

A long and winding road to The Beatles from John and Yoko. Oh no! And then more



Author's collection



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It's taking a bit of time, but look at it this way: If you are getting a tax refund, you can easily pre-order ***I'm Not the Beatles: The John & Yoko Interviews with Howard Smith, 1969-1972***, this eight-CD box set featuring John Lennon and Yoko Ono's five iconic conversations with *Village Voice* journalist and radio personality Howard Smith. These in-depth discussions

about music, love, creativity, peace and politics illuminate the couple's transformation from Beatles into revolutionaries.

These interviews have been mastered from Smith's original audio recordings, which had been buried in the back of his West Village loft for 40 years. Never before released on CD. Until now.

May 28-29, 1969: Live phone interview, the Bed-In Montreal (35 min)

Smith speaks on the phone with John and Yoko, who are in their suite at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal. Among other things, they discuss selling Peace as a commodity, the Activist Movement, and Lennon's denial of being, nor intention of being, a leader.

December 17, 1969: Ronnie Hawkin's Ranch, Ontario Canada (89 minutes)

Smith traveled to Ronnie Hawkin's Ranch outside of Toronto to interview John and Yoko.

While eating shrimp tempura, they discuss the ins and outs of recording with the Beatles, the band's uncertain future, Woodstock vs. Altamont, and the impact of the Youth Movement.

December 12, 1970: ; Regency Hotel, NYC (86 minutes)

Smith interviews John and Yoko the day after the *Plastic Ono Band Albums* are released, and they are in the midst of shooting two art films. They discuss the emotional process of their music including specific songs from the albums, their time in Janov therapy, how they handle fame, and whether the Beatles will ever get back together.

September 9, 1971; St. Regis Hotel, NYC (71 minutes)

Smith interviews John and Yoko on the day Lennon's album *Imagine* is released. They discuss the album, Ono's upcoming artist retrospective, Paul, George and Ringo's own individual albums, the media's criticisms of their relationship, John's "working class" nature, and future plans.

January 23, 1972; The Lennons' Bank Street apartment, NYC (86 minUTES)

Smith drops by John and Yoko's West Village apartment on the day of a WPLJ Beatles marathon which can be heard at times playing in the background, often inspiring and directing the conversation. They discuss the experience of being a Beatle (and a Beatle wife) and the break up, stage fright and the emotional rollercoaster of performing, breakthroughs acquired in Janov therapy, love and *Revolution*.

About Howard Smith

Smith is an Oscar winning film director, journalist and broadcaster. As a writer for more than 30 years, his articles have appeared in, among others, *Playboy* and *The New York Times*. Smith's weekly column "Scenes" in the *The Village Voice* helped cement the paper's position within the emerging counterculture.