

## Chapter 1 : FACT CHECK: The Meaning of James Taylor's Fire and Rain

*The real story behind 'Fire and Rain,' as I understand it, is that some friends of James were going to surprise James by bringing his girlfriend, Suzanne, to one of his concerts.*

Taylor, worked as a resident physician. Thinking of the red soil, the seasons, the way things smelled down there, I feel as though my experience of coming of age there was more a matter of landscape and climate than people. I knew James had that thing. Taylor would later say of this New York period, "I learned a lot about music and too much about drugs. Isaac Taylor flew to New York and staged a rescue, renting a car and driving all night back to North Carolina with James and his possessions. In late , funded by a small family inheritance, he moved to London, living in various areas: Notting Hill , Belgravia , and Chelsea. McCartney remembers his first impression: He had this determination in his eye that I had never seen in anybody before. Other young artists of his age whom I worked with sang about how good or bad life was but really had no idea what they were singing about. James was already singing with the conviction of a singer much older than himself. Everything that he had already been through was evident in his songwriting. It knocks me out. On July 20, he performed at the Newport Folk Festival as the last act and was cheered by thousands of fans who stayed in the rain to hear him. Fame and commercial success[ edit ] Taylor in the early s Once he had recovered, Taylor moved to California, keeping Asher as his manager and record producer. In December , he held the recording sessions for his second album there. Both the album and the single reached 3 on the Billboard charts, with Sweet Baby James selling more than 1. It earned several Grammy Award nominations including one for Album of the Year. His career success so far and appeal to female fans of various ages piqued tremendous interest in him, prompting a March 1, , Time magazine cover story of him as "the face of new rock. The album went on to sell 2. The album consisted of eighteen short pieces of music put together. Reception was generally lukewarm and, despite making the Top 10 of the Billboard Album Charts, its overall sales were disappointing. Almost simultaneously, Taylor married fellow singer-songwriter Carly Simon on November 3, in a small ceremony at her Murray Hill, Manhattan , apartment. Career ups and downs[ edit ] Taylor spent most of enjoying his new life as a married man and did not return to the recording studio until January , when sessions for his fifth album began. The album was a critical and commercial disaster and was his first album to miss the Top 5 since his contract with Warner. It received poor reviews and sold only , copies in the United States. The title track failed to appear on the Top On the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart, the track also reached the top, and the follow-up single, the feelgood "Mexico" also reached the Top 5 of that list. However, it was arguably a more consistent and fresher-sounding Taylor, with classics such as "Mexico", "Wandering" and "Angry Blues". It also featured a song about his daughter Sally, "Sarah Maria". The album found him with many colleagues and friends, including Art Garfunkel , David Crosby , Bonnie Raitt and Stevie Wonder who co-wrote a song with Taylor and contributed a harmonica solo. A melodic album, it was highlighted with the single " Shower the People ", an enduring classic that hit 1 on the Adult Contemporary chart and almost hit the Top 20 of the Pop Charts. However, the album was not well received, reaching 16 and being criticized, particularly by Rolling Stone. Still, In The Pocket went on to be certified gold. With time, it became his best-selling album ever. Between March and April, he quickly recorded his first album for the label. Peter Herbst of Rolling Stone was particularly favorable to the album, of which he wrote in its August 11, issue, "JT is the least stiff and by far the most various album Taylor has done. The song also topped the Canadian charts. Taylor also appeared on the No Nukes concert in Madison Square Garden, where he made a memorable live performance of "Mockingbird" with his wife Carly. The concert appeared on both the No Nukes album and film. Taylor told the BBC in And it was surreal to actually have contact with the guy 24 hours before he shot John. Troubled times and new beginnings[ edit ] At Winterfest, Simon announced her separation from Taylor in September saying, "Our needs are different; it seem[s] impossible to stay together" and their divorce finalized in I sort of hit a low spot. I was asked to go down to Rio de Janeiro to play in this festival down there. We put the band together and went down and it was just an amazing response. I played to , people. They not only knew my music, they knew things about it and were interested in aspects of it that to that point had

only interested me. To have that kind of validation right about then was really what I needed. It helped get me back on track. In the late s, he began touring regularly, especially on the summer amphitheater circuit. His later concerts feature songs spanning his career and are marked by the musicianship of his band and backup singers. Comeback[ edit ] Taylor in concert at DeVos Hall, Grand Rapids, Michigan â€” April After six years since his last studio album, in Taylor released Hourglass , an introspective album that gave him the best critical reviews in almost twenty years. It featured a number of quiet instrumental accompaniments and passages. A Christmas Album with distribution through Hallmark Cards. Taylor performing at Tanglewood Always visibly active in environmental and liberal causes, in October , Taylor joined the Vote for Change tour playing a series of concerts in American swing states. These concerts were organized by MoveOn. In early , MusiCares honored Taylor with performances of his songs by an array of notable musicians. Before a performance by the Dixie Chicks, lead singer Natalie Maines acknowledged that he had always been one of their musical heroes and had, for them, lived up to their once-imagined reputation of him. The digital discrete 5. The appearances marked the 50th anniversary of the venue, where Taylor, King and many others, such as Tom Waits , Neil Diamond , and Elton John , performed early in their music careers. Parts of the performance shown on CBS Sunday Morning in the December 23, , broadcast showed Taylor alluding to his early drug problems by saying, "I played here a number of times in the 70s, allegedly". Taylor has used versions of this joke on other occasions, and it appears as part of his One Man Band DVD and tour performances. The resulting live-in-studio album, named Covers , was released in September The Covers sessions stretched to include "Oh What a Beautiful Morning", from the musical Oklahoma, a song that his grandmother had caught him singing over and over at the top of his lungs when he was seven years old. An additional album, called Other Covers , came out in April , containing songs that were recorded during the same sessions as the original Covers but had not been put out to the full public yet.

## Chapter 2 : Fire and Rain (song) - Wikipedia

*On page , the author is discussing the anticipation surrounding Taylor's follow-up record to his first release, Sweet Baby James. Mud Slide Slim and the Blue Horizon made a huge impression. Sophomore albums usually sell fewer units than first releases, and that is an accepted pattern in the record business.*

Share Tweet Submit Pin 8. That one question captures the behind-the-scenes bedlam that personifies Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young in , for sure. In , both Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Those albums leave those of us looking back to wonder if volatile musicians make the best music or perhaps if volatile times inspire musicians to create their best material. Fire and Rain explains why. In the months preceding the recording date, serious tension had developed between group members. Paul was hiding out with wife, Linda, somewhere in Scotland. Although the tabloids speculated that McCartney might be dead, he was actually working on a solo project. Ringo was searching for something new to take the place of the stardom he gained through The Beatles for a brief moment, he turned to Elvis Presley for answers. George was a new student of Hinduism, living in a gigantic Gothic mansion about an hour west of London. A new era, it was. The group format, they insisted, had become too restrictive, too limited, too Establishment. The memo posted on a bulletin board at the university was so modest that many students took it as a joke. And thousands of miles away in California, Warner Brothers execs scratched their heads over what to do with a tall, long-haired, folk-singer named James Taylor, who was so fragile that bigwigs generally steered clear of his recording sessions. Later, they learned why: Taylor was addicted to heroin and had spent some time in psychiatric hospitals. Neil Young owned tiny, nocturnal pet monkeys that ran amok in his hotel rooms. The romantic photos of Lennon and Ono looking almost identical give way to the image of a depressed former star hypnotized in front of a television set as Lennon was for much of His heroin addiction makes him seem fragile at first, but it eventually causes him to become self-centered and unmotivated. None of these quibbles detract from the fact that Browne is the perfect person to tell this story. A contributing editor at the Rolling Stone, he has reviewed nearly 1, albums in his career as a journalist. Before Fire and Rain, Browne authored three other books: A Biography of Sonic Youth That said, Browne writes in a very matter-of-fact tone. Fire and Rain has even a tabloid feel at times. He wandered around security muttering about his medicine, and tried to convince the band that he was a witch doctor. Then, during the first show of the tour, Neil Young stalked off stage, angry that CSNY had added only one of his songs to the set list. He never came back. One show into the tour, CSNY was history. This kind of behind-the-scenes drama strikes most every band. It leaves you wondering: And what kind of music will our political and social climates produce? Megan Pacella is a freelance music and lifestyles writer living in Nashville. She blogs at megan-writes.

Chapter 3 : ShieldSquare Block

*Many musicians sing about heartache, despair, and confusion, but few have experienced those feelings more intensely than James Taylor, who rose from a childhood of privilege as the son of an affluent medical school dean to become a modern-day troubadour and pop superstar.*

Fire, Rain and No Family Last night: James Taylor has two kids who are musicians, two siblings who are musicians and a famous ex-wife musician. None of them made it to the stage. And he was only a last-minute addition, as Sweet Baby James was not that kind about inviting his blood relatives. However, by the end of the show, his twin toddler sons, dressed in mini suits, were hopping around on stage for the finale. At least he mentioned the latter pair in his remarks. Well, maybe his adult children will be at his funeral. In the meantime, plenty of stars turned up for this tribute to his career. Neil Young and Brian Wilson were in the audience, but they did not play. Actress Maria Bello represented the film world. The Springsteens and the Stings sat together at one table, and although there were recent gossip items about both couples having problems, they sure acted like they were happy as clams all night. My only problem with the Springsteens was that, for a "working class" couple, they carried a lot of firepower with them. Their security detail was a little embarrassing, given that it was an invited audience. Even Nicole Kidman and boyfriend, Keith Urban, "certainly a "hotter" attraction" had less of a force field around them. There was not a lot of color. Arie commanded "The Secret of Life" like a pro. And Taj Mahal with Dr. John made "Everybody Has Got the Blues" a hot piece of property. The only conspicuous no-shows were Randy Newman, who was supposed to be there, and Joni Mitchell and Paul McCartney, who should have been there. Like the rest of her family and in-laws, Carly Simon was also, obviously, omitted. In the end, though, it was Taylor himself who did the best with his own material. It was a good night for MusiCares, raising some more hundreds of thousands for their coffers "money that goes into music education and stipends for indigent musicians. It was just huge! Arie and Natalie Cole. Cool J told me his new album hits stores in mid-March, and the first single is produced by Jermaine Dupri and features Jennifer Lopez. Confidential, Boston Common and Capitol File. When Jason started Gotham in , there was a lot of snickering. The conventional wisdom was that between New York magazine and the then-upstart Time Out New York, Gotham would be just a vanity project. How wrong the naysayers were. Gotham, which this month sports a beautiful cover portrait of Beyonce, is a hit. All of the Niche magazines are beautiful and full of sumptuous ads, and they all take their cue from Gotham. Somehow another Jason "Jason Oliver Nixon" edits these massive tomes without having a nervous breakdown. He should be commended. But the real hero of Niche is Binn. He was also ubiquitous. If there was a hot event, Jason was somewhere in the center of it. Sometimes, this was annoying. But then in I got to work with him as we put out the first issue of Los Angeles Confidential as an Oscar magazine. Once you work with Jason, you get to see his other side. He is the hardest-working man in show business. He is a relentless salesman, and a most effective one. Advertisers want to be with him. By putting into the magazines pictures of all the beautiful people in town, Jason also attracts a loyal following. They want to be with him too. And the unique thing is, even with investors, he is entirely self-made. The entire concept of Niche is quite brilliant, and my hat is off to him.

### Chapter 4 : Story Behind The Song: "Fire & Rain" by James Taylor | bluerailroad

*Despite a predisposition to enjoy Mr. Halperin's book (after all, I've been a fan of Mr. Taylor's for 20 years), I cannot escape the conclusion that the writing, research and organization of Fire and Rain: The James Taylor Story are undoubtedly the worst I have ever encountered.*

As told to Paul Zollo My friend Suzanne, from New York, had committed suicide a couple of months before my friends let me know. I started it in London. I had known Suzanne the year before I started writing the song. I wrote the second two verses there. They put me in a little room and I wrote a lot of songs there. It was very productive. I was getting my strength back, I was getting my nervous system back. Writing a lot of stuff. I had a small basement room. I lived in a succession of basement rooms. This one was fairly spacious. Silver foil on the wall. It really a kind of blues. It details three different episodes of hard times. And then the third one is much more general, not as specific as the first few verses. Like a postcard from the loony bin. The third verse, I think, is hopeful. It is looking at going back out into the world and reengaging. It was the ad lib that happened at the end of that take. It was so much of a piece, that I kept it. On that song, I capo [the guitar] on the third fret. The song is in C, but I play it in A. And back in the day it seemed sufficient. We recorded it at Sunset Sound [in Hollywood]. That album [Sweet Baby James] was recorded in two weeks. On two-inch track tape. Bill Lazarus was the staff engineer who recorded us. It was, at that point, just about getting the songs down. I taught her the song. Different producers have different tasks with different artists. Sometimes Danny Kortchmar or Carole would suggest things. But really the way these songs were recorded is that I have a community of musicians I work with. I give them the chords and play them my arrangement of it, then they find things that play that work with it. I never write out whole arrangements. I was in a booth, playing [guitar] and singing. Russ Kunkel is a remarkably versatile and powerful drummer. He really invented a lot of stuff. His tom fills, playing that song on brushes but as lively as he played it, and with as much passion. Bobby was just nailing down the bass, and he bowed the last verse, which built a lot of tension, that arco bass. Looking back on it, it was a very nice session. Carole has this energy about how she plays. She plays very energetically. She and I share a common language. We were definitely on the same page musically. She is so good at getting the feel of what I was doing. That really changed everything for me in , when that came out and I started working behind that album. I was at the right place and the right time.. It is deeply gratifying. And validating and confirming what I say. And I love to play it. I love playing it for people. And almost always, when I play that song , I get back to the place, to the feeling I had when I wrote it.

### Chapter 5 : James Taylor - Fire and Rain - Heroin Helper

*-- The story behind his second album, Sweet Baby James, which contained the song "Fire and Rain" about the hopelessness of mental illness and suicide. -- As Taylor's fame increased, so did his problems with heroin, alcohol, and mental illness.*

### Chapter 6 : NPR Choice page

*James Taylor "Fire and Rain" As told to Paul Zollo My friend Suzanne, from New York, had committed suicide a couple of months before my friends let me know.*

### Chapter 7 : Fire and Rain: The James Taylor Story - Ian Halperin - Google Books

*Taylor, however, was on the road promoting the album, and when "Fire and Rain" was released as the second single, it took off. The stark lyrics about Taylor's depression stand out on Sweet Baby James, which contains mostly lighter, uplifting songs.*

Chapter 8 : James Taylor - Wikipedia

*"Fire and Rain" is a folk rock song written and performed by James Taylor. Released on Warner Bros. Records as a single from his second album, Sweet Baby James, in February , the song follows Taylor's reaction to the suicide of Suzanne Schnerr, a childhood friend, and his experiences with drug addiction and fame.*

Chapter 9 : Fire And Rain: The James Taylor Story by Ian Halperin

*Taylor's hit song "Fire and Rain" is about the suicide of a woman he became close to while in rehab and about getting off heroin itself. There is an amusing myth about the meaning of the song. According to the myth, the song tells the story of Taylor's girlfriend, Suzanne, being killed in an airplane crash on her way to meet him at a concert.*