

Nevada Resident Recovers Lost Rock ‘n Roll Photo Archive

Ian Wright’s Photos Reveal Early Origins of The Beatles,
Rolling Stones, Elton John, Tom Jones, Jimi Hendrix and others

Las Vegas resident Ian Wright, a career photojournalist, recently recovered his photo archive that had been lost for 45 years and has published “*On The Brink of Fame, Pop Stars In The Swinging ‘60s*.” This historic, mostly unpublished photographic archive of the Northeast of England reveals the nightclub origins of such icons as The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Roy Orbison, Ike and Tina Turner, Tom Jones, Engelbert Humperdink, Jimi Hendrix, Elton John and Johnny Cash. The archive reveals intimate back-stage portraits of eager, young performers unsure of whether they would flop or ascend to fame and fortune.

“I did what the editor Sir Harold Evans told me,” says Wright. “I photographed everyone on the bill, kept notes, and stored the negatives at the newspaper office.” A 16-year-old darkroom boy, Wright took the photographs for the newspaper supplement, “Teenage Special.” As a result, Wright unwittingly was on hand to photograph the creation of The Swinging ‘60s.

“I was too young to drive so I strapped the heavy plate camera equipment to my bicycle and pedaled to the local ballrooms, theaters and nightclubs, photographing emerging pop stars and celebrities.”

From his first picture of Ella Fitzgerald in 1962 to his last of Elton John in 1971, Wright photographed everyone on the scene. Some performers fell into obscurity while others ascended to indescribable creative and financial success. Five became Knights of the Realm. Many died too young.

Wright plans to travel the world detailing the social and political history represented by his 45-year old archive.

“You never know who will become famous,” says Wright. “I’m very fortunate to have recovered my work from this special time in early rock ‘n roll history that depicts the beginnings of so many iconic music legends. Thank goodness the newspaper called me before they put the work in the dumpster.”

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