

Rolling Stone

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The Second
Coming of

Tom
Petty

NWA BEATS UP
THE CHARTS

HOW TO BUY
A SENATOR

BONNIE
RAITT

EXCLUSIVE

Norman
Mailer

'Harlot's Ghost'
Part Two



RS 610

'ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS'

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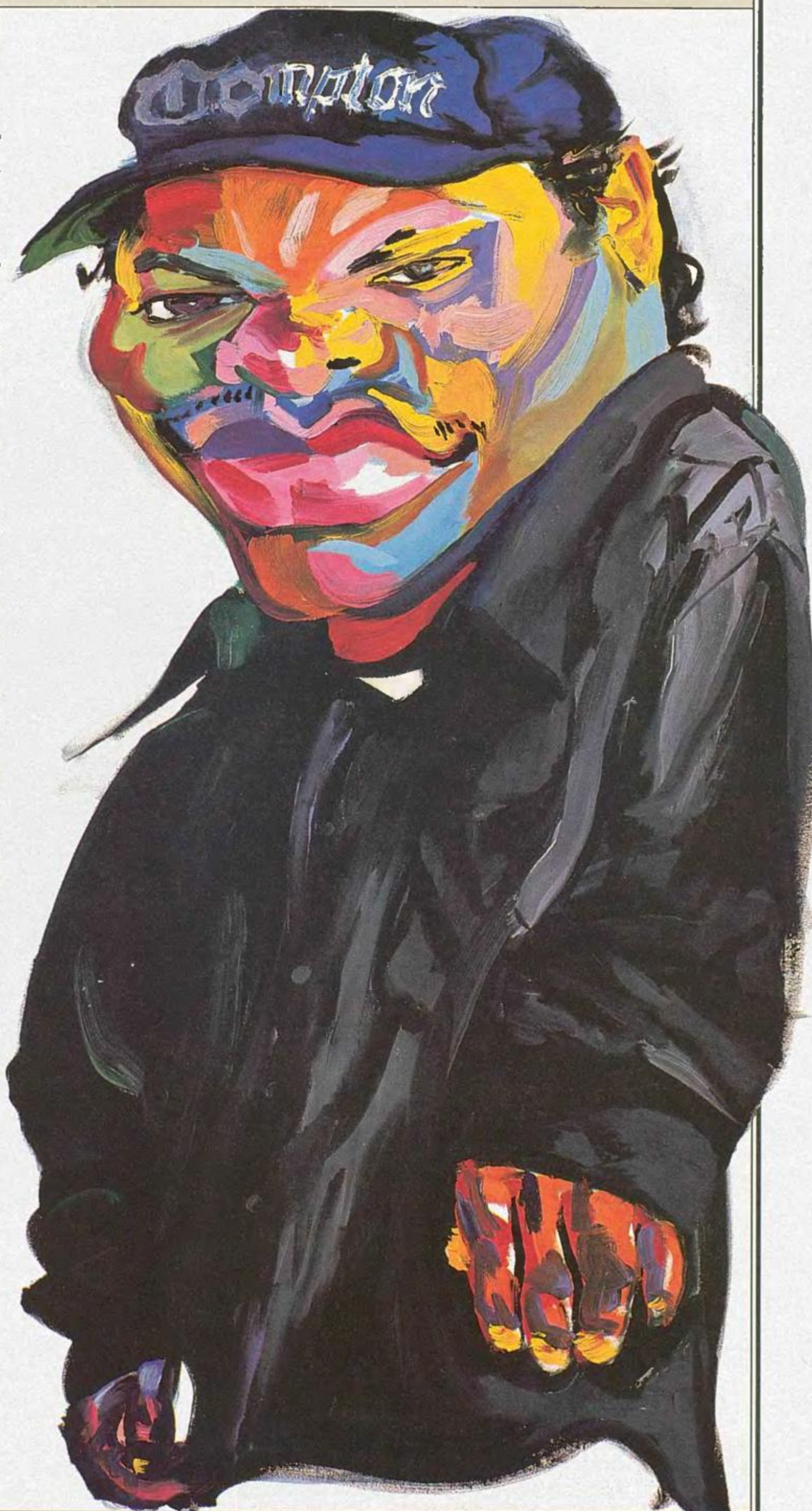
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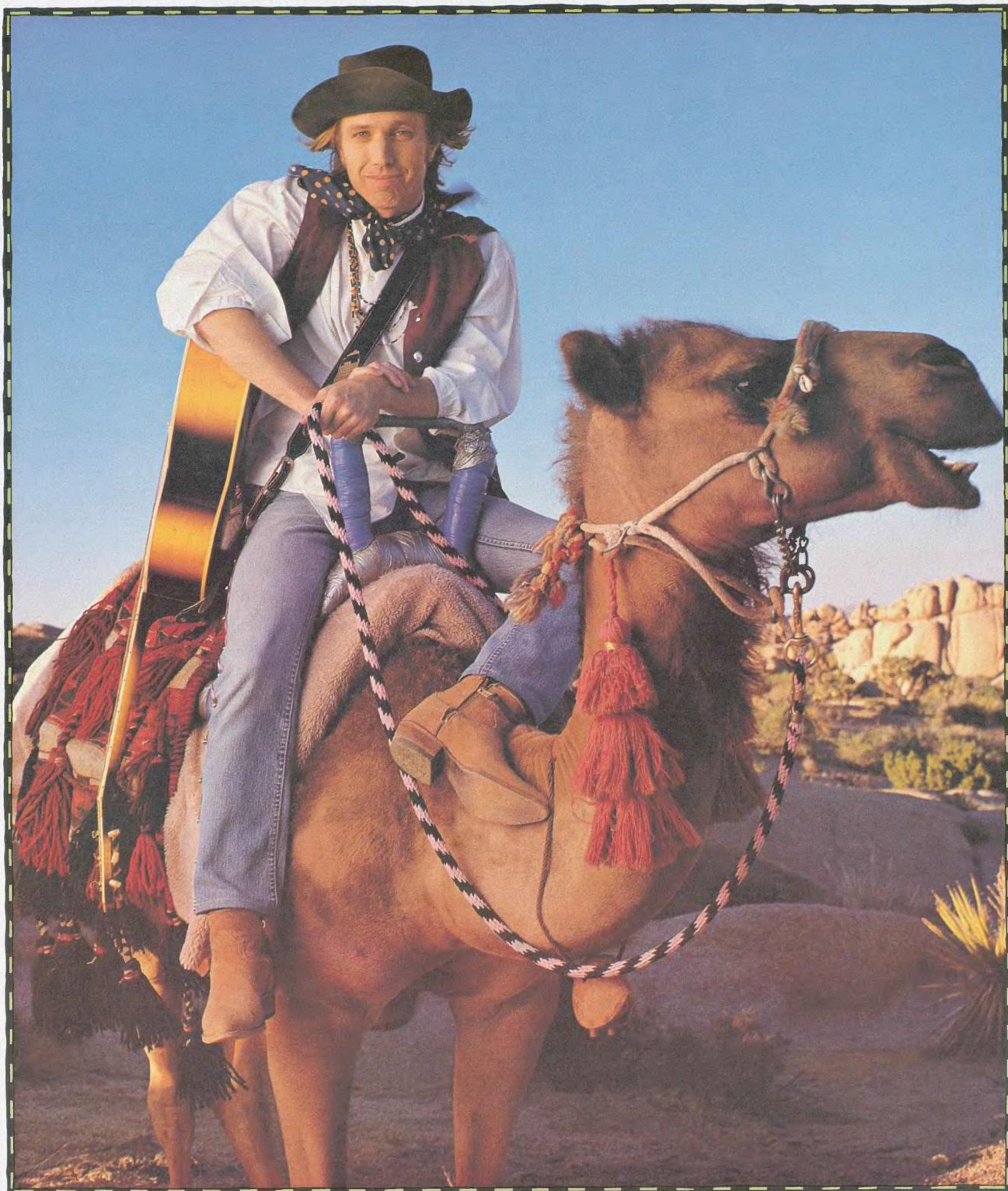
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COVER: Photograph of Tom Petty by Mark Seliger, Los Angeles, June 1991. Grooming by Tracy Warbin; styled by Arianne Phillips for Dorie Sherman, Inc.


EAZY-E OF N.W.A *Illustration by Philip Burke*





OVER THE HUMP

BY DAVID WILD



HUMP

THE WAITING IS still the hardest part. * Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers are spending the day at Bob's Airpark, part of an immense airplane graveyard in Tucson, Arizona. All one can see in any direction in this surreal location are the carcasses of countless aircraft of various vintage set dramatically against an otherwise

AFTER SUFFERING THROUGH A PERIOD OF PERSONAL CRISES AND CAREER DOLDRUMS, TOM PETTY HAS REEMERGED AS ONE OF ROCK'S MOST VITAL ARTISTS

barren desert landscape. Occasionally, military planes in far better condition than the ones below fly loudly overhead. * Everyone here this afternoon is waiting for some unusually cloudy weather to pass so director Julien Temple can finish shooting the video for "Learning to Fly," the first single from the band's exquisite new

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK SELIGER

album, *Into the Great Wide Open*. Throughout the morning, Petty and the Heartbreakers — guitarist Mike Campbell, keyboardist Benmont Tench, drummer Stan Lynch and bassist Howie Epstein — were balanced precariously on the wings of stripped-down planes as they braved, with varying degrees of stoicism, the intense desert heat for hours on end. Jane Petty, Tom's wife of eighteen years, observed one setup and appeared concerned. "Look at poor Benmont," she said. "He's roasting out there."

During a much-needed break, Tom hurries over to Jane, who could pass for his twin sister, and surveys the rather bizarre scene. "I suppose if you worked here at Bob's, this would have to qualify as a pretty good day at the office," he says, his deep voice still betraying a slight Southern accent. "It's like 'Oh, yeah, honey, then there was some band in here making a video.'"

Moments later the skies open, and torrential rain comes pouring down. Crew members rush to cover the band's instruments, while most everyone else takes refuge. Temple hides out in a nearby equipment truck and chats on a portable phone with Mick Jagger about the video he's just completed for "Sex Drive."

Petty — who's sporting a button that reads, I CAN SEE YOUR POINT, BUT YOU'RE STILL FULL OF SHIT — ambles over from the trailer that he and Jane are sharing to the one that's housing the Heartbreakers. "Kinda romantic, huh?" Petty says, looking out the window. The band members shoot their leader a series of quizzical looks. "Romantic?" inquires Lynch, the Heartbreakers' leading wiseass. "Tom, have you noticed by any chance that you've just entered a trailer full of guys?"

Tony Dimitriadis, Petty's manager for the past fifteen years, looks outside and diplomatically informs the band that even if the weather clears up soon, it might be a while before the ground dries enough to keep filming. "Don't worry, Tony," Petty says with great sarcasm. "I'm the frontman here. These guys would never even think of letting my feet touch the ground."

For all the banter, there's the unmistakable sense that Petty and the Heartbreakers are if not overjoyed, then at least relieved to find themselves still together. Not long ago many people outside the band, and some inside it, seriously thought Petty might be flying solo as a result of the success of his 1989 solo album, *Full Moon Fever*. The Heartbreakers — with the exception of Epstein, who replaced original bassist Ron Blair in 1982 — have known one another since growing up together around Gainesville, Florida. That's a lot of history — even if, as Lynch says, "it's not like we're blood brothers, camping out and taking canoe trips together anymore."

According to everyone concerned, there's never been a shortage of tensions within the group. Asked if he ever thought that the band might break up, the soft-spoken Campbell says: "All the time. Right from day 1. It's a miracle that this band stayed together for two weeks. I don't really know why we're still together. There must be a bond that even we're not aware of."

This moment of pure Heartbreaker male bonding is short-lived, however, as only minutes later the trailer door opens, and in walk Faye Dunaway, Johnny Depp and a few other members of the cast of *Arrowtooth Waltz*, a feature film that's been shooting not far from here. Like a bunch of slightly unhappy summer campers trying to wait out a rainy day, the assembled group bitches amiably about the miseries of life on location. Dunaway joyfully relates the details of a jam session that she, Depp and Tench had at their hotel the night before. Then the group settles into a lengthy discussion of various one-hit wonders from the Seventies, building to a heated debate over whether it was Starbuck or the Starland Vocal Band that sang

"Moonlight Feels Right." (It was Starbuck.) This conversation seems to annoy Lynch, who keeps shaking his head and muttering "wimp-rock classic" under his breath.

Later in the afternoon the skies finally clear, and the professional actors make their exit, while Petty and his troupe of amateur video thespians take off for some more aeronautical lip-syncing. As the crew prepares for another shot, Jane Petty approaches her husband and asks how he's holding up. "I'm doing okay," he says. "But I sure do feel hot."

IN FACT, TOM PETTY IS HOT THESE DAYS. RECENTLY A FRIEND SENT PETTY AN AD for an Arizona club that was promoting an upcoming show by one Michael Furlong, the first known Petty imitator. "I thought, 'Oh, boy, I get just a few hit singles, and now all of the sudden we're getting into some really weird territory,'" Petty says with a laugh.

In the wake of *Full Moon Fever*, the best-selling album of his career, and given his tenure as the youngest Traveling Wilbury, Petty is flying high. "Tom Petty is not only one of the cornerstone artists of this company," says Al Teller, chairman of the MCA Entertainment Group, "he's one of the cornerstone artists of the whole music business."

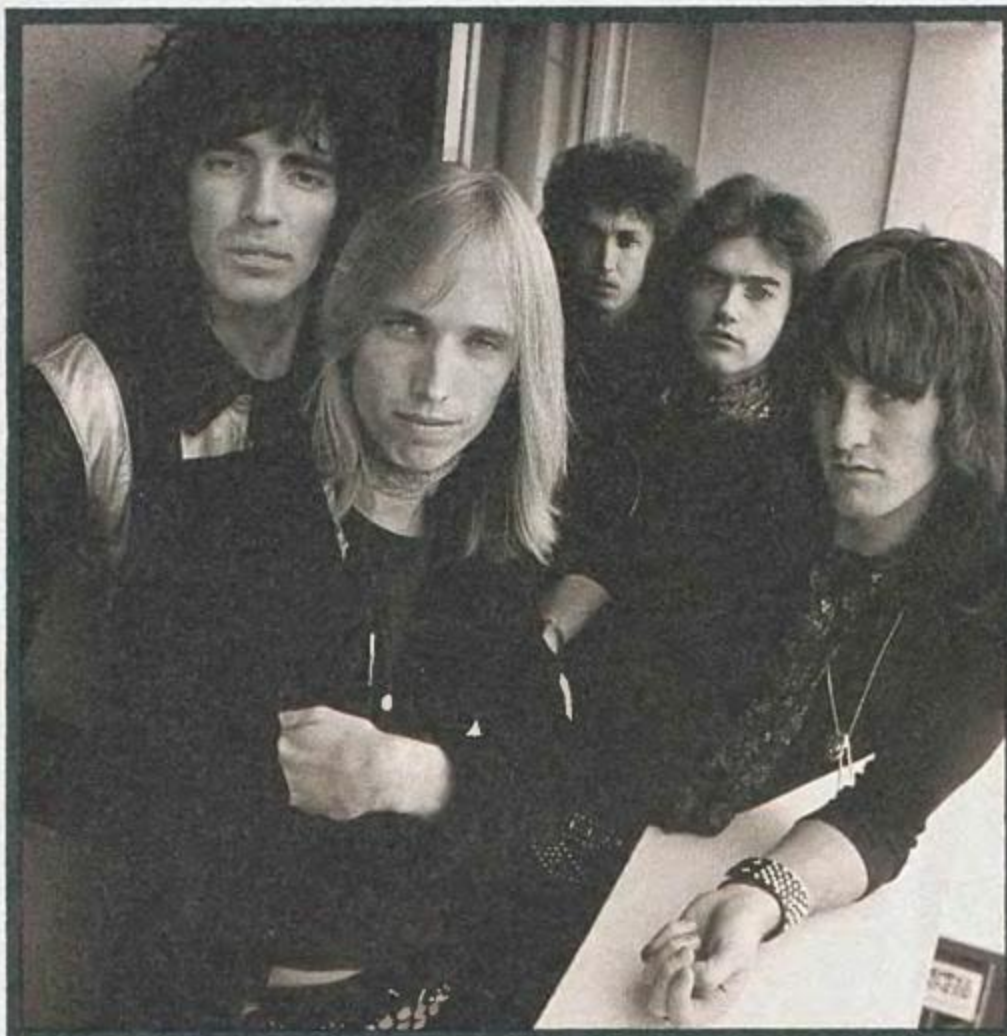
Yet this turn in Petty's commercial fortunes comes not so many years after a time when it seemed as though he and the Heartbreakers would have to journey to the desert to get hot. After the breakthrough success of *Damn the Torpedoes*, in 1979, the group produced a series of distinguished albums that nonetheless seemed to sell progressively fewer copies. Though always a formidable and respected musical outfit whose albums routinely went at least gold, the group found itself receiving less and less attention. To the people buying the albums — or, increasingly, not buying the albums — Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers were in danger of becoming just another bunch of not-so-new kids on the block. Frustratingly for Petty — whose success had always been based on the music rather than the persona — he found himself making more news when he broke his hand during the recording of 1985's *Southern Accents*, or when his home burned down in 1987, than when he put out a new record.

By the time of Petty and the Heartbreakers' last effort together, 1987's underrated *Let Me Up (I've Had Enough)*, sales were slipping, and there were more and more empty seats when the group hit the arenas. "We played a lot of shows where they'd put a curtain up to hide the fact that there was only a two-thirds house," says Campbell. "But we played like we had a full house and then worried about it when we got back to the hotel." Like Spinal Tap, the Heartbreakers found that their popularity was getting more and more selective.

It was also during this period that Petty cemented his reputation as a tough customer, a man who stubbornly refused to compromise with the music industry. He refused sponsorships and battled MCA on a number of occasions, even threatening to rename *Hard Promises*, the 1981 album, \$8.98 if the company jacked the album's list price up to \$9.98.

"Tom's the kind of proud guy who will not bend past a certain point," says producer Jimmy Iovine, who worked with the band from *Damn the Torpedoes* through *Southern Accents*. "He's not going to do anything he doesn't believe in. But over the years I've realized that the really great ones don't have to compromise. Tom is definitely one of the great ones."

Full Moon Fever — which started as a busman's holiday with former Electric Light Orchestra leader Jeff Lynne — ended up being the album that reminded mil-



ABOVE: THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF THE HEARTBREAKERS INCLUDED RON BLAIR, PETTY, CAMPBELL, TENCH AND LYNCH (FROM LEFT). BELOW: A DECADE EARLIER, IN 1966, PETTY (FAR RIGHT) WAS WORKING ON HIS CHOPS WITH THE EPICS.



lions that Petty is indeed one of the great ones. In the end the album sold more than 3 million copies in the United States and an additional million overseas, where Petty had not been a major star. And though Petty says he's never been one to base his personal happiness on the *Billboard* charts, he discovered that having his work so well received meant a lot to him.

"It was incredibly gratifying," Petty says. "It made me such a nice guy for about a year. I mean, I got so *fucking* nice, I couldn't believe it. You know, I felt this overpowering love for humanity all around me. I just wanted to hug total strangers and tell them, 'Thank you.' You know how people can stop you on the street and say, 'Love your record, man.' You can hear so much of that. But around that time it meant so much to me. I found myself saying, 'You do? Sit down and tell me about it. What *exactly* did you like?'"

MTV's exposure of the *Full Moon Fever* videos helped introduce Petty to a new generation of fans. "We were beginning to see the same faces for a while there," says Petty. "It was incredible to find so many young people who didn't know anything about us, or me, who were discovering the whole trip because they liked 'Free Fallin'' or 'I Won't Back Down.' I think I laughed for an entire year."

THERE WAS A TIME, OF COURSE, WHEN Tom Petty wasn't laughing much at all. "My dark period" is how Petty describes most of the late Eighties. Part of the problem was personal — he was drinking too much, and he and Jane were going through a rough patch in their marriage, which resulted in her moving out for a time. "People remember the fact that I hit the wall back then," says Petty of the torturously long sessions for *Southern Accents*, during which he almost permanently ended his guitar-playing career by smashing his right hand into a wall. "But at that time in my life, my marriage, and just about everything else, was on the rocks. I was just overindulging more than I should — the brandy was coming around more often. I was hitting all sorts of walls."

Another problem during that period, Petty says as he sits in a limousine on his way to a Black Crowes and Jellyfish show in Tucson — the first concert, other than his own, that he's attended in a number of years — was that he'd begun to lose his connection with rock & roll, the music that had long sustained him. "I really love the music and always have," he says. "I've gone through hell and heaven for it. Maybe that's why I just hate to see it relegated to a kind of crappy *Mad* magazine version of a rock group — some juvenile cartoon version of the real thing."

"Things got real phony-sounding for a while," he continues. "It got to the point where even the guys in the denim jackets were sounding phony. I started thinking maybe I should just get drunk. Maybe I should just fucking forget all these songs. I hate to sound like a grouchy old-timer, but the reason rock isn't as big as it once was is probably that it isn't as good as it once was. It wouldn't bother me, except this stuff is really important to me. As corny as it sounds, my life has been consumed by rock music. I just loved it right from the beginning."

Petty can trace that love to the day Elvis Presley came to Gainesville to shoot a scene for the movie *Follow That Dream*, and the King of Rock & Roll had a brief audience with one of its future princes. "I remember sitting in the yard near the pond," Petty says, "and my aunt pulls up and says, 'How would you like to go see Elvis Presley?' And boy, did we ever see Elvis Presley! He didn't have much to say to us, but for a kid at an impressionable age, he was an incredible sight."

The next day the eleven-year-old Petty made what would become the trade of a lifetime: He gave up his Wham-O slingshot and a couple of his mother's albums in exchange for a stash of Elvis and Little Richard singles that his young buddy Keith had inherited from his older sister. "And that," says Petty, "was the end

of doing anything other than music with my life. I didn't want anything to fall back on, because I was *not* going to fall back."

It was a decision that would lead Petty to leave home at seventeen. He joined a Florida country-rock band called Mudcrutch, at first playing bass and singing Roger McGuinn and Bob Dylan covers. Eventually, the band, which also included Campbell and Tench, moved to Los Angeles, where it signed a record deal, then quickly collapsed. "There were too many cooks in that band and at least one real asshole," says Petty. "I learned that a band needed one real leader. It was also good if a band didn't have any assholes. In the Heartbreakers we all take turns — we're sort of alternating assholes."

Petty credits his Traveling Wilburys experience with getting him back in touch with the pure joy of making music. "After a lot of years and a lot of booze," he says, "I came to the conclusion that all I can do is try to amuse myself, really." And that, according to Petty, was the magic of the Wilburys. "To be honest, we didn't give a shit how we were perceived by other people," he says. "That was nothing more than a bunch of guys making an honest attempt at having fun. Rock got so over-intellectualized for a while. The Wilburys just refused to take themselves seriously." Petty cites this — and George Harrison's and Jeff Lynne's utter disinterest in touring — as the reason the group never hit the road.

"We might have destroyed the spirit of the thing," Petty says. It was a spirit, he adds, that was hard enough to hold on to after the death of Roy Orbison. Eventually, around the time of the second Wilburys album, there was a meeting to discuss the possibility of a tour. "A lot of money was offered to us, but at the end of the meeting, we'd decided not to do it," Petty says. "And I kept getting down on my knees in front of George, saying, 'Please! It's so much money.' And everybody would just start laughing. It was that kind of meeting; we'd look at each other and start giggling nervously, going, 'Nah, we can't.' Like George says, I can't see waking up in a hotel in Philadelphia and having to do a Wilburys sound check."

The fact that the second Wilburys album, *Vol. 3*, didn't sell as well as the first didn't dampen his view of the experience. "See, I'm not exactly a guy who makes new friends easily," Petty says. "And here I was making all these great new pals. And we were making this music — and the fact that there were some people who liked it just made it all the better." Petty's

affection for his Wilbury brothers is apparently mutual. "Tom's finally getting some recognition," says Bob Dylan. "That's good. Tom's an excellent songwriter, an excellent musician. People talk about how he sounds a little like Roger McGuinn, but playing with him and seeing what he does to a crowd, I think he's more in the Bob Marley area. He's *real* good."

PETTY'S SUCCESS WITH HIS NEW PALS RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF the Heartbreakers. Fears subsided a bit when Petty headed out on tour to support *Full Moon Fever* with the Heartbreakers. Still, says Lynch, "that was the first time a tour ever felt like work to me — I never want to feel like I'm in a cover band."

Petty says he enjoyed the tour, except for one peculiar problem. "For the first time in my career, I developed stage fright," he admits. "After a whole career in which I was very happy to take the stage, all of a sudden I went through a period of being terrified, puking, the whole thing."

When it was time to go back into the studio, Petty faced some hard choices. "I didn't want to leave the Heartbreakers behind," he says, "because I figured they were the best band I know, and because it just felt like there was a lot of unfinished business. But at the same time, I knew I was on a roll, and I didn't want to just drop what Jeff and I had going."

So Petty decided that he, Lynne and the Heartbreakers should all work togeth-



"THERE MUST BE A BOND THAT EVEN WE'RE NOT AWARE OF." HEARTBREAKERS TENCH, CAMPBELL, PETTY, EPSTEIN, LYNCH (FROM LEFT).

er. "Now that was scary for me," Petty says. "There I was taking one of my new friends to meet some of my old ones. And all I can think is 'Oh, boy, these people had better get along.'"

While Petty was off working on his other projects, the Heartbreakers managed to keep busy. Campbell — "sort of my lieutenant in the band," says Petty — was the only band member who was a key contributor to *Full Moon Fever*. Perhaps the most consistently tasteful lead guitarist around, Campbell had some outside success, most notably his collaboration with Don Henley on "The Boys of Summer," a tune that Petty says he passed on during the *Southern Accents* era "because I was too fucked up to do anything with it."

Lynch worked even more extensively with Henley, co-writing two songs that wound up on *The End of the Innocence* — "The Last Worthless Evening" and "Gimme What You Got" — something he'd never been able to do with Petty. "Tom's never asked me to write with him," says Lynch. "And that's one party you do not invite yourself into. You just don't invite yourself into someone's bedroom, and that's what writing is. He obviously doesn't see me in that light. He says, 'I don't need any more producers and songwriters around here. I need a drummer, you know. I need musicians who are going to play this shit.'"

Tench, meanwhile, has been a highly sought-after studio guest musician since the *Damn the Torpedoes* days, playing with Elvis Costello, Bob Dylan, U2 and Lone Justice, among others. "Benmont is the band radical," says Petty. "He's the one who always says, 'Fuck the set list. We don't need the set list.'" The other band members describe Tench as a musician's musician. Lynch reports that Roger McGuinn compared Tench to Leonard Bernstein, while Petty says that "even Little Richard was blown away by Benmont."

Epstein has recently begun a successful career as a producer. Last year he produced *I Fell in Love*, a fine country album by Carlene Carter, with whom he is romantically involved. He has also just completed work on the first new studio record in years by singer-songwriter John Prine. "I think the fact that we're all busy helped us accept the fact that we can't be the chief," says Epstein. "There's got to be some Indians, too."

Still, tensions can flare up, as they did when Lynch flew to L.A. to work on the Petty record that started out as *Songs From the Garage* and ended up — after the pleasant interruption of the first Wilburys record — as *Full Moon Fever*. Lynch says he reported to Los Angeles for work only to wait around until a third party informed him that Petty was making a solo album and that Lynch's services wouldn't be needed. "At that time I thought, 'Well, fuck me,'" says Lynch. "I mean, you know, *call me up*." Lynch — whom Petty warmly describes as "the *mas macho* Heartbreaker, the *real* Heartbreaker" — says he took the slight "real personally."

"I thought they were shits who were not even man enough to tell me," Lynch says. "But about a year later I realized they were embarrassed. We're old friends. How do you call an old friend and say you don't want him at the wedding?"

For all the time they've spent together, Petty and the Heartbreakers no longer hang out as much as they once did, despite the fact that they all live near one another in L.A. "But listen, I'm impressed that I still have friends in this group," says Lynch. "That means a lot to me. I mean, after twenty years, what ridiculous crap haven't we seen each other go through? What awful thing could we not say to each other?"

"Things have changed," says Tench. "And, then again, they really haven't." Tench says he remembers first meeting Petty when his future leader was working at Liphams Music Company, in Gainesville, and the young keyboardist would come in to show off on the store pianos.

"Tom's not much different from the guy I first met," Tench says. "He's just a lot more famous. I was over at his house a few weeks ago, sitting around the kitchen table talking about whatever was going on, and it felt pretty much

the same as sitting around the kitchen table in their old apartment in Gainesville. Of course, it's a *much* bigger kitchen."

"YOU'D THINK WITH HIM FOR A FATHER, I'D GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING. BUT HE can be really strict."

Adria, Petty's sixteen-year-old daughter, is standing in that bigger kitchen, chatting with her dad. Jane is away for a few nights with Kim, the couple's nine-year-old daughter, and Tom is taking his parental duties seriously. Adria, on the other hand, is trying to get out of the house quickly so she can join some friends who are going to a free concert on the Santa Monica pier.

"Who are you going to see?" Petty asks, sounding much more like a normal, concerned father than a rock star checking up on the musical competition.

"I don't know, Dad," she says. "I'm just going."

Petty has been a husband and a father since before his first record. He is the first to point out, however, that he has not always been such a good one. "There were a lot of years when I just wasn't really around," he says. "And fortunately Jane was strong enough to basically run the whole show by herself for a long time."

Still, he and Jane have managed to weather out the tough times, just as he and the Heartbreakers have. "Well, I'm stubborn about things," says Petty. "God knows, neither relationship has been particularly smooth. They each had real separations and frustrations along the way. I guess there is some weird parallel."

When it's suggested that he's chosen a line of work that seems to take its toll on marriage, Petty offers a typically forthright insight. "It does if you're prone to fuck a lot of people," he says. "That will cause a lot of problems."

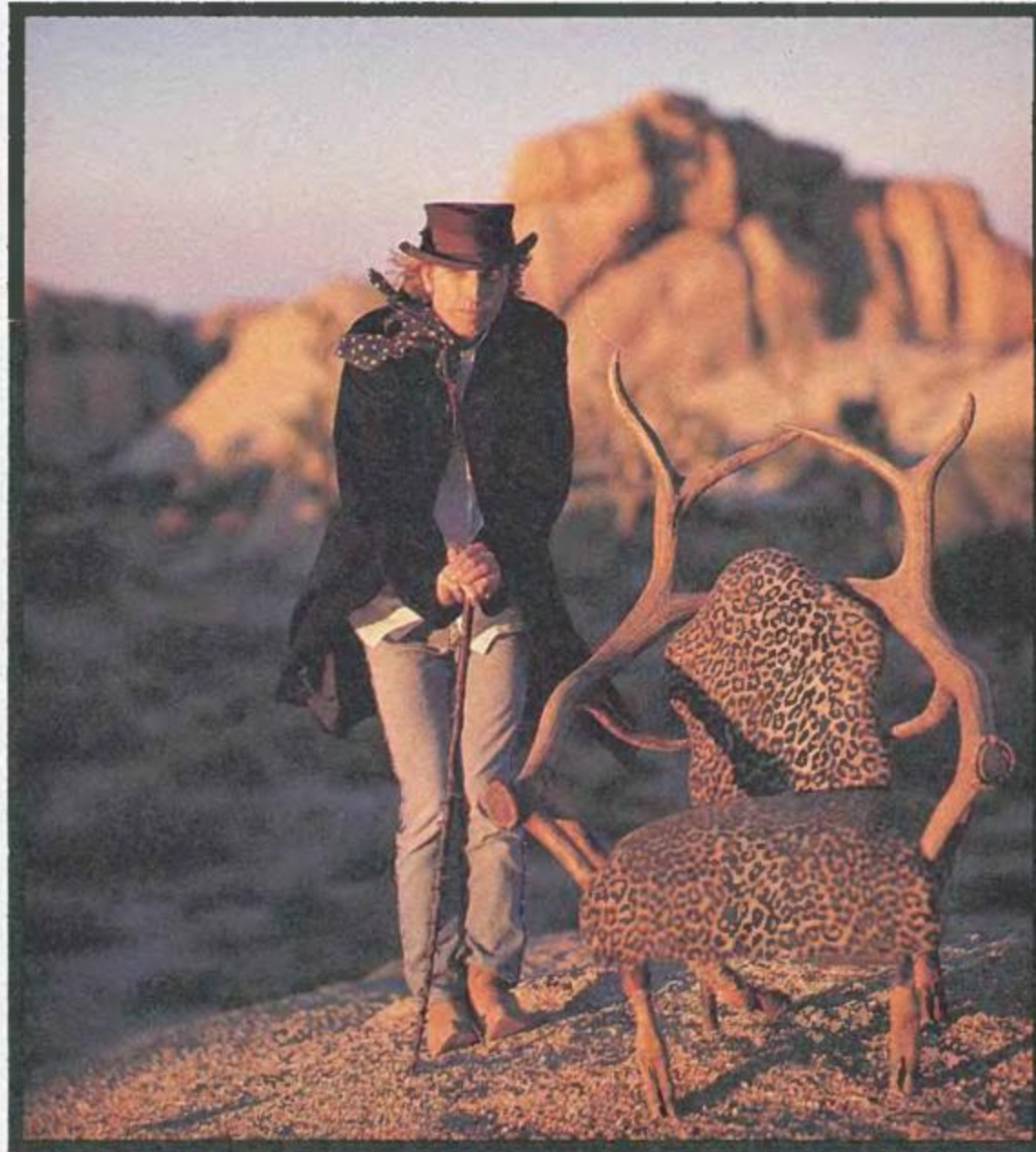
"I'm very much in love with Jane," Petty says. "I'm still thrilled about her. She's the most honest, frank person I've ever met. At this point I don't really like to be very far from her for very long. But there were times when we definitely were not getting along, when we fought like fucking Apaches, you know. I'm lucky they still let me live in this neighborhood."

The neighborhood is a charming one in the suburban San Fernando Valley — Petty is just a short drive from some of the Valley spots he immortalized in "Free Fallin'." The house itself is a large wood-and-stone structure that's built on the

same spot as the house that burned back in 1987. "That was a complete change of life," Petty says of the fire. "It was like a death in the family." Though all evidence points to arson, the incident remains a mystery. The day after the fire, Petty continued rehearsals for the *Let Me Up (I've Had Enough)* tour, and soon he and the family hit the road. "It ended up being really therapeutic for us," he says. Eventually, Petty moved the family into a temporary house, formerly the home of Xavier Cugat and Charo. "It felt like a big El Territo restaurant," he says with a grimace. Finally, he and Jane built a bigger, better version of the old house on the same lot.

The Pettys lost nearly everything they owned in the fire, yet today the house hardly seems bereft of personal touches. There are artworks by Adria and Kim. There's a wooden Indian statue that George Harrison gave Petty for Christmas. And in the TV room there's a copy of a mysterious videotape that's marked ROGER AND TOM'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE.

EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT TAPE WAS BRIEFLY THE TALK OF THE MUSIC BUSINESS. A film crew was shooting the sessions for Roger McGuinn's comeback album *Back to Rio* when Petty came in to record his vocal for "King of the Hill," the powerful duet he wrote and sang with his longtime friend and musical influence. As the scene unfolds on the video, Petty becomes increasingly pissed off about a song McGuinn's A&R man wants the former Byrd to record, a song Petty considers to be a piece of substandard commercial dreck. "I could write a better song than that *stoned*," Petty says as he launches into an eloquent and passionate explanation of why an artist of McGuinn's stature ought not be asked to lower his [Cont. on 90]





★ ★ ★ ½

SHADES OF TWO WORLDS

The Allman Brothers Band

Epic

THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND HAS come almost eerily full circle with *Shades of Two Worlds*. Charged by top-flight performances from Dickey Betts and Gregg Allman, the band summons up both the spirit and the musical resonance of the original group. Betts, continually overshadowed by the mythical stature of the late Duane Allman, has never been given credit for his own contribution to the band's sound. Betts's playing accounted for more of the hot licks on the early Allmans material than most listeners realize, but just as the great Cannonball Adderley was eclipsed by the young John Coltrane on the Miles Davis classic *Kind of Blue*, some of Betts's best work exists in people's imaginations as Duane Allman's music.

Betts's masterful soloing on "Nobody Knows" may dispel that perception. He soars under the influence of guitarist Warren Haynes, who has taken on the awesome responsibility of filling Duane Allman's chair and forced the band to play at an improvisational level it had not reached since Allman's death. The two guitarists soar through the pounding rhythm patterns set up by the percussion team of Butch Trucks and Jai Johanny Johanson, trading solos and reaching a dramatic climax before wrapping up with a beautiful extended coda.

Haynes, who was warned by friends not to join the band lest he be typecast as a Duane clone, chose instead to walk in the footsteps of his hero; he plays slide as if a guiding hand were at work. He references Allman's tone and signature techniques yet animates his presentation with his own distinct personality. The rejuvenation of the band's guitar magic is paralleled by the reawakening of Gregg Allman, who sings as well as ever on several harrowing tales about the hell of drug addiction. He delivers his chilling messages like a man emerging from a nightmare.

Creative high points are the product of neither luck nor design. They occur when artists open the window to their heart and soul. Right now the Allman Brothers Band, two albums into its new identity and fired by the achievement of *Shades of Two Worlds*, should finally be ready to pick up where it left off after *Live at Fillmore East*.

— JOHN SWENSON

Tom Petty

[Cont. from 44] standard to sing such overtly commercial material. Eventually, as McGuinn and his producer look on in silence, Petty righteously admonishes this attempt to "perpetuate the depth of shit in pop music."

The tape provides a moment of insight into the true character of Petty as a believer in the enduring power rock & roll can have in changing and illuminating lives. That power is very much in evidence on *Into the Great Wide Open*, an album that blends the traditional strengths of the Heartbreakers with Lynne's user-friendly sonics. Some of the album is very much in keeping with *Full Moon Fever*—one track, the delicate "All the Wrong Reasons," sounds enough like "Free Fallin'" that at least one Heartbreaker has taken to calling it "Refallin'." Other tracks, such as "Out in the Cold" and "Makin' Some Noise," capture the pure electric intensity of the Heartbreakers at their least restrained.

For Petty, though, the collaboration with Lynne is not just about selling more records. "I like working with Jeff because I make better records with him," Petty says. "He's an incredible musician and a fantastic guy to bounce things off." And despite Petty's fears, things went well in the studio between all involved.

"To me, Tom is the all-American boy," says Lynne, "and I'm quite British, so it's strange that things seemed to click real easily. But the fact is that they did."

And as Petty points out, he and Campbell were there as coproducers to make sure *Into the Great Wide Open* remained true to the Heartbreakers. As Petty puts it, "If things got too cute, I'd just say, 'Jeff, sorry, but that's a little too Lou Christie for me, thanks.'" Petty says that while he expects his next album will go in a "stranger, more twisted" direction, he's extremely proud of *Into the Great Wide Open*, an album on which his songwriting continues to mature. But then again, that's only appropriate, since after all, he is getting older.

"The night before we started the record I turned forty," Petty says. "And it's tough when you look in the mirror and go, 'Shit, I'm an old guy.' But the night I turned forty there was a big party for me, so I was surrounded by friends. And I'm glad that I turned forty at a good time in my life. I didn't go through it a few years ago, when I was feeling like a failure at everything. Like the song says, 'I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now.' And I listen to the new album and I feel so good, because it's not a cheap shot. It's not a bunch of old assholes trying to take your money."

"In a way I'm really upbeat about turning forty," says Petty, sounding suspiciously like a satisfied man. "I feel like 'Well, I'm still here, you know.' And that's more than some people can say. I'm still here, and I'm still doing something."

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[Cont. from 56] very large suggestion of liking him?"

"I just go after what I want and *ensnare* it." She gave vent to her gutty, earthy little laugh as if she couldn't believe how outrageous she was.

"I think you're terrific," I told her. "You gave me such a turnaround. I never felt that before. Not even with the woman I love." I looked at her eyes and took a large swallow of my third drink.

"I want to kiss you," she said.

She did. It was a small embrace, but her lips were soft and I certainly didn't get to the bottom of them. "You're earthy," she said as she withdrew.

"That's good, I hope."

"Well, I seem to attract earthy people."

My lips were feeling the tactile echo of her lips, and my breath was resonant. *Earthy?* Well, that was news! "Who are some others you would characterize in such fashion?"

She wagged a finger at me. "Kiss and tell."

"I don't mind."

"I do. My life is private to me. I cater to my privacy."

"Don't any of your friends know anything about you?"

"Let's talk of something else," she said. "I know why I want to see you, but why do you want to see me?"

"Because one look at you and—I have to confess—a force came over me. I never felt that before. It's the truth."

What was the truth? I wondered. I had been lying for so long to so many people that I was beginning to feel mendacious relations with myself. Was I a monster or merely in a muddle? "What I guess," I said to her, "is that you feel this kind of impact when you meet someone who's absolutely equal to yourself."

She looked dubious. Was she thinking of the condition of my scalp?

"Yes," she said, and gave me a very careful second kiss as if assaying samples for ore content.

"Can we go somewhere?" I asked.

"No. It's ten after six and I have to leave in twenty minutes." She sighed. "I can't go to bed with you, anyway."

"Why not?"

"Because I've reached my quota." She touched my hand. "I believe in serious affairs. So at any given time, I only allow myself two. One for stability; one for romance."

"And now you are fully booked?"

"I have a wonderful man who takes care of me in Washington. I see him when I'm there. He protects me."

"You don't look as if you need protection."

"Protection is the wrong word. He... takes care of my needs on the job. He's an executive at Eastern. So he makes cer-

tain I get the flight schedules I want."

Her executive sounded somewhat smaller than the giants Harlot had been promising.

"Do you love him?"

"I wouldn't say that. But he's a good man, and he's absolutely dependable. I can count on him trying to make me happy."

"You don't talk like any girl I've ever known."

"Well, I would like to think I'm a bit unique."

"You are. You certainly are."

She tapped the bar with one very long fingernail. "Right here, however, Miami Beach, is my port of choice."

"You have the longest fingernails," I said. "How do you keep them from breaking on the job?"

"Constant attention," she said. "Even then I have been known to rip one occasionally. It's painful and it's expensive. I spend half my pay getting nail splints."

"I would think this hotel is expensive."

"Oh, no. It's summertime. I get a rate here."

"Isn't it far from the airport?"

"I don't care to stay with the other girls and the pilots. I'd rather spend the time traveling in the hotel van."

"So you don't like being with your crew?"

"No," she said, "there's no point to it unless you want to marry a pilot, and they are unbelievably stingy. If three stewardesses and the pilot and the copilot share a dollar-and-eighty-cent taxi ride with tip, depend on it, the pilot will ask each of the girls to contribute thirty-six cents."

"Yes," I said, "that's small beer."

"I still haven't told you what I want you to do for me."

"No, you haven't."

"Do you like Frank Sinatra?" she asked.

"Never met him."

"I mean, do you like his singing?"

"Overrated," I replied.

"You don't know what you are talking about."

"You oughtn't to ask a question if you have no respect for the answer."

She nodded, as if to indicate that she was certainly familiar with my variety of reply. "I know Frank," she said.

"You do?"

"I dated him for a while."

"How did you ever meet him?"

"On a flight."

"And he took your number?"

"We exchanged numbers. I wouldn't reveal something so private to me as my phone number unless a celebrity was ready to offer his first."

"What if his proved to be a false number?"

"That would be the end of him."

"It seems to me that you got to know Sinatra well."

"I don't see how that is any of your business. But maybe I'll tell you someday."

We were now on our third drink. Six-thirty was certainly [Cont. on 92]