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The Bossa Nova Years

The attention to the assassination of John F. Kennedy occasioned by the 30th anniversary of that event set off a complex of memories in me, as it doubtless did in everyone old enough to remember it. It is a sobering thought that half the population of America does not remember it at all, or remembers it only dimly as something that made the tall people cry.

The memories were rendered the more vivid by three small jobs I did, in the month or so before that anniversary, for Michael Lang, who is in charge of the CD reissues at Verve Records. Because of my involvement in the bossa nova movement, he asked me to compile, program, and annotate CDs drawn from the albums of Antonio Carlos Jobim and Astrud Gilberto, and to write notes for the CD reissue of the Stan Getz-Gary McFarland album called *Big Band Bossa Nova*. Music, odors (particularly perfumes) and shocking public events are remarkable catalysts of recollection. I found myself listening again to music I had once known intimately but in most cases hadn't heard in years. The Getz-McFarland album was recorded a little over a year before the Kennedy assassination. And I spent much of the day of the assassination with Gary.

This is how I became involved with Jobim and the Brazilians and Gary McFarland:

Some of the time I spent as editor of Down Beat -- from May of 1959 to September 1961 -- was exhilarating. I learned to run a magazine. More significantly, I met a lot of my musical heroes, and some of them became my friends, among them Ed Thigpen, Donald Byrd, Dave Brubeck, Art Farmer, Benny Golson, Buddy Rich, Miles Davis, Bill Evans, and Philly Joe Jones. Yet I hated the job, for it was a constant contest with the magazine's owner, an Irish Catholic conservative named John Maher who made frugality into an art form and launched periodic attempts to keep black musicians off the cover of the magazine. The magazine's publisher, Chuck Suber, backed me in my war to make sure that people like Cannonball Adderley did get on the cover. Even if the issue of justice meant nothing, how could you sell the magazine if you kept from the covers the most popular artists in jazz? The magazine's own polls, both the readers' and critics' poll, indicated that the majority of them were black. The issue that ended my tenure, however, was one of Maher's periodic budget parings. He ordered me to fire the magazine's gifted young art director, Bob Billings, who had done wonderful work for us. I resigned.

I had not planned to leave the magazine so soon. I had needed another six months to put my finances in order. One of the things I did to survive was write reviews for Don Gold, my predecessor at Down Beat, who now worked at Hugh Hefner's ill-fated Show Business magazine. And one day in a pile of records Don had sent me I discovered an album by some Brazilian singer named Joao Gilberto. Since my idea of Brazilian music was Carmen Miranda, I didn't hasten to listen to it. When I did, I was overwhelmed by the originality, swing, subtlety, and beauty of this music, particularly the songs of someone called Antonio Carlos Jobim.

Dizzy Gillespie and Lalo Schifrin came to town. Dizzy was playing one of the Jobim tunes, something called *Desafinado*. At my apartment, Lalo showed me the chord changes on a little beige Wurlitzer electric piano I had then. I gave the Joao Gilberto record a rave.

In circumstances I no longer remember, I was offered a job as a copy editor at the Chicago Defender. I told the editor I would take it as long as it was understood that I planned to move soon to New York.

Whether I was the first white journalist ever to work there, I don't know, but the chasm between black and white America became even more disturbing to me than it already was. I realized that the reporters at that paper had had no access to disciplined training. There were very few black journalists on major newspapers then, perhaps none. This was long before the time of Ed Bradley and Bernard Shaw. How should I treat these reporters? Should I coddle them, out of compassion for the lack of solid training? Or treat them as impatient editors had treated me when I was learning my craft? I chose the latter.

In December, I was approached by some musicians I knew. Alto saxophonist Paul Winter had won one of the college jazz contests and had applied and been approved for a State Department tour of Latin America with a sextet. Richard Evans, a fine bass player who had been with the Eddie Higgins Trio, and Harold Jones would, with pianist Warren Bernhardt, comprise the rhythm section. Dick Whitsell, who had gone to Northwestern University with Paul, was on trumpet, and Les Rout on baritone. Richard, Harold, and Les were black, the others white. Les was making the trip to do research for his master's degree in Latin American history. The State Department wanted the group to find someone to act as manager of the tour; Paul asked me if I would go. I was already fascinated by Latin America, the more so since hearing the new Brazilian music. I said I'd go.

I gave my notice at the Defender.

I remember one young man I thought had the makings of a fine reporter, and for just that reason I had devoted some harsh critical attention to him. I thought he hated me for it. When he learned I was leaving, he said to me with eyes misted, "If you won't teach us, who will?" It chokes me even now to remember that moment. But I had to go. I hope he did well.

My young French wife went home to Paris with our son, to stay with her parents for the six months I was to be away. She never came back, and my son is now a composer for French television.

Around the first of February, the Paul Winter Sextet and I flew to New York, where it was bitterly cold, and then to Miami,

where we learned that Richard, Harold, and Les would not be allowed into the hotel where we had reservations. So we all stayed in a black motel.

From Florida we flew to Haiti, where we did some thoroughly useless concerts for people living in appalling poverty who hadn't the remotest idea what our music was about. Papa Doc's Ton Ton Macoute prowled our audiences in sunglasses with American army 45s protruding from their waistbands. There were machine guns in front of the presidential palace. Near the hotel in Petionville where we were lodged, Dick Whitsell and Richard Evans watched two of Papa Doc's uniformed thugs beat a naked and chained prisoner to death in the street. Whitsell got very drunk that night. Richard was in turmoil: here the tormentors of the blacks were black.

I was never as glad to leave a place as I was Port au Prince. As the plane climbed, I took a picture of the ribs of a wrecked ship on a beach. Richard Evans, who was sitting with me, said, "You like lonely things, don't you?"

"Yes," I said, "I do."

We did concerts all over Mexico. I had learned Spanish in the weeks before our leaving and did some talks on American music at universities. We proceeded south through the countries of Central America, including Guatemala and Nicaragua. We played under incredible conditions, once with a redbrown sloth hanging over the outdoor bandstand in a park. And everywhere we saw the evidence of American exploitation of these tragic peoples. What you seldom hear is that the Germans were in there too, particularly the Siemens company. Les Rout taught me Latin American history. In Colombia we visited the home of Simon Bolivar. Because the peoples he had led to separation from Spain were accustomed only to monarchy and authority, Bolivar said, "Tyrants will rise from my grave." Les told me that there were only two ways for a poor boy to get education in Latin America: the army or the church. So long as this remained true, he said, Latin America would remain volatile.

Les had a habit of disappearing for hours at a time. The guys made jokes that he was working for the CIA. Years later, Les visited me in Toronto. He said that during our trip he had been writing a report on conditions, but for a foundation. I too had a habit of wandering off, to see conditions for myself. In some slum somewhere -- I think it was Tegucegalpa, the capital of Honduras -- I saw shanty-town people washing their clothes in a river full of garbage. I heard the knocking of hammers. I looked up and there atop someone's pathetic home, Les Rout, hammer in hand, was helping a poor man repair his roof. I can never think of Les without seeing him there, grinning at me.

Everywhere we were overworked by the Cultural Affairs Officers, always adding extra concerts to our schedule.

We arrived in Costa Rica to learn that the Cultural Affairs Officer had failed to clarify our hotel reservations. We had to sit in the lobby, exhausted, waiting for rooms. The CAO said this gave him a chance to discuss a small detail with us: he wanted us to do a couple of extra concerts. After our concert that night, we attended some sort of reception in a penthouse atop a fairly tall building. The CAO approached Warren Bernhardt, asking him to speak to me because I was so unreasonable. About what? Warren asked. Well, just because he'd asked for a couple of extra concerts, I'd threatened to throw him in the swimming pool. "Gene threatened throw you in the pool?" quoth Warren, who is big and powerful. "I'll throw you off this fucking roof!"

The Cultural Affairs Officers were part of the United States Information Service. Later I learned that the post was often a cover for the CIA. God, some of those USIS people were stupid -- and contemptuous of the Latin peoples around them. There were, happily, some outstanding exceptions, gifted, intelligent and dedicated officers who knew Spanish and loved the people. I was perpetually astonished at the inconsistency of the U.S. foreign service.

As we were picking up speed on the runway in Panama, Harold Jones, who was usually asleep (how I envied him) before takeoff, looked out the window and saw that the cap had been left off a fuel tank. Gasoline was pouring across the wing near an exhaust flame. He called a stewardess, who blanched and ran to the pilot's cabin. He cut the engine and taxied back to the terminal. Somebody replaced the cap and we took off. To this day I call Harold Gas Cap Jones when I see him. He saved our lives.

I had been warned that Latin America was a strange and disturbing contradiction, nations of great beauty and appalling human exploitation and poverty. Richard Evans was full of anger, and wasn't hesitant to express it. Whenever we did seminars, I could always detect the Communists in the audience. They asked exactly the same questions from one country to another about the treatment of blacks in the United States. There was nothing anyone could say to excuse it. Les Rout and I had the chief responsibility for answering questions, because we spoke Spanish. In Colombia, or perhaps it was Peru, the racial question came up again, and in English. Before I could respond, Richard said, "Gene, do you mind if I answer that question?"

"Go ahead," I said, wondering what would come out.

He paused for a moment, looked at the questioner, and said, "I grew up in the ghetto in Chicago. Nothing I ever saw or knew of the way black people are treated in the United States even compares to the way you people -- " and he jabbed a finger " -- treat the Indians."

We continued down the west coast of South America, increasingly exhausted by our tight schedule and frightening flights in rickety 1930s DC-3s long ago sold off by American airlines. I remember a terrifying takeoff from the airport of La Paz, Bolivia. The field is at 13,000 feet and the plane must be above stall speed for that altitude before it will even lift. The plane was only a few feet off the ground when it passed over the edge of a plateau, and we looked down at the city 2,000 feet

below.

We didn't fly over the Andes; we flew through them. They are awesome. Dick Whitsell and I somehow managed to hold each other together during those flights. I remember one long night flight down the coast of Chile when Dick cried in my arms.

There was relief in Santiago, Chile. We were met by a delegation of jazz fans, one of whose leaders was Jose (Pepe) Hosiasson. They treated us like royalty, and one of my happiest memories of the trip is the time we spent with him and his friends. We are still in touch.

Then we played once-glorious Buenos Aires, most of whose street lamps were not lit and whose automobiles were old because the economy had been left in ruins by Juan and Evita Peron. The USIS people held a press conference for us. The U.S. ambassador showed up with some sort of liveryman leading his two poodles which wore rhinestone, or for all I know diamond, collars. This display, mind you, in front of the press in this land of pain.

We started up the east coast of the great continent. We played in the backwaters of primitive Paraguay, land of sequestered Nazis. Probably Josef Mengele was there at the time. I remember Richard Evans sitting in with a Paraguayan harp band; they seemed amazed that he could grasp their music, which was harmonically quite simple. Giddy with exhaustion, we bought sacks of oranges from a trucker for almost nothing and had a juicy equivalent of a snowball fight. We bonged them on road signs as we traveled in two Volksagen vans.

Then we played Montevideo, Uruguay, then known as the Switzerland of Latin America.

I was hearing more and more of the new Brazilian music, including some Jobim and Gilberto records that had not yet come out in the States. And then we played our first gig in Brazil, in a city named Porto Allegre. We played some other city, and then we were to go to Rio de Janeiro. The Brazilian air force took us there. We came over a great bank of clouds, dazzling white in the sunlight, in a Lockheed Lodestar. There was the city below us, stretching in its glory, the great sweep of Copacana Beach, the mountain Corcovado (meaning the hunchback) on which stands that astonishingly huge statue of Jesus with outstretched arms, the sailboats on Guanabara Bay, the cable cars to the top of Sugar Loaf. It was unbelievable. Later I used the memory of that arrival in the lyric to a Jobim tune, *Samba do Aviao*, which we called in English *Song of the Jet*. Tony Bennett recorded it.

I did not yet know Jobim.

Somehow or other, I had been told to call a Swiss-born Brazilian music publisher named Enrique Lebendiger. I visited his office to discuss the new Brazilian music, this bossa nova. He gave me Joao Gilberto's phone number. (It is pronounced, with a tilde over the a, Zho-ahn-oh Zhil-BERT-oo in Rio. But the Brazilians tend to swallow that final o, so that it almost sounds like Jean Gilbert in French.) I called the number. Gilberto's wife answered. She spoke English, which fact would change her life. She told me her name was Astrud. I told her I would like to meet her husband. She said Joao was rehearsing that evening at the home of Antonio Carlos Jobim, whose number she gave me. The name is not pronounced Ho-bim, as some American disc jockeys have it, thinking it is Spanish. In Portuguese it is Zho-beem; and in any case his ancestry is French. He spoke little English, then.

I arrived at his house at Ipanema Beach that evening. It was raining, inevitably making me think of the song *A Rainy Night in Rio*. Never in my life had I felt so much a stranger in a strange land. Jobim invited me in. He was younger than I had anticipated -- 37. I entered his modest living room. On the sofa, with his guitar, rehearsing with a vocal group called the Carioca Boys, was Joao Gilberto, his voice so soft that one could hardly hear it. I remember standing by the refrigerator with Jobim in his kitchen, speaking the one common language we had, French, saying that I thought I could translate some of his songs into English and that there would be an audience for them in North America. We were drinking Scotch; we would drink a lot of it together over the years. He has a peculiarly Brazilian way of pronouncing it: it comes out almost Sco-watch. And he made a remark that still sticks in my mind. He said in English, "I'm crazy, but he -- " indicating Joao in the living room "-- is more crazy." It was a terse and keen insight.

I told him he reminded me of a friend of mine, Gerry Mulligan. They looked a little alike in those days. He said that Gerry Mulligan's records had been a big influence on the development of bossa nova; Joao Gilberto later told me the same thing.

I didn't attend most of the sextet's concerts. I'd heard the repertoire endless times. I spent a few evenings in a jazz club called Bottle's Bar near the beach in Copacana. There I met a young jazz pianist, much enamored of Horace Silver and sharing Horace's African and Portuguese background. His name was Sergio Mendes.

In a bus on the way north, I wrote the lyric that would be called *Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars* and mailed it back to Jobim. We played in Belo Horizonte, a beautiful city, the night Brazil for the first time won the world football championship. The city went mad, as the whole country did, with dancing everywhere, samba in the streets, rhythms made on pots and pans and hubcaps and bottles. We played one more concert in Brazil, at Belem near the mouth of the Amazon. I remember looking out the window of some thatch-roofed lodging at the river as Warren Bernhardt and I listened in headphones on a Koss portable record player to the Bill Evans recording of *Haunted Heart*.

We must have played it ten times that last night on the south bank of the Amazon. It makes the Mississippi look like a creek.

It was now July, and we couldn't wait to get home. We played British Guiana and Venezuela, stopped over in Jamaica, then were on our way to New York. Richard Evans, who had left home in anger, got down on his knees and kissed the tarmac at what was then still Idlewild Airport, then raised his arms and looked to heaven in laughing supplication. I was as glad as he to be back in the United States, if not as demonstrative. Warren Bernhardt calculated that we had traveled 30,000 miles. The journey had changed my thinking about the world forever. It had opened my perspectives and left me shaken, not least because of Les Rout's guided-tour history lessons.

I intended to stay in New York. Warren Bernhardt and Dick Whitsell decided to stay too. Paul Winter had been in touch with President Kennedy's social secretary, and got an invitation to take the group to the White House, the publicity from which, as he had rightly foreseen, would launch his professional career. I declined the invitation. As a correspondent in France, I had covered the French negotiations to withdraw from Viet Nam, which had been a disaster for them. The American military thought they could do what those mere frogs could not. What the Viet Minh fought was not some weakling army but the Foreign Legion, made up of some of the toughest soldiers in the world, including former Wehrmacht officers. The little guerillas kicked the hell out of them. I had learned a great deal about Vietnamese history, and I knew how bitterly they hated foreign control of their country after about 900 years of Chinese domination and a hundred of French. I knew they would never, never, never stop fighting, they would never, never surrender. It was a tragedy for the United States that its leaders had not done the right reading and research. Kennedy was getting the United States into a morass, a war that could only be won with nuclear weapons at a price of destroying the world. I could foresee the cost of this mindless adventure. Nor had I admired the hypocrisy, not to mention equivocation, of the Bay of Pigs debacle. I didn't want to go to the White House.

The first person I called on arriving back in New York was Art Farmer, who told me to meet him at a bar called Jim and Andy's. You will hear those of us who lived in the jazz world of New York in the 1960s refer, usually nostalgically, to that almost legendary watering hole. The first issue of the Jazzletter, in 1981, was about that estimable tavern on 48th Street a few doors west of Sixth Avenue, as New Yorkers insisted on calling what the street signs identify as Avenue of the Americas.

The sole proprietor of Jim and Andy's was Jim Koulouvaris, a former Seabee of Greek parentage. He was a tough, irreverent, and kind, and he liked musicians. He trusted them, and let them run up tabs, sometimes huge tabs, during times of duress. Though there were other bars catering to musicians -- Junior's, Charlie's, Joe Harbor's, all of them gone now. Jim and Andy's was the favorite for its good food, good drinks, and above all the deep sense of camaraderie, perhaps I should say love, among the musicians who hung out there. And they were the cream: Coleman Hawkins, Bob Brookmeyer, Phil Woods, Jimmy Raney, Jim Hall, Doc Severinsen, Will Bradley, Eddie Safranski, Grady Tate, George Duvivier, Jo Jones, Carl Kress, Nick Travis, Willie Dennis, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Jerome Richardson, Richard Davis, Claus Ogerman, Ben Webster, Hank d'Amico, Clark Terry, Dizzy Gillespie at times (when occasionally he came in off the road), Eddie (Lockjaw) Davis, and of course Gary McFarland and Stan Getz. Musicians used to store their instruments, get their phone calls, and cash their checks there.

One of the first persons I met in Jim and Andy's was Gary McFarland. I'd heard of him vaguely. He introduced himself. He said that in 1959, he was one of a number of aspiring musicians who had submitted to Down Beat a tape of th[illegible] music, applying for a scholarship to the Berklee School of Music in Boston that the magazine gave. He said that I awarded the scholarship to him. If I did so, and I suppose I did, it was undoubtedly in consultation with Chuck Suber. I had forgotten the incident. But Gary was certain that it was because of me that he had gone to Berklee for two years, after which he moved to New York and wrote two pieces for the Gerry Mulligan Concert Band, titled *Weep* and *Chuggin'*.

Gary was very much a west-coast American. He was born in Los Angeles October 23, 1933. His family moved to Grants Pass, Oregon, when he was in his middle teens. He attended Oregon State University, then went into military service. Somewhere along the way, he got interested in jazz and took up vibraphone. He studied music at San Jose City College in California, attended jazz workshops in Lenox, Massachusetts, and then made that application to Down Beat for a scholarship.

Who knows who in North America was the first to "discover" bossa nova? Dizzy, ever fascinated by Latin music, had been using its melodies and rhythms for some time. Bob Brookmey[illegible] was already aware of it. Charlie Byrd had encountered the music on a trip to Brazil, and made an album with Stan Getz even while I was in Rio with Jobim. One track of the album was Jobim's *Desafinado*, which in Rio they pronounce Day-za-fee-NAH-doo, emphasis on the fourth syllable. Stan got the hit on that tune, and it associated him permanently with bossa nova, although it was really a vocal, not an instrumental, music. But like the great American standards of the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, it lent itself beautifully to jazz improvisation.

The Brazilians had solved the problem of the ballad. American popular music -- and jazz -- had advanced by the use of ever more interesting chord progressions. The Brazilians, by introducing a soft eighth-note pattern in the drums and an off-center rhythm in the bass (as well as an irregular but steady rhythm on the guitar) could sit on one chord for some time and still have forward motion. The pulse in bo[illegible]a nova was not on two and four but on one and three (actually on one, since in the original notation, the music is usually in two-four). Not that

harmony was neglected. On the contrary, the best Brazilian songs were characterized by warm and subtle chord changes.

The music burst on the North American consciousness with that Getz record.

Gary McFarland, then 29, was a tall, arrestingly handsome man who looked as if he might have played football, which I think he did. He was a rather glamorous figure. He had beautiful features and a full head of straight, prematurely graying hair. He had an engaging manner and he was very popular with the musicians, and when he got married, virtually the entire population of Jim and Andy's bar went to the reception. Like all of us in those days, he liked to drink. He was confident without being cocky, and he had a wry sense of humor.

Hung on the door to the kitchen of Jim and Andy's was a playboy calendar. The current month's picture was a chest shot of a well-endowed (and of course carefully air-brushed) young beauty. Across her boobs Gary wrote:

"To Gary, dearest: As you strive to make your way to fame and fortune in Gotham, I hope you won't forget this homely bit of backwoods philosophy: It doesn't matter how you play the game, it's who wins, baby."

"Love from

"Your Mom."

Gary's inscription struck so many of us as funny that the same girl remained on display on that door for a long time.

Often I read about Creed Taylor as a producer of "commercial jazz". And I suppose he was, although they were all very good and very musical commercial albums. He was also the producer of some fine and uncompromising records, such as the dazzling *Focus* album by Stan Getz and Eddie Sauter. Creed did that great album *The Individualism of Gil Evans*; I remember as if it were yesterday sitting with Gil in Creed's office listening to the tape as I prepared to write the liner notes. He made some great albums with Jimmy Smith, and masterpieces with Bill Evans, including *Conversations with Myself* and that album Bill did with a large orchestra and arrangements by Claus Ogerman called, unimaginatively enough, *Bill Evans with Symphony Orchestra*.

I attended most of the sessions Bill did for Creed, and saw Creed as an astute and creative producer, one of whose greatest gifts was relaxing musicians, even though (I later realized) he was seething with tension as the clock ticked and costs soared.

Just how astute he was became clear to me when I noticed that the *Big Band Bossa Nova* album was recorded August 27 and 28, 1962, scarcely more than a month after I got back from South America and only a few months after Stan got the hit on *Desafinado*. According to the liner notes Gary wrote for the album in its first release, Stan had suggested their collaboration, probably after hearing those two pieces Gary had written for Gerry Mulligan and perhaps after hearing some tunes in bossa nova style Gary had written for fellow vibraharpist Cal Tjader, another (though occasional; he lived in California) Jim and Andy's visitor.

Gary must have depopulated Jim and Andy's on those two days of recording, because the personnel includes a roster of its regulars, among them Doc Severinsen, Bernie Glow, Clark Terry, Nick Travis, Willie Dennis, Bob Brookmeyer, Romeo Penque, Jim Hall, and more. He used no saxophones on the sessions, only flute, alto flute, clarinet, and bass clarinet. It was the mark of Creed Taylor's daring that he let this comparatively unknown arranger and composer use a full band on an expensive session.

Four of the eight tunes on the album are originals by Gary. I noticed in the notes of the original album that all four were published by MJQ Music. There is background on that. Gary had met John Lewis at Lenox, where John had encouraged him. And there is a certain affinity between them, a taste for lightness and a use of delicate contrapuntal textures. What is notable in the album, as I hear it again, is its airiness. On the other hand, there is a certain naivete about it. One of the older arrangers, and a very seasoned one, said of Gary's music, "He should have stayed in school another couple of years." That may be so. But as the years went on, that album had an influence on younger writers.

The album reveals a certain influence of Gil Evans, whom Gary very much admired -- as who didn't? When you realize that the so-called cool school was born in Gil Evans' apartment in writing experiments by John Lewis, Johnny Carisi, and Gerry Mulligan, this early sponsorship of Gary by John and Gerry is logical. And Creed Taylor had a deep love for Gil's writing; thus his liking for Gary's work was also logical. Ultimately, Gary came out of Gil, and that leads us back to the Claude Thornhill band, where that kind of writing began. Thornhill brought the French horn into jazz ensembles; Gary used Ray Alonge on French horn on *Big Band Bossa Nova*.

John F. Kennedy had 14 months to live when Stan and Gary made that album.

Jobim came to New York to take part in a concert of Brazilian music at Carnegie Hall with Bola Sete, Baden Powell, Sergio Mendes, Roberto Menescal, Luiz Bonfa, Carlos Lyric, and Oscar Castro-Neves. Backstage I introduced Jobim to Gerry Mulligan. The producer was Sidney Frey, who owned Audio Fidelity records. I wrote a piece about the bossa nova arrival in New York for what was then called Hi-Fi Stereo Review, in which I said that the musicians had never been paid for that concert. Sidney Frey sued me and the magazine for libel. I knew I could prove the truth of the statement. I called Chuck Suber in Chicago for advice, because of his astute knowledge of the business. "Where do I find some witnesses who hate Sidney Frey and will testify to his character?"

"Go down to the lobby of the Brill Building," Chuck said. It is a storied office-building on Broadway, filled with music

publishers, large and small. "Stand in the lobby and throw a rock," Chuck said. "Anybody you hit will do."

But the magazine chose to sop Sidney Frey off with a few pages of free ads, which was cheaper than paying lawyers. As far as I know, those musicians never were paid. A lot of them were broke and hungry in that cold winter. I can remember going to a party at Lalo Schifrin's apartment in Queen's. Baden Powell carried his guitar in a blanket, thinking that would keep it warm. At Lalo's he played duets with Jimmy Raney. It was a wonderful party. Sidney Frey later died. I don't know whether anyone mourned. I certainly didn't.

Jobim and I wrote some more songs that winter. Some were translations, some were new. We made a demo of *Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars*. I was the singer, Jobim was the guitarist, and Bill Evans was the pianist. I treasured that tape and lost it in a fire.

Creed Taylor took Getz, Gilberto, and Jobim into the studio to make an album. One of the songs Gilberto sang was *Garota de Ipanema*, to which Norman Gimbel had written an English lyric called *The Girl from Ipanema*. Gilberto spoke no English. Creed wanted a chorus in English. Astrud Gilberto said she could sing in English. Creed had her do a chorus. To issue the song as a 45 r.p.m. single, he shortened the track by omitting Joao Gilberto's chorus and leaving Astrud's in. The record was a hit, almost overnight. It made Astrud, who wasn't even a professional singer, famous; and left her husband, the greatest singer of the bossa nova movement, in obscurity in North America. Later they were divorced.

Stan Getz called Creed's office. Astrud had not been included in the contract, and Betsy, Creed's secretary, thought he was calling to see that Astrud was paid at least something. On the contrary, he was calling to be sure she would not be.

The story got around Jim and Andy's. Zoot Sims had called Stan "a whole bunch of interesting guys." Al Cohn said, "It's nice to see that success hasn't changed Stan Getz."

After a period of financial desperation, I began to make some money on my songs (the first of which was recorded by Mark Murphy, the second by Tony Bennett) and on a novel I had written in Chicago and revised in New York. Canadian composer Ron Collier had been in New York on a scholarship, studying with George Russell. When he returned to Toronto, he let me have his basement apartment in a gray "brownstone" on West End Avenue between 70th and 71st. Diahann Carroll lived a few doors north of me, and around the corner in a modernistic building on the last block of West 70th, Erroll Garner, Roger Kellaway, and Tony Studd. My apartment, which had brick walls and a small courtyard from which you could look up through locust leaves at a patch of sky, was a hidden, secret, and comforting little dump. Jobim would come by to work on songs on a guitar I'd bought on a little side street in Colombia for the equivalent of 40 dollars. Jobim called it "a nice friendly little guitar." The dry heat of that apartment cracked and then destroyed it. All the Brazilians were having trouble with their guitars in that New York steam heat.

Gary McFarland came to that apartment a lot, and we wrote together. Songs poured out of that basement, along with a stream of short stories. Bill Evans lived with me for a while there. We wrote *Turn Out the Stars* there, a beautiful melody that is completely unsingable.

Whatever I thought about John F. Kennedy, cool and cynical though he was, he exuded a bonhomie that made the nation feel good and delivered speeches that inspired confidence. Handsome, young, with a beautiful wife and young family, he seemed to embody that ever-improving future we were all taught to believe was historically inevitable. And remarkably beautiful music flooded the land, coming from or inspired by the Brazilians.

And then came November 22, 1963, the day none of us who were old enough to understand -- or try to -- it can ever get out of our minds. I dropped in at Woody Herman's office to see his manager, Abe Turchen. Abe's nephew Dick told me as I entered, "The president's been shot!" I thought it was a joke until I saw the TV in Abe's office. I went down to the A&R recording studio where Woody was recording an album for Phillips. The band had heard the news. The tune was *A Taste of Honey*. Woody did one more take and called off the session. As I've said before, there is a mourning in that track that haunts me, something not in the song or the chart but the performance.

Woody and I went downstairs and next door -- to Jim and Andy's. We slumped side by side in a booth, facing the TV set, watching the eerie unfolding horror story. Gary McFarland came in, his face as bleak as everyone else's. No, I hadn't been a Kennedy fan. But this? To rescind an election with bullets?

Gary said, "You wouldn't believe what just happened. I was just crossing the street and I ran into Sonny Taylor." Sonny was a thief, a "booster", as he defined his trade, a character out of Damon Runyon. He hung around Jim and Andy's. He was trusted to such an extent that if Jimmy had to go away for an hour and there was no one else, Sonny ran the cash register and served the drinks. We all liked him, old rough-neck though he was. He once said to me, "It used to be, Your money or your life. Now they want your money and your life." It was prophetic. When Sonny got a load of new merchandise, he'd get rid of it in Jim and Andy's. He once sold the boys so many dark blue raincoats that everyone had to write his name in his, and when the bar -- The Gym, as Gary had named it -- emptied at night it looked as if the navy was leaving.

Gary told us Sonny had just asked him, "What size shirt do you wear, Gary?"

Gary told him, and said, "Why?"

"Too bad," Sonny said. "I got a suit dat would be poifect for you if you was two sizes smaller."

"What's the matter with you, Sonny?" Gary demanded. "Don't you know the president's been shot?"

Sonny said, "How'm I s'posed to know what you're t'inkin'?" Life goes on.

Woody left. Gary and I soon followed. We spent the rest of the afternoon in his apartment, watching television with his wife Gail. They had not been married long.

I lived in New York from 1962 to 1969, when I moved to Toronto to work mostly in television and radio, both writing and singing. I kept in touch with my friends in New York and Los Angeles, and some of them would come up to play gigs or just sit, Johnny Mercer, Bill Evans and Paul Desmond among them. Gerry Mulligan was a guest on one of my television shows.

Gary's career blossomed. He made a good many albums, some of them very good. For a while he toured with his own quintet, but it was really as a composer that he made his mark.

One day early in November, 1971, just short of eight years after the death of John F. Kennedy, he went to a New York bar, one of those we used to call a civilian bar. Jim and Andy's was closed that day. Someone slipped liquid methadone into Gary's drink and that of a friend who accompanied him. It killed both of them. Gary's widow believes that it was deliberate murder, perhaps done as a prank. We were entering that kind of dark age.

Lyndon Johnson, who held meetings with staff while defecating and pulled his dog's ears and raised his shirt to show a surgery scar, deepened the war in Viet Nam and enraged the young. Richard Nixon succeeded him and, when he was entrapped in crimes and pardoned by Gerald Ford, proved that those who are powerful enough can get away with anything. Only the weak are punished, and for minor crimes at that. The mood of America became cynical. Bossa nova faded into history, replaced by snarling guitars. An ugly perfunctory kind of sex replaced the romanticism of Kern and Gershwin -- and Jobim and Carlos Lyra and other Brazilians.

And so many of the friends and acquaintances of those Jim and Andy's days are gone: Jack Whittemore, the talent agent everyone loved, Alec Wilder, Jo Jones, Carl Kress, Richie Kamuca, Nick Travis, Willie Dennis (who died in an improbable car crash in Central Park), Lockjaw Davis, Coleman Hawkins, Jo Jones, Johnny Carisi, Ben Webster, Marky Markowitz, Dizzy Gillespie, Bill Evans, Gil Evans, Miles Davis, Buddy Rich, Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, Alec Wilder, and more. Jim Koulouvaris died of a heart attack and Jim and Andy's no longer exists. Neither does Bottle's Bar in Rio.

Sergio Mendes and Antonio Carlos Jobim got rich. Gerry Mulligan visited Jobim recently in Rio de Janeiro. Jobim is involved in the ecology movement. Once when we were talking about the destruction of the Brazilian rain forests and the systematic extermination of the indigenous population, Jobim said to me, "We are building a desert, my friend."

Paul Winter, too, became involved in the ecology movement and formed the Paul Winter Consort, which has been very successful. He lives on a farm in Connecticut. Richard Evans teaches arranging at the Berklee College of Music. Harold Jones has had an outstanding career playing drums for, among others, Sarah Vaughan and Count Basie. Warren Bernhardt lives near Woodstock, New York, not far from Jack DeJohnette with whom he sometimes plays. He is one of the finest pianists in jazz.

Les Rout fulfilled his promise and his dream. He became a professor of history at Michigan State University in Lansing. He continued to play gigs on weekends, usually on alto. Often when I have occasion to think about Latin American history or politics, I think of all that Les taught me during our travels there. Latin America is part of my soul, though my Spanish has deteriorated from disuse. Les, dear brilliant Les, died of a heart attack some years ago.

And Whitsell? Whitsell was born into a family of great wealth, his father an ophthalmologist. A strange streak runs in that family. Whitsell was always a rebel. His family disapproved of his playing jazz for a living and exerted pressure on him to take on something more responsible. His friend Freddy Hubbard was shocked when I told him that Dick had given up playing, sold his trumpet and fluegelhorn, and lived in Guadalajara with his daughters and his beautiful Mexican wife. Freddy thought he was a superb player, and so did I. Dick got into cocaine and drank heavily. He always seemed to look on me as a sort of big brother; I was ten years or so older than he. His alcoholism deepened. He came to Ojai, reaching out to me to save him. He entered a hospital and for a while appeared to be recovering. But his mother cut off the support just when, I think, he was really going to make it. He rented an apartment in Ojai. He wanted to get into business in California and put his family back together. He was talking of buying a new horn.

One day I got a call from an investigator with the Ventura County coroner's office, asking if I knew Richard Whiltsell. They'd found my name in his address book. He had died in his apartment. He had fallen asleep listening to records. There was an empty bottle by the bed. He never woke up. I'd seen him so drunk he didn't know who he was, and he took some bad falls. What had killed him, I asked, was it a brain injury?

"Mr. Lees," the investigator said, "when someone has been dead for 10 days or so in the summer heat, there isn't much brain left. He died of alcohol. With that kind of drinking, the body simply shuts down."

Dick was in his early 50s.

Whatever John F. Kennedy was in his first term in the White House, I think he would have become a great president in his second. He was 46 when he was murdered. Gary McFarland was 38.

A few months ago I was in Dallas for the first time in my life.

You are no doubt aware of a new book on the assassination of John F. Kennedy, written by a former Wall Street attorney named Gerald Posner, titled *Case Closed*. It argues that Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby were lone lunatics who committed their murders on impulse. U.S. News and World Report took the bait, giving the book a cover story and an almost rapturous review.

Jonathan Kwitney, who has made his own extensive study of the assassination, demolished the book in cool surgical analysis in a review in the Los Angeles Times, pointing out all that it had left out. Saying that he has no firm theories of his own about the assassination, he noted that all the writers on the subject have had theories to prove, and the facts be damned.

I saw something in Dallas that made up my mind for me that if Lee Harvey Oswald was involved at all in the shooting, he was not alone. It was an anomaly I have not seen mentioned in any book or movie or documentary about the assassination.

Many persons in Dallas were so ashamed of the shooting that some city leaders at one time wanted to tear down the Texas School Book Depository from which Oswald supposedly fired the shots. Wiser heads prevailed, and the sixth floor is now a small museum devoted to the Kennedy presidency. To destroy the building would be like tearing down the Ford Theater in Washington, and worse: it is in and of itself a piece of evidence.

The building faces out over Dealey Plaza, a small park at the intersection of Houston and Elm Streets. You can picture what I am about to tell you if you draw a large reversed 7 on a piece of paper. The angle points to the left. The horizontal bar of the reversed 7 represents Houston Street. The descending bar represents Elm Street, which you know from photos, including the Zapruder film, for it was there as the open car descended the shallow slope toward an underpass that Kennedy was shot. The famous grassy knoll is to the right of the car's rout.

The Kennedy cavalcade came along Houston street, the horizontal bar at the top of the reversed 7. Then it had to make that acute-angle turn into the bottom bar of the reversed 7. The angle of the turn is, I should say, about 120 degrees. The School Book Depository is at the intersection of Houston and Elm.

Thus for a time the car headed straight toward the window from which Oswald supposedly shot the president. And if he was there with a rifle, waiting, he should have begun shooting while the procession was coming toward him. An approaching target is in effect a stationary one.

At that point, Oswald would have had Kennedy in a trap. Had the driver of that convertible slammed on the brakes at the sound of the first shot and begun to back up, Oswald would still have had him in the gunsight. In any case, the driver would have found this difficult to do because of the cars behind him. Had he raced forward, Oswald still would have had Kennedy in the gunsight, and indeed the target would only have grown larger. Furthermore, at the angle of that backward 7, the car would have been immediately below the window at the corner of the building. Shots fired downward are, of course, more accurate than those fired upward. Stand on that sixth floor and look down and you will see what a perfect target the president would have been as the car very slowly turned that corner. Had Oswald started firing while the car was on the spar at the top of the backward 7, he would have had time to get off quite a number of shots in case he missed the first or second time. Why then did Oswald wait until the car had turned the corner [redacted] was proceeding at a somewhat lateral angle — a more difficult shot than the straight-on shot he supposedly had just passed up — before pulling the trigger the first time?

Why would he have waited until the target was moving away, about to escape into the underpass? Furthermore, the line of fire along Houston Street is clear: there is nothing in the way. But Elm Street has trees on it as well as road signs. Even though the trees were bare in November, they were in the way. A flying bullet is unstable; even a twig will deflect it. Why would Oswald pass up a clear and easy shot to wait for a difficult one to be made when the target had almost reached safety?

I explored Dealey Plaza. I walked up to the grape-stake fence at the top of the sloping lawn, the so-called grassy knoll. A man in his 40s stood just beyond the fence, taking photographs from the exact location where some witnesses have placed two men whom many theorists say did the major shooting. Beyond it is a parking lot and beyond that, a freeway. It offers a perfect escape route, which the sixth floor of the School Book Depository assuredly did not, although Oswald did get [redacted] of there. The man with the camera nodded good-day and I nodded back. He said, "This is the perfect place for the shots."

We will undoubtedly never know who planned and ordered the assassination of John F. Kennedy. They didn't intend us to find out and they had the means and the techniques to make sure that we didn't.

But nothing now will convince me that it was a lone Lee Harvey Oswald who did the deed. And nine of 10 Americans don't believe so either.

As I looked from that window from, I, like everyone no doubt who goes there, thought of where I was on the day it happened, and of course I thought of Gary McFarland.

None of the songs Gary and I wrote in my little basement pad on West End Avenue has ever been recorded. One of them was called *I Wish that I Could Believe in Magic*. But I don't.

The bossa nova years of my life, before kiddie porn and MTV and crack and crank and drive-by shootings and serial murders and crumbling bridges and highways and schools, seemed a very long time ago.