



August 22, 2010

Open Forum
San Francisco Chronicle
901 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA. 94103

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Dear Editor:

~~I~~ Dear Mr. Jimmy Webb, the alleged writer of the song, By The Time I Get To Phoenix, is a fraud for having taken credit for a song that I composed and that he acquired through some nefarious means that I am, as yet, unaware of. Indeed when Mr. Webb received my song (from, whom-ever), the least he could have done was to declare that because he had no idea who had composed it, it should be documented as such, that the composer is anonymous.

In mid-July, I warned Mr. Webb in a letter that if he did not come forward soon with a confession and an apology, I would, perhaps, begin writing to newspapers, exposing him.

Since Mr. Webb has not responded, I have chosen to begin the writing process; to write, first, to those news dailys, lying on the route I had taken from where I had once lived in the East Bay with my mother, to my never-achieved destination, Phoenix. My first letter, therefore, has already been sent to The Oakland Tribune.

In June of 1962, at a stopping-off point in San Francisco, in a location I had always wanted to visit, including ~~the~~ (and especially) the famous Buena Vista (an



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Irish coffee house), near Fisherman's Wharf, I met an early-middle-aged, professorial-looking, poker-faced gentleman, who, when pressed, claimed to be a songwriter.

Upon hearing the word songwriter, I blurted out: "Do I have a song for you!... Want to hear it?" Whereupon, I began singing a lament, a kind ballad, about an ongoing experience I was having at that very moment, about starting a new life in the "Sunbelt".

After listening to my song, I told him that I'll bet he thinks it's a girl friend-or wife-I'm leaving. Anyone would, I added. Although he did not answer and remained poker-faced, I told him that ^{in fact,} it's my mother.

While I was singing and, yes, at the same time, composing, the gentleman had a propensity to interrupt me. ~~to~~ Twice he intervened, saying: "Kid, you swallow your words... you know! you swallow your words."

Was his interrupting me actually a ploy to get me to project more effectively (especially, in the noisy milieu we were in), so that he wouldn't miss any notes, words, or phrasing? Perhaps, he was wearing a recording device under his nice, Ivy-league jacket. He may have worried that ^{the device} ~~it~~ would not pick up my voice, unless my voice were projecting brightly and clearly. Who knows? Nevertheless, everything-notes,



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Words, phrasing—all, were intact, when I first heard the Glen Campbell recording on a jukebox in a Shakey's Pizza Parlar, moments after I had registered for my last and final semester, where I received my BFA, at the California College of Arts and Crafts, ~~now, The California College of The Arts~~, 1968.

As I prepared to leave, I asked the gentleman if he might know where the Greyhound Bus Depot is. No answer. I rose and walked past his right shoulder and managed to say "goodby"; and I thanked him for letting me sit at his table. Although he glanced at me and may have shown a degree of surprise, he said nothing, and I left.

It was growing dark when I stepped outside and onto the street. Walking past a cable-car-turn-around station, a landmark I had used in order to locate the famous Buena Vista, I pondered why the Irish coffee house I ended up in was called The Parlar. Almost 50 years later, I discovered the answer to that question. Indeed, there are two cable-car-turn-around stations, only about ~~seven~~ seven blocks apart, ~~maybe eight~~.

Having no idea where the bus depot was, and although I wanted to walk to it, I was left with no choice but to hail a cab. The driver, I ~~reasoned~~ reasoned, would know the way and could, alas! take me there, quickly.



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Ending up in L.A. around 3 AM, I had to turn back, realizing that I ~~wouldn't~~ wouldn't have enough money to make it to Phoenix. I am sincerely,

Roger Smith
The Idaho Kid

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The Idaho Kid

- cc. Mr. Jimmy Webb
- cc. Mr. Glen Campbell
- cc. Mr. Carl Watanaby
- cc. Mrs. Linda Ronstadt
- cc. www.rogersmithartandopera.com
- cc. The Oakland Tribune