brampton, loads of them. I did A-levels at grammar school and as soon as I'd finished that, we started the band professionally and those [gigs] were our main source of income. We did three or four American camps a week. We got asked to do the Embassy in London, Douglas House, and we got asked to play there. A lot of our audience was American forces people. We also played dance halls while we

were still at school, doing a gig in the evening, coming back in the morning, doing our homework quickly and back in school the next day. We would do that several times a week. We had quite a busy life in those days, but it was great. But you can't beat that. What a start! The American servicemen would even suggest songs for us. I remember them suggesting "Forty Days." Later we found out that was a form of punishment for them. We used to sing that. Everyone loved it.

How did you get material in those early days?

We got the address of Norman Petty. I wore glasses and still do; we would emulate Buddy Holly and the Crickets, and we did a lot of their songs. Some of the Americans got us the number for Norman Petty who was Buddy Holly's manager, and we asked him for some songs. He sent back about five or six that they hadn't recorded yet. One of those records was "Someone, Someone," which became a major hit for us. It went to number two—but never got to number one. I think You've Lost That Loving Feeling beat us to the top.



An early performance from Brian Poole and the Tremeloes.

One of the things that really stood out about your records to me is that you had such a different sound even then... would you agree?

Yes. We were a bit different. When I listen to our old records, we did everything in such a rock-and-roll way, even the slow ones. That's what people wanted. These days, when we do

a show, we play big theatres, concert halls and places like that. But there was nowhere like that back then. We used to play dancehalls. We would have to play songs much faster for people to dance to. Now, we do some of them a bit faster and some slightly slower because that's the way people like to hear them. We try to keep up with the times, if we can, even in our seventies. We are still trying!

How did you get a recording contract? You had to face the Beatles for a contract at Decca, didn't you?

Well, see, there's a big story about that that's often got wrong, so I'll tell you the truth. The Beatles and the Tremeloes were asked to do an audition at Decca records in West Hampstead in London. We went up and did our audition and did all rock 'n' roll and harmony songs—material from Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly and stuff like that. I was told by the great George Martin, who was their mentor, someone asked me in his company why we got the contract at Decca and the Beatles didn't. The fact is that we did a better audition. George Martin said, "What you don't realize is that everyone turned them down. They were doing the wrong songs. If they had done a couple of their own songs and the rock and roll which they were really good at, they'd have been fine." Before we'd got into recording ourselves, we were quite often asked to vocally back other people. Tommy Steele was one of our idols, and we were asked to back one of his records. We got brought in by Decca to back people like Bob Luman, the country singers, quite a few Americans too. We even backed the Vernon Girls. They needed beefing up in the middle of their record so they brought us in. We had backed a lot of records before we did the audience, and they knew we could do the harmony stuff. We got the contract at Decca and went on from there. We were very lucky with Decca, and had hit after hit.

The experience was very useful to us in those days and still is today. It's that experience that we got in those younger days, knowing how to do things, and how to know harmonies and put them together. The same three people can actually just walk into a studio and do things very quickly as long as it's the same three people. If you add a fourth, it won't sound the same. We always had the same three or four people singing in the band, and there's three of us still left—Chip Hawkes, Dave Mundon and myself. We sang everything there was. I don't know how we still get away with it.

A lot of the groups from the same time don't sound as good as you guys. They're starting to sound their age...

You know why they don't sound the same?



The "teen idol" posing for a publicity photograph.

Why?

It's not easy to do. I've just been on tour singing everything in the same key I sang it in when I was eighteen or twenty, and I'm seventy-six now and I'm still singing in the same key. It's high and it's hard. But we still do everything we did in the same key. We don't sound exactly the same as our voices have taken a bashing over the years—but we still sound almost the same. When singers lower their keys because the singer wants it a little easier, they don't sound the same. This is a personal observation, but that's what I think.

You still sound vibrant.

Well, thank you.

Did you ever have any problems finding material to record? There were a bunch of groups trying to get hit records at the same time. Was it hard to find material for hit singles?

No. You know what? We had a glut of material. Through Norman Petty, we had all of the Chess material, and material from singers like Roy Orbison. We toured with Roy, and he gave us about twenty songs. One of them was Candy Man, which we recorded and still sing on stage. We were on the coach on a massive package tour with the Beatles, Chris Montez, Dusty Springfield, The Searchers and Roy Orbison. He came down to the front of the coach and said, "I've got a song for you—do you want to hear it?" He took out a guitar and played it for us. We certainly wanted to record it. He got us a reel-to-reel tape, and we put it together and had a multi-million selling hit with that record. Material was there if you listened to people. We wrote as much as we could, as well. Some of the stuff later Chip Hawkes wrote. We always wrote our 'B' sides.

If you write your 'B' sides, they can be a good earner...

Of course, we knew that because we used to work with the top musicians just doing backing vocals. We couldn't even read music, and we were working with people who were really top studio musicians, much older blokes. They told us not to forget to write the 'B' sides because you get the same money as you'd get for the 'A' sides.



The song that knocked the Beatles off the top spot of the British charts.

Do you remember recording the first album?

Yes, I do. You'd never believe a lot about the recording of that first album. It was on "Ace of Clubs," and it was called 'BIG BIG HITS OF 62.' It was one of the first party albums. That's what they said they wanted. We suggested they run all the tracks into each other. There was no digital at that time, so all the links between the songs had to be physically done. There was no other way to do it. We would have to do three or four songs in one go. If you stopped, you had to start from the beginning. Some of it was good and some wasn't quite so good. It was a party record and people say they still use it at parties. In actual fact, we had ideas on how to make it easier to go from one song into another. Our recording manager, Mike Smith, had other ideas—we sent him out for a drink a few times while we worked on the links. He did that quite a few times and that's how that record was made. It was quite hard as it was on two tracks.



An early extended play record from Brian Poole and the Tremeloes.

I thought it came out well. It sounds like an amazing feat to pull it all together manually.

I suppose it was. We only had ourselves in the studio. There were no other musicians that came in. Later, people would say, "So-and-so played on your tracks," and I'd say, "No—nobody played on our tracks apart from us because nobody else could." I suppose it was quite hard. It took a little while to record it all. Some of the medleys I still like. There's one called Devil Woman, which was an old record we covered which we loved. It was a lovely old song, as well. Songs by Ray Charles made it onto that album. We tried to imitate him as best we could. That was how it turned out and we were quite happy with it.

Do you still see it?

Yes. We just finished a forty-date tour—you can probably tell by my voice. We had merchandise for sale but would you believe that there were at least five or six copies of that album that we were asked to sign? It's lovely to see. It had all the tracks printed on the front, didn't it?

It did.

Lovely album.

Then came your second album—“Twist and Shout,” which included “If You Gotta Make A Fool of Somebody.” I always thought your version was better than the original.

Well, the original was a blues number from James Ray. Did you ever hear that version? You’re thinking of Freddy and the Dreamers’ version, aren’t you? You should listen to the James Ray version. He wrote and recorded “If You Gotta Make A Fool of Somebody.” We kind of copied it as best we could, but he’s a really bluesy singer and we couldn’t imitate that. It was later that Freddy came out with it. But everyone was doing the same songs. Freddy must have heard James Ray’s version and recorded it, and his version was lovely.

How did you fit in recording time around all your tours?

We were lucky as we could always get into the studios when we wanted to. Decca had a good open relationship with us. We didn’t have any problems with Decca. Our management sold us out to CBS eventually, but if we’d have stayed at Decca we would have been happy, but it was a money thing as usual. Not particularly for us, but it did work out for us. We still have a good relationship with Decca. We purchased some but some are still owned by Decca. We were lucky because we were touring, and when we had a couple of weeks off, we wanted to do some recording. They were always open ended for us. They would open the studio at 2am. We would go into the old Decca studios in West Hampstead, and they’d let us go in and record.

I guess Decca really nurtured their talent...

We never thought of it that way. We never thought we were talented. We were just enjoying it so much I don’t think we thought about talent and stuff. We knew lots of people

like Roy Orbison and it didn’t strike us like that. We never thought of ourselves as a great band. We just tried to please everybody; we didn’t please everyone all of the time, but as long as everyone liked what we were doing, we would do it.

You also went solo for a while, didn’t you?

I did. When we were with CBS, I did three or four world tours with the Tremeloes, then I went solo for a while and did some records on CBS. We still did backing sessions for people, as well. We did stay together. But it was an on-off relationship. You have to remember, we weren’t just a band working—all our parents knew each other; our kids knew each other. Still do. It was more like a family and is to this day. It’s good. We still get a visit from retired Tremeloes like Ricky Westwood, who gives us a lesson in guitar playing every so often. “You still can’t play guitar, can you?” he says. But I really enjoyed my time alone. I even left showbusiness altogether when my kids were young. They were more important at the time, so as soon as they were old enough I got another band together called Black Cat and they were a great rock-and-roll band. Then I had a band that was part of “Black Cat” called Electrix. When charity concerts would come up, I would get back with the Tremeloes and we would start out again.

You’re still touring, aren’t you?

Yes. Our next tour starts at the end of September. It’s called the ‘60s Gold Tour,’ which we’ve done for several years. On that last year was P.J. Proby and Gary Puckett from Union Gap. This year we are working with Gerry and the Pacemakers. Gerry is doing his farewell tour—so he tells us—but he won’t, of course! The Searchers are also on that tour along with Steve Ellis. It’s going to be a nice tour.

Tell me, how are you enjoying working with American singer P.J. Proby?

What a lovely man he is now. He's a total darling. I met him in the '60s when he wasn't a total darling, and he knows he wasn't. He doesn't drink at all now. He hasn't for twenty years. He wears a golden jacket and comes on stage—still a great singer. Looks great. My young granddaughter is seven and calls him the golden man. He loves her for it. He has this great big golden jacket. She saw him a couple of times last year when we toured. He's great with my daughters and Chip's son, as well. I'm forgetting that Chip's son is Chesney Hawkes (famous for the hit "I'm the One and Only.")



Andrew Oldham (Rolling Stones producer and manager), Brian Poole and Peter Noone.

It must be fun working with all of these people you knew from back in the '60s. Would you say it is?

It is. It really is. Two of the Pacemakers used to be in my band when I left the Tremeloes. I've known Gerry since we were young whippersnappers. We were both about eighteen and singing too loud, drinking too much and having a great time. It's lovely working with these people, especially people like Chris Montez. He comes over from

America and does a tour over here, and he's a lovely guy. Just a lovely person. Brian Hyland—I know him and his family. His son, Bodie, plays drums with him. He's a lovely guy, too. It's still a pleasure to work with them.



One of the first records—Brian remembers the recording of "Big Big Hits of '62" fondly.

This is turning into a great interview. Thank you for being so candid.

It's funny... As you get older, you enjoy talking about yourself. Sometimes, I know you'll agree with this, people can have secrets. I haven't got any secrets. My life is wide open. It's always been the truth. With the Tremeloes—we were never the best band in the world, or anywhere close, but we wanted to please people. I know when I was younger I used to get blasé and say that I wasn't going to talk too much, or overexpose and all that rubbish, but not now. Everybody loves chatting. People ask you questions and you answer them. If you answer honestly, you know that when it goes down in writing nobody can say anything was said wrong.

What was it like working with England's first rock-and-roll star, Tommy Steele?

We did a couple of backing tracks for Tommy Steele on a record called Butterfingers. He's a funny, really nice bloke. You could tell why he was a star. When you were in his company, you knew he was a star. There's not a load of people who are like that. You come into their company and you go WOW! Of course! That's why he's a star! Great guy and still going! He played Glenn Miller in the Glenn Miller story. We went to see it, my wife and I, and he was brilliant. There's not many people I can say are older than me—but he is. Lovely bloke!

How about British rock-and-roll singer Billy Fury?

He was also a man you met and knew was something special. We toured with him. I went to his funeral and performed at a concert in his memory. He was another proper star. As soon as you'd meet him, you knew he was something special. Both he and Tommy Steele were big stars.

You must be connected to every top singer of that generation. Are you going to write a book?

I'd love to. I've been writing a book for the last twenty years. I've got pictures that you would not believe of all the famous people we met and all the things we did. My wife used to work for our office at London. For Peter Walshes office. We were married then. We've been married for fifty years.

Would you have ever believed you were going to have the career that you had?

Do you know, it's really lucky because we go out on these tours and we do thirty-five or more gigs. At least eight or nine sell out quickly. Places like Glasgow Concert Hall. It makes you feel quite small, and you can't be too flash about it because people are still coming to see us. You've got to think to yourself... we're in our seventies, and they are

still coming to see us. It makes you feel humble. I don't mean that lightly. I really mean that. It's lovely. When we do these concerts, we try to meet people, sign merchandise and records, and get to know our audience. That's one of the nicest things about it.

Well, this has been a fantastic interview. Thank you for your time.

Thank you. I've enjoyed it. It's been lovely talking to you. It's always nice to do something like this. It's nice to talk to someone who actually knows what he's talking about.

I'm not sure if that's me. (laughs)

If you get a chance, come and see one of our shows. You would have loved the tour we just finished. We had twenty minutes sitting on stage talking to the audience. Getting them to ask questions and answering them. The rest of the time was spent doing our hit records. A two-hour show.

I'd love to see what you guys are up to now.

You'll love it. We always do De Montford Hall on the Gold Tour... That's near you, isn't it?

Yes... it's just down the road. I'll be buying my tickets. Thank you, Brian!

THE PARANORMAL CORNER

WITH G. MICHAEL
VASEY



I write books about the paranormal.

As I read that back to myself, I actually marvel at myself despite the fact it sounds somewhat reminiscent of the 'I am an alcoholic' phrase used at AA meetings. However, I am the kid that slept with the light on, covers pulled tightly over my head with just a small hole to breathe through. I am the kid for whom the closet held a monster and for whom there was somebody under the bed. I grew up plagued by ghosts, poltergeists, and strange coincidences. If you had told me that I would collect stories of demons, ghosts, and things that go bump in the night, I would have laughed in your face. And yet, here we are and it is true!

Every morning with coffee in hand, I post a new story to my website - My Haunted Life Too. It may have been one submitted by someone just like you or one I researched myself. Periodically, I write another book with lurid titles like 'Ghosts in the Machines' or 'Your Haunted Lives'! The story of how I overcame my fear is also the subject of a book – my first actually. It's called Inner Journeys: Explorations of the Soul, and it recounts the story of my growing up and finding magic. Yes – that's right – magic. Oh, I didn't tell you that yet, did I? I am interested in magic and the occult, too. Over the coming months, I will introduce you to my world – of magic, rituals, incense, meditation, and the spirits – in this column but for today, I will simply tell you that I still have strange experiences.

Just the other day, as I posted a story to the site, I heard what can only be described as a doll's voice chuckling in the room next door. I ignored it the first two times but then I had to look. There was no doll nor trace of anything that could make such a sound. I told whatever it was to bugger off and carried on writing the story. It seemed to work. However, not all entities do as they are told, and just recently, I had a very scary experience.

I like trains and riding by train so when an opportunity to go to Frankfurt for business presented itself, I opted to take the sleeper service in both directions rather than fly. I was looking forward to the trip and as I found my private sleeper compartment at Vienna station, I will admit to a little excitement. I had decided to try to get some sleep almost immediately as the train left Vienna, as arrival was at 5.25am, meaning I would need to wake up about an hour earlier. I pushed the three seats away and pulled down the bed, and after ordering

breakfast, I got into bed and switched off the light. For a while, I just lay there, allowing myself to be gently rocked to sleep by the motion of the train.

At some point, I recall feeling as if someone was sitting on my legs and as I tried to get up to see, I realised that I could not. I could not move! I could hear the people next door talking and the sound of the train on the tracks and something getting up off my legs and moving above me. There was a feeling of rising terror, especially when I saw the thing that now floated above me. It was like a whitish mist with eyes and a face of sorts. It came alongside me and peered at me. I tried to scream for help. Nothing came out. I was totally aware of everything – sounds, smells, sight, my fear – everything – but I was paralyzed and the plaything of whatever this was that was now inspecting me like a cold piece of meat. Then, as quickly as it had started, the train suddenly braked and the jolt freed me. I watched as the mist rose up and into the luggage recess of the carriage where it seemed to be waiting. I sat up and switched on the light. It was still there. I was frightened and my heart was racing. I was also puzzled. What had just happened? Had it been a vivid dream? I soon came to the conclusion it was an old hag experience or sleep paralysis, and that hadn't happened to me in decades. Despite that, the thing – the entity – was real. I could still see it.

When you write ghost stories for a hobby, it takes something very scary to frighten you. I can tell you that I felt a mixture of fear and puzzlement. I started to pray and then also do some self-protection. The thing seemed to have gone and I commanded it not to bother me again. After a few minutes, I lay down again and dozed.

I awoke, knowing the thing was back. Once again, I could not move nor scream, yet I could see, hear and sense everything. The thing was hovering over me and, I'll be honest here, I felt a sense of sexual excitement along with the fear. The thing was going to molest me? For a few moments, it seemed so, but then it seemed to know that I was aware of it and its intentions and instead, it moved upwards and peered at me again. I started to scream 'Help, help me,' but no sound emerged from my lips. I was now really scared because I was at the mercy of this thing and we both knew it, and there was not a thing I could do. Imagine, lying paralyzed as an entity – perhaps even a succubus – eyed you up as its next victim. I continued to struggle, though I could not move. I kept on trying to scream for help. I knew there was a call button just above my head if only I could move. The malevolence of the thing was scaring me, and I knew it was just a matter of time before it started doing whatever it planned on doing...

And then, again, I was fully awake and able to move. I sat up sweating profusely with my heart pounding. I again prayed, engaged in some self-protection and generally told it to get the hell away from me. Needless to say, I barely rested the remainder of the night and my day was one of a heavy tiredness dogged by the memory of the grayish mist-like face.

Funnily enough, now I think on it, I have had a few other creepy experiences such as the time I went on a business trip and I checked into a hotel in the Netherlands and was given a room. The room initially looked good. It was very large and furnished in a period style. I took off my coat and began to unpack. However, I heard a sound that was a cross between a tapping and a dripping sound. It seemed to

emanate from a big old closet standing in the corner of the room. I went to the closet and listened, but it was the sort of noise that you cannot seem to trace. I opened the closet and it stopped. Thinking perhaps it was from next door or the heating, I resumed unpacking. However, when I closed the closet, the noise started again. By now, I was puzzled and I investigated that closet closely. I pushed it, rocked it. Looked inside it for a cause - an explanation.

Each time, I went close to the closet, the sound stopped. I began to feel the hairs on my neck stand up and I decided I couldn't stay there. I called reception and told them about the noise and that there was no way I could put up with it. They said they would send someone up. After 5 minutes of constant clicking or knocking sounds and an increasingly strange atmosphere, I was determined to fight my case that I couldn't stay there.

The hotel lady knocked on the door. I told her about the noise and she walked straight over to that closet and barely 5 seconds later, she said, "Yes, I couldn't sleep with that either, sir."

"You heard it then?" I asked, surprised.

"Oh, yes," she said.

She left, promising to find me another room.

After waiting another 5 minutes in that room, I could no longer stand it and I packed and went back down to reception. Within 5 minutes, they informed me that the hotel was full and they had transferred me to another hotel - a nice modern one.

I asked if the room was haunted and was told they did sometimes have an *issue* with the room...

I was pleased to leave.

Over the coming months, do stop by my column for a scary tale or two.... And perhaps leave me yours at My Haunted Life Too.

Thanks,

G. Michael Vasey

Keep up to date with our columnist G. Michael Vasey by checking out the true paranormal stories he shares daily on chilling paranormal related website www.myhauntedlifetoo.com. You'd be a fool to miss out.

THE LATEST WORDS AND MUSIC FROM WESTERN BESTSELLER DAVID WATTS

with Bruce Bennett

When a new author, with a new hit, sits down to talk to you—you have to look at him in a different way. Today, over coffee with David Watts, I knew I wanted to concentrate on the business of finding success and writing to please those who have made you successful. David Watts, scored a major hit with “The Guns of Pecos County,” a book that stands on its own as an acclaimed Western adventure. Now he has followed that up with “The Long Ride,” a book that is climbing the bestseller lists and pleasing those same readers over again. Will “The Long Ride” become an acclaimed classic? I think so—because its creator is an acclaimed, classy writer. Let’s catch up with Dr. David Watts—the man who has mastered the West.

Bennett: Thank you for coming back to talk to us about your new book. You were born in Texas, correct?

Dr. Watts: I grew up in Texas; my dad grew up in Texas. Tumbleweeds and plains. At home, I rode a horse and milked a cow every day. Milking a cow allowed me to buy



a French Horn. I would take the milk to the creamery every day. That was my background I used to frame the book. My father’s real job was Professor of Philosophy at a local university.

Bennett: The Western audience has unique demands in a writer. How do you meet those demands?

Dr. Watts: Definitely by speaking in the language of the reader.

Every story is made the same way: love, friendship, adventure, how difficulties are handled. I don’t set out trying to portray a philosophy. Start out with interesting characters and settings, and throw in a problem to see how it’s solved.

It’s the same with all writing. Look at children’s books. Look at Maurice Sendak. Sure, he’s writing for children, but he’s really writing for adults. It has to be interesting and ask the right questions. The result is polemic, to show life as what life is.

Bennett: What was your plan for success for your first Western, "The Guns of Pecos County?"

Dr. Watts: To write the first chapter as well as I could possibly do.

The characters are about to have a gunfight. Wind, dust, all to set the scene. They're rough; they disregard death.

Atmosphere is the most important and is reflected in the words; beauty, wisdom, music. I draw the audience in by rhythms of words, musicality. Just the first chapter has the makings of a complete novel. I think it succeeds well enough that it could become a movie. That's a long shot, one in a million, but it reads like poetry.

Bennett: You've just released your second Western, correct? "The Long Ride." Where did the idea come from to write this new Western?

It flowed from the previous. I have a troubled character in Luke. I have a mysterious past that is unfolding. I have a love interest that is both alluring and complicated. . . What could be better?

Bennett: How do you personally feel about your success in the Western field?

Astonished! Never would have thunk it. But once I got started, I realized, "Hey! I've got the background for this: Texas, farm life, a couple of rifles here and there." Just like home again!

Bennett: How do you personally put together a Western? What is your process?

Recipe: One part troubled cowboy. A pinch of hidden background traumas. A large

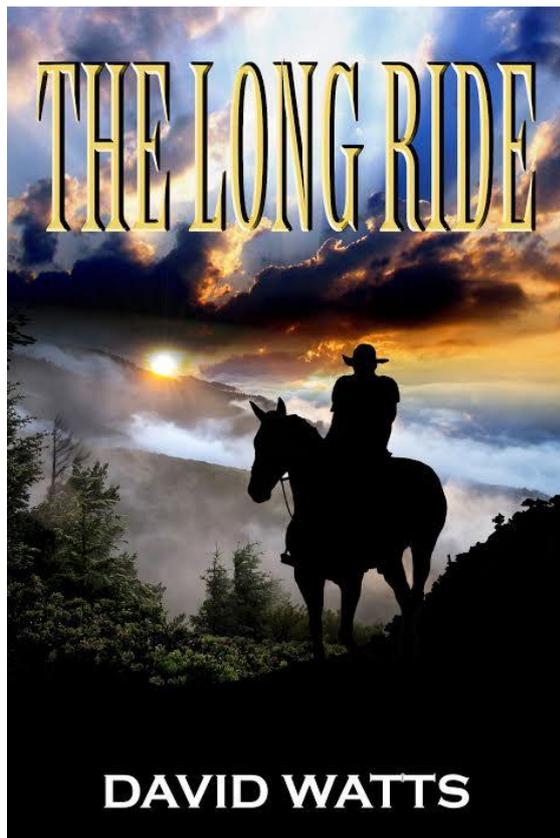
scoop of an unresolved love affair. Fold in a bunch of enemies lurking around the bend... Toss it all in a mixing bowl and see what happens.

Bennett: How do you put together gunfights and violence? Is there a poetry to be found in violence?

Ah, poetry! It is the job of poetry to go to the heart of a difficult truth. Gunfights are unimaginably scary and yet there is a way to create a poetic beauty, as the Symbolists in France did a hundred years ago, by taking what is ugly and finding a way to make it beautiful. The measure of the author's affection for his subject lies in his attention to detail. That detail, perhaps the slo-mo movement of a hand reaching for a gun, or the way the dust swirls around the boots of the challenger, or the windmill on the hill groaning out a metaphor for the anguish the scene contains... all adds beauty and interest to the work. That's what it's all about. Beauty among the horrors of life.

Bennett: How do you feel about the Western readership and its voracious love of your work?

Grateful. Gives me the gas to drive on down this road.



Bennett: I'd like to thank you for the time you've given me. I think the answers are intuitive, and our Western readers will enjoy learning more about you. Do you have a last comment?

Dr. Watts: I think you have a lot to work with. I enjoy writing the Westerns; it takes me back to my beginnings. I hope people will enjoy reading them as much as I did writing them.

Bennett: It's been a great pleasure meeting you.

Dr. Watts: Thank you, I enjoyed the interview.

'The Long Ride' is available on Kindle and other media. Follow the link for more information on the great book by David Watts, ['The Long Ride.'](#)

THE LONG RIDE — A REVIEW

WATTS HAS WRITTEN ANYTHING BUT A TYPICAL WESTERN WITH HIS THIRD FORAY INTO THE GENRE

I get sent a big pile of books to review for Westerner each month. But what does a reviewer look for in a book? Well, the cover, the cover does a lot of the hard selling. I have to say that Watts has turned out a great cover for this book. The blurb can either give me chills or leave me cold. But Watts has created a book here that, in a few years, may go down as a Western classic. This book is Irving Shaw-style writing set in the West.

The usual Western reader is going to absolutely eat this book up because it has all the main ingredients of the Westerns they are reading from other top name authors of the genre. Action, adventure, and the rest are apparent. But the casual reader is also going to find himself reading this book because of its far-ranging appeal. The psychological element is extremely well put together, and the drama is high quality. The characters are extremely well developed, dialogue is thoughtful and well executed. The story flows like a gentle babbling brook to its colorful conclusion.

Watts mixes together three of the truly classic forms of storytelling: Western, psychological

drama and the Hero's Journey to form a new category of Wild West legend. In lyrical flowing words and images suitable for the silver screen, we experience the struggle that Luke the gunslinger goes through to leave behind his past as a savage bounty hunter and the haunting memory of the men he has killed for a more balanced life. In so doing, he risks his own life over and over again to enter this dangerous quest. He is guided in his pursuit by a series of colorful characters who show him new ways of thinking and deliver to him ancient wisdom necessary to the understanding of the often troubled challenges we face as humans. Underneath it all, a haunting love story lies at risk. How will all this turn out?

For most readers, this is going to be one of the Westerns they cherish this year. Watts has surpassed himself. So this one is well worth the price of admission—you will want to seek this book out as a paperback to treasure on your bookshelf for many years. It's got all the hallmarks of being one of the biggest hits of the 2017 season. Watch out Western charts—here comes David Watts!

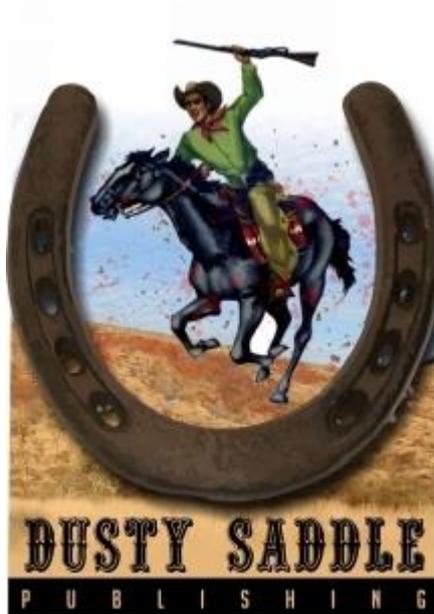


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