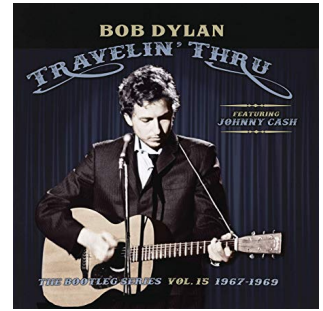


## Bob Dylan's Bootleg Series to Tackle 1969 Johnny Cash Sessions



Along with Dylan's legendary Cash duets, **Travelin' Thru, 1967–1969: The Bootleg Series Vol. 15** will also feature outtakes from 'John Wesley Harding' and 'Nashville Skyline'

**By Andy Greene**

In February 1969, Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash holed up in a Nashville studio for two days of loose, free-flowing sessions where they sang each other's songs, jammed with rockabilly icon Carl Perkins, broke into spontaneous covers like "Mystery Train" and "You Are My Sunshine" and even wrote the tune "Wanted Man" that Cash would debut at San Quentin prison just one week later. Their duet on "Girl From the North Country" appeared on Dylan's LP *Nashville Skyline* later that April and select tracks from the sessions leaked out into the bootleg world over the years, but much of this material has never been heard anywhere.

That will change on November 1st with the release of *Bob Dylan (Featuring Johnny Cash) — Travelin' Thru, 1967–1969: The Bootleg Series Vol. 15*. The three-CD package devotes a disc-and-a-half to the legendary Johnny Cash sessions, but it also has outtakes from the 1967 *John Wesley Harding* sessions and *Nashville Skyline* sessions that have never been bootlegged, along with a couple of Johnny Cash covers recorded for *Self Portrait* in 1970, the soundtrack to Dylan's 1969 appearance on *The Johnny Cash Show*, and selections from Dylan's 1970 home recording session with bluegrass great Earl Scruggs and members of his family.

"Besides the very early folk years, you don't have Bob playing with a lot of other major stars up until this point in his career," says a source close to the Dylan camp. "Here you have him doing duets with Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, and Earl Scruggs. It's a really deep dive into some of the music that he loves and just a really cool package. I think people will come away from it enchanted by the breadth of his catalog."

The *John Wesley Harding* session have been a source of deep fascination with Dylan fans for decades. Not only have the outtakes never leaked out to the bootleg community, but the whole thing was made in just three days and he's never talked about the songwriting process in any depth. None of the songs have choruses (unlike other works from this era) and he didn't attempt a single one of them with the Band while they worked on *The Basement Tapes* in this same time period. "1967 was a very creative time period for Bob and you get the feeling he could have written them in the car ride down to Nashville," says the source. "Who knows?"

There are just seven *John Wesley Harding* outtakes in this new collection. "There just doesn't seem to be many alternate versions of the songs," says the source. "The ones we have are often very similar to each other. We had to include 'All Along the Watchtower,' but it's not like 'All Along the Watchtower' cha-cha or anything. But 'I Pity the Poor Immigrant' is great and has a completely different melody. I don't think anything had more than three complete takes."

(The European copyrights for the *John Wesley Harding* sessions have expired since they are being released after the 50-year copyright-protection window closed. That has no impact on the publishing rights, but it is technically legal for anybody to release these seven outtakes on physical sets in Europe. "I'm sure they will appear on grey market collections," says the source. "But people don't really buy records anymore, so it doesn't make much of a difference.")

*Nashville Skyline* was recorded across eight days in February 1969, but roughly half of the session tapes have been lost. "There was an engineer who had taken some of the tapes home and put them in a storage locker," says the source. "Someone later bought them for a couple of grand and Sony had to buy the tapes back. Most of what we have comes from the storage locker, but the rest were lost. From the best we can tell, they are just

gone. That is unusual [in relation to the rest of the Dylan catalog, which has been carefully preserved], and I think it's just because nobody in Nashville was paying attention. They weren't thinking about future re-issues."

Fortunately, the tapes that survive offer a fascinating glimpse into the making of *Nashville Skyline*. There are alternative versions of songs like "One More Night," "Peggy Day," and "Country Pie" that are quite different than their album counterparts. "Everyone always talks about the Wrecking Crew in Los Angeles," says the source. "The players in Nashville from this time don't get enough love. Wayne Moss played on *Blonde on Blonde* and now three years later he's playing on 'Country Pie.' These guys could do anything and make it sound funky."

None of the Johnny Cash sessions were lost and they form the heart of *Travelin' Thru*. June Carter Cash was in the studio those two days and she can be heard suggesting they dust off Dylan's 1963's classic "Girl From the North Country," which he hadn't played in five years. "Bob goes, 'I like that, I just don't really remember it,'" says the source. "I think he only remembered one verse. We included that conversation. And every time Carl Perkins takes a solo, Johnny Cash says, 'Carl Perkins, everybody!' It's so cool. If Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, and Jerry Lee Lewis were the Million Dollar Quartet, this is the \$750,000 Trio."

For Dylan obsessives, the single most interesting song on the set will probably be "Wanted Man." There are numerous versions of Johnny Cash performing the song over the years, but nobody has ever heard Dylan sing any of it. "They don't have the words together, so they're making the words up on the spot as they go along," says the source. "You can hear June say, 'Johnny, you need to get that 'Wanted Man' from Bob so you know the melody of it.'"

The set also contains Dylan and Cash duetting on "One Too Many Mornings," "Matchbox," "Ring of Fire," and two medleys of Jimmie Rodgers songs. "They are just singing Jimmie Rodgers song off the top of their heads," says the source. "Johnny starts, Bob joins in. It's just two guys relaxing in the studio and having fun. That's what we tried to focus on. We wanted to focus on the fun they were having."

For the sake of completion, the set also has Dylan and Cash singing "I Threw It All Away," "Living the Blues," and "Girl From the North Country" from *The Johnny Cash Show* in June 1969 along with "Ring of Fire" and "Folsom Prison Blues" that Dylan sang on his own during the *Self Portrait* sessions on May 3rd, 1969.

The set ends with four songs that Dylan played with Earl Scruggs at the Carmel, New York, home of album-cover illustrator Thomas B. Allen on May 17th, 1970. The songs ("East Virginia Blues," "To Be Alone With You," "Honey, Just Allow Me One More Chance," and "Nashville Skyline Rag") were intended for the 1971 documentary *Earl Scruggs: His Family and Friends* along with its accompanying album *Earl Scruggs Performing With His Family and Friends*. "It's a little outside of our chronology," says the source. "But to us, it put a nice bookend on the set. They sound really relaxed and there's a very nice, casual feeling to all of it."

Future plans for the Bootleg Series are unclear, but a *Time Out of Mind* set and one that chronicles Dylan's pre-fame folk period in Minnesota and New York are both in contention. "We've collected all these early tapes of him like the Minnesota Hotel Tapes and all the tapes that Tony Glover recorded," says the source. "We have all these things in beautiful quality along with the Town Hall concert [in 1963] and the Carnegie Hall concert [in 1963]. Some day we'll put these all together and put them out, but it's not like people are clamoring for it. There are probably a few other areas to explore before that."

There are no immediate plans to end the Bootleg Series, but the steep decline in the market for physical product does put its future in some jeopardy. "We have to also see how long people keep buying these things," says the source. "We'll see what happens. Right now, there's a certain amount of physical that still gets sold, so we'd like to keep doing them."

# Rolling Stone

Here is the complete track listing for *Travelin' Thru, 1967–1969: The Bootleg Series Vol. 15*

## DISC 1

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October 17, 1967

Columbia Studio A, Nashville, TN

John Wesley Harding sessions

01. Drifter's Escape – Take 1 (Alternate Version)
02. I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine – Take 2 (Alternate Version)

November 6, 1967

Columbia Studio A, Nashville, TN

John Wesley Harding sessions

03. All Along the Watchtower – Take 3 (Alternate Version)
04. John Wesley Harding – Take 1 (Alternate Version)
05. As I Went Out One Morning – Take 1 (Alternate Version)
06. I Pity the Poor Immigrant – Take 4 (Alternate Version)
07. I Am a Lonesome Hobo – Take 4 (Alternate Version)

Bob Dylan: vocals, guitar, harmonica

Charlie McCoy: bass

Kenneth Buttrey: drums

February 13, 1969

Columbia Studio A, Nashville, TN

Nashville Skyline sessions

08. I Threw It All Away – Take 1 (Alternate Version)
09. To Be Alone with You – Take 1 (Alternate Version)
10. Lay Lady Lay – Take 2 (Alternate Version)
11. One More Night – Take 2 (Alternate Version)
12. Western Road – Take 1 (Outtake)

February 14, 1969

Columbia Studio A, Nashville, TN

Nashville Skyline sessions

13. Peggy Day – Take 1 (Alternate Version)
14. Tell Me That It Isn't True – Take 2 (Alternate Version)
15. Country Pie – Take 2 (Alternate Version)

Bob Dylan – vocals, guitar, piano, harmonica

Kelton D. Herston, Norman Blake, Charlie Daniels, Wayne Moss (10 & 12): guitars

Bob Wilson: piano, organ

Peter Drake: steel guitar (13-15)

Charlie McCoy: bass

Kenneth Buttrey: drums

## DISC 2

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February 17, 1969

Columbia Studio A, Nashville, TN

The Dylan-Cash Sessions

01. I Still Miss Someone – Take 5
02. Don't Think Twice, It's All Right/Understand Your Man – Rehearsal

February 18, 1969

Columbia Studio A, Nashville, TN

The Dylan-Cash Sessions

03. One Too Many Mornings – Take 3
04. Mountain Dew – Take 1
05. Mountain Dew – Take 2

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06. I Still Miss Someone – Take 2
07. Careless Love – Take 1
08. Matchbox – Take 1
09. That's All Right, Mama – Take 1
10. Mystery Train/This Train Is Bound for Glory – Take 1
11. Big River – Take 1
12. Girl from the North Country – Rehearsal
13. Girl from the North Country – Take 1
14. I Walk the Line – Take 2
15. Guess Things Happen That Way – Rehearsal
16. Guess Things Happen That Way – Take 3
17. Five Feet High and Rising – Take 1
18. You Are My Sunshine – Take 1
19. Ring of Fire – Take 1

## DISC 3

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February 18, 1969

Columbia Studio A, Nashville, TN

The Dylan-Cash Sessions

01. Studio Chatter

02. Wanted Man – Take 1

03. Amen – Rehearsal

04. Just a Closer Walk with Thee – Take 1

05. Jimmie Rodgers Medley No. 1 – Take 1

Based on Blue Yodel No. 1 (T for Texas), The Brakeman's Blues (Yodeling the Blues Away), and Blue Yodel No. 5 (It's Raining Here) written by Jimmie Rodgers

06. Jimmie Rodgers Medley No. 2 – Take 2

Based on Waiting for a Train, The Brakeman's Blues (Yodeling the Blues Away), and Blue Yodel No. 1 (T For Texas) written by Jimmie Rodgers

Bob Dylan: vocals, guitar

Johnny Cash: vocals, guitar

Carl Perkins: guitar (08, 10, 02, 04-06)

Bob Wootton: guitar

Marshall Grant: bass

W.S. Holland: drums

May 1, 1969

Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, TN

Live on The Johnny Cash Show

Originally broadcast on ABC-TV, June 7, 1969

07. I Threw It All Away

08. Living the Blues

09. Girl from the North Country

Bob Dylan: vocals, guitar

Johnny Cash: vocals, guitar (09)

Norman Blake and Charlie Daniels: guitars

Peter Drake: steel guitar

Bob Wilson: piano

Charlie McCoy: bass

Kenneth Buttrey: drums

May 3, 1969

Columbia Studio A, Nashville, TN

Self Portrait sessions

10. Ring of Fire (Outtake)

11. Folsom Prison Blues (Outtake)

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Bob Dylan: vocals, guitar  
Fred F. Carter, Norman Blake: guitars  
Charlie Daniels: guitar (11), bass (10)  
Bob Wilson: piano  
Peter Drake: steel guitar  
Charlie McCoy: harmonica (10), bass (11)  
Kenneth Buttrey: drums  
Delores Edgin and Dottie Dillard: background vocals

May 17, 1970

The Home of Thomas B. Allen, Carmel, New York

With Earl Scruggs

12. Earl Scruggs Interview

13. East Virginia Blues

14. To Be Alone with You

15. Honey, Just Allow Me One More Chance

16. Nashville Skyline Rag

Bob Dylan: vocals, guitar  
Earl Scruggs: banjo  
Randy Scruggs: acoustic guitar  
Gary Scruggs: electric bass