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Interview with George Harper 5 Part Series

PART III

No Smokin' in Here ***

Th: That's one of my favorite songs on that CD, also the title track is a very beautiful song, No Smoking in Here. Is there some sort of personal story behind that? Is that...

George Harper: Well, yeah, and the title, Nathan, just to correct you it's No Smokin'...

Th: Without the 'g'.

GH: Without the 'g'.

Th: No smokin'.

GH: No Smokin' in Here and it's really a song about growing up in my mother's house and there was no smokin' allowed, there was no drinkin' allowed. We were not allowed to cuss. We went to church, but we loved the Beatles and we loved to smoke and we loved to drink. And so we had to go out... outside on the porch to do that kind of thing and although she didn't really agree with it as long as we weren't inside the house, we weren't invading her space.

Th: Right.

GH: And believe me, inside the house was her space. And so when... my mother's very old; she's 89, she'll soon be 90. And my brother, he's 58 years old and he lives with her. And he grew up in the 60s. He wanted to be... he wanted to grow his hair long like the kids did back then. She didn't want him to and they fought and they fought. And now he's 58 and she's 89 and sometimes they still have the same kind of confrontation. And one particular morning I went down... I go down to see her everyday and he's... he might be there, he might be at work, but she was... she had obviously been in argument with him, neither one of them were speakin' and he told me he didn't want me to feel like I wasn't welcome because nobody was speakin' to me, but it was just that nobody was speakin'. And he didn't want me to feel unspoken to so all he could really conjure up to say was, "The mosquitoes are swarmin' this mornin'." that's all he said and five minutes later No Smokin' in Here was a song.

Th: OK.

George Harper: Because the more things... I realized the more things change, the more things stay the same. And nothing's really changed. And also, Nathan, I've recently been able... had the opportunity over the past six years to go to Ireland several times for the Johnny Keenan Banjo Festival in Longford. And this record... my first record, I'll Be Back, first introduced me because they really liked it and they wanted me to come play it. And so when I went to Ireland, of course, the first thing you notice as a smoker is that you're not allowed to smoke in any building. And the Irish don't like that, especially if they're a smoker and they like goin' to pubs. Y'know, you'll see them outside smoking their cigarettes. And, so, when I finished the song it's really written in such an Irish vein that I just really wanted to get this record done so I could get it there for this festival this year. And the chorus is written in such a fashion that "no smokin' in here"... you might not listen to the rest of the story, but everybody knows that there's no smokin' in here, you know?

Th: Great.

www.GeorgeHarper.com

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Nashville Tennessee George Harper Band

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