

Hotel California

A Special Edition of...

❖ The Wasted Times ❖

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*On a dark, desert highway, cool wind in my hair,
Warm smell of colitas rising up through the air,
Up ahead in the distance, I saw a shimmering light,
My head grew heavy, and my sight grew dim
I had to stop for the night.
There she stood in the doorway;
I heard the mission bell
And I was thinking to myself,
'This could be heaven or this could be hell'.
Then she lit up a candle
and she showed me the way,
There were voices down the corridor, I thought I heard them
say*

*Welcome to the Hotel California,
Such a lovely place (such a lovely place),
Plenty of room at the Hotel California,
Any time of year, you can find it here.*

*Her mind is Tiffany-twisted, She got the Mercedes bends,
She's got a lot of pretty, pretty boys, that she calls friends,
How they dance in the courtyard, sweet summer sweat,
Some dance to remember, some dance to forget.
So I called up the Captain, 'Please bring me my wine'
He said, 'We haven't had that spirit here since 1969',
And still those voices are calling from far away.
Wake you up in the middle of the night,
Just to hear them say...*

*Welcome to the Hotel California
Such a lovely place (such a lovely face).
They livin' it up at the Hotel California.
What a nice surprise, bring your alibis.*

*Mirrors on the ceiling, pink champagne on ice
And she said 'We are all just prisoners here, of our own
device',
And in the master's chambers, they gather for the feast.
They stab it with their steely knives, but they just can't kill
the beast.*

*Last thing I remember, I was running for the door,
I had to find the passage back to the place I was before.
'Relax' said the nightman, 'We are programmed to receive.
You can check out any time you like, but you can never
leave.*

Don Felder, Don Henley, Glenn Frey



This month, we've decided (thanks to tons of reader input) to devote an entire issue to Hotel California. Even if it isn't your favorite Eagle's album, you have to admit that this one is a biggie. Its lasting significance and popularity can attest to that. In the future, we hope to devote issues to some of the other albums. Next month, we'll be telling you all about the Hawaii concert as well as Henley's Walden Woods dinner benefit.

Important Stuff

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On a dark, desert highway.....

A while back, we asked our readers to tell us what the song "Hotel California" was about to them. We got a great response. Here's what some of you had to say....

I first heard the Eagles when I was riding around in my baby-sitter's friends convertible. The radio was playing Take It Easy. My baby-sitter's reaction to that song is similar to the reaction that I have today. Pure elation. That event started a long, happy relationship with a band that has not only given me the desire to play guitar, but also has given me memories that can never be replaced. The one song that continues to send chills down my spine, whenever I hear the opening notes play, is Hotel California. For some reason, it will forever be placed among the other chill-evoking songs from my past, like Riders on the Storm, by the Doors, and From the Beginning, by ELP. The beginning of these songs always take me back in time, to somewhere when I was much younger, and the only friend I had was the radio. The story is the same all over, I guess. We moved a lot, and making friends was never a strong point. But, in every place I lived, the radio was a constantly living thing. I would listen in the dark of night to everything from old radio dramas to science fiction shows. When the entertainment turned to music, it was the same rock station that saw me through to the dawn. Hotel California was a song that would come on late at night, and as I listened to the words, the same scene would come into play. I pictured Don Henley on a motorcycle, cruising down that dark, desert highway, with the wind in his hair. And, then the small light appeared on the dark horizon. It was so well sung, and the images came through the radio so clearly, it was like I was there. Seeing her, in a white dress, standing there with a lantern, just waiting for him. Everything from the pink champagne on ice, to the scene in the masters chambers, was playing in my head like I had been there. It always disturbed me that it seems he never gets away. I still see him fighting it today. The solos at the end made me want to play guitar so bad, I could taste it. When I learned that solo, so many years later, I'm sure I was prouder than I ever could have been. The one thing I wanted so desperately when I was young, was mine now, unlike so many other things that had fallen by the wayside. For years after first hearing that song, every time I visited California, I looked in doorways for her, in her white dress, still waiting for the next weary traveler. I guess I've grown up. I don't look for her anymore. But, whenever I hear the opening bars of the song, and whenever I play it on stage, the movie starts in my mind. I just follow happily, now. It just wouldn't be the same without it.

Our apologies to the author of this wonderful piece. We downloaded it, and lost the name of the author. Let us know that this is you and we'll give you the credit you deserve. L&M



"Hotel California" strikes me as a clever, insightful criticism of the decadent, self-indulgent lifestyle that swallowed up so many Californians in the seventies. Following the chaos and outrage of the decade before, I believe that people must have felt lost without the unity they had then. This lifestyle seems to be the product of a void that the sixties left, and the people who knew what they were doing then had to find a new place for themselves in the world.

As the lyrics say, "We haven't had that spirit here since 1969." In this line, the "captain" is telling us that the common bond that held huge numbers of people together during the sixties is gone. "And still those voices are calling from far away..." the song continues. This line rings of the legacy left behind by the leaders, and the casualties, of the decade before. In general, the whole song becomes an illustration of the post-sixties state of mind. An entire generation of lost souls are searching for a new collective identity to fill the space that was left by the last one. However, they find little success, filling the void instead with animal pleasures—not the spiritual connection they lack.

This song actually seems to be a striking introduction to the yuppie phenomenon of the eighties. These same people, together through the sixties, lost through the seventies, would grow to become the searchers, the hungry, of the eighties, perpetually consuming, always searching for satisfaction. Whatever it means, however, "Hotel California" leaves little doubt of its significance in a generation of recovering activist-children. It became the anthem for a generation and should serve as a warning to the next. I hope we are not the only one's paying attention....

—Bonnie Shenton
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