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SOUL DETECTIVE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 2010

CASE SEVEN - THE MEMPHIANS



LATEST UPDATE: 2/1/11



BLUFF CITY 101 B

South Memphis

OK folks, here goes... I've been working on this one for quite a while, and this time things are a little different. In conjunction with my friends Preston Lauterbach and Charisse Sales, we've already done some

extensive legwork on this case, as you'll see in the days to come, but there is still plenty of stuff to figure out!

Now, as you may have noticed down in the [comments](#), new contributor (and Ace detective) [Sir Algernon Truth](#) correctly identified the band that will be the subject of our new investigation here but, oddly enough, the song title he supplied us with is actually the flip of this 45, 'Breakdown'. He goes on to say that it "took a while for me to find as it was part of a gold sampler..." I'm wondering if the folks who put together the 'sampler' in question got the titles mixed up, or what... does anybody have any more information on that?

We'll take a listen to that A side of this initial 45 by this very cool Memphis underground super-group the next time out...

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



Thanks - red

3/11/10

OK folks, as promised here's the flip of South Memphis:



BLUFF CITY 101 A

Breakdown

So, here's the real 'Breakdown'... I'm loving that kind of 'Time Is Tight' meets 'Grazing In The Grass' feel, then all of a sudden there's this wild funky breakdown with a wailing sax

that somehow comes out the other end into the tune again. Very cool and inventive stuff, no? Now, let's talk a little bit about the label.

Regular contributor, good friend and proprietor of the excellent [Just Moving On](#) Gospel site, Cies, had this to say in the comments:

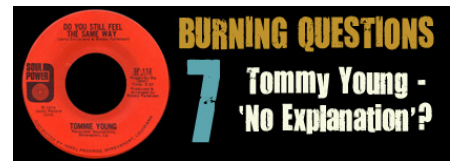
"According to the R&B Indies there are two more releases on Bluff City. R&B Indies has a New York address for Bluff City."

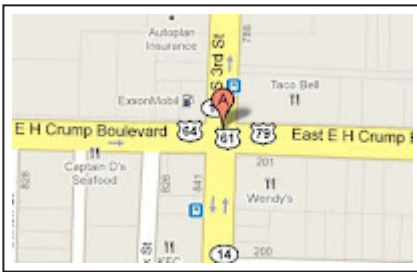
Well, that certainly seemed odd... so I checked it out:



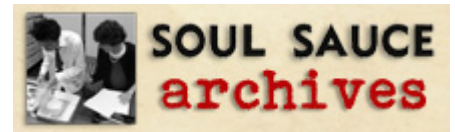
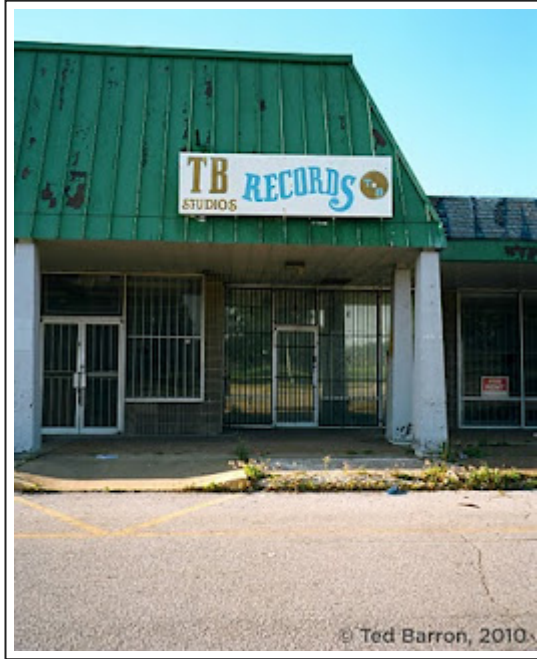
Sure enough, they place the company on Seventh Avenue in New York City. The fact that the B Side of #101 is listed as an 'unknown title' would seem to indicate that they didn't have the 45 in front of them when compiling the book, and so didn't notice the Memphis address printed on there plain as day - 378 E.H. Crump.

A google of that location puts the address right in the middle of the intersection of E.H. Crump and South Third Street. I wasn't sure what was up with that so I contacted our man in Memphis, Preston Lauterbach. "Yeah, it's right about at Crump & 3rd. There's nothing





there to see, though it had been some kind of record co. until just a couple years ago... I'll tell you who has a picture of it, Ted Barron at the [Boogie Woogie Flu](#) blog. It was called TB Records..."



Sure enough, Brooklyn's own Ted Barron, whose new venture is the excellent [Daily Pixel: Twenty-Ten](#) provided me with the photograph above. "I made this photograph in 2007," he said, "All I can tell you, is it was on a mostly derelict strip mall..." Thanks, Ted!



So there ya go, the original address of Bluff City Records was this building. If you notice, the sign actually says 'TB Studios'. Think that was there these sides were recorded? Anybody have any clue who TB might have been?

We'll talk more soon...

3/17/10

Yes, as sleuth Davie Gordon pointed out in the comments; "I'd bet that the Memphians are related to Julius Bradley who you wrote about on your [Holy Ghost](#) blog (Aug 28, 2007)"... and he'd be right. It is my sad duty to inform all of you, however, that Julius Bradley, who was indeed the bass player for The Memphians, passed away yesterday, as I reported over on [holy ghost](#):



[RED KELLY SEARCH](#)



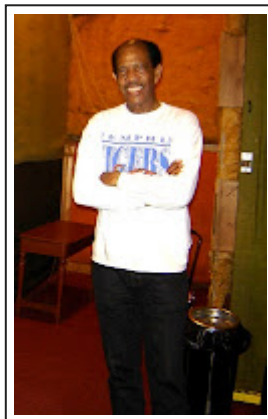
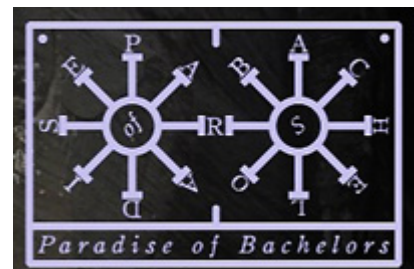
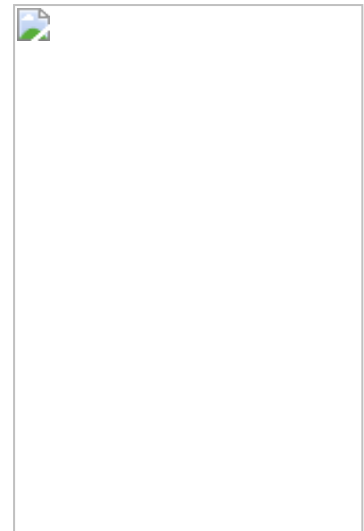
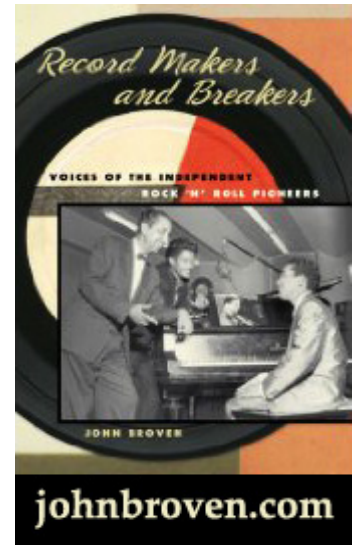
JULIUS BRADLEY
1942-2010

We will talk more about Julius and his music in the days to come.

May God Rest his Soul.

3/24/10

So, as you might have heard me mention in my [Special Report](#) on the 2009 Soul Detective Fact Finding Mission, it was [Julius Bradley](#) who answered the door at Royal Studio when I came knocking back in 2006. It was Julius who was kind enough to show me around the place, and who introduced me to the man himself, [Poppa Willie](#). We talked for a while about the Gospel album he was working on (which I would later feature on [holy ghost](#) when it was released the following year), and he told me he had been with Willie over thirty years, writing songs for Hi and Waylo artists like Al Green, Otis Clay and Lynn White.

LINKS

- [Funky 16 Corners](#)
- [Home of the Groove](#)
- [In Dangerous Rhythm](#)



When I went back to visit the studio just before the [Stax 50th](#) celebration in 2007, Julius was there along with J. Blackfoot and Preston Shannon. We had us a time...



Julius, who had actually gone to High School with O.V., was there at the [O.V. Wright Memorial Benefit](#) in 2008 (along with his constant companion and good friend 'Blade'), and it was obvious that he knew everybody in the place, both on stage and off. Through all of this, Julius never mentioned that he had been an R&B artist in his own right... never mentioned the fact that he had been the bass player and lead vocalist for one of the most respected and well-loved bands to emerge from the smoking Memphis club scene of the late sixties and early seventies.

He was truly one of a kind.

Imagine my surprise when my pal Preston Lauterbach forwarded an email to me that he had received from a young lady in Memphis named Charisse Sales about a group her father had been in back in the day...

My mother tells me that the person who initially brought this group of quite accomplished musicians together in the late '60's was a man named Roy Strong. He was the bass player but at some point, he was replaced by Julius Bradley. The line-up then became...

Archie Bradley-Tenor sax & band leader
 Charles Norfleet-Trumpet
 Kurt McKinney-Organ & manager
 Julius Bradley-Bass
 Preston Shannon-Guitar
 Oscar Sales-Drums

The group, which had been known as 'The Memphians', had included not only Julius, but Preston Shannon as well! When I spoke with Julius about all of this, and asked him why he never told me about it (especially that time when both he and Preston were there with me at the Studio), he just kind of shrugged...

- [soul sides](#)
- [Deep Soul Heaven](#)
- [Soul Cellar](#)
- [Downtown Soullville](#)
- [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](#)



I promised Charisse at that point that we would make The Memphians our next investigation here on Soul D, and subsequently met with her and Kurl McKinney at the Lauterbach digs last October, where they provided us with some incredible photographs and memorabilia. As the case unfolds here on the site, I would like to take this opportunity to dedicate all of our efforts to the memory of my friend Julius Bradley.

He was awesome.

Back in the seventies, Julius got a 'day job' with Delta Airlines there in Memphis, and worked with a couple of friends named Mark Blackwelder and Barry



Wilkins. Although The Memphians had broken up by then, he used to get together with his co-workers and play music whenever they could find the time. In yet another example of the amazing power of the internet, folks, here is a song Mark sent me that Julius wrote and recorded in the living room of Barry's apartment on an old 2 track reel-to-reel recorder around 1978:

^^

It's Nice

That' Julius on the bass guitar and vocals, along with Barry on lead and Mark on rhythm. How cool is that?

Thanks, Mark!



4/5/10

Check this out...



MANKIND 12004 A

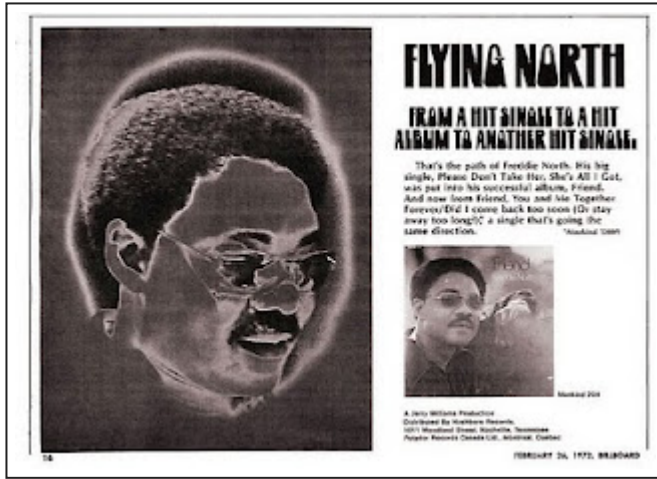
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She's All I Got

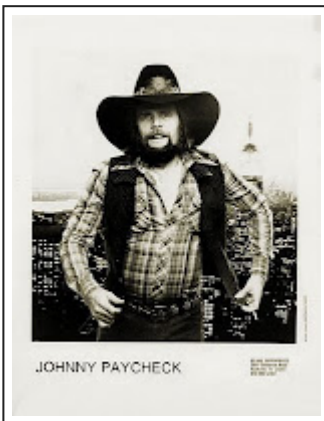
In 1971, after **Wally Roker** shut down his Canyon label out in L.A., **Jerry Williams, Jr.** (who had only recently taken on his **Swamp Dogg** persona) negotiated a deal with Nashboro Records in Nashville that

created the Mankind subsidiary. With Swamp at the helm, the label would become the home of some truly incredible soul music by the

likes of [Z.Z. Hill](#), [Doris Duke](#), [Brooks O'Dell](#) and [Freddie North](#).



North, who was also the head of promotion at the label, would have a top ten R&B hit (#39 Pop) with this Swamp Dogg production in August of 1971. Sounding a lot like [Joe Simon](#), Freddie's impassioned delivery of this catchy number make it a definite keeper. If you look there on the label, it says "recorded at Quinby Studios, Sheffield, Ala", which I'm sure is supposed to read 'Quinvy', Quin Ivy's Muscle Shoals digs that were soon to become David 'Bat' Johnson's [Broadway Sound](#), Swamp's home away from home in those days.



EPIC 10783

[\(Don't Take Her\) She's All I Got](#)

I'm not sure how it happened but, within a couple of months, another Nashville via Muscle Shoals figure had picked up on the song, and cut it on that most 'outlaw' of all the new breed of outlaw singers, [Johnny Paycheck](#).

Foreshadowing the ground-breaking work he was about to do with [George Jones](#), this trademark [Billy Sherrill](#) production soared to #2 Country (#91 Pop) in early 1972, and set Music City on its ear.

If you look at the songwriting credit there on the Mankind label, it says 'J. Williams Jr. - G. Bonds' - that would be (you guessed it) [Gary U.S. Bonds](#). Bonds and the Dogg had been friends since the early days back in Virginia, and were frequent collaborators, writing dozens of songs together. Bonds would also be a member of Swamp's short-lived [Slick 'n' The Family Brick](#). Although he had continued performing, Gary hadn't had a record on the charts since 1962. I think



both of them were pretty much blown away at being selected as the 'Country Music Songwriters of the Year' in 1972, after the Paycheck record was such a smash. It must have been quite a scene when they picked up the award...

Anyway, what does this have to do with The Memphians? Nothing really, but I just wanted to set the stage here for this next record:



BLUFF CITY 221 A

My Love Song

The last of the three Bluff City releases, this Bonds composition is actually a great little song that somehow fell through the cracks. With Bonds' songwriting back in the spotlight, he must have been viewed as a big signing for the tiny label. How the record came to be produced by industry heavyweight [Alan Lorber](#) (who had worked with everybody from [Jackie Wilson](#) to [Ultimate Spinach](#)), is anybody's guess.



Despite the fact that it was 'recommended' in Billboard in June of 1974, the record went nowhere, and Bluff City, seemingly, ceased to exist.

We'll take a closer look at the label, and the people behind it, soon...

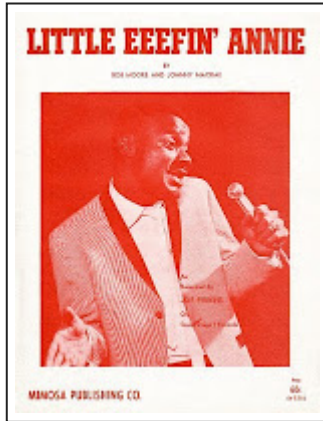
5/7/10

OK, last time out we were talking about the Bluff City label, and I told you we'd investigate further.

Our story starts with our good friend [Chuck Chellman](#), who told me that when he and [Fred Foster](#) set up [Sound Stage 7](#) as the R&B subsidiary of Monument, they decided to hire an energetic young black man named [Ed Crawley](#) as the head of their promotion department. Chuck said they met him when he was 'washing windows'

at RCA, and invited him to join them. "Eddie was just a great guy," he told me, "and everybody that ever met him just loved him. He was like a son to me."

One of the first R&B artists to record for Sound Stage 7 was named Joe Perkins, who cut 'Little Eefin' Annie' for the label in 1963. Our hero (and ace detective) [Sir Shambling](#) has a wonderful article on Joe over at [Deep Soul Heaven](#), where he calls Little Eefin' Annie "...the worst record to get a mention on this website." Although I've never heard it, we'll take John's word for it and leave it alone. According to the discography on the site Perkins had first recorded for King in 1957:



KING 5030 - Joe Perkins & The Rookies - How Much Love / A New Feeling

...but I don't know about that.

I am absolutely LOVING the fact that all these back issues of [Billboard](#) have been scanned into Google Books, it's become a truly invaluable resource. In the March 30, 1957 issue, I found this:



Yes, the single is listed in the 'Records Released This Week' section as being *Country & Western*. Do you think it's possible that this is a different Joe Perkins? I know that King first made a name for itself as a Country label, so I suppose it's also possible that they just got their wires crossed and made a mistake. Do any of you deep-crated detectives out there have this 45?

SAPTON 100 A

[I'm Not Gonna Leave](#)

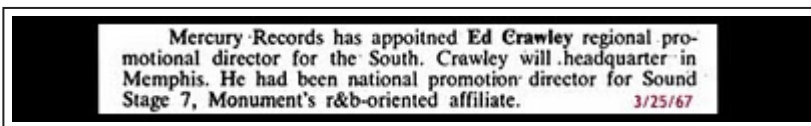
There doesn't seem to be any biographical information on Perkins out



there but, according to Ridley, the single immediately prior to the Sound Stage 7 release was this Saptan 45, which John says was released in 1961. The label was apparently owned by someone named Wylie Sappington, and the fact that it was produced by partners [George Jackson](#) and [Dan Greer](#) indicates that it was recorded in

Memphis. Keep that in mind. It's a great record, but I'm kind of wondering if, with that fully developed 'Memphis Soul' sound, that the release date might be placed a little too early... what do you think?

Anyway, let's get back to our man, Ed Crawley:

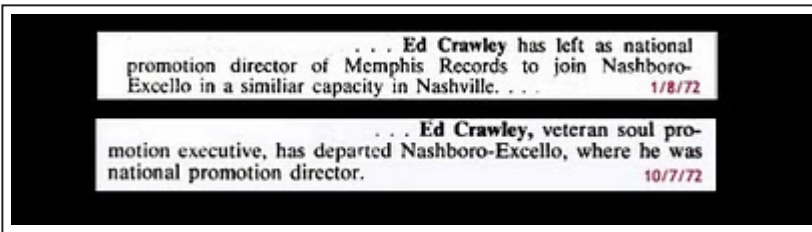


According to Billboard, he left Sound Stage 7 in early 1967, and was set up in Memphis as Mercury's Southern Promotion Director. By 1970, Mercury decided to get even more involved in the southern soul scene, and set up Jerry and Billy Butler with their own subsidiary label, Memphis Records, headquartered at a state of the art sixteen-track studio named Universal down the street from American at 261 Chelsea in North Memphis.

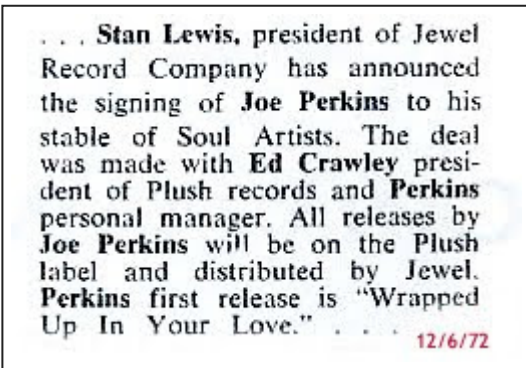


In early '71, Crawley was named as the promotion director for the label. [Memphis Records](#), as it turned out, would only release five singles, and folded by the end of the year. [Bowlegs Miller](#) produced the last two (on [Ollie Nightingale](#)) and, according to Howard Grimes, would continue to cut there after Mercury left, producing the untouchable [You're Gonna Miss Me](#) on [Ann Sexton](#) for John R's Seventy Seven label in 1973. The studio was later bought by [Isaac Hayes](#), and renamed HBS (as in Hot Buttered Soul).

Crawley, meanwhile, tried returning home to Nashville, and got a job with Nashboro/Excello...



...but it didn't work out and, in less than a year, he was out on the street. At this point Ed apparently decided to return to Memphis and start his own label.



In December of 1972, Billboard refers to him as Joe Perkins' 'personal manager', and the president of a company called 'Plush Records'. When I asked Julius Bradley about it, he told me that he was the one who

suggested the name Plush to Crawley for the label. With his connections in the industry, Ed (who had probably had it with the big outfits by then) was able to secure distribution with Stan Lewis in Shreveport, who operated one of the biggest 'One-Stops' in the South.



PLUSH 100 A

~
Wrap Up In Your Love

Here's that inaugural release on Plush, with 'Featuring The Memphians' displayed prominently there on the label. The label also credits our man Julius Bradley as the producer, and I think he did just a

fantastic job here, with a sound that puts you in mind of what Poppa Willie was doing across town. The song was also written by Julius and his brother (and fellow Memphian) Archie, and I think Ed Crawley's idea was to use the group as his 'house band', and the Bradley bothers as the 'in house' songwriters for the label.

PLUSH 100 B

~
Looking For A Woman

Check out this cool scan I found of the B side of that record. Apparently from an earlier, more generic pressing. Once again it's



produced by Julius, and features the same songwriters (does M. Smith ring any bells with anybody?). The publishing company is listed as 'North Bluff City Music', which may be the first mention of the name. This label also says that it was 'Recorded at Universal Studios', Crawley's former Mercury stomping ground. The

Memphians intricate funky style just cranks it here, and Perkins' JT-like vocals are da bomb. Listed as 'A Division of Jewel Records' (which doesn't appear on the later pressing), I guess Lewis' distribution wasn't enough to dent the charts, and this great 45 disappeared without a trace.

6/16/10

Alright folks, every once in a while here on Soul D we get to do something really cool, like introduce a 45 that nobody (well, practically nobody) even knew existed. As I told you back when we opened this can of worms, we were fortunate enough to have been handed a stack of vinyl that belonged to the late Memphians drummer **Oscar Sales** by his daughter **Charisse**, who was kind enough to allow me to take the records back to New York so I could scan them and transfer the audio to the computer. It took me a while to finally get it done (and even longer to actually get us started here on the case), but once I finally started paying attention, I was amazed.

If you recall, we've been talking recently about the work **The Memphians** did backing up Joe Perkins. That is Joe in the only known photograph of him at right, which I lifted from John Ridley's excellent **Deep Soul Heaven** article that we have spoken about in the past. Last time out we questioned whether the Sapton single that Joe cut with **Dan Greer** and **George Jackson** that John dated as being from 1961, had actually been released later on.



It certainly seems that way, as George Jackson didn't cut his own first single (for Ike Turner's Prann label) until 1963. I'd always heard that his partnership with Dan Greer started around the time they formed their own 'Gre-Jac' label in 1966, and released the version of **You Didn't Know It But You Had Me** that was picked up by Goldwax as part of the deal when **Quinton Claunch** signed them on as songwriters for the label.

So where, then, did **Sir Shambling** who (I think we can all agree) is

simply one of the most knowledgeable people out there when it comes to Memphis Soul, get the idea that the record was cut in 1961? Well, as it turns out, the same tracks had also been released on the Berry label. Here's the R&B Indies listing:



Apparently the label's only release, perhaps the question mark should have been placed next to the date, rather than the location...

BERRY 102 B

Until You Were Gone (edit)

I was able to locate a scan and a short audio clip of the B Side of that Berry 45 on eBay (where it's going for \$49), which *does* kind of sound like it might possibly be from 1961. The names of Dan Greer and George Jackson are nowhere to be found on this side of the record, however. In addition to Wylie Sappington (whom we mentioned earlier) a certain J. Horton is listed as his co-writer on this tune, and it looks like it says 'Prod. by H. Gordon', but its difficult to tell for sure. Do those names sound familiar to anybody? (I don't know why Wylie was the only guy who got to use his full name instead of an initial, but it's all good, I guess...).



Be that as it may, Shambling goes on to say; *"From this period came the unissued deep ballad 'I Know What You're Up To' - really one of his best recordings."* Well, Lo and Behold:



TAURUS 100 A

33

I Know What You Are Up To

This fantastic number we have here actually *was* issued, on yet another obscure Memphis label named Taurus. Has anybody out there ever heard of it before? Once again produced by our man Julius Bradley, and written with his brother Archie and the mysterious 'M. Smith', you can bet the farm that that's The Memphians playing behind Joe on this one. Truly an excellent record all the way around, check out Preston Shannon's guitar, Archie's sweet sax solo, Kurl McKinney's fat B3, and the tight battery of Julius on bass and Oscar Sales on the drums just knocking it out. This was one great band, man, and I'm sure Joe Perkins was happy to be their lead singer whenever he got the chance.

So, here comes the cool part... I get to introduce the B side of a 45 that nobody knew existed - a previously unheard addition to the Joe Perkins (and Memphians) discography (*Thank You Charisse Sales!*):



TAURUS 100 B

Your Love Fits Me Like A Glove

Can you say Funky? Yeah, Baby! This is one cookin' track, boys and girls, with that trademark Memphians 'breakdown' there in the middle, I am just lovin' it! Once again, I think it gives you an idea of how great they were. Joe is just going for it, man, with a couple of screams worthy of [Lee Bates](#)! Written by the Bradley Brothers, and produced by Julius, the publishing company is listed as **North Bluff City Music**, just as it was for the Plush single. So, where do you think this one fits in... is it pre-Bluff City and post Plush, or somewhere in between? If you notice, down there on the bottom, it says 'A Division of C & G Enterprises'. Hmmm... I'm willing to go with the idea that the 'C' refers to Crawley, as in Ed, but then who do you think the 'G' might be? Dan Greer?

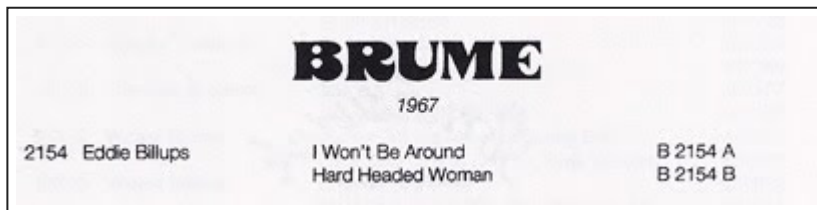
2/1/11

Ok folks, I know it's been quite a while between updates here but, as I'm sure you know, life sometimes gets in the way..

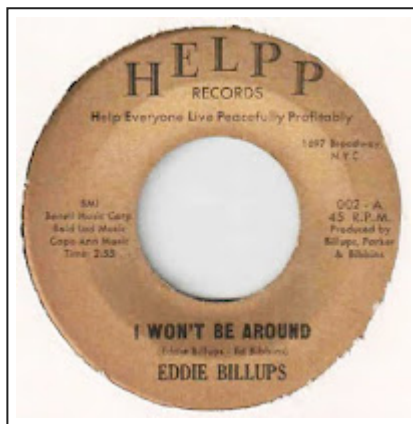
First off, I'd like to thank new contributor [Minee](#) who alerted us to the fact that the Joe Perkins single that had been released on both Berry and Sapton was also issued on yet another obscure label, Brume. Just as with the Berry release, there are no production credits on the label. Minee also points out that the J. Horton who is listed as a co-writer with Dan Greer and Wylie Sappington refers to [James Arther Horton](#), but neither side of the single appears in the

BMI Repertoire Database. Go Figure.

Now, the Brume label does have a listing in The R&B Indies...



...but, as you can see, the Joe Perkins 45 is nowhere to be found. According to them, the label was formed in 1967, and since the single they do have listed has both a lower release and matrix number (2154) than Joe's (2156), it would seem to indicate that it is actually from that period, just as we suspected. Interestingly, both sides of the Eddie Billups record they *do* have on there are up on YouTube on a New York based label named HELPP.



HELPP 02 A

I Won't Be Around

I couldn't resist putting this up here, because I think it's just awesome. You go Eddie! Now, the address listed on the label, 1697 Broadway, is actually the Ed Sullivan Theater, where they film Letterman nowadays. I'm

not sure what's up with that, but there are a couple of other clues on there that seem to place this great deep soul record down South where it belongs. Ed Bibbins, who is credited as both a co-writer and co-producer was a disc jockey down in Chattanooga, and one third of the publishing is owned by Cape Ann Music, which was John R's company, based in Nashville - which kind of makes you think that Brume may indeed be a Tennessee based label, and probably had the first release on it. Once again, I could only afford the first volume of the R&B Indies, so can one of you guys help out and look up HELPP for us? Thanks.

I was able to get Dan Greer on the phone recently and, although he remembered working with Joe Perkins vividly, he was unable to recall

exactly what year it was, or any details about which label released it when. Now, if you remember, we had postulated that perhaps the 'G' in the 'C & G Enterprises' that was mentioned on the Taurus 45 referred to Greer. Not so, Dan told me. He said that Ed Crawley was 'like a brother' to him in those days, and they were the best of friends, but he wasn't involved in anything called 'C&G'.



Anyway, an anonymous tip from the [Doo Wop Cafe](#) confirmed that Joe's 1957 King single was R&B, *not* C&W, and good friend and long-time detective [Colin Dilnot](#) wrote to say that the songs on the Taurus single actually were released in Japan. Thanks, guys!

Now, let's go back to Billboard:

<p>Crawley Heads 2 Friend Labels</p> <p>MEMPHIS—Carl Friend, who entered the record business with a set of documentary LP's commemorating the 50 states, has started two soul-oriented record labels, Bluff City and Plush.</p> <p>Ed Crawley, veteran soul regional director and more recently chief of Jerry Butler's Memphis Records, is president of the two labels. Crawley is considering major distribution or through independent distributors. Joe Arnold, once with the Memphis Horns, and Pete Mitchell, brother of A&R veteran Willie, are handling production. First acts signed are Phase Six and Joe Perkins. 11/1/73</p>	<p>EXCLUSIVE:</p> <p>Bluff City, Buddah Tie?</p> <p>NEW YORK—Negotiations are underway between the Buddah Records Group and Bluff City Records for Buddah to distribute the Bluff City line, Billboard has learned.</p> <p>A source said that the negotiations have been going on for some time and that final approval by both parties should be announced shortly.</p> <p>Memphis-based, Bluff City is a newly-formed r&b label (Billboard Nov. 17). The first product scheduled for release by the firm is a single by Joe Perkins. 12/22/73</p>
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Although this is the first mention of him we've seen, in late 1973, Billboard says that both Bluff City and Plush were 'started' by someone named Carl Friend, even though they had reported earlier that they were Ed Crawley's labels. Friend had been the A&R director of the legendary [United Southern Artists](#) imprint back in 1961, which was a short-lived Rockabilly outfit based in Little Rock, Arkansas that featured releases by folks like Eddie Bond and Sonny Burgess' Pacers. Friend later moved on to Nashville and ran a booking agency that handled minor Country acts. The ambitious 15 volume 'History of the States' mentioned above never saw the light of day, as far as I can tell. How Crawley got involved with him, and handed over control of his labels remains a mystery.

The article goes on to say that "Joe Arnold, once with the Memphis Horns, and Pete Mitchell, brother of A&R veteran Willie, are handling production..."

Joe Arnold came up as a member of a group called **The Memphis Blazers**, and became one of the **Mar-Key Horns** when **Duck Dunn** brought him to Stax (to replace **Gene Parker**) in 1966. Along with **Wayne Jackson** and **Andrew Love** his blazing tenor sax would become an integral part of so many of the Memphis Soul records we all know and love. You can see



him in action on the positively fantastic **Stax/Volt Revue Live In Norway** DVD from 1967. According to **Rob Bowman**, Arnold felt he was under-appreciated on that tour, and didn't like the idea that **The M.G.'s** had all been put on salary, but the horn players were still being paid standard session fees. He left Stax shortly after that.



WAND 1175 A

Soul Trippin'

Florence Greenberg had been poking around Memphis for a while, signing **The Masqueraders** in 1967, and attempting to record **Chuck Jackson** at American in the ill-fated **Papa Don Schroeder** session that

we've mentioned in the past. In early 1968, she signed Joe to Wand and released this great 45 we have here. A look at the label reveals that it was produced by Arnold and **Larry Rogers**. Rogers was the engineer and in-house producer at **Bill Black's Lyn-Lou Studio**, which pre-dated **American** on Chelsea Avenue in Memphis. Rogers took over the reins after Black died in 1965. According to Sir Shambling, this record was leased to Wand as part of a package that also included a couple of amazing **Marvin Preyer** singles that Rogers and Arnold had produced at Lyn-Lou. Written by **Sammy Creason** (the Bill Black Combo drummer who would later become one of The Dixie Flyers), **Soul Trippin'** was no doubt conceived as the same kind of hit instrumental that **King Curtis** had been recording across the street at American. The great guitarist on here is apparently **Clarence Nelson** who, according to **Darryl Carter**, recorded regularly for **Chips Moman** before **Reggie Young** left Hi to come work for him at American full time in 1967. Joe Arnold would have one more release on Wand under his own name later that year.

So anyway, detectives, here's a question for you; Whatever became of Lyn-Lou? Did Mercury buy it and rename it Universal after Larry Rogers left for Nashville in the early seventies? As we've established,

Universal was located at 261 Chelsea, and would later become Isaac Hayes' H.B.S. - was it initially Lyn-Lou? Is that how Joe Arnold got involved with Ed Crawley and Bluff City? Hmmmm...

The other name mentioned in the Billboard article is **Willie Mitchell's** brother, Pete.



Eldridge "Pete" Mitchell was heavily involved in Memphis High School Football, being named coach of the year four times before moving on to the University of Memphis and the MIAA in the early seventies. In 1975, he formed his own insurance company, **Pete Mitchell and Associates**, which is still going strong. He was honored along with **Al Bell** as a **Memphis Living Legend** by the New Sardis Baptist Church in 2010. This Billboard reference is the only place I've found that connects him with music in any way.



BLUFF CITY 220 A

Hungry For Your Love

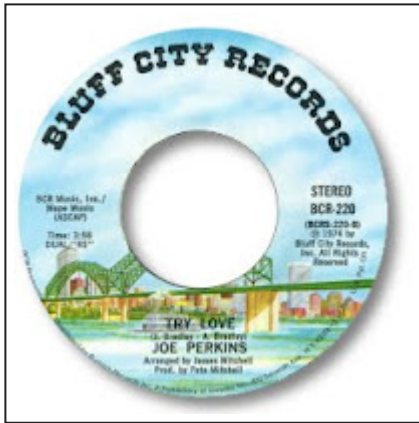
...that is, of course, except for the label of Bluff City 220, which does indeed list Pete Mitchell as the producer. Joe Arnold's name, however, is nowhere to be found. Note that the songwriters are listed as Julius and Archie Bradley, which certainly indicates that The Memphians are once again Joe Perkins' backing band on the record. Note also that the label is now being distributed by Buddah, just as predicted in the second Billboard article. Perhaps the most interesting name on the label, however, is one that Billboard didn't mention, that of the arranger, **James Mitchell**.



In a town that's full of under-appreciated figures, James Mitchell may just be the most under-appreciated of all. After studying at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, James returned to Memphis in 1964 and immersed himself in the burgeoning Soul scene. In addition to blowing the sax in his brother Willie's road band, he would become one of the go-to baritone men in town, lending his trained ear to the 'head arrangements' at countless sessions at virtually every local studio. Along with guys like [Bowlegs Miller](#), [Ed Logan](#) and [Jack Hale](#) (not to mention Joe Arnold), he was a fixture in the loosely knit group that came to be known as 'the Memphis Horns', before Wayne Jackson and Andrew Love began using the name exclusively in the mid-seventies. When Willie Mitchell assumed control of Hi Records in 1969, he put James to work creating the signature Royal Studio sound that would change everything. According to [Paul Brown](#); *"Up until Hi Records was sold to Cream in 1979, James Mitchell arranged horns and strings on over ninety percent of all the albums and singles his brother Willie produced, including Al Green's classic [Let's Stay Together](#), Ann Peebles' Grammy nominated [I Can't Stand The Rain](#), and Otis Clay's powerful [Trying To Live My Life Without You...](#) during his career, James Mitchell, like his arrangements, has appeared on well over 300 Gold Records."*

That, my friends, is quite frankly amazing.

By the time this Bluff City single was released the 'Hi Sound' that James and Willie had developed was in full swing, and Al Green was comfortably ensconced near the top of the R&B charts. No wonder Ed Crawley wanted James to come and work for him! I'm not sure if it was a sibling rivalry thing, with Ed convincing Pete and James that he could offer them some of the glory that brother Willie was keeping for himself, but this 45 certainly holds its own with Reverend Al's (or [O.V. Wright's](#)) Mitchell-arranged records from that same period.



BLUFF CITY 220 B

Try Love

Here (thanks once again to our man [Sir Shambling](#)) is the excellent B side of this penultimate Bluff City release. Certainly Joe Perkins' finest hour, this beautiful Bradley brothers composition, framed

by James' stirring arrangement, is as good as it gets. Do you think it was cut at Royal or Universal? Hmm... So why wasn't it a hit? You would think that, with Crawley (and Friend) finally securing national distribution, it would be pretty much of a sure thing. Well, as we've [discussed in the past](#), when Buddah suddenly hit big with Gladys Knight and the Pips in late 1973, a lot of their smaller acts kind of had to take a back seat. Once again, it seems, our man Crawley was in the right place at the wrong time.

We'll talk more about all of this soon.

To Be Continued...

POSTED BY RED KELLY AT 8:04 AM

[<< souldetective.com](http://souldetective.com)

20 COMMENTS:

 Red Kelly said...

Hey folks, it's me, Red.

I'm heading out on vacation for the next few weeks, on my annual quest to try and find someplace that's actually warm in February. Opening Case Seven here on Soul D has been on my list for a while, but the passing of Poppa Willie kind of took precedence...

I'm dropping this mystery tune on ya here before I head out the door... any clue as to who it might be?

Thank you one and all for your continued support. I'll talk to ya when I get back.

Geaux Saints!

6:18 AM

6:35 AM

 **Sir Algernon Truth** said...

sooo familiar,
(the Memphians - Breakdown)
Took a while for me to find as it was part of a gold sampler.
Afraid I don't have much info aside from some affiliations the group
had with Joe Perkins...
love your blog though!

Sir Truth

1:09 PM

 **Cies** said...

Red,

According to the R&B Indies there are two more releases on Bluff
City. R&B Indies has a New York address for Bluff City.

4:51 AM

 **Red Kelly** said...

OK guys, just a little technical note about some minor procedural
changes...

From now on, whenever I update a case, that update will appear on
the main page: souldetective.com, as well as being added to the
original post...

Also, I'm going to change the date of the current original post as I add
to it, rather than try to do an internal link to the update as I was
doing, and leaving the posted date the same. The way Blogger is set
up, I think that makes more sense.

◀ To access the entire case from souldetective.com, you can click on
it's individual 'banner'.

Hopefully, this will make ol' Soul Detective better and easier to figure
out.

Thanks! -red

7:42 AM

 **Christian Patterson** said...

Here's the sign out in front of the strip mall:

<http://christianpatterson.com/public/metro.jpg>

9:10 AM

 **Unknown** said...

The New York address was the offices of the Viewlex Corporation which owned Buddah at the time.

There's another later Memphians release on Pawn, the Hi subsidiary.

3801 THE MEMPHIANS (1974)

Slidin' In And Out

(Archie Bradley, Julius Bradley)

Who Will The Next Fool Be

(the Bobby Bland song ??)

Prod : Pete Mitchell

The Memphians were the backup band on Joe Perkins' Bluff City single and were also on his earlier "Wrapped Up In Your Love" single on Plush.

They weren't involved with Gary US Bonds' Bluff City single which I'd guess was recorded in New York given that it was produced by Alan Lorber

I'd bet that the Memphians are related to Julius Bradley who you wrote about on your Holy Ghost blog (Aug 28,2007)- you might try an e-mail to him.

Davie Gordon

7:21 AM

◀  Hot Soul & Cool Jazz Lightly Brownded, On The Funk Side said...

Thank you for the nice blog

5:18 AM

 Unknown said...

If 'I'm not gonna leave' was released in 1961 it surely has to be one of the most influential 45s of all time!

It, to me, sounds at least six years later.

Who does it better than you Red, most interesting.

4:25 PM

 minee said...

Just to add to the mystery. The Berry 102 release was reissued on a label called "Brume" (see:

<http://www.discogs.com/release/2421939>). I am not familiar with this label, but perhaps anyone is. At least it didn't cost me \$49, but only €2 :)

BTW, according to the BMI database J. Horton is James Arthur Horton.

Thx for the excellent blog, Red!

9:49 AM

 Keeping Soul Alive said...

Hi Red

Haven't been out and about for sometime! Great read.

Just to let you know that the Japanese released the Taurus tracks - I think originally on vinyl back in 80's but definitely both sides on a CD called A Man In Love Classic Soul Jewelry 2 with I'm Gonna Love, Until You Were Gone, Wrapped Up In Your Love and Looking For A Woman plus tracks from George Perkins, Eddie Giles, Tommy Ridgley, Johnny Adams and Clarence Carter - funnily enough they had a partial discography on Joe but don't list the Taurus side!

Take care

Colin

1:56 AM

 Anonymous said...

HI RED

IS THIS THE SAME JOE PERKINS WHO SANG DOO WOP THEN WAS CALLED RNB

I HEARD HIM SING A GREAT BALLAD CALLED A NEW FEELIN WITH GROUP THE ROOKIES 1957 ON KING RECORDS.

◀ ON WWW.DOOWOPCAFE.COM

IF ANYONE LOVES DOOWOP/RNB GROUP HARMONY STREET CORNER SINGER CHECK IT OUT


TOM TJDOOWOP@AOL.COM

8:11 AM

 Anonymous said...

Hi RED, just found this blogging while looking up an ER MUSIC ENT. 45 by George Jackson. still not found. I am always in the hood here in and around Memphis. Lovin' this stuff. Wes Taylor 8436098313

8:54 PM

 ana-b said...

Hey Red...concerning your query about HELPP: the original pressing of Linda Perry's "I Need Someone" is on that label. There's a Chattanooga address listed on that record....

1077 Duncan Ave.
Chattanooga, Tenn. 37408

3:18 PM

 Austin said...

Hey all, not that it adds much to the story of The Memphians...but "the mysterious 'M. Smith'" listed as one of the writers on the excellent "I Know What You Are Up To" could very well be Mira Smith of Ram (Royal Audio Music) records. She was in Nashville around this time writing with Maggie Lewis for Shelby Singleton. The songwriting team that brought us the classic "Reconsider Me"

It's certainly a possibility.

9:24 AM

 dj ny said...

I'm Not Gonna Leave is a great, and hard to find 45, if you see it buy it!

11:05 AM

 jdogg said...

Sorry to inform you that TB Records is just an odd coincidence and that is all. TB stood for "Taylor Boyz" the name of a Memphis rap group that was comprised of some cousins of the Memphis rapper Al Kapone. They acquired their own studio in the late 1990's or perhaps in the early 2000's, and I was in there during a couple of sessions. That isn't to say that there couldn't have been a recording studio there back in the 1970's. The shopping center was the Freedom Center, which opened in 1971, and was the first Black-owned shopping center in Memphis. It never lived up to potential even in the early years, and its fate was sealed when the housing projects across the street were demolished in the early 2000's.

10:29 PM

 jdogg said...

Lyn-Lou was further east on Chelsea than Universal, and is still standing, today known as the Williamson Building. By contrast, Universal was built by Jerry Butler, Billy Butler and Seymour Rosenberg, and was the headquarters of the Memphis label. That ill-fated venture didn't last a year, but Isaac Hayes bought it, renaming it Hot Buttered Soul. It was later renamed Mark VI, and was the recording location for some of the rare soul and funk singles on the Active label. By the early 1990's, junkies had eviscerated the building looking for copper and other saleable metals, and the building was ultimately demolished. The site is now an overgrown vacant lot.

10:38 PM

 Red Kelly said...

Thank You for your insights there, jdogg. Much appreciated!

-red

4:17 AM

 James V. Roy said...

Lyn-Lou was in two locations on Chelsea. The original that Bill opened was around the corner from where American Sound would open. Sometime after Bill died Larry relocated to 1518 Chelsea, the place that jdogg mentioned.

11:32 AM

 TheCzarsOf45 said...

Re: Linda Scott/I Need Somebody. That address in Chattanooga is near a friend who has a custom wheelchair and seating business. Funny thing, I find soul where I find mobility. Very weird coincidence for a gimpy Soul fanatic.

8:58 PM

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