

Now that's (four-fifths of) a supergroup.



“My Wilbury nickname was Charlie T. Near the end of the [Heartbreakers] tour in 1987, we were in London. While we were there, George [Harrison] and Jeff [Lynne]

would come to see us every night and usually come backstage afterwards. I remember we were having such a good time after one of the shows we stayed back there for hours. It was one of those, ‘You’ve got to leave, we are shutting the building down’ nights. I felt really inspired by it all. I remember thinking, ‘My God, this is great. I love these guys.’

“We went back to the hotel and a hurricane hit the middle of London the same night. They didn’t even predict it, but it ripped huge oaks out of the ground. I got up the next day and thought, ‘Holy cow, this is something.’ I always thought that hurricane had something to do with something. My life was different after that.

“I was back in America and it was a holiday. I think it was Thanksgiving, and I went to buy baseball gloves for a game. I pulled up to a red light and there was Jeff in the car next to me. I had seen him a few weeks before in England, but it seemed strange that he was at the red light and I waved at him. He was shocked too. We pulled over and he said, ‘Where are you going? Want to go to a session?’ I said, ‘No, I have got a thing going on at home.’ But I gave him my number and he called me the next day.

“We are very similar people in that we live the same kind of life. So it was great, he would come over and I would have a friend to hang around with. Then one day a week or two later, I was out Christmas shopping with my oldest daughter and there was this really nice French restaurant that we used to go to for special occasions. So we stopped. The waiter came up to us and said

that there was a friend of mine in a private room and he would like to see me. It turned out to be George [Harrison]. When I got there, he said, ‘This is so strange. I was writing your number down from Jeff and they told me you were in the next room.’ I agreed it was strange. Cosmic, even.

“Then he asked me where I was going. I told him I was going home and he asked if he could come with me. Without even thinking about it I said, ‘Yeah.’ So he came home with me and he spent the holiday and we became good friends.

“Jeff kept telling me that he had been talking with Roy Orbison about coming out to California, and I said, ‘Wow, that is pretty supernatural.’ Jeff said that he’d talked to him about recording and thought he’d be up for it. I said that I’d love to see that if he comes out. I didn’t hear any more about it for a while, but Jeff phoned me one afternoon and said, ‘Hey man, Roy Orbison is over here and we are going to write a song. Roy asked if you would come over and help us with it.’ I said, ‘Hey man, I am there, baby!’

“I was never afraid of Bob [Dylan], he was always nice to me. I have never been in awe of anyone and I think it’s worked in my favour. Dylan comes from folk music where if you wanted to play an extra bar you could, so he might play five bars instead of four and think nothing of it. There is an air of spontaneity about him; if things get too well rehearsed he doesn’t seem to like it. Although he never said it to me, I think he likes to keep things a little bit edgy.

“A lot of people think that the Traveling Wilburys were united because it was a good idea, but really we were pals and hanging out long before the Wilburys.”

Traveling Wilburys

Harrison, Lynne, Orbison, Petty and Dylan.
Tom Petty recalls the Wilbury genesis.

“A lot of people think the Wilburys were united because it was a good idea, but we were pals long before.”
Tom Petty

MUST HEAR: *Handle With Care* (from *Traveling Wilburys Vol 1*, 1988)