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News Classifieds **Community** Directory Marketplace My Zwire!

Home -> Community -> Content Saturday 23 November, 2002

NEWS SEARCH

GO

Advanced search

Community

- Community Features
- Community Calendar
- TV Listings
- Weather
- Maps
- Directions
- Community Websites
- Create a Website
- Edit a Website

Links

- Classifieds**
- Maps/Directions**
- Business Directory**

Community Features

Herndon's 'Paperback Writer'
 Herndon man spreads the word about Paul, 'truth' about the Beatles

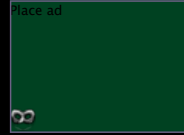
By David Loos March 19, 2002



Times Staff Photo/David Loos

Paul is dead.
Really.
And if you're just learning this now--well--you're certainly behind the times.
Because Paul McCartney has been dead since Nov. 9, 1966.

LOOKING FOR CLUES: Mere fans see only an album cover where Bruce "Doctor" Lev sees hundred of clues that prove Paul McCartney may be dead.



The Beatles carried on, of course, using a talented McCartney look-alike for their remaining four years, and one who continues to play the role of Paul today.

Do the math and that leaves only Ringo to carry on the original Beatles legacy.

Luckily the world also has Bruce "Doctor" Lev, a 36-year-old Herndon musician/mechanical engineer/writer, who has made it his mission to spread the word about Paul's untimely demise at the height of Beatlemania more than 35 years ago.

With his first book, "Billy Shears: the Secret History of the Beatles!" now on shelves, Lev has a new medium to complement his lectures on the subject.

While the book may be fiction, it also may be based on the truth--the truth according to Lev.

"There are hundreds and hundreds of clues everywhere," says Lev, who has lived in the area for the past 12 years.

"There are clues in the music, on the album covers, in the lyrics," he says.

Lev, who uses Doctor as his pen name, loves the intrigue of such a conspiracy theory. Give him 10 minutes, and he'll make a convincing case for Paul's demise.

Bounding up and down the stairs to his basement, where approximately 150 of his 400 LPs are Beatles-related, Lev produces album upon album in his defense.

At his lectures, the first of which he gave at a Lake Anne coffee shop three years ago, Lev brings both visual and audio clues to make his case.

To the skeptical, Lev offers these clues, "the most obvious," he says:

The Beatles never toured again after Nov. 9, 1966, the day of Paul's fiery car accident.

On the cover of "Abbey Road," Paul is barefoot and out of step, and a license plate behind the quartet reads 28IF, as in Paul would have been 28 if he had not been killed.

Hold a mirror across half of "Lonely Hearts" on the cover of "Sgt. Pepper" and it reads "One He Die."

At the very end of "Strawberry Fields Forever," John Lennon murmurs, "I buried him."

And then there is the whole playing songs backward theory, of which Lev, of course, is a diehard believer.

What Lev does in "Billy Shears" (Billy Shears equaling Billy's Here--another clue) is to explore a side to the Paul-is-dead story that few have even thought about.

"My story is told through Billy Campbell, who legend has it was the double for Paul," Lev explains. "You've just got to pretend that it's all true, and, if it is, then what is his story."

Billy felt completely insecure. "So you three lads really think I can replace Paul and would actually want me to be a part of your band?"

John, being the realist, answered, "Las, we haven't a choice! But we also wouldn't have asked you in today if we didn't think you could do it."

Then Ringo spoke in a most sincere tone. "We're really depending on you, Billy."

Reaching new audiences across the country, Lev recently returned from the semiannual BeatleFest in New Jersey, where he spoke to his largest audience to date and sold dozens of books.

"There were thousands of people there; it was great exposure. ... There were probably 250 people at my lecture."

The Beatles obsession is somewhat strange for a man who wasn't even born until the height of Beatlemania and certainly qualifies as a product of the 1980s.

"In 1978, when I was 13, I snuck into my sister's room and kept listening to this one album of hers," Lev remembers. "I listened to it all the time. ... It turned out to be 'Sgt. Pepper.'"

His interest in both the Beatles and music grew from there. Today, he plays with his own band, Roxygen, and sits in with other local acts like Soul Purpose, especially when they play at Ned Devine's pub in Herndon.

While Lev writes many of his own songs and is proficient on the guitar and drums, he is also the first to admit that he does not make a living through his music, lectures or writing.

The Long Island native spends his days as a mechanical engineer examining applications for the U.S. Patent Office in Arlington.

"It's fun work ... and I've learned lots about licensing and intellectual property, so all my stuff with the book is copyrighted and trademarked."

The man who once studied rocket science admits, "People were a little surprised I could write a book."

"I actually had written the screenplay first but was turned down several times. ... So then I wrote the book. It took about 10 months."

The final product, he says, is an easy read on purpose. "I want kids to be able to read it also."

With the Beatles remaining popular more than 30 years after the breakup, Lev has found an eager audience willing to absorb anything relating to the Fab Four.

Some famous names have even taken an interest. While speaking at the conference, Lev had a close encounter with Billy Kramer, a singer from the 1960s and good friend of Paul McCartney.

"He had kind of heckled me throughout the lecture," Lev says. "After I was done, he came up to me and asked, 'So, if Paul is really dead, how come he always gives me a big hug when he sees me.'"

"I had to think fast to come up with a decent answer," Lev remembered with a laugh.

He has also come into contact with Pete Best, the infamous fifth Beatle who was replaced by Ringo Starr early in the band's career.

"I met him when he played at Jaxx last year. ... I sent him and his band the book," Lev says.

The response was positive, says the author, and Lev hopes to meet Best again this summer when he makes his second pilgrimage to Liverpool.

In the meantime, Doctor Lev hopes to continue to raise eyebrows with his tale of Paul's demise.

And, as word spreads about "Billy Shears," Lev hopes to reach wider audiences with his lectures.

Just don't ask him to speak on April 23, because he's already booked.

"I'll be at the MCI Center," he said. "I've got tickets for the Paul McCartney show."

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Reader Opinions

Post your opinion and share your thoughts with other readers!

Name: Bruce Lev **Date: Oct, 17 2002**
For more information about the Paul-Is-Dead mystery and/or Doctor Lev please log on to: www.Paul-Is-Dead.com

Name: Mike Holyak **Date: Jul, 14 2002**
Although I don't really believe that Paul is dead... it is intriguing that the Beatles would have so many clues in their music, album covers, etc. Although they deny involvement, they had to know what was going on. I have been a Beatles fan since even before the first Ed Sullivan show in February 1964... I am going to this years Beatle Fair in San Diego and look forward to meeting Louise Harrison, Dr. Lev and the other folks there.... check out my webpage at: home.san.rr.com/yakspg PS I will probably be buying the Billy Shears book.... Mike Holyak San Diego

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