

A TUNE'S TWISTED TALE...

Something that's repeated often enough will soon become "fact". The truth, as told by WILL SHADE, will surely leave you "dazed and confused"!

"Been dazed and confused for so long it's not true"

MANY READERS WILL REMEMBER those words as the opening lyrics to a song that became a '70s anthem, "Dazed And Confused." They have turned out to be prophetic lines indeed. Almost nothing you have read about the song is true...

Even the most casual of listeners will recognise that particular set of lyrics as belonging to Led Zeppelin. However, the song was actually written by a New York acid-folk singer by the name of Jake Holmes.

Jake's band, which also included Teddy Irwin and Rick Randle, performed the tune on the brilliant 1967 album *The Above Ground Sound of Jake Holmes*. The revolutionary trio, consisting of one acoustic gui-



tar, one electric guitar and an electric bass, played a song that laid the groundwork for shapes of things to come. "Dazed And Con-



Top of page: Jake Holmes' 1967 album with detail from the track listing in inset; Centre: Jimmy Page, wearing the hat of a Carpetbagger, from the Union Civil War uniform; Above: The later line-up of The Yardbirds, Page second from left

Lonely
Did You Know
She Belongs To Me
Too Long
Genuine Imitation Life
Dazed And Confused
Penny's
Hard To Keep My Mind On You
Wish I was Anywhere Else
Signs Of Age

fused" boasted descending bass lines complete with dramatic caesuras and percussive tapping on strings, frets and guitar bodies. This was no accident. Holmes and company had been indulging in sonic experimentation for quite some time. Combined with Jake Holmes' eerie vocals, the song was five years ahead of its time. Literally.

Holmes' original version has usually been described as a song about a bad acid trip. In an exclusive interview with *Shindig!* in the spring of 2001, Holmes laid that myth to rest:

'I never took acid. I smoked grass and tripped on it, but I never took acid. I was afraid to take it. The song's about a girl who hasn't decided whether she wants to stay with me or not.

It's pretty much one of those love songs,' he revealed.

So, how did the song come into Led Zeppelin's repertoire? For that story, we must go to Jimmy Page's previous band, the majestic Yardbirds. On 25th August 1967 Jake and his group opened for The Youngbloods and Yardbirds at The Village Theatre in New York. The trajectory of rock 'n'roll was forever altered at this particular gig. Holmes and company played "Dazed And Confused" that night, capturing four Englishmen's collective attention and imagination.

Asked if he remembered that particular gig, Jake Holmes did indeed. 'Yes. Yes. And that was the infamous moment of my life when "Dazed And Confused" fell into the loving arms and hands of Jimmy Page,' he said.

In 1999, Yardbirds drummer Jim McCarty told this interviewer the details from the fallout of said gig. McCarty does not

hesitate to give credit where credit is due. 'We played with Jake in New York and I was struck by the atmosphere of "Dazed And Confused". I went down to Greenwich Village and bought his album and we decided to do a version,' he said. 'We worked it out together with Jimmy contributing the guitar riffs in the middle Don't you think he's the riff-master?.'

Indeed he is, but he's not the song's author. Further, he is obviously not even the song's sole arranger as the other Yardbirds were involved in that process. Anyway, Page also wielded a violin bow on his guitar during the song's bridge, giving it an uncanny flavour. With some minor lyrical rewrites courtesy of singer

Keith Relf, the song entered The Yardbirds' set for the last six months of their existence.

Very coy...

Jimmy Page is usually very coy when asked about the song's origins. At times, he has contended that Keith Relf introduced the song to the band. Rock historian Greg Russo, author of the acclaimed book *Yardbirds: The Ultimate Rave-up*, quotes a certain John Alusick asserting that he witnessed Jimmy Page buying Holmes' album the day after the New York gig at Bleecker Bob's Record Store on Bleecker Street in the East Village.

Some of the more educated rock'n'roll fans do realize that The Yardbirds

did cover the song. However, they usually think The Yardbirds' version was called "I'm Confused" – a title that the band itself never used. It was mistakenly called that on the 1971 Epic release, *Live Yardbirds! Featuring Jimmy Page*, an album designed to ride on the coattails of Led Zeppelin's success. Page had the album (recorded at New York City's Anderson Theatre on the band's final US tour in 1968) suppressed within days of its release.

McCarty also shared his thoughts on this. 'The Anderson Theatre show I didn't think was too bad. Jimmy says Keith had a

Led Zeppelin, the group that made "Dazed and Confused" famous, 1968.



bad night. I think it was more a case of doing "Dazed and Confused" pre-Zeppelin that made him withdraw it.'

An official CD release of *Live Yardbirds! Featuring Jimmy Page* by Mooreland Street Records in the summer of 2000 was also met with legal action by lawyers, according to record company owner Russ Garrett, who also runs a fan forum on the internet. The New Millennium label's release of *Cumular Limit* in the summer of 2000 finally gave listeners a chance to hear The Yardbirds' version of the song.

The Yardbirds imploded in July 1968. Page quickly formed a new band to cash in on his former group's pioneering groundwork. One of the songs on Led Zeppelin's late 1968 debut album (and on the car stereos of a million American teenagers throughout the following decade) was of course "Dazed And Confused". Page and his new singer, Robert Plant, collaborated on overhauling the lyrics, giving them a more misogynistic edge, but it still retained Holmes' trademark descending bass lines, his melody and signature lyrics. Further, the expanded arrangement stuck strictly to the one devised by The Yardbirds. Strangely, Page was credited with writing the song on Led Zeppelin's first album and all their subsequent performances of it. To this day, Led Zeppelin's version bears his name with no mention of Jake Holmes or Page's former bandmates in The Yardbirds. The song was obviously a reputation-maker.

Remuneration?

Asked when he became aware of Led Zeppelin's version, Holmes remembered vividly. 'When the album came out! And then, stupidly, I never followed up on it,' he said. 'In the early 1980s, I did write them a letter and I said basically: "I understand it's a collaborative effort, but I think you should give me some credit at least and some remuneration." But they never contacted me.'

Of course, it takes a little bit more than a nicely worded letter to get Jimmy Page & Co to provide recompense. Willie Dixon was forced to institute legal proceeding against the band to get credit and royalties for the quartet's plagiarising of "You Need Love", which Led Zeppelin attempted to disguise as "Whole Lotta Love." That case was settled out of court with generous restitution to Willie Dixon. (For a look at that case and others, visit: <http://www.furious.com/perfect/jimmypage.html>.)

At the time of writing, Led Zeppelin's debut album had just received the Diamond award from the music industry (10 million copies sold). However, the majority of rock music fans have no idea who actually authored the song nor have any real knowledge regarding The Yardbirds' pivotal role in its development.

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Be all that as it may, now the question is do we lay the blame for heavy metal at Jake Holmes' feet...?

DAZED AND CONFUSED

(Title Code: 340119544)

Writers:
HOLMES JAKE

Performers:
(none found)

Variations:
(none found)

Publishers/Administrators:
UNIVERSAL MCA MUSIC PUBLISHING A DIV
OF UNIVERSAL STUDIOS INC
2440 SEPULVEDA BLVD
SUITE 100
LOS ANGELES, CA, 90064
(310) 235-4700

From the ASCAP files – note the much earlier code number for Jake Holmes

DAZED AND CONFUSED

(Title Code: 340128276)

Writers:
PAGE JAMES PATRICK
PLANT R A

Performers:
GLEASON J
LED ZEPPELIN
MARSHALL W

Variations:
DAZED & COFUSED
DAZED AND CHINESE

Publishers/Administrators:
SUPERHYPE PUBL INC
% WB MUSIC CORP
% WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC INC
10585 SANTA MONICA BLVD
LOS ANGELES, CA, 90025
(310) 441-8600

The lyrics

Original studio version by JAKE HOLMES for The Above Ground Sound of Jake Holmes – Recorded in New York City, 1967; Released same year; Time 3:38.

I'm dazed and confused, is it stay, is it go?
Am I being choosed, well I'd just like to know
Gimme a clue as to where I am at
I feel like a mouse and you act like a cat

I'm dazed and confused, hanging on by a thread
I'm being abused, I'd be better off dead, I
Can't stand this teasin', I'm starting to crack
You're out to get me, you're on the right track

Bridge

Yeah, I'm dazed and confused and it's all upside down
Am I being used, do you want me around?
Secrets are fun to a certain degree
But this one's no fun 'cause the secret's on me

Live version by THE YARDBIRDS (erroneously titled "I'm Confused") – Recorded at the Anderson Theater, New York City, 30th March 1968; Live Yardbirds Released 1971; Time 6:27.

I'm dazed and confused, is it stay, is it go?
I'm being abused and I think I should go
Come on baby, I'm starting to crack
You're out to get me, you're on the right track

I'm dazed and confused, hanging on by a thread
Come on now baby, do you want me dead?

I can arrange that for a dollar or two
I can't remember anything about you

Bridge

I'm dazed and confused, hanging on by a thread
I'm being abused, I'd be better of dead
You're out to get me, you're on the right track
Quit teasin', I'm starting to crack, yeah

Studio version by LED ZEPPELIN for Led Zeppelin – Recorded in London at Olympic Studios, October 1968; Re-released 3rd February 1969 in the USA, 21st March 1969 in the UK; Time 6:26.

Been dazed and confused for so long it's not true
Wanted a woman, never bargained for you
Lots of people talkin', few of them know
Soul of a woman created below, yeah

You hurt and abuse, tellin' all of your lies
Runnin' around, sweet baby, lord, how they hypnotize
Sweet little baby, I don't know where you been
Gonna love you, baby, here I come again

Every day I work so hard bringing home my hard-
earned pay
Try to love you, baby, but you push me away
Don't know where you're going, all I know is where
you been
Sweet little baby, I want you again

Bridge

Been dazed and confused for so long it's not true
Wanted a woman, never bargained for you
Take it easy, baby, let them say what they will
I worked so much when I send you the bill