

JD SOUTHER  
YOU'RE ONLY LONELY



YOU'RE ONLY LONELY  
IF YOU DON'T WANT MY LOVE  
THE LAST IN LOVE  
WHITE RHYTHM AND BLUES  
'TIL THE BARS BURN DOWN  
THE MOON JUST TURNED BLUE  
SONGS OF LOVE  
FIFTEEN BUCKS  
TROUBLE IN PARADISE

**BONUS TRACKS:**

**EVER FAITHFUL WOMAN**

**BAD NEWS TRAVELS FAST** (Alternate Take)



"WELL, THE SUN IS A SINKIN'  
AND PEOPLE START THINKIN' AT TWILIGHT..."





RI3

CHUKO

&

MARIA



"Don't you have anything *uptempo*?"

JD Souther recalls the question Waddy Wachtel posed to him one day at North Hollywood's Warner Bros./Amigo Studios.

"We were about a month into making this album which we were going to call *White Rhythm And Blues*. I said to Waddy, 'No,

not really. I don't really write uptempo

songs." But the guitarist and *de facto*

bandleader wouldn't take "no" for an

answer. "He said, 'Man, give me some-

thing that sounds like a single . . . *please!*'

So I said, 'Well, I've got this little song I

started in Colorado years ago. It's just two

verses. It doesn't really have a chorus. It

doesn't have a bridge and doesn't have a

third verse.' And he said, 'Well, play it, JD,

play it!' And so I played it for him. He just

went, 'Sing the first verse again.' That was

his only comment: '*Sing the first verse*

*again.*'" Not only did JD now have a com-

plete song, but he had the chart-topping

title track of the album that would become

known as *You're Only Lonely*.



"It's got the most fun inner sleeve ever," JD enthusiastically shares. "It's really cool to look at, and gives you a sense of the looseness and, at the same time, the hard work that went into this album. Everybody got in a picture except John Sebastian and Peter Asher. There's a picture of Jorge Calderón and Kenny Edwards and Waddy and I singing. But I think those beginning *oohs* on 'You're Only Lonely'—which are just thick and monstrous—were those three guys, me, and Peter, as well. As soon as we heard those first two bars of *oohs*, we went, 'Man, that is a good way to start a record!'" Those shimmering, expressive harmonies welcomed listeners to 1979's *You're Only Lonely*, the Michigan-born, Texas-raised singer-songwriter's first (and only) LP for Columbia Records.

Souther had been one of the inaugural signings to the Asylum label founded by David Geffen and Elliot Roberts; after his 1971 debut *John David Souther*, he teamed with Richie Furay and Chris Hillman for two LPs as the Souther-Hillman-Furay Band. But his second solo release, 1976's sweeping *Black Rose*, was issued in the wake of Geffen's move to Warner Bros. Pictures. "After David left Asylum, it wasn't quite the same," Souther reflects. "I didn't think *Black Rose* got the amount of promotion or attention it deserved." Columbia offered a fresh start and requisite promotional muscle.

JD, playing guitar, assembled an A-list band for his Columbia debut: Waddy on guitar, Don Grolnick on piano, Kenny Edwards on bass, and Rick Marotta on drums, with Danny "Kootch" Kortchmar also contributing on guitar, David Sanborn on alto saxophone, and Dan Dugmore on guitar and steel. "Wachtel and Grolnick and Edwards and Marotta and me—and Kortchmar, of course—were all tight. The guys knew each other so well that sometimes just a nod of the head would get the correct result," JD notes. "As much as I love being the bandleader, I like having someone as musically savvy as Waddy in the studio. I'm really hard-pressed to think of him ever having a bad idea in the studio." Colorado-based musician Haden Gregg (credited as "Hayden") was among the many harmony singers. Lee Herschberg was enlisted to engineer the sessions: "We always called him The Captain because he was a great sailor. We were all loaded, and there were so many distractions, and he was just focused. He always had things set for us to do, and was great at helping me mix the record."

A close-knit circle of friends including Jackson Browne and Eagles Don Henley and Glenn Frey also helped JD, as producer, shape the sound of *You're Only Lonely*. With typical graciousness, he offers, "Jackson sang a little [on the album]. He always says he's not a good harmony singer, but he did sing on a couple of things, though I don't remember which ones. I wish the album credits had been a little more specific, but I was trying to be cool and minimalist. It was a little movie poster way of

doing the credits, and it really didn't do them justice. Originally, the inner sleeve said 'GPs: Waddy, Don, Glenn, and Jackson.' It should have just said 'Guest Producers' because they all helped. I'm pretty sure the vocal on 'You're Only Lonely' would not have been as good if Don wasn't in the studio coaching me and going, 'No, let's comp these two together' or 'Not quite!' Their enthusiasm for making a real record without any obvious flaws in it was an important aspect of getting it right."

*You're Only Lonely* reflected the diversity of JD's influences: "I've listened to all kinds of music all my life. I grew up playing classical music. I started violin in the fourth grade, but I was a jazz kid. I fell in love with jazz. My father was a big band singer when I was young and I wanted to play tenor sax, but I was a really little kid. I didn't grow until I was a junior in high school, so tenor sax was a little unwieldy for me. My music teacher said, 'Well, why don't you learn on clarinet?' Everything's the same, but it's small and easy to handle. So I played clarinet for a couple of years, and then I got a tenor. In eighth grade, I discovered drums, and it was, 'Okay, I'm a drummer!' From then on, that's what I did. I was a jazz drummer. I had a rock and roll band, too, because I had to make some money. My two little jazz groups never made any money! I've been influenced by everything I've ever heard. When I was in college, the only classes I went to were in composition . . . I played drums in the big band and wrote charts for them. I played clarinet in the woodwind ensemble and timpani and orchestra. I never touched the guitar then; I don't think I ever even held one! I'm influenced by everything, and that's why every album sounds different. I never want to make the same album twice."

Drums played a key part in the rockabilly sound of "You're Only Lonely." As JD explains, "The drum fills were absolutely ripped from a Roy Orbison record I loved called 'I'm Hurtin'.' The drums just play right to the break at the end of every refrain with no licks or anything, which is my favorite drum beat as far as rock 'n' roll goes. Roy is certainly one of the great singers. I listened to all of his records in junior high school. He was a powerful influence, but he didn't see it that much. He heard 'You're Only Lonely' and said, 'There's nothing of mine in there except that drum beat. [JD's] a good writer and a good singer.'" JD played in Roy's all-star band for his televised *Black And White Night* concert in 1987, along with other illustrious fans such as T Bone Burnett, Elvis Costello, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Waits, Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Jennifer Warnes, k.d. lang, and Elvis Presley's TCB Band.

Roy's inspiration was felt on "You're Only Lonely," but another legendary figure of rock 'n' roll was heard on "White Rhythm And Blues." Linda Ronstadt had first recorded JD's song on her 1978 album *Living In The USA* while *You're Only Lonely* premiered his own rendition. ("Those girls are always beating me

to the punch," JD quips. "Linda did the same thing on 'Silver Blue' and Nicolette Larson on 'The Last In Love' because I was so slow getting this album out.") "We'd finished the lead vocal on 'White Rhythm And Blues' and I said, 'I'm going to try a harmony on this, a real Phil Everly-sounding harmony.' Waddy and Warren Zevon had been the bandleaders for the last Everly Brothers tour. Waddy said, 'Just call Phil!' 'Call Phil? He's not in my phonebook! He's one of my heroes.' Waddy goes, 'I'll call. He's in the Valley, maybe a quarter of a mile from where we're recording.' He calls him. 'Hey Phil, it's Wad. Want to come down and sing with John David?' He goes, 'Sure, when?' Waddy says, 'Well, how about now?' He just came over and sang this glorious harmony part." Phil joined JD, Waddy, and Jorge to complete the vocal A-team.

"And then John Sebastian! I was talking to him, and said, 'Hey man, I got a really tiny thing to do on my album, but I can't think of anybody that gets a better tone on a blues harp. Would you come do the outro of the song for me?' He came right over. I was amazed at how many friends I had who had been heroes of mine that just said yes immediately."

"White Rhythm And Blues" features one of Souther's most powerfully specific yet universal lyrics. "[The title] is how I describe the way all the Texas hillbillies and Okies tried to sing black music—Buddy Holly and The Big Bopper and all those guys. Those guys loved rhythm and blues but, like me, had these white, punky voices. I thought it's one of those things that's kind of impossible, like black roses. There's no such thing as a black rose, horticulturally. You can spray it black, but you can't breed it black. And 'somebody who cares when you lose.' That's a tough thing to come by, too. I thought the chorus should be aspirational to three things that are practically impossible: white rhythm and blues, black roses, and somebody who cares when you lose."

The beautifully melancholy "The Last In Love" was one of two songs on the album penned by JD and his close friend and former Longbranch Pennywhistle bandmate, the late Glenn Frey. "When Glenn and I wrote that, we thought it would be the second single [after 'You're Only Lonely']. Nicky Larson said, 'Hey, do you mind if I sing that?' I said, 'No, it would be great to hear a girl sing it.' Well, her album didn't take as long as mine!" Larson's rendition was a highlight of her 1978 debut album *Nicolette*.

"We were best buddies," JD says of Glenn. "He was my first songwriting partner in L.A. and we hung out together consistently for a year because we didn't have any work." Frey had moved from Detroit and Souther from Amarillo; individually and collectively, they would play major roles in the birth of southern California rock. "What Glenn brings to the table is



basically rhythm and blues, Midwestern Bob Seger-style, and an enormous background in Motown. I don't think there's a Motown record he couldn't sing all the way through. He's a high energy guy, a cheerleader. He's the guy you want in the room. When he and Don and I were riding together, we had three pretty distinct roles. Glenn was, 'Yeah, the kids are going to love this!' I was the guy with the wild ideas. About one in four was accepted by the Eagles! Henley was the critic. He could have been the best English teacher you ever had. He has a really good sense of what powerful writing is, what makes a good sentence great, and what distinguishes a lyric from poetry or prose. It was a really good team. We came at it with this three-prong attack. I think that's why those songs are quality art. We were very slow writers and looked at every word and every possible substitute for that word. Sometimes somebody would just throw something out and we'd go, 'Yeah, that's it!' Sometimes ideas just appear in the room."

How did JD, Glenn, and Don decide which songs would go to JD solo and which would go to Eagles? "At one point in an interview with Glenn, my name came up. He said, 'Yeah, Souther is fantastic, but he gave away all his good songs. Even when they were given to us, he would have had more.' I thought, 'Well, it's kind of true.' But on the other hand, I knew the Eagles were perfectionists in the studio. Linda had already moved onto Peter Asher producing her, which was a great combination. I thought those two entities made better records than I did."

The Souther/Frey team also co-wrote the raucous barn-burner "'Til The Bars Burn Down," described by JD as "a rowdy, kick-ass bar song." He believes Glenn and Don joined on vocals, too: "There's some of these candid shots of the three of us singing and clowning around. I think that's one of the songs the three of us sang on."

Like "The Last In Love," both the country-rock rouser "The Moon Just Turned Blue" and the driving "Trouble In Paradise" might have been familiar to listeners. "Nitty Gritty Dirt Band did the first record of 'The Moon Just Turned Blue,'" JD remembers. "They were the first outside group to do one of my songs. I was really impressed, and it made Jeff Hanna and I friends for life." Their recording was included on 1975's *Dream*.

"Trouble In Paradise" appeared on, and became the title track of, the second Souther-Hillman-Fury Band album. Its appearance on *You're Only Lonely* stemmed from album sessions held in New York: "Late in the process, I met David Sanborn and we took the whole crew to New York to record for a couple of weeks. Those tracks were turning out to be a different kind of record, and the only one we kept was 'Trouble In Paradise.' It's just a song about how empty and vapid the superficial aspects of a rock 'n' roll life would be. It was real long on the S-H-F album, with a big, minor-key solo that Paul Harris played . . . a flute solo and a keyboard solo. I played drums on the S-H-F record, and I wanted to hear Rick Marotta on it. I wanted to relax, play my little guitar part, and sing. Marotta is one of the great shuffle drummers. I think Tom Scott is the whole horn section on that cut. It sounds like the music I grew up listening to and playing . . . I love big band music."

David Sanborn also made his mark on the rousing "Fifteen Bucks." JD observes, "It's just a jam. We'd finished something else and were all making jokes about



how Ike Turner used to fine his band members. If his shoes weren't shined or he didn't have the right outfit on or any mistake, he would just turn around and flash a five-fingered hand, three times, or fifteen bucks. That's what it costs to have your pants pressed! Rick Marotta and I were joking about it, and Kenny Edwards was laughing. I just saw him and said, 'Fifteen bucks!' He went, 'Pow!' So I did it again, and he did it again, and we started playing. We made it up on the spot. That's why all the guys have writing credits on it. When I was out touring with a band, which I don't do anymore, it was fun to play. So was 'Trouble In Paradise.'"

The exquisitely wistful "Songs Of Love," with Fred Tackett guesting on acoustic guitar, had originally been demoed for *Black Rose*. "I think 'Songs Of Love' is beautiful," JD comments. "In fact, I'd like to cut it again. But it's the one song I think barely fits on the album. It's a really pretty song and I don't think we did it justice. It may have been among the last things we cut in L.A. before we headed to New York, and we were just a little fried. It might be better as a piano song, anyway."

JD channeled his Texas roots on "If You Don't Want My Love." Eagles' Don Felder joined the band on rhythm guitar, with Jai Winding on organ and Bread's Mike Botts on drums. "We used to go to a skating rink in New Orleans where they played a lot of Tex-Mex music. That organ sound that Jai got is very much the 'All couples, skate left!' That was a fun song to do."

With the album completed, it was time to promote it. "We had the amazing Irving Azoff to help us sell it," Souther acknowledges. The singer-songwriter also went up and down the East Coast to share the single with radio stations. "I'm not famous for being good at promotion, but it really paid off. All these guys added it to their playlists."

*You're Only Lonely* and the title track as the lead single hit stores in September 1979. On the first of the month, *Billboard* praised the LP as a "predominantly mellow, atmospheric collection of tunes . . . Souther's guitar playing takes a backseat to his writing, with many of the tunes here among his best." *Record World* wrote of the single on the same date, "Souther's expertise as a songwriter is well-documented by the many covers from Ronstadt, Raitt, and others. Here he continues as a multi-talented singer-songwriter-producer-guitarist on this long-awaited first release from the LP."

"You're Only Lonely" debuted on the *Billboard* Adult Contemporary chart on September 29, 1979 and climbed to # 1 where it resided for a five-week stay. It entered the Hot 100 on October 20, reaching a peak of # 7. It also gained tremendous popularity in Japan. "It was a monster hit there," JD recalls, "and Sony was moving into their merger with Columbia. They were using 'You're Only Lonely' to sell a stereo system in a new car. Every fifteen minutes on television there, a pretty girl would

open the door to the car and 'You're Only Lonely' would come blasting out! It was everywhere in Japan. We went there to do four or five shows and ended up doing nine. We added matinees and sold them all out."

Concurrently with the chart ascent of "You're Only Lonely," Eagles' "Heartache Tonight," from their album *The Long Run*, was on its own path to # 1 on the Hot 100. The band's final chart-topper, it was co-written by JD, Glenn, Don, and Bob Seger. (JD co-wrote three of Eagles' five # 1s, also including "Best Of My Love" and "New Kid In Town.") "It was quite a good Christmas," JD laughs. "'You're Only Lonely' and 'Heartache Tonight' were both in the top ten the same week. It was pretty amazing."

"Then there was some talk of 'If You Don't Want My Love' being a single," he recalls, "but it was real long and they couldn't decide how to cut it up. So what we ended up with for the second single was 'White Rhythm And Blues,' which was way too long and just a little bit elusive for radio." It was warmly greeted, though. *Cash Box* called it a "an appropriate successor to his last Top 10 single . . . a sad and pretty ballad," while *Record World* opined, "This follow-up is another touching ballad that's sure to score heavily with AC/Pop listeners." Ultimately, "If You Don't Want My Love" became the third and final single in June 1980. "Souther lets his Tex-Mex roots show throughout the pretty pop gloss on this cool side . . . Jai Winding's organ emphasizes the border feeling," wrote *Record World*.

In 1980, JD's duet with Linda Ronstadt on his "Hearts Against The Wind" appeared on the massively successful *Urban Cowboy* soundtrack; the same year, "You're Only Lonely" was culled for the soundtrack of the comedy *Coast To Coast*. Naturally, Columbia was looking for a follow-up album, but Souther's relationship with the label soured when an executive demanded to hear something finished when, in fact, he was still knee-deep in the recording process. "That's just not the way I work," he recounts. "I told him, 'You can come down if you want, but I'm not auditioning for anything. When the painting's finished, we'll take the canvas off and you can see it.' But I really didn't like the way it was going much, either. I called Irving and said, 'Listen, these guys are driving me crazy to hear something . . . We don't have anything that sounds finished to play them. Can you just get me off this damn label?' They were great to me with *You're Only Lonely* but were giving me a hard time about spending money in the studio. Irving, with that magic he has, just said, 'Okay.' Two weeks later, Joe Smith had signed me to Warner Bros. for a fresh start." JD had already given Columbia a parting gift with 1981's "Her Town Too," an affecting duet with labelmate James Taylor which James, JD, and Waddy co-wrote. It peaked at # 5 AC and # 11 Pop.

Two bonus tracks premiere on this expanded edition of *You're Only Lonely*. "I wanted to put 'Ever Faithful Woman' on the

album, but back in the days of vinyl, the sound quality really suffered with the more minutes you crammed onto the side," JD reveals. "I think it has one of Kootch's best solos on it. That was one take! We all thought, 'God, we have to make this fit,' but we just couldn't find a place for it that didn't scrunch up the bottom-end sound at the end of the side." That bluesy cut is joined by "Bad News Travels Fast," which JD would subsequently re-record for his 1984 Warner Bros. album *Home by Dawn*. "'Bad News Travels Fast' was probably my favorite thing on that album," he reminisces. "But this version was just when I had written it. There may even be a couple of different lyrics. The band had never heard it, and David Sanborn just started playing on it. This is a one-take, one-time-through thing, and it didn't feel finished. I thought, 'We'll come back to that.' I'm fascinated with the way we all tentatively crawled into the beginning of that song because nobody knew it. I barely knew it! Now, I thought, 'Well, it's not perfect, but it's a nice peek into the process.'"

JD showed another side of his talent with roles on television (*Thirtysomething*, *Nashville*) and film (*Postcards From The Edge*, *My Girl 2*). He co-wrote a number of tracks on Don Henley's 1989 album *The End Of The Innocence* including the hit single "The Heart Of The Matter" and reunited with Eagles when they recorded "How Long," from 1972's *John David Souther*, as the lead single off their 2007 studio album *Long Road Out Of Eden*; it was a hit on both the Country and AC charts. He also co-authored that LP's "Last Good Time In Town" with Joe Walsh. 24 years after *Home By Dawn*, JD returned to albums with the acclaimed, jazz-infused *If The World Was You* in 2008. Two more studio releases have followed (2011's intimate songbook retrospective *Natural History* and 2015's elegant, orchestral *Tenderness*). In 2013, he was inducted into The Songwriters' Hall of Fame. In a full-circle moment, he joined Eagles onstage in January 2024 at L.A.'s Kia Forum to help his friends celebrate their Long Goodbye tour. Henley told the sold-out crowd that JD was the guy he and Glenn Frey would call on "when we would get stuck on a song or we'd try to start some new material."

JD continues to write, record, and perform live. With each album, he has added further luster to the New Great American Songbook. He shares his philosophy, one he shares with Glenn, Don, Jackson, and their circle of friends: "We always said our motto was 'we're building to last.' We really spent a lot of time on the songs. The other motto was, 'no filler.' You don't make a single and then put a bunch of filler on an album. You make an album and hope you have a single." *You're Only Lonely* epitomizes that ethos. It's *built to last*.

—Joe Marchese  
*TheSecondDisc.com*  
April, 2024



## THE BAND

WADDY WACHTEL-GUITAR  
 JD SOUTHER-GUITAR  
 DON GROLNICK-PIANO  
 KENNY EDWARDS-BASS  
 RICK MAROTTA-DRUMS

## WITH

DANNY KORTCHMAR-GUITAR  
 DAVID SANBORN-ALTO SAX  
 DAN DUGMORE-GUITAR,  
 STEEL GUITAR

## HARMONY SINGERS:

JD, WADDY, JORGE CALDERÓN,  
 AND PHIL EVERLY ON  
 "WHITE RHYTHM AND BLUES"

## WITH

KENNY EDWARDS, PETER ASHER, HAYDEN GREGG,  
 GLENN FREY, DON HENLEY, AND JACKSON BROWNE

## CAMEOS

JAI WINDING-ORGAN ON  
 "IF YOU DON'T WANT MY LOVE"  
 MIKE BOTTS-DRUMS ON  
 "IF YOU DON'T WANT MY LOVE"  
 DON FELDER-RHYTHM GUITAR ON  
 "IF YOU DON'T WANT MY LOVE"  
 FRED TACKETT-ACOUSTIC GUITAR ON  
 "SONGS OF LOVE"  
 JOHN SEBASTIAN-HARP ON  
 "WHITE RHYTHM AND BLUES"  
 TOM SCOTT-TENOR SAX ON  
 "TROUBLE IN PARADISE"

SPECIAL THANKS TO GUEST PRODUCERS: WADDY WACHTEL,  
 DON HENLEY, GLENN FREY, AND JACKSON BROWNE





All songs written by JD Souther  
except: "The Last In Love" and "Til The Bars Burn  
Down" by Glenn Frey/JD Souther; and "Fifteen Bucks"  
by JD Souther/Waddy Wachtel/Rick Marotta/Danny  
Kortchmar/Don Grolnick/Kenny Edwards

Recorded at Warner Bros. Recording  
Studio, North Hollywood

Additional Engineering: Loyd Clift  
Studio Assistance: Andrea Farber and Jon Chesler

Produced by JD Souther  
Recorded by Lee Herschberg

Art Direction: Jimmy Wachtel  
Photography: Jim Shea  
Booklet Back Cover Photography:  
Laurie Bird and Gayle Simon

Management: Irving Azoff, Susan Markheim, and Nicole  
Mollenhauer for Full Stop Management

Reissue Produced for Release  
by JD Souther and Cheryl Pawelski

Restoration and Mastering: Michael Graves  
at Osiris Studio, Los Angeles

Business Affairs: Glenn Schwartz

Reissue Art Direction/Design: Greg Allen  
Liner Notes: Joe Marchese

Project Assistance: Audrey Bilger, Dutch  
Cramblitt, Lee Lodyga, Jordan McLeod,  
and Brad Rosenberger

Special Thanks: Susan Markheim,  
Nicole Mollenhauer

Tracks 1-9 Originally Issued as  
*You're Only Lonely*, Columbia JC 36093 (1979)

Tracks 10-11 Previously Unissued





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