

GM: Do you remember what the first record was that you ever bought?

RK: Geez, that I bought. Oh God. It might have been 45 Little Richard, maybe.

GM: Okay.

RK: Or might have been Elvis' Hound Dog.

GM: You're one of the most unique guitar players ever. There's nobody else that sounds like you. I wouldn't even know how to describe your style of playing. How would you describe it?

RK: Different. Just different than anybody else

GM: That it is.

RK: Not because I tried to do that. It was just that I was no good at copying other people. <Laugh>, I tried, but then it would come out different, which is good because I never got sued <laugh>. Except, except for once

GM: Which song were you sued for?

RK: For Spanish Caravan. The intro, it's actually from a song called Leyenda. It's owned by somebody in France, and in France they have a law that says copyrights last forever. You know, usually it's thirty or forty years, then it becomes public domain. But this this one lasted forever. So, every time we sold a record anywhere in the world the French guy would get 2 cents <laugh> or maybe 1 cent. I forget. <Laugh>.

GM: Yeah, I guess that's what it was back in the day. Now, before we get into the meat of the interview, I do want to ask you about your most recent thing, which was your appearance on Alice Cooper's new album. And apparently you have a Genesis book also that's being planned, I know you've been friends with Alice for a long time. What was that like being, being on a record with Alice and what did you think of it?

RK: Well, I've actually been on a number of records with Alice. Always fun. When they had the group with Johnny Depp, I was on that first album. And what else?

GM: A Genesis book that's coming out about The Doors. Have you seen any drafts of it?

RK: Not the whole thing, but seen a lot of the pictures and stuff. Yeah. It's gonna be good.

GM: It sounds like a great, fitting tribute to such an iconic band.

RK: Well, I don't know if it's fitting enough, but it's pretty good. It's a big coffee table book.

GM: Let's go back to the early formation of the band. The Doors were formed from the Ashes of Rick and the Ravens. From my knowledge, Ray had created this band and then added John Densmore and Jim, and you were the last in the band. How did you end up in the band?

RK: Well probably because I knew John and he got me in when they were trying out guitar players. And I won the contest, probably because of the slide, which I did on Moonlight Drive, which was the first song we played when we had the tryouts.

GM: Slide guitar wasn't exactly a household thing at the time. That was a very unique thing at the time.

RK: Yeah. and especially for something other than just a straight blues.

GM: Yeah, absolutely. I think that's a huge part of what you did.

RK: Jim liked it so much, he wanted me to play it on every song.

GM: Now, you guys got signed to Columbia Records. I think it was a very short, maybe six-month contract, but you had asked to be let out of the contract because Columbia couldn't find you a producer. Do you think you were on the wrong label? Columbia was known for different kinds of artists, especially at that time. Did Columbia not get The Doors at all?

RK: Well, it was actually when I first joined the band, they were pretty much out of the Columbia thing because what happened was, there was this guy, Billy James, who had signed Dylan to Columbia. He had a pretty good track record, and he was trying to sign us. They signed a lot of groups every month pretty much. And then they would hang them up on the wall and see which one fell off, . And so, we were up on the wall and Jim Billy James told us, "Hey boys, I'm going in to talk with the big guys, and hopefully we'll get you signed up for good. " Jim says, "Oh, please, can I come <laugh>?" Which was a bad idea because Jim did go, and he unfortunately had taken a lot of acid that day. They came outta the meeting and we were out of the contract. <laugh>.

GM: That's funny. Do you think it was a mixed blessing?

RK: Jim thought he had sewn it up. He was like, "Alright boys, we're in!" When he came out of the meeting, <laugh>, it was just the opposite.

GM: Classic Jim Morrison. Do you think it was a mixed blessing because you ended up going from that to being the house band at The Whiskey and the playing The London Fog. Do you think that was where the band got really tight? Was the Sunset Strip the thing that made the band?

RK: Yeah, I mean, who knows what would've happened had we been on Columbia, they had Bob Dylan, they had a lot of huge groups.

GM: If you look back at what Columbia did, it seems that they picked one artist from each genre and promoted that singular artist, and just sort of let everybody else sort of die on the vine. I believe Aerosmith experienced this lack of promotion, which is why they had to re-release certain singles multiple times.

RK: Yeah, you're right. Even though Elektra were a small label and just getting started, they were the perfect label for The Doors.

GM: Why is that?

RK: Because they understood what we were trying to do. You know, they, when they heard the song, Whiskey Bar, when we did it at the at The Whiskey that night, they said, "That's it! Wow." Nobody knows about the whiskey bar. And these guys knew about it, it was pretty cool. Not only that, they had Paul Rothchild that wanted to be our producer. When I was in school years before, a couple years before, he had produced pretty much every record I was listening to at the time. Maria Mulder, Paul Butterfield. It's all these great crazy acts that I was totally into.

GM: That's a name you don't hear often, Maria Mulder. Midnight at the Oasis. That was a great song, in spite of it not being a "classic rock" type of tune. That was a staple of light FM for years.

RK: Yeah, absolutely.

GM: So, if Jim was already tripping on acid at the very beginning, what about you? Were you already into it at that point?

RK: I was already out of it at that point.

GM: Really?

RK: A couple of years before I was in The Doors, I was totally into acid. I would turn people on. Every weekend we would have an acid bash. I got kind of tired of it after a while. 'cause you know, the first trip is always the best.

GM: I know.

RK: Then you're always trying to recreate it, but it never happens.

GM: Yeah. Like, all great drugs, the first time is the best, and then you end up chasing it, and the chase is never as good. You've been depicted in film as tripping with Jim though, so you must not have totally given it up, right?

RK: Right. I mean, I still would do it once in a while, mainly with Jim, but not very often.

GM: Did it enhance your playing in any way? Or do you think it detracted? Or neither?

RK: I Couldn't tell. You know, when you're on acid, you think you're playing great. But then if you listen to it on a record, it might not sound so great.

GM: From a musical standpoint, and more specifically from a live performance standpoint, who were you closest to? Who did you lock in with when you were performing live?

RK:

Well, everybody, the whole band was locked in, it was it was the perfect band for me. You know, I wasn't going, "Oh, shoot, I wish we had somebody else playing such and such." Jim, on the other hand, was never satisfied <laugh> "I gotta get rid of Ray man!"

GM: Wow. Did he ever want to get rid of John Densmore?

RK: Yeah. I suppose he probably said the same thing about me to the other guys. I don't know. <Laugh> I don't think so.

GM: Wow. I've never heard that before. That's an interesting comment coming from a vocalist with no background in the recording process.

RK: Yeah. I mean, then he changed his mind the next day, because it really was the perfect four guys.

GM: And unique too. When you think about a four-piece band, what do you think about? You think about guitar, drums, bass, and vocals, and there was no bass player.

RK: Ray always played the piano bass on stage. One time we played at the Forum and Harvey Brooks played bass.

GM: So, were you closest to Jim from a social standpoint, just hanging out, that kind of thing?

RK: In general, as time went on, it would become less and less. At first, we were very close, and he stayed over at my house for a couple of weeks when my parents went out of town. And yeah, we'd hung out quite a bit, but as time went on, he started drinking more, and I started hanging out less, with people I didn't like. It was less and less.

GM: If you had to tell someone who had never heard The Doors' music, which would be hard to believe, where would you tell them to start?

RK: Oh gosh. Probably on the first album.

GM: Logical choice.

RK: I mean, that's what we're doing at The Whiskey this summer. Every month at the end of the month, we play a different album front to back. So, we've already done two of the albums, and on the 28th of this month, we're gonna play the third album front to back.

GM: Is there a particular album that stands out for you?

RK: Probably either the first album or the last, L.A. Woman.

GM: That's perfect! Those are the two albums that stand out for me also. Debut albums are always something very special. A band forms, gets tight, and they have this music bottled up, they can't wait to get it out, and it just makes a huge impact. Your first album was one of those. Just like with Led Zeppelin's first album. It just bang, it just hits you right out of the gate.

RK: Yep, yep. I agree.

GM: Was there any particular moment in the entire band's history that stood out for you, that you think of to this day that makes you really happy?

RK: Oh, God.

GM: Are there too many to list?

RK: Yeah. It'd be hard to pick one. Let me think. Wait a minute. Maybe when Jim took too much acid after we had recorded, or at the time we were recording The End at Sunset Sound, and it was it was getting late. So, we packed it up and, and went home, but we didn't know that Jim came back. He climbed over the fence and sprayed the entire studio down with a fire extinguisher, including our instruments. And we thought, "Oh, this is the end, they're gonna kick us out of the music business after this." And guess what? They didn't. Elektra records Jack Holzman said, "Okay, we're gonna take care of it. We need these guys." So, at that point, we knew that anything goes <laugh>.

GM: It seems like there were a lot of "Jim Morrison" moments that were just hard to believe that actually took place. It seems like he was a real character. There is one question that I do want to address, and that is the mystery surrounding his death. Do you believe that he really died in his tub from a heart attack? Or do you think that this was a fake narrative created around a drug overdose?

RK: Well, I think that probably happened. You know, the reason it happened. I don't know what he had done before that would bring that on, but I'm sure that it was a combination of certain drugs. I don't think that would've happened just for no reason.

GM: There are many conspiracy theories about this. The most common one is that he OD'ed in a bar, was dragged back to this apartment, and was placed in the tub. There's even a Marianne Faithful connection there, that both Jim and Marianne had the same drug dealer. Let's face it, mystery is great for a band because it keeps people talking for decades.

RK: <Laugh>. Exactly.

GM: They say that there is no such thing as bad publicity. At this point, I'd like to go through the discography, starting at the first album. According to what I've read, Paul Rothchild prohibited you from using any pedals during the recording of the first album. Is that true?

RK: No, I only had one pedal.

GM: The wawa?

RK: No, I had the Gibson Maestro Fuzz Tone. I don't think I used it on the first album, but it wasn't because of him not letting me. It was just that the songs didn't call for it. Oh wait, I actually did use it. What am I talking about? I used it for Break On Through.

GM: Okay. So, after Break On Through, which was a huge hit on that album. It goes back to that whole first album, first song thing. Bang! It just hits you. The second track, soul Kitchen. Jim apparently wrote the lyrics in early 65. I'm not sure if this was before or after you were in the group, and it's referring, I believe, to Olivia's Restaurant in Venice.

RK: Mm-Hmm, he wrote that before I was in the group.

GM: He wrote the lyrics and the music.

RK: Oh, gosh, I don't know who wrote the music. I think we all kind of wrote the music on that one because there really isn't much music. It's just a blues song, a three-chord kind of thing. But without my <sings a syncopated guitar riff>, it would be totally boring.

GM: There's a lot I could get into for hours on that very fact. I know a lot of people hold Jim Morrison and his lyrics up as the central piece of The Doors, but as far as I'm concerned, you could strip his vocals off of every song, and The Doors would still be a killer band, as a purely instrumental kind of thing, it would've been equally great, I think.

RK: Me too. Me Too.

GM: Next track, Twentieth Century Fox. I think it's the first time that "fox" may have been used to describe a really good-looking girl. Maybe you are responsible for coining that term? It certainly predates Hendrix's "Foxy Lady". Did 20th Century Fox ever have any issues with you guys using those lyrics?

RK: Oh gosh, I never thought about that. We never had a call from them, so I'm sure they liked it. I think people knew what a fox meant by that time. Making it seem like a synonym for the movie company was tongue-in-cheek, I'm sure people realized it was kind of a joke.

GM: The next track, Light My Fire was such a huge hit, it was the breakout hit from the album. You wrote this by yourself, did you not?

RK: Yeah.

GM: Can you tell me anything about writing that song?

RK: Things were added. Things were added that helped.

GM: Can you be a bit more specific?

RK: I assume you saw the Oliver Stone movie, The Doors. There's a scene in the movie, when Ray comes up with this standalone thing. He says, "All right, you guys go out to the beach and I'm gonna write this intro here." Well, that's not how it happened. I had those chords for that part. You don't realize how many cords there are in that part. It's like, I think nine different cords. It took Ray all summer to come up with the notes for those chords. You know, after playing it every night at The Whiskey, he would mess with it. He finally came up with those great notes. Originally that part was used as a way to get out of the instrumental and back into the third verse, it was not the intro to the song, nor was it in the outro of the song. And that was Paul Rothschild's idea.

GM: The next track, track number three, End Of The Night. This one has always stood out for me. I think it perfectly encapsulated the sound of the doors. It had a, a very special sort of atmospheric quality to it. But from what I've read, it was written prior to you joining the group, but because it was missing something, it never made it on to a recording until you showed up and put your slide on it. Your slide is the thing that really made it stand out.

RK: Yeah, exactly!

GM: So, regarding the slide, did anybody influence you at all, or did you just come up with this technique by yourself?

RK: No, I listened to all the slide guys, you know, the Blues guys but I never really tried to copy them. The first guy I copied was Duane Allman when he did, what's that song?

GM: Statesboro Blues?

RK: Right, right. We used to do that when I had the group with Waylon Jennings and Barry Oakley Jr. He had a little bit of an Allman Brothers influence at that time. I love that song.

GM: Me Too, it's a great song. And there's a great story behind how he came up with the slide. His brother came over with a bottle of painkillers. Medicine used to be in glass bottles, and I think he had just had a motorcycle crash. It was just after that. He took all the pills, got really whacked out, looked at the bottle, put it on his finger, and he, he says he came up with the slide guitar right then and there.

RK: Really?

GM: Yeah.

RK: That sounds like a good story.

GM: Yeah. It's just another great example of drugs and music going together, in my mind. <Laugh>

RK: <Laugh>.

GM: So, the last song on the second side, The End. For a band just starting out, that's an incredible song to have on a debut album. In some ways, I think it's almost more famous for its lyrical content than its musical content. What did you think of the way Jim performed this song?

RK: Well, you know, the song grew from just a little love song, to how it ended up at The Whiskey. You know, when we played it at The Whiskey every night it would evolve into more of an American Indian music kind of sound. And then, Jim's words, that's where he came up with the Freudian kind of stuff at The Whiskey.

GM: Did that song really get you kicked out of The Whiskey the way it was depicted in the movie?

RK: I don't remember it doing that.

GM: It was kind of experimental music for the time, is that the way it kind of went over?

RK: I suppose, yeah. I mean, there was nothing like it at the time, that's for sure. It was pretty popular. I mean, we would do Light My Fire and that would get the crowd all worked up and dancing and stuff, and then we would come back for an encore and we would do The End, and they would just stand there, glassy-eyed, not knowing what to think.

GM: I bet they were mesmerized.

RK: Oh yeah.

GM: So, on the album credits, everything is credited to the band, which seems like a great way to start off. But what about the songwriting? Was it you and Ray that did most of the songwriting together at that point? I know that Jim had a lot of poems and music was put to them but tell me about the songwriting on that first album.

RK: Well, on the first album, like you say, a lot of the songs were already kind of formed. Moonlight Drive, even though I did have the slide in it, it totally evolved from the first version. We were gonna put it on the first album, but we didn't because it was just kind of boring the way it was, even with the slide. I don't know, have you ever heard the first version of Moonlight Drive?

GM: I have, I think it was on Rarities.

RK: Yeah. So that kind of needed time to grow and make it to the second album. and The End, that was just formed at the time of the first album while we were at The Whiskey. And Whiskey Bar, we'd done that quite a bit beforehand, we decided to do it that way back when I first joined.

GM: Being able to write and remember all of this music is quite the feat, there wasn't any technology. How were you able to remember all of this when you were just playing it live and growing it, as you played it, essentially?

RK: Repetition, I guess. We remembered it just from playing it all the time, you know? We hadn't recorded any of it until the first album. So, we would just learn it, play it, and remember it.

GM: One great promotional tool was the billboard advertising the album. I believe it was The Doors Who pioneered the Sunset Boulevard billboard, was it not?

RK: No actually it was Love, Love had the first billboard.

GM: I always thought it was The Doors, which when I was just growing up and seeing that, I thought that California was the coolest place in the world. And then I moved here and discovered it was. OK, let's move on to the second album, Strange Days. I think this was the first appearance of a Moog in any popular music, wasn't it?

RK: I'm trying to remember whether somebody else had had used it before, but I don't think so. Paul Beaver wasn't the guy who invented it, but he did popularize it. I remember him coming over to the studio and, and setting up all the wires, it was quite a contraption. And yeah, we used it on a number of songs.

GM: The second track, You're Lost Little Girl. I've read that this was the first song that you actually wrote prior to joining the band, but when you were in the studio trying to record it, the mood wasn't right. So, you had them dim the lights, and you smoked some hash to get you in the mood. Is that a pretty accurate depiction?

RK: Well, the first song I actually wrote was Light My Fire. So, You're Lost Little Girl was afterwards. I can't remember how we recorded it or how high I got, but I wouldn't doubt it. <Laugh>. We had this guy



named Alan Parishioner who would come by with all different grades of marijuana and hashish, and we were lucky to have him.

GM: The third track on Strange Days, Love Me Two Times. I've read that it was controversial at the time. Raymond Eric's biography describes it as "Robby Krieger's great blues rock classic about lust and loss, or multiple orgasms. I'm not sure which."

RK: <Laugh>

GM: Which was it? Do you remember?

RK: Oh gosh, not really. It's just words that I came up that seemed to work with the music, you know? It was mainly about leaving your girlfriend, like a lot of guys that had to go to Vietnam had to do at that time. They might never see 'em again. So, "love me two times" may have meant, "Get some in while you can. <Laugh>."

GM: And then on side two, When The Music's Over

RK:

Uhhuh,

GM: To me, you could have made an EP with The End on one side, and When The Music's Over on the other side, these songs are just so, they're magnum opuses, real masterpieces.

RK: Mm-hmm.

GM: When The Music's Over was also a very long song. Was it hard for you to play at all?

RK: No. You know, a lot of people thought, "Oh, they're trying to recreate The End," because it was so long, but that, that really wasn't the case, that's just how it came out.

GM: I agree. I don't think there's any two songs you could take in the catalog and put 'em back-to-back and say that one is just a recreation of another one.

RK: Yeah, exactly.

GM: Every single song stands apart. Some of the deeper tracks just are wonderful. I'm sure you've heard this a million times. People talk to you and say, "The Doors were wonderful," but your music really affected me, It really did.

RK: That's good to hear.

GM: I don't even know how to encapsulate this, but your music seemed to have an intelligence to it that other music didn't have. There was something serious going on there, it wasn't just a collection of pop-radio hits. Even though I was young at the time, if you went to a college campus or a high school, you heard the kids listening to The Doors. You just had a sense that this was different, it was important. What was it that you think The Doors had?

RK: Well, it had Jim Morrison's Brain <laugh>.

GM: Well, even, you know, even aside from the lyrics, if you just, if you take the lyrics out, The Doors were still a killer band. And I know that there's, over the years, there's always been a lot of emphasis on Jim and his poetry, but the band itself was just so great! I'm more of a band person than a lyrics kind of person.

RK: Yeah.

GM: Sometimes you can't clearly hear the lyrics. You have to play them over and over. The Doors were a killer band. The only thing I can find to compare the guitar work to is Jeff Beck. There's nobody else in the world that's ever been such a unique guitar player. It's just you and Jeff Beck, nobody has ever been able to copy either of you.

RK: Wow. Well, that's a huge compliment, thank you!

GM: You're welcome!

RK: Maybe there is a similarity to Jeff Beck. We both played with our right-hand fingers rather than picks.

GM: That's interesting. You didn't use a pick at all?

RK: No, I didn't. On the first two albums I never used a pick, I never learned how, and I think it was pretty similar for Beck. He was the master of the whammy bar.

GM: Yes, absolutely.

RK: I could never even approach how good he was on the whammy. The most amazing part was that he never got the guitar out of tune. When I used the whammy bar, I'd have to retune the guitar immediately because it throws it out of tune. But he never had that problem, I don't know why,

GM: Maybe because he played Fenders and they have that whole spring mechanism that you can use the whammy without taking it outta tune, and Gibson's don't

RK: It's possible. I think it was more just the way he played.

GM: Just to address something that you said, I wouldn't say that he was a better guitarist than you, he was just different, but when you're talking virtuosity, you're up there with Jeff Beck in my opinion.

RK: Thanks. I agree.

GM: Great.

RK: <Laugh>

GM: <Laugh>. So now we're at the third album, Waiting for the Sun.

RK: Yeah. That's the one we're gonna play at the Whiskey next week.

GM: According to what I've read, this was the only album to reach number one, which seems, which seems kind of strange.

RK: Well, it had a number one song on it, Hello, I Love You. I don't know whether any of the other ones ever did make number one Light My Fire, I think was number two, I don't think it ever made number one. I could be wrong about that, but I do remember how Hello. I Love You. Definitely was number one. Maybe that kicked the album over the edge and made it number one too.

GM: Yeah, although I'm sure many of your albums were gold, platinum, et cetera, et cetera.

RK: Yeah. But, you know, Elektra Records was still growing at that point, and they just didn't have the oomph to get us a number one album on our first couple of albums.

GM: I see. And I was speaking to Alice Cooper actually a couple of weeks ago, and we were talking about your involvement in his latest album, and he started to tell me a story about when this album was being recorded. He was next door in, in the next-door studio and poked his head in and thought that Jim was already suffering from overindulgence at that point. Which is kind of a funny story because it's kind of like Keith Richards telling you you're taking too many drugs.

RK: What year was that?

GM: What year was that Waiting for the Sun? That would've been 1968. Well, it was released in July of 1968.

RK: And he was hanging around with us?

GM: Well, I don't know if he was hanging around, but supposedly, he was in the studio cutting, cutting an album.

RK: Oh, I see. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That's funny.

GM: I've also read that John Densmore had become really frustrated with Paul Rothchild and his perfectionism, and he just walked right out of a session. Is that true?

RK: I don't remember that no.

GM: Okay, I guess you can't believe everything you read, but it does bring up another question, the way that John Densmore was portrayed in the Oliver Stone movie. I interviewed Bill Siddons a few years ago, but John is portrayed as the guy in the band that was just frustrated by, by Jim's meltdowns and drugs or what have you. Was that accurate?

RK: One thing that was fairly accurate.

GM: I actually met him when you did the tribute to Ray at the Fonda Theater. I ended up downstairs in the little backstage dressing room area, and he was very adamant about not having his photo taken, which I ignored.

RK: I bet. What was the reason?

GM: I don't know, I didn't wanna bother him. It, it was between sets. He was just taking a rest. I didn't wanna bug him. I didn't even actually say a word to him. I just lifted the camera and said, kind of like, is it okay? You know that expression? And he was like, no, pictures, please.

RK: Oh, God. That's funny.

GM: Enough about John. I'd need to really interview him to form an opinion of my own. Back to Waiting For the Sun, the last track on the first side, The Unknown Soldier. Apparently, it took over 130 takes. Is that even possible?

RK: Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. It was a lot of takes. I don't know if it was that many, but it was a lot. I remember, we were gonna have a hit record. Okay. And so, Paul Rothschild was determined to learn how to make a hit record. So, he scientifically went overboard, he found out information like, "what key are most top hits written in?" and that kind of thing. So, we made it in G or something, and "what tempo are they in?", You know, so we made it in a certain tempo. All kinds of stuff like that. And <laugh>, it was just funny. Didn't work, didn't work.

GM: First Track, second Side, on Waiting For the Sun, Spanish Caravan. That had to be all you, right?

RK: Yeah. I actually stole that first part of the song is actually from a flamenco song called Leyenda. I kind of borrowed that you know, the da-da-da-da part, and then the rest is my doing but we got sued for that. Did we talk about this?

GM: We did actually. Yeah.

RK: I think it was a very influential song. I think Spanish Fly by Van Halen is a direct descendant of Spanish Caravan.

RK: Yeah.

GM: The guitar work is incredible on that. You can almost hear your fingers sliding up and down the neck. Was that a standout song for you on the record?

RK: Sort of, yeah. I was lucky to be able to sneak one of those in there .You know, Flamenco does not really go with Rock and Roll that much, and nobody had ever done it before, so I was lucky to be able to get that on the record.

GM: We were lucky to get it as fans.

RK: Yeah.

GM: I think it might have been the first instance of rock musicians putting something like that on a record. I think it probably influenced Led Zeppelin when they did their third album, and they had an acoustic side of the album.

RK: Yeah. Oh, that's right.

GM: Okay, so let's move on to the fourth album, The Soft Parade. I think was a kind of a huge departure from the previous three albums, mostly because it had horns and strings on it. What did the band think of this change in direction? Was it the band that came up with the idea?

RK: Well, we weren't crazy about the idea because it was obviously a copying of The Beatles. The Stones did it after the Beatles and the Beach Boys too. I didn't think we should do it, not initially, but when we heard the arrangements that were done by Paul Harris, they were really good. I thought they turned out great. So, I was kind of happy we did it. We did an album, using those songs without the horns and strings. Did you ever hear that?

GM: I don't think so, unless it was on Rarities.

RK: It was not that long ago, I'm sure you could look it up. It was pretty cool. It was Ray and I doing most of the horn and string parts and in a way, it made me happy that we did use the strings and horns because they really did a good job.

GM: It sounds almost like something similar to Let It Be Naked. I don't know if you've ever heard that. Paul McCartney took all of the Phil Spector production off of the Let It Be album. Stripped it bare so to speak.

RK: I've heard about that, but I've never heard it.

GM: It's still great music, but the problem with it is we've had more than fifty years of hearing Let It Be the way it was recorded. It's burned into everybody's mind the same way the Soft Parade is. We're all used to the horns on it. You can't really picture that music without it. It's the same thing with Let It Be. The album didn't go anywhere for Paul.

RK: Yeah. Yeah.

GM: What about Paul Rothchild at this point? I've read that he was becoming a slave driver and that he started doing a lot of coke at the time,

RK: He was always like that, really as much as he could be. It all depended on how much money we had to spend in the studio. But he would use as much time as he could get away with. He just wanted to make it sound perfect, which you can't blame him for, but I think it would've been better for the band had he not been able to do that. The L.A. Woman album turned out to be our most fun album, just because we didn't have that perfection stuff going on.

GM: I have read that when he was gone, it became just a better environment musically, less retakes and that kind of thing. There wasn't this drive for perfection.

RK: Right, exactly. And you know, it didn't take so long to get a drum sound, it was more fun.

GM: Let's talk about the song, Touch Me. That was a pretty big hit. Jim's kind of urging people to reach out and touch him. Did he crave that adoration especially when he was off stage?

RK: Not really. In fact, it was kind of the opposite, because originally that song was called Hit Me, not Touch Me. This song was actually another one of mine. I wrote it about a card game, a game of twenty-one. That's when you go, "Hit me!" If the guy hits you too much, you lose, but if you make twenty-one, then you win. Jim thought that maybe people might take it literally and actually wanna hit him when he was on stage. I can't believe that, but that's what he said. But then he changed the words a little bit. The part that goes, "I'm gonna love you, till the heavens stop the rain." I actually stole that from a Joan Baez song on one of her albums. I told her that, and she didn't even know it. She had no memory of that. I mean, she didn't write it or anything, it was an old folk song, but the other part, "come on, touch me, can't you see, I'm not afraid." All of that kind of works if you think of it as a card game.

GM: Yeah, it does. On the track, Running Blue, you're listed as the single writer. I noticed at this point on the albums most of the credits are you and Jim. Why did you change from crediting "The Doors"?

RK: At that point, we, for some reason, decided to stop saying everything was written by The Doors and actually give credit to each song. Probably because I was writing more and more of the songs and, you know, percentage wise. I didn't mind.

GM: Okay. And then the title Track, The Soft Parade, which is a really interesting song, but it's credited solely to Jim.

RK: Is that right? That's weird, I never noticed that. All the words are his it's from one of his poems when he was in high school, I think. But the music is mostly all mine. I don't know why I didn't get credit on that.

GM: The Soft Parade is an interesting song, it seems almost like it was three different songs put together.

RK: It is kind of is three songs I guess, and musically too. You're right. I Never thought of that.

GM: Moving on to Morrison Hotel. I know about the album shoot and Henry Diltz running you guys into this derelict hotel and everything, which worked out really well. But I wanna ask you about Peace Frog. It's one of my favorite Doors songs.

RK: A lot of people love that song.

GM:

Again, I can't tell you why, there's just something about the song, the punchiness of the guitar, you know, it's got that bite to it.

RK: I don't know how the hell I came up with that, but one thing was that the guitar I had at the time, for some reason, the pickups were wired backwards. They were out of phase. So, it kind of sounded like

I was using a Wawa pedal, but I wasn't. The bass player came up with a really great part, something I never would've thought of. Ray Neapolitan was his name.

GM: Speaking of guitars, almost every picture I've ever seen, you're playing the red Gibson SG. Is that the original SG from day one?

RK: I wish. My original one got stolen after the second album. So, the first two albums are that one, that red guitar. And then after that, I got a white one. I had one with three pickups. After the Doors, I played a Gibson ES-335 for a long time, and then my guitar tech Marco found this SG that was almost exactly like my first one. It was a 67, and that's the one I've been using up till now.

GM: One more thing about Morrison Hotel. I don't know if anybody's ever mentioned this to you, but I think it was the first time a band put a song on an album that related to a previous album. You had the song Waiting for the Sun on Morrison Hotel.

RK: Don't ask me why we did that, stupid, I guess.

GM: Not, not really, I think it was influential. I hate to go back to Led Zeppelin or even make a comparison between the two groups, but they did it a few times.

RK: Really? Like what?

GM: Well, they had an album called Houses of the Holy, and then later released Physical Graffiti, which had a song called Houses of the Holy on it.

RK: That's weird. I think in our case we had worked up that song, but it never got on the album that it was meant to get on, so we stuck it on the next one.

GM: Makes sense. That brings us to your final album with Jim, L.A. Woman. A lot of people think it's the best album. It's hard to make a choice like that. You've already said, everybody was in a happier place. No more Paul Rothchild in the studio. What stood out on that album for you?

RK: Well, the main thing is that out of all the albums, it was the album that most ended up being really worked up by the band altogether. And, instead of just my song or Jim's song, or Jim and I, it was all of us like on certain songs, especially like Riders On The Storm. One day, we were just fooling around playing Ghost Riders in The Sky. And from that, Jim just changed the words a little bit. And the same thing on the song, L.A. Woman. We started playing and just kind of jamming. That would never have happened with Paul Rothchild. He would have said, "Oh, we can't waste time!" So, it was more written by the band, as a unit. And that's how I think it would've ended up, had Jim come back from Paris. I think we would've really written songs more that way.

GM: It's kind of interesting when you think about the two albums without Jim, Other Voices and Full Circle, because it doesn't sound like The Doors, even though I had a theory that you could just take Jim Morrison out of the equation, and it would still be a great band. I guess the whole loss of him at the time just made it come out differently, really.

RK: Right, right.

GM: Not to say there weren't good songs on those albums. I love The Mosquito. It's great.

RK: Me too. In actuality, The Mosquito has more copies of other bands doing it than any other Doors song, except for Light My Fire, probably because it's in Spanish and all the Spanish speaking countries had musicians that ended up doing copies of it. Also, it's a great almost Spanish, flamenco guitar kind of piece too.

GM: Another track, The Wasp. I've always wondered about the title of this, The Wasp (Texas Radio and the Big Beat). What was that about?

RK: Good question. I don't know, maybe Jim got stung by a Wasp one time in Texas. That's all I can think of.

GM: Okay. One, one last song to ask you about, because it always stood out for me on the album. Cars Hiss By My Window., This has got to be one of the most interesting blues tracks ever written, because musically it's like a 12-bar blues kind of song, but the way Jim syncopated the lyrics, It seems like the lyrics are just behind the song a little bit. Who wrote the song? Was that all you?

RK: No, that was Jim. Jim's words.

GM: The music though.

RK:

The music is just the blues, you know. The guitar sound is definitely patterned after a lot of blues songs that I've played. It is really just a Jimmy Reed copy.

GM: Really?

RK: Yeah, a lot of Jimmy Reed's songs use that progression.

GM: Jimmy Reed's influenced more bands than people know, he was a huge influence on The Rolling Stones.

RK: He was great, a very strong influence.

GM: Well Robby, we're at the end of the catalogue, and the end of my questions. I want to thank you for taking the time to go through all of these wonderful songs with Goldmine.

RK: My pleasure Ivor, take care.