

PAT HARE

• a blues guitarist •

by Kevin Hahn

‘Take The Bitter With The Sweet’

During the decade of the '50s the name of Pat Hare stood among the front ranks of the many fine guitarists playing in Memphis, Houston, and Chicago. As Sam Phillips' favorite guitarist he appeared on many of Sun's blues sessions and his ferocious lead work made classics of records by the young James Cotton, Walter Bradford and Junior Parker; later recordings and performances with Parker, Bobby Bland and Muddy Waters served as tutelage for a new generation of blues players. Bob Koester, of Delmark Records, whose interest in blues is primarily as a vocal music, considered Pat as one of the finest non-singing guitarists and one of the few of interest.¹ By the early '60s, however, his career was over; his last recorded work dates from 1960 and in early 1964 he was sentenced to life in prison for a double murder in Minnesota. Although he lived until 1980 and continued to perform while incarcerated, he was a forgotten figure in the blues community. This article is intended to bring some attention to his brief but important part in the story of the blues, and especially to shed some light on the events that ended his musical life, a story that has been clouded with myth and misinformation.

Auburn Hare was born on December 20, 1930 in Cherry Valley, Arkansas at the home of his grandfather on Mrs Fay Van's plantation. The family, which included Auburn's only sibling, a brother who died at the age of six, remained on the plantation until 1940 when they moved to a farm near Parkin. By this time Auburn had been nicknamed 'Pat' by his grandmother and had already begun to play on an old guitar he had discovered under a bed at his grandfather's house.

In his young teens Pat came under the musical wings of Joe Willie Wilkins and Howlin' Wolf, who lived nearby and knew Pat's parents. From Joe Willie, Pat received lessons and was allowed to join in playing between innings at the minor league baseball games in West Memphis. By the late '40s Pat was spending his weekends playing in Wolf's band when it performed in the

Parkin/Forrest City/West Memphis area (Wolf would come out to the Hare farm and pick him up for the gig and return him at the end of the night); during the week he drove 'a big John Deere tractor'² helping his father on the farm. The band experience was a heady one for a teenager spending his life on the farm and this early exposure to nightlife and moonshine encouraged his rebellious streak. Feeling his oats, he had several run-ins with Wolf (who tried to keep him in check), one time getting up on a chair to punch the much-larger Wolf in the mouth (Wolf didn't retaliate, but did tell Pat's parents when he brought him home that night, recommending that they give him a good whipping!), and another time claimed to have actually taken a few pot-shots at Wolf with a small-caliber automatic, laughing with glee while Wolf scrambled up

and over a wood-pile behind the juke they were playing at. One night a fight with some patrons ended with Pat cracking an antagonist over the head with a handy rake-handle, breaking the rake, his pursuer's jaw, and his own little finger, which healed crookedly and remained bent for the rest of his life.

Wolf kept Pat in the band despite all this and by 1951 he was playing full-time with the group, broadcasting from West Memphis station KWEM on Wolf's radio spot; he also broadcast with James Cotton, Willie Nix and Joe Hill Louis, and from station WDIA in Memphis with his cousin, disc jockey Walter Bradford, with whom he made his recording debut, cutting six titles in February/June 1952 for Sun Records. The first session's results, 'Dreary Nights'/'Nuthin' But The Blues', were supposedly issued on Sun 176 but copies have never been found and they remain unheard. The second session produced four titles, including the very fine 'Reward For My Baby' with superb guitar work from Pat. Pat also remembered playing behind Wolf on some RPM titles cut at KWEM (twenty-five years later he could still play 'The Sun Is Rising' note for note), but Willie Johnson claims that no titles were actually cut at the station, and that Pat never recorded with the band.³

In 1952 Pat left Wolf and began playing with Junior Parker's band and was with Parker in Houston from June 1952 to April 1953. When he returned to Arkansas he joined up with Cotton until Floyd Murphy left Parker in 1954; Pat then rejoined the Blue Flames. As Pat recalled those days:

'I stayed on the farm all the time I was playing with Wolf and Junior Parker and Bland . . . I knew Wolf before I started playing with a band. Wolf was the first band. And in between them times I was playing with Johnny Ace, Ike Turner or just a bunch of us guys would meet up and go play a gig someplace. For a short while I played alone [his ex-wife Dorothy Mae Hare Adams, whom he had married on Christmas Day 1949, remembered Pat



Joe Willie Wilkins



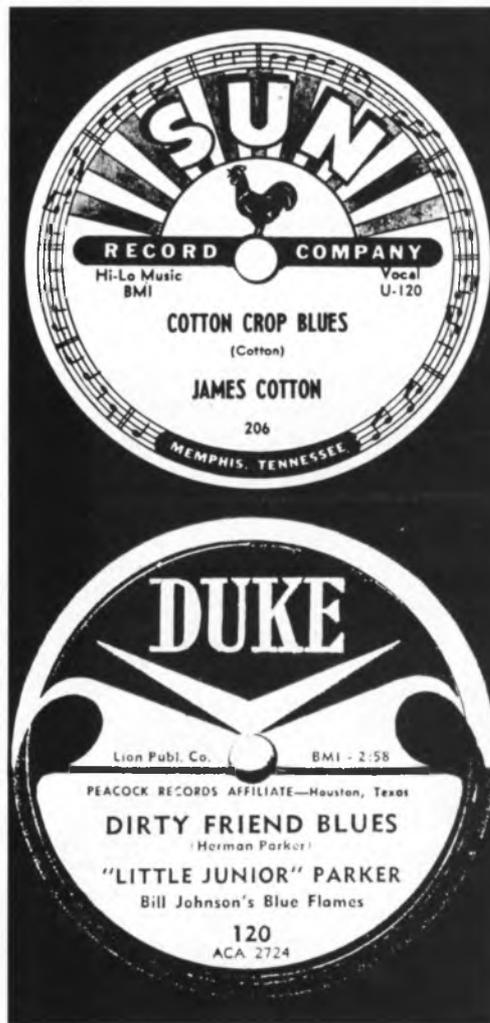
l to r: standing: Junior Parker, Hamp Simmons, Jimmy Johnson, Eugene Ballow, Pat Hare; kneeling: Bobby Bland, Joe Fritz, on tour in South Carolina, 1952 (© Norbert Hess/ Joe Fritz collection)

working as a one-man band in the late '40s] . . . I didn't leave the farm at all because whenever I came off the road I would always make it out to the farm. I hung around Memphis a lot tho."⁴

Pat did indeed hang around Memphis a lot, soon becoming known, along with Willie Johnson, Floyd and Matt Murphy and, a bit later, Hubert Sumlin, as one of the city's premier young guitarists. Pat became a favorite of Sam Phillips and between 1952-55 backed up a number of Phillips' artists in the studio, among them Bradford, Parker, Walter Horton, Big Memphis Ma Rainey, James Gayles, Kenneth Banks, Hot Shot Love, Rosco Gordon and others.

The musical event Pat spoke of with the most pride from his days in Memphis, however, was playing with Memphis Minnie on one occasion around 1960 after Minnie had returned to town on her retirement: Minnie was one of Pat's guitar heroes (along with Joe Willie Wilkins and Lonnie Johnson) and he tried to see Minnie and Son Joe frequently when in Memphis.

On May 14, 1954 Pat and Cotton each recorded two vocal sides at the Sun studio. Cotton's 'Cotton Crop Blues'/'Hold Me In Your Arms' were released on Sun 206 and featured Pat as guitarist; 'Cotton Crop' was a showcase for Pat's blistering, over-amplified soloing, derived from his earlier solo on Bradford's 'Reward For My Baby'. His playing here pushed Memphis-style guitar to new standards and, although he soon became much more technically proficient, this must remain the milestone of his recorded work, a landmark of '50s Memphis blues-playing. Pat's own two cuts, the only vocals he would record during his career, showed an engaging, countrified style but were not released on Sun and did not appear until 1976 when



they were issued on a Dutch bootleg LP. Although much has been made of the theme of his 'I'm Gonna Murder My Baby' as revealing a side of his nature (and foreshadowing events in his life), the song is in fact a reworking of Doctor Clayton's 1941 'Cheating And Lying Blues' (also captured on tape in 1964 by Robert Nighthawk as 'Goin' Down To Eli's'); both of his titles, according to Pat, had been given to him to record by someone in the studio. The second tune, 'Ain't Gonna Be That Way' (Eddie Vinson's 'Bonus Pay') employed a much simpler guitar part than his other work of the day, suggesting some lack of familiarity with the song. Cotton was to have blown harp on Pat's sides, but he and Pat had a fist fight between sessions and was unable to play.

Shortly after this session Pat headed back to Houston with Junior Parker (who would become his son Larkin's godfather), who had left Sun and signed with Duke Records. Parker and Bobby Bland were touring together and sharing the same backup band; Pat required a better amplifier for this level of playing and so rather than the raw and distorted tone of the Sun recordings his playing with the Parker/Bland group in Houston was smoother, cleaner and jazzy. Because Duke/Peacock did not keep records of the session men it is sometimes difficult to absolutely identify Pat's work at Duke, but between 1954 and 1956 he seems to have played on almost all of Parker's records and shared the duty behind Bland with Roy Gaines and Clarence Hollimon; he may also, as he claimed, have been the guitarist on recordings by Harold Conner, Connie McBooker, Big Mama Thornton and Johnny Ace (i.e. possibly on the latter's 'How Can You Be So Mean').

Pat never spoke of Gaines or Hollimon,



Evelyn Young, with James Harbert (right), Memphis, 1979 (Cilla Huggins)

but fondly remembered Big Mama, McBooker, Floyd Dixon and Curtis Tillman; he also told a favorite story involving saxophonist Evelyn Young. The band would often cross into Mexico to visit a favored bordello when they had some time off in Houston, and on one occasion Evelyn, who liked to dress in men's clothing, insisted on joining the pilgrimage. The bordello was a rather informal affair; lacking actual rooms it had curtained-off areas each equipped with a bed for the patron. Evelyn, undetected as a woman by the girls, had made her selection along with the others and things were proceeding swimmingly for everyone until a scream and a lot of Spanish expletives came from Evelyn's 'room' and her girl went tearing through the cubicles, breaking down the ropes and curtains and jumping over beds and bodies. Everyone in the band fell out laughing themselves sick, although Evelyn was not amused with her evening!

Some time in 1956 Pat left the band, having been fired by Bobby Bland; he may have served a jail sentence in Houston at this time, precipitating his dismissal. James Cotton summoned him to Chicago to replace Jimmy Rogers in Muddy Waters' band, an offer he accepted after first situating his wife and three children in Cleveland. Pat felt that Muddy's music was a step backwards from what he had been playing in Houston: a simpler, rougher brand of blues with which some felt his Memphis-style guitar didn't fit. Nonetheless, with Pat in the band Muddy played less and less guitar himself, letting Pat carry the load except on some of his older numbers featuring slide. Unfortunately, Pat didn't get along with Leonard Chess and most of Muddy's recordings from this time

have Pat's guitar way down in the mix, oftentimes barely audible, although there are a few fine examples of his playing such as on 'She's Into Something' and 'Take The Bitter With The Sweet'. When playing in clubs like the Tay May Pat, Cotton and Otis Spann usually did most of the singing with Muddy coming on stage only in the shank of the evening. Some of the fine lead instrument interplay that Pat and Cotton developed is represented on the 'Muddy Waters Sings Big Bill' LP.

Pat had a reputation for toughness or 'meanness' that had followed him up to Chicago and, although Paul Oliver found him quite amiable when he met him in 1960, Oliver commented on this in *Nothing But The Blues*. Pat responded to the charge in a letter:

'I've never been a mean guy, I just never did backup off nothing or anybody. Oh I would fight in about two seconds if somebody gave me a reason to, but nobody can say that I went around looking for someone to jump on. It was somebody always around or someplace I went that thought they could kick my ass. Then I would have to come unglued you dig? See I just never afraid. And lots of people mistook that for meanness. Another thing I stayed pretty well down under [i.e. drunk] all the time. That's why Paul said I looked about 20 years older than I really was.'⁵

One night, however, (some time between 1960-63, the date is unclear) Pat did go looking for someone to jump on.

With his wife in Cleveland, Pat had been seeing a woman in Chicago named Louise Kennedy, but things weren't going smoothly between the two and he accused Louise of cheating on him. One night he called her and, getting no answer, got his Winchester and went to her apartment. Pat said he knew she was there and just refused to answer the door, so he emptied the rifle through the front window in a drunken rage. The police knew who had done the shooting and were on the lookout for him. Muddy was able to hide him for a short time but then sent him to Memphis to stay with Joe Willie Wilkins. He was visiting his parents in Parkin in May 1963 when Mojo Buford and Jojo Williams, both late of Muddy's band, tracked him down. They were starting up a band of their own in Minneapolis and wanted Pat to join them.



The band, with Pat and Sonny Rodgers on guitars, Jojo (not Jody) Williams on bass, Francey Clay on drums and Mojo on harp and vocals, found work almost immediately playing weekends at Mattie's B-B-Q on 29th and 1st Avenue in South Minneapolis. Mojo had brought the band to the area because of the encouragement he had received there while playing with Muddy so his reception was not unexpected; what did cause him consternation were the antagonisms with Pat, who was proving to be at the end of his downward spiral. Pat was drinking heavily,



Jojo Williams, 1972 (courtesy Kevin Hahn)



James Cotton and Pat Hare, Smitty's Corner, Chicago, 1959 (© Jacques Demètre)



l to r: Muddy Waters (just visible), Otis Spann, Francis Clay, Andrew Stephens, Little Walter, Pat Hare, Chicago, 1959 (© Jacques Demètre)

and by this time apparently it wasn't taking much alcohol to put him out of control. There were reports of him drinking wine and falling asleep on the bandstand, and one night Mojo sent him home when he was unfit to play. Pat took two nights off and then reappeared, demanding to be paid for the time he had missed; when Mojo refused Pat threatened to get his gun and shoot him, but nothing further transpired.

Shortly after beginning their engagement at Mattie's Pat met Agnes Winje, a white woman whose husband was the maintenance man at the club. Soon afterwards 'Aggie' left her husband and moved into an apartment with Pat at 3025 Portland Avenue, just a few blocks from Mattie's. In order to augment his income Pat took a job as a window washer during the weekdays but his drinking was using up most of the money, and even though Aggie was working at a nearby grocery store they had a hard time making ends meet. Soon there were arguments about money, his drinking problem, and her jealousy. Aggie was 49 to Pat's 32 and insecure about the age difference. They lived together for four to five months and the arguments got worse with time. In October 1963 Pat confronted Aggie while she was at work and threatened her with a gun he had bought at Hy's Pawn Shop in August; a police officer, Kymphus Workcuff, who knew Pat and was in the store at the time, took the gun from him and later gave it to Nila Pool, who was Mojo's girlfriend and manager of the band. She later returned the gun to Pat.

On Sunday, December 15, Pat apparently spent the afternoon drinking wine with S.P. Leary (known as Kelly) who was living on the 1800 block of 15th Ave. S and was working with Willie Johnson and J.T.

Brown. After Leary left, Pat called a young woman friend of Aggie's named Pat Morrow and hitched a ride to a friend's house where he obtained a half-pint of gin. From there they proceeded to the home of James McHie, who employed Hare as a window washer; McHie wasn't home at the time and Pat invited McHie's wife to bring James to his apartment when he returned. There were difficulties because Aggie had told him that she was thinking of returning to her husband, and Pat was working himself into a state.

Morrow pulled up outside the Portland

address and dropped Pat off; she did not think he was drunk as his speech was clear and he was walking alright. For some reason she waited a few minutes and Aggie came out to the car and got in: she was afraid. Pat had just taken a few shots at her with his pistol. Aggie wanted Morrow to wait and drive Pat away as she wanted to throw him out. Aggie went back to the apartment and Morrow drove off.

Aggie went into the apartment and the argument continued. There was a knock at the door and Pat was called to the telephone



3025 Portland Avenue, the scene of the shooting (Kevin Hahn)



AUBURN HARE, killer of a Minneapolis patrolman, is shown on the operating table in General hospital. —Staff Photo by Dennis Magnuson.

Probe of Cop's Slaying Awaits Outcome of Killer's Condition

Police investigation of the murder Sunday night of a Minneapolis policeman today awaited the outcome of the fight for life being made in General hospital by his assailant and another victim, both critically wounded.



So far detec- Hendricks lives have been unable to talk to Auburn Hare, 32, who killed patrolman James E. Hendricks, 45, or Mrs. Agnes Winje, 49, found critically wounded in the apartment where Hendricks was shot.

Hendricks and his partner, patrolman Chester Langaard, were sent to the first-floor apartment at 3025 Portland ave. after a resident across the hall reported a number of shots had been fired there.

The two officers, with Hendricks in the lead and carrying a shotgun, approached the apartment door, which they found unlocked. Hendricks opened the door and caught a glimpse of Hare standing behind it with an automatic pistol in his hand.

"Give me the gun," Hendricks ordered. Instead of complying, Hare stepped around the door and fired three shots. Two of the .32-caliber slugs hit Hendricks in the chest and the other in the groin.

Hendricks dropped to the floor and patrolman Langaard, immediately behind him, fired three shots from his service revolver into Hare's body at close range.

When the officers got there, Mrs. Winje was lying moaning on aavenport. She had

been shot in the upper chest and the abdomen. Doctors at General hospital said today it is doubtful she will live.

Hare is given a better chance for recovery. He was hit in the upper chest and the arm. Police said Hare and Mrs. Winje were living together in the Portland avenue address. Mrs. Winje is separated from her husband, Ernest, 52, of 2728 First ave. S., a bartender.

What went on in the apartment before the arrival of the officers remains a mystery, in that police found 13 expended shells from Hare's automatic. Five bullet holes were found in the walls, and five more are accounted for by the shots which hit Hendricks and Mrs. Winje. This leaves three unaccounted for.

Hare was employed as a window cleaner.

of neighbor Charles Cooke (Pat and Aggie did not have a phone). Pat crossed to his neighbor's apartment, saying, 'That woman is going to make me kill her'. He had a brief conversation on the phone, hung up, and told Cooke, 'You got the wrong Pat'. The caller had been Pat Morrow's husband looking for her.

Hare returned to his apartment; there were more shouts and more shots, and Cooke's girlfriend Florence Whipps called the police. Officers James E. Hendricks and Chester Langaard were only blocks away when the call went through. In two minutes they were at the apartment and Hendricks, several steps ahead of Langaard and armed with a shotgun, was directed to Pat's rooms by Whipps, who then retreated. Langaard saw his partner enter the room and heard him say, 'Give me the gun', then heard three gunshots. He got to the door and saw Hendricks lying on the floor and Pat pointing his pistol at the body. Langaard shot Pat twice and dropped him. Aggie was sitting on a couch, shot twice.

Help was called for and Hendricks was rushed away in the first ambulance but died on the way; Aggie and then Pat were loaded into the second ambulance and taken to General Hospital where they both underwent surgery. Pat was out of the operating room at 11:15 and was interviewed for the second time of the night (he had been questioned briefly at the scene of the shooting). He was questioned at least once again that night and was understandably confused; he claimed he was drunk and that when he had been drinking he didn't know what he was doing. He said that he knew he had been shot by a policeman, but didn't think he had shot anyone; when told that Aggie had been shot he thought that she might have done it herself; when told that a policeman was dead he said Aggie must have shot him, and when asked if she would do such a thing replied, 'She wouldn't hurt a fly'.⁶ The next morning he made a statement admitting to both shootings. On January 22, 1964 Aggie died of her wounds.

Pat got no breaks at his trial: his case was assigned to Judge Tom Bergin and he was persuaded to waive his rights to a jury trial. Bergin had been a Minneapolis cop for eight years before being appointed to traffic court in 1949 where he earned the nickname 'Tender Tom' for his habit of handing down maximum sentences. He had just been elected to the criminal court earlier that year and Pat's was one of his first cases.

Court convened on February 19, 1964 and the trial lasted one day: Pat was found guilty of 1st degree murder in the case of Hendricks and 'was allowed' to plead guilty to 3rd degree murder in Aggie's case. He was sentenced to life in prison and was immediately bound over to Stillwater State Prison where he was assigned number 21961-E.

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I met Pat in the summer of 1973; I had been interviewing Jojo Williams and Lazy Bill Lucas and corresponding with *Living Blues* when Jim O'Neal told me that Pat was in prison here. When I first went to Stillwater that August I met a small, stooped, balding and intensely quiet man, hardly what I'd expected from the little bit that I then knew of him. He was glad of the company and eager to help with whatever information he could give me; other than letters from Bob Eagle and occasional visits from Willa Buford (Mojo's wife) he had been pretty much out of touch; indeed he seemed to have been forgotten, as in all my visits with Jojo, Lazy Bill, Sonny Rodgers, Baby Doo Caston and Mojo in the previous two years his name

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Section of Vital Statistics
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

430

1. PLACE OF DEATH, STATE OF MINNESOTA a. COUNTY Hennepin		2. USUAL RESIDENCE (Where deceased lived, if institution, residence before admission) a. STATE Minn. b. COUNTY Hennepin	
3. CITY, VILLAGE OR TOWNSHIP Minneapolis		4. CITY, VILLAGE OR TOWNSHIP Minneapolis,	
5. LENGTH OF STAY in 1 b. 3 yrs.		6. STREET ADDRESS 2728 First Ave. South	
7. NAME OF HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION General Hospital		8. IS RESIDENCE INSIDE CORPORATE LIMITS? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
9. IS PLACE OF DEATH INSIDE CORPORATE LIMITS? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		10. IS RESIDENCE ON A FARM? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
3. NAME OF DECLARANT (Type or Print) AGNES ISABELLE WINJE			
4. DATE OF DEATH Month Day Year January 22, 1964		5. AGE (in years if UNDER 1 YEAR; if UNDER 24 HRS. see birthdate) Months Days Hours Min. 49	
6. SEX Female		7. MARRIED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEVER MARRIED <input type="checkbox"/> 8-18-1914	
8. COLOR OR RACE White		9. WIDOWED <input type="checkbox"/> DIVORCED <input type="checkbox"/>	
10a. USUAL OCCUPATION (Time spent in work during most of working life; state if retired) Housewife		10b. END OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY	
11. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) Swift County, Minn.		12. CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY? USA	
13a. FATHER'S NAME Daniel Mathiasen		13b. MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME Theresa Darrington	
14. SPOUSE'S NAME Ernest Winje		15. ADDRESS 5600 Excelsior	
16. WAS DECEASED EVER IN U. S. ARMED FORCES? (Yes, no, or unknown)		17. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. 173-36-7619	
18. CAUSE OF DEATH (Enter only one cause per line for (a), (b), and (c))		19. TOPOGRAPHIC & GROSS SIGNATURE Mortuary Records	
PART I: DEATH WAS CAUSED BY: IMMEDIATE CAUSE (a) Gram negative septicemia		20. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S SIGNATURE John I. Cook, M.D., Medical Examiner	
DUE TO (b) Liver abscess		21. DATE SIGNED 1/24/64	
DUE TO (c) Gunshot wound		22. ADDRESS Minneapolis, Minnesota	
PART II: OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH BUT NOT RELATED TO THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE GIVEN IN PART I (a) Pyelonephritis		23. DATE OF CREATION 1-25-64	
24. DATE OF CREATION		25. MAJOR FINDINGS OF CREATION	
26. ACCIDENT, SUICIDE OR HOMICIDE (SPECIFY) Homicide		27. DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED (State name of weapon, if any, and type of injury) Shot by another person with a .25 caliber revolver.	
28. TIME OF INJURY Hour Month Day Year 12 15 61		29. CITY, VILLAGE OR TOWNSHIP Minneapolis, Hennepin, Minn.	
30. PLACE OF INJURY (If on street, specify street name, corner, etc.) Apt. building		31. COUNTY Hennepin, Minn.	
32. NAME OF CEMETERY OR CREMATORY Church of the Visitation		33. LOCATION (City, village or county) (State) Danvers, Minnesota	
34. SIGNATURE OF REGISTRAR Marie H. Mahoney		35. SIGNATURE OF MORTICIAN OR FUNERAL DIRECTOR Edgar 464	
36. DATE FILED BY LOCAL REG. JAN 24 1964		37. ADDRESS 5600 Excelsior	

Agnes Winje's death certificate (courtesy Kevin Hahn)

had never been mentioned. I had asked Muddy about Pat in 1972 and he affirmed that Pat was in prison here but then quickly changed the subject, as if he were an embarrassment.

Soon after he was incarcerated, Pat was befriended by Sgt Bill Kiley who induced him to join the prison Alcoholics Anonymous group. He was soon considered a model prisoner; he minded his own business and stayed away from confrontation. Eventually he was allowed to start a musical program for the inmates, collectively called 'Sounds Incarcerated': this consisted of various inmate bands playing C&W, jazz,

rock and blues, who put on shows for the prison population. Because of Pat's musical reputation and his quiet leadership which earned him the esteem of both inmates and prison officials, the groups were allowed to put on programs outside the prison until 1972 when the prison tightened security because of unrest in the penitentiary.

Pat began drawing attention from the outside now nearly ten years after his imprisonment. He met another inmate's attorney, Dan Shulman (son of author Max Shulman), and his wife Margret, and Dan began representing him. On the basis of his fine prison record Pat was urged to try for an

early parole in 1974; unfortunately this bid for freedom failed in spite of a large number of letters of support from blues fans around the world who had been made aware of Pat's situation. Although the pardon was not granted (in part because of a letter Judge Bergin sent the parole board) Pat became cognizant of the large interest in him on the outside, support which he needed to boost his morale at times. Although he rarely complained, his health and prison life were wearing him down. As he wrote to me:

'Yes I'm back and feeling pretty goddam good, you dig? Man I was a sick man for a few days. They had to cut the ole belly open and go in there and straighten things out. So in no time at all I should be good as new you dig?'

'I told you that they changed our meeting to Monday nights didn't I? Well anyway they did. You did get my other letter didn't you? And did I tell you I got ulcers again? Man I don't know what's happening I get one thing taken care of and something else comes up.'

'As you could guess I'm in the hospital again. Man I think I'm just falling apart. Seems that way anyway. This time I got hepatitis don't no how the hell I got that I don't shoot no dope but that's what they say I got. I don't know how long I'll be here it could be two weeks three or four I don't no . . . Man looks like everything is happening to me. My mother passed away the 16th of last month and I just found it out and 22nd and you know I've been pretty upset ever since.'

'I came out of the hospital yesterday. I'm still very weak tho, but feels much better now in a few weeks I should be as good as new you dig?'

I made it a point to get visiting musicians who had been friends with Pat to go see him, and those who paid him visits eagerly when they were in town included Mighty Joe Young, Sunnyland Slim, Louis Myers, Willie Smith, Albert King, Freddie King, Willie Dixon, Gatemouth Brown, Walter Horton and James Coiton.

In 1975 Pat was diagnosed with lung cancer; surgery was performed and part of a lung removed. His recovery was slow and he didn't have a lot of strength to draw from, but eventually he seemed to be coming around. Then in 1977 cancer appeared in his throat and he again underwent surgery and chemotherapy. This time the muscles from the left side of his neck and under his tongue were removed, as well as the left half of his jawbone. His speech was garbled, although it improved somewhat in time, and he had a hard time chewing food. Always small-framed, he seemed to become almost frail and he never fully recovered his strength. Realizing that his condition was grave, the prison administration softened its policy and transferred Pat to the minimum security ward where he was given a lighter job and his diet was catered to more carefully. He was also now allowed to go outside of the prison grounds (accompanied by a guard) to perform on occasion.

Pat had formed a group of 'outside' musicians including Roger Herd on second guitar and Gene Adams on trumpet, and in the summer of 1978 they performed free concerts at Harriet Lake Park and at Lake Nokomis in Minneapolis; in 1979 there was a show at the Walker Church which was broadcast over station KFAI, and Jim O'Neal and Steve Wisner came up to record the show and interview Pat. That same year Muddy Waters came to town as the warm-up

TO Kevin Hahn, 1865 Stillwater Ave, St. Paul

Mr. Auburn Hare has filed an application before the Board of Pardons for a Pardon/Commutation, and he has requested that I advise you of the date, time and place of the meeting of the Board.

His application will be heard on April 19th in the Governor's office at 9:30 a.m. or as soon thereafter as possible.

Be advised that this notice imposes no obligation upon you; you may attend and speak in his behalf if you wish.

STATE BOARD OF PARDONS

JAMES N. BRADFORD, Secretary



Muddy and Pat at the Tay May Club, Chicago, 1960 (Paul Oliver)

act for Eric Clapton and Pat was allowed backstage to surprise Muddy, whom he hadn't seen in years. Pat and his guard sat behind the bank of speakers during Muddy's set, and then for his encore of 'Got My Mojo Working' Muddy called Pat on stage, introduced him to the huge crowd with, 'This young man is my old guitar player, Pat Hare!', and handed him Bob Margolin's guitar. It had been nearly twenty years since they had last played together, and it would be their last time.

The next year the prison band was asked to play at the Hennepin County Government Center, but then received news that they would be picketed by the Minneapolis police (whose headquarters was across the street), and they were forced to cancel. In February 1980, however, they did play in Powderhorn Park's recreation building where they were filmed for the local PBS program 'Wyld Rice', and there was later a segment on Pat on the local 'PM Magazine' program, broadcast just the week before he died. In April Pat appeared in the basement of Mama D's restaurant near the University of Minnesota; by this time he was very weak and just beginning to cough up blood.

In August Muddy and his new band were going to play at the Union Bar and arrangements had been made for Pat to sit in. I had

heard nothing from Pat for two weeks before the show, and then received a call from a guard at the prison telling me that Pat had been admitted to Ramsey Hospital in St Paul with a recurrence of lung cancer. The cancer had also affected some nerves in his vocal cords and he was barely able to speak. He missed the gig with Muddy but rallied enough to play at an engagement he had made at the Whole Coffehouse on the University of Minnesota campus, but was extremely weak, sitting through the entire set and unable to speak to the appreciative listeners who approached him afterwards.

Pat's estranged family, whom he hadn't seen since his incarceration (Dorothy Mae divorced him while he was in prison), was contacted and made the trip up from Cleveland; when they arrived they found that Pat had been taken to Rochester's Mayo Clinic for an effort to temporarily clear his congested lungs which were literally growing shut; this was done by holding him down and forcing a tube down his throat and tearing an opening into his air passages. On his return to Ramsey, Pat told me he'd never go through that again, fully aware of the consequences. A side benefit of this treatment was some restoration of his vocal powers, and he was able to reunite with his now grown family.

A week after his family returned to Cleveland and a day after he had been informed that he would be granted a medical pardon, Pat died at Ramsey Hospital at 2:25 pm September 26, 1980. Margret Shulman was at his bedside.

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Bobby Bland performed at the Riverview Supper Club in Minneapolis on Saturday the 27th and left the next day for another gig in another town, so he had neither the chance to see his old guitarist one last time nor to pay his last respects. Instead he sent a floral tribute in the shape of a guitar. On the Lady Day of September, after his friends had gathered to remember the gentle and creative man they had known, after his last band had played a slow blues for him, Pat Hare was put to rest in Stillwater's Fairview Cemetery at the opposite end of the Mississippi river from which he had begun, the flowered guitar standing at his gravesite silhouetted against the late summer sunset. ■

Notes

1. Conversation with Bob Koester at Jazz Record Mart, Chicago, August 1984.
2. Letter to KH, February 8, 1974.
3. Ibid re Pat's claim. Willie Johnson disclaimer from unpublished interview by Cilla Huggins, 1978.
4. Letter to KH, February 8, 1974.
5. Letter to KH, December 8, 1973.
6. This quote, and this account of the day's events taken from Minneapolis police reports filed at the time of the shooting.
7. Letter to KH, January 19, 1974.
8. Letter to KH, February 28, 1974.
9. Letter to KH, March 6, 1974.
10. Letter to KH, March 27, 1974.



Pat at Smitty's Corner, Chicago, 1959 (© Jacques Demètre)



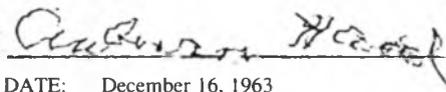
(Kevin Hahn)

OFFICIAL POLICE STATEMENT BY PAT HARE

Statement of AUBURN HARE taken at Minneapolis General Hospital, Sta. 20W. Interrogation by Det. Short and Hyvare, December 16, 1963, 10:35 a.m. B. Kveberg, typing.

Q. What is your name?
A. Auburn Hare.
Q. What is your address?
A. 3025 Portland
Q. Are you employed?
A. Yes, window washer.
Q. Auburn we are going to take a statement from you concerning a shooting that took place at your home 3025 Portland Sunday, December 15, 1963 at approximately 8:55 pm and also at 9:03 pm. Knowing that you do not have to give us a statement are you still willing to give a statement concerning these shootings as you remember them?
A. Yes.
Q. Who did you live at 3025 Portland with?
A. Agnus Winje [sic].
Q. How long have you lived with Agnus Winje [sic]?
A. About five months.
Q. How long have you been in Minneapolis?
A. Since somewhere in May of this year.
Q. Where did you come from when you came to Minneapolis?
A. Earle, Arkansas.
Q. Calling your attention to Sunday afternoon did you and Agnus [sic] come to some disagreement?
A. She was flying off the handle about me going with Pat Morrow, who is supposed to be a very good friend of Agnus' [sic].
Q. Did you leave your apartment and go someplace with Pat Morrow?
A. I went to 2616 18 Ave. So.
Q. Why were you with Pat Morrow?
A. I called and asked her if she would take me to 10th Avenue because she has a car.
Q. How long were you gone from the apartment with Pat Morrow?
A. 45 minutes to an hour. We got lost & she couldn't find my boss' house.
Q. Was Agnes angry with you after you came back to the apartment?
A. Yes, I tried to get her to ride along with us but she wouldn't do it.
Q. Do you think she was jealous of you going with Pat?
A. Yes.
Q. What did she do to you?
A. She kept on nagging and called me a lot of names. I asked her to leave me alone but she didn't. I don't know too much after that.
Q. What did you do when she kept nagging?
A. I went first and laid on the bed and then I got off the bed and went on the couch and she kept following and nagging. That's how the whole thing started. I don't remember how I got my hand on the gun but I know I had it in my hand. I fired some shots in the wall to scare her. The next thing I remember somebody shoved the door open and I didn't know who it was at first until I started shooting. It all happened in a flash. After that I realized who it was and I gave up just like that.
Q. What kind of a gun did you use to do the shooting with?
A. '25 Caliber Automatic.
Q. Is that the automatic that you purchased at Hy's Loan Office in August?
A. Yes, it was.
Q. How many shells did that automatic hold?

A. Put seven in the magazine and one in the barrel. That would make it eight.
Q. Do you remember how many shots you fired at Aggie?
A. I don't remember.
Q. Do you remember her saying anything when she got hit?
A. No.
Q. How many shots did you fire at the policeman before you recognized who it was?
A. Two or three times. That gun shoots so fast it can shoot two or three times and sound like once.
Q. Did you hear the Policeman or did you hear anyone say to you "give me that gun."
A. Yes, but I had my back to the door and I don't know who it was and when I wheeled around I must have been shooting.
Q. Where was Aggie sitting or standing when you shot her?
A. She was standing right in the middle of the floor in the livingroom.
Q. Do you remember how many shots you fired at her?
A. About two or three times.
Q. Auburn, does that gun fire very easily?
A. Yes, very easily.
Q. How soon after Aggie was shot did the Policeman come to the front door?
A. It must have been about the same time because it all happened about the same time. She got hit and I shot the Policeman and I got hit.
Q. Had you been drinking at all on Sunday afternoon?
A. I went over to my friend's house because he always had some around on Sunday. I drank part of a half-pint of gin there.
Q. You didn't drink very much then, is that right?
A. No, I only had a good swallow out of a whole half a pint.
Q. Did you fire four or five shots at the wall shortly after 8:30 pm?
A. Yes, I must have fired four or five shots and then got a telephone call in the next apartment so I talked on the phone and went back to my apartment and then I loaded the gun.
Q. Auburn, is there anything else that you wish to add to this statement?
A. I'm very sorry. I didn't want that to happen. Everything happened so fast I didn't have time to think.
Q. Is this a true statement given of your own free will without any threats or promises made to you?
A. Yes.
Q. When it is completed and you have had a chance to read it and make any necessary corrections, are you willing to sign it as a true statement?
A. Yes, I will.

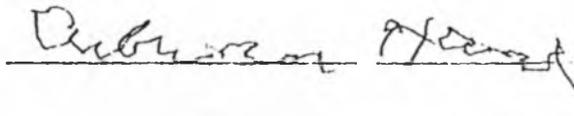


DATE: December 16, 1963

TIME: 11 a.m.

PLACE: Minneapolis General Hospital Station 20W.

I, Auburn Hare, do hereby certify that I have received a true and exact copy of my foregoing statement.



PERSONAL STATEMENT BY PAT HARE

'The truth is, Kevin, they [the police] did come in without giving me any warning and shot me twice in the back and once in my left arm, between elbow and shoulder but they swore that they didn't shoot me but twice. And the woman [Agnes Winje] didn't have a scratch on her before they got there. Everything happen in the exchange of gunfire and that woman [Florence Whipps] that called them can tell you that if she tells the truth about it. She left from my apt. and went back into her Apt. and called the cops. And me and the woman [Aggie] both were standing at the kitchen table drinking gin when she came into our place and was still standing there when she left. And yes, before this woman came in I had fired some shots into the wall. She was told that by a man [Charles Cooke] she had living there with her she wasn't even home that's really what she was doing in our place in the first place, to see what was going on. Kevin her name is Florence Whipps.

'And Kevin I'm almost sure that the door was closed, it may not have been locked but it was closed, and I was hit in the back not in the chest but I really couldn't say which one of the cops shot me because I didn't see them

come in I only heard the noise when the door came open and felt the bullets hitting me in the back. The woman and myself was treated at General Hospital and she never was unconscious as far as I know because she and I talked on the way to the hospital and yes it's true the police never released any statement she made. And I tried my best to get that attorney to check on that but he wouldn't do it. His name is Kermit Gill public defender and I didn't have no jury trial, and Judge Tom Bergen [sic] he found me guilty of first degree on the cop and allow me to plead guilty to 3rd degree on the woman and they are running together. Oh yes Kevin one more thing the woman lived a month and 8 days after she was shot and she was sending me word about every other day telling me how sorry she was and it was all her fault that all this thing happen.' (Letter to Kevin Hahn, August 19, 1973)

'I don't have any letters she sent me. She always sent word by friends that would go by the hospital and see her then they'd come by the jail and visit me and would you believe none of them lives in the state anymore?' (Letter to Kevin Hahn, August 23, 1973)