

Chapter One

‘Hello/Goodbye’

The Golden Bear, Huntington Beach, California,
March 1975

Even in this room, surrounded by ageing beatniks and finger-popping fusion nuts, the kid still looked way out of place. For one thing, he was the only eight year old in a house full of adults, many of them pleasantly stoned out of their gourds. Those who weren't were wondering to themselves, how did the kid get in here? And was this music really suitable for such an innocent-looking youngster, with his trusting face and wide-open eyes? The intense guy on stage, who wasn't so much singing as channelling some kind of crazy spirit, part cosmic folkie, part jazz-rock adventurer, was surrounded by diligent, furrowed-brow muso types, deeply immersed in their playing. And the music itself – a very strange, slightly over-heated brew of rock, soul, psychedelia and sex – was as far out there as the guy singing. And yet the kid, perched in the front row, was bouncing wildly in his chair, finding it impossible to keep still. His face was lit up like a Christmas tree, absolutely beaming with joy. He seemed to be truly digging the freeform, avant-garde sounds emerging from the serious things on stage, which was very odd, considering that most children his age were mad for more kid-friendly acts like The Muppets and The Flintstones.

The kid looking on with such rapture was Jeffrey Scott Buckley – simply ‘Scotty’ to every one who knew him, or Scotty Moorhead according to the rolls of the many schools he'd attended so far in his short life. The guy on stage was his biological father, Tim Buckley, space-folkie, jazz-rock fusionist,

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one of the rarer musical talents of the Woodstock era, a guy with a voice that could scale the kind of heights usually reserved for opera divas or freaks of nature. He'd just turned 28. But theirs was hardly a typical father-son relationship: since 'Scotty' was born on November 17, 1966 – just two days before positive notices began appearing for his father's self-titled debut long player – they'd spent precious little time together. Buckley had left Jeff's mother, Mary Guibert, well before his child was born, barely a year after they married, and she moved back with her family in California's Orange County, while he continued touring and recording, eventually settling in Malibu with a woman named Jane Goldstein. In the autumn of 1968, mother and son visited Tim in Malibu, yet since then, apart from a monthly alimony cheque for \$80, they had very little to do with each other. There were no Christmas cards, no catch-up calls, no postcards from the road. Nothing.

In 1969, when 'Scotty' was two, Mary had met mechanic Ron Moorhead, who, despite a strong interest in rock music, dwelt in a world entirely different from that of Tim Buckley: he was a solid-state citizen, dependable, hard working, drug free. That might have been the very reason why he and Mary Guibert married in December 1969: Moorhead seemed to offer considerably more stability than Buckley, and the one thing that 'Scotty' needed right now was a solid base, for already he and his mother had fallen into an almost gypsy-like existence, shifting base whenever she sniffed out a new job or had a falling out with her parents, which was often.

By 1975, life for Mary and her son was unstable yet again. Despite having a child, Corey James Moorhead, who was born in March 1972, Guibert and Moorhead had split in 1973. In early 1975, Guibert was flicking through a local newspaper when she noticed that her former husband was playing in Huntington Beach, at The Golden Bear, a legendary venue located at 306 Pacific Coast Highway. The Golden Bear was the type of place where comic Steve Martin could have been spotted opening for the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, or the Ramones would plug in and make eardrums bleed.* Maybe Guibert was even kicking around the idea of a reunion, as unlikely as that seemed. Yet Tim Buckley's life – or at least his career – was at a similar lowpoint to Guibert's. For the first time since 1966's *Tim Buckley* he was sans manager and record label, while *Look At The Fool*, his ninth LP, had been panned by *Rolling Stone* (who had pretty much ignored all his earlier releases), who described its mix of 'hyper-speedy funk and ... octave-spanning howls all but unbearable.' Most other reviews were just as harsh.

* Nowadays The Golden Bear is buried under yet another bland urban redevelopment.

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(Years later, even his son weighed in, questioning whether Buckley was unsure if he was emulating Tom Jones or Al Green, 'and the two mixed together don't really sound that great.')

But his estranged son felt differently on this night in 1975, bouncing wildly in his seat, first to the band and then to his father playing solo, his straggly blond hair falling into his eyes as he lost himself in the music with almost the same intensity as the guy on stage.

When asked about this now legendary meeting between father and son, Guibert swore she witnessed an exchange between the two Buckleys while Tim was playing. '[Tim's] eyes were closed, and he'd open them a little bit to see Scotty in the second row, and Scotty was grooving. I was watching the two of them and I thought, "This is really going to be amazing"'. At the end of the first set Guibert asked her son if he wanted to go and talk with his father. He had agreed even before she'd finished her sentence.

There was the usual crowd of hangers-on and legit visitors backstage, along with such Buckley consorts as guitarist Lee Underwood. Guibert, at first, couldn't spot her former husband; it didn't help that he'd recently cut his typically unruly halo of air. But then she heard a voice call out: 'Jeffrey.' Although no-one called him by this name, he immediately responded to his father's voice, racing across the room and jumping into his arms, as if it was the most natural thing on earth. As Guibert recalled, 'He was sitting on his lap and chattering a mile a minute. He said things like, "My dog's name is King, he's white" and he was telling [Tim] everything he could think about himself to tell his father. The scene was the most heartrending sight I'd seen in my life.' Guibert could see her ex-husband's face from where she was standing, and tears were rolling down his cheeks, clearly a mixture of joy at reuniting with his firstborn, and guilt at having been out of his life for so long. Guibert quietly returned to her seat stage front, leaving them together. She didn't want to spoil the moment. 'I literally watched my son fall in love with his father,' she'd later confess.²

Within minutes, Buckley's wife Judy returned with 'Scotty', who was still charged from his brief meeting – 'sparks were coming out of his eyes,' Guibert recalled.³ Judy took a deep breath and asked Guibert if there was any chance that he could come home with them, just for a few days, sometime soon. Her initial instinct was to say no, but when she saw the look of sheer bliss on her son's face, Guibert knew she didn't have a choice. But within a few months of that reunion, which took place soon after the Huntington Beach gig, his father, her former husband, died from a lethal drug cocktail. Yet that one chance experience at The Golden Bear set the guy who would eventually be known as Jeff Buckley down a similar musical road to this father: both were seekers, sonic explorers, with voices that

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had been touched by a higher force. And they were both destined to fade away far too quickly.

It would be a massive understatement to describe Mary Guibert's heritage as complicated; it's be like saying her son had a reasonable grasp of how to milk every last drop of adulation from his swooning audience, or that Tim didn't rate with the best fathers on the planet. The Guibert bloodline had more tributaries than the Mississippi, while the Buckley family history was equally complex.

'Jeff's cultural background is pretty varied,' she once said on-line. 'My mother is Greek and my father is part French, part Panamanian. Both my parents were born and raised in Panama; I was born there, and we all immigrated [to the USA] when I was three. So there was a very strong Central American family culture.'⁴ Clearly, Jeff Buckley was a man of conflicting parts: he may have been cursed with the Buckley 'unibrow' but he was blessed with a golden voice, while his darkly romantic side could be traced back to his mother's exotic roots. (A fascination with the French side of her family inspired Guibert to study the language, which led to her first close encounter with Tim Buckley. But more on that later.)

Mary's father, George Peter Guibert (pronounced with a hard G, as in *Ghee*-bert), was a little rough around the edges. Born in September 1923, and raised in the western Panamanian city of Boquete, he didn't study beyond the sixth grade, couldn't write or speak English, and despite having a solid job as an aircraft mechanic, had a fondness for pot, not exactly the pastime of choice back then. George Sr, his long-absent father, was an American, living in Pittsburgh, who'd made a habit out of heading south to Panama and having unprotected sex before high-tailing it back to the States (hence his two Panamanian sons). 'My father was the illegitimate son of a French-American merchant marine who abandoned him, his mother and brother,'^{4a} Mary Guibert explained. In 1943, a guilty George Sr returned to Panama and tracked down his two children: he found Mary's father working in what was known as the 'Canal Zone' (*Zona del Canal de Panama*), a 553 square mile territory inside Panama that, at the time, was US-controlled and was used mainly for military purposes. US presidential hopeful John McCain was actually born in the Canal Zone, not long before Guibert started working there.

It was only through this meeting with his father that George Jr learned that he could become an American citizen, which he promptly did. The benefits were immediate: he graduated from a 'silver roll' pay rate (which was strictly for Panamanians working in the Canal Zone) to the 'gold roll',

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which applied only to Americans. It was a sort of unofficial caste system that operated there; being on the 'gold roll' meant that your pay was three times higher than the locals, more than sufficient incentive for George Jr to change his nationality.

George Jr met Anna Smiросes, a beautiful Panamanian woman, at a wedding in 1944. Her grandfather was a Greek named John Payablas, while her father, Costas Smiros, was also of Greek extraction. Anna, one of five Smiros children, was born in February 1924. Costas met an early and grisly demise; while in New York, painting houses as a second job so that he could raise much-needed extra cash, he fell off a ladder. The injury to his leg became gangrenous and he died. Although he had managed to extricate a few of his children from Panama and relocate them to the US, at the time of his death, his wife was still in Panama City, barely getting by, with Anna and two other remaining daughters.

Fluent in English, Anna left school at 15 and scored a job in the Canal Zone. Although pot-smoking George Jr seemed an unlikely partner at first, his upgrade to the 'gold roll' came with a newfound desirability, especially to someone in such dire circumstances as Anna. George Jr was equally smitten with her; he'd sometimes roll up to her bedroom window at night, guitar in hand, and croon Spanish folk songs.* Now a citizen, George had been drafted into the US Army, but received an honorable discharge soon after WWII ended. He and Anna were married in a Catholic ceremony on January 10, 1946. Although a bout of pneumonic fever as a child meant that bearing children could be risky, staunch Catholic Anna put in a prayer to the Virgin Mary and when her daughter was born, she named her Mary Ivette in the virgin's honour.

George Guibert shared two things with Mary's grandfather: he was a hothead, inclined to dishing out rough justice on his kids, and he knew that a move Stateside was the best way to improve their circumstances. By September 1950, when Mary was two-and-a-half, the family relocated to Long Island in New York State, where George scored a job as a sheetmetal worker. Two more children were born: George Peter III, in 1951, and Peggy, in October 1953.† Although the family's financial state was improving –

* Music was very clearly a Buckley/Guibert family tradition. When asked about his Panamanian roots in 1995, and its link to his love of music, Jeff Buckley stated how 'everybody [in the family] sang, everybody had songs all the time – and they loved music.'⁵

† Peggy would become a key person in the life of Jeff Scott Buckley; many feel that she was as much a mother to him as Mary Guibert, maybe even more so.

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they bought their first home in Massapequa, for \$10,000 – the deadly chill of American winters was too much for Mary’s mother, who was used to the temperate climes of Panama, and the family shifted west, to California. They rolled up in the Guibert family Plymouth, in early June 1954, optimistic about their new life on the west coast.

Their optimism was well founded, too: if one part of America typified the country’s newfound, post-war prosperity, it was Orange County, and the Guiberts chose Anaheim as their destination. It wasn’t a part of the world that excited Jeff Buckley very much – when asked about his Orange County youth, he scathingly referred to living life ‘surrounded by the Disneyland Nazi youth of Anaheim, California’⁶ – but there was no question that to his mother’s family, it was truly a ‘Magic Kingdom’.

Anaheim was the 10th largest city in California, but until July 17, 1955, when Disneyland opened its front gates for the first time, remained a relatively sleepy outpost, some 40 miles out of smoggy, seedy Los Angeles. Although the troubled kids from *The OC* might have suggested that this part of California was forever young, cashed-up and prosperous, that wasn’t always the case. Founded in 1847 by German farmers and vintners – its name a mix of ‘Ana’, from the nearby Ana River, and ‘heim’, the German word for home – it was first planned as a wine-growing region, but when that failed it became renowned for its many types of orange.

The city’s population reflected its slow growth: in 1876, when Anaheim was incorporated, only 881 hardy folk dwelled there. The population increased to 5,000 in 1920, and to 14,556 by 1950, just before the Guiberts settled there. But then Anaheim was hit by a one-man cultural explosion detonated by Walter Elias Disney, and the city would be forever changed. Since establishing the Disney Burbank Studio in 1940, after the runaway success of such animated features as *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs*, Disney had been planning a large-scale family theme park, inspired, in part, by the inadequate public facilities he’d encountered when he played in local parks with his daughters. Disney was no fool; he also recognised the money-making potential of this dream theme park.

Disney’s plan typified the conservative, crew-cut, *Leave It To Beaver* mindset that gripped America during the prosperous post-war era: he envisaged a return to simpler times, where families could fish, ride a carousel, relax at a bandstand and stroll up and down Main Street – his own spin on Anaheim’s Center Street – while all the time surrounded by Goofy, Mickey, Minnie and the myriad other characters of Disney’s undeniably fertile, if somewhat naïve, imagination. It also helped Disney’s plans that the recently completed Interstate 5 went right through the heart of Anaheim; no longer

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a backwoods-y, orange-growing distant outpost of LA, Anaheim was now a breezy 45 minute drive from the big smoke. Visitors to the park could hang their hat in the city, check out the Hollywood studios and then drive south for their Disney experience. Every inch the entrepreneur, Disney struck up a deal with TV network ABC, who would hand over \$500,000 and also guaranteed \$4.5 million in construction costs for Disneyland; Disney, in exchange, would produce a weekly, hour-long TV show for the network. All things considered, it was a quantum leap from Disney's original plan of a 10-acre lot backed by a budget of \$10,000.

During the first week of Disneyland business, its visitors included the Guiberts, who had recently settled in Greenacre Avenue on the fringe of the city. Their tract home set them back all of \$11,000. Mary's father George, meanwhile, found work as a foreman, handing out orders to an all-female assembly line at an electronics plant. The mind-and-body-numbing winters of Long Island must have seemed like some weird, distant memory to the family, as they settled into life in balmy California behind the so-called 'Orange Curtain'. By January 1960, the Guiberts' lot in life improved yet again when they shifted to a larger house, in Anaheim's Archer Street. Though hardly palatial, it offered three bedrooms, separate living and dining rooms, a laundry, even a backyard. And it was a steal at just under \$20,000. As Anna Guibert told biographer David Browne, 'We thought we were such hot stuff.'⁷

Life for the Buckley family, however, was not quite as upbeat. Just like the Guiberts, the Buckleys had first settled in New York. But whereas the Guiberts were escaping the limited opportunities of life in the 'Canal Zone', the Buckleys had their own cross to bear: like many of their countrymen they sailed the Atlantic to avoid the Penal Laws, which were introduced in Ireland by the British to discriminate against Protestant non-conformists and Roman Catholics. Under the original Penal Laws, Irish Catholics were denied their rights to vote, own land, practise law, attend school, serve an apprenticeship, possess weapons or practise their religion. No wonder so many of them jumped on the first boat to Ellis Island; this might also explain the moody, melancholic streak that gripped such troubadours as Tim Buckley.

Originally from County Cork, the first America-bound Buckley was Timothy Charles Buckley, who, along with his wife Charlotte, had, by the early 20th century, settled in Amsterdam, a small industrial centre about 20 miles out of Albany, in New York State. Populated mainly by immigrants – Poles, Russians, Germans, Italians and, of course, the Irish – Amsterdam was

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perched on the banks of the Mohawk River. Priding itself on its manufacture of carpets, the population of Amsterdam had swollen to more than 33,000 by 1920. What it didn't pride itself upon was the fact that one of its better-known natives, the congressman Benedict Arnold, had been named after the man who was perhaps America's most notorious traitor. Kirk Douglas – better known to Amsterdammers as one Issur Danielovich – was also born there, in 1916.

The Buckleys were an itinerant clan, moving to different houses within the city pretty much every year. Timothy Charles Buckley Jr, their first child, later known simply as 'Buck', was born in November 1916. By the mid 1930s, Tim Sr was tending bar, and the family was living on the poetically named Mechanic Street (somewhat ironically named, too, given that Buckley had just lost his savings in a failed auto repair enterprise).

Although they never met, Jeff Buckley had a strong impression of his paternal grandfather 'Buck', based on facts he steadily acquired during his own short life. Writing in his journal in August 1995, Buckley commented upon his grandpa's 'beautiful voice... Irish tenor... beautiful.'⁸ But Buckley was also fully aware of his grandfather's emotional coldness, an unfortunate trait that may have even contributed to the dreadfully fractured relationship Jeff had with his own father. Maybe Tim was so shit-scared to find out that he shared Buck's venomous mean streak that he couldn't face being a parent. As Lee Underwood wrote in his Tim Buckley memoir *Blue Melody*, and later confirmed with me, 'Buck was not so much a loving parent as he was a powerful force. Ironically, and in a very different way, Tim passed the father-suffering onto his own son, Jeff. Tim and Jeff both grew up desperately yearning for love and respect and emotional nourishment from fathers who simply were not able to fulfill these primal needs. Deep psychological wounds seemed to pass from one generation to the next.'⁹

Much of Buck's wayward behaviour stemmed from his service in WWII. At the age of 21, in December 1937, he'd enlisted in the National Guard and began active duty in mid-October 1940. In late May 1942 he was drafted and posted to the 101st Airborne, the so-called 'Screaming Eagles', a unit trained principally for air assault operations. When the unit was 'activated' on August 15, 1942, its first commander, Major General William C Lee, announced, in a statement that must have scared the hell out of his new recruits, that the 101st had a 'rendezvous with destiny'. The US military General Order Number Five spelled out the 101st's mission statement just as ominously: 'Due to the nature of our armament, and the tactics in which we shall perfect ourselves, we shall be called upon to carry out operations of far-reaching military importance and we shall habitually go into action

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when the need is immediate and extreme.' It didn't take long for Timothy Buckley to grasp the significance of this; after leaving the US in September 1943, he was involved with campaigns in the Rhineland, Normandy, northern France and elsewhere, during which time up to 25% of his comrades were killed in action. Officially referred to as sergeant, Buckley was responsible for blowing up bridges, buildings, railway lines and other forms of transport and communication.

After more than two years of overseas service, Buckley returned home on Christmas Day 1945, bringing with him a chest-full of medals – a Bronze Star, a Distinguished Unit Badge, even a Purple Heart – and, quite literally, a head full of ghosts. While in Europe, he'd been injured by a landmine explosion, and needed to have a steel plate inserted in his skull. Initially, he seemed to adjust relatively smoothly to civilian life, marrying Elaine Doris Scalia (his second wife), a woman with a genuine passion for music, a constant in both the Buckley and Guibert bloodlines. Their first child – Timothy Charles Buckley III, the best known of the many Tim Buckleys – was born in Washington DC on February 14, 1947. Although over the ensuing years his father's demons gradually began to emerge and do irreparable damage to the family, Tim Buckley did give due credit to the role Tim Sr and Elaine played in his musical development. 'My parents listened to [jazzmen] Miles Davis and Coltrane, Gerry Mulligan, Stan Kenton and the big bands,' he recalled in a 1973 interview. 'In America, if you are brought up here, you grow up with music whether you like it or not. You know about country music and all the ethnic music and although I was born in Washington I travelled around a lot hearing all kinds of things.'¹⁰

Within days of his birth, the Buckleys returned to Amsterdam, where Tim's father found work, first with General Electric and then American Locomotive. But when their son was in second grade, they felt a similar longing to the Guiberts, and began to look west. The paths of Tim Buckley and Mary Guibert were soon to intersect.

Back in Anaheim, the Guiberts had spotted a fast-developing musical talent in their daughter Mary, which they actively encouraged, buying an upright piano from a neighbour. 'I studied piano from the age of nine through my late teens,' said Guibert. 'The cello was an instrument I picked up in Junior High and played in school orchestras through high school.'¹¹ Further down the line, Guibert studied privately, playing cello in the Orange County Youth Symphony Orchestra (first chair), the Cal State Long Beach Symphony Orchestra (third chair) and was fourth chair in the La Mirada Symphony Orchestra. (Jeff Buckley also tried his hand at the cello, for one

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year in junior high, but the lure of the guitar was far too irresistible.) By the age of 12, Guibert envisaged a Broadway career, having got a taste for the stage by appearing in a local production of *South Pacific*. But her plans were bent out of shape when she met Tim Buckley.

By 1958, the Buckleys had laid roots in Bell Gardens, a roughneck town seemingly a million miles from Anaheim, the land of milk and Disney (only a short drive of 18 miles separated them, in reality). Despite a rich Indian heritage dating back thousands of years, and a strong history of agriculture, during this post-war period Bell Gardens was best known as the chosen place for relocated Okies, fresh from the Midwest Dustbowl. Aside from a proliferation of churches, Bell Gardens was dotted with defence plants, which helped add some economic stability to the area; many homes and schools were built there, as munitions workers moved into the neighbourhood. Among these new residents was Eddie Cochran, straight out of Minnesota, who, in his Bell Gardens garage, grabbed hold of the zeitgeist and cranked out teen rock anthems 'Twenty Flight Rock' and 'Summertime Blues'.^{*} When the Buckleys bought a home not far from Bell Gardens' hobo camps, Elaine had just given birth to their second child, Tim's sister Kathleen.

Before being gripped by the folk music boom, Tim Buckley was a relatively well-adjusted teenager. He spent three years as the quarterback on Bell Gardens' Junior High School football team, was actively involved in the Letterman's Club and the school newspaper, and was the student body president for a time. Clean-cut and smartly turned out, it was almost impossible to associate this Tim Buckley with the cult figure with the white-man's Afro whose legion of admirers included New York punk poet Patti Smith and her confidant, maverick photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. As recently as 2007, Smith admitted to a colleague of mine how 'I loved Tim Buckley and listened to him all the time.'^{11a}

Just like his son many years later, Tim Buckley was a musical sponge; while the charts may have been clogged with easy-listening crooners and starlets like Pat Boone, Connie Francis and Bobby Vee – this was the pre-Beatles era, of course – Buckley looked elsewhere for musical sensations. Country music was a particular passion; he was a huge admirer of such stars as Johnny Cash and Hank Williams. 'In 1960 when I started thinking about music,' he explained many years later, 'there was rock and roll and jazz and some folk

^{*} Nowadays, Bell Gardens' claim to fame is that it's one of only five cities in Los Angeles County that permit casino gambling; it's also the home of NHRA drag racing champ John Force.

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stuff to look at. Folk and country-blues were the first things I learned to play well, and then as you progress you get into more complex things.’^{11b} Accordingly, he regarded jazzman Miles Davis as nothing less than a God; during early interviews he stuck to the unlikely boast that he first realised music was his calling when he heard one of his mother’s Miles Davis albums – he figured that he was five at the time. ‘Among the Americans, I like Lead Belly, Robert Johnson, Hoagy Carmichael, Louis Armstrong and Ray Charles,’ Buckley added during the same 1973 interview. Buckley’s tastes were eclectic and colour-blind, which would eventually shine through in his own recordings (and his own band, too; African/American percussionist Carter Collins was a key Buckley sidekick for years).

Well before he set out on his own freeform sonic journey, Buckley’s musical skills were somewhat more pastoral – he knew how to play the banjo, having been given one as a gift by his mother when he was 11. Both this skill and his mother’s top-shelf tastes were talked up like a mantra in one of Buckley’s earliest press releases, which stated that, ‘Tim’s mother listened to Sinatra, Damone, and Garland, and Tim listened to Flatt & Scruggs, Bill Monroe, and Johnny Cash. When he was in the ninth grade at school he taught himself to play the banjo – and that was the beginning.’ It was around this time that Buckley also began to stretch his tenor voice, an octave-jumping wonder that critic Andy Childs would soon rate as one of ‘the two most expressive, versatile, and controlled voices in contemporary music’¹² (The other belonged to Van Morrison.) Or, as writer Ian Penman would declare, as late as 1994, ‘Contemporaries like Lennon and Morrison, Jagger and Joplin may have been good rock singers, but that is after all a very limited boast, which doesn’t necessarily mean you are a *good singer* – not in the realm of the Eternal Singer, which was undoubtedly Buckley’s pitch and path.’¹³

Buckley’s first foray was in a short-lived duo with Bell Gardens’ High classmate Corby Alsbrook on guitar. He then performed as part of the Cobblestone Three alongside two other Bell Gardens buddies, Dan Gordon and Larry Boren. Their repertoire barely hinted at the freewheeling, mind- and audience-fucking direction Buckley would eventually head; playing local clubs and school assemblies, they’d end their sets with a cover of ‘Lonesome Traveller’, a fearfully earnest number made famous by the Pete Seeger-led Weavers. As conservative as his folkie aspirations appeared to be, music, nonetheless, had overtaken Buckley’s interest in sport by the time he enrolled at Bell Gardens High School in 1962. Nevertheless, despite his mother’s strong musical inclinations, she wasn’t actively encouraging a career in music for her son; she hoped that he’d become a dentist, which now seemed about as likely as Tim getting back on the football field.

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At home, Tim's father 'Buck' was gradually coming undone. A workplace accident, in which he fell off a roof and cracked the back of his head, marked the end of a relatively serene time at Buckley HQ. As Jeff Buckley would note, many years later, 'he was never the same' after his fall, and clearly Buck used Tim as a whipping post. 'His life was hell,' Jeff Buckley once said of his father.¹⁴ Tim would discourage his school friends from visiting his house, as his father's behaviour took a turn towards the bizarre. 'After the war, he wasn't right anymore,' Jeff's grandmother Elaine Buckley told Lee Underwood in *Blue Melody*. 'And after he took that fall in the factory, things got progressively worse.' When Elaine took him to see a psychiatrist, he stopped at the door and refused to enter. 'I'm not the one who's crazy,' he snapped at Elaine, 'you are.' Soon after he and Tim came to blows in the family garage, and then he threatened Elaine with a gun.¹⁵ Fortunately, Tim Buckley had an outlet – folk music – and a new hero, an electric-haired Midwestern poet going by the name Bob Dylan, whose lyrically potent anthem 'Blowin' In The Wind' had become a massive hit for airbrushed, family-friendly folkies Peter, Paul & Mary.

It was Dylan's on- and off-stage partner Joan Baez who'd provide the version of the old chestnut 'Geordie' that Buckley performed at the 1964 Loara High School hootenanny. (The Buckleys had recently, finally, gotten the hell out of Bell Gardens and relocated to the far mellower climes of Gilbuck Street, Anaheim, hence Tim's shift to Loara High.) Looking on were two 16-year-olds, Jim Fielder and Larry Beckett. Like Buckley, Beckett was a recent Anaheim transplant; he shifted there with his father, a teacher of English and speech, and his mother, who ran a career counselling business, when he was 10. Fielder, who was born in Denton, Texas, was yet another wanderer who'd finally settled in the land of Disney. Playing from the age of seven, he had been tutored on bass by Ralph Pena, Frank Sinatra's bassman, so his credentials were strong. Of all the crooners from the pre-rock era, the Chairman of the Board ranked the highest, at least to Tim Buckley.

Both were gobsmacked by Buckley's talent, especially his voice, and wasted no time in forming a musical team with the intense, gaunt dude in the sports jacket, who, at the time, bore a passing resemblance to folk legend Woody Guthrie. As Beckett gushed in the liner notes for *Morning Glory: The Tim Buckley Anthology*, the impact was immediate. 'We'd sit there and go, "Oh my God! I've never heard anything as beautiful as this voice".'¹⁶ Fielder was equally impressed – and almost as effusive as Beckett. 'One hesitates to get flowery but [I'd use] the words "gift from God",' he told writer Martin Aston. 'He had an incredible range of four octaves, always in tune, with a great vibrato he had complete control over. You don't normally hear that

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stuff from a 17-year-old.¹⁷ Fielder, Beckett and Buckley shared the same gym class, and that was where their friendship began. 'I don't remember his dad, maybe he'd already gone insane,' Beckett said of Buckley. '[But] his mom was a sweetheart, with great music lying around, Johnny Cash, Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles, Pete Seeger.'

But 1964 was also a banner year for Tim Buckley the romantic, especially when he spotted a dark-skinned, doe-eyed, if slightly uptight beauty in French class at Loara High. In many ways Mary Guibert was the anti-Tim Buckley: she was studious and diligent, a self-confessed teacher's pet, who was already harbouring dreams of a Broadway career. Buckley, meanwhile, was wild-eyed and adventurous – a wearer of turtlenecks, no less – and a completely different guy to the over-achieving quarterback of a few years back. And just like his rapidly deteriorating father, Buckley had developed a taste for booze, something the church-going Guibert frowned upon. Buckley wasn't much of a student, either. As Beckett recalled, while he and Fielding were chasing straight As in honours classes, 'Tim was barely making it to school.' Beckett was actually Loara High's vice president and the president of the Honors Society, with vague plans of becoming a mathematical physicist, but clearly found Buckley's rebellious streak as seductive as Guibert eventually would. He'd also fallen hard for the beat poetry of Allen Ginsberg. '[Tim] dressed like a man, not a boy,' Beckett told an interviewer in 2000, '[He] had sex in the backs of cars, and was happy-go-lucky and contemptuous of all institutions. When he sang, you thought you were sitting around with fucking Caruso.'^{17a}

Meanwhile, in Loara High's French class, a note was passed to Mary Guibert. It was a love poem, written and signed by Buckley, that went into some heavy-breathing detail about 'what fires he knew lurked inside' this beautiful, buttoned-up teenager. She was both attracted and appalled by this come-on, but soon began dating Buckley, who was one year older than her. Though she didn't realise it at the time, with this gesture she'd kissed her artistic aspirations goodbye. As they'd discover, both shared disruptive home lives; Mary's father prohibited her from shaving her legs or using make-up and would lose his temper at the slightest disturbance. 'Buck' Buckley, meanwhile, had checked into a Veterans Administration hospital, as his downward mental spiral continued.

Buckley's musical ambition remained unaffected by whatever negativity and ugliness might have been happening around him. He'd switched from the banjo to an acoustic six-string, and when he wasn't listening closely to such crooners as Nat King Cole and Johnny Mathis, he'd scream at buses and mimic the sound of trumpets, stretching his voice like a rubber band.

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As you do. As for Beckett, the self-confessed 'perfect though increasingly arrogant schoolboy' was fast turning into a rebel, hugely inspired by his new buddy Buckley. Their bond was formed in 1965 when Buckley came to his defence after Beckett was suspended for three days for arranging a 'sit-in' demonstration, prompted by Loara High's vice-principal, who'd torn down some posters designed by Beckett. (One read: 'Drink Up', alongside the image of a huge cocktail; another cryptically said: 'Keep a Cool Tool'.) Buckley and Beckett celebrated by taking their prom night dates (most likely not Guibert) to the legendary Coconut Grove, where jazz chanteuse Nancy Wilson headed the bill. 'Tim showed me how to let my natural rebellion out,' Beckett admitted in 2000. 'We'd play hooky and drive to Hollywood, to go through La Cienaga Boulevard art galleries.'

Inspired by the songwriting success of The Beatles' John Lennon and Paul McCartney, he suggested that Buckley start writing his own songs, while he'd supply the lyrics. Buckley readily agreed. Beckett had also begun drumming; when combined with Fielder's bass playing, the Bohemians were born. (During 1964, Buckley also appeared with a country band going by the name Princess Ramona & the Cherokee Riders, decked out in a yellow hummingbird shirt and turquoise hat. *Or at least he said he did*; like his son, Tim had a liking for seeing just how far he could embellish his past and pass it off as the truth.) Beckett's writing influences were hardly typical So-Cal teen fare: he cited Ginsberg, Shakespeare, Yeats and James Joyce as his idols, and also listed Bob Dylan, Donovan and Fred Neil as key figures. The records shared by Buckley, Fielder and Beckett were equally diverse, as Beckett related: 'Our music started with the Beatles and Dylan and so-called folk rock, and then fanned out to include Indian raga, Miles Davis, Bulgarian folk music, Villa-Lobos, Erik Satie, Peggy Lee, B. B. King, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Bach. We listened to all of this, day and night.' The Band would become firm favourites, too; Beckett once shared a Venice duplex with Buckley's guitarist Lee Underwood and Buckley christened it Big Pink, in honour of the band's immortal debut LP. Throughout his short, fast life, Jeff Buckley would emphatically downplay his father's role in shaping his destiny, but it's indisputable that they shared a natural musical curiosity. Jeff's tastes would closely parallel those of his father. Merri Cyr, Jeff Buckley's 'official' photographer, was one of many who noted this. 'He had such difficulty dealing with his father's memory,' she told me. 'Yet I think, more than anything, he compared himself to what his father did.'

The Bohemians were intent on capturing some momentum from the cultural tsunami that had recently hit the USA, courtesy of The Beatles. Many decades down the line, it's still hard to grasp just how significant this shift

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was: only a year before The Beatles held three of the Top 10 LP chart placings Stateside (and also picked up the Grammy for 1964's Best New Act), the charts still welcomed such mainstream martini-sippers as Dean Martin or novelty country acts like Roger Miller. But the British Invasion, as it became known, was overwhelming, as The Beatles opened the chart doors for countrymen The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Animals and The Dave Clark Five, who all scored big in North America. At their commercial peak, The Beatles shifted a million copies of *A Hard Day's Night* in just four days, had 30 tracks in the US singles chart in 1964, including six chart-toppers, and in April of that year famously held down the top five places in the singles chart. US authorities reacted with customary short-sightedness, drastically cutting the number of work permits handed out to UK groups, thereby allowing such obvious Limey knock-offs as Gary Lewis & The Playboys and The Beau Brummels to have their few minutes in the spotlight. So maybe the time was right for the so-called Orange County Three, as well.

Yet the Bohemians – who also moonlighted in folk clubs as Harlequins 3, a more loose-knit combo who'd sing, read poetry and perform comic skits – stood apart from their peers: it's unlikely that Beach Boy Brian Wilson had even heard of WB Yeats, let alone aspired to reach his lofty lyrical heights in song. And Buckley had already shown signs of his fast-developing interest in improvisation. As Beckett explained in a 2004 interview with Carson Arnold, their vastly different personalities probably had a great deal to do with their songwriting synchronicity; even at this early stage they sensed an unusual musical chemistry. 'I was very intellectual and disciplined and [Tim] was very loose and passionate. I think actually that was part of the secret, that obscurely we sensed we each had what the other person needed – the whole human being, the whole artist. If he would try to write a song it would just drift aimlessly. But if I had these overly rigorous lyrics in place, then it would give a structure for him to work with. He would infuse my too-tight songwriting with his passion, and loosen it up. It was a kind of magical formula. And it worked in life and it worked in art. We sensed that, I don't think we really understood it at the time, though.' (Jeff Buckley also co-wrote much of his music, possibly for similar reasons.)

As Buckley's musical relationship with Beckett went from strength to strength, he continued to date Mary Guibert. She'd scored a job at Disneyland, at the Mexican eatery Casa de Fritos, and Buckley could often be spotted there, sitting at the counter, waiting for her to finish another shift. He also held down a job in fast food, working at Taco Bell during the day, while playing at various LA venues by night. Buckley enrolled at college – either Ventura or Fullerton, no-one is really sure – but dropped out

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after two weeks, sensing that a formal education didn't suit his plans. As Guibert admitted to biographer David Browne, it was around this time that she lost her virginity to Buckley, at the apartment of his friend Dan Gordon. '[It] was the closest thing we had that might have resembled sex,' said Guibert. However, the respite that their relationship offered them from their shared domestic unrest was soon shattered. In August 1965, Mary missed her period. Not long afterwards, Anna Guibert found herself shaking hands with Mary's musician boyfriend, but it was hardly the introduction that could have been hoping for. Buckley told Anna that he loved her daughter and wanted to marry her – Mary has said that even before she missed her period, they'd planned to wed when she was 18 and no longer in high school – and arrangements were hastily made for their wedding.

The not-entirely-happy event took place on October 23, 1965, in the Guibert family church in Anaheim, St Michael's Episcopal. Barely two dozen family members and friends were spread amongst the chapel's dozen rows. Mary's father was a no-show. Allegedly, prior to taking his vows, Buckley turned to his best man Beckett and said that he didn't want to go through with it. He may have genuinely loved Mary, at least for a time, but everything was happening way too fast for Buckley, who sensed his musical career was slipping away from him, replaced by a life of suburban humdrum. Afterwards, the newlyweds spent their wedding night at an anonymous Laguna Beach hotel, where they slept on the floor because the vibrating bed wouldn't stop shaking. As unfortunate metaphors go, that first night pretty much summed up what lay ahead for Buckley and Guibert.

The Buckleys rented an apartment in Anaheim, not far from the home of Mary's parents, and Mary, now shunned, dropped out of Loara High and signed up for typing classes. The Bohemians continued to play their usual round of gigs in and around Orange County, with the occasional road trip to LA, where they'd perform at open-mic nights at The Troubadour. Then, inspired by Bob Dylan's legendary show at the Hollywood Bowl – a gig cited by many as almost as significant as his electric 'coming out', polka-dot shirt, shades and all, at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival – Bohemians Fielder, Beckett and Buckley decided to get some music down on tape. They pooled their cash and cut their first demo, of sorts, at a shop just outside of Anaheim that provided a rudimentary recording service, and all for six bucks an hour. 'It's kinda cool,' Beckett said in 2004.

Included amongst the dozen songs they cut that day was 'She Is', a Beckett/Buckley co-write that would turn up on his self-titled debut the next year. And the tape wasn't simply comprised of Dylan-like strums. According to Beckett, it included 'some hard-rockers – you never hear it

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until much later in his career like “Honey Man”, but when we first started out [Tim] would do a song like “Please Be My Woman” and was rocking like Elvis. I don’t know where he got that from either.’¹⁸ As Buckley biographer Browne succinctly stated, ‘The Bohemians sounded like exactly what they were: a scruffy little folk-rock bar band, albeit one with a secret musical weapon: a powerful, emotive singer who could slide from a falsetto to a gritty grunt, who could ooze vulnerability and tenderness one moment, petulance the next.’¹⁹ Browne may well have been describing the work of Jeff Buckley at the same time.

Meanwhile, the Buckleys’ domestic situation was falling apart. Buckley would later suggest to a New York journalist that Guibert used her classical training as a way of undermining his music – something she emphatically denied. Others have suggested to me that Mary was a control freak, and that she drove Tim away. It’s also been said, fairly enough, that they were both simply too young to be married in the first place. Regardless of the reason, if a date was needed to mark the beginning of the end it was January 1966. On New Year’s Eve Mary was rushed to hospital after waking up to find their sheets soaked in blood; three days later she felt her waters break and returned to hospital, only to learn that she hadn’t, in fact, been pregnant in the first place: she was suffering from a so-called ‘hysterical’ or ‘phantom’ pregnancy (*pseudocyesis* in medical terms). Hippocrates had recorded a dozen different cases of women with the disorder as early as 300BC, and Mary Tudor, Queen of England during the 16th century, also suffered from the complaint, but it is a relatively rare condition – typically, only a couple of cases are reported each year. It’s actually more common in dogs and mice than it is in humans. ‘Phantom’ pregnancies are an odd mix of legitimate physical signs of being ‘with child’ – morning sickness, breast tenderness, weight gain, even abdominal swelling, which is caused by the build-up of fat, gas, etc – combined with a stone-cold conviction on the part of the woman that she is pregnant. It’s obviously more an emotional condition than a physical one.

It seemed that for every step forward Buckley would take with his nascent musical career, his and Guibert’s life would slide several steps in the opposite direction. Jeff Buckley documented what lay ahead when he came clean during an on-air session in 1994, at Philadelphia station WXPN. ‘He split before I was born,’ Buckley said, ‘and didn’t really keep contact with me and my mum. He decided not to be my father.’²⁰ Buckley’s first step in detaching himself from Guibert was to travel to New York.

His father’s fateful trip to Manhattan actually began in a Sunset Strip club called – very much in the parlance of the time – ‘It’s Boss’. It was there, in

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early 1966, that Buckley, Fielder and Beckett spoke with Jimmy Carl Black, a Native American who, when he wasn't drumming for Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention, gave lessons at the same Anaheim music store where Fielder taught young Orange County guitar hopefuls. Black arranged a meeting with Herb 'Herbie' Cohen, the manager of Frank Zappa and the Mothers and as colourful a character as any who impacted on the lives of either Buckley. Cohen, a native New Yorker then in his mid 30s, had ended up in Los Angeles after a stint in the army; it was in LA that he became connected with the music biz, organising shows for folkies Pete Seeger and Odetta, both early favourites of Tim Buckley. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, even before Sunset Strip became the place to be heard and seen, Cohen ran coffee bars Cosmo Alley, the Purple Onion and the Unicorn. 'Herbie' was a notoriously hard man, who was known to keep a loaded gun handy in case trouble broke out at his clubs, and was also rumoured to have dabbled in gun-running. He was like a character lifted directly from Warren Zevon's 'Roland The Headless Thompson Gunner'. Buckley was impressed by Cohen's cut-the-crap approach when they first spoke, even though he thought he resembled a 'dope smuggler or someone out of *Che!*'²¹

Cohen's next venture was more legitimate, though still fraught with danger: artist management. He handled the careers of belter Judy Henske, the highly regarded Modern Folk Quartet and musical maverick Zappa, possibly the most bent character never to actually use the mind-enhancing drugs so prevalent at the time. Zappa was also one of the few people not overly intimidated by the man handling his business affairs; close examination of the cover of his wildly satirical 1966 LP *Freak Out!* reveals that Cohen is listed under the credit: 'These People Have Contributed Materially In Many Ways To Make Our Music What It Is. Please Do Not Hold It Against Them'. Cohen would be credited with contributing 'cash register noises' on Zappa's *Absolutely Free* album, another less-than-subtle dig by Zappa towards the role of his and Buckley's boss. He was the suit, the money guy.

Not long after their first meeting, Cohen signed Buckley to a publishing deal. Far too 'arty' to show any interest in the business end of things, Buckley raised no objection when Cohen suggested the Bohemians disassemble, although it was agreed that he'd keep writing with Beckett and Fielder would play on his recordings. (Fielder would score work with the Cohen-managed Mothers of Invention and Judy Henske, before moving on to 'serious' mainstream acclaim with Blood, Sweat & Tears, so there was an upside to the Bohemians' split. The ever-contrary Zappa, however, deleted Fielder's credits from the *Absolutely Free* album, because he'd jumped ship

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and moved on to Buffalo Springfield.²² Cohen, whose future clients included Tom Waits and mid-western shock-rockers Alice Cooper, also came up with a new strategy for Buckley's domestic arrangements, suggesting that he move in with Fielder, while Mary relocate to the Cohen compound, where she could help look after his daughter Lisa. Cohen has denied that the intention was to end the marriage in deference to Buckley's musical career, but you'd have to imagine that was in the back of his mind somewhere.

It wasn't long after this arrangement was set in place that Buckley met LA scenester Jane Goldstein and began a new relationship. Speaking with David Browne, Goldstein made an observation that would ring as loudly for Jeff as it would for his estranged father, Tim. '[Tim] was sad because of his father,' she said. 'He really missed having a father.'²³

Occasionally, Tim would spend time at the Cohens' home with Mary, but in spring 1966, acting on a tip regarding a New York record label, Buckley and Goldstein began their fateful trip to the east coast, the journey that would effectively derail the already wobbly Buckley/Guibert relationship. Danny Fields, a legendary music industry figure who'd soon become Tim's publicist and friend, and much later on a close confidant of Jeff Buckley, agreed that it wasn't just the lure of a label that drove Tim to head east. 'She [Guibert] was one of the reasons Timmy fled to New York. I could only have imagined what it was like. The possessiveness... that must have driven Timmy to insanity and heroin.' It was the start of what Jeff Buckley would refer to as his father's 'gypsy life', deftly chronicled in Tim's song 'I Never Asked To Be Your Mountain', a deeply-felt outpouring that was also one of the biggest cop-outs in modern music. (In the song, Buckley quotes Guibert's description of him as Jeff's 'scoundrel father', while a reference to 'barren breasts' could be Buckley's dig at Guibert's phantom pregnancy. It's a catfight either way.) 'It's a beautiful song,' Jeff once said of the epic, but it was also a song he equally loved and loathed.²⁴

The New York label that Tim Buckley sought out was Elektra. As unlikely as it seems on the surface, and as much as Jeff Buckley hated being likened to his absent father – one of his friends went as far as to say 'it would have made him puke' – there was more than one similarity between Tim Buckley's signing with Elektra and his son's record deal with Columbia. While both labels recognised the need for acts that kept cash registers ticking over, they were also on the lookout for credible, serious artists, whom Columbia would one day nobly refer to as 'heritage' acts. When Jeff Buckley signed his deal, those 'artistes' included Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan and the late Miles Davis. When Tim Buckley signed up in 1966, Elektra's roster

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included protest singers Phil Ochs, Tom Paxton, David Blue and Judy Collins, along with more cutting-edge acts from the burgeoning psychedelic rock scene, including LA's Love and The Doors, plus – two years later – Detroit noisemakers The Stooges and MC5, and also the revered Paul Butterfield Blues Band. Both Columbia and Elektra were doing their best to juggle art and commerce. Yet the word humble doesn't do justice to Elektra's origins; like Rick Rubin's Def Jam label many years later, it came into existence in a dorm room. Founder Jac Holzman and his business partner Paul Rickholt sank a hefty \$300 into establishing the enterprise in 1950. The label's name was a twist on the Greek mythological heroine Electra – as Holzman famously explained, 'I gave her the "K" that I lacked.'

Holzman's response to Buckley's new demo – six songs he'd recently cut in LA with Fielder – was as immediate as Cohen's, as he revealed in a 1995 story that ran in *Mojo* magazine. 'I must have listened to it twice a day for a week,' Holzman said. 'Whenever anything was getting me down, I'd run for Buckley.' The Elektra boss could sense that this Dylan lookalike, with his heaven-sent voice and genre-jumping sound, represented precisely what his label needed. 'He was exactly the kind of artist with whom we wanted to grow – young and in the process of developing,' Holzman said. It's eerie how similar his take was to that of Columbia's Steve Berkowitz, on seeing Jeff Buckley perform in the early 1990s. 'Frankly,' Berkowitz stated in the BBC documentary *Everybody Here Wants You*, 'I thought that Jeff would make 25 records, and I think Columbia and Sony thought it went: Dylan, Springsteen, Buckley.'

Buckley and Goldstein, meanwhile, drank in New York. During one of his many visits there, Buckley befriended similarly gifted singer-songwriter Fred Neil, another Cohen client, the writer of such era-defining songs as 'Everybody's Talkin'' and 'Dolphins'. He was a huge influence on tune-smith-under-development Buckley, who covered 'Dolphins', and beautifully. He also crossed paths with Cambridge-based folkie Eric Andersen, who, weirdly enough, would feature alongside Jeff Buckley years later at the *Greetings From Tim Buckley* tribute. 'I saw Tim frequently,' Andersen told me in 2007. 'His interests were more jazz meets psychedelia, a weird intersection that he arrived at. I was more interested in the lyrical content; I liked jazz but my roots weren't in psychedelia. He had one foot in Indian raga music. He played with some very good players; people respected him, he was on his own adventure.'

Once back on the west coast, however, everything rapidly came apart. According to Jim Fielder, 'The marriage was a disaster [even though] Mary was full of talent and life, a classical pianist and Tim's equal.'²⁵ In August

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1966, Buckley had returned to LA to cut his debut LP, with the help of, amongst others, recently recruited guitarist, and longtime sidekick, Lee Underwood, producer Paul Rothchild (soon to score critical and commercial acclaim with *The Doors*), and Hollywood arranger and provocateur Van Dyke Parks (a richly gifted and immensely charming musical all-rounder, once described to me as the 'gayest straight man on the planet'). Throughout this self-titled debut, Buckley made his domestic confusion abundantly clear, especially in tracks such as 'Valentine Melody' – even though the lyrics were Beckett's – and 'It Happens Every Time'. Buckley brazenly celebrated his new lady love and his infidelities in 'Song for Jainie', the song performed by Andersen in 1991 at the Buckley tribute – even the misspelling of Goldstein's Christian name didn't make it any less of a slap in Guibert's face.

As if their situation couldn't be any more complicated, Guibert had delivered some heavy news to her free-love-embracing, wandering minstrel husband: she was expecting his baby, and this time it was no 'phantom' pregnancy. He recommended that she return to her family in Anaheim, and consider an abortion. (There remains some confusion whether Buckley actually knew of her pregnancy before leaving for New York; it's been documented that Guibert actually came clean to Buckley's mother.) Deep in denial, Guibert thought there was some remote possibility that Buckley would return to her, until, finally, a mutual friend filled her in on his relationship with Goldstein. As Jim Fielder recalled, 'The pregnancy made it [their marriage] go sour, as neither of them was ready for it. To Tim it was draining his creative force, and Mary wasn't willing to take the chance on his career, putting it to him like, "Settle down and raise a baby or we're through", that kind of showdown.'²⁶ Lee Underwood had a slightly harder take on the clearly hopeless situation. 'Tim had to decide whether to follow his musical calling or stay at home with Mary and work in the local Taco Bell. Tim left not because he didn't care about his soon-to-be-born child, but because his musical life was just beginning,' he wrote in a letter from 1998. 'And, in addition, he couldn't stand Mary. He did not abandon Jeff, he abandoned Mary.' (To Tim Buckley's credit, he did send money whenever he could.)

Several unfortunate confrontations later, Mary reluctantly accepted that their marriage was over and filed divorce papers, with only a couple of months remaining until the baby was due. It must be said, though, that Buckley's situation was hardly uncommon, as Danny Fields pointed out to me in mid 2007: 'As for kids, well, everyone had a few lying around if you were cute and living in Los Angeles in the late 1960s; I think there were

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very few young men who weren't fathers. But he certainly wasn't domestic and I think he had no intention of staying with her.' Jeff Buckley wasn't exaggerating, years later, when he was asked about his biological father and replied: 'I never knew him.' When Mary went into labour on the morning of Thursday, November 17, 1966, and was driven by her mother to Anaheim's Martin Luther Hospital, Tim Buckley was nowhere to be found. It would be several years before father and son spent more than a few hours in each other's company.

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