

# THE BEATLES

## A Long and Winding Road

As a young record label executive at Capitol Records in the sixties, the Beatles were Ken Mansfield's clients, and they became his friends. Ken was hand-picked to be the first U.S. manager of The Beatle's Apple Records and was thrust into a world that would change his life forever.

I grew up in Northern Idaho near Indian reservation country. I was fascinated with Hollywood and the music business, but I never dreamed I would end up in it as a profession.

In college I studied to go into business. As a hobby I got into a singing group where we started doing really well and ended up with some Beverly Hills managers. After college I met some people from Capitol Records and they hired me as a business manager.

I became district promotion manager for Capitol Records on the West Coast. When an artist came into L.A. I was responsible for taking them to their television interviews, doing the press things with them and taking them to cocktail parties. After only a few months the Beatles came to town and suddenly they were my responsibility. Well, we just hit it off.

They were really fascinated with L.A. and Hollywood. They invited me over to their rented house and we spent the day hanging around the pool getting to know each other. They wanted to see Mullholland Drive and Grauman's

Chinese Theater. Ringo wanted to meet Buck Owens because he was a country fan. To the people of England in the sixties, California was this magic land.

At this time their goal was to make sure they captured America. I was the only one they knew over here so they hired me as the head of Apple Records in America as well as their personal liaison between Britain and the United States. I became the Beatles guy in Hollywood.

I was making plenty of money and had all the material things I needed. The Beatles were my friends and my position, my relationships and my power were the envy of Hollywood. My kids grew up in Beverly Hills playing in bands. Groups like Guns N Roses basically came out of our house. I had a studio there and that's where they rehearsed. Slash was my son's best friend. It was a pretty heavy life that they were around. Drugs flowed freely. I would be gone for weeks at a time. It was this crazy lifestyle with chauffeurs driving my family everywhere. It was an exciting atmosphere but in retrospect it was not a good environ-

# ES & ME

■ BY KEN MANSFIELD

ment to raise a family. Of course we all loved it at the time.

I left the Beatles in 1970 to become vice-president of MGM. From there I went on to a CBS label owned by Andy Williams and was president of that record company. My success with the Beatles and as a record industry executive wasn't enough for me. I wanted to start making money for myself instead of for others. So I set up my own production company.

I needed to produce major artists and I did get some, like David Cassidy, but not enough was happening. I wasn't getting the projects I needed. I also made some really bad investments. I had a very high overhead and things started going backwards. When you get involved in a backwards slide you don't have the energy to do what's need-

ed in your career. I kept coming in second in my bids to have the record companies sign me to produce their artists. I had to produce at a regular rate to keep the money coming in. On top of all that I was having some health problems and my marriage was falling apart. It was a downward spin and when it starts going down it goes down big time.

So in a very short period of time everything fell apart: my finances, my career, my health and my family. I went from the top to the bottom very quickly. I have since come to understand how God can work things. He can create blessings in both directions. He can create great success but he can also take it away in order to point you to himself. About this time I met a very winsome young lady who was a Christian. She began to explain to me what it meant to have a personal relationship with God. She explained how God had become a man and died a cruel death on a tree in order to forgive my sins and clear the way for a daily love relationship with me. God changed my heart and brought me to himself.

I now understand that my past successes were fun and exciting, but they didn't bring the lasting happiness and purpose that I was searching for. God wasn't a part of the mix and that is why my success had no lasting value and significance. I have

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since realized that God loved me enough to remove these things so that I would discover my need for him and we could start over with each other.

Now I see success in the peace I have, in the rich marriage I have and in my relationship with God. Everything I do now in my personal and business life comes under His direction. I learned the hard way that

when things go bad or fall apart and you don't have God in your life, it's an absolute nightmare because you have nothing to fall back on. Now when things happen that are disconcerting I have no fear because I know that it's part of his purpose and plan for me. There is always going to be good coming out of it because he's lovingly watching over my life.

My most memorable experience with the Beatles was the last time they played together. We needed live footage for the *Let It Be* film but they couldn't play anywhere because they were so famous. We just wanted to get live footage of them playing together and we tried everything, but we could never keep a secret.

Things were starting to get really weird too. You could tell that the Beatles were close to breaking up. So one day we set up on the top of a six-story building in downtown London with the cameras and recording equipment. And the Beatles went up on the roof and did a show over the skyline of London. That was the last time they ever played together. There were only 12 of us on the roof that day who got to see it. We locked the door to the street so neither the police nor anyone else could come up. It was a real special time and it is featured in the *Let it Be* movie.

It's hard to stay in touch with the Beatles now because they have to change their phone numbers regularly. Ringo and I are still long-time friends. I try to keep all of this in perspective though. It's not my memories of the Beatles that will last forever, because one day even that will fade away. It's who I am in relationship with God and where I'll spend eternity that's most important to me now. I hope that will be the same for you too. 