A COLLECTOR'S MONOGRAPH

The Band

The Band

CAPITOL · STAO-132 · STEREO
UNITED STATES · EARLY LOS ANGELES STATE

PLACE IN THE LINEAGE

The original US album, in the Los Angeles branch of the two-sided Ludwig cut. [R1 H3]



01 / Blair's front sleeve. Existing copy evidence; rectangular crop. [P1]

WHAT WE THINK THIS IS

Early US Capitol. D1 / RL · Los Angeles.

Member-credit green targets and textured gatefold; faint SS probably omitted from the first reading. [P1 R1]

DATABASE RELATIONSHIP

Probable exact match.

Discogs #3769972
Confidence: **medium-high**

ORIGINAL RELEASE CONTEXT

1969 [H1]

THIS DISC PRESSED

Factory date unrecorded

Why it matters: a common album contains a sought-after original cut. The distinctive LA package and reported D1/RL pattern converge. [R1 S1]

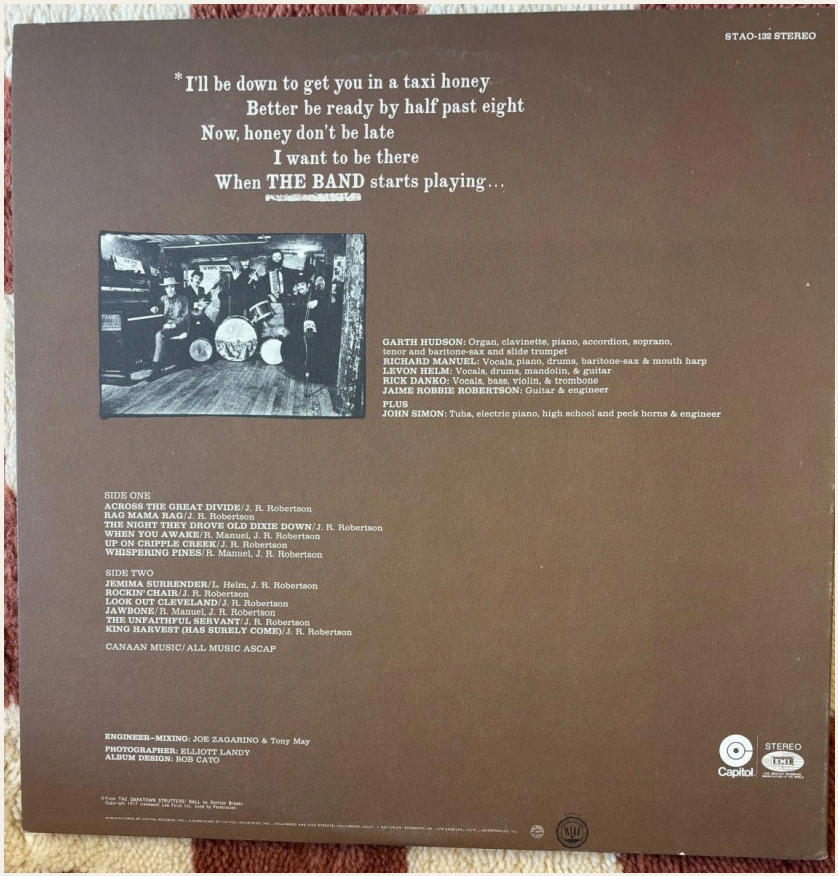
CONDITIONAL COLLECTOR GUIDE

USD $80–$125

Clean VG+ complete copy, with the D1 / star / RL family physically confirmed. Guide retained from 22 September 2026; market access checked 6 October. Exact minor variant unpriced. Blair's copy is not independently graded or play-tested. [M1]

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE / THE WHOLE SLEEVE

The brown package is part of the answer.



02 / Whole rear sleeve. Catalogue and credits remain in context. PI

WHAT IS VISIBLE

STAO-132 · stereo.

The brown sleeve retains the twelve-track program, personnel, mixing credits, Capitol identity and US presentation. PI

WHAT IT SUPPORTS

The early package.

Together with the target labels, the supplied textured gatefold family agrees with the candidate's original Los Angeles presentation. PI RI

WHAT IT CANNOT PROVE

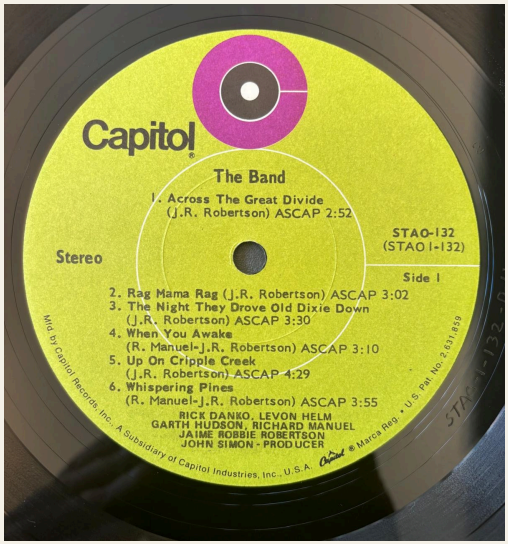
A particular stamper.

A sleeve is not a lacquer or pressing-plant signature. It supplies neither the full SS reading nor an exact manufacture day. PI RI

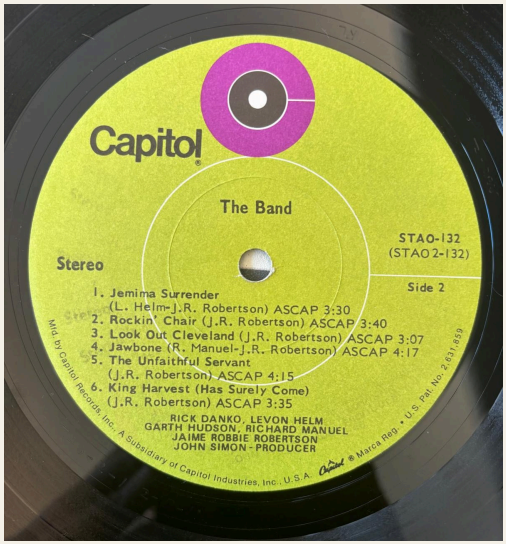
Texture and gatefold construction belong to the package argument. Condition remains unassessed: these photographs do not establish the assumed VG+ grade or quiet playback behind the collector guide. PI MI

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE / BOTH SIDES

The small names distinguish the state.



03 / Side 1 · STAO-132 · member credits visible.[PI]



04 / Side 2 · matching target/member-credit state.[PI]

WHAT IS VISIBLE	WHAT IT SUPPORTS	WHAT IT CANNOT PROVE
Green target / purple C The Capitol label design.	The early US label family.	A unique year, plant or cut by colour alone.
Member names at the foot Both labels retain the credits.	The candidate's first LA label state.	A character-perfect runout match.
US manufacture / STAO-132 Catalogue and stereo identity.	A coherent US album package.	Factory date, stampers or groove condition.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE / OWNER VERSUS CANDIDATE

Keep the reported reading intact.

WHAT BLAIR REPORTED · SIDE 1

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STAO – 1–132 – D1* 2 (the 2 is on its side) + (a small star symbol) Side 1-  RL
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WHAT BLAIR REPORTED · SIDE 2

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STAO – 2–132 – D –1* 3 + (a small star symbol) Side-2. RL
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Verbatim owner strings, including the sideways-2 description and separate star wording. No SS has been inserted.[PI]

WHAT THE CANDIDATE DOCUMENTS · illustrative variant 1, not a claimed minor-numeral match

```
STAO-1-132-D-1 ✲ side 1 RL SS
STAO-2-132-D-1 ✲ side 2 RL SS
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The meaningful agreement

D1 on both sides, the reported star, side wording and RL sit within a known Los Angeles pattern. Those owner reports agree with the visible member-credit labels and package.[PI RI]

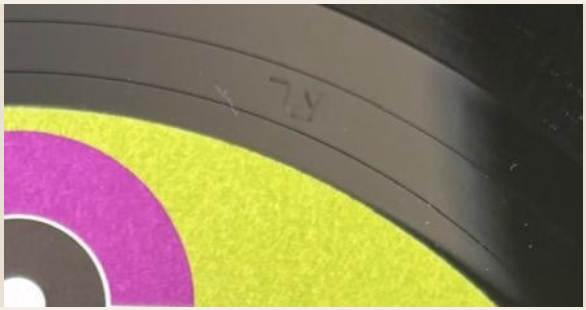
The precision still missing

The exact pair of small numerals is unconfirmed. The live page contains D1 and D2 variants, including some entries without written SS; it is not one immutable transcription.[BI]

Highlighted SS is candidate evidence only. The mature interpretation is a probable omitted inscription, not a newly observed mark or a unique match to variant 1.[RI]

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE / THE RECONCILIATION

A difficult reading has a bounded explanation.



05 / Side 2 dead-wax region from the supplied label photograph. Full SS is not independently readable. [P1]

WHERE TO CHECK

RL SS?

Editorial location guide only: the candidate places a short suffix immediately after the reported RL. No letters are drawn onto the photograph. [R1]

Why an omission is plausible

Blair later said the etching was exceptionally difficult and he probably missed faint SS. The candidate expects a short auxiliary mark in a coherent position. Unreported is not confidently blank. [R1]

What makes it more than a guess

Catalogue, stereo, member-credit labels, textured gatefold and side-specific runout components converge. The later reconciliation accepted the bounded omission explanation without a material contradiction, while retaining the literal note. [R1]

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

No defensible match.

No specific page selected. The later clarification was unavailable. [P2]

22 SEP · LATER CLARIFICATION

Probable omitted SS.

High confidence in the omission explanation; no physical confirmation added. [R1]

CURRENT REPORT

Probable exact.

#3769972; medium-high page confidence. The initial finding is preserved. [R1]

ONE USEFUL PHYSICAL CONFIRMATION

Inspect after **each RL** under raking light; photograph faint **SS** and every minor numeral. Visible SS raises confidence; a clearly blank position reopens the relationship. This optional check does not block the current probable-exact judgment. [R1]

PROVENANCE & LINEAGE

Origins, cuts and this copy.

Recording and edition origins, and this copy's place in the album's release history.

■ DOCUMENTED ☐ ATTRIBUTED ◇ PROBABLE ? UNRESOLVED

1 / RECORDING / PROGRAM ORIGIN

1969 sessions

☐ ATTRIBUTED

Hollywood pool-house recording; New York completion. Participant accounts support the setting; the daily schedule is unresolved. H1 H2

2 / RELEASE LINEAGE

22 Sep 1969

☐ ATTRIBUTED

US Capitol STAO-132, dated by retrospectives. Contemporary October documentation anchors circulation. H1 H5 H6

3 / MASTERING / CUT / METALWORK

Ludwig · Sterling

☐ ATTRIBUTED

Ludwig recalls the original Sterling cut. D1/star/RL supports LA; metalwork transfer and stamper sequence remain unresolved. H3 R1

4 / THIS PHYSICAL COPY

Visible early package

■ DOCUMENTED

Member-credit targets and gatefold are visible. D1/RL are reported; SS is a probable omission. P1 R1

WHERE BLAIR'S COPY SITS

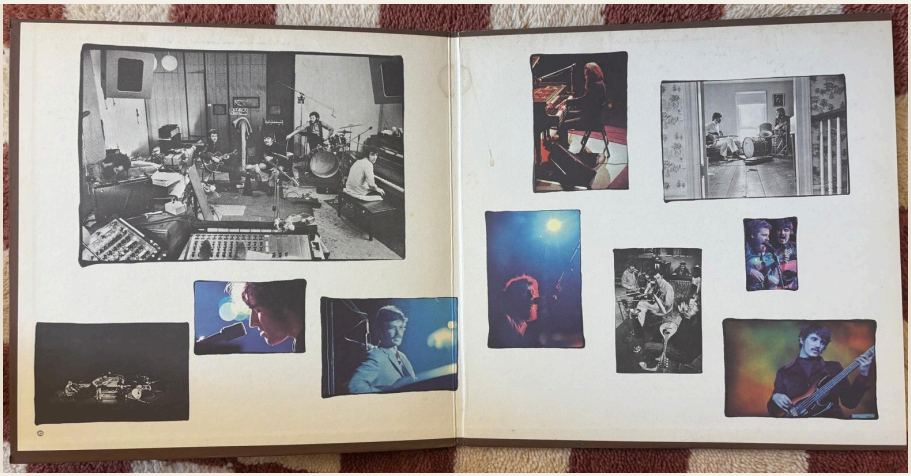
The original Ludwig-cut LA branch.

Probable first LA state, #3769972; medium-high confidence. 1969 context; factory date and minor-number pair unconfirmed. R1

Ownership/custody is unestablished. No tape/metalwork chain is proved. Later comparisons: page 12.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT / THE RECORDING

A room made for playing together.



06 / Blair's open gatefold, using the preserved upright display orientation. The participant accounts establish the recording setting; this printed montage is package evidence. [P1]

Robertson and Simon's participant accounts describe turning a Hollywood pool house into a studio: a familiar room where the musicians could work together, using their equipment and taking time to arrange the songs. The choice explains the album's production setting rather than this disc's manufacture. [H1] [H2]

The institutional essay places Hollywood sessions in spring 1969 and names New York completion at the Hit Factory. A complete session-day log remains unestablished. [H1]

Blair's twelve-selection program belongs to that original album. Yet Hollywood recording does not identify a Los Angeles pressing factory; studio history and the reported plant symbol answer different questions. [P1] [R1]

The labels name John Simon as producer; the rear names mixing engineers Joe Zagarino and Tony May. These roles support the presentation, but do not date the vinyl or identify its cutter or metal parts. [P1]

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT / RELEASE AND LABELS

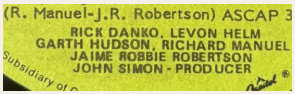
An early state inside a familiar title.

The original US album appeared as Capitol STAO-132 in September 1969. The institutional essay and the label's later anniversary material give 22 September; the earlier investigation also retains a contemporary Billboard review from 11 October. That separates the album's release context from the unrecorded factory date of Blair's particular disc. [H1] [H5] [H6]

The green target was a new Capitol design in 1969. Specialist label chronology places its introduction in July and notes that Los Angeles continued using green labels into later label periods. Colour therefore supports a family, not a strict last pressing year. The actual configuration matters more than the colour alone. [H4]

On Blair's two labels, the member names remain at the foot. The target page uses those credits to distinguish its first Los Angeles state from the no-member-credit comparison #21452119. The current database entry confirms that the latter still contains D1/RL runout entries. A famous cut and an early label colour can recur across distinct label states. [P1] [B1] [B2]

This is why the complete package is retained in the argument. Member-credit labels, textured gatefold, catalogue, program and reported dead wax converge on the earlier LA state. The claim is a probable specific relationship, not a statement that every green-label Band LP is the same original pressing. [R1]



07 / Small credits, useful discrimination. [P1]

1969

Original release context.
Not an encoded factory date.

Member credits removed

#21452119 retains D1/RL entries. Relative repress placement is database attribution; separate manufacture date unknown. [B2]

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT / MASTERING

The signature belongs to a cutting history.

RL is meaningful here because the album, period and inscription pattern agree with a specific mastering history. In a 2023 first-person interview, Bob Ludwig recalls cutting the self-titled Band album at Sterling in 1969 soon after he joined the studio, with Robertson participating. This is stronger context than identifying initials from an unrelated record. [H3]

The target release and independent physical-example descriptions document RL SS alongside the D1 and Los Angeles-star pattern. Together with Blair's reported RL on both sides, the evidence supports the original Ludwig/Sterling-cut family. The faint SS remains a proposed omitted observation on this copy; it is never silently inserted into his note. [B1] [M3] [R1]

D1 on both sides is a useful identifier in that family. It is not, by itself, proof of the very first lacquer made worldwide or the first stamper fitted at the plant. The target page includes D1/D2 combinations, and the small numerals are not independently confirmed on Blair's disc. No complete cutting ledger or electroplating record has been recovered here. [B1] [R1]

The collector attraction therefore has a defensible scale: this copy most plausibly represents the original two-sided Ludwig cut in the early LA package. Its appeal does not require an invented stamper hierarchy, nor does the signature certify the present grooves' condition. The reputation evidence is assessed separately. [R1] [S1]

SUPPORTED INTERPRETATION

RL / Sterling / original album.

A coherent album-specific cutting context, supported by participant testimony and comparison inscriptions. [H3] [B1]

UNRESOLVED GENEALOGY

Lacquer to metal to stamper.

Exact parts, transfer route and sequence are unestablished. Small numerals are not assigned a ranking.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT / MANUFACTURE

Four jobs, four kinds of evidence.

Recording, cutting, pressing and packaging can share a history without becoming interchangeable facts.

LAYER	EVIDENCE IN THIS CASE	LIMIT
Recording	Hollywood pool-house accounts; New York completion.	Does not identify the factory that made this disc.
Cutting	Ludwig's Sterling recollection; reported RL and compared RL SS.	Does not establish a unique lacquer or stamper sequence.
Pressing	Reported star and D1/Side/RL pattern; LA physical examples.	Plant attribution is convergent; full photographed marks remain incomplete.
Package	Member-credit targets and textured brown gatefold.	Labels/sleeve do not independently date every piece of vinyl.

The reported star supplies the regional clue, supported by LA physical examples. Other plants could make the same album; Ludwig mastering was not exclusive to one factory. The combined pattern supports LA.[R1 M3]

No metalwork shipment, mother or stamper trail has been established. A later label may share an entered D1/RL pattern, while the no-RL/SS comparison carries F2/F3 entries. These distinct observations justify comparisons, but not a complete industrial family tree.[B2 B3]

The original cut, first LA label state and individual manufacturing event remain separate. "Probable exact" is the current relationship to the documented release page, not laboratory authentication or a character-perfect stamper claim.[R1]

THE COLLECTOR'S POSITION / SOUND

A celebrated cut, with the right limits.

Strong audiophile reputation.

BROAD_CONSENSUS
Retained 22 September sample: six favourable exact-page reports. Professional comparison re-read 6 October. [S1] [S2]

OWNERS REPEATEDLY PRAISE

Bass and drums.

Deep bass, forceful percussion and an alive presentation at volume. [S1]

OWNERS REPEATEDLY PRAISE

Clarity and scale.

Separation, detail and a large image. These are listening impressions, not measurements. [S1]

A PROFESSIONAL COMPARISON

Impact versus balance.

The two-sided RL original has sweep and immediacy; MFSL 1-419 offers more space and detail. [S2]

Joseph Taylor compares a two-sided RL original with MFSL 1-419, without identifying its LA minor variant. He values original impact and MoFi balance/detail. His quiet-background praise concerns the MoFi/RTI copies heard; it does not prove a generally noisy original or a superior Capitol plant. [S2]

The six-report pattern is retained from the 22 September audit. The 174 ratings (4.51/5) are not testimony. Review text was blocked; no fresh recount is claimed. [S1] [B1]

MANUFACTURING QUALITY

Insufficient exact-LA evidence.

No independently counted recurring defect pattern or controlled plant comparison supports a general LA-quality verdict.

BLAIR'S INDIVIDUAL COPY

Playback remains unassessed.

Wear, noise, tracking and dynamics have not been tested. A desirable mastering signature cannot promise a quiet VG+ disc.

PROVENANCE & LINEAGE / LATER COMPARISONS

The album continues; the cut can change.

By 2014

MFSL 1-419 · a separate remaster

The January 2014 professional comparison documents Krieg Wunderlich's MoFi remaster alongside the two-sided RL original. It supplies a later listening reference, not proof of inherited original lacquers or metal parts. [S2]

2019

A new mix and new vinyl cutting

The anniversary edition uses Bob Clearmountain's new stereo mix, with Chris Bellman cutting the 45rpm two-LP edition at Bernie Grundman Mastering. The album title and original twelve-song core endure, while mix, side layout and cutting are different. [H5]

These editions explain why album-level enthusiasm cannot be transferred automatically to Blair's disc. A new stereo mix changes the material being cut; a separate remaster can present the original recording differently. A familiar name in modern credits does not identify the old lacquer in his dead wax. [H5 S2]

The relevant endpoint remains the early US LA branch. The no-member-credit and no-RL/SS database states illustrate narrower original-era differences; the MoFi and 2019 editions illustrate later alternatives. Their dates and technical changes are not ancestors of this 1969-context copy. [R1 B2 B3]

The research is bounded to the states that explain this copy and meaningful listening comparisons. No exhaustive worldwide discography, universal best-pressing ranking or unproved tape/metalwork connection is implied.

THE COLLECTOR'S POSITION / VALUE

A specialist combination in a common album.

CONDITIONAL COLLECTOR GUIDE

USD $80–$125

Clean VG+ complete copy, with the D1 / star / RL family physically confirmed. Guide retained from 22 September 2026; market access checked 6 October. Exact minor variant unpriced. Blair's copy is not independently graded or play-tested. The range values the early LA D1/RL family; probable exactness creates no new premium. M1

EVIDENCE AND SCOPE	PRICE / STATUS
Retained target-page sold summary 22 Sep 2026 · retained mixed-condition summary; no fresh median	$5 / $19.99 / $97.70 low / median / high
Near D1/D1 LA, two-sided-RL sold example 11 Sep 2026 · retained attribution; reopening failed	¥13,850 about $88 at captured rate
Fresh target-page offers 6 Oct 2026 · 28 offered; grades not normalized	from USD $10 asking, not sold
Fresh specialist comparison asks 6 Oct 2026 · near family; dealer field inconsistencies	¥30,800 / ¥35,200 asking, no FX conversion

The mixed-condition median does not price a clean, complete collector copy. The near-family evidence supports the retained guide's scope, not a precise value for Blair's minor variant. M1 M3 M4

The premium attaches to the early package and sought-after cut, with clean surfaces and a sound gatefold. The album itself is plentiful. Difficulty identifying an exact submission is not evidence of rarity, and sonic praise is not a valuation formula. M1 S1

THE CURRENT JUDGMENT

Keep the inference beside the evidence.

CATALOGUE-READY DESCRIPTION

The Band, *The Band*. US Capitol STAO-132 stereo, probable first Los Angeles member-credit green-target state, textured gatefold, reported D1 cuts and RL on both sides with star/side wording. Faint SS probably omitted from the original reading. Discogs #3769972: **probable exact match, medium-high confidence**. 1969 release context; individual factory date and exact minor-numeral pair unconfirmed. P1 R1

THIS PHYSICAL COPY

The short suffix and numerals.

SS and the complete minor-number positions are not independently confirmed. The optional raking-light check is on page 5; a confidently blank position would reopen the relationship. R1

MASTERING AND MANUFACTURE

Parts history remains open.

No exact lacquer/stamper genealogy, metalwork transfer or manufacturing day is established. The reported pattern supports a branch, not a complete factory record.

RECORDING AND RELEASE

Origins are better scoped.

Participant accounts support the 1969 Hollywood/New York setting; a complete session-day schedule remains unresolved. The original release date is distinct from this copy's pressing. H1 H2

VALUE AND SOUND

Condition still governs.

The $80–$125 guide assumes clean VG+ completeness and confirmed family marks. Mastering reputation is strong; Blair's playback and grade remain unassessed. M1 S1

Evidence history: the initial assessment found no defensible match, with no release selected. The 22 September clarification and reconciliation support the current probable-exact conclusion; no original observation or earlier finding was rewritten. P2 R1

SOURCES / 1 OF 3

Evidence with its proper scope.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE / RECONCILIATION

P1 Blair's copy and literal notes

Five supplied photographs and the original runout note. Member-credit labels and package are visible; D1, stars and side/RL strings are owner reports. Full SS and minor numerals are not independently resolved in these images.

P2 The initial assessment

The initial investigation found no defensible match; no release was selected. Preserved as an earlier finding. The later owner clarification was not available to that assessment.

R1 Omitted-inscription reconciliation

22 September 2026: new owner clarification, converging package/cut/plant clues, no material contradiction, probable omitted SS. PROBABLE EXACT MATCH #3769972; medium-high page confidence, high omission confidence. No later physical confirmation recorded.

DATABASE COMPARISON

B1 Discogs #3769972

Fresh API capture, 6 October 2026: US 1969 Los Angeles page, member-credit label note and D1/D2 variants. The page documents RL SS; some submitted variants omit written SS. Data quality Needs Vote. Comparison metadata, not a photographed suffix on Blair's disc.

B2 Member credits removed · #21452119

Fresh API: similar LA edition with no band-member credits at label bottom; D1/RL entries remain. Relative repress relationship is database attribution; no separate factory date established here.

B3 Different cuts · #29814175

Fresh API: similar no-member-credit edition without RL/SS in entered runouts; F2/F3 variants. A comparison state, not proof that all later copies lack original metal. Its 1969 field is not a precise cut date.

The photographs and literal notes remain primary. The later reconciliation records a separately inferred omitted inscription; it does not rewrite the initial finding. Current release metadata is comparison evidence, not a new physical observation.

SOURCES / 2 OF 3

Origins, labels and cutting history.

PROVENANCE & LINEAGE

H1 Library of Congress · album essay

Harvey Kubernik, 2019 essay, pp.1,3-4. Retrospective 22 September 1969 release date; Hollywood pool-house accounts and spring-1969 session recollection. Names three New York Hit Factory tracks. Complete session-day schedule remains unknown.

H2 Mix · participant production accounts

Blair Jackson, Classic Tracks, current web republication dated 2026; earlier article origin retained in the archive. Robertson/Simon describe the pool-house setup and New York completion at Hit Factory. Recollections are attributed; no daily session log recovered.

H3 Ludwig on the original cut

Tom Fine interview, 22 August 2023. Ludwig recalls cutting The Band at Sterling in 1969, soon after joining; Robertson participated. Primary participant testimony supports original-cut context, not this stamper's genealogy.

H4 US Capitol label chronology

Capitol Labels specialist chronology, PDF p.4. Specialist chronology assigns green target introduction to July 1969 and notes continued LA green-label use into later label periods. ATTRIBUTED general chronology; colour is not a personal pressing deadline.

H5 Original date and a new 2019 mix

Capitol/UMe-associated announcement, 15 November 2019, and official 2LP description: original 22 September 1969 context; new Clearmountain stereo mix and Bellman-cut 45rpm two-LP edition. A later comparison, not ancestor of Blair's original cut. Original date also appears in the official 2LP description.

H6 Contemporary 1969 documentation

Billboard, 11 October 1969, album review, retained in the original research. Anchors US commercial circulation by October. This pass's download was blocked; no new scan inspection or tighter copy date claimed.

Fresh supplemental history access: 6 October 2026. Retrospective release dates, participant recollections and specialist label chronology are attributed within their scope. Session particulars, cut sequence and factory chronology remain distinct; no ownership or custody chain is established.

SOURCES / 3 OF 3

Dates, value and listening testimony.

MARKET

M1 The mature guide and sold summary

Retained market audit, 22 September 2026: $80-$125 for clean VG+ complete probable LA D1/RL family. Retained Discogs last-30 summary $5 / $19.99 / $97.70 spans condition; no current median accessible. Guide retained, not raised for stronger identification.

M2 Current offers · explicit USD

6 October 2026 API: 28 offered, lowest ask USD $10. Release API: 1,623 have / 672 want. Asking and collection indicators, not a sale or clean-copy median; no shipping or grade normalization.

M3 Paradise Records · comparison asks

6 October: #30157 asks ¥30,800; #30159 asks ¥35,200 for described D1/star/RL SS member-credit examples. Some grade fields conflict and a body TITLE field says Stage Fright. Headline/catalogue/runouts identify The Band. Qualified near comparisons; no reproduced images.

M4 Retained near-variant sale

The retained market record documents a D1/D1 LA two-sided-RL example sold 11 September 2026 at ¥13,850, about $88 at the captured rate. Live reopening failed. Retained sale attribution; exact minor variant and current FX not independently reverified.

SONIC REPUTATION

S1 Six retained exact-page reports

Retained sonic audit, 22 September 2026: six independent favourable #3769972 reports, BROAD_CONSENSUS. This pass retains that audited sample; no fresh review-text recount was possible. Ratings are excluded from testimony counts.

S2 SoundStage! · original versus MoFi

Joseph Taylor, 1 January 2014, re-read 6 October 2026. Two-sided RL original versus MFSL 1-419: original impact/sweep, MoFi balance/detail and quiet RTI backgrounds. Plant/minor matrices unspecified. Recycled-vinyl passage concerns Rock of Ages, not proof about 1969 LA manufacture.

S3 A scoped owner comparison

Owner describes a 1969 green-label two-sided RL copy as rich and warm. Plant and D1 numeral pair unspecified: family-level ISOLATED_ANECDOTE, outside the retained exact-page count. No general forum preference establishes chronology.

Fresh access: 6 October 2026. Valuation and the six-report sonic sample retain their 22 September evidence dates. Scores, offers and engineer testimony serve different purposes. No new playback, individual grading or authentication history is established.