



THE POP ARCHIVE

A BAG OF HASH AND A GOOD CHAT WITH THE EAGLES (1973)

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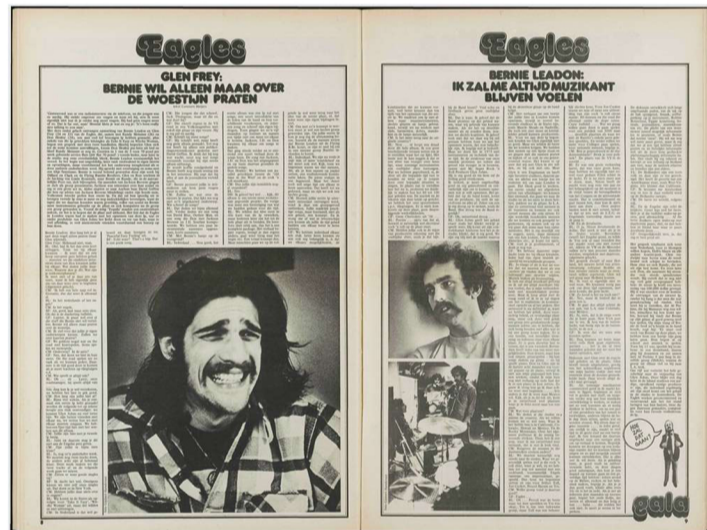
In 1973 Constant Meijers became acquainted with an American band that had just recorded 'an LP sung with much praise'. Moreover, an even better one was in the making, the OOR editor told me. The band in question: the Eagles. The Plates: *Eagles* and *Desperado*. Meijers smuggled a bag of hash through customs ("That's always asked immediately") and met Glenn Frey, Bernie Leadon and Don Henley in London.

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"Last night there was a radio interview over the phone, and the guy was so nice. He asked about six questions and then he said, well I don't really know what else to ask you. He had no more questions or anything. That's *far out, man!* Usually you chat and say: ' *It's been really nice talking to you man* '.

With this laughter-received comment from Bernie Leadon and Glenn Frey (24 and 23) of the Eagles, who, along with Randy Meisner (26) and Don Henley (24), made a critically acclaimed LP, plus some of those LP pulled hit singles like *Take It Easy* and *Witchy Woman*, started a conversation with these two band members. Glenn limited himself to the sometimes comical additions, Don Henley only got out of bed later and Randy Meisner still stayed in it.

Seated in one of the three service flats rented for 70 pounds a week (70 pounds per flat!), leader Bernie Leadon mainly spoke, as it became clear later in the studio. In the beginning somewhat impatient, later often lost in own ideas and opinions, but constantly returning to the subject when interrupted by others. He speaks with conviction and sometimes with a touch of fanaticism.



Bernie is best known for his work with Dillard and Clark and the Flying Burrito Brothers. Glenn and Ron worked in Linda Ronstadt's backing, joined by Bernie and Randy, who was in the initial Poco. On the advice of Jackson Browne, they started to present themselves as a group; Jackson was enthusiastic about their sound and saw a big act in it. So they went to Asylum boss David Geffen, who blindly took them under his wing on the advice of Jackson Browne. Quite rightly so considering their first LP.

And their soon-to-be-released second LP will confirm that even more emphatically, because the tapes we heard from it were great, fuller of sound now that Bernie uses more instruments on the record and also more compact now that the group has become a group. The song *Tequila Sunrise* in particular made an indelible impression, and it is to be hoped that the record will be released soon. The fact that the Eagles were in London had to do with the recording of this LP, which they prefer to do under the production of Glyn Johns and far from home, where too many distractions, too many music-making friends constantly call on them.

Bernie Leadon: How long have you been talking to this bird (pointing at Glenn).

Glenn Frey: Not at all, man.

BL: Okay, let me explain briefly then. When we got together - I know we've had a lot of European press - we had to do those endless interviews of 'How did you get together?'; 'What did you do before that?'; 'Why are you doing this?'; 'What are your future plans?'; I don't know if you know anything about that, because I really don't feel like bringing it up again (general laughter).

CM: I have a whole folder full of information, so I already know all that.

BL: In Dutch or English?

CM: In English.

BL: Ah, well, let's see. Oh that's the marketing bullshit.

GF: Listen, I'll talk about all that stuff Bernie won't tell you; Bernie just wants to talk about the desert.

CM: I suggest you choose your own topics. Shall we talk about cards?

GF: We gamble quite a bit *on the road* with card games. Sometimes we play monopoly.

CM: On the way? In the car?

GF: No, we do that more in the house. *On the road* we play poker as often as we can. This makes it easy to pass the time when you have to wait for planes, etc.

CM: Who always cheats?

BL: Oh... . uh . . Larry, our road manager, he's always cheating. One thing I can assure you, we have a great time here.

CM: How long have you been here?

BL: Almost four weeks. Once you've made a first LP, the next ones get a lot easier to some extent: we know Glyn Johns much better now eg We're better friends now, we know how to interact with each other. We're having a good time here working on this album.

CM: You're working on your second LP here.

BL: Right and that's why you can't give this to the English press.

CM: Are you almost done with it?

BL: Yeah, another week and a half. We still have two tracks to do, the other eight are already done. This week we'll finish those two tracks and the next week we'll mix. CM: Are there good singles again?

BL: I thought so. Incidentally, we do not choose our singles ourselves. They do that in New York.

CM: Have you nothing to say about that?

BL: We chose *Witchy Woman in the States as the successor to Take It Easy*, but they didn't want to release it. CM: That has happened in the Netherlands and they are now *releasing Peaceful Easy Feeling* there. BL: Really? *That's a trip*.

That's a good song. CM: That kid who wrote that, Jack Tempchin, where is he and what is he doing? GF: He's wandering around the US in a Volkswagen bus with only his guitar and his wife. He is very generous and kind. CM: Does he write more songs?

GF: He does write, but he hasn't made an album yet. So far, he has only signed a publishing agreement with David Geffen. I think he will wait a bit, collect some songs before he releases his first album.

Coffee is being handed out and Bernie still doesn't feel like the interview. He says he has already told everything to the journalists.

GF: Bernie is trying to intimidate you into not asking him any more questions.

CM: Shall we talk about the new LP? That doesn't seem like such an exhausted topic to me. Who wrote the songs?

BL: We almost all did that ourselves. We also did a song by David Blue, *Outlaw Man*, and a song Don composed with Jackson Browne and JD Souther. We recorded a few instrumental tracks, short tracks.

CM: With Bernie's banjo in the foreground?

BL: Indeed... Well, the first album was an LP full of songs, kind of an introduction to the members of the band and their different preferences, and everyone sang and wrote their own contributions. Then we went on tour for about five months and took a break to get closer together. Jackson, JD and Don got together to make songs. That went on and on and a kind of story developed through the songs. The song by Jackson, JD and Don was the starting point and the other songs grew on that basis.

Don Henley: We drew a parallel between the 'old time in the West' and the rock 'n roll musician.

CM: So you've changed quite a bit now?

BL: No...

DH: I believe so.... look, this album is our first more evolutionarily grown project. The previous one was more of a confirmation of what we had done before then.

BL: We wanted to put that idea in one side of the LP at first, but later decided to extend it to the whole record. The cover photo is included, so it is a complete package. The story starts somewhere, then takes you somewhere else, goes back to the beginning, etc. So a total concert. But maybe on the next LP we'll go back to the idea of the first record, ie that everyone makes their own contributions.

CM: To work with such a concept, you have to have become a close-knit group. On your first LP you could still hear the pedigree, although if people know that Bernie Leadon from the Flying B.Br. comes, they are quick to hear Burrito influences in a new group.

BL: Indeed. As you say, we are now more or less *established* and we have to be. Look, when we started we were four people, who, when you put their names down on paper, seemed like a promising combination. The right pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. But it does take some time to get to know each other. That has lasted until now, but now we are also a close group.

CM: Although your first LP was received very enthusiastically, I thought there was a lack of group feeling there. You made beautiful songs, but separately, not as a whole, a concept. And I wondered what would emerge if you had the time to get to know each other better.

GF: We did get to know each other a lot better and what's also very important is that we know each other's possibilities, the combinations that we can form, much better than at the time of recording that first LP. We made an LP with just strings, just using guitars and banjo, while now we're working with slide, harmonica, dobro, mandolin and the banjo of course.