

circular



Now You Can Read Gordon Lightfoot's Mind

A poet of the city, a chronicler of the high country, a teller of tales, Gordon Lightfoot is a solid, massive figure evoking mountains, lakes, rivers and streams. To most he is a writer singing songs of sorrow and joy, of discovery and wisdom. His audiences have painted a picture of the life they think he lives, but according to the man himself, he doesn't quite conform to the image.

"Well I'm certainly not the kind of guy who sits back and broods, locking himself away in a turret," he laughs. "I like to enjoy things—to drink and go out with my friends.

But I know when to stop. A couple of times a week I know I can boogie around, but I know that I have responsibilities. But I do the mountains and lakes thing, too. I'm a woodsman. I took a 500-mile trip through northern Quebec last summer."

Relaxing in the small, glassed-off sound booth in a corner of Warner Brothers' Amigo Studios, Lightfoot, who has just risen (after working on the mix of his newest album, *Sundown*, till 3 a.m.), is graciously fulfilling one of those "responsibilities"—an interview with *Circular*. Except for the occa-

The Case of the Mysterious Shrinking Vinyl

by JOHN BRADY

When *Circular* asked me to pursue the shrinking vinyl, my immediate impression was: Easy. In fact, what could be easier? After all, I live in Terre Haute, Indiana—a geographical quirk that my uppity East and West Coast friends gloss over during cocktail party introductions, and have considerable merriment over in private. But on this particular assignment, I couldn't have been better placed.

Indiana, whether you like it or not, is probably the pressing capital of the US of A. Well, the Midwest, anyway.

Ah, Terre Haute. Not exactly up there with Zurich, Vienna and Sheboygan in the guidebooks, but let's be truthful: you've heard of it. Maybe it was on the back of your Tommy John baseball bubblegum card under "hometown." Or possibly you recall it as the place where Buffy & Jody were orphaned from on those old Family Affair reruns. But more likely than not, it's the city with the zip code behind it on those pesty postcards you are always tearing out of *Reader's Digest* and *TV Guide*—the ones that offer you 12 records (or tapes) of your choice for 99¢ or whatever, with a free record-whateer brush if you Order Now. Familiar? Yes: The Columbia Record Club, 1 Melody Lane,

Terre Haute, Ind. 47808.

Well, Virginia, there is no Melody Lane in Terre Haute. (In my darker moments, I even suspect there is no Symphonette Square in New Rochelle, N.Y. 10810—where the Longines Symphonette is pushing postcard offers of its own.) Legends and PR campaigns die hard. In Terre Haute the Club works out of the Columbia pressing plant, an interconnecting maze of low-lying yellow and brown buildings on Fruitridge Avenue, east of the city.

Plenty of Secrets

Columbia is maybe five minutes from my home. In fact, the plant manager—a gracious fellow named Ken Lemry—lives but a few blocks from my front step. As if this weren't convenient enough for a story on the shrinking vinyl, the major RCA pressing plant (aka the RCA Record Club) is located in nearby Indianapolis; and the PRC Recording Co., an independent record manufacturer that presses for Atlantic, Warner/Reprise, Paramount, the Phonogram group, Bell, Elektra, Brunswick, BASF, K-Tel and a platoon of others, is but a few hours by car in Richmond, Ind.

So when *Circular* asked me to see how things were down on the

'Here's Another Vinyl Mess You've Gotten Us Into'

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vinyl farm, I was ready. I mean ready. Unfortunately, hardly anybody else was.

To make a very long story mercifully short, I met some nice people at Columbia, but got damn little info. At RCA, I went through an obstacle course of secretaries and plant officials before being referred to the New York PR office. And at PRC I had a terrific chat with the company comptroller, who told me everything I wanted to know.

In general, though, a reporter

from the Warner/Reprise quasi-weekly news device nosing around about the vinyl shortage at competitors' pressing plants is about as welcome as Sam Dash might be if, say, he were to bop over and see how Rose Mary Woods was doing with the tapes. People—really *nice* people—tend to stare, purse their lips and shuffle their feet a lot.

"I've got the information you want, and I'd like to help, but it's such a sensitive issue just now—one that could go either way. Really. There might be a lot of vinyl, or there might be damn little—but I've got to check with So and So first," is a typical attitude at the plant level.

'Occasional' Back Orders

So and So, of course, refers you to the PR office, and from here it's hard to say whether you're getting the real poop, or maybe just a lot of wishful humming. Anyway, here goes. All plant officials and PR men whose tones seemed to have the ring of truth are hereby referred to as "spokesmen." (I tried, *Circular*. Honest to Gawd, I tried.)

At Columbia, the Terre Haute plant is still operating fulltime—three shifts, five days a week.

"For the foreseeable future, we are okay," Ken Lemry told a reporter for the *Terre Haute Star*. "We are still operating five days a week."

A spokesman at the plant, however, acknowledged that under normal conditions the plant would be operating on a six-or seven-day week from September through mid-December.

"We usually have a lot of over-

time for the holiday rush, but not this year," he added. "The five-day week has been in effect since Nov. 1. There are back orders occasionally."

At Columbia's plant in Pitman, N.J., meanwhile, things are the same.

"As of now, supplies needed to make vinyl are allocated to all users," said one spokesman. "The allocation to CBS Records has recently been reduced, although we are getting our fair share. But . . . if our supply of vinyl was adequate for our needs, we could produce more records."

Weekend work in Pitman has likewise been curtailed to conserve vinyl for a full five-day operation.

Prudent RCA

RCA, on the other hand, seems ultra-cool about the whole situation. An Associated Press report in November, for instance, said that RCA foresaw the problem and ordered enough in advance to "get us through the first six months of next year and possibly the whole year." I asked a spokesman if this was still accurate.

"The six months is still operative," he said. "I'm not too sure about the whole year, though. I do know that our company has not reached the crisis stage yet. We have no problems at the plant, where our facilities run at need. I assume that right now this means 24 hours a day, seven days a week, because we had a terrific November."

What accounts for RCA's foresight?

"The close contact that our people maintain with the sup-

"You only have so many presses, so you pattern your business after the larger customers who are paying their bills. You put someone on who's going to pay you. This is our basic policy."

pliers," says my spokesman. "For the past couple of years anybody in this business could see that materials we need have been used increasingly by others—everything from gardening hose to Tupperware takes its toll—so as they bought more and more, we could see a problem ahead for us. Therefore, we bought ahead."

At the PRC Recording Co. in Richmond (a town where Ol' Blue Eyes did a benefit for a widow with nine children in 1970, incidentally) comptroller Gerald Sharp was quite open about the independent record manufacturer's problems.

"We just don't have the backlog of vinyl we used to have," he said. "We keep up with our shipping back orders. That's our first priority. But right now we're getting only 70% of the vinyl we used to get."

Cash and Carry at PRC

PRC presses some 110,000 LPs and 130,000 45s daily, but, like Columbia, has reduced its work week from seven to five days. The company is also allocating to customers.

"You only have so many presses, so you pattern your business after the larger customers who are paying their bills," says Sharp. "You put someone on who's going to pay you. This is our basic philosophy."

PRC has also been experiencing some problems with other suppliers.

"Our clients furnish jackets, so that's OK," says Sharp, "but we are beginning to find corrugated cartons pretty tight. The lead time for orders is now five weeks in-

stead of three. We are running into a similar situation with Norelco clear-type boxes for our tape facilities—both here and on Long Island. They're in very short supply. Same problems." Tape clients for PRC include BASF, K-Tel and Phonogram.

Heartland Furrows

So there you have it. While the oil shortage gets headlines in *The New York Times*, and truck drivers badger the government for more gasoline, while the Secretary of Transportation says on CBS News that we are now making less gasoline and more distillates for the industrial sector, and *Billboard* reports that the diminishing supplies have "label chiefs . . . furrowing brows to invent ways to hurdle the vinyl shortage barrier," it is Out Here in the heartland that all of the furrowing begins. The vinyl stops here, and thusfar—at least in two of the three plants I checked out—it ain't stopping often enough.

At CBS and at PRC, where a six- or seven-day week and "gobs of overtime" are the norm this time of the year, production is off between 14 and 28% on a typical week. At RCA things are considerably brighter for the present, but in some ways the company's situation is vaguely redolent of a condemned man ready for his last meal—and ordering Chinese to go.

Hopefully, a year from now we'll all be sitting around the shredder pouring in copies of this article, laughing as the trucks pull in with vinyl compound. Until that day comes, however, you can probably look forward to a '74 with less and less overtime—for everyone.

Las Vegas, OK – But Not The Sunset Strip!



What's Missing in the U S A and Elsewhere.

Just to keep you up-to-date on current material shortages and energetic crises effects on the record biz, Ruby's been scouting all over town to find out what's where and who has it. The Japanese record companies are in a frenzy at this very moment because, although they had the foresight to buy up all the PVC (i.e., vinyl) they could, a central storage place, the Naoestu factory of Shinetsu Chemical Industries, exploded recently. This has resulted in an announced 20% cut in Nipponese LP production for 1974. Stateside, A&M Records proclaimed a one-dollar increase in their LP list price, bringing it to a grand \$6.98. Apple and Capitol Records did their bit to conserve energy by turning off their Ringo Starr *Photograph* billboard (located, of course, smack in the middle of Sunset Strip) between 1 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. everyday. Paul McCartney and Wings' billboard for *Band on the Run* will be phosphorescently painted so it'll glow in the dark on its own. Apparently Bell Records has shelved

the Partridge Family's forthcoming LP indefinitely due to their PVC paucity. That'll set the David Cassidy fans screaming. Dinner theaters (like they have in Las Vegas, dearie) are suffering from lack of gas to fill the autos to drive the people to the casinos. Likewise, rock & roll touring acts are not only suffering from lack of gas to drive fans to gigs, but are sweating under the strain of the fans having no money to buy tickets. It's turning out to be a hard life—

even for the superstars. The radio industry may well be the next punching bag for the energy crisis. According to rag *Radio and Records*, there's already talk of voluntary sign-offs, spread periodically through the day and night by Los Angeles-based radio stations, both AM and FM. President Nixon, meanwhile, has come up with a terrific fuel-saver. He's flying to Florida at the moment, while the White House has canceled the usual press plane. The press, I would imagine, is hoping for a government issue of a fleet of cross-country racing bicycles to make it on time. Finally, take a tip from Ruby's recent tour of LA supermarkets—there's no beef anywhere (except at about \$2.69 lb. for the cheapest cuts) and toilet paper, not to mention paper towels and blow-your-nose-tissues, will be all but extinct a month from now. Depressing news all, but ending on a cheerful note. Only 20% of the Christmas trees cut down to be sold in LA this year moved off the lots. Maybe next year, they'll save the Christmas trees so we can keep putting out *Circular*, blowing our noses, wiping our asses and cleaning up after the baby.

So You Wanna Mastermind Rock & Roll Records?

Well, read on for some good tips. From a less-than-well-known group called the Tikis, through a better-known group called Harper's Bizarre came Ted Templeman, whose production work can be heard on discs by the Doobie Brothers, Van Morrison, Captain Beefheart, Little Feat, Claudia Lennear, Lorraine Ellison and more. Lenny Waronker nudged Teddy out of performing in and arranging for the Bizarre into pro-



duction. Lenny's now the Vice President of WB's A&R Dept. and Teddy's the Tiptop Producer. Long ago Teddy worked with Lenny and producer Joe Wissert on some Nancy Sinatra sessions. As Teddy puts it, "I warmed up to the job right away." After Teddy signed the Doobie Brothers and produced their first LP, he produced Little Feat's *Sailin' Shoes*, which he considers his best album to date. While working with Lorraine Ellison on an LP yet-to-be-released, Ted met Van Morrison. Van



had produced *Moondance* and *Astral Weeks* himself, while Lou Merenstein did the production on *His Band and Street Choir*. After listening to Teddy's sessions with Lorraine, Van said, "How'd you like to do my records?" And we all know what followed—the beautiful *Tupelo Honey* and the rocking *St. Dominic's Preview*. Currently Ted's so busy he hardly has time to return his phone calls. He's just wound up the debut LP by a group he signed, Montrose, starring Ronnie Montrose (Edgar Winter's former guitarist); he's putting finishing touches on the long-awaited Lorraine Ellison LP; John Cale and Ted have co-produced a brand new group of LA weirdos called Chunky, Novi and Ernie, and he's working on Van's forthcoming live LP, which promises to become a 2-record set. The secret lies in his attitude toward his work. To quote from a recent *Radio & Records* interview, "I take a different approach from most producers. Most of them are necessarily trying for a big hit the first

time out with a new act. I try to help a group express whatever it is that's going to give them some sort of longevity. In other words, the record might not bust out of the box, but it might give them a little bit of credibility that they can build on—and they can go from there. It's important to get the personality of the act across, so people can have something to latch onto."

Ruby's Run-Ons

◆ Six inches and rising for **Maria Muldaur's** performance at Los Angeles' Dorothy Chandler Pavilion December 19. The Music Center was packed with autos and people streaming in to fill the house. Main attraction was **Loggins & Messina** who, in this reviewer's opinion, ought to pack themselves right off to Vegas. Maria and band (drums, bass, electric lead guitar and piano) bluesed and rocked the audience into a screaming encore. Special favorites were wiggling "Midnight at the Oasis," (which, by the way, as a single is selling in and around Atlanta, Miami, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Denver and Phoenix) and "Tennessee Mountain Home," during which Maria played a beguiling fiddle. There wasn't a limp or dry seat in the house by the time Ms. Muldaur's set was finished. ◆ While I'm on the subject of good reviews, **Jesse Colin Young** garnered a few recently, too. *Record World's* Nash raved on over Jesse's performance at NYC's



Nick, Valerie and Soul Train's Engineer Carnegie Hall December 9. "Jesse demonstrated that he is even better now than he was with the Youngbloods. No pop performer can boast a more pleasant voice . . . His best songs were drawn from his fine new album, *Song for Juli*, and his new band was extremely well received." ◆ **Chip Taylor**, currently WB's primo



Country & Western artist, is about to embark on an entirely new career. He's making his acting debut in **Krzysztof Zanussi's** new film, *The Catamount Killing*. Chip's a quasi-Renaissance man, having pursued several successful careers, including pro golf, gambling and pop tune-penning (you all remember "Wild Thing" and "Angel of the Morning," of course). The title tune from *The Catamount Killing*, written by Chip, is called "Think About Him." His role is that of a small-town deputy sheriff who is, according to those who know, the only good guy in the movie. Also starring are **Horst Buckholz**, **Ann Wedgeworth** and **Louise Clark**. Zanussi's last flick, *Illuminations*, won vast critical acclaim at the recent New York and San Francisco film festivals. *The Catamount Killing* was filmed in Ver-

mont. ◆ **Fanny's** undergone a major personnel change. **June Millington** left the group to pursue her acoustic leanings and the remaining ¾ of Fanny has added **Patti Quatro** (yes, **Suzi's** sister) and **Brie Brandt**. June's off to New York, while the new Fanny debuted New Year's Eve at LA's Troubadour. **Nickolas Ashford** and **Valerie Simpson** smashed onto TV's Soul Train December 17. Pictured herein is the duo with show's host **Don Cornelius**. Meanwhile, their first WB LP, *Gimme Some-thin' Real*, is being played and played and played in places like Atlanta, Memphis, Nashville, Miami, Jacksonville, Ft. Lauderdale, Tampa, Fayetteville, Columbia, Little Rock, Jackson, Milwaukee, Detroit, St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Columbus, Dayton, Louisville, Cincinnati, Houston, Dallas, Beaumont, New Orleans, Shreveport, Seattle, Philadelphia, Washington, New York and Baltimore. Whew! ◆

It was easier to design a movie than to design **Berry Gordy's** daughter **Hazel's** wedding to **Jermaine Jackson** (yes, of the **Five**), according to **Luis Estevez**. "It was my most expensive wedding," he proclaimed, and I'll bet it was. The wedding gown alone had 40 feet of white mink and a train 12 feet long embroidered with 7,500 pearls. Black tie at noon at the Beverly Hills Hotel. One timid estimate of the total cost was \$200,000. ◆ **Marc Bolan** is currently weeding 33 tracks of live recorded material from recent concert tours. He's planning on doing final mixing in Munich, London and Hollywood. ◆

The Function of a Folksinger

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sional flash of a camera, the booth is dark and silent as he continues.

True Job of a Performer

"People usually tell me I'm not what they expected. Of course I don't know what they expect, but it must be different from what I am. I'm not the introverted type."

And that's a fact. Lightfoot doesn't walk around tight-lipped and stone-faced, those deep eyes lost somewhere far away. That's saved for the stage and album covers. Instead, he laughs a lot—at himself and with others—even after little sleep.

"Most entertainers are onstage for one reason," he says; "they're trying to impress somebody. Now for a long time I was like that, but I've been in the business for quite a while, and I discovered in the last two or three years that what I do is serve a function. I'm not there to display myself or get my own ego trip out of it. I'm there to create a focal point for the audi-

ence's attention, and that's the true job of a performer. Very few know that."

Gordon doesn't feel the squeeze of glitter, rock & roll, electronics or walls of amplifiers, and he's not thinking of retiring.

"I'm a traveling folksinger. It's what I do. It's my job; my avocation. And I run a tight ship. I've only got two musicians and a business manager, a roadie and seven lawyers. I have my own publishing company. I keep thinking that I might be talking about some things that folks don't realize. It's expensive, doing this gig. You have to operate it like a business.

"Sure I wish that people who think that rock & roll is the only music on God's green earth would come and see what we've got to offer. Folksingers, country acts and singer/songwriters are an area of the business that's vastly undersold. Everybody thinks it's so un-hip if it's not rock & roll."

'If You Could Hula My Hoop'

Lightfoot issues albums with amazing regularity—he's done 10 since 1965—to a devoted audience that he calls "both intelligent and astute. I think when you make a record," he continues, "it should be one that can be listened to over and over. People should get more out of it than just listening to the lyrics and trying to figure out what space the guy's in.

"I began writing when I was 17. My first song was about a hula hoop. I was writing crap for three or four years, and I continued to write that way until I was about 24. I was working by this time and was finally turned on by the Weavers and Pete Seeger—their Carnegie



Hall album. That inspired me to go out and buy my first decent guitar. In a year or so I was ready to get a job. I'd already been making my living singing as a choral performer and working in several TV shows. I went over to England in '63; got in with these people in London; got on a TV show and a guy ripped off all my tunes. Came back to Canada and started working in bars.

"I did that for four or five years when suddenly Bob Dylan appeared on the scene and changed my whole outlook on songs. I just started writing better songs because of him. Eventually, one night, after playing the circuit for years, some people came in and said 'Hey, we like you,' and that's how I got started and moving."

Lyrics Are Most Important

Gordon, who has written more than 400 songs in the space of his career, finds he's most productive under pressure.

"At the first of the year I usually make a resolution to get one album done. I swear that I'm not going to

get caught in the same predicament as the year before when I left myself only three months to do the whole thing. But I procrastinate for about five or six months, just writing down lines and gathering bits of information, and I finally get to the point where I just have to throw myself into it.

"I resolve to write one song a week and, by golly, have 52 at the end of the year. But it never works out that way. So I usually find myself working when the pressure comes on.

"The lyrics are of number one importance, so I always make sure that they don't get obscured. I start with a melody, and if it isn't any good, there's nothing on God's earth you can do to save it. It has to be a good melody. I might be sitting there toying around with one, trying to put some words to it; I come up with a line and maybe develop that line and then go two or three lines further, which so far probably don't say anything.

"But then somewhere a little light comes on, and I find myself drawing on something that may have happened to me, for God's sake, 10 years ago. Or last week. I've even written them when it was happening to me right at the time. I was going through a scene with a chick or something and was feeling uptight about it—I've even been *there*. Though not very often, 'cause usually when you're in that space you can't write at all."

From 25 to 10

Gordon used to lock himself up in hotel rooms for days on writing jags, but not any more.

"Now I settle into an abode



England Moves Toward Three-Day Week



somewhere and stay there for perhaps a year, maximum. This time I stayed only five months, during which I wrote the songs on *Sundown*. I wrote 25, recorded 14 and used 10 on the album."

Sundown was produced by Lenny Waronker and engineered by Lee Herschberg.

"The basic tracks were done at Eastern Sound Studios in Toronto," Gordon hastens to add. "Make sure they know we did a lot of the work in Canada."

Lightfoot's perception of his role as an artist is strikingly direct.

"The most important aspect of my life, other than the care and welfare of my family," he says, getting up in answer to Waronker's signal that everything is ready and waiting for him, "is to write songs and make records and go sing for people. It's my function as a human being, which more or less takes us away from the idea that it's just a job. It's what I do, what I like to do, and I just continue to do it."

—DAVID RENSIN

LONDON—Perhaps it was rash of the press office to importune Santa to spare them from Tuesday morning meetings. The view from here suggests that there may be no Tuesday mornings, period, what with the threatened three-day work week. When I arrived on the Friday after Christmas the office had an air of desolation about it, evoking some Italian movie about the end of the world. The furniture was all shoved around, and the desk tops were alarmingly clear, untouched since the bacchanal of a week before which yielded a smashed lavatory window, the subsequent arrival of three mice and other things less newsworthy. The party began early in the week, gathering momentum for that climactic Friday which was then crowned with the evening charity gala starring office favorites George Melly and Linda Lewis. But enough of gay abandon and back to the end of civilization, as we know it (which seemed to be the watchphrase all through Christmas). Things are tough here, and the three-day week has been bruited about in quite certain terms. The proposed deal is, business may only use electricity for three days, so on the other days it's down to sitting at home or working by daylight (which, itself, is just one more shortage here in this northern latitude). What this, in turn, means is that London record companies are facing the apocalypse of an 8-to-3 working day. This will be an especially bitter blow to Chrysalis, whose constituents have always equated dawn with noon. (They've begun training their phones to say "He's in a meeting" with no human assistance.)

The Sale Must Go On. Various phenomena have ignored the ubiquitous crises. These include Leo Sayer, who continues to sell more speedily than he can be manufactured; Slade, whose Christmas single has been a resounding #1 for weeks (proof that seasonal songs can jingle tills with the best of them); and Bedlam's drummer Cozy Powell who is pummeling the charts in the spirit of Sandy Nelson. Cozy's peach of a percusser is called "Dance With the Devil."

Who Sell Out. A well-known band on another label is conceded to have scooped every other megastar performing this holiday season with its four pre-Christmas sell-out presentations of *Quadrophenia*. (That makes it one performance for each phenia). The shows were stage-managed to perfection, and the audience was even treated to a shower of party favors near the end of each two-hour set. One especially thoughtful touch was the provision of free transport for fans from the remotely located Edmonton Theatre back to the West End.

Too Little Monkey Business. Seen hanging out in London (as opposed to performing in any capacity) was Mickey Dolenz. He was definitely not overheard saying "There's no business like monkey-business."

Do the Shortage Shuffle. A few weeks ago, they (meaning de gub'mint) took to shutting down all

TV channels at 10:30 p.m., so as to save power. There has been a resurgence in sales of board games (Escape From Colditz being my own newcomer pick), but it will be many moons before we have statistics to compare to New York's famous blackout boom in population. Shoplifters are having a field day with the curtailed lighting but have been heard to grumble, "Y' can't see wot yer nickin!" Housewives are popping across to borrow up cup of petrol, and many an upper lip is growing rigid. The mother country wishes the colonies a Happy New Year, but fears we may have to settle for a re-cycled one. —SHELLEY BENOIT

IT COULD BE VERSE

Putting the "X" in Xmas

Jingle tingle,
Christmas is over;
Holly folly,
What's it to you?

Buy a chocolate
Doughnut for Rover;
Chatty Cathy
Gives deep throat.

Tear the wrappings
From the gift boxes—
What's inside?
Red socks and a fish.
Have a happy
Post-Christmas let-down;
Maybe next year
You'll get your wish.

What's *Even Worse* With the Record Business Today

by LEONARD BROWN

It's a fact of modern life that the art of wrapping things has advanced far beyond its sister art of *unwrapping* them, as editor-critic Colman Andrews observed recently in *Circular* [vol. 5 number 39].

His comments on the packaging folkways of the great record companies gave me a few moments of quiet satisfaction, although at least one other reviewer took issue with his complaints. Vince Aletti wrote in to say: "I go to the Post Office with a jackknife strong enough to slit reinforced tape, and while Bob Christgau is across the table ripping cardboard like a madman, I'm slashing away with a flourish that keeps curious bystanders at a distance." Mr. Aletti recommends a razor blade to Mr. Andrews, but I suspect that I share the latter's primary problem. In the time required to locate the tool or weapon, Colman and I will have taken cruder, but no less effective measures.

It is beyond those wrappings and within the shrouds of corrugated board and shipping tape that my grievances usually begin.

You see, record makers relate to the press with overt distrust and latent hostility which verbalizes simply and implacably: "Promotion Copy. Not for Sale."

This philosophy is expressed by acts of vandalism which guarantee that albums sent forth to writers are rendered worthless in the marketplace. Worse, some companies ravage their freebies so efficiently that they are barely acceptable, even as a putative gift.

I understand that *they* view us as unprincipled, illicit distributors of their merchandise. Lord knows,

they certainly do not elicit a proportionate ratio of reviews to copies shipped. (For which, often as not, they should be grateful.)

Some record companies issue review copies on what is called a "white label." A white label is just that. It lacks customary coloration and design, and lists only the bare essentials of information.

However, most companies go on to vent their antagonism on the sleeve with deliberate damage or defacement of one sort or another.

Here I have followed Mr. Andrews' admirable procedure, listing the several larger companies alphabetically, and rating their degree of disfiguration by his ingenious 1-to-10 rating system.

ABC-Dunhill. ABC usually delivers without the shrink wrap, without which no album is cherry. They further downgrade the review copy with a sticker which tells you at a glance that this is a Promotion Copy. (7)

A&M. I just realized that I have somehow fallen from grace, hence I do not know A&M's current treatment of review albums. In the past, however, they were one of the few companies sending pristine product along. No funny business at all. (10)

Atlantic. Somebody does a scary thing to Atlantic's promo copies. My guess is that a Skil saw slices down the edges of stacked albums, inflicting a deep cut which always seems to miss the edge of the record inside. However, this creates a helluva problem when you try to slide the al-

bum back on the shelf in subdued light. Really wrecks a mood (6)

Buddah. Sticker, no shrink, and the worst packaging in the industry. Policy is evidently to let the Post Office finish the job. What do you *do* with an LP which has been folded in half to fit into the mail box? (3)

Capitol. Varies, but usually they punch holes in the jacket, possibly an extension of traditional theater custom of making holes in passes—Annie Oakleys, they were called, honoring that formidable markswoman. Occasionally, with boxed sets (operas, and such), the score or libretto also has that hole through its upper right corner, too. But not *always*. Angel's reviewer freebies are usually embellished with a prestigious gold sticky which somehow flatters, rather than insults, the recipient. (7)

Columbia. I used to get their broadcast service, with a great gawdawful white timing sticker pasted over the liner notes or the art, whichever was most vexatious. Lately, however, some neat person makes an unobtrusive slit in the shrink and affixes a tiny sticky as a modest reminder that this is not to be sold, heaven forbid. (9)

CTI. White label. No other effacements. (9)

Fantasy/Prestige. With or without shrink, depending on how they feel, I guess. They *emboss* "For Promotion Use Only" on the

back, upper left corner. *And* white label, if you please. (8)

London. Usually *sans* shrink. Occasionally *avec* sticker. But once in a while an album comes through in what could be called perfect retail condition. (8)

RCA. Class. Just plain old class. No stickies, no dents, gouges or holes. You can't buy 'em in stores this clean. (10)

United Artists. Conscientious, these bastards. They emboss the sleeves for openers, strip away the shrink, then let some frightful creature gnaw a corner off the sleeve. As guilt-inducing as a store detectives' smile. (7)

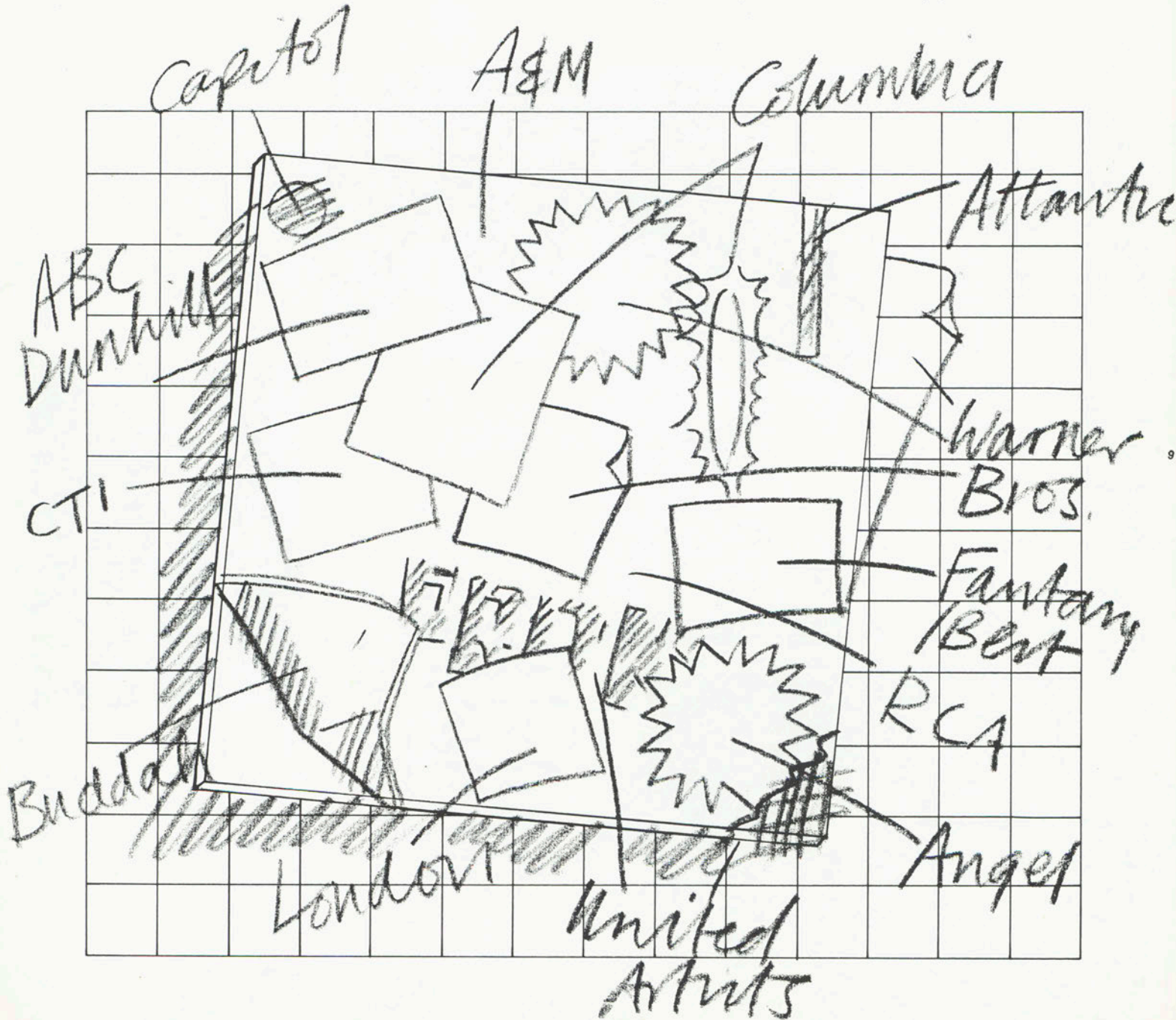
Warner/Reprise. An old-line white labeller, plus they package a special information sheet known as a "nine by nine" *inside* the shrink. And then paste a great eyesore of a dayglo sticky on the jacket, where it eclipses the sense of the art work. (7)

Curiously, all of these precautions have a built-in self-defeating factor. Seems there are collectors who specialize in review or broadcast copies, and they place a premium value on the relative rarity of white label records.

Finally, accidents will happen, and now and then an album comes through with a hole tapped into the vinyl itself. Not often, to be sure, but when it does and if you fail to notice before playing it, what you need is an armful of relatively unblemished LPs to raise cash for a new stylus.

It's such a jungle . . .

Record makers relate to the press with overt distrust and latent hostility which verbalizes simply and implacably: "Promotion Copy. Not for Sale."



Flew in From Miami Beach BOAC

Allman Bros. Band

1/10-2/9 Europe

Paul Butterfield's Better Days

1/17-20 Boulder
2/1 Los Angeles
2/2 San Bernardino
2/8 Seattle
2/9 Vancouver
2/10 Edmonton
2/11 Calgary
2/12 Winnepeg

Captain Beyond

2/7 Americus, Georgia

Uriah Heep

1/25 El Paso
1/26 Albuquerque
1/29 Denver
2/1 Los Angeles
2/2 San Bernardino
2/3 Phoenix
2/7 Las Vegas
2/8 San Diego
2/9 San Jose
2/10 San Francisco

Hydra

1/15-20 Nashville
1/26 Hickory, North Carolina

Gordon Lightfoot

1/24 Berkeley
1/25 San Diego
1/26 Santa Barbara
1/27 Los Angeles
2/15 Milwaukee
2/16 Duluth
2/17 St. Paul
3/1-3 Ottawa
3/15 Miami
3/16 Daytona
3/21-25 Toronto
4/18 Quebec
4/19-21 Montreal
5/11 Anchorage
5/12 Fairbanks
5/14 Portland
5/16 Seattle
5/17 Spokane
5/18 Salt Lake City
5/19 Honolulu

James Montgomery Band

1/10 Syracuse
1/12 Clinton, New York
1/20 Rochester

Van Morrison

1/11-12 Austin
1/13 Arlington, Texas
1/16 Oklahoma City
1/17 Kansas City
1/18 St. Louis

Maria Muldaur

1/30-2/2 Denver
2/6 Passaic



Uriah Heep

2/8-9 New York City
2/12 New Haven
2/13-14 Boston
2/15 Burlington, Vermont
2/17-18 Philadelphia
2/19 Long Island
2/21 Richmond
2/22-23 Washington, D.C.
2/24 University Park, Pennsylvania
2/26-27 Cleveland
3/1 Pittsburgh
3/5-6 Detroit
3/8-9 Chicago

Martin Mull

2/1 Lawrence, Kansas
2/2 Columbia, Missouri

Bonnie Raitt

1/18 Durham, North Carolina
1/19 Richmond



1/20 Washington, D.C.
1/26 Providence
1/30 Pittsburgh
2/1 Lawrence, Kansas
2/2 Columbia, Missouri
2/3 Evanston, Illinois
2/7 Hanover, New Hampshire
2/8 Hartford, Connecticut

Seals and Crofts

1/12 State College, Pennsylvania
1/13 Youngstown, Ohio
1/15 Richmond, Kentucky
1/16 Cincinnati
1/18 Clemson, South Carolina
1/19 Bowling Green
1/20 Ann Arbor
1/24 Loretto, Pennsylvania
1/25 Evansville, Indiana
1/26 Muncie, Indiana
1/28 Macomb, Illinois
2/15 Boone, North Carolina
2/16 Fayetteville, North Carolina
2/17 Durham, North Carolina

Vinyl Statistics

Circular is pleased to present a running account of newborn Warner Family Records, everything from 7 to 12 inches in diameter, a list stripped of adjectives, avoidable nouns and even verbs. The past week has given birth to assorted singles and a stack of albums.

SINGLES (December 26)

"Sabbath, Bloody Sabbath"
—Black Sabbath—Warner
Bros. single WB 7764
"The Show Must Go On"—
Terry Collins—
Kwanza single KWA 7766
"Dolphins"—Tim Buckley—
DiscReet single DIS 1189

ALBUMS (December 28)

Sabbath, Bloody Sabbath —
Black Sabbath—Warner
Bros. album BS 2695
Silverbird—Leo Sayer—
Warner Bros. album
BS 2738

Graham Central Station—
Warner Bros. album
BS 2763

Chunky, Novi & Ernie—
Reprise album MS 2146

A Great Gift Idea—
Credibility Gap—
Reprise album MS 2154

Grievous Angel—
Gram Parsons
Reprise album MS 2171

Sundown—Gordon Lightfoot—
Reprise album MS 2177

Energized—Foghat—
Bearsville album BR 6950

Strong in the Sun—Tir Na Nog
—Chrysalis album
CHR 1047

You and Me—Chick Churchill
—Chrysalis album
CHR 1051

Inside Out—Eddie Henderson
Capricorn album CP 0122

Man I Had a Dreadful Flight



2/18 Kent, Ohio
 2/21 St. Cloud, Minnesota
 2/23 Bloomington, Indiana
 2/24 Columbus, Ohio
 2/28 Bangor, Maine
 3/1 Boston
 3/2 Long Island
 3/7 Syracuse
 3/8 Binghamton
 3/10 Rochester
 3/12 Scranton, Pennsylvania
 3/13 Dayton, Ohio
 3/15 Indianapolis
 3/16-17 Chicago
 3/19 Madison
 3/20 Minneapolis
 3/21 Detroit
 3/23 Columbia, Missouri
 3/24 St. Louis
 3/25 Champaign, Illinois
 3/26 Louisville
 3/28 Pittsburgh
 3/29 Richmond
 3/30 Norfolk
 3/31 Baltimore
 4/15 San Antonio
 4/16 Dallas
 4/17 Tulsa
 4/18 Oklahoma City
 4/20 Houston
 4/21 Corpus Christi
 4/22 Austin
 5/9 Charlotte, North Carolina
 5/10 Columbia, South Carolina
 5/12 Miami Beach
 5/16 Mobile
 5/17 Atlanta
 5/19 St. Petersburg

Slade

1/8 Burbank
 1/11 Philadelphia
 1/12 Hartford
 1/18 Cleveland
 1/19 Toledo
 1/20 Indianapolis
 1/21 Detroit
 1/24 Fresno
 1/25-26 San Francisco
 1/27 Los Angeles
 1/29 Milwaukee
 1/30 Duluth
 1/31 St. Paul
 2/2 St. Louis

Livingston Taylor

1/26 New Paltz, New York

Top Ten

Warner Bros. Sales Figures for
 Week of December 23-29.

1. Alice Cooper/*Muscle of Love* (BS/M8/M5 2748)
2. Frank Sinatra/*O! Blue Eyes Is Back* (FS/M8/M5 2155)
3. Gregg Allman/*Laid Back* (CP/M8/M5 0116)
4. Todd Rundgren/*Something/Anything* (2BX/L8/L5 2066)
5. *The Beach Boys in Concert* (2RS/K8/K5 6484)
6. America/*Hat Trick* (BS/M8/M5 2728)
7. Uriah Heep/*Sweet Freedom* (BS/M8/M5 2724)
8. The Mothers/*Over-nite Sensation* (MS/M8/M5 2149)
9. Fleetwood Mac/*Mystery to Me* (MS/M8/M5 2158)
10. Neil Young/*Time Fades Away* (MS/M8/M5 2151)

Tower of Power

1/11 Sacramento

Marshall Tucker Band

1/10-2/9 Europe
 3/11 Carrollton, Georgia

Wendy Waldman

1/12 Riverside, California
 1/18 Bloomington, Indiana
 1/23-28 New York City
 1/26 Lewiston, Maine
 1/31-2/3 Bryn Mawr
 2/6-10 Boston



Dionne Warwick

1/15 Singing at NBA All Star Game
 1/31-2/2 Caracas, Venezuela
 2/8-10 Lake Tahoe
 2/13-3/5 Las Vegas
 3/13 Washington, D.C.
 3/21-24 Houston
 4/18-5/1 Reno
 5/4 New Haven
 5/5 Hartford
 5/6-12 New York City
 5/22-6/4 Las Vegas

Eric Weissberg

2/22 Bronx

Wet Willie

2/7 Americus, Georgia



Bear & Co. Meet the Chipmunks



Question for Next Week

As football mounts to its yearly climax, and ordinary stadia across the land suddenly metamorphose into bowls, here's a question for the season. It's a question to ponder during halftime of the Super Bowl, or perhaps while watching Tower of Power strut its stuff with the USC marching band during the Rose Bowl show.

One of the least-known but most beguiling songs ever written about the pigskin pastime is "Golden Gridiron Boy." It is the lament of a young lover whose musical ability exceeds his athletic prowess; he can only play in the band, and weeps behind his sheet music while the dashing G.G.B. steals his

beloved away. All was not lost for our bandsman, however; he went on to become one of Reprise's most distinguished and (at last) best-selling artists. Be first to name him and win one of his albums free (or somebody else's album, if you want to be that way; see the little print below).

Winner of Dr. Demento's 12/10 contest is Brad Cramer of La Mirada, Ca., who correctly guessed that "The Chipmunk Song" by the late David Seville was the last Christmas song to hit #1 in America (1958).

Each week the good doctor poses a music lore question whose answer is the focus of his subsequent column. The earliest reply to his question (mailed to Dr. Demento, c/o Circular, Warner Bros. Records, 3701 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Ca. 91505) wins any single Warner/Reprise catalog album. (Please specify choice.) Answers will be geographically pro-rated, ties will be judged on the basis of penmanship, wit and lucidity.

For the second issue in a row, the answer to last week's question (last year's question, really) is "The Chipmunk Song," featuring the late David Seville (nee Ross Bagdasarian) and his double-speed triplicate alter-ego, The Chipmunks.

Liberty #56079, released in 1968, begins with the same lilting waltz that helped make Liberty #55168 a million-seller (several times over) a decade earlier. In fact, the first 12 seconds of #56079 are a 1:1 copy of the 1958 original. Just as the darling little critters are about to reach the end of their second line "(Time for toys

and time for cheer") they are, however, brusquely interrupted by the authoritatively bearish voice of Canned Heat lead singer Bob Hite. Speaking for his Canned Heat cohorts, Hite makes it perfectly clear that 1968 is the year of the Christmas Boogie, and "you mice just gotta get it together."

Riled Rodent

Alvin, speaking for *his* Chipmunk cohorts, doesn't attempt to challenge Hite's musical expertise (he'd better not; "The Bear" owns one of the largest and finest record collections on the planet). Alvin is, however, miffed (to put it mildly) at Hite's failure to differentiate chipmunks from another species of rodent which most humans find considerably less endearing (unless the animals' names happen to be Mickey, Minnie or Mighty). All works out for the best, however, except for one thing: Liberty #56079 just didn't catch on the way good old #55168 did.

Inspirational Verse

Now we're going steady,
And I found out her real name
is Betty.

—"Puddin' n' Tain"
The Alley Cats

Robert
Empire

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