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If You Believe In What You Do
The Life and Music of Freddie King

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This thesis explores the life and music of blues guitarist Freddie King. The Introduction to the thesis chronicles my interest in the music of Freddie King. The first chapter chronicles King's prolific early career and delineates influences and his musical aesthetic. The second chapter explains Freddie King's crossover success in the context of the blues revival movement of the middle 1960s. The third chapter takes an in depth look at Freddie King's use of rhythm and metric dissonance with examples from the instrumental tune "Sidetracked," while chapters four and five are in-depth interviews with a Texas music scholar and notable blues author.

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Introduction:

Entering the Palace of the King

Years ago, I was in the coveted position of writing for a local newspaper. Far from the promising career I thought I had entered, I became dissatisfied with paying dues in an industry that, as a young reporter eager to make a name for myself, seemed to profit from the suffering of others. I wrote about car crashes, house fires and environmental disasters. If that wasn't enough, a large part of my responsibility was to sit through the interminable proceedings of town meetings at several of New Jersey's thousands of small towns. Each one is a little fiefdom with a little king and court and would-be deponents who debate for hours about how much it costs to repave roads or worse, endlessly congratulate each other for allocating money for a given project, necessary or otherwise.

Not exactly exciting stuff, but I liked being a professional writer so I stuck it out for as long as I could, which did not turn out to be very long. I just could not stop myself from performing music on weeknights when I should have been staying past five p. m. working unpaid hours for the paper, the way all the other writers were doing. While I loved writing professionally, I realized nothing excited me more than being on stage, even though it rarely paid. This desire for the immediate self expression that one gets from performing music in a live venue cost me the focus and attention I needed in order to succeed at my writing gig. Soon I was called into the boss's office and—you know the rest.

I never once regretted the decision to follow my dream rather than write for the paper but I realized that I still needed an outlet for writing and that the best way I would

enjoy writing was if I wrote about something I cared about, music, more specifically – blues and rock music. I’ve been listening to and learning to play blues for the better part of my life. In the context of becoming proficient at blues changes as a young guitarist in the mid-1990’s it was impossible not to recognize the talent and long shadow of Freddie King. In the liner notes to New York City blues-rocker Popa Chubby, whose CD I purchased at the now-defunct Philadelphia based *River Blues* festival where he performed, I read about how he thought Freddie King was the “King of the Kings.”¹ At around the same time, Eric Clapton released his *From the Cradle* album featuring blues standards including King’s “I’m Tore Down”. In August 1995 and again in October of 1997, *Guitar Player* magazine capitalized on Freddie King’s growing appreciation by blues fans with cover stories, many of those fans were like me and did not grow up listening to him. As I was to discover later, if we had been alive while King was playing and recording in the early 1960s, it is just as likely we wouldn’t have heard of him then either.

The more I listened to Freddie King the more I understood the power of his playing, his soulful singing and mastery of the blues idiom that convinced me he truly was, to borrow the title of one of his final records, “Larger Than Life.” In this thesis, I will attempt to tell the Freddie King story and shed light on exactly why, all these years after his death, people are still hailing him as a major influence on blues, rock and the hybrid music that combines them both.

¹ Popa Chubby *Gas Money*, Laughing Bear, 1996, compact disc.

Chapter 1

“If You Believe (In What You Do)”: The Early Life and Career of Freddie King

*Well this is a story, a story never been told.
You know the blues got pregnant
and they named the baby rock and roll.*

“The Blues Had a Baby and They Called It Rock
and Roll” as sung by Muddy Waters²

In 1961, Texas-born guitarist Freddie King rose to number five on the Billboard R&B charts with his hard-driving blues hit, “I’m Tore Down.” The same tune, credited to bandleader and composer Sonny Thompson, rose to number one on Billboard’s “Mainstream Rock Tracks” chart in a 1994 cover version performed by Eric Clapton. Since his unexpected death in 1976 at age forty-two, Freddie King has received praise from blues guitarists and rock performers internationally and influenced guitar players such as Jeff Beck and Stevie Ray Vaughan, as well as Clapton, who counts himself as an early disciple of King’s, if, at first, from afar. Further evidence of King’s continued relevance to rock and guitar communities is his inclusion in such canon forming lists as the Rolling Stone magazine’s list of “100 Greatest Guitar Players of All Time” – King was number twenty-five. The publication of such lists by the most recognized rock magazine underscores King’s musical significance beyond the blues that has garnered him “rock guitar god” status.

Despite his early induction into the Blues Hall of Fame in 1983, as well as his countless citations as an innovator and musical influence, there is scant scholarly

² Muddy Waters, *Hard Again*, Blue Sky, 1977, compact disc.

attention to Freddy King, the “Texas Cannonball.” By contrast, there are three books celebrating his blues-king peer and his own major influence, B.B. King. In fairness, B.B. is older, still alive (one of the books is his autobiography) and without his contribution to the modern blues style, Freddie King would likely have developed into a very different musician. B.B. King has also been more successful on the Billboard charts and in record sales but with Freddie King’s legions of famous followers, it is hard to understand why his contribution to blues and blues-rock has yet to draw a full-length biography.

Nevertheless, a frequent characterization of especially the early career of Freddie King is the story of a player, no relation to B.B. King, whose singular guitar prowess helped him rise above the shoulders of many other notable blues artists. Few blues musicians loom larger than Freddie King in the formation of blues rock and hard rock—two idioms of popular music that are still widely appreciated and reinvented, as can be heard in the music of bands like the White Stripes, the Black Keys and Gary Clark Jr. This thesis will tell how an obscure blues artist who had a few hits in the early 1960s became universally acclaimed, inspiring blues and rock musicians the world over. It will attempt to explain his enduring significance and interpret the importance of his body of work in moving from a primarily African American music to a primarily white idiom and succeeding in both.

The Blues Had a Baby

Freddie King was born September 3, 1934 on a farm in Gilmer, the county seat of Upshur County, Texas. On the map Gilmer is a small dot in eastern Texas about half way between Shreveport, Louisiana and Dallas, Texas. According to census data for the

year 2000, only 4,799 people lived there ³ a little over seventy five percent white with African Americans making up twenty percent of the population. An article on the Upshur County website boasts that “as of July 1, 2007, the city of Gilmer had an estimated population of 5,208, up 8.5 percent from the 2000 census figure of 4,799.”⁴ Gilmer hosts an annual event called the “East Texas Yamboree” which features a beauty contest, quilt show a yam pie contest a home canning contest and on Saturday night a barn dance but also hosts a Gospel Stage with 15 different acts scheduled to perform.

Freddie King’s given name was Freddie Christian, after his father, J. T. Christian, who was a harmonica player. On a website run by Freddie King’s estate, a short biography says that Freddy King was the name he was at birth.⁵ However, in a 1994 interview with Guitar Player Magazine Wanda King, King’s daughter, says her father “was a Christian, and then he decided to be a King” and added that:

He was born Freddie Christian. My father’s father is not the same as my uncle’s father. My grandmother’s side of the family, their name is King. They had a fallout or a family feud, like most things happen. And he took his mom’s name. To this day I don’t know if he legally took it or it was just ‘I’m going to be a King from now on.’ He was a Christian and then he decided to be a King. And my grandmother married a Turner and all the other kids were Turners.⁶

King’s brother Benny Turner , who played electric bass in King’s 1970s touring band, offered a more pragmatic reason for the name change in that same article: “He was

³ “American Fact Finder.” United States Census Bureau, Retrieved April 20, 2013.

⁴ “Census Bureau Estimates Gilmer Has 5,208 People.” Upshur County Economic Development Corporation, accessed April 25, 2013.

http://www.upshuredc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5:census-bureau-estimates-gilmer-has-5208-people&catid=7&Itemid=12

⁵ “Growing up in East Texas,” The Estate of Freddie King, www.freddiekingsite.com accessed on April, 20, 2013.

⁶ Mark Humphrey, “Freddie King’s Daughter Remembers,” in liner notes for Vestapol 13014 videocassette, 1994, p 18.

inspired by B.B. King, and King was a cool name. He was rightfully entitled to it.”⁷

Whatever the reason behind the change, the man who was born Freddie Christian would be known as Freddy King and later, after his work on King Records, he reverted the spelling of his first name the way his parents named him and that is how he will be referred to in the rest of this thesis.

By all accounts, his mother, Ella May King, and uncle Leon King played guitar. “There was always two or three guitars laying around the house,” Freddie King told *Guitar Player*.⁸ In an interview with *Living Blues Magazine*, an important blues information source that has been publishing since the early 1970s, King told interviewers “I been playing guitar since I was six,”⁹ and that he learned finger picking from both his mother and his uncle Leon, who died in a car accident when he was only around eleven years old. In that same interview, King said his first guitar was “a Silvertone acoustic, and then later I got a Kay. Since then I’ve never switched from Gibson.”¹⁰

The Silvertone was a “Roy Rogers” guitar manufactured by the Harmony Company based in Chicago and sold by Sears and Roebuck from 1954 through 1958. Family legend has it that King picked cotton in order to get up the money for his guitar but as soon as he had it, that was the end of his cotton-picking career.¹¹ The “Roy Rogers” model had a stencil on its body depicting a lonesome cowboy sitting beside a campfire holding a guitar. Below that, it bore Roy Rogers’s signature,¹² a fitting first

⁷ Humphrey, “Freddie King,” 101.

⁸ Humphrey, “Freddie King,” 100.

⁹ Jim O’Neal and Amy Van Singel, *The Voice of the Blues: Classic Interviews From Living Blues Magazine* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 360.

¹⁰ O’Neal and Van Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, 360.

¹¹ Bill Dahl, Liner notes to *Freddie King: Taking Care of Business 1956 to 1973*, Bear Family Records, 16979, 2009, 3.

¹² Steve Evans, “The Cowboy Guitars,” article and images copyright, www.cowboyguitars.net, accessed on April 20, 2013.

guitar for the man later known as “The Texas Cannonball” and who wrote a song about himself called “The Texas Flyer.”

Freddie King’s earliest influences included Sam Lightnin’ Hopkins, the aforementioned B.B. King, T-Bone Walker and Louis Jordan who King claimed to have studiously translated his saxophone licks to guitar as a boy. By the time of his sixteenth birthday, he sang in a choir and jammed with a local musician Shorty Brown,¹³ as the records from his aunt’s collection filled his ears. In December of 1950, King and his family moved to the Windy City: Chicago, Illinois, a town his uncle had already moved to in search of work. Young Freddie King’s arrival in Chicago would expose him to the burgeoning blues scene where, before he knew it, King would be rubbing elbows with some of those same bluesmen from his aunt’s record collection.

Freddie King also had an unorthodox finger picking style, in 1971 he spoke to *Living Blues Magazine*:

Interviewer: Your tone, you sound, it’s a different sound from almost anybody.

Freddie King: It comes from the wrist, from the fingers here, and then I don’t use any straight pick, I use two. I use fingerpicks, steel, on this, and a plastic pick on the thumb. And then I knock the tone down with the back of my hand. A lot of these rock groups, they hit it wide open, whereas, you see, I can hit it open, I can turn it all the way up to 10, and it still won’t be too loud, see, because I can keep the sound down with the back of my hand like that.

Interviewer: How did you start playing with two fingers when most of the guys on the West Side play with a flat pick?

Freddie King: Well, I never played with a straight pick, man. I used to play with my fingers, and I met Jimmy Rogers [guitarist in Muddy Waters band] and I seen he and Muddy Waters using those two picks, so they showed me how to. I used to use three, but then Eddie Taylor, he showed me how to get the speed out of it, see. He’s fast, man, Eddie is. But in a way I’m fast in some things, you know.

¹³ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 3.

Guitar Heaven, “Sweet Home Chicago”

The South Side Chicago blues scene that Freddie King entered as a young man in the early 1950s was well under way as early as the 1920s, helped along by the passage of the National Prohibition Act in January of 1920 banning the manufacture or sale of alcohol in the United States. Author Mike Rowe points out:

Prohibition had as dramatic effect on the blues as it did on jazz...while the jazzmen played for what was essentially a young and well-off white audience in the more palatial cafes and dance halls, the bluesmen played at semi-private house parties in the black districts. The musical result was the establishment of a lusty and vigorous club scene that asserted Chicago’s claim to be the home of the blues.¹⁴

The later 1940s and early 1950s saw the further development of a “jump blues” music popularized by such players as Big Joe Turner, Jimmy Witherspoon and T-Bone Walker, as well as the saxophonist/singer that captured Freddie King’s attention as a kid in Texas, Louis Jordan and his Tympany Five. B.B. King notes in his autobiography, “I think it was Louis Jordan who made the real marriage between jump-band jazz and barrel-house blues. Every musician I knew — singer or saxist, guitarist or drummer— idolized Louis Jordan.”¹⁵ Freddie King, too, was wistful about Louis Jordan, “I play my guitar like Louis Jordan used to play his horn. That’s the same sound I get.”¹⁶ Also relevant to the life and music of Freddie King was the popularity of Jordan with both white and black audiences in pre-Civil Rights America who achieved the same crossover success King was able to demonstrate later in his career.

By the early 1950s, the pendulum had swung back toward the country blues style arriving with blacks from Southern states, especially Mississippi. Rowe speculates that:

¹⁴ Mike Rowe, *Chicago Blues: The City and the Music* (New York: Da Capo, 1975), 40

¹⁵ B.B. King and David Ritz, *Blues All Around Me: The Autobiography of B.B. King*. (HarperCollins, 1996), 123.

¹⁶ Dan Forte, "Freddie King: The Texas Cannonball," *Guitar Player*, October, 1997.

“The modern Delta style took root in Chicago because of the vast influx of Mississippi migrants during the ‘40s – out of the total net migration to Chicago for these years it’s probable that one half came from Mississippi alone.”¹⁷ Rowe admits that since census data did not keep track of state of origin of migrants so we can never know the exact numbers, but many of the blues players who ended up on Chess were from that state. No label would define this down-home and plugged-in style more than the Chess Records, run by the brothers Phil and Leonard Chess, themselves immigrants from Poland.

Originally, Aristocrat, the label name changed to Chess after Leonard Chess bought a controlling stake in Aristocrat and located the label on Chicago’s South Side, where the majority of the city’s African American community was concentrated in the early 1950s. Veteran musicians who had played all over the Southern states like Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf were mainstays of the label. These new arrivals to Chicago modified their use of the electric guitar and other amplified instruments from a rural acoustic sound to an amplified sound that included louder, noisier and more dissonant tones, a style that dominated the Chicago club scene and spawned a new technologically enhanced blues.

In his book *Instruments of Desire*, Steve Waksman meditates on the various uses of the electric guitar in the history of Western popular music. “It is with the range of meanings that I am most concerned,” wrote Waksman “...the ways in which the electric guitar has been integrated into a diverse set of existing musical contexts, and the ways in which the electric guitar has reshaped those contexts, and has created new fields of

¹⁷ Rowe, *Chicago Blues*, 210.

knowledge within the history of popular music.”¹⁸ One of those musical contexts is African American blues from 1941 to 1955 and the “shifts and transitions” that marked this history include:

[T]he changing concentration of blues performers in rural and urban areas, as well as between north and south; the displacement of field recording practices in favor of studio recording; the growing African American acquaintance with technologies of sound production and reproduction like tape recorder and the electric guitar; and the increased potential of African-American music, and of black performers, to ‘cross over’ into success with white audiences.¹⁹

Waxman’s analysis centers on Muddy Waters, a forerunner and inspiration for Freddie King who was also a contemporary from an older generation along with Howlin’ Wolf, another friend of King’s. A song written by Chess Records in-house producer/songwriter Willie Dixon and recorded by Howlin’ Wolf, “Wang Dang Doodle,” describes a party in one of the many blues clubs that dotted Chicago’s west and south sides. The first verse introduces us to some tough sounding characters:

Tell Automatic Slim , tell Razor Totin' Jim
 Tell Butcher Knife Totin' Annie, tell Fast Talking Fanny...
 We gonna romp and tromp till midnight
 We gonna fuss and fight till daylight
 We gonna pitch a wang dang doodle all night long

Waksman continues, “these were the years that saw the overlapping development of electric blues and rock and roll, two musical styles that were significantly affected by, and even derived from, changes in amplification and the role of the electric guitar.”

Chuck Berry is “a more familiar sort of guitar soloist by contemporary standards” says

¹⁸ Steve Waksman, *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1999, 10.

¹⁹ Waksman, *Instruments of Desire*, 115.

Waksman because he fits the archetype of the wailing blues soloist but artists like B.B. King and T. Bone Walker created this image for African American musicians to look up to before Chess Records artists became internationally famous. Chuck Berry brought Chess from a regional to a national audience with his hit “Maybellene” in 1955 and at the height of his fame Berry was a thirty-year-old black man playing to mostly white, teenage crowds.

Freddie King’s first job upon moving to Chicago was in the steel mill, but it did not take long before he was involved in the vibrant musical life around him. In addition to this, by 1952 he married Jessie Burnett, a young Texan who “proved to be the foundation and maturity he needed”²⁰ and who eventually gave birth to King’s seven children. King met and worked with both Chess stalwarts Wolf and Waters as a teenager and young man in the mid 1950s, going out nights after he put in his shift at the steel mill. In an interview, King recounts what life was like in Chicago when he was seventeen years old. “We were living right by the Zanzibar [a blues club on Chicago’s west side], so I started hanging around Muddy Waters. I’d sneak in the side door. Muddy would sneak me in, you know, and I would sit there and listen to the cats.”²¹

In another interview, Freddie claims to have been playing on studio sessions at Chess Records when Howlin’ Wolf recorded “Spoonful” and on Muddy Waters’ “I’m Ready.” There is no evidence that can back up these claims and the guitarist, Freddy Robinson, listed on the same recording date where Howlin’ Wolf recorded “Spoonful”, had the following to say about it. “I think Freddie King spread some of those rumors himself,” said the late Robinson known later in his career as Abu Talib. “But he never

²⁰ Unsigned article, “Sweet Home Chicago,” The Estate of Freddie King, www.freddiekingsite.com accessed on April 20, 2013.

²¹ O’Neal and Van Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, 362-363.

was in any session that I was on. I played the lead on ‘Spoonful,’ and I recorded ‘Back Door Man’ and this song that I hate, ‘Wang Dang Doodle.’”²² Despite King’s potential myth making he is credited with playing guitar on at least one Howlin’ Wolf tune “I’ve Been Abused” a tune that would be featured in many of Wolf’s live sets with Freddie King playing the signature guitar answer to Wolf’s lyric “All my life, I’ve caught it hard.”²³

King found acceptance and camaraderie with older musicians like Eddie Taylor and Jimmy Rogers (not the country singer, but the blues guitarist who was a member of Muddy Waters’ band). This helped shape the young black blues musician who would later play in front of mostly white crowds. Jimmy Rogers, who also recorded as a leader on Chess, scoring two hits on the *Billboard* R&B charts, recounted that he first saw King while playing with Muddy at those Club Zanzibar gigs. “He was a boy then, a youngster,” said Rogers, who died in 1997.

He wasn’t even playing. He was trying to learn how to play...He used to come in and sit and look at us play, me and Muddy. He was too young to come in but the bouncers there knew us, and by Freddie being so big, his sister could bring him in there. ... He’d sit there all night, from the time that he came in there until maybe one o’clock, and we closed at two. He’d sit there and watch me play. Then he’d go back home and practice. He’d go back home and practice until he got those licks sounding pretty good. Every time he’d play, if I’d be around. He would laugh and hit some of my licks there. He really liked what I was doing.”²⁴

Mississippi born Jimmy Rogers was a huge inspiration for the young Freddie King, so much so that he made sure to credit him on his Shelter Records comeback record, 1971’s “Getting Ready” with a cover of Rogers’ 1954 R&B chart hit “Walkin’ By Myself,” which King played on acoustic. Roger’s, along with seminal harmonica player

²² Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 10.

²³ James Segrest and Mark Hoffman, *Moanin’ At Midnight: The Life and Times of Howlin’ Wolf*, (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 2004,) 161.

²⁴ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 4.

Little Walter (born Marion Walter Jacobs), formed the core of Muddy Water's first band in Chicago in 1947 called the Headcutters or Headhunters, which was taken from their practice of stealing gigs from competing bands. In the history of the blues, Jimmy Rogers' guitar playing will be remembered just the same as Muddy Waters singing and songwriting because it's Rogers' licks you hear on lead breaks on much of Waters' material, the same band King went to sneak in and listen too after moving to Chicago.

Eddie Taylor was just as important a figure to the young Freddie King. A self-taught guitar player, also a Mississippi native, Taylor is credited with teaching Jimmy Reed to play so it's not surprising that King points out that Taylor showed him how to play fast. Not only did Taylor give lessons to Jimmy Reed, who was one of the era's most financially successful and popular blues acts, but he accompanied Jimmy Reed on guitar as well as musicians such as John Lee Hooker, Sam Lay and Big Walter Horton. Jimmy Reed himself had a huge influence on subsequent generations of rock, blues and soul acts but his career was marred by alcohol addiction and he died of respiratory failure at the relatively young age of 51 in August 1976.²⁵

A daughter of Freddie King's (presumably Wanda King, but the article is unsigned) tells the story of King's experience with Jimmy Reed on the road. Reed suffered for many years with undiagnosed epilepsy, which was compounded by his alcoholism.

My father and Jimmy Reed were booked together for some University shows. Jimmy Reed during this time was one of the hottest R&B performers around but he was not popular among his fellow artists. Jimmy would fight with the other artists, he sometimes would be a no show or he would perform so drunk at times he would pass out on stage.

²⁵ "Jimmy Reed," article on Allmusic, <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/jimmy-reed-mn0000076881>, accessed April 26, 2013.

My father knew of Jimmy's reputation but they got along well together. My father pranks and jokes kept Jimmy laughing. One night backstage in the dressing room while getting ready to go onstage Jimmy went into an epileptic seizure. People in the dressing room panic and did not know how to help him. My father grabbed Jimmy forced a drum stick between his teeth to prevent him from biting off his tongue.²⁶

Freddie King would trace a different trajectory than Muddy Waters after moving to Chicago, he was years younger than Muddy and his family made their home on Chicago's West Side, which was home to a new generation of young musicians coming of age in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Players like Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, Magic Sam, and Luther Allison (whom Freddie King claimed to have given lessons)²⁷ blazed a blues trail of their own in the wake of the Chess Records Mississippi Delta-imbued sound. There was considerable overlap between these generations, the West Side players being the last generation of young African American blues musicians who learned blues directly from the acknowledged masters of the genre and reinterpreted a new style in significant ways. Later called the "West Side Sound," the music was one of the primary moving forces in the blues revival movement that happened on both sides of the Atlantic among white youth in major urban centers.

The younger players in Freddie King's cohort on the West Side of Chicago had a different approach to the guitar than the older players on the South Side. Emphasizing the B.B. King approach and note "squeezing" these players made their names in all night guitar cutting contests at West Side clubs. Buddy Guy tells the story of one contest he won because of his showmanship. Having acquired an extra long electric guitar cord plugged into a car outside the club, he played for the prize of a bottle of whiskey, which

²⁶ Unsigned article "Sweet Home Chicago," www.freddiekingsite.com accessed April 26, 2013.

²⁷ Dan Forte, "Freddie King: Fingerpicking the Blues," *Guitar Player*, January 1977, 103.

he won, only to discover it was already empty!²⁸ Guy described the West Side scene this way in his autobiography: “No way I could compare with the guitarists of the day. I’m talking about Earl Hooker, the greatest slide man in the history of slides. ... I’m also talkin’ ‘bout Otis Rush and Magic Sam and Freddie King. They was masters, they was monsters, they was killers. There never was – and there will never be --- another time when so many gunslinger guitarists terrorized the streets of any city.”²⁹

Another West Side guitarist, Jimmy Dawkins, pointed out that economic factors in part drove preference for a three-piece band with guitar, bass and drums, a formula later appropriated by rock musicians and became the blueprint for mid 1960s heavy rock – the power trio.

It was the thing that we couldn’t get the money to have a full band. There’s a thing with most of the West Side boys. What we’re doing is playing with a bass, drums and guitar, but we’re thinking of a horn or two horns and when we throw those heavy chords that’s what we’re doing. It’s a creative thing. It makes us get this heavy sound as we call it substituting for a full band...we just weren’t able to hire and we had to fill it up some king of way. And we’d rather play with three pieces because it makes us work harder.³⁰

The guitar driven power trios, together with the West Side player’s adoption of the amplified electric bass were both key factors in the Blues Revival that hit a few years later.

Like Muddy Waters, Freddie King’s early experiences were in the South, just as Waters had in 1943, King brought with him his acoustic guitar and instrument. He is famous as a virtuosic electric blues guitar player but during his later stint at Leon Russell’s Shelter Records Freddie King first recorded on his acoustic guitar, an instrument on which he had just as much mastery; both songs were covers of Jimmy

²⁸ Buddy Guy with David Ritz, *When I Left Home* Da Capo Press Inc, 2012, 81.

²⁹ Buddy Guy, *When I Left Home*, 81.

³⁰ Rowe, *Chicago Blues*, 177.

Rogers's. In the context of Muddy Waters, Waksman talks about the tension between the rural and urban in the music. As Waksman notes, "[T]he impulse to adapt to the demands of the Chicago bars and the desire to preserve the sounds of the Delta...gave the...music much of its force." Freddie King referenced this juxtaposition of urban and rural, the acoustic and electric in an interview: "...I picked up the style between Lightnin' Hopkins and Muddy Waters, and B.B. King and T-Bone Walker. That's in-between-style, that's the way I play see. So I plays country and city."³¹

Despite Freddie King's closeness with premiere Chess Records talent, he never received a contract offer from their management. King's daughter offered an explanation in a 1994 interview:

Chicago was still into that Delta (blues style), but kind of urbanized. My father wanted a break. I think he tried several times to record for Chess. I've heard different versions that he sounded too much like B.B. King. The only likeness to him was his last name, King. His style was more upbeat. He was more what they call now Texas blues style. He had a jump to his blues. I don't think that fit into the Chess mentality. My father came on the scene and it's like, 'Who's this young guy, this maverick here? He's a maverick on the scene, trying to give blues more of a contemporary sound.'³²

One contemporary blues scholar, author Elijah Wald, has his reservations about Freddie King's being snubbed by Phil and Leonard Chess for sounding too much like B. B. King. "The reasons for turning down people by record companies...they don't necessarily mean anything," said Wald. "The Chess people weren't stupid. Sounding like BB King was pretty good economics at that time."³³ Whatever the reasons the Chess Brothers had for passing on Freddie King, they passed up an opportunity to score some

³¹ O'Neal and Van Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, p 366.

³² Mark Humphrey, "Freddie King's Daughter Remembers," in liner notes for Vestapol 13014, 1994.

³³ See Appendix B, 69.

much-needed hits in the early 1960s. “I tried to get on Chess,” King told interviewer Dave Booth, “but no one would listen to me.”³⁴

Freddie King’s first recordings were for the obscure label El Bee, “Country Boy” backed with “That’s What You Think” in 1957. Both tunes failed to get much attention and were once relatively unknown but now are widely available on King’s numerous retrospectives. A break occurred when a friend from the West Side, Syl Johnson, recommended him to the talent scout, bandleader and composer Sonny Thompson who was working a few doors down from the Chess office on Chicago’s Record Row (South Michigan Avenue) for the Federal imprint, a subsidiary of the Cincinnati, Ohio record label King Records.³⁵ Thompson’s 1948 hit “Long Gone” on the Miracle label solidified his reputation and when Miracle went out of business, it was soon acquired by the King label and by the late 1950s, Thompson was a seasoned performer, session musician and talent scout combing Chicago for new blood. As a result, it was in early 1960 that Freddie King was on a train headed to Cincinnati.³⁶

The King of King Records

Built by entrepreneur Syd Nathan, King Records had a slew of successful country music hits and boasted a stable of R&B acts under the Federal imprint, most notably James Brown and Little Willie John, headliners with tunes near or at the top of the *Billboard* R&B charts. “As did most of the artists who recorded for King [Records], [James]

³⁴ Mark Humphrey, “Freddie King,” *Guitar Player*, August 1995.

³⁵ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, p. 13.

³⁶ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, p. 14.

Brown butted heads time and again with Nathan, sometimes quite violently,” writes Jon Hartley Fox in *King of the Queen City: The Story of King Records*.³⁷

To say that Syd Nathan was a tough manager to get along with underestimates the paternalism endemic in a white, cigar chomping, recording company executive recording mainly black and working class white talent. Nathan had a reputation for honesty to a fault, and according to friends and detractors alike was most interested in making money for his record company.³⁸ Indeed, “Syd Nathan often said he made ‘records for the little man,’” but while this statement can be interpreted in many ways, what no one can deny is that Nathan had a keen sense of exactly what would sell to those “little men” be they white or black.³⁹

Upon Freddie King’s arrival at the studios of King Records, he immediately lent his guitar talents to the debut record for blues man Smokey Smothers who happened to be recording the day before him. Smothers was a blues player in the mold of Jimmy Reed and played a laid back acoustic blues. Smothers named his album *The Back Porch Blues* and he takes solos of his own along with session guitar player Freddie Jordan was already in the studio. King’s licks blend with Smothers’ tunes and are recognizable to Freddie King listeners on tunes like “Rock Little Girl”, including some familiar sounding double stops. King described his arrival at King Records and his version of the Smother’s session:

He was recording before me, and I just walked in. See, they had a cat there to play, Freddie Jordan, playing behind Smokey. He was a studio man. And the cat didn’t know what Smokey wanted, so I walks in, and I told ‘em, “Oh, man, I

³⁷ Jon Hartley Fox, *King of the Queen City: The Story of King Records*, Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009, 2-3.

³⁸ Jon Hartley Fox, *King of the Queen City*, 22.

³⁹ Jon Hartley Fox, *King of the Queen City*, 22.

know what he wants.” I told ‘em I’d play behind him ‘cause I know what he wanted. So it was no problem.⁴⁰

One can easily imagine Smothers and Jordan about to lay down some tracks and in walks a large Texan, Freddie King who “knows what he wants” and who were they to argue, especially when they hear his cleanly played, lightning fast blues runs! Listening to the way Smothers eggs King on, if he didn’t know what he wanted before he met Freddie King he would surely know when the tape was rolling.

The next day on August 26, 1960, at the first recording session under his own name at Cincinnati’s King records, Freddie King cut his first sides and some of his most widely recognized tunes. “Have You Ever Loved a Woman” the outstanding slow blues that has become a modern blues standard along with “See, See Baby” – an updated version of the standard “C.C. Rider” and the instrumental tune “Hideaway.” King later told an interviewer about the freedom he had on his first session. “Oh, it was cool, you know. Long as Syd Nathan would stay out of the studio, it was nice. Like the first hit, like all those things like ‘Hideaway,’ ‘Have You ever Loved a Woman,’ ‘You’ve got to Love Her with a Feeling,” that whole instrumental album [likely referencing *Let’s Hide Away and Dance Away with Freddie King*], Syd wasn’t nowhere in the studio. He was upstairs.”⁴¹

“Hideaway,” Freddie King’s first hit for King/Federal in 1961, is a good example of the tensions between “country and city,” playing that King characterized as his guitar style. The instrumental, named for the Chicago club Mel’s Hideaway Lounge, is a combination of riffs drawn from other guitarists’ instrumentals. King explained his inspiration for “Hideaway” in a Living Blues interview:

⁴⁰ O’Neal and Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, 369.

⁴¹ O’Neal and Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, 369.

Interviewer: I've heard that the original idea for "Hideaway" came from something that Hound Dog [Taylor] was playing.

Freddie King: Right. Hound Dog Taylor, it came from, he used to play a thing called "Taylor's Boogie"...[t]his diminished chord thing I used on the break part...came from Robert Jr. Lockwood...I put a thing in there from like "The Walk"...one of Jimmy McCracklin's songs...I just pitched it all in like this...Made a commercial thing out of it.⁴²

"Hideaway" was King's first and biggest hit and it capitalized on the surf guitar craze in the early 1960s. "Hideaway" was the opening salvo of a career that would catapult him into a place of respect and admiration that only the other "King's" of the blues have garnered since; B.B. King and Albert King. "Hideaway" has a dance hall and jump blues quality and added to the collage of tunes mentioned above Freddie King playfully inserted the riff from Henry Mancini's "Peter Gunn Theme." A video recorded in 1966 on a regional Texas television show *The Beat* shows King in top form moving along with the entire band as he effortlessly tosses off high-register licks while studio girls dance the "mashed potatoes."

One unfortunate outcome of the success of "Hideaway" was that Freddie King felt forced to play mainly electric guitar instrumentals, even though his vocal range allowed him to sing high notes in falsetto and was a commanding blues crooner in his own right. King addressed this in an interview:

Interviewer: In Europe you're most well known for instrumentals like "Hidaway" and "Driving Sideways." Now you concentrate more on singing.

Freddie King: Well, I was singing then. You see, my first hit record was singing. Like "You've Got to Love Her With a Feeling" and "Have You Ever Loved a Woman. [Federal 12384], that was my first hit. The first record [for Federal]. But then I made "I Love the Woman" [Federal 12401]; this was supposed to back up "Have You Ever Loved a Woman," but they put "hideaway" just for the B side. And that wound up being the A side, see. And this is when this particular song went on the Top 40s. And so, everybody forgot about the vocals then. So I

⁴² O'Neal and Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, 367.

just kept putting out instrumentals. So they actually didn't think I could sing, you know, just thought I played guitar, that was it.

Interviewer: Your singing occasionally reminds me of some of the things that Bobby Blue Bland was doing around 1955. Do you consider him somebody that was important in the way you developed as a singer?

Freddie King: Well, I always listened to Bobby, and B. B. King, and T-Bone Walker. Jimmy Rogers. I like his singing, man. Well, really, on my singing thing, my style I really don't sound like anybody but me, really. You know, not to me. Maybe Jimmy Rushing. A little bit.

Interviewer: Jimmy Rushing?!

Freddie King: Maybe a little bit on his style. I think, like "Ain't Nobody's Business," I believe if you listen to his record [Columbia CL 963] and Listen to mine [Cotillion SD-9016], you know, listen to my voice, I think it's a little bit on his.⁴³

In 1961's "I'm Tore Down," one can hear the quintessential Freddie King "double threat" – powerful soul-shout vocals and guitar showmanship par excellence. King, whose successful instrumental tune brought him to the attention of guitar players the world over, experienced a bias against his singing, which by any fair assessment, equaled his guitar-playing prowess. Other tunes are exemplary for demonstrating Freddie King's early vocal skill, "Lonesome Whistle Blues" which has a kind of loping swing feel, the falsetto and shouting on "Have You Ever Loved a Woman" and "Some Other Day Some Other Time," were the envy of blues men everywhere in the early 1960s.

This was Freddie King's first big impact on pop music scene but it seems that Syd Nathan was intent to recreate "Hideaway" with his insistence on guitar instrumentals at the expense of vocal tunes. One of the paternalist practices that frustrated King was Nathan's practice of naming the instrumentals for the artist, without his consultation. He was asked about it by Living Blues:

⁴³ ⁴³ O'Neal and Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, p. 366.

Interviewer: How do you think of the names for your instrumentals? Some are very funny.

Freddie King: Well, I tell you what, man, like, “Hideaway,” “Just Pickin’” [Federal 12470], I think those are the only two I named. I made ‘em all, you know, I wrote all the tunes, but the studio put the names to ‘em. Some of ‘em, I don’t know—they said “Swooshy” [on King LP 773], you know, I’d listen to it and not know what he’s talkin’ about. They got some heck of a names in there.⁴⁴

Things weren’t all bad at King Records for Freddie King. The unprecedented success of “Hideaway” and tunes featuring his vocals had the upside of bringing some much needed revenue, as by now King had quite a large family. “I can still remember as a little girl looking out the window of our third floor flat and seeing this big light blue Buick station wagon with Freddy King and his Band written in big bold lettering on the sides and his current hits ‘Hide Away’ and ‘Tore Down’ written on the tailgate,” remembers King’s daughter. By 1962, Freddie King was a recognizable blues talent being booked in reviews with acts such as Sam Cooke, the Shirelles, James Brown and the Drifters.

His fame and money didn’t stop King from enjoying himself. Still flush with cash from his early hits he became a fixture of Chicago nightlife. The excerpt below from an unsigned article from the point of view of Freddie King’s daughter is one of very few windows that open onto Freddie King’s personal life. In it, she explains the consequences to her mother and her numerous siblings of Freddie King’s penchant for staying out all night drinking and gambling:

Freddie loved the Chicago nightlife. Gambling til dawn in the backroom of Mike’s cleaners and getting into mischief with his cronies. My mother was now a housewife with six children. She didn’t like what the Chicago nightlife was doing

⁴⁴ O’Neal and Van Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, 367.

to her husband, it provided to many distractions. The fall of 1962 she left her husband and she and her six children moved to Dallas Texas.

After she arrived in Dallas she called Syd Nathan demanding that he send her royalties that she knew her husband was entitled to. She stated that she needed it for her children and herself to start a new life. Nathan proved to be a few notches above the other record company owners of this period. He sent my mother two thousand dollars. My mother place a down payment on a house. It did not take my father long to realize that his family was not returning to Chicago. Freddie left his beloved Chicago and joined his wife and children in Dallas in the spring of 1963.⁴⁵

These hedonistic habits, picked up early in King's career, as we will see later, would cost him dearly later in life. For now, however, he was able to reunite with his family before heading back out on the road.

Despite this newfound fame, studio boss Syd Nathan's business practices continued to upset King. He felt he wasn't getting enough attention in promotional material and radio spots. He was asked about his reason for leaving King Records in *Living Blues* and answered in his plain spoken, blunt style, even as the interviewer hedges somewhat in the asking.

Interviewer: As far as I'm concerned, to my ear—and I think you'd probably agree—the stuff on King, especially those early sides, are still your best records.

Freddie King: It is.

Interviewer: I was wondering why you left them? Or is that business stuff that—

Freddie King: Well, the reason I left them, it wasn't too cool.

Interviewer: Personalities and things?

Freddie King: Well, I mean, they got where they wouldn't push me, and then plus, nobody but James [Brown], you know James, pushin' him. And it just, I mean it was hard to get a King record played on the radio, man. It was a thing like, it was

⁴⁵ Unsigned article, "The Palace of the King," The Estate of Freddie King, www.freddiekingsite.com, accessed April 26, 2013.

hard for me to get anything going, you know, with King. They like had it out there, but it's nothin'. Not far as any of the radio stations were concerned.⁴⁶

The combination of this with the paternalist practices of King Records founder and studio boss Syd Nathan, such as not being allowed to title his own instrumentals, record material of his choosing, combined with his dissatisfaction with what he felt was inadequate promotion of his career led to his decision to leave the label where he enjoyed his biggest success. Freddie King's daughter adds more details that she claimed to have heard in "out of earshot conversations."

Interviewer: Once your father began to record for King, did he ever mention Syd Nathan?

Wanda King: I remember several things just from being in ear-shot of conversations between my mom and father about Nathan and how he shorted my father out of his gold record on Hide Away.

He actually made the million mark, but Nathan didn't want to pay the IRS on the count. (laughs) Things like this happen. You make some money, but you don't own up to it on paper, 'cause if you do, you've got to pay the IRS on it. But Nathan wasn't completely bad. He bought my father a brand new station wagon. They had 'Freddie King' in bold blue and red letters on the side and Hide Away and 'King Recording Artist' written on the side. It was like a moving neon sign! To me as a child, I said, 'Wow! This is beautiful!' That car was like a moving bus with a neon sign on it. When you saw it, you knew Freddie King was in town!⁴⁷

Whatever the reasons, Freddie King was packing his bags and moving on from King/Federal in search of greener pastures. He didn't have to look long because a burgeoning white blues revival audience was eager to pay for concert tickets from California to Europe.

⁴⁶ O'Neal and Van Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, 370 – 371.

⁴⁷ Mark Humphrey, "Freddie King's Daughter Remembers," in liner notes for Vestapol 13014 videocassette, 1994, 20.

Chapter 2

The Blues Revival and the Godfather of Blues-Rock

“...Negro music is essentially the expression of an attitude, or a collection of attitudes, about the world, and only secondarily an attitude about the way music is made. The white jazz musician came to understand this attitude as a way of making music, and the intensity of his understanding produced the ‘great’ white jazz musicians, and is producing them now.”

Amiri Baraka formerly Leroi Jones¹

In the span of four years, from when Freddie King left King Records in 1964 to his arrival on Cotillion in 1968, slow but steady changes occurred in blues listenership. No longer was blues exclusively the music of black Americans, it found a home with white blues revivalists who were looking for a connection with what they perceived was authentic music and for rock and roll roots, while blacks were in a mood to distance themselves from a musical reminder of an unjust system of segregation. Even so, writer, critic and activist, Leroi Jones who changed his name to Amiri Baraka, wrote in his seminal 1963 work *Blues People*:

*Ragtime, dixieland, jazz, are all American terms. When they are mentioned anywhere in the world, they relate to America and an American experience. But the term blues relates directly to the Negro, and his personal involvement in America. And even though ragtime, dixieland, and jazz are all dependent upon blues for their existence in any degree of authenticity, the terms themselves relate to a broader reference than blues. Blues means a Negro experience; it is the one music the Negro made that could not be transferred into a more general significance than the one the Negro gave it initially.*²

¹ LeRoi Jones, *Black Music*. New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, 1968, 13.

² LeRoi Jones, *Blues People*. New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, 1963, 93 – 94.

Baraka writes his book *Black Music* he argues that something changes when a music is no longer exclusively black, it becomes *American*:

Jazz, as a Negro music, existed, up until the time of the big bans, on the same socio-cultural level as the sub-culture from which it was issued. The music and its sources were *secret* as far as the rest of America was concerned... The first white critics were men who sought, whether consciously or not, to understand this secret, just as the first serious white jazz musicians (Original Dixieland Jazz Band, Bix [Biederbecke], etc.) sought not only to understand the phenomenon of Negro music but to appropriate it as a means of expression which they themselves might utilize. The success of this “appropriation” signaled the existence of an American music, where before there was a Negro music.

As jazz developed and became an American and international music, so too, did the blues, but it retained it’s the characteristic of being almost exclusively black, although there is scholarship that defies this representation and argues there were moments racial cross-fertilization among white bluegrass and folk musicians and black blues players as a result of the legacy of minstrelsy.³ “[N]either tradition developed independently of the other; the races lived too close together, and each relied upon the other’s support too much for any real cultural separation,” argues Tony Russell in his book *Blacks Whites and Blues*. Going back to the 1920s, black women blues crooners were the rage, with Bessie Smith, Ethyl Waters and Ida Cox introducing the first blues craze in American history. These artists had substantial numbers of whites buying their discs and attending their concerts and were well-regarded stars in their own right during the Jazz Age.

In Elijah Wald’s book, *The Blues: A Very Short Introduction*, a chapter entitled “Jazz and Blues” provides details on the overlap between blues and jazz and further highlights the appropriation of styles within the black community of musicians and whites who learned to play like them. Wald shows blues was an extant tradition at exactly the same moment and even before the birth of jazz and has informed it all along the way.

³ Tony Russell, *Blacks Whites and Blues*, (New York, Stein and Day Publishers, 1970,) 9.

From Dixieland through the swing era blues was present in jazz repertoires and even sophisticated orchestras, such as Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra, brought in singer Ethel Waters to meet popular demand, although not always with spectacular effect. Wald cites Ethel Waters' description of her work with Henderson to illustrate this point:

'Fletcher, though a fine arranger and a brilliant bandleader, leans more to the classical side.... [He] wouldn't give me what I call a 'damn it to hell bass,' that chump-chump stuff that real jazz needs.' She added that under her tutelage he eventually mastered blues rhythms, but this story highlights the disparate strains that went into jazz, and the role blues often played.⁴

To a modern reader it might seem odd that a celebrated jazz bandleader would need lessons in blues but regional differences and uneven development in African American music affected not only what people played but their musical opinions as well. The same can be said of white players, who were listening and eagerly speaking the language of black music.

Bebop valued complexity of harmony along with improvisational virtuosity and required faithful musical study to play. This high bar for entry thereby preserved its blackness since not many whites (with some notable exceptions) could "make the [chord] changes," or so goes the most common narrative of the birth of bebop. That this complexity also excluded numerous black players did not escape leading proponents of bebop, the music was intended to be exclusionary from the beginning as it was no longer for dancing, it was art music. Wald hints at another reason bebop musicians may have looked down on the blues, "...the fact that audiences tended to prefer bands like [Jay] McShann's and Louis Jordan's to their more musically adventurous groups just increased the disdain they felt for the straightforward blues stylists."⁵

⁴ Elijah Wald, *The Blues: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 84.

⁵ Wald, *Blues*, 88.

Blues phrasing and forms are present in bebop and this was not something Dizzy Gillespie or any other bebop player would deny. An underlying dialogue between generations of black musicians is present in this quotation from Wald's book and it illustrates how central the blues were to bebop innovator, saxophonist Charlie Parker. "The bebop musicians didn't like to play the blues," said Gillespie. "They'd play the twelve-bar outline of the blues, but they wouldn't blues it up like the older guys they considered unsophisticated."⁶ Wald notes prior to the quotation that Gillespie came from an "eastern swing background" further emphasizing regional attitudes towards blues. Nevertheless, Gillespie corrects some of his peers regarding his most famous collaborator: "Those guys overlooked the fact that Charlie Parker personified the blues idiom. When he played the blues, he was a real blueser."⁷

Even if Freddie King's chart topping sessions were already behind him by the mid-1960s it was his dissatisfaction with King Records and its management that led to successful tours on the Chitlin Circuit in the South as well as his first tour of England in 1967. The first label that allowed King to record what he wanted in the studio was Cotillion, a subsidiary of Atlantic records, with sessions under the direction of legendary saxophonist King Curtis, after a nearly two year recording hiatus. By 1968 as many whites as blacks (sometimes more depending on the venue) were turning up to see Freddie King in concert. Benny Turner, Freddie King's bass guitar player in the 1970s (and his half brother) observed, "Freddie was actually reaching a white audience then, which was about '65...He started doing it about between '65 and '68."⁸

⁶ Wald, *Blues*, 88.

⁷ Wald, *Blues*, 88.

⁸ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 39.

Freddie King's recordings for Cotillion allowed him the opportunity to play with a handpicked band representing some of New York's best session players. King Curtis, David "Fathead" Newman and Cornell Dupree graced his albums while on the label, while a young Donny Hathaway was credited with arranging for the record "My Feeling For the Blues." The studio bands on both albums were much larger as well, with a full horn section there are moments on the record where King doesn't stand out as well as on his Federal cuts and King said so in an interview.

Interviewer: What was the production like when you were recording for Cotillion? Were they asking you to do things that you didn't want to do?

Freddie King: No, it wasn't anything wrong with the things that I wanted to do. Because they told me to go for myself. But the only thing was the production, man: they kept the guitar back and kept the voice back and put this whole big band up front. An dthis way you can't hear the guitar at all. 'Cause see, most people when they hear blues, they hear Freddie King and B. B. King, they listen for guitar, too.⁹

King Curtis was a bandleader and saxophonist who played tenor, alto and soprano sax and whose compositions featured r&b, soul jazz, funk, with riffs heavily laced with the blues. His career kicked off as the sax soloist on the smash Coasters hit "Yakety Yak" on Atlantic records in 1958, but Curtis had been playing for years before this and even walked away from a scholarship for a chance to join Lionel Hampton's band.¹⁰ Upon moving to New York he became a respected session musician working on the Prestige, Atco and Capitol labels. By the time he worked with Freddie King in 1968 he was already a rising star having worked with Aretha Franklin in her backing band and with southern blues guitarist Duane Allman.

⁹ O'Neal and Van Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, 371.

¹⁰ Theroux, Gary; Howard Rye (2010-02-15). "Curtis, King". *Oxford Music Online*. Accessed April 25, 2013.

Dahl notes that since “King reportedly wasn’t thrilled with the mix on ‘Blues Master,’ and he returned to Atlantic’s New York studios to cut his encore Cotillion album, ‘My feeling for the Blues,’ a year later, his axe was noticeably hotter and beefier.”

¹¹ While “Freddie King is a Blues Master” and “My Feeling For the Blues” garnered critical acclaim, neither was a financial success. Dan Forte noted in an August 1995 article for *Guitar Player*:

If King felt discouraged, it never showed on stage. Guitarist Willie Smith remembers playing with him in Fort Worth at T.J.’s Famous Chicken in the Basket in 1969. “He showed up with his Cadillac,” says Smith, “and in the back of his Cadillac would be that big ol’ Dual Showman amp. He would se his amp up on the dance floor in front of the band. T.J.’s had a hardwood floor, hard wall, and lots of echo. It sounded like a gymnasium. Man, he just burned.”¹²

If we follow Baraka’s analysis, enumerated at the outset of this chapter, to its logical conclusion it leads to a proposition that may seem elementary but is really at the heart of Baraka’s whole reason for writing *Black Music*. The contention is that a blues song like “Have You Ever Loved A Woman” by Freddie King could only have been written and performed by a black man or woman who had lived an experience in America under certain social and economic conditions. The implication and corollary to this is that a white musician, if he wants to play blues in such a way will have to understand “attitude or collection of attitudes...about the world” and the “intensity” of that understanding will create a “great” white musician. That’s exactly what happened in the 1960s blues revival movement in places like Chicago, Illinois and London, England, white players sought the “secrets” of the blues and appropriated the attitude and learned to play the blues.

¹¹ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 48.

¹² Mark Humphrey, “Freddie King,” *Guitar Player*, August, 1995, 103.

Baraka's essay, written in 1963 about jazz music and its white critics, a music that had wrestled with this question much longer than the blues, which was primarily the domain of black musicians and working class blacks more specifically up until the 1960s. Middle class blacks own attitudes towards the "bad taste" contained in the blues, charged Baraka, "has been a factor that has kept the best of Negro music from slipping sterilely into the echo chambers of middle brow American culture."¹³ Baraka further contended that the "best music" owed its existence to precisely this "bad taste" kept alive in the music, "blues or jazz," which sprung directly from "Negroes...aware of their identities as black Americans" who "did not, themselves, desire to become vague, featureless, Americans as is usually the case with the Negro middle class."¹⁴

The blues revival among whites had no small hand in sustaining the elder statesmen of the blues, at a time when younger blacks were throwing off the cultural trappings of an older generation. In the chapter, "Blues Today" by Manfred Miller in the anthology *The Story of Jazz* by Joachim E. Berendt, Man references the authenticity of the white players Mike Bloomfield and Paul Butterfield. Both played with Muddy Waters on his critically acclaimed album *Fathers and Sons*. The double album, released in 1969 was Muddy Waters most successful selling record to date and had reached number 70 on the Billboard Hot 100 that same year. The cover art played on white audiences' understanding of racial authenticity in the playing of blues music.

It conspicuously parodied Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel with a dark skinned "God" in the upper right of the record reaches out his finger to a reclining "Adam" who has finally learned to be "cool" because in addition

¹³ Jones, *Black Music*, 11.

¹⁴ Jones, *Black Music*, 12.

to his fig leaf he also sports a pair of dark shades. By taking on the mantle of “blues player” whites were both acknowledging who the “gods” were and consciously identifying with black musical legacy that had lost popularity to other musical forms among the African American community.

Mann quoted Muddy Water’s idea that he had captured a sound similar to his “classic” first band at Chess Records:

“The music has the same feeling as it used to have with Otis (Spann), Jimmy Rogers and Little Walter. And that was the best band I ever played with.” Muddy brushes aside with unusual briskness the question of the authenticity of Bloomfield’s and Butterfield’s execution: “Anyone who comes at me again with this black-white rubbish will get it shoved back down his own throat. Anyway Mike and Paul lived and played with us for years when a blues boom in pop music seemed absolutely unthinkable.”¹⁵

A similar record to “Fathers and Sons” was cut in the UK released by Chess in 1971 with Eric Clapton in lead guitar chair. The version of “Little Red Rooster” is memorable in this regard because the white players, including Clapton to play Wolf’s tune and when he is correcting them they ask him to show them and initially he demurs, as if unwilling to give up his secret. Marshall Chess, son of Chess Records founder Leonard Chess commented on the white blues player phenomenon.

I noticed it with the Rolling Stones, Butterfield, Bloomfield, and others: If they had their wish, they would have been black to sound identical to those Chess Records that they were covering onstage. But it came out their way. They just added that little bit of whiteness to it, and that little bit of their way really made it [expand] into the white market.¹⁶

For some it may be tempting to write off Freddie King’s later work as not as good as the Federal instrumental and vocal tunes and a convincing argument can be made that

¹⁵ Manfred Miller, “Blues Today,” in *The Story of Jazz* edited by Joachim E. Berendt Prentice Hall Press 1978, 43.

¹⁶ *Martin Scorsese presents: The Blues a Musical Journey*, Peter Guralnick, Robert Santelli, Holly George-Warren, Christopher John Farley. Amistad HarperCollins Publishers 2003, 217.

later Freddie King loses some of his technical vibrancy on guitar. King was asked by *Living Blues* magazine in December 1974 if he “practiced frequently” he replied: “That’s if I practice. That don’t hardly come. Every once in a while. I travel too much, man, I’m always on the road. And in the summertime, I be fishin’!”¹⁷

A thorough listening to his *Cotillion* and *Shelter* material reveals an older player who has successfully crossed over to the white blues-rock audience and if anyone of his numerous fans thought he wasn’t as good as the old stuff you would be hard pressed to find them. Up until the end of his life King kept up a rigorous touring schedule often playing strings of one nighters with little or not sleep and had notorious eating habits and enjoyed staying up late playing poker. This rock and roll life was immortalized in the *Grand Funk Railroad*, who toured with Freddie King, tune “American Band” with the lyrics:

Up all night with Freddie King
 I got to tell you, poker's his thing
 Booze and ladies, keep me right
 As long as we can make it to the show tonight

Waksman describes how male bias of the electric guitar “cannot be fully grasped without examining how the varieties of masculinity...have resulted from such a convergence of race, gender, and sexuality.” As an example of “just how deep-rooted the assumption of the electric guitar” is, he recalls an interview with Jennifer Batten who toured with Michael Jackson as lead guitar player in his backing band. “[I]t’s a shock for some people to see a woman playing the guitar. All over the world, on the Michael Jackson tour, people would ask me whether I was a man or a woman. Just because I played guitar, they assumed I was a guy.” Waksman also links this concept with the

¹⁷ O’Neal and Van Singel, *Voice of the Blues*, 363.

“racialized nature of rock’s favored phallogocentric display, with the electric guitar as a privileged signifier of white male power and potency” arguing that this system affects both black and white musicians.

With regard to Freddie King, many white players saw King as the embodiment of black male power. At six feet three inches and three hundred pounds, many biographies write about King’s stage presence and this echoes Waksman’s observations on how the electric guitar invests the body with meaning. “He practically stamped the walls with his outline, so massive was his stage presence in form and function,” writes one biographer.¹⁸ The author says he was present at more than one Freddie King concert in the 1970s and there is no doubt he could spellbind audiences, yet the choice of words carries an interesting subtext of black male power as transcending the body, especially with a man as large as Freddie King: 6 foot 250 pounds.

It was during his stint at Atlantic’s Cotillion imprint that Freddie King began to change and update his look. Gone was the slicked back pompadour and suits he wore in the early 1960s promotional shots at Federal. King let his hair grow naturally, he was in tune with the look of popular musicians. By the 1970s, photos show him sporting big mutton chop sideburns and later towards the end of his life, what is commonly referred to now as a “soul patch” on his bottom lip. His style of dress was also outlandish to some even back in the 1970s. He favored shirts with extremely long lapels. “One shirt he frequently wore was accentuated by lapels larger than Dumbo the elephant’s ears; one often got squashed under his guitar strap,” writes Dahl.¹⁹

¹⁸ Michael Corcoran, *All Over the Map: True Heroes of Texas Music* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005), 51.

¹⁹ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 53.

The Significance of Freddie King

With his speed and intricate, perfectly executed blues runs, Freddie King was the next level of technical virtuosity after the ascendance of B.B. King to national prominence in the 1950s. It was Freddie King's faster and more aggressive playing that was an influence on the younger Eric Clapton, leading light of England's 1960s blues revival scene. Three tunes by each artist are evidence that the vibrato drenched leads of B.B. King are clearly present in both Freddie King's and Eric Clapton's style, as they are in virtually all blues and rock guitarists that came after him. Nevertheless, it is the ferocity of Freddie King that Clapton appropriated as his primary weapon and marked his early years with the Yardbirds, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and one of history's first hard rock super group: Cream.

Eric Clapton's role in the foundation of a new blues based guitar solo style cannot be understated. He is the only musician to be inducted into the Rock and Roll hall of fame three times, as solo player, and as a member of the band The Yardbirds and Cream. He consistently appears near the top of canon forming lists of influential guitarists coming in second in Rolling Stones 100 Best Guitar Players of all time. His musical credentials are as good as gold not just from his 17 Grammy Awards but that he has lived the lifestyle of a wealthy rock and roller in addition to all the awards and adoration.

Very early on a consistent determination to play blues marked Clapton's career. He decided to quit the successful pop band The Yardbirds after they scored a hit tune "For Your Love" written by a professional songwriter who had penned hits for other "British Invasion" bands. His next move was to work with the godfather of the blues revivalist movement in the UK – John Mayall. It was during his stint with Mayall that

Clapton waxed Freddie King's biggest hit, "Hideaway" which brought him international attention and an even wider appreciation in England. Shortly after this album was released, graffiti appeared in a London subway proclaiming "Clapton is God."

When it comes to technique, style, mutual admiration and professional collaboration, Freddie King and Eric Clapton, like Mike Bloomfield and Paul Butterfield to Muddy Waters, are "father and son." Yet few could deny the trailblazing role of Mississippi born B.B. "Blues Boy" King. In the tune "Sweet Little Angel," released on RPM Records in 1956, which became one of B.B.'s biggest early hits pushing up to number eight on the Billboard R&B chart, we can hear a now-familiar style that would be appropriated later by both Freddie King and Eric Clapton. The tempo is a relaxed 74 beats per minute and B.B. King plays a call and response, alternating singing, and playing runs on the electric guitar. His vocals are smooth and laid-back while his guitar licks are derived from the pentatonic scale with hints of the mixolydian mode displaying his mastery of vibrato "crying" bends and blue notes. Even though B.B. King was solidly within a blues tradition, the addition of a horn section with the electric guitar performer taking center stage was a stylistic shift in post-WWII urban blues and his style, while uniquely his own, borrows heavily from T-Bone Walker.

B.B. King's vocals often reach into falsetto as he cries, "If my baby quit me...I do believe I would die." B.B.'s high register vocalizations are clearly echoed in "I'm Tore Down," Freddie King's recording of a Sonny Thompson credited tune that was a hit for Freddie King in 1960. The solo in "I'm Tore Down" demonstrates the use of triplets, chromatics and Freddie King plays more notes than B.B. King, in addition to the tune being much more up-tempo. Interestingly, in the eighth measure of the solo there are

three distinct chromatic triplets that are identical to each other but they are also identical to a lick that B.B. King used in “Sweet Little Angel.” They travel from F natural, F sharp to G natural and in “I’m Tore Down,” they really fly off the fret board, while they are more relaxed in “Sweet Little Angel.”

There are many similarities between these two tunes not least of which is the fact that they are only one fret away from each other on the guitar fret board. “Sweet Little Angel” is in the key of D flat while “I’m Tore Down” is in the key of D. To a blues guitar player that’s just a half step difference, simply shift up one fret and all the same chord shapes and scales are employed. Yet there are some significant differences between the blues stylists. If the vocals and guitar register are similar, both players shredded on different instruments – B.B. King’s “Lucille” is a Gibson ES-355 semi-acoustic electric guitar while Freddie King played the solid body Gibson Les Paul gold top. With the Les Paul’s thinner, solid wood body the tone sounds substantively different with more distortion coming from the P-90 pickups.

While Freddie King’s phrasing is similar, his attack is much more aggressive and his note choices are somewhat different. For example, during the “I’m Tore Down” solo he bends the same high register F three times in between well-timed pauses. This creates a brash, harder sound that indicates the younger player has developed a distinct style from his predecessor and namesake and is evidence that he can play as good as or better than any blues man of his day. In B.B. King recordings, he more frequently shifts to the major pentatonic scale while Freddie King stays in a minor pentatonic mode and quite often took a minimalist approach to his soloing. B.B. King has said that one of the reasons for his sparse style has to do with his technical ability:

“I guess I’ve always been thick headed and had stupid fingers. I could never do like the kids do today...since I could *not* play like them I would say ‘if I could play that I wouldn’t play that the way he’s playing it...I’d play it this way.’ And I think that’s how I started to develop a style because I couldn’t hear well enough or play well enough to play like these people that I loved so much.”²⁰

After WWII and the implementation of the Marshall Plan on mainland Europe and the British Isles, along with all the expertise and material there came with it crates of imported music discs. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a youth culture had emerged in England that embraced the sound of American blues and rock. A network of avid young record collectors sprang up that spread the music of African American entertainers such as Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf as well as white musicians such as Elvis Presley and Carl Perkins. By the mid-1960s, the British Invasion was in full swing with English musicians riding a wave of popularity on the Billboard charts. A subset of these rock fans became die-hard blues fans and helped fuel a blues revival. Eric Clapton was a leading light of the movement along with bandleader John Mayall.

“I was in this little band called the Roosters, someone had it and it was like ‘wake up, this has happened’ ... ‘this has already happened somewhere in the world, you are already way too late,’” said Clapton referring to the first time he heard Freddie King’s blues standard Hideaway.²¹ From then on he became a lifelong devotee of Freddie King toured with him and helped sign him to RSO Records the company that released King’s final two records, *Burglar* and *Larger Than Life* which doesn’t rate as highly as King’s earlier work with Shelter or Federal with fans. If one listens, there are gems like the

²⁰ Peter Guralnick, Robert Santelli, Holly George-Warren, Christopher John Farley eds., *Martin Scorsese presents: The Blues a Musical Journey*, Amistad HarperCollins Publishers, 2003, 217

²¹ *Eric Clapton: Nothing But The Blues*, directed by Martin Scorsese (Warner/Reprise Video, 1994), Remastered DVD.

funked up blues of “My Credit Didn’t Go Through” about a subject very closely linked since its beginning: poverty and overcharged credit cards.

One tune where Eric Clapton displayed exemplary and arguably, Freddie King inspired guitar is Cream’s rendition of “Sitting on Top of The World” a cut from their farewell album appropriately entitled “Goodbye.” From the very first slow blues pick up notes Clapton is honing in on the same grooves he heard from the early Freddie King records he borrowed from his friend John Mayall’s record collection. Tunes like this and others put Clapton in the same league with King, even if he never expected to meet or work with King, he had the same blues rock spirit in his playing.

While King no doubt benefitted from Eric Clapton’s generous efforts there is a hint in a live recording that some things might not have sat well with Freddie King regarding Clapton’s highly acclaimed cover of King’s “Have You Ever Loved a Woman” on the Derrick and the Dominoes record. The tune had a salacious tale attached to it since it was widely rumored to have been Clapton’s response to the problem of having fallen in love with George Harrison’s former wife, Patty Boyd. In his introduction to the tune on a live bootleg entitled “Live at Cain’s Ballroom 1975,” after nearly three minutes of scorching slow blues soloing King complains “A lot of people think that Eric Clapton recorded this song first – that’s bullshit. He was about five years late,” King hastened to add “but he’s a friend of mine.”

Clapton was a known entity in England by the time he quit the successful Yardbirds and joined with an obscure blues revivalist named John Mayall. If he was identifiable as a pop guitarist before recording, after playing with Mayall his name would henceforth be spoken with reverence all over England and beyond as an blues player par

excellence. This recording more than any other introduced hard core blues fans to the British scene and launched Clapton to local acclaim, if not yet international prominence. It's not hard to tell Clapton's homage to Freddie King came from a fiery devotion to the music and mimicked King's intensity and attack. The solo section includes the same double stops as in Freddie King's original and a section that shows Clapton transforming the double stop section into something resembling Elmore James intro to the Robert Johnson standard "Dust My Broom."

Freddie King's half brother and bass player Benny Turner remembered the tour that King and Eric Clapton shared. Regarding a show at a California club The Starwood, Turner recalled, "I sat back and listened to Freddie and Clapton play together. Freddie played 'Hide Away' that night, and Clapton played 'Hide Away' also with Freddie. But you didn't hear but one guitar. You know, Clapton was just that much into Freddie."²²

In comparison to Clapton, a contemporaneous tune on the Rolling Stones 1966 album "Aftermath," demonstrates Keith Richards guitar work on the song "Stupid Girl" (ignoring for the moment, its misogynistic lyrics) is much less technically inclined. Keith Richards solo sounds as if he is simply repeating the same lick but this is typical of "British Invasion" guitar breaks during the mid 1960s. It was only after Clapton emerged as a guitar superstar in Cream and after Jimi Hendrix left New York and arrived in London that guitar players in Britain knew the bar had been set at a much higher level for rock guitar virtuosity.

²² Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 69

Freddie King in the 1970s: Shelter and ISO Records

After his lackluster sales at Cotillion, Freddie King struck out again on his own and acquired the services of a professional manager, Texan Jack Calmes, who was instrumental in setting up a deal with Leon Russell's Shelter Records.²³ Calmes was a seasoned music industry mover who produced a video for the Rolling Stones in 1978 and also owned a company that provided concert lighting and sound around the time he entered into a business relationship with Freddie King. Almost immediately Calmes secured King a spot on the legendary Texas International Pop Festival held just two weeks after Woodstock in 1969. Bootleg copies are rumored available over the internet that are spoken of with reverence because of the high technical quality of live recording for the time. According to King's Estate website:

In 1969, Freddie hires a new manager Jack Calmes. Jack is young, white and part of the "counter culture" that has discovered the blues. Jack helped orchestrate Freddie's career into high gear with the 1969 Texas Pop Festival, there he shared billing with Led Zeppelin, Sly and the Family Stone, Ten Years After, B.B. King, among others, "Led Zeppelin's guys were standing there watching him perform with their mouth open," Jack said.²⁴

Pianist Leon Russell played a pivotal role in bringing Freddie King to the attention of the legions of pop fans who were now listening to blues-rock bands like Led Zeppelin, Canned Heat, Cream and Jimi Hendrix. His own career as a session player reads like a who's who in music but for Freddie King the relationship worked out well. Once signed to Russell's Shelter Records King was treated as a star and was given leeway similar to his time on Cotillion to choose material of his own while also recording tunes penned by Russell and collaborator Don Nix, a lablemate on Shelter. The result

²³ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 53.

²⁴ Unsigned article, "The Palace of the King," The Estate of Freddie King, www.freddiekingsite.com, accessed April 26, 2013.

was Freddie King's 1971 comeback album "Getting Ready" which featured a Russell tune "Goin' Down" sounding much more like rock than blues but had the desired effect.

Dahl argued:

"Goin' Down" was a "major departure for King. Its bone crunching bass line never lets up for even a nanosecond, sounding unapologetically like hard rock even though King handled his vocal and high-end string –bending in customary hair-raising blues fashion. The track was the plug side of the only single to be culled from the LP; Deep Purple, Jeff Beck, and Stevie Ray Vaughan subsequently chimed in with versions.

While King delivers his hard blues licks and growling vocal delivery on every Shelter album, King's time at Shelter suffers from the quite consistent overuse of synthesized strings after the breakthrough hit of B.B. King's "The Thrill is Gone." The arrangements for synthetic strings, while giving it an almost psychedelic vibe, feel so forced as when King covers Jimmy Rogers Walking By Myself on acoustic guitar and shortly thereafter the strings come on and take some of the rawness of King's heartfelt tribute to one of his Chicago blues mentors.

Author Joe Nick Patoski shed some light on this part of Freddie King's career from the point of view of a white music fan who as a young man saw King on five separate occasions.

[W]hile Freddie King is starting to play the Armadillo [World Headquarters] in Austin...which is really how most hippie kids heard about him and it was really through the patronage of Leon Russell, he'd [King] be skinny-ing the blues...at the same time he was doing that he was still playing P.J.'s Chicken In A Basket on Sunday afternoons for chump change...

[H]e was one of the pioneers to do this cross over playing in front of mainly white crowds, as well as black crowds. I know in Austin in the early 70s we called the Armadillo "the house that Freddie King built because he was the first act to consistently pack it out and sell it out.

Freddie brought so much legitimacy to what Leon did and vice versa and that was more powerful than what was going on... at least around here, that made much

more of an impact than what BB King or what Albert King did. Freddie was homegrown and he was electric he could play to the white kids he had black people start to be in his band but he was still Texas blues, he was the Texas Cannonball. You gotta go find Jim Franklin's poster of Freddie that hung on the wall in the Armadillo, that to me, says everything 'cause it shows him scrunched out very lifelike, realistically scrunched down hitting a note on his guitar and an armadillo is bursting out of his heart.²⁵

King's last record with Shelter, "Woman Across the River," "reached a new level of commercial prosperity for Freddie," writes Dahl, "climbing to #158 on *Billboard's* pop album charts during an eight week run that summer. But it also marked the end of Freddie's time on Shelter. Interviewed in the wake of his exit, he derided Shelter's alleged lack of promotional muscle just as he once had Syd Nathan's, although his stint with Russell at the helm had very obviously brought him a sizable new audience."²⁶

Despite arguments that Russell hadn't promoted him well enough, King never impinged on Russell's hospitality towards him but he may have felt his career had more promise across the Atlantic, where he was a top draw and had played to a spellbound crowd at the Montreaux Jazz Festival in 1973 a video of which is currently available on Youtube. It shows him in his prime weaving through his set with his guitar turned up to 11 and his band, especially the drummer, is smiling the whole time and really enjoying themselves as they play the real thing with the Father of Blues Rock.

King's second to last "Burglar" is an overlooked album with many terrific tracks on it, including the title track and the aforementioned "Credit Didn't Go Through." The album, produced by Clapton, was released on the UK label RSO which stood for Robert Stigwood Organization, but it failed to perform as well as "Getting Ready" or "Woman Across the River." King's last album "Larger Than Life," also on RSO was for several

²⁵ See Chapter 4 for full interview.

²⁶ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 65.

years the only official release of a Freddie King concert out of numerous performance recordings and bootlegs.

Wanda King reminds us in her 1994 interview that as popular as her father was in England he always had followers closer to home in Texas:

There was this black booking agent and what he would do when my father was not in the area to catch him doing this, he would take Jimmie out to these clubs in little out-of-the way towns like Sherman and Greenville, Texas. He'd take him to these black clubs and have him perform as Freddie King, Jr. Of course, once he got there, they knew he wasn't Freddie King! But he played the songs close enough to Freddie that they didn't complain too much.²⁷

Signed to a new label in England, with a live recording about to be released that was recorded with a home team advantage with white hippies packing out Armadillo World Headquarters, Freddie King was leaning into what should have been a promising career with a potential to last well into the 1990's and beyond. His touring backed him with bands such as ZZ Top and Grand Funk Railroad, white blues rockers all. What is interesting about the genre is that only a few blacks from that era are recognized. Most blues rock bands, so goes conventional wisdom, were white a club that few black players got to move in. Yet Freddie King and Jimi Hendrix along bands like War and Parliament straddle the fence between blues-rock and funk, which can be described in some ways as a more rhythmically oriented version of black blues-rock. Taken from that perspective, there are numerous black blues-rock bands in the 1970s who may also claim Freddie King as their Father as diverse as Minnie Riperton and Tower of Power.

There was no inkling that Freddie King would have died as suddenly as he did but looking back there were some signs things weren't right with his health. Dahl writes:

²⁷ Mark Humphrey, "Freddie King's Daughter Remembers," in liner notes for Vestapol 13014 videocassette, 1994.

After informing “Melody Maker’s” Max Jones that he hadn’t been eating any “real meals,” he confided, “I live off Bloody Marys, they give you fire. I get up in the morning and go right to the bar. Yes, I lose my appetite touring.” “Creem’s” Mitch Howard reported that Freddie was “armed with a bottle of whisky for anyone who cares to share it with him.” In his dressing room after he hit the hotel lounge for “two large Bloody Marys to prepare himself for the show.” King dubiously reasoned, “I always drink these because they’ve got food in them too.”²⁸

Joe Nick Patoski had this to say regarding King’s lifestyle: “I looked at how young he was when he died, and hangin’ out with the hippies pot was one thing but getting into cocaine was not good for him,” said Patoski.²⁹

What lay ahead for Freddie King we will never know because the drinking and gambling, poor diet and relentless road schedule finally caught up to him just after Christmas on December 28, 1976. Freddie King suffered from ulcers and pancreatitis at the time of his death and died from complications of these illnesses, he was 42 years old, a blues-rock guitar god and father of 7 children, in the years since his reputation has only grown and has not diminished. Not long before the completion of this thesis in 2012, Freddie King was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, squarely placing him in the halls of canonized rock and roll musicians.

²⁸ Dahl, *Taking Care of Business*, 71.

²⁹ See chapter 4, 57.

Chapter 3

Freddie King's Rhythmic Complexity in the Early Instrumental "Sidetracked"

This chapter focuses on Freddie King's complex use of rhythm applying the ideas of music theorist Harald Krebs in his *Fantasy Pieces: Metrical Dissonance in the Music of Robert Schumann*.¹ As we shall see, theorists Ted Buehrer and Robert Hodson further developed Krebs' ideas in analyzing jazz, specifically drawing examples from the work of Thelonious Monk, James P. Johnson and Mary Lou Williams.² Central to both works is the metaphor, as Krebs called it, of "metrical dissonance and consonance" where he borrowed concepts well studied in a harmonic context and used them to explain the "manifold disruptive and distortive conditions that affect what we generally call the meter of a musical work."³

The syncopations found in jazz, which Buehrer and Hodson argue is the "backbone of jazz rhythm"⁴ can be no less "disruptive and distortive" than the work of Robert Schumann, a composer that Krebs admired so much he wrote his book in the style of Schumann's mid 19th century musical analysis. He appropriated Schumann's characters of Florestan and Eusebius and they engage in dialogue as they walk around the fictional town of Euphonia – a musical utopia with its own "Rhythmic Quarter" wherein

¹ Harald Krebs, *Fantasy Pieces: Metrical Dissonance in the Music of Robert Schumann*. Oxford University Press, 1999.

² Ted Buehrer, Robert D Hodson, "Metric Dissonance in Jazz: The Stride Piano Performances of Thelonious Monk and James P. Johnson," In *International Association of Jazz Educators Research Proceedings Yearbook*. (2004): 106–23.

³ Krebs, *Fantasy Pieces*, viii.

⁴ Buehrer-Hodson, "Metric Dissonance," 1.

children are taught how to play extremely complex rhythms at a young age. With all this borrowing, Krebs after Schumann and Buehrer-Hodson after Krebs, there is no reason that it should stop there – because just as much as in Schumann or Monk, metrical complexity lives in the best music of any genre, including that of our subject, blues legend Freddie King.

There are abundant examples of metric dissonance in the music of Freddie King but for our purposes, we will take one instrumental and inspect different parts of it in search of examples of metric dissonance. Firstly, what is metric dissonance and how will we know it when we hear it and see it written out in notation? Buehrer-Hodson answer these questions very clearly in their paper but Krebs also uses a phrase that gets to the heart of his metaphor: “metric conflict.” This conflict, according to Buehrer-Hodson, must arise from the contrast of different levels of rhythm, the first of which Krebs called the “pulse level” — which is normally the foot-patting level — and the “interpretive levels” in which different rhythms are set against each other and interact in various ways. “There can be more than one interpretive level operating at a given time,” explain Buehrer-Hodson. “Indeed, conflict between interpretive levels is what leads to metric dissonance.”⁵

Just as there is metric dissonance, Krebs also discusses “metric consonance.” When a piece of music is metrically consonant, all of the interpretive levels line up symmetrically with the pulse level and exhibit a “high degree of alignment”⁶. Each interpretive level is further assigned a “cardinality” which is defined as “the number of

⁵ Buehrer-Hodson, “Metric Dissonance,” p 2.

⁶ Buehrer-Hodson, “Metric Dissonance,” Ibid.

pulses that elapse from one attack of an interpretive level to the next.” When a piece of music is metrically consonant the different interpretive levels will share cardinality.

A difference between the James P. Johnson recordings and Freddie King’s 1961 recording of “Sidetracked” is the studio-backing band provided by the King label. These seasoned musicians played on numerous early Freddie King tunes and form an underlying basis on which King takes his extended guitar solo in “Sidetracked”. We will represent all of the musicians with their own interpretive levels in an early section part of the song and discover its rhythmic consonance. The drummer Phillip Paul plays an eighth note blues shuffle emphasizing beats 2 and 4 in 4/4 time and that is represented in interpretive level one (I-1) while bassist Bill Willis plays swung eighth notes in interpretive level two (I-2). Pianist and composer Sonny Thomson, who shares credit on the tune as with most of Freddie King’s early material on King/Federal, emphasizes the first beat in 8 out of 12 measures in the first two choruses. Interpretive level three (I-3) represents Thomson’s playing a chord consistently on the first beat while Freddie King’s guitar line is the top staff.

Example 1

G3/2 (1 = quarter note)

The image shows a musical score for Freddie King's "Sidetracked". At the top, a treble clef staff indicates a tempo of 142 bpm. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The main riff consists of three measures of triplets of eighth notes. The accompaniment is divided into four parts: I-1 (piano), I-2 (piano), I-3 (bass), and Pulse Level. I-1 and I-2 play a steady eighth-note accompaniment. I-3 plays a single note per measure. Pulse Level shows a steady quarter-note pulse.

Freddie King and the band slide into “Sidetracked” with an introduction followed by a riff comprised of a series of triplets — a theme developed throughout the tune. The three measures shown are the riff as it is played over the C7 or C9 chord, a voicing Freddie King preferred (as did T-Bone Walker before him) with the third finger of the left hand barring the third fret from the G string to the E string. In example one, we can see that the chords on piano, bass line and drums all coincide on each bar above a basic pulse of quarter notes while King plays the triplet riff that is the hallmark of this tune. While the entire band is rhythmically consonant, the triplet rhythm of the opening riff forms a contrasting group of three against two when the note E occurs three times in two beats. Krebs calls this a “grouping dissonance” which he defines as “the association of at least two interpretive layers whose cardinalities are not multiples/factors of each other; labeled with a ‘G’ followed by a ration of the cardinalities involved.”⁷

While King is setting up the tune in example 1 he plays two choruses of the riff and solos on the last four measures of the blues form. It is only after a “bridge section”

⁷ Krebs, *Fantasy Pieces*, p 254.

that he solos for an entire chorus and here things get interesting in a melodic and rhythmic sense. Example 2 shows the beginning of his solo at measure 42 of the tune.

Example 2



These are the first few licks of his extended solo and as shown in example 2 the opening licks foreshadow the whole step bends that we will analyze in example 3. Throughout all the improvisations Freddie King makes use of eighth note triplets interspersed with half step and whole step bends. In example 2, we can see that rhythmically speaking the triplets in the last measure, which would be measure 44 of the piece are very similar to the triplet riff that is a theme throughout the tune. They also share the same grouping dissonance with the riff in example one.

In his book, Krebs speaks of two main types of metric dissonance, grouping dissonance and displacement dissonance; Buehrer-Hodson demonstrate both types in examples from the works of James P. Johnson and we have already found an example of a grouping dissonance in the opening riff of “Sidetracked.” Example 3 is representative of a delightful displacement dissonance wherein the whole step bends that Freddie King played shift by one beat away from the basic pulse provided by the rhythmically consonant backing band. Displacement dissonance Krebs defined as “the association of layers of equivalent cardinality (i.e. congruent layers) in a nonaligned manner.”⁸

Example 3

⁸ Krebs, *Fantasy Pieces*, p 254.

D4-1 (1=quarter note)

One interesting result of this displacement dissonance is that at the end of these three bars Freddie King changes the duration of the whole note bend. This produces an effect called “indirect dissonance” that describes, as Buehrer-Hodson note, “musical situations in which an established interpretive level drops out ... since the grouping pattern has been established, we continue to hear that pattern for a time, even as another interpretive level enters.”⁹ What also adds to the tension of these bends is the fact that they occur over the last measure of the fourth bar of G7 and continue into the C9 chord that draws more attention to the new pattern, which our ears were not expecting to hear.

These above examples rhythmic complexity in the music of Freddie King demonstrate a few reasons why guitar players and fans of blues and blues-rock the world over praise Freddie King’s guitar wizardry. While also technically difficult, they show how rhythm played a central role in his musical arsenal. It is certain that guitar players and musicians will continue to find interesting, creative and unexpected uses of rhythm in the recordings of one of the most celebrated and revered blues masters who ever lived. I hope that this chapter is a modest contribution to our further understanding of his playing and can serve as a useful description of Freddie King’s dynamic rhythmic sensibilities.

⁹ Buehrer-Hodson, “Metric Dissonance,” p 3.

Chapter 4

Interview: Joe Nick Patoski

Joe Nick Patoski is in his fourth decade writing about Texas and Texans. He has authored and co-authored biographies on Selena and Stevie Ray Vaughan, both published by Little, Brown and Company and the coffee table books *Texas Mountains*, *Texas Coast*, and *Big Bend National Park* all published by the University of Texas Press.

He spent 18 years as a staff writer for *Texas Monthly* and more recently has written for the *Texas Observer*, *National Geographic*, *No Depression*, *People* magazine, *Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine*, *Field & Stream*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Big Bend Sentinel*, *Southwest Spirit*, *American Way*, the *Austin Chronicle*, *Harp*, and *Timeout New York*, and other publications. He also contributed an essay to the photo book *Conjunto* by John Dyer, also published by University of Texas Press.

In 2003-4, he recorded the oral histories of B.B. King, Clarence Fountain of the Blind Boys of Alabama, Memphis musician and producer Jim Dickinson, Tejano superstar Little Joe Hernandez, and 15 other subjects for the Voice of Civil Rights oral history project. Some of which appeared in the book *My Soul Looks Back in Wonder* by Juan Williams, published by Sterling, and rode on the *The Voices of Civil Rights bus tour*, a 70 day journey across the nation where personal oral histories on civil rights were collected for the Library of Congress.

CM: I wanted to start by asking you where you are from and what are your musical interests?

JNP: I grew up in Fort Worth, I've lived in the Austin area for the last 40 years, and as far as music I've always liked all kinds of music, that comes with the territory around here. Certainly, blues was part of the deal, all kinds, I've got a pretty broad range. I've got close to 40 years now writing about music in Texas specifically.

CM: Did you write a lot about blues?

JNP: All kinds of Texas music, including blues, sure. I was lucky enough that it was kind of a direct experience, I mean most people my age learned about blues through records. Growing up in Fort Worth at that time it was a direct experience, there were still juke joints and clubs. That's why I told you need to, you need to contact Mike Buck (also founding member, Fabulous Thunderbirds) of Antone's Records because he was part of that scene in Fort Worth. Where there was an active juke scene and white people could walk into a black club and hear the real deal.

CM: That doesn't really exist anymore, the way they used to, is that right?

JNP: No, hard to find. Blues has become a folk music and very rarely do you find occasions where the music is being made authentically for the audience it was originally intended for. It's an affection now in a way, it's really not direct. Mainly that speaks to the African American experience in the United States today and it also speaks to the larger evolution of music.

I will say this, Dallas and Fort Worth, there may be one or two occasional joints – Houston still has a very healthy juke scene for some reason. That's part of our experience that makes kids growing up in Texas a little luckier where we can get the real deal. I mentioned Mike because I started hanging out with Mike in the late 60's and we'd hit some clubs in Fort Worth. We used to go down to this area called the Bottom, which meant the river bottom, it's on the east side of Fort Worth. And so while Freddie King is starting to play the Armadillo in Austin...which is really how most hippie kids heard about him and it was really through the patronage of Leon Russell he'd be skinny-ing the blues...at the same time he was doing that he was still playing P.J.'s Chicken In A Basket on Sunday afternoons for chump change, you know real

CM: This is Freddie King? Playing in a place called P.J.'s Chicken In A Basket? That's in Austin?

JNP: No, that's in Fort Worth. The only place Freddie was playing in Austin was pretty much the Armadillo and he was playing for hippies. He was one of the first to cross over. During this period of time you have Albert King playing and B.B.King playing the

Filmore so you didn't have a whole lot of crossover yet in Texas other than your so-called folk blues musicians, Lightnin' Hopkins and Mance Lipscomb were both playing white joints in Austin.

Like in the 60s there was a place, kind of a predecessor of the Armadillo – the Vulcan Gas Company. And so Lightnin' and Mance were part of that and they were part of the Armadillo deal. I know also the Vulcan Gas Company was one of the places that brought in Muddy Waters when he was still playing places in Chicago and the juke joints there. And there was a performance in '68 or '69 at the Vulcan where Muddy Waters invites someone up, this albino from Port Arthur named Johnny Winter and that's what got Johnny Winter on the map and got him signed. It was the biggest record contract going I mean he got the biggest deal, I think it was only a \$100,000 bucks, but it was a big deal.

So Freddie was part of this whole fabric and in many respects he was one of the pioneers to do this cross over playing in front of mainly white crowds, as well as black crowds. The only guy to do this on a real successful level throughout the 60s was Jimmy Reed. And Jimmy Reed always had a great following among white kids as well as older blacks. But Freddie was one of those, I mean he was kinda.... I know in Austin in the early 70s we called the Armadillo the house that Freddie King built because he was the first act to consistently pack it out and sell it out. And it was just a real transitional period and he was right in there.

And he always was, I mean any white kid wanting to play blues according to being a decent blues player had to know Hideaway. That's like one of the basic building blocks. If you didn't know Hideaway, you weren't worth shit. So that's coming from Freddie's traditional period and then of course ...the appeal to the Armadillo was the fact that he signed with Leon Russel's record label (Shelter Records) if anything. So it wasn't so much the old black buy with chops.

CM: He was pretty young then right?

JNP: Yeah I looked at how young he was when he died, and hangin' out with the hippies pot was one thing but getting into cocaine was not good for him.

CM: That's something I heard from another guitar player recently that I didn't know about. Of course, there's no record or anything. The other thing too was apparently his diet wasn't necessarily very healthy.

JNP: There weren't too many people of his background that were eating healthy diets.

CM: There's a blogger in England who writes a blog about how Freddie would combine eggs and meat and eat it all the time.

JNP: Yeah

CM: One of the things I wanted to ask you about was when did you first discover Freddie King, if you recall that?

JNP: Hideaway has been his spring. Growing up you can't grow up without hearing. I'd say mid 60s I was aware of him and it was mainly during listening to black radio and also just knowing enough basics about blues. And like I said you didn't know shit in Texas if you didn't know Hideaway. And you know, I wasn't a player but I knew what the tune was, everybody knew what the tune was.

CM: Do you play any instrument?

JNP: No, not at all.

CM: Do you have a favorite period? Did you ever see him live?

JNP: Probably no more than five times. I always thought his flared collars were a little bit weird. It was more like you wanted to get the real experience and by the time I saw him at the Armadillo it was kind of blending and there were more white musicians. I was a disc jockey too, I was a disc jockey in Dallas-Fort Worth 1971 on a free form rock radio station. I mean it was literally free form, it was like "go play good music." Of course his music was part of that programming, he was local. He was considered a local hero and he had the Leon Russell ties and it was songs like "Going Down" and "Living

In The Palace Of The King.” Those were the kind of modernist songs that really grabbed and had traction.

I also knew enough about his older shit “Hideaway” and the instrumentals “San Jose” and things like that. But I caught it with the white wave when I saw it. I was always intrigued he played a very clean style of lead a very distinctive. You can hear any of the three kings and to me Freddie was the one that jumped out amongst those three, there was no question about that. His style was more distinctive than BB’s or Alberts in a way, to me. At that time, and I look at Albert and BB and they had crossed over they were playing in front of hippies but the Leon Russell connection was very powerful.

I wrote about it in my biography on Willie Nelson. That how much Leon laid down the marker for what Willie did which is basically go home to where you came from and build up your own self contained empire recording studio performance venues, do it on your own terms. Leon did two great signings to the Shelter label in my book, never mind J.J. Cale who was actually successful, but he signed a guy out of Austin named Willis Alan Ramsey and really Ramsey only recorded one album, he never has recorded a follow up. He was one of the catalysts of the progressive country music and when I hit Austin in ’73 he was probably the best known “cosmic cowboy” progressive country acts, so that’s Leon but the other thing was Freddie.

And Freddie brought so much legitimacy to what Leon did and vice versa and that was more powerful than what was going on... at least around here, that made much more of

an impact than what BB King or what Albert King did. Freddie was home grown and he was electric he could play to the white kids he had black people start to be in his band but he was still Texas blues, he was the Texas Cannonball. You gotta go find Jim Franklin's poster of Freddie that hung on the wall in the Armadillo, that to me, says everything cause it shows him scrunched out very lifelike, realistically scrunched down hitting a note on his guitar and an armadillo is bursting out of his heart. Go google Jim Franklin Freddie King armadillo on images that thing says a whole lot about who this guy was. That's what still resonates with me.

CM: That cover of the LP, Texas Cannonball, he's coming out the ground, he's sort of emerging from the dirt and he's in one of those poses hitting the note. I think there's an armadillo somewhere in there.

JNP: The poster was done, the painting that hung inside the Armadillo was done first. Then the album came out. I swear to God the main thing was that he was the first big act down there at the Armadillo. (The painting that hung in Armadillo World Headquarters now hangs in the club Threadgill's located Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas. – ed.)

CM: There was there something called Armadillo records, is that right?

JNP: There was a label but he didn't have anything to do with that.

CM: No? Ok. You mentioned two things about radio that I am curious about... One was when you were first listening to Freddy and hearing Hideaway on black radio, what station was that, do you remember that?

JNP: That would be KNOK in Fort Worth, which was a soul station. This is where you have to understand Texas again, is at the same time - and it was a was a sunrise to sunset station – but it was the black radio station for Dallas-Fort Worth. At the same time the city owned station in Dallas WRR AM had a show on at night and I could barely get in Fort Worth, it was called Kat Caravan with a “k.” “K” with kat and caravan was the same, and it was hosted by this guy named Jim Lowe, white man, who played basically rhythm and blues for white kids. Very heavy influence on the Vaughan brothers and any kid that grew up in Dallas and in Fort Worth at that time and “Hideaway” was part and parcel of that he’d open up his show playing one of the standards, the Okie Dokie Stomp by Gatemouth Brown, a lot of Jimmy Reed, he’d play cool music. He was called the “Cool Fool.”

A little sidebar, he had a guy that was his second, that subbed for him and actually helped him out towards the end of his run in the late 50s early 60s a guy named John Ravenscroft, who also worked at a top 40 station in Dallas station KLIF. (call letters established 1949 – Ed.) That’s before he went back to England and went on the air under the name John Peale and he was the best known broadcaster in the history of the BBC. The rock and roll that he played he turned on a generation of people to this stuff. Well he got his shit out of Dallas on this show Kat Caravan and at KLIF. I gotta mention again,

top 40 radio at this time KLIF in Dallas and KFKZ in Fort Worth and KXOL in Fort Worth KFOX in Dallas, all played real top 40 music so you would hear Faron Young singing Willie Nelson's "Hello Walls" backed with Jimmy Reed doing low down shit, and Hideaway by Freddie King was part of those formats too, so it wasn't just the black stations. That was considered pop music in Texas.

CM: Hideaway charted, but it charted on the R&B chart not on the pop chart...

JNP: Well you have to look around you, I mean, well, Top 40 nationally wasn't Top 40 in Texas.

CM: Right...

JNP: I would be willing to bet a dime that if you go find a KLIF survey that Hideaway was part of that, it was on their chart it was on the other top 40 stations

CM: How about his other material in terms of his vocals? There's evidence in interviews that after the success of Hideaway that Syd Nathan his manager at King Records which owned Federal as a subsidiary that after that it was all instrumentals...

JNP: Yeah, basically Hideaway boxed him in...he did sing, I remember there was a TV show that was aired in the mid 60s it was taped out of Dallas and it had all these R&B acts. If you go to Youtube and look up Freddie King you'll find him on there.

CM: Oh yeah! I've seen it. ("The Beat!" TV show 1966)

JNP: But that show was very influential, because it was just aired throughout the South and it was one of those things there were no barriers. We had segregation going on here but radio and juke joints and even TV you could jump the line, the Jim Crow line and get away with it. That was part of it so the smart white kids were already turned on to him. So Leon signed him and one of the first things, Leon's not like "you're just an instrumentalist!" He had him vocalizing all the way through on the Shelter cuts, on the Shelter tracks, and so that helped I mean that added another dimension to Freddie which if you went to the juke joint you already heard that shit. You just didn't hear it on record because of Syd Nathan. That was kind of the...Leon (laughs) was a very liberating impact considering the other white guys Freddie worked with were old school Chitlin' Circuit guys that were basically like Jim Crow and taking all the pay. Leon was a little more judicious, he spread around the money more, and if anything he offered artistic freedom. Now I gotta say, conversely he had a little less of that direct blues experience a little more of a watered down sound you know Freddie King getting more into rock, what he perceived as rock these were all parts of Leon's influence. To me overall it was more of a plus for him and it's part of the reason why we are talking about Freddie King now.

CM: You're right, because without those recordings, there was a "comeback" scenario...

JNP: He had a career as a bluesman who was fading away and then he had this bigger brighter brash-ier music that was actually bringing in money. It made him a whole different kind of celebrity, now the sad part is in that context he really did die young. And it was surprising, it was like God almighty how did that happen, I think he was in his 30's.

CM: I think he might have been 42...he was born in 1934 died in '76 but your point still holds he was young, no doubt about it.

JNP: Terribly young.

CM: Leon Russel one of the tracks has a mellotron on it, you don't really hear that in traditional sound. The other thing too was his relationship with Clapton and the reception he got there.

JNP: I couldn't tell you much about it, I'm not an expert on that...

CM: It goes to the idea of the whole Blues Revival movement in general both here and in the UK, could you talk about that at all?

JNP: I don't know anything about the UK.

CM: Maybe you could talk about what was occurring here?

JNP: In the UK you gotta understand it was really, I remember Joe Boyden in the early 60s brought in the Newport Allstars Blues Band. He did a couple tours of England and in Europe. He was a road manager and that's what really started, figured, all these bands in England, English rock and rollers all doing blues. It was finally what they *saw* was what they heard on record. To me that's the whole big difference, I like to talk to the direct experience. Yes, records helped sell this but that's not how this generation learned about these bluesmen they got to see them, they got to hear them and it was direct experience.

My comparison when I finally heard Dave Ray up in Minneapolis he was a great Mississippi 12 string blues master and he was part of this "Koerner, Ray and Glover" folk trio who was really a major, one of the first influences on Bob Dylan. All these guys learned from records, very exact, very precise, very Catholic. They had no context in which "where does this come from" they didn't smell a juke joint. They never tasted Malt Duck. They never saw someone go wild and play guitar with their teeth.

And that to me you have to see that and witness it and understand...Freddie definitely played in Chicago, but he grew up in Gilmore which was really hard East Texas, I mean I don't wish that kind of place on anyone. And he was up in Dallas, it was a Dallas black scene, it was very rich and evocative but it wasn't very financially successful. These people had day jobs or just get by or Freddie could ride the Chitlin' Circuit, it was not very lucrative at all.

CM: That may be one reason he continued to tour so hard, especially towards the end...

JNP: Yeah he was trying to catch up trying to make all he could.

CM: He has a daughter, that he must have had to support at the time...

JNP: Yes seems to be the daughter is the keeper of the flame from what I understand. I got really lucky I got to be a part of that back then cause your never gonna get it. That was one of impetus in writing about Stevie Vaughan is, not only knowing him and seeing that scene blow up but Jimmie and Stevie were some of the last guys left that got to learn directly from the masters.

When you got Hubert Sumlin hanging around all week just idling his time between weekend gigs and Clifford Antone appeared. Or Albert King taking the time to show Stevie how you did these licks, and it certainly goes with Freddie because both of those kids got to know Freddie directly. They're the last great blues band. And if you don't have that direct experience anymore – "How do you do that? Damn, how thick are those strings the gauge on those strings?" Now Jimmie is the man.

Freddie was in a place and time we'll never get back again and it really was an amazing period in that what he did as a blues man turned on several generations of rock and rollers. That's the interesting stuff...it just ain't gonna happen again.

CM: So basically there's no younger generation of African American blues musicians who have come up to replace that older generation and it's part of history now is what you are saying...

JNP: I remember working on the Stevie book interviewing Kenny Wayne Sheppard. They were faithful and they were apostles of Stevie and all that... Kenny Wayne has become the arbiter of modern blues just like being so far removed from the direct experience. Freddie was direct of that experience.

CM: Know anything about Freddie's time in Chicago?

JNP: Not much except obviously that's where he got most of his ideas and it was the active scene it's like you go to New York for jazz.

CM: Do you have any general tips on research based on your experience writing the Willie Nelson and Stevie Ray Vaughan biographies?

JNP: The best thing I can tell you is you go for the jugular, you want the big names but you really want to find out about this guy you find out who worked with him. Who hung out with him Your sidemen and roadies will tell you more than a big name. I'll give you this lead here and you need to follow this up, Jack Calmes. Other one is Angus Wynne III, he's run salt and pepper clubs in Dallas going back to the 60s and he promoted the Texas International Pop Festival and he was the go to guy for blues in Dallas. Both of

these guys knew Freddie really well. He can tell you a lot about him, Angus is a friend of mine just tell him that I told you to call.

CM: I'll definitely be contacting both of these gentleman. Thanks a lot Joe Nick, I'm sure I'll have some questions and I'll be following up in email.

JNP: I'm easy to find.

CM: I really appreciate it, it's been a pleasure chatting with you.

JNP: Go get 'em.

Chapter 5

Interview: Elijah Wald

Elijah Wald started playing guitar in the 1960s after seeing his first Pete Seeger concert at age seven. At seventeen, he went to New York to study with Dave Van Ronk, then spent most of the next dozen years hitchhiking and performing all over North America and Europe, as well as much of Asia and Africa, including several months studying with the Congolese guitar masters Jean-Bosco Mwenda and Edouard Masengo in eastern Zaire and lecturing for the United States Information Service in India and Central Africa. He also recorded two albums: *Songster*, *Fingerpicker*, *Shirtmaker* and *Street Corner Cowboys*.

In the early 1980s, Elijah began writing for the *Boston Globe*, and was in charge of the newspaper's "world music" coverage for most of the 1990s, as well as contributing articles to various other newspapers and magazines. His books include *Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues*, *Josh White: Society Blues*, *Global Minstrels: Voices of World Music*, Dave Van Ronk's memoir *The Mayor of MacDougal Street*, *River of Song: Music Along the Mississippi*, which accompanied the PBS series of the same name, and *Narcocorrido*, a survey of the modern Mexican ballads of drug smuggling and social issues. His latest book is *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'n' Roll: An Alternative History of American Popular Music*. He has won a Grammy Award for his album notes to *The Arhoolie Records 40th Anniversary Box*, for which he was also nominated as a producer, and his books have won many awards, including an ASCAP-

Deems Taylor award and an honorable mention for the American Musicological Society's Otto Kinkeldey award.

In the last few years, Elijah has been teaching off and on at the University of California Los Angeles, performing music when possible, and contributing occasional pieces to the Los Angeles *Times*, along with various other writing projects and speaking engagements.

CM: You said you saw Freddie King once?

EW: Yeah, it was this horrible failure of a blues festival. It was the first last and only, what did they call it, I guess it was called the New England Blues Festival. And it was an amazing line up...that people these days when I say the line up they just want to kill themselves.

CM: (Laughs)

EW: I mean from the first to the last it was Roomful of Blues, Koko Taylor, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells, Willie Dixon, Freddie King, B.B. King, the Muddy Waters Blues Band. ...Freddie King was amazing. He was really interesting, I mean he was, he was just such an astounding showman. I mean he was by far the most theatrical performer on the bill.

CM: Really?

EW: Yeah he was doing things like bottlenecking with the microphone stand. It was interesting because he was very much sort of a rock guitar hero kind of show, what he was doing. If you had just *watched* and not listened he would have been the most exciting person on stage that night. If you listened, B.B. blew everyone else off stage that night, which astonished me because I had gone essentially for Muddy Waters and thought of B.B. as a little bit slick and ... had to completely reassess everything I knew about blues.

CM: Really? That's a pretty big statement.

EW: B.B. was unbelievable. I was a folk-blues guy I mean I had not thought of B.B. as being my cup of tea. I had listened to the Live At the Regal album and it wasn't really my thing. But goddamn-it live he was unbelievable.

CM: What year was that?

EW: That would have been '76. '77 maybe, summer of '77

CM: Well Freddie died at the end of '76.

EW: Ok then it was '76.

CM: You said you were into folk blues...

EW: Yeah that was my world. I mean acoustic blues was what I played.

CM: I saw your website and you have an instructional video...

EW: As it stands yeah...

CM: I didn't know there was blues in the Bahamas...

EW: You know um he isn't a blues player...Have you read any of my work?

CM: I just read the "Blues: A Very Short Introduction" book.

EW: Ok. That gives you some idea but I don't really believe words like "blues" mean a hell of a lot.

CM: Could you expand on that?

EW: Yeah, it was a marketing term. And it was a good marketing term when blues was selling well and a bad marketing term when Blues was selling badly. I don't think....and I don't know I'd be interested when Freddie King was....When Hideaway came out nobody was calling that "Blues" I don't *think*...

CM: It was like surf rock or something like that...

EW: I'd be interested I haven't actually seen it called surf. I would expect it to be and certainly "San Jose" I would think would be thought of that way, but it was instrumental rock. But I mean definitely rock. The first Freddie King album I had was the album produced by Leon Russell.

CM: Gettin' Ready.

EW: There were two or three weren't there. What were the names of them?

CM: Gettin' Ready, Texas Cannonball, and I think Woman Across the River...

EW: Yeah...that's the one that I have. Knowing me I guess I would have picked that up because it was in a cut out bin. He was somebody I kinda liked. I would have picked it up because he was somebody I kinda liked.

CM: Did you ever listen to his older music from the early '60's or was it more the Leon Russell '70s stuff?

EW: I later heard the other stuff but...what I had when I was younger what I was sort of aware of after I heard him live was the Leon Russell thing – and I was a Leon Russell fan and I enjoyed that. Then later of course I heard Hideaway...which it's one of those

funny things Hideaway is to me is *the* classic Freddie King, but of course he was a great singer, but that may not be ideal but that's still how I think of it. Now thanks to YouTube you can actually see those old TV shows "Shout" TV shows. That's basically what I know specifically of him.

CM: I'm really curious about your idea of Blues as a marketing term, I mean you still call it blues in some sense...I mean it's....how else would you describe the music. I imagine this is in one of your books.

EW: It depends on what we're talking about. I mean Hideaway is a 12 bar blues, no question about that. Hideaway if it's played by the Ventures it's a blues but that doesn't make the Ventures a blues band right?

CM: Right.

EW: So we are talking apples and oranges there. I mean there's no question about Hideaway being a blues, - in the purely technical term. Whether Freddie King was a blues artist, I don't know? Was Ray Charles a blues artist? I mean I'm not saying the answer is no...

CM: Sometimes?...

EW: I would say the answer is: if that was the best way to sell records yeah, if it wasn't no. (Laughs)

CM: Underneath that is how the market dictates what you have to do in order to survive. Do you have any thoughts on that how that influences how musicians see themselves and what they do to try to...

EW: Musicians try to make a living. Freddie King in terms of mass history is somebody who had a few instrumentals in the early '60s. I mean you know what his influence was outside of that presumably. When I run into anyone today who covers Freddie King what they tend to play is Hideaway or San Jose. And they don't tend to play it in the context of "I'm going to play you some hard core blues." I mean somebody I'll ask to play San Jose is also somebody who's likely to play ...Run or maybe "Pipeline" that's how I see it.

CM: Can I ask you when you got involved writing about music?

EW: Writing, in the early '80s. I was a player before I was a writer.

CM: And you still play is that right?

EW: Oh yeah...

CM: Where do you normally gig?

EW: Um, you know, I'm not doing that much gigging right now life's been kinda crazy. But my last gig was in Somerville, Boston area.

CM: Gotcha, so it was in the 80s when you first got involved writing about the music

EW: I started as a writer for the Boston Globe.

CM: You were telling me before about acoustic blues and more country influence do you hear any country influenced things in Freddie King? That's sort of a leading question I guess...

EW: In the sense of Nashville country I would say probably more than in the sense of Blind Lemon Jefferson. We are talking about his guitar, which is what I'm most familiar with. He's playing as far as I can tell it's meant for the radio. You're listening to the radio in Texas the line between Country and the Blues and R&B could get pretty thin.

CM: That's what everybody in Texas is telling me too.

EW: I don't hear...my guess is...that he would be as likely to be playing...I don't really know. Blues. I don't hear a lot of Country, what we would call Country Blues in his playing. But as I say, what I'm thinking of are the big hits, which I don't know how typical they are, I'm not an expert specifically about Freddie King. I don't know how typical they are about what he could do. How typical are they?

CM: They are pretty representative I think. Some differences would be on his slow blues like Have You Ever Loved A Woman or Full Time Love.

EW: Did he play did he use a pick?

CM: He did. He used two metal picks on his index finger and middle finger I think he also used a thumb pick.

EW: But not a flat pick?

CM: No.

EW: That's one of the really interesting things to me. I mean everybody who plays that stuff now uses a flat pick and none of the guys of his generation did, Buddy Guy doesn't – BB does, but nobody else and BB comes out of jazz. So in that sense yeah, he's related to the blues tradition because most of the people who came out of jazz used a flat pick. If you are coming out of the blues tradition you finger pick.

CM: I didn't know this about BB I'm learning too, he comes from jazz you say.

EW: Well as a guitar player yeah. As a guitar player so does Django Reinhardt, but first of all T-Bone Walker but then Django Reinhardt.

CM: Wow, I had no idea BB was listening to Django, I mean I can hear some Charlie Christian in him...at times

EW: No, no Django was his main guy I mean read any interview with him.

CM: That's great! I can't wait to dig that up because I'm going to have to write about BB because Freddie patterns a lot of his style on BB in the beginning. There's a rumor it isn't corroborated that when he was in Chicago and he approached Chess records - hanging out and playing with Muddy and Wolf - he says he even got to play on Spoonful...he's the only one that says that in Living Blues magazine. At any rate, he said he approached Chess records but they didn't want him because he sounded too much like BB at least that's what the family's bio of him says on their website dedicated to him. But it is one of those things that gets repeated but there's no hard evidence of it.

EW: Yeah. Um. Listen. The reasons for turning down people by record companies...they don't necessarily mean anything. I mean if someone turns you down for a job tomorrow all you know is they didn't want to hire you. You have no idea whether they turned you down for the reason they say they turned you down or because they wanted to give the job to their cousin in Milwaukee. So who knows. If it's true what would it mean?

CM: I don't know this is what the family repeats.

EW: What it tells you is that they think of him in those terms. I mean what it tells you whether or not Chess Records thought of him sounding like BB, the family presumably did. I would say what it tells you says more about the family than it does Chess. When was this event.

CM: Way back in the early 60s before he had any hits...presumably even in the late 50s that happened when he was in Chicago.

EW: Yeah, the Chess people weren't stupid. Sounding like BB King was pretty good economics at that time. They would have been more likely to turn him down for sounding like Muddy Waters which wasn't selling so well. I'd be surprised they'd turn anyone down for sounding like BB. I mean, at that moment BB was outselling most of their artists.

CM: Did you say he was outselling?

EW: Yeah, most of the Chess artists, sure. Nobody was buying the Chess artists by the late 50s early 60s. That was a dead time for them, that's not exactly right in the late 50s they were doing very nicely with Chuck Berry.

CM: I'm trying to take it all in... I have to admit what I'm bringing to the table, I'm a writer. I wrote for a local newspaper for awhile, but I wasn't writing about music. Once that job ended I decided to go back to school for music and I was focused on

performance, since I already had bachelor I decided I wanted to get into music scholarship and that's when I found out about the masters degree in jazz history and research. In one of the classes I was in with Prof. John Howland I was writing about blues but I was trying to find out as much general information about blues as I could. I always listened to blues but I never read books about it, like a lot of fans, you just kind of find the artist you like and play that music and as a guitar player I just learned from records the way a lot of people do. I came across your book and really enjoyed it but another of your books is about your hitchhiking, is that the latest one.

EW: Nah that's a few back now...

CM: I apologize...

EW: That's not a problem. If you can find a copy God bless you, I think there are still some floating around.

CM: I'm curious about this hitchhiking and its relationship to your blues interest.

EW: That's how I spent an awful lot of my life, hitchhiking and it went along with playing music.

CM: Do you have favorite acoustic blues players.

EW: There's no such thing, it depends on the day. I think any serious musician it depends on the day.

CM: Yeah that's one of those questions I had written down in front of me that I like to ask. You could say a few names if you like...

EW: Freddie King is definitely somebody I like a lot and Hideaway is something I request a lot from people who play that kind of thing.

CM: I play it on the acoustic sometimes and it's remarkable, it really does translate pretty well.

EW: I have a friend who teaches it at a guitar camp and he teaches it with a shuffle bass line with a guitar playing lead over that.

CM: Freddie King said he was influenced by country blues. The way he said it was "I play country and city," is how he said it in this interview.

EW: I mean these things are meaningless....I don't want to say meaningless but I don't know what he would have meant by that sentence then. I mean the term "country blues" the way we use it today....I'd be real surprised if he ever used that term that way. I don't know whether he's talking like country and western or if we are talking like...Gatemouth Brown.

CM: I think he was referencing the easy translation, in Hideaway you can hear rural roots. He said that quote in 1974, I don't know if these terms have different meanings today because you can hear acoustic blues in any city. I took it to mean he was combining two styles that he heard...was influenced by, maybe I'm wrong.

EW: I don't know why they're two styles. I don't know why *your're* making these divisions.

CM: Um...

EW: The question is: what did they play in a Texas bar in 1955? My guess is if he was playing in bars in 1955 was more varied than what he ever recorded. My guess is he would be playing whatever was on the radio that week plus whatever people in that area liked to dance to. I have no idea what that range would have been. But my guess is it would have been a wider range than what he recorded, not narrower a range.

CM: You are reminding me that he recorded pop tunes.

EW: These guys were professional musicians! I mean if his recording contract had been with RCA and they would make him into a pop star, he would have played a completely different repertoire. His repertoire says more about what Syd Nathan thought he could sell than about what Freddie King could play.

CM: That's why there are so many instrumentals after Hideaway...

EW: Yeah. You have to be really *really* careful about thinking what people recorded represented what they played. I have absolutely no idea whether he played anything like Hideaway before he went into the studio. Or whether that simply is an instrumental blues that he played on the record and then he or Syd Nathan decided to call it Hideaway...and next time he had to play it he had to learn from the record. I'm not saying that's what happened...I'm just saying I don't know

CM: Supposedly, it's named after a juke joint in Chicago...and that it's a Hound Dog Taylor instrumental that had other parts added to it...

EW: Sounds right. I mean it's generic! It's not a very complicated piece but it's a cool little generic upbeat blues shuffle. If it hadn't become a hit he wouldn't have remembered it three weeks later.

CM: That goes again to the concept of the commercial

EW: And simply the extent to which you shouldn't trust records as something other than records. Records are hugely important as records, but what they tell you is about the record not about what the guy played when he wasn't playing that record. And

particularly with someone like Freddie King. Is there anyone around who knew him before he recorded?

CM: No I haven't yet.

EW: Call Alan Govenar have you called him yet?

CM: No but I'm going to write his name down. Is he in Texas?

EW: Yeah, he's in Dallas. He did a book on Lightnin' Hopkins but he also did a book on Texas blues. I would just say warning, warning, warning: anyone who is principally interested in blues may give you lots of good information but they are blues fans and that does not meet....they may concentrate on blues but it doesn't mean Freddie King would have.

CM: How do you mean?

EW: Just what I said. Someone who is interested in Freddie King because they love blues is going to think about him differently than someone who is into Freddie King because they love surf guitar. That doesn't mean they are any closer to Freddie King it just means that is their take. You just need to be careful to remember that everybody is still doing to their own taste and preferences and that includes me. My view of the world is that those categories are limiting. I will be sitting here on the phone with you saying be carefull not

to put him into this box labeled blues. That's my hobby horse just like someone else's hobby horse is that blues is the most important music on earth.

CM: I hear ya on this when you hear his music there are a lot of different influences, he recorded a Bill Withers song "Ain't No Sunshine."

EW: Look. As far as I can tell no band advertised themselves as a blues band until Paul Butterfield hit, which is to say "blues band" is an invention of white fans. Nobody ever advertised themselves to the black community as a blues band. That is not one hundred percent true but it is almost a hundred percent true – that one I've done the research.

CM: It was just music. Or "our music" if you were black listening at that time.

EW: Or R&B, but it was the Muddy Waters Band not the Muddy Waters Blues Band, because why tell an audience I don't play anything but blues? That doesn't make you any money.

CM: Do you think there's a misunderstanding of how the industry itself shapes these things?

EW: Of course! Not just the industry. You are talking about old fashioned, archaic music by now our views of that have been shaped not just by the industry but by the historian. I mean how do they decide what is and isn't in the archive where you work?

CM: Right. That's the perennial debate what is and isn't jazz.

EW: I mean do they want Kenny G's papers?

CM: (Laughs a little) I don't...

EW: I'm not jokin'. I mean he is the biggest selling jazz artist one of the biggest selling of a handful of jazz artists in the last ten years do they want his papers?

CM: I don't either, but I do know they are running out of space...they might just say that.

EW: I see these fights all the time. People say young people don't listen to jazz I say "what about Norah Jones?"

CM: And they say: "That isn't jazz..."

EW: It's like ok, yeah, she won a Grammy for best jazz album, you want to say that isn't jazz, that's fine.

CM: I like that approach, same with Esperanza Spalding...and Norah Jones is on Blue Note. I don't know, the labels themselves are restrictive is your overall point.

EW: Yeah, which is not to say they aren't useful

CM: R&B was an invention of the labels...

EW: R&B was an invention of Billboard magazine...

CM: Because they used to call them "race" records...

EW: Right and then they called them "Harlem Hit Parade..."

CM: As I continue in my research to you have any general pointers?

EW: Yeah, take your time and try to find human beings. Talk to people. There's a huge tendency particularly academic researchers to divide the world as if there is this thing called ethnography and there is this other thing called historical research. And it's idiotic. The other thing is don't trust paper to mean anything more than that you found a piece of paper. The fact that a newspaper says such and such and an old black guy from Texas says something else and they didn't agree are two pieces of information. They both have their biases they both have their strengths and weaknesses. It's very, very common there is this whole world of nerd discography which will talk to a guy who says he was at a recording session and what they will note about it is that he's got the date wrong. And who the fuck cares about the date. The date is infinitely less interesting than the memory of someone who was at the recording session.

CM: That's what the readers want to hear about anyway...

EW: What any sane person wants to hear about, I mean who the fuck cares whether or not he recorded it on Tuesday or Wednesday?

CM: (Laughs) I'm glad we are talking about it, I have these thoughts too, reading the stuffed shirt academic jazz articles it takes some of the fun out of it in some ways.

EW: I'm glad that there are people who do discography it's very very useful and it's really useful to do newspaper searches. But there is a tendency in the academy to think that pieces of paper are closer to truth than human beings and that is sometimes true and sometimes not true. The fact that you have a poster for a Freddie King gig or an ad for a Freddie King gig, doesn't mean the gig happened. The fact that you have a review of a Freddie King gig doesn't necessarily mean the gig happened but without good reason I would tend to trust it. It is by no means unheard of for someone who saw Freddie King last year to write a review this year without actually bothering to go out....I'm just saying don't over trust, scholars tend to trust writing, it's what they do.

CM: Thank you. One last question. In your listen with blues and what you are interested in can you tell me about regional differences between types of blues. There are different sounds in different areas.

EW: It's hard to tell. There are a lot of things that come together that we end up phrasing it that way. If the Duke Peacock sound a Texas sound or a Duke Peacock sound? I don't know. Is what we call the Texas sound what people were playing in Texas or is it the sound that has sold for a Texas artist so other people go into a studio might play like that or at gigs they might play a different way? I'm not saying it is I have no reason to think that there aren't things that Texas musicians shared. Presumably Freddie King learned how to play by sitting around with other players and presumably they shared things in common.

However you just said that Hideaway was taken from Hound Dog Taylor who isn't Texas...so you know there are people for whom regionalism is a completely logical way to think about them. Howlin' Wolf could not have come out of anywhere but the Mississippi Delta. On the other hand BB King, if you just listen to his guitar playing and knew nothing else about him no one would ever guess he came out of Mississippi, everything about his playing suggests West Coast. And he worked very hard at sounding like a West Coast player and sounding like people like T-Bone Walker...

CM: T-Bone, who's also from Texas, but ended up in California right?

EW: They all ended up in California

CM: It's where the gigs were right?

EW: It was where the money was. In the 1940s everybody, essentially every young person who wasn't in the army in the entire Southwest who could possibly do it went to California. There was more work, paying more money than probably anytime before or since. I mean it was one of the huge population shifts... I mean I don't know if you know this history at all.

CM: I'm getting bits and pieces of it....

EW: The short version is when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor the US found itself in a war in the Pacific and had just had its Pacific fleet destroyed, so it had to build a Pacific fleet in the next year. Which meant that there was a desperate need for people out there building ships and there was a need for people supplying and feeding. So literally all the young people moved out there and all the clubs and all the dance halls went twenty four hours because all the war industries worked three eight hour shifts. A bunch of people got of at 6 a bunch got off at 2 in the morning and others got off at 10 and there was a lot of work for musicians. That's as true of Bob Wills as it is of T-Bone Walker.

CM: Whenever they talk about blues they always call it "post war urban blues" when speaking of the music of BB King....I know it's another label...

EW: That's meaningless. BB King was an R&B star. This is a little bit cynical but not much...What blues means as a description of a black musician from the 1950s or 1960s

is somebody who did not become a big enough star to be called a rock or a soul musician. That's all that blues means.

CM: Yeah a good example is Chuck Berry and others on Chess...

EW: Think about Etta James vs. Aretha Franklin, the only reason Etta James became a blues person is because she didn't have enough hits. If she had enough hits she would be a soul singer. It's marketing and the marketing changes and that's the thing you have to be careful about. What somebody was marketed as in 1962 is not necessarily related to what bin you find their record in, their CD in, their mp3 in....whether Hideaway was a blues, a rock and roll, surf hit. Go back and look at Billboard chart and see how they mention it. Go back and look if there was an LP of Freddie King at that point, go back and see if there was a picture of him or anything else that would tell you that he was black. That's something always to watch for in that period because as an instrumental artist in a pre-television era (which it still largely was in that world) era, I would not be at all surprised if you found that all of his records in that period were ambiguous so that people could buy him a white guy if they didn't want to buy black guy

CM: Like another instrumentalist, Lonnie Mack.

EW: Yeah Lonnie Mack, perfect example. Did the average person know that Wham was a white guy and Hideaway was by a black guy? Ok?

CM: Well Mr. Wald thank you so much for your time I got a lot out of this ...

EW: Sure. Ok take care...

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[A] = analytical remarks
 [B] = extensive book review
 [BT] = blindfold test
 [C] = concert review
 [D] = discography
 [F] = feature article
 [I] = interview
 ["I"] = article written by the respective musician himself
 [O] = obituary
 [R] = extensive record review

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Discography

In the past five years Bear Family Records has released two comprehensive Freddie King box sets that include all of his studio material and also a good chunk of his live recordings. There is a lot of live recorded material but some of it is of questionable quality because of the long drawn out jams that, one reviewer pointed out, veers into 1970s drug culture. Either way there is a lot of good stuff available for trade from avid Freddie King collectors. Both Freddie King box sets are worthy contributions to anyone's collection, for beginners, nothing beats Freddie King's 17 Original Greatest Hits.

[K2199] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl\)](#) acc by [Earl Payton \(hca\)](#) [Milton Rector \(el-b\)](#) [Robert "Big Mojo" Elem \(b\)](#) [Thomas J. McNulty \(d\)](#) [Margaret Whitfield \(vcl-1\)](#)

Chicago, 1956

El-Bee 157

LB-157 [Country boy \(1\)](#)

-

LB-158 [That's what you think](#)

[K2200] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Gene Redd \(tp?-1\)](#) added, [Clifford Scott \(ts-1\)](#) added, [Sonny Thompson \(p\)](#) [Bill Willis \(b\)](#) [Phillip Paul \(d\)](#)

Cincinnati, Ohio, August 26, 1960

K-4881 [You know that you love me \[but you never tell me so\]](#) King LP762, Polydor (E)2343047, Python PLP-7,

Charly (E)CD247 [CD]

Federal 12428, King LP762, LP1059, Python PLP-7,

K-4882-1 [See see baby \(1\)](#)

Federal DCD7845 [CD]

Federal 12384, King LP762, Python PLP-7,

K-4883-2 [You've got to love her with feeling](#)

Gusto LP5012X, Polydor (E)2343047, Charly (E)CD247 [CD], Federal DCD7845 [CD]

[Have you ever loved a woman ?](#)

Federal 12384, King LP762, LP1059, 6264,

K-4884-1

Python PLP-5, Polydor (E)2343047, Gusto

GD5033-X,
Charly (E)CD247 [CD], Federal DCD7845
[CD]

[Hideaway \(inst\)](#)

Federal 12401, King LP749, LP773, LP856,
LP1026,

K-4885-2

LP1059, Gusto GD5033-X, 5012X, Polydor
(E)2343047,
184163, King 6264, Odeon (F)10038, SOE3662,
XOC196, Increase 2006, Columbia G30503,
Charly (E)CD247 [CD], Federal DCD7845
[CD]

[I love the woman](#)

Federal 12401, King LP762, LP1059, Python
PLP-7,

K-4886-4

Gusto CG5033-X, Parlo (E)45R4777, Polydor
(E)
2343047

Note: Mx K4884-1 also on King (Oldies)15011, Polydor (F)2310111.

Mx K4885-2 also on Polydor (F)2310110, Parlophone (E)45R4777.

Charly (E)247 [CD] titled "Texas sensation"; see flwg sessions to 1966 for the rest
of this CD.

Federal DCD7845 [CD] titled "17 greatest hits"; see various flwg sessions to
August 26, 1964 for the rest of this CD.

[K2201] [Freddie King](#)

[Sonny Thompson \(p\)](#) [Freddie King \(g,vcl\)](#) [Bill Willis \(b\)](#) [Phillip Paul \(d\)](#)

Cincinnati, Ohio, January 17, 1961

F-1368-2 [Train whistle blues](#) Federal 12415, King LP964, Gusto LP5012X,
Federal
DCD7845 [CD]

F-1369-1 [If you believe in what you
do](#) Federal 12443, Pol (E)2343047

Note: The above two titles also on King LP762 and Python PLP-11.

[K2202] [Freddie King](#)

[Osborne Whitfield, H. Johnson \(ts-1\) Sonny Thompson \(p\) Freddie King \(g,vcl\) Bill Willis \(b\) Phillip Paul \(d\)](#)

Cincinnati, January 18, 1961

F-1372-1 [It's too bad \(things are
going so tough\)](#) Federal 12415, King LP762, Pol (E)2343047,
Python
PLP-5, Charly (E)CD247 [CD]

F-1373-1 [I'm tore down \(1\)](#) Federal 12432, King LP762, Pol (E)2343047,
Python
PLP-5, Columbia G30503, Charly (E)CD247
[CD],
Federal DCD7845 [CD]

Note: Last title also on King LP1059, 5012X, Gusto GD-5033X (2).

[M2132] [Hank Marr](#)

[Osborne Whitfield \(ts\)](#) [Hank Marr \(org\)](#) [Mich Robinson \(p\)](#) [Freddie King \(g\)](#) [Larry Frazier \(el-b\)](#) [Phillip Paul \(d\)](#)

Cincinnati, January 18, 1961

Federal 12304

F1370 [Ram-bunk-shush](#)

-

F1371 [The push](#)

, 12507, King LP829, LP1011, KSD1061

Note: Both above titles also on Charly (E)271 [CD].

[Hank Marr](#)

Cincinnati, March 22, 1961

F1384 [Mexican vodka](#)

Federal 12412

- , King LP1011, KSD1061

F1385 [Travelin' heavy \(1\)](#)

Note: (1) On King KSD1061 as "Travelin'".

Both above titles also on King LP829, Charly (E)271 [CD].

[K2203] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(g,vcl\)](#) [Sonny Thompson \(p\)](#) [Fred Jordan \(g\)](#) [Bill Willis \(el-b\)](#) [Phillip Paul \(d\)](#)

Cincinnati, Ohio, April 5, 1961

F-1390-1

[Butterscotch \[Onion rings\]](#)
*]

Federal 12529 *, Gusto LP5012X *, Pol
(F)27761,
Federal DCD7845 [CD]

Federal 12432, King LP964, Pol (G)623278,
Python

F-1391-1 [Sen-sa'-shun \[Bumble bee
sting\]](#)

PLP-7, Odeon (F)10038, SOE3662, Charly
(E)CD247
[CD]

Federal 12456, King LP1059, Pol (E)2343047,
Python

F-1394-1 [Side tracked](#)

PLP-11, Charly (E)CD247 [CD], Federal
DCD7845 [CD]

Federal 12456, King LP1059, Pol (E)2343047,
Python

F-1395-3 [The stumble](#)

PLP-7, Charly (E)CD247 [CD]

Federal 12428, King LP5012X, Python PLP-11,
Charly

F-1396-1 [San-ho-zay](#)

(E)CD247 [CD], Federal DCD7845 [CD]

King LP1059, Pol (E)2343047

F-1397-3 [Wash out](#)

Federal 12470, King LP964, Python PLP-11

F-1398 [Just pickin'](#)

Federal 12443, King LP5012X, Federal
DCD7845 [CD]

F-1399-2 [Heads up](#)

Note: All titles instrumentals. All the above titles also on King LP856 (with live noises
dubbed on).

Mx 1391/94/95/97/98 also on Gusto GD-5033X

Mx 1394 also on King LP5012X.

[K2204] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Sonny Thompson \(p\)](#) prob [Fred Jordan \(g\)](#) [Bill Willis \(el-b\)](#)
[Phillip Paul \(d\)](#) unknown saxes-1 added.

Cincinnati, Ohio, July 24, 1961

F-769-1 [Christmas tears](#)

Federal 12439, King LP5012X, Python PLP-5,
Gusto

LP5012X, Odeon (F)SOE3721, Federal
DCD7845 [CD]

King LP762, Python PLP-11

F-770 [Let me be \[Stay away
from me\]](#)

Federal 12450, King LP762, Python PLP-7,
Charly

- F-771-1 [Takin' care of business](#) (E)CD247 [CD]
- F-772 [You mean, mean woman](#) King LP762, Python PLP-7
[\[How can your love be true\]](#)
- [K2205] ● [Freddie King](#)
same
- Cincinnati, Ohio, July 25, 1961
- F-773-1 [I hear jingle bells](#) Federal 12439, Odeon (F)SOE3721
- F-774 [In the open \(inst\)](#) Federal 12475, King LP773, LP856, Gusto GD5033X
- F-775 [Out front \(inst\)](#) King LP773, LP856, Gusto GD5033X
- F-776 [Swooshy \(inst\) \(1\)](#) King LP773, LP856, Gusto GD5033X
- [M2134] ● [Hank Marr](#)

Cincinnati, November 22, 1961

Federal 12451

F785-2 [The twist serenade](#)

-

F786-1 [Your magic touch](#)

Federal 12468, King LP829, LP1011

[Watusi-roll](#)

F1455

[Sweet Nancy](#)

- - -

F1456

Note: Last two titles given as early 1962 ? See also under Eddie Clearwater.

[K2206] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Gene Redd](#), [Clifford Scott \(as,ts\)](#) [Sonny Thompson \(p\)](#) [Fred Jordan \(g,vcl\)](#) [Bill Willis \(el-b\)](#) [Phillip Paul \(d\)](#) vcl background-

Cincinnati, Ohio, January 10, 1962

Federal 12521 *, Python PLP-7, Pol (G)623278,

- F-1423-5 [Closed door \[High rise *\]
\(inst\)](#)
Gusto LP5012X, Federal DCD7845 [CD]

Federal 12462, Python PLP-7, Gusto GD-5033X
(2)
- F-1424-2 [Texas oil \(inst\)](#)

Federal 12521, Python PLP-5, Pol (G)623278,
Charly
- F-1425 [She put the whammy on
me](#)
(E)CD247 [CD]

Federal 12475, Python PLP-5, Pol (G)623278
- F-1426-1 [I'm on my way to Atlanta
\(1\)](#)

Federal 12578
- F-1427 [Overdrive \[The
untouchable glide\] \(inst\)](#)

Federal 12518, Pol (E)2343047, Charly
(E)CD247[CD]
- F-1428-1 [Driving sideways \(inst\)](#)

Federal 12456, King LP964
- F-1429-1 [Sittin' on the boat dock](#)

Federal 12470, King LP931

F-1430 [Come on](#)

Note: First 4 titles also on King LP964.

For a session from February 7 & 8, 1962 see Lula Reed.

[R1912] [Lula Reed](#)

Lula Reed & Freddy King : Lula Reed And Freddy King Acc By Sonny Thompson & His Orchestra : [Lula Reed \(vcl-1\)](#) [Freddie King \(vcl-2\)](#) acc by [Gene Redd](#), [Clifford Scott \(saxes\)](#) [Sonny Thompson \(p\)](#) [Fred Jordan \(g\)](#) [Bill Willis \(el-b\)](#) [Phillip Paul \(d\)](#)

Cincinnati, Ohio, February 7 & 8, 1962

F-1431-1 [Do the president twist \(1,2\)](#) Federal 12456, King LP777, KCD777 [CD]

F-1432-1 [\(Let your love\) Watch over me \(1,2\)](#) 12471, - - - , Gusto GD-5033X

F-1433-1 [You can't hide \(1,2\)](#) - - - , Gusto GD-5033X

- F-1434-1 [It's easy child \(1,2\)](#) 12477, - - ,964
- F-1435-1 [What love keeps a-working on me \(1\)](#) 12457
- F-1436-1 [What about love \(2\)](#) 12462, King LP931, LP5012

[K2207] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by unknown as, ts, bar, p, el-b and d, and (vcl group-1) added.

Cincinnati, Ohio, November 27, 28 & 29, 1962

King LP821, Pol (G)623278

F-804 [Bossa nova blues \(inst\)](#)

Fed 12515, King LP928, 964

F-804-4 [King-a-ling \(F-859\)](#)

Fed 12482, King LP821

F-805	The bossa nova watusi twist (inst)	
F-806	Walk down that aisle [Honey chile]	-
F-807-4	Someday after awhile (you be sorry)	Fed 12518, King LP821, Pol (G)623278, Charly (E)CD247 [CD]
F-808	You walked in	Fed 12578, King LP821
F-809-1	You're barkin' up the wrong tree	12499 -
F-810	Is my baby mad at me (horns out)	King LP821
F-811-2	The welfare [Turns it's back on you]	Fed 12499, King LP821, 5012X, Python PLP-5, Charly (E)CD247 [CD], Federal DCD7845 [CD] King LP821

F-812 [It hurts to be in love](#)
 Fed 12482, King 5012X, LP821, Charly
 (E)CD247 [CD]

F-813 [Look ma, I'm crying](#)
 Federal DCD7845 [CD]

F-814-1 [\(I'd love to\) Make love to
 you \(g out\) \(1\)](#)
 Fed 12491, King LP821

F-815-2 [One hundred years \(g out\)](#)

F-900 [Freeway 75 \(recut of F-
 805\)](#)

King LP928, Pol (G)623278, Python PLP-7

[K2208] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Gene Redd \(ts\)](#) [Sonny Thompson \(p\)](#) [Frederick D. Jordan \(g\)](#)
[Oscar Crummie \(el-b\)](#) [Phillip Paul \(d\)](#)

Cincinnati, Ohio, September 26, 1963

F-851-1 [Now I've got a woman](#)
 Fed 12529, King LP931, LP964, Pol (F)27761,
 Gusto
 GD-5033X (2)

F-852-1 [Surf monkey \(inst\)](#)
 Fed 12509, King LP928, LP964

12535, LP931 -

F-853	If you have it	
		King LP882, LP928, 1059, Pol (E)2343047
F-854-2	Zoo surfin' [Low tide] (inst)	
F-855	Remington ride (inst)	King LP884, 928, 1059, Gusto GD-5033X (2)
F-856-1	Monkey donkey	Fed 12509, King LP931, 964
		Fed 12515, King LP931, LP964, Python PLP-7
F-857	Meet me at the station (inst)	
F-858	Full time love	Fed 12537, King LP931, 5012X, Python PLP-5, Federal DCD7845 [CD] Fed 12515, King LP928, KP964

F-859

[King-a-ling \(F-804-4\)\(inst\)](#)

Note: Mx F-854-2 also issued on Python PLP-11* and Gusto GD-5033X (2).

[K2209] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by unknown p-1, org- , g, b and d.

Cincinnati, Ohio, August 26, 1964

Fed 12535, King LP931, LP964

F-884

[I love you more every day](#)

King LP931, Charly (E)CD247 [CD]

F-885

[Teardrops on your letter](#)

Fed 12532, King LP931, LP964, Pol (F)27761,
King

F-886-1

[Some other day, some other time \(1\)](#)

LP5012X, Federal DCD7845 [CD]

Fed 12537, King LP931, Python PLP-11

F-887

[She's the one](#)

		Python PLP-5, King LP931, LP964, Pol (G)623278
F-888	She's the kind (1)	
		Fed 12532, King LP928, LP964, Pol (F)27761
F-889-1	Manhole (inst) (2)	
		Python PLP-11, King LP928
F-890	Fish fare (inst)	
		- -
F-891	Funny bone (inst)	
		PLP-5 - , LP964, Pol (G)623278
F-892-7	Cloud sailin' [Don't move] (inst) (2)	
		King LP928, LP964, Gusto GD-5033X
F-893	The sad nite owl (inst)	
		- -
F-894	Nickel plated (inst)	
		Python PLP-5 *, King LP928, LP964

F-895 [Freddy's midnite dream](#)
[\[Freddy's guitar blues *\]](#)

Note: Mx F-900 see session of November 22, 1962. F-886 also on Python PLP-11, Mx F-889 also on Python PLP-5 and Gusto GD-5033X (2). King LP931 was probably never issued and all tracks on King LP964 have been edited.

[K2210] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by unknown (org) [Lonnie Mack \(g\)](#) unknown (el-b) [Frank Charles \(d\)](#)

Cincinnati, Ohio, September 14, 1966

King 6080

K-12231 [Girl from Kookamunga](#)

King 6080, Pol (G)623278

K-12232 [You've got me licked](#)

6057 - , Charly (E)CD247 [CD]

K-12233 [Double eyed whammy](#)

K-12234 [Use what you've got](#)

Note: Polydor (G)623278 = Polydor (E)2343009.
 King 5012X (minus Mx F-1399, 769, 858) = Bellaphon BID8012.
 King LP773 = King LP856 (with live noise dubbed in).
 King LP1059 = Bellaphon BID8015.

[K2211] [Freddie King](#)

Freddie King Is A Blues Master : [Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Joe Newman](#), [Melvin Lastie](#), [Martin Banks \(tp\)](#) [King Curtis \(as\)](#) [David "Fathead" Newman \(ts\)](#) [Willie Bridges \(bar\)](#) [Gary Illingworth \(p\)](#) [James Booker \(p.el-p.org\)](#) [Billy Butler \(g\)](#) [Jerry Jemmott \(el-b\)](#) [Norman Pride \(d\)](#)

New York, July 16, 1968

14850	Hideaway (inst)	Cotillion SD9004
14851	Papa's got a brand new bag	(unissued)
14852	Funky (inst)	Cotillion SD9004, 44015
14853	Soul twist '68	(unissued)

14854

Cotillion SD9004

[Blue shadows \(org,horns
out\)](#)

[K2212] [Freddie King](#)as [Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Steamhammer](#) : unknown g, el-b and d

Live "Entire Club", England, 1968

Python/Black Bear BB-904

[Guitar thing \[Guitar
workout\] \(inst\)](#)

-

[See see baby](#)

-

[This is the blues \(inst\)](#)

-

[Have you ever loved a
woman ?](#)

-

[New hideaway \(inst\)](#)

-

[Get out of my life](#)

BB-905

[Someday after awhile](#)

-

[Sen-sa'-shun \(inst\)](#)

-

[Love her with a feelin'](#)

-

[Guitar pickin' \(inst\)](#)

[K2213]  [Freddie King](#)
same

New York, July 17, 1968

Cotillion SD9004, 44015

14855 [Play it cool](#)

-

14856 [That will never do](#)

-

14857 [It's too late](#)

-

14858 [Sweet thing](#)

- , Midi LP68005

14859 [Get out of my life woman](#)

-

14860 [Hot tomato](#)

(unissued)

14861 [Soul twist \(2nd version\)](#)

-

14862 [Soulsville](#)

[K2214]  [Freddie King](#)
same

New York, July 18, 1968

14863 [Wide open](#) Cotillion SD9004

-

14864 [Let me down easy](#)

14865 [Today I sing the blues](#)

Note: All titles from Cotillion SD9004 also on Atlantic (E)K40496.

[K2215] [Freddie King](#)

My Feeling For The Blues : [Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Ernie Royal](#), [Martin Banks \(tp\)](#)
[George Coleman](#), [Frank Wess \(ts\)](#) [Trevor Lawrence](#), [Willie Bridges \(ts,bar\)](#) [King Curtis](#)
 (ts-1,marimba-2) [George Stubbs \(p\)](#) [Cornell Dupree \(g\)](#) [Jerry Jemmott \(el-b\)](#) [Ken "Spider Webb" Rice \(d\)](#) [Hugh McCracken \(hca-3\)](#)

New York, 1969

17455 [Yonder wall](#)

Cotillion SD9016, 44058, Repertoire
 REPCD4167 [CD]

17456

[I wonder why](#)

[Stumble \(inst, 1\)](#)

[Stormy Monday blues](#)
 [They call it stormy
 Monday]

[I don't know](#)

[What'd I say \(inst, 2\)](#)

- -

[Ain't nobody's business
what we do](#)

- -

[You don't have to go \(3\)](#)

- -

[Woke up this morning](#)

- -

[The things I used to do \(3\)](#)

- -

[My feeling for the blues](#)

Cotillion SD9016 = Atlantic (E)K40497

Note: All above titles also on Atlantic (Jap)AMCY-496 [CD].

[K2216] [Freddie King](#)

Getting Ready... : [Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Leon Russell \(p,g\)](#) [John Gallie \(org\)](#) [Don Preston \(g\)](#) [Donald "Duck" Dunn \(el-b\)](#) [Chuck Blackwell,](#) [Charles Myers \(d\)](#) [Claudia](#)

[Lennear](#), [Kathi McDonald](#), [Don Preston](#), [Joey Cooper \(vcl-1\)](#) on a later date strings- and horns-3 dubbed in.

Chicago, 1971

Same old blues (1,2)	Shelter SHE-8905, 2140
	-
Dust my broom (4)	
	-
Worried life blues	
	-
Five long years	
	-
Key to the highway	
65044	-
Goin' down	
	- , 2140, 7303
Living on the highway	
Walkin' by myself (5)	- , 2140

65047 [Tore down](#) - , 7303

-

[Palace of the king \(1,3\)](#)

Note: (4) vcl,g acc by tamb, p only. (5) vcl, g ac by strings, p, tamb only. Shelter SHE-8905 = Philips (G)6369102 = A & M (E)AMLS65004

[K2217] [Freddie King](#)

Texas Cannonball : [Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Leon Russell \(p\)](#) [John Gallie \(org\)](#) [Don Preston \(g\)](#) [Carl Radle \(el-b\)](#) [Chuck Blackwell](#), [Jim Gordon \(d\)](#)

Memphis, Tenn., 1972

[Lowdown in Lodi](#) Shelter SW8913, 7320, 2140

- -

[Reconsider baby](#)

-

[Big legged woman](#)

- - -

[Me and my guitar](#)

- , 7323 -

[I'd rather be blind](#)

[K2218] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Leon Russell \(p,org,slide-g\)](#) [Don Preston \(g\)](#) [Donald "Duck" Dunn \(el-b\)](#) [Al Jackson \(d\)](#) + strings-1 dubbed in.

Hollywood, CA, 1972

[Can't trust your neighbour](#)
(1) Shelter SW8913

-

[You was wrong](#)

-

[How many more years](#)

- ,7323

[Ain't no sunshine](#)

-

[The sky is crying](#)

Note: Shelter SW8913 = A & M (E)AMLS68113 = Philips (G)6369108 = Sequel
NEXCD-126 [CD] = Shelter (Jap)PSCW-1032 [CD].

[K2219] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [David Maxwell \(p\)](#) [Deacon Jones \(org\)](#) [Bennie Turner \(el-b\)](#)
[Charles Robinson \(d\)](#)

Live, Ann Arbor, Michigan *, September 8-10, 1972

Atl SD2-502

[Goin' down](#)

Note: (*) Recorded Live "Otis Spann Memorial Field", Ann Arbor, Michigan, September
8-10, 1972.

[K2220] [Freddie King](#)

Woman Across The River : [Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Rev. Patrick Henderson \(p,org\)](#)
[Leon Russell \(p\)](#) [Don Preston \(g\)](#) [Carl Radle \(el-b\)](#) [Jim Keltner](#), [Chuck Blackwell \(d\)](#) [The](#)
[O'Neil Twins \(backing vcl-1\)](#) strings-2 dubbed in.

Ti Juana, Oklahoma, 1973

Shelter SW8819, 7733, 2140

[Woman across the river](#)

[\(1\)](#)

[Hootchie cootchie man \(1\)](#)

-

[Danger zone \(2\)](#)

-

-

[Boogie man](#)

-

[Leave my woman alone
\(1\)](#)

-

[Just a little bit](#)

-

[Yonder wall](#)

-

-

-

[Help me through the day
\(2\)](#)

-

-

[I'm ready \(2\)](#)

-

[Trouble in mind \(1,2\)](#)

-

[You don't have to go \(1\)](#)

Note: Shelter SW8919 = A & M (E)AMLS68919 = Philips (G)6369115
Shelter 2140 = Shelter (F)67607 = A & M (E)AMLS68313

[K2221] [Freddie King](#)

Burglar : [Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Ron Carty \(tp\)](#) [Chris Mercer](#), [Mick Eves \(ts\)](#) [Steve Gregory \(ts-1,sop-2\)](#) [Buddy Beadle \(bar\)](#) [Roy Davies](#), [Pete Wingfield](#), [Brian Auger \(keyboards\)](#) [Bobby Tench \(g\)](#) [Delisle Harper \(b-g\)](#) [Steve Ferrone \(d,cabassa-6\)](#) [Mike Vernon \(perc-1\)](#) [Pat Arnold](#), [Vic ...](#), [Misty Browning \(backing vcl-2\)](#) unknown female speech-3.

Oxfordshire, England, July, 1974

RSO RS-1-3025, SO-4803, Pinnacle
BGOCD137 [CD]

[Pack it up \(rd el-
p,clav,1,3\)](#)

[Shake your booty \(rd el-
p,clav,1,3,5\)](#)

[My credit didn't go
through \(rd el-p,pw
p,1,2,4\)](#)

[I got the same old blues
\(rd el-p,2,3,6\)](#)
[Only getting second best
\(rd el-p,ba org,1\)](#)

[Texas flyer \(rd el-p,pw p,
1, 3\)](#)

Pulp wood (pw el-p, horns
out, inst, 3)

- -
She's a burglar (rd el-p,pw
clav, ba org, inst, 3)

- -
I had a dream (pw p, ba
org, 2)

Come on [Let the good
times roll] (rd org, pw p,
clav, 1,4) - -

- -
It's your move (rd clav,
pw p, 4)

RSO SO-4803 = RSO (F)2479129 = RSO (E)2394140.

Note:

[K2222] Freddie King

Freddie King (vcl,g) acc by Pete Wingfield (p) Kenny Passarelli (b) Steve Ferrone (d)

Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, England, July 1974

RSO RS-1-3025

Sweet home Chicago[K2223] Freddie King

Live In Antibes 1974 : Freddie King (vcl,g) acc by Alvin Hemphill (org) Louis Stephens (p) Floyd Bonner (g) Bennie Turner (b) Mike Kennedy (d)

"Antibes Jazz Festival", Antibes, France, July 24, 1974

France's Concert (F)FCD111 [CD]

Going down the highway

-

Big legged woman

-

Woman across the river

-

Have you ever loved a woman ?

-

'Tain't nobody's business if I do

-

Hideway

-

Let the good times roll[K2224] Freddie King

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Dick Sims \(org\)](#) [Eric Clapton](#), [George Terry \(g\)](#) [Carl Radle \(el-b\)](#) [Jamie Oldaker \(d\)](#)

Miami, Florida, August 5, 1974

RSO SO-4803, RS-1-3025

[Sugar sweet](#)

[TV mama](#)

[Gambling woman blues](#)

[K2225] [Freddie King](#)

Live In Nancy 1975, Vol. 1 : [Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Alvin Hemphill \(org\)](#) [Louis Stephens \(p\)](#) [Mark Pollack \(g\)](#) [Bennie Turner \(b\)](#) [Calep Emphrey, Jr. \(d\)](#)

Nancy, France, 1975

[Messin' with the Kid](#)

France's Concert (F)FCD126 [CD]

[That's all right](#)

[Goin' down](#)

[Stormy Monday blues](#)

[\[They call it stormy Monday\]](#)

(Medley :)

[Sen-sa'-shun](#)

[Lookin' good](#)

[Boogie chillun'](#)

[Sweet little angel](#)

[K2226]  [Freddie King](#)

Live In Nancy 1975, Vol. 2 : same
Nancy, France, 1975

France's Concert (F)FCD129 [CD]

[Got my mojo working](#)

[Sweet home Chicago](#)

[Wee baby blues](#)

[The danger zone](#)

[Feelin' allright](#)

[You're the one](#)

[Final](#)

[K2227] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King](#) (vcl,g) acc by [Melvin Jones](#) (org) [Louis Stephens](#) (p) [Sam Wylie](#) (g) [Bennie Turner](#) (el-b) [Charles Robinson](#) (d)

"Live in Studio!", Dallas, Texas, March 31, 1975

['Tain't nobody's business
if I do](#)

RSO RS-1-3025

-

[Woman across the river](#)

[K2228] [Freddie King](#)

Larger Than Life : [Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [John Thomas](#), [Darrell Leonard \(tp\)](#) [Jerry Jumonville \(ts,as\)](#) [David "Fathead" Newman \(ts\)](#) [Jim Gordon \(ts,org\)](#) [Joe Davis \(bar\)](#) [K.O. Thomas \(p\)](#) [Mike O'Neill \(g\)](#) [Robert Wilson \(b-g\)](#) [Big John E. Thomassie \(d\)](#) [Sam Clayton \(cga\)](#)

Live "Armadillo World Headquarters", Austin, Texas, April, 1975

[You can run but you can't
hide](#)

RSO SO-4811

-

[Woke up this morning](#)

-

[Meet me in the morning](#)

-

[The things I used to do](#)

-

[Ain't that I don't love you](#)

[K2229] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Louis Stephens \(p\)](#) [Alvin Hemphill \(org\)](#) [Mike O'Neill,](#)
[Andrew Jones, Jr. \(g\)](#) [Bennie Turner \(el-b\)](#) [Charles Myers \(d\)](#) [Sam Clayton \(cga\)](#)

Live "Armadillo World Headquarters", Austin, Texas, April,
1975

[Have you ever loved a
woman ?](#) RSO SO-4811

Note: RSO-4811 = RSO (E)2394163

[K2230] [Freddie King](#)

[Freddie King \(vcl,g\)](#) acc by [Sonny Burke \(el-p,clav\)](#) [Pete Wingfield \(p\)](#) [Melvin "Wah
Wah" Ragin \(g\)](#) [Henry Davis \(el-b\)](#) [James Gadson \(d\)](#) [Mike Vernon \(perc\)](#) [First Priority
\(vcl group\)](#)

Hollywood, CA, 1975

RSO SO-4811

[It's better to have \(and
don't need\)](#)

-

[Boogie bump](#)

[K2231] [Freddie King](#)

[Dick Sims \(org\)](#) [Freddie King](#), [George Terry \(g\)](#) [Carl Radle \(el-b\)](#) [Jamie Oldaker \(d\)](#)
[Sergio Pastora \(perc\)](#) [Eric Clapton \(vcl,g\)](#)

Live "Dallas Convention Center", Dallas, Texas, November
15, 1976

[Farther up the road](#)

RSO RS-1-3025, (E)2394192