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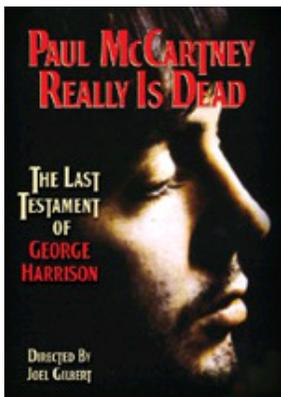


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## HIGHWAY 61



### MOVIE INFO

**Director:**  
Joel Gilbert

**Cast:**  
Various

**Writing Credits:**  
-unknown-

### Synopsis:

In the summer of 2005, a package arrived at the Hollywood offices of Highway 61 Entertainment from London with no return address. Inside were two mini-cassette audio tapes dated December 30, 1999 and labeled THE LAST TESTAMENT OF GEORGE HARRISON. A voice identical to Harrison tells a shocking story: Paul McCartney was killed in a car crash in November of 1966 and replaced with a double! British intelligence, MI5, had forced the Beatles to cover up McCartney's death to prevent mass suicides of Beatle fans. However, the remaining Beatles tried to signal fans with clues on album covers and in songs. Until now, the Paul is Dead mystery that exploded worldwide in 1969 was considered a hoax. However, in this film, George Harrison reveals a secret Beatles history, chronicling McCartney's fatal accident, the cover up, dozens of unknown clues, and a dangerous cat and mouse game with Maxwell, the Beatles MI5 handler, as John Lennon became increasingly reckless with the secret. Harrison also insists that Lennon was assassinated in

## Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament Of George Harrison (2010)

Reviewed by [Colin Jacobson](#) (July 19, 2010)

In the band's prime, Beatles fans interpreted everything they did/said/wrote for "deeper meaning". Along the way, some listeners discovered "clues" that Paul McCartney had died. And thus was arguably the ultimate rock 'n' roll urban legend born! It started in 1969 and never really went away. Heck, Macca himself even had fun with the myth when he titled his 1993 concert album/video *Paul Is Live*.

Despite the utter absurdity of the idea that McCartney could die and be replaced by another left-handed bass player with an identical voice and equal songwriting talent, the rumor won't vanish. It gets yet another examination in a "documentary" entitled *Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison*. Here's how the DVD's case divulges its content:

"In the summer of 2005, a package arrived at the Hollywood offices of Highway 61 Entertainment from London with no return address. Inside were two mini-cassette audio tapes dated December 30, 1999 and labeled THE LAST TESTAMENT OF GEORGE HARRISON. A voice identical to Harrison tells a shocking story: Paul McCartney was killed in a car crash in November of 1966 and replaced with a double! British intelligence, MI5, had forced the Beatles to cover up McCartney's death to prevent mass suicides of Beatle fans. However, the remaining Beatles tried to signal fans with clues on album covers and in songs.

"Until now, the Paul is Dead mystery that exploded worldwide in 1969 was considered a hoax. However, in this film, George Harrison reveals a secret Beatles history, chronicling McCartney's fatal accident, the cover up, dozens of unknown clues, and a dangerous cat and mouse game with Maxwell, the Beatles MI5 handler, as John Lennon became increasingly reckless with the secret. Harrison also insists that Lennon was assassinated in 1980 after he threatened to finally expose Paul McCartney as an imposter!

"Highway 61 Entertainment has corroborated most of George Harrison's stunning account of the conspiracy to hide McCartney's tragic death. Harrison's complete audio tapes narrate this film that includes all the newly unearthed evidence. The Last Testament of George Harrison may prove to be the most important document in rock and roll history, leaving little doubt that PAUL MCCARTNEY REALLY IS DEAD!"

Um. Yeah. Okay.

Wow.

I'm tempted to leave my review at that, as I'm not sure what to make of *Really*. Two possible interpretations arise:

- 1) It's a total farce that intends to parody the "Paul is Dead" myth and poke fun at obsessive Beatles fans;
- 2) It actually intends to convince us that McCartney died in 1966.

Neither explanation satisfies, though I hope Possibility 1 is accurate. I tend to think it must be the case given the nature of this disaster. Director Joel Gilbert apparently has an MBA from George Washington University and he's a major Bob Dylan buff. Could someone with that intelligence and that knowledge of rock history produce a "documentary" as inherently flawed and idiotic as this one?

1980 after he threatened to finally expose Paul McCartney as an imposter! Highway 61 Entertainment has corroborated most of George Harrison's stunning account of the conspiracy to hide McCartney's tragic death. Harrison's complete audio tapes narrate this film that includes all the newly unearthed evidence. The Last Testament of George Harrison may prove to be the most important document in rock and roll history, leaving little doubt that PAUL MCCARTNEY REALLY IS DEAD!

**MPAA:**

Rated NR

**DVD DETAILS****Presentation:**

Aspect Ratio: 1.78:1/16X9

**Audio:**

English Dolby Stereo 2.0

**Subtitles:**

None

Closed-captioned

**Supplements Subtitles:**

None

**Runtime:** 97 min.**Price:** \$14.95**Release Date:** 9/1/2010**Bonus:**

- "Bob Dylan Meets the Beatles" Featurette
- Soundtrack

**PURCHASE @ AMAZON.COM****EQUIPMENT**

Panasonic 50" TH-50PZ77U 1080p Plasma Monitor; Sony STR-DG1200 7.1 Channel Receiver; Panasonic DMP-BD60K Blu-Ray Player using HDMI outputs; Michael Green Revolution Cinema 6i Speakers (all five); Kenwood 1050SW 150-watt Subwoofer.

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Maybe. After all, Oliver Stone seems to believe all the nonsense he shoved out the door with 1991's *JFK*, so it's entirely possible that Gilbert thinks he's giving us the hidden truth with *Really*.

If so, it's a "hidden truth" built on a mountain of lies. Much of the program's "credibility" stems from the nature of the audiotapes that give *Really* its narration. Gilbert claims that he attempted to have them authenticated, but the results were inconclusive.

Heh. Deaf people won't be fooled by the horrid Harrison impersonator. Heck, that's probably Gilbert himself doing the voice. Whoever pretends to be George, he can't even pull off a decent British accent, much less a nice reproduction of Harrison's tones. Even if you're willing to invest in the "Paul is Dead" story, you can't believe anything from the "George Harrison" we hear here.

Of course, that doesn't even get into the fact that the micro-cassette recordings of "Harrison" sound awfully clean and clear for that format, and it remains befuddling that "George" feels the need to spell out the Beatles' history in detail. Helpfully, he even makes sure he uses the last names of his bandmates in case we might get confused!

It's also interesting that "George" has an incredible memory for events but gets the chronology totally wrong. "Harrison" has it right for a while, up through the alleged demise of McCartney in late 1966.

And then he goes into a tailspin. "George" discusses the "clues" found on *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*, both of which came out before Paul's rumored demise. "George" also discusses *Yesterday... and Today* as the band's follow-up to *Revolver*, even though a) it came out before that album, and b) it was nothing more than a compilation created for US consumption. No Beatle would ever think of it as a regular LP of theirs.

Of course, "George" doesn't even know that he wrote "Only a Northern Song", so why expect him to remember the albums he made? Many, many more mistakes in facts and chronology occur along the line, though the stretches in logic prove the most dazzling. I'd enjoy a fairly serious documentary examination of the "Paul is Dead" legend, and if *Really* took a hard look at the accepted "clues", it could've been an interesting diversion.

*Really* does bring up the standard "hints", all of which are presented as fact even though many never made sense. For instance, conspiracy theorists cited the *Abbey Road* cover license plate that read "28IF" as a clue; they claimed it signified Paul's death because at the time of the album's release, he would've been "28 if" he'd lived.

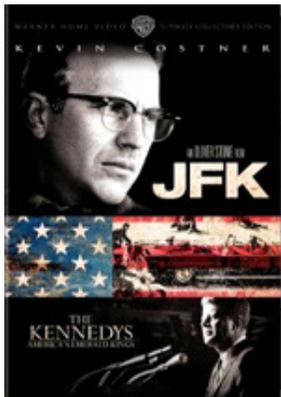
Which was inaccurate, as Macca would've been 27 when *Abbey Road* hit the shelves. Of course, nimble theorists came up with poppycock to make sense of the term, something like a claim that some cultures count time in the womb and McCartney would be 28 under those rules. ("Paul is Dead" fanatics could always be counted on to find some obscure explanation for all the "signs".)

*Really* doesn't bother with the fancy footwork, though. It just says "Paul would've been 28 at the release of *Abbey Road*" and leaves it at that. Of course, *Really* also thinks that the Beatles recorded *Abbey Road* before they made *Let It Be*. Sigh.

The most insane parts of *Really* come from the theories it appears to invent on its own. Granted, I'm no student of "Paul is Dead" lore, so I can't say for sure that the program's creators didn't lift all the "clues" from elsewhere. I know enough about the Beatles to recognize some of them – like "28IF" and whatnot – but there were many outrageous ones that were new to me.

Man, I'd need days to get into all of them. Arguably the craziest one? The notion that during the 1966 drive that would claim his life, he picked up a woman who would later come back to haunt him.

A woman who would turn out to be...

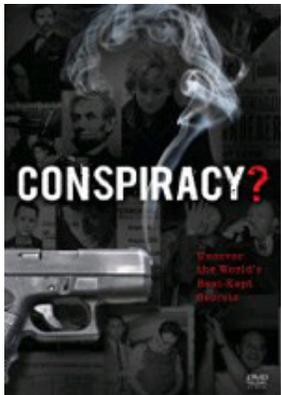


Paul's second wife, Heather Mills!

For real? The program wants us to believe that Mills greeted McCartney on the motorway in 1966 even though she wasn't born until 1968?

For all of these reasons and many more, I find it next to impossible to accept that *Really* exists as anything other than a spoof. However, nothing in its release tips off prospective viewers that the show's producers aren't serious, and all the viewer interpretations I've seen appear to accept it as a serious examination of "Paul is Dead".

Is this some sort of crazy performance art experiment meant to have a laugh at the viewer's expense? Probably, though only the utter absurdity of the content gives us a clue that the filmmakers want to poke fun at the topic.



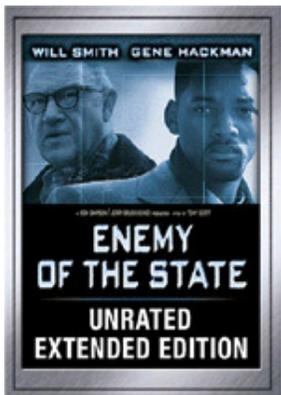
If viewed as attempted comedy, *Really* works better, though not much. It's just too stupid, and I find some aspects of it to be offensive. In particular, it really bothers me that *Really* trivializes the deaths of both Lennon and Harrison. I don't care for the way it makes tragedy into fodder for its silliness.

On the positive side, *Really* includes some interesting news footage of the Beatles. A full DVD with those elements would've been quite enjoyable, as it gives us a good mix of well-known and semi-obscure clips. Unfortunately, there aren't enough of these to redeem *Really*.

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### The DVD Grades: Picture D+ / Audio C+ / Bonus D

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*Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison* appears in an aspect ratio of approximately **1.78:1** on this single-sided, single-layered DVD; the image has been enhanced for **16X9** televisions. The program consisted solely of stills and archival film footage, which restricted visual quality.

Some of the stills looked fine, though the show went with a lot of effects that altered their appearance. At their best, the photos provided decent delineation, but they also came with a fair amount of jaggies and roughness. However, the images tended to fly past pretty quickly and were frequently subjected to blurring and coloration effects, so we rarely got a very good look at them. Their quality was passable and that was about it.

The film shots came with expected erratic quality, though the transfer did them no favors. Like the stills, the footage used a lot of effects and moved very quickly, so we rarely got a strong glimpse of the elements. Film bits tended to be pretty ugly anyway. They showed the expected source flaws, and they were blurrier and less concise than expected even when I accounted for age. Colors looked blotchy and messy, while definition was rough. I noticed a fair amount of edge enhancement and digital artifacts. This wasn't an atrocious presentation, but it wasn't appealing.

At least the **Dolby Stereo 2.0** soundtrack worked better. A busy affair, the show came with virtually constant music as well as a surprising number of effects. I didn't expect much in terms of the latter, but the show used a flashy approach that meant swooshes and a variety of effects to simulate car crashes and the like. These popped up across the front speakers, though they usually stayed pretty centered.

The same went for speech. Most of the narration remained in the front middle, but lines occasionally popped up from the sides for trippy impressions. Music demonstrated very good stereo presence and used the various channels well.

Audio quality was fine. Some archival materials came across as screechy, but material created for the program worked fine. Speech was clean and natural - too natural, in terms of the "micro-cassette" recorded narration - and effects showed reasonable clarity. Music displayed nice pep and range. The track was acceptable for this sort of show, though it might've been busier than necessary.

Two extras appear here. A featurette called **Bob Dylan Meets the Beatles** runs 10 minutes, nine seconds and includes comments from journalist Al Aronowitz. He discusses the time in 1964 when he introduced the Fabs and Dylan to each other and also relates some thoughts about Dylan. The tale behind the momentous encounter isn't as interesting as you'd hope, and Aronowitz doesn't bring many compelling thoughts to the table.

In addition, the DVD provides MP3 versions of the show's Beatlesque **soundtrack**. These clips are available if you plop the disc in your computer drive. If that excites you, have fun!

Does *Paul McCartney Really Is Dead* attempt to seriously investigate the "Paul is Dead" hoax or does it just want to poke fun at that theory? I have to lean toward the latter, but the clumsy, idiotic program doesn't succeed in that way or any other; it's relentlessly stupid and absurd. The DVD comes with flawed visuals, decent audio and minor supplements. Stay far away from this goofy, dopey "documentary".

**Viewer Film Ratings: 1 Stars**

**Number of Votes: 1**



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