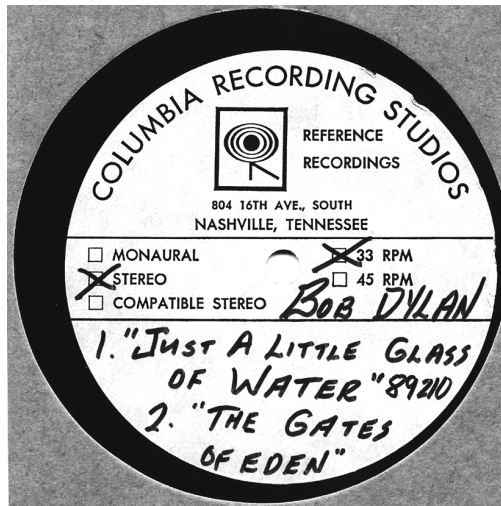


THE CUTTING EDGE:

NEW YORK ALBUM SESSIONS, JAN 1966

by Roger Ford



Courtesy of Bill Pagel Archives

Having delivered Columbia a single in the form of the re-made *'Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window?'* Dylan's first job in the New Year was to start work on his next album. He already had a good take of *'Visions Of Johanna'* left over from the November singles session, and at this stage was possibly still thinking of putting it on the new album; he didn't attempt to re-record the song until he got to Nashville and saw what the musicians there could do. In the meantime, having completed a West Coast tour with The Hawks in December, Dylan appears to have been ready to trust them in the studio again. Following the West Coast dates drummer Bobby Gregg had left the band in order to return to studio work; Robbie Robertson persuaded Sandy Konikoff, then working for The Hawks' old bandleader Ronnie Hawkins, to come and take his place.¹

A session booked for January 20 1966 was cancelled, but by the time Dylan arrived at the studio the next day he had another big new song apparently already written and ready to record.

It's worth noting here that the recording sheets for these final New York sessions are particularly unreliable. Whatever Bob Johnston's merits as a producer, accurate record-keeping was clearly not his strong suit. His spoken 'slates' for the recordings (song title and take number) were often either missing or inconsistent; this meant that the engineer given the job of filling out the recording sheets had very little to go on when they listened through the tape. Furthermore, Johnston sometimes kept the tapes rolling when the musicians were just rehearsing, so in the absence of spoken slates it was very difficult for the engineer to figure out exactly what constituted a take that should be numbered. As a result, the recording sheets are not a reliable guide to what is on the tapes – and at times they are quite misleading.² Nonetheless, in combination with the recordings themselves they can still yield valuable information.

January 21, 1966

Sheet No. _____		Tape Identification Data				Job No. <u>B 98878</u>	
Date <u>1/21/66</u>		DEPT. OR CLIENT <u>ColCap</u>		Reel No. <u>1C</u>	Studio <u>A</u>		
Start No.	Start Time	SELECTION TITLE SPOT DATA	Take No.	F. S.	Master No.	OK	REMARKS
1		<u>JUST A LITTLE GLASS OF WATER</u>	1	b	<u>Co 89210</u>		
2			3	b			
3			5	b			
4			7	b			
5			9	b			
6			11	b			
7			13	b			
8							
9		<u>Cont on 2C</u>					
10							

Start No.	Start Time	SELECTION TITLE SPOT DATA	Take No.	F. S.	Master No.	OK	REMARKS
1		<u>JUST A LITTLE GLASS OF WATER</u>	15	✓	<u>Co 89210</u>		<u>✓ - NOT SHOT</u>
2			✓				
3			✓				
4		<u>END</u>					
5							
6							

This session was apparently drummer Sandy Konikoff's first formal engagement with Dylan, though there may have been rehearsals prior to the session. Curiously, the box set book credits Mike Bloomfield with playing guitar at the session, as well as Robbie Robertson. Somehow this seems unlikely; whatever Dylan's reservations with the Hawks as a recording outfit, they don't appear to have been in the lead guitar department, Dylan famously describing Robbie Robertson as a "mathematical guitar genius". And to my ears, the only guitars on this day's recordings are played either by Robertson or Dylan.³

SHE'S YOUR LOVER NOW (CO 89210)

This was the only song attempted in a triple-length session, from 2:30pm 'till 2:30am: allowing for breaks, that's nine hours of recording. According to Sean Wilentz, on the session tape Albert Grossman announces, just before they start recording, that there is a supply of "raw meat coming up for everybody in the band";⁴ what did he know?

Take 1, Breakdown (Disc 10 Track 13, also on 6-CD set): "What do you want to call this for now?" asks Bob Johnston before this first take. "We'll call it... uh... *'Just a Little Glass Of Water'*" responds Dylan after some thought, with a laugh to himself. Dylan is playing electric rhythm guitar, and the tune is in 6/8 time, giving it the same lilting swing as *'Sad-Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands'* was to receive later down in Nashville. It's a promising start: everyone seems to know what they're doing, and it only breaks down well into the third verse when Dylan forgets the words.

Take 2, Rehearsal (Disc 10 Track 14): Dylan decides to switch to 4/4 time, and it goes OK until Rick Danko misses the chord change on the fourth line; Dylan calls it off.

Take 3, Breakdown (Disc 10 Track 15): Another attempt in the same style, this one goes a little further. But when they get to the section beginning "Now you stand here..." it seems that some of the musicians don't know what they're supposed to be doing. "Listen," says Dylan, "First of all, when we get to that part, everybody break and just me and Garth will do that."

Take 4, Incomplete (Disc 10 Track 16): Dylan's vocal is totally committed, full of hurt and scorn; but the beat is plodding and the "just voice and Garth" sections don't really work, making the rhythm section seem even more heavy handed when it comes back in. On the up side, they get as far as the fourth verse before Dylan forgets the words, three lines in. There are some unfamiliar lyrics, too: "With her picture books of the pyramid / And her snapshots of Billy The Kid / They're all nice but I refuse to stand here and bow / Explain it to her /She's your lover now".

Take 5, Rehearsal (Disc 10 Track 17): This time the vocal is much softer, almost contemplative. At the beginning of the second verse, the way Dylan sings "that we're in the felony room" reminds me of nothing so much as *'Three Angels'* on *'New Morning'*. Just after that he forgets the words and calls "OK, stop". It's not clear why this is labelled a 'rehearsal' on *'The Cutting Edge'*, as Columbia recording sheets make no distinction between recorded rehearsals and takes with more serious intent. Maybe in this case it was implied by some prior dialogue that has been edited out.

Take 6, 'Complete' (Disc 10 Track 18, also on 6-CD and 2-CD sets): Although this is listed as a complete take, in fact it breaks down again in the fourth verse. This time it seems to be because Dylan, on rhythm guitar, stays on the seventh chord for a bar too long; the others try to adjust, but half a line later Dylan realises the game's up. The arrangement is making progress, though. The rhythm section plays a little more fluidly, and on the "Now you stand here..." "lines the reduction in the level of backing is less stark, the organ now kept company by bass guitar and a cymbal. The third verse gives us "And you, just what do you do anyway / What are you, some kind of moose, isn't there nothing you can say?"

Take 7, False Start (Disc 10 Track 19): Dylan switches to piano, and showing his noted fondness for the black keys on that instrument he transposes the tune up a semitone to E \flat ; he also switches the time signature back to 6/8, as it was at the start of the session. Some dialogue arising from Bob Johnston's complaint about use of the foot pedal reveals that Dylan is playing the studio's upright piano; Richard Manuel must be playing the grand.⁵ The take only lasts for the first three lines anyway, seemingly just a try-out for the new arrangement. "OK, that's right", says Dylan.

Take 8, Rehearsal (Disc 10 Track 20): The two pianos are clearly in evidence, Dylan with his foot firmly on the sustain pedal despite Johnston's concerns. The pace is positively languid, and the other musicians are perhaps unsure about the energy level required. Part way through the first verse, Dylan breaks off with "I can't hear anybody, man, I can't hear anybody... nobody's playing... I just can't hear anything – is anybody playing?" General clearing of throats and shuffling of feet. "Play, Robbie, let me hear you play," commands Dylan, and Robertson obliges with a delicately-picked chord progression not entirely unlike Bloomfield's work on *'Like a Rolling Stone'*; less clean, but more subtle.

Take 9, Rehearsal (Disc 10 Track 21): Off they go again with the same 6/8 arrangement, organ and guitar a little more in evidence this time. But half way through the first verse they break off, Dylan saying – apparently to himself – "It's not right". The tape breaks and comes back in with a half-minute section of rehearsal, Dylan still playing the piano but trying out a 4/4 rhythm.

Takes 10-11, Rehearsal (Disc 10 Track 22): The ghastly heart of the session, encapsulating in 11½ minutes the awful frustration of trying to get this complex song recorded. No doubt the recording is somewhat edited, if only to remove some of Dylan's expletives,⁶ and what we're left with is a collage of unsuccessful attempts to find the right feel for the song, most lasting no more than a few lines. Some are faded in part way through, probably because the tape was suddenly restarted. They try it in 4/4, they try it in 2/2, then back to 4/4 again, and nothing works except for a brief burst that sounds surprisingly like the well-known version (Take 15) from *'The Bootleg Series Vols. 1-3'*; but that is quickly left behind. Dylan's increasingly haphazard piano-playing betrays his frustration with the process, and he is irritated that the band don't seem to be able to help him through it. "It's not together, man... Just play it together, make it all together... you don't have to play anything fancy or nothing, just together." He pointedly asks one of the musicians if they need earphones, and someone protests, "It's not our fault it's not together, man, it's different every time, y'know?" For Sandy Konikoff, this cannot have been a good introduction to working with Dylan. After quite a while Dylan decides to move the key down a tone to C# and reverts to the 6/8 rhythm they started out with. Both he and Richard Manuel have some trouble figuring out the less frequently-used chords in this new key, but they stick with it for most of the remaining takes.

Take 12, Rehearsal (Disc 10 Track 23): After what seems like a brief extension of the Take 11 rehearsal, Dylan suddenly says “Ready?” and they swing into a 6/8 rendition that actually gets most of the way through two verses before suddenly faltering. Konikoff’s drumming is getting more confident, with one or two of the machine-gun fills that added so much to the “*Bootleg Series Vols. 1-3*” version.

Take 13, Rehearsal (Disc 10 Track 24): Very clearly a rehearsal rather than a take proper, this fades in with half a minute of instrumental playing before Dylan starts slipping in the words. The singing is sketchy, but the song seems to have a new sense of purpose, the 6/8 time signature abandoned for a more urgent 4/4 rhythm. Konikoff continues to inject more energy into the song through his drumming.

Take 14, Breakdown (Disc 11 Track 1): As it fades in Dylan is practising fitting his “Talk to her...” line to the rhythm he’s playing on the piano. Then Johnston slates the take, but it’s a mess: Dylan and Konikoff forge ahead, but Danko and Manuel in particular seem to be struggling to keep in step with the rhythm. A few lines into the second verse Dylan either forgets the words or loses the will to sing them.

Take 15, Breakdown (Disc 11 Track 2, also on 6-CD set): Suddenly we have the near-miracle of an almost perfect take, the one that long ago crowned the unofficial ‘Band session’ tape and was eventually released on “*Bootleg Series Vols. 1-3*”. Here it has the longer piano introduction heard on the bootlegged mono mix. It doesn’t get off to a clean start, but we all know just how good it is after that: Dylan’s vocal is one of the greatest of this phase of his career, and the band suddenly pulls together and delivers a towering performance behind him ... until seven lines from the end. As Dylan sings “Now your mouth cries wolf...”, Rick Danko starts his descending bass line but stops after the first two notes; Manuel stops playing simultaneously, and suddenly it seems as if all the blood has drained out of the performance. Dylan stops singing with a “What?” and everyone else stops playing. Unlike the previous mono and stereo mixes, this new mix fades out quickly at this point.

Rehearsal (Disc 11 Track 3): Curiously, this track rewinds a couple of seconds, picking up just as Take 15 is falling apart, and then carries on from there. So now we get the two seemingly random bass notes that Danko plays after everyone else has stopped; then someone says “The bass fucked up too”; strange, given that the bass seemed to be the prime offender.⁷ Danko proceeds to tune up, with Manuel providing some reference notes, and the tape cuts. From here on it’s another dose of the misery experienced in Takes 10-11: five more brief and unsatisfactory try-outs. Dylan switches back to rhythm guitar, and puts the key back to D as in the first few takes of the day; but after a few lines of the first attempt he stops, with “Ah, it’s ugly! I can’t, I can’t even...” (angry guitar chord) “It’s not that way at all, man”. He tries quietening it down, but his guitar’s out of tune. On the next try he fumbles the words, Manuel changes chord too soon, and Dylan vents his exasperation. The next attempt gets a little further but still crashes, Dylan muttering “I can’t do this...”. Albert Grossman makes a rare intervention from the control room, suggesting they take a break. Possibly they did, as the tape cuts here; as the tape rolls again we’re half a dozen lines into yet another attempt. Dylan sees it to the end of the verse, but for some reason Danko has stopped playing again. “I can’t hear the song anymore,” says Dylan.

Take 16, Complete (Disc 11 Track 4, also on 6-CD set): Defeated in his attempts to get a usable recording, Dylan resolves to at least capture the whole song on tape himself – a sort of retrospective demo recording. Perhaps having let the band go home, he sits down at the piano once again and gets Johnston to roll the tape. “Last take, anytime...” says the producer. “OK... it’s not gonna be exactly, really right” Dylan announces, admitting that perfection has eluded him on this song; he sounds exhausted. He spends a minute or so playing the piano and occasionally humming to himself, finding his way into the rhythm and feel that he wants. Musically it’s a close relation of Take 12, in the key of C# and in 6/8 time, but it’s sung as a sort of rumination, nothing like the wired-up finger-pointing of the more familiar Take 15. Thankfully the mix here is far better than the bootlegged stereo version from the ‘Goldmine’ acetates⁸, where the piano was so quiet it was practically lost in the surface noise; but it’s still not an easy listen, and the lines of the last verse seem to describe this take particularly well: “My voice is really warm / It’s just that it ain’t got any form / It’s like a dead man’s last pistol shot, baby”. The pace is (perhaps appropriately) funereal, Dylan’s piano playing is ramshackle, and he stumbles over the words here and there. Even after the lengthy preamble, the song itself lasts nearly 7½ minutes. After singing the last line Dylan just stops playing abruptly, still hanging on the dominant seventh chord; then he throws in a few random notes, much as Danko had done on the bass after the wreck of Take 15, and after a “Huh” to himself he asks Johnston “Did you get that down?”

And so one of Dylan’s greatest compositions – and nearly one of his greatest recordings – was left in ruins, with just that ghost of a final take preserving the words in their entirety.⁹ I can’t help but wonder whether, had there been just a couple of experienced session musicians present, they could have steered it towards a successful outcome, and we might have had this song on “*Blonde On Blonde*”. Surprisingly, Dylan did not attempt to re-record the song with the more flexible and inventive Nashville musicians that he used for most of “*Blonde On Blonde*”. Perhaps by then the feeling of the song had passed, the general tone of “*Blonde On Blonde*” being more one of bemused acceptance than of hurt and anger.

Page 24 Goldmine/June, 1980

WOODSTOCK RECORD AUCTION

Auction and set sale. Please order by number and title. Postage and handling is \$1.50 per order in U.S. Insurance is extra. Money orders or certified checks are preferred. Personal checks must clear before merchandise is shipped. Payment should be made to: The Book Shop, 65 Tinker St., Woodstock, NY 12498; (914) 679-8276.

Auction DYLAN ACETATES Auction

The following Bob Dylan “Columbia Recording Studios Reference Recordings” (so labeled) are guaranteed as advertised. They are on aluminum acetate. Stereo. The grading is conservative. Some of the cuts have never been released by Dylan, others have been released in various forms with other titles. The fact that these recordings are one-sided, 12-inch “Columbia Reference Recordings” makes them unique. We believe all material falls within 1962-64. Concert cuts are indicated with a (C). Special note: Bids on the Dylan material as a whole will be accepted.

No.	Titles (Cuts) & Comments	Grade	Min. Bid		No.	Titles (Cuts) & Comments	Grade	Min. Bid
1	RED WING REFORM SCHOOL (C) IF I HAD TO DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN (C) WHO KILLED DAVEY MOORE (C)	VG	\$125.00	5	PHANTOM ENGINEER OVER THE CLIFF FREEZE OUT	No. 86445 No. 86444 No. 88581	VG	\$125.00
2	YOU GOTTA GO (C) THE GAL I LOVE RED WING 7 CURSES (C)	VG	\$125.00	6	NEVER HAVE MET (C) MR. TAMBOURINE MAN (C) HARD RAINS GONNA FALL (C) All three from Lincoln Center concert, 10/31/64. Numerous skips. May be dirt.		6+	\$125.00
3	MILK COW BLUES - Take 3 MILK COW BLUES - Take 4 WICHITA BLUES - Take 1 WICHITA BLUES - Take 2	VG	\$125.00	7	JUST A LITTLE GLASS OF WATER No. 89210 Dylan - piano and vocal. Hear foot beating on pedal throughout. THE GATES OF EDEN (C)		VG	\$125.00
4	WHO KILLED DAVEY MOORE (C) LAY DOWN YOUR WEARY TUNE (C) TURN, TURN, TURN (C)	VG	\$125.00	8	LONESOME WHISTLE BLUES DADDY, YOU'RE ON MY MIND (C) With Joan Baez. Talking, laughing, goofing, audience breaks up.		VG	\$125.00

January 25, 1966

Tape Identification Data							
Sheet No.							Job No. B 98891
Date 1/29/66							Reel No. 1 C
Program Bob Dylan	DEPT. OR CLIENT ColCap						Studio A
rt	Start Time	SELECTION TITLE SPOT DATA	Take No.	F.S.	Master No.	OK	REMARKS
1		Brand New Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat	1	2	CO 89215		
2			1	2	89216		1 NOT SATED
3			3	4			3:4 " "
4			5	6			5:4 " "
5			7	8			7:2 " "
		SONG UNKNOWN	9	3			9 " "
		5:45	11	6			11 " "
		5:10	17	13			17 MARKED WITH SOLING
		Contin 2C	17				TAP
1	5:10	SONG UNKNOWN	19	21	89216		
2			22	23			
3	4:55		24				24 F.S.
		END					

After a long weekend Dylan is back in Studio A, with another nine-hour triple session booked. The only two members of The Hawks present are Robbie Robertson and Rick Danko; the latter's presence perhaps seems a little surprising given his shaky performance at the previous sessions.¹⁰ Bobby Gregg is back on drums, and Paul Griffin and Al Kooper on keyboards.

LEOPARD-SKIN PILL-BOX HAT (CO 89215)

Dylan has a new song to record, rather less ambitious than *'She's Your Lover Now'*: a tongue-in-cheek 12-bar blues about a ridiculous hat.

Take 1, Complete (Disc 11 Track 5): This take was previously released on *"The Bootleg Series Vol. 7: No Direction Home"*. The intro has some classic Albert King-style blues guitar, which I'm 99% sure is played by Robbie Robertson. The box

set book credits Michael Bloomfield as well as Robertson with lead guitar on both takes of this song; but although Bloomfield is the more famous as a blues guitarist, I can only hear one lead guitar, and to me it sounds far more like Robertson than Bloomfield.¹¹ Whatever, the musicians generate a massive slow groove, and Dylan is enjoying it so much that after he's sung all the song's usual verses, he improvises a couple more based on stock blues phrases. This take has both organ and piano; the book credits Griffin with organ, which I think is probably right, in which case the piano (not mentioned in the notes) must be Kooper. Dylan plays rhythm guitar in very much the same style as he does on the *"Blonde On Blonde"* recording of this song. Surprisingly, this new mix for *"The Cutting Edge"* omits the final, satisfying drum crash heard on *"No Direction Home"*.

Take 2, 'Complete' (Disc 11 Track 6): Although it is listed as complete, this second take misses the first two lines (plus whatever intro there may have been). The key is down a tone from A to G, but it feels lighter than the previous take; there is no piano this time, and the sound is more organ-driven. In place of the usual third verse ("If you wanna see the sunrise...") we have a new one: "Well, you don't feel no trouble / No, you don't feel no pain / Well, you don't feel no trouble / You ain't scared when it starts to rain / Well, you look pretty good riding a camel, honey / But how you ever gonna hop a train / In your brand new leopard-skin pill-box hat?". Robertson takes a solo that is a close relative of the one he delivers on the *"Blonde On Blonde"* recording. After a final guitar and organ jam the ending is clearly unrehearsed, Danko catching up with the others rather belatedly.

ONE OF US MUST KNOW (SOONER OR LATER) (CO 89216)

Was this a break-up song to take the place of the abandoned *'She's Your Lover Now'*? Possibly: it is certainly a break-up song (though involving only two parties rather than the more interesting triangle of the former song); and musically it eventually gains some of the same grandeur, and employs a similar descending chord sequence. However, *'The Cutting Edge'* reveals some fundamental differences between the songs. *'She's Your Lover Now'* was a very carefully constructed song, with a lyrical architecture that perfectly fit its complex musical structure; and it was apparently brought to the previous week's session fully-formed. *'One Of Us Must Know'*, in contrast, starts out as little more than the germ of an idea, and even when complete it doesn't have much in the way of comprehensible focus, relying on pure feeling to deliver its not inconsiderable impact.

Take 1, Rehearsal (Disc 11 Track 7): The tape starts rolling well before the musicians are ready. "Paul, are you gonna play?" Dylan asks Griffin at the start; "I'm not gonna play the piano, really... I don't think." Someone can be heard warming up on the grand piano. But then Dylan, having had a change of mind, starts playing on a second piano; and once again he's on the black notes, in the key of A^b.¹² When he starts singing, the music seems to bear as much resemblance to *'Sad-Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands'* as it does to *'One Of Us Must Know'*; it's in triple time (curiously common for early versions in this period), and Dylan rehearses to himself: "Now you're glad it's through / ... mad with you... But I'm sorry / I was bad to you". But he's evidently struggling to remember what he'd previously worked on with Kooper. "That's not right, Al," he says, "I don't get it... What's the tempo?" It seems it might be Kooper rather than Griffin playing the grand piano in these early takes, as he apparently uses it to remind Dylan how it went. Steered into the right groove, Dylan then surprisingly comes out with a recognisable version of the song's first verse: "I didn't mean / To hurt you so bad / I didn't mean for it / To be that small / I didn't mean / To make you so sad / You just happened to be there / At the wrong time, that's all". It's taken slower than the final version, and sounds more genuinely regretful; but the take breaks down on the next line.

Take 2, Rehearsal (Disc 11 Track 8, also on 6-CD set): The next take – just the first verse and chorus – is even slower, and with the grand piano tinkling over the slow, swaying 4/4 beat it sounds in places uncannily like the *"Live at Budokan"* version of *'Blowin' In The Wind'*. Lyrically, the first verse is not very far off the final song, but the chorus is essentially what Dylan was trying in Take 1: "Now you're glad it's through / And I'm feeling so mad / ... [unintelligible]... / But I didn't mean to hurt you so bad". He's improvising here, and neither the words nor the tune are anything like the final chorus. "Aaah," he says at the end in mock despondency, "Hey, I'm ready to go home."

Take 3, Fragment (Disc 11 Track 9): Dylan has moved to rhythm guitar now, and with the key changed to F and the tempo very slow he rehearses the chords for the "When I saw you say goodbye to your friend and smile" line, accompanied just by

organ and bass; predominantly minor, it sounds something like a Procol Harum out-take, but this intriguing little fragment lasts less than half a minute.

Take 4, Rehearsal (Disc 11 Track 10, also on 6-CD set): This take fades in on a developing second verse: "... showing [*sic*] / Her scarf had kept her mouth so hid / I couldn't see if I'd be going / But you said you knew me and I believed you did". Lyrically, the rest of the verse plays out more or less as on the final version, but the chorus still has some way to go. The chords and instrumentation are all worked out (and it's now unmistakably Kooper on organ, Griffin on piano); but while the vocal melody is coming on, Dylan is still feeling his way with the words. What he sings sounds something like "Ah, she low lah lie hard sleeping on the ground / Oh shed long doing what they had to do / But they low lah lay hard breaking around / I didn't really mean to hurt you like I do". But as in some of the "**Basement Tapes**" songs (most notably '*I'm Not There*'), some of the words seem to be little more than improvised sounds that fill the space and maybe fit the feeling Dylan is striving to get across. They stop after this single verse and chorus, Dylan perhaps not yet ready with the third. This take, and the next, are in 6/8 rhythm.

Take 5, Rehearsal (Disc 11 Track 11): Now we get a similarly approximate version of the third verse, and then a chorus that is beginning to be recognisable, though still with some words only half-formed: "And it's a-sooner or later one of us will know / Lay down your ??? like they had to do / And lonely old ??? back on you / But I really didn't mean to be so bad to you".

Takes 6-8, Rehearsal (Disc 11 Track 12): Take 6 fades in again, this time on a chorus played in straight 4/4 time. "Is that the way it was?" asks Dylan as it ends. "All right, then, there's one important thing about the song," he begins to say, but we never learn what that thing is as the tape cuts. Take 7 (I'm assuming – there are no slates) fades in as they're just finishing an instrumental section, possibly the end of the chorus. "Did you get it?" asks Dylan. In what is presumably Take 8, Dylan launches into the second half of the second verse ("When you came up and whispered in my ear..."), and the others quickly join in; this leads into a chorus that's getting ever closer to its final state: "Now sooner or later, one of us will know / That you just did what you had to do / And sooner or later one of us will show / That I really wasn't that bad to you".

Take 9, Rehearsal (Disc 11 Track 13): "You play it now, Al ... you know it," Dylan says to Kooper. They appear to be focussing on the song's instrumental introduction. "Can you do that?" Dylan asks Robertson, who responds with a guitar phrase. "No, no, no" says Dylan. "You don't want that?" asks the guitarist; "Yeah, I do want it," says Dylan, "but not so *specific*". They then practice how Dylan's opening vocal phrase "I didn't mean..." fits into the musical structure, and proceed with a hack through the first verse and chorus. "I don't think that's the right way... do you think so?" says Dylan as they finish. "I think we ought to do it *quieter* – it's kind of loud... and maybe we ought to raise it".

Takes 10-14, Rehearsal (Disc 11 Track 14): So raise it they do, up to the key of A, and Dylan briefly practises one of the descending chord sequences with the organ and piano. Next they start a vocal take in 6/8; but Dylan needs to figure out his starting point in this new higher key, and when he gets there, it turns out to be too high anyway. "Put it in G," he says. "Nobody sings any songs in A... Know anybody that sings in A?" So they settle on G. "Why don't you record this?" Dylan calls out. "I'm getting it all," replies Johnston, "Rolling on 3." (Don't ask me which takes Johnston thought were 1 and 2). They start, but Dylan doesn't like the bass pattern Danko is playing over the intro, so there are one or two stops and starts while that gets adjusted. Finally Dylan starts to sing, but he's still straining to reach the high notes. "No, that's no good, I'm sorry... lower than G... and we were doing it in F before, right?" "F sharp", someone says, presumably as a suggestion for the next key to try.

Take 15, Complete (Disc 11 Track 15): But in fact F is the key they settle on,¹³ still in the slow, swaying 6/8 rhythm. The first verse still has some unfamiliar words: "I didn't mean to treat you so bad / You were just going for a fall", and the chorus likewise: "Now sooner or later, one of us must know / That you just did what you had to do / Sooner or later, one of us must know / That I really didn't be so cruel to you". After that first verse, Dylan falters: "I'm losing the whole song," he says – but they keep going anyway, and surprisingly get through a complete take. There are some similar rough edges in the words of the third verse in particular, but the chorus is edging towards completion – on the last time through Dylan comes up with "... that I really was so close to you." Dylan's guitar is horribly out of tune on this take.

Takes 16-17, False Starts (Disc 11 Track 16): The slow 6/8 beat is abandoned for a faster 4/4. After a couple of very brief false starts, Johnston suggests that Dylan try playing his harmonica over the intro.

Take 18, Complete (Disc 11 Track 17): "Rolling on 18" announces Johnston, back on track; after a ragged start Dylan comes in with the harmonica intro as requested, and then plays it in between the verses for good measure. This is the first take that sounds like a serious performance attempt, with Dylan putting some proper attitude into his vocals. In the first chorus he's come up with "That you just did what you're supposed to do", and by the second he's moved on from "one of us will know" to the more inescapable "one of us must know". He's not yet familiar enough with the words in the third verse, and the music stumbles here and there, but it sounds as though Dylan knows he's on a winning streak now.

Rehearsal (Disc 11 Track 18): This section of the tape (less than two minutes) seems to be unaccounted for on the recording sheet, and presumably was not slated. There's some discussion of an arrangement detail, largely inaudible, and then Dylan asks how long the previous complete take was. An engineer says it was about five minutes; "Five forty-five," corrects Albert Grossman in his usual deadpan tone. "Oh... I'm going to cut the harmonica out," says Dylan, "until the end." This concern over the length of the song perhaps suggests that Dylan was already thinking in terms of his next single. They start off again, but a couple of lines into the first verse one of the musicians (Griffin?) asks "How come we never play the same chords there?" "I dunno," mutters Dylan. Then Danko offends again... "No, no, I don't *like* that bass run," complains Dylan.

Take 19, Complete (Disc 11 Track 19, also on 6-CD and 2-CD sets): Kooper leads off with an upward swirl on the Hammond. The song is pretty much there now, just the last verse still showing some unfinished lines: "I couldn't hear when it started snowing / Your voice that spoke, that was all I heard". Now that the musical arrangement has settled, Bobby Gregg starts to develop his drum part, throwing in fills to the point of excess. Paul Griffin, meanwhile, has started to play his wonderful right-hand octave lines. It's practically a usable take, as evidenced by its inclusion on the "**Best Of The Cutting Edge**" 2-CD set.

Takes 21-22, Breakdown (Disc 11 Track 20): Take 20 seems to be one that didn't happen, absent from both the recording sheet and *"The Cutting Edge"*. On the recording sheet, Take 21 is shown as a brief false start and Take 22 as a long false start / breakdown. What we hear as Takes 21-22 on *"The Cutting Edge"* appears just to be the latter; there's no sign of a brief false start, though the intro to the breakdown take is uncommonly long. In the first verse and chorus Dylan's singing sounds a little distracted in places; and he seems to have trouble deciding when to come in with the second verse, leaving the band treading water. "Ah, no... it's not right," he announces.

Take 23, Complete (Disc 12 Track 1): Griffin starts it off with a piano riff this time. Dylan, still having trouble timing his vocal entrances, skips the opening "I" in order to get "didn't" on the beat, so we just get the rather offhand-sounding "Didn't mean to treat you so bad". His entrances for the second and third verses are inconsistent, but the band copes well. Gregg has reined in his drum fills considerably.

Take 24, Complete (Disc 12 Track 2): Here is the familiar final take, opened in classic style by a rim-shot from Bobby Gregg. Even now, Dylan makes his entry into the third verse too late, leaving the band killing time; Kooper plays an organ phrase and at the end of it he just sits on a single note, waiting for Dylan to come back in. This was addressed for the then all-important mono mix by means of an edit: the transition between the first and second verses was copied onto another tape and then that copy was inserted in place of the transition between the second and third verses, losing Kooper's organ fill. The edit included Dylan's "I couldn't see", the phrase which fortuitously began both verses. The splice was almost certainly done on the mono mix-down tape, and by the time a stereo mix was prepared for the *"Blonde On Blonde"* LP release the need for the edit had either been forgotten or was perhaps judged less of an issue for an album track than it was for a single. All released stereo mixes have left the track unedited as it is here on *"The Cutting Edge"*. However, most stereo mixes have also faded the track at the end; here it is thankfully presented with the ending at full volume, as it was on the mono mix.

After this come the individual recording channels, or stems, from Take 24.¹⁴ You can currently play around with these on the 'Studio A microsite' at bobydylan.com, adjusting the relative volumes to vary the mix.

Master Take, guitar (BD) and organ (Disc 12 Track 3): The organ is the very heart of this number, with a thicker, richer sound than Kooper had used on *"Highway 61 Revisited"*. The surging glissandos at the start of phrases add a real emotional impact to the song. Dylan's rhythm guitar is slightly out of tune.

Master Take, vocal (Disc 12 Track 4): Well, vocal and harmonica, to be precise. There's also some acoustic leakage of other instruments into Dylan's vocal microphone, mainly rhythm guitar and bass; this does help to give just a bit of harmonic context. It's noticeable how Dylan is developing the smears phrasing that became such a characteristic of *"Blonde On Blonde"*.

Master Take, piano and drums (Disc 12 Track 5): *'Like a Rolling Stone'* was the first track to be included in *"The Cutting Edge"* in the form of individual stems; Paul Griffin's piano is surely the reason that *'One Of Us Must Know'* was chosen as the second. His playing here has been praised often enough that I hardly need add to it, but it is of course marvellous. His climactic octave playing in the choruses has always been audible in the full mix, but in this individual stem you can really hear how his lower-pitched, more rhythmic playing underpins the verses. Gregg's drum part is perfect, just keeping the time during the verses, but really building up for the choruses, his rolls in between the vocal lines particularly effective.

Master Take, guitar and bass (Disc 12 Track 6): The guitar, of course, is Robbie Robertson's. He's very much in a supporting role on this song, with no call for lead solos. He mostly uses the upper strings, playing ringing broken chords to bring out the flavour of the harmonies. I particularly like the figure he plays behind the end of the second and fourth lines of each verse (e.g. "... personal", "... that's all"), where he introduces a suspended fourth note into the C7 chord and then pulls it off (my apologies here to non-guitarists; but just listen). As for the bass, Rick Danko gets a deeper, fatter sound than Dylan has had on his recordings previously; this was also noticeable on the takes of *'Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat'* recorded earlier in this same session.

After they were through recording – possibly around 2.30 in the morning – Dylan, Kooper and a couple of others went on to the WBAI radio studio, where they sat in on Bob Fass's *Radio Unnameable* phone-in show for a couple of hours. This very late night may have been one reason why a long session booked for later on January 26 was cancelled.

January 27, 1966

Tape Identification Data							Job No.	Reel No.	Studio
1/27/66							B 92908	15	A
am. Bob Dylan							DEPT. OR CLIENT		
							Collop		
Start Time	SELECTION TITLE SPOT DATA	Take No.	F. S.	Master No.	OK	REMARKS			
	UN KNOWN	1		CO 89218					
	BEARD NEW LEOPARD SKIN PILL BOX HAT	1		CO 89219					
	UN KNOWN Song. M. S. G. # 1	1	2 b L	89216					
		3	b						
T. MD							✓ = UN STATED TAKES		

Paul Griffin is not documented as having been present at this final New York session; the other musicians are as for January 25.

LUNATIC PRINCESS (CO 89218)

Take 1, Incomplete (Disc 12 Track 7, also on 6-CD and 2-CD sets): This little tune has been a bit of a mystery ever since it appeared unofficially on *"The Genuine Bootleg Series Take 2"* in 1995. The first puzzle was when it was actually recorded. On the bootleg it was stated to have been recorded on June 16 1965, i.e. at the second *'Like a Rolling Stone'* session.¹⁵ However, the lead guitar always

sounded a lot more like Robbie Robertson than Mike Bloomfield, and we now have it unequivocally placed by *“The Cutting Edge”* at the start of the recordings from January 27 1966.

The second question concerned the title, which the bootleggers gave as *‘Lunatic Princess Revisited’*. Dylan had of course already used *‘Lunatic Princess No.3’* as a working title for *‘From a Buick 6’*, but according to the notes in the box set book, *‘Lunatic Princess’* was used again to slate this take on January 27. If true, this is surprising. While the CO number (89218) was apparently heard on the tape by the engineer who wrote out the recording sheet, the slating of the song title was not picked up, and the song was just listed as “Unknown”. On the copy of the recording sheet reproduced in the media-carrying book of the box set (beneath Disc 17), a later hand has added the annotation “Fragment”, which does fit this short, incomplete song, but again the song was not identified as *‘Lunatic Princess’*.¹⁶

As with the other recordings from this session there is only one keyboard – in this case an electric piano, played by Al Kooper. The bootlegged mix was in much wider stereo, and had a lot of reverb on the vocal. On the other hand, the *“Cutting Edge”* mix has much more bass and a more solid drum sound, and it also carries on a few seconds longer, until Bobby Gregg finishes it off with a neat little drum fill. “No, I’m scared, man, I’m scared” says Dylan for no obvious reason.

LEOPARD-SKIN PILL-BOX HAT (CO 89219)

Another attempt is made to record this new song. Although it is not noted as a remake on the recording sheet, it is given a new CO number at this session.

Takes 1-2, False Start/Incomplete (Disc 12 Track 8): The track starts with a little snatch of Dylan singing the opening phrase with just his electric guitar for accompaniment, delta-style. Then Johnston slates *“‘Leopard-Skin Hat’, Take 1”*; there’s a very brief false start, followed by Take 2. The song is taken quite a bit faster than it was the day before, and Dylan opts for the higher key of A. Kooper plays a similar organ part, but his playing doesn’t have quite the same loose, funky feeling that Griffin had given it. Robertson, meanwhile, is beginning to develop the guitar part he deployed in the final *“Blonde On Blonde”* version. Dylan uses both the “you don’t feel no trouble” verse and the “you wanna see the sunrise” verse, but then calls it off with “No, no, no, it’s not as good as it was yesterday...”¹⁷ Then he gets an idea: “Hey, why don’t we just make a couple of verses and then just dub it in... can you do that, Bob?” “Yeah!!!” replies Johnston, nearly swallowing his tongue in his eagerness to show willing.

Insert (Disc 12 Track 9): The recording sheet suggests that there were three insert takes, but we just get one here. They spend a few bars building up the groove, and then Dylan just sings the final “I see you got a new boyfriend” verse, omitting the penultimate one about the doctor. At the end he says to Johnston, “Just put that in the last verse... I just messed up the words, you see.” “On the last verse?” queries Johnston; “Yeah,” confirms Dylan. Dylan had not in fact messed up the words on the last verse in Take 2 – he didn’t even get as far as singing the last verse. So this dialogue rather suggests that there was at least one intervening insert take, omitted from *“The Cutting Edge”*, in which Dylan did perform the last verse – and quite possibly the penultimate verse too.

I’LL KEEP IT WITH MINE (CO ?)

Rehearsal (Disc 12 Track 10): Now that the Big Blue Box has got us used to dropping in on rehearsals, the ramshackle nature of this song’s appearance on *“The Bootleg Series Vols. 1-3”* is easier to understand. To put it another way, the track sits a lot more comfortably in this context than it did on that earlier release, where it always seemed to me to upset the flow of more polished material. Here it is augmented by additional material both fore and aft, about a couple of minutes in all.

It starts with Dylan on rhythm guitar, accompanied by a second electric guitar, bass, drums and organ, fading in after the first two lines and continuing to the end of the first verse. Dylan then scratchily demonstrates some of the chords to the other musicians. “Very heavy bass,” he says to Danko, “Do you understand the bass in it?” After Danko plays a few bass notes and Dylan spends some time tuning his guitar, Bob Johnston helpfully asks “Are you going to play the piano or guitar?” “You want to try to do this?” Dylan replies, “OK, let’s just do... I’ll play the piano.” And he starts off, oddly not at the beginning of the song but at the fifth line (“Everybody...”).

After the briefest of false starts, he launches into the performance as we know it from the earlier *“Bootleg Series”* release, again beginning with “Everybody will help you”. Clearly he was still thinking of this as a warm-up rather than a proper attempt to capture the song. Gregg has some trouble deciding what percussion to use. On the first take he’d been playing the drums with brushes and a tambourine on his hi-hat stand, but now, as Dylan sings “Discover what you set out to find” he starts playing some sort of shaker instead of his drum kit; but after a couple of bars he can be heard saying “... doesn’t work” and he switches briefly to a different shaker. All of this was edited out of the stereo mix on *“The Bootleg Series Vols. 1-3”*. Then Johnston cuts in with “... what you were doing”, presumably directed at Gregg, and the drummer then just plays his snare with brushes for the rest of the take.

At the end of the track, where the earlier mix was faded out, we get a couple of extra bars before everyone stops playing. “Well,” says Dylan, and laughs; “What do you want to do?” It doesn’t sound as though he’s burning to try it again.

“The Cutting Edge” places this recording after the others from January 27, but the notes surprisingly say ‘no date listed’. So is it in the right place here? After the already-discussed takes of “Unknown” (i.e. *‘Lunatic Princess’*) and *‘Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat’*, the original writing on the recording sheet lists three brief takes of ‘Unknown Song - Insert #1’; but a later hand has crossed out *‘Unknown Song’* and written in *‘I’ll Keep It With Mine’*. Assuming this was done with good reason, i.e. by someone who knew the song from elsewhere and recognised it on this tape, then it seems reasonable to conclude that these

three brief takes noted on the recording sheet are in fact the separate parts of this rehearsal. It seems from the CO number of 89216 written against this title that the engineer thought he was hearing a series of attempts to record an insert for *'One Of Us Must Know'* (CO 89216), recorded two days earlier but also listed on that day's recording sheet as "Unknown Song"; possibly Johnston actually slated the *'I'll Keep It With Mine'* rehearsal (erroneously) as 89216.¹⁸ But there is no other evidence that any inserts were recorded for *'One Of Us Must Know'*. Quite why the producers of *"The Cutting Edge"* say "no date listed" for *'I'll Keep It With Mine'* is puzzling; possibly it was at some time cut out of the original session tape and moved to another reel with no date; the annotated recording sheet may then have been overlooked when the notes were written for the box set.

* * *

So, after three days of recording, Dylan had just one usable song – *'One Of Us Must Know'*. According to Michael Krogsgaard, the session on January 27 had been scheduled to last from 2:30pm to 2:30am – at least nine hours of recording time – but the takes listed on the recording sheet cannot have added up to more than 20 minutes. Then a further nine hours of studio time in New York were booked for January 31 and February 4, but these sessions were cancelled. It seems as though Dylan had for the time being run out of new material to record; and probably by now Bob Johnston had persuaded Dylan to try recording in Nashville instead.

Not surprisingly, given Columbia's appetite for putting out singles, *'One Of Us Must Know'* was *not* held back pending the recording of the remainder of the new album, but was released as a 45 in mid-February, backed with *'Queen Jane Approximately'* from the previous album. Commercially it fared even worse than its predecessor *'Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window?'*, failing to make Billboard's top 40 at all; nonetheless, in his 1969 interview with Jan Wenner for *Rolling Stone*, Dylan cited it as one of his favourite songs.

Next time: the Nashville sessions for *"Blonde On Blonde"*.

My thanks once again to Ian Woodward and Bob Stacy for their help in putting this article together.

Notes:

1 See http://theband.hiof.no/band_members/sandy_konikoff.html

2 When Michael Krogsgaard researched the Columbia archives in 1995 for his series of articles in *The Telegraph* about Dylan's recording sessions, he was evidently unable to listen to the tapes for many of the sessions, and so had to use the recording sheets as his primary source. So, for example, he reported no fewer than nine complete takes of *'She's Your Lover Now'* from the January 21 session. In fact only the very last take was complete, but the engineer who completed the recording sheet had simply failed to mark the other 8 as false starts or breakdowns – which, as we can now hear on *"The Cutting Edge"*, they all were. See Michael Krogsgaard, *Bob Dylan: The Recording Sessions, Part One* (*The Telegraph* #52, Summer 1995). Now accessible at <http://www.punkhart.com/dylan/sessions-1.html>.

3 Michael Krogsgaard (see Note 2 above) reported that the musicians for this session included 'Michael John ??' (the question marks presumably indicating that the name in the studio documents was not entirely legible), but with no indication of the instrument played. Possibly the producers of *"The Cutting Edge"* took this entry in the documents to be Michael Bloomfield – though in fact Bloomfield's middle name was Bernard, not John.

4 Reported by Sean Wilentz in his book *"Bob Dylan In America"*, The Bodley Head, 2010, p.112. Wilentz was evidently allowed to hear the full session tapes. He also repeats this story in his essay for the *"Cutting Edge"* book.

5 At one point in this dialogue Dylan appears to say "OK, Mike?". In the context he could well have been saying something about a microphone; but perhaps this, combined with the reference to a Michael somebody in the studio documents, led to the credit given to Bloomfield in the box set book. There's no audible evidence of Bloomfield playing on this or any other take at this session.

6 See Sean Wilentz (*ibid*) for some of the censored utterances. Probably very little actual musical content has been removed, if any: the recording sheet shows that Takes 1-14 were on the first tape reel; these takes add up to around 41 minutes on *"The Cutting Edge"*, while the tapes used by Columbia for 4-track recording appear to have had a maximum capacity of 48 minutes (3600 feet at 15 ips) – and they probably switched to a new reel at well under that.

7 It's true that Dylan had sung "Now your mouth cries wolf" whereas on the complete Take 16 he sings "Now your eyes cry wolf while your mouth cries..."; but even if this inversion of the words really was a slip, it seems unlikely that Dylan would have bailed out at this point in the song had the musicians not gone wrong first.

8 This set of eight single-sided 12" acetates was sold through *Goldmine* magazine in 1980. The stereo mixes made for the acetates were very rough, particularly on the 1965-66 material. For further details see <http://www.searchingforagem.com/1980s/1980.htm>.

9 Although Dylan had taken such pains to get the whole song down, the incomplete Take 15 was the one used to transcribe the words for publication in "Writings and Drawings", and the truncated fourth verse was omitted altogether. Probably Take 15 had already been earmarked as the most presentable take, despite being incomplete. The missing words from the solo final take were printed in the original booklet for *"The Bootleg Series Vols. 1-3"*, and noted as a variant in the massive "The Lyrics: Since 1962", published in 2014. This restoration should surely also be made in future, more compact editions of Dylan's lyrics.

10 According to Michael Krogsgaard (see Note 2 above), veteran bassist Bill Lee was also logged as present; but he was strictly a stand-up bass player, **and does not appear to have performed on any of the tracks recorded at this session.**



11 Michael Krogsgaard (see Note 2 above) does not record Bloomfield (or anyone else called Michael!) as being present at this session.

12 The studio must either have had two upright pianos or a single one fitted with a 'mandolin rail' which could be lowered to give a jangly, honky-tonk sound. Mostly when Dylan played the piano in Studio A he used that hard, 'tack piano' sound, e.g. on *'Ballad Of a Thin Man'* or *'She's Your Lover Now'*; but here the instrument he is playing has the softer sound of a normal, untreated piano.

13 Curiously, this take as it appears on *"The Cutting Edge"* is neither in F nor in F# but somewhere in between, presumably the result of an analogue tape speed error somewhere along the line. It seems they are actually playing in F, but the playback tape machine is running a little too fast (or, perhaps less likely, the recording machine was running too slow). Even more strangely, this pitch error seems to gradually correct itself over the next few takes, so that by Take 19 the pitch is pretty much correct.

14 The assignment of instruments and vocals to recording channels is different for this song than it was for *'Like a Rolling Stone'*, the other *"Cutting Edge"* track given this treatment. Ben Rollins's notes in the box set book seem to try and explain this by noting that in Nashville they recorded differently than in New York, so "Bob's guitar is fed through an amp that is miked separately from his vocal". Well, that's as maybe, but this track was recorded in New York...

15 This dating was probably based on its claimed CO number of 86449, just three numbers higher than *'Like a Rolling Stone'*, and well below the numbers assigned at the July and August sessions. However, there is no mention of any additional song on the recording sheets for June 16; so the CO number was almost certainly spurious.

16 It's possible that the *'Lunatic Princess'* title was found later on another document relating to the session. Page 29 of Dylan's Artist Contract file (reproduced in the media-carrying book of the 6-CD Deluxe Edition, beneath the first CD) gives the titles and CO numbers of the songs recorded at the January 21 and January 25 sessions, but indicates that the January 27 session is covered on Page 30 – which has not so far been published anywhere. The January 27 session was probably also covered by an Artist Job Sheet, but again this is yet to be seen.

17 Here Dylan is presumably referring back to the session on January 25, the intervening day's session having been cancelled.

18 The presence of this CO number on the recording sheet is probably the reason why Michael Krogsgaard (see Note 2 above) listed these three brief takes as inserts for *'One Of Us Must Know'*, and concluded that *'I'll Keep It With Mine'* must have been the first song recorded on the 27th. He most likely did not actually hear the tape, and at that time (early 1995) might not even have been aware of the *'Lunatic Princess'* recording. The documents alluded to in Note 16 above, if they still exist, might clarify matters further; but from the evidence currently available it looks as though *'I'll Keep It With Mine'* should probably have been given the number CO 89220.

ARTIST CONTRACT CARD						
DEPARTMENT			ARTIST		PAGE NO.	
COLUMBIA-SEG			BOB DYLAN		25	
RECORDING DATE	STUDIO	ASST	RECORDED BY	TITLE	TARIFF PAYMENTS	
REL. DATE	REL. DATE	REL. DATE	REL. DATE	REL. DATE	TO	AMOUNT
			1/21/66 90878 Studio A ASR Bob Johnston	CO 89210 JUST A LITTLE GLASS OF WATER	Joe Gouter expenses 11/30/65 seas. \$115.87	
					Carroll Instr. rentals for 11/30/65 seas. \$53.55	
					Bob Dylan mus. 1/21/66 \$1468.00	
					Bob Grogg mis. ec. 1/25/66 seas. \$2034.25	
			1/25/66 90891 Studio A ASR Bob Johnston	CO 89215 BURNARD NEW LEOPARD SKIN PILLBOX MAT see 1/27/66 seas. 4-30	Carroll Instr. rentals 1/25/66 \$21.00	
			4-43541 2/14/66	CO 89216 SEP 113096 SEP 113761 SEP 113765	ONE OF US MUST KNOW (Bocour or see Later) 4:49 -B. Dylan-	Dwarf Music (ASCAP) 1966
			18 20 0012 11/24/66 18 20 0012 1/19/72			