



Biography

Barry McGuire – The first Decade

Intro



Barry McGuire has led an incredible life, to say the least. Born in 1935, and having a music career that has lasted over four decades with more than 40 albums, there is much to tell. We will hit the highlights and tell some interesting stories along the way. At the moment, only part of his story is posted here (up to 1971).

Beginnings

Barry McGuire was born on October 15, 1935 in Oklahoma City. His parents divorced when he was two years old, and Barry moved to California with his mother, who later remarried. Barry's stepfather worked construction in and around Los Angeles. "Every time he'd finish a job," Barry remembers, "we'd move to a different community. I went to nine or ten grammar schools and two high schools." When Barry was ten years old, his family was living in San Pedro, where he started working on fishing boats at the age of fourteen. At sixteen, Barry joined the Navy, lying about his age in order to get in. After ten months in the service, he was faced with the possibility of going to the brig, having shown up late for duty after a date that ran a bit long. Preferring freedom to the brig, Barry showed the Navy his birth certificate and was discharged for being under age.



During his late teens and early twenties, Barry led the life of a drifter, working all kinds of jobs. The folk scene was catching like wildfire in the late 1950s, and it really sparked something deep inside Barry's soul. He had been to some live folk performances at Laguna Beach, thought it was great fun, and in 1960 he bought his first guitar

and started singing. He says he never dreamed that anyone would actually pay him to do it, though.

Barry's first paid gig came about as a result of happenstance rather than a calculated career move. Barry recalls, "I had a date with a girl, and she thought I was supposed to be there at seven. I thought I was supposed to be there at eight. When I got there, she was gone. My uncle, Sterling Mount, had a bar in Santa Monica, and I went over to get soused. Bill, the bartender in there, was a great piano player, singer. I was sitting there, and he played something. I knew some of the words, so I sang a little, and he says, 'Hey, you sing pretty good.' I said, 'Yeah, I play the guitar and sing.' He said, 'You got your guitar?' and I said, 'Yeah, it's out in the car.' 'Well, go get it.' So, I went out and got it and brought it in, and I'd sing a couple, and he'd sing a whole bunch, and I'd sing a couple more.

"By the time the evening was over, the waitress was having a birthday party at her house, and they invited Bill over to play the piano. He says, 'Can my friend come with me?' and they said, 'Bring your friend.' So we went over to the house, and I played the guitar and sang songs until the sun came up. About two, three days later, the phone rang, and a guy says, 'Listen, I was at the party at so-and-so's house, and I own a bar here in Santa Monica. Can you come and sing? My piano player's sick.' I said, 'I only know about four or five songs all the way through.' He said, 'Just do what you did at the party the other night. I'll give you fifty dollars cash. You can keep all your tips.' I said, 'Man, I'll be there.' I called my friends, told them what was happening. They all showed up, and by the end of the evening, the place is packed. I couldn't believe it. People were calling their friends and telling them to come down and listen to this guy - which is me! By the end of the evening, I made about eighty dollars in tips and fifty dollars in cash, and the guy says, 'Come back next week, and we'll do it again. I'll give you a hundred dollars a night.' I thought, 'Man, it's like going to a party and they pay you.'"

Barry quickly learned more songs, expanding his repertoire, and found himself singing five nights a week. One night while taking a break between sets, producer Fred Briskin approached Barry. He said, "Miss Lee would like to speak with you." Barry said, "Sure!" and followed Briskin to his table. Awaiting their arrival was the great singer, Peggy Lee, but Barry didn't realize who she was. Peggy Lee told Barry she thought he had a great voice and that she felt he should be singing in better places. She and Fred would help get him into those places, she said. Not realizing who these people were, Barry thought it was just another case of someone promising to hook him up and never coming through. Later, someone at the club came up and asked him, "So how did it go with Peggy Lee?" Barry's response was, "Oh, was she here?" Incredulous at his reply, they said, "McGuire! That was Peggy Lee you were talking to!"

Within a very short period of time, Barry got a call from Fred Briskin telling him he had a gig at Ye Little Club in Beverly Hills.

Before he knew it, Barry was playing other uptown venues like the Troubadour. He also made his first record around this time. The song was called "The Tree." It was a 45 rpm record released around 1961. Barry doesn't even remember who the guy was that recorded it, and says they sold maybe ten copies of that record. That same year, Barry formed a duo with Barry Kane, a singer-songwriter he had met at the Troubadour after closing time. "We all used to sit around when they locked the doors, and a few of us used to sit there and sing songs. Art Podell was there, Barry Kane, Hoyt Axton and people like that. Barry Kane was singing a song, and I knew it. We started harmonizing, and we just couldn't believe what it felt like. So, we said, 'Let's get together and work on a couple of tunes.' We did, and the following week, we sang at the hootenanny. But we were both under some kind of dumb contract, and we weren't supposed to be singing together. So, we sang in silhouette so nobody could see who it was."

The Christys



People loved what Barry and Barry did on stage, and before long they were in the studio with Art Podell recording an album that was eventually released as "Here and Now!" But before "Here and Now!" had even hit the racks, McGuire and Kane had joined the New Christy Minstrels. In the Spring of 1962, Art Podell had asked them if they wanted to be part of the group, adding that they'd have a lot of fun and make a lot of money. Randy Sparks had put the Christys together as a studio ensemble, and had already done four songs and were set to perform at a Vic Damone special. "A lot of the guys who had worked on the four presentation songs for Columbia were already in groups and couldn't get out of those commitments," Barry recalls. "So, all of a sudden, Randy was scrambling for people to make a performing group, and I was one of the first members." The members of the original performing group known as the New Christy Minstrels were: Randy Sparks, Art Podell, Barry McGuire, Barry Kane, Nick Woods, Larry Ramos (later of The Association), Clarence Treat, Dolan Ellis, Jackie Miller and Gail Caldwell. Over the years, the lineup would change, members coming and going. Other notable members over the years included Paul Potash, Gene Clark (Byrds and solo), Ann White, Karen Gunderson, Jerry Yester (Modern Folk Quartet, Lovin' Spoonful), Mike Settle (First Edition), Kim Carnes and Kenny Rogers (First Edition and solo). Roger (Jim) McGuinn (Byrds and solo) almost joined the group at one point, but decided to go with the Chad Mitchell Trio instead.



In July 1962, the Christys got a one-week gig at the Troubadour that turned into a three-month gig due to popular demand. This led to television appearances on the Vic Damone and Andy Williams shows, and appearances at the Greek Theatre with Andy Williams.

With the success of the Christys, Horizon Records released the Here and Now! album that McGuire and Kane had recorded earlier. Theodore Bikel wrote the liner notes, in which he said that “Barry and Barry all but stole the show” at the Christys’ concerts.

In October of that year, the Christys’ debut album The New Christy Minstrels was released. It reached #19 in the Billboard charts, and stayed on the charts for 92 weeks. Although the songs on that LP were recorded by musicians other than the performance group of which Barry was a part, the album owes its longevity in the charts, to some extent, to the fantastic live performances of those songs.



In February of 1963, the Christys’ second album, “The New Christy Minstrels In Person,” was released. Unlike the Christys’ first album,



“In Person” was a live performance, which is where the Christys shone most brightly. Their wit and vivacity in concert was something that couldn’t be captured in a studio recording. This album was followed by “The New Christy Minstrels Tell Tall Tales! Legends & Nonsense” in May of that year.

In 1963, Barry wrote a song that was both his first composition for the Christys and the Christys’ first and greatest hit single: “Green, Green.” Barry says that he wrote the song as a result of losing a girlfriend to another guy. Just prior to the Christys going on the road to play the Latin Quarter in New York City, Barry introduced his girlfriend, Toni Stern, to Dino Valenti (later of Quicksilver Messenger Service). While Barry was on the road, Toni started dating Dino. Barry says, “It just frosted my cookies. I thought of how I could get even with him for going out with my girl. He did a song called ‘Green, Green,’ the old traditional folksong from the southeastern United States, and it was a showstopper. When he did it, he always got a standing ovation. So I said, ‘I’ll fix him,’ and I re-wrote it into a different format. Then Randy Sparks took it and re-wrote a few lines, and the Christys did it and it became a big hit for us. I thought, ‘That’s it, man! He’ll never be able to sing that song again, ‘cause everybody will think he’s singing a Christys’ song.’ About a year later, I went to a little club in San Francisco, and Dino was singing ‘Green, Green’ just like he’d always sung it. It was still a showstopper, standing ovation, everybody singing, and I just saluted the guy. I said, ‘Man, you are wonderful.’ But that’s how the song was born.” Barry’s version as performed by the Christys reached #14 in the charts.

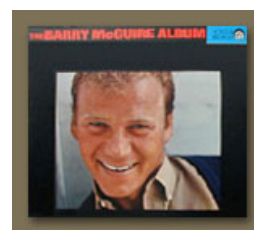
Barry co-wrote another song that made it big in 1963, but he was never to get official credit for it. The song was "Greenback Dollar." The Kingston Trio's recording of the song made it to #21 in the charts, but Hoyt Axton and Ken Ramsey were the only ones to get credit for writing it. Barry's recollection of how the song came into being is that Ken Ramsey came into the dressing room at the Troubadour one night looking for Hoyt Axton. He told Barry that he had just written a song and wanted to play it for Hoyt. Barry told Ramsey that Axton wasn't around, so Ramsey sang the song for Barry. A couple of days later, Barry and Hoyt were at a laundromat on Santa Monica Boulevard waiting for their laundry to finish drying. They got out their guitars, sat on top of some washing machines and jammed a little. At one point, Barry said, "Ramsey showed me this tune the other day. I don't remember quite how it went." Barry says he couldn't remember the hook and a couple of the chords, but he and Axton started jamming with it and re-wrote the song using the fragments Ramsey had shown Barry at the Troubadour and adding what Barry and Hoyt came up with.

Barry remembers, "I was traveling with the Christys, and while I was out of town, they went to Hoyt, 'cause he was singing it all over town, and the Kingston Trio wanted to record it. Hoyt said, 'Ramsey started it, but McGuire and I finished it, but he's not in town.' So, since they wanted it right away, they kind of left my name off. I used rag Hoyt about it when I saw him, and he told me how much money he didn't make on that tune, and we laughed."



The Christys' album, Ramblin' Featuring Green, Green was released in July, 1963, and reached #15 in the charts. It remained in the charts for seventy-seven weeks. It became a gold record in October of the following year.

Contractually, Barry still owed Horizon Records one more LP. With "Green, Green" and Ramblin' having so much success, Horizon wanted Barry to record a solo album. Barry says, "Rod McKuen and Lou Gottlieb did some work with us on it. It was fun. I had a couple of the Christys sing on it with me.



Karen Gunderson and, I think, Clarence Treat sang with me, and it kind of got them upset over at the Christy office because they weren't supposed to do that." Art Podell arranged and conducted the recording, which came to be titled The Barry McGuire Album. Besides Barry's version of "Greenback Dollar," this album has some great songs that were co-written by McGuire and Rod McKuen, like "Good Times Are All Done Now," and "Another Country." Barry sings fantastic renditions of some McKuen compositions, including the haunting "So Long, Stay Well," the romantic "The Way You Are," as well as "One By One."

The Barry McGuire Album was put out on Horizon, later by Vee Jay Records, then the masters wound up somehow at Sussex Records. Sussex then put out a series of LPs under the name Star Folk that contained a mixture of songs from the Here and Now! and The Barry McGuire Album LPs, plus songs by other artists. According to Barry, "They just took a bunch of cuts, because there was a guy - I forget his name - and he came in and would record us live, and what did we know? We were a bunch of street scruffs, and it was a lot of fun. Judy Henske, Jerry Yester and people like that. Then they just took a bunch of those and released them as a little conglomerate of some stuff that Barry Kane and I did." The upshot was that Barry learned a lesson in how the music industry sometimes leaves musicians holding the bag . . . an empty one.



In 1964, things continued to look bright professionally for the Christys, at least initially. Their fifth LP, Merry Christmas, and the following LP, Today, both made it to the Top Ten, and the single, "Today," made it to



the Top Twenty.

The Christys did their own summer television replacement show that year, and were invited by LBJ to play at the White House.

But 1964 was also the year that the Beatles hit the scene, turning the music business and the world itself on their respective heads. The folkie, innocent sound and image of the Christys was now considered outdated.



The Christys LP, Land of Giants, only made it to #48 on the charts, and Randy Sparks sold the Christys to George Greif and Sid Garris for 2.5 million dollars. Barry says, "All of a sudden we became employees of New Christys, Incorporated. It really crushed us all. We were bringing in fifteen to twenty-thousand dollars a night, and the band members were only getting one-hundred dollars apiece." Meanwhile, the new owners of the Christys were using the remainder of the money to pay off the loan that allowed them to buy the Christys in the first place. "It was like we were working to buy ourselves," Barry says, "and we didn't own ourselves. That's what killed us all. One at a time, we started bailing out."

There were other reasons why Barry left the Christys. "I was moving into social issues and what was happening in the world, and the group didn't want to change their image. I couldn't go out there and pretend to be somebody I used to be, and so I had to leave the group to be true to what was churning around inside of me." Barry left the Christys in January, 1965, right after they had recorded the Cowboys and Indians LP and had won first place at the music festival in San Ramos.

One of the last songs Barry recorded with the Christys was “Chim Chim Cheree,” a popular song from the movie, Mary Poppins. The single, with Barry doing lead vocals, was released in April, 1965, three months after he had left the group. By this time, Barry was broke. A very surreal incident happened to him. “I had enough money to go to a movie, buy some popcorn and a Coke, and that was it. So I’m going down Hollywood Boulevard, with all the stars on the sidewalks. I walked past a record store, and out of the store is coming ‘Green, Green.’ I’m standing there listening, and right at that moment a car pulls up to the stop sign with its top down, and “Chim Chim Cheree” is coming over the car radio. So I’ve got two different songs with my voice, my own voice hitting me in stereo, right? - singing two different tunes, and I’ve got five dollars! I thought, ‘This is a scene from a movie, man! This is not happening!’”

Eve of Destruction

After Barry left the Christys, work was hard to find. He spent the Winter and part of Spring, 1965 contacting producers, to no avail. But in April, Barry went to Ciro’s in L. A. to see his old friends Roger McGuinn and Gene Clark, whose band, the Byrds, was celebrating the release of their single, “Mr. Tambourine Man.” Bob Dylan was there, and so was



producer Lou Adler. During the show, Barry saw a guy on the dance floor just bopping up and down while looking up at the ceiling. So he decided to try it out himself, and was bouncing around on the dance floor. Lou Adler spotted him and said:

“Aren’t you McGuire?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, are you doing any singing?”

“Well, not recently.”

“Would you like to?”

“Well, yeah.”

Then Lou said, “Come over to my office next week. I’ve got some tunes I think you might like.”



Lou Adler was a man who knew the music business inside and out. He had written songs for people like Sam Cooke, had been one of Jan and Dean’s managers, had worked in music publishing and for various record companies. By 1965, Adler, along with Jay Lasker and Bobby Roberts, had started a publishing company called Trousdale and a production company called Dunhill. P. F. (Phil) Sloan and Steve Barri, who had written some surf songs that became hits and had a band called the Fantastic Baggys, worked for Adler as songwriters and musicians. Lou introduced Barry to Phil Sloan, who was now writing

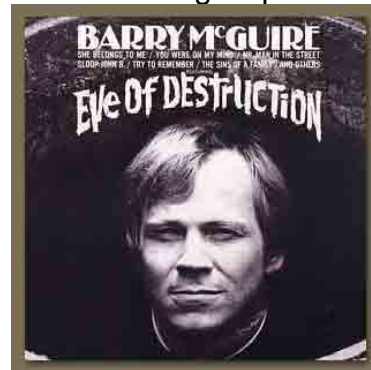
songs that contained serious social messages born from an overwhelming sense of frustration, disgust, and outrage at the system and the way things were going in the world. Barry was ready to start singing songs that reflected these ideas and feelings. "When I left the Christys," Barry says, "I left looking for answers. I was in a kind of a spiritual, philosophical search at that time. We were going through the whole social question, turmoil of the day within ourselves. Why not do this? Why shouldn't we do that? How come we have to do this? Who says we gotta do that? And then we started to get down to, well, what is the basic ultimate truth, and what is life? What is the universe? Where did it come from? Where is it going? What's on the other side of death? What was on the backside of birth? 'Eve Of Destruction' was just a continuation down that road. At least I felt I could compile all the problems, and I thought that's what Phil did in the song. All the problems, but no answers." Unlike the cheery tunes of the Christys, "Eve of Destruction" was a grave, prophetic warning of imminent apocalypse. It was a song that expressed the frustrations and fears of young people in the age of the Cold War, Vietnam, and the arms race.

Barry signed with Dunhill in May, 1965, and started recording with Phil Sloan (guitar, harmonica and co-production with Adler), Larry Knetchel (bass), Tommy Tedesco (guitar). Barry played guitar and percussion. Sometime between July 12th and the 15th, they recorded "Eve of Destruction." Barry recalls that the song was recorded in one take. There were only thirty minutes left in the recording session. Barry remembers, "I got my lyrics that I'd had in my pocket for about a week. I smoothed all the wrinkles out of them, and we wrote the chords down on a piece of brown paper that somebody got some chicken in or something, and we folded little creases and hung them on the music stands and went through it twice. They were playing and I'm reading the words off this wrinkly paper. I'm singing, 'Well, my blood's so mad feels like coagulin', that part that goes, 'Ahhhhhh, you can't twist the truth,' and the reason I'm singing 'Ahhhhhh' is because I lost my place on the page. People said, 'Man, you really sounded frustrated when you were singing.' Well, I was. I couldn't see the words. I wanted to re-record the vocal track, and Lou said, 'We're out of time. We'll come back next week and do the vocal track.' Well, by the next weekend, the tune was released. The following Monday, it was being played on the #1 rock music station in Los Angeles, and it was incredible what happened. It all just exploded."

It turns out that a photographer and record promoter by the name of Ernie Farrell visited Lou Adler's office on July 16th to see if Lou had any records to promote, and he picked up a couple of 45s off of Adler's desk without Lou's knowledge. That afternoon, Farrell was scheduled to take photos at a birthday party at the home of the program director at KFWB. Farrell was taking pictures, went to get some flashbulbs out of the trunk of his car, and he saw the 45s there. He played the 45s for the kids at the party, and they really didn't respond to any of them until Farrell played "Eve of Destruction." They

demanded that he play it repeatedly. The kids took it into their father and asked him to listen to it. He phoned KFWB and said, "I've got next week's pick to hit." The folks at Dunhill rushed the one take of "Eve" back into the studio to get it ready for immediate release, but Barry wasn't around that weekend, so they mixed it, pressed it and shipped it out by that following Monday, July 19th (although the official release date is July 21st). So Barry never got a chance to re-record the vocals.

In the first week of its release, "Eve" was at #30 in the Cash Box charts, and #103 in the Billboard charts. By August 12th, Dunhill released the LP, Barry McGuire Featuring Eve of Destruction. The LP reached it's high of #37 on Billboard the week ending September 25th, the same day that the single "Eve of Destruction" soared to #1 in both the Cash Box and Billboard charts. One would think that any musician whose single had such quick and huge success would be propelled into ever-increasing stardom and opportunities in the music industry. But "Eve of Destruction" actually had the opposite effect, because its success came in sales before success in airplay. It was a song that captured the ear of the public before it caught the attention of most radio stations. A lot of radio station managers, DJs, and playlist controllers were upset that "Eve" made it big without going through them. Barry says, "I don't know if it's true or not, but I heard that the word was that no matter what I came out with next, nobody was gonna play it because I was a loose cannon in the music business. They didn't have control of the last one, and they weren't gonna let the next one get away from them."



Then there was the reaction of the media. Phil Sloan remembers, "The media frenzy over the song tore me up and seemed to tear the country apart. I was an enemy of the people to some and a hero to others, but I was still only 20 years old and nobody really was looking. I have felt it was a love song and written as a prayer because, to cure an ill you need to know what is sick. In my youthful zeal I hadn't realized that this would be taken as an attack on The System!

The media headlined the song as everything that is wrong with the youth culture. First, show the song is just a hack song to make money and therefore no reason to deal with its questions. Prove the 19-year old writer is a communist dupe. The media claimed that the song would frighten little children. The United States felt under threat. So any positive press on me or Barry was considered un-patriotic. A great deal of madness, as I remember it! I told the press it was a love song. A love song to and for humanity, that's all. It ruined Barry's

career as an artist and in a year I would be driven out of the music business too.”

On top of all this, there was flack from both conservatives and liberals. On the right wing, a group called The Spokesmen released an “answer” record called “The Dawn of Correction,” and a few months later, Barry Sadler released “Ballad of the Green Berets.” On the left, musicians who had been writing and singing protest songs for years were not happy that a kid who wrote surf songs and a former member of the Christys had found success with a protest song of their own. Phil Ochs, for example, said that the quality of “Eve of Destruction” was terrible, and called its philosophy “juvenile.” He cautioned that protest songs by their very nature could never maintain a popular status, adding, “The Top Forty revenge is one of the fastest revenges in the country. When people get turned off, that’s it: instant death. I think the protest thing will die out pretty fast.”

There were some exceptions to the ill treatment "Eve" received. For example, on September 20th, 1965, Barry sang "Eve of Destruction" on NBC's Hullabaloo. But Barry looks back now and thanks God that the reaction to “Eve of Destruction” kept him from further fame and fortune. He believes it would have killed him. “It’s just as well I didn’t get another hit tune,” he says. “I would have gone the way of Jim Morrison, Hendrix, or Joplin. I say ‘Thank God,’ and I do thank God for that, too, because I wouldn’t have survived. I think God did ‘Eve of Destruction.’ It was supernatural. I was just dumbing my way through the day, and it all happened. I came up with some great tunes after ‘Eve of Destruction,’ and none of them happened, and I couldn’t figure out what was going on. But I’m sure glad nothing did, because I would have been history by now.”

California Dreamin'



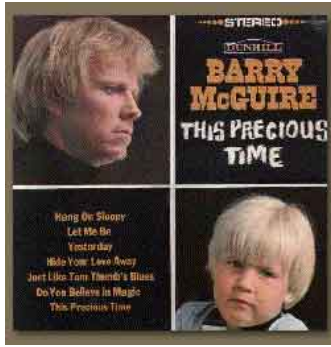
Story behind the photo: The Mamas and The Papas were in the studio with Barry McGuire, singing backup on a song for one of Barry's albums (Barry thinks the song was probably "Hang On Sloopy"). While they were recording the song, a guy named John Antler came into the recording booth. With him was the new Miss Teen USA, whom Antler was escorting to various places. Mr. Antler began tapping Lou on the shoulder, trying to shout over the music to get Adler's attention, saying, "Antler! John Antler!" Lou couldn't really

hear what the guy was saying, and thought that he was mispronouncing Lou's name. So Lou shouts back at the guy, "It's Adler! Lou Adler!" Then the song ended and the guy shook Lou's hand and said, "Antler. John Antler." Lou got on the intercom and told Barry and The Mamas and The Papas what had just taken place, and they all cracked up. It was at that very moment that someone took the photo seen above.

After the release of Barry's first Dunhill album, some of Barry's old friends from New York migrated to California. Barry had met John Phillips in 1962, and whenever he was in New York with the Christys, he used to go to the Earl Hotel in Greenwich Village where Phillips and Roger McGuinn were both living and join in on jam sessions with them and other folk musicians. Barry had also met John's wife Michelle and Denny Doherty (who, with John, made up the group The New Journeymen), along with Cass Elliot (who had been in The Mugwumps with Denny, John Sebastian and Zal Yanovsky). By now, John, Michelle, Denny and Cass were calling themselves The Mamas and The Papas, and they were looking for a place to record.

Denny Doherty remembers it this way: "Cass calls up McGuire who's got *Eve of Destruction* on the charts, a huge hit, and is in the middle of recording another album. He comes over to the apartment, gives a listen; 'Yeah, man sure, you guys sound really good. Look why don't you come down and sing for my producer Lou Adler.' So, there we are at Western Records, Lou Adler in the booth. We sing him *California Dreamin'* and this voice comes out of talkback: 'You got any more?' Got any more! Sure we got more! We sang him everything we had. We sang him 'Straight Shooter,' 'Monday, Monday,' 'Go Where You Want To Go.' And this voice from the booth just kept asking for more. 'What else you got? What else you got?' Finally Cass says: 'That's all we got. What do you think?' And he says: 'I think we can do business.'" Barry adds, "Lou heard them sing, and he thought Michelle was cute. That was his main comment after hearing them sing: 'Who's the blonde?' But he did like their sound and they sang backup on my second album for me. They told me that that's where they actually found their counterpoint. That's when their sound really came together, singing backup for me." Originally, "*California Dreamin'*" was going to be Barry's second single from *This Precious Time*. Barry says that while they were recording his version, "it just really came together for them, and John asked me if they could release it as their first single rather than my second one, and I said, 'Sure, John, it's your tune, man, you wrote it.' So, they just took my voice off of it, put Denny's voice on it, put a flute on it, and that was their first megasong."

So in place of "*California Dreamin'*," Dunhill released "*Child of Our Times*" (with "*Upon a Painted Ocean*" as the B-side) as Barry's second single from the album. The third single was the title track, "*This Precious Time*." All three songs were great compositions by Phil Sloan, and are three of Barry's best performances. Yet, none of these songs did well in the charts. The album, released December



14th, 1965, also charted poorly, despite the fine sound created between Barry and The Mamas and The Papas. Besides the Sloan songs on this album, there are some great covers, like the Lovin' Spoonful's "Do You Believe in Magic?" and The Beatles' "Yesterday" and "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away." It was obvious that the DJs and playlist controllers were having their revenge for the way "Eve of Destruction" had become a hit without their involvement.

The Mamas and The Papas also sang backup on Barry's next album, *World's Last Private Citizen*, released in 1967. Band members from Paul Revere and the Raiders also played on this LP. The songs ranged from repeats from the previous album, like "Hang On Sloopy" to the hippy anthem "The Grasshopper Song" and the psychedelic-folk tune "Inner-Manipulations" (co-written by McGuire and fellow former Christy member, Paul Potash). *Private Citizen* also contained Travis Edmonson's composition, "Cloudy Summer Afternoon," which featured a New Orleans style horn section and honky tonk piano. But despite this single's greater accessibility than the more esoteric tunes from the album, it charted down at #62 in *Billboard* and #85 in *Cash Box*. Barry comments, "That was a great tune. See, I thought it was gonna go all the way. It was a ton of fun, it had a great groove, but - nothin'. So something was goin' on out there. They just stonewalled what I was doin'."



In June, 1967, the Monterey Pop Festival took place, organized mainly by John Phillips. Many people have wondered why Barry McGuire wasn't there, seeing as he was so tight with The Mamas and the Papas. Turns out, Barry was engaged in a much more exciting experience: the birth of his daughter, Ever. Patty Wilson, formerly married to Ramblin' Jack Elliott, is Ever's mother. She and Barry had met at the Hungry i, and were together for three years. 1967 also saw Barry's entrance into acting. He appeared as "Old Wrangler" in *The President's Analyst*. Barry says he didn't really do any real acting in that role, as the character was pretty much like him: a hippy rock musician. Severn Darden, who plays the Russian spy, Kropotkin, in the movie got McGuire the role. Barry had a contract

with Paramount that had to be fulfilled. Barry says, "Paramount had already taken two extensions. It was a pay-or-play contract, so they had to use me in something. Severn read the script and told them, 'I know this guy, he lives out in Topanga.' And I knew James Coburn. He made it really great for me. He was a real gentleman with me, 'cause I was out of my element. He did his lines and then - usually the star leaves and you do your lines with the script girl. But he stayed so I could do my lines working with him, and he was really super to work with." In the film, Barry performs "Inner-Manipulations" while kicking back on a bunch of cushions in a field. Unfortunately, when Paramount released the home video version of *The President's Analyst*, they cut out Barry's song and replaced it with a song by the group America - a song not even in existence when the movie was originally released. Whatever their reason\$ for cutting Barry's performance of this song, Paramount stripped the movie of one of its best scenes by doing so.



World's Last Private Citizen was Barry's last Dunhill album. Lou Adler sold the label, and the new owners didn't seem to want to keep Barry on. So, after filming *The President's Analyst*, Barry dropped out of sight for a time. He went to Santa Fe, New Mexico for about a year and lived in a commune of sorts. "It didn't work, because nobody took out the trash, and everybody smoked dope and strung beads, and pretty soon you're up to your eyeballs in garbage; and so it's just easier to leave than it is to try and clean the place up."

HAIR, The Doctor, and Hitting Bottom

After leaving Santa Fe, Barry headed back to California to look for work, and was living in his Volkswagen van. "One morning I was over at Cass Elliot's house," he recalls, "and the phone rang. It was some people from New York looking for me, and they tracked me down at her house. They said they wanted me to come back and do a show called HAIR. John Sebastian was there, and we were sitting out at her swimming pool, and I said, 'What's HAIR?' He says, 'Oh, HAIR is a play about, well, it's kind of about what was happening in the streets of New York a couple of years ago.' I said, 'Well, I don't want to do something that was happening a couple of years ago. I want to do something happening today.'

"Cass is leaning out the window of the house with the telephone, and I said, 'Tell him I don't want to do it.' She says, 'McGuire, why don't you just go back there and see what it's all about? They'll pay your ticket, you get to go back and see everybody, have a week in New York. You haven't done anything in a couple of years. Go do something.' and I said, 'Okay, tell them I'll...'. She said, 'You come and

tell them.' So, I went in and got on the phone, and I said, 'When do you want me?' They said, 'Tomorrow.' I said, 'Okay, leave me a ticket,' and I went down to the airport that evening, and I flew back and wound up doing HAIR for the next year." Barry joined the original cast six months into run of show. Initially, he played the role of Claude, then played Berger.



After leaving the cast of HAIR, Barry returned to California. He showed up at Denny Doherty's house and stayed for the next year and a half. Eventually, Barry once again recorded for Lou Adler, now with Ode Records. The album was Barry McGuire and the Doctor, the Doctor being Eric Hord, who had been the lead guitarist for The Mamas and the Papas. Others joining Barry on the album were Chris Hillman, Bernie Leadon, Sneaky Pete, Michael Clarke, Billy Mundy, and Byron Berline. By this time, Barry's drug problem was way beyond any control. The album cover features Barry and Eric, who, in Barry's own words, looked like "two cadavers. Two dead human beings looking out of tombstone eyeballs, I mean just absolute end-of-the-road desolation. One of the guys that produced the album died of a drug overdose. The only reason we didn't die from an overdose is because we didn't make any money on the album."

The extent of Barry's drug problem during the recording of this album is illustrated pretty well in a couple of stories Barry tells. They were doing huge amounts of cocaine during the recording sessions. One night as they left the studio, Barry dove into a trash can. The other guys got into the van, noticed Barry wasn't with them and wondered where he had gone. Barry says, "They looked around and my feet were sticking up out of the trash can. So they came and pulled me out and put me in the van and took me home." On another occasion, Barry was in Eric Hord's Volkswagen with several other people. Eric is doing about 65 MPH, and without Eric noticing, Barry slips out and gets up on the roof of the VW. "I was sitting up there cross-legged. Just wanted to get some fresh air. So I'm up there thinking, 'Yeah, this is better!'" Eventually, Eric notices Barry is missing and says, "Where's Mac?"

"Oh, he's on the roof," says one of the passengers.

"Up on the roof?!?"

So Eric slowly pulls the car over to the side of the road, gets out, looks up at Barry and says, "Mac! What're you doin' up there?"

"Just gettin' some fresh air," says Barry.

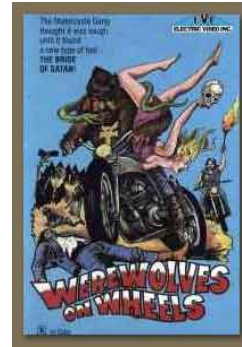
"Well, get down from there, Mac!"

Barry McGuire and the Doctor was released in 1971. Although it received great critical acclaim, sales of the album were not as good as the reviews. In February of 1971, Barry became the father of twin boys. Helga Preller gave birth to Carlo and Jason on the morning of the L.A. earthquake. Barry says, "When Carlo and Jason came into the world, the earth shook!"

Also that year, Barry appeared in his final feature film role. He played a biker named Scarf in Michel Levesque's bizarre horror flick, *Werewolves on Wheels*..

The plot has to do with a biker gang that gets on the wrong side of a group of Satanic monks, who curse two of the bikers, turning them into werewolves. The werewolves start killing off other members of the biker gang. Then, of course, the bikers seek revenge. One movie reviewer called this film "almost unwatchable." Barry agrees, calling it "a piece of trash." Made shortly before his conversion to Christianity, Barry was at an all-time low in his personal life while filming this flick.

As he put it, "I was beyond the beyond. My life was in a total self-destruct mode. A lot of drugs, a lot of booze, getting more and more violent and more and more desolate inside because I'd been to the party. It's like you go to a carnival, and you go on all the rides, and you find the most fun ride, and then you go on that one over and over again until pretty soon you're bored with the whole thing. That's where I was at, that's where a lot of my friends were at. A lot of guys and girls I knew were



taking their own lives. We'd done everything that was supposed to bring fulfillment, and nothing did. People that were much more famous, made much more money than me, had a much grander lifestyle than I had, were more miserable than I was. I thought, 'Well, what's the sense in going further in this direction, you know? I mean they're not happy. So, why should I continue along in this direction?' And it was right at that point in my life that this Jesus phenomenon started making itself known to me."

Salvation

Perhaps the story of how Barry became a follower of Jesus is best told in his own words. Here is the way Barry tells it:

"When I was a little boy, my grandmother told me something I've never forgotten. I was probably about five, maybe six years old. She used to take care of me during the day when my mom worked. One day she said to me, 'You know, Barry, one day when you grow up, you're gonna know the truth, and the truth is gonna set you free.' Now, I didn't know that came out of the Bible. I didn't even know there was a Bible. I was just a little kid. My grandmother told me that. And I knew she loved me, and boy, I knew I loved her. And when I grew up, sure enough, I wanted to be free. I mean who doesn't want to be free? And certainly, a lie has never set anyone free. So if anything was gonna set me free, it had to be the truth



"And along came the 60s. And boy, I was the right age at the right time in the wrong place, you might say. And hey, I wanted to be free. Boy, I sang 'Eve of Destruction' lookin' to be free. I went to

Broadway. I did a show on Broadway called HAIR. I played the male lead in the original Broadway cast, lookin' to be free. And the very lifestyle that we were promoting was, as I looked around me I saw my friends, one, two, three at a time goin' down: drug overdose, suicide, sexually transmitted diseases. The very lifestyle we were promoting was killing us all.

"So I left Broadway, I came back out to California. And I was livin' with a friend of mine, Denny Doherty, up on the Appian Way. And he used to joke and tease me, 'cause I was still lookin' for truth, and every time a new teacher or sage or somebody, Meyer Baba, Sai Baba, Hadji Baba, any Baba would do, I mean I was down there in the front row, ya know, 'Humna Baba, lay the truth on me, man!' I was hummin' and bobbin' and goin' for it. And Denny says, 'Ah, you belong to the Guru of the Month Club.' I mean, anybody, I didn't care. If they had a word, I was down there tryin' to learn the truth. And they said a lot of things that were true, but I just couldn't somehow get it right inside of me.

"And I was just about to give up, and one day I went over to a friend's house, Eric Hord. He used to be the lead guitar player for The Mamas and Papas, and he always had a big bowl of marijuana under his coffee table. And man, I had this bowl out that morning, I had three papers glued together. I figured he's only gonna lay one joint on me, so I'll make the biggest one I can roll. And I look down on this particular day, there's a little paper back book layin' on the table next to the grass, and it's called Good News for Modern Man. And I thought, 'Hey, I'm a modern man. I could use some good news.' I mean, everybody was dyin' all around me. So I took the book home with me, didn't know what it was. Got by myself, opened it up, and right on the first flyleaf page in the book it says, 'The New Testament in Modern English.' I got so angry. 'Ah, look at this! Them Jesus Freaks, man! They're diguisin' the Bible!' Threw it on the floor, I didn't wanna read the Bible! Give me a break! And it layed there for days. I was hopin' someone would come along and throw it away. I didn't wanna throw it away, 'cause I knew what it was, the Bible, and just in case, you don't wanna be responsible. Who knows? But it layed there for days, weeks, months actually. I mean, when somethin' hit the floor in my house, the next person to pick it up was an archaeologist. I mean, that was some future dig.

"And I was there one day by myself. And there this little book somehow kept surfacing above the trash. And the wind was blowing through the window catching the pages. It was flickin' its pages, flick, flick, flick, flick, flick. 'Read me!' it said to me. And truthfully, just out of bored, sarcastic curiosity, I picked up The Life and Times of Jesus Christ. And for the first time in my life, I stopped looking at Christians, I stopped looking at denominations, organizations, Catholics, Protestants, ya know, all this stuff that goes on in His name. And I took a look at Him, examined what He had to say. How He treated His personal friends. What He had to say to the people in the street, the alcoholics, the prostitutes, the homosexuals, the thieves, liars,

robbers. What he had to say about the military people, the political leaders, the spiritual leaders (which is about the scariest thing he had to say to anybody). How He treated the little children when they came around. And everything that Jesus had to say, as I put it to the test against what I knew to be true through my own life experience, I couldn't find anything wrong with His words. There's no double meaning, no hidden agenda. It was all out front. And then He said thirteen words that changed my life, because I saw this was the answer to my personal eve of destruction. He said, 'Love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as your self.'

"How simple can it get? And I realized that if all of us in the whole world lived according to those two simple instructions -- I don't care what your concept of God is, you could be a Buddhist, you could be B'hai, you could be, ya know, whatever it is, Christian, just your concept of God -- love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as your self, and our world would change. How simple can it get? We wouldn't need a police force anymore, and we wouldn't need armies and navies and prisons and welfare systems. We wouldn't need lawyers and politicians. Two simple pieces of instruction: Love God with all my heart, and love my neighbor as my self.

"And I wanted to be like Jesus. I thought, 'Man, this is my guy!' But I didn't wanna be a Christian, see. I wanted to be like Him, but I didn't wanna be like all them. I thought if I said yes to Jesus I'd have to get a powder blue leisure suit -- remember those? -- white shoes, ya know, walk around smilin' a lot. I couldn't do that.

But then I wrestled with it for nearly a year. And one day I was up just off Mulholland Drive in Stone Canyon in the Hollywood Hills. And I'm bangin' my head on the wall, my friends are all smokin' dope, eating peyote, psilocybin, ya know, drinkin' champagne and orange juice. And I'm over in the corner, I can't have fun anymore. See, once you've been busted by the truth, you've been busted. You can't fake it anymore. You can't go around sayin', 'Well, who really knows?' 'Cause you really know. You don't wanna know. But I knew. Jesus is the Lamb of God. His death paid my karmic debt. See, I had a debt I couldn't pay. I had debt I could not pay. I mean, I'm a murderer, I'm a liar, I'm a thief, I'm everything you're not supposed to be. I did it all. One time I was doing a newspaper interview, and the reporter said, 'Well, what did you do?' I said, 'Well, ya know the Ten Commandments?' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'I broke 'em. All of 'em. A lot.'

"That's what I did. And that's what we all did. And there has to be justice. How could God not allow justice to be? He couldn't just arbitrarily say, 'That's okay, Barry. You're forgiven.' And Jesus said, 'I will go. I will satisfy the demands of justice on his behalf.' And now the Bible says if I should stumble, if I should sin, it says God is faithful and just. You know what that justice cost? It cost Jesus' life. And He did that for me, He did that for you, He did that for every person that's gonna ever hear these words. So that I could be forgiven and truly, truly be free. That happened in 1971. I fell on my

face on the floor of that house in Stone Canyon. I said, 'God, I don't know why, how; if I wake up alive tomorrow I'll follow You wherever You lead me.' And within a week I was on a Greyhound bus out of Hollywood, and I've never looked back, except in awe and wonder at how He revealed Himself to me in my state of mind at that time."

That Greyhound bus took Barry to Fresno, California. There, he began his new life.

Taken from Barry McGuire's Website
www.BarryMcGuire.com