

'Record Company Guy' Richard Glanville-Brown Revisits John & Yoko's Montreal Bed-In for Peace (almost 50 years later)

On a bitterly cold and icy day in February 2019, I paid a visit to Richard Glanville-Browne to discuss his once in a lifetime opportunity that occurred in May 1969. Richard had started a new job with Capitol Records in Montreal, having moved to Canada from England in 1967. His first position was with London Records of Canada. Richard's job at London Records had been to promote British artists such as Cat Stevens, The Moody Blues, Tom Jones and the group with the longest name in the 1960s - Dave, Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich. Richard achieved chart success in key markets across Canada with the latter group and, in early 1969, his talents were mentioned to A&R man Paul White at Capitol in Toronto. Richard was then recruited for the new English A&R position for Capitol in Montreal.

Having been on the job at Capitol for only a day or two, Richard was driving home in his car and heard the news that John & Yoko had arrived in Montreal and were planning to hold their second Bed-In for Peace at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel. Of course, Richard knew that John Lennon was one huge-selling English artist for Capitol Records. And here he was in Montreal. Richard went to the hotel and sought out Derek Taylor. Taylor told him: "If you're going to be a record company guy and just

hang out, I wish you wouldn't, but if you're here to work, you're welcome." Richard promptly rolled up his sleeves and commenced his role to support Derek, John and Yoko with their Bed-In. That was the morning of Tuesday 27 May. The Bed-In would run until the following Monday 2 June.

The Bed-In was initially in Room 1738 but it soon moved to the much larger Room 1742, one more suitable for the throngs that were expected. Over the course of the week, John & Yoko conducted more than 1,000 interviews, some over the telephone and some at their bedside. Richard was directly involved in coordinating many of these interviews, including a visit by Globe & Mail Rock journalist Ritchie Yorke (pictured). He also worked with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) who came to make a documentary television program about the recording of 'Give Peace A Chance'. During the entire crazy week, Richard was on deck at the Lennon's hotel suite from early morning until late. He recalled many happy hours in conversation with Derek and the film and sound men who had travelled with John & Yoko to make their own documentary of the Bed-In.

Richard told me that there were hundreds of people trying to get in to see John & Yoko. It was a 3-ringed circus from 10 AM to 10 PM every day. One woman was there all week making her own film. Richard never saw her again or heard anything about the film. Another was a psychiatrist who had travelled up from the States to observe the Lennons and their motivation. A couple of days into the Bed-In, Derek Taylor asked Richard to call Capitol in Toronto to ask for money. Richard duly placed the call to Capitol's HQ in Toronto and states: "one senior executive gave me a lecture

along the lines that they were not going to pay for those long-haired hippies ... but a few minutes later the head of Capitol in Toronto was on the line and he certainly understood the relevance of being nice to The Beatles". Richard worked directly with the Capitol office in Toronto on getting cash and on recording details. His colleague, Pierre DuBord, who handled French-language artists for Capitol in Montreal, recruited the Quebec-based recording engineer, Andre Perry. Richard is proud of the fact that his own voice, along with so many others who were jammed into the room with him, was captured on Andre Perry's recording of 'Give Peace A Chance'. "I sang my heart out and banged on the door too ...".

When it was all over, Richard travelled with the Lennons and Derek Taylor back to Toronto via Ottawa on an overnight train. The day before John & Yoko returned to England, Richard joined them on a side trip to the Canadian side of Niagara Falls in Ontario. What a way to finish your first week in a new job with Capitol Records!

Richard and Derek Taylor had been a good team in Montreal. Richard kept in touch with Derek, and he received an invitation to attend the Apple Christmas party at 3 Savile Row in December of the same year. That must have been a lovely

thank you and a nice way to end the 1960s.

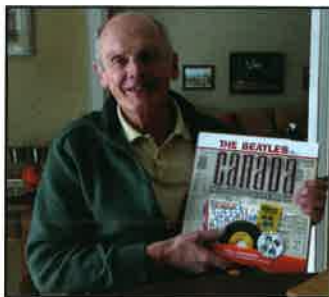
Looking back almost fifty years later, Richard still can't believe it all happened the way it did. The whole experience was beyond anyone's formal job description. It just had to be this way, because it was all about giving PEACE a chance.

At the end of our meeting, I thanked Richard and Rita, his wife, for spending such a very lovely afternoon with me. I presented Richard with a copy of The Beatles In Canada RED book. Richard's expanded story will be included in the BLUE volume of The Beatles in Canada book which I am busy working on for the end of this year.

Piers Hemmingsen, BBFC Member



Capitol's Richard Glanville-Brown, John, Yoko and Ritchie Yorke (photo by Annette Yorke)



Richard Glanville-Brown in February 2019 (photo by Piers Hemmingsen)