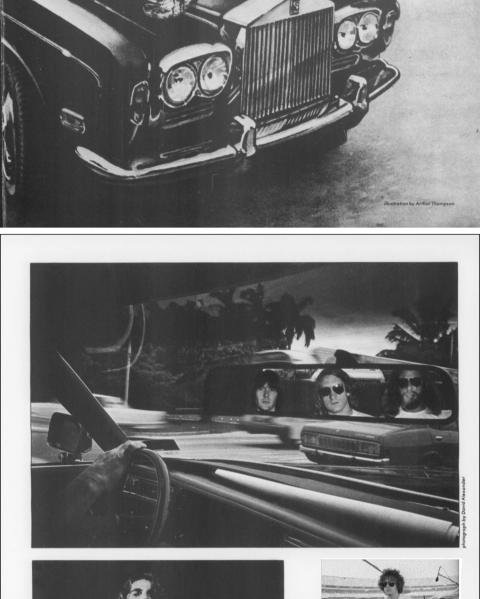
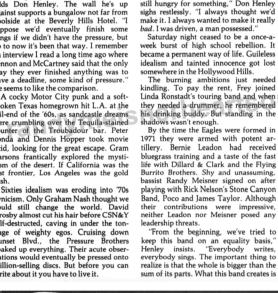


BY BAPBAPA CHAPONE







tually ... the pressure will have a detrimental effect."
"Part of the depression is keeping this band together." Frey explains. "Our collective, uh, what do they call it in men? ... a quiet desperation. That's one of the things that keeps us together. I was real disappointed when CSN&Y dissolved so rapidly. One of our most powerful strokes in the area of putting things back is just staying together. To me that sets an example for people to believe in.

"Being in this band is a very intense experience for me," Frey exults. "Five albums in and the biggest band America has ever produced. This is not an easy role. To succeed and hang together through all of this is nothing short of astonishing to me. It's easy to break up; to see couples and bands hanging together is the thing."

Frey: "We cannot betray our own poetry"
Full of expansive ambitions and volatile egos, the Eagles have somehow survived—first in the face of the lack of success, then in spite of its ravages. The latest trauma involved replacing Bernie Leadon with Joe Walsh. Cynics figured Walsh would be wasting his time spiking such grenadine concoctions, but the main ingredients are apparently blending.

"Initially it was Joe's idea," Henley stresses. "Joe wanted to be in a group. He was tired of hiring bands, tired of making all the decisions, tired of writing all the songs. After a while, if you're a solo artist, everything starts to sound the same. There's no contrast. There's a certain advantage to having five people who all contribute to the sounds. The personnel change has been a grand stimulus for

37

CRAWDADDY

bigger than all of us."
Pious assertions aside, the Pressure Brothers ran the show. Recognized on the radio but not on the street, the Eagles provided an alternative to heavy-metal gunpowder.
In a backstage trailer in 1974, Glenn Frey popped a cold beer and stared at the stream of nubile California girls parading before him. In jeans and a football jersey, he was heavily into being an Eagle. "I

before him. In jeans and a football jersey, he was heavily into being an Eagle. "I WANT ONE!" he screamed, but the trailer was off-limits. Only the sage presence of Jackson Browne kept Frey in check.

Three months later, at the tail-end of one of those massive, inhuman American tours which make stars and sell albums, the Eagles were running low. Inspiration is hard to come by playing underneath the Ohio State scoreboard.

the Ohio State scoreboard.

The Pressure Brothers were better equipped to handle the strain than the rest of the band. Frey still managed his rock 'n roll bravado; Henley still worried about being an Eagle ["Ain't it funny how your new life didn't change things...?"]. but Bernie Leadon was having trouble. None too fond of touring, Leadon OD'd on greasy cheeseburgers, swill coffee and the monotony of the road. The morning after the last concert, he flipped in the Holiday Inn coffee shop. Perhaps the waitress forgot to bring the cream. Overcome with exhaustion, depression and confusion, Leadon began raving. Yelling, screaming,

decadence.

"The album packaging is like that too,"
Frey says, picking up an album cover
conveniently within arm's reach. "Something that at one time was elegant but is
now decadent. See this lobby," he asks,
pointing to the cover foyer. "Just when
you think it's really beautiful you see this
paneling over here and cheapest chandeliers in the world next to a couple of really
nice ones."

"This new album is about trying to

longevity,"
"I don't care if [critics] don't think
Lyin' Eyes' and 'Rocky Mountain Way'
can find happiness together," Frey insists.
"We knew a year before Bernie left that
Joe was gonna replace him. We knew
Bernie wasn't happy touring. We knew he
was gonna leave. We checked around.
And there was only one guitar player for
the Eagles.
"As far as skeptics go. I just take that
with a grain of salt. Who are they to
know unless their ass is on the line?"
To survive, the Eagles want to stay lean
and hungry, to keep their frame of reference intact, to remain a band. Frey is very
assertive on the subject: "With us it's five
people playing. It's not like hirring the
guys in Stuff to play on the R&B tracks,
or hiring Jimmy Page to play rock 'n roll.
With the Eagles it's always us playing."
"Everybody brings his own experience
to a certain piece of music so it becomes
all of us rather than one little thing,"
Henley adds. "We've always been labeled
as a mellow country-rock harmony group
from L.A.'—and we play rock 'n roll as
good as anybody! You've got to go to extremes to show people you can do other
things."

With all their trappings of success—the

good as anybody! You've got to go to extremes to show people you can do other things."

With all their trappings of success—the money, access, sex, adulation—Henley and Frey still long for artistic respect.

"We are a song-oriented group," Henley emphasizes. "That's the bottom line. With Joe it's easier to be a group now. It's easier for us to write ballads. That country-rock stuff we could write all day long. We always could. Now we can do other things, too.

"It's more difficult to write a good rock 'n roll or R&B song. The lyrical content of most rock 'n roll is a lot of 'baby, baby' kinda shit. It's not the meat of the matter. It's more difficult to write a song like Victim of Love' because." he grins, "it's hard to deal with a crotch rock tune."

As we talk, Frey and Henley often mention Jackson Browne with admiration. Upset by constant dismissals as lightweight West Coast AM hacks, the Eagles are hungry for quality recognition. Henley is practically starved.

"I do think the songs are underrated. The songs don't get enough attention. That's the fast lane for us, working on the songs," he says urgently. "I suppose the whole new album is about growing pains. "People talk about Jackson's lyrics but they don't seem to talk about ours. It's not that they don't seem to talk about ours. It's not that they don't seem to talk about ours. It's not that they don't seem to think you can write acatchy tune that's a hit that means something. I think our songs have more to do with the streets than Bruce Springsteen's."

"When the Eagles first burst upon the scene in 1972," Frey offers, "I think audiences were very disillusioned behind what went on in 1968 or 1969 in this country. The rock audience in general was interested in escape. But it doesn't seem that way now. As the band's getting ready to celebrate its fifth birthday, it seems like people are more into wanting to talk to somebody that's a little bit like them, as opposed to somebody who can take them into outer space." Which plays into the Eagles' strength. But how do Henley, 28, and Frey, 27, maintain the contact? Perhaps it's just that the age of innocence is being lowered daily.

"They're having those parties in high school now!" Frey exclaims in disbelief.
"Cocaine is everywhere!" agrees Henley.
"When I was in high school." Frey Henley.
"When I was in high school .
"Uses. "I mean, high schools in ." Frey

muses. "I mean, high schools in America have changed so much in ten years that there actually is a generation gap. But we can pretty much identify with what kids in high school are going through even though we didn't experience that until maybe our last year of school. Right now, junior high is rated XI"

Frey cracks Henley up. The doom-and-gloom atmosphere lifts for a moment, but not for long. "Kids are growing up too fast these days," Henley says with concern. "The 70s seem to have a big value gap."

The Folge are ctuck in the middle. The Eagles are stuck in the middle, neither adolescent dreamers nor angry

(Top) Life in the backseat: (from left) Randy Meisner, Joe Walsh and Don Felder.

"We're still hungry for something," says Henley(r.), though he's not quite sure what. "I always wanted to make it really bad." "We are the embodiment of what a lot of people don't like about California," Frey says brazenly.



savor those lyrics."

Their second and arguably finest album, Desperado, proved the Eagles were more than one-hit wonders. The renegade rocker and lawless outlaw were apt representatives of "70s restlessness."
Desperado was a reaction to our initial success, and a prediction," says Henjey. "This new album is a reaction to success at this level." Hotel California had a million copies presold on its release. The success is staggering. "Were survivors. I intend to be a survivor. I intend to be around to enjoy the fruits of my labor,"

"Let's face it," Frey insists, "if you're a commercial success and that's all you are, hat's a very vacuous existence. You must face the facts that being a commercial success is about all that is. And you have to have other successes to work on."

Unlike most of the established supergroups, the Eagles are very much a product of the "70s. They saw the '60s through adolescent eyes, watching others make mistakes they are determined to avoid. What are these "other successes" they say they're working on?

"Back in the '60s it was that warrior hing," Frey begins. "A soldier lives with the end on his left shoulder, which tempers everything he does. I'm ready for anything. Like the calm before the storm."

Frey, it seems, has visions of himself as some kind of Nordic rock warrior crusadstorm."
Frey, it seems, has visions of himself as some kind of Nordic rock warrior crusading for inner peace. Henley shares some of these sentiments. But credibility either in song or conversation depends upon genuine convictions. And sometimes they slip. Frey, for instance, had delivered an almost identical "warrior" rap to me nearly three years before.

settinute convictions. And sometimes they slip. Frey, for instance, had delivered an almost identical "warrior" rap to me nearly three years before.

"You should never lose your passion," Frey continues. "Getting emotion on plastic is an art form unto itself. It defies the live act. With Hotel California we've accomplished the same kind of artistic desperation—the passion, the story and the life signs—we had during Desperado, but our recording technique has caught up."

Of course, it's not easy being an Eagle: "The demands that have been put on us." Frey sighs. Hotel California missed so many deadlines it was put on the "indefinite release" list. Plus, a tour had to be performed and Joe Walsh initiated into the band. "Suddenly sleep becomes a planned activity. A lot of your time is not your own. I know that sounds silly. I didn't think it could be any less my own han a year ago but it actually got to the point where it's a 24-hour-a-day job."

However, their tendency to glide on into the fast lane, that same kind of adolescent panic that happens the night before an exam you know nothing about, forms the bulk of their best work.

"I suppose that's the one thing that keeps the songs good," Henley says casually. "I don't know if it's completely nec-APRIL, 1977

Taking the easy way out has become a '70s trademark. It's less painful simply to look away. But, to their credit, the Eagles write about modern-day relationships as successfully as they write about decadence. The bleak portraits of the wild side of life on Hotel California are far more substantial than the more typical Eagles fodder. More than simply shattering illusions of California Dreamin', Henley and Frey must feel like they, too, can "check out but never leave."

"Oh, God." Henley moans, "you can

"Oh, God." Henley moans, "you can interpret that a million different ways."
"We'll stay off that one," Frey advises.
"We cannot betray our own poetry."
"If you want to take it to the ultimate, you could say that line was about reincarnation, just bein' here." Henley quietly muses. "Or living in this city. Everybody always talks about getting out but they always come back. We just see California as a big hote."
Is the album, then.

Is the album, then, only about Califor-

world.

"Part of the thing about The Last Resort' is that there is no more new frontier," Frey continues. "You've got to make it here. Our job is to take care of this place. 'Hotel California' to me also means that we're workin' in the junkyard of the IIS." S."
This is the last frontier," Henley adds "This is the last frontier," Henley adds.
"This is as far west as you can go. Bout
20 miles out that way." He points out the
window of Bungalow 16. "But we're running out of space. And you gotta figure a
new way to deal with it.
"We're in the middle of the decadent
"70s. The '60s are over. The revolution
has taken a totally different shape and
there's a certain amount of apathy."

this stuff?

"Sure, I like life in the fast lane," Frey admits. "It's very stimulating, but you can get trapped in it. You can go on and totally waste away without having accomplished anything. I hope we can continue to keep our perspective because a lot of people have gone blind.

"Fortunately," Frey laughs somewhat nervously, "we get out of town a lot."

CRAWDADDY

APRIL, 1977 courses. When he stops to catch his breath, Henley gets to the point.

The chaos will not stop. One begins to see where their material comes from. Bell captains. Stereo experts. Room service. Phone calls to manager Irving Azoff. Phone calls from Azoff. Wasted time. Wary of misquotes and suspicious of the press, the publicist is taping our conversation. There's no firm ground here. Bungalow 16 feels just like a crowded dressing room. What the hell, might as well start talking.

Hotel California "We're working on it right now," Henley continues. "As Paul Simon said, How long can you run that body down? Listening to 'Life in the Fast Lane' makes me uncomfortable. Sometimes that's the only way you can move people—to scare them. But it's a positive desperation. Sometimes you have to get to the depths to bounce off it and ride out of it." "It's the elegance and decadence that is Hotel California," Frey enthuses. "Life in the Fast Lane' also starts out with a kind of glamor as the song opens up; it looks kind of groovy with this couple who love sex. The song starts out where it's all beautiful; the hills, the L.A. basin. Then when you examine it closer, you see the decadence.

"The album packaging is like that too," he finally collapsed on the formica table top. Businessmen looked up from their morning papers. Several of the band looked up from their coffees. Leadon continued to babble. Several tables away, Glenn Frey ate breakfast with his family who had driven up from Detroit. On the border and close to the edge, this was no prima donna rock star charade. For Bernie Leadon it was time to close up the honky tonks. Some time later he left the rest of them to carry on. room. What the neil, might as well start talking.

Hotel California, I tell them, reestablished my faith in the band.

"Ours, too," Frey agrees.

"We weren't disappointed with One of
These Nights," Helley adds as the publicist checks his cassette. "We couldn't help it if we had three hit singles. The songs were just as valid, We were going through a lot of group turmoil.

"But this one," he continues, "it's like Last thing I remember I was running for the door. I had to find the passage back to the place I was before. "Relax," said the night man, "we are programmed to receive. You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave." — "Hotel California" Last thing I remember I was —"Hotel California"

Don Henley is having trouble checking in. There is something wrong with his bungalow at the Beverly Hills Hotel and nervous employees scurry about, moving his belongings from one bungalow to another. The Eagles live in L.A., yet this is where they choose to talk.

It is more than a coincidence that the Beverly Hills Hotel is pictured on the cover of the latest Eagles album. The posh Hotel California surroundings are rather a step up from your basic Holiday Inn. The bungalow could well be an expensive house, the hotel a decadent mansion elegantly dying.

Henley is presented with new rooms, and he is pleased. Representatives from Asylum Records set up stereo equipment. Maids scurry about and publicity people hover, making interview intimacy difficult at best. Glenn Frey places football bets on the phone. "McCartney checked out of here this morning," Henley says in a voice absently interested. His eyes reveal the kind of exhaustion Neil Young writes about.

"Gee," says Frey. "Maybe he left some paneling over here and cheapest chandeliers in the world next to a couple of really nice ones."

This new album is about trying to look at things a different way," says Henley. "To go on from here and try to develop a new set of values and a new thrill that's more meaningful and more valid than one just built on sand." He stares vacantly out the bungalow window. "Some of the first thrills had no base, no real roots in anything. But the intentions were good.

"When we were supporting Neil Young in England [quite a few years ago] he'd be doing his new material and people kept yelling for the old. They just kept yelling, Play "Cowgirl in the Sand," play this, play that. Finally Neil just stopped and said, Listen, if you wanna go back to where you were three or four years ago then I'll meet ya there.""

"Thank you, Neil," Frey quips.

So the Eagles got hip. When they got their first shot, with "Take It Easy," and toured America opening for Jethro Tull in 1972, their success-rush was dampened by the AM audiences. While hit single brought jukebox advantages, Henley and Frey found substantial motivation for some of their greatest songs.

"We realized that we weren't the Beatles," Frey recalls. "We realized it wasn't mass hysteria, and then we started to cool out. Take It Easy' would be the seventh song in a nine-song set and no one would pay any attention to the first six. Then we'd do Take It Easy' and people would say, 'Oh, yeah, that's who they are."

"It's then you realize that longevity and keeping your band together is what



departure. We simply had nothing to say,

While Henley broods about big league songwriting status, Frey is equally passionate about the media. He is convinced that there is a sizable anti-Eagle lobby which hates them for being so California.

"The interesting thing about the new album is that, in the past, we've been accused by some of the press for exploiting being what typifies 'those West Coast assholes,'' Frey yells. "We are the embodiment of what a lot of people don't like about California!

"People on the East Coast accuse us of exploiting this big fantasy world. There are many with that hipper-than-thou attitude. A lot of those people who write that success-oriented press we've gotten seem to like the music okay," Frey continues, calming slightly. "What they're so pissed off about is that it's us in this situation—so ideal, so volatile.

"What they want to do is be on that hipper-than-hip trip. So they have this negative attitude. What they hate is the individual, not the music. Our music has improved. We were recognized as good songwriters on our second album. I've never worried about that one."

Due to manager Irving Azoff's directive, the Eagles have avoided interviews almost entirely. They have maintained an enforced silence since the time of Leadon's departure.

"We simply had nothing to say," Henley avons." "A lexi of recoll thought." "We simply had nothing to say," Henley avows. "A lot of people thought we
were being snotty and stuck up. Now
we've got something to talk about, instead of rehashing how the group got
together or what Desperado means."
"Before Bernie left," Frey continues,
'the changes were making themselves
very apparent to us but it just wasn't the
time to talk about it. You can tell by the
new album what we've been doing. It's
fairly graphic. I don't want to manipulate
the press. We had nothing to talk about
before and now we do. But you know,"
he sighs mock-wearily, "when you got it,
you don't have to talk about it."

But Frey hasn't quite got it all. What is ne sighs mock-wearily, "when you got it, you don't have to talk about it."

But Frey hasn't quite got it all. What is the Eagles' proclaimed "artistic desperation"? Their success is based on the tricornered formula of catchy tunes, songs about recognizable life situations, and some very persus-sive turns of phrase. When they're going good, as on "One of These Nights" or "Best of My Love," they catch a truly American universal—love lust and love lost. But if you listen again, and listen hard, it gets a little difficult to believe. The songs are well-crafted, and Henley's voice in particular is very evocartive, but one begins to question the conviction: Am I being manipulated? The Eagles' problem is that it's hard to believe they care. And with their rock-star carriage, they don't make it any easier on themselves. Nobody likes to be connel particularly out of his or her affections. Henley and Frey strike one as the kind of

"We cannot betray our own poetry

guys who will pick up girls and then drop them . . . just to see how it feels, and then write about it. It's the punk without the heart of gold and it's not attractive. It's an image they don't accept, or perhaps even recognize. "Hopeless romantics, here we go again"—it scans, but it doesn't ring true.

Is the album, then, only about California?
"No." he laughs. "The universe." He means it.
"We're in a transient state now. 'Us' meaning all of us." Frey says. "The planet. We're just moving through time."
"I guess you could say this whole album was a Bicentennial statement about the whole country." Henley proclaims. "We're right here in the middle of it. California is a microcosm. We could all move to New Mexico and forget it, say To hell with it. Let it fall into the ocean. Let them breathe the shit in the air. 'We could afford to do that. I'd rather go down with the ship and stay here. That's what we were trying to say in 'Hollywood Waltz.' California is simply a metaphor for the whole country. Maybe the whole world."
"Part of the thing about The Last Re-

The Eagles are stuck in the middle, neither adolescent dreamers nor angry young men. Their alternative is being the Eagles, but solid gold success has made them a little queasy. Where is that something else that Henley longs for?

"I see a lot of people who are totally confused about what to do with their lives, where to go," Henley says. He doesn't seem so very certain himself. "I'd rather stay around for a long time and make worthwhile music. You can't go back, you've got to go on," he rambles. "You can't expect people to be where they were at, or revive any fading spirits. It's gotta develop from this point onwards."

"Still, people recreate the '60s around us," Frey laughs absurdly, "and we're not gonna stop 'em. It's like Don talking about the desperation of Beverly Hills, how desperately they are seeking thrills after all their desires have been sated. What can you do after you've done all this stuff?

"Sure, I like life in the fast lane," Frey admits. "It's very stimulating of the stay of the same of the