



HOTEL CALIFORNIA

Don Felder - Don Henley - Glenn Frey

THE EAGLES

1977

Asylum Records #45386

The lead single from the album **HOTEL CALIFORNIA**. Chart: #1. Time: 6:30. Flip Side: "Pretty Maids All In A Row ". Released in U.S.A on February 22, 1977.

Album recorded at Criteria Studios, Miami, Florida and The Record Plant, Los Angeles, California, USA, March to October, 1976. Produced by **Bill Szymczyk**. Engineered by **Bill Szymczyk**, **Allan Blazek**, **Ed Mashel** and **Bruce Hensal**. Mixed by **Bill Szymczyk** in Miami.

The Eagles in their earlier years were forced to record music that was more softer then what they wanted. After three albums, they broke with their producer and took control of their destiny, adding Joe Walsh and, important to this track in particular, Don Felder. They wanted to rock. And rock they did. They created not only their most played track, but one of the greatest of the 1970's. While on the surface, it seemed to be about California, it was more about the excesses and self-indulgence of America as a whole. - Larry -



Personnel

Don Henley - lead vocals, drums, percussion
Glenn Frey - vocals, guitar, keyboards
Don Felder - vocals, guitar, slide guitar
Joe Walsh - vocals, guitar, keyboards
Randy Meisner - vocals, bass, guitarone

DON HENLEY

"Hotel California' was our interpretation of the high life in Los Angeles. It was meant to be a metaphor for the United States, for the excesses this country has always been known for. It wasn't meant to be just about California or Beverly Hills. It was more or less taken that way, but we had broader intentions than that. When you love something, you have to point out the things that are going wrong."

DON FELDER

"I had just leased this house out on the beach at Malibu--I guess it was around '74 or '75. I remember sitting in the living room, with the doors all wide open, on a spectacular July day. I had a bathing suit on and I was sitting on this couch, soaking wet, thinking the world is a wonderful place to be. I had this acoustic 12-string and I started tinkling around with it, and those "Hotel California" chords just kind of oozed out. Every once in a while it seems like the cosmos part and something great plops into your lap. I had a Teac four-track set up in one of the back bedrooms and I ran back there to put this idea down before I forgot it. I had one of those old rhythm ace things that Roland or somebody made. I remember it was set to play this cha cha beat, so I started it p, set the right tempo and played the 12-string on top of it. I didn't do any more to it then because I was also working on "Victim of Love" at the same time. I had about six or eight song ideas I was working up. But a few days later I went back and listened to that 12-string thing with the cha cha beat, and it sounded pretty unique. So I came up with a bass line. A few days later I added some electric guitars. Everything was getting mixed down to mono, ping-ponging back and forth on this little four track. Finally I wound up with a cassette that had just about the entire arrangement that appears on the record, verbatim, with the exception of a few Joe Walsh licks on the end. All the harmony guitar stuff was there as was my solo on the end."

"When I gave Henley the cassette, it had eight or 10 different song ideas. He came back and said (imitating Henley), "I really love this one track on your tape. The one that sounds like a matador or something...like you're in Mexico." We worked it all up and went into the studio and recorded it. "

"Even when we finished "Hotel California" I wasn't convinced that it should be a single. I thought it was okay as an album piece because all those guitars were a lot of fun. But when Henley said, "I think it should be our single," I said, "Are you kidding? The song is six minutes and change. They're not going to play anything over three minutes-30 seconds on the radio. Here we've got something that's twice their usual program length. It starts off quiet and it's got this quiet breakdown in the middle..." I was very skeptical, but I just yielded to the wisdom of Guano, which is Henley's nickname."

DON HENLEY - 2013 History of the Eagles

"It's a song about a journey from innocence to experience."

GLENN FREY

"That record explores the underbelly of success, the darker side of Paradise. Which was sort of what we were experiencing in Los Angeles at that time. So that just sort of became a metaphor for the whole world and for everything you know. And we just decided to make it Hotel California. So with a microcosm of everything else going on around us."

GLENN FREY - Cameron Crowe interview

"(Don and I wanted the song) "to open like an episode of the Twilight Zone. We take this guy and make him like a character in The Magus, where every time he walks through a door there's a new version of reality. We wanted to write a song just like it was a movie.""

GLENN FREY - NBC's Bob Costas interview

(a cinematic montage) "just one shot to the next ... a picture of a guy on the highway, a picture of the hotel, the guy walks in, the door opens, strange people. We decided to create something strange, just to see if we could do it.""

YOU TUBE LYRIC VIDEO

YOU TUBE LIVE 1977, Landover, Maryland, USA, The Capitol Centre

YOU TUBE LIVE 1998, Cleveland, Ohio, Rock n'Roll Hall of Fame

On a dark desert highway
Cool wind in my hair
Warm smell of colitas
Rising up through the air
Up ahead in the distance
I saw a shimmering light
My head grew heavy, and my sight grew dim
I had to stop for the night
There she stood in the doorway
I heard the mission bell
And I was thinking to myself
This could be Heaven or this could be Hell
Then she lit up a candle
And she showed me the way
There were voices down the corridor
I thought I heard them say

Welcome to the Hotel California
Such a lovely place
Such a lovely place (background)
Such a lovely face
Plenty of room at the Hotel California
Any time of year
Any time of year (background)
You can find it here
You can find it here

Her mind is Tiffany twisted
She's got the Mercedes bends
She's got a lot of pretty, pretty boys
That she calls friends
How they dance in the courtyard
Sweet summer sweat
Some dance to remember
Some dance to forget
So I called up the Captain
Please bring me my wine
He said
We haven't had that spirit here since 1969
And still those voices are calling from far away
Wake you up in the middle of the night
Just to hear them say

Welcome to the Hotel California
Such a lovely Place
Such a lovely Place (background)
Such a lovely face
They're livin' it up at the Hotel California
What a nice surprise
What a nice surprise (background)
Bring your alibies

Mirrors on the ceiling
Pink champagne on ice
And she said
We are all just prisoners here
Of our own device
And in the master's chambers
They gathered for the feast
They stab it with their steely knives
But they just can't kill the beast
Last thing I remember
I was running for the door
I had to find the passage back to the place I was before
Relax said the nightman
We are programed to recieve
You can check out any time you like
But you can never leave