

MISSION REBEL NO. 1:

Looking for Reverend Jesse James

Composed by David James

Performed by GPS:

Alan Williams trombone, voice

Beth Custer clarinet, voice

Keith Lawrence viola, voice

David James guitar, voice

Lisa Mezzacappa bass

John Hanes drums

with

Allegra Bandy voice

Sólás Burke-Lalgee voice

Sound Engineer Deanne Franklin

Projections David Rosenthal

J.J.'s Boogaloo

The Average Adult

Circa 1928

Sharpened

Alauddin

Cop Booze

"To you people who represent labor, I'm asking you ..."

Headlines

Reformed Convict Honored

Mission Rebels' Jackpot

Circa Chico

Freshman Class

Sharpened

*"I think that it's important, you know,
This bit about identity. This is the
question I used to ask myself all the time,
It doesn't bother me anymore, you know,
I used to constantly ask myself, "Who am I?"*

Where did you go?
Where did you come from?
Where did you go,
And did your mother know?

Where did you come from?
Where did you go?
Where did you come from,
And did your mother know?

Did the stork drop you off
And hide you among the weeds,
Just awading in a pool of toys?

The cell, the stars, the suit, the scars
You left behind,
You never left the house without a hat on.
Just a baby in a pool of noise

Where did you go?
Where did you come from
when you came back?
Where did you go,
And did your mother know?

Brace Memorial Farm,
Elmira Reformatory,
Warwick State Training School for Boys.

You heard the name the devil came with,
Called it yours.
And ev'ry hat you ever wore remembers

Warwick State Training School for Boys,
Attica, Sing Sing.

Portions taken from the notebooks of Rev. Jesse James

Alauddin

*"At that time, my name was Alauddin al-Assad. I was a
Muslim, belonged to the Ahmadiyyah movement out of the
East. I used to make my salat devoutly, five times a day – in
Arabic ..."**

Where did you come from,
And where have you been,
Brother Alauddin?

Where are you going,
And where will you be,
Reverend Jesse?

From "Rapping", 1968 film

Cop/Booze

Just a little bit of wine, that's all we need
To get our mellow shade of groovy lit.
Just a little bit of heaven, that's all we need right now,
Take us out of this hardly real.
We'll make our buzz and you can make
dollar or two on the deal

“ ‘Say man,
How about going into the store and copping us
Some booze?’
I felt quite a bit of remorse ...
I could see two youths; both of them
Seventeen years old, um,
Going no place fast.

“I searched my mind and my
Heart for the words, you know,
To approach them and decline their offer,
And yet not leave them hanging...

“I pointed out to them that the average adult
Who would do something like this
(who would go and cop some booze for a kid)
Is probably one
Who destroyed his life,
Nothing really to live for.
And as we know,
Misery loves
Company

“But, on the other hand,
I felt that an adult should be around to offer
Something constructive,
And in order to offer something constructive,
one would first have to find out
Just what the youth wanted,
Or needed, or felt like he or she needed
And so I asked them what they wanted, what they
needed,
And they began to talk about
Jobs and respect,
A better image, you know, improved education,
And this type of thing.”

Adapted from interview with Rev. Jesse James – KPFA, Nov.
18, 1966

Additional lyrics by David James

"To you people who represent labor, I'm asking you ..."

**"To you people who represent labor,
I'm asking you
To release the freeze-out,
To melt it,
To open up doors,
Adequate avenues,
That these youth may
Have an opportunity."**

Adapted from Mission Rebels press conference, Nov. 30, 1966

Headlines

**"The Mission Rebels' War on Glue"
(It's a sticky situation)**

"Young Ones Stage a Groovy Rebellion"

"We'd Rather Do it Ourselves"

Adapted from various S.F. newspaper headlines 1966-67

Vocal melodies by Keith Lawrence, Lisa Mezzacappa, Alan Williams, and John Hanes

Reformed Convict Honored

**Reformed convict honored
Ex-criminal wins Kirkwood Award
A graduate of Sing-Sing, prison worker
Gave up a life of narcotics and crime,
Became a minister.**

("I thought that an adult should be around to offer something constructive")

**San Francisco ex-convict
Gets award for work with poor.**

Adapted from various S.F. newspaper reports June, 1968

Mission Rebels' Jackpot

**Mission Rebels' Jackpot:
Two hundred ninety-six thousand,
seven hundred sixty dollars.**

Adapted from various S.F. newspaper reports June, 1968

Vocal melody originally improvised by Beth Custer
From San Francisco Chronicle July. 4, 1968

Circa Chico

**Judith, Vincent, Marguerite, and
Sunflowers,**

**Joshua, the blonde one,
corn stalks, bare feet**

**Me and Anna come up from the
Black from the
came up from the**

**had to drive us up from
Edlo drove us from the
city**

**Oakland, 'cross the bridge Vallejo
Town the bridge, the**

**Sunshine day long the go?
Sun where'd day go?**

"One ... two ..." Jumpinthebigcreek!

**Mr. Blue Sky, Telephone Line,
Electric**

**Take a Chance on Me, My
Light, Queen, and the**

**Best Friend's Girl, and You're My Best Friend
Cars, Abba,**

**Butter, pressure cooker
Apple pressure cooker**

**Food scraps buried in the ground and
Food scraps buried, pressure cooker**

**Beauty was all around, but
Pressure ways around, but**

**Demons found him, "How 'bout some booze?"
"Hey Man, how about some booze?"**

**God!
God!!
God!!!**

**God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
the courage to change the things I can;
and the wisdom to know ...**

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Reading that illuminated things:

Ten Years That Shook the City: San Francisco 1968-1978, Charles Carlsson, Ed.
(particularly the essays “With the Soul of a Human Rainbow”, by Dr. Jason M. Ferreira and , “All Those Who Care About the Mission, Stand Up With Me”, by Tomás F. Summers Sandoval)

A Community Organizer’s Tale by Mike Miller
(A telling of the formation of the Mission Coalition Organization, including an account of J.J. and the Rebels’ disruption of the first MCO convention)

Numerous articles from the San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner printed between 1966 and 1975.

FoundSF.org has a brief introduction to the work of Rev. Jesse James and the Mission Rebels.

Ask your elders. Use your libraries.

In memory of my mother, Dolores James, and my father’s mother, Anna Mae Anderson,
the two of whom never met on Earth.

**For Jesse Joseph James
October 6, 1928 - May 31, 2005**