



SIGNS

Les Emmerson

FIVE MAN ELECTRICAL BAND

1971

Lionel Records

The second single from the album **Good-byes and Butterflies**. Chart: #3. Time - 3:20 / 4:05.
Flip Side: "Hello Melinda Goodbye". Released in U.S.A. May 1971.

Recorded in Los Angeles, California , USA. Produced by **Dallas Smith**.

Les Emmerson, who recently passed away, wrote this after noticing advertising billboards destroying the scenery on Route 66 heading to California. The song became an international hit for the Canadian band and they only had one more top 40 single in the U.S. They would have several more well known hits in Canada. It originally was not recognized as single material and so was put out as the B side to 'Hello Melinda Goodbye'. When radio started flipping it over and playing the other side, 'Signs' was re-released as the A side. 'Signs' had another run in Billboard's top 10 in 1991 when American rock band Tesla released a live, cover version. -- Larry --



Personnel

Les Emmerson - lead vocals, guitars
Brian Rading - bass
Mike Bell - drums
Rick Bell - percussion
Ted Gerow - organ, piano

Les Emmerson - 2004:Ottawa Sun

"We were on Route 66 somewhere in Nevada, the early evening, the sun setting. This stretch of the road, there were huge rocks covered in graffiti, you know, Jesus Loves Maria, stuff like that, and endless advertising signs, go here, do this, and I thought what a shame, all these signs obscuring the beautiful scenery and telling us what to do. It cheesed me off. If all I'd ever done in life was write this one song, I'd have a very nice living."

Les Emmerson - 2014:The Music Express

"The whole song was right in front of me. I just had to stop and write the song down. That song broke every radio rule going. The record label said that the song was too long and it took too long to get to the chorus. Yet record producer Dallas Smith believed in the song and fought for it. That was the only reason it got released."

YOU TUBE LYRIC VIDEO

YOU TUBE LIVE July 1, 2010; Canada Day Celebration

YOU TUBE TESLA COVER VERSION

And the sign said "Long-haired freaky people need not apply"
So I tucked my hair up under my hat and I went in to ask him why
He said "You look like a fine upstanding young man, I think you'll do"
So I took off my hat, I said "Imagine that. Huh! Me workin' for you!"
Whoa-oh-oh
Sign, sign, everywhere a sign
Blockin' out the scenery, breakin' my mind
Do this, don't do that, can't you read the sign?
And the sign said anybody caught trespassin' would be shot on sight
So I jumped on the fence and-a yelled at the house, "Hey! What gives you
the
right?"
"To put up a fence to keep me out or to keep mother nature in"
"If God was here he'd tell you to your face, Man, you're some kinda sinner"
Sign, sign, everywhere a sign
Blockin' out the scenery, breakin' my mind
Do this, don't do that, can't you read the sign?
Now, hey you, mister, can't you read?
You've got to have a shirt and tie to get a seat
You can't even watch, no you can't eat
You ain't supposed to be here
The sign said you got to have a membership card to get inside
Ugh!
And the sign said, "Everybody welcome. Come in, kneel down and pray"
But when they passed around the plate at the end of it all, I didn't have a
penny to pay
So I got me a pen and a paper and I made up my own little sign
I said, "Thank you, Lord, for thinkin' 'bout me. I'm alive and doin' fine."
Wooo!
Sign, sign, everywhere a sign
Blockin' out the scenery, breakin' my mind
Do this, don't do that, can't you read the sign?
Sign, sign, everywhere a sign
Sign
Sign, sign