

Meeting and Recording Waylon Jennings

I met him at a Johnny Cash demo session. I had heard some of his records prior to that and dug them. Waylon came to Nashville a year or so after I came here. I don't know if that's the first time I met him, but that's the first time we were around each other. Cash had asked me to help him produce this demo session. And I guess he'd asked Waylon to do that too. He'd taken a real interest in Waylon. He really helped Waylon get started. He took him on the road with him. He did his own thing, but he was part of the show for a while.

But, anyway, we were both there helping Cash do some demos. Waylon, he didn't like the way I was looking at him. He was paranoid. He'd be playing the guitar and I'd be walking by. I was just observing, you know.

And he went up to Cash and said, "If that son of a bitch looks at me that way again, I'm gonna hit him."

And Cash said, "No! He loves you, he's always playing your songs."

He lived with Johnny for a while. They were both pillheads at the time.

Me and Waylon were always just sort of mutual admirers. We talked about working together a long time before we did. I had the JMI thing set up every Thursday. Well, I ran into him at RCA one day, and I told him what I was doing. I said, "I'll have the band there, and you just fall in and do whatever you want to do." No contracts or nothing. So we went in and cut these super sides! One of them was "Gypsy Woman." And I tried to get RCA to put it out. And Waylon tried to get them to put it out, but they wouldn't. I had Chet Atkins come out here and I sat him in that chair in there, and made him listen to it, a couple of times. But he just couldn't hear it. Harry Jenkins, who was Chet's boss, I had him come out here and sat him in that chair in there. It's the only time RCA just flat ass wouldn't. I mean, I would have cut it at their studio. We just wanted them to put out that record. That's not really what held it up. They just didn't hear it. It didn't sound like country music.

I paid for all that stuff. I still own that master, I never actually sold it to them. I've got several other singles in the can by him during that period of time. I've got stuff by Charley Pride that I own. I couldn't do anything with them, but I paid scale for them. They're cleared with the union. And RCA don't have their engineers anymore, so now that wouldn't be a problem. I never could understand why they couldn't hear "Gypsy Woman " They just refused to put it out. Well, they weren't too happy with Waylon right then. I was actually gonna be his manager there. He cut it before Don Williams. It's on the "Dreaming My Dreams" album.

