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Criticism lighting his fire: perspectives on Jim Morrison from the Los Angeles Free Press, Down Beat, and the Miami Herald

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**CRITICISM *LIGHTING HIS FIRE*:
PERSPECTIVES ON JIM MORRISON FROM *THE LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS, DOWN BEAT, AND
THE MIAMI HERALD***

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Liberal Arts

in

The Interdepartmental Program in Liberal Arts

by

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To my mother Ursula,
who introduced me to the many wonders of Venice Beach, Santa Monica Pier,
and to the music of The Doors.

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It has been a fantastic, interesting, humbling, and fun experience to write a second thesis, especially after completing a doctoral degree. If I were told five years ago that this would be the path on which I would travel, the journey I would take—earning the master's of liberal arts and writing another thesis—after graduating with a Ph.D. in music and a certificate of advanced studies in library and information science, I would not have wanted to believe it. This particular journey involved rejection: four years of unemployment; failed position searches in musicology and libraries; and people I never expected doubting me, questioning my judgment and persistence. It also included acceptance: my work has been published and is gaining recognition; new friends and rediscovered friendships; acceptance in the The Interdisciplinary Program in Liberal Arts at LSU; and (finally) a position as assistant professor/reference librarian at Nicholls State University, which was followed by the opportunity to work as Part-Time Lecturer of music appreciation for the Office of Independent and Distance Learning at LSU.

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ABSTRACT

Jim Morrison, lead singer of The Doors, transcended his mythical personae through the band's songs, his poems, and works about him. Morrison's cult continues today, through pilgrimages to his grave (a major tourist attraction in Paris), Oliver Stone's film *The Doors* (1991), videos on *YouTube.com*, rediscoveries of already released recordings, and new discoveries of unreleased recordings, lost films, and unpublished manuscripts of Morrison's poetry. Fans, filmmakers, photographers, the music industry, writers, and members of The Doors have cultivated him into *their* icon, hierophant, and God. But does myth construction about Morrison possess any goals, continuity, or direction? The music was essential to Morrison's creative development and image, so why do so few published works about Morrison examine the songs themselves?

Writings in *Rolling Stone* and by those affiliated with the magazine dominate literature about Jim Morrison and The Doors. Many of these writings are essential to scholarship about The Doors; however, some merely aim to perpetuate myths about Jim Morrison. Other writings deserve attention since they offer fascinating perspectives about Morrison and possess discernable directions; therefore, the scope of this study focuses on *The Los Angeles Free Press*, *Down Beat*, and *The Miami Herald*. It explores Morrison's use of voice, words, and music, and discusses original and new contexts. As metacritique, this study examines how writers singled out and focused on Morrison and shows how limits of interpretation (from the perspectives of authenticity, representation, perception, and reception) are related to Morrison's aesthetics and involvement in 1960s counterculture. These writings illustrate how the Doors and Morrison himself created not only worlds out of their compositions, performances, and recordings; more specifically, they created interplay with the counterculture and musical material culture. The treatment of songs and poems here leads to exciting avenues for analyzing The Doors' songs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: OPENING CEREMONY

Jim Morrison (1943–1971), best known as the lead singer and lyricist of The Doors, one of the most important, controversial, and influential rock bands of the late 1960s, founded the band with keyboardist Ray Manzarek (b. 1939) in the summer of 1965. The Doors was formed shortly afterwards with Morrison on vocals, Manzarek on keyboard, John Densmore (b. 1944) on drums, and Robbie Krieger (b. 1946) on guitar. Morrison, Manzarek, and Krieger were students at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Morrison (an undergraduate) and Manzarek (a graduate student) were in film classes together. It was not until July 1965, after Morrison's graduation from UCLA, that he and Manzarek decided to form a band. Their story about meeting again at Venice Beach that summer, Manzarek's listening to Morrison sing his "Moonlight Drive," declaring the "lyrics" were the best ones he ever heard, and Manzarek's telling Morrison to form a rock and roll band and make a million dollars, is well known. Manzarek met Densmore while studying Transcendental Meditation at the Maharishi Institute of Santa Monica (also known as the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Meditation Center, located on Third Street). Densmore knew Krieger for a while in high school and they became friends a few years later. He introduced Krieger to Morrison and Manzarek after he decided to join their band later that year.

Numerous sources explained that the group's interests went beyond music. In addition to their music, they planned writing, filmmaking, and theatre projects. Morrison wrote poems for years before The Doors until his death, and many became texts for their songs. Many of the band's songs began with Morrison's poems; some of the poems were songs with music and texts originally conceived by Morrison. Most of the songs as known in their complete and polished format were the result of the collaboration of all four Doors. Manzarek suggested the link between the name of the band and its purpose and function to *Newsweek*: "There are things you know about . . . and things you don't, the known and the unknown, and in between are the doors—us."¹ Morrison's remark, "It's a search, an opening of doors. We're trying to break through to a cleaner, purer realm," alludes to a prose passage in the second section of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (completed in 1793), entitled "A Memorable Fancy":

¹ Anon., "This Way to the Egress," under "Music" in *Newsweek* (November 6, 1967): 101.

If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.//
For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.²

The title of Blake's work and the above first line were used as part of the title, and quoted by Aldous Huxley in *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (published in 1954 in London and then in 1956 in the U.S.).³ Huxley claimed that taking mescaline, a drug with similar hallucinogenic effects to lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), inspired his book. Enveloped in 1960's counterculture, members of The Doors took acid ("dropped acid") while it was still legal in California. LSD, in fact, is often credited as an influence in their interviews, autobiographies, and other writings about them. For The Doors, the reference to opening doors and breaking through to a cleaner, purer realm has many meanings: Morrison, like Huxley, alludes to hallucinogenic drugs, but equally as important are the words and influences of Blake and Huxley, their intention to open up after closing themselves up, in essence the primary creative motivation and process of The Doors.⁴

Descriptions of the rise of The Doors from their hungry days between 1965 and 1967 to their first national hit with the song "Break On Through (To the Other Side)" abound in histories, autobiographies, and biographies. Although there are many kinds of artifacts that chronicle their work (The Doors believed their live performances as vital to understanding the band's aesthetics and intentions), the albums received and still receive the most attention.⁵ Table 1 lists the songs on each album released between 1967 and 1970. It excludes their concert album *Absolutely Live* (July 1970) and their compilation album *13* (November 1970). Here the albums are in italics and boldface. The number of the first song on sides 1 and 2 of the LP, as it originally appeared, is underlined and songs designated as epic songs are in bold face. The Doors' epic songs were usually, but not always, their longest songs on the album. What distinguishes them from their other songs, including their hits, is their compositional and concert histories, their musical ambition, and their complexity based on having a far-reaching scope or various sections and structural components that make them whole. John Covach identified musical ambition, use of technology,

² William Blake, "The Doors of Perception" in *The Portable Blake*, ed. and comp. Alfred Kazin, The Viking Portable Library (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), 258. In his Introduction Kazin compared Blake to Beethoven; both lived in isolation and died in 1827.

³ See Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), and Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956).

⁴ For more information about The Doors and William Blake, see Robert Bogen, "Beyond The Doors" (master's thesis, San Francisco State University, 1992).

⁵ Details about their other musical and nonmusical works will be discussed later in the thesis.

virtuosity, lyrics and ““big ideas,”” concept albums and conceptual music, as characteristics of the “hippie aesthetic.” To him, progressive rock (from 1966 to 1980) exhibited all five of these characteristics.⁶ The Doors’ epic songs made use of studio experimentation, including the ones with well known concert histories like “When the Music’s Over” and “The Unknown Soldier.” All the epic songs had a strong sense of purpose, if not also strong messages. Their musical ambition featured influences of jazz, classical, and avant–garde music. As songs within songs, they often created their own musical worlds with musico–dramatic and structural *Gestalten*.

The first two albums, *The Doors* (released in January 1967) and *Strange Days* (released in October 1967) were extremely successful in both critical reception and sales.⁷ While *Strange Days* received critical acclaim and approval and showed great promise for a group that wanted to be as famous and successful as The Beatles, the third album, *Waiting for the Sun* (released in July 1968), failed to be as appealing. The Doors followed it with *The Soft Parade* (released in July 1969), which featured a studio orchestra, bass guitar and conga, and solos on saxophone, trombone, horn, mandolin, and fiddle. The least popular of all The Doors’ albums, *The Soft Parade* consisted of four out of nine tracks composed with texts written by Krieger, another song composed by Morrison and Krieger, and the remaining four tracks with texts by Morrison. Their fifth album, *Morrison Hotel* (released in February 1970), was a return to The Doors’ sound of the first three albums and brought their blues influences into focus. The

⁶ John Covach, “The Hippie Aesthetic: Cultural Positioning and Musical Ambition in Early Progressive Rock,” available at *Philomusica Online*, under “Proceedings of the International Conference ‘Composition and Experimentation in British Rock: 1966–1976’” (2005), <http://www.unipv.it/britishrock1966-1976/pdf/covacheng.pdf> (accessed 2 October 2007), 3–8 of 10pp. Covach also wrote the entry for The Doors in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 7, 2d ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: MacMillian, 2001).

⁷ John Tobler and Andrew Doe, *The Doors*, ed. Kay Rowley (London: Proteus Books, 1984; Somerset, Eng.: Bobcat Books, 1987), 34. Tobler and Doe reflect the sentiments of many fans, critics, and scholars about the first album: “*The Doors* is one of the most stunning debut albums in the history of rock, turning accepted maxims upside down. Here, instead of foundations being laid for later construction, the best came first.” Tobler and Doe later explain that The Doors turned accepted maxims upside down because their songs represented a dark world that was in sharp contrast to the mainstream’s preference of The Beach Boys and The Beatles during “a time of good vibrations when all that was needed was love.” Their assertion that the first album did not set a foundation for later construction (creative activity or composition?) is unconvincing: there were many hit singles from the subsequent albums in addition to the sensational triumph of *L.A. Woman*, their final album with Morrison. Their observation that the first album was the best one has some validity because many previous rehearsals and performances perfected the songs and polished the performances. Jerry Hopkins described the *L.A. Woman* album as one of their three most critically acclaimed albums. See Hopkins, *The Lizard King: The Essential Jim Morrison* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1992), 151.

same year saw the releases of the concert album *Absolutely Live* (July 1970), which consisted of recordings of live performances that took place over a period of time in New York, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia, and the compilation album *13* (released in November 1970).⁸

Table 1: Albums and Songs by The Doors (Including Song Durations, Sides 1 and 2, and Epic Songs)

<p><i>The Doors (1967)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Break on Through" (to the Other Side)" (2:25) 2. "Soul Kitchen" (3:30) 3. "The Crystal Ship" (2:30) 4. "Twentieth Century Fox" (2:30) 5. "Alabama Song (Whisky Bar)" (3:15) 6. "Light My Fire" (6:30) 7. "Back Door Man" (3:30) 8. "I Looked at You" (2:18) 9. "End of the Night" (2:49) 10. "Take It as It Comes" (2:13) 11. "The End" (11:35) 	<p><i>Strange Days (1968)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Strange Days" (3:05) 2. "You're Lost, Little Girl" (3:01) 3. "Love Me Two Times" (3:23) 4. "Unhappy Girl" (2:00) 5. "Horse Latitudes" (1:30) 6. "Moonlight Drive" (3:00) 7. "People are Strange" (2:10) 8. "My Eyes Have Seen You" (2:22) 9. "I Can't See Your Face in My Mind" (3:18) 10. "When the Music's Over" (11:00)
<p><i>Waiting for the Sun (1968)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Hello, I Love You" (2:22) 2. "Love Street" (3:06) 3. "Not to Touch the Earth" (3:54) 4. "Summer's Almost Gone" (3:20) 5. "Wintertime Love" (1:52) 6. "The Unknown Soldier" (3:10) 7. "Spanish Caravan" (2:58) 8. "My Wild Love" (2:50) 9. "We Could be so Good Together" (2:20) 10. "Yes, The River Knows" (2:35) 11. "Five to One" (4:22) 	<p><i>The Soft Parade (1969)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Tell All the People" (3:24) 2. "Touch Me" (3:15) 3. "Shaman's Blues" (4:45) 4. "Do It" (3:01) 5. "Easy Ride" (2:35) 6. "Wild Child" (2:36) 7. "Runnin' Blue" (2:27) 8. "Wishful Sinful" (2:56) 9. "The Soft Parade" (8:40)
<p><i>Morrison Hotel (1970)</i></p> <p><u>Side 1: "Hardrock Café"</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Roadhouse Blues" (4:04) 2. "Waiting for the Sun" (3:15) 3. "You Make Me Real" (2:50) 4. "Peace Frog" (2:52) 5. "Blue Sunday" (2:08) 6. "Ship of Fools" (3:06) <p><u>Side 2: "Morrison Hotel"</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. "Land Ho!" (4:08) 8. "The Spy" (4:15) 9. "Queen of the Highway" (2:47) 10. "Indian Summer" (2:33) 11. "Maggie M'Gill" (4:24) 	<p><i>L.A. Woman (1971)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The Changeling" (4:20) 2. "Love Her Madly" (3:18) 3. "Been Down So Long" (4:40) 4. "Cars Hiss by My Window" (4:10) 5. "L.A. Woman" (7:49) 6. "L'America" (4:35) 7. "Hyacinth House" (3:10) 8. "Crawling King Snake" (4:57) 9. "The WASP (Texas Radio and the Big Beat)" (4:12) 10. "Riders On the Storm" (7:14)

⁸ Ibid., 80. According to John Tobler and Andrew Doe, Manzarek remarked that they never wanted their record company (Elektra) to make the albums and that "[The Doors] had nothing to do with those albums at all."

Table 2 includes several Doors songs and famous covers of popular songs that were released separately from the albums listed in Table 1. This list is by no means exhaustive; many discoveries of unreleased materials as well as long awaited CD reissues of documentaries and other kinds of recordings are now being released on CDs, most are productions of The Doors Music Company's own label Bright Midnight Archives. Table 2 lists several songs recorded by The Doors that appeared on compilations, concert recordings, anthologies, and as bonus tracks on reissues, mostly after Morrison's death. At a glance, it reveals the breadth of The Doors performance repertory. The final album of the four Doors was *L.A. Woman* (released in April 1971). It proved that the band was continuing its upward turn on the hits charts and record sales since *Morrison Hotel*. It maintained a focus on the blues, exploiting the same throaty "Roadhouse Blues" sound Morrison used on the previous album on many of the tracks. Today *L.A. Woman* is about as popular as the first two albums with its combination of blues, homage to Los Angeles in the title song and other songs, dark novelties, and the eerie but beautiful concluding song, "Riders On the Storm." Morrison died that summer.

Obituaries and other sources reported that on 3 July 1971 Morrison was found dead by his girlfriend Pamela Courson in the bathtub of his Paris apartment, and he was buried five days later on 8 July, at Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.⁹ Louis Armstrong also died the very same week and his obituary and funeral notices overshadowed Morrison's in both the U.S. and France. The first obituaries about Morrison's death made public very few details. For instance, the obituary in *The San Francisco Chronicle* remarked that there was "no explanation of the delay in announcing the death."¹⁰ The obituary in *The New York Times* mentioned that Morrison died of natural causes and that the details of his death would be withheld until his agent returned from France. A similar anonymous obituary appeared in *The Miami Herald* in addition to a lengthy one that was written by staff

⁹ Bob Seymore offers documentary evidence that suggests that Morrison did in fact die in his bathtub on 3 July 1971 and that he is without question buried in the Père Lachaise Cemetery. See *The End: The Death of Jim Morrison*, ed. Chris Charlesworth (London, New York, and Sidney: Omnibus Press, 1990). The myth about Morrison faking his death is covered briefly in Quinton Skinner's *Behind the Music: Casualties of Rock*, VH1 Music First (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, and Singapore: Pocket Books, 2001), 122-24. Alex Constantine investigates (and entertains) the notion that the CIA may have been involved in Morrison's "political assassination." See *The Covert War Against Rock* (Venice, Calif.: Feral House, 2000). Jerry Hopkins also mentioned the FBI cover-up theory, among others, in Hopkins and Danny Sugerman, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, rev. ed., Foreword by Danny Sugerman (New York and Boston: Warner Books, 1995), 372.

¹⁰ Anon., "Singer for The Doors is Dead," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 July 1971, 2.

Table 2: Selected Songs, Cover Songs, and Poems Recorded by The Doors Released on Separate Albums

<p><i>Absolutely Live (1970)</i> “Who Do You Love?,” composed by Bo Diddley; “Love Hides” (Part of the Medley); “Build Me a Woman” (also known as “Woman is a Devil,” based on Robert Johnson’s “Me and the Devil”); “Close to You,” composed by Willie Dixon; “Universal Mind”; “The Celebration of the Lizard” (in its entirety)</p>
<p><i>Weird Scenes Inside the Goldmine (1972)</i> “Who Scared You?”; “You Need Meat (Don’t Go No Further),” composed by Willie Dixon</p>
<p><i>An American Prayer (1978)</i>: Poems previously recorded by Jim Morrison with accompaniment added posthumously by The Doors as a trio. “Awake” (included “Ghost Song,” “Dawn’s Highway,” and “Newborn Awakening”); “To Come of Age” (included “Black Polished Chrome,” “Latino Chrome,” “Angels and Sailors,” and “Stoned Immaculate”); “The Poet’s Dreams” (included “The Movie” and “Curses, Invocations”); “World On Fire” (included “American Night,” “Roadhouse Blues,” “The World On Fire,” “Lament,” and “The Hitchhiker”); “An American Prayer” (included “Hour for Magic,” “Freedom Exists,” “A Feast for Friends”); Bonus tracks on the 1995 CD reissue included “Babylon Fading,” “Bird of Prey,” and “The Ghost Song.”¹¹</p>
<p><i>Alive, She Cried (1983)</i> “Gloria,” composed by Van Morrison; “Little Red Rooster,” composed by Willie Dixon</p>
<p><i>Box Set (1997)</i> “Black Train Song”; “Whiskey, Mystics, and Men”; “I Will Never Be Untrue”; “Orange County Suite”; “Queen of the Highway”; “Rock Is Dead”; Adagio in G minor, composed by Remo Giazotto (based on fragments of a Sonata in G minor attributed to Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni; an excerpt is used on <i>An American Prayer</i>; the entire song is on <i>Perception</i>); “Poontang Blues/Build Me a Woman/Sunday Trucker” (the second is also known as “Woman is a Devil”); “Money”; “Someday Soon”; “Mental Floss”; “Adolph Hitler”; “Tightrope Ride”</p>
<p><i>Complete Studio Recordings (1999) and Essential Rarities (2000)</i> Bonus track included “Woman is a Devil,” based on Robert Johnson’s “Me and the Devil”</p>
<p><i>Perception (2006)</i> “Push Push”; “Talking Blues”</p>

Writer Lawrence (Larry) Mahoney for *The Miami Herald*.¹² Just a few reasons for such a long obituary in this publication were that Morrison was from Florida, The Doors’ Miami concert fiasco that resulted in Morrison facing

¹¹ See Morrison, Jim. *An American Prayer*, with music by The Doors, Elektra 61812–2 (1995), CD.

¹² See Anon., “Rock Star Morrison Dies at 26,” *The Miami Herald*, 9 July 1971, 1A and Lawrence [Larry] Mahoney, “Morrison Had Heart Attack, Officials in Paris Confirm,” under “Singer Died in Bathtub,” *The Miami Herald*, 10 July 1971, 1 and 25A. The obituary appeared three days after the first of several for Armstrong. See the following: Bob Micklin, “Satchmo is Dead; One of Jazz Greats,” *The Miami Herald*, 7 July 1971, 1A and 10A; Eddie Adams, “In 1968, Doctors Said He was Through, But ‘Pops’ Came Back,” *The Miami Herald*, 7 July 1971 (final ed.), 11A; Anon., “Armstrong’s Body to Lie in Armory,” *The Miami Herald*, 8 July 1971, 1A; Anon., “Jazzmen forgo Funeral Parade in New Orleans,” *The Miami Herald*, 8 July 1971, 24A; Anon., “Tribute to Satch On Par with Ike’s,” under “European Farewell,” *The Miami Herald*, 8 July 1971, 24A; Anon., “By Thousands, They

a felony charge and being found guilty on several misdemeanors for lewd and lascivious behavior, and the coverage in the newspaper starting from the infamous concert until the outcome of the trial created a history between Jim Morrison and *The Miami Herald* (especially Mahoney). The obituary in the final edition of the newspaper featured a couple pictures and a separate article by Mahoney, “Morrison Show Here: Beginning of End,” which explained that Mahoney was a “contemporary of Jim Morrison at Florida State University in the 1960s.”¹³ Here Mahoney reflected on Morrison’s recalled fondness for the Florida landscape. Mahoney also explained the concert, trial, and outcome, giving some detail about being buried in France. According to Mahoney, Morrison was “a royal figure of the drug-oriented counterculture, [but] was not a man for narcotics himself. He drank heavily and dismissed LSD as ‘a new kind of wine.’”¹⁴ The article’s columns are artistically juxtaposed with advertisements for mainstream, art, and x-rated films and shows (including *Woodstock*, advertised as “best documentary feature/1970” with a picture of an Academy Award). Many of the other obituaries focused on Morrison’s “Superstar as Poet” image, his leather pants, and The Doors’ hit songs, as well as accusations of indecent exposure and profanity against Morrison at the March 1969 concert in Miami, the following trial against Morrison, and the resulting “Rally for Decency” at the Hollywood Bowl (a nationwide gathering of 30,000 concertgoers that was organized by Catholic teenagers against profanity in music and bands like The Doors).¹⁵ The lengthy Miami trial had a negative impact on Morrison and The Doors: their concerts were cancelled for a long time; their record sales reached their nadir; their notions of freedom of speech and performing the way they wanted to perform were challenged.

Mysteries and rumors of his death and the possibility that he faked it became known worldwide. Rumors hinted that Morrison paid off a doctor for the death certificate; that he is living in Africa and making music with Elvis; that he is buried somewhere else; the coffin at Père-Lachaise contains nothing but 150 pounds of sand. The official story of Morrison’s death was a retelling of Courson’s official report that she heard Morrison’s difficult breathing and woke him up. Though he coughed up a small amount of blood, he told her not to call a doctor and that he would have a bath to relax. When she woke up again, she noticed he was still in the bathroom. She walked

Say Goodbye to Satch,” *The Miami Herald*, 9 July 1971, 1–2A (street ed.); Patricia Davis, “‘It’s So Unlike Him’: Satchmo Laid Out in a Somber Hall,” *The Miami Herald*, 9 July 1971, 1–2A; and Anon., “Louis Armstrong is Borne to Rest,” *The Miami Herald*, 10 July 1971, 1–2A.

¹³ Lawrence [Larry] Mahoney, “Morrison Show Here: Beginning of End.” *The Miami Herald*, 10 July, 1971, 2D.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2D.

¹⁵ Anon., “Jim Morrison, 25, Lead Singer With Doors Rock Group, Dies,” *The New York Times*, 9 July 1971, 34.

in to check on him and he seemed to be sleeping. When she was unable to wake him, she called their friend Alain Ronay (Morrison's photographer and a cinematographer and filmmaker) to call an ambulance. Ronay and Courson, along with their other friends Jacques Demy (a filmmaker and writer) and Agnès Varda (a filmmaker, film editor, and actress married to Demy), carried him into the dining room for a cardiac massage, but were unable to revive him. The official cause of death was cardiac arrest following pulmonary congestion. The best known alternative version of Morrison's death has been considered and supported by countless observers, reporters, and biographers. In this version Morrison died of a heroin overdose at the toilets of the Rock 'n' Roll Circus, a Parisian nightclub known for drug addict customers and suppliers, especially from the world of rock and roll. It is adjacent to L'Alcazar, a bar, restaurant, and dance club located in the Latin Quarter.¹⁶ Courson may have administered the lethal dose. Morrison's body was then taken from the nightclub to the bathtub in his apartment.¹⁷ Numerous writers pointed out the flaws and curiosities of both stories: Why did his friends move his body? Why did it take so long (perhaps over 48 hours) to file the report of Morrison's death? If he died at a nightclub, why would no one call the police or an ambulance to the scene? Why was an autopsy unnecessary and the coffin sealed immediately? That Morrison was already in a coffin and a coroner's report was already signed by the time Doors' manager Bill Siddons arrived in Paris provokes all kinds of speculation of scandal or at least a cover up. Reports of Morrison sightings were frequent despite the official report and alternative accounts of his death. Jerry Hopkins, who knew Morrison during his time writing for *The Los Angeles Free Press* and then *Rolling Stone*, explained a different story that seems closely related to the heroin overdose version: within a couple of years after Morrison's death, Courson had sex with his protégé Danny Sugerman.¹⁸ According to Hopkins, Sugerman told him that Courson confessed that she

¹⁶ Hopkins compared the Rock 'n' Roll Circus (also called the Circus) to the Whiskey A Go-Go, the bar made famous especially by The Doors, who practiced and performed sets there. By 1971 it became Paris' heroine scene with its American rock and roll musician regulars and it was going downhill with drug users and prostitutes. See Hopkins and Sugerman, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, 356-57. When it closed in 1972, the establishment's name was changed to "Whiskey A GoGo," apparently embracing ironically the possibility that Morrison may have died in the nightclub.

¹⁷ Wallace Fowlie includes details of both accounts of Morrison's death, but suggests that the alternative account is believable. He credits Oliver Wicker for writing about it in the French magazine *Le Globe*. According to Wicker, Jean de Breteuil ("a son of an aristocratic French family") and Marianne Faithfull ("a former friend of Mick Jagger's") took the body back to the apartment. See Wallace Fowlie, *Rimbaud and Jim Morrison: The Rebel As Poet* (Duke University Press, 1994), 95-96.

¹⁸ Hopkins' column for the *L.A. Free Press* was "Making It." He wrote for the newspaper in the late 1960s before becoming a writer for *Rolling Stone*, which advertised for subscriptions in the *L.A. Free Press*.

killed Morrison by accident at their apartment. Morrison may have inhaled the several lines of a white substance she had placed on the table for herself because he believed it was cocaine, or perhaps he knew it was heroin and, as the result of his depression, he took the opportunity to commit suicide.¹⁹

Dylan Jones's *Jim Morrison: Dark Star* provides many photographs of Morrison's grave and the people who visit it at Père-Lachaise.²⁰ The graffiti on Morrison's grave and those that surround it ranges from admiration to contempt and to random messages that seem meaningless or without connection to Morrison. Katherine Sutherland observes,

note the graffiti, for instance: a perfectly post-modern palimpsest of spray paint over spray paint, practically begging for playful deconstruction. Check the tombstone itself, where the bust of Jim Morrison, first grotesquely painted, then finally stolen, sits permanently under erasure.²¹

The graffiti helps tourists find his grave. The place for just meeting people, partying, or to worship Morrison is policed and cleaned up constantly.

Why do people go to his grave? Some go because they do not believe he is there or is because they know it is his final resting place and they wish to pay their respects. Montmartre and Lourdes remain popular sites in France; unlike these places that attract tourists and the devout to the Sacré Coeur or to the grotto (places to be in closer contact with God or to be healed as well as to visit), tourists and the devout travel to Morrison's grave to meet, party, drink alcohol, use drugs, and vandalize the cemetery. Some go to find a continuation of The Doors' dark aesthetic, to experience that hour of magic, to break into one of the worlds Morrison created, or to put an end to it. Others go to see if they could find him and talk to his ghost. Morrison's cult continues today, through pilgrimages to his grave (a major tourist attraction in Paris), Oliver Stone's film *The Doors* (1991), videos on *YouTube.com*, songwriting and recordings of surviving members of The Doors (especially Manzarek), rediscoveries of recordings, and new discoveries of unreleased recordings, lost films, and unpublished manuscripts of Morrison's poetry.

¹⁹ Hopkins, *The Lizard King*, 172-73.

²⁰ See Dylan Jones, *Jim Morrison, Dark Star* (New York: Viking Studio Books, 1990).

²¹ Katherine Sutherland, "Jim Morrison's Grave," in *Cemeteries & Spaces of Death: Inquiries into Their Meaning*, ed. Darnetta Bell and Kevin Bongiorno (Riverside, Calif.: Xenos Books, 1993), 3.

Playing with Jim Playing with Us

Morrison's creative output—on his own and with The Doors—leads to questions about his transformation from legend to mythical character and his interactions with the local counterculture of his time.²² Morrison simultaneously loved and hated his transformation: the Changeling identified himself as the Lizard King in his song “Not to Touch the Earth” (a song that was extracted from the longer recording “Celebration of the Lizard” on the album *Waiting for the Sun*); he soon discovered he could do anything but shed this mythical persona. Most of the public equated him onstage and offstage with the dark aesthetics or world of the Doors. But Morrison was also playing with the public's interpretation of him, manipulating the media, aligning his poetry by with the aesthetics of beat writers, and experimenting with theatrical presentations inspired by Antonin Artaud and Bertolt Brecht in ways that were intended to break through the boundaries of audience, artist, and present experience. Successful at breaking through the boundaries, Morrison commenced his own game of interpretation by writing poems and songs, and composing music. He interacted with everyone who was witnessing, watching, and listening to him. Morrison required the audience to play the game, to become part of the performance with few boundaries between them and the performers (some would suggest there were no boundaries, but he distinguished himself as the shaman) as the band's music possessed transformative powers and ethereal connections. He continuously found ways to describe the game differently. For example, the lines in poems that refer to “the Game” permeate the first part of his first book of published poems, *The Lords and the New Creatures* (published in 1969). In the opening poem he explains that we live in a city that forms a circle, a “Game” that consists of “a ring of death with sex at its center,” so that “when play dies it becomes the Game,” and “all games contain the idea of death.”²³ In his *Los Angeles Free Press* interview with Bob Chorush, he makes it clear that his game includes “self image propagation” and “manipulating publicity” or the media.²⁴

²² Here, legend is distinguished from myth: legend is a historical story that is generally based on the truth; myth is also a historical story, but it is generally based on misrepresentations of the truth and stretches of the imagination (for example, exaggeration).

²³ Jim Morrison, *The Lords and the New Creatures* (Venice, Calif.: James Douglas Morrison, 1969; repr., New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 12–14.

²⁴ Bob Chorush, “An Interview with Jim Morrison: The Lizard King Reforms: Taking the Snake and Wearing It,” *Los Angeles Free Press*, 15 January 1971, 24. In his Preface (written in 1995), Dave DiMartino's comment about The Doors, without singling out Morrison, echoes what many have remarked about the band: “I remain astounded that my very first favorite band in the world continues to mean anything to anyone three decades later.” Chuck Crisafulli, *The Doors: When the Music's Over: The Stories Behind Every Song*, ed. Dave DiMartino (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2000), 8.

This game of interpretation was of course nested in a larger game of interpretation—in which Morrison became the object of different players, writers, filmmakers, and the media. Morrison’s invitation to experience the performance as members of a new, dark, and sensual world had its limits or rules, which became violated by those who misunderstood the nature of the performances and by those who became convinced he was his personae long after the performances were over and long after his death. The interpretation games of the writers, filmmakers, and the media also had limits and rules. Sometimes their role was to explain what happened at a Doors concert or in a studio. Those who forgot their roles as sound recording critics or stretched the truth about Morrison with the aim to captivate readers and audiences (either to criticize or to encourage their readers to buy books, novels, or videos) violated these rules. Frequently writers give Morrison a “passional” reading, to use Umberto Eco’s term for those who read by reactions inspired by love or hatred.²⁵ Both games of interpretation achieve what Eco calls metatextual status:

When [texts] outline the very contradictoriness of the act of writing in itself, they reach a metatextual status, that is, they speak of their own internal and radical openness.²⁶

There were contradictory outcomes from writing these poems and songs; Morrison and The Doors claimed they knew about the interpretive possibilities of their creative output. At the same time The Doors and Morrison himself were writing and creating projects positioning Morrison as the focus of attention, tapping into the desires of Doors fans, and permeating boundaries between art and real life; they (especially Morrison) were also inciting the disapproval of authority figures, other performers, and writers. All this raises a few questions: Do these works about Morrison have any real direction? On a cultural level, why should scholars care? The critics were often very aware of how their writings positioned themselves as authors. The result of their writings, legend and myth construction, appears like a web: The authors affirm the intense dislike for Morrison and The Doors, or show their academic coolness through announcing their indifference to them, or demonstrate their love of the music and daring energy of Morrison and the band. For various reasons, they revisit biographical details or perspectives on the band. Many writings by and about Morrison and The Doors, however, also reveal interactions (sometimes relationships) with the authors, the mainstream, and the counterculture. The players of this game, including Morrison himself, are

²⁵ These reactions often change over time. See Umberto Eco’s “Reply,” in Eco, Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler, and Christine Brooke-Rose, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 143.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 141.

obviously using his person, his works, and the music of The Doors to perpetuate legend or to construct myth. The question is, what are they trying to achieve?

Aims and Directions of this Study

Exploring Morrison's games of interpretation involve considering authenticity, representation, perception, and reception, as well as an in-depth analysis of and reflection on his aesthetics, which embraced the counterculture of the 1960s and his use of transcendence, the uncanny, and the ethereal. Underlying this study are a few important questions: Why do most of the works about Morrison and The Doors ignore the music itself? Is the lack of analysis and discourse about the songs significant? What devices are being used to single out Morrison? What are the limits of interpretation? Does the icon represent the thing that is being signified?

The literature about Jim Morrison and The Doors is strongly influenced and thus dominated by *Rolling Stone* and writers affiliated with the magazine. These writings are certainly essential resources for scholarship about The Doors. Jerry Hopkins' biography *No One Here Gets Out Alive* (with Danny Sugerman) and its follow-up biography *The Lizard King: The Essential Jim Morrison* are seminal works in respect to biographical details about Jim Morrison and the beginning and rise of The Doors, the origins of some of the songs, and media coverage.²⁷ Hopkins wrote for *The Los Angeles Free Press* before writing for *Rolling Stone*. He also interviewed Jim Morrison for *Rolling Stone* in 1969.²⁸ The Doors' number one fan, Jim Morrison's protégé, Danny Sugerman submitted writings to *Rolling Stone*, including a letter warning the magazine about revealing its politics in issues and an excerpt from his autobiography.²⁹ *Rolling Stone* writer Ben Fong-Torres was a colleague of Hopkins and interviewed Morrison for *Rolling Stone* in 1971. According to the dust jacket of his recent book, *The Doors by The Doors*, this was Morrison's final interview. Fong-Torres' book contains conversations and interviews with the

²⁷ According to Ben Fong-Torres, keyboardist Ray Manzarek did some "uncredited editing" for *No One Here*. See Ben Fong-Torres, *The Doors by The Doors*, with Forewords by Henry Rollins, Perry Farrell, and Chester Bennington (New York: Hyperion, 2006), 229. Hopkins had also written the Foreword to Patricia Butler's *Angels Dance and Angels Die: The Tragic Romance of Pamela and Jim Morrison* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998). He also wrote the Foreword to Danny Sugerman's *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, ed. Benjamin Edmonds (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1983).

²⁸ Jim Morrison, "Jim Morrison," interview (1969) by Jerry Hopkins; repr. In *The Rolling Stone Interviews: Talking with the Legends of Rock & Roll: 1967-1980*, ed. Peter Herbst, with an Introduction by Ben Fong-Torres (New York: St. Martin's Press/Rolling Stone Press, 1981, and in *Rolling Stone* (October 15, 1992): 42-43.

²⁹ See Danny Sugerman, letter under "More Letters," *Rolling Stone* (October 15, 1970): 46, and Sugerman, *Wonderland Avenue: Tales of Glamour and Excess* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1989). He was a friend to Hopkins and was responsible for getting Hopkins' biography *No One Here* published.

surviving members of the band.³⁰ Other writings in *Rolling Stone* include reviews about their recordings, news about The Doors, an obituary for Morrison by Fong–Torres, letters, articles about posthumous celebrations of anniversaries, and articles about peaks of revitalized interest in Jim Morrison, The Doors, and their music.³¹ Perspectives offered in these diverse writings range from the point of view of fans to knowledgeable popular music magazine writers, Doors experts, or close friends to members of the band. A few examples of sensitive writing about Morrison can be found in *Rolling Stone*: San Francisco Renaissance beat writer Michael McClure recalled Morrison’s desire and talent to become a poet and his approach to life as a bard, singing his poetry like a child who fails to perceive the difference between musical films and reality; Danny Sugerman’s excerpt from *Wonderland Avenue* explained to readers how Jim Morrison befriended and mentored the young Sugerman, instilling him with a love of literature and writing, as well as the desire to have his own dreams (not those of his parents) and dealing directly with some problems; Mikal Gilmore’s articles recalled the history of the band, their songs and musical inclinations, biographical details about Morrison’s life and death, and issues about Morrison’s public image and drunkenness. Despite these efforts in *Rolling Stone* to give intimate details about Morrison as a learned person and beloved mentor, who wanted more than anything else to become best known for his poems, the passionate readings leave the strongest and most lasting impressions. *Rolling Stone* is certainly not unique for stimulating passionate

³⁰ Fong–Torres’ *The Doors by The Doors*, a valuable source of quotations by members of the band, as well as people who worked with them and knew them, also seems to be designed as a coffee table book with its large glossy photographs and print. See also Jim Morrison, “Jim Morrison’s Got the Blues,” interview by Ben Fong–Torres, *Rolling Stone* (March 4, 1971): 22.

³¹ The following is a list of just a few examples that appeared in *Rolling Stone*: Jan Hodenfield with Andrew Bailey and Eithne O’Sullivan, “Wheeling and Dealing on the Isle of Wight,” *Rolling Stone* (October 1, 1970): 14–16; Gloria Vanjak, “Absolutely Live, *Doors*,” under “Records,” *Rolling Stone* (October 1, 1970): 44; Gloria Vanjak, “State of Florida vs. Jim Morrison,” *Rolling Stone* (October 1, 1970): 12; Gregg Thomas Weinlein, under “Correspondence, Love Letters, & Advice,” *Rolling Stone* (October 29, 1970): 3; Anon., “Michael McClure Recalls an Old Friend,” *Rolling Stone* (August 5, 1971): 40–41; Ben Fong–Torres, “James Douglas Morrison, Poet: Dead at 27,” *Rolling Stone* (August 5, 1971): 1 and 34–39; Danny Sugerman, “No One Here Gets Out Alive: Jim Morrison—The Fall of the Lizard King,” *Rolling Stone* (May 29, 1980): 47–50; Steve Pond, “Jim Morrison’s Spirit Keeps The Doors Alive,” *Rolling Stone* (November 27, 1980): page numbers unavailable; Rosemary Breslin, “Jim Morrison, 1981: Renew My Subscription to the Resurrection,” *Rolling Stone* (September 17, 1981): 31–32, 34, and 96; Jerry Hopkins, “Jim Morrison is Alive and Well and All Over the Place,” *Rolling Stone* (September 17, 1981): 33; Paul Williams, founder of *Crawdaddy!*, “Music Without the Myth,” *Rolling Stone* (September 17, 1981): 34; Michael Goldberg, “New Jim Morrison Writings Discovered,” under “Music: The News,” *Rolling Stone* (January 29, 1987): 11 and 53; Anon., “The Lost Writings of Jim Morrison,” *Rolling Stone* (October 6, 1988): 69–70 (the following page numbers are unavailable); Danny Sugerman, “The Night the Lizard King Came to Dinner,” *Rolling Stone* (February 23, 1989): 31–32 and 38; Mikal Gilmore, “The Legacy of Jim Morrison and The Doors,” *Rolling Stone* (April 4, 1991): 30–34 and 62; Mikal Gilmore, “The Unforgettable Fire,” *Rolling Stone* (August 30, 2001): 52–54, 56, 59–60, and 136–38; and Robert Love, “Still Hot, Still Sexy, Still Dead,” under “Letter from the Editor,” *Rolling Stone* (August 30, 2001): page number unavailable.

readings of Jim Morrison. But because of its aims to appeal to its reading audience (the majority current day popular music lovers, whether or not they have musical knowledge) and to sell to a mass market, it appears that its articles deal overwhelmingly with Morrison's image as troublemaking singer, who may or may not be dead, whose issues with being "Lizard King," drunken poet, rail thin or bloated, make him a perpetually misunderstood artist.

So much attention has been given to the *Rolling Stone* and literature by and associated with the *Rolling Stone* writers that the entire body of literature about Jim Morrison could be perceived from the views presented in these publications alone. In other words, part of the literature can and has been understood to represent the whole. The *Rolling Stone* authors also called attention to their own writings by making them at times the main focus of their work. If the entire body of literature has more than one voice, why not pay attention to other writings? Why transpose a single voice of popular music criticism onto an orchestra of writings found in magazines, newspapers, and journals? Why ignore other voices when several important players can be identified and can offer other fascinating interpretations of Jim Morrison?³² This study therefore focuses on writings about Jim Morrison that appeared in *The Los Angeles Free Press*, *Down Beat*, and *The Miami Herald*.³³ These three publications represent a cross section of perspectives from the underground, the vast and diverse field of music criticism, the media, and public opinion. Exploring these writings lead to understanding better the music of The Doors, problems with interpreting Morrison's public image, what Morrison himself thought about his own songs, all within stratified musical, social, political, and emotional contexts of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It considers the critic's role and function in reviews, interviews, and articles about Morrison and the outcome of these publications. It also offers

³² These questions, to some extent, are related to Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas about false approaches to analyzing a novel, especially the following, which is a translation from the Russian and *not* from the source itself. One of my questions is a play on Bakhtin's question about mapping the novel as a whole onto one of its "subordinated stylistic unities":

The traditional scholar bypasses the basic distinctive feature of the novel as a genre; he substitutes for it another object of study, and instead of novelistic style s/he actually analyzes something completely different. S/he transposes a symphonic (orchestrated) theme on to the piano keyboard.

We notice two such types of substitutions: in the first type, an analysis of novelistic style is replaced by a description of the language of a given novelist (or at best of the "languages" of a given novel); in the second type, one of the subordinated styles is isolated and analyzed as if it were the style of the whole.

Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 1 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 263.

³³ I am concurrently working on a book manuscript will have a much broader approach and will also include other writings found in magazines newspapers, journals, biographies, and fiction, as well as films and videos, Doors' paraphernalia, Morrison's own writings, and sound recordings.

context for Morrison's and The Doors' aesthetics as well as their approaches and interactions to those viewing, listening to, and writing about them. Chapter 2 will explore Morrison's relationship with *The Los Angeles Free Press*, the largest circulating underground newspaper in the U.S., and how the writings reveal deep connections between Morrison's aesthetics and the underground, especially contemporary beat writers who lived in Venice West. It will offer analyses of "My Eyes Have Seen You," "Soul Kitchen," and "Hyacinth House" in context of the *L.A. Free Press* articles and reviews and will also consider, among other songs, "Light My Fire," "Unknown Soldier," and "The End." Chapter 3 discusses Morrison's interview that appeared in *Down Beat* and his attitude towards the publication in comparison to the popular music press. It will focus on The Doors' interest in the blues and jazz and how they incorporated both genres in their music. It will consider "Tell All the People," "Touch Me" and "The Alabama Song," as well as The Doors' many blues performances (for instance, "Back Door Man" and "Been Down So Long"). Chapter 4 investigates *The Miami Herald's* coverage of Morrison's infamous Miami concert, the response of the Miami community and nation found in writings that appeared in the newspaper, news about decency rallies that followed as a reaction against the Miami concert and groups like the Doors, and reports about the ensuing charges against Morrison and his trial. It will explore not only the work of staff writers and reporters for *The Miami Herald*, but also the public's letters to the newspaper. The negative impact of these writings on The Doors' concert performances have been addressed before in the literature, but not to the extent presented here. These writings and the entire experience of Miami influence just one kind of listening of their final album *L.A. Woman*. Songs like "L.A. Woman" and "Riders On the Storm" may possibly suggest that The Doors' recording output went full circle: the first a celebration of a city so far away from Miami; the last a tribute to those unlikely protagonists who persevere in the darkness of the present and continue to travel, through the rain and down the road, to see what lies ahead.

CHAPTER 2

PERSPECTIVES ON JIM MORRISON FROM THE UNDERGROUND: JIM MORRISON AND THE *LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS*

Hippie poets, *Holy Barbarians*, Venice West Café, muddy canals, open sewers, the colonnades, free jazz, bongo ordinances: during the late 1960s, Venice, California was becoming a “slum by the sea,” Los Angeles’ dying beatnik community—turned into shanty town. *The Los Angeles Free Press*, the most widely circulated underground newspaper in the history of journalism, offered many glimpses into the bohemian life there.³⁴ This era coincided with Jim Morrison’s songwriting days and his transformation into the nomadic rock star who fronted The Doors. There has been a steady stream of biographies of Morrison, some more reliable than others, but none has surveyed the *L.A. Free Press* literature or considered its impact on Morrison and viewpoints of him during life and after his

³⁴ The newspaper began on 23 May 1964, first as a broadsheet called the *Faire Free Press* for the Southern California Renaissance Faire, and then as *The Los Angeles Free Press* with its first issue appearing on 25 May 1964. It became a weekly underground newspaper by 1965. Along with other underground newspapers like the *San Francisco Oracle*, *The East Village Other (EVO)*, the *Chicago Seed*, and the *Berkeley Barb*, the *L.A. Free Press* was a founding member of the Underground Press Syndicate (the UPS, which was later called the Alternative Press Syndicate, the APS), which began in 1967. At the time, the newspaper had subscribers, but could also be found for sale in newspaper racks or bins on street corners as well as through people holding a certain number for sale chanting “don’t be a creep, buy a *Freep!*” (the newspaper’s nickname) or handed out for free. The newspapers usually cost about ten cents per issue. In the 1960s and 1970s, it was generally easy to obtain free copies of the *L.A. Free Press*. Copies were available at various establishments in the L.A. area (for example, at the Venice West Café, the Pleasure Dome in L.A., Art’s Newsstand and the Sandal Maker in Westwood (in the UCLA vicinity), Papa Bach Bookstore in Santa Monica, and the Valley Peace Center in Sherman Oaks). A couple places in San Francisco also sold the *Freep* (the Blue Unicorn Coffee House and the Bookstore of City Lights Booksellers and Publishers—the latter the major publisher of beat writings, the mecca of the San Francisco Renaissance poets, co-founded and co-owned by beat writer Lawrence Ferlinghetti). At times, issues were also resold for up to a dollar and they would somehow be made available next to vending machines of the *Los Angeles Times* and (later) *The Evening Outlook*. Michael Pearce, who worked for the *L.A. Free Press* between 1966 and 1970 recalled (in technological terms that could be understood today) how this underground newspaper and others like it emerged during this time, and gives one reason for how the *L.A. Free Press* was able to be produced regularly:

The *Freep*, and other undergrounds, existed through the new-generation typesetting and offset printing, which had gotten comparatively cheaper and easier to use, much as the early Macs made personal typesetting possible. Gary Taylor, the paper’s regular typesetter, was able to type 160 words per minute on the Freiden; he was able to run the tape out of the puncher on one machine, across the floor and into the second machine, which itself typed at 160 words per minute.

Michael Pearce, “About Paul Eberle,” *Pearce’s Perch*, http://www.moonmac.com/About_Paul.html (accessed 4 October 2007), 1. The *L.A. Free Press* also received nationwide (and perhaps international) advertisement in the 1968 film *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas*, when the main character (starring Peter Sellers), a 35-year old Los Angeles lawyer (temporarily for love) dropped out and turned into a hippie, found himself selling the newspaper on a street corner. It ceased publication with its last issue appearing on 23 April 1978, but revitalized itself with its 13 September 2005 issue. The *L.A. Free Press* is now available in an online version at <http://www.losangelesfreepress.com>. Its front page appearance resembles the earliest issues of the 1960s. Defining itself today as “the true alternative to corporate controlled media,” it remains inspired by its activities and writings of its formative years.

death. How did the *L.A. Free Press* contribute to Morrison's images, legends, and myths? This chapter will explore the relationship and exchanges between Morrison and the *L.A. Free Press*, examining local perspectives on Morrison's milieu, which is to say the counterculture of Los Angeles, the city he loved.

In their biography *No One Here Gets Out Alive* music journalist Jerry Hopkins and Morrison's protégé Danny Sugerman referred to several *L.A. Free Press* articles and reviews.³⁵ Hopkins wrote for the *L.A. Free Press* and later became a correspondent for *Rolling Stone* magazine. Sugerman was an assistant in The Doors' publicity office; he later became their promoter and, after Morrison's death in 1971, keyboardist Ray Manzarek's manager. His book *The Doors: The Illustrated History* included transcriptions of *L.A. Free Press* reviews and interviews.³⁶ In his autobiography *Wonderland Avenue: Tales of Glamour and Excess* Sugerman explained that *L.A. Free Press* editor John Carpenter was Morrison's friend.³⁷ Hopkins' biography *The Lizard King: The Essential Jim Morrison*, which quoted passages from *No One Here Gets Out Alive* and two *L.A. Free Press* interviews, mentioned Morrison's interactions with the author and editor, writer, and local radio show host John Carpenter. Both worked for the *L.A. Free Press*.³⁸

Unlike other publications that gave attention to The Doors like *Rolling Stone*, *Crawdaddy!*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, the *L.A. Free Press* chronicled their countercultural contexts, influences, and confrontations with the main stream. It gave many accounts of Doors concerts and concert advertisements, as well as criticism, reviews, and interviews; it also published poems, leftist views of news, and columns about politics, as well as opinions about art, literature, music, and theatre, and advertisements for events that appear to have had a significant influence on Morrison's artistic and literary interests, aesthetics, and creative output.

³⁵ Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugerman, *No One Here Gets Out Alive* (New York: Warner Books, 1980), and rev. ed. (New York and Boston: Warner Books, 1995).

³⁶ Danny Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, ed. Benjamin Edmonds, with a Foreword by Jerry Hopkins (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1983).

³⁷ Danny Sugerman, *Wonderland Avenue: Tales of Glamour and Excess* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1989), 313.

³⁸ Hopkins' biography was published in 1992, a year after Stone's film. Though their extensive biography includes many *L.A. Free Press* articles and reviews and it is clear they are referring to materials found in the newspaper, James Riordan and Jerry Prochnicky almost never actually cite the *L.A. Free Press*. This practice is curious. See *Break on Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991).

Reviews of Sound Recordings and Concerts in *The L.A. Free Press*

Following the success of the first *Doors* album (released in January 1967), Mike Pearce gave a mostly favorable review of *Strange Days*, their second album (released in November 1967). The review's headline was "New Doors Album 'Incredible.'" Pearce praised every song except "When the Music's Over." He described the album's cover as a "visual trip": its front cover with a picture of circus performers on the street, perhaps reminiscent of the scene one could find on any given day at Venice's boardwalk or at Muscle Beach; its back with all the words to the songs. His parting shot: "this is an album to get stoned to."³⁹

In his regular column, "Wailing," Nat Freedland, who also wrote for the *New York Herald-Tribune* and *Billboard*, among others, and later wrote *The Occult Explosion*, remarked that "The Doors are pretentious as hell on records." In this column he sarcastically criticized The Doors and their third album *Waiting for the Sun*:

[I] call [it] a pretty satisfying Doors effort. It seems to be their decadence approach to goodtime music album, which is a pretty freaky combo. Of course, Manzarek's organ sound is as stiff as ever, most of their tunes are the same monotony and Jim Morrison can't let us get away without his favorite avant-garde rhyme of the snake by the lake. Maybe next time the lake snake will bake a cake for the boys to take and screw their mothers . . . eeeaaagh. Somehow it's not the same unless you can see Morrison jumping off the platform to rape his microphone.⁴⁰

Though many critics disliked their third effort, Freedland's review stood out as the most amusing and colorful one of the time. Less than a year after Morrison's death, the three remaining Doors released the album *Other Voices*. Christopher van Ness observed that they no longer quite sound like The Doors even though their album showed promise. Morrison was missing.⁴¹

Gene Youngblood wrote his favorable review of *Strange Days* just after making love to their music and realizing its meaning. Youngblood would later become Associate Editor for the *L.A. Free Press*, but today he best known for his book *Expanded Cinema*, which became an essential source about the aesthetics of film and 1960s counterculture.⁴² In "Doors Reaching for Outer Limits of Inner Space" he expounded on their combination of music and theatre, referring accurately to Morrison's theatrical influences, which included Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty*. He took pleasure in the group's record label Elektra:

³⁹ Mike Pearce, "New Doors Album 'Incredible,'" *L.A. Free Press*, 10 November 1967, 10.

⁴⁰ Nat Freedland, "Wailing," *L.A. Free Press*, 30 August 1968, 30.

⁴¹ Chris van Ness, "The Doors After Morrison," *L.A. Free Press*, 26 November 1971, 5.

⁴² See Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema*, with an introduction by Buckminster Fuller (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970).

the music of The Doors is electric both in fact and fantasy: it doesn't soothe, it assaults; it doesn't encourage, it intimidates; it doesn't touch the heart, it tickles the prostate. The Beatles and The Stones are for blowing your mind; The Doors are for afterwards, when your mind is already gone. . . .⁴³

Under the headline, "Doors can Provide Instant Enlightenment through Sex," he explored their songs, quoted them like a well-versed convert, compared their "ominous messages" to Sibelius's "The Swan of Tuonela," and described their sound as "music of outrage," "electric without ostentation," and "avant-garde in content if not technique"⁴⁴:

The music of The Doors is more surreal than psychedelic. It is more anguish than acid. More than rock, it is ritual—the ritual of psychic–sexual exorcism. The Doors are the warlocks of pop culture. The agonized grunts and screams that fly from Jim Morrison's angelic mouth are indeed as enigmatic as the idea of a butterfly screaming. The Doors are saying there are screams we don't hear, and they're trying to give them shape. Morrison IS an angel: an exterminating angel. He and The Doors are a demonic and beautiful miracle that has risen like shrieking Phoenix from the burning bush of the new music.⁴⁵

In *No One Here Gets Out Alive* Hopkins and Sugerman noted that The Doors read Youngblood's review and were thrilled that he understood them and compared them to the Beatles and the Stones. They enjoyed his descriptions of their music, Morrison's role, and his epiphany.⁴⁶

Eileen Kaufman, who was married to Bob Kaufman, a San Francisco beat poet inspired by bebop, wrote a review of a Doors concert at the Whiskey A GoGo ("the Whiskey") in West Hollywood. It was likely their final Whiskey concert, and, according to Greg Shaw's *The Doors: On the Road*, they appeared with either The Byrds or the Buffalo Springfield—both bands had already achieved huge success.⁴⁷ Kaufman worked as a music critic for the *L.A. Free Press* and wrote about pop and jazz festivals, Janis Joplin, and Jimi Hendrix. She praised Morrison's

⁴³ Gene Youngblood, "Doors Reaching for Outer Limits of Inner Space," *L.A. Free Press*, 1 December 1967, 6. He referred to Sibelius' Op. 22, no. 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁶ Hopkins and Sugerman, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, rev. ed., 164–165. In 1968 Youngblood ranked The Doors first in his list of best American rock groups. Gene Youngblood, "Rock," *Zero*, in the *L.A. Free Press*, 10 May 1968, 41. But just above his ranking, Youngblood's review of Love's *Forever Changes* mentioned that nobody (including the Doors) has texts as "evocative, surrealistic, and haunting." He thought of the band's Arthur Lee as being in the "same league with Dylan, Lennon and McCartney." *Ibid.*, 41. In 1967, on the original Elektra Records biography, Morrison listed Love with the Beach Boys and the Kinks as his "favorite singing groups." Reproduced in Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, 9. Early in their career, in their days performing on Sunset Strip, The Doors aspired to be as successful as Love. By 1966 The Doors were the opening band for Love at their shows at the Whiskey A GoGo. See Chuck Crisafulli, *The Doors: When the Music's Over: The Stories Behind Every Song*, ed. Dave DiMartino (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2000), 17. According to Hopkins, Love was "then the most popular 'underground' band in Los Angeles." Hopkins and Sugerman, *No One Here*, 81.

⁴⁷ Greg Shaw, *The Doors: On the Road* (London: Omnibus Press, 1997), 38.

magnetism and predicted his success as a singer who was “going to flip the kids and psyche out of all his listeners,” especially his live audiences.⁴⁸ She described his onstage appearance and recognized him as a poet who improvised his words and used his body in performances:

He actually plays jazz with his voice by this sort of improvisation. Then too, Jim’s far out appearance, his strangeness, his haunting demeanor on stage and his wild body movements appropriate to a song’s lyrics are all unique individual qualities.⁴⁹

Harvey Perr’s review of The Doors’ Hollywood Bowl concert was an excellent example of Morrison’s seeing music as an entire performance, or what he called “mystique.” Perr was a playwright and worked as a publicist for Elektra. He criticized The Doors for their “superficial” contact with the audience that night and blamed the venue’s stage for distancing the audience (“even the *Oresteia* could get lost up there”). Morrison did not do anything exciting and unpredictable. He spent the show singing:

Everything went smoothly, too smoothly. And restlessness set in. And the impact of “Light My Fire” (despite the random sparklers that were lit and thrown) or “The [Unknown] Soldier” or “When the Music is Over” was dissipated, because we weren’t listening to words of death and passion and love and violence; we were spectators at a sport in which nothing of crucial significance was affecting our existence. It was a good show and nothing more. The mystique had turned mundane.⁵⁰

Of course, not all reviews of Doors’ concerts had meaningful information to impart. In *Zero*, the monthly arts supplement to the *L.A. Free Press*, columnist Liza Williams, who was on the periphery of the San Francisco beat scene, gave a one-sentence-per-paragraph silly description of her Doors concert experience in 1968 at the Los Angeles Forum. Williams focused on Morrison’s black leather pants—while invoking Federico Garcia Lorca’s 1935 poem about tragic death at a bull ring.⁵¹ Williams briefly described their performances of “The End” and “Light My Fire.” During these concerts the performers as well as the audience would light sparklers for “Light My

⁴⁸ Eileen Kaufman, “Doors Set Night on Fire,” *L.A. Free Press*, 26 May 1967, 16. Her other writings about music appeared in *Billboard* magazine, *Music World Countdown*, and the *Los Angeles Oracle*.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁰ Harvey Perr, “At the Bowl,” *Zero*, in the *L.A. Free Press*, 19 July 1968, 39. The review mistakenly printed “Universal Soldier” instead of “Unknown Soldier” (the song “Universal Mind” is a similar title to “Universal Soldier”).

⁵¹ Liza Williams, “Liza Meets *infante terrible*,” *Zero*, in the *L.A. Free Press*, 20 December 1968, 27. The poem was “Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias.”

Fire.” She focused on his play of childlike innocence and the inner child of everyone at the concert, explaining how we all want to “play with the forbidden matches . . . and burn the bed and the curtains and mummy and daddy and everything. . . .” She called Morrison “a baby bullfighter” and “the ultimate Barbie doll. . . .”⁵²

John Carpenter wrote a more serious column that explained why the Forum concert was disappointing, even though The Doors’ “recorded sound [was] more interesting, more creative than ninety percent of the groups [of the day]”⁵³:

They didn’t get to see “The Lizard King, I can do everything” take off all his clothes, start a revolution or mouth their sentiments towards authority. All they got to see were a group of pretty smart college kids put them on.⁵⁴

Like Perr, Carpenter criticized the audience, describing them as the “poor creeps” who wanted Morrison to do something outrageous. According to Carpenter, Morrison’s testing the audience by throwing cigarette butts at them or “the stick the maracas down into the crotch and then throw them to the fans number” did not incite the crowd to riot.⁵⁵

Impressions and Interviews

In *Zero* Paul Eberle interviewed Tiny Tim (1932–1996), a baritone singer and entertainer best known for his extremely high falsetto rendition, with ukulele, of “Tip Toe Through the Tulips.” Eberle, with his wife Shirley, eventually became infamous in the 1970s as prolific pornography publishers: their publications included *Finger* in the 1970s, *The Adventures of Mrs. Pussycat* (1972, a children’s book), and in the 1980s they edited *L.A. Star*, a soft-core pornography magazine.⁵⁶ In the interview, Tiny demonstrated his knowledge of 1920s and 1930s vaudeville, movie, and crooner’s songs and spoke about his encounter with Morrison. When asked about “new acid

⁵² *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵³ John Carpenter, *Carpenter Column*, in the *L.A. Free Press, Zero*, 20 December 1968, 30.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁶ Paul Eberle worked as a staff writer for the *Los Angeles Free Press* into the 1970s, when he left with other writers over the “acrimony toward the management of the paper; mostly [editor] Art Kunkin.” See Michael Pearce, “About Paul Eberle,” 1. As members of the liberal underground themselves, the Eberles promoted free sexuality. They simultaneously received additional notoriety and admiration for their books *The Politics of Child Abuse* (Secaucus, N.J.: L. Stuart, 1986), and *The Abuse of Innocence: The McMartin Preschool Trial* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1993), in which they represent themselves as experts in the pornography industry with specialized knowledge about the involvement of, who Pearce calls, “court–lawyer–children’s services agencies and other participants.” Both were accused themselves of including child pornography in *Finger*. Their children’s book was *The Adventures of Mrs. Pussycat*, ill. Anthony De Rosa (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice–Hall, 1972). Their two

rock songs” and if he thought their melodic content was as touching as these earlier songs, Tiny replied he could find many great songs there “despite those terrible drugs.” He then picked up his ukulele and sang “Come on Baby, Light My Fire.”⁵⁷ Tiny added that “It’s a great tune because it has a lovely melody, and it has lovely, touching words.”⁵⁸

John Carpenter’s interview of Morrison appeared in *Zero* less than a month later. Hopkins described Carpenter as “a burly son of a longshoreman from San Francisco and a hard-drinking music writer for the *L.A. Free Press*, a weekly newspaper dedicated to the arts and unrest.”⁵⁹ The interview began at 11:30 in the morning at the Hyatt Continental Hotel (also known as the Continental Hyatt House, located in West Hollywood) and ended after midnight at a topless bar.⁶⁰ He asked Morrison what he thought about albums as art forms. Morrison, an avid reader equally passionate about films, gave a surprising answer: albums had replaced books and movies. He also showed an understanding of albums as material culture and people’s tendency to stockpile them:

books discussed the increased number of what they believed were abuses of power by the government, unfair charges of child sexual abuse in the U.S., and the stigma people faced (exemplified by those in the McMartin Preschool case in southern California that made national news) as they always appeared to be guilty before proven innocent. The last mentioned book here received praise by famous defense attorney and Professor of Law Alan Dershowitz. Paul Eberle also wrote about road rage, drive-by shootings, and other kinds of violence involving driving cars in his book *Terror on the Highway: Rage on America’s Roads* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2006).

⁵⁷ Paul Eberle, “The Adventures of Tiny Tim,” interview of Tiny Tim, *Zero*, in the *L.A. Free Press*, 21 June 1968, 26.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 26. Tiny continued commenting about his encounter with Jim Morrison and about another Doors song, “And Mr. Morrison—we were working together at ‘The Scene’ in New York, for one month last year. Oh, what a thrill that was. In fact, Mr. Morrison wanted to give me a song called ‘People are Strange,’ that he wanted me to do. He was leaving and I didn’t have a chance to do that. It was a lovely melody, that one.” See *ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁹ Jerry Hopkins, *The Lizard King: The Essential Jim Morrison*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1992, 96. Carpenter credited Morrison for The Doors’ “rapid and wide acceptance following the acclaim of their first album.” See John Carpenter, “Mama Cass is Back. . .,” in the “Carpenter Column,” *L.A. Free Press*, 27 September 1968, 30.

⁶⁰ Morrison was drunk during the interview. Years later Carpenter explained to Hopkins that when they saw the transcript, Morrison’s wife Pamela Courson “went through rambling thoughts of his which [Carpenter] thought showed him at his drunken best, and got the spirit of the interview over.” See Hopkins, *The Lizard King*, 97. Later he mentioned that the interview “survived her editing, revealing Jim’s robust delight in life.” The *L.A. Free Press* article, not a reproduction of the original transcription, appeared in this book. See *ibid.*, 203–209. Hopkins also discussed Carpenter’s interaction with Morrison, who was one of his guests on his KRLA radio show. The records he selected to play on the show included Howlin’ Wolf and Muddy Waters. See *ibid.*, 97–98.

[An album is] more influential than any art form going. Everybody digs them. They've got about forty of them in their houses and some of them you listen to fifty times, like the Stones' albums or Dylan's. . . .

You measure your progress mentally by your records, like when you were really young what you had then. Harry Belafonte, you know, Calypso, Fats Domino, Elvis Presley.⁶¹

He recalled writing poems while living in Venice in the mid 1960s and explained the creative process of his songwriting:

I'd have to make up words as fast as I could in order to hold onto the melody—you know a lot of people don't know it, but I write a lot of the melodies, too—later, all that would be left would be the words 'cause I couldn't hold on to them. The words were left in a sort of vague idea. In those days when I heard a song, I heard it as an entire performance. Taking place, you know, with the audience, the band and the singer. Everything. It was kind of like a prediction of the future. It was all there.⁶²

Morrison prefigured the use of sound recording “cartoons,” brief moments of music and poetry between tracks, when he mentioned that he wanted to insert poetry between the cuts of the *Strange Days* album. He eventually decided against it.⁶³

After his observations about the dancers at the topless bar, Morrison answered Carpenter's question about what he thinks about the press. His response rambled on from mentioning an incident of false reporting by a journalist who “did a number” on him to being careful and guarded concerning what is said in front of the press. He mentioned how he finds himself repeatedly telling the truth or the same perspective when he suddenly realizes that this kind of exchange is a game:

I think that there is a sub-world in which everybody is sleeping. This whole other world that everyone's trying to forget, but which we remember, immediately everybody knows it. But people love the game. The Game. They really dig it and nobody is supposed to admit it's a game. They won't. If they did, then they would ruin the game. . . .⁶⁴

Morrison would later address issues he had with the media again in his interview with Bob Chorus for the *L.A. Free Press*. His reference to the Game here could signify many ideas: his poems about the Game in the first part of his first book of published poems, *The Lords and the New Creatures* (published in 1969); the Game of perpetuating fame and selling writing, photographs, magazines, and newspapers; the Game that enables further layers of interpretation and encourages play.

⁶¹ John Carpenter, “Morrison,” Interview with Jim Morrison, *Zero*, in the *L.A. Free Press*, 19 July 1968, 38.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 38. Morrison explained, who wants to listen to some cat talking. The music is what's happening.”

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

Seven months before Morrison's death, during the recording of their final album *L.A. Woman*, Bob Chorush interviewed an old and weathered Morrison. The interview had photographs of Morrison with a beard, sitting at a table with a beer, or with a pen and paper, or walking casually down Santa Monica and Sunset Boulevards either by himself and with his interviewer. His aged and bearded appearance surprised Chorush, who was expecting "an alcoholic, drug crazed, megalomaniacal, slur-speeched rock star filmmaker in snakeskin pants and leather shirt carrying a celebrating lizard under his arm."⁶⁵ They discussed his film *Hiway* and his book of poems *The Lords and the New Creatures*, previous concerts, the obscenity charges against him related to their Miami concert, the trial that followed, and other busts. He explained that the busts were a misunderstanding:

The trouble with all these is that people I know, friends of mine, think it's funny and they like to believe it's true and they accept it; people that don't like me like to believe it because I'm the reincarnation of everything they consider evil. I get hung both ways.⁶⁶

Here, it appears that Morrison perceived that he was not always in control of what others thought about him—a very contradictory observation to his other comments about controlling the media. During the Miami trial, many of the witnesses were related to city officials. Richard Nixon congratulated students who organized what were called "decency rallies" against groups like The Doors. The largest such rally took place at the Orange Bowl with Jackie Gleason and Anita Bryant. Chorush asked if "they were out to get [him] or out to get the culture." Morrison believed it was the latter and he happened to be the one who "stepped into the hornet's nest."⁶⁷

Morrison also explained his talents of "self image propagation" and "manipulating publicity" or the media.⁶⁸ These talents were part of his own game:

I was very good at manipulating publicity with a few little phrases like 'erotic politics.' Having grown up on television and mass magazines, I knew instinctively what people would catch on to. So I dropped those little jewels here and there—seemingly very innocently—of course just calling signals.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Bob Chorush, "An Interview with Jim Morrison: The Lizard King Reforms: Taking the Snake and Wearing It," *L.A. Free Press*, 15 January 1971, 23.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

He observed that the albums have become increasingly socially conscious and that this progression was the result of exchanges with people they met on tours. He remarked that he was most interested in the blues, but he also liked jazz, and that he hoped the Doors musicians would record some instrumentals.

Aesthetics Intertwined: Jim Morrison and the Beats, Rising from the Underground

According to Hopkins and Sugerman, Morrison “liked the *L.A. Free Press* for its antiestablishment stands, and . . . he felt it was ‘part of everybody’s life. . . .’”⁷⁰ His name was included on the 1968 “Year–End Greetings” list of people remembered for helping “the *Free Press* survive and grow.” Other notable figures on the list were John Cage, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Tiny Tim, William S. Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, W. C. Fields, and Dennis Hopper.⁷¹

Although the epic song “The End” is an heir to poems with oedipal themes, it also echoed the anti–Vietnam sentiments of letters and articles as well as the angry poetry of beat and other writers that appeared in the *L.A. Free Press*. Like the California atmosphere of the time, hippie aesthetic often intertwined with beat aesthetic in The Doors music. Though some of these writings were published after the songs were written, Morrison continued improvising on his words at concerts, a practice that enabled him to polish his performance and to reflect and ruminate on these sentiments in a kind of ongoing interaction with other poets as well as his audience. The same can be observed with “When the Music’s Over,” “Unknown Soldier,” and “Not to Touch the Earth.” The last, an excerpt from *Celebration of the Lizard*, was influenced by William Blake and sitar music made popular by Ravi Shankar.⁷² These songs expressed the sentiments of an angry youth of the time and took after poets like Lawrence Lipton (1898–1975), author of the book *The Holy Barbarians* (published in 1959) and the epic poem “Bruno in Venice” (published posthumously in 1976), and Venice West Café owner John Haag (sometimes spelled “Haig”).⁷³

⁷⁰ Hopkins, and Sugerman, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, rev. ed., 338. They discussed Morrison’s opinions about concert riots and drinking.

⁷¹ *Los Angeles Free Press*, “Year–End Greetings from the *Free Press*,” *L.A. Free Press*, 28 December 1968, 12.

⁷² Chuck Crisafulli provided an explanation for the Shankar–inspired music in “The End”: “Robby Krieger was interested in Eastern music and philosophy—he studied sitar and sarod at UCLA and at Ravi Shankar’s Kinnara School. This influenced the music he created on songs like ‘The End.’” Crisafulli, *When the Music’s Over*, 37.

⁷³ Anon., “The Poets of the Angry Arts,” *L.A. Free Press*, 23 June 1967, 12–14. For example, from the section titled “Poets of the Angry Arts,” A. Frederic Franklin’s “The Calendar Girl Unsented” featured the mother as sexual object and was juxtaposed against an excerpt from “Johnny Got his Gun” with illustrations of skulls and a graveyard in the background.

Lipton's column "Radio Free America" was featured as a weekly column in the *L.A. Free Press*. He had another column, "The WASP" that appeared in earlier issues of the underground newspaper.⁷⁴ The final track on The Doors' album *L.A. Woman* was the song "The WASP (Texas Radio and the Big Beat)," based on an earlier poem, but the song's text is about Morrison's exposure to Texas radio.⁷⁵ Apparently, both Venice West poets were attracted to the name of the series of shortwave receivers. Shortwave radio stations were an alternative to commercially owned radio (not quite as underground as an underground newspaper, but certainly just as experimental, spontaneous, and unbound in its operation and ideas).

According to Clinton Robert Starr, Lipton acted as a kind of bohemian impresario, a "director of entertainment," for the Gas House, which was located on the "Promenade," on Ocean Front Walk in Venice.⁷⁶ Along with the Gas House, the other prominent coffeehouse was the Venice West Café, which was located on Dudley Avenue. Both were venues for local artists to create what were then called "performance happenings." These performances included poetry reading, art exhibits, and music (especially jazz and folk music). It is well known that Jim Morrison frequented these cafés and visited other important countercultural locales in Los Angeles; however, as expected, there is no document found that showed he read his own poetry or sang his songs in any of

⁷⁴ The headline appeared with the phrase "In Memoriam: Ambrose Bierce (1842–1914)." The column itself was slightly reminiscent (but in jest and apparently knowledgeable about Winchell's tabloid journalism) of his contemporary Walter Winchell's (1897–1972) gossip reports on the beat of the New York night scene both on the radio and in *The New York Evening Graphic* and *The New York Daily Mirror* between the 1930s and 1950s. Lipton's beat was Venice West, which included the beats. For example, see Lawrence Lipton, "The WASP," *L.A. Free Press*, 2 July 1965, page number unavailable. Winchell affiliated himself eventually with the political right while Lipton focused on the political left and very far left. Winchell, who retired in 1969 after working for *The Miami Herald* (he was replaced by Larry King), died a couple years later as a recluse living in the Ambassador Hotel in L.A.

⁷⁵ According to Crisafulli, the poem became one of the first 'straight' Morrison poems to become a part of The Doors' songs. It was part of a souvenir tour book dating from 1968. At concerts Morrison read the poem as a spoken introduction usually for "Love Me Two Times." Morrison's father, a young admiral in the Navy, had assignments in Florida, California, and New Mexico when Morrison was a boy:

Powerful signals from Mexico and Texas could be heard as far away as Chicago and, as the signal faded in and out, Jim was exposed to blues shows, R&B programs, strange rock and roll songs, ethnic music and many other exotic sounds that would never be made available on commercial pop stations. The odd mix of compelling music had a greater effect on Jim than all the Top 40 stations ever would and "The Wasp" was the eventual result.

See Crisafulli, *When the Music's Over* 133–34. The poem was later included as one of the *Notebook Poems* in Jim Morrison, *The American Night: The Writings of Jim Morrison*, vol. 2 (New York: Villard Books, 1990), 127.

⁷⁶ Clinton Robert Starr, "Bohemian Romance: The Beat Generation and Urban Countercultures in the United States During the Late 1950s and Early 1960s" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2005), 203.

these places. Programs for performance happenings, by the nature of the events being happenings, generally did not exist.⁷⁷ In his biography, and more recently in an interview that appeared in *The Argonaut*, drummer John Densmore briefly mentioned going to the Venice West Café with Jim Morrison.⁷⁸ In the *L.A. Free Press*, the Venice West Café frequently advertised that it was open “from dusk to dawn every night.” Like Sugerma, Densmore claimed Morrison was a mentor to him:

“When we were completely unknown, Jim Morrison and I would drive to the Venice West Café to hang out. We were amazed at the fact that, years ago, people like Allen Ginsberg had read there.”

At the time, the Venice Boardwalk was “completely deserted” and Venice resembled a wasteland, says Densmore. The landscape provided just the sublime setting The Doors needed to make their mystically-coated rock.⁷⁹

Densmore and Jim Morrison’s Venice was a slum by the sea that was still considered home to serious writers and artists, according to the *L.A. Free Press*. Starr described Venice, its coffeehouses, and their role in the Los Angeles counterculture (it “fostered artistic creativity and encouraged nonconformity) as emerging in the late 1950s.⁸⁰ He stressed that Venice was not the only town with places and spaces that fostered bohemian lifestyles and creative works. It appears from his description that owners and managers of the Venice coffeehouses preferred to maintain and encourage the town’s shabby-chic atmosphere:

Venice was an economically depressed and predominantly working-class area with a small colony of avant-garde intellectuals, and the owners and managers of coffeehouses in the district often prioritized the dissemination of creative work by local poets and painters to audiences interested in art and literature. They were less concerned with attracting affluent customers, who were in relatively short supply in the immediate vicinity.⁸¹

⁷⁷ For more information about the scarcity of documentation about the Venice West beats, see John Arthur Maynard, *Venice West: The Beat Generation in Southern California* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991).

⁷⁸ Densmore recalled Morrison’s suggestion, one night during their Venice days, to go out to the Venice West Café. Densmore asked him if they still had poetry there. John Densmore, *Riders On the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and The Doors* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1990), 41. *The Argonaut* is a small local newspaper published every Thursday and accessible online that covers information about Marina del Rey, Playa del Rey, Del Rey, Santa Monica, Venice, and Westchester. It has been in press since 1971.

⁷⁹ John Densmore, “John Densmore Continues Post-Doors Musical Exploration with Tribaljazz,” interview by Rahne Pistor, *The Argonaut*, 20 May 2006, <http://www.argonautnewspaper.com/articles/2006/05/19/entertainment/wol.txt> (accessed 9 October 2007), pp. 1–2 of 3. Densmore added that members of The Doors “rented a Victorian house with ten rooms for \$200 . . . , contrasting today’s gentrified and pricey Venice real estate, often far exceeding the budgets of today’s young artists and musicians.” See *ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁰ Starr, “Bohemian Romance,” 199.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 200.

Lipton was credited for bringing national attention to the Gas House through his weekly column and *The Holy Barbarians*, reinforcing Venice West's recognition as a hotbed for bohemians, beats, and hippies later with his collection *Bruno in Venice West and Other Poems*, but news about the Venice West Café appeared in the *L.A. Free Press* since its first year in 1964 and throughout the 1960s.⁸² Special attention was given to both the counterculture and the café every time there was a threat from police or the city to close it down.⁸³ Not only the performance happenings and poetry at the cafés, but also the coverage of these challenges to freedom of expression by the *L.A. Free Press* must have had some influence on Morrison's own approach to freedom of expression (which would be placed on exhibit later on during the time of *The Miami Herald* coverage of the infamous Doors concert and his

⁸² See also Lawrence Lipton, *The Holy Barbarians* (New York: Julian Messner, 1959), and Lipton, *Bruno in Venice West and Other Poems* (Van Nuys, Calif.: Venice West Publishers, 1976). The poems were selected by Lipton a year before his death in 1975. His wife Nettie Lipton carried the publication to fruition. Criticism of Lipton for exaggerating in his discussions about the people, events, and atmosphere of Venice West was harsh. According to Starr,

Lipton ceaselessly promoted [the Gas House and Venice West] as headquarters of the beat generation in southern California. . . . Lipton served as director of "entertainment" at the coffeehouse, which largely meant spearheading a public relations campaign designed to attract as much attention as possible. . . . Using hyperbolic rhetoric to portray the Gas House as a quasi-religious and semi-exclusive arena in which the general public could glimpse the creative genius of the avant-garde intelligentsia, Lipton essentially relegated art and literature to a side-show in which would-be celebrities milked the limelight for all it was worth. In the process, he made the Gas House the most famous beatnik hangout in L.A.

See Starr, who went into more detail about Lipton, in "Bohemian Romance," 203–204. Lipton did exaggerate to reporters about Venice West. Unfortunately, this practice made his critics fail to see his pivotal role in getting Venice West the recognition it deserved as a legitimate home of beat culture. It is clear from his writings like his poetry, *The Holy Barbarians*, and his columns that he was not solely interested in profiting by money or fame; rather, he was working towards reporting about an under documented counterculture (Venice West writers were far less interested in dropping into the main stream to have their works published than their other beat contemporaries), he wanted to see that the literature, art, and music receive recognition, and to find ways to encourage its preservation. Tourists flocking to see the Venice West counterculture or to see the ruins of Venice would stop by the coffeehouses whether they understood the aesthetic and lifestyle of the counterculture or not.

⁸³ One intriguing example can be found in the 24 September 1964 issue with Charles Britten's photograph of Venice West Café's exterior. Posted on the door were two signs that read "Demonstration Against Police Malpractice" (it continued to mention that the demonstration would be on 23 September 1964 and that transportation would be made available at the café for those who wanted to participate) and "No More Poetry! No poetry here until further notice due to action by the art-hating anti-intellectual yahoos of the L.A. Police Dept. This case will go to the Supreme Court if necessary. Poets, arise! Defend the oral tradition." See Anon., "Venice Poetry Den Raided," *L.A. Free Press*, 24 September 1964, 1–2. Another interesting early example is Ridgely Cummings' "Ban on Bongos, Guitars at Beaches and Parks Proposed by City Council," *L.A. Free Press*, 3 December 1964, 1 and 9. Morrison would have been attending UCLA as a film student at the time these articles appeared. Ridgely Cummings' follow-up article early the following year showed how the causes became intertwined by quoting Venice West Café owner John Haag, who "defended the beatniks and claimed the proposed ordinance was aimed at 'getting rid of certain persons, the beatnik-type person, and not certain disturbances.'" Cummings, "Bongo Drum Legislation Postponed by City Committee," *L.A. Free Press*, 29 January 1965, 1. The ban against bongos was eventually lifted, and the Venice West Café won its court case.

trial) and his aesthetic. The angry tone felt in his writings, embraced by The Doors' music, was also the result of learning about the oppression of the Venice West beats, their activities and forms of expression, and their hangouts. On one level of interpretation the song "Peace Frog" is about civil unrest in the U.S. (there are also lines like "blood on the streets of the town of Chicago" and "blood in the streets of the town of New Haven"), but not just about anti-Vietnam sentiment or the police brutality against demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago. The song also consists of the lines "blood stains the roofs and the palm trees of Venice" and "bloody red sun of fantastic L.A.," suggesting the civil unrest had certainly reached the west coast, too. Another level of interpretation is that Morrison, who lived on a rooftop in Venice, identified with the blood being spilled over Vietnam and other kinds of oppression, including abortion (the song was based on Morrison's epic poem "Abortion Stories") and Morrison's own recollection of witnessing a gory fatal automobile accident as a child, overflowing into other aspects of life—perhaps love and the 1966 "summer of hate"—experienced in Venice and in L.A.

"My Eyes Have Seen You" also referred to Morrison's point of view on the rooftop in Venice; however, there is nothing in the song's text that suggests Morrison has placed his protagonist there. This time, from a voyeuristic perspective as the protagonist of the song gazes down on life on the streets and into the windows of a woman's apartment, stalking a lady who caught his fancy. In this song, Morrison's voice is in its middle range and rises to its upper range, suggesting his position from above in the "television skies." As usual, the harmonic motion of the song is not interesting (much of the song harmonically is about a fluctuation between VII and i or borrowed I), but the musical gestures are fascinating. Morrison sings the opening line "my eyes have seen you" three times: the first two utterances (like a pair of eyes) alternate i and III; the third, a kind of outcast at this point, alternates borrowed I and VII and introduces III as a new chord. Here, the following line "stand in your door" can be heard as V/III, which leads to an introduction of III in the next measure accompanying "meet inside." While VII has no common notes to i or I, III has two common notes with i and one with borrowed I (for example, compare eg[#]b (I borrowed from i, egb) to df[#]a (VII) and gbd (III) found in the passage in mm. 13–14 in *The Doors Anthology*).⁸⁴ "Show me some more" is a return of i and occurs three times before the repetition. The fade at the end is also a wonderful play on words and music: "endless role" in i gets repeated, an endless roll (like that of a television out of

⁸⁴ See The Doors, *The Doors: Anthology*, ed. and arr. The Hal Leonard Corporation, with interviews of The Doors by Mark Etzkorn (Milwaukee, Wisc.: Hal Leonard Corporation, [2001]), 210–211. The song is also on track 8 of The Doors, *Strange Days* (1967), Elektra 75005–2 (1999), CD, and track 12 of The Doors, *The Doors Legacy: The Absolute Best*, Elektra/Rhino R2 73889 (2003), CD 1 of 2 CDs, and other recording reissues.

tune) until it fades out. This musical image corresponds to Morrison's words: Hopkins and Sugerma explain that Morrison was alluding to the television antennas he saw from the rooftop as he was writing the song in Venice.⁸⁵

Chuck Crisafulli's *The Doors: When the Music's Over: The Stories Behind Every Song* considered the local influence of Los Angeles in The Doors' songs, and primarily in the song texts. While the rest of the world interpreted the "blue bus" line from "The End" as an allusion to the drug counterculture (suggesting a drug-induced trip involving sex), those familiar with Los Angeles know that back then, and still today, the blue bus is a reference to the transportation system's Big Blue Bus. Crisafulli explained that even though some of "The End" remains enigmatic, "Los Angeles native, poet, journalist, and record producer Harvey Kubernick can shed light on one piece of the puzzle."⁸⁶ Kubernick had also collaborated with Ray Manzarek, so he had some insider knowledge about the song. Like Nat Freedland's earlier colorful "Wailing" column about Morrison that appeared in the *L.A. Free Press*, Kubernick was attracted to the mysterious line about the "seven mile snake" and "the ancient lake," but had no explanation for them. He was, however, able to explain the "blue bus":

"Back then, we all had a sense of regional pride when we heard Jim Morrison say, 'Meet me at the back of the blue bus.' We knew that the blue bus was the bus that went down Pico Boulevard—the bus that took us to the beach for a quarter. I believe it was the Number 7. As young fans of the Doors music, we didn't talk too much about Freud or Oedipus, but we got very excited every time Jim mentioned that blue bus."⁸⁷

The Big Blue Bus was also frequented by many college students who needed to get to the UCLA campus from locations in Santa Monica and West Los Angeles. Other lines from "The End" like "ride the highway west, baby" and "the West is the best," both precede "The blue bus is calling us" and "meet me at the back of the blue bus," also satisfied the regional pride of Doors fans from Los Angeles.

One place in Venice that The Doors frequented in their early days, a soul food diner named Olivia's on Main Street and Ocean Park, became the subject of the song "Soul Kitchen." The restaurant had all the characteristics of a beloved inexpensive dining establishment: a greasy spoon atmosphere; a mother-figure who both loved her customers and would not hesitate to run them out of the restaurant at closing; a combination of

⁸⁵ Hopkins and Sugerma, *No One Here*, 60.

⁸⁶ Chuck Crisafulli, *The Doors: When the Music's Over: The Stories Behind Every Song*, ed. Dave DiMartino (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2000), 39. Crisafulli is a frequent contributor to the *Los Angeles Times*; he writes articles about contemporary popular music, as well as pop culture, and reviews about music and theatre. He has also written for, among others, *BAM*, *Hollywood Reporter*, and *Rolling Stone*.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

rickety-cheap 1950s and 1960s decorative touches (tacky bamboo shades, posters of ladies with beer, and chrome-topped sugar, salt, and pepper shakers); no need for advertisements because *everyone* knew it was there. Olivia's was well known as a hangout for The Doors, who enjoyed many inexpensive meals there.⁸⁸ The song begins with a jazzy keyboard riff—the keyboard that became a major element of The Doors' sound. The introductory rhythmic groove of the keyboard sets up the rhythm of the stanzas that follow. Harmonically, the song is mostly about I and IV (with some V and VII chords).⁸⁹ For a song that is supposed to be about a place that represented the closest food to a home cooked meal, it is very dark: the closest sense of comfort exists in the opening riff and the fullest chords at the beginning of the song.⁹⁰ Because there is a history of The Doors and this place, Morrison can be identified as the singer's persona. Morrison's first phrase "Well, the clock says it's time to close now" is accompanied by a closed harmonic passage: in A Major, the passage is bor i-IV-I. These harmonies gradually become empty or hollowed out as notes are omitted. Other phrases are harmonically static (for example, there are lots of instances of repetition of bor i-IV-I, which eventually becomes bor i-IV-[^]1 and then [^]1-[^]4-[^]1), hypnotic. Home is not represented as comfortable despite its promise of comfort food: the song's text explains how the singer would like to stay in the restaurant all night even though it is closed. Outside of the restaurant "the cars crawl past all stuffed with eyes," the "street lights shed their hollow glow," and "your brain seems bruised with numb surprise"—the customer is addicted to the place and finds outside an eerie, frightening place. Here the harmonic pattern is mostly an alternation of V/IV-IV. The chorus, "let me sleep all night in your soul kitchen," is an arrival in V. Morrison promises that if he has to be sent out he will "wander in the neon groves."⁹¹ These words correspond to a very brief

⁸⁸ According to Hopkins and Sugeran, Olivia's was a restaurant "where Jim could get a big plate of short ribs, beans, and cornbread for 85 cents and a steak dinner for \$1.25." See Hopkins and Sugeran, *No One Here*, 60.

⁸⁹ See *The Doors: Anthology*, 288–93. The song is also on track 2 of The Doors, *The Doors* (1967), Elektra 74007–2 (1988), CD, and track 7 of The Doors, *The Doors Legacy: The Absolute Best*, Elektra/Rhino R2 73889 (2003), CD 1 of 2 CDs, and other recording reissues.

⁹⁰ Crisafulli explains that the groove was possibly influenced by another musician and song that The Doors heard in 1968 at The London Fog's jukebox. According to Crisafulli, Albert Goldman, who was doing research for a book about The Doors book, learned that the jukebox there played a song by producer and songwriter Kim Fowley called "The Trip." See *ibid.*, 27.

⁹¹ The groves as imagery is interesting here because it signifies to some extent Morrison's awareness of his new home geographically. Los Angeles has citrus groves and eucalyptus groves. The word "grove" appears as names of areas (for example, Orange Grove and Garden Grove, California) and famous establishments (the Coconut Grove, a place where Morrison visited before fire burn it down, and the Ash Grove, which offered poetry and music programs that included the New Music). It implied a place with many trees; here in Morrison uses "grove" to describe the many lights that lined the streets (lights rather than trees).

but noticeable dissonance—crunchy as the dry southern California Mediterranean chaparral (Morrison whines at this point in the recording), the use of a minor second interval to evoke the many street signs with their neon lights, their bright and disturbing neon glow in the night. By the “learn to forget” passage of the song, the harmonies are nothing more than implied. Here, the singer cannot shake off memory as the accompaniment struggles, too. But the chorus and its full chords repeat after this passage to finish the song.

“Hyacinth House” clearly evoked some inspiration from the Los Angeles underground. According to Crisafulli, the song may have been about the hotel, the Hyatt House, located on Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood and frequented by many touring rock and roll bands and famous solo acts, including Elvis.⁹² The hotel was the very setting for the beginning of the interview he had earlier with John Carpenter for the *L.A. Free Press*. Perhaps it also represented Morrison’s own sentiments about unwanted fame, something he addressed in Carpenter interview. It may have been an allusion to a drunken practice session at Doors’ guitarist Robbie Krieger’s house that may have been surrounded by water hyacinths or to Apollo, who accidentally killed his lover, a young boy named Hyacinth. Crisafulli remarked, “once again, Jim’s words are packed with several levels of meaning and it’s clear he had the actual myth of Hyacinth in mind as well when ‘Hyacinth House’ was written.”⁹³

The song in D Major ends its opening phrase with a typical rock music I-v-IV-I progression. Morrison’s phrase can be heard as a passage in the tonic with an added flat seventh, which he sings. The minor dominant chord corresponding to the word “lions” is striking and stresses a number of different images and ideas: Morrison’s famous early image as the young lion; influential and celebrated people (maybe critics); the “lions of doubt” waiting in “Promises,” one of several poems in *The American Night* featured in “Notebook Poems”; the “lions in the street,” the opening line of his poems titled “Celebration of the Lizard”; the same “lions in the night” found in the song “The Soft Parade”; lions at a coliseum; lion statues at St. Mark’s Cathedral—the other Venice.⁹⁴ Their demo made at guitarist Krieger’s home studio in 1969 evoked the Venice West spirit covered in the *L.A. Free Press* through the

⁹² Crisafulli, *When the Music’s Over*, 133. It was also close to the Whiskey A Go Go. In 1958 it opened as the Gene Autry Hotel and was later opened as the Continental Hyatt House in 1966. Morrison also lived there briefly and was later evicted, apparently, for hanging out of a window by his fingers. The hotel was later called the “Riot House” or the “Riot Hyatt” for the number of room trashings and other crazed activities there demonstrated later by bands like the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁹⁴ Both poems are in Jim Morrison, *The American Night: The Writings of Jim Morrison*, vol. 2 (New York: Villard Books, 1990), 154 and 39, respectively.

recording's unpolished aspects, Morrison's description of it as an experiment, and its sparse use of instrumentation: just bongos (John Densmore) and guitar (Krieger).⁹⁵ Densmore's drumming makes its way into the foreground with its heaviest accentuation of the downbeat, the first beat of each 4/4 measure, their presence at the instrumental opening of the song and their crescendo towards the end of it. Just before the final repeat of the refrain, Morrison suggests to the musicians to play it one more time. He added his amusing bluesy tag line "the end" as his final utterance, allowing for the guitar and drums to finish the song—the conclusion suggested informal intimacy, The Doors obviously having fun, and evoked a sound that came more from the beach or Windward Avenue than from a studio.⁹⁶

Most of these gestures suggesting connections to The Doors' Venice were lost in the final recording of the song. The mythological interpretation of the song on the polished product is perhaps emphasized through the use of the keyboard and its arpeggios, which sonically invoke the psychedelic. To listeners possessing an earworm for classical music, the instrumental background is momentarily reminiscent of the best known ostentatious musical passage of Chopin's Polonaise no. 6 in A-flat major, op. 53, also known as the "Heroic." Jerry Hopkins explained that keyboardist Ray Manzarek added the passage from Chopin to Morrison's line "I see the bathroom is clear," but mentioned that the piece was called "Til the End of Time," missing some of the meaning (and humor) added to the song on the *L.A. Woman* album.⁹⁷ Morrison's phrasing, a completely different performance, is awkward and insecure compared to the demo recorded at Krieger's house.⁹⁸

Conclusions

Morrison's relationship and exchanges with the *L.A. Free Press* involved an intriguing game of interpretation. The *L.A. Free Press* writers were simultaneously his friends and "the press." Artistically, they appeared to have inspired each other and exhibited interests in perpetuating perspectives of his images, legends, and

⁹⁵ This version of "Hyacinth House" had been released on *The Doors: Essential Rarities*, Elektra 62530-2 (1999), CD.

⁹⁶ Other kinds of self-reference (to The Doors and their Venice identity) and intertextuality inferences can be observed in the videos: for instance, the video made for "The Unknown Soldier" includes shots of The Doors with Krieger and Manzarek playing sitar and sarod and Densmore with bongos near a pier on the beach; the shots of Windward Avenue denizens and derelicts in the video for "People are Strange." See The Doors, *Dance on Fire* (1985), on *The Doors Collection*, produced by Rick Schmidlin, directed by Ray Manzarek, 62 min., Universal Studios 20542 (1999), DVD.

⁹⁷ Hopkins and Sugerman, *No One Here*, 342. Hopkins described the line as "absurd."

⁹⁸ Compare the demo sound recording on track 4 (00:02:35) of the *Essential Rarities* to the version recorded on track 7 (00:03:10) of The Doors, *L.A. Woman*, originally released in 1971, re-released in 1999 on Elektra CD 75011-2.

myths sometimes accurately, sometimes in jest. At times, the articles seem to describe Jim Morrison similarly to fan magazines. The Doors' appearance, especially Morrison's, seems to matter more than the songs or performances themselves. The writers themselves became passionate about The Doors, moved by Morrison, and wrote openly about it. Music criticism in the *L.A. Free Press* was geared towards being accessible to a diverse audience, many who love music but would likely skip over reading music analysis in a newspaper. The aesthetics of these songs with their local grounding, however, was important to these writers—the *L.A. Free Press* and its writers leave many clues about how The Doors were a part of their community. In other words, though there were no analyses of the songs, there was certainly discourse about them.

Devices used to position Morrison as the focus of attention included singling him out from the rest of the band and commenting about him instead of musical details; again, these devices have been seen before in magazines like *Rolling Stone*. But the difference is that as much as Morrison was described as an icon in the *L.A. Free Press* articles, readers were constantly reminded that he was also a person who signified something more than whom he was. The rock star image, no matter how nomadic, had a home and felt at home with the L.A. counterculture represented by the *L.A. Free Press*. He was authentic because he lived, breathed, and took part in this community and in the success of this underground newspaper. One part of the myth construction was the *L.A. Free Press* writers having fun with playing with Morrison as himself and as an object; another was finding ways to build an icon out of a lead singer of a local band. Writers of the *L.A. Free Press* nevertheless found it newsworthy to cover some of Morrison's interactions with them. His admission to manipulating the press in this newspaper may have been one of his own devices to become a kind of hero to those writing for and reading the *L.A. Free Press*: he may have been trying to communicate that he was one of them and wanted everyone taking part in his community to enjoy the game. This device resembles the one he used while onstage to blur the boundaries between his performance with The Doors and *their* audience. And the writings of the *L.A. Free Press* show that Jim Morrison and The Doors had an ideal audience, but at the same time Morrison especially wanted to increase that audience. It appears from these writings that Morrison was less interested in reaching more people with The Doors' songs and his other projects than in finding people willing to understand the art, literature, music, and mysticism that inspired him. His game with the *L.A. Free Press* may involved the various kinds of coverage and publicity he attracted to himself in a newspaper that valued arts and music, but focused mainly on important local or national events to the counterculture. Morrison's image appeared in advertisements, reviews, articles, and interviews—never front page

material to lure readers, but at times full page material. Exciting literature about Morrison existed in other publications like *Crawdaddy!*, *Down Beat*, and the *Rolling Stone*; however, none had a friendship with Morrison as enduring, fascinating, and creative as the *L.A. Free Press*.

CHAPTER 3

THE LIZARD KING'S *DOWN BEAT* AND *DOWN BEAT*'S JIM MORRISON

Michael Cuscuna's interview of Morrison appeared in late May 1970 in *Down Beat*. Since 1934 *Down Beat* was considered the foremost serial publication about the contemporary state of jazz (issues related to jazz itself and jazz musicians), the stories of jazz musicians and their works, and the strategies for arranging popular jazz songs; it was also the leading source of interviews of and opinion pieces written by jazz musicians and composers. In addition, sometimes the monthly publication also included articles and reviews about rock music that featured prominent jazz or blues characteristics. The cover of the issue containing the Morrison interview lists information about its contents and reads "Behind The Doors: The Real Jim Morrison," perhaps simultaneously implying that Morrison functions as the band's voice, that the band exists as his vehicle, and that Morrison himself was a different (or Other?) person from Morrison the performer. The latter is particularly important since although at the end of the interview Cuscuna reviewed The Doors in their May 1st concert at the Spectrum in Philadelphia, he conversed with Morrison only. This well known interview is easily accessible; today it can be found on numerous websites, including the "Archives" on the *Down Beat* home page (<http://www.downbeat.com>).⁹⁹

Before discussing Cuscuna's interview, it is necessary to establish context. Cuscuna's *Down Beat* interview was not the first article to discuss The Doors' blues and jazz influences. Danny Sugerman's *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, dating from 1967, contained the earliest articles about The Doors: it contained important reprints like Francine Grace's 1967 article for the *Los Angeles Times*, which labeled The Doors as a "jazz-rock" group¹⁰⁰; also included is Paul Williams' article for *Crawdaddy!*, which claimed that the band's music is "modern music, and contemporary 'jazz' and 'classical' composers must try to measure up."¹⁰¹ Sugerman's book is a goldmine of early difficult-to-find Door's articles: Richard Goldstein's 1967 article for *New York Magazine*

⁹⁹ Accessed on 25 July 2007.

¹⁰⁰ Francine Grace, "Vibrant Jazz-Rock Group at Gazzarri's," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1967, pages unavailable. Article reproduced in Danny Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, ed. Benjamin Edmonds, with a Foreword by Jerry Hopkins (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1983), 16.

¹⁰¹ Paul Williams, "Rock is Rock: A Discussion of a Doors Song," *Crawdaddy!*, no. 9 (May 1967): pages unavailable. Article reproduced in Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, 19. Williams founded *Crawdaddy!* in 1966.

mentioned The Doors' blues roots.¹⁰² In a 1968 issue of *Eye* magazine Digby Diehl explained that Ray Manzarek, who fronted Rick and the Ravens, went by the name Ray Daniels and was named the “bearded blues shouter.”¹⁰³ Diehl described Manzarek's early interests in the blues (Muddy Waters) and his study of classical music (Bach, Rachmaninoff, and Tchaikovsky) at the Chicago Conservatory. According to Diehl, The Doors made their first demo recordings at World-Pacific Jazz studios on the Aura label, and over half of their early repertory “consisted of blues and rock ‘n’ roll classics, such as ‘Gloria,’ ‘Red Rooster,’ and ‘Who Do You Love?’”¹⁰⁴ Cuscuna's review, which was not included in Sugerman's collection, gave the most detailed glimpse into the blues and jazz aesthetics of Morrison and The Doors through Morrison's words and Cuscuna's observations. Unlike the other articles that explained connections between The Doors and the blues and jazz, Cuscuna singled out Morrison (and/or Morrison singled out Cuscuna) and this time, with the absence of the band's musicians, Morrison was able to discuss his own admiration of the blues and jazz. The interview itself was void of music analysis; however, it stressed Morrison and The Doors' authenticity as musicians through describing the blues and jazz elements and influences found in their own kind of rock music.

The Interview with *Down Beat*: Getting Serious about Music

Cuscuna (b. 1948) was a regular writer for *Down Beat* and for *Jazz and Pop* magazine. He also wrote for *Rolling Stone*. He played saxophone, flute, and drums, collected records, and had the aspiration to become a record producer.¹⁰⁵ In the 1960s he had his own jazz program on WXPB, the University of Pennsylvania's student-run

¹⁰² Richard Goldstein, “The Doors Open Wide,” *New York Magazine* (19 March 1967): page numbers unavailable. Article reproduced in Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, 21.

¹⁰³ Digby Diehl, “The Doors' Story,” *Eye* (April 1968): page numbers unavailable. Article reproduced in Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, 10. Apparently, Sugerman's source provided a new title for the excerpt. The original title was “Love and the Demonic Psyche.” Because Diehl's article offered historical background about the band, it is placed just after the original Elektra biographies of The Doors and just before the compilation of reproduced writings dated 1967. Thirty years later, Diehl participated in a conversation about The Doors and Elektra in 1967 with Manzarek, Robbie Krieger, John Densmore, and Elektra's founder and former President Jac Holzman. See Holzman, and Gavan Daws, “Brecht and Weill at the Next Whisky Bar . . . Diaghilev to The Doors . . . Days of Morrison, Nights of Warhol . . . Eve of Destruction at Delmonico's 1967,” chap. 11 in *Follow the Music: The Life and High Times of Elektra Records in the Great Years of American Pop Culture* (Santa Monica, Calif.: FirstMedia Books, 1998), 162.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

¹⁰⁵ See Anon., “Michael Cuscuna,” in *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music* vol. 2, 2d ed., ed. Colin Larkin (New York: Stockton Press, 1995), 1022.

public radio station.¹⁰⁶ But by 1966 he showed interest in becoming a producer. According to his biography in *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, his WXPB show helped him obtain part-time employment at ESP-Disk, which was the “legendary New York free music label of the 1960s.”¹⁰⁷ He later worked for Atlantic, Blue Note, Impulse (for the ABC label), Arista, and Muse, among other record companies, and afterwards co-founded his own label, Mosaic.¹⁰⁸ Cuscuna’s introduction to his interview explained how Elektra contacted him on behalf of Morrison, who for some time still wanted to be interviewed (“written up”) for *Down Beat*. The interview took place just prior to the Doors’ Philadelphia concert. Cuscuna was expecting a rock star with an attitude to match. His other preconceptions included a sense of Morrison’s many “changes in style,” some of the group’s successes (most of the songs on the first two albums, *The Doors* and *Strange Days*) and failures (many of the songs on the next two albums, *Waiting for the Sun* and *The Soft Parade*). He in fact noted that, as a result of the more recent failures, it was anticipated that the band needed to head in a different or new direction; however, he stressed that Morrison and the Doors should be considered meaningful and relevant to jazz *aficionados* and *Down Beat* readers:

¹⁰⁶ Cuscuna was enrolled as a business student, but then changed his major to English literature. His WXPB position led to working at Philadelphia’s underground format radio station, WMMR. He then worked for New York City’s WABC FM (WPLJ) to host a morning show. See Jazz Alliance International (JAI), “Michael Cuscuna,” under “About JAI: Board of Directors,” <http://www.jazzai.org/aboBio.html> (accessed on 29 July 2007). According to the biography, the New York radio show he hosted had a free format. See also “Cuscuna,” *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music* vol. 2, 1022–23.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1022.

¹⁰⁸ According to Scott Yanow, Cuscuna eventually left broadcasting in the 1970s and became a producer for Atlantic. In 1983 he co-founded Mosaic with Charlie Lourie. Mosaic is still one of the most important and prolific reissue labels today. Cuscuna’s efforts for Blue Note alone in the mid 1970s through the 1980s, and for Mosaic since 1983, included programs supporting reissue projects and unearthing many outstanding recording sessions (including Thelonious Monk and Charles Mingus) believed previously to be lost. See Yanow, “Michael Cuscuna,” *AllMusic Guide*, available online at <http://www.allmusic.com> (accessed on 31 July 2007). Also cited in Verve, *The Verve Music Group: Impulse!*, <http://www.vervemusicgroup.com> (accessed on 31 July 2007), and “Cuscuna,” *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music* vol. 2, 1023. He produced and wrote program notes for many important reissues of jazz album classics (few of many examples include Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, and Max Roach’s *Money Jungle* and Thelonious Monk with John Coltrane at Carnegie Hall). Cuscuna’s writing career continued concurrently with his producing career. He co-wrote with David Anthony Wild *Ornette Coleman, 1958–1979: A Discography* (Ann Arbor: Wildmusic, 1980). With Michel Ruppli he co-wrote *The Blue Note Label: A Discography* (New York and London: Greenwood Press, 1988), rev. and expanded ed. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001). He later co-wrote with Francis Wolff, Lourie, and Oscar Schneider, *The Blue Note Years: The Jazz Photography of Francis Wolff* (New York: Rizzoli, 1995), and the *Blue Note Jazz Photography of Francis Wolff* (New York: Universe, 2000).

With their first album, The Doors brought many innovations to rock. Essentially, it was the first successful synthesis of jazz and rock. No one wrote about it; there were no posters or ads to that effect. Nevertheless, organist Ray Manzarek, guitarist Robby Krieger, and drummer John Densmore comprise a tight spirit of rock and the feeling of jazz.¹⁰⁹

Cuscuna also described The Doors, because of their inclusion of Willie Dixon and Howlin' Wolf's (Chester Burnett's) "Back Door Man" on their first album, as forerunners to the white blues revival in early 1970s rock and roll.¹¹⁰ Dixon and Wolf, who were African American, were important blues musicians, composers, and musical innovators. Dixon (1915–1992) was a bassist, record producer, and singer and songwriter, and was credited as one of the originators of Chicago blues. He became especially well known for combining Chicago blues and elements of Delta blues in his songs. Wolf (1910–1976) was a blues singer, guitarist, and harmonica player who was inspired by Charley Patton. Like Dixon, Wolf combined Chicago blues with Delta Blues (he grew up in Mississippi). Wolf's singing style included what he called a "blues yodel" and other shouting effects; he employed intelligent and sensitive phrasing both with his strikingly loud (at times intimidating) gravelly voice and on guitar and harmonica.

Cuscuna, like other interviewers of Morrison, was surprised not to be dealing with another rock and roll ego or with one of Morrison's wilder stage personae. Morrison was pensive and thus obviously thoughtful concerning the interview. Sitting on his hotel bed, he explained to Cuscuna why this interview with *Down Beat* was meaningful to him:

"I am not an avid or knowledgeable jazz fan, but I do read *Down Beat* regularly, because it deals with music. Most of the so-called music magazines cover everything but music. They are fan magazines and sensation-seekers. I have been written about in all of them—but so what. . . ."¹¹¹

Despite hearing Morrison's praise for and loyalty to *Down Beat* and its musical legitimacy (while at the same time egging on other magazines publicly with his own "who cares?" attitude), Cuscuna remarked to Morrison, "The Doors had lost much of their spirit and creativity on the third and fourth albums." Morrison described the difference between the band's creative processes with the first two albums from the third and fourth, an explanation often cited in countless other sources. He explained that the first two albums were the result of performing night after night and honing the songs, while the second two albums were the result of concert performances, in-studio composing, and

¹⁰⁹ Michael Cuscuna, "Behind The Doors," *Down Beat* 37, no. 11 (28 May 1970): 13.

¹¹⁰ Wolf's own performance made this blues song famous; however, The Doors' interpretation and performance was inspired by John Hammond, Jr.'s version, which became known to them through Krieger.

¹¹¹ Cuscuna, "Behind the Doors," 13.

fulfilling the demands of audiences (the last, according to Morrison, had kept The Doors at the time from creating the kinds of experimental musical endeavors in which they were able to engage during their early years).¹¹² It appears that he longed for the opportunity to play numerous gigs per week and to polish as many songs as The Doors did in the hungry days of their early years together.

Jim Morrison's Jazz and Blues

For Morrison, Krieger's song "Touch Me" stood out as a good song on the fourth album, *The Soft Parade*. He pointed out during the interview that it was the first rock song to have a jazz solo on it.¹¹³ Morrison also mentioned that he thought another one of Krieger's songs, "Tell All the People," was stupid.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, as he noted, "Tell All the People" was the first song on the album and "Touch Me" was the second track. Morrison also conveyed a sense of excitement about new projects, including "a live concert album . . . that may bring back the feeling that [Cuscuna] was talking about." Returning to blues and jazz, Morrison describes his own musical aspirations:

"I really want to develop my singing. You know, I love the blues, like Joe Turner and Freddie King. I would like to get into that feeling and sing some old standards like 'St. James Infirmary.'"¹¹⁵

Both Turner and King had musical careers that spanned long before and after Morrison's own musical career. "Big" Joe Turner (1911–1985) was a blues shouter from Kansas City, Missouri, but was best known for his hit rock song "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" (1953), though Bill Haley and The Comets had the most successful recording of the song shortly afterwards in 1954. Other well known hits were his recordings of "Chains of Love" (1951), "Flip, Flop, and Fly" (1955), "Corrine, Corrina" (1956), and "The Midnight Special" (1957). His hits included "Have You Ever Loved a Woman" and "Hide Away" (1960), among others. With its upbeat swing sound, Kansas City Blues was clearly a forerunner genre to rock and roll; nevertheless, Turner's musical career and performance experience were exceptionally diverse and eclectic. His singing exemplified connections and transitions between blues and rock and his musical career embraced and included spirituals, Kansas City Blues, swing band singing, boogie woogie, rhythm and blues, and rock. He also performed in musicals by Ellington. Turner's blues singing style was loud and highly

¹¹² Ibid., 13 and 32.

¹¹³ The jazz solo was by tenor saxophonist Curtis Amy. See *ibid.*, 13.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

theatrical, but it also captivated listeners because of its expression—many times evoking empathy and amiability and demonstrating a range of vocal timbre from shouting and gravel to melodic and smooth. King (1934–1976), who was also influenced by Howlin’ Wolf, sang and played acoustic and electric guitars and performed Chicago blues and Texas style guitar. His instrumentals often demonstrated his virtuosity, which included extremely fast picking using a plastic thumb pick and a metal index finger pick. Generally, his guitar playing received more attention than his singing, which was characterized by its smooth and relaxed, sometimes pensive or nonchalant delivery. In the late 1960s and early 1970s he performed at many of the same festivals as other blues, jazz, and rock performers.¹¹⁶

The song “St. James Infirmary” is best known as its Dixieland version recorded and arranged by Louis Armstrong. Originally titled the “St. James Infirmary Blues,” it was a folksong that was perhaps known earlier as “The Gambler’s Blues” (dated 1899?) or derived from the Irish folksong “The Unfortunate Rake.” The singer narrates the story in retrospect, as he (identified as a man in the text) sits at a bar. His tragic story ends as he goes to the infirmary to find his girlfriend dead on a stretcher, then tells of plans for *his* funeral, and his subsequent sorrow. Sometimes during their concerts, The Doors performed the song as an inserted interlude into their own “Light My Fire.”¹¹⁷ The beginning descending phrase of the famous refrain of The Doors song (the phrase itself in a major key) as well as its initial eighth note gesture is similar to the opening line of “St. James Infirmary” (minor key). The insertion of this interlude also offered a different perspective to the meaning of “Light My Fire.” For example, one may wonder who is the woman Morrison is addressing in the song and why a blues song about lost love (and a dead woman) was included as part of the performance of this song. From Morrison’s comment, it appeared that he wished to sing the song and standards like it not just as an interlude to a Doors’ song, but as separate entities from the music of The Doors.

¹¹⁶ At the time he befriended English rock singer and guitarist Eric Clapton.

¹¹⁷ For example, they included “St. James Infirmary Blues” at their concert on 10 April 1970 in the Boston Arena. See track 6 of CD 3 of The Doors, *Live in Boston 1970*. Bright Midnight/Rhino R2 216124 (2007), 3 CDs. “Light My Fire” begins on track 3. This concert featured an interlude that contained “Fever” on track 4 (which does not sound like the popular song composed by Otis Blackwell and Eddie Coley, ascribed also to John Davenport), a pop version (more in the vein of Janis Joplin) of “Summertime” from George Gershwin’s opera *Porgy and Bess* on track 5, “St. James Infirmary” on track 6, and Morrison’s own “Graveyard Poem” on track 7. The “Light My Fire” (reprise) follows the interlude on track 8.

Cuscuna's article concluded by mentioning that the rest of the interview was actually a discussion about Morrison's interests outside of music, and their mutual praise for Buñuel, Fellini, and other directors. The article ends with Cuscuna describing The Doors performance in Philadelphia as exhibiting "shades of the exciting and innovative Doors of old."¹¹⁸ Greg Shaw, Simon Glickman, and Jeffrey Jampol's brief recollection of the interview is interesting, though incorrect about *Down Beat's* coverage of rock music:

The morning of May 1 saw Morrison sit for an interview with Michael Cuscuna of *Down Beat*, a jazz-oriented publication that rarely expressed much interest in rock. The interview lasted through dinner, and the writer was sufficiently moved by the band's one-of-a-kind stylistic fusion to hail The Doors as "a tight musical unit that is equally rooted in the spirit of rock and the feeling of jazz."¹¹⁹

Cuscuna was impressed by the opening jazz rock sets and Morrison's performance of some of their better known songs. The Doors' performance of "Light My Fire" did not have the "St. James Infirmary Blues" interlude, but it did feature Krieger's insertion of a passage of "These are a Few of My Favorite Things" from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music*. Their performance of "Back Door Man" segued into another song, "Love Hides," which was composed by Morrison.¹²⁰ Other songs performed included their own "Roadhouse Blues" and "Roadhouse Blues" Reprise, "Break On Through," "Ship of Fools," "Universal Mind," "When the Music's Over," "Wake Up!," "Maggie M'Gill," and "Soul Kitchen," blues standards like "Mystery Train" (composed by Junior Parker and Sam Phillips)/ "Crossroads" (also known as the "Cross Road Blues," composed by Robert Johnson), and Morrison's "Been Down So Long" (which sounds like a blues standard)/"Rock Me Baby" (composed by B. B. King and Joe Josea), and the rock/rhythm and blues song "Carol" (composed by Chuck Berry).¹²¹ Their repertoire for that night certainly demonstrated not only the blues and jazz influence; it also showed Morrison's interest as both blues singer and composer.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 32.

¹¹⁹ See page 5 of the liner notes by Greg Shaw, Simon Glickman, and Jeffrey Jampol, for The Doors, *Live in Philadelphia '70* (1970), Bright Midnight Archives RHM2 7912 (2005), 2 CDs. See also Cuscuna, "Behind the Doors," 13.

¹²⁰ The performance of both songs at the concert were recorded and appear on track 11 and 5, respectively, of the CD reissue of The Doors, *Live in Philadelphia '70*.

¹²¹ "Been Down So Long (It Looks Like Up to Me)" was also the title of Richard Fariña's 1966 book, which became a cult classic and was considered 1960s counterculture literature. It was based on Fariña's own college experiences and travels. See Richard Fariña, *Been Down So Long, It Looks Like Up to Me* (New York: Random House, 1966). Chuck Crisafulli, however, explained that even though Morrison read and very much enjoyed Fariña's book, "the lyrics of 'Been Down So Long' do not specifically detail the story of [Fariña's protagonist] Gnosso Papodoupolis." According to Crisafulli, Morrison would later demonstrate interest in combining poetry with music, and Richard Fariña's wife, Joan Baez's younger sister, and he released two traditional folk style albums, *Celebrations for a Grey*

Cuscuna compared Morrison to bassist Charles Mingus—not musically, but in respect to their misunderstood public images—certainly praise for Morrison as a person. He made it clear how much he enjoyed talking to Morrison and found himself liking him despite his expectations of meeting a weird and spoiled rock star:

In Jim Morrison, I found to my surprise a beautiful human being who, not unlike Charles Mingus, has been a victim of sensational publicity and harassment by silly journalists. This same Jim Morrison seems trapped in the routine of success, with a public image to live up to, while his best musical and cinematic talents and ambitions remain stifled and/or untapped.¹²³

To a varying extent, Mingus (1922–79) had been repeatedly characterized by both the press and other musicians as disagreeable, volatile, financially greedy, and emotionally demanding.¹²⁴ He was at the same time admired and praised for being passionate about his art and his aggressive playing style (his instrument was to be *heard*, not to be merely the pulse or rhythmic background of other instruments—by the 1950s he projected his instrument in ensembles as if it was in the front line). Mingus threatened to leave the U.S. permanently for Europe, but eventually returned. He continued to make tours to Europe throughout his career.

Day (1965) and *Reflections in a Crystal Wind* (1966) before Fariña died in a motorcycle accident. But this song is more about the blues, as Crisafulli mentions,

Morrison offers a kind of primer on how to build the basic, bone-rattling blues tune: the first verse is a hollerin' statement of the blues in general; the second verse is a plea to a warden for freedom; the third verse a plea for some oral satisfaction (When Jim asks a little darlin' to get down on her knees and give her "love" to him, it's not a request for flowers and chocolates); and finally Jim hollers out a final re-statement of those general blues.

Chuck Crisafulli, *The Doors: When the Music's Over: The Stories Behind Every Song*, ed. Dave DiMartino (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2000), 128.

"Roadhouse Blues" and its reprise appear on track 3 on both CD 1 and CD 2 of the *Live in Philadelphia '70* CD. "Break On Through (To the Other Side)," "Ship of Fools," "Universal Mind," "When the Music's Over," and "Wake Up!" are on subsequent tracks on CD 1; "Maggie McGill" is on track 2 of CD 2, followed by "Been Down So Long"/"Rock Me Baby," "Carol," and "Soul Kitchen" on tracks 4, 6, and 7, respectively.

¹²² At the time of this interview, some examples of blues songs composed by The Doors, in addition to the ones mentioned included "Summer's Almost Gone," "Shaman's Blues," "Runnin' Blues" (which also incorporated bluegrass), and "Love Me Two Times." See The Doors. *The Doors: Anthology*, ed. and arr. the Hal Leonard Corporation, with Interviews of The Doors by Mark Etzkorn (Milwaukee, Wisc.: Hal Leonard Corporation, [2001], and The Doors, *Waiting for the Sun*, ed. Leo Alfassy (New York: Nipper Music, 1969).

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹²⁴ For example, "Mingus was a brilliant, volatile artist whose work, inspired by Ellington and Parker, married the past with the present into innovative, sometimes deliberately chaotic and provocative social commentary." See Leonard Feather and Ira Gitler, "Charles Mingus," *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Jazz* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1999), 467.

In hindsight Cuscuna's sympathetic perspective on Morrison not only described his situation of the time but also apparently foreshadowed future problems Morrison would experience with the press around the time he decided to leave for Paris, the city that became the permanent home of many American jazz musicians and composers during the 1950s and 1960s. Morrison's reasons for expatriation, however, were not just based on press reactions to or distortions of him. Several sources suggest that the press' attitude towards him was just one factor that led to Morrison's departure to Paris. He also had plans to go there to write poetry, to refuel on creativity, and to determine his future projects. The Doors were able to finish their final album, *L.A. Woman*, without him, so his departure also represented a good stopping point for the group as a whole, at least for a while.

Conclusions

Morrison gave the impression that *Down Beat* was important to him both as a musician and as a person interested in the blues and jazz. In their exchange, Cuscuna reinforced the importance of The Doors, and especially Morrison as musicians. Throughout his article he reminded readers of their previous success (even though Cuscuna blamed this very same success for their failures), their connections to the blues and jazz, and their promise of future success. At the same time, Cuscuna was emphasizing his status as a writer: he informed his readers that Morrison came to him through his publicity department so that Cuscuna himself would interview and write about him. Cuscuna explained that The Doors' publicity department came to him because he was still writing for *Down Beat*, and Morrison's agenda was to be written about in the publication. In the beginning of the article, Cuscuna gave the impression that his interest was about learning more about Morrison and the music of The Doors; he was not a fan of the rock star. Cuscuna informed people about his own transformation from being a writer who began the interview as "dismayed at the prospect of encountering another rock ego, yet curious" to one with strong admiration, as exemplified through his comparison of Morrison to Mingus.¹²⁵ Perhaps experiencing this transformation offered some kind of answer to the question about Cuscuna's direction as a critic: in order to get to the real Jim Morrison (to go beyond rather than just behind The Doors to locate the driving force of their authenticity), perhaps one needs to undergo such metamorphosis. He allowed Morrison to take him there through one-on-one conversations and attending at (and enjoyment of) a Doors concert.

Unfortunately, Morrison's own comments about manipulating the press in his later interview with Chorush for the *L.A. Free Press* (January 1971) made it difficult to completely believe his comments about enjoying *Down*

¹²⁵ Ibid, 13.

Beat as well as his opinion that the magazine stood apart and above fan magazines. His “one of us” device to make himself not just accepted but respected by those knowledgeable about music could have seemed strained: this reading audience was musically demanding. Morrison had to be someone who was beyond mere familiarity with blues and jazz repertoires. *Down Beat* readers would be most interested in reading about him if he was an accomplished performer, composer, or arranger, preferably with a flair for analyzing or writing about music—something that Morrison was not. The interview showed that Morrison was aware of his musical limitations, and in doing so received respect and better understanding from Cuscuna. This interview generally showed Morrison in a positive light. He took the opportunity to explain that he composed as he wrote his poems, taking responsibility for composing some of The Doors’ songs, and by clarifying that he deserved some of the credit for their music (he was not just a bard or a pretty face fronting the band). He did not pretend to know more than he did about music. He took the time to discuss with Cuscuna the repertory he loved, the songs he would like to perform someday, and successful and unsuccessful Doors songs. The tone of the interview appeared candid, adding intimacy and significance to the authenticity of *Down Beat*’s Jim Morrison. In short, Morrison’s *Down Beat* was not just about the music after all.

CHAPTER 4

THE MIAMI HERALD VERSUS JIM MORRISON?

John Densmore, The Doors' drummer and author of *Riders on the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and The Doors*, remarked that *The Miami Herald* had labeled the band the "Dirty Doors."¹²⁶ Less than a year after the *Down Beat* interview and Michael Cuscuna's observations about how the media was involved in distorting Morrison's public image, the poet-singer found himself involved in his most disturbing interactions with *The Miami Herald*. Morrison was accused of "lewd and lascivious behavior," supposedly exposing himself and simulating copulation during a Doors' concert at Miami's Dinner Key Auditorium. Morrison was drunk at the concert and, although clearly unable to sing Doors songs for that night, was still inspired by Artaud and recent performances by the Living Theatre at the University of Southern California. He seemed determined to break the boundaries between performers and audience, stage and auditorium, song and speech (sometimes rap), social inhibition and sexual exhibition, and listening and experience—but very few appeared to understand what he was doing or his need to have a dialogue with his audience in order to create his own commentary about their political, social, and moral inhibitions. The concert took place on 1 March 1969, and from the very beginning it attracted the attention of staff writers and reporters from *The Miami Herald*. The newspaper covered the concert, its aftermath, and the city's outrage over the concert, as well as indecency in the entertainment industry in the U.S. It also chronicled the charges against Morrison, and details of the trial.

Various discussions about *The Miami Herald's* coverage have appeared since, as articles, and portions of biographies, and studies about Jim Morrison and The Doors, but all have focused on the perspectives of the reporters and staff writers only.¹²⁷ Just a few examples will be discussed briefly here. In *The Doors Collectors Magazine*, an online periodical whose aim is to promote The Doors ("If you want to bitch, please go elsewhere"), Jan E. Morris discussed details of the incident, the venue, and she cited passages from *The Miami Herald*.¹²⁸ Morris rightfully

¹²⁶ John Densmore, *Riders On the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and The Doors* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1990), 230.

¹²⁷ Many of the *Miami Herald* articles about The Doors were reprinted in Danny Sugerman's *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, ed. Benjamin Edmonds, with a Foreword by Jerry Hopkins (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1983).

¹²⁸ Anon., "Guidelines for Submissions," *The Doors Collectors Magazine*, <http://www.doors.com/magazine> (accessed 29 August 2007). See also Jan E. Morris, "The Miami Incident," *The Doors Collectors Magazine*, <http://www.doors.com/miami/truth.html> (accessed 28 August 2007).

called the *Miami Herald* coverage “media madness.” Her article also discussed mistakes made by the defense during the trial and offered a link to hear a tape recorded segment of the concert performance in question. Morris’ perspective defends Morrison: he received extremely harsh media attention, which resulted in an unfair trial and convictions. The end of the article called for action to “right a few old wrongs.” Following it are instructions to take the initiative to help get Morrison pardoned by then Florida Governor Jeb Bush, as well as other political officials. Today the form letters are still available. In another article that appeared in *The Doors Collectors Magazine*, “New Evidence in the Miami Incident,” Janelle Preston gave further details about the misuse of law and legal agencies in the case, including “the denial to Jim Morrison of arguably defensible rights afforded all U.S. citizens under the First, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. . . .”¹²⁹ Preston briefly described the language used in the *Miami Herald* articles as “misleading, plentiful, and inflammatory.” Other sources that cited and discussed *The Miami Herald* coverage included books of Doors’ quotations by Andrew Doe and John Tobler, autobiographies by John Densmore and Ray Manzarek, biographies by James Riordan and Jerry Prochnicky, Jerry Hopkins, and Stephen Davis, and picture books by William Ruhlmann and David Dalton, among others.¹³⁰ Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugerman’s biography *No One Here Gets Out Alive* discussed *The Miami Herald* coverage as a smaller part of the giant media frenzy over the concert, aftermath, and trial.¹³¹ This biography was the first extensive work that went beyond the written word of the press to find out what took place at the concert, the period after the concert (including the charges), and the trial. Contact with people who were present at the time, especially members of the band, added some clarity of the actual event. In general, the firsthand accounts of reporters were mostly questionable: Were they really firsthand accounts? Were reporters motivated to exaggerate or spin a yarn in their coverage? Though it cannot possibly be known which news stories were the most

¹²⁹ Janelle Preston, “New Evidence in the Miami Incident,” *The Doors Collectors Magazine*, <http://www.doors.com/miami/truth.html> (accessed 28 August 2007).

¹³⁰ Andrew Doe and John Tobler, *The Doors in Their Own Words* (London: Omnibus Press, 1988; repr., New York: Perigee Books, 1991); James Riordan and Jerry Prochnicky, *Break On Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991); Jerry Hopkins, *The Lizard King: The Essential Jim Morrison* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1992); Stephen Davis, *Jim Morrison: Life, Death, Legend* (New York: Gotham Books, 2004); William Ruhlmann, *The Doors* (New York: Smithmark, 1991); and David Dalton, *Mr. Mojo Risin’: Jim Morrison The Last Holy Fool*, with a Foreword by Nick Tosches (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991).

¹³¹ Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugerman, *No One Here Gets Out Alive* (New York: Warner Books, 1980) and rev. ed. (New York and Boston: Warner Books, 1995).

accurate, how these news stories shaped public opinion about The Doors can be found in the newspaper. Of course, none of the sources implied that *The Miami Herald's* coverage told the whole story, and all suggested that the *Miami Herald* writings headed into a direction to ruin The Doors', especially Morrison's, career as touring musicians. This chapter will show that *The Miami Herald* coverage was riddled with curiosities and contradictions.

Although many understood the tone of the articles and were correct in detecting that the coverage was far from fair and objective, the literature about *The Miami Herald* generally failed to contextualize these writings; thus suggesting implicitly that *The Miami Herald* was itself a reflection of the mostly conservative views of the city's residents at that time.¹³² Another problem with the current literature is that it possessed a tendency to isolate *The Miami* quotations by not addressing other coverage in other newspapers at the time. The one exception was Danny Sugerman's collection of articles in *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, which consisted of articles that ran concurrently with *The Miami Herald* ones. For example, Stephanie Harrington's article in *The Village Voice* explained that none of the reports "fully jibe" and that the police did not issue warrants until after The Doors left town. *The Miami News Reporter* had an article that covered Morrison's arrest, the title suggesting that he was a fugitive. Articles in *The Miami News* and *The Arizona Republic* discussed his run-in with the law while drunk on a Phoenix airplane: he was arrested for assaulting an airline stewardess, drunk and disorderly behavior, and interfering with flight crew members, the last was a federal offense. They also explained that this run-in with the law was all while awaiting extradition to Florida. The charges in Phoenix were eventually thrown out. Sugerman's compilation also had articles found in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Rock*, the *Record* (Bergen, New Jersey), *Creem*, and an Associated Press report. This compilation impels comparison of *The Miami Herald* articles to other points of view recorded in other newspapers.

The Miami Herald was the flagship Knight Newspaper, owned and run by the Knight family. At the time of the Doors' Miami Concert, the famous Knight-Ridder merger between Knight Newspapers and Ridder

¹³² The newspaper covered the history and growth of immigrant populations in Miami before and during this time, particularly from Columbia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras; however, their communities in Miami received little attention. For a history about the Knight family's ownership, management, and editorship of *The Miami Herald* (and other Knight Newspapers publications through the early 1970s), see Nixon Smiley, *Knights of the Fourth Estate: The Story of the Miami Herald* (Miami: E. A. Seemann Publishing, 1974). Other books with information relating to the history of *The Miami Herald* include Davis Merritt, *Knightfall: Knight Ridder and How the Erosion of Newspaper Journalism is Putting Democracy at Risk* (New York: AMACOM, 2005), and Charles Whited, *Knight: A Publisher in the Tumultuous Century* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1988). The last is a biography on John S. Knight funded by The Knight Foundation.

Publications, according to Davis Merritt, was not “on the horizon.”¹³³ Merritt also mentioned that John S. Knight, who worked as an Editor for *The Miami Herald*, was a moderate Republican known also as an early enthusiast of Nixon, though earlier in 1968 the staff who worked there were apparently evenly divided between Nixon and Hubert Humphrey.¹³⁴ The staff and contributing writers at *The Miami Herald*, mostly agreed with the city’s interpretation of Jim Morrison, although individually, reporter views were diverse. The newspaper’s articles about The Doors represented the office dynamics of *The Miami Herald* during this time. This study includes discussion about the reporters’ writings and letters to the Editor, as well as opinions of columnists and residents (of Miami and other cities in the U.S.) concerned about the concert and the trial. Boundaries were crossed in regard to who could be a critic: reporters, columnists, students, husbands and wives all included criticism about Jim Morrison and The Doors in their writings. While the articles about Morrison’s concert, charges, and trial were written by men (none warranted becoming front page material, though some appeared on the first page of a section of the newspaper), women wrote news stories about the decency rallies (at times first section page material, but not for the front page) and answered the concerns of those who wrote in to the newspaper. According to former *Miami Herald* staff writer Marjorie Paxson, at the time *The Miami Herald* was unusually progressive for the opportunities it offered women writers.¹³⁵

Criticism and Reporting about the Miami Concert

Staff writers Larry Mahoney and Ray Villwock initiated *The Miami Herald*’s coverage of Morrison. They reported in their article “Disorder Follows Pop Concert” that an “estimated 10,000 young people packed the [Dinner Key Auditorium] to hear the Doors.”¹³⁶ The authors identified Morrison as being “known as the king of “‘orgasmic’ rock.”¹³⁷

¹³³ Merritt, *Knightfall*, 55.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 54–55.

¹³⁵ Marjorie Paxson, “Women in Journalism,” interview by Diane K. Gentry (Muskogee, Okla., 6 April 1991), Session 6, 153, *Washington Press Club Foundation*, <http://wpcf.org/oralhistory/pax6.html> (accessed 4 September 2007), 13 of 31. Paxson worked for *The Miami Herald* from 1956 to 1968. See *ibid.*, Session 6, 154–155 (or 15–16 of 31).

¹³⁶ Larry Mahoney, and Ray Villwock, “Disorder Follows Pop Concert,” *The Miami Herald*, 2 March 1969, 2C.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2C.

The crowd was orderly until Morrison, a wiry 5' 6" dressed in leather pants and slouch hat, appeared and began to whip the crowd up with obscenities and calls for the crowd to come up on stage and join him.¹³⁸

Mahoney and Villwock also reported that the concert did end in a brawl, with Morrison being dragged off stage by police "after the young musician began making obscene gestures" and that forty to sixty people did rush to the stage, an event which was followed by fist fights.¹³⁹

In his autobiography Densmore recalled his fear of the "Dirty Doors" label and explained that Mahoney was one of the *Miami Herald* journalists "who managed to work up the people of Dade County against us."¹⁴⁰ According to Davis' biography, *Jim Morrison: Life, Death, Legend*, Mahoney was a student at Florida State University while Morrison was a student there; he mentioned that Mahoney may have known Morrison.¹⁴¹ Mahoney's own article about the concert appeared a day later. Curiously, the beginning of the article and its title, "Rock Group Fails to Stir a Riot," seemed to contradict much of Mahoney and Villwock's reporting about the brawl (perhaps Mahoney was splitting hairs over brawl versus riot?), and focused on the behavior of the audience (here described as "nearly 12,000 youths), observing that most of the young audience members found Morrison's display "disgusting." Mahoney claimed they resisted the urge from Morrison and the "mesmerizing" guitar to break into a riot. He interviewed Ken Collier, the Dinner Key's part-time owner, who was there the night of the concert. The article opened with "It was the night of the riot that did not happen."¹⁴² Collier claimed that The Doors were attempting to pull the same tactics they used to successfully incite a riot in Phoenix there, and it did not work. Both Collier and police Sergeant Charles Crocker credited the young audience for not breaking into a riot; Crocker observed that Morrison "did his damndest to start a riot and the kids didn't move" and Collier followed up by remarking that "these kids were magnificent; they proved that Miami was too sophisticated for trouble."¹⁴³ He also

¹³⁸ Ibid., 2C.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 2C.

¹⁴⁰ Densmore, *Riders on the Storm* 230.

¹⁴¹ Davis, *Jim Morrison*, 322.

¹⁴² Larry Mahoney, "Rock Group Fails to Stir a Riot," *The Miami Herald*, 3 March 1969, 1B.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 1B.

claimed that there were no arrests, which according to Collier “would have been exactly what Morrison and The Doors were looking for.”¹⁴⁴ Collier then speculated that had the police arrested Morrison at the concert, there would have been a riot.¹⁴⁵

Mahoney’s article recounted details of the concert, including the previous arrangement for their payment. He suggested that Morrison’s appearance, performance, and words were all meant to instigate violence, anarchy, and free love. He added a comparison to “Elvis the Pelvis”:

The Dinner Key exhibition lasted one hour and five minutes. For this, The Doors were paid \$25,000. Morrison sang only one song, and that off-key. For the remainder he grunted and groaned, gyrated and gestured in a manner that made Elvis Presley’s style seem more staid than a Presbyterian preacher’s.¹⁴⁶

Mahoney also reported how Morrison’s words—if not by alcohol then by grand inspiration of Artaud and Brecht—were “inflammatory.” He quoted Morrison as yelling to the crowd, ““You’re all a bunch of slaves. . . . What’re you going to do about it?”” Mahoney added that Morrison also wanted to incite nudity, and quoted him yelling, “Man, I’d like to see a little nakedness around here. Grab your friend and love him!” and “There are no laws! There are no rules!”¹⁴⁷ Davis also described Mahoney’s articles as “inflammatory” and blamed Mahoney for leading what he called a press campaign against Morrison that caused the band’s lead singer to fall into disfavor with local law officials. According to Davis, Mahoney did his own style of investigative reporting by calling the city’s acting police chief and then the Dade County district attorney. Davis posed perhaps one of the questions: “did they know that [Morrison] exposed himself in Coconut Grove?” According to Davis, they were too busy with the 2,500 fans outside the hall to arrest Morrison.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 1B and 5B.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 5B.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 5B.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 5B. Paul Levine quoted Morrison from tape in his article “Jurors Hear Morrison Tape, But No Call to Join in Nudity,” *The Miami Herald*, 28 August 1970, 9C: “Grab your f----- friend and love him.” The spelling out of the offensive word was Levine’s. For further details about the Levine quotation, see the section “*The Miami Herald’s Coverage of Jim Morrison’s Trial*” near the end of this chapter. One recording of the Miami concert showed that Mahoney’s quotation was correct. The recording itself was just a segment of the concert. See The Doors, “*No One Here Gets Out Alive*”: *An Audio Documentary*, Part 3 of 4, Bright Midnight RHM2 7903 (2001), CD 3, Segment 2. The recording included an original 1979 radio program written and hosted by Jim Ladd, who also wrote the first pages of the CD’s liner notes.

¹⁴⁸ Davis, *Jim Morrison*, 322–23. Ian Glass also reported that the police “had their hands full trying to cope with another 2,000 fans trying to get into the auditorium.” See Ian Glass, “Fugitive ‘Door’ Surrenders,” *Miami News*

Davis also mentioned that the FBI dossier on Jim Morrison had the informant's name blacked out, and the narrative of the dossier itself appeared to be based on Mahoney's reporting for *The Miami Herald*. According to Davis, the reason that the FBI was investigating Morrison was that they believed he had made threats against Nixon. Davis explained that other famous and powerful critics of Nixon and the Nixon Administration were targeted then by the FBI's COINTELPRO operation (Davis noted, for example, that "they were already harassing John Lennon").¹⁴⁹ COINTELPRO was the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation's Counter Intelligence Program from 1956 to 1971. It was known to be more concerned with groups like the Weathermen than individuals like Morrison, but COINTELPRO was also interested in groups that advocated peaceful protests like Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference. It was also targeted countercultural groups like the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Black Panthers, both high in numbers and strong in presence in Morrison's Los Angeles.

Mahoney's article clearly described what Morrison appeared to be doing at the concert, described as a combination of offensive behaviors:

It was not meant to be pretty. Morrison appeared to masturbate in full view of his audience, screamed obscenities and exposed himself. He also got violent, slugged several of Thee Image [the Miami Beach concert hall that sponsored the show] and threw one of them off stage before he himself was hurled into the crowd.¹⁵⁰

According to Mahoney, Morrison typically stole the hat of a policeman at most Doors concerts, and this time the officer approached the singer onstage to retrieve his hat. Mahoney explained that there were five arrests, including a man on narcotics who was writhing on the floor, an attendee who was impersonating a constable, another who was leaning on the hood of a moving car, and others for calling the police "pigs."¹⁵¹ Despite these arrests and violent outbreaks, Mahoney reported that all that took place was expected to happen and that the concert ended "with no ill feelings."¹⁵² But he also reported that Police Chief Paul M. Denham was looking for policemen as witnesses so they

Reporter, 4 April 1969, page numbers unavailable; reproduced in Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, 132.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 323.

¹⁵⁰ Mahoney, "Rock Group Fails to Stir a Riot," *The Miami Herald*, 5B.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5B

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 5B.

could issue a warrant against Morrison.¹⁵³ Collier was asked why he invited a group that had been known to start riots elsewhere to the Dinner Key. He explained that students at the University of Miami wanted to see them perform, but when the University invited them, The Doors turned them down in order to get more money from Thee Image. The concert would have taken place at the Convention Hall at Miami Beach. Collier's reason for bringing The Doors to the Dinner Key was missing; it is unclear from the article if that concert in Miami Beach had also fallen through or if the idea of having a Doors concert available to all age groups convinced some not to hold the concert there.¹⁵⁴

Mahoney's next article investigated the Miami public's strong reaction against the concert, especially since it was allowed to take place inside the city's auditorium. He reported that the city was gathering facts and that warrants may be issued for Morrison. He also described Morrison's age and reminded readers where he was from—the latter fact divulged perhaps for effect. Though the reporter was careful to use the word “appeared,” he made the claim that Morrison did expose himself, implying that he saw the “lewd and lascivious” act himself:

Morrison, 25, and a native Floridian, screamed obscenities from the bandstand, appeared to masturbate before his audience, exposed himself and did his best to incite chaos in the auditorium, which was wall-to-wall youths. . . .¹⁵⁵

The article that appeared before this one mentioned the same violent occurrences; however, Mahoney remarked that everything took place in front of 31 off-duty Miami policemen, but there was no attempt to arrest Morrison or to report the occurrences to the city police. George MacLean, who leased the Dinner Key, took full responsibility for booking the band. He mentioned that his decision was based on the number of albums they sold.¹⁵⁶

Stephanie Harrington's *Village Voice* article appeared concurrently to Mahoney's articles. She had also reported about the Miami Concert (her count was 8,000 teenagers), the behavior of Morrison, the audience, and the policemen there, and quoted Collier.¹⁵⁷ Her article explained more clearly than Mahoney's that Collier was just one of the concert's sponsors and a partner in Thee Image (according to Harrington, Thee Image was Miami's answer to

¹⁵³ Ibid., 5B.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 5B.

¹⁵⁵ Larry Mahoney, “Public Reacts to Rock Show,” *The Miami Herald*, 4 March 1969, 2B.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 2B.

¹⁵⁷ Stephanie Harrington, “It's Hard to Light a Fire in Miami,” *Village Voice*, (1969): pages unavailable; reproduced in Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, 129.

the Fillmore). She also gave much more detail about the concert itself. In her article, Collier mentioned that The Doors contract for the concert required two six packs of beer—not hard liquor—to be ready in Morrison’s dressing room by the time he arrived. She reported that Collier disputed a published story about the money dispute without mentioning specifically the title of the publication. According to Harrington, that Collier denied that there was a percentage deal (the story about the percentage deal appeared in *The Miami Herald*). She also explained that Morrison told everyone that he wanted to have a good time and that the one fact upon which everyone who was there could agree was that Morrison was clearly not exhibiting his best showmanship:

In fact the one point on which all versions of the gospel agree is that until its (so to speak) climax, the program was pretty dreary, consisting mainly of a not impressively coherent Morrison (“The Doors could barely find the microphone,” complained one erstwhile teenage fan who was there) reciting bits of poetry (his own, presumably) and fooling around with snatches of songs like “The End,” “The Snake,” “Touch Me,” and “Light My Fire.” But evidently neither the Freudian symbolism nor the invitation produced sufficient response for Morrison who then proceeded to strike his own match.¹⁵⁸

According to Harrington, Dinner Key’s part-time owner Ken Collier mentioned that he saw Morrison reach into his pants and fondle himself and that is when he came on stage to take the microphone away from him. When Morrison pushed Collier’s brother, Harrington reported, Collier unplugged the instruments and kicked in the drums.

Harrington’s descriptive language was also more colorful than Mahoney’s. Throughout her story she interwove the thread about peace and love. She described how the crowd waved forward when Morrison grabbed the microphone back from Collier and then how they receded back when Collier gave the peace symbol and deterred the audience from joining Morrison on stage: “Like two moon men Collier and Morrison proceeded to hypnotize the sea of youth before them, the one drawing the waves up, the other causing them to fall back.”¹⁵⁹

Following up on whether or not The Doors would be welcome to complete their concert schedule at other Florida venues, Mahoney and fellow staff writer Joe Averill questioned if Jacksonville would allow The Doors to stage their concert after Miami. According to them, state Representative John Crider responded to such a possibility by sending the Mayor of Jacksonville a hand-delivered letter about the Miami concert and remarked, “I will do everything within my power to keep this man Morrison from appearing before our young people.”¹⁶⁰ This

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 129.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 129.

¹⁶⁰ Larry Mahoney and Joe Averill, “Will Doors Open in Jacksonville on Sunday Night?,” *The Miami Herald*, 5 March 1969, 2B. This time the authors mentioned that the Dinner Key audience was 11,000 young people from Miami.

time, The Doors were scheduled to perform at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum, a huge sports arena in Jacksonville that had a seating capacity between 7,800 to 11,500 people. The article repeated the details of Mahoney's article previously mentioned here. Mahoney and Averill reported that the Crime Commission of Greater Miami issued a statement that demanded that Morrison as well as others involved in the performance be charged for lewd and obscene acts: "The actions of the bandleader (Morrison) as reported in the public press were lewd, obscene, and therefore illegal . . . the entire performance remains as a blot on this community."¹⁶¹

Mahoney and Averill also discussed the issue about money in this article. They interviewed Jimmy Murdock, a publicity man for Jacksonville show producer Gary Lashinsky. He thought that Morrison's display at the Miami concert happened because The Doors were angry as they believed they were underpaid. His theory was that they wanted to anger and hurt the Miami promoters.¹⁶² Collier agreed. The article ended by quoting Murdock's criticism of Morrison and The Doors, an attack that singled out Morrison and must have contributed to subsequent difficulties for The Doors to have appeared in concerts in the U.S. just after Miami: "In my opinion . . . they shouldn't appear anywhere in the U.S. ever again because Morrison is unable to guarantee any promoter or any group that he will behave like a human being."¹⁶³

The Miami Herald also ran an editorial article about the Miami concert that criticized Morrison and the role of off-duty policemen working for private employers. The writer supported the right of taxpayers "to insist that the auditorium not be used by individuals who would foment disorder or engage in obscene conduct before an audience including thousands of teenagers."¹⁶⁴ The editorial article appeared on the same page as a teenager's letter to the editor. The letter, like the article, questioned why the police did not stop or arrest Morrison. Linda Campbell, a senior at Palmetto High School, was so disgusted by what she saw on stage, as well as Morrison's own actions and words that she stayed for the entire concert just to see what the consequences would be. Half burned about not getting her money back after the Doors failed to "play one good song all the way through" and apparently unaware that one should expect the unexpected from Morrison at a Doors' concert, Campbell remarked, "Sex education is not

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 2B.

¹⁶² Ibid., 2B.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 2B.

¹⁶⁴ Anon., "Disgrace at Dinner Key," under "Editorials," *The Miami Herald*, 6 March 1969, 6A.

taught in too many places. Why was it displayed in Dinner Key Auditorium owned by the City of Miami?”¹⁶⁵

Campbell also criticized Collier. She claimed that he described the Miami teens who attended the concert as wonderful because they did not ask for their money back just after the concert.¹⁶⁶

A few days later another letter to the editor praised Mahoney’s reporting and described their child’s experience at the concert. Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Birzon criticized the State’s Attorney’s Office, the Office of the Miami Crime Commission, and the Office of the Mayor for using bureaucratic red tape while dealing with complaints made to them about the concert. They wondered what they could do to avoid other concerts like the Miami one; they became angry when one official replied that they should keep their children at home. They also criticized how the police were praised for showing restraint by not arresting people at the concert.¹⁶⁷

Larry Arem of the University of Miami wrote a letter regarding The Doors and Morrison, first criticizing his own generation and their complaints about how their ancestors (e.g., their parents) had ruined the world. He also commented about their reaction against the establishment. His main question, however, was why 12,000 of his peers were willing to pay a concert ticket at \$12 per couple while people are starving in the Republic of Biafra.¹⁶⁸ Arem mentioned that the money would be more meaningful as a contribution to the United Fund or to a religious welfare organization that makes efforts to improve the world. Using The Doors for his own soapbox, Arem concluded his letter by praising Morrison especially:

I believe that Mr. Morrison, whether he realizes it or not, has taught us a lesson. I can’t understand why people are attacking his actions. The reason they went to the concert was to see The Doors. So, not only did they see what they expected but Mr. Morrison showed the guests a bit extra, at no extra cost. Surely, people didn’t go just to hear The Doors since one can hear them on radio, records, or tape at any hour. They went to see The Doors and Mr. Morrison showed them how stupid they were. I applaud him.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Linda Campbell, “‘Grossed Out’ by The Doors,” under “Letters to the Editor,” ed. Don Shoemaker, *The Miami Herald*, 6 March 1969, 6A.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 6A.

¹⁶⁷ Dr. Ralph Birzon, and Mrs. Birzon, “Too Much ‘Restraint’ Shown in ‘Doors’ Case,” under “Letters to the Editor,” ed. Don Shoemaker, *The Miami Herald*, 9 March 1969, 6A.

¹⁶⁸ The Republic of Biafra was a Nigerian state that had just a brief existence, from 30 May 1967 to 15 January 1970. At the time, war and the opposing Nigerian army (which blocked food supplies, medicine, and other kinds of outside aid) had already taken their toll—causing famine and illness there. Worldwide criticism of the Nigerian government and offers of aid by various countries convinced Nigeria to allow aid to reach Biafra for just a couple weeks in 1969. Ian Glass in the *Miami News Reporter* also mentioned that tickets were \$6 or \$7 per person. See Glass, “Fugitive ‘Door’ Surrenders,” *Miami News Reporter*, in Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, 132.

¹⁶⁹ Larry Arem, “Money for Doors, Not Biafrans,” under “Letters to the Editor,” ed. Don Shoemaker, *The Miami Herald*, 12 March 1969, 6A.

Mahoney's article, "Rock Singer Charged," appeared on the following page of Campbell's letter. Mahoney described the details of the six warrants: five misdemeanors including "two counts of indecent exposure, two counts of open public profanity and one of public drunkenness"; one count for indecent exposure and simulating masturbating, and oral copulation in public. According to Mahoney, the combined maximum prison sentence would be for three years and 150 days in Raiford Prison (the Florida State Prison was and still is a maximum security correctional facility that houses Florida's most dangerous inmates). Mahoney quoted Joe Durant, an assistant to State Attorney Richard E. Gerstein, on the State Attorney's Office's intention to request the maximum sentence for Morrison. Mahoney added that the Jacksonville concert was cancelled and gave more details about the Miami Concert by mentioning that some of the hundreds of youths there scaled the auditorium to enter through second story windows, without paying and there were 2,000 other youngsters outside the auditorium who were also trying to get inside.¹⁷⁰

In his column in the *Miami Herald*, staff writer Charles Whited described in jest The Doors as a teen rock group that "pointed the way to new levels of taste in the performing arts."¹⁷¹ Whited's article "Get Rich Quick: Be Obscene" used the Miami Concert to illustrate how anyone can attain wealth (and fame) in this world by being disgusting:

1. Appear onstage looking like you've just joy popped on half a bottle of pills, gyrating and screaming obscenities;
2. Make wild, ear-shattering sounds with thunder bass guitars and microphones on full volume, at the threshold of pain;
3. Display your private parts, with appropriate gestures;
4. Start a riot.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Larry Mahoney, "Rock Singer Charged," *The Miami Herald*, 6 March 1969, 1B.

¹⁷¹ Charles Whited, "Get Rich Quick: Be Obscene," under the column "Charles Whited," *The Miami Herald*, 6 March 1969, 1B. Whited addressed responses to his column and included a few of them in his column that appeared just a few days later. Mrs. Betty Kerr complained to Whited not about the concert itself or about the issues that surrounded it, but rather about Whited's pessimism. She remarked that "such reporting contributes to delinquency and sickness." In contrast Mrs. D. Zeigler agreed with Whited's column. See Whited, Charles. "'Door' Reaction," under the column "Charles Whited," *The Miami Herald*, 11 March 1969, 1B. Whited would later become the biographer for John S. Knight, under whom he worked while at *The Miami Herald*, and author of the biography *Knight*, which was published in 1988.

¹⁷² Whited, "Get Rich Quick," 1B.

Dismayed with how so many people are “hung up” with paying the mortgage and raising children properly, Whited imagined that The Doors could set an example for just about anybody: “If The Doors represent what’s ahead for America, just think of the possibilities. Instead of dinner and a movie, you can go to a neighborhood orgy.”¹⁷³

Announced under the headlines ““Offensive Entertainment”” and “Key West PTA Panel Scores ‘Doors,’” the Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers in the Dade–Monroe District met to support a resolution to allow a review board of teachers and parents to screen out potentially offensive acts. They believed that they were censoring performers to protect young people and that “Morrison had been soundly criticized for shouting obscenities from the stage and for making lewd gestures during the performance.”¹⁷⁴

The Doors’ Miami concert was blamed for the close scrutiny and cancellation of other concerts. For instance, in his favorable article about Blood, Sweat, and Tears, who were to perform at the Dinner Key after “the cultural disaster,” Fred Sherman remarked they would be watched by “the arbiters of decency.”¹⁷⁵ He nevertheless recommended the concert to both parents and teenagers. Mahoney reported that an Easter religious rock concert was banned from the Dinner Key “because of the wild exhibition staged there March 1 by The Doors and Jim Morrison, ‘King of the Orgasmic Rock.’” George MacLean, who leased the auditorium from the city decided to deny permission to the promoters of “The Expanded Spiritual Musical Concert” because he believed, according to Mahoney, that even though they (referring to the list of performers, including The Grateful Dead, Country Joe and the Fish, Creedence Clearwater Revival, the Steve Miller Band, and Sweetwater) did not have the same reputation as the Doors, he feared they were going to have a three–day concert (“happening”) that would be too similar to the previous Doors’ concert: “It’s this underground pop music. The similarity of music and dress of the performers was just too close to that of The Doors.” Anthony Casey, (president of the concert’s sponsor, Together Productions) replied that the show did not “have anybody like Jim Morrison.” On a separate note, Mahoney asked Morrison’s agent if cancellations of The Doors concerts hurt the group. The agent said yes and no.¹⁷⁶ *Miami Herald* staff writer

¹⁷³ Ibid., 1B.

¹⁷⁴ Anon., “Key West PTA Panel Scores ‘Doors,’” *The Miami Herald*, 7 March 1969, 6F.

¹⁷⁵ Fred Sherman, “Rock Band at Beach Tonight,” *The Miami Herald*, 20 March 1969, 6F.

¹⁷⁶ Larry Mahoney, “Concert of Religion and Rock is Banned,” *The Miami Herald*, 18 March 1969, 1B. According to Mahoney, the concerts cancelled included Philadelphia, Jacksonville, Cincinnati and others. Easy distribution of and access to drugs at rock concerts in general were other reasons cited for concert cancellations. For example, see Anon., “Forbidden Rock Festival Held; MD Counts 1,000 ‘Bad Trips,’” *The Miami Herald*, 2 August 1970, 28A.

Margaret Carroll reported later that Casey (or Cacace, as the name appeared in this article) was arrested on a drug charge. She also referred to The Doors' concert and MacLean's comments about "'the same type' people as The Doors."¹⁷⁷ In another article Carroll and Georgia Marsh reported that Together Productions lost its case to hold the concert. The authors (or MacLean?) described these bands as psychedelic rock groups. Though Judge Harold Vann was reported to have the opinion that The Grateful Dead and seven other groups were "innocent of any riot-causing melodies," his decision favored MacLean because a clause in Together's sublease required that the groups scheduled to perform needed to have a "high moral character."¹⁷⁸

The Indecency of Decency Exposed

Aside from the warrants and questions about the policemen at the concert, *The Miami Herald* covered the Clean Teen Rallies inspired by the Doors' Miami conference. Jean Wardlow's article featured the faces of four teens and a Catholic priest and described the March 23d Orange Bowl rally against obscenity, smut, and other forms of indecency. According to Nixon Smiley, Wardlow was a "promising woman writer" in the 1960s who studied under Fred Shaw, at the time a well known professor of creative writing at the University of Miami.¹⁷⁹ Wardlow reported that the rally began with a Catholic group, but she also explained that Archbishop Coleman F. Carroll and others wanted to communicate that the rally was really a nondenominational teenage movement. One of the teen organizers, Mike Levesque, became angry about how teenagers were being exploited at the time "in sex, in clothing, on TV, on the radio." Wardlow and Levesque mention The Doors (alluding to Morrison) in the article:

When Mike asks, is all this going to stop?
Now, *answered* some youngsters who, with Mike, got hot under the collar recently about what had gone on at The Doors' concert with one of the entertainer's indecent exposure.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Margaret Carroll, "Rockers' Concert Is Barred," *The Miami Herald*, 20 March 1969, 2B.

¹⁷⁸ Margaret Carroll, and Georgia Marsh. "'Rockers' Concert OK—Where?," *The Miami Herald*, 22 March 1969, 2B.

¹⁷⁹ Smiley, *Knights of the Fourth Estate*, 276. Smiley also discussed the role of women writers at *The Miami Herald*, particularly during the late 1950s to mid 1960s: "for the most part, the era of the 'woman' writer, in contrast to the strictly 'male' writer, was disappearing. 'Women's Liberation,' together with the desexing of hair styles and dress, would take care of that. An era would come when the males, not the women, would 'cry' over stories."

¹⁸⁰ Jean Wardlow, "Clean Teens Rally for Scour Power," under "Local News," *The Miami Herald*, 9 March 1969, 1B.

According to Wardlow, Mike mentioned that the rally would feature entertainment (The Rhodes Brothers and The Impact of Brass as well as other bands and entertainers were expected to accept invitations to perform at the Orange Bowl):

“We want to present music in accordance with our views, not what happened at The Doors’ concert. We feel we were being taken advantage of there. That’s not the kind of thing we want. We don’t want filth, obscenity, corruption in any areas and we feel it’s time somebody took a stand to show how the majority of teenagers feel about it.”¹⁸¹

Within days after this article appeared, Mahoney reported that other “show business personalities” were to appear at the rally. Mahoney as well as Wardlow mentioned names that were to appear on the show bill: Jackie Gleason (a comedian well known for womanizing, alcoholic binges, and offensive language) and Anita Bryant (a former second runner-up Miss America Beauty Pageant winner and singer, who at the time was already known as an anti-gay activist) were the most famous to join the Teen Decency Bill; the show was also to feature, in addition to the Rhodes Brothers and The Impact of Brass, Ted Mack, Roslyn Kind (Barbra Streisand’s sister), Frank Hubble and the Village Stompers, the Miami Drum and Bugle Corps, The Faculty, Barry Smith, The Lettermen and Sing Out, Miami.¹⁸² Local outrage over The Doors’ Miami concert was credited as the impetus for the rally. Mahoney also reported briefly again about how the local outrage over Morrison was becoming national outrage, the willingness of several cities to cancel “his potentially-riotous shows,” the warrants for his arrest, and the possibility that he would have to serve time at Raiford.¹⁸³

A concerned parent, “43 and Striving,” also sent a letter to Eleanor Hart, whose “Column with a Heart” appeared in the “For and about Women” section of the Wednesday, 19 March 1969 *Miami Herald*. The letters that

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 1B.

¹⁸² Larry Mahoney, “Gleason, Anita Top Teen Decency Bill,” *The Miami Herald*, 12 March 1969, 11A. Paul Anka was later added to the list. See Anon., “Clean Teens Can Use O[range] B[owl],” *The Miami Herald*, 14 March 1969, 4B. See also Jean Wardlow, “Decency Costs Money, Clean Teens Find Out,” *The Miami Herald*, 18 March 1969, 2B. Rally originators were apparently able to get Wardlow at *The Miami Herald* to inform readers where they can send money to fund their cause. Wardlow also stressed by quoting rally originators and the adults who helped them that the movement was originated and organized entirely by teenagers. She added The Lettermen to this list in “Teens Beat Obstacles, Decency Rally Ready,” *The Miami Herald*, 22 March 1969, 2B. Here she also mentioned that the organizers received support from various religious leaders in the area and that one stage would be used for entertainment and another for speeches. Ted Mack was added to the growing list of celebrities in Jean Wardlow, “Teens Stage Rally for Decency Today,” *The Miami Herald*, 23 March 1969, 1A.

¹⁸³ Mahoney, “Gleason, Anita,” 11A. Wardlow later reported that The Doors had been making news because two of their promoters sued public officials for \$1 million for illegally cancelling a concert scheduled for 30 March 1969 in Cincinnati. Jean Wardlow, “Teens Preparing for ‘Decency Day,’” under “Rally at Orange Bowl,” *The Miami Herald*, 16 March 1969, 1B.

appeared in Hart's column supported the Decency Rally, and Hart reminded her readers about the upcoming event. Another letter from "Winter Tourist" wished to make clear that parents should attend rock concerts to come to understand that not all rock and roll bands are the same (like The Doors), and a third letter from the president of Melbourne Teen Town mentioned "that The Doors are a bad risk." The last was within the context that one could not possibly know if the band, nationally known or otherwise, would be "decent and law-abiding" onstage. The president of Melbourne Teen Town also explained that the efforts of Teen Town are for recreation (implying that the dances they plan keep teenagers off the streets).¹⁸⁴ According to Marjorie Paxson, who worked at *The Miami Herald*

during the time, Hart's column was actually ahead of its time for an advice column in a women's section of a newspaper: it was a locally written feature that dealt directly and indirectly with the sexual revolution, birth control, marital issues, dieting, mental health, and hippies.¹⁸⁵

Just the day before the rally, an editorial supporting the rally appeared in *The Miami Herald*. Informing readers that the teenagers organizing and attending the rally wish to inform the world that they do not want filth in entertainment, the editorial describes the rally as a potentially constructive and entertaining event for teenagers:

The plan for the rally began as an answer to the Doors performance March 1. Call it protest, if you like. We consider it a kind of protest which should be heard more often—an uprising of the vast majority which usually is silent, speaking out affirmatively, not negatively.¹⁸⁶

The local news featured photographs of the preparations for the rally (at this point called "Decency Day" or "D-Day"). Writers continued to note that the rally originated as an outcome of the community's reaction to the "wild performance staged" by The Doors.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Eleanor Hart, et al., "Decency Rally May Point The Way to Better Things," letters in "Column with a Heart," under "For and about Women," *The Miami Herald*, 19 March 1969, 1C.

¹⁸⁵ Paxson, "Women in Journalism," interview by Gentry, Session 6, 154 (or 15 of 31). Paxson added that Eleanor Hart was "a very imaginative person" with her column. She remarked that the women writers had a number of strategies for dealing with issues that concerned them, even when they were unable to address them in their own writing: "[*The Miami Herald*] had a great deal of space . . . so that if outside articles were written that we thought would be good for the paper, we would run them. We ran, for instance, parts of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique*." See *ibid.*, Session 6, 154 (or 15 of 31).

¹⁸⁶ Anon., "Teens to Rally For, Not Against," under "Editorials," *The Miami Herald*, 22 March 1969, 6A.

¹⁸⁷ See Anon., "Decency Day," photograph that appeared on page 1C in the "Local News" in *The Miami Herald*, 23 March 1969. In the same issue, it was reported that a judge was to rule on the Cincinnati case brought forward by promoters after The Doors concert was cancelled there. See Anon., "Judge to Rule on 'Doors' Injunction," under "Local News," *The Miami Herald*, 23 March 1969, 4C.

Wardlow reported that 30,000 people attended the rally. Wardlow and Mahoney's articles that covered the event featured photographs of Anita Bryant and Jackie Gleason greeting the attendees, riding on antique touring cars into the Orange Bowl, as well as a photograph of flag bearing adults and teenagers—one turtle-neck clad girl holding a "Down with obscenity" sign. Headlines stressed a sense of success: "'Decency Rally' Rattles Orange Bowl to Rafters"; "'Should Do This Every Six Months'"; "Orange Bowl Trembles as Teenagers Stage Roaring Rally for 'Decency.'"¹⁸⁸

After the event, the "Letters to the Editor" section of the newspaper included letters for and against the rally; most, however, praised *The Miami Herald's* coverage. None examined the surrounding issues of censorship. Dorothy Moldenhauer credited the press for the rally's success:

What comes to mind is the magnitude of the power of the press without which this mass meeting would never have been a success. The effectiveness of the news media in their encouragement of decency and good citizenship as compared to coverage of the shoddy side of youth groups about which the less said the better proved a most satisfying contrast.¹⁸⁹

Mary F. Keith of Baltimore described the rally as "the most heartwarming sight to the people of this country."

R. Faria of Palm Beach Shores also praised the rally and *The Miami Herald's* coverage of it.¹⁹⁰ Though these Letters to the Editor were supposed to include letters against the event, the balance clearly tipped in favor of the rally.

Timothy Greenfield did not criticize the rally in his letter, but rather Jackie Gleason, who "returns to the stage after the half-naked girls have advertised dog food" and "has in his hand a coffee cup 'supposedly' filled with booze": the Great One being himself a *decent role model*.¹⁹¹ Greenfield did criticize the audience in passing, remarking that if they thought Gleason was an appropriate representative for decency then "those who donned American flags and

¹⁸⁸ See Jean Wardlow, "Decency Rally Rattles Orange Bowl to Rafters," *The Miami Herald*, 24 March 1969, 1A and 25A. See also Larry Mahoney, "'Should Do This Every Six Months,'" *The Miami Herald*, 24 March 1969, 25A.

¹⁸⁹ Dorothy Moldenhauer, "Great Coverage of Rally at Bowl," under "Letters to the Editor," and "The Rally for Decency: For and Against," *The Miami Herald*, 29 March 1969, 6A.

¹⁹⁰ See Mary F. Keith, "Only Way is Up for Entertainment," under "Letters to the Editor," and "The Rally for Decency: For and Against," *The Miami Herald*, 29 March 1969, 6A, and R. Faria, "The Best News Around Lately," under "Letters to the Editor," and "The Rally for Decency: For and Against," *The Miami Herald*, 29 March 1969, 6A.

¹⁹¹ Timothy Greenfield, "How Sweet It is Saturday Night," under "Letters to the Editor," and "The Rally for Decency: For and Against," *The Miami Herald*, 29 March 1969, 6A. *The Miami Herald* often reported about Gleason's connections to the city. For example, see Jack Anderson, "The Honeymooners return to Florida," *Miami Herald*, 15 September 1970, B1.

G.O.P. sweaters must have had flasks in their back pockets.”¹⁹² In his long letter against the rally, Virgil Hart observed that the rally had “all the fanfare of a Barnum and Bailey circus” and wondered about the organizers’ message since it became so intertwined with other messages as well: the rally was a forum for those against obscenity; it also had, according to Hart, “tossed in” messages about patriotism, religion, and politics.¹⁹³ He mentioned that The Doors performance was “the tempest in the teapot” for the rally. He also asked about what could possibly determine the decent from the indecent:

Who sets the demarcation line of propriety between the delectable leggy Peggy Lewis in the don’t-bend-over skirt at the Orange Bowl and Jim Morrison’s manipulations at Dinner Key? After all, Peggy did bend over.¹⁹⁴

Sherry Good also asked who should determine what is decent in her letter that pointed out that there were many adults at the rally and that many of the teenagers went because their parents made them attend.¹⁹⁵ Michael F. Jimenez of Hartford, Connecticut, briefly alluded to The Doors as “a rather mediocre musical group” and questioned the success of the rally.¹⁹⁶ He pointed out that their zeal for decency led to “scapegoating” and they should focus more on the real obscenities of this country: “racial bigotry and intolerance, the reprehensible poverty in this land of plenty, the abuse of our natural resources, the misguided foreign policy. . . .”¹⁹⁷ Interestingly, these letters were on the same page and juxtaposed against letters praising *The Miami Herald* for refusing to carry advertisements run by theatres that show “sick movies.”

Wardlow did mention the diversity of the teenage audience. The only pickets mentioned outside the rally were ones that appeared to not be protesting the event: hippies and drug addicts ““going all the way for Christ,”” still with long hair and receiving “friendly looks from a squad of policemen.”¹⁹⁸ An editorial that appeared a day after these articles reaffirmed the success of the rally. According to the article, the rally’s message was that

¹⁹² Ibid., 6A.

¹⁹³ Virgil Hart, “What Did It All Prove?,” under “Letters to the Editor,” and “The Rally for Decency: For and Against,” *The Miami Herald*, 29 March 1969, 6A.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 6A.

¹⁹⁵ Sherry Good, “Who is to Say What is Decent?,” under “Letters to the Editor,” and “The Rally for Decency: For and Against,” *The Miami Herald*, 29 March 1969, 6A.

¹⁹⁶ Michael F. Jimenez, “Real Obscenities are Overlooked,” under “Letters to the Editor,” and “The Rally for Decency: For and Against,” *The Miami Herald*, 29 March 1969, 6A.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 6A.

¹⁹⁸ Mahoney, ““Should Do This Every Six Months,”” 25A.

teenagers at the time wanted modern entertainment, but without the filth.¹⁹⁹ Afterwards, the prominent teen organizer (Levesque) received an outpouring of letters to stage similar rallies in other cities, an invitation to appear on the *Today* show, and was one of the recipients of a letter of praise from President Nixon.²⁰⁰ *Miami Herald* radio and television editor Jack E. Anderson discussed the appearance on the *Today* show before it took place. Anderson was already a controversial but respected investigative reporter and columnist. He later earned a Pulitzer Prize in 1972 for his report that the Nixon administration secretly sided with Pakistan in its war with India; he would also investigate the Watergate Scandal and publish the secret transcripts of the Watergate grand jury. Here he informed readers again about the rally being instigated by The Doors:

Morrison tried unsuccessfully to provoke a riot and broke into a series of obscene gestures. It set the legitimate rock music cause back locally almost to the pre-*Hair* era.
The incident by now has been belabored to the point of tedium.²⁰¹

The rest of the article focused on The Doors and Morrison. Anderson criticized Collier and Thee Image, explaining that Collier knew better and took a risk with The Doors. He claimed that he was told (by who?) that Thee Image was “a gaudy, psychedelically painted center of overwhelming sound.” He mentioned that a friend there told him “that if any of the recorded underground platters have tainted lyrics you can’t hear them anyway over the noise.”²⁰² He also explained that Collier outbid the University of Miami to get The Doors, who were especially popular among the young, to play at the Dinner Key. Anderson was curious about several questions that remained unanswered about the issues surrounding the Miami concert, including “why Morrison and The Doors lost their cool.”²⁰³ He concluded,

¹⁹⁹ Anon., “Away We Go, Decently,” under “Editorials,” *The Miami Herald*, 25 March 1969, 6A.

²⁰⁰ Anon., “White House Letter Comes for Clean Teen,” *The Miami Herald*, 27 March 1969, 2C. It was later reported that Miami Rabbi Irving Lehrman would present a speech at a synagogue in Miami Beach that would call the decency rally “a wonderful thing” and would draw connections to Nixon’s remark that “the greatest crisis facing our nation is a spiritual and moral one.” See Anon., “Teens Decency Rally Draws Rabbi’s Praise,” *The Miami Herald*, 28 March 1969, 4C. An article about the *Today* show appearance, written for the Associated Press in *The Miami Herald*, described the national attention the rally received, how it had become an impetus for other rallies against decency in the U.S., and quoted Nixon’s letter of appreciation to Levesque. See Associated Press, “Decency Rally sparks National Drive,” *The Miami Herald*, 29 March 1969, B1.

²⁰¹ Jack E. Anderson, “Decency Teens On Today’s *Today* Show,” *The Miami Herald*, 28 March 1969, 2B.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 2B.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 2B.

What provoked the bad scene at Dinner Key? Were they sore at Collier and his associates? Wasn't the money what they had been promised? Collier and his brother were roughed up in the mêlée. What brought all that on, besides the group's unhappiness with having their microphone cords disconnected.

I still don't completely understand how Collier and company got their rear ends caught in The Doors.²⁰⁴

Mahoney also reported about a warrant issued for a seventh charge, unlawful flight to avoid prosecution. Morrison, however, was on tour with The Doors and was unaware of any legal problems resulting after the Miami concert. Police did not arrest him, members of the band, or anyone else involved in the performance during or after the concert. Mahoney described Morrison's performance as "evoking the wrath of much of the community."²⁰⁵ He explained that by the end of March the warrants remained unserved because Morrison and The Doors had been to the Caribbean and returned to an undisclosed location in the U.S. Max Fink, their Beverley Hills lawyer, criticized the charges by remarking that Miami's reaction to the concert as well as international reaction to it had been "blown out of proportion" as had the reaction the Miami community had to the concert. He asked if its residents were at all aware of theatre today. He concluded that considering the kinds of shows that took place at the time, The Doors' Miami concert could not have contained any obscenity.²⁰⁶

The Miami Herald's Coverage of Jim Morrison's Trial

As the 10 August 1969 court date approached, *The Miami Herald's* coverage again shifted its focus to Morrison. According to the column "The Tip Off," an early strategy of The Doors' lawyers was to have contemporary films shown to the jury. These films included *Jag är nyfiken—en film i gult*, a Swedish film directed by Vilgot Sjöman (known as *I am Curious (Yellow)* in the U.S., released in Sweden in 1967, and released in the U.S. in 1969), the *Woodstock* documentary (1969), and Allen Funt's *What Do You Say to a Naked Lady?* (1969). These films and the trial were called "X-rated." The Doors' lawyers wanted the films to be admissible in court to show

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 2B.

²⁰⁵ Mahoney, Larry, "Doors' Singer Faces Seventh Charge in Miami," *The Miami Herald*, 25 March 1969, 3B.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 3B. Morrison had apparently paid the bond to be released while awaiting trial. See Associated Press, "Rock Singer Release on \$5,000 Bond," the *Los Angeles Times*, April 1969, page numbers unavailable; reproduced as "Rock Singer Released on \$5,000 Bond," in Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, 132. According to the unsigned article, Morrison surrendered to the FBI "on a Miami lewd and lascivious charge." It also reported that the FBI added the charge of "unlawful flight to avoid arrest."

the jury that they represented ““contemporary moral standards.””²⁰⁷ At the time, *The Miami Herald* itself was also chock full of advertisements for films in the mainstream with hippie or drug culture themes like Hy Averback’s *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (1968), Joseph McGrath’s *The Magic Christian* (1969), and Mark Robson’s *Valley of the Dolls* (1967), as well as adults only films like Paul Hunt’s *You* (1968), in addition to far less risqué films in the mainstream, local vaudeville and burlesque shows.²⁰⁸ Of the last, one particular advertisement stands out: a local revue, *Femmes de Fantasia*, took place at Miami’s “world famous” Eden Roc. The advertisement informed that the show possessed “the excitement of *Hair*” and “The Wildness of *Oh, Calcutta*.”²⁰⁹

A large picture of a bearded Morrison with Manzarek and Krieger appeared on the first page of Section B in the 11 August 1970 *Miami Herald*. According to the caption, Morrison is the one facing the charges. All three were casually dressed, as staff writer Paul Levine points out. Levine was a 21-year-old court reporter who graduated from Penn State University with a degree in journalism just a week before he started working for *The Miami Herald*. He had never been in a courtroom before.²¹⁰ After writing about the trial, he went to The University of Miami Law School. Levine is known today as a prolific and award winning author of his bestselling Jake Lassiter novels and for the critically acclaimed *9 Scorpions* (1999) and *Solomon vs. Lord* (2005). He wrote *The Miami Herald*’s coverage of the trial and made radio reports of it.²¹¹ He reported that the trial had been delayed.²¹² He mentioned that Morrison was accompanied by The Doors, their publicist, and two lawyers (one was attorney

²⁰⁷ Anon., “Movies Rated ‘X’ May Enter Trial of Rock Musicians,” under “The Tip Off,” *The Miami Herald*, 2 August 1970, 34A.

²⁰⁸ *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* starred Peter Sellers. *The Magic Christian* starred Sellers and Ringo Starr, had a script written by Graham Chapman and John Cleese (just before they were united with Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin on the BBC television show *Monty Python’s Flying Circus*), and was based on a book by Terry Southern, who was previously a co-writer with Stanley Kubrick of the film script for *Dr Strangelove, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. The film *You* featured “Feel-A-Vision” and had “no holds barred” concerning obscenity and nudity.

²⁰⁹ The advertisement appeared, for example, in *The Miami Herald*, 5 August 1970, 7C.

²¹⁰ Paul Levine, message under “Disorder in the Court,” *Naked Authors.com*, http://www.nakedauthors.com/archive/2007_02_01_archive.html (accessed on 7 September 2007). On this blog, he recalled his own inexperience as a court reporter, “A prosecutor took pity, showed me around, and taught me a few Latin expressions. (‘Mero Motu,’ it turns out, is not a businessman’s greeting in Tokyo, but rather an act undertaken on the court’s own motion).”

²¹¹ See Rockmine, “The Doors: Tape List,” in *Rockmine: The Doors*, <http://www.rockmine.com/DoorsIC.html> (accessed on 7 September 2007).

²¹² Paul Levine, “Doors’ Singer’s Case Given Second Billing,” *The Miami Herald*, 11 August 1970, 1B.

Max Fink, best known as a Beverly Hills celebrity divorce attorney). Ian Glass identified the publicist as Mike Gershman in his *Miami News* article about the trial. Gershman confirmed that he was there with The Doors in his article that appeared just afterwards in the magazine *Rock*.²¹³ Criminal Court Judge Murray Goodman was appointed to the case, which he postponed to the next day. Levine's report could be perceived as cameos of the lawyers, the publicist, and Morrison: the lawyers wanted the trial to take place immediately; the publicist and Morrison apparently took the situation less seriously than what would be expected at a hearing. The publicist was interested in getting coverage of the trial on network television. Morrison smoked, talked to fans in the corridor of the Metro Justice Building, and according to Levine, did not speak above a whisper. Recalling the Miami concert, Morrison being called the "King of Orgasmic Rock" and his earlier connection to Florida (he was once a Florida State University student), Levine quoted Morrison's sarcasm about Miami: "I get a real good feeling from Miami."²¹⁴ Levine mentioned that Fink predicted the trial to last six or seven weeks and that during that time he would show that Morrison's performance did not "offend the 'contemporary moral standards of the community.'" Morrison, however, was quoted that "the significant issue is artistic freedom of expression."²¹⁵

Levine later reported that Goodman's courtroom was too small for the many Doors fans who wanted to see Morrison. According to Levine, the room was just big enough for lawyers to begin the process of selecting a jury for the trial. He described the process itself as grueling since the state used five out of its six challenges, Morrison's lawyers used two of its six, and Goodman excused six more.²¹⁶ Levine reported that some of the teeny boppers were lucky enough to see Morrison's poem "An American Prayer" (bound in hardcover) as it was passed around by the publicist to newsmen just outside the courtroom. He was showing Morrison's admirers that the poem was "not unlike the lyrics to the musical *Hair*."²¹⁷ Meanwhile, after the five jurors were chosen in the courtroom, Morrison's co-defense counsel, Robert Josefsberg, demanded that the entire jury be dismissed because he did not believe Morrison could receive a fair trial as none of the jury members were young; all potential young jury

²¹³ Ian Glass, "Doors' Morrison in Court as Jury Selection Begins," *The Miami News* [issue number unavailable] (1969): pages unavailable; reproduced in Sugerman, *The Doors: The Illustrated History*, 135.

²¹⁴ Levine, "Doors' Singer's Case Given Second Billing," 1B.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1B.

²¹⁶ Paul Levine, "Morrison's Peers Try for Glimpse at Trial," *The Miami Herald*, 13 August 1970, 1E.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1E and 2E.

members had to be dismissed for knowing too much about the case. Levine reported that Goodman was open-minded to Josefsberg's suggestion to find jurors under 30 years old for the case. Levine's account revealed Fink's hand early on. Fink questioned every potential juror about popular culture and contemporary art, books, music, and theatre. Fink's strategy was spelled out, according to Levine, from the very beginning, and his questions were quoted in the article:

“If Mr. Morrison used slang expressions which you as individuals considered crude—some four-letter words—and those same expressions, verbally and physically are part of the dissenting scene in this country, as evidenced by plays, books, and thing[s written by] people of the country, would you be shocked?”²¹⁸

Levine concluded that Fink's questions demonstrated that the jurors had very little knowledge of popular culture and contemporary art, books, music, and theatre. He also reported that Fink asked a woman juror if she would be willing to see a film that featured nudity and profanity. She replied that she would not pay for it:

The defense lawyers have said they would like to show the jury certain X-rated films as evidence of the current community standards with regard to obscenity. Should this be allowed, the country would pick up the admission tab for judge, jurors, and lawyers.²¹⁹

The jury was selected two days later. It consisted of four men and two women.²²⁰ According to “The Tipoff” column that appeared the day before the trial was scheduled, Morrison's lawyers purchased tickets for *Hair* for everyone involved in the trial (the county did not have to pick up the tab after all). The musical would take place later that month at the Coconut Grove Playhouse.²²¹

Levine later reported on the two young witnesses, Colleen Clary (age 17) and her boyfriend Carl Huffstutlear (20), who claimed they saw Morrison pull down his pants to his knees and expose himself at the Miami

²¹⁸ Ibid., 2E.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 2E.

²²⁰ Anon., “Jury Set for Trial of Singer,” *The Miami Herald*, 15 August 1970, 2B. The men were John Cone (a machinery worker who was once a cook for the U.S. Army), Herbert Franks (a tile setter for a flooring company), Karl Beidl (a mechanic who served 23 years in the Coast Guard), and William Bowen (a 1950 graduate of Ohio State University and an elementary art school teacher). The women were Elaine Hemperly (a Miami Beach housewife with a 23-year old son and a 30-year old daughter) and Audrey Tomp (a housewife who was once an insurance underwriter). The short article described Morrison as being the idol of “the Now Generation.”

²²¹ Anon., “Morrison Jury May View *Hair* If Court Allows,” under “The Tipoff.” *The Miami Herald*, 16 August, 1970, 24A. The column featured Morrison's publicity shot next to pictures of former Florida Governor Fuller Warren and federal Judge C. Clyde Atkins. All were discussed in this issue's “The Tipoff.”

concert.²²² On the stand Clary, a drugstore cashier, explained that she witnessed Morrison with his hands on his genitals. Levine reported that Clary was so distraught from embarrassment and the cross-examination that Goodman had to call for a brief recess. According to Levine, Fink attempted to show that Clary's description in court conflicted with answers that she gave the day before. Levine's example was that Clary claimed to have bought tickets for the concert, but later told the court that her brother-in-law (a Miami policeman) let her and her boyfriend into the Dinner Key free of charge. Levine reported that Huffstutlear's testimony was similar to Clary's and that Fink pointed out to the court that Huffstutlear stated earlier that his memory of the concert was vague but on this day claimed that it was not vague.²²³ The headline of the article, "Singer Exposed Self, Two Spectators Testify," emphasized that two witnesses testified, but did not imply that their testimonies were questionable. Levine also reported that Huffstutlear had seen *Woodstock* and that Fink was seeking the Judge's permission to let the jury see the film.²²⁴ The prosecution's presentation was met by Josefberg's motion for a mistrial because prosecutor Terry McWilliams "accused Morrison of inciting to riot, though the performer is not charged with that offense." According to Levine, McWilliams also mentioned that Morrison "called for a revolution." Despite McWilliams' choice of language in the courtroom, Goodman rejected the motion for a mistrial. Fink's defense presentation suggested that the trial was the outcome of political pressure, pointing out that none of the 26 policemen at the concert arrested Morrison at the time.²²⁵

On the third day of the trial, Levine reported that over 100 blown-up photographs were introduced into evidence: "none clearly portrayed him in one of the two positions the prosecution contends was illegal."²²⁶ According to Levine, the photographer, Jeffrey Simon, a former University of Miami student, testified for the state; however (Levine's "however" was in all capital letters and boldface), Simon did not testify that he saw Morrison roll

²²² Paul Levine, "Singer Exposed Self, Two Spectators Testify," *The Miami Herald*, 18 August 1970, 1B. The article featured another publicity shot of a younger grinning Morrison. Interestingly, the first page of the article is juxtaposed to *Miami Herald* medical writer Ena Naunton's "Follow Beeline Straight to Sobriety," which claimed that honey could help ease the malaise of the morning after.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 1B.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-2B.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2B.

²²⁶ Paul Levine, "Morrison Blurred in Photos," *The Miami Herald*, 20 August 1970, 3B.

down his pants and expose himself, even while at the “closest vantage point to Morrison” and The Doors.²²⁷ The one photograph that showed Morrison’s hand near his groin was apparently so blurred that the prosecution argued that the photograph showed Morrison holding his genitals and the defense argued that Morrison was holding a microphone.²²⁸

Levine reported a day later that Goodman rejected Fink’s request to have books, films, periodicals, and plays to be admitted as “evidence of contemporary moral standards” and to allow the court to view the movies. He described the decision as a “severe setback” for the defense.²²⁹ Again, the defense questioned the fairness of the trial. The Judge also ruled that the defense could not present “psychiatrists, clergymen, and educators it had planned on using to establish the ‘contemporary standards’ that federal courts consider in judging obscenity cases.”²³⁰ Levine quoted Goodman, who wrote that in regard to obscenity there was a difference between speech (and dress) and conduct:

“The court is of the opinion that the standards of obscenity apply to written material and motion pictures protected by the First Amendment, namely freedom of speech and dress. . . . Conduct is another matter entirely To allow so-called experts or others to testify or admit evidence to support the theory that in America, 1 March 1969, it was accepted conduct and outside of statutory prohibition, to use the language alleged in this case, to expose one’s sexual organs as alleged, to simulate masturbation and oral copulation as alleged, would be to acknowledge the existence of a state of affairs which would shock and affront decent and law abiding citizens everywhere.”²³¹

According to Levine’s article “Officer: Morrison Fans Feared,” Miami police officer Richard Flaum testified that police took no action against Morrison because they feared that the fans would retaliate.²³² Another headline for the article read “Mood Precluded Arrest, Jury Told.” Levine reported that Morrison grabbed Flaum’s police cap and that Flaum went backstage to retrieve it; Fink asked if the mood backstage precluded 26 uniformed policemen from arresting him and Flaum said “no.” Under the photograph of a bearded Morrison appeared the

²²⁷ Ibid., 3B.

²²⁸ Ibid., 3B.

²²⁹ Paul Levine, “Movies, Play Barred as Morrison Defense,” *The Miami Herald*, 21 August 1970, 2C. The article featured a photograph of a bearded Morrison on the left with the caption “. . . *setback*” and a photograph of Goodman on the right with the caption “. . . *irrelevant*.” The News Summary on a previous page refers to the trial. See Anon., “Greater Miami,” under “News Summary,” *The Miami Herald*, 21 August 1970, 2A.

²³⁰ Ibid., 2C.

²³¹ Ibid., 2C.

²³² Paul Levine, “Officer: Morrison Fans Feared,” *The Miami Herald*, 26 August 1970, 2B. The article featured a photograph of Morrison at the Miami concert (taken by *Miami Herald* Photographer Mario Castellanos).

caption, “Morrison at concert here . . . policeman said arrest would have been ill advised.” Levine also reported in the article that Miami undercover narcotics agent William Riley saw Krieger “get on his knees near Morrison” while others claimed it was Morrison who kneeled near Krieger.²³³

Levine’s next article was about the 65–minute tape of Morrison at the concert that was introduced into evidence by the prosecution. Levine pointed out that Morrison, who was wearing a pimento colored shirt during the trial, was tapping along to the music as his own lawyers relaxed; this behavior was contrasted to that of the prosecution, who (as Levine implied) was taking the trial seriously. The tape featured Morrison singing “Light My Fire,” but his alleged call to start a riot or revolution—and the sounds of the concert about the time Morrison allegedly exposed his genitals—was missing.²³⁴ Levine quoted Morrison from the tape: ““Hey, I don’t want a revolution I want you to love your neighbor until it hurts. I want love, love, love, love, love, love, love, love. Grab your f----- friend and love him.””²³⁵ Levine referred to Morrison’s charges again, this time by remarking that Morrison was “more–or–less lighting his own fire.”²³⁶ He reported that police dispatcher Kathleen Vivian maintained that she heard Morrison ask the audience if they wanted to see his genitals. Levine mentioned that the tape was recorded by a young audience member and submitted “after pleas in the news media for photographs and recordings made at the concert.”²³⁷

Levine reported on the verdict and Goodman’s rejection of Morrison’s plea for an acquittal. The prosecution concluded, and Goodman agreed, that the jury should be able to decide about which witnesses to believe.²³⁸ Levine quoted Goodman’s ruling: ““I find there are sufficient facts upon which the jury could find the defendant guilty on each of the four counts, beyond and to the exclusion of every reasonable doubt.””²³⁹ The defense then followed with their witnesses, which included Miami Beach photographer David Levine, who was

²³³ Ibid., 2B.

²³⁴ Paul Levine, “Jurors Hear Morrison Tape, But No Call to Join in Nudity,” *The Miami Herald*, 28 August 1970, 9C.

²³⁵ Ibid., 9C.

²³⁶ Ibid., 9C.

²³⁷ Ibid., 9C. Levine also mentioned The Doors would be performing at the Isle of Wight concert, a festival that also featured Joan Baez and Jimi Hendrix.

²³⁸ Paul Levine, “Judge Rejects Morrison Plea for Acquittal,” *The Miami Herald*, 3 September 1970, 6D.

²³⁹ Ibid., 6D.

standing at the front of the stage during the conference and testified that he did not see Morrison expose himself. According to Levine, Goodman ordered a limit of 17 witnesses for the defense, who was planning on presenting 60 witnesses. Levine recalled that Goodman also ruled that the defense could not present experts on “contemporary moral standards.”²⁴⁰

In an unsigned article that appeared in *The Miami Herald* on 17 September 1970, the anonymous author reported that Morrison and The Doors claimed that it was members of the audience, not Morrison, who were offensive language at the concert.²⁴¹ The author quoted Morrison in the courtroom answering his attorney Max Fink on the stand: “I heard a lot of profanity. . . . It was coming from the audience and ran the full gamut of basic four-letter words.”²⁴² *Miami Herald* staff writers J. K. DeGroot and Raul Ramirez wrote the article that anticipated the jury’s verdict. According to the authors, the jury had determined its verdict on three of the four charges against Morrison. The jury asked Goodman about the distance witnesses stood from The Doors during the night of the concert. DeGroot and Ramirez reported that the trial that was supposed to last just a week lasted 15 days that were stretched out for over two months and ended with over five hours of closing arguments.²⁴³ They noted Morrison’s last day in court by describing his activities there:

The man who started it all, the self-anointed King of Orgasmic Rock ended his gig in Criminal Court Judge Murray Goodman’s chambers reading a book.

The book, a current best seller, contained many of the four-letter deeds and words in question during the trial.

Amid barrages of Biblical quotations, counter-volleys of Hans Christian Andersen and salvos of four-letter words that could clear a pool room, Morrison read on.²⁴⁴

The day of the conviction was on 21 September 1970. The results of the trial were reported briefly in the “News Summary” of that issue of *The Miami Herald*. “The Indecency Trial” was in all capital letters and in boldface:

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 6D.

²⁴¹ Anon., “Morrison: Audience Cussed,” *The Miami Herald*, 17 September 1970, 3D. The author reminded readers of the charges against Morrison, his connections to Florida, and to UCLA.

²⁴² Ibid., 3D.

²⁴³ J. K. DeGroot and Raul Ramirez, “Morrison Jury Expects Verdict Today,” *The Miami Herald*, 20 September 1970, 3C.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 3C.

The indecency trial of rock singer Jim Morrison ended with his acquittal on a felony charge and conviction of two misdemeanors. His bond was boosted from \$5,000 to \$50,000 pending sentencing, which is scheduled for 23 October 1970.²⁴⁵

The article about the conviction appeared on the first page of section B of *The Miami Herald*. It featured a photograph of Morrison leaving the courtroom with his lawyers. Above the title of the article, “Singer Jim Morrison Guilty of Indecency,” was a headline that read “Innocent on Felony Charge.” *Miami Herald* staff writer Colin Dangaard wrote the article and called Morrison by his first name (James) and described him as “the shaggy-haired, bearded, self-styled ‘King of Orgasmic Rock’ before reporting on the trial itself.²⁴⁶ Interestingly, Dangaard mentioned that the charges were against Morrison as well as The Doors. He reported that Morrison was found guilty of indecent exposure and indecent language, but “not guilty” of lewd and lascivious behavior, drunkenness, and the felony charge. The misdemeanors in the article have bullets next to them with very little spacing to separate the ones of which Morrison was found guilty and the ones of which he was found “not guilty.” The bond increase mentioned previously in the “News Summary” was also mentioned here.²⁴⁷ Dangaard recalled the testimonies for the prosecution by Clary, her boyfriend, and other witnesses who claimed Morrison exposed himself, as well as by Vivian. He also mentioned the warrants, Goodman’s rulings that eliminated the opportunities for the defense to show the court films, Fink’s questioning about the 26 uniformed police officers who did not arrest Morrison during or right after the concert, the tape that was introduced into evidence, quoting Morrison as Levine did earlier, and the Orange Bowl and other indecency rallies that were the result of an outraged Miami over Morrison’s performance there and its own residents and the nation over indecency.²⁴⁸ Dangaard also discussed the book Morrison was reading in court and the demeanor of his paid and “non-paid” attorneys:

While the jury sat Sunday in final deliberation, Morrison sat calmly, reading Irving Stone’s biography of Jack London, *Sailor on Horseback*.

All the King’s men sat around; the attorneys, up beside Morrison, and the non-paid ones in back, chewing gum, yawning, scratching, and, from time to time, muttering “far out.”²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Anon., “Greater Miami,” under “News Summary,” *The Miami Herald*, 21 September 1970, 2A.

²⁴⁶ Colin Dangaard, “Singer Jim Morrison Guilty of Indecency,” *The Miami Herald*, 21 September 1970, 1B.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1B.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1B and 3B.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 3B.

Without distinguishing these attorneys from others in the courtroom, Dangaard reported an instance when some of Morrison's fans became disruptive in court and continued to discuss Morrison's own attitude towards the court that day:

Once a couple in the back row dropped off to sleep, their heads together under a pile of tangled, matted hair.
When they started to snore a court orderly prodded them and asked, "Hey, are you two under the influence or something . . . ?"
"Just tired, man, just tired. . . ."
"Far out," said a lady with a gold tinfoil star glued smack between her eyes.
"Jim baby" seemed to rock back in his chair, Judge Goodman hiked his bond by \$45,000.
But he was indifferent over the jury's decision, adding "It could have been worse, I suppose. I've only been found guilty of misdemeanors."²⁵⁰

Dangaard also reported Morrison's desire to appeal and his claim that he would do so despite exorbitant legal costs. He remarked that "this trial and its outcome won't change [his] style."²⁵¹ According to Dangaard, Morrison was also taking notes during the trial and planned to write "an essay or something" about his "impressions": "I might even put some of it in a song . . . but [the] trouble is the outcome wasn't clear-cut enough for that."²⁵²

Conclusions

The city of Miami issued a warrant for James Douglas Morrison on 5 March 1971, less than four months before his death in Paris. On 17 April 2007 Paul Levine revisited the trial he covered nearly 40 years previous as a very young reporter for *The Miami Herald*. His comments were posted on the blog at *Naked Authors.com*:

My fading recollection was a travesty, and that the evidence was conflicting and confused as to what Morrison did. The singer died of heart failure in a Paris bathtub before his appeal could be heard. I wonder if he would even want the pardon request pursued.²⁵³

Levine was responding to Dayton cable television producer Dave Diamond's efforts to seek a pardon for Morrison. Diamond wrote to Florida Governor Charlie Crist that former New York Governor George Pataki pardoned the late comedian Lenny Bruce on an obscenity conviction. According to the blog, Crist responded that he could not pardon someone by himself and that there was no precedence in Florida for procedures for a posthumous pardon.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 3B.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 3B.

²⁵² Ibid., 3B.

²⁵³ Paul Levine, message under "Jim Morrison Crucified in a Miami Courtroom," *Naked Authors.com*, <http://www.nakedauthors.com/2007/04/light-my-fire.html> (accessed on 7 September 2007). Here he described himself as a "wet-behind-the-ears criminal reporter for *The Miami Herald*, a once great newspaper."

Morrison did write about Miami, but not explicitly about his experience there or *The Miami Herald*. His poem, “Miami,” opens with the questions “What can I read her// on a Sunday Morning” and “What can I do that will// somehow reach her on a Sunday Morning.” The woman could be someone Morrison is with (Pamela Susan Courson) or it could be Miami herself. The poem is undated, but it was grouped in the posthumous collection *Wilderness: The Lost Writings of Jim Morrison*, vol. 1, in “Poems 1966–1971.” He was clearly referring to a newspaper without mentioning its title (*The Miami Herald?*). He decided in the poem that he will read to her about news of the Indian Wars. Leaping back into history, he referred to blood and gore. The reference to the Indian Wars may suggest his identification with Native Americans being sought and attacked, slaughtered on the ground of their homeland. Within the context of his Miami experience, Morrison viewed himself as persecuted in his homeland, Florida and the U.S. He always had an interest in Native Americans and their cultures and ritual practices; his other connection to them was that when he was a child, he witnessed a gory fatal car accident with dead and dying Indians on the road. The experience led him to believe that one of their spirits found his way into him. A line later, the poem quickly shifts tone: Morrison suggested that he could also read her “stories to tame and charm// and more.” He paid attention to the diversity of the newspaper’s Sunday edition here. The Sunday edition *Miami Herald* stories were especially diverse. They ranged from the gory front pages focusing on global events, the war in Vietnam, to the Ladies’ section (covering a combination of taming and charming interests like fashion and domestic life, but also including articles of interest to feminists), and other sections focusing on real estate and family friendly interests. The final couplet continues about other stories: wild fires and a “searchout” (his own Miami experience?). The last line reads “Searchout// a dry kiss on leaving.” His attitude towards the city may be summed up here: there was neither love nor hate towards her; the kiss may acknowledge his own mark on Miami (and on Florida); he opted to leave there quietly, with appeals that would be handled by others; the dryness of the kiss perhaps signified a draining of passion, exhaustion upon departure from Miami.²⁵⁴

The coverage of Morrison and The Doors by *The Miami Herald* of the Miami concert, the aftermath, and the trial, demonstrated Morrison’s distance from the newspaper. Other than words recorded at the concert, reported at the trial, and taken out of context from an earlier time had any influence on *The Miami Herald*. Morrison’s actions, gestures, and image were the main focus. Morrison did not develop a rapport with *The Miami Herald* like

²⁵⁴ The poem appeared in Jim Morrison, *Wilderness: The Lost Writings of Jim Morrison*, vol. 1 (New York: Villard Books, 1988), 68–69. It is included in a group of poems written between 1966 and 1971.

the ones he had with the *L.A. Free Press* and *Down Beat*, despite his being from Florida. No interview appeared during this time; Morrison very rarely had the chance to speak for himself or go as far—as he once expressed it—to manipulate the media.²⁵⁵ *The Miami Herald* coverage was a good example of the media exploiting and manipulating Morrison, all so it seems without getting too up close and personal. In retrospect, what was at stake was not only democracy, freedom of speech (and expression), accuracy of press coverage, Morrison’s right to a fair trial, and The Doors’ image as concert performers, but interpretative issues about concerning authenticity, perception, and representation (Did *The Miami Herald* ever represent the real Jim Morrison? Were the reporters truly interested in what took place? How do some of *The Miami Herald* writers differ from other reporters and from critics who distance themselves from the subjects they analyze and observe?).

A more dislikable portrayal of Morrison emerged from the *Miami Herald* writings than from the *L.A. Free Press* and *Down Beat*. But readers have been convinced about viewing these charges from the same perspective as Morrison. They are not convinced, partly because of information from other sources including member of The Doors, that Morrison exposed himself at the Miami concert. Writers’ agenda were obvious in *The Miami Herald*, and it is impossible to ignore such contrast between the willing writers who listened to Morrison’s side of the story and *The Miami Herald* writers who nearly always remarked about him in third person. From the perspective of this study, it is also impossible to ignore the difference of treatment Morrison received from an underground newspaper (liberal or politically left), a highly specialized magazine for professional musicians (also liberal or politically left, but less so than the *L.A. Free Press*), and a major newspaper with a corporate history (conservative or politically right). But all offered writings that went beyond expectations of their readers: Liza Williams for the *L.A. Free Press* identified Morrison as the ultimate Barbie doll; Michael Cuscuna did not hesitate in his interview with Morrison to address the shortcomings of *Waiting for the Sun* and *The Soft Parade*; and *The Miami Herald* printed a letter by Larry Arem of the University of Miami that praised Morrison for directly or indirectly waking a few people up to consider more pressing needs in the world than complaining about a bad concert.

The Doors songs did not allude to Miami; however, their album *L.A. Woman* as well as the title song signified a return to focusing on their city. The last album reflects the full circle of The Doors, and *Full Circle*

²⁵⁵ There is no source available that either suggests that Morrison or any member of The Doors was willing to speak with any staff writer at *The Miami Herald* or that the newspaper wished to interview them about the events that unfolded during this time.

(1972) became the title of the trio's final album together after Morrison died.²⁵⁶ They would collaborate again on other projects, including accompanying recordings Morrison made of his poems. The 1978 album was *An American Prayer*.²⁵⁷ "L.A. Woman," with its car or motorcycle musical sound effects and musical pedals, is an anthem to L.A.; for many fans of The Doors as well as writers, it is Morrison's farewell to the city.²⁵⁸ Amusingly, the initial pedal on ^1 eventually sounds like ^5, so this is a musical pun about going somewhere else even though Morrison's first line announces that he just got into town an hour ago. These same fans and writers have pointed out that one of the song's most famous lines, "Mr. Mojo Risin'" (a point of arrival and tempo change in the song), is an anagram for Jim Morrison. The line, of course, signifies Morrison's acknowledgement of another comeback after Miami as much as it is a self reference device and a reference to the blues. Like his poem about Miami, Morrison is addressing both a woman and the city as a woman. While "Miami" focuses on Sunday morning, "L.A. Woman" is about Sunday afternoon. The song explores the topography of L.A. woman, offering a topography of Doors' texts and experiences in L.A.: the burning hills and the line "if they say I never loved you, // you know they are a liar" ("Light My Fire"); the topless bars (where Morrison goes for one of his *L.A. Free Press* interviews or the ones on the Sunset Strip); "midnight alleys roam" (evocative of "People are Strange" and "Soul Kitchen").

"Riders On the Storm" also made no mention of Miami, but within the context of Morrison's ordeal the song is laden with additional meaning. The sound effects of the storm include rain and thunder, music concrète. The keyboard's right hand chords take up the voice of the storm. The sound in the introduction is purposely open, evoking a barren landscape through an alternation of i and IV6/4 chords. The studio used echo and reverb to intensify the effect along with an additional track of Morrison's voice (he is slightly off sync with it). According to Crisafulli, Morrison's text was inspired by avant-garde poet Hart Crane's "The Bridge" (written in 1930), which focused on the Brooklyn Bridge. Morrison borrowed Crane's phrase, "riders on the storm."²⁵⁹ The barren sound in the beginning of the song also sounds reminiscent of a cowboy style song with a similar title: "Ghost Riders in the Sky" (originally composed by Stan Jones in 1948). In 1949, Gene Autry sang the song in *Riders in the Sky*, and since then there have been many other recordings of the song. "Ghost Riders" focuses on the ghosts of cowboys,

²⁵⁶ The Doors, *Other Voices/Full Circle* (1971 and 1972), CD Maximum CDM 1199-380 (2001).

²⁵⁷ Jim Morrison, *An American Prayer*, with music by The Doors, Elektra 61812-2 (1995), CD.

²⁵⁸ See Crisafulli, *When the Music's Over*, 130.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

damned to be eternally chasing fire-breathing cattle across the sky. “Riders On the Storm” identified Morrison, The Doors, and the listeners as the damned ones on earth. As mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, “Riders On the Storm” paid homage to those unlikely protagonists who persevere in the darkness of the present and continue to travel, through the rain and down the road, to see what lies ahead. Within the context of Miami, Morrison appeared to be riding out the storm. He was convicted, but the trial was behind him. *The Miami Herald* writers lost interest in him. He could not manipulate the media in Miami, or position himself as a liminal figure with these writers, who did not (or could not?) interview him. The reporters were unwilling to lend him their ears. He nevertheless found a way to control and manipulate the impression *The Miami Herald* made through creating his own texts, even when he did not allude to them. “Riders On the Storm” is about moving forward. Morrison did not allow *The Miami Herald* writers to have the last word.

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VITA

Born in Santa Monica and spending her early childhood days in the West Los Angeles area, Melissa Ursula Dawn Goldsmith spent many hours playing at and visiting many of the places in California that Jim Morrison knew: there she enjoyed the merry-go-round rides, the sounds of the calliope, the plaster of Paris sculpture curios shops, and the occasional fireworks at Santa Monica Pier before and after half of it was lost at sea by storm; captured a view of Santa Monica Beach from the vista point as well as from the Camera Obscura at Santa Monica Park; walked down Westwood before all the new malls and apartments raised the rents there; skated on the Boardwalk at Venice Beach when Venice was still a sleepy beach town with abandoned cottages and apartments; and ate at restaurants (Alice's, Delores', Gladstone's, Hamburger Hamlet, Junior's, Kelbo's, Olivia's, Piece o' Pizza, and the Malibu Sea Lion), some closed long ago while others still remain open. An early interest in music took shape, initially developed by a fascination with a quadraphonic stereo housed on its own in the add-on bedroom as well as a bright orange Mickey Mouse/Disney chord organ that was located front-and-center in the living room, becoming educated and grounded in both classical and popular music. Because she attended Frederick Forrest Peabody Elementary School in Santa Barbara, a public school with a wonderful endowment for arts education, she was able to continue her music studies. The Girls' Club and The Dance Warehouse also provided her opportunities for enrichment.

Melissa earned her bachelor of arts in degree in music and biochemistry, and her master of arts degree in music, at Smith College. She later attained the master of library and information science, the certificate in advanced studies in library and information science, and the Ph.D. in music at Louisiana State University (LSU). Discovering that the floodgate for musicologists and music librarians did not open by the time she graduated, Melissa worked on various postdoctoral projects. These included a press book of reviews and documents she found while working on her dissertation about the Film Music Interlude in Alban Berg's *Lulu*, as well as writing about musicology and technology, discrimination in the library science field against those in the field with Ph.D.s, Duke Ellington's song "Caravan," popular music in Federico Fellini's film *La dolce vita*, beat writer William S. Burroughs as a musical subject, and criticism about Jim Morrison and The Doors. Her publications include a bibliographical essay about film music, a discographical essay about lounge music, an article about Adorno's writings about Gustav Mahler, and many book reviews. She is a Reference Librarian/Assistant Professor at Nicholls State University and a Part-Time Lecturer of music appreciation for LSU's Office of Independent and Distant Learning. She remains a lifelong learner, and she hopes the master of arts in liberal arts degree will open doors to teaching opportunities.