

## I SWEAR I HEARD THIS... *MY OLD FRIEND*

Dave Kane

I swear I heard this and I know you won't believe it. Or, knowing you, you'll be sceptical and put it down to rock 'n roll myth making, a carefully constructed piece of fluff to sell a few more records, get people interested, yada, yada. But, for me, this one is a little different; maybe because it would be deeply disrespectful to someone's memory to think of employing such a cheap trick. I know, I know; respect in the music business - what a bloody joke! Anyway, listen to this...

Back in the early 1980s, not long after Lennon had been killed, Paul McCartney was in Montserrat recording an album at George Martin's Air studios. He was still dwelling on John's death and had reconnected with the other members of his old band; Ringo had drummed on some tracks and George, being typically George, nearly got involved. Feeling nostalgic, McCartney had also invited Carl Perkins, a hero of both his and Lennons from their early rock 'n' roll days, to join him at the session.

Perkins accepted the invitation and they had a great time: Perkins stayed for over a week and he and McCartney wrote and recorded a song together. The night before he was due to leave for home, Perkins was sitting alone and reflecting on the experience. He wanted to thank McCartney for inviting him and being so gracious. Perkins felt that McCartney had gone out of his way to make him feel welcome and part of the family. Perkins couldn't find the right words to express his gratitude, so he did something that came more naturally to him, he wrote a short song. It left such an impression on him that he didn't even write it down.

The next morning at breakfast he played the song for Paul. Halfway through, McCartney got up and left the room with tears streaming down his face. Perkins stopped, thinking he had done something wrong, but Linda McCartney put her arms around him and thanked him for helping Paul come to terms with his grief over Lennon's death. Carl was confused - what had his song got to do with Lennon's death? Turns out, Lennons last words to McCartney were "Think of me every now and then, my old friend." These were the very words that Perkins had just sung to Paul. Weird eh!

But that's not the end of it. Years later, Perkins was making a documentary about his life and recounted the story of this particular song as an anecdote - it had never previously been shared. After the film crew left, Perkins was sitting alone in his studio playing the same song. His wife buzzed him on the intercom to tell him that Paul McCartney was on the phone! Now that is spooky, right?

Yes, I know, it could be purely coincidental - these things happen all the time. But what about the song lyrics, coincidence too? What do you think, my old friend?

**Dave Kane** was a researcher in the Social Research and Evaluation Unit (SREU) at Birmingham City University. Dave has been fascinated by pop music since discovering his brother's collection of 1960's singles at a tender age and his MPhil investigated how music fans organise online resources devoted to their object of fandom. Now happily retired, Dave spends his time playing guitar, writing songs and escaping the city on his motorcycle.

