

TALKIN' BOB ZIMMERMAN BLUES

No. 2

MARCH 1975



[Handwritten signature]

RAIN UNRAVELED TALES...

Hello again! Somehow, we've managed to last at least two issues, and hopefully this is just the beginning.

Initially, I'd like to welcome anyone who is reading TBZB for the first time, and that includes most of you, since last issue we had a circulation of under thirty.

For those of you who have been with us since the start, I think you'll find many improvements over #1.

After I was almost done with the masters last time, I realized that it would be much easier on the eyes if the text was arranged in columns rather than straight across the page, so that's the way it is from now on.

You also will notice that we have not nearly as many typographical errors this time (I spoke too soon!). No, my typing hasn't improved, but I am using my trusty X-Acto knife a lot more. Unfortunately, some of my blunders are beyond its help... And does anybody have any suggestions on how to avoid having the centers of all the letters "o" fall out???????? This master looks like a shotgun got to it!

I also hope that my grammar and spelling is better--after all, Zinn hasn't ever used "ain't" or any other corruptions of the language, has he? Also, if the person of this page seems to be vacillating, it's because I use "we" and "I" interchangeably...you'll get used to it.

Also adding to the cosmetic appeal is color. It takes a good deal extra time, but I think you'll agree it's worth it.

Probably the biggest fault of #1 was the out-datedness of the news. Because of this, the news section this time will not be put down on the masters until the day before this is to be sent out, and maybe everything will

be timely.

The reason #1 went out to such a small readership is that, due to a very stupid mistake on my part, there was only a tiny number of covers for that issue made before the original was destroyed.

Barring any mishaps this time, I hope to have at least 100 copies printed up. Since this is a ditto zine, we are limited to a total of about 200 I'm told. This, compounded by the fact that not nearly all the pages that go thru the machine for the flip side come out OK, means that our circulation can never grow much larger. The more-expensive process has been considered, but dismissed since both color and neatness would have to be sacrificed, not to mention the added difficulties of reproducing artwork with it.

If the attrition rate of the double-sided technique gets too large, I will then just make the remaining copies single, so if you have received a copy like that, you know why.

The main reason that I am so optimistic about the demand for this issue that I would print up so many is the exposure that TBZB is getting in the next issue of Joe Pope's Beatles fanzine, "Strawberry Fields Forever." He was kind enough to give me a free ad, and his circulation of 1500+ promises to put a lot of letters in my mailbox. Also I'm going to print up some fliers to put up around a few of the campuses here in Boston.

I'm very happy to report that we will be able to continue our policy of everything about TBZB being free. All my materials, with the exception of the color masters, come my way without charge, as does the printing. All anyone has to do to receive TBZB is send me a 10¢ stamp and their address, and as we said last time, we're going to keep it this way as long as TBZB doesn't get to be too much a strain on my wallet.

We are also introducing free ads with this issue. If you have any desire to sell or buy anything

that has anything to do with Dylan or rock music in general, just let me know. A number of the people TBZB is going out to have extensive collections of tapes, etc, so an ad just might be able to help ya out.

As for TBZB's artwork, I'm sure you've noticed by now that I am not an artist or letterer by trade. The illustrations are not meant to really be masterpieces, but I do think they help to break up the monotony of the printed page.

I am desperately in need of some art by anyone who is interested—just put it on a ditto master and send it my way. Beware, however, for the copies never turn out quite as good as the originals, due to the inability to shade wall.

Articles and news are, of course, needed more than anything. I am getting a little help this time from some local friends, but it would be nice to have a nationwide contributing staff. As long as it remotely concerns Zimmerman, we'll use it, as you wrote it. It doesn't have to be new, either—if you've got something lying around you did ages ago, that's great.

News is hard to come by these days—I hear more than a lot of fans, and I don't get much. It doesn't matter where you get it from—just inform me please.

Finally, I'd like to say

I SHALL BE RELEASED FROM
THE GATES OF EDEN ON
THAT DREADFUL DAY!

something about the response we have gotten about the first issue. Basically, it has been non-existent. I don't know exactly why, but only two people have bothered yet to even acknowledge their receipt of #1, and no one has offered me any criticism, pro or con. Only after soliciting some written comments from friends here at BU have I gotten any real feedback at all.

Come on Folks! The only way we can ever know if we are going in the right direction is if you let us know. It doesn't take long to sit down and write two or three paragraphs telling us what you think of our efforts and offering suggestions, or better yet, contributions and rebuttals.

I desperately want to continue TBZB—I'm confident that it can eventually establish a meaningful position in Dylandom—but we have to know how we're being received.

What's about all I've got to say for now—next time I'll try to keep this column shorter and have feedback on your feedback—until then, hope you enjoy #2, and don't forget to Stay With Dylan!

Talkin' Bob Zimmerman Blues is published and edited for the enjoyment of Dylan fandon by Brian Stibal, 1502B, 700 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass. 02215. It is entirely non-profit, being distributed without any charge, although a 10¢ stamp is appreciated. TBZB is published irregularly, with aims on a monthly basis. All contributions of a reasonable nature will be printed, and also returned if postage is included. Advertising in TBZB is available free of charge for items dealing with things of interest to rock music fans in general. All ads should be submitted within 1 week of the arrival of this issue.

All characters described within are fictitious. Any similarity with any celebrities, living or dead, is unrecorded and coincidental.

-----The "A Tribute to Leadbelly" concert reported on in the last issue is still on for March 19 at Carnegie Hall in NYC. Scheduled to appear are Arlo Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Browdie McGhee, and Sonny Terry. According to Albert Laufer (my apologies for spelling his name wrong in #1), the word still is that Zimmerman is considering showing up.

-----The Zimmerview that was supposed to be aired in mid-February as part of the Mary Travers syndicated radio series never was distributed. WCAS 740, the station which airs the show here in Boston, tells me that Bob decided the production wasn't up-to-date enough, mainly because he wanted to include some discussion of "Blood On The Tracks." Why he would put the clamps on it after it was already in the can, however, is anybody's guess. A retake was supposed to have occurred early this month, with broadcasts about two weeks later. The only other station which I know carries the show is KADI in St. Louis. The time-slot WCAS gives it is 11AM on Sundays. Meanwhile, has anybody gotten ahold of the first take?

-----We stated last issue that we were not going to print any of the various rumors floating around about the GFW's marital affairs, since we had no way of telling what was true and what not-so-true. In the meantime, Dylan's brother has come out and said that everything is false, that there never was any troubles in the first place. Although not by any means concurring, all of my sources (a couple of which are personal friends of Zimm's) have indicated that something has happened, but like Mr. Jones, we just don't know what it is.

-----A single is finally being released from "Blood On The Tracks." Columbia decided that "Tangled Up In Blue" had the best chance at making it alone. I'm not sure what the flip is going to be since the copy that I have received is a promo with the same cut on both sides. Unfortunately, they've used the same take as is on the album, rather than giving the freaks an extra sample of the late 74 sessions.

-----The Doug Sahm album which features Dylan on a number of songs has recently been reduced to \$1.99 nationwide. Bob's voice is easily identifiable on a couple of them, and one ("Wallflower") was even penned by Zimm. But you'd better grab it quick, because a reduction to 2 bucks generally means that the stock has been bought out by another party, with the masters being destroyed.

-----The release on the latest Dylan lawsuit I have received from the Rolling Stone News services is as follows: "(DYLAN RAMPAGE) Bob Dylan went on a legal rampage in Los Angeles recently. As described by Rolling Stone magazine, the problem began when disc jockey Steve Clean, of radio station KMET-FM, played "Idiot Wind" off Dylan's new album. Clean followed the song with a cut off National Lampoon's

continued...

"Radio Dinner" album, which featured an actor imitating Dylan and drawling out an outlandish spoof of a Dylan-type song.

"Shortly thereafter, KMET received a call from attorney David Braun, who'd been pulled off the golf course by his indignant client, Mr. Dylan. As reported to Rolling Stone, Braun threatened a \$10 million legal action over the prank.

"To show he meant business, Dylan's attorney followed up with a letter saying that his client would probably not pursue the matter further, but warning the station that the FCC might take a dim view of the prank.

"KMET's Program Director Shadow Stevens was aghast at Dylan's thin skin. He said, 'I can't believe that he never heard the Lampoon bit before. My God! What's he been doing?'

"Stevens did not feel that the disc jockey had done anything wrong. 'We have all sorts of records here, and we play 'em. Bob Dylan is one, and the National Lampoon is another. That's what we do here!'"

TBZB would like to know what has happened to that wonderful sense of humor that was so prevalent in such songs as "Tombstone Blues" and "I Shall Be Free No. 10."

"Blood On The Tracks" is doing quite well in the sales department. The February 15 issue of Record World put it at #2, just one week after it had debuted at an incredible #17. The next second week entry was miles below at #59. Also, "Tracks" is the first album ever to make gold under the new, more stringent RIAA standards. (In a future issue, we hope to be able to present a complete listing of the chart histories of each album and single Zimmerman has released.)

The bootleg floating around with Bobby doing Lennon-McCartney's song "Help!" is evidently a fraud. When I was at A.J. Weberman's place last year I asked him where it had originated from, and he said that while on a talk show the tape had been played for him to identify. He said that it sounded like Zimm, to which the host replied that it was some Canadian group imitating Dylan. It at least comforts TBZB to know that we weren't the only ones to fall for it! Fortunately, the rest of the cuts are legit.

DEDICATION

and Acknowledgments

This issue of TBZB is dedicated to Linda.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many people whose ideas and techniques TBZB is based on. My years in comic book collecting fandom exposed me to fanzines of many types, and without those ideas, TBZB would never have been. Among those whose work I have been influenced by are Bob Gale, Jerry Stephan, and especially Tom Orzechowski.

SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This piece is meant to be both informative and editorializing. We hope the separation of the two within is clear.)

With the possible exception of Grateful Dead freaks, the followers of the Great White Wonder are probably the most ardent fans in all of rock music. To be sure, many are now not visible, hiding out in establishment jobs with little time for music, simply because Dylan's people are so comparatively old. In Bob's heyday, the mid-60's, one had to be at least in his or her late teens to really understand what he was talking about, and these folks are now pushing thirty or more.

But there are a lot of us still around. Some, like TEZB's publisher, have only recently arrived.

But no matter, for all differing roots lead to the same trunk, and we all unite to appreciate Dylan collectively.

But just how much do we differ? I submit that we are split into more factions and subfactions than most rock fandoms. Sure, some Beatlemeniacs dig early, some late or middle, but that is usually as far as it goes. With Zimmerman, however, each of the three major periods is viewed in a few ways, making the total number of permutations quite large. The more important viewpoints could be summed up as follows...

The face-value approach contends that none of Dylan's songs really should be looked at any deeper than their superficial meaning. Despite the obvious anti-intellectualism of this attitude, a surprising number of Zimmfans believe it. Their argument that any further delving destroys the enjoyment of the song is countered by TEZB with the tried and true phrase, "Ignorance is bliss."

There is a small faction which listens to Dylan mainly for the musical content, with little emphasis on the lyrics. We have never considered Dylan to be very talented musically (with the exception of the harmonica), so this is a hard position for us to recognize, but it does exist to a limited degree.

Many of the supporters of the kids who booed Bob at Newport still feel that the only true Dylan was an acoustic with no back up. Most of this folk faction now also acknowledged his other styles, but the great majority still think he sold out when he put the plug in the outlet. This group tends to regard his political relevance to be more important than his poetic talent.

The antithesis of the former group are the people who believe that his switch to electric, and with it the accompanying change from political protest to social protest poetry, freed him to develop his greatest ability. TEZB's editorial staff of one has long held this position. A corollary to this stand is that his abandonment of involvement in

the late-60's was a total cop-out. Some in this group are more hard-lined than others; most are happy with the few throwbacks to the old days he gives us nowdays, but many will not be satisfied until he starts producing comparable work again. This, too, is our belief.

Aside from these general groupings, there are two individuals who have risen far above the rest of us in their studies of The Man. Both gentlemen have so influenced Dylandom that they must be awarded their own "ologies."

The first is A.J. Weberman of New York, who works out of what he likes to call the Dylan Archives. First really achieving fame via the various garbage rumaging incidents, he now enjoys having his name recognized by just about every rock music fan, in Dylandom or out. Unfortunately, along with this fame, he has also gained a reasonable amount of notoriety.

He has often been accused of being a hypocrite, only being into Dylan for profit and to cause trouble. From my own personal experiences with him I can say that, as far as I can tell, nothing is farther from the truth. He has always been fair with me, and very prompt with his mail. The only times he ever seems to involve money with his Dylan interest is at cost, no profit. Indeed, he has been more than kind in giving me many items for free. (see page 10)

As for his theories, he contends that the only way to really correctly interpret Zinn is to "pick out [the] words which constantly repeat themselves. These are Dylan's symbols...and try and figure out what they symbolize by looking for words that cluster around them and looking for the least ambiguous context." In order to do this more efficiently, he compiled his famous "Concordance," which is truly impressive when behold.

We believe that Weberman has a good system, but we think he is mis-

taken if he believes it is so refined that it can cast any one specific meaning on a Dylan word. We think that it is entirely possible that "rain," for instance, meant something entirely different to Bob in '62 than it does now. All in all, however, Weberman comes off pretty intelligently, we feel.

The other personage which is important to Dylanology is Stephen Pickering of California, the editor of the huge volumes "Dylan A Commemoration" and "Praxis: One," both very thorough and high-levelled collections of Dylan criticisms.

I've been told that the distinguished Mr. Pickering attended every '74 tour show on his own, and he has written that he had seen Bob on stage some 35 times before the accident, not to mention owning some 450 hours of bootleg tape and an incredible collection of photographs numbering 5000.

He has certainly paid his dues, and he has the right to call Weberman worthless, as he does, and I'm sure he would not have much respect for TBZB at all, either.

He believes that "there is no such thing as isolated 'early,' 'middle,' or 'late' Dylan. There is ONLY Bob Dylan." We see this attitude as too one-dimensional, with little tolerance of those who disagree with him.

If I read him correctly, his thesis is that all of Dylan's work, from the very early to the present, has been a constant quest to reach that plateau where one is the "perfect Jew." No one will argue that Bob's Judaism doesn't play a large part in his life and music, but to base an entire system upon that one idea seems to us to be quite shortsighted.

Furthermore, to ignore what he does when off stage or out of the studio also risks missing important links to the entire chain which we call Dylanology. Nevertheless, Pickering's two books are quite awe-inspiring and he has contributed great treasures to Dylandom with their publications.

Of course, many other points-of-view are held, and the entire purpose of TBZB is to provide an open forum for any and all of them. As we know so well, without so many different schools of thought, there would be little of the Dylan mystique left.

DYLAN'S STAGES:

Temporary, Like Achilles'

by Phil Pullella

A friend of mine is a collector of Dylan photos. He is without a doubt a Dylan freak par excellence—he knows dates, places, acquaintances, and enemies; but he has decided to specialize anyway. When he tells me he has five or ten new pictures, the first thing I ask him is, "What period?" Then, because we have the lingo down pat, he says either one, two, three, four, or five, and I understand him.

During our many long nights of Dylan talking, we had concluded, as many others had also, that there was a subtle but intense distinction in the phases of Bob's music. However, we didn't leave it to stand at that. We numbered the phases and, mainly through dates, we assigned pictures, albums, voices and moods to each period.

Bob never really bored us. He did have slumps, but everyone is entitled to that. Bob's down periods were at least interesting, while the slumps of other musicians were downright distasteful and ear-vidently effortless. Consider some of the solo Beatles' earlier music—that

left much to be desired, most everyone agrees.

The Dylan Phases are as follows: Phase One starts, of course, with the first album and continues to and includes the fourth, "Another Side of Bob Dylan."

The obvious musical identification for this period is the single guitar and harmonica framework. The songs are folksy and raspy; they are topical and concerned in a very outright way. The themes are punching in an immediate way—they hit like a shot of bourbon.

The characters of Phase One are easy to identify. William Zanzinger was a wealthy Southern landowner, and Hattie Carroll was his de facto slave. Davey Moore the member and victim of a savage system. Hollis Brown a man unable to understand the world about him.

The sound of Phase One is easily identifiable as well. The choppy guitar and voice, sporadic harmonica at the beginning, between the verses and at the end of every song are sure giveaways of Phase One.

Visually, Bob in Phase One is the Dylan that most non-freaks associate his music with. For me and many of my friends, this is the most important period because of its basic formative features. The defiance seemed strongest then, possibly because it was all so new.

Phase Two starts with "Bringing It All Back Home" and ends with "Blonde on Blonde." Suffice it to say that things here are starting to become very weird. The

The characters are no longer so easily recognizable. Songs like "Queen Jane Approximately," "The Ballad of a Thin Man," and "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" don't leave us with clear outlines of people the way pieces like "Ballad in Plain D" and "Only A Pawn In Their Game" did.

Visually, Bob changed dramatically in Phase Two. Dylan went to England after the Beatles had turned the Isles on their ears, with the effect on him being obvious. The leather jacket was shorn for a tailored one in black. He no longer tried to mat down his hair, but now was content to let it do as it pleased. So vast was the change that it looked like Glamour had done a complete makeover of him. Even his mudded brown suede boots were replaced by Beatle-style shineyblack leather.

Phase Three is quite mysterious. After the supposed motorcycle accident,

Dylan came out with the spiritually-conscious "John Wesley Harding" disc, and except for one or two songs, he was back to the old guitar and harmonica framework. What is even more strange is that he actually looked straight. His hair was cut and it seemed that the once-violent Denizen of Downtown would now be content to live on a farm the rest of his life.

By this time Dylan was in a mellow head, singing establishment love songs, mainly because he had found establishment love--a wife, kids, and an upstate New York homestead.

Phase Four, or the "New Morning" stage, saw Bob as the established mentor of popular music. With his brown seersucker suit on the cover of the album, he made clear that now he was to become more of an overseer than a doer. His influence was to be widespread and his approval was going to be hard to get. He was now like a weary reporter who had covered every monumental story of his decade and now would rest as editor, having the final say but not doing any of the leg work.

Phase Five, the tail end of which I believe we are now in, has been characterized mainly by the '74 tour and "Planet Waves."

"Blood On The Tracks," however, sounds totally different because of its acoustic nature. The album, which many consider the new "New Morning," is Dylan's first attempt in the acoustic realm with other musicians. In the past, he and he alone provided the accompaniment

continued...

for accoustic albums. When he went electric, we knew that he was being backed up by Bloomfield, Kooper, and later The Band. Now Dylan is using a basically simple format, but it sounds so different because other people are invading what heretofore was a one-man accoustic show. "Blood on the Tracks" is merely an assuring statement from The Man telling us that he still is as powerful as he ever was, however removed from the center of the stream of things he might now be.

Dylan's next Phase is as unknown to us now as

any one phase was to us while we were still grooving on the stage the preceeded it. Al Kooper said that Dylan can do whatever he wants and not only get away with it, but also do it very well. He went on to say that even if Bob did soul next, "it would be good soul because Dylan would do it with fresh perspective."

Whatever he does next, we must remember that Dylan is the reigning king of popular music. Someone like Stevie Wonder, who was named "Most Popular Singer" for two years may see his influence dwindle as early as this summer. Audiences are basically fadists, and someone will be named next year. Dylan will never win it any year, but he will continue to wield power from his throne, quietly, and sometimes even secretly.

TARANTULAS

No, this is not another dubious radio-lib campaign, but we are willing to liberate a number of copies of bootleg "Tarantula," without charge to our readers. Yes Fans, TUBE is ringing the chimes of freebieden once again. Thank to A.J. Webberman, I am in possession of a decent-sized, but limited collection of these goodies which I will send out to anyone who sends me two 10¢

stamps to cover postage, plus 35¢ in coin to buy a big brown envelope so your copy arrives damage-free. These originally went for \$20 on the streets of NYC via A.J. These pink-covered beauts pretty rare, so I think it will be worth your time. But there aren't a tremendous number, so absolutely one per. Also, please give me time, for finals are soon, and they and the rest of TB28 comes first, but you will get yours, or if all out, your money back. You know the address.

YES! THIS IS THE SAME BOOK, WORD FOR WORD, THAT YOU WANTED THRU BEFORE!

"Blood on the Tracks" (Part II)

by Brian Stohr

In recent years Dylan has liked to use the natural break between the first side's last song and the next's first to attempt a shift of gears. It didn't work well on "John Wesley Harding," "Nashville Skyline," the first disc of "Self-Portrait," or "New Morning." In fact, the only time it ever succeeded was way back with "Bringing It All Back Home." So why does Bob try to change the pace with the second round of "Blood On The Tracks"? My only guess is that he wants to escape the web of indictment he has spun. He started to do this with "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go," but reverted with such lines as "I've only known callous love," "When something's not right it's wrong," and "Relationships have all been bad."

But with "Meet Me In The Morning" Zimm strikes out on a completely new path. Whining away in a "Self-Portrait"-type voice, he even implies a rebirth with a cut dealing with morning imagery. Unfortunately, the scenario doesn't really seem to have a point. To be sure, not all songs have to have some deep message or relevance to succeed; but all poetry should convey some type of emotion. All "Meet Me" conducts for a feeling is one of subtle obliviousness. And although that might be often welcome when playing The Beatles or The Allman Brothers Band, we have come to expect much more from The Man.

Sheer length is responsible for the great amount of interest which has already been afforded to "Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts," and I'm afraid that we must invoke the quality-not-quantity maxim here.

Throughout some fifteen verses Bob weaves in and out of a rather boring tale of passion and violence in what appears to be the Old West, although

the imagery of two other continents is represented. "Jack of Hearts" is no doubt the most involved plot line in a Zimm tune since "Gal-Lyed Lady of the Lowlands," and in many ways he moves from character to character in a smooth and pleasing style. The fact that it requires close attention to decipher only heightens the emotion felt by the listener, and viewed on this level it comes off as a fine piece.

But under closer scrutiny, "Jack of Hearts" fails in that its multi-dimensional heroes and heroines meet and interact in very one-dimensional situations (e.g. a poker game, the gallows, and a stage). It is hard to appreciate the sentiment of a conflict when its background is passé or dull.

Musically, however, "Jack of Hearts" is quite interesting. Its fast pace alone immediately invites regard. The harmonica has seldom been as perky in recent years, and the strumming of the guitars in the back can't help but make the story line easier to follow.

Especially interesting is its offbeat syncopation (pur intended). That open space right after the last words of each verse beckons conjecture as to what he might possibly be leaving out. Since whoever (or whatever, for that matter) the Jack of Hearts really is never is concretely stated, it can't help but be wondered what, if anything, is being hinted.

Dylan never was at his best with strait love songs, and its deviation from the standard pattern is about the only thing which saves "If You See Her Say Hello." Reminiscent of the excellent "Ballad in Plain D," "Say Hello" captures only some of the poignancy of the former, and virtually none of the insight. But Zimm does manage to put in enough imagery and memories (of real experiences?) to make it worth listening to, although doubtfully the amount of FM play it's been getting.

"Helter Skelter From The Storm" has almost

instantly gained a reputation for being a new version of the old breed of brilliantly poetic Dylan cuts. Admittedly, such lines as "The one-eyed undertaker/He blows a futile horn," "The deputy walks on hard nails," and "Newborn babies wailing like a morning dove" equal most of the better statements of the "Highway 61 Revisited" era, but one does not always live by perceptivity alone. The doom of the "storm" suggests the larger question of possible salvation, and although he seems to imply that the shelter she is offering him is his deliverance, little is forwarded in the song to this end, at least explanation-wise.

Furthermore, who is Bob kidding with such self-righteous utterances as "[she] took my crown of thorns" and "They gambled for my clothes"??? Zimmerman must have a mighty short memory, for it was us, the freaks, who told him time and time again that he was Jesus Revisited; he always insisted that he was nothing at all special, "just mathematical" as he loved to say. At least if he still wants us to believe his "divinity" he could give us more of what he so liberally poured forth with that originally made us feel that way. Play fair, King!

"Buckets of Rain" was a poor choice to end "Tracks" with because of its lack of any cohesive structure. An artist's last word should leave an impression that will stay until the next work is viewed, and everyone knows how long it might be before a new Dylan disc will appear. "Buckets" continually skips over many potentially productive areas in its three and one-half minute life, without ever really considering any of them, much less developing them. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that he is just writing the song with no direction. Indeed, he hints at this with "You do what you must do"—he knows he's supposed to write songs. But why doesn't he follow his own accompanying advice

and "do it well"?

It might have been expected that Pete Hamill's liner notes would be innocuous; it's a delicate situation when someone is asked to adorn the cover of a super-established (ment?) artist with criticism. But even Johnny Cash managed to complete the assignment excellently with the totally-uninvolved "Nashville Skyline" album, so why does Hamill come up short? The best reason is probably because he seems to feel compelled to defend Dylan's copping out: "There are some who attack Dylan because he will not 'Write Like A Rolling Stone' or 'Gates of Eden.' They are fools, because they are cheating themselves of a shot at wonder." Cheat might be the right word, but we suspect Hamill is confusing the cheater with the cheatse.

So where exactly does "Tracks" fit into the Zimmerman spectrum? His title suggests a lot of "blood" was spilt while laying down these ten "tracks," so at least credit must be given for trying hard; one "Blood On The Tracks" is better than five "Self-Portraits," any day. And the new voice which is presented on many of the cuts (among them, "Tangled," "Lonesome," "Jack of Hearts," and "Shelter") once again proves that Dylan's different physical guises are outnumbered only by his set of distinct vocal methods.

So, "Blood on the Tracks" emerges as the best since "John Wesley Harding," and probably not equalled since "Blonde on Blonde." True hindsight, however, is never gained until at least the next album has appeared. Until then, let's keep at "Tracks" and see what else there is to be drawn from it.

BEATLE FREAK TOO?

If so, then you've probably heard about Strawberry Fields Forever, the country's oldest and largest (1500 circ.) Beatle fanzine. Each issue is offset, and Joe Pope makes it a full-time job so each issue is superb. Monthly, it's \$5 for six issues to SFF, 310 Franklin St., #117, Boston, Mass. 02110. Subscribe!

Dylovan..!

by Bobby Abrams

(EDITOR'S NOTE: A small excerpt from "Donovan In The Seventies," the following is reprinted with kind permission from the February issue of Phonograph Record Magazine. Of all the many comparisons between Dylan and the Sunshine Superstar we've seen, few capture their common bonds as well.)

"...With both...critical and commercial success..., Donovan was fully acclaimed as Crown Prince to King Dylan. Soon their careers would diverge in totally opposite directions, but at this point in time it is worth discussing their relative similarities, at least as then perceived. Both wrote folk songs that seemed to be poetry, spouted a lot of philosophy (especially existentialism) and seemed to be revitalized moment of life and light for a dying Beatnik movement, both inspired an entire generation to imitate and follow them. On the other hand, Dylan represented the forces of rampant nihilism, raging hostility, whereas Donovan was a prophet of peace and love, English gentility. In their poetry, Dylan

specialized in the hip phrase, the Blakeian metaphysic, the dark ominous underside of life as reported by Baudelaire. In contrast, Donovan preferred the lush romanticism of Coleridge or Yeats. Dylan was the hard voice of amphetamine consciousness; Donovan the gentle dope smoker.

By 1966, the furor over Dylan's "having gone electric" had simmered down and one would have thought the folk movement would have come to grips with the phenomenon of The Rolling Stones. One would have thought a lesson had been learned, but no, fascists are fascists and the gang from Sing Out! was intent on destroying yet another career, having failed in their efforts to erase Bob Dylan from the public consciousness."

THE 'NEW MORNING'
ROARIM TRICK...

Does that stare on the cover of "New Morning" give you the creeps? If so, there is more to it than you probably realize. To find out why it is doubly frightening, hold the front cover up in front of the nearest Louise while holding it about a arms length away (it would be hard to hold it much further). Now look back and forth between the picture of young Bobby and old Bobby. See it? If not, you must be pretty sad-eyed, Lady.

YES I RECEIVED YOUR
LETTER YESTERDAY

Dear Brian,

I'd like to welcome an old friend's new magazine to the world, and wish both of them the best. I'm only the mildest of Dylan freaks, but, who could ever forget "Visions of Johanna"?

—Ken Smith, 15625 Summerlake Dr.,
St. Louis, Mo. 63017—

(THANK A LOT, KEN, YOUR INTEREST IS SINCERELY APPRECIATED. HOPEFULLY TBZB WILL DEVELOP YOUR INTEREST IN THE BIG D FURTHER)

(ED. NOTE: The following was received after page 3 had already gone to press)

Dear TBZB,

On the whole I thought your basic layout was pretty nice. I think you have a good approach. It was very wise to point out right off that you're not intended to be an extension of the Dylan Liberation Front, an organization that I feel doubtful was necessary, since for myself, I could never have conceived of the concept of the word 'liberation' in the first place had it not been for my listening to Mr. 'D' in my early years. (GOOD POINT, I TEND TO AGREE)

In any case, the main thing that let me down was the failure to mention the spiritual qualities inherent in Dylan and/or his new album. In the whole issue nothing to this effect is mentioned. (AS THE "TRACKS" ARTICLE STATED, IT WAS ONLY A FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE ALBUM. OF COURSE THIS ASPECT PERMEATES DYLAN ALL THRU HIS LIFE, BUT I DON'T SEE THIS BEING VERY BASIC TO 'TRACKS') I consider this quite an oversight, since he has definitely touched upon different phases of spirituality on every one of his albums as far back as his first.

As for 'Tracks', some of your comments were most interesting. I was glad to see you liked 'Idiot Wind' but what you said about 'Big Girl' and Dylan's sense of retribution is off base, simply because he does suc-

ceed, and the song's unique approach to this is proof. The song is a gem.

We must all be careful of the 'Idiot Wind' which sometimes comes 'blowing everytime you move your teeth.' Like the man says, "I couldn't believe after all these years you didn't know me any better than that." (ANOTHER GOOD POINT—MAYBE I DON'T KNOW HIM AS WELL AS I THINK...) No mention of the duality of existence, which is portrayed in this song and album, as well as thruout his career, is made, a concept he has always consciously or unconsciously expressed. The epitome of this concept came, of course, with 'Blonde On Blonde' (I WOULD AGREE, ALTHO I MIGHT PLACE THAT PEAK ONE ALBUM EARLIER), however it has never been lost. What is happening in the world today is such an intense reality that the duality of existence is simply and painfully more visible today than it was in 1966. (YES!)

No mention of the significance of Dylan recording most of the album, at the last moment, in Minnesota, where he was born and raised. (AS WAS STATED IN THE NEWS SECTION, AT PRESS TIME WE WEREN'T SURE IF THAT WAS TRUE OR NOT) He has made tapes there as far back as 1961 but never released any. To me this puts Dylan on home territory and as confident as ever, truly a Boy From the North Country. Mr. 'D' is certainly "just like that bird" and "singin' just for you" and even if "What's good is bad/What's bad is good" there is still plenty of hope that "a simple twist of fate" could bring. No mention either, of the liner notes by Pete Hamill. (THEY ARE DISCUSSED IN PART II) Certainly just the fact that Dylan had these notes put on the album means something. Dylan's liner notes have always been a sort of "key" to what's inside to "let you go in far enough to say you've been there." (THIS IS VERY TRUE, AND INDEED I AM PLANNING AN ARTICLE DEALING EXCLUSIVELY WITH LINERS FOR A FUTURE ISSUE)

To my eyes, this is one of the best (if not the) albums of the 1970's (PERSONALLY, MY FAVORITE OF THAT PERIOD IS "BAND ON THE RUN", IF ANYONE CARES) and in these times

where creativity itself is being stunted by the pressures involved in just existing, that's one hell of a feat.

"Beauty walks the razor's edge" and Dylan certainly has "offered up [his] innocence" and "got repaid with scorn." (I DON'T KNOW IF YOU MEAN IN GENERAL, OR IN REGARDS TO TBZB-- IF IT'S THE LATTER, I DON'T APOLOGIZE. ANYONE WHO PUTS ANY ARTWORK ON THE MARKET IS BY IMPLICATION GIVING UP THE RIGHT TO PRODUCE WITHOUT EVALUATION. IF I DON'T THINK GOOD WORK IS BEING DONE, I FEEL A RESPONSABILITY TO EXPRESS MY VIEWS, JUST AS I WOULD AND DO WHEN I THINK ITS GOOD)

Yeah, well, I think TBZB is on the right path--it just needs to be rounded out in certain areas (NO ONE ARGUES THAT!) and it could have real potential. A good idea might be to have a separate page for tape collectors. (SEE OUR ANNOUNCEMENT ON FREE ADS THIS ISSUE)

A free publication on or about Mr.'D' is certainly a ray of sunshine in these days "when blackness [is] a virtue." Keep up the good work, "you do whatcha must do, and you do it well". Try to continue to play down the talk that isn't past the rumor stage. (DON'T WORRY--THAT IS A DEFINITE POLICY OF TBZB) "They're planting stories in the press." Be careful! For what you and I and Dylan obviously know is "You find out when you reach the top, you're on the bottom."

Also, I was sorry to hear that the 74 Tour was one of the biggest let-downs of your life. If anything ever lifted my spirits it was the tour, of which I only saw 5 shows, and just couldn't quite get enough of.

-----Bob Heyer, 530 Melain, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122-----
(THANK YOU FOR YOUR VERY CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS, BOB. I HOPE EVERYONE READING THIS TAKES THE TIME TO CONSIDER DYLAN AS INTELLIGENTLY AS YOU OBVIOUSLY DO. EVEN THO WE DON'T SEE EYE TO EYE ON MANY THINGS, ALL OF YOUR POINTS ARE WELL-TAKEN. AND ABOUT THE TOUR, WHEN I SAID THAT, I QUALIFIED IT BY SAYING "IN SOME WAYS." I ONLY WAS ABLE TO SEE TWO SHOWS, AND I TOO WISHED I COULD

HAVE SEEN A THOUSAND MORE. JUST SEEING DYLAN, NO MATTER THE QUALITY OF THE PERFORMANCE (WHICH I HAVE AMBIVALENT FEELINGS ABOUT) IS A VERY INSPIRING EXPERIENCE. THE FACT THAT ZIMM FINALLY DECIDED TO COME OUT OF HIDING LIFTED MY SPIRITS GREATLY TOO, BUT WHEN I THINK OF HOW GREAT THIS COMEBACK COULD HAVE BEEN, HAD HE BEEN A LITTLE MORE RESPONSIVE TO HIS AUDIENCES, I AM LET DOWN. ON THE OTHER HAND, BEFORE THE FIRST CHICAGO SHOW, I NEVER DREAMED HE WOULD DO ANY OF THE OLD SONGS, SO JUST HEARING THE CLASSICS MADE IT GREAT. IF I APPEAR TO BE CONTRADICTING MYSELF, IT IS BECAUSE MY VIEWS ARE SO AMBIVALENT. IN ANY CASE, WE ARE ALSO PLANNING AN ARTICLE ON THE TOUR, HOPEFULLY FOR #3.)

Dear Brian, the Ed
Hay, how come you have to print letters from yourself? Are you crazy????
-----Brian Stibal, 4932 Theiss Rd., St. Louis, Mo. 63128-----
(I HOPE NOT, BRIAN. IT'S JUST THAT THIS IS A SNEAKY WAY TO SHOW WHY I KNOW SO MANY PEOPLE FROM ST. LOUIS, IT BEING MY SUMMER HOME WHEN I'M NOT HERE AT SCHOOL.)

Dear Brian,
It was very interesting to me to ask why in the world someone would be putting out a Dylan fan publication at this time--a time when Dylan popularity seems to be slipping into another lull. The climatic period of Dylan frenzy surrounding Tour 74 has almost disappeared and even the current interest in the new album is merely a murmur when looked at in the perspective of what one was. (DON'T BE SO SURE--FROM WHAT WE CAN TELL, "TRACKS" IS CURRENTLY ACHIEVING ENOUGH CRITICAL SUCCESS TO BRING DYLAN BACK INTO THE POP MUSIC LIMELIGHT, AT LEAST TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN HE HAS BEEN FOR THE LAST NINE YEARS)
Dylan and his music, seem more susceptible to ups and downs than do most artists or the trends they might create. Dylan, as we all know, causes these lulls to pop up intentionally himself. At times like the pre-New Morning days, most non-freaks forget Dylan even existed--"Oh yeah, right, he did 'Like A Rolling Stone'."

Well, now, despite the new

continued...

album, we're falling into another lull, and this time I'm not so sure it's intentional. (THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF TBZB IS TO PROHIBIT THESE LULLS FROM AFFECTING THE MIGHTY ZIMM'S TRUE BELIEVERS.) Dylan seems to be losing grip of that conscious, heady style that inevitably becomes a trend setter. Whether or not he regains it remains to be seen--I believe he will.

But the lull itself, is what justifies this Dylan news letter. In an unproductive time, Freaks need something besides liner notes and Tony Scaduto and Toby Thompson. Since Rolling Stone sleeps with

IF A PLANET WAVES...

WAVE BACK!

thanx to A.J.

whomever is sleeping, and A.J. Webberman has just about retired, TBZB will hopefully be able to make the interim period more bearable, and most of all, memory-filled. Of course it can never fill the void completely; only you-know-who can rightfully do that. But still, it will serve to keep us alert and in constant training. As we reconsider the meaning a certain line holds, we will continually be refed by competent feedback. (TBZB HOPES!) There is room for your publication, Brian, and many others like it, because Bob can, as we all know, be almost infinite.

I wish you many press dates.

-----Philip Pullella, 514 Park Dr., Boston, Mass. 02215-----
(NO ONE HOPES MORE THAN WE HERE AT TBZB THAT ZIMMERMAN WILL PULL OUT OF THIS LULL, BUT WE AREN'T QUITE AS OPTIMISTIC. BUT IF TBZB HELPS OUT THE FREAKS, THEN ITS MISSION IS FULFILLED.)

OTHER DYLANZINES??

There must be some other Zimmerman fanzines out there, but we don't know what are where they are. Please let us know! In magazine publishing the name of the game is to compete, but with fanzines it's just the opposite--to complement. Maybe we can even have a fanzine review section in the next issue of TBZB. Of course, that means they can review us...

AFTER THE FLOOD...

OK, we all know that the cuts from "Before The Flood" were from different '74 shows, and that they were all even from the West Coast, or so I've heard. But has anybody got and has listened to the West Coast shows enough that they can tell TBZB where each individual cut came from? I also heard that one song

Bootlegs!

Wayne Rogers runs a pretty wild school down South called Rock & Roll University. His selection of bootlegs is pretty extensive, so he might have what you're looking for. As far as I know, his list is free for the sending, so drop him a stamp at R&R U, Wayne Rogers, 4919 Lord Byron Rd., Wilmington, North Carolina 28401

came from a non-West Coast show, but I don't know which one. And in any case, all the various tapes of the tour are tough to distinguish without a program to tell the difference between the "You should wear a earphone"'s from the "You should wear a telephone"'s. Can anybody help?

Welllllllllll, we finally got old TBZB #2 finished. I'm quite proud of it, and if it brings some enjoyment to you, then it's all been worth it. As we've reiterated, we're anxiously awaiting your comments and complaints, so please write some down in a short while and forward them along to us, and please don't forget to send that 10¢ stamp for your copy of #3, or if you're taking advantage of our Tarantula offer, don't forget to include the extra two stamps for the book. We will stay free as long as we don't have to worry about such minor things (when handled individually) as postage.

The GREAT news is that so far, the various ads I've had in different places for TBZB #2 have worked quite well, so I think we will have quite a readership this issue.

Also, you will notice that except

for pages 1-3, the printing is quite good, since I learned a couple new tricks with the machine after those were printed some time ago.

Sorry I couldn't provide more illustrations this time (maybe you're glad...), but since small ones take me about 7 hours total, I didn't have the time. I wanted one for this page too, but no could do.

Remember to send in you ads within one week of when you receive this, so they can be assured of seeing print.

Don't know if there is a whole lot else to say, except the obvious, and that is to tell your friends about us! It does certainly seem that we are becoming some kind of a success, but the more Believers we can round up, the better.

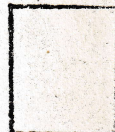
Have a nice life, hope to be hearing from you soon, and STAY WITH DYLAN!

R.

"I'l 'B.Z.'ing you!"

TALKIN' BOB ZIMMERMAN BLUES
c/o Brian Stibal
1502B 700 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Mass. 02215

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