

"Townshend and Daltrey were friendly and we hung out", he recalls. "They had a road crew of only two - a small Cockney named Sweaty and his assistant (who made sure we knew he was Jim Morrison's younger brother). Entwistle and Moon kept to themselves, and it was clear that Moon was drinking heavily. He got especially carried away during their destructo-bit at the end and started throwing bits of his kit into the audience, who were busily attempting to invade the stage. This meant that Sweaty alternately had to throw bits of instruments back onto the stage and bodies back into the audience! Finally Keith staggered offstage, kicking Dave Kinsman's drum kit over on his way and smashing his fist through a window and cutting himself rather badly, which put a damper on our after gig plans."

On another memorable occasion, Richard went back to the Jefferson Airplane's hotel after a gig. "We got really ripped on weed in their room," he reminisces, "and Jack and Jorma started jamming (a preview of Hot Tuna!) The TV was on the whole time, and when the station sign-off came on, Jack fired up a small reel-to-reel tape deck and played a tape of 'A Day In The Life' they'd gotten from George Harrison! It was the first time I'd heard it." As a fan, Richard saw many of the era's greatest bands. "I frequented the Boston Tea Party [the venue where Terrastock 5 was later to be held] and saw the Yardbirds (with Jimmy Page), Spirit, the Youngbloods, Jimi Hendrix and quite a few others. The Cream were stunning, as were the Doors, whom I saw in small venues before they became highly successful." Another band that impressed him were Big Brother & the Holding Company, "not because the band were particularly good (they weren't), but because Janis was on fire and James Gurley did some fantastic noise guitar." Others were less impressive. "I never cared for the Grateful Dead", he admits. "Todd Rundgren's band, the Nazz, were pretty lame and derivative, and I saw Pink Floyd on a rainy night in a largish ballroom with only 20-30 people in the auditorium. They seemed exhausted from touring and were uninspired and uninspiring."

Eventually, however, the band wound down. "The main reason we split was because we did not want to continue working with Tom Wilson as producer. After the initial period of

our contract expired at the end of 1968, he chose to pick up his option to renew it. The only way for us to get out of it was to disband." In addition to this ludicrous scenario, Ken Frankel had married Judy Bradbury, the band's original singer, and was under pressure to move to California. Most of the extended family living with Tom Frankel in the band house took their cue, packed up and headed west. "I'd always had rather a competitive relationship with Ken," reflects Richard, "and I think I blamed him and Tom for the situation. It didn't help my frame of mind that I was dead broke, it was almost Christmas, and I'd broken a rib on my first day working on a construction site."

Ill Wind played their last gig in December 1968 at the original Boston Tea Party. "We were billed with Fleetwood Mac, on their first American tour, but they all had the flu, so on the second night they did only one set and then had the J Geils Band stand in for them. Unfortunately, they ran overtime, so we had to cut our last-ever set short," Richard remembers. This final piece of misfortune seems apposite for a group whose career was so dogged by problems of others' making. Strangely, though, they made more recordings around the time of their break-up. "I have the tapes and have been trying to restore them", he tantalises. After going their separate ways for a year, during which Richard played in a band named Slag, the group reformed in April 1970, with Carey Mann rejoining on lead guitar and organ in place of Ken Frankel. After a few months in this configuration, though, Carey quit again in the late summer. He was replaced by Larry Carsman, described by Richard as "a phenomenal musician" - but in November he also quit, to be replaced by Walter Bjorkman, another highly accomplished player. Clearly the original spirit had been lost, though, and Richard was next to leave, describing his position in the band by this stage as 'emotionally untenable'. Ill Wind hadn't quite blown out, though. They carried on with much local success as a quartet and were apparently much sought-after on the resort circuit. In the final phase, however, they did very little original material and (though they did some recording) never approached a record release.

After a final split, the group splintered in various directions, though they remain in touch with each other. Tom and Ken Frankel successfully entered the real estate business in California. Ken eventually divorced Judy Bradbury and now lives in California, where he still plays guitar. Tom eventually moved to Las Vegas and has a variety of businesses including an art gallery. He also practices Asian medicine]. Carey Mann played in a variety of bands throughout the 70s, recording an album with Dirty John's Hot Dog Stand and gigging on the club circuit for a number of years, during which he also developed a highly successful career in computer technology. He still lives in Massachusetts. David Kinsman and Conny Devanney ran a booking agency together for a number of years, before David moved to Maine and started a business importing bicycle parts, which he has recently sold in order to retire. Conny organises 'estate sales' of furniture and other personal items after death but still sings on the corporate entertainment circuit, living in New England. Finally, Richard took a PhD in composition and music technology in 1982 and has worked extensively both as a musician (incorporating tours with artists such as Diamanda Galas) and intermedia artist since (generating software used by the Grateful Dead live) into an extraordinarily varied career.

Though none of the members have pursued full-time musical careers since their split, interest in 'Flashes' has steadily grown through compilation appearances, bootlegs, and particularly the collectors'

market, where copies sell for well into three figures. A recent bootleg reissue on the Afterglow label includes cuts culled from the band's earliest Boston demo sessions in 1966, and also from the Capitol demos of the following year. These were obtained from one of the members under false pretences, and cause Richard understandable irritation. A more recent bootleg by Italian label Akarma was even overseen by Alan Lorber, self-appointed king of the 60s Boston psychedelic rock scene. As Richard puts it, "Lorber never had anything to do with the band, but has made a business in recent years out of reissuing albums by Boston groups, generally without their participation." As extras, this issue also contained the demos, presumably culled from the Afterglow issue. "I'm flattered at the attention the band is getting after 35 years", he says, "but I'm also annoyed that this has been done without any consultation with us. We could have provided better quality recordings of the bonus material and corrected the errors on the sleeve." In light of these remarks, a remastered, official reissue with extra tracks would be most welcome. Richard still has their demo tapes, and even some live recordings - but hearing them, he says, is the closest we'll come to hearing the band in concert today. "We never talk about reforming", he says. "Some of us aren't playing anymore and we live on opposite coasts. It's best to let it be."

Written and directed by Richard Morton Jack, © Ptolemaic Terrascope, 2003

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