

## EAGLES

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conceited than the next. Don claims this was a defensive maneuver. "You've got to have a good attitude in this business period — if you want to survive. You've got to think you're good, because if you don't, boy, you'll get eaten alive."

"We liked being an opening act. In some ways the underdog position like that is a little bit easier to work from, because you only have to play for 50 minutes. You can put all your best stuff in and compact it into 50 minutes, 40 minutes or whatever you've got — and you can kick ass."

Recently, for the first time, the Eagles have started looking less interested in themselves onstage and more into their music. There is even a kind of jolliness and good feeling there.

"Jesus, don't write that," says J.D. "You'll wreck their image."

"It's been that way in the past year," says Don, "at least since Joe's been in the band. We still try to stay lean and hungry and not take too much for granted. Because it's harder to maintain it once you get there than it is coming up, and there are lots of other bands on the way up."

The Eagles, as the eastern critics point out, are a California band, and Glenn Frey opens each concert by saying something like, "Hello, we're the Eagles from Los Angeles." Only none of the Eagles is from Los Angeles. They come from Florida, Texas, Ohio, Nebraska and Michigan. What makes them so California?

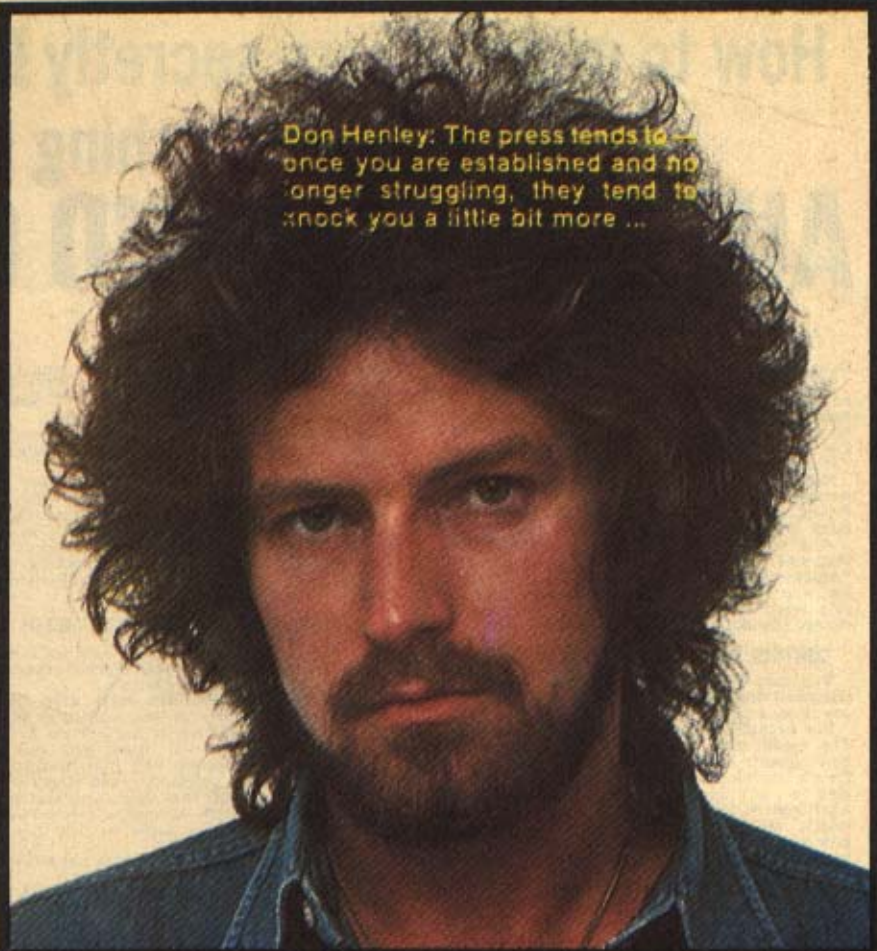
"But everybody in the music business in Los Angeles is from somewhere else," says Don. "That's what the California sound is: a culmination of the United States as a whole. The California sound is the American sound."

For the last several albums the Eagles have been writing about a life-style that has received the California label, too. As beautiful as the music may be, the lyrics are summed up in a line from one of their songs: "So you keep on singing after the thrill is gone." The songs seem to deal one way or another with empty, wasted lives. And maybe this is why all those rumors crop up.

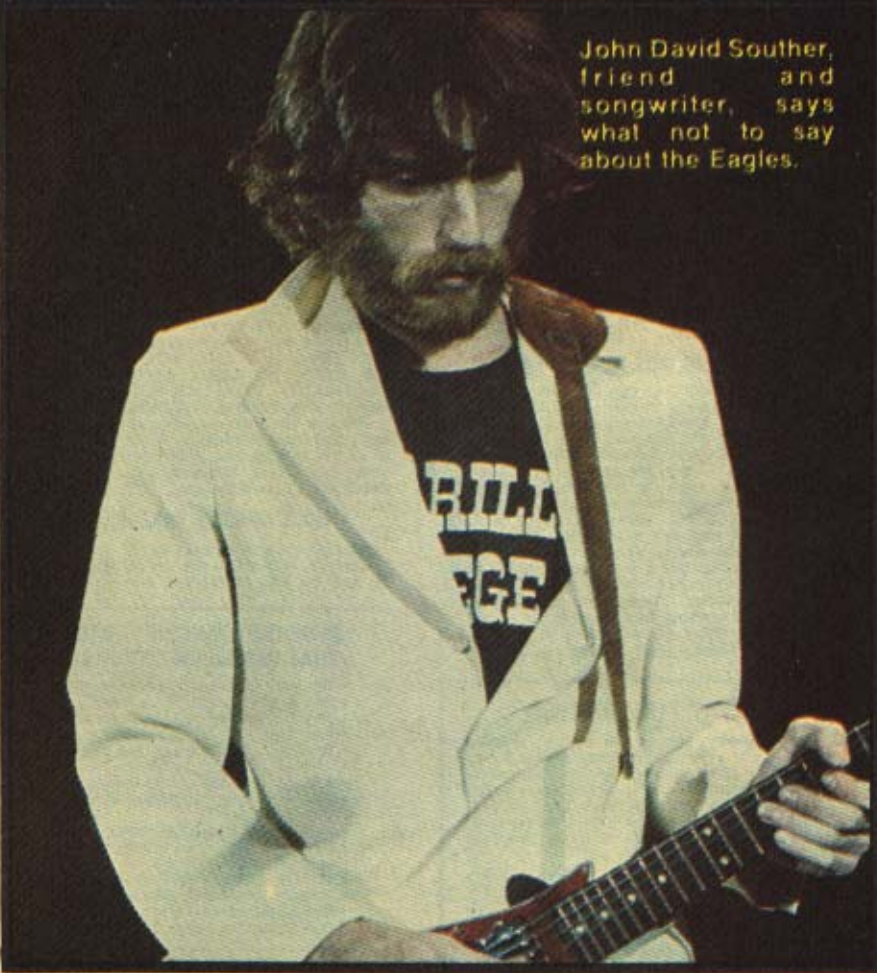
The culmination of these devastated songs is the new "Hotel California," a concept album which comes right out and deals with Los Angeles in graphic terms. And the scene isn't a pretty one.

"We're not exactly going to make friends with this album," says Don, "but that's what it's about. We're just saying, 'Look what's happening.' I don't feel totally that way about California. I love it and I hate it at the same time."

There are a lot of mixed emotions about the Eagles. Perfectionists like they are can never be truly happy, and Henley has an ulcer to prove it. Perhaps one thing can comfort them: Their inner turmoil and creative agonizing has produced music that speaks to, and often brings solace to, millions. Let's wish them peace — and preservation. □



Don Henley: The press tends to — once you are established and no longer struggling, they tend to knock you a little bit more ...



John David Souther, friend and songwriter, says what not to say about the Eagles.