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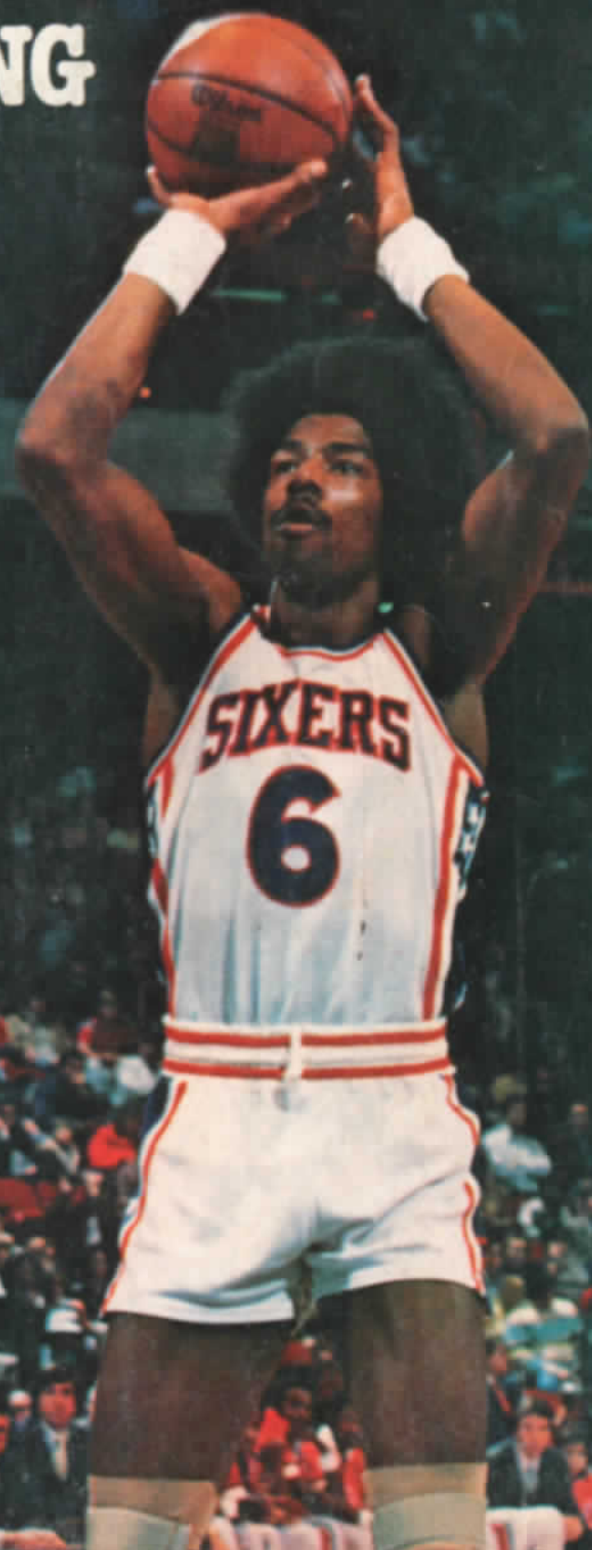
TIM LEARY BLASTS OFF

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# CRAWDADDY

**DR. J  
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**Going  
One-on-One  
With Pro  
Basketball's  
#1 Split  
Personality**



**EAGLES VS. THE COOKIE MONSTER  
GRAHAM PARKER HOWLS**



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Can we really take four, maybe eight more years of Plains, Ga.? That "good ol' gas station," that "good ol' church"? Our Travel Editor revisits the Southern White House—the first time was as a civil rights worker when it was board-up-the-windows-and-duck!—and wonders if anything has really changed.

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The lead guitarist was a Puerto Rican sumo wrestler with a blimp for a belly. The bass trumpet player was a latin lover, the bandleader a Dominican Dandy, the journalist a New York yanqui. Godzilla Has Entered The City. And the question of the day: What to do about the Japanese jailbait backstage who, despite cash settlement, has refused to go back home.

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ing. He stands about Van Morrison's height, weighs maybe as much as Dylan . . . he's a skinny little thing who wails his music because he has to. "I would play and scream, and I would get it out," he says. A year ago he was pumping gas. Now. . . .

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Dr. J is the best basketball player in the world. It's something in the way he moves. Style is what sets him apart—You put a ball in Dr. J's hands it's like putting a brush in Picasso's. But who is Julius Erving? They live in the same body, but in different

worlds. The delicate balance is critical. There's a struggle going on, a man going one-on-one with himself, and the game clock is winding down. . . .

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Maligned mentor or cosmic snitch? After many years on the lam, and some others in prison, Leary is trying to reemerge. "I always knew I was going to be one of the great philosophers of all times," he says. On airplanes, at lectures, in late-night hotel rooms, our correspondent tries to pin down the elusive sky pilot. Only Eldridge Cleaver and the FBI have succeeded before her.

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# 30 LATINS OVER TOKYO

BY GREG MITCHELL

グレゴリー・ミッチェル

The conga player was a black Cuban best known for a pun off his name in a Mel Brooks movie. The lead guitarist was a Puerto Rican sumo wrestler with a belly as big as a blimp. The bass trumpet player was a Latin lover who hadn't done much except fuck since getting his head smashed in a streetfight three years ago. The piano player was a white Jew, the bandleader a Dominican Dandy. The sponsor was an Italian attorney who once promoted a heavyweight championship fight between a Belgian and an Afro-American. And the journalist was a blond New York yanqui in Emperor Hirohito's court who at the outset barely knew the difference between a pagoda and a bodega. The occasion: the Fania All Stars' annual overseas tour, which this year went looking for a salsa crossover into the lucrative American rock market via a visit to a tiny Oriental island 6,000 miles from home. There they were, the journalist and 30 Latins over Tokyo, scaling trilingual language and cultural barriers in the Land of the Rising Sun.

This day he seems to be dreaming as he saunters past deferential hotel help on whose faces vague outrage at his hulking vulgarity can be detected as they com-

Crawdaddy's Senior Editor Greg Mitchell was born on Pearl Harbor Day, 1947.

**F**lying high  
with Mongo, Yomo,  
El Malo and  
the rest of the "Kiss Me,  
I'm Puerto Rican"  
gang in a  
cross-cultural assault  
on Mt. Fuji.

plete their bows. Far out in the countryside Mt. Fuji rises mystically, a snow-capped autumn apparition under this most rare of immaculate Tokyo skies. In the faint distance, a smattering of new skyscrapers dares the inevitable earthquake. Like Los Angeles, the city stretches aimlessly, clogged close to the ground, unexplored yet familiar in its grey metropolitan appeal.

Stepping outside his Western-style quarters, the yanqui suddenly finds himself afloat in an ocean of Orientals. A shocking absence of other Americans . . . diminutive strangers are staring up at him . . . tan faces and dark hair everywhere,

like huge acorns bobbing on thin sticks. He studies the expressive faces of the men and subtle shades of delicacy in the women and decides: They do not at all look alike. Consistently pretty girls in cotton dresses. An occasional old woman in an ancient kimono. Businessmen as usual, in bland suits and uniform white shirts. Dressed in transplanted Wrangler wear, young men move with an air of resigned powerlessness, for women run their homes and elderly forefathers control the offices and factories. There are, the yanqui has been told, no whiz kids in Japan.

Toyotas swell the streets. In absurdly lush parks, undersize high school linemen lock shoulder pads and baseballs share air space with decorative kites. On top of the hill, riot police carrying shiny shields have commandeered a playground and are drilling in self-defensive formations. On sealed-off pavement, children are racing remote-control sports cars whose automotive coughs shatter the busy stillness. A taxi approaches . . . and the yanqui yelps as his knee is knocked silly when a driver's-side pushbutton automatically opens the rear door.

A national holiday. In Shinjuku, a parade. An American Army-of-occupation band plays "The Stars and Stripes Forever!" while traditionally attired teenagers snake dance and balance an ex-

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photograph by Jose Flores

otic miniature shrine on their shoulders. In a cemetery as densely packed as the city itself, the yanqui finds incense warding off evil and these tributes to the dead lying atop family plots: a candle, a banana, a ball of soybean. At the baseball stadium nearby, happy fans sit in the sun eating soyburgers and rice. In countless pachinko parlors, restless outcasts play a dizzying form of pinball without flippers, while historic halls downtown promote kabuki actors and sumo wrestlers grappling with antiquity.

Searching for something to eat, the yanqui dodges sidewalk vending machines and avoids lukewarm coffee shops too numerous to ignore for long. Occasionally he stops in front of tiny wood-framed restaurants to study plastic replicas of various delicacies inside glass display cases. At a tempura place, the waitress is watching a samurai soap opera. In a sushi bar, the yanqui feeds his inscrutable face with chewy raw octopus and fresh tuna artistically attached to chunks of rice by seaweed threads. At least this fish isn't moving, he laughs aloud, recalling an incident from the night before, when an uncooked, half-eaten lobster had suddenly lurched off Larry Harlow's plate in an abortive escape. . . .

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The dissident Jewish pianist is at the MARCH, 1977



photograph by Jose Flores

moment wishing he were somewhere else himself. Dressed in a shocking blue jumpsuit, "El Judio Maravilloso" is kicking back his stool and playing a chord with his left buttock, more out of sheer boredom than from any incipient showmanship. Smiling Cheshire-like through it all, Mongo Santamaria shakes off the darts shooting through his bandaged fingers and addresses the congas between his legs 400 times during one 60-second solo. If Mongo's hands are, as some of the musicians believe, "blessed," then God has for some reason, anointed them with pain.

Standing alongside Mongo, angular

bongocero Roberto Roena hits his skins with agile sticks, then steps out front and mambodances frenetically, a strobe-lit vision in silver. Outfitted in a shocking green karate suit, Nicky Marrero blows into an assortment of whistles, wheels his timbales around the stage, and taps out a rimshot solo. The five singers at stage left are an odd assortment, from campy young matinee idol to frail veteran, with a Latin girl named O'Neil in between. They're dancing the cha-cha in unison, singing Spanish in harmony and taking turns as *sonero* out front. But one of the chanting *coros* seems distracted, perhaps deciding what to do about the Japanese jailbait backstage who, despite cash settlement, has refused to go back home.

Behind this line, a walking stereotype dressed in stacked heels, effervescent green pants, "Kiss Me I'm Puerto Rican" sportshirt and straw hat is wrenching out a shattering electric guitar solo on his 10-stringed cuatro. In back of him, six trumpeters and trombonists are playing predictable charts and blowing progressive jazz-rock solos. Ismael Quintana has just completed his exciting *montuno* improvisation when skinny-slick Luis "Perico" Ortiz steps forward with his trumpet to negotiate a difficult passage. "The trumpet is very physical and moody," Perico had testified, "and a solo is something that comes from your gut"



—high notes are rocketing around the arena—“until it explodes in your head”—the brass is bursting, spittle drips from the bell—“just like an orgasm.”

Dry ice raises smoke. Styrofoam balls clutter the air. “*Moto, moto,*” the audience screams. The half-filled hall is up in arms. Somehow salsa has broken the language barrier, an achievement not lost on any of its beaming crossover-conscious sponsors. The normally reserved shag-cut products of Japan’s own postwar baby boom are jumping onstage, dancing, presenting gifts of kisses, bouquets and sake. As they follow the Fania All-Stars off, emcee and salsa propagandist Dizzy Izzy Sanabria rhetorically asks the crowd: “Aren’t they great?” And Willie Colon lays down his silverplated trumpet, puts on his shirt, and mutters not quite under his breath, “It sucks.”

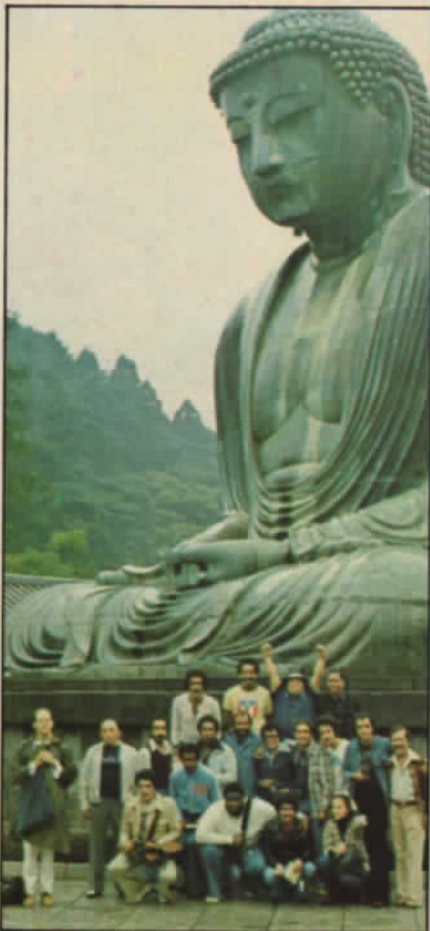
The game is called “Waiting for Willie.” Planes, buses, taxis, concerts must wait for Willie. The other All-Stars resent and spoil him with the kind of reluctant love lavished on those whose talent commands special consideration. Waiting on the bus for Willie. “One time in Nice,” explains Johnny Pacheco, rummaging in his pocket for an imported cigar, “we finally had the plane take off without him. Just as we got to Ibiza, Willie pulls up in a rented car with 47¢ in his pocket.”

As the bus finally pulls away, William Anthony Colon, 26, broadjumps onboard. “The bowing, it’s very good for the waist,” he declares, “and for the way they dispose of the waste.” Colon’s bedroom eyes peer out from over a brown beard blanket. His clothes are French expensive, his jokes childishly clever, his manner cloaked in soft ferocity. “Willie has a big heart, but he is temperamental,” guitarist Yomo Toro is telling the yanqui. “He’ll jump up and punch you in the face just like that.” The word is to make friends with Willie Colon is to risk turning your back on him one day and catching a chair over the head.

At a disco the night before, Willie had picked up a girl from Washington, D.C. named Susanna. Back in his hotel room, she had turned him on to some Thai stick which had knocked him right out. “I didn’t screw her,” he admits. “Goes to show you about my reputation.” Besides fucking, the boy wonder of Latin music has done little else but produce other acts, write jingles and score a play for New York Shakespeare Festival Director Joseph Papp called *Mondongo* since that night three years ago when he walked into a White Castle in the South Bronx.

Enroute to the second oldest (700 years), second largest (44 feet) Buddha in the world, yanqui and Latin alike are overlooking endless rows of colorful tiled roofs. In addition to next-door neighbors,

every family seems to have front- and back-door neighbors as well. In conventional 12-story apartment buildings, the only rooms with a view inevitably look out on terraces strung with wet clothes. Children play on clean streets the size of sidewalks, skirting open sewers. Intermittent rice paddies strain for space amid the



photograph by Jose Flores

factories, engaged in a symbolic struggle for land.

Competition and jealousy are running rampant on the bus as well. Handsome young singer Ismael Miranda, who has one eye on *barrio* dances and the other on Vegas, is handing the yanqui his business card and a “My Life Story” booklet, text in Spanish. “You could look at the pictures,” he explains, “taken from my entire life.” The yanqui can’t believe that the hottest seller in salsa isn’t too proud to do his own PR.

A manic cross-reference in his orange “Go Fuck Yourself—Do It Today” T-shirt and coolie hat, Nicky Marrero is bitching about “the singers” hogging the All-Star spotlight. “Their axes aren’t as well-developed as musicians,” he asserts. “I’m not happy. The material’s bad—and getting worse.”

While Mongo Santamaria protests that there’s no such thing as salsa—it’s just a commercial phrase for Cuban mambo—Larry Harlow lowers his voice and tells the yanqui how much he hates the All-

Stars’ show, even his own solos. “It’s all old shit, man,” he says. “To see anything hot, you gotta go home and check out the dances.”

Under a pork-pie hat in the back of the bus, Victor William Toro is taking up two seats and somewhat regretfully recounting the handjob he’d gotten from a masseuse in his room at the hotel. The legendary *tipico* guitarist has come a long way from his home two blocks from Yankee Stadium in the gritty South Bronx. He shows the yanqui a little black book with 101 names in it but says his huge heart belongs to a 15-year-old virgin. Back in America they go for long rides together. With her mom in the back seat, she reaches over and touches him gently. Yomo sighs and the girl licks her fingers clean. “She wants me,” he says, “but I use my 43-year-old mind to deny her 15-year-old body. She cries for me. Does that mean she loves me?”

At the Kamakura Buddha, the solemn monument is overwhelmed by the exquisite scenery surrounding it. Twenty yards away, a souvenir stand sells the uniquely Japanese brand of quality junk. Willie Colon is buying hash pipes. One of the Fania execs is shoplifting key rings and chopsticks. Ignoring the darker Latins, schoolchildren surround the yanqui, staring, pointing, laughing in amused mockery. Alarmed at the absence of smooth skin, they tug at his blond beard and hairy arms, making the yanqui feel like a bull in their china shop.

At a rustic roadside restaurant which takes all major credit cards, the natives are sipping soup and spinning noodles when the barbarians invade. The host wants \$20 a man for *shabu-shabu* (beef, vegetables, the omnipresent bean curd) but the foreigners demand something for a buck-three-eighty. Harmless threats and wisecracks fill a room never before shaken by loud laughter, and the Japanese customers scamper off. Godzilla Has Entered the City. Alex Masucci, a Fania exec thanks to the benevolent nepotism of older brother Jerry (company president), picks up a cold noodle and roars in his street-kid Italian: “Twenty thousand years and they haven’t learned to put tomato sauce on it yet?” The waiters are horrified. The Puerto Ricans are starving. Some use ladles as soup spoons. Others drift off next door, where they invade the strictly traditional annex, respectfully removing their shoes as they step across the straw mats. Latin blood and ethnic gaucherie have suddenly given way to a certified gentility the yanqui has seen before but still finds surprising.

When he returns to the bus the yanqui spots Benji, the Masucci’s 300-pound Jamaican bodyguard, carrying an eight-foot bamboo feather duster ripped off from the restaurant. “I used to have eight bodyguards,” Willie Colon tells the yan-



qui, settling into his seat in the bus after making it wait for him the appointed 10 minutes, "real gorillas, and Benji was one of the smallest. There were underworld contracts out on me for some heavy shit that I can't be prosecuted for now. But when I walked into that White Castle, man, I was alone. These niggers—I call a nigger a nigger, a spic a spic—called me a half-breed but I just got my hamburgers and walked out. When they came after me I hit them with everything I got, but they kept coming! In one shot this guy fractured my cheek, skull and jaw in four places. I staggered over to my car and got a baseball bat—I'd just been playing with my kid—and let him have it over the head. Thought I killed him.

"Went home, put my face back together, then I was in the hospital a month losing 10 pounds a week. Got out, my wife says she's leaving. More contracts out on me. So I withdrew, moved downtown, bought a Cadillac, broke up my band."

Willie was #1 back then. He's not even Top 10 now. "Getting my ass kicked at White Castle made me a diplomat—and a lover. I had to prove it wasn't me who caused the breakup with my wife." Even a little loaded, the insecurity behind the public machismo is touching. His voice is actually cracking. "And my wife, you can put down that I still love her. . . ."

As the bus careens along the freeway into the city, its occupants can observe a flowing stream of ant-like commuters chasing phantom subways in the rain. The neon lights of the Ginza are lit like a G-rated Times Square. At the hotel, the travelers stumble into a student demonstration against the "Rockheeda" scandal. Sound trucks boom, accompanied by a distant, eerie feminine chant. Young Japan seems halfheartedly insistent; just as they were inspired by American radicalism in the '60s, so have they now, the yanqui decides sadly, succumbed to rampant apathy.

The yanqui was certain of this much: There was no word for "no" in Nipponese. When in doubt, he had found that the natives were never noncommittal. At his own risk he had asked for information many times and been misled with a nod and a smile. The Japanese, he knew, didn't know the meaning of "don't know."

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The next day, the yanqui is sitting alone in the comfortable sanctuary of a bullet train making young girls giggle with a glance. Women porters sell mandarin oranges and boxed lunches as the train putters along at 160 miles an hour. The day before, the yanqui had traveled by taxi, two trains, a cable car, ropeway and boat, up, down and around and between mountains, to see Mt. Fuji but had found the only cloud in the sky covering the Most Holy Place. Now he was sud-

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denly speeding past its base, meditating on the meaning of its unexpected appearance alongside the track. Like much of the rest of Japan, Fuji had revealed itself in its own time, not the visitor's.

By contrast, the yanqui had, if anything, found his record company patrons too open, too obvious. In an historic switch, the journalist was more suspicious of his subjects than vice versa. He had discovered that the most powerful voice of latin culture in the U.S. is run by guys named Masucci, Gallo, and Sachs. In Japan they displayed the kind of approachability the yanqui usually wished to avoid, so blatant was its guilelessness a cover for cunning business sense; they are all just one of the boys, the yanqui decided, and the masters of them. But for most of the musicians they are also the only masters they've ever had, so despite long-term contractual servitude, under-scale session payments and manipulative star treatment, the up-from-the-slums players are, for the most part, grateful.

In a world of sharkskin sharpies, the

Willie Colon: Late again



Photograph by Izzy Sonabira

Masucci's scruffy insolence has its appeal; it was all the yanqui could do not to watch the Fania execs with their pants down. He could not imagine a vice president of Arista Records, for example, inviting him, as Alex Masucci had repeatedly done, to let the good times roll at a bath house in Kawasaki.

"You gotta go," Alex had advised. "First you bathe, then the chick washes you down with her body. Then you bathe again to rinse off the suds, and she uses vaseline and hot water all over. Then she washes that off. Then she licks your toes, legs, balls, cock, then you go fuck. A lot of the guys have gotten Japanese nookie."

His big brother seemed somewhat more restrained, perhaps more befitting status than inclination. Jerry Masucci, 40, believes that, like R&B, salsa just "happened" and then he promoted it. "I'd love to see 'salsa' in the dictionary just like jazz," he tells the yanqui, checking through customs back in L.A., USA. "I'm gonna call up the people myself." A former truckdriver who stumbled into

salsa 10 years ago as Pacheco's attorney, he's since promoted the Ali-Coopman fight, two salsa movies, and built a \$6-million company based on a market of just 10 million Latinos in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

And yet he still has his goals. Crossover. He wants it badly. He wants, he said, a Top 40 hit, in fact had made his first foray with a record called *Delicate and Jumpy*, a disastrous quasi-disco All-Stars album produced by Barry White's arranger, Gene Page. In attempting to take his fish into a bigger pond, Masucci had let the big one get away.

"To cross over," Larry Harlow affirms, drawing the yanqui aside conspiratorially, "we need only one big song with English lyrics. Only me or Willie could do it. Barretto's into be-bop. Eddie Palmieri's coked out." But Willie had already said that he was abandoning his crossover search and instead was teaming up with striking young singer Ruben Blades on what Masucci predicted would be the album of the year. Blades himself had told the yanqui that "one should not be deceived by non-Latin audiences that regard salsa as a new craze or fad. Crossover could even hurt the audience already genuinely devoted to salsa."

The customs lines are clogged with affable Latins, impatiently tapping out Cuban rhythms on floor, luggage, instrument cases. For the first time, the yanqui realizes that he is really quite fond of nearly all of them. He had found that they were not so different from rock stars of similar status; they picked up groupies, cheated on their wives, wrestled with coke and junk habits, took advantage of their stardom and were taken advantage of in return. Throughout the Japan trip, the yanqui had not been able to shake off the feeling that he was something of a guinea pig, the archetypal young white rock 'n roll fan who would make or break a salsa crossover. The yanqui had come away impressed by the eclectic Latin textures but not moved, entertained but rarely delighted. He felt a little guilty about this until he remembered that many of the musicians shared his ambivalence.

As he moved to the head of the line, the yanqui vowed to check out the local salsa scene back in New York, and sensed that he would not keep that promise.

The last time he saw Willie Colon, "El Malo" was jumping ship, heading back East early in a fitful flight of self-propulsion.

The last time he saw the Fania All-Stars, they were cruising through customs, suspicious grins on their faces and dope stashes in tow.

The last time he saw Jerry Masucci, the ex-cop, current lawyer, president of a multimillion dollar company was getting his skin searched, U.S. Customs, L.A. International Airport. ■