THREE DOG NIGHT

Title: Captured Live At The Forum

Label: Dunhill

Release Date: 1969

Medium: Album

Availability: Very Good

Venue: The Forum, Los Angeles, CA

Recording Date: September 12, 1969

Lineup: Chuck Negron - Vocals
Cory Wells - Vocals
Danny Hutton - Vocals
Mike Allsup - Guitar
Jimmy Greenspoon - Keyboards
Floyd Sneed - Drums
Joe Schermie - Bass

Set List: Heaven
Feelin' All Right
It's For You
Nobody
One
Chest Fever
Eli's Coming
Easy To Be Hard
Try A Little Tenderness

The career of Three Dog Night is filled with the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. At one point, they released twenty-one consecutive top forty singles, a record for a rock band. Seven of these sold over a million copies in the U.S. and eleven of them cracked the U.S. pop singles top ten chart. Their first twelve albums were all certified gold and they have released fourteen U.S. gold albums to date, with two passing one million in sales. They have charted thirteen albums and twenty-one singles in Canada and also had success in Australia, where ten of their singles have charted. The group is in the Vocal Group Hall of Fame and they literally put then little known songwriters like Laura Nyro, Harry Nilsson, Randy Newman, and Paul Williams on the map.

At their best, the band's music featured flawless multi part harmonies, exquisite lead vocals, and tight well played arrangements. They were a dynamic band in concert and at their peak, were able to sell out stadiums throughout North America. They had an uncanny ability to improve nearly every song they decided to record, even records from established artists/songwriters like Hoyt Axton, Leo Sayer, and Russ Ballard. They even successfully tackled song classics like "Try A Little Tenderness", "Chest Fever", and "Feelin' All Right" and held their own with the originals. While they had an uncanny ability to find new material and rework old songs, they have not received credit for what they did with them.

However, for all of these accomplishments, Three Dog Night is one of the most disrespected superstar groups in music history. When they made the decision to not write any of their music, they were relegated to something just above a covers band and their later day song choices bordered on bubblegum. Their never-ending barrage of albums and singles during their peak period wound up turning off nearly all of their early fans and they fell apart because of drug addictions, apathy, bad business advice, and group member departures. With recent death of Chuck Negron, the last remaining original singer is Danny Hutton. He continues to lead a version of the band which still actively tours as of February 2026. A new studio album, *Enter*, will also be physically released in 2026.

As their name suggests, the backbone of Three Dog Night were their three lead singers, Chuck Negron, Cory Wells, and Danny Hutton. Chuck Negron was born Charles Negron on June 8, 1942, in Manhattan, NY. His father was a nightclub singer, who divorced his wife when Chuck and his twin sister, Nancy, were only five years old. Three years later, they would wind up in an orphanage for a couple of years when their mother could no longer afford to take care of them.

Once reunited with his mother, Negron discovered that he was a gifted singer, blessed with a pristine voice and incredible range. He sang in several local doo wop groups throughout his teens and when he fifteen years old, joined the Rondells. The vocal group landed gigs at college parties and hung around at the Brill Building, hoping to get discovered. They wound up getting signed, cut some records, then landed higher prestige shows in NYC, including one memorable one at the Apollo Theatre when Chuck was sixteen years old.

Around this same time, Negron began playing basketball and quickly excelled at the sport. During the rest of high school, he balanced weekend gigs with the Rondells with basketball and his studies. He soon attracted the attention of college recruiters. He wound up choosing Allan Hancock College in Santa Maria, CA. He picked the school because it was near where his father was living, and he wanted to reestablish a relationship with him. While in college, he joined the school choir and was picked for an ensemble that played shows outside of the university.

While still playing basketball, Negron began to play live shows with The Sorenson Brothers. In 1962, he released a single, "I Dream Of An Angel" backed by "Sharon Lee" on Hart-Van Records billed as Chuck Rondell With The Sorenson Brothers. He then signed with Columbia Records. Once again using the moniker Chuck Rondell, he released a single, "Speak For Yourself, John" backed by "All's Fair In Love And War" in December 1964.

While Columbia pigeonholed him into singing torch ballads, he established friendships with many industry insiders who would later help him with his career. He also met a number of up-and-coming songwriters. He had now moved to Cal State University in Los Angeles because of his basketball skills. However, it became apparent that he could no longer balance basketball, Columbia Records, and his school studies. In 1964, he decided to focus on music and left college.

Hutton was born Daniel Anthony Hutton on September 10, 1942, in Buncrana, Ireland. He was the youngest of three children born to Kathleen Hutton. When Danny was four and a half years old, his mother took her three kids and immigrated to the U.S., settling in Boston nearby other members of her family. She played the mandolin, while her brother Bill was a multi-instrumentalist, and sister Mary played the harmonica and sand. As such, Danny was raised in a musical environment. His older brother, Vincent, would become a professional trumpet player working with Chet Baker, and his older sister, Patricia, would sing in Las Vegas.

They eventually moved to the Back Bay area of Boston, where his mother ran a boarding house. She wound up testifying against a murderer who then escaped from jail. Fearing that she and her family were in danger, she moved to Los Angeles when Danny was 12 years old. Danny graduated from high school in 1961, then took a trip to Europe. On the trip, he visited his hometown. While there, his love for music was reignited and he decided to pursue a career upon returning to Los Angeles. He auditioned for A&M Records and wound up recording a single, "Why Don't You Love Me Anymore" (1964) on their Almo subsidiary under the moniker Daring Dan Hutton.

During that same year, Hutton met Brian Wilson and the two became friends. They recorded a new version of the Beach Boys' "Farmers Daughter" (1965) as Basil Swift and the Seegrams. To make ends meet, Hutton was working in the warehouse at Disney's Buena Vista Records and hanging out at various Hollywood hangouts, including the International House Of Pancakes. He met producer Kim Fowley, who sent him over to meet Larry Goldberg, who was working for Hanna-Barbera Records, which was owned by Hanna-Barbera, producers of various cartoon series, including *Yogi Bear*, *The Flintstones*, and *The Jetsons*. The record label was formed to release recordings by the cartoon characters.

Goldberg hired Hutton as a producer, voice over artist, talent scout, and singer. His first record with Hanna-Barbera was "Nothing At All" backed by "Big Bright Eyes" under the name, The Bats. Hutton wrote both songs, did all the singing and played all the instruments. This led to his involvement on a new album, *Monster Shindig* (1965). The idea was for Hutton to record the entire album, which would include songs written by other artists as well as himself. That included "Roses and Rainbows" (#73-1965), which was written and credited to Danny Hutton. The B side was the album's title track.

On September 17, 1965, Hutton was briefly shown singing the song on the season opener of *The Flintstones*. The exposure pushed the single to the lower levels of the U.S. pop singles chart, peaking at number 73. Hutton played his first professional concert while touring in support, opening for Sonny and Cher during a three-week tour. He also appeared on *American Bandstand* and performed the song, appearing on the show with the Lovin' Spoonful.

As a follow up, Hanna-Barbera Records had Hutton re-record "Big Bright Eyes", which they released. When label executives insisted that the B side was "Monster Shindig Part 2" and Hutton found out that Goldberg was credited as co-writer on "Roses and Rainbows" without his knowledge, the singer knew that he would never get anywhere with the label. He hired a new agent, who got him released from the label, and signed with MGM Records. During this same time period, Hutton auditioned for *The Monkees* television show, but did not get the part.

While on MGM, Hutton released "Dreamin' Isn't Good For You" backed by "Funny How Love Can Be" in 1966, followed by "Hang On To A Dream" backed by "Hit The Wall". Neither did anything outside of Los Angeles and the label dropped him. While with MGM, Hutton also produced a couple of singles for another artist. Interestingly, it was for his future bandmate, Cory Wells.

Wells was born Emil Lewandowski on February 5, 1941, in Buffalo, New York. His biological father impregnated his mother while he was married to another woman. He died when Cory was a young child, leaving his mother to raise him alone until she eventually remarried. Cory later changed his last name to Wells, which is a shortened version of his biological father's last name, Wellsley.

Cory had a rough, blue-collar upbringing but had a gift for music as a child. He played with several Buffalo based bands in his teens, then joined the Air Force immediately after graduating from high school. While in the service, he formed his own band called The Satellites. After being honorably discharged, Wells returned to Buffalo and joined the Vibratos in the mid-sixties. The group also included guitarist Mike Lustan and drummer Dave Treiger. The band's manager, Gene Jacobs, encouraged the group to relocate to Los Angeles, where they recruited bassist Cal Titus and renamed themselves Cory Wells & The Enemys. Wells took the name Cory from Jacobs' son.

The band quickly became part of a burgeoning music scene. They landed their first gig at The Rag Doll club in Coldwater Canyon and quickly became part of the scene, which also included The Byrds, Buffalo

Springfield, The Doors, Love, The Leaves, and The Music Machine. They graduated up the club latter, eventually landing gigs at Ciros, The Crescendo, The Palomino Club, The London Frog, Gazzarris, The Action, Cinnamon Cinder, Danitas, and finally the Whisky A Go-Go, where they had a high-profile residency in 1966.

In 1965, they signed with Valiant Records and released their debut single, "Goodbye To Donna" backed by "Sinner Man". They then signed with MGM and released "Glitter And Gold" backed by "Too Much Monkey Business" (1966). Their third single was a cover of "Hey Joe" backed by "My Dues Have Been Paid". Wells met Hutton for the first time when both were on a two-week tour with one of Dick Clark's package tours. Hutton was performing as a solo act in the wake of "Roses and Rainbows" and Wells was touring as part of The Enemys. The two bonded during the long bus rides between shows.

Once the tour ended, Hutton agreed to produce the next single for The Enemys, which was a cover of "Ey Joe" backed by "My Dues Have Been Paid". It was released as their third single. Their last MGM single was "Mo-Jo Woman", which was again backed by "My Dues Have Been Paid".

While none of these singles went anywhere nationally, the band performed on an episode of *The Beverly Hillbillies*, singing "Mo-Jo Woman", "Oh, Pretty Woman", and an instrumental. They played an instrumental on an episode of the television series, *Burke's Law*, and performed "Jolene" in the movie, *Riot On Sunset Strip*.

Cory Wells and the Enemys broke up in 1967 and Wells moved to Arizona, where he formed The Cory Wells Blues Band. His bass player was Joe Schermie (born Joseph Edward Schermetzler on February 12, 1946 in Madison, Wisconsin). Later that same year, he was contacted by Hutton, who pitched the idea of forming a new band centered around three lead singers. Wells returned to Los Angeles and the two began the process of finding a third singer.

Meanwhile, Negron found work between 1965 and mid-1967, singing backup in the studio and on tour. He also released some singles under the name Chuck Oberon, but they did not go anywhere. He was managed by Reb Foster and Bill Utley, who would wind up managing Three Dog Night. In August 1967, he had just returned from a small tour with Biondi when he ran into Hutton, who he become friends with while both were at Columbia. Hutton set up a meeting between Negron and Wells. While Negron had not met Wells, he was familiar with him from his days with The Enemys at the Whisky A-Go-Go. The two hit it off immediately when they learned that they were both from New York.

The three started practicing together and it was immediately apparent that there was something there. By the end of that first session, Hutton and Wells had invited Negron to join the new band and soon the wheels started rolling. Hutton called up Brian Wilson, who wanted to work with the three singers. He named them Redwood and offered to sign them to the Beach Boys' Brothers Records, but the other Beach Boys would not commit to anything beyond one single. Then, Mike Love found out that Brian was writing new songs for them and insisted that the new material, which included an early version of the future Beach Boys hit, "Darlin'", had to stay with the band. In the end, they recorded a couple of singles but neither of them was released.

Meanwhile, the three singers were advised by Utley and Foster, who were now their managers, to put together their own backing band so that they would not have to rely upon session musicians to cut their records. Initially, Hutton advocated playing behind pre-recorded tapes, but Wells agreed with their managers. The first to join was keyboardist Jimmy Greenspoon.

Greenspoon was born James Boyd Greenspoon on February 7, 1948, in Beverly Hills, CA. He began to take classical piano lessons at the age of seven. His mother, Mary O'Brien, was a silent screen actress and his family was well off. He attended Beverly Hills High School with Richard Dreyfuss, Bonnie Franklin, and future producer Michael Lloyd. Lloyd and Greenspoon formed the New Dimensions in 1963. He later attended the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music, where he studied under Harry Fields.

Greenspoon played with several Sunset Strip based bands after college, including the Sound of the Seventh Son and The East Side Kids. While playing there with the latter, he met Wells. In late 1966, he moved to Denver where he met the members of The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band, which included guitarist Ron Morgan (born June 8, 1945, in Colby, KS). Morgan's father was a jazz guitarist who passed his love of music to his two songs, Ron and Bob. Both would become professional musicians.

After Greenspoon played with the California Spectrum, along with Shaun and Danny Harris, and Michael Lloyd, he returned to Los Angeles. After returning to Los Angeles, he met Hutton and was invited to join the band. He wound up recommending Morgan, who also joined.

Wells then contacted Schermie, who agreed to move up from Arizona to join on bass. The trio then added drummer Floyd Sneed (born Floyd Chester Sneed on November 22, 1942, in Calgary, Canada). Both of Sneed's parents were musicians and he gravitated to drums at an early age. His sister was later married to musician-actor Tommy Chong, who formed a Vancouver based band called Little Daddy and the Bachelors. Sneed eventually joined as their drummer. By 1966, he had moved to Los Angeles with his own band.

The group played their first show at a bar near LAX Airport. Still without a name, Hutton's then girlfriend, actress June Fairchild, suggested Three Dog Night. She had just read a magazine article about indigenous Australians, who would sleep in a hole in the ground while embracing a dingo to keep warm. On colder nights, they would sleep with two dogs and if the temperatures got below freezing, three dogs.

Over the next six months, the band played club shows and continually rehearsed. In May 1968, they played their first show at the Whisky A Go-Go, opening for It's A Beautiful Day. They headlined in mid-June and late October of the same year. At the time, their setlist was very similar to what would wind up on their first album. For the most part, they chose songs written by other songwriters that had not been hits and put their own spin on them, often rearranging them to fit the three lead vocalists' format.

When Utley and Foster thought they were ready, they set up an afternoon showcase at the Troubadour in mid-1968. Jay Lasker, the President of ABC-Dunhill attended and signed them on the spot. He also told them that he wanted them to start recording their debut album immediately and use the same songs that they had played in the showcase.

Unfortunately, Morgan picked that very moment to tell the band that he was going to leave. He had been given a contract that defined the four musicians as secondary to the three main singers and refused to sign it. He also did not agree with their strategy of playing songs written by other artists. Finally, Morgan did not like to play live, preferring studio work.

Through a set of fortuitous circumstances, they found his replacement, Michael Allsup (born Michael Rand Allsup on March 8, 1947, in Empire, CA), almost immediately. Allsup first began to play the guitar in his early teens and soon began taking lessons from a local guitarist, who was blind. He formed his first

band, The Chancellors, in eighth grade. They later were known as The Viscounts. Allsup later became a huge fan of Jimi Hendrix. His entry into Three Dog Night came about by accident.

He was a member of a club band called The Family Scandal when he bumped into Schermie at Vine Lodge Hotel, where both were staying without knowing that the other was there. Allsup had first met the bassist in 1966 when he was a member of the Nomads. Three Dog Night was rehearsing next door in a vacant house. Morgan had just given his notice but was still in the band. Schermie invited him to attend a rehearsal, things clicked, and he decided to leave The Family Scandal to join Three Dog Night.

Lasker teamed the new band with producer Gabriel Mekler, who had previously worked with Steppenwolf. In turn, he brought on engineer Richard Podolor. The songs for the first album were picked in large part due to the band members' connections within the industry. Negron knew Chuck Kaye, who knew the Nilsson had written and released a great song called "One" that had flopped. He also recommended Randy Newman, who supplied "Bet No One Ever Hurt This Bad".

Hutton was friends with Danny Whitten and Neil Young, which led to "Let Me Go" and "The Loner". He also was huge fan of the Beatles, which led to "It's For You". Wells had extensive blues knowledge which led to the selection of Johnny Watson's "Find Somebody To Love" and the classic, "Try A Little Tenderness". . Greenspoon was a fan of Garth Hudson which led to "Chest Fever". The entire band loved Traffic, which led to "Heaven Is In Your Mind".

During this same time period, Foster and Utley merged with management agent Burt Jacobs to create a new management team that would manage both Steppenwolf and Three Dog Night. The three would spend $35,000 of their own money to help promote the band over the next several months. With Allsup now on board, they played a handful of shows then recorded their debut in one week. That album, *Three Dog Night* (#11-1968), was released on October 16, 1968. Their debut single, "Nobody" (1968), was written by Beth Beatty, Dick Cooper, and Ernie Shelby. It was released in November 1968 but did not crack the U.S. pop singles top one hundred.

The band went out on the road in November 1968 to promote the album. They made their first television appearance on a local LA show in mid-November, then did a mini tour of Texas opening for Vanilla Fudge at the end of the month. That tour included four shows. They then toured through December, including high profile appearances at the Los Angeles Pop Festival, The San Francisco Holiday Rock Festival, and the Miami Pop Festival during late December. They ended the year with a show in Phoenix, Arizona.

The group then headed out on their first bus tour on January 30, 1969. After eight shows in the Northwest, they headed to the Northeast for the first time, debuting with two shows in Boston at The Ark in mid-February. They then played Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland, before making their NYC debut at Steve Paul's The Scene on March 3, 4, 5, and 6. They followed with two shows at the Electric Factory on March 7 and 8.

While this was taking place, the album began to sell at the beginning of 1969. It cracked the American pop albums chart in late January, when Dunhill released the second single, a cover of the r&b classic, "Try A Little Tenderness" (#29-1969). It caught on and cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty in late March. It featured an energetic lead vocal from Wells that was closely patterned after Otis Redding's version of the same song. It peaked at number 29 during a four-week top forty chart run. In turn, the album, which was receiving excellent reviews, began to move up the charts.

Not knowing how successful the debut album would ultimately become, Dunhill had the band start recording their second album in the spring of 1969, with the same production team who had worked on their debut. While working on the new material, Negron lobbied Dunhill executives that they needed to release one more single from their debut. He was convinced that their cover of Harry Nilsson's "One" (#5-1969) was a potential hit and as it turned out, Negron was right. Featuring a soaring lead vocal from the singer, the song was released in April and entered the U.S. pop singles top forty in late May. It stayed there for twelve weeks, eventually reaching number five and selling over one million copies.

With the single seemingly everywhere, the album soared, peaking at number 11 on the American pop albums chart during a 62-week chart run. It also reached number 17 in Canada and was eventually certified platinum in the States. Meanwhile, the band booked their first tour of England. From June 1 through June 19, 1969, they played a number of shows in England and Germany. Once back in the States, the band appeared at the Newport Pop Festival at Devonshire Downs in CA on June 22, the Denver Pop Festival on June 27, then played the LA Forum on July 14, 1969. This show would yield their first live album.

After that, they returned to the East Coast for two shows in Flushing Meadow Park in New York, followed by their only appearances at the Fillmore East on August 1 and 2. The following day, they played another high profile show at the Atlantic City Pop Festival, before heading West once again. Unfortunately for them, the band was not invited to Woodstock, which they would certainly have accepted.

Their second album, *Suitable For Framing* (#16-1969), was released on June 11, 1969. Even though there was a real chance that they could oversaturate the market with the new music, they were so hot that the album made the American pop albums chart in mid-July, pushed by the success of the lead single, "Easy To Be Hard" (#4-1969). The song had originally been written by Galt MacDermot, James Rado, and Gerome Ragni for the musical, *Hair*.

Once again, the band members recognized the potential and were the first artist to release it as a single. Featuring another remarkable lead vocal from Negron, the song entered the U.S. top forty in mid-August and reached number 4 during a twelve-week chart run. In October 1969, Dunhill released "Eli's Coming" (#10-1969). It was written by Laura Nyro, who had released it in 1968 to little success. The band recorded it with Wells on lead vocals and it became another huge it. It cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty within a month of its release and peaked at number 10 during a twelve-week top forty chart run.

Meanwhile, *Suitable For Framing* became a massive hit. It entered the American pop albums chart in July 1969 and reached number 16 during a remarkable seventy-four-week chart run. It was also certified gold and peaked at number 15 in Canada. A third single, "Celebrate" (#15-1970), was released in February 1970 and became another hit, peaking at number 15 during an eight-week U.S. top forty chart run. It was written by Gary Bonner and Alan Gordon and featured all three lead singers, each of whom sung one verse.

. In addition to the three hit singles, the album also included a very early Elton John/Bernie Taupin single called "Lady Samantha" (1969), which had been unsuccessfully released by Elton John in January 1969. The album also included a cover of Dave Mason's "Feelin' Alright", which became a favorite in their live shows.

As if all of this wasn't impressive enough, Dunhill doubled down and decided to release a live album that was recorded on July 14, 1969, at the Forum in Los Angeles. The album came about by accident. Dunhill was recording live shows for Steppenwolf during their 1969/1970 tour. As it happened, Three Dog Night opened for Steppenwolf at the Forum show. Since Dunhill already had the recording equipment set up,

they decided to record both bands that night, even though Three Dog Night had just released their second studio album and had no plans to release anything new at the time.

Captured Live At The Forum (#6-1969) was released on October, 16, 1969 and quickly became another hit. It cracked the American pop albums chart in late November and wound-up peaking at number 6 during a seventy-two-week chart run. It was also certified gold and is considered to be one of the best live albums of the era.

It is hard to imagine from today's perspective how fast all this took place. In one year, the band had gone from touring in an old bus to flying on chartered planes. They now had three gold selling albums at the top of the American pop albums chart, had released five consecutive U.S. top forty singles, and were huge in Canada. They had gone from a club band to an arena draw and had single-handedly elevated the stature of some of the best songwriters of their era.

At this point in their career, Three Dog Night made a conscious decision to stick with their approach of recording relatively obscure songs from outside songwriters instead of writing their own material. While Hutton had a proven track record as a songwriter and had written one song, "Dreaming Isn't Good For You" for their second album, he had decided that it was simpler in terms of band politics and market consistency to continue down the same path. And it continued to work for the next five years, despite tarnishing their legacy in the eyes of many important people in the music industry.

Dunhill continued to push Three Dog Night records out the door as fast as they could, realizing that they should maximize record sales while the group was hot. They settled on a two albums per year strategy, with five or six associated singles. This gave the band members virtually no time off. As soon as they would come back from their tours, they were in the studio, cranking out yet another record. It was exhausting and would ultimately doom the band.

Their third studio album, *It Ain't Easy* (#8-1970), was released on March 31, 1970. It was produced by Podolor and was another gold selling hit. It cracked the American pop albums chart in early May and peaked at number eight during a forty-eight-week chart run. It also reached number 5 in Canada. Oddly, none of their albums caught on in England, where they had virtually no success.

The lead single was the iconic "Mama Told Me Not To Come" (#1-1970). The song was written by Randy Newman back in 1966 and was first released by Eric Burdon & The Animals in March 1967 as an album track. Three Dog Night released their version in May, and it became an instant hit. It cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty in early June and topped the chart for two weeks during a thirteen-week top forty chart run. It generated U.S. sales of one million copies.

Lead vocals were sung by Wells, who injected enough humor into the song to make it endearing to the record buying public worldwide. In addition to topping the singles chart in America, it reached number 2 in Canada, number three in England, and number 10 in Australia. The song is widely considered to be Wells best individual lead vocal.

The second single, "Out In The Country" (#15-1970), was released in August 1970. It was written by another relatively unknown future star songwriter, Paul Williams, along with Roger Nichols. The environmentally themed piece entered the U.S. pop singles top forty in September and reached number 15 during an eight-week top forty chart run. Lead vocals were handled by all three singers, performing in unison.

Following the two album per year strategy, Dunhill next released *Naturally* (#14-1970) on November 18, 1970. It cracked the American pop albums chart in December and peaked at number 14 during a sixty-four-week chart run. The gold seller also peaked at number 19 in Canada. The album yielded three more massive hit singles. The lead single, "One Man Band" (#19-1970), was released in November 1970. It cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty in early December and reached number 19 during a nine-week top forty chart run. The song was written by Billy Fox, Tommy Kaye, and January Tyme and featured Hutton and Negron on lead vocals.

The second single was the iconic "Joy To The World" (#1-1971). It was released in February 1971 and topped the U.S. pop singles chart for six weeks during a fifteen-week top forty chart run. The song was written by Hoyt Axton, a country singer from Oklahoma. He had written "The Pusher" for Steppenwolf and as such, was a known commodity at Dunhill Records. When the label first brought "Joy To The World" to Three Dog Night, neither Hutton nor Wells wanted to record it. However, Negron thought it had potential and wound-up singing lead, after convincing Axton to change the opening line from "Jeremiah was a prophet" to the now famous "Jeremiah was a bullfrog".

The song is the only one that features all seven members of Three Dog Night on vocals. It also marked the first time that a mother and son separately wrote a number one single in the rock era. Axton's mother, Mae Axton, was the co-writer of Elvis' "Heartbreak Hotel". In addition to selling over one million copies in the States, the song was a worldwide hit. It peaked at number one in Canada, number eight in Australia, and number 24 in England. It would be the group's second and last chart record in England. The song was nominated for a Grammy for Best Pop Vocal Performance by a Duo Or Group and has generated sales of over five million copies worldwide.

The third single from the album was "Liar" (#7-1971). It was released in July 1971 and entered the U.S. top forty almost instantly. It peaked at number 7 during an eleven-week top forty chart run. The song was written by Russ Ballard for Argent's 1970 debut album and was released as a single but did not chart. Once again, Three Dog Night reworked it and turned it into a top ten hit. Hutton was featured on lead vocals and the song featured some scorching guitar work from Allsup.

Three Dog Night's first compilation, *Golden Bisquits* (#5-1971), was released in February 1971. It was their sixth straight gold album, charting upon release and reaching number 5 on the American pop albums chart during a sixty-one-week chart stay. *Harmony* (#8-1971) followed on September 30, 1971. It entered the American pop albums chart almost immediately and peaked at number 8 during a thirty-four-week chart stay. It also peaked at number 11 in Canada and was their seventh straight U.S. gold album.

Like all the other studio albums, the record yielded three chart singles. "An Old Fashioned Love Song" (#4-1971) was their fourth million selling single. It was written by Paul Williams and featured Negron on lead vocals. It cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty in November and climbed to number 4 during a ten-week top forty chart run. It also peaked at number two in Canada and was their first single to top the American easy listening singles chart.

"Never Been To Spain" (#5-1972) followed in January 1972 and nearly did as well. The song was their second Hoyt Axton written hit and was sung by Wells. It cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty upon release and rose to number 5 during a ten-week top forty chart run. The third single, "The Family Of Man" (#12-1972) was released in March 1972. It was written by Paul Williams with help from Jack Conrad. The

song entered the U.S. pop singles top forty in early April and reached number 12 during an eight-week top forty chart run. Each lead singer sang one verse.

In 1971, the band played Madison Square Garden for the first time, then started to book stadiums. In fact, they were so huge that they could sell them out, the first band to do that since the Beatles. On July 9, 1971, they played Atlanta Stadium, followed by a show at Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh on August 1. In 1972, they played Legion Field in Birmingham in April, Tampa Stadium in July, Three Rivers Stadium in July, Atlanta Stadium in July, the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, and Sicks Seattle Stadium. They also played the Pocono Pop Festival in early July. They reached a symbolic high when they made the cover of Rolling Stone Magazine in September 1972. By this point, they were traveling in their own private plane.

On July 27, 1972, they struck again with *Seven Separate Fools* (#6-1972). It was their eight straight gold seller, entering the American pop albums chart upon release and peaking at number 6 during a forty-week chart run. It also peaked at number 7 in Canada.

The album yielded their third and final U.S. number one single, "Black & White" (#1-1972). The song was written by David Arkin and Earl Robinson back in the fifties and had been released by Pete Seeger and Sammy Davis Jr. in 1956 and 1957. The members of Three Dog Night first heard a cover version by the British reggae band, Greyhound, who hit the British top ten with it in 1971. Hutton sang lead, giving all three lead singers one number one single. It entered the U.S. pop singles top forty upon release and made it to number one for one week during a nine-week top forty chart stay. It was their fifth million selling single.

The band followed with "Pieces Of April" (#19-1972). The song was written by Dave Loggins and was released in November 1972. It was sung by Negron and entered the U.S. pop singles top forty in early December. It reached number 19 during a nine-week top forty chart run. In December 1972, they toured New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, and Hawaii before returning home. In late November, they filmed a show for Dick Clark that was broadcast on New Year's Eve as *Three Dog Night's New Years Eve Rockin' Eve*.

The years of constant touring, recording, and promotional activities finally began to take their toll on the band members by 1973. While not choir boys, the group members had been able to control their use of alcohol and drugs early in their career but eventually succumbed to the constant temptation. Everyone in the band other than Wells became heavy drug users with Negron particularly struggling with cocaine. Hutton's health also began to fail, at one point developing drug related jaundice. It got so bad that he had to take regular B-12 injections to even tour.

The band also had an image problem. At the start of their career, they were accepted within the hard rock community because of their undeniably innate talents. They played the festivals, appeared at Fillmore East, opened for Led Zeppelin, and received great album reviews by respected hard rock critics. However, admittedly juvenile songs like "Joy To The World" and "Black & White" then cast them in a near bubblegum light. Critics started to harp on the fact that they did not write any of their hits and their reputation among serious rock fans plummeted.

When they began to lose members, the die was cast. After returning from Hawaii, Schermie abruptly left the band. He was replaced by Jack Ryland (born June 7, 1949), who had an extensive resume for a relatively young man. He was a member of a band called Boundaries when he was 13 years old, then was a session and touring bassist for Lou Rawls, Carla Thomas, Albert Collins, Mac Davis, and Helen Reddy. He

was also a member of Seven, which was formed by ex-Steppenwolf members Goldy McJohn and Jerry Edmonton.

The group's next album was the live *Around The World* (#18-1973). It was released in February 1973 and quickly made the American pop albums chart, reaching number 18 during a twenty-seven-week chart run. It peaked at number 21 in Canada. It was also certified gold, giving them nine straight gold albums. They quickly followed with an independently produced non album single called "Shambala" (#3-1973). It was written by Daniel Moore and was released in the middle of May. It cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty in early June and climbed all the way to number 3 during a million selling thirteen week top forty chart run. Lead vocals were handled by Wells.

Since the single did so well, it was included on their next studio album, *Cyan* (#26-1973), which was released in October 1973. It immediately entered the American pop albums chart but only reached number 26 during a relatively short seventeen-week chart run. It also peaked at number 8 in Canada and was certified gold in the States. The album yielded one top forty single, "Let Me Serenade You" (#17-1973), which was released in early November and featured Wells on lead vocals. It entered the U.S. pop singles top forty shortly after its release and reached number 17 during a six-week top forty chart run. The song was written by Jack Finley.

In the fall of 1973, the band added a second keyboardist, Skip Konte (born Frank Konte on October 2, 1947). He had been a member of Blues Image and was co-writer of their huge hit, "Ride Captain Ride" (#4-1970). His addition allowed the band to recreate studio string arrangements on stage. The band ended 1973 with another hugely successful tour of Japan and more shows in Hawaii.

While everything seemed great, pressures were mounting within the band. The loss of Schermie had affected the non-singers and there was less collaboration in the studio. Drugs continued to be an issue for everyone other than Wells and Konte. Outside business managers were aggressively controlling every aspect of the band, creating doubt and mistrust with the band members. Under pressure from management, they switched producers for their next album, dropping Podolor and Cooper and hiring Jimmy Ienner. They also switched recording studios to the Record Plant in Los Angeles.

The resulting new album, *Hard Labo*r (#20-1974), was released in early March 1974. Concurrent with its release, the band issued the lead single, the Leo Sayer/David Courtney written "The Show Must Go On" (#4-1974). Negron handled lead vocals and it entered the U.S. pop singles top forty in mid-April and peaked at number 4 during a twelve-week top forty chart run. It was their seventh, and last, million selling single. It also peaked at number 2 in Canada. The album entered the American pop albums chart a couple of weeks earlier and reached number 20 during a twenty-two-week chart run. It also peaked at number 16 in Canada and was certified gold in the States.

The album yielded two more top forty singles. "Sure As I'm Sittin' Here Today" (#16-1974) was released in June 1974. It was written by John Hiatt. It entered the U.S. pop singles top forty in mid-July and peaked at number 16 during an eight-week top forty chart run. Cory Wells was featured on lead vocals. The band followed with "Play Something Sweet (The Brickyard Blues)" (#33-1974) in September 1974. It was written by Allen Toussaint and featured lead vocals by Wells. It reached the U.S. pop singles top forty in early November. It peaked at number 33 during a short three-week top forty chart stay.

The group closed 1974 with their second compilation, *Joy To The World (Greatest Hits)* (#15-1974). It was released in November, made the American pop albums chart in December, and reached number 15

during a seventeen-week chart run. It was their twelfth and final American gold selling album. It also sold very well in Canada, reaching number 4. As was the case in previous years, the group toured constantly when not recording.

By the end of the year, things had reached a critical level within the band. Negron and Greenspoon had graduated to heroin and Hutton was in such bad shape health wise that he had to be temporarily replaced by Jay Gruska (born April 23, 1952 in Brooklyn, NY) for live shows. The group had replaced their old management team with Jim Guercio, Larry Fitzgerald, and Howard Kaufman of Caribou Management.

In the second half of 1974, the band convened at Caribou Ranch, just north of Boulder, Colorado, to record a new album. Once again, Jimmy Ienner manned the production desk. The album, *Coming Down Your Way* (#70-1975) was a disjointed affair that was not released until May 1, 1975. By that point, Allsup was gone. The guitarist played his last show at the Universal Amphitheater in Los Angeles in late 1974, then left to team with Schermie in a new band called S.S. Fools. Floyd followed him soon after. The group also included Stan Seymore, Wayne DeVillier, Bobby Kimball, and Jon Smith.

While the album yielded their last U.S. top forty pop chart single, "Til The World Ends" (#32-1975), it did not sell well. It only reached number 70 on the American pop albums chart and was only on the charts for twelve weeks. It also peaked at number 27 in Canada. Allsup and Sneed were replaced by guitarist James Smith and drummer Mickey McMeel. During 1975, Ryland also left and was replaced by Dennis Belfield. Then, Smith left and was replaced by Al Ciner (born May 14, 1947). He had played with The American Breed and Rufus.

The single did do better, cracking the U.S. top forty in early August and reaching number 32 during a three-week top forty chart run. It was their second top forty hit single written by Dave Loggins and featured Negron on lead vocals. It was their 21st straight top forty single, a record for a rock band. The band continued to tour through 1975, but it was clearly on its last legs. Hutton began to miss rehearsals and concert dates. He was fired from the band by the end of 1975 and immediately took an extended break to kick his drug habit and regain his health. He was replaced by Jay Gruska, who had been filling in for him during his frequent absences. Konte then left in 1976 and was replaced by Ron Stockert.

The band released one more album, *American Pastime* (#123-1976), before they played their last concert on July 26, 1976 at the Roxy in Los Angeles. The final lineup only included Wells, Negron, and Greenspoon from the original seven musicians. The album was released in March, 1976 and made the lower levels of the American pop albums chart in late April. It only reached number 123 during a short six-week chart stay. Hutton only appeared on one track which had been recorded in 1975 before he left. The rest of the album featured Negron, Wells, Greenspoon, Gruska, Ciner, McMeel, and Konte.

Over the next five years, the various members went their separate ways. Hutton turned to artist management, with one of his first clients a punk rock band called Fear. Wells released a solo album, *Touch Me* (1978) and Negron struggled with a severe heroin addiction that would nearly kill him. Greenspoon recorded with a series of artists, including Roderick Falconer, Stepson, Joanne Mackell, Shaun Cassidy, Lowell George, and Rod Taylor. Meanwhile, S.S. Fools disbanded after only one album, leaving Allsup to build his own studio, which became very successful. He also appeared on albums by Eric Relph and Hoyt Axton. Sneed teamed with Greenspoon on Lowell George's 1979 album, *Thanks I'll Eat It Here*.

Schermie kept busy with a series of solo and band projects. In October 1980, Wells noticed that a band in the Far East had formed and was touring under the Three Dog Night moniker. He contacted Hutton and the two decided to reform Three Dog Night to protect the copywrite. They contacted Negron, Greenspoon,

Allsup, and Sneed and the band reformed in October, 1980. Since Schermie was not invited, they began a search for a new bassist. They wound up hiring Mike Seifret, who stayed with the group for 18 months before being replaced by Richard Grossman.

While Hutton had been sober since 1978, Negron and Greenspoon were still struggling with heroin. The band's reputation within the record industry was not good, with the group now considered to be unreliable. As such, they had to build themselves back up from ground zero. They began to play at some small venues in 1981 and in 1982, the successor to Dunhill, MCA Records, released a new compilation, *The Best Of Three Dog Night* (1982). While it did not chart, it has sold well over the years and was eventually certified gold. In May, 1983, the band released an EP called *It's A Jungle* (1983). It included five new tracks and was released on Passport Records. It received limited promotion and did not chart.

With his recording studio thriving, Allsup would only two for two weeks a month. As such, Paul Kingery replaced him at some shows in 1982 and Steve Ezzo did the same in 1983. On July 3, 1984, the band opened for The Beach Boys at their Washington DC show. After the show, they flew down to Miami and played a second show that same day. However, Allsup had a falling out with all three singers and was fired shortly after. That led to a full-scale lineup change.

Ezzo replaced Allsup on a permanent basis, Sneed was replaced by Mike Keeley, and Grossman was replaced by Scott Manzo. In late 1985, Ezzo left and was replaced by Kingery. Also, the group finally got fed up with Negron, who had been in and out of rehab constantly. They kicked him out at the end of the year. Meanwhile, Greenspoon had also entered rehab in 1985 and would stay clean the remainder of his life. During the time he was in rehab, he was temporarily replaced by keyboardist Rick Serratte.

That was not the case with Negron. At one point, he was spending $2,000 a day on drugs and was in rehab a total of 36 times before he finally kicked his habit in 1994. The following year, Negron released a solo album, *Am I Still In Your Heart*. He followed with *Long Road Back* (1999), *Chuck Negron Live In Concert* (2001), *Live and in Concert* (DVD-2005), and *The Chuck Negron Story* (DVD-2005).

Chuck also published a book, **Three Dog Nightmare**, which details his twenty-year struggle with drugs. There are now four editions of the book. Negron joined *The Happy Together Tour* with The Turtles, Gary Puckett, The Buckinghams, The Classic IV, and The Cowsills in 2019, but because of his severely compromised health, he has not played live since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Hutton, Wells, Greenspoon, Keeley, Kingery, Manzo lineup remained intact into 1988 when Kingery and Manzo left. They were replaced by T.J. Parker and Gary Moon respectively. After taking a year off, Hutton and Wells reformed the band in 1991, with Greenspoon and Keeley, along with Allsup, who agreed to return, and new bassist Richard Campbell. (born Richard J. Campbell on December 7, 1958 in Van Nuys, CA). He had toured with Natalie Cole for years. The new lineup remained intact until 1993, when Pat Bautz replaced Keeley on drums. The band released another new compilation, *Celebrate: The Three Dog Night Story* (1993). In 1996, Campbell left and was replaced by Kingery, who returned as a bassist instead of guitarist.

The Hutton, Wells, Greenspoon, Allsup, Bautz, Kingery lineup would prove to be the most stable in the band's history. In 2000, the band was inducted into the Vocal Hall Of Fame. In 2002, they recorded a live DVD with the Tennessee Symphony Orchestra that was released as *3 Dog Night – Live* (2002). They followed the same format several years later on a new live CD, *Three Dog Night with the London Symphony Orchestra* (2008). It was released on Shout Factory Records.

The group also continued to release compilations. *MCA's 20th Century Masters – The Millennium Collection: The Best of Three Dog Night* (#109-1999) was released on October 19, 1999. It made the lower reaches of the American pop albums chart, peaking at number 109. It was certified platinum. In 2004, the band charted once again with another compilation, *The Complete Hit Singles* (#178-2004). It remains their last chart record.

On March 26, 2002, Schermie passed away from a massive heart attack at the age of 52. He had joined Negron's solo band in his later years, as well as working with Yvonne Elliman and Stephen Stills. Schermie's last television appearance was on a cooking show called Food Rules with Sneed. In late 2014, Greenspoon had to leave the band when he was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma. He died from the disease on March 11, 2015. He was 67 years old. Shockingly, Wells passed away in his sleep on October 20, 2015 at Brooks Memorial Hospital in Dunkirk, New York. His family later revealed that he had been fighting multiple myeloma, a form of blood cancer. He was 74 years old.

In the wake of the deaths, Hutton decided to keep going. David Morgan joined the band on lead vocals and Eddie Reasoner joined on keyboards. Reasoner was replaced by Howard Laravea in late 2017. The Hutton, Allsup, Kingery, Bautz, Morgan, and Laravea lineup continued to tour up to the COVID-19 pandemic. They wound up staying intact through the concert shutdown and started playing live shows once again in the summer of 2021, playing around ninety shows throughout the year.

Amazingly, Hutton has been able to maintain that aggressive schedule since then, with ninety shows played in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025. As of February 2026, they are touring with Ambrosia and John Ford Coley, with numerous shows booked through the remainder of the year. Their touring lineup includes Danny Hutton, Timothy Hutton (bass), Paul Kingery (guitar), Paul Bautz (drums), David Morgan (vocals), and Howard Laravea (keyboards). Their signature three part harmonies are provided by Danny, Timothy, Morgan, and Kingery. Mike Allsup continues to appear with the band on special occasions.

For many years, Danny Hutton has teased that they were working on a new studio album called *The Road Ahead*. The album was supposed to come out in 2021 but was delayed. In 2026, Hutton announced that they are planning on releasing a new studio album called *Enter*, which is essentially the finished *Road Ahead* project. The album is being released alongside the 2026 tour and is now available on streaming platforms.

On February 2, 2026, Negron passed away from a combination of COPD and heart failure. He died peacefully in his home in Los Angeles, surrounded by this family. He was 83 years old. Negron had finally reconciled with Danny Hutton in 2025.

Three Dog Night is featured on numerous compilations. RCA's 1983 release, *The Best Of Three Dog Night*, contains 20 tracks. RCA's 1993 set, *Celebrate: The Three Dog Night Story 1965 – 1975*, contains 43 tracks. RCA's 1999 budget set, *20th Century Masters - The Millennium Collection: The Best Of Three Dog Night*, includes 12 tracks. Compendia's 2002 release, *35th Anniversary Hits Collection*, contains 19 tracks. Geffen's 2004 set, *The Complete Hit Singles*, includes all 21 top forty singles.

Three Dog Night has released four live albums. Dunhill's 1969 set, *Captured Live At The Forum*, includes 9 tracks from a single 1969 show. Dunhill's 1973 release, *Around The World With Three Dog Night*, contains 17 tracks recorded at numerous locations in late 1972. Images' 2002 release, *With The London Symphony*, contains 16 tracks from a 2002 concert. Finally, Shout Factory's 2008 release, *Three Dog Night Greatest Hits Live*, contains 12 tracks recorded in 1972 and 1973.

I have two live recordings of Three Dog Night, including their seminal live set, *Captured Live At The Forum*. The album was recorded on September 12, 1969 as the group was opening for Steppenwolf at the Los Angeles Forum . At that point in their career, they were touring in support of *Suitable For Framing*. When Three Dog Night began their career, they toured with hard rock heavyweights like Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, Steppenwolf, Uriah Heep, and Frank Zappa. They were also a popular festival act, appearing at multi act gatherings in Miami, Atlantic City, Denver, and Los Angeles. At this point, they were as legitimate and well received as any touring rock band.

During this show, they do not leave anything in the band, emulating Delaney and Bonnie on "Nobody", doing a top-notch cover of Dave Mason's "Feelin' Alright", rocking out during "Heaven", and pulling off a gritty, solo filled version of The Band's "Chest Fever". Their frenetic cover of Otis Redding's "Try A Little Tenderness" brings down the house and Negron is sublime on "One" and "Easy To Be Hard". This intense version of "Eli's Coming" is worth the price of the set alone.

The only lightweight song on the entire set is their barbershop quartet like version of Lennon/McCartney's "It's For You", and even that one ends with a chaotic burst of guitar. All of these songs are performed with studio like precision. The vocals are outstanding, the backup band is flawless, and the energy level of the band, and the audience, is off the chart. This was as good as live music got at the time.

Frankly, live music does not get much better than this. The harmonies and lead vocals are perfect, the backup band is kicking ass, the set is well recorded, and the songs are classics. As such, *Captured Live At The Forum* should be an essential part of any live collection. It will reshape the way you think about this group.

Title: Around The World

Label: Dunhill

Release Date: 1973

Medium: Double Album

Availability: Good

Venue: Various Locations - Europe and Japan

Recording Date: Late 1972

Lineup: Chuck Negron - Vocals
Cory Wells - Vocals
Danny Hutton - Vocals
Mike Allsup - Guitar
Jimmy Greenspoon - Keyboards
Floyd Sneed - Drums
Joe Schermie - Bass

Set List: One Man Band
Never Been To Spain
Going In Circles
Family Of Man
Midnight Runaway
Liar
Good Feelin' 1957
Organ Solo
Eli's Coming
Joy To The World
Black And White
Pieces Of April
Out In The Country
Mama Told Me Not To Come
Drum Solo
An Old Fashioned Love Song
Jam

Between the time *Captured Live At The Forum* and *Around The World* were recorded, the reputation of Three Dog Night, but not their record sales, had plummeted. By 1973, the group was now considered to be nothing more than a glorified covers band and lightweight pop mega hits like "Joy To The World", "Black And White", and "An Old Fashioned Love Song" had killed whatever credibility they had built from their early career. The FM crowd who had supported their early career had pretty much abandoned them. The one thing that had remained consistent between the two eras was that they remained outstanding performers, as sometimes evidenced by this set.

While *Around The World*, which was recorded at various venues on the *Seven Separate Fools* tour of 1972, has its share of bad moments, parts of it are excellent. The band nails songs as diverse as "One Man Band", "Never Been To Spain", "Family Of Man", "Liar", "Joy To The World", "Out In The Country", "Pieces Of April", and "Mama Told Me Not To Come". Each of these songs is flawlessly sung and the music arrangements are harder edged than the corresponding studio tracks. On a fairly obscure song from *Seven Separate Fools* called "Midnight Runaway", the group sounds as good as any hard rock outfit out there at the time.

However, the album also contains several throwaways The singers perform a mocking, sarcastic version of "An Old Fashioned Love Song" that reveals what they really felt about the song. They clown their way through "Black And White" and "Eli's Coming", ruining both songs in the process. There is a pointless, poorly performed new song called "Good Feelin' 1957", and the drum and organ solo sequences have no connection with anything else on the album.

While all of this is bad, the group hits rock bottom during a long jam that ends the record. It sounds like some nightmare out of the late sixties San Francisco scene. It's almost as if the band didn't care how they sounded by this point in their career. This schizophrenic juxtaposition of material is disconcerting to the listener, making it impossible to really enjoy the album. If you are going to record drivel like "Black And White" and "An Old Fashioned Love Song" and play them in concert, at least have the professionalism to do them the best you can.

While the good moments do outweigh the bad on *Around The World*, the album is too inconsistent to recommend. Stick with *Captured Live At The Forum* and remember why all of us were listening to the band at that point in time.