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This is the Lawyers, Guns & Money Podcast.

Welcome everybody to a very special edition of the Lawyers, Guns & Money Podcast.

I'm Scott Lemieux and I'm joined by Robert Farley and L. Jams resident actual rock star, great Elizabeth Nelson. And we're here to discuss a variety of things, Dylan, perhaps a little Garth Hudson as well since we're talking about the band. And we're talking about both her liner notes for the excellent new collection of Dylan's recordings with the band on their 1974 or read a tour as well as the recent Dylan, which I'm gonna argue is not exactly a biopic, at least in the classic sense, but the film version of Dylan Goes Electric, starring Timothy Chalamet, which I was actually pleasantly surprised by. And so this seemed like a good occasion to talk all things Dylan.

So Elizabeth, Robert, how are you?

- I'm doing great, Scott.

It's so nice to see you guys.

I know you've probably been doing a lot of reporting on things that are, I would consider,

like, slightly less important than talking about Bob Dylan,
but I know that there's a lot going on,
so I'm psyched to be here and appreciative
that we made a little time to, you know,
talk about one of our favorite subjects
amidst all of the chaos.

- Yeah, and I am doing just fine.

my beverage of choice tonight is a Fresca.

Having previously imbibed a little bit of Nyquil
because I have a little bit of the flu.

But otherwise things are good.

- Yeah, outstanding.

I was wondering if I could actually start off by,
I have a sort of couple quotes from Elizabeth's liner notes
which I actually sort of reunite,
you know, the sort of two themes today.

Some of you will know the 1974 tour
was Dylan's first since his motorcycle accident.

So he had been pretty productive in terms of recording
since the release of John Wesley Harding in New Morning,
but hadn't gone on tour in part
because he wanted to raise his family.

So this was, and of course,

his first time basically touring with the band since 1965.

So I love the way Elizabeth puts it.

So first of all,

Greeks intended to remark on the sheer force of the 1974 tour

the band, the Tanner Hooks urgency that verged on rage, and they aren't wrong. There's a hectic,

freight train aspect to the playing arrangements, score settling stuff, all the old bills collected.

Because it had been eight years since the same group was robustly heckled night after night in

1965 and 1966. And then a little later, you quote Robbie Robertson in his sort of answer documentary

once were brothers, which I love, although I'm on Team Robbie, so adjust accordingly,

that about the famous tour of England, that we'd go somewhere, we'd set up when we'd play,

people come, they'd boo us, sometimes throw things, we'd pack up our equipment, go to the

next place, set up, play, and they'd boo us. What a strange way to make a buck.

And I quote this partly because I think, again, it does explain the music on Before the Flood,

which we'll come back to. But I also suspect that some people who aren't knowledgeable about it,

we'll sort of assume that the footage at Newport and the controversy of Al Lomax

and in a more complex way Pete Seeger is kind of schematic that it's kind of like a biopic

kind of sports movie villain. It pretty accurately convinced what the situation was like. It really

was as amazing as it seems today. It really was seen as a profound betrayal by a lot of people.

So I really love the way that you sort of go back to that and then link it to the sort of very unique

music during the 1974 tour. It really sounds like neither Dylan nor even the band have sounded like

another live recording. So I kind of wanted to start there and wonder if you had some of the same thoughts as you were watching A Complete Unknown. Well, I did. And I also look forward to discussing the movie in a little bit more depth because like you, I enjoyed it and I was really prepared to not and I have, you know, slight criticisms of it, but I thought it was great.

And I do think that as the person who wrote the liner notes and spent so much time with this material, with this tour, you know, I not that I was uniquely positioned because there were plenty people who thought a lot about this tour. But like it was it was really interesting to see that portrayal of the New York Port Folk Festival where you know they they kind of played a little bit around with the actual facts of like you know the Judas thing and then you know whatever. But yeah

I mean you know but I'll let it go. But yeah I mean you know what was interesting to me I think was

like, you know, like, and they sort of presage this when they the final scene in the movie, spoiler alert, is he's riding off on his motorcycle after having gone to see what he got through for probably the final time. And it's like, okay, so we're, we're getting ready for the crash, you know, this is and I mean, maybe that will be the sequel. But, you know, and the motorcycle crash

does really sort of encompass when we talk about the motorcycle, I should say it is literally a motorcycle crash, but it's also just Dylan kind of realizing that he has to become a more private person, that he has to take the accelerator off his lifestyle. I mean, one thing that the movie doesn't do necessarily is kind of show the prolific drug use that was going on, you know.

Johnny Cash accepted.

I mean, what was funny about it is this is a mangled film. And if you see mangled Johnny Cash movie, he did not walk away from it at all. And that so I was like, wow, that's really weird. Like they kind of sort of like, you know, make some comments around it. But they really, and I'm assuming this came from like, Dylan's people being like, we can't talk about the drugs, which is fine. But you know, like, as a real head, you know, it's like he kind I think this acknowledging like I have to, you know, stop doing speed, I have to stop taking junk, I have to do, you know, something or else, you know, I am going to not just literally fly over the handlebars, but you know, I think he saw that as a way to, you know, heal himself.

And so when he gets back into it, it's a totally different scene for him because he has been absent. I'm putting absent in air quotes because he was recording a lot, like you said, Scott, and he was giving interviews. It's not like he just was JD Saland during it. He was there. He was doing some of his best recordings. But he was coming back and doing a live show. And I received this book for Christmas from my brother. It's "Knockin' on Dylan's Door," which is all about the 74 tour.

And it's just basically a collection of Rolling Stone, it's a lot of collections of Rolling Stone essays about the tour.

And so Ben Tong Torres, I haven't read the whole thing, but he followed them around.

And in the initial essays, he's sort of talking to fans

and following the fan experience where they're like,
we haven't seen him in so long and we're so excited.

And some people are angry because he's like, you know, he made up the motorcycle crash
and he's manipulating us and they're charging so much money and they're mad at Bill Graham
and they're, but everybody's really excited and they feel like they haven't had Dylan
for so long.

But the last time that Dylan gave himself over as a public person, as a front facing,
you know, member of a band where he was playing his songs, they acted like that was a
betrayal.

And so, you know, I think, you know, as I say, it's like, it's sort of fun to think
about that scene in the movie and that betrayal that they felt then.

And then him being like, okay, fine, you know, like, I'm not going out on tour anymore.

You guys hate us.

And then, you know, retreating and then feeling like he has to come back and everybody being
so excited.

And these shows in 74 were so much better received.

They were really excited to see Dylan.

It was like, you know, he was back to his Godhead status.

And that, you know, but the initial shows, you feel that energy of like, oh, they're
really nervous as to how they're going to be received.

Like, and Scott, I know you kind of listened to the shows and I know that this is like
your personal favorite.

I don't know if before the flood is your favorite record, but I know you were very, very, very

excited when the box that came out.

I want to hear what your reaction was to when you started with the Chicago Show and followed it through the tour.

If there were anything surprising for you or if you could feel that energy in the same way.

Yeah, it's really interesting.

I don't know, Rob, how if you're familiar at all this before, but I still remember buying, but really not knowing anything about it, just was on sale with Sam the Record Man and I got the cassette and basically listened to it on my bus ride from high school almost day for a year. But it is definitely a little divisive. You point out that Robert Krisko in his positive view describes Dylan running over his old songs like a truck, very much is. It's very like Arena Rock. But I think what's interesting about it, and especially if you compare it to, say, Rolling Thunder and its recorded versions, and as Krisko points out that it's a little bit sloppy, except that the band are also extraordinary musicians and they still are. Like, Leon just, Levon just can't be out of the pocket, no matter how wild he gets, you know, that they always sort of come back to it. So almost a little loosening up, you know, actually helps them. They actually, in some ways, you know, have more momentum than they do live sometimes. Whereas Rolling Thunder can really get kind of sloppy,

you know, and it has its moments,
but it also could be kind of a, you had to be there thing.
So I've actually always loved, you know,
partly because, you know, I love the band too,
And not especially, not every song on it, I would say,
necessarily works, but just the versions of Highway 61
revisited and all along the watchtower.
And just phenomenal, just the band is so locked in
and Dylan sounds like he's having so much fun,
which he doesn't always live.
But it's very much on that line.
And obviously, even people who like electric Dylan,
I could see it being a bit much.
It's like, I like Rock and Roll Animal too.
It's kind of the same thing.
It can kind of feel sacrilegious,
but it was really interesting.
And of course, as you point out too,
the very first disc at Chicago starts off
with like a song called "Tough Mama,"
which is like, I've spent more time
with the "Bootleg" series than most people.

And it's only existed like a demo on,
like I'd never heard that before in my life.

You know, just kind of a way of saying,
we're not gonna be too pandering here.

It's gonna be a little bit.

But it is interesting how the sound evolves throughout the tour.

As you say, they don't figure out that you'll go what?

Sorry.

They don't figure out their opening song until halfway through, that they're still
kind of figuring out what they want to play.

Unfortunately, the band material is not included.

And I understand why, but that's a bit it.

But it is, if you compare sort of especially the sort of Chicago shows to the LA shows
or some of the later shows.

It is interesting how that evolves,
and especially like Robertson basically never plays
the same song twice the entire tour,
but it really is,

and I don't know how extensively they rehearsed for it,
but it is really interesting to see,
again, these fairly brilliant
and fairly traditional musicians,

almost with a bit of pre-punk energy.

And as you say, it really is the,

"Okay, now you'll like it."

But we don't wanna make this thing that,

to sort of be able to play this sort of wild electric music.

But now with an audience that they would almost take that

to granted, for granted.

So they're almost trying to sort of push it forward

and really again, sort of deliver.

But, there are unexpected versions,

but they're not some, name that tune Dylan,

those kind of infamists from later on.

Is that "Bastards of War" or what?

That is still, like the songs still keep their melodies.

They're not, you know, they're unrecognizable,

but you know, sound different.

And so I was really, yeah, and I just wanted, you know,

there was kind of a running joke because, you know,

I kept saying, you know,

when are we gonna get the before the flood?

There'd always be, you know,

further down in the groove, 15 CDs, you know,

whatever it is, like the Empire of Prolesco takes,
you know, it's kind of like,
come on, get on with it, get to the end stuff.
So I have, it's a bit of a running joke, but I was really,
I mean, I don't know that I expected them
to release every single show, you know,
And they're part of me that could have used some curation,
but it is kind of just,
and especially since it was a very reasonable price,
it's actually kind of fun to just have all these shows
and just, you know, so every night I kind of read
and I just kind of put one on,
just pick, "Ooh, Seattle, or you'll throw that in."
You know, and yeah, it's really fascinating to listen to
and just the sort of way these songs develop.
I don't know how you,
having spent even more time with it
and obviously having to think about it
to actually write it up,
I don't know if you kind of had the same reaction,
but I was fascinated that for an arena show,
there was like, you really noticed that the material

going through some real changes,
it wasn't just like the same,
you can play the same way every night.

- Yeah, I mean, absolutely.

And I do think that like,
and I bring this up in the liner notes
that like when they hit the stage in Chicago,
and I think the first song that they actually played
in Chicago at the first show was "Hero Blues,"
which was kind of a,

And I mean, tough mom, they're tough mamas great too.

- Oh sorry, it's hero blues, you're right.

Tough mamas from Planet Wave, sorry.

It's hero blues.

Yeah, so then like I'd never heard that song before.

Put it out on.

- Well, I mean, it's such an incredibly like deep cut.

And I think that this was like them
kind of testing the waters.

I mean, I think I described it as more of like a war footing.

Like they were coming out like ready to fight.

And I do think that there is like a punk energy to it,

which was maybe surprising to the audience.

But again, I think they were just so happy

to have him back.

And for him, having inhabited all of these persona,

like that they were gonna get the Dylan

that they were expecting to get.

And as I say, like in this book, it's sort of interesting

because like by the Toronto show,

which is like the third show,

like there's a fun anecdote about Ben Fonteur

not really having a lot of access to Dylan in the band. So he's in his hotel room watching TV,

and there's like some cultural show called The City or The City News or something. And there's

a 50-something year old reporter who Ben Fontouris, where is he recognizes and you know,

but they cut to a youth reporter who's really mad at Dylan. And he's the one who's kind of saying

like, oh, you know, Bill Graham and Dylan, you know, they're just they're just using this,

he's manipulating. And the older commenter is saying, like, well, you know, Dylan doesn't really

belong to the public. And, you know, I don't really like to talk about him on the show,

but my son Neil doesn't really, you know, need all this media attention. And he's made that

decision. And of course, Scott, as a, you know, the veteran Canadian on the show, and I'm sure

you know who this commentator was with his son Neil.

- Yes, Scott Young also wrote a series of fiction books

about young hockey players.

Boy and Leaf's Camp is a classic of Canadian fiction.

- But anyway, I just had to get to that digression

because I was so delighted by that story.

And I figured like as a Canadian, you might appreciate it.

And my understanding is that Neil Young

has transcended fame, his father's fame everywhere but Canada, where Scott Young is still more

beloved than Neil, maybe not at this point.

My favorite Scott Young story is that when Old Man came out and became a big hit, Scott went around and said, "Can you believe this song?"

And of course, he found out there was actually written about the guy who lived on Neil's comp.

He had taken it and was like, "Fy-ah, the song about me is a huge turn out."

No, not such a rip, but somebody else.

But anyway, I don't want to get too much into
can't go under aggression.

- No, no, no.

- Because one of the first things,

'cause I tried to sort of arbitrarily decide

what to listen to,

the shows from Maple Leaf Gardens in the forum,

which I think, I guess,

yeah, I guess six and seven shows,
among other things, he does Nobody Except You,
which is a deep cut we're more familiar with
because the sort of first three bootleg discs
are almost canonical now.

But that was sort of an interesting choice as well.

So that along with, you know, kind of some of the songs
you'd expect from a read-a-rock show,
he's still, you know, kind of resurrecting, you know,
songs that the audience would have had no familiarity with
and playing them in that context.

And I thought that was, you know, so like, you know,
kind of "Ready Day Women" is a very crowd pleasing opener,
but then, you know, sort of going back in,
it's sort of interesting, you know, those choices
where he still doesn't want to be even in a read-a-rock show.

And again, very much, we'll come back to that.

some of the ambivalence, you know, sort of reflected in the movie, you can still see
that that he doesn't want to be too predictable. He doesn't want to be too familiar. Although
this is about as close as you would get in a good context. So like Budokan, he's playing
the hits, but in like cheesy Vegas lounge.

So, so, so, so I want to, I want to intervene on that point exactly. Because my Dylan, my

Dylan experience is far less extensive than either of yours. And I think actually it is probably less extensive than the median 50-year-old American man.

I was just sort of more the Pink Floyd, a little bit of Zeppelin, Beatles, and so forth.

In college, one of my roommates, there was the \$3 CD store where you bought your used CDs.

He brought home Live at Buddha Camp and played it incessantly.

The entire time, I'm like, "Eh, I don't know, maybe."

It was only later where I read that as I came to be aware that this is the album that people do not speak its name, right?

We pretend that it does not exist.

And so I actually was reading through the liner when I was reading through Elizabeth Liner notes and thinking about this, like that one of the questions that occurred to me that I wanted to ask you guys is like, first, why?

And second, how does this happen in four years?

Because Budokan is only four years after this tour, right?

So how does it happen that in four years there is, I don't know whether it would be called a reversion or sort of a different approach?

I mean, is this just all part of the mercurial sort of inscrutableness of Dylan that this sort of thing happens or what?

Like how do you guys explain why Buddha can is bad and how it happens in such close proximity

to this tour?

I think that's a great question.

I don't know, Scott, do you have thoughts about it?

And I don't know, some of you got an decision

'cause there was also a,

all the "Buddhikan" shows are released recently.

So I kind of went back to them

and they definitely got some reviews of that.

"Ah, this isn't actually as bad as you thought."

Whereas "Greal Marks" is like,

"This is the one "Buddhikan" series

I'm not listening to a single second of like,

and I'm like, "Greal Marcus," you know,

and I kind of lead towards the word "Greal-like."

There's some moments there,

but it's actually more or less as bad as this, you know,

It's just not, it doesn't work.

But it's just, you know, I guess,

and Elizabeth would have a better sense

of this as a band leader, but it just seems, you know,

Dylan is just sort of very, you know,

he works with musicians for a certain period of time

and then it's on to the next thing.

So you can kind of see Rolling Thunder as a transition,

but you know, one thing about Rolling Thunder,

you still got Mick Ronson with him.

There's still a bit of that, you know,

so there's still something to at least kind of keep him

kind of tethered to rock and roll.

And then "Buddha Konya," I don't, you know,

obviously you can see some of the music on "Street Legal"

has a bit of that, sort of the, you know, the horns,

the background singers.

But where "Street Legal" sounds at least okay today,

you know, I don't think it's anybody's favorite,

but it definitely is, it's not a terrible record.

But yeah, there's just something, you know,

I can't really understand like why I kind of went into that.

You know, I don't know if you just like thinking about

Elvis, you know, just the, you know, the,

or just genuinely like I'm a people's entertainer.

He kind of goes through phases like that.

Because again, like "Budakan" is the one where like,

the set lists are, it's stuff that people want to hear,

it's organized then.

And again, I can understand picking that up at a store

and think, "Whoa, this looks great."

It's like, you know, track for track,
it looks better than his greatest hits albums,
but it just doesn't.

But I just think that it's something that,
somebody who has never thought,
he's always had an off the cuff.

That's the, again, I think the story of the movie
about Al Cooper wandering into play guitar
and then just sitting down at the oar.

Like my understanding is that's pretty much
an accurate representation of what happened.

There's just a lot of,
and inevitably that's gonna produce some unevenness.

So the sort of off the cuff nature
just produces phenomenal music with the band in that context.

but with kind of less distinctive or impressive musicians
and kind of more dubious concepts, it just doesn't work.

But again, I think that's my impression
is just that he's got a band with him,
he plays the shows, he moves on to the next thing.

That's one interesting thing actually about,

I think since kind of roughly Love and Theft came out,

he has kind of kept a core band together, right?

Like I think he's had like Charlie Sexton,

he's like, he's kind of, but that's very unusual for him,

for most of the 70s and 80s.

It's like one, you know, he has these lounge guys

then he, you know, brings in Mick Taylor.

Then, you know, it's just sort of like random

and that just seemed to be that kind of,

I don't know if that's your impression, Elizabeth,

but that's sort of what I, how I would look at it.

- Yeah, I think that's accurate.

And I will have to fact check myself on this,

but I don't know if around "Buddhikan" was the time

where he became very interested in Neil Diamond

and wanted to replicate his-

- Damn, Robbie Robertson.

- Yeah, I'll blame him for that.

(laughing)

- But yeah, I think you make an excellent point

about this rotating sort of cast of characters

that would come in and out of Dylan's orbit.

I don't know if this is the place

where I talk about why Rob Stoner is mad at me,

because Rob Stoner was a really integral part

of the Rolling Thunder band.

He was like the band leader, right?

Like during that time.

- Yeah, and he was great and that was a hot band.

And I, you know, but for whatever reasons,

you know, Dylan jettisoned him

and a lot of the other people in that band.

So I do think that it's like he, like you said,

like, you know, he has had a fairly stable lineup

for when he goes out on tour,

although he did fire Charlie Sexton.

- Oh, I did not see that.

I haven't seen him in a way.

He doesn't come to big cities anymore.

I'm super cool.

So yeah, but yeah.

- He played DC.

Is that not a big city?

- Oh yeah, I'm sorry.

I apologize.

That's not strictly accurate,

but his tour this year in particular,

he's going to like Tulsa and Wichita.

I don't mean gray, I think it's kind of cool,

but I think he likes to, but yeah.

So that's true.

It's more erratic than that.

It's never one thing, but yeah.

- I mean, and you can never predict what he's gonna do.

But anyway, so, but I saw him twice

on the Ruffin Roddy Ways tour,

which I guess we're not calling it the never ending tour anymore

because I think it's going to end, which is sad.

But yeah, I mean, not having that stable lineup and certainly like

who he's choosing to work with can definitely affect the sound.

And I think like so perhaps the ferocity of working with the band in this context.

Obviously, the band's a band.

They're the best, the best band, like Scott said, even on, you know, their worst night,

they're still the hottest band, you know, this side of NRBQ.

I think one other thing, one other theory that I could offer up is that

because of what happened on the 74 tour and the things that like

I sort of learned about it and I think this is common knowledge.

So I don't think I'm going to be divulging state secrets here, but like and this comes up a lot in the reporting of it, but like the sound systems like, just weren't equipped for like an arena show could not cater to what Dylan was doing. And he kind of, it didn't ruin his voice, but he changed it irreparably. So I think that like, and if you look at the, these were like robust setlist and he was sometimes doing two shows a day in venues that could not accommodate his vocals.

And so he was really, really working his vocals.

So I mean, if any of the commentary is about how the vocals don't sound good, it could be because his voice was being altered by the 74 tour.

Yeah, I also did.

I really enjoyed Scorsese's documentary about Rolling Thunder.

It was kind of very interesting.

And again, the sort of interesting dynamics.

Yeah. And you can definitely see some of that tension within the band.

And again, not so everybody has this crush on Scarlett Rivera.

That's like someone is that all those weird tensions.

And yeah, like it definitely seems like one still spends enough time with people.

It's just not going to. That's just not.

And I think, you know, I think his more recent bands have stayed together in part

because they're just kind of got their their their born side men.

Like, I don't think, you know, you're just going to.

But you definitely get a sense that Dylan's 70s,

There's a whole bunch of kind of Lou Reed,

you know, Bob Quinn situation.

There's situations where it's just not, you know,

that what makes it great intention

is just not going to produce a long standing, you know,

just, you know, you're just not going to.

So I, you know, now Bob Stoner wasn't a star,

but the fact that he was basically like the musical director

and sort of had that and was kind of, you know,

sort of having to work out concepts

of what was a very ad hoc tour.

Yeah, again, I just think that that kind of, you know,

and again, I think the movie captures that well,

that's just, that's going to breed a certain amount of resentment, which again, is just

not uncommon.

It's just, you know, you know how hard it is obviously to sort of keep bands together

and those tensions and so on.

And I do think again, like that is an interesting thing about Rolling Thunder is that it definitely

conveys a lot of that tension, you know, as well as, you know, like it was clearly a fun

tour in a lot of ways, but there's definitely, even as kind of people moved on and they're kind of feeling better, but you still definitely get some of that.

It's interesting how much of that tension still comes through later.

It's actually a pretty interesting film.

Interesting film and also shout out to Razzo Sloman's book, "On the Road with Bob Dylan,"

I think it's called, which is all about Razzo going on the tour with the Rolling Thunder crew.

Very, very highly recommended that book.

Another one for the list.

Will some great should we talk about a complete unknown?

I I you know it was yeah

I thought it was like again and there will definitely be quibbles that we can get to but I thought it was well done

a lot of ways first of all Elizabeth you definitely need but the monogrammed envelopes

Like I like the Johnny Cash where you have like Elizabeth Nelson

You have some sayings then you write in some extra ones that or the pink Cadillac

I think either one would be acceptable, but but hopefully you'll be able to get one

We'll we'll have to do a separate fundraiser for that. I'd support that

But I thought it was some you know, I you know and again, I it didn't although I've seen lots of views basically say

You know, it's just a standard music biopic which walk the line is one of the best examples

You know, it's one of the better ones, but that definitely falls that I guess is more complicated and that you know

There's not really the same arc. You know, I do I do take the argument that it's sort of about the most over familiar period

In Dylan's but I also understand like I'd love to see a movie about him, you know

You know recording infidels or or you know fighting with

Daniel Lanwan New Orleans, but I don't think that's probably not gonna get financing for a major studio for that

But you know, I mean it definitely is like on some broad level, you know, kind of a familiar part of the story

But you know even the sort of goes electric is not an unalloyed triumph

You know, and I think one of the sort of pivotal figures in the movie is sort of Ed Norton's Pete Seeger

Um, you know, he's definitely not a villain, you know, he's you know, trade is like very earnest

And I think that you know one thing I point the movie makes is that you know sort of seager's assessment that you know

Dylan, you know never really cared about politics. Okay is completely correct

Um, you know that that part of the reaction

Um to sort of dylan isn't isn't just about going electric but it's sort of about abandoning

folk music at a time of you know, sort of of of the civil rights act and the great society

And again, I personally think on one level,

sort of dumb to criticize a musical genius

about to produce his best work,

but I think it's more understandable.

And I think that the sort of decision

to make Seager a relatively major figure,

I think is actually a really interesting one.

It means that it's not sort of,
it can easily been told as a,
like Dylan beats the squares and it's straight,
but I think it ends up being a little bit more complicated
that. And partly because Dylan's motives for going electric are also mixed.
And that's why I sort of brought up that quote from the beginning, you know,
the settling scores that, you know, there's the,
there's very much the not doing what the audience expects is its own
justification for Dylan. And so I don't see the movies having that sort of very,
you know, sort of traditional art, you know, and then also in the bad ways,
as you say, Elizabeth, not really, you know,
talking about Johnny Cash's drug use, but not Dylan's, you know, there is some, you know,
some of
what, you know, some of the what could make it more interesting is missing too. But I don't
really
think, you know, it's much more of a, I think it's a much more complicated story that doesn't
follow
that sort of, sort of downfall and redemption arc. I don't know how you two saw it. But that's,
that's what I kind of found most interesting about it.
Elizabeth, you want to go first? Or do you want me to go first?
What was your take, Rob?
I'll go first. I mean, I mean, it's up to you. Okay. I'll go and maybe we can bring up some
topics of conversation. So I'm with, I think both of you in saying that I really enjoyed it and was

surprised because I was positioned to hate it. And I'm interested to hear whoever's going to give Matt Doss's opinion about this. But I thought, obviously, I had to sit with it for for a minute, like I had gotten a copy of the shooting script and I read it and I was like, oh, I'm gonna hate this.

Aren't I?

Like I just, you know, like-

- By the way, co-written by a longtime Scorsese, Lieutenant Jay Cox, which is interesting.

- Totally, I mean, and so like, and I read it and like, you know, there are some like annoying things like, which I just think are hard to convey on screen.

Like how do you portray genius being genius as opposed to like Bob Dylan sitting in the Chelsea hotel.

I think it was, I think it was the scene where he's like struggling his way through writing, it's all right, Ma.

And he's like, he's not busy being born.

And he's like thinking it through.

And I'm like, Oh, come on.

- Busy dying.

- Busy dying.

It's like, they're like busy shopping, busy eating a sandwich.

Like, come on, like, you know, like this is a game.

- There's only a few of those.

- Yeah.

- Like, Oh, I understand the reference, but yeah.

And there's like a very like sort of walk hard,

which is also the best music biopic ever.

- Even though it's mostly directed at Maggoli's movie,

that it is, yeah, that's,

there could be no more traditional biopics after that.

That just, yeah, absolutely.

- So I mean, so like all of that aside,

like I thought it was great.

I thought Chalamet was great.

I thought him choosing to play Dylan as sort of a nullity

was really interesting, but obviously, you know,

probably the right choice.

Dylan himself is the avatar of, you know, a cipher and and somebody who's constantly changing

personalities and and is rewriting his own biography, more or less full time. My my biggest

critique, you know, other than just kind of, you know, sort of flattening everything out and making

it sort of one dimensional was the portrayal of the women in his life, I think was given

a little bit of short shrift. And I understand that that's okay, because, you know, we need

to go forth with the male auteur genius narrative here. But I will speak in defense of Joan

Baez and Susie Rotolo, who is Sylvia Russo in the film.

So now I was wondering, is that because like it's a composite or is the

just no one. Dylan, Dylan,

insisted evidently,

curious about that choice.

Evidently, evidently Dylan insisted on changing.

Oh, OK. OK.

So I don't know. I respect her, her estate or whatever.

So they they changed it to Sylvia, but it's obviously Susie Rotolo.

And, you know, I,

- The color of, yeah, the cover shoes for free wheel

and probably get gave you a chance.

- Exactly.

Well, they didn't show them standing

in the middle of the street.

It was, you know, on a porch stoop.

But anyway, I think the thing that people

maybe don't fully understand about Joan Baez,

especially if they watch this movie,

is how massively famous she was

and how she basically was willing to transfer

all of her fame to Dylan.

This is how much that she believed in him.

And while he was a genius,

that he would not have been as easily accepted if it wasn't for her

and all of the work that she put behind making sure that he got her.

You know, she was taking him out with her

and she was covering his songs.

And I know they kind of give a little bit.

Of of screen time to this, but I you know.

I don't think that they really, really show like just how important she was to building his career.

And that kind of bugged me, you know, I'll be fine. But and then and then Susan Retolo as well.

I mean, you know, she she gave him the cred that he needed to get, you know, into core and and,

you know, sort of become a part of the burgeoning folk scene. And I just, I feel like both of these

women were really flattened out in terms of the impact that they had on his career. And then

this comes up in a New Yorker review of the movie where, and I think it has come up in a

couple of other reviews, but the New York one stood up in my mind. They completely leave out

Sarah Lowndes from the narrative completely. And like, she was with him by the time he

was playing Newport in '65. And like, I mean, you know, as I say, maybe Dylan came down

and said, absolutely no Sarah content. But this is like the one relationship in his life.

She was basically his muse and you know, the person who was with him, you know, through

motorcycle crash and everything that follows, but she was there for the Newport stuff. So that scene

where he, you know, Sylvie is at Newport with him and she just can't hang because of Joan and all

this other stuff, like none of that is accurate. And that's okay. Like again, it's a biopic, but that we're not even going to acknowledge the fact that there was this woman who was basically, you know, the, you know, the linchpin to blood on the tracks, which comes after the 74 tour, which some consider to be his finest recorded document. And I would say it's on a short list for me. It's weird. It's just, it's weird. I mean, Seager, absolutely. He got the veneration that he deserves, but I feel like the women didn't. I agree 100% about the Sylvie, despite Elle Fanning, I think, doing a valiant job. It's interesting to say that 'cause I actually thought that the movie's portrayal of Baez was actually relatively, that like I saw him, you know, at like it did portray her as kind of, you know, kind of a major talent who was kind of, you know, on further than the movie is, I think pretty clear that Dylan is a misogynist dickbag. Like I think- - Oh, hell yeah. - Well, it does like convey that pretty well.

You know, and there is of course the scene
where Dylan has the famous like oil painting comment,
which is, you know, it's very hard for me
because on what like,
Dylan buys an incredibly admirable figure,
Dylan's also kind of right about it.
I don't like him, I don't,
I admire more than I feel like listening to her music
sometimes despite like, geez, phenomenally, you know,
but, you know, I do think that the,
I don't, I don't read that as the movie
presenting that unambiguously.
Like, you know, that is a bit of a,
like, yeah, it's also a bit of a distancing strategy.
It's, you know, it's, it's kind of like Dylan being an act,
You know, like, you know, but I do think that it,
like to some degree, you know, it does,
I feel it, the other interesting thing,
and I don't know if this is just a coincidence or not,
but I don't think so, is the fact that Dylan is willing
to take the pragmatic, give the audience something
they want to buy some cash, but not from bias.

And I don't think that's a coincidence, you know,
and I don't see the movie as portraying that as,
you know, you should have taken that advice from Cash
because he's hipper, I think it's that like,
when he was, when he refused to play "Bone with the Wind"
and you, I do like that you dissed that track
as in your liner notes,
even though I got to see Neil Young play it
on the right "Glory to I still think it's a little too
Peter Paul and you know,
too all too Peter Paul and Mary Reddy,
but the way I read it and maybe I'm being too generous
to mangle Cox, but is that it's not just about
I'm doing my own thing.
It's like specifically sticking it to John Baez,
knows very well is talented and was a bigger star. And the fact that when Cash holds up as
the acoustic guitar and says, "Come on, Bob, I want you to hear these songs a lot, but give
them this one." I didn't see this, because do you think, am I being too generous there? Or do I
do
see the movie, I think, at least in some ways, trying to sort of stand up for bias as importance
and influence? I mean, I don't think you're being too generous. I mean, obviously,
it's a movie and they had to make decisions. And yeah, I mean, it'd be super weird to
spend an hour on how Joan Baez spent her time trying to advance Bob Dylan's career.

So no, I think they kind of chose the avenues to where-- and so yes, I mean, as I say, it's like this is my one.

- And I was just saying, I largely agree with that.

I thought there was a little bit,

I thought they did a bit of a better job with Baez

than they did with the Silvie characters.

- Oh yes, yes.

And Baez, and I loved Monica Barbarro.

- Yeah, I think that's it, yeah.

- And I thought she was great.

And I love that they actually let her be kind of a spitfire

and you know, like the scene where he, you know, is, you know,

not on drugs, obviously, but knocking around the Chelsea hotel,

knocking on doors and he finds her and, you know, and then,

yeah,

this is about the closest they came to suggest a little,

some amphetamines may be involved in this.

I just thought he was confused. I mean, it's, it's a big hotel. I don't know.

But you know, and then, you know, they,

they spend some time together and then he's sitting there writing and,

and you know, she says, like, did you,

Did you just come over to make me watch you write, which I thought was like such a cutting

takedown because it's like, Hey man, you know what's really boring is watching dudes, right?

I'm just gonna, I'm going to put it out there.

The listeners I'm really sorry.

And I thought that was great.

And so, and I, yeah, I love the way that she gives him the finger and you know, she's clearly a self-possessed woman, but yeah, I felt that, you know, they, they really kind of washed out a lot of Susie Rottolo's influence and her own ability.

I do think, I will say this, they got this correct.

How square the folk music scene was in the early 860s.

Yeah, like Seager is actually relatively hit by the standards of the way that it is.

So it's like, it is, it really is what, yeah.

Yeah, and again, I think that a lot of people will sort of assume that that's kind of schematic.

But my understanding is that it's really not like that is pretty much an accurate reflection of what that was like. And I think part of the reason why Dylan, despite his admiration for Guthrie was so ambivalent about you know, like that there's part of it, he loves like the American songbook, right?

Like he always had, you know, but there is that he just has no use for that kind of, yeah, that sort

of pedantic, you know, very, you know, like that that it is. And again, it's unfortunate. But that that does, you know, I think the movie could have done more

with Baez kind of being caught in the crossfire,

you know, like on that.

And then I don't think that, you know,

so like Baez was a very political person
who's like music was not always,
like I think that it's entirely correct
that you know, that one need not do panatic folk music
to still like care about stuff, you know,
and that's kind of hinted at, but you know, I think
it would really just be a movie that sort of
just focused on that relationship
Dylan could actually be like, that would be a really cool angle to pursue in its
own, right? Cause I think that's like a fast, you know, like Dylan Baez is a
really fascinating, um, you know, story in so many ways. And, and, and, and, and
as you say that again, the complete exclusion of Sarah Lowndes and, um, you
know, the really, and again, like Elle Fannock does everything she can, but
there's just very little to be done with that role. Um, yeah, I, I, I definitely
think that's, that's, that's definitely weakness. Again, some of that is just,
there's only so much time with bias. I will at least accept a,
There's only so much time, you know, that if you have some
background knowledge, it does convey some of that. But yeah,
it definitely is a, you know, and again, you could do with
one or a few less like, Oh, he's writing a famous I know, I know,
I know what that's on. But yeah, definitely, that's that is one,
you know, one one limitation for sure. And that is a limitation

of almost all, especially biographical projects where there's at least tacit support from the from the from the subject. So, and I think this gets to the points I wanted to make. And I will say that this point is not original, right, that Matt initially made it. And he did not like it as much as any of us did. And his comment was, James Mangold really should have watched Walk Hard, right? In between

Walk the Line and this movie, James Mangold really should have watched Walk Hard because, you know, it problematizes all the moments. And I don't, you know, Matt is lovely, but I don't fully agree. I think, you know, I'm much closer to you guys. The one, the man gold ism that is so common

does touch upon what you guys are talking about here with Baez, which is that man gold loves to

tell a man's story in the reaction shot of a woman. Right. And that is all over walk the line.

It is all over this movie. Right. I'm going to convey how much of an asshole he is, because we're going to switch to L. Fanning looking at him. Right. But it's also some other, it's like, It's part of Logan, right? It is, you know, part of his toolkit, right?

It's I want to tell you something about the greatness of this man.

So or the ass-wholeness of this man or whatever.

And so I am going to show you the face of a woman in his life.

Going back to heavy, really. That's just like, yeah, yeah.

But I mean, you know, I also do think that that that bias was sort of capably presented here and her importance.

A lot of it was conveyed. It's just, you know, it's a movie.

But but you know, I think as Elizabeth noted all the players here are young you can always make a you can always make a sequel

so

Uh, you know other things that I found pretty interesting, uh, and you know, I mentioned this on on the intertubes

uh

you know

I forget his name right now, but it's like it's like bra whoever played cash

I thought was actually better in the scenes that he played cash than Joaquin Phoenix was when he played cash

You know way back in in walk the line, right? I mean looks a lot like him too, but he's he felt much more like cash

Yeah, that wild side. He was really

dangerous and sexy angry

Yeah, boy, holbrook. Yeah, he's actually in a fair amount of stuff in a fair amount of money from pressmanburg, Kentucky

I don't know right so but you know, he is dangerous. He is sexy. He's not introspective. He's not brooding

And I actually like Joaquin Phoenix

I know a lot of people don't but you know his cash is this very introspective

Brooding figure in that movie and you know, man gold lets him do that and it's actually not super appropriate to cash, right?

I mean, I'm sure he had these introspective and brooding moments

But you know you got you got to tell us something about the cash that we know right?

And so I loved when he held the hell he held the guitars a gun

Towards the the festival and when he backs his Cadillac into another catalog

Amazing like that justifies the best picture nomination itself

Yeah, I also kind of with Elizabeth, I almost wonder if he got that back because you could talk about Dylan's drug use to be really needed that scene to sort of pack, you know, sort of like you can apply that that that Johnny's probably not the only person who has the aftermath of the parties that Dylan has been in.

Yeah, you know, it's another thing.

And yeah, but here's another part of this, right, that I have never, and I think this

This also goes to the drug question, I have never seen a movie that is glorified smoking more than this movie, glorified smoking.

I wanted to smoke a whole pack of cigarettes after I watched this movie, because he is smoking all the time.

It is the core to his ability to communicate with other people, is sharing a cigarette or borrowing a cigarette or giving a cigarette.

That's obviously a very intentional choice and a commentary, and it may be a shadow commentary

sort of ways of talking about Dylan's addictions in sort of very, when you couldn't talk about it super explicitly, but the smoking in this movie, you know, and I figured it, I don't know what it was rated, but I assume it was rated R just because of the smoking, because you can't show that much of it on TV anymore.

You know, the other thing, like, I thought Norton's performance as Seager was fantastic, but it really was updating Death to Smoochie, which I don't know if you guys of scene, but he plays exactly the same character in Death to Smoochie. And he really is just

updating that character. And I like because Norton does have these, you know, he does have these particular roles in his toolbox. And he dusted that one off so that he could play it as Pete Seeger. But you know, as you guys say, right, the Newport is not a triumph. It's not depicted as a triumph in this movie. Like Seeger, Norton's long monologue about, you know the shovel and the spoons, like that's well taken, right?

He makes sense, right?

And you know, he's arguing against somebody who just doesn't want to have a conversation with him at all and it's just not engaging.

But you're not cheering for Seager to be defeated here, right? - Right.

- I mean, you're also not cheering for him to take an ax to the cables.

But you're not cheering for him to be defeated.

And I think that, you know, that's one of the real strengths of the movie to my mind is that it avoids the very obvious arcs that biopics so often fall into, right?

Which is that you're telling a story about redemption, right?

You're telling a story about triumph and redemption.

In this one, the triumph comes very early.

And from that point on,
we're not talking about sort of another greater triumph
that Dylan is gonna have.

We're just talking about the people around him.

And so, and I think that gets to the greatest strength
of the film, which is because of both alluded to,
it doesn't try to figure Dylan out, right?

I mean, you go back to "Walk the Line,"

they try to explain,

Mangold wants to explain to you why Johnny Cash was
the way he was, right?

And he uses it in flashbacks,
and he uses it in all these places, right?

- See, I think he did watch "Walk Hard,"

like he really does avoid a lot of those,

like I was just gonna like,

or whether he did or not,

he avoids a lot of the really obvious,

like problematic devices in the first,

which I enjoyed, but yeah.

- Yeah, that's a long question.

- And in a way,

Dylan himself is just left as the central mystery

in the film, right?

He's kind of like the word escapes me right now,

but he's kind of like the suitcase in Pulp Fiction, right?

You know, that just everybody is sort of rotating around

and everybody is talking about

and it's a pretty interesting suitcase,

but they never,

Mangle never tries to crack him open, right?

Never tries to crack him open

and figure out what's going on inside.

And that is probably a uniquely well thought out approach

to talking about Bob Dylan, right?

Because we just have, we can't even make guesses

as to his interiority and the film doesn't try to, right?

It just leaves us with him as the mystery box in the middle.

- Elizabeth, one thing you put in talking about the,

in your liner notes, talking about the stress

of those tours is that, of course, you know,

Levon Helm, you know, laughed the England tour very early.

Like he barely played on it at all.

I mean, to me that's, it's certainly,

I get the sense from Robbie's biography
that that's sort of the,
which Robbie represents very sympathetically
as like the real key that, you know,
Robbie Roberts is this like whatever,
this 18 year old from Toronto who like moves to Arkansas.
Levon Helm is like the local star,
the guy who gets more pussy than Frank Sinatra,
et cetera, et cetera.
And then it turns out Robbie Roberts
is an incredibly cosmopolitan guy
who makes friends with Dylan and like goes over to Europe.
And Levi just can't, you know, and I think on some level,
like it's just almost like his son abandoned him.
You know, and I think that's why, and you can understand,
I think, I think Robbie really understands
why Levi can never fully accept that.
Like it makes it, it's not, you know,
it's not anybody's fault, it's just very understandable.
But I also think that that just, you know, suggests,
and I think the movie conveys, like,
I don't think there's anything about that

that really feels trite.

Like there's, there's kind of resentment,
would you get to, there's, there's sort of a like,
I need to do this.

And I think Mango can sort of assume
that no one in the audience wishes
Dylan Hatton recorded Highway 61 Revisited
and blah, blah, blah, blah.

Yeah, like he was right to go electric,
aesthetically, everything, you know,
but, you know, it's not out of some kind of pure motive,
you know, and if a lot of the arguments made against it
were, you know, the sort of rock music is inauthentic
and this, you know, blah, blah, you know,
it's, you know, it's definitely,
there's always a lot of ambivalence there.

And so I think about like how stressful that tour was
and how much, you know, again,
that sort of how much tension there was there
that doesn't feel like, I don't know
if you thought that we did a good job betraying that,
but I really like you bringing that up

in your comments about before the flood

because that's so interesting

that somebody is kind of confident as leave on,

I'm just like, I can't take that,

I'm just like, I don't wanna get booed every night.

- Yeah, and it's funny because they brought in Mickey Jones

who was great on Justified

in case you guys haven't watched it yet.

He plays a pot grower and a sort of drug-cheap kid.

- Oh, and he's like, "Wow, I didn't know it was that

Mickey Jones, that's what I want."

- Yeah, it's saying Mickey Jones.

So, I mean, and Robert, you should watch it

as a Kentucky guy and, but anyway.

- Wait, are you talking about the second series,

the more recent series or the original Justified?

- Just, I think it's the more recent, or I'm sorry,

I think it was the first run where they bring in

Mickey Jones, he's part of a pot mafia.

Anyway.

- Oh yeah, yeah, no, that's,

I mean, every person in Kentucky has watched it, so.

- Okay, well, I figured that it just shows up
at your doorstep along with a carton of cigarettes
that you could smoke after watching the movie.

You know, I think the thing, like,
it's, this is tangentially related,
but addresses your comment somewhat.

Like, when Levon left the tour,

You know, I don't know why he did it.

I mean, I think probably there were a lot of, you know,
personal and emotional and, you know,
maybe substance related issues.

Again, I'm not allowed to talk about drugs,
but the thing that stood out to me about leaving the tour,
and I've been thinking about this

because somebody wrote to me on Twitter
to ask like, to fact check, you know,

'cause I said he went back to Arkansas and evidently,
and I knew this, that he went to actually work
on an oil rig in the Gulf of America.

And she was like, why did you say he went back to Arkansas
when he went to work on an oil rig in the Gulf of America?

And I was like, well, I knew he took the job,

but symbolically, we don't know

that he didn't go back to Arkansas.

I assume at some point he went back to Arkansas,

but I think for me, the gesture of Levon

going back to Arkansas was to go build the band

and figure out the roots Americana piece

of this outfit that was once the Hawks.

And I think actually him leaving was so important

for the band going forward.

And I mean, maybe this is a further essay

or something I can post on LGM.

But when this woman posed this question to me,

I was like, well, I mean, going back to Arkansas

is like going to Texas.

When people used to just leave their identities behind

and say, I'm going to Texas,

like they'd maybe not literally going to Texas.

I do think he went to Arkansas,

but I think he was going back

because he had to kind of reestablish the roots of this group

that he was working with.

And so I can't even remember the question that you're asking, but I definitely think that it was

probably important for Levon to leave the tour. And if he was frustrated with the relationship

that Robbie had developed with Dylan or with any of the other, you know, and we talked about this

on our popular episode where we discussed Robbie Robinson, his facility with dealing with celebrity

that Levon really didn't have.

And the real relationship in the band is Levon and Robbie.

And that's the romance, isn't it?

I mean, but that Levon had to do this to make a statement,

to take care of himself,

and then to also do the thing that he needed to do

to keep the band going is a theory that I have.

- And it really, I don't know if you've got the sense of it,

but especially, and everybody sounds great.

And when you hear the band material before the flood,

you get more ricked in because of singing.

But like when they're just playing behind Dylan,

it's like Levon and Robbie having a cutting contest.

Like they really are just both just sound like,

like, you know, every time you hear like,

oh, just like the, like the playing

that Levon does on, on stuff like Highway 6,

which is so wild and so, but again,

never stills always give you no, he's always instinctive.

It's just like, it really is phenomenal.

And I don't know how much that, you know,

That's not necessarily about interpersonal tension,

although we know that was developing by that time.

But it really is incredible how much those two,

and they're playing with Dylan, come out.

And I almost get the sense that like,

Levon's getting the chance that he didn't get the first time

and has almost taken magic.

It's like, if you hear, and I put it on,

like not "Rock of Ages," but the Academy,

like basically the same shows.

And it sounds great, but it's still very different.

It's not as, it's like much more controlled.

It's just so wild to hear them.

So I don't know if that came through for you,

but I definitely got like those two in particular

really stood out for me,

sort of listening to those concerts.

- Well, for sure.

And I mean, I know at some point we probably have to talk

a little bit about Garth's contribution.

- Yes, I was kind of also wanting to lead onto that.

- Okay, okay.

Well, I didn't want to step on the leave on talk,
but yeah, for sure.

I mean, and I mean, that's what's so great about the band.

And it is a shame that the band, you know,
sets were left off of that 74 tour,
although that would be a lot to listen to.

And so it was a good choice
and I understand why they did it too.

- Still on the archive.

I think we can still, you know,
somebody should get around to at least curating
a selection from that.

- Absolutely.

And I mean, I would listen to it excitedly.

And I mean, like, I'm just looking at the ways
that they were constructing those sets.

Like, I mean, I'm very lazy and I will freely admit to that,
but like they were like really providing unique concerts
every night to anybody who went to these shows.

Like they were changing up the set list
and I know that that's just like a Dylan thing to do,
but I mean, even the band was trying
to provide different set lists.

And I was really impressed by their willingness to do that
because I feel like it's very easy to just get into a groove,
get down in the groove.

And, you know, Robbie would play a different solo
every night, maybe that was just a suede
of his own boredom, but that's pretty cool.

Like, you know, and a lot of bands
probably wouldn't do that.

But yeah, I mean, it was just,
it was very impressive that they managed to endure
for that rigorous of a tour, I thought.

And especially as you say, given, and I know like Jagger has talked about that too, that
the sort of level of sound systems and that just like was just not, it was like, not really
a great way to play music and you have to deal with that.

And so it's kind of amazing how good it sounds given.

Um, so it's like mid 70s stones, for example, does not sound, but you know, like, like does,
is a bit of a, you had to be there thing.

Like ironically, so the sort of more professional later day stones actually sound better alive

than, than when they were at their like recording peak.

this just sounds like phenomenal.

You know, and again, I think it's a real tribute to the band that just like how great those guys are, which should bring us to the, you know, and I know Rob, you're also a fan, but that I think I think we should pay tribute to the phenomenally talented Garth Hudson.

One thing about the we saw none of that during the NFL playoffs, the hockey broadcasts have done a very good job.

Almost everybody has a chest fever interstitial.

They've so at least the the Canadian hockey networks were paying their tribute.

I was I want to see a little of that on the.

And I'm surprised nobody got that in the NFL.

So I feel one like Neil Peart died, like you heard,

I guess, Russia are bigger than the band now,

but you heard that on NFL broadcast.

But yeah, I would be as the musician here,

and Garth definitely does.

And the fact that he could adapt so quickly,

you would think he's somebody who would disdain synthesizers

or all that, but like his ability to do that

is real key to why that music works

and why the songs maintain their melody.

I think Garth is one of the key reasons

it doesn't become Dylan's, you know, these lyrics to whatever

melody I'm thinking of, they still keep their shape. But he

was just, you know, just like everybody in the band, just a

phenomenally talented, multi instrumentalist. You know, so I'd

love to hear your thoughts, because he's always been really

fast. And again, he is the genuinely reclusive figure on

that, that not just a private figure, but actually like a

pretty reclusive figure. But he's he's like a really

fascinating story in terms of the history of this music.

Yes, I totally, I mean, you know, it was always just nice to think that Garth Hudson was out

there doing something somewhere and there's some really beautiful footage of him playing

an organ in his advanced age. It might even be in the facility where he was and it's still

great, still very beautiful. I mean, he's such a phenomenal musician. And, you know,

if you read Testimony by Robbie Robertson, which I know we all have, you know, he talks

about Garth as being, you know, this very unique presence who was narcoleptic and, but

always, always older and not as interested in consuming substances as some of the members

of the band, but really pivotal in terms of coming up with arrangements for songs, figuring

out how to realize Robertson's visions for songs, and an incredible musician, not just

as a keyboardist, but he was a horn player and, and, you know,

his sax on it makes no difference.

Is it signed in the last walls?

Yeah, I mean, you know, it's like

he he's one of those guys who, you know, he could have probably,

you know, he's he's as talented as like Prince or Van Morrison

in terms of being a multi instrumentalist genius.

But he was perfectly contented to retreat into the background.

And I mean, like critics of The Last Waltz

will probably say maybe too much.

But, you know, how do you not love Garth?

He's the most interesting member of the band on any given day.

And I will recommend Franz Nicolet's piece about Garth

in the ringer that he published on the day that...

-Oh. -It's excellent. It's absolutely...

Like, Ponce de Leon can't find stuff on the ringer now.

I don't know what the fuck is up with that.

- You know, I'll talk to my guys.

- I'm gonna find that out.

- It's hard and I can, I'll forward it to you guys.

And if you guys want to put it in the show notes

or whatever, it's beautiful.

It's really, really beautiful.

And, you know, yeah, and Frans is a great writer

and he actually wrote a great book called "Band People."

I'm not his publicist,
but he wrote a great book called "Band People"
where he talks a lot about being a sideman
and he speaks to people who are also side men.
And actually, there's a little section where
he's talking to people who play a lot of live shows on tour
and how they will often change up their solos every night.
So it kind of lends nicely to a lot of the ancillary
sidebar conversations that we've had
throughout this wonderful podcast.

But yeah, I mean, it's sad that Garth is no longer with us
and now we have no more members of the band with us.

- That's a little too much fucking perspective.

- Really is, yeah.

- So I mean, but I mean, go back
and revisit your favorite band record.

- Oh, I have.

- Because he's just, he's a genius
and that's all that can be said.

And I think he was probably a genius up until the very end.

And so it was really sad.

Like, you know, there's some celebrity deaths

that just hit you a little harder and that was one of them.

But Robbie was the same way too.

Yeah, so it definitely is. But yeah, no, I'm particularly grateful I got this. I have this like music from Big Pink, which is like the kind of vital what actually spreads it out over two albums. Just like, yeah, like the perfect place to hear, to hear all those guys, but especially, you know, the Garth, like the one that, you know, I, I'm generally pro Robbie, but the, the one where I will suggest that compositional credit needed to be shared was chest fever. Like, I think it's even Robbie says, like, are there even lyrics to chest fever? Like, I don't know, it's not like that's just like that's like that that that goes beyond just arrangement like what Garth did with that song is just like uh uh just just phenomenal but like almost anything like if you just listen you know and even to kind of like good but not incredible like where the songs are really good like your your cahoots and uh and and stage frights just anytime you listen for detail like there's just something from like Garth will like bring you up um you know it's just like just really a phenomenal player. As again, that entire band was and that's why it was it's really exciting to have some of this music out there because it's just anytime you put it on, it's just they're really fun to listen to and especially in that when they're in a weird way, like freed to be to be sidemen for a while. It really sounds phenomenal. So I don't know, maybe we can get like a movie about the tour of England or something, and the formation of the band. That's what I'll hope co-write a revisionist, sympathetic to Robbie's script. But not taking it aside, just like everybody was right. That's the thing. That's not like there's no this, I'm pro Robbie and pro Levon, as untenable as I make.

And I think in some ways, I, you know, I have, have you seen once for brothers?

I think it's on Amazon prime. It's actually, there's, there's two particularly

great, and it definitely is. It takes the more summer more. you know,

it does bring in like David Gassman to be like the world's biggest ass kind of,

but the two things there's one where, you know, Eric Clapton was an asshole,

but like, well, visually has this great thing where he says, you know,

Robbie could go on Drake. Richard needed to drink.

It just feels very cold, like, you know, and it goes through the, you know, it's like,

yeah, like everything Richard is hard done by, but it's a lot easier to admire guys who almost get your

fiance's killed in car crashes after like eight bottles of Grand Marnier in theory than in bracket.

I'll just say, you know, there's some of that.

But, you know, that's sort of, you know, one of the things that stuck out to me.

But I forget, there was something else I wanted to, I forget what the, anyway, yeah, sorry, there was something,

There's something else in that that was related to Garth that I wanted to.

But I don't remember.

Anyway, I would say that it's like I really is, you know, fascinating in terms

of the just sort of the sort of development of that sound and the difficult

tensions, you know, that sort of come from, you know, sort of, you know, like,

you know, the sort of the the burdens of of trying to lead a band and sort of how

those dynamics work out.

I actually think it's actually pretty fascinating

in a lot of ways.

So it's definitely a,

if you watch The Last Waltz, Every Thanksgiving,

which I certainly do, definitely,

it definitely is worth it.

If I remember, you liked it too, right, Elizabeth?

- Oh, I love The Last Waltz, are you kidding me?

- But also, but not on the same level,

but you also liked Once for Brothers, right?

- Oh yes, I love, yeah, I love Once for Brothers.

I thought that was fantastic.

And and obviously it gave me a lot of material for those liner notes, which was super helpful.

So yes, big ups to Once Were Brothers to anybody who hasn't seen it.

And if you've already seen it, go back and revisit.

Robert, you know, you should check it out for the next time that we have to do one of these podcasts.

The one thing that I would add if we want to bring it all back home

is if you want to listen to,

there are a lot of commenters out there

telling you what to listen to

if you want to revisit a Garth performance.

And I know Ray Padgett recommended one of the discs

from the tour, the 74 tour.

But since Scott, you like Tough Mama so much,

I would recommend the January 6th performance of "Tough Mama,"

listen to Garth and Dylan,

because they're way up in the high end.

Dylan's playing harmonica and Garth's organ

is incredibly high in this,

and they're just weaving to use a rock and roll term.

And Dylan's vocal is really forceful at this point.

And again, I listen to it and I'm worried

'cause I know he's gonna blow his voice out,

but this is really where I think Chris Gao

was pulling this MC5 comparison in his review.

And so yes, go back and listen to the January 6th performance

of Scott's favorite song, "Tough Mama" from Planet Waves.

(laughing)

- I just wish they had gotten going, going gone.

I was really hoping they'd feel like that's my favorite.

Yeah, it's actually fascinating.

So that's the Philadelphia show really fascinating.

starting with the Ballad of Hollis Brown,

just like Tom Sun's Booze, to Ramona,

Nobody Except You, again,
something that is about you.

That's like a fat, you know, yeah, that's a really,
that's a Taddy Carroll,
among even on my mind, that's a really, yeah,
like that's a very interesting set list
for like an arena show.

And again, shows that Dylan is never,
and again, I like the movie doing
he's a very good job of that,
is that Dylan can never be a crown pleaser,
That's why Marcus, he's never satisfied.

And so, and that's, I think what prevents it
from being that triumphalist is that it's not a triumph
to Dylan, it is something that he does, but he's never,
you know, there's nothing that he could ever be satisfied
with, you know, which I think is part of the reason that,
that, you know, he has retained, you know, a vital, you know,
has one of the few people that generations continue
to make good records in the, not all good records,
but you know, certainly has made some good records
into the 21st century.

And I do think that's kind of part of it as well.

But yeah, I did really think that that did a good job of just,

and Chalamet really, I haven't talked a lot about that,

but again, really, he even did like a pretty decent job

with the singing, even, you know,

like nobody can match Dylan's phrasing,

but he doesn't try to imitate him exactly

like it's very much, he really does,

I think a good job of conveying that.

But also just the, you know, as you say, Rob,

just kind of keeping him almost as a blank,

but just somehow conveying that just perennial sense

of unease and dissatisfaction, which is so much.

And I really think in that new point, which again,

the structure of the movie you really need to think is like

Dylan beats the squares really does not that,

but I think that also is, I think a credit to Chalamet.

And especially I guess it was with having read the script,

I don't know if it comes across as much there

that that may be as much about Chalamet's performance

as anything else.

- I 100% think it's about Chalamet's performance.

I read the script and I was like, oh boy.

And I went in really, really nervous and expected hit.

And I haven't seen every "Shell and Made" movie
by orders of magnitude.

But I think I was predisposed to like him

and I thought he was just great.

I really, really thought he was great.

And I thought his conjuring of Dylan and his playing
and his singing and the ways
that he would sort of be able to capture his affect
and his weirdness in the way that he talks was remarkable.

And I mean, yeah, all credit to Timothy Chalamet,
because I, yeah, I just thought he was wonderful.

And I hope Dylan watched, I assumed he did.

And I think he's probably a fan.

- Did you see his tweet about it?

And it really does seem like,

Like Dylan's tweets are hit.

Like they just, they cannot possibly be written
by like some PR guy.

Like they're just like, yeah.

- No, I think they absolutely have to be.

And that's what makes it even more endearing.

Yeah. Because, you know, he's like,

oh, this young actor went, what a title.

- Let me find the tweaks.

It's almost a perfect way of,

it's just, it is very, it is very Dylan-esque.

Let me, did you see it wrong?

- Oh, the tweets, no, no, no.

Although, you know, one person I was talking to said,

Well, of course Dylan like show because Shawn is hot.

And you know,

- And he basically almost says that like, so,

Oh, by the way,

he also had a nice tribute to Garth Hudson says, you know,

listening to his going away.

But yeah, so there's a movie about me opening soon

called "The Complete Unknown."

What a title.

Timothy Chalamet is starring in the lead role.

Timmy's a brilliant actor.

So I'm sure he's going to be completely believable as me

or a younger me or some other me.

The title of the film,

the title is taken from Elijah Wald's

Dylan Goes Electric,

A book that, or the film's taken from Elijah Waldseil

and goes electric, a book that came out in 2015.

It's a fantastic retelling of events from the early 60s

that led up to the fiasco at Newport

after you've seen the movie read the book.

But that choice, fiasco at Newport.

And I think the movie conveys that.

That's like Dylan himself is not saying that

this was a try, like I proved that I was better

than anybody else.

It's not how we view it.

- And one of the things I found interesting

in reading some of the reviews and some of the commentary,

and we're approaching an hour and a half,

so we should probably lie down.

But Newport, the approach to Newport

sort of becomes in a lot of ways illustrative

of the approach to Dylan, right?

Some of the reviews and stuff,

like no one knows what happened at Newport, right?

That sort of fascinatingly the different accounts

of what happened at Newport,

you know, that different people have given,

oh, the crowd loved it, oh, the crowd hated it, right?

Everybody who was there gave their own account

and the accounts are impossible

to actually integrate successfully into what was happening

both on stage in the audience and off the stage.

And so it itself has become the site of contested memory

that we can't really break apart

and figure out what actually happened.

And so you just take one thread of what happened there

and you have to decide and you have to go with that.

And that's what Chalamet and Mangold do with it.

And it works pretty well.

- Yeah, absolutely.

So Elizabeth, to conclude, are we getting,

now that we'll see you have a new album out,

paranoid style, wussy shows, I'd travel.

- I have been in touch with Lisa.

And if we can set something up together, that'd be great.

And, you know, those are shows not to miss

because they are event performances

and they are our favorite band to play with.

Their new album is wonderful.

- Actually that's the best in a lot, yeah.

It's I mean, it's it's sad and beautiful, but also the ferocity of a wussy record that I've come to expect from them in recent vintage.

And so I I will I will keep bothering Lisa, but she brought it up first that we should do some shows together.

And yes, it would be my honor.

So if she's listening and I know she is, we should we should get that set up.

But I have done.

I have I've been saving Delta points for this occasion.

So definitely next time there's a paranoid still show.

I will unless there's a hopefully if we can avoid a teaching conflict,

I will make every effort to be there.

But I think I know we've talked to them.

But again, thanks again for your show.

And Atholins last year is really fantastic.

And we all really enjoyed seeing the homecoming was definitely something

I wanted to do at least once.

And it was it was fun.

Also really, oh, Rob, what did you think of the state of the Southern Rock Opera show?

Oh, the Southern Rock Opera show. Have you seen the tour Elizabeth?

I haven't. I really I wish I could have, but I want to hear Rob's review.

I mean, it was terrific. The band was, you know, they're enthusiastic. They're fire,

you know, everything you expect. What surprised me was that, you know, they integrated in non-7

rock opera songs when they seemed appropriate to do so. So we got a Ramon Tasciano in the first

half, we got several other songs, I don't remember them all right now, but so you'd

be listening and then it's like, wait, that's not the song that's supposed to come next

to it because it's the English Oceans they threw in. And so they maintained their cred

as never, or perhaps they maintained their cred as never playing the same soap show twice.

Of course, and this was interesting too, because I'm part of the drive by truckers Facebook group

that Patterson is also part of, right? And there were several comments when people left after the show where people identified, you know, I thought they were just going to play Southern Rock Opera,

didn't think they were going to play all this woke shit in between. And so walked out because

of that. And Patterson, Patterson just just tore through a guy who was basically trying to make

that make that case who was who was like, literally, I'm a lifelong Democrat, which is why I love Tulsi Gabbard and RFK Jr.

And Patterson would just have none of that.

And it was funny to watch in the Facebook thread.

During the pandemic, I downloaded some of their band camp shows

just to sort of listen to on my pandemic walks.

And there's one amazing one where somebody starts heckling
in the middle of what it means.

And they like,

Patterson and Cooley have this long dialogue going,
can we play outfit?

Like daddy's cop, what can we do?

And, and, and, uh, uh, and better.

It's like, look, you know, you know, we're, you know, we're open all politics,
but this is where we're going to play.

And then who's like, nah, fuck that.

Get out of here.

It's like, so many old lives, like, I don't, I don't want this guy as a fan.

Like fuck off.

But it was really, I enjoyed that.

Like, do you want outfit?

Do you want daddy's cup?

What can, what can we play you?

That'll be, uh, it was, uh, it was, it was pretty amazing.

I must say, but yeah, I know it was, it was fun.

So yeah, Elizabeth, if you have the chat again, they're, they're, they're, they're,
the touring has become geographically odd. So it's not always, but hopefully you get,
hopefully Patterson will invite you to the VIP section of, you still hold you for that,

you know, the duet. So, but yeah, no, it's a fun thing to see for sure.

- I would love to see it. And I'm sure that he knows that I only roll with VIP.

>> You cannot be expected to sit with them.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

>> I mean, but they're so great.

They're just such a great brand.

It surprises me not at all that they read one of the-

>> If you're hungry, you're finding something else, you're-

>> One of the fans.

>> You're not making something at 9.2.

>> Sorry, we're not being LGM podcasts though,

an intervention from the girls.

So yeah, so- >> So are we making just soup?

>> Okay.

(laughing)

- So I continue.

- Well, no, no, I'm so grateful

that you guys came out to the homecoming

and I'm so glad you had fun.

And it was a huge, huge thrill for us

and obviously duetting on "Stumbling In."

The Susie Quattro and Chris Norman single with Patterson

was one of the great highlights of my life.

There is video footage just a little bit out there.

So if you are a huge fan, seek that out.

- So, but the "Belongs of the Cannon"

with the Delta Dawn they did with Kelly Hogan,

like also definitely look that up at the first first first rate. But yeah. Well, so yeah,

as Rob says, this has been 90 minutes. So I want to I really, Elizabeth, thank you so much for coming

on. Love this discussion of before the flood and complete unknown and other topics. We should

definitely we should find an excuse to do this again soon. And and best of luck with everything

in in DC. And Rob, thank you for joining us as well. And most of all, thanks to our listeners.

We really appreciate it. And I think in this time, it's really nice to think about something other

than anti-trans executive orders and various illegalities and trees and pardons. And just

think a little bit about some of what's best about America rather than something

than what's worse about America and salute to Joan Baez. However, the movie intended are

definitely okay in my book and hopefully we'll get a great story about focusing on Dylan's women,

maybe called Diamonds and Rust or something. That should be the next thing to hopefully come out.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thanks, Elizabeth. Thanks, Rob. We will be back next week, of course,

with our annual Super Bowl podcast. Steal in for four hours of alcohol-sogged entertainment

as we prepare for the big game.

And see you all then. Thank you.

Thank you again for listening to the Lawyer's Guns and Money podcast.

We would like to thank Elizabeth Nelson of the Paranoid Style

for supplying as our intro and outro music,

I'd Bet My Lands and Titles, a track on the album for executive meeting.

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