

TAPE INDEX

1. Announcement.

2. Born February 26, 1942, Indian hospital, Hayward Wisconsin. Bobby went back to see the place in the early 1980s, but it had been torn down.

3. Uncles played guitar, mandolin, a little banjo, and fiddles. Maternal uncle, French-Indian. Raised on that music, "almost since I was old enough to have ears." Parents also tuned in on to the Grand Ole Opry on radio. Radio took B many places. Mentions radio programs that he listened to. Also listened to pop music of the time. But "primarily I was raised on country music," hillbilly music. Reckoned the music was frowned on, but some like Jimmie Rodgers, Ernest Tubb, Roy Acuff "legitimized hillbilly music and turned it into country music." Mentions Hank Williams here too and how his tunes were covered by pop singers like Patti Page.

4. Kind of forced into music by his uncle, Harris LaBarge, a great guitarist until he cut a tendon on his arm. When he picked up the fiddle, he needed Bobby to play for him. Taught B the chords. Would ride around, find a place in the country, then "go at it until our fingers would fall off." Was quite young then and started drinking young too. Would play in the cemeteries at night, drinking beer. Nobody would bother them in the cemeteries.

5. From 13 through high school liked the Everly Brothers, Elvis, Rick Nelson, Chuck Berry. Country music fell a little to the side.

6. Joined the Army to explore the world in 1961. Ran into a lot of black musicians who tolerated his interest in jazz and blues. Went to some clubs. Had bands in Germany. Polish accordionist, New York City guy on upright bass and drums, a farm kid from Iowa and Bobby on guitar, an Italian trumpet player. Called "The Moonglows," did "standard music" which B had never done. Learned a lot.

7. Started writing country songs seriously in the early 1960s, had been dabbling since grade school. Left service in December 1963. Began playing country music in Madison, WI, area. In 1971 began going to Nashville with a handful of songs to "make the rounds." Songs were all rejected.

8. Made a record, "Kite in the Sky" and "Roar, Diesel, Roar" as a demo. Writing improved, but guitar playing dropped off. 1976 got sick of music, and didn't do anything for about a year and a half. But got back into writing. Was finding out who he was and where he came from--that he was an Anishinabe or Ojibwe Indian. "My music followed me as I followed the Indian ways."

9. About this time, mid-1970s, began to follow an Indian "spiritual path." Nashville began to fade and B started to write about his people, injustices they have suffered, and the issues that face them today. Has no wish to be a big star, very comfortable with what he is doing.

10. Bobby's name really St. Germaine. When in Germany in Army chummed with a black fellow from Georgia, Clarence Weaver. And also used to drink beer with the Wisconsin guys. People used to call Bobby "Buddy Holly." Clarence used to ask Bobby what his name was, and he'd say "Big beautiful bouncing brown-eyed Bullet Bob from Boston, babe." Then they called him Bullet Bob. Later on Jim Dawson, a country music promoter in Madison, originally from Louisiana, heard the story from Bobby. B had just made a record in Nashville, Weekend Warriors, and Dawson suggested that Bobby call himself Bobby Bullet. Bobby liked it because Billboard magazine marked hits "with a bullet." Record never became a hit, however.

11. On Bobby's songs. "Reservation Auto." Had a 1976 Pontiac in bad shape. Had to open the doors with a rat tail file, the trunk with a screwdriver, the hood was held down with a rope. The thing was always breaking down. Coming down from the res one Sunday and the car broke down near Stevens Point. Wrote 3/4 of the song, then went for help, bought a water hose. Finished the song when he got home.

12. "The Fire Must Never Die" is about the flooding of rice beds and graves at the Lac Court Oreilles reservation when the state put in a dam. At that time Bobby's song "Lac Du Flambeau Reservation" was being played quite a bit and people at LCO wanted a song too.

13. "The Devil's Mouth" concerns Bobby and Harold Frog of Spooner, in their drinking days. Alcohol should be avoided by traditional Indian people.

14. When B was a kid his music-playing uncles would "pop in at any time" and stay for a day to a month to six months. "They always heard that music swirling around them."

15. B doesn't really know of any "Indian" fiddle tunes. Did write a song around 1980 about one of his grandfathers, a Frenchman, who was a lumberjack and about to die. Had to do with river drives. Never recorded this song, but has it on a tape someplace.

16. B generally plays by himself nowadays because the people who invite him--concerned with environmental or treaty issues--have a shoestring budget. B does his "Indian songs" then. Maybe at the end of the day, he might jam with people and play some rock and roll that everybody knows.

17. B has a new tape. "Play Me" is a song he wrote seven years

ago. Got some interest from Tommy Collins, who was Ronnie Milsap's manager.

18. "They Can't Keep Us Down" is about political prisoners in the United States, including Leonard Peltier.

19. "Hey Woman Girl" a love song about a woman in this area.

20. "Has Love Disappeared?" is about children. A woman at Lac Court Oreilles asked him to write a peace song, and this was eventually what he wrote.

21. "Lac Du Flambeau," about his home reservation, and "Crawling on My Knees," about a girl he met in Dodgeville, are also on his latest tape.

22. About Mauri Big John, a fiddler from Lac Du Flambeau. Tom Lynch and Fat Lynch two brothers, guitarists, from Lac Du Flambeau. Mauri played guitar and fiddle too. B would be visiting his fiddling uncle and would play with these guys when they were teenagers. Then Mauri Big John played guitar for Bobby for many years when he played bigger jobs in Milwaukee or Duluth.

END OF TAPE, END OF SESSION
TAPE TWO, SONGS BY BOBBY BULLET

1. Lac Du Flambeau Reservation.
2. The Devil's Mouth.
3. The Fire Must Never Die.
4. I'm Hattin' Up.
5. Grandmother's Grave.
6. You Are Summer.
7. The City Where I Died.
8. Trail of Broken Treaties.
9. Reservation Auto.