

# RECONSTRUCTED COFFEEHOUSE BLUES CD

## LINER NOTES

Travis Edward Pike  
Otherworld Cottage Industries, 2014



01. "Sing a Song of Blues" is dedicated to military veterans who have gone through -- or are going through -- repatriation after tours of duty overseas. Servicemen and women, changed by their experiences abroad, sometimes return to a home where the politics and social atmosphere have changed too, and the adjustments they must endure can be bitter and disheartening.

02. "Don't Let Me Change Your Mind" may be double-reverse psychology, if such a thing exists. Granting everyone permission to walk away, may make them reconsider -- but if it fails, the grantor may take comfort from being alone by choice, rather than abandoned. Perhaps that's why both servicemen and the college-age crowd like it so much. Neither wants to be abandoned, and both rather desperately hope someone will care.

03. "Gray Day Lady" is a product of the coffeehouse scene. Every now and again, an apparently abused young lady would come in, sometimes with a child or even two in tow. The gal might be panhandler, or just getting in out of the rain. There's little one can do from the stage, but this song sometimes led to positive intervention, either from coffeehouse management or an empathetic customer.

04. "Mesmerizing, Tantalizing, Hazel-eyed Jane" another product of my 1965-67 New England coffeehouse scene, was composed about the waitress at Mark Edward's "Sword in the Stone" coffeehouse in Boston's Back Bay. Tall and lovely, her undulating walk was probably a by-product of carrying trays of coffee while she wended her way through the crowds. Always and only Mark's lady, she was, nevertheless, a visual joy to behold for patrons and performers alike.

05. "She's Gonna Be a Woman Someday" sprang from a visit with a friend to a girl's house where the younger sister tried in vain to get the suitor's attention. A "third wheel," Travis not only listened to the little one, but entertained her with a few of his stories, which made the afternoon fun, and resulted in an invitation

from the older sister (which Travis dutifully declined). The incredible pianist is Travis's friend, David Pinto, founder of the Academy of Music for the Blind, musician and sound engineer on The Morningstone Music.

06. "You and I Together" emerged during weekend liberties Travis spent lake-side, with only a transistor radio and his beloved English Setter. Travis was still on crutches and at home, everyone was caught up in their own activities, so mostly Travis and the dog would go to the lake where he'd watch her fish for bluegills. Sometimes, it seemed she was the only friend he had in the world, so he wrote a song about their time together. Today, Travis thinks of the song as being about himself and his youngest brother, Adam, who whole-heartedly embarked on this recording adventure with him.

07. "Tommy Tew Run Run" used to be called "Three Girls," loosely based on the 1963 movie *Tom Jones*. But in prepping this version of the song, the "Three Girls" were transformed into metaphors for ships, and the song suddenly emerged, as from a fog bank. Tommy Tew Run Run is about the notorious Rhode Island pirate!

The "Fresh launched" lady, which Tew and his crew attempted to loot in November, 1695, did not surrender so willingly as the first two. Tew was slain in that action, disemboweled by a cannon shot, an oddly appropriate end, even for the original rapacious villain of "Three Girls."

08. "Midnight Waltz" was written in memory of a night when Travis, a patient at Chelsea Naval Hospital, went to a party at the corner of Myrtle and Joy Street on Boston's Beacon Hill. When it broke up, his ride was gone, so he hobbled down to an all-night diner on Cambridge Street, where the song ends. From there, he caught a ride to Charlestown, and hobbled across the windy, swaying, Mystic River Bridge back to Chelsea.

09. "Shaggy, Shaggy Blues" is probably the most knock-down, drag-out, genuinely authentic "blues song" on this CD. It goes back to Travis's earliest repertoire for the wards and coffeehouses. He hasn't changed the way he sang it in 1965, but now, with Adam's bass, piano and lead guitar parts, it sounds deliciously and fully evolved.

10. "Don't You Care At All" is dedicated to all American and allied forces who served in Vietnam. Travis wrote it for his friend, Chuck Monda, who received his draft notice a few days after New Year's Day, 1968. Chuck was in basic training during the Tet Offensive that resulted in Walter Cronkite's call for an end to America's role in the Vietnam conflict. Feelings about the war were already divided but Cronkite's opposition to a war he did not believe we could win, was the last straw. America's withdrawal was still years off, but continuing military operations and mounting U.S. casualties were unacceptable. Against that background, Travis wrote "Don't You Care At All." Never before recorded, it was not a protest hit of the times, but those who have recently heard it agree that it reflects perfectly that devious era in American history.

11. "A Red-Backed, Scaly, Black-Bellied, Tusked, Bat-winged Dragon" was recorded in 1984 with David Carr playing the piano. It was remixed and remastered for 2013's *Odd Tales And Wonders Stories in Song* CD. This "bonus" version is a remix of that, shortened to the length it was when the Tea Party first began playing it for live audiences in Boston, Massachusetts, and with the addition of an accordian part that gives it an amusement park feel. Travis, still in high school, composed this song in 1961 as the title theme to a story he wrote. He first performed it in Chelsea Naval Hospital and later in coffeehouses as a tongue-twisting "sing-along." Through the years, it remained an audience favorite and is reprised here, for the pure joy of it.

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