

**LEFTY FRIZZELL
AN ARTICLE FROM LIFE**

BY CHARLES WOLFE

UPDATED AND REVISED

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AND KEVIN COFFEY



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Richard Weize in Corsicana, Texas, at the unveiling of the Lefty Frizzell statue.

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First Edition

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Lefty Frizzell – An Article From Life

20-CD Box-Set (LP-size) with

264-page hardcover book



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It was the fall of 1973, at one of those late-night Nashville hotel room jam sessions where they sit around with somebody's old Martin and a couple of bottles of Jack Daniels Black Label trading songs and stories. Johnny Rodriguez was there, hot from three #1 hits in a row, as was Kenny Serratt, fresh from a new MGM contract. Merle Haggard was holding court, in from the coast plugging his new one called *If We Make It Through December*. The fourth man in the room was the oldest, and looked older; he was a big, easygoing man who spoke with a soft Texas drawl, and dressed in a fringed shirt with a long wide collar and wore his graying hair long and swept back. After the four had traded songs for a while, Merle Haggard sat back and pointed to the big man and said, "*Right there. That's where all the Haggards, Rodriguezes and Serratts come from!*" The big man looked startled, then embarrassed, and folded his hands in front of him. A big ring sparkled on his left hand, a big ring with diamonds that formed the initials L.F.

Everyone in the room knew it stood for Lefty Frizzell.



PREFACE

From the very beginning, when he burst on the complacent music world of the 1950s with a spectacular string of hits that has never been equalled in country music since, Lefty had been a singer's singer. While millions were casually listening to his drawling Texas baritone on hit after hit, young singers across the land listened intently, trying to pick up every nuance and grace note of that style that was more intense, and more personal, than any that the music had ever seen. This was the generation that was to define modern country singing, and in the young man from the Texas oilfields, they had found their model. As early as January 1954, when a young ex-marine named George Jones made his first audition records in Beaumont, the Frizzell mystique was in place. As Pappy Daily listened to young Jones, he recalled: *"George at that time sounded exactly like Lefty Frizzell. I said, 'People don't want somebody that sounds like somebody else.'" Yet it was hard to sing a modern country love song with any feeling, and not copy Lefty's style – or some of it. As Dottie West remarked years later, "Most all country artists were touched by his style. Mickey Newbury recently said: 'Wasn't Lefty always right?' I agree."*

Most open in his admiration for Lefty has been Merle Haggard, and his story of first see-

ing Lefty conveys some of the intensity with which the younger generation of singers viewed Lefty, and conveys a sense of the impact Lefty had on the music of the time:

"I first saw Lefty Frizzell in 1951 at the Rainbow Gardens in Bakersfield. I believe he was the hottest country artist in the nation. No one, not even Hank Williams, was as hot as Lefty was then. He was just dynamic on stage, and he really inspired me to try and sing a song. A year or so later, he came back to Bakersfield and I was introduced to him. I sang a couple of songs for him, and he got me up on stage – that was one of the greatest thrills of my life, to be on stage with him.

"From then on when I'd get on stage, and I'd wonder how I should do a song, and maybe I'd be in doubt, I'd just mentally try to remember how Lefty would do it, and that pulled me out of a lot of holes. We became close friends. Years later someone said to me, 'Merle, that guy sounds a lot like you.' I can remember when having someone say that about Lefty was a dream beyond ever coming true.

"Lefty Frizzell was ninety percent of the reason that I'm in the business. He was my inspiration, and I feel that he was the most unique thing that ever happened to country music. When I was fifteen years old, I thought he hung the moon. You know ... I'm still not sure he didn't."

Like the prime movers in any art form, Lefty attracted his share of legends. Some were foisted on him by

eager press agents in the 1950s as part of an early and effective image-building campaign; others came from his mammoth capacity for hard drinking and hard living; others came from his sudden spectacular success and early fame; and many came from his own shyness and difficulty in explaining himself. *"He hated interviews,"* his wife Alice recalled, *"and if he had to do one, he would have to get loosened up with drinks before he did one."* The late journalist Bob Claypool, who followed Lefty's career for years said: *"He was one of those wild men of country music, the central figure in hundreds of rip-roaring tales – some true, some make-believe... (Did Lefty really do THAT?)."*

In a few serious attempts to write about Lefty's career, these legends have crept in over and over, jostling the true facts and salient details. They appear in everything from liner notes to record company publicity to official Hall of Fame biographies. Some of them are useful, even if they are not accurate, for they give us something of the way Lefty was perceived by his friends and fans. Others are simply misleading. This account [by Charles Wolfe], in its original edition, was an attempt to start from scratch, and to reconstruct the career of one of the seminal figures of American music. The current edition has been revised to incorporate the research of other authors who followed, principally Kevin Coffey and Daniel Cooper.











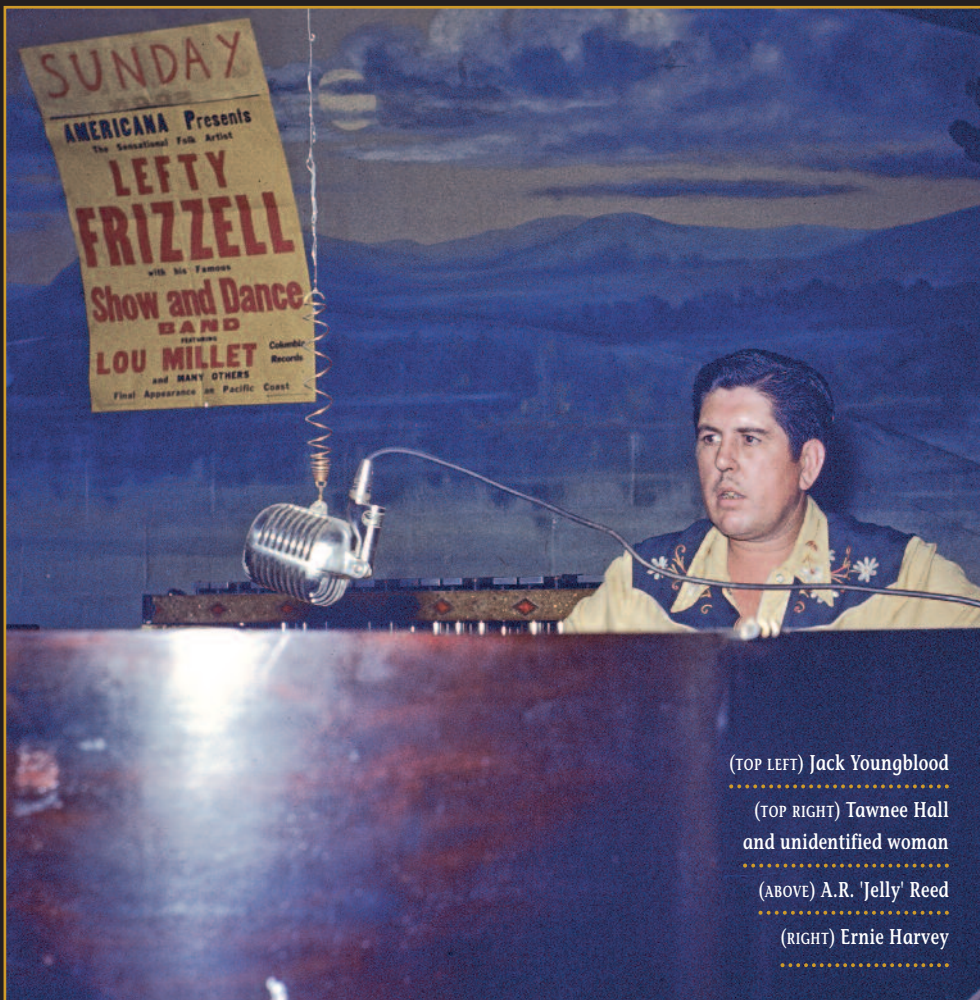
To Judy
"my
one and
only"

I
love you a
thousand ways
Betsy Krizzell

Lefty Frizzell & band
at Bostonia Ballroom,
Sunday, October 26, 1952

.....
Photos page 74-77 by Scotty Broyles
(courtesy Deke Dickerson Photo Archive)





(TOP LEFT) Jack Youngblood

(TOP RIGHT) Tawnee Hall
and unidentified woman

(ABOVE) A.R. 'Jelly' Reed

(RIGHT) Ernie Harvey



**December 2/3, 1958 (19:30-01:30) • Bradley Film & Recording Studios,
804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law**

Lefty Frizzell: vocal/guitar; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Donald Helms: steel guitar; Bob L. Moore: bass; Thomas Lee 'Tommy' Jackson, Jr: fiddle; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Floyd Cramer: piano; Unidentified: vocal chorus

119	OB 1713-3 CO 61861	My Bucket's Got A Hole In It (Williams)	B 13422	CL 1342 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/9
120	OB 1714-8 CO 61862	I Love You A Thousand Ways (Lefty Frizzell)	B 13423	CL 1342; P 15595 CL 2488/CS 9288 HL 7460/HS 11260 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/10
121	OB 1715-2 CO 61863	If You've Got The Money, I've Got The Time (Lefty Frizzell - Jim Beck)	B 13421	CL 1342; CWM/CWS 1 CL 2488/CS 9288 P 15595; GP 19 BFX 15100; BCD 15550; BCD 17540-5/11
122	OB 1716-5 CO 61864	Mom And Dad's Waltz (Lefty Frizzell)	B 13421	CL 1342; KC 33882 CL 2488/CS 9288 P 15595 HL 7419/HS 11219 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/12
123	OB 1717-6 CO 61865	I Want To Be With You Always (Lefty Frizzell)	B 13423	CL 1342; P 15595 CL 2488/CS 9288 HL 7460/HS 11260 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/13
124	OB 1718-3 CO 61866	Always Late (With Your Kisses) (Lefty Frizzell)	B 13422	CL 1342; P 15595 CL 2488/CS 9288 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/14
125	OB 1719-5 CO 61867	If You're Ever Lonely Darling (Lefty Frizzell)	B 13423	CL 1342 HL 7460/HS 11260 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/15

**March 3, 1959 (19:00-23:00) • Bradley Film & Recording Studios,
804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law**

Lefty Frizzell: vocal/guitar; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Donald Helms: steel guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Marijohn Wilkin: piano; Unidentified: vocal chorus

126	OB 1765-6 CO 62449	Sin Will Be The Chaser For The Wine (Lefty Frizzell - Eddie Miller)		BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/16
127	OB 1766-16 CO 62450	Knock Again, True Love (Walker)	Co 4-41384	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/17
128	OB 1767-9 CO 62451	The Long Black Veil (Marijohn Wilkin - Danny Dill)	Co 4-41384; B 13531	CL 2488/CS 9288 KC 33882; P 15595 CL 1353/CS 8161 CL 1408/CS 8777 CL 2231/CS 9031 HL 7362/HS 11162 HL 7414/HS 11214 CK 45067; R2 71005 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/18
129	OB 1768-4 CO 62452	One Has-Been To Another (Harlan Howard)		BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/19

**July 22, 1959 (14:30-18:00) • Bradley Film & Recording Studios,
804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law**

Lefty Frizzell: vocal/guitar; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Floyd Cramer: piano; Unidentified: vocal chorus

130	OB 1888-7 CO 62828	Farther Than My Eyes Can See (Freddie Hart)	Co 4-41455	CL 1408/CS 8777 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/20
131	OB 1889-9 CO 62829	My Blues Will Pass (Lefty Frizzell)	Co 4-41635	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/21
132	OB 1890-6 CO 62830	Ballad Of The Blue And Grey (Harlan Howard)	Co 4-41455	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/22

**May 26, 1960 (19:30-23:00) • Bradley Film & Recording Studios, 804 16th Avenue
South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law**

Lefty Frizzell: vocal; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Donald Helms: steel guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Floyd Cramer: piano; Unidentified: vocal chorus

133	OB 2221-9 CO 64931	That's All I Can Remember (Marijohn Wilkin - Mel Tillis)	Co 4-41751	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/23
134	OB 2222-9 CO 64932	So What! Let It Rain (Lefty Frizzell)	Co 4-42253	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/24
135	OB 2223-6 CO 64933	What You Gonna Do, Leroy? (Mel Tillis)	Co 4-41751	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/25



(ABOVE, FROM LEFT) Dale Potter, Wayne Walker, Lefty and Raymond C. Walker of the Jordanaires at Owen Bradley Studio, February 7, 1961 • (BELOW) Lefty with producer Don Law.





(ABOVE, FROM LEFT) Marijohn Wilkin (at the back), Don Law, Judy Baker and Lefty at the Owen Bradley Studio
(BELOW) Lefty with Don Law and another friend speak no evil, see no evil, hear no evil.



February 7, 1961 (19:30-23:30) • Bradley Film & Recording Studios, 804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law

Lefty Frizzell: vocal; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Walter 'Hank' 'Sugarfoot' Garland: guitar; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; Dale Potter: fiddle; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Floyd Cramer: piano; The Jordanares: vocal chorus

136	OB 2437-12 CO 66320	I Feel Sorry For Me (Lefty Frizzell)	Co 4-42253	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/26
137	OB 2438-8 CO 66321	Heaven's Plan (Wayne Walker)	Co 4-41984	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/27
138	OB 2439-5 CO 66322	Looking For You (Lefty Frizzell)	Co 4-41984	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-5/28

May 9, 1962 (14:00-17:30) • Columbia Studios, 804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law

Lefty Frizzell: vocal; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Ray Edenton: guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Floyd Cramer: piano; Unidentified: vocal chorus

139	CB 164-7 CO 75325	Stranger (I. Stanton - W. Walker)	Co 4-42521	CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/1
140	CB 165-2 CO 75326	A Few Steps Away (Eddie Miller)	Co 4-42676	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/2
141	CB 166-5 CO 75327	Forbidden Lovers (I. Stanton - W. Walker)	Co 4-42676	KC 33882; RS 1/RSS 1 CL 2081/CS 8881 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/3
142	CB 167-5 CO 75328	Just Passing Through (Dan Wolf)	Co 4-42521	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/4

June 26, 1963 (14:00-18:00) • Columbia Studios, 804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law

Lefty Frizzell: vocal; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Wayne Moss: guitar; Ray Edenton: guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; William Paul Ackerman: drums; William Whitney Pursell: piano; Unidentified: vocal chorus

143	CB 737-6 CO 79057	That Reminds Me Of Me (Mel Tillis)		BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/5
144	CB 738-3 CO 79058	Don't Let Her See Me Cry (Lefty Frizzell)	Co 4-42839	CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/6
145	CB 739-5 CO 79059	Through The Eyes Of A Fool (Williams-Bare)		CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/7
146	CB 740-2 CO 79060	James River (Merle Kilgore - June Carter)	Co 4-42839	CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/8

October 1, 1963 (19:00-22:00) • Columbia Studios, 804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law & Frank Jones

Lefty Frizzell: vocal; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Ray Edenton: guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Floyd Cramer: piano; Unidentified: vocal chorus

147	NCO 80058-5	Preview Of Coming Attractions (Harlan Howard)		BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/9
148	NCO 80059-4	Lonely Heart (Lefty Frizzell)		CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/10
149	NCO 80060-1	What Good Did You Get (Out Of Breaking My Heart) (Lefty Frizzell)		CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/11



Album HARMONY HL-7460/HS-11260 (ABOVE) | Album COLUMBIA CL-2488/CS-9288 (BELOW)





Album COLUMBIA CL-2169/CS-8969 (ABOVE) | Album COLUMBIA CL-2386/CS-8186 (BELOW)



October 21, 1963 (19:00-23:00) • Columbia Studios, 804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law & Frank Jones

Lefty Frizzell: vocal; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Ray Edenton: guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Floyd Cramer: piano; Unidentified: vocal chorus

150	NCO 80061-5	When It Rains The Blues (Lefty Frizzell)	Co 4-42924; 4-45652	CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/12
151	NCO 80062-4	I'm Not The Man I'm Supposed To Be (Wayne Walker)		CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/13
152	NCO 80063-13	Saginaw Michigan (Don Wayne - Bill Anderson)	Co 4-42924	CL 2169/CS 8969 CL 2488/CS 9288 H 30346; P 15595; KC 33882 GP 9; CK 45067; R2 71005 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/14

January 22, 1964 (18:00-21:00 & 21:30-00:30) • Columbia Studios, 804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law & Frank Jones

Lefty Frizzell: vocal; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Ray Edenton: guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Floyd Cramer: piano (18:00-21:00); Unidentified: vocal chorus

153	NCO 80131-5	There's No Food In This House (Merle Kilgore)		CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/15
154	NCO 80132-4	The Rider (W. Tubb)	Co 4-43051	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/16
155	NCO 80133-6	The Nester (D. Wayne)	Co 4-43051	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/17
156	NCO 80134-7	I Was Coming Home To You (Hayes - Rule)		CL 2169/CS 8969 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/18
157	NCO 80135-4	Hello To Him (Goodbye To Me) (Lefty Frizzell - Abe Mulkey)		CL 2169/CS 8969 ROU SS 16 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/19

October 16, 1964 (18:30-22:30) • Columbia Studios, 804 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee • Producer: Don Law & Frank Jones

Lefty Frizzell: vocal; Thomas Grady Martin: guitar/leader; Harold Ray Bradley: guitar; Ray Edenton: guitar; Joseph S. Zinkan: bass; Murray M. 'Buddy' Harman, Jr: drums; Floyd Cramer: piano; Abe Mulkey: harmony vocal

158	NCO 80792-4	I Can Tell (Lefty Frizzell - Abe Mulkey)		CL 2386/CS 9186 BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/20
159	NCO 80793-3	Make That One For The Road A Cup Of Coffee (F. Hart)	Co 4-43169	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/21
160	NCO 80794-9	'Gator Hollow (Mel Tillis)	Co 4-43169	BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/22
161	NCO 80795-3	It Costs Too Much To Die (J.A. Balthrop)		BFX 15100; BCD 15550 BCD 17540-6/23

**LEFTY FRIZZELL
ISN'T GOING WHERE MOST
COUNTRY MUSIC'S GOING.**

His music is pure. It has that great "original" country sound. When country music was lots of fiddles and steel guitars.

And you can hear it all on his new single, "Honky Tonk Stardust Cowboy."

It's the kind of song that made Top 40 turn country in the first place.

**"HONKY TONK
STARDUST COWBOY."**

A pure country song from Lefty Frizzell.

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Executive Producer: Richard Weize/AND MORE BEARS
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Producers: Don Law, Frank Jones, Larry Butler, Don Davis,
Don Gant, Glenn Sutton

Re-Issue Producer: Kevin Coffey

3-Track Mix: Richard Bennett & Mark Wilder

Disc/Metalpart Transfer: Christian Zwarg

Tape Research: Richard Weize

Tape Comparison: Kevin Coffey

Disc Dubs: Bob Jones, Mark Wilder, Christian Zwarg

Mastering: Bob Jones & Christian Zwarg

Biography: Charles Wolfe
updated and revised by Daniel Cooper and Kevin Coffey

Discography: Richard Weize and Kevin Coffey

Transcription & Editing: Evelyne Gerstenberger

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