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SOUL DETECTIVE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2006

CASE FOUR: CHARLES "SOUL" BROWN

A RETURN TO NEW ORLEANS

LATEST UPDATE: 10/5/09

I picked up this single a long time ago in some little store down in the French Quarter. It has been one of my favorites ever since. Years of searching have yielded no concrete information about who the artist might be. Only one thing is certain (even though the record is often listed in [discographies](#) that way), it is not by *THAT* Charles Brown.



NOLA 702 A

▶ [Standing On The Outside](#)

This record just kills me, man. I mean, it's so DEEP, it's like painful, you know? The way it builds and builds, the whole spoken word thing, "...you don't trust a woman, not the way you

trust a friend", whoa. When "Soul" just goes off there at the end... the call and response "YEAH!"s between him and the band - it's just about as good as it gets. It is inconceivable to me that this is the only record this guy ever made. He had to have had some kind of career leading up to it, or following it or something. He's just too good.

Now, there are two names on the label that should interest us. The first, of course, is the arranger, [Wardell Quezergue](#), aka the [Creole Beethoven](#).

Quezergue came up as a trumpet player and arranger for [Dave Bartholomew](#) in the late 50s. By the early 60s he had become the premier bandleader in the Crescent City, heading his groups The

ABOUT ME

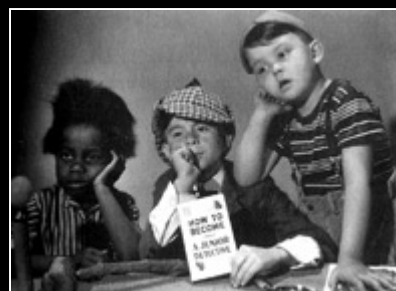


RED KELLY
THE NORTH FORK,
NEW YORK

IN VINYL VERITAS

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

SOUL DETECTIVE



Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to join me in my quest to find out as much as possible about these all but forgotten artists.

Each case will be ongoing, with new information added as we receive it. Please feel free to add whatever evidence you may have on the case to the 'comments' section, or you can e-mail me with additional photos, label scans, music or whatever...

EMAIL ME

SOUL DETECTIVE

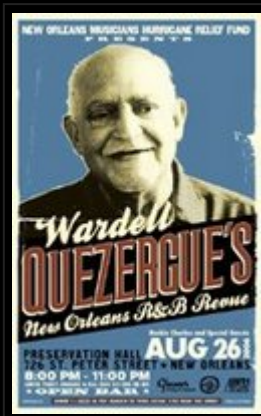


Sultans and The Royal Dukes Of Rhythm. "He would be the house band for all artists visiting New Orleans", according to Mac Rebennack. It was only natural that his skills as an arranger would lead to doing session work at Cosimo's studio. Small independent labels like Frisco, Rip and Watch used him to their advantage, most notably on the timeless **Big Chief** with Professor Longhair and Earl King. By

late 1964, Wardell was able to form his own record company, **NOLA**, with partners Clinton Scott and Ulis Gaines. Our Charles "Soul" Brown record here was only the second release on the label.

They would go on, of course, to hit big with Willie Tee's **Teasin' You** and Robert Parker's **Barefootin'** as well as producing many solid local records by folks like Smokey Johnson and Curley Moore. A combination of unpaid bills and the collapse of Cosimo Matassa's Dover Records (along with the seizure of his assets, including the studio they recorded in), led to the demise of the label in 1968.

The ever resourceful Wardell, as I'm sure you know, would work out a deal with **MALACO** up in Jackson, Mississippi and go on to produce his biggest records yet for artists like King Floyd and Jean Knight. As I heard it, Quezergue was rescued from the rising floodwaters around his home on a makeshift raft last year, and was honored just this past weekend by the **Mystic Knights of the Mau-Mau** at **Preservation Hall** in New Orleans.



◀ The other name is that of the songwriter, **Sax Kari**.



The Isaac Kari story is an absolute trip. Here's a guy who was a bandleader in the 1940's, and went on to record a string of way cool instrumental hits (like **Chocolate Fizz**) during the 50's. He had opened a chain of record stores in Detroit early in the decade, and began producing records on Della Reese, Teddy Randazzo, and The Falcons, at the very dawn of what would become Detroit Soul. He

next turns up in Houston, where he is employed by Don Robey as a promoter and salesman for his Duke/Peacock empire, working with greats like Junior Parker and Bobby Bland. By late 1963, Kari had relocated to New Orleans.

"I rented a seven room apartment right across the street from Wardell Quezergue's home, and converted one of the rooms into a recording



BURNING QUESTIONS

7 Tommy Young - 'No Explanation'?



case one **JOE HAYWOOD**



the update project



case two **LEE BATES**



case three **J. HINES**



case four **CHARLES 'SOUL' BROWN**



case five **ALLEN ORANGE**



case six **JAMES DUNCAN**



case seven **THE MEMPHIANS**



BURNING QUESTIONS



contest one **ELTON ANDERSON**



contest two **JAMES RIVERS**



contest three **PAUL GAYTEN**



studio...”, he said. It was this set-up that must have led to our current record by Mr. Brown. He would also produce the smokin' **Key To Your Door** by the great Warren (Lee) Taylor on NOLA 711. At this point, he opened a record store, and kept up his connections with the guys in the "one-stops".



When Allen Toussaint left Joe Banashak to form Sansu in 1965, Kari stepped in as his A&R man and producer. The first record he produced for **Instant** (3269) was a raw and muddy blues by someone named Polka Dot Slim, that was recorded at his home studio and was supposed to be used only as a demo. It turned out to be such a departure from the polished R&B the city had grown used to, that it became somewhat of a local hit. He went on to produce great records on folks like Ray Wilson and Chris Kenner for Banashak as well as having a few big releases under his own name on his Tune-Kel label (one of which, **Ludwig**, was actually leased by Atlantic for national distribution). By 1968, Eddie Bo had essentially replaced him as Banashak's producer, and Sax decided it was time to move on.



His next stop was Mobile, Alabama where he would operate a record shop and continue to produce records on his own Channel 1 imprint. By the mid seventies, he was working with **Henry Stone** in Florida on his T.K. family of labels, and continued to produce and record well into the 80s, producing some of the first hip hop sides. The last I heard, Sax Kari, now 86 years old, was living in a trailer that was damaged during the record 2004 hurricane season somewhere in Florida. A man whose career bridges everything from Big Band to Blues, R&B, Soul, Disco and Hip Hop deserves a better fate... hell, even if all he ever did was write our current song, that's enough for a Rhythm & Blues Foundation Pioneer Award or something, as far as I'm concerned!



There is a woman named **Marilyn Bond** who knew Sax well during his Detroit days, and contacted me this past Spring asking for help in convincing the **Mystic Knights** to let him perform at the Ponderosa Stomp. When I spoke with Dr. Ike, it became apparent that this wasn't the first time he'd been asked, and he assured me that Mr. Kari is indeed on their radar. I sure hope so.



Anyway, in 2002, **Tuff City Records** released both this side (on **Wardell Quezergue - Sixty Smokin' Soul Senders**), and the B side, "I'll Love You (If You Let Me)", of NOLA 702 (on **Sax Kari - Fumigate Funky Broadway**). I immediately bought both of them (although it pained me), hoping that the liner notes would shed some light on the identity of our mystery artist. No dice. They don't know any more than we do.



So, here on this most tragic of anniversaries, I present to you this awesome record, a collaboration between two obscure yet legendary music industry giants who wouldn't think of letting a little thing like a hurricane slow them down!

9/5/06

Well, alright.

I knew this case was gonna be a tough one, if only for the lack of other known recordings. Here's what detective Dan (our resident Crescent City expert) had to say:


"Great record. Very mysterious artist. You'd think with a voice like that he'd have a few other sides anyway, unless he recorded under another name... All I can contribute is to tell you who he is also *not*, besides THE Charles Brown. I thought he might possibly be 'Chuck' Brown who had two singles on Excello in 1961-62. Come to find out, those were King Karl records recorded under a pseudonym. And a simple vocal comparison demonstrated to me that 'Soul' Brown ain't King Karl! It is interesting that NOLA 702 was just the second release on the label. That at least narrows down the date to 1964. Happy hunting..."

OK, thanks Dan!

Hmmm... not much to go on there, huh? Here's the B side:



NOLA 702 B

 [I'll Love You \(If You Let Me\)](#)

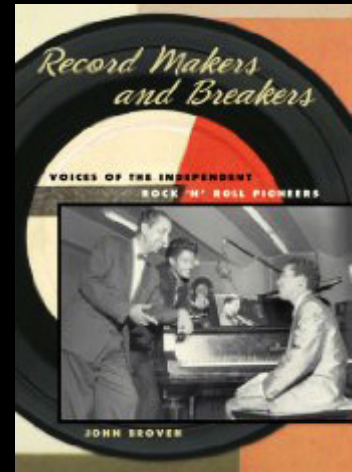
While not the killer track that the other side is, the sweet Quezergue arrangement gives it that New Orleans feel. 'Soul's vocals here exhibit that same kind of 'tone deaf' quality that King Floyd's did at times, while I

can hear a little Curley Moore in his inflections there towards the end... I'm guessing he's local.

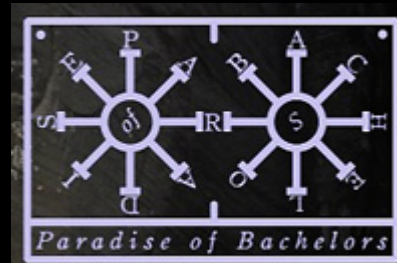
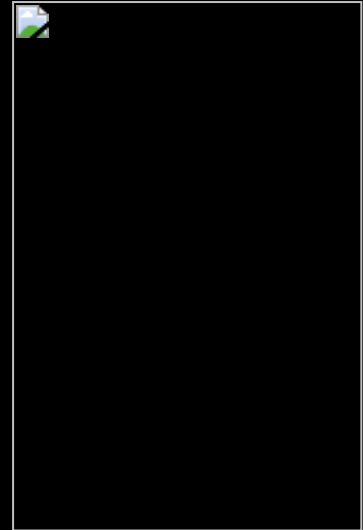
Kari has said that he practically lived at the Dew Drop Inn around then, hanging out with owner Frank Pania. I suppose it's possible that Brown performed there...

Then again, anything's possible.

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LINKS

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- [Home of the Groove](#)
- [In Dangerous Rhythm](#)

9/15/06

Kolb's Restaurant was a cavernous beer hall sort of place at the foot of St. Charles, right across Canal St. from the Quarter. Opened in 1899, it became a New Orleans tradition, serving German food with a Creole accent (if you can imagine that...). The ceiling fans in the place all ran off of one central motor, on a 'fan belt' (if you will) that circled the whole dining room. The entire contraption had been taken intact from the 'Cotton Centennial Exposition' of 1884, and was something to see! They also had a mechanized Bavarian looking figure that raised a beer stein to his lips and kinda looked around (I don't remember if he ran off the same motor as the fans). Everybody called him "Ludwig".



Ken Kerr, a studio musician that Sax was working with, was inspired by the figure (and a few beers, I imagine) to write a song about him. Sax produced it and Banashak released it on a new label they had created called TUNE-KEL (it was named after the publishing company he had started with Irving Smith in 1961). The song was a big hit locally, as everybody knew who ol' Ludwig was...



TUNE-KEL 601 A

▶ Ludwig

This catchy little number has this kinda 'Love American Style does Bourbon Street' vibe to it that was just perfect for the pop charts circa 1968. Atlantic Records though so too, and approached Banashak about

leasing it for national distribution. Kari went back into the studio, cleaned it up a little, and added some **Clyde Kerr** trumpet before shipping them the master. They released it as ATCO 6536, under the name of **The Royal Canal Street Band**. It started creeping up the charts, but when **Al Hirt** released a version of the tune (RCA 9381) - just as he had done with Toussaint's **Java** four years before - that became the one people wanted to hear, and the ATCO single sank like a stone.

I realize that this has nothing whatever to do with our quest for the facts about Charles "Soul" Brown's identity, but I thought you'd be interested nonetheless... Sax Kari just couldn't catch a break, man. Still can't, I guess. I mean, while Toussaint is out touring the world

soul sides

[Deep Soul Heaven](#)[Soul Cellar](#)[Downtown Soulville](#)[Stepfather of Soul](#)[Just Moving On](#)[Feel It](#)[The Singing Bones](#)[Brown Eyed Handsome Man](#)[The Vinyl Word](#)[Roy C Forever](#)[Carolina Soul](#)[It's Great Shakes](#)[Memphis Music Confidential](#)[Georgia Soul](#)[New York Soul Recordings](#)[The Blush Orgainzation](#)[Soul Discovery Radio](#)[Soul Spectrum](#)[the tofu hut](#)[Weblog Gazette R&B Review](#)[The Roots Canal](#)[SoulGeneration](#)[R&B Discographies](#)[The Funk Files](#)[jukebox mafia](#)[Benn loxo du taccu](#)[The Soul Club Jukebox](#)[Free Hiphop Now](#)

Zielinski

I Power Blogger

SPAM POISON

with a famous British rock idol, Kari is sitting home in a trailer.

I'm going to try to contact him... I'll keep you posted.

9/21/06

Talk about not being able to catch a break, check this out:

In the interest of leaving 'no stone unturned', and all of that (and also because I'm just as messed up as the rest of you are when it comes to vinyl), I went out and found us a copy of the ATCO release of 'Ludwig'. I slap it on the ol' turntable, and it SUCKS... I mean, it doesn't even sound like the same song, know what I mean? What a trip, I thought, oh well... then I turned the record over, and there ol' Ludwig was, trumpets and all!

In other words, Atlantic had apparently switched the masters, and put the "plug side" on the wrong side! Now, I'm not sure if they were all pressed that way, but I'll betcha that not too many more than the initial promo run (which our copy is obviously from), were ever produced...



SO, imagine you're a DJ at some radio station in 1968, plowing through the latest stack of record company advance vinyl, and you come across this one by the Royal Canal Street Band (who you've never even heard of), with a rubber stamp that says 'plug side' on it, and when you listen to it, you wince... would you turn it over to check

if ATCO made a mistake, or toss it?

You get the idea... no wonder Al Hirt's version got the air time, they couldn't even FIND Kari's!



ATCO 6536 B?

▶ Ludwig

I actually like the original TUNE-KEL version better... it's got more of a 'second-line' feel to it I think, but this is the sound they thought would sell, I guess (how about those two chords on the Hammond, yo?). I'm gonna

spare you the real "Everybody Dance", as it's kind of like fingernails on a blackboard (sorry, Sax).

You can't make this stuff up!

10/12/06

OK. Enough is enough, I said. I'm gonna find Sax Kari...

As it turns out, all I had to do was look in the phone book! That's right, I was able to track down his phone number and I gave him a call. We spoke for about a half an hour. He was very gracious, and happy to talk with me about his music. At 86 years old, he remains as sharp as a tack!

SO, first things first; when I asked him about Charles "Soul" Brown he said that the first time he met him was at the recording session for NOLA 702, and that he never saw or heard from him again. That wasn't that unusual for the label's artists back then, he said, as they didn't promote anything. "They'd just put a record out and let it sit there", something Sax didn't agree with. All he could tell me was that he believed Brown to be from New Orleans.

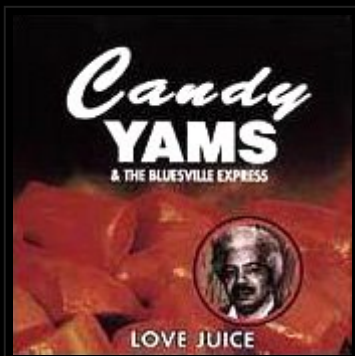
He himself had built up a network of over 200 dee-jays (including [John R](#) and [Hoss Allen](#)) that he knew personally during his days with [Don Robey](#), as he handled promotion for Duke/Peacock. He also worked closely with Robey's Buffalo Booking Agency alongside [Evelyn Johnson](#), and knew how to 'sell' a record.

When I mentioned [Dave Clark](#), the much-touted promotion man who ended up his career at Malaco, Sax laughed, and told me "Dave Clark couldn't promote a record if the dee-jay was already spinning it on the air"! He said he first met Dave through [Denver Ferguson](#) (a booking agent -and bookie- that owned the Sunset Terrace Ballroom in Indianapolis. His brother, Sea, owned The Cotton Club down the street) in 1939. He said Dave followed him down to Texas, and became a 'bag man' for Robey, delivering the 'payola' to the radio guys. When the big scandals hit in 1959, the money dried up, and Clark was left 'holding the bag'. "Dave Clark took my life history and made it his own", Sax said.

We talked about those Indianapolis days, when Sax was the leader of an eighteen-piece orchestra, and also about his days in Detroit, where he owned several record stores and began producing records on local talent like Della Reese. He told me that he later moved on to Chicago, and began working with [Vee-Jay](#). He produced an album on [Jerry Butler](#), that was to be titled "No End Of Time" after a song Kari had written for him. When [Breakfast At Tiffany's](#) hit big in 1961, Vee-Jay tried to cash in and had Butler cover [Moon River](#), and put it on the album as the title track!

After talking for a bit about [Chris Kenner](#) and [Eddie Bo](#), we moved on to his days with [Henry Stone](#). He'd been working closely, more or less, with Stone since the mid-seventies, and accumulated an "extensive unreleased catalogue" of music. When Stone's Miami studio burned down, Sax took his masters with him. There's quite a bit of material 'in the can', he said, including some work he'd done with blue-eyed soul singer [Bobby Caldwell](#), that's just begging to be released. He's been involved with the annual [Jack The Rapper](#) Conventions (which were apparently initiated in 1977) from day one, and basically never looked back.

In the mid-nineties, Kari re-invented himself as a piano playing 'blues man' named [Candy Yams](#). Stone released an album by him and his band, [The Bluesville Express](#), in 1997 called [Love Juice](#). A song from the record, [Charley's Got a Harley](#), has become a favorite of the 'bike week' crowd in Florida, and Sax said he's working up an album's worth of biker tunes as we speak. He also told me that he put together a benefit album called "Katrina" that he sent to Stone soon after the hurricane hit, but it never saw the light of day.



I asked him about his own hurricane damage, and he made light of it, saying they're working on a new building now. When I tried to say things like 'you never got enough recognition', Sax said he was never interested in that, and viewed the music business as just that - a business. He asked me several times if I was with a record company, or a booking agency or a radio station or something, and when I told him I was a 'music writer' he said, "How you gonna make any money with that?" (ain't THAT the truth!).

Anyway, Sax Kari remains ready and full of ideas. He's willing to perform anyplace, anytime, he said, "just send me a bus ticket". He's also willing to shop his unreleased masters to the right people. We'll see what we can come up with.

In the meantime, here's the B side of the original version of 'Ludwig':

TUNE-KEL 601 B

 [Here And There](#)

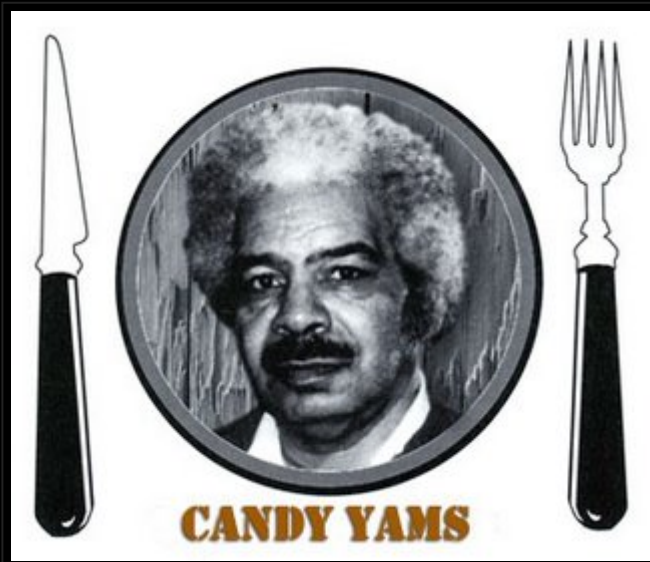
Just a little more of that [Bert Kaempfert](#) does Mardi Gras sound that we've all grown to love. I'm pretty sure that Sax is playing the organ (he wrote this side as well)... way cool! Also, how about that over



the top flute solo? Yeah, baby!

10/23/06

I did a little digging around, and got us a copy of [Love Juice](#), Sax's 1997 album with the Bluesville Express. Here's [Charley's Got A Harley](#), the track the bikers took a liking to:



▶ [Charley's Got A Harley](#)

That's bike week regular Moe Jackson on guitar, and a 77 year old Sax Kari on the keyboards and vocals. While not the greatest of songs, it certainly shows that Sax hasn't lost his sense of humor!

11/12/06

Let's continue with the 'Saxathon', as detective Dan so ably put it:

I picked up a cool little book called [The Birth Of The Detroit Sound 1940-1964](#), a volume of the 'Images Of America' series. It was written By Marilyn Bond (you remember, the lady that spoke with me about trying to book Sax for the Ponderosa Stomp) and S.R. Boland. I bought it figuring it would mention Mr. Kari, as he was such a part of the music scene in Detroit in those days.

I was right. One thing it points out is the fact that Sax actually had a bonafide top ten R&B hit record in 1953 with a song called [Daughter \(That's Your Red Wagon\)](#) by 'Swinging Sax Kari and His Orchestra' on the Chicago based [States](#) label (#115). The song was an 'answer record' to Ruth Brown's mega-smash [\(Mama\) He Treats Your Daughter Mean](#), which had just spent 5 weeks in the number one slot. The



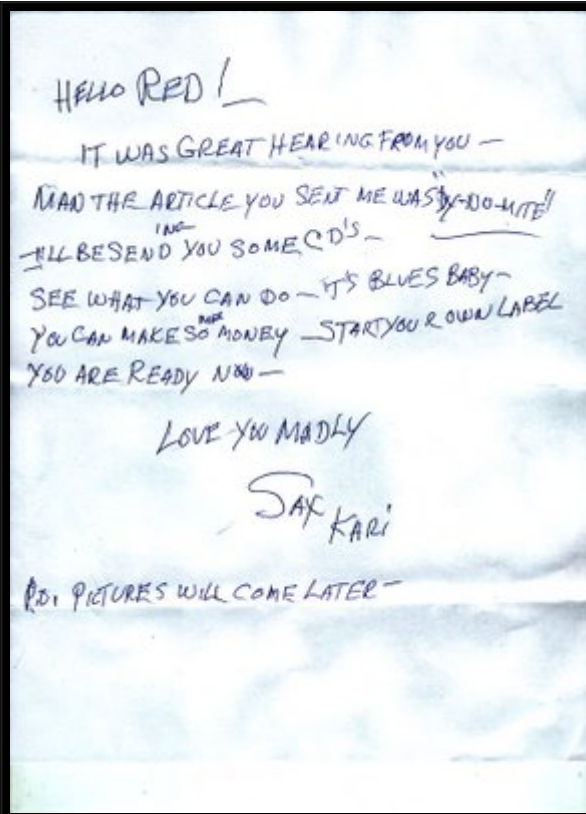
vocals were handled by Gloria Irving, who would go on to record for [Cobra Records](#) in 1957.



As mentioned earlier, Sax would later sign with Detroit legend [Robert West](#), producing acts like [The Falcons](#) for his [Lupine](#) and [Flick](#) labels. That's Sax discussing the finer points of the deal with West in the photo above.

While there's not much more info about Sax in the book, it's worth the price of admission for the cool photographs alone. Thanks, Marilyn!

Now, I had sent a copy of our 'case' so far down to Sax (as he doesn't own a computer), and received a letter back from him last week:



Like I said before, folks, Sax remains ready for anything! Despite what the man says, I'm not sure if I'm ready to 'start my own label', but I'm sure going to plug the idea of his returning to 'active duty' to anyone who'll listen...

"It's Blues, Baby!"

1/17/07

Hey y'all... just wanted to keep you up to date with what's been going on over here with 'case four'. First off, I found these cool label scans doing my usual scrounging around eBay and the rest of webland. If you check it out, they are both sides of the same release, STATES 115 (the top ten 1953 hit we mentioned above), only one is a 45 and the other a 78. This just illustrates, in my opinion, what a historic figure Mr. Kari is... he was *there* when the industry made that switch. He's been there all along.



I have been calling Sax every few weeks or so, and getting a phone company recording that his number has been disconnected. Fearing the worst, I called around and was finally able to speak with one of his neighbors in Florida. He said that Sax's damaged trailer had been removed, and that they were in the process of building a house in its


place. Kari is staying with a relative (he thinks it may be his son) during the construction, he told me. Well, that certainly is good news! I guess FEMA or somebody finally came up with a few bucks. I'll keep trying to reach him, I promise.



Now, I was going through some records over here, attempting to finally 'get organized' and make some sense out of the faceless piles of vinyl that surround me, when I found something that froze me in my tracks:



JEWEL 838

 [I Just Can't Get Over You](#)

Holy shit, I thought, here I start up this whole investigation and everything, and the answer was right here under my nose the whole time! I mean, here's a guy named Charles Brown, recording for a Louisiana label, with

something in quotation marks in between his first and last names. It has to be the guy we're looking for, right?

Wrong. At least I think so. The label says this record was recorded in 1973, but I don't think those nine years could have changed 'Soul' that much. I love the song, it's like this Philadelphia meets Chicago type production by the "Soul Company"... can anybody offer any clues about them or "Cole Black"?

I don't know... maybe it *is* him, what do you think?

4/16/07

Alright, folks, here comes some important news...

As I told you a while back, Sax Kari's phone had been disconnected, but I was able to locate a neighbor who told me that they were rebuilding his house, and that he was staying with someone, possibly a relative.

I took a shot in the dark, and mailed a letter out to his last known address in early February. Eventually, Sax wrote me back, and sent me copies of his two latest 'hand-made' CDs:



from KATRINA

▶ Aw Kick That

Here's an instrumental track from 'Katrina', the benefit album Sax put together and sent off to Henry Stone after the flood in New Orleans. I will say this, for an 86 year old man to still be making music at all,

much less burning it to CDs with graphics and everything is nothing short of amazing. I'm sure that's him playing all those different keyboard parts as well, and he's still got it goin' on!



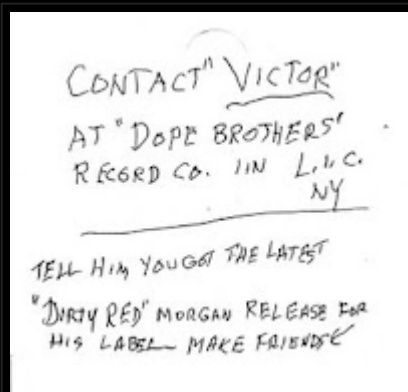
from DIRTY RED MORGAN GROUP

▶ Messing With JB Pt 1

Well folks, apparently Sax has come up with yet another personality, this time he's 'Dirty Red Morgan', the Funk King! Like I was saying, the fact that an octogenarian can get down like

this is just so cool! "Yeah, this is Dirty Red Morgan gettin' ready to blast your skull about the past, now do you dig?" Yes, Sax I dig, man. When you connect the dots that this is the same man that was recording demos on Polka Dot Slim up in his apartment in New Orleans for Joe Banashak over 40 years ago, it's the same as it ever was...

Sax also sent along this note scrawled on the back of one of the CDs. So far, I've been unable to find 'Victor', but sent an email to a 'Dopebrothers Records' I found listed on the web. I never heard anything back. Sax also gave me a phone number to reach him at, but I kept putting off calling him, hoping to have 'made friends' with this Victor guy first.



This past week, I finally decided to call. A kid picked up the phone, and when I asked to speak with Sax, he went and fetched his mother.

I could hear her say "Oh, boy!" in the background before she picked up the line... "Sax Kari's had a mild stroke,' she said, "on the right side" He's in a nursing home, now. I was his caretaker, but I'm not any more..."

My heart sank. "it was about three and a half weeks ago..."

Damn.

I got the address and phone number of the nursing home and called Sax. Amazingly, his mind is still totally focused, but he's lost the use of his right hand... "They're gonna take good care of me in this place, Red. We're doing rehab to try and get my fingers to work again..."

It just broke my heart, you know?

We talked for quite a while, and he told me that the deal he had to rebuild his house fell through, and that he wasn't sure what was going to happen. Dopebrothers, he said, had actually released a Dirty Red Morgan record already (anybody have any leads on that?), and he thought they might be interested in the CD he sent me...

He handed the phone after awhile to the 'best friend he has down there', a fellow by the name of Melvin Blair. Mel is on a mission (as we are) to get Sax Kari the recognition he deserves. He told me that he's been in recent contact with the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, and has recieved an initial positive response from them. Mel has also purchased the URL saxkari.com, and has just gotten it up and running, starting off with a FANTASTIC must read article from Real Blues Magazine. 'Melly Mel' is doing a great job over there at his Blue Duke Studio, and I've offered to help him in any way we can.

Now, I'm not sure if you remember this, but Sax told us that he had saved some unreleased master tapes from a fire in the T.K. warehouse. Work he had done with [Bobby Caldwell](#) and others. Well, he recently made a deal with Aaron Fuchs over at the [Tuff City Music Group](#) that will hopefully get some of that music released for the first time.

I just got off the phone with Aaron, and he assured me that, while the details need to be straightened out, he has nothing but Sax's best interests at heart. His company is going through those raw unmixed masters as we speak, and hope to be able to release something soon.

In the meantime, I thought I'd put up a cool B side from that era to hold us over:

DASH 5023



▶ Raggedy Ann

Another of 'Saxton's' fractured easy listening pieces, this time filtered through the disco-era T.K. Orchestra, you just gotta love it. You can almost see yourself cruising along in like a '75 Impala convertible, just digging the scenery... You know, as Mr. Fuchs was saying on the

phone, Sax's music defied categorization, and perhaps that's what's held him back from being recognized as the genius he is...

Anyway, if you'd like to send Dirty Red Morgan some get well wishes to cheer him up, here's the address:

Sax Kari
PO Box 773
Seffner, FL 33583
sakkari@hotmail.com

Get Well Soon, Sax!

...this just in (from the 'comments'):

"The Dirty Red Morgan 7" will be released in May 2007.

Your Chicken Ain't Funky Like Mine / Finger Lickin', Funky Chicken

UB-4501"

◀ Victor Piagneri
victor@dopebrother.com

Thank You Victor!!! Can't Wait!

5/23/07

OK everybody, we have some major news to report here on Case Four!

As mentioned by detective Dan (aka our lucky winner) on [Home Of The Groove](#), there was an excellent 'living tribute' to Wardell Quezergue on the small stage in the Grandstand at Jazz Fest.

On the stage with him were former rival studio arranger Sam Henry Jr. (now a member of Wardell's great big [R&B Revue](#)), the one and only [Cosimo Matassa](#), [Irma Thomas](#), and [The Dixie Cups](#). Author [Ben Sandmel](#) led a lively and informative panel discussion about



Quezergue's incredible career. Wardell, now totally blind, spoke humbly about how his musical skills were a God given

gift, and how he considers himself blessed to have been able to make a living doing what he loves. "Everything I did was from the heart," he said, "if you paid me, or if you didn't pay me, I still gave it all I had."

Just a sweetheart of a man.

After the presentation was over, Ben opened it up for questions from the audience. Here was our chance! I spoke a little bit about the NOLA label, and how it went down with the ship when Cosimo's Dover Records distribution company declared bankruptcy in 1968. It felt a little like an episode of 'This Is Your Life', but I next went on to ask Wardell if he remembered a man he used to work with in the early days of the label, Sax Kari. I told him how Sax was now 87 years old and living in Florida, and conveyed his regards to his old friends in New Orleans. He said that it did his heart good to hear that Sax was still around, and that he remembers him very well. Now came the big question; "There's a song Sax wrote for NOLA, called 'Standing On The Outside', that was recorded by somebody named Charles "Soul" Brown. Can you remember any details about him or the recording session?"

"Charles, and his brother Oliver, were members of my band The Royal Dukes Of Rhythm," Wardell said, "and that's who's playing on that record, my band at the time."

NOW HOW ABOUT THAT?

He went on to tell a story about a show they put on at the Union Hall in New Orleans. Quezergue had worked up arrangements for the band to perform the entire smash 1962 Ray Charles album [Modern Sounds In Country & Western Music](#) in sequence (presumably with Charles and Oliver Brown handling the vocals), and the crowd went nuts. They loved it so much, they carried Wardell and the rest of the Dukes out of the hall on their shoulders. Can you imagine?

SO, not bad, I figured... we finally found out where Charles "Soul" Brown came from. I asked Wardell if he knew whatever became of him, and he said he had no idea.

NOW, I get home here from New Orleans and I get an e-mail from someone named "Charlie Brown" (I almost soiled myself)... I thought maybe we had finally made contact! Here's what it said:

"Red,

I just discovered your blog through Home of the Groove and it is truly amazing. I am a New Orleans native and thought I was a music fan until I see guys like you and Dr. Ira etc.

Anyway, I took those Soul Brown mp3s and played them on WWOZ's New Orleans music show (I am a sub, not a full timer) and Clyde Kerr called me up. He said Charles and his brother Oliver were both lead singers for Wardell Quezergue's band and they sang together as The Sultans. Clyde said Standing On The Outside was one of the first sessions he ever played and credited Wardell with giving him his start.

BTW, I am no relation to the singer, being a white guy from Metairie. Bet I gave you a start, though? Huh?"

Yes, Charlie, you sure did. Anyway, how about THAT? Good ol' Soul Detective out there on WWOZ! Thanks again, Charlie!

SO, we have no less an authority than the great Clyde Kerr weighing in (if you recall, he was also involved with Sax on the re-recorded ATCO version of 'Ludwig', which incidentally, according to the label, was written by "Ken" Kerr...), and independently corroborating Wardell's story. Thank you Clyde!

NOW... The Sultans, huh? I remembered reading in the liner notes for [Wardell Quezergue - Sixty Smokin' Soul Senders](#) that The Sultans was the name of another of Quezergue's bands, and that they recorded a couple of sides for Imperial... Sure enough, I found this on [Global Dog](#):

IMPERIAL 5812 - Original Popeye b/w Dance Time

IMPERIAL 5886 - I Need Your Love b/w I'm Broke

Both released in 1962 under the name of "Wardell and the Sultans". The obvious question now is; Are Charles and/or Oliver singing on any of these sides? Does anybody out there own them?? Boy, I'd love to hear 'em! (another interesting aside, by the way, is that this also points out yet another 'Popeye' record we hadn't come up with over on that [Eddie Bo 'B' side post](#)...)

You go, detectives, let's find those 45s!!

Thank you Mr. Quezergue, Mr. Kerr, Mr. (no-relation) Brown and everybody else for everything. Stay tuned!

6/1/07

Alright. Detective [Cies](#) (the proprietor of the excellent Gospel site [Just Moving On](#)) left this in the 'comments':

"Great that you've found who the real Charles "Soul" Brown is. I've just looked at the Imperial discography in the R&B Indies. Two interesting releases by the Two Brothers. Are these the Brothers Brown? Charles & Oliver??"

Imperial 5810: Never Again/Blue Monday

Imperial 5887: Who changed the look/Tell her"

Good lookin' out. Cies! A very interesting hypothesis, and I think you may be on to something! The first 45 he lists, Imperial 5810, is the release before 5811; Earl King's Trick Bag (which, as we all know, was arranged by Quezergue), which in turn precedes the 5812

Popeye record by Wardell and the Sultans... what I'm saying is, these may have all come from the same sessions.



The same holds true for Imperial 5887, which was issued just *after* 5886, Wardell and the Sultans' **Who Changed The Lock**. All of these records were released in 1962.

There is one other 'Two Brothers' release on Imperial that Cies didn't notice, however:

5748 - Lonely Boy b/w Tell It

This one hails from 1961, and doesn't appear to be contiguous with any Quezergue arranged stuff (number 5747 is by Huey Smith and the Clowns, while 5749 is by Frankie Ford). In any event, we need to hear these records! Does anybody know of any CD re-issues of early sixties Imperial stuff that they might be on? Or, better yet, any of you detectives out there have any of the original vinyl?

[OK... I just ordered the first Two Brothers release (5748) off of [GEMM](#) (for like \$20), and we'll check it out together as soon as it shows up.]

In the meantime, I'm issuing a soul detective A.P.B. for the rest of 'em!

6/14/07

Alright guys, I got us a copy of the first of the 'Two Brothers' releases on Imperial:



IMPERIAL 5748

[▶ Tell It](#)

Well, what do you think? Hmm... it's tough to make a determination one way or the other based on this one. The harmony vocal there in the background *could* be our man Charles, but I don't know. If you

listen closely, at the very end, one brother says "Sho'nuff" before the other chimes in with a "Whoah, Yeah" that kind of has the same vocal qualities that 'Soul' has. Take another listen to the B side of our original NOLA 702 45, [▶ I'll Love You \(If You Let Me\)](#), and you'll see what I mean.

Anyway, as we said earlier, Imperial 5748 here was released in 1961, which, I believe, is the same year that the company acquired the Minit label. I'm wondering if the cool piano work on here is by Allen Toussaint...

9/19/07

Hey folks, I figured it was time to catch up a bit here on case four...

First off, let's have a listen to another of those Imperial 'Two Brothers' sides:



IMPERIAL 5810 B

[▶ Never Again](#)

A sweet little tune, it's kind of like a vocal group take on what was going on at Cosimo's at the time. The flip, the Brothers' version of Blue Monday, just doesn't do it for me. Anyway, whaddaya think? It certainly

could be our man Charles crooning those "No, No, No, No, No, No's"...
I'm digging that like limpid sigh. Oh, those love starved brothers!

By the way, I was *this* close to picking up one of the Wardell & The Sultans 45s on eBay a few weeks ago but, even though I bid heavily, somebody 'sniped' it in the last ten seconds. I hate when that happens.

And now, back to the 'sax-a-thon'...

Here's a primo photograph of our man Sax with Memphis legend Rufus Thomas:



(I love the shirt!) Taken, I'm sure, in the WDIA studios back when Sax was inventing the role of record promotion man, it shows once again what an important, and criminally overlooked, figure Kari is in the history of this music. Sax gave the photo to our pal, Memphis journalist [Preston Lauterbach](#), who posted it on his insightful and informative site [The Memphis Sound: Lost and Found](#) back in June. Thanks, Pres, and congratulations to you and the missus on the new arrival!

Sax is presently living in an 'assisted living' facility in Tampa, which is certainly a step up from the Rehabilitation Center he was in just after the stroke. He was actually scheduled to appear with Etta James at the House Of Blues in Lake Buena Vista (aka 'downtown Disney') this past July (a show which I was not about to miss), but she



was laid up in the hospital, and cancelled the first leg of her tour this summer. I spoke with our man on the scene, [Melvin Blair](#), this afternoon, and he told me that Sax was in good spirits, and seemed to be doing fine. 'Melly-Mel' was scheduled to give a presentation tonight to the 'Rap Kids' at the [Gainesville Music Summit](#). Go get 'em, Mel!

Here's another of Kari's wacky instrumentals from his Crescent City days:



TUNE-KEL 600 A

[▶ Siesta](#)

Dig 'dem crazy bongos, baby! In the [Fumigate Funky Broadway](#) liner notes Sax comments on this one (and it's flip 'Spanish Drums');

"The session players and I made up those tunes on the fly at a

studio session we placed with Banashak. Joe really liked the tunes and wanted to make them into hits..." Which somehow just never quite happened.

And now, as promised, here is the brand new Dirty Red Morgan Group 45:



Dope Brother 4501 A

[▶ Your Chicken Ain't Funky Like Mine](#)

Pressed on groovy red vinyl, Dope Brother #1 Victor Piagneri sent us a few copies over the summer. No matter what you may think of the song itself, the fact that this outstanding

musician is still releasing records at 87 years old is just so very cool...

"Look at that chick dressed in green, strictly from New Orleans!"

Thank you, Victor... and you go, Sax! Your chicken is still plenty funky, brother!

10/5/09



SAX KARI
1920 - 2009

I just got the sad news that the one and only Saxton Kari passed away in Florida on October 1st after a short battle with pancreatic cancer.

Sax was a joy to talk to, and always had a story to tell. He remained sharp as a tack right to the end, and I will always treasure the time I spent on the phone with him.


I just spoke with his son, Melvin Blair, who told me that a memorial service was held for Sax this morning.

May he Rest In Peace.

POSTED BY RED KELLY AT 9:28 AM

<< souldetective.com

16 COMMENTS:

 Anonymous said...

Sick side!

5:00 PM

 Dan Phillips said...

Yo, Red. Great record. Very mysterious artist. You'd think with a voice like that he'd have a few other sides anyway, unless he recorded under another name.

All I can contribute is to tell you who he is also not, besides THE

Charles Brown. I thought he might possibly be 'Chuck' Brown who had two singles on Excello in 1961-62. Come to find out, those were King Karl records recorded under a pseudonym. And a simple vocal comparison demonstrated to me that 'Soul' Brown ain't King Karl!

It is interesting that NOLA 702 was just the second release on the label. That at least narrows down the date to 1964. Happy hunting.

10:27 AM

 Dan Phillips said...

Nice Kolb's sign shot, Red. I used to go there back in the 50's and 60's with my folks when they'd head to NO for a visit.

As bad as it is that Sax Kari is living in a damaged trailer somewhere in Florida, I doubt he'd be out doing much touring at 86 anyway. Then again, maybe Elvis C could do his next project with him!

7:58 PM

 Dan Phillips said...

Man, what a fiasco, that ATCO, yo!

Oh, well it's hidden version of "Ludwig" is way too straight and polite, anyway - makes the Tune-Kel track sound almost. . . funky. I prefer the flute and cheap organ sound on the original. Gives it charm. And, I'd bet Charles 'Soul' Brown would like it better, too. Good work, Red. Record collecting can sure be full o' surprises.

10:53 AM

 Dan Phillips said...

Great work, Red! Ol' Sax maybe didn't clear up the Soul Brown mystery; but I think you found yourself a better topic anyway. The 'recud bidniz' cats from back in the day are endlessly fascinating to me. The fact that he's still pluggin' away on his own projects is living proof those guys weren't slackers.

And, if you ever crack that nut about making money writing about music, please give me a heads up.

10:54 PM

 Dan Phillips said...

As you know, we have a minor thread in the comments over at Home of the Groove on my post featuring a cut by the Blenders. Jon, over at Nevilletracks.com said the lead singer, Arthur Booker, sounds similar to 'Soul' Brown (remember him?). Seriously, I've done some comparisons of Booker's voice on both sides of the group's single with Brown's NOLA tracks; and, I'd say close, but no ceegar. Two different vocalists. So, back to the Sax-A-Thon, dude!

9:05 AM

 Dan Phillips said...

Love Cole Black's voice, Red; but I don't think it's 'Soul' Brown, who seems more a Little Willie John type to me. Just sayin'. Great find though and worthy of hearing. Now we can start asking who the hell THIS guy is.

8:15 PM


 Cies said...

"Cole Black" Brown certainly isn't "Soul" Brown. John Ridley in his liner notes for Soul Jewels Vol 1 wrote about "Cole Black" that he "was another of those Chicago artists that Stan Lewis (owner of Jewel label) picked up on during the 70s. It appears to have been his only record".

No reason to start digging for more "Cole Black" records as there aren't any.

Still we don't know who "Soul" Brown is.

4:09 PM

 Anonymous said...

The Dirty Red Morgan 7" will be released in May 2007.

Your Chicken Ain't Funky Like Mine / Finger Lickin', Funky Chicken

UB-4501

Victor Piagneri
victor@dopebrother.com

7:18 PM

 Preston Lauterbach said...

Nice work, Un-Dirty Red.

Sax is one of the great untold stories out there.

Makes me wonder what other tales are hidden in broken down trailers.

12:06 PM

 Preston Lauterbach said...

oh yeah, next time you find yourself with hours to kill, look thru Sax's songwriter credits at bmi.com

12:11 PM

 Cies said...

Great that you've found who the real Charles "Soul" Brown is.

I've just looked at the Imperial discography in the R&B Indies.

Two interesting releases by the Two Brothers. Are this the Brothers Brown? Charles & Oliver??

Imperial 5810: Never Again/Blue Monday

Imperial 5887: Who changed the look/Tell her


Cies

2:19 PM

 Dan Phillips said...

Good work, detectives! I was not aware of the Wardell & The Sultans or the Two Brothers sides. Think you are probably on the right track with the Brown brothers there. Just a note on the pianist on the Two Brothers single, Red. James Booker played on the Earl King Imperial sessions of that period as well as Snooks Eaglin's 1961 Imperial sides. So he is a likely suspect here, too.

2:46 PM

 Cary said...

I recently visited Sax Kari and he asked that I help him locate a musician/calligrapher and an artist. I know very little about music and any help with this request would be greatly appreciated.

I will look to this blog for follow up.

Thanks


5:52 PM

 Red Kelly said...

Cary -

Welcome aboard! I would be happy to assist you (and Sax) in your quest.

Please contact me via email:

 redkelly@optonline.net

and we'll discuss it.

Thank You.

5:00 AM

 Anonymous said...

I don't know if this is of any relevance or not but I recently picked up a 45 by Al Brown & His Tune Toppers called 'The Madison'. Released on Amy 804 in 1960.

The members of The Tune Toppers were Alfonso Brown, Cookie Brown, Donald Brown & Charles Brown.

Is this Charles one of your Charles or still another? Don't look at me, I don't know.

7:17 AM

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