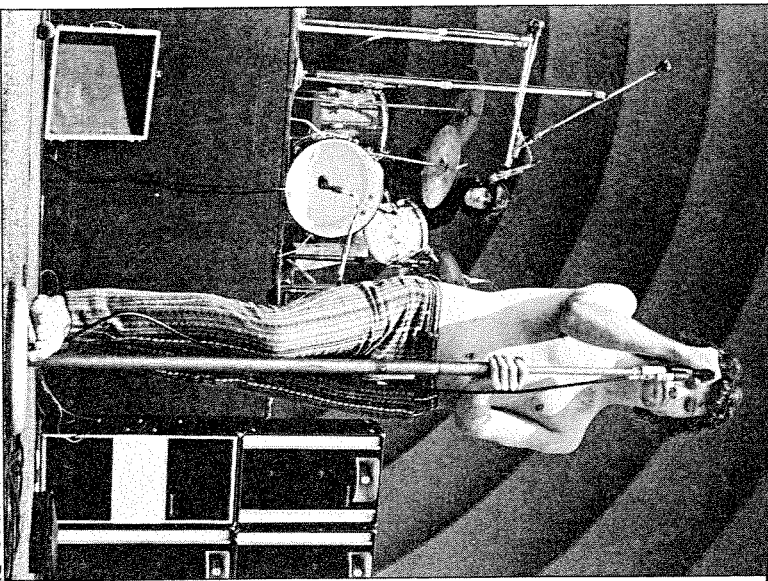


Prologue: The Boy Looked at Jimbo



Jim Morrison sound checks at the Hollywood Bowl, July 4, 1968. Photo Credit: Kerry Colonna.

**HARVEY KUBERNIK:** I always thought Phil Spector was the first L.A. punk because of the rebel aspect. The attitude first and foremost. He didn't answer to anybody. It was also the clothing, the hair, the costumes, and he was a tiny little runt. He was the guy at Fairfax High that people told you, "Don't be like Phil Spector. He dresses weird. You don't wanna be some weird-assed punk like Phil." And that only attracted us young'uns more to him, especially when he showed up on the Stones' first album as a songwriter.

**DENNY BRUCE:** There were as many iconoclasts here during the '60s as there were in New York. The Velvet Underground weren't the only proto punks. Look at Frank Zappa, who utterly savaged flower power culture on *We're Only in It for the Money*. Look at Captain Beefheart, an untrained musician who blew free-form bass clarinet solos without even being able to play, or even more extreme . . . look at Charlie Manson, for God's sake. Not that I'm comparing Frank or Don (Van Vliet, aka Captain Beefheart) to a lunatic . . . but these were not hippie love people, nor were they cranks hammering out folk songs in the East Village about transsexuality and shooting dope.

**DON WALLER:** L.A. was full of punks in the '60s. The Music Machine, the Standells, Arthur Lee and Love, Black Pearl—Sky Saxon and Jim Morrison. My definition of punk rock Mach 1 is basically '60s American garage bands like the Sonics that wanna be a combination of the London bands like the Yardbirds, the Pretty Things, and the early Stones.

**SKY SAXON:** My band, the Seeds, was a balance between chaos and wonderland. Music was and always will be the great escape from when there is too much reality. "Pushin' Too Hard" was a battle cry for the young, that we weren't going to take it anymore.

**JIM MORRISON (FIRST ELEKTRA RECORDS BIO, 1967):** I am primarily an American, second, a Californian, third, a Los Angeles resident.

**SKY SAXON:** I loved the Doors. The Doors opened for the Seeds in the '60s. I remember Jim coming to hear the Seeds at the Bido Lito's club in '66.

**JIM MORRISON (FIRST ELEKTRA BIO):** I've always been attracted to ideas that were about revolt against authority. I like ideas about the breaking away or overthrowing of established order. I am interested in anything about revolt, disorder, chaos—especially activity that seems to have no meaning.

**DANNY SUGERMAN:** Most people associate punk with mindless mayhem, but Jim was a true original artist who refused to compromise for anyone for any reason. It was that attitude that made him a punk, because supposedly he didn't know what was good for him. Not listening to good advice has always been a characteristic of a punk, I'd say.

**HARVEY KUBERNIK:** Morrison was obviously much more rebellious and outrageous and more chemically induced and alcohol driven than Spector was. There was Jim the poet and artist and then there was i'l ol' Jimbo . . . and ol' Jimbo drank way too much. I thought it was extremely rebellious during Doors concerts to tell everybody to shut up or to scream "Fuck you!" from the stage . . . even to ask "Anybody got a cigarette?" And somebody would come up to the stage and give him one. I always saw that as a major rebellious thing, the leering drunken swagger, the sheer whimsical insolence of asking for a cigarette from a seated audience while they're yelling for "Light My Fire."

**DANNY SUGERMAN:** Jim certainly was the first rock singer to front off an audience, to tell them to go get fucked . . . that's what happened at Cobo Hall when Iggy saw Jim for the first time and decided to be a singer instead of a drummer. He loved what he saw Morrison doing, flipping the audience the finger for screaming out "Light My Fire" while the band was going off into "Celebration of the Lizard" instead.

**RAY MANZAREK:** Iggy Pop, whom many consider the godfather of punk, loved the Doors, especially Morrison. When Iggy was still Jim Osterberg he checked us out when we played at the University of Michigan. We didn't know till we got there that it was homecoming weekend. We thought, "This is entirely wrong; this is going to be such a disaster." The audience was thick-necked young men in tuxedos with their girls in ball gowns. We're playing in their gymnasium and Morrison is drunk as a skunk, knowing full well what we had gotten ourselves into, and he was just gonna obliterate himself. We played the worst fucking show ever. John and Robbie were so fed up. Finally John tossed his sticks into the audience and walked offstage. We tried to do a simple blues, but Jim was all over the place. Then Robbie left the stage, too. All they wanted to hear was "Light My Fire," but Jim kept on hollering freeform, so I picked up the guitar and played a slow blues and the audience started booing. He was shouting, "Hey, this is what we play, man. This is the fucking blues. Keep on, Ray. Hey, fuck you! Fuck you!" Huge refrigerator-sized football players began lunging toward us. Then the dean came out and said, "That's it, that's it . . . show's

over. Would you boys leave the stage? Just leave the stage." And Morrison's screaming, "Fuck, we don't wanna leave the stage. You people wanna hear more music, don'tcha?" And they're going, "Boo! Boo!" We got paid and got out of there by the skin of our teeth before they pulverized us. Afterward Iggy said: "Holy fuck, true anarchy prevailed. You guys were great. I loved it." Who knows what that night did to Iggy Pop's head, 'cause he's been doing that show ever since. Soon the Stooges were brought to Elektra, the Doors' label, with the thinking: "The Doors are a band with a wild-man singer that has pop hits, let's get another hit with these guys."

**RON ASHETON:** Iggy watched Morrison and learned how to use and abuse the audience and get them into the act. Morrison wore a pair of brown leather pants, so Iggy had a pair of brown vinyl pants made 'cause he couldn't quite afford the leather, you know.

**DANNY SUGERMAN:** Morrison had no interest in the Stooges. They were playing the Whisky and I wanted him to take me to see them, but he said: "No, Bo Diddley's going to be there next month, I'll take you to see him instead."

**JOHN DOE:** Jim Morrison had to be one of the first punks because he was just as shit-faced as the rest of us and alcohol has a way of loosening your tongue—and the same thing about demons, having all these personal problems and working them out. I was attracted to the Doors as a teen because of the dark imagery.

**EXENE CERVENKA:** I liked the Doors' version of the ocean, which was dark and scary. It wasn't the sunny beach that the other people liked, especially those who liked roller skating.

**JIM MORRISON (FIRST ELEKTRA BIO):** We are from the West/The whole thing is like an invitation to the West. The world we suggest is of a new wild west. A sensuous evil world.

**DANNY SUGERMAN:** The Velvet Underground get more credit than the Doors for dark and somber themes. The Doors' being from the Sunshine State didn't help, but certainly songs like "End of the Night," "You're Lost Little Girl," and "The End," are as dark and foreboding as anything the Velvets did. I'm a fan of both bands, but the darkness seemed to be the Velvets' entire raison d'être. New York street poets writing about the dark side of life, whereas the Doors did that, too, but they had a greater, wider range, emotionally and musically.

Lou was more street than Jim. Jim never sang about putting a spike into his vein but he did sing "Father, I want to kill you." I'd say the Velvets had the street sewn up but the Doors have forever staked out the domain around the abyss.

**DON WALLER:** It's pretty hard to top the Velvets' "Heroin"—although the Doors' "The End" comes close. I think the Doors don't get some of the credit for being a voice of darkness in a world of flower power that the Velvets do because the Doors sold a lot more records and the Velvets came from New York. New York is a parochial town run by a publishing media that likes to think it invented everything.

**SKY SAXON:** L.A. was very groovy in the '60s. I believed that flower power was the way, although the record industry completely destroyed the message of love and peace. The '70s should have been a rebirth of spirit for all, instead there was a war.

**RAY MANZAREK:** At some point white men took over, the impulse to whiteness took over in L.A. Black jazz and black soul were taken out of rock music. It went country, a shift in radio programming which represented the triumph of country music over psychedelic hippie rock. The country rock of Linda Ronstadt, Jackson Browne, and the Eagles reigned supreme. It was nice enough radio music, nice tunesmithing and all that, but the whole country rock period was all a little too mellow for me. No runaway passion. No Dionysian impulse. If the Doors had still been active, would the country rock stuff have happened? Depends on who you talk to. There's always something to fill a vacuum; usually it's the lowest common denominator.

**HARVEY KUBERNIK:** By '71, the Elektra/Asylum Records singer songwriter type music was all that this town was offering. They were social climbers, very locked into the traditional Brill Building verse/chorus/verse style. They wore flannel shirts, long hair, beards. When Morrison died, I said to Manzarek, "Well, maybe Jim wasn't supposed to see all this singer-songwriter shit take over his label."