



FROM the original NEBRASKA album sleeve

1982 By David Michael Kennedy

FOUR DECADES ON,

Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska* stands stronger than ever as a songwriting masterclass. Springsteen isn't alone in considering the album his finest work: *Nebraska* continues to serve as a touchstone for generations of songwriters and musicians, many of whom cite its influence and cover its songs. Its brilliance is only heightened by the mystique and appeal of an origin story that intrinsically shaped the work itself.

Working in his Colts Neck, NJ bedroom with guitar tech-tuned-engineer Mike Ballan, Springsteen cut demos of a new batch of songs written in the winter of 1981-82 on a TEAC TASCAM 144 Portastudio, a first-of-its-kind consumer four-track cassette recorder, then mixed down through an Echoplex reverb to a water-damaged Panasonic boombox that ran at the wrong speed.

The alchemy of that homebrewed recording chain produced the album's otherworldly and impossible-to-replicate sonic signature. Springsteen's voice has an unaffected quality that at times belies the subject matter of his lyrics. "If you listen to that vocal style on *Nebraska*," manager Jon Landau told *Deliver Me From Nowhere* author Warren Zanes, "it's different from any other record. It's like he's singing to himself."

"I was pretty much singing to myself," Springsteen says. "I didn't think many other people were ever going to hear it. The work was experimental, and that was all fine by me."

To that end, *Nebraska* carries no producer credit. It's more akin to a field recording, an audio documentary capturing a cultural moment as it happens in the wild when no one else is listening or watching.

The songs themselves were "written quickly," Springsteen recounts in his memoir *Born to Run*, "all rising from the same ground." The musical references were "white gospel, early Appalachian music and the blues," with the writing of Flannery O'Connor and James M. Cain, and noir films like *The Night of The Hunter* along with Terrence Malick's *Badlands* providing narrative and thematic references.

"I wanted black bedtime stories," he continues in *Born to Run*. "I thought of the records of John Lee Hooker and Robert Johnson, music that sounded so good with the lights out. I wanted the listener to hear my characters think, to feel their thoughts, their choices.... These songs... were restrained, still on the surface, with a world of moral ambiguity and unease below."

That's the blueprint for all ten *Nebraska* tracks.



"I was pretty much singing to myself"

Nebraska was released on September 30, 1982, and remains the strongest expression of Springsteen's original artistic vision. But it only became an album after an abandoned attempt to record some of its songs with the E Street Band, after which he understood they could never supplant his uncanny, lo-fi originals. He had captured lightning in a bottle, and any trade off would have meant the loss of an extraordinary piece of outsider art.

The basic narrative of how *Nebraska* came to fruition has stayed consistent for the past 43 years, but upon reflection, there was never really a competition between solo and band versions of its songs. Springsteen's next album with the E Street Band needed its own sonic template, one that came to be informed by the eventual recording of a song first demoed with the rest of *Nebraska*, "Born in the U.S.A."

Springsteen felt the song was a centerpiece from the moment he heard the now-classic

version played back in the studio. With its signature synthesizer line and stadium-sized drums, "Born in the U.S.A." brought with it a riveting, contemporary sound that defined his next album with the E Street Band and became its title track. *Born in the U.S.A.* was released in June 1984 and proved to be the catalyst to superstardom Springsteen had wanted/resisted.

It's long been assumed that *Electric Nebraska*, the title used to refer to E Street Band recordings of songs later released on *Nebraska*, would sound much like those that wound up on *Born in the U.S.A.*

Not exactly.

There's a short, forgotten chapter in *Nebraska*'s history—after the original bedroom demos but before Roy Bittan's Yamaha CS-80 synthesizer was raised in the mix—that spanned the work week of Monday, April 26 through Friday, April 30, 1982.

In the course of those five days, Springsteen tried a stripped-down E Street Band to ground key songs, including "Born in the U.S.A.," in rock 'n' roll's early roots and punk energy. *Electric Nebraska* doesn't sound like the band album that followed; at times, it's downright primitive. He also cut a solo session, attempting to recreate his Colts Neck bedroom inside the Power Station. These acoustic studio takes were quickly dismissed in favor of the home recordings, but with them, three unique solo performances went missing as well.

"I didn't even know they existed until we went in and found them," Springsteen says. "I was shocked at how good they were, and also shocked at how primal and raw they are."

The contemporary home and studio recordings collected on *Nebraska '82: Expanded Edition* add a welcome twist to the album's already fascinating history. *Nebraska '82* also features a newly filmed performance of its ten songs played in track order recorded in the spring of 2025. Together, they make a worthy companion to the album four decades on.

The road to what would be included on *Nebraska* starts with a 14-song demo tape Springsteen shared with Landau in early 1982. It was accompanied by his own track-by-track notes that added one song to the list Landau had already heard, "Johnny Bye Bye," which the band played on tour in 1981.

"I knew it was unusual," he says of the material. "I was unsure of what I'd done, but I thought it was good or I wouldn't have given it to Jon. I just sent him what I had with some humorous notes."

The demo cassette included five tracks that would not make it on *Nebraska* ("My Father's House" was cut later to complete the album along with future "Open All Night" B-side "The Big Payback"). Springsteen's home recording of "Born in the U.S.A." came out on tracks in 1998. The four remaining outtakes on the original tape sent to Landau are harvested "from the same ground" as the rest of the album and released here for the first time.

"Losin' Kind" is another beautifully crafted first-person story in the vein of "Highway Patrolman." In his note to Landau, Springsteen wrote "[I] racked my brain for hours searching for a better title" and "liked the verses but can't seem to find a punchline."

"It was close," Springsteen says of "Losin' Kind." "If I was working on it today I could probably get it into shape. It didn't belong on *Nebraska*, but it's a pretty decent little B-noir track. I write these because I read noir crime novel I like them a lot and they don't get voiced very often in music. The really good one is "High Sierra" [on the *Last Album's* *Twilight Hours*], but they all have their charms."

ELECTRIC NEBRASKA recording notes

The Power Station, April 27, 1982

1043 POWER STATION
441 WEST 53rd STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10019
(212) 246-2900

CLIENT: CBS

PROJECT: BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

DATE: 4.27.82

PRODUCER: BRUCE, STEVE, JON, CHUCK

WORK ORDER #

N/A NONE

ENGINEER: TOGY SCOTT

REEL #

30 I.P.S. ☒

370 m/s/m

AES ☐

ASSISTANT: JEFF HENRICKSON

STUDIO: A

MASTER: X

15 I.P.S. ☐

250 m/s/m

NAB ☐

ZOE YANAKIS Scratch 250

POWER STATION
441 WEST 53rd STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10019
(212) 246-2900

PRODUCER: BRUCE, STEVE, JON, CHUCK

WORK ORDER #

ENGINEER: TOGY SCOTT

REEL #

ASSISTANT: JEFF

STUDIO:

TRACKS

ONE TONES: 1 KHz ☒ 10 KHz ☒ 15 KHz ☒ 100 Hz ☒

TITLE	T	A
PAD		
TONES		
Johnny 99	4:09	
Down Bound Train	2:38	
Nebraska	4:50	
"		
Bye Bye Johnny		



Nebraska

Track 1: Mandolin in D

Harmonica

4 Bye Bye Johnny - no explanation necessary
3 Starkweather in Nebraska - 4 mixes

Orch is strong - complete version this song may need editing or verses switched but it might be right as it is. It is about the Charles Starkweather murder case in Nebraska in the 60's. mix ② early fade ③ bad harp no good 4. undigested
4 Atlantic City - 3 different takes - all with slight lyrical changes
① #1 ② #3 ③ #4 this song should probably be done with

whole band + really rockin out.
skip 2 this song comes from the tape
↓ Johnny 99 - 2 versions, kinda fun. These words are not completely worked out or finished + so the singing is occasionally awkward. I don't know if this song is a keeper or not but I thought you'd get a kick out of it. ① #2 ② #3 different verses

4 Mansion on the Hill

3 mixes
and with slight balance change / 1st 2 mixes are a little dirt 2nd is best sounding quality
5 Born in the U.S.A. - you sent me the Paul Schrader script which I did not have a chance to read yet but I did whip up this little ditty pertaining to it. Better. On this number

song should be done very hard rockin. This song is in very rough shape but is as good as I can get it at the moment. It
6 Johnny 99 - see above

3 Downbound Train - up tempo rocker for Bill effort needs band / could be exciting
4 Gas in Kind - scatted + scatted for a better ride, spent many hours on this take but no good.

Song summary sent to Jon Landau with the NEBRASKA tape

Winter 1982

Springsteen's humor comes through in his note to Landau about "Child Bride": "In which the protagonist violates the Mann Act and is left to ponder his fate." It's another song that "almost gets there" and will later see the light of day in slightly obtusified form as "Working on the Highway." "They were the same song," Springsteen says, "in different iterations."

The four-track demo of "Pink Cadillac" is a slow-burning tease, sexier and more sinewy than the eventual E Street Band recording. "I have no idea where I was coming from with that," says Springsteen with a smile. "I wrote those humorous lyrics and because I was recording in that style, I laid it down like that. It became a big hit for Natalie Cole. It might have been a hit for us if I had put it on *Born in the U.S.A.* The choice was that or 'I'm Goin' Down'."

The acoustic "Downbound Train" has instant urgency driven by Springsteen's rapid, rhythmic strumming and a faster tempo quite different from the arrangement released on *Born in the U.S.A.* "For full effect [it] needs the band. Could be exciting," he wrote to Landau. The spirit of the home demo of "Downbound Train" foreshadows the events of the last week of April 1982 at the Power Station in Hell's Kitchen.

The first *Nebraska* track cut with the E Street Band was "Atlantic City" on April 26. Over the next two days they worked out a potent electric arrangement that largely mirrors the performances of "Atlantic City" done on the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour and ever since. The harmonica parts of the original acoustic reading are still intact; on stage, a synthesizer takes over that melody line.

All eight *Electric Nebraska* songs would be cut on April 27 and all but one tried again on April 28. "Nebraska" and "Mansion on the Hill" receive fitting, measured accompaniment from the band akin to their live performances in 1984, with Stevie Van Zandt on mandolin and Danny Federici playing synthesizer on "Nebraska," while Phantom Dan adds lovely organ to "Mansion." Gorgeous vocalizing opens "Johnny 99," in a rollicking take reminiscent of the band arrangement from the early 2000s, led by Bittan's honky-tonk piano.

A wholly different approach was taken for the rest. "We threw out the keyboards and played basically as a three-piece," Springsteen says. "It was kinda like punk rockabilly."

After a guitar and drum beat intro, "Born in the U.S.A." is a four-minute onslaught. Where Max Weinberg's gunshot drum and dazzling fills are such a memorable part of the familiar band version, the trio's take of the song unfolds at a pile-driving pace, with Garry Tallent's thick bass locking to the drummer's deep-thudding snare. The rhythm section complements Springsteen's angular guitar and vocal intensity, especially his howls and wails in the track's outro.

Springsteen, Weinberg and Tallent also cut engaging takes of "Open All Night" and "Reason to Believe," channeling a harder-rocking Tennessee Three. "Open All Night" is almost pure rockabilly with Springsteen adding a bit of twang to his voice, while "Reason to Believe" is sung with a clarity and conviction that suggests he already sensed it would be the last song and final statement on the eventual album.

With Bittan and Van Zandt expanding the trio to a quintet the following week, a storming recording of "Downbound Train" hits hardest of all. Springsteen's voice is loaded from the get-go and only grows in agitation, offset by tinkling piano. This relentless, thrilling performance fits his description of "punk rockabilly." If Hank Mizell's genre classic "Jungle Rock" had been set during the Vietnam War, it might sound like this.

"I don't know where I was coming from for those arrangements," Springsteen says, acknowledging he was stunned when he heard the trio and quintet tracks again for the first time in decades. "What would make me play them in that fashion? We were trying to bring *Nebraska* into the electric world, but I don't know what was influencing me at the time."

Rough mixes for most of *Electric Nebraska* were completed on April 28. Two days later, Springsteen returned to the Power Station on his own to record a six-song acoustic session. At this point, it was becoming clear that the songs Bruce had written and captured at home were losing something vital with the band, but the standard recording quality of the demos remained an issue.

Springsteen's in-studio solo attempts at "Used Cars," "Losin' Kind" and "Highway Patrolman" are solid, but without the unique elements that made the home recordings so compelling, they didn't cast the same spell.

But *Nebraska* songs weren't the only material tried solo on April 30. "Child Bride" from the original *Nebraska* demo tape had fully evolved into "Working on the Highway." Opening with a blast of harmonica and rhythmic tapping on his acoustic guitar, Springsteen has most of his new lyrics and arrangement settled. Awash in vocal reverb, he takes "Working on the Highway" on something of an Eddie Cochran "C'mon Everybody" ride and laughs delightfully at the result when he finishes.

Primal surely applies to "On the Prowl," a rebel rocker of deep longing with questionable intent. Springsteen played the tune at a couple of Jersey Shore guest appearances in 1982 with Bobby Bandiera's band Cats on a Smooth Surface, one in a medley with a musical antecedent, Little Richard's "Lucille." The solo version reads far more ominous, like one of those exploitative drug store paperbacks about teenage vice where "looking for a gal" doesn't end well. A year later, "I'm on Fire" would tap this same burning sensation of dangerous desire.

"I was all in, completely committed to what I was doing," Springsteen says of the rediscovered solo recordings. "You can hear that in the vocals and the rhythms." Intriguingly, he starts, not with one from *Nebraska*, but an entirely new song, "Gun in Every Home." Springsteen isn't using it to ease into the session, instead he sounds completely assured and knows exactly how he wants to play it.



**“something about
that batch of songs
on Nebraska
that holds some
sort of magic”**

A country living in fear is a theme “Gun in Every Home” shares with “Murder Incorporated,” only this time the tale is set in the suburbs. Like moments on the original *Nebraska* demo tape, Bruce sings this indictment of American society with matter-of-fact detachment. “That was the plan,” he says. “I remember the hook, ‘two cars in each garage, and a gun in every home.’ When I wrote it, I thought it was a little hysterical. Now of course it seems totally natural.”

“I had a sound that I was very dedicated to,” Springsteen summarizes, “some sort of punkish, rockabilly sound that’s kind of noir-y.” This streak, which runs through both *Electric Nebraska* and *Nebraska Outtakes*, reveals another side of this profoundly creative period.

“Most of this stuff,” he concludes, “is pretty mysterious to me.” Given the alchemy of *Nebraska*’s inception, it seems entirely appropriate that this expanded look at those recording sessions remains enigmatic.

IN THE SPRING OF 2025, Springsteen decided to put a performance of *Nebraska*, all ten songs in sequence, on film. Just as the album had been created in isolation, so too would this reading, inside an empty Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, NJ. “I knew that the way to do it was no audience and no speaking,” he says. “You just present the record, play it through, then you’re done.”

Springsteen did reacquaint himself with the original versions and brought along Charlie Giordano from the E Street Band and multi-instrumentalist Larry Campbell “to play a few small parts that would be nice to keep.” But that was it. “I didn’t listen to the record much,” he says of his preparation for Count Basie. “I might have listened to it once through. It just remains what it is, which is a bunch of very good songs. I think in playing them again to be filmed, their weight impressed upon me.

“I’ve written a lot of other narrative records: *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, *Devils & Dust*, *Western Stars*. I have another one on *Lost Albums*. A lot of narrative music. But there’s just something about that batch of songs on *Nebraska* that holds some sort of magic.”

—ERIK FLANNIGAN, JUNE 2025



DISC1 NEBRASKA OUTTAKES

BORN IN THE U.S.A. LOSIN' KIND DOWNBOUND TRAIN CHILD BRIDE PINK CADILLAC THE BIG PAYBACK WORKING ON THE HIGHWAY ON THE PROWL GUN IN EVERY HOME

BORN IN THE U.S.A.

Born down in a dead man's town
The first kick I took was when
I hit the ground
You end up like a dog that's
been beat too much
Till you spend half your life
just covering up

Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.

I got in a little hometown jam
And so they put a rifle in my hands
They sent me over to Vietnam
To go and kill the yellow man

Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.

Come back home to the refineries
Hiring man says "Son if it was up to me"
I go down to see the V.A. man
He says "Son, don't you understand"

Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.

I had a buddy at Khe Sanh
Fighting off them Viet Cong
They're still there, but he's all gone
He had a little girl in Saigon
I got a picture of him in her arms

Down in the shadow of the penitentiary
Out by the gas fires of the refinery
I'm ten years down the road
Nowhere to run, man, nowhere to go

I'm a long gone daddy in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.
I'm a cool rocking daddy in the U.S.A.

Born in the U.S.A.

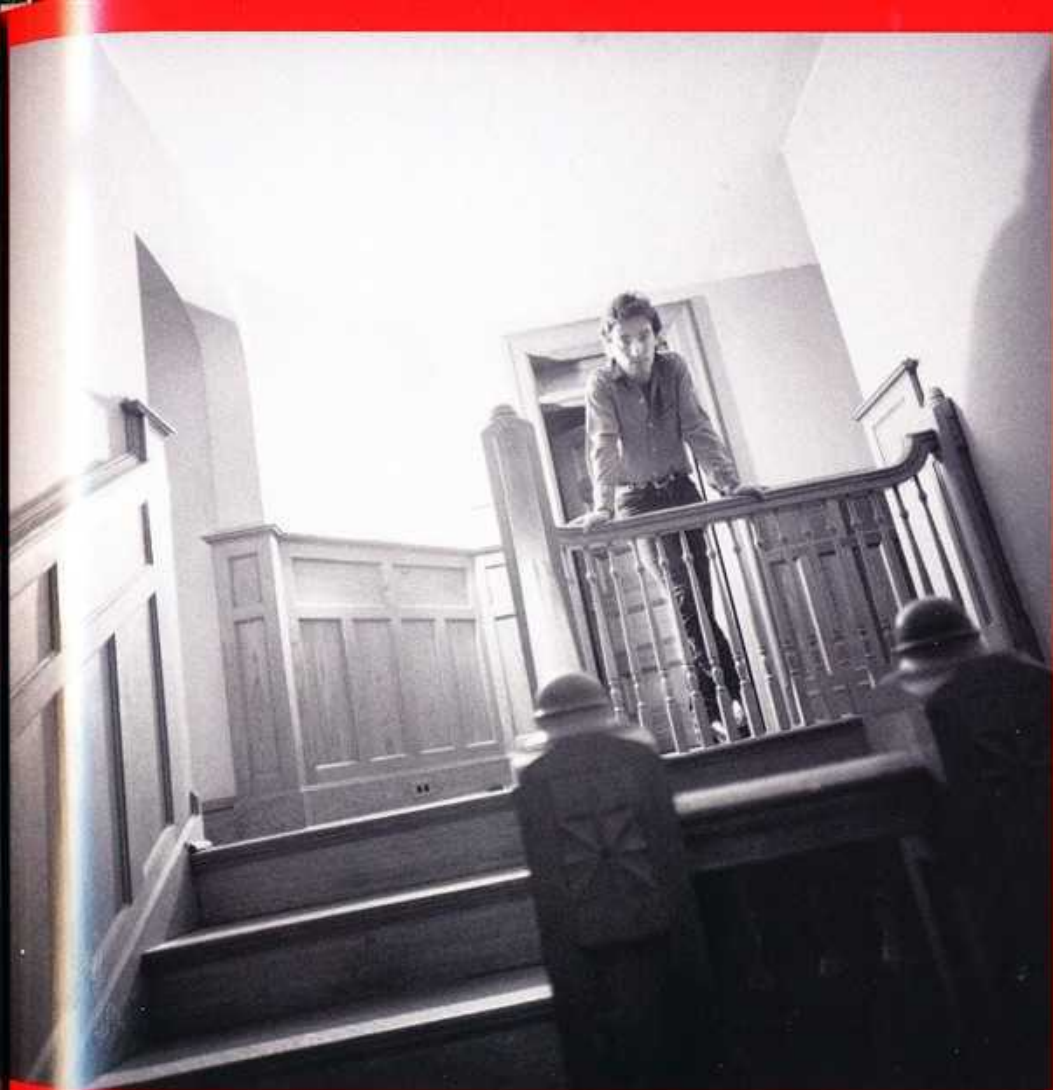
LOSIN' KIND

My name is Frank Davis,
driver Dixie 109
I was out on Highway 17,
just south of the Camden Line
It was down there in the heart of
Wilsonville where I met my fate
She was standing outside the bar room,
said she was waiting for a date
But I knew that that was just a line
And I knew I was messing
with a losin' kind

Well I knew what we were both doing
and I knew that you can't win
But when the light turned green,
I reached across the seat,
popped the lock and she slid in
She said she liked Mexican music,
she knew a place if I had the time
Well we had a few drinks and
we danced a while
I pulled her close, she didn't mind
Then what I knew kinda
slipped my mind
And I couldn't resist her messin'
with the losin' kind

Well we drove around in my Buick,
gettin' drunk and having fun
Well we ended up at this Best Western
out on Highway 101
It was around 3 A.M., we went out to
this empty little roadside bar
It was there the cash register was open
It was there I hit that guy too hard
But I knew when I hit him
for the second time
That one attracts the other
when you're the losin' kind

Well I grabbed her hand to get
out of there and I felt like
I was gonna be sick
And half hour later the sleet
started coming down
and that highway got pretty slick
I seen some lights in
my rearview mirror,



I guess I panicked and
I gave her the gun
Well then I wrapped us
around a telephone
pole south on Highway 101
Well she just stumbled out onto
the bank and sat down in a pout
Well I kicked out the driver-side window
but buddy when I got out
Well all I had to greet me was a highway
patrolman's .45
He looked at the wreck and then he said
"Son, you're lucky to be alive"
Well sir, I'll think that one
over if you don't mind
Now luck ain't much good to
you when you're the losin' kind

DOWNBOUND TRAIN

I had a job, I had a girl
I had something going
mister in this world
I got laid off down at the auto yard
Our love went bad, times got hard
Well now I work down at the carwash
Where all it ever does is rain
Sometimes don't you feel
like you're a rider
Oh baby, on a downbound train

She just said "Joe I gotta go
We had it once, we ain't got it anymore"
She packed her bags, left me behind
She bought a ticket on the Central Line
Nights as I sleep, I hear
a whistle whinin'

I feel her soft kiss in the
misty morning rain
Sometimes don't you feel
like you're a rider
Oh baby, on a downbound train

Last night I heard a voice
You were crying, crying
You were so alone
You said your love had never died
And you were waitin' for me at home
Well I put on my jacket,
I ran through the woods
I ran till I thought my
chest would explode
There in the clearing,
beyond the highway
There in the moonlight
our wedding house shone
I rushed through the yard,
I burst through the front door
And then up the stairs I climbed
The room was dark, our bed was empty
And then I heard that long whistle whine
And then I dropped to my knees,
hung my head and cried

Now I swing a sledgehammer
on a railroad gang
Knocking down them cross ties,
working in the rain
Sometimes don't it feel
like you're a rider
Oh baby, on a downbound train

CHILD BRIDE

Friday night's pay night,
guys fresh out of work
Talking about the weekend,
trying to scrub off the dirt
Some heading home to their families,
some wearing trouble on their shirts
Some driving down to Stovall just
looking to get hurt

I work for the county out on 95
Just holding that red flag,
watching the traffic pass me by
All day I keep a picture of
my baby in my head
At night I dream I'm with her,
laying in my bunkhouse bed

Seen her at the canteen
down at the Legion Hall
She come in with her brothers,
standing back up against the wall
Me and her we'd go walking
down by them winding tracks
Well one day I looked straight at
her and she looked straight back

Grey clouds stretch across
the white moon
Sitting in the backyard in
my old car, we hum out of tune

Well I saved my money,
and I put it all away
I went to see her daddy,
we didn't have much to say
He said, "Now son, can't you

see she's just a little girl
Who don't know nothing 'bout
the meanness in this world"

Back off down into Florida,
yeah, we got along all right
One day her brothers came
and got her and they took
me in a black and white

The prosecutor kept his promise
that he made on that day
Well she was sad and
the judge was mad,
they put me straight away
Well they said she was too young,
she was no younger than I've been
When she put her arms around
me and the night close in

Well sometimes I dream
if getting out of here,
heading down towards them old tracks
I swore I'd come and get her but I know
I ain't never going back

There's nights I can't
sleep no matter how hard I try
So from my window, I watch the
moonlight fall on the far hillside
I imagine I put on my jacket,
go down to this little roadside bar
Pick a stranger and spin around the
dance floor to a Mexican guitar

PINK CADILLAC

Now you may think I'm foolish
For the foolish things I do
You may wonder how I can love you
When you get on my nerves like you do
Well baby you know you bug me
Ain't no secret 'bout that
Well come on over here and hug me
And baby I'll spill the facts
Honey it ain't your money
'Cause I got plenty of that

I love you for your pink Cadillac
Crushed velvet seats
Low in the back
Oozing down the street
Waving to the girls
Feeling out of sight
Spending all my money
On a Saturday night
Honey, I just wonder
what it feels like in the back
Of your pink Cadillac

Now way back in the Bible
Temptations always come along
Always somebody tempting you
From doing something right
into doing something
you know is wrong
They tempt you, mister, with silver
They tempt you with gold
They tempt you with the pleasures
That the flesh does hold

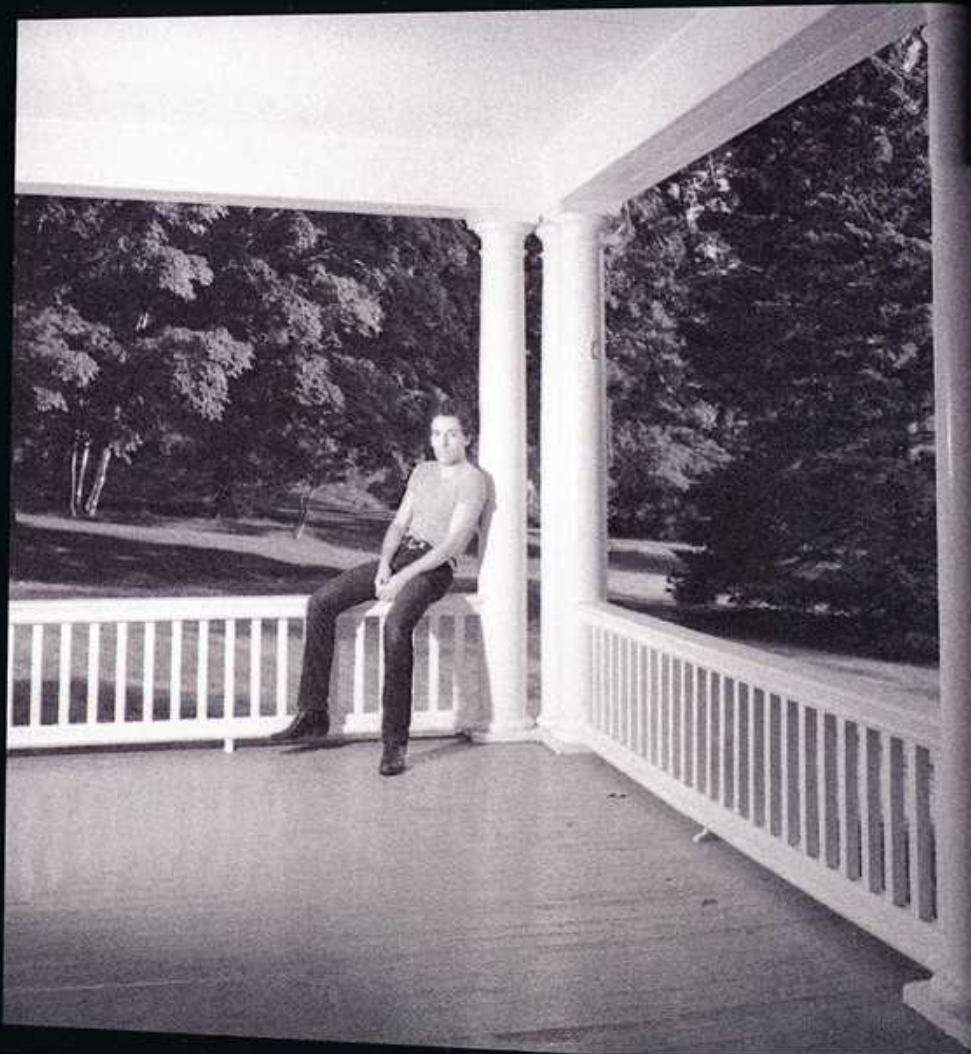
They say Eve tempted Adam
with an apple

Ain't no way the poor fool went for that
Can you imagine what
would have happened
If she'd just stepped back

And showed him her pink Cadillac
Crushed velvet seats
Sitting low in the back
Oozing down the street
Waving to the girls
Feeling out of sight
Spending all my money
On a Saturday night
Now honey I just wonder what you do
there in the back
Of your pink Cadillac
Pink Cadillac

Now some folks say that it's too big
Uses too much gas
Some say that it's too old
And it goes too fast
But honey, my love is bigger
than a Honda
It's bigger than some Subaru
And that car, she's got something
And there ain't nothing else will do
Anyway, we don't have to drive it
We can just park it out in back
And have a party in your pink Cadillac

Pink Cadillac, pink Cadillac
Pink Cadillac, pink Cadillac
Pink Cadillac, pink Cadillac
Pink Cadillac, pink Cadillac



THE BIG PAYBACK

I bought a scooter and I rented a shack
Out in the sun by the railroad track
I got a job and I'm a-breakin' my back
Workin' and workin' for the big payback

I keep a puttin' and a puttin' out
I keep a sweatin' like all got out
I work so long that I'm a losin' track
Waitin', waitin' on the big payback

Well, it's a wham, bam, thank you ma'am,
God damn, look out Sam
It's a gone dead train rumblin'
down this track
They got your neck in the noose,
you're draggin' long in back
Chasin' and chasin' the big payback

Oh, what my foreman does,
well I don't know
He just throws me a shovel
and yells "Go, Bobby, Go"
Oh, well all day long he's
just a ditty whack wack
While I'm sweatin' and
sweatin' for the big payback

It's a wham, bam, thank you ma'am,
God damn, look out Sam
I look on that train rumblin'
down the track
They got your neck in the noose,
your hands are tied up in back
And you're a-workin' and workin'
for the big payback

I quit that job, and Mister
I ain't goin' back
Got me a knife and she's
a long and black
I'll tell you how I make the peace
at night Mac
Down in the alley of the big payback

I'll go a-wham, bam, thank you ma'am,
God damn, come on man
You're a gone dead train rumblin'
down this track
I got your neck in the noose
and I don't give a damn, Jack
I'm on that long-lost highway
of the big payback
I'm on that long-lost highway
of the big payback
I'm on that long-lost highway
of the big payback

WORKING ON THE HIGHWAY

Friday night, pay night,
guys fresh out of work
Talkin' 'bout the weekend
scrubbin' off the dirt
Some heading home to their families,
some are lookin' to get hurt
Some headin' down to Stovell wearing
trouble on their shirts

Now I work for the company out on 95
I'm holding that red flag,
watching traffic pass me by
In my head I keep a picture
of my pretty little miss

I'm swearing that someday mister I'm
gonna lead a better life than this

Working on the highway
laying down the blacktop
Working on the highway
all day long I can't stop
Working on the highway
blasting through the bedrock
Working on the highway,
working on the highway

Well I met her at a canteen
down at the union hall
She was standing with her brothers,
back up against the wall
Sometimes we'd go walkin'
on the union tracks
One day I looked straight
at her and she looked straight back

So I'm working on the highway
laying down the blacktop
Working on the highway all
day long I don't stop
Working on the highway blasting
through the bedrock
Working on the highway,
working on the highway

Well I'm saving up my money,
gonna put it all away
Gonna go and see her daddy
but we didn't have much to say
"Son, can't you see that
she's just a little girl
Well I'm gonna protect her
from the cruel, cruel world"

No, I don't even know where
this highway's bound
Still I work from early morning
till the sun go down
Cause she's the only thing I've
ever had in my whole life
Who can turn workin' on this highway
from a prison into paradise
I'm gonna prove to her daddy
that my love is pure and true
If I gotta drop a two-lane
blacktop from here to Timbuktu

I'll be working on the highway
laying down the blacktop
Working on the highway all day
long I can't stop
Working on the highway blasting
through the bedrock
Working on the highway,
working on the highway

I'll be working on the highway
laying down the blacktop
Working on the highway all
day long I don't stop
Working on the highway blasting
through the bedrock
Working on the highway,
working on the highway

ON THE PROWL
Night after lonely night my head
don't touch the bed
I'm on a two-lane blacktop
cruisin' in my rocket sled

I'm on the prowl, I'm on the prowl
Yeah, I'm looking for a gal, gal, gal
Hey, hey, man, I'm on the prowl

No, only one thing that I'm
certain, every mile, mile, mile
Keep a-searchin', searchin',
searchin' for a wild, wild, child
I'm on the prowl, I'm on the prowl
Yeah I'm looking for a gal, gal, gal
Yeah, yeah, man, I'm on the prowl

They got a name for Dracula
and one for Frankenstein
They ain't got no name now mister,
for this sickness of mine
I'm on the prowl, yeah, I'm on the prowl
I'm looking for a gal, gal, gal
Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm on the prowl

You're rockin' baby, it's understood
Everything you do, you sure do it good
I'm on the prowl, I'm on the prowl
Yeah, I'm looking for a gal, gal, gal
Yeah, yeah, man, I'm on the prowl

Well baby, baby, baby I'm in love
it's born true
I wanna save you, save you, save
you from those evil things I do
I'm on the prowl, out on the prowl
I'm looking for a gal, gal, gal
Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm on the prowl

In the morning I check my mirror, and I
hang my head and cry
Then come the night I get a burning,

burning, burning deep inside
I'm on the prowl, I'm on the prowl
I'm looking for a gal, gal, gal
Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm on the prowl

Yeah, though my heart is hurtin',
hurtin' all the while, while, while
There's only one thing that I'm
certain, every mile, mile, mile
I gotta keep on searchin', searchin',
searchin', searchin', searchin',
Searchin', searchin', searchin', searchin',
Searchin', searchin', searchin', searchin',
Searchin', searchin', searchin', searchin'

GUN IN EVERY HOME
I had a dream of the way
I thought it should be
So I moved to the suburbs yeah,
just me and my family
On the block I live, you got everything
that a man would need to want
Two cars in each garage and a gun
in every home
Now sometimes I gotta go away
and I know for a long time I'll be gone
Well I get so afraid of leaving
my baby all alone
I keep a secret in a dresser drawer
Of a bright little house where
the lawn's fresh-mown
Two cars in each garage and
a gun in every home
Sometimes I wanna take my little
boy and hold him in my arms
Shield him from all pain,

Some night I put my baby to bed
and I shut out all the lights
I sit downstairs in the living room
and I listen to the sounds of the night
I stare out my window onto
a street so empty and alone
Filled with two cars in each garage
and a gun in every home
And I don't know what to do, no,
I don't know what to do



protect him from all harm
From a world gone crazy now
From a world that's gone all wrong
But I don't know what to do, no,
I don't know what to do

Some night I put my baby to bed
and I shut out all the lights
I sit downstairs in the living room
and I listen to the sounds of the night
I stare out my window onto
a street so empty and alone
Filled with two cars in each garage
and a gun in every home
And I don't know what to do, no,
I don't know what to do

All songs written by Bruce Springsteen.

"Downbound Train," "Pink Cadillac," "Born in the U.S.A.," "The Big Payback," and "Working on the Highway". Published by Eldridge Publishing Co and Sony Pop Music Publishing (GMR). © 1982, 1984, 2025

"Lesin' Kind," "Child Bride," "On the Prowl," and "Gun in Every Home". Published by Bruce Springsteen, administered by Sony Pop Music Publishing (GMR) © 2025 Bruce Springsteen

Recorded by Mike Ballan (Tracks 1, 3, 4, 5, 6)
Recorded and Engineered by Toby Scott,
assisted by Jeff Hendrickson (Tracks 2, 7, 8, 9)

Mixed by Zoe Thrall (Tracks 1, 3, 4, 5)
Mixed by Rob Lebert (Tracks 2, 7, 9)

Mixed by Mike Ballan (Track 6)
Mixed by Toby Scott (Track 8)

Mastered by Brian Lee and Bob Jackson at
Weygate Mastering (Cape Elizabeth, ME)

Audio Archivist and Project Coordination:
Rob Lebert

Recorded at:
Thrill Hill Colts Neck, NJ
The Power Station, New York, NY

Bruce Springsteen: Vocals, Guitars,
Harmonica, Mandolin, Glockenspiel,
Percussion and Synthesizer

DISC2 ELECTRIC NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA ATLANTIC CITY MANSION ON THE HILL JOHNNY 99 DOWNBOUND TRAIN OPEN ALL NIGHT BORN IN THE U.S.A. REASON TO BELIEVE

NEBRASKA

I saw her standin' on her front lawn
Just a-twirlin' her baton
Me and her went for a ride, sir
And ten innocent people died

From the town of Lincoln, Nebraska
With a sawed-off .410 on my lap
Through to the badlands of Wyoming
I killed everything in my path

I can't say that I'm sorry
For the things that I've done
At least for a little while, sir
Me and her, we had us some fun

Well, the jury brought in a guilty verdict
And the judge he sentenced me to death
Midnight in a prison storeroom
With leather straps across my chest

Sheriff, when the man hits
that switch, sir
That snaps my poor neck back
You make sure my pretty baby
is sittin' right there on my lap

Well, they declared me unfit to live
Said into that great void
my soul'd be hurled
They wanted to know why I did what I did
And sir, I guess there's just
a meanness in this world

ATLANTIC CITY

Well, they blew up the chicken
man in Philly last night
They blew up his house too
Down on the boardwalk they're gettin'
ready for a hell of a fight
Gonna see what them racket boys can do

Well, now they're busin' them
in from outta state
Till the D.A. can't get no relief
Gonna be trouble out on the promenade
And the gamblin' commission's hangin'
on by the skin of its teeth

Well, everything dies, baby, that's a fact
But maybe everything that
dies someday comes back
Put your makeup on,
fix your hair up pretty
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City

Well, I got a job and tried
to put my money away

But I got in too deep and I could not pay
So, I drew what I had from
the Central Trust
And I bought two tickets on
that Coast City bus

Well, everything dies, baby, that's a fact
But maybe everything that
dies someday comes back
Put your makeup on,
fix your hair up pretty
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City

Now our luck may have died
and our love may be cold
But with you forever I'll stay
I'm goin' out, baby, where
the sands turn into gold
I'm goin' down there half,
but I'm comin' back whole

'Cause everything dies,
baby, that's a fact
But maybe everything that
dies someday comes back

I turned up dead out of luck
and strung out on the line
Mister, this hand I've been dealt keeps
me coming up short each time
I've been lookin' for a job
but it's hard to find
Down here it's just winners and losers
And don't get caught on
the wrong side of that line
Well, I'm tired of comin'
out on the losin' end





So, honey last night I met this guy
And I'm gonna do a little favor for him

Well, I guess everything
dies baby that's a fact
But maybe everything that dies
someday comes back
Put your makeup on,
fix your hair up pretty
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City

MANSION ON THE HILL

There's a place out on
the edge of town, sir
Risin' above the factories
and the fields
Now ever since I was
a child I remember
That mansion on the hill

In the day you can see
the children playing
On the road that leads to
those gates of hardened steel
Steel gates that completely
surround, sir
The mansion on the hill

At night my daddy'd take me,
and we'd ride
Through the streets of
a town so silent and still
We'd park on a back road down

on the highway side
And look up at that mansion on the hill

In the summer, now, all the lights
would shine
There'd be music playin', people
laughin' all the time
Me and my sister, we'd hide
out in the tall corn fields
And sit and listen to the
mansion on the hill

Now tonight, down here in the valley
I watch the cars pass by
home from the mill
There's a beautiful full moon risin'
Above the mansion on the hill

JOHNNY 99

Well, they closed down the Ford plant
in Mahwah late that month
Johnny went out lookin' for a job,
but he couldn't find none
He came home too drunk from
mixin' Tanqueray and wine
Got a gun, shot a night clerk,
now they call'm Johnny 99

It was down in a part of town with
a red light, buddy, you don't stop
Johnny's wavin' a gun around and
threatenin' to blow his top
When an off-duty cop snuck
up on him from behind
Right there in front of the

Club Tip Top they slapped
the cuffs on Johnny 99

Well, the city supplied a public
defender but the
judge was Moan John Brown
He came into the courtroom
and stared poor Johnny down
Well, the evidence is clear,
gonna let the
sentence son, fit the crime
Prison for 99 and a year and we'll call
it even Johnny 99

Well, a fistfight broke out
in the courtroom
They had to drag Johnny's girl away
His mama stood up and shouted
"Judge don't take my boy this way"
Well, I'm sorry ma'am but the law
must be satisfied
At your son's killing hands an
innocent man died

You got anything you want to say son,
before you ride
Judge, the bank was gonna come
and take my house away
I had debts Your Honor, no honest
man could pay
Well, now I ain't sayin' that makes
me an innocent man
But it was more 'n all this, sir, that
put that gun in my hand

Now Your Honor, I do believe
I'd be better off dead

So if you can take a man's life for the
thoughts that's in his head
And I do believe sir, I'd be better off a
dead man
'Cause I shot that young boy
I shot him Judge, and I ran

DOWNBOUND TRAIN

I had a job, I had a girl
I had something going
mister in this world
I got laid off down at the auto yard
Our love went bad, times got hard
Well now I work down at the carwash
Where all it ever does is rain
Sometimes don't you feel
like you're a rider
Oh baby, on a downbound train

She just said "Joe I gotta go
We had it once,
we ain't got it anymore"
She packed her bags, left me behind
She bought a ticket on
the Central Line
Nights as I sleep, I hear
a whistle whinin'
I feel her soft kisses in the
misty morning rain
Sometimes don't you feel
like you're a rider
Oh baby, on a downbound train

Last night I heard your voice
You were crying, crying,
that you're so alone

You said your love had never died
And you were waitin' for me at home
Well I put on my jacket,
I ran through the woods
I ran till I thought my
chest would explode
There in the clearing,
beyond the highway
There in the moonlight our
wedding house shone
I rushed through the yard, I burst
through the front door
My head pounding hard,
up the stairs I climbed
The room was dark, our bed was empty
And then I heard that
long whistle whine
And then I dropped to my knees,
hung my head and cried

Now I swing a sledgehammer
on a railroad gang
Knocking down them cross ties,
working in the rain
Sometimes don't it feel like
you're a rider
Oh baby, on a downbound train
Oh baby, on a downbound train
Oh baby, on a downbound train

OPEN ALL NIGHT

Well, I had the carburetor, baby,
cleaned and checked
With her line blown out she's
hummin' like a turbojet

I propped her up in the backyard on
concrete blocks
For a new clutch plate and
a new set of shocks
Took her down to the carwash,
check the plugs and points
Because I'm goin' out tonight,
I'm gonna rock that joint

Early North Jersey industrial skyline
I'm an all-set Cobra Jet creepin'
through the nighttime
Gotta find a gas station,
gotta find a payphone
This turnpike sure is spooky at night
when you're all alone
I hit the gas because I'm running late
This New Jersey in the mornin'
like a lunar landscape

Now, the boss don't dig me,
so he put me on the night shift
Takes me two hours to get back to
where my baby lives
In the wee wee hours,
your mind gets hazy
Radio relay towers, won't
you lead me to my baby
Underneath the overpass, a trooper
hits the party light switch
Goodnight, good luck, one... two...
power shift

I met Wanda when she was
employed behind the counter at
Route 60 Bob's Big Boy

fried chicken on the front
seat, she's sittin' in my lap
We're wipin' our fingers
on a Texaco road map
I remember Wanda up on
Scrap Metal Hill
With them big brown eyes that make
your heart stand still

Wah, that's the one!
Wah, at five a.m. the
oil pressure's skakin' fast
I make a pit stop, wipe the windshield,
Widdy, check the gas
I gotta call my baby on the telephone
Let her know that her
daddy boy's comin' on home
Got two more hours,
let I'm coverin' ground
It's six a.m. on Sunday morning,
I'm a comin' around

My eyes are gettin' itchy
In the wee wee hours
Ain't just a red ball risin'
near them refinery towers
Radio jammed up with gospel stations
but souls callin' long distance salvation

Wig, mister deejay, you gotta
hear my last prayer
Wig ho, rock'n'roll, deliver me from
where

BORN IN THE U.S.A.

Born down in a dead man's town
The first kick I took was
when I hit the ground
You end up like a dog that's
been beat too much
Till you spend half your
life just covering up

Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.

I got to a little hometown jam
So you put a rifle in my hands
Send me off to a foreign land
Said, son, go and kill the yellow man

Born in the U.S.A.,
I was born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.

You come back home to the refineries
Hiring man says "Son if it was up to me"
I went down to see my V.A. man
He said "Son, don't you understand"

Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.,
I was born in the U.S.A.

I had a buddy, Mister, at Khe Sanh
Fighting off them Viet Cong
They're still there, but he's all gone
He had a little girl in Saigon
I got a picture of him in her arms

Now down in the shadow
of the penitentiary

Out by the gas fires of the refinery
I'm ten years down the road
Nowhere to run, nowhere to go

Born in the U.S.A.
I'm a long gone daddy in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.
I'm a cool rocking daddy in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A., born in the U.S.A.

REASON TO BELIEVE

Seen a man standin' over a dead dog
Lyn' by the highway in a ditch
He's lookin' down kinda puzzled
Pokin' that dog with a stick
Got his car door flung open
He's standin' out on Highway 31
Like if he stood there long enough
That dog'd get up and run

Struck me kinda funny
Kinda funny, yes indeed
How at the end of every hard-earned day
People find some reason to believe

Now Mary Lou loved Johnny
With a love mean and true
She said "Baby I'll work
for you every day
And bring my money home to you"
One day he up and left her
And ever since that
She waits down at the end
of that dirt road
For young Johnny to come back

Now it seems kinda funny
Seemed kind of funny to me
Now at the end of every
hard-earned day
People find some reason to believe

Take a baby to the river
Kyle William they call him
Wash a baby in the water
Take away little Kyle's sins
In a whitewashed shotgun shack
An old man passes away
They take the body to the graveyard
And over him they pray

Lord, won't you tell us
Tell us what does it mean
Still at the end of every
hard-earned day
People find some reason to believe

Congregation gathers
Down by the riverside
A priest stands waitin' with his Bible
A groom stands waitin' for his bride
The congregation gone as the sun sets
Behind a weepin' willow tree
A groom stands alone on the banks
and watches the river rush on
So effortlesaly

Wonderin' where can his baby be
Still at the end of every
hard-earned day
You can find some reason to believe

All songs written by Bruce Springsteen.
Published by Eldridge Publishing Co and
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Produced by Bruce Springsteen,
Jon Landau, and Stevie Van Zandt

Recorded and Engineered by Toby Scott
Assisted by Jeff Hendrickson and
Zoe Yanakis

Mixed by Rob Lebet

Mastered by Brian Lee and Bob Jackson at
Woygate Mastering (Cape Elizabeth, ME)

Audio Archivist and Project Coordination:
Rob Lebet

Recorded at The Power Station, New York, NY

Musicians: NEBRASKA (4.27.82) Bruce
Springsteen: Vocals, Harmonica, Electric
Guitar / Danny Federici: Synthesizer /
Garry Tallent: Bass / Stevie Van Zandt:
Mandolin / Max Weinberg: Drums //
ATLANTIC CITY (4.27.82) Bruce
Springsteen: Vocals, Harmonica, Electric
Guitar / Garry Tallent: Bass / Stevie Van
Zandt: Harmony Vocals, 12-String Acoustic
Guitar / Max Weinberg: Drums //
MANSION ON THE HILL (4.27.82) Bruce
Springsteen: Vocals, Harmonica, Acoustic
Guitar / Roy Bittan: Piano / Danny
Federici: B3 Organ, Synthesizer / Garry
Tallent: Bass / Stevie Van Zandt: Electric
Guitar / Max Weinberg: Drums // JOHN WY
99 (4.27.82) Bruce Springsteen: Vocals,
Harmonica, Electric Guitar / Roy Bittan:
Piano / Garry Tallent: Bass / Stevie Van
Zandt: Acoustic Guitar / Max Weinberg:

Drums // DOWNBOUND TRAIN (5.3.82)
Bruce Springsteen: Vocals, Electric Guitar /
Roy Bittan: Piano / Garry Tallent: Bass /
Stevie Van Zandt: Acoustic Guitar / Max
Weinberg: Drums // OPEN ALL NIGHT
(4.27.82) Bruce Springsteen: Vocals,
Electric Guitar / Garry Tallent: Bass / Max
Weinberg: Drums // BORN IN THE U.S.A.
(4.27.82) Bruce Springsteen: Vocals,
Electric Guitar / Garry Tallent: Bass / Max
Weinberg: Drums // REASON TO BELIEVE
(4.27.82) Bruce Springsteen: Vocals,
Harmonica, Electric Guitar / Garry Tallent:
Bass / Max Weinberg: Drums





**DISC3 +
BLU-RAY DISC
NEBRASKA (COUNT
BASIE THEATRE,
RED BANK, NJ)**

**NEBRASKA
ATLANTIC CITY
MANSION ON THE HILL
JOHNNY 99
HIGHWAY PATROLMAN
STATE TROOPER
USED CARS
OPEN ALL NIGHT
MY FATHER'S HOUSE
REASON TO BELIEVE**

All songs written by Bruce Springsteen.
Published by Eldridge Publishing Co and
Sony Pop Music Publishing (GMR). © 1982

Live audio recording from the film *Nebraska*,
A Film by Thom Zimny

Recorded by Rob Lebrat and Minty Carlo
Pro Tools Technician: Carl Barc
Guitar & Technical Services: Kevin Quail
Keyboard Technician for Charlie Giordano:
Rich Spillberg

Mixed by Rob Lebrat

Mastered by Brian Lee and Rob Jackson at
Weygate Mastering (Cape Elizabeth, ME)

Recorded at Hackensack Meridian Health
Theatre (formerly the Count Basie Theatre),
Red Bank, NJ

Musicians:
NEBRASKA Bruce Springsteen: Vocals,
Acoustic Guitar, Harmonica / Larry
Campbell: 12-String Acoustic Guitar //
Charlie Giordano: Celeste // **ATLANTIC CITY**
Bruce Springsteen: Vocals, Acoustic Guitar,
Harmonica / Larry Campbell: Mandolin //
MANSION ON THE HILL Bruce Springsteen:
Vocals, Acoustic Guitar, Harmonica / Larry
Campbell: 12-String Acoustic Guitar //
JOHNNY 99 Bruce Springsteen: Vocals,
Acoustic Guitar, Harmonica / Larry
Campbell: Acoustic Guitar // **HIGHWAY**
PATROLMAN Bruce Springsteen: Vocals,
Acoustic Guitar, Harmonica / Larry
Campbell: 12-String Acoustic Guitar //
STATE TROOPER Bruce Springsteen:
Vocals, Acoustic Guitar // **USED CARS**
Bruce Springsteen: Vocals, Acoustic Guitar,
Harmonica / Larry Campbell: 12-String
Acoustic Guitar / Charlie Giordano: Celeste

OPEN ALL NIGHT Bruce Springsteen:
Vocals, Electric Guitar / Larry Campbell:
Acoustic Guitar // **MY FATHER'S HOUSE**
Bruce Springsteen: Vocals, Acoustic Guitar,
Harmonica / Larry Campbell: Tambourine //
Charlie Giordano: Synthesizer // **REASON TO**
BELIEVE Bruce Springsteen: Vocals, Acoustic
Guitar, Harmonica / Larry Campbell:
Electric Guitar

Nebraska A Film by Thom Zimny
Director: Thom Zimny
Executive Producers: Bruce Springsteen,
Jon Landau
Bruce Springsteen: Vocals, Guitar,
Harmonica
Charlie Giordano: Glockenspiel, Keyboard
Larry Campbell: Guitar, Tambourine, Mandolin
Original Music Written and Performed by:
Bruce Springsteen
Producers: Thom Zimny, George Travis,
Adrienne Gerard
Director of Photography: Graham Willoughby
Lighting Design: Todd Ricci
Live Concert Audio Recording by:
Rob Lebrat and Minty Carlo
Bruce Springsteen Guitar Tech: Kevin Quail
Charlie Giordano Keyboard Tech:
Rich Spillberg
Music Mixed by: Rob Lebrat
Supervising Sound Editor: Jonathan Greber
Re-Recording Mixer: Gary A. Rizzo, CAS
Editor: Thom Zimny
Co-Editor: Samuel Shapiro
Recorded at Hackensack Meridian Health
Theatre (formerly the Count Basie Theatre),
Red Bank, NJ
Blu-Ray Authoring by Giant Worldwide







NSC4 2025 REMASTER

NEBRASKA ATLANTIC CITY MANSION ON THE HILL JOHNNY 99 HIGHWAY PATROLMAN STATE TROOPER USED CARS OPEN ALL NIGHT MY FATHER'S HOUSE REASON TO BELIEVE

NEBRASKA
saw her standin' on her front
man just twirlin' her baton
and her went for a ride, sir,
and ten innocent people died
from the town of Lincoln, Nebraska,
with a sawed-off .410 on my lap
through to the badlands of Wyoming I
killed everything in my path
I can't say that I'm sorry for
the things that we done
at least for a little while, sir, me
and her we had us some fun
on jury brought in a guilty verdict and
the judge he sentenced me to death

Midnight in a prison storeroom with
leather straps across my chest

Sheriff, when the man pulls that switch,
sir, and snaps my poor head back
You make sure my pretty baby is sittin'
right there on my lap

They declared me unfit to live, said into
that great void my soul'd be hurled
They wanted to know why I did what
I did, well, sir, I guess there's just a
meanness in this world

ATLANTIC CITY

Well, they blew up the chicken man
in Philly last night
Now they blew up his house too
Down on the boardwalk they're
getting' ready for a fight
Gonna see what them racket
boys can do

Now there's trouble busin'
in from outta state
And the D.A. can't get no relief
Gonna be a rumble out
on the promenade
And the gamblin' commissioner's
hangin' on by the skin of his teeth

Everything dies, baby, that's a fact
But maybe everything that dies
someday comes back
Put your makeup on,
fix your hair up pretty
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City

Well, I got a job and tried to
put my money away
But I got debts that no honest
man can pay
So, I drew what I had from
the Central Trust
And I bought us two tickets
on that Coast City bus

Everything dies, baby, that's a fact
But maybe everything that
dies someday comes back
Put your makeup on,
fix your hair up pretty
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City

Now our luck may have died
and our love may be cold
But with you forever I'll stay
We're goin' out where the
sand's turnin' to gold
So put on your stockings 'cause
the night's gettin' cold

Everything dies, baby, that's a fact
But maybe everything that dies
someday comes back
Put your makeup on,
fix your hair up pretty
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City

Now I've been lookin' for
a job but it's hard to find
Down here it's just winners and losers
and don't get caught on the wrong side
of that line

Well, I'm tired of comin'
out on the losin' end
So, honey last night I met this guy and
I'm gonna do a little favor for him

Everything dies, baby, that's a fact
But maybe everything that dies
someday comes back
Put your makeup on,
fix your hair up pretty
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City

MANSION ON THE HILL

There's a place out on the
edge of town, sir
Rislin' above the factories
and the fields
Now ever since I was
a child I can remember
That mansion on the hill
In the day you can see
the children playing
On the road that leads to those
gates of hardened steel
Steel gates that completely surround, sir
The mansion on the hill

At night my daddy'd take me,
and we'd ride
Through the streets of
a town so silent and still
Park on a back road along
the highway side
Look up at that mansion on the hill
In the summer all

the lights would shine
There'd be music playin', people
laughin' all the time
Me and my sister, we'd hide
out in the tall corn fields
Sit and listen to the
mansion on the hill

Tonight, down here in Linden Town
I watch the cars rushin'
by home from the mill
There's a beautiful full moon rising
Above the mansion on the hill

JOHNNY 99

Well, they closed down the auto
plant in Mahwah late that month
Ralph went out lookin' for a job
but he couldn't find none
He came home too drunk from
main' Tanqueray and wine
He got a gun, shot a night clerk,
now they call 'im Johnny 99

Down in the part of town where when
you hit a red light you don't stop
Johnny's wavin' his gun around and
threatenin' to blow his top
When an off-duty cop snuck
up on him from behind
Out in front of the Club Tip Top
they clapped
the cuffs on Johnny 99

Well, the city supplied a public
defender but the judge was

Mean John Brown
He came into the courtroom
and stared poor Johnny down
Well, the evidence is clear, gonna let
the sentence son, fit the crime
Prison for ninety-eight and a year and
we'll call it even Johnny 99

A fistfight broke out in the courtroom,
they had to drag Johnny's girl away
His mama stood up and shouted
"Judge don't take my boy this way"
Well son, you got any statement
you'd like to make
Before the bailiff comes
to forever take you away
Now Judge, I got debts no
honest man could pay
The bank was holdin' my mortgage
and they was takin' my house away
Now I ain't sayin' that makes
me an innocent man
But it was more 'n all this that
put that gun in my hand
Well Your Honor, I do believe
I'd be better off dead
And if you can take a man's life
for the thoughts that's in his head
Then won't you sit back in
that chair and think
it over Judge, one more time
And let 'em shave off my hair
and put me on that execution line

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN
His name is Joe Roberts,
work for the state
in a sergeant out of Perrineville,
garacks number eight
always done an honest job,
is honest as I could
I got a brother named Frankie and
Frankie ain't no good

Now ever since we was young kids
it's been the same comedown
I got a call over the shortwave
Frankie's in trouble downtown
Well, if it was any other man
I'd put him straight away
But when it's your brother sometimes
you look the other way

Me and Frankie laughin' and drinkin'
Nothin' feels better than
blood on blood
Takin' turns dancin' with Maria
As the band played "Night
of the Johnstown Flood"
I catch him when he's strayin'
like any brother would
Man turns his back on his family,
well he just ain't no good

Well, Frankie went in the
way back in 1965
got a farm deferment, settled down,
took Maria for my wife
but them wheat prices kept on droppin'
and it was like we were gettin' robbed

Frankie came home in '68
and me, I took this job

Yea we're laughin' and drinkin'
Nothin' feels better than blood
on blood
Takin' turns dancin' with Maria
As the band played "Night of
the Johnstown Flood"
I catch him when he's strayin',
teach him how to walk that line
Man turns his back on his family,
he ain't no friend of mine

The night was like any other,
well I got a call 'bout quarter to nine
There was trouble in a roadhouse
out on the Michigan line
There was a kid lyin' on the floor lookin'
bad, bleedin' hard from his head
There was a girl cryin' at a table,
It was Frank, they said

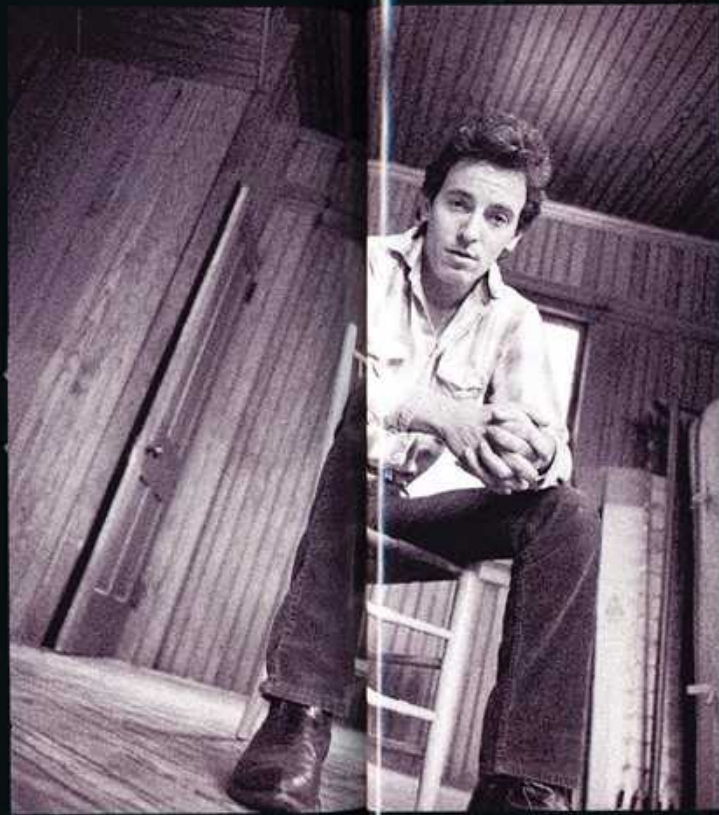
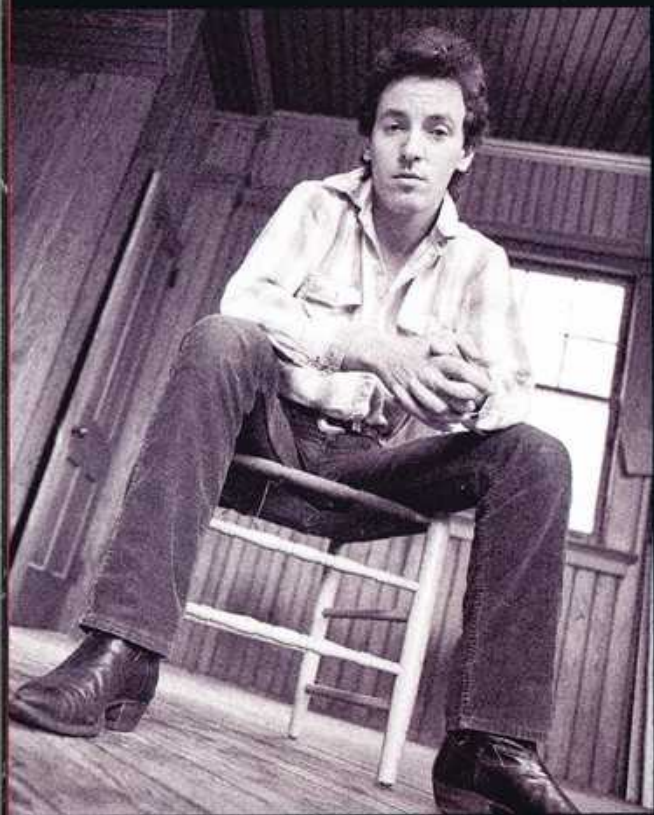
Well, I went out and I jumped
in my car and I hit the lights
I musta done 110 through
Michigan county that night
It was out at the crossroads
down 'round Willow bank
Seen a Buick with Ohio plates,
behind the wheel was Frank
Well, I chased him through them
county roads till a sign said
"Canadian border 5 miles from here"
I pulled over the side of the
highway and watched
his taillights disappear

Me and Frankie laughin' and drinkin'
Nothin' feels better than
blood on blood
Takin' turns dancin' with Maria
As the band played "Night of the
Johnstown Flood"
I catch him when he's strayin'
like any brother would
Man turns his back on his family,
well he just ain't no good

STATE TROOPER

New Jersey Turnpike, ridin'
on a wet night
'Neath the refinery's glow, out where
the great black rivers flow
License, registration, I ain't got none
But I got a clear conscience 'bout
the things that I done
Mister state trooper,
please don't stop me

Maybe you got a kid, maybe
you got a pretty wife
The only thing that I got's been
botherin' me my whole life
Mister state trooper,
please don't stop me
In the wee wee hours your
mind gets hazy
Radio relay towers lead me to my baby
Radio's jammed up with
talk show stations
It's just talk, talk, talk till
you lose your patience



Mister state trooper,
please don't stop me

Hey somebody out there,
listen to my last prayer
Hi ho silver-o deliver me from nowhere

USED CARS

My little sister's in the front seat
with an ice cream cone
My ma's in the backseat
sittin' all alone
As my pa steers her slow out of the lot
For a test drive down Michigan Avenue

Now my ma she fingers
her wedding band
And watches the salesman
stare at my old man's hands
He's tellin' us all 'bout the
break he'd give us if
he could but he just can't
Well, if I could I swear I know
just what I'd do

Now mister, the day the lottery I win
I ain't ever gonna ride in
no used car again

Now the neighbors come
from near and far
As we pull up in our brand-new
used car
I wish he'd just hit the gas
and let out a cry
And tell 'em all they can kiss
our asses good-bye

My dad, he sweats the same
job from mornin' to morn
Me, I walk home on the same dirty
streets where I was born
Up the block I can hear my
little sister in the
front seat blowin' that horn
The sounds echo all down
Michigan Avenue

Now mister, the day my
number comes in
I ain't ever gonna ride
in no used car again

OPEN ALL NIGHT

I had the carburetor cleaned
and checked
With her line blown out she's
hummin' like a turbojet
Propped her up in the backyard
on concrete blocks
For a new clutch plate and
a new set of shocks
Took her down to the carwash,
check the plugs and points
I'm goin' out tonight, I'm
gonna rock that joint

Early North Jersey industrial skyline
I'm a all-set Cobra Jet creepin'
through the nighttime
Gotta find a gas station,
gotta find a payphone
This turnpike sure is spooky
at night when you're all alone
Gotta hit the gas 'cause

I'm runnin' late
This New Jersey in the mornin'
like a lunar landscape
The boss don't dig me so he put
me on the night shift
It's an all-night run to get back
to where my baby lives
In the wee wee hours, your
mind gets hazy
Radio relay towers, won't you
lead me to my baby
Underneath the overpass trooper
hits his party light switch
Goodnight, good luck, one
two powershift

I met Wanda when she was employed
Behind the counter at the Route 60
Bob's Big Boy
Fried chicken on the front seat,
she's sittin' in my lap
We're wipin' our fingers on
a Texaco road map
I remember Wanda up on
Scrap Metal Hill
With them big brown eyes that
make your heart stand still
Five A.M., oil pressure's sinkin' fast
I make a pit stop, wipe the
windshield, check the gas
Gotta call my baby on the telephone
Let her know that her daddy's
comin' on home
Sit tight, little mama, I'm comin' 'round
I got 3 more hours but
I'm coverin' ground

My eyes got itchy in the
wee wee hours
Sun's just a red ball risin' over
them refinery towers
Radio's jammed up with gospel stations
Lost souls callin' long
distance salvation
Hey Mr. DeeJay, won'tcha hear
my last prayer
Hey ho, rock 'n roll, deliver
me from nowhere

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

Last night I dreamed that I was a child
Out where the pines grow wild and tall
I was trying to make it home
through the forest
Before the darkness falls
I heard the wind rustling
through the trees
and ghostly voices rose from the fields
I ran with my heart pounding
down that broken path
With the devil snappin' at my heels
I broke through the trees and
here in the night
My father's house stood
shining hard and bright
The branches and brambles tore my
clothes and scratched my arms
But I ran til I fell shaking in his arms
I awoke and I imagined the hard
things that pulled us apart
Will never again, sir, fear us
from each other's hearts

I got dressed and to that
house I did ride
From out on the road, I could see its
windows shining in light

I walked up the steps and
stood on the porch
A woman I didn't recognize came and
spoke to me through a chained door
I told her my story and who I'd come for
She said "I'm sorry, son, but no one by
that name lives here anymore"

My father's house shines
hard and bright
It stands like a beacon
calling me in the night
Calling and calling so cold and alone
Shining 'cross this dark highway where
our sins lie unatoned

REASON TO BELIEVE

Seen a man standing over a dead dog
lyin' by the highway in a ditch
He's lookin' down kinda puzzled pokin'
that dog with a stick
Got his car door flung open, he's
standin' out on Highway 31
Like if he stood there long enough that
dog'd get up and run
Struck me kinda funny, seem kinda
funny, sir, to me
Still at the end of every hard day,
people find some reason to believe

Now Mary Lou loved Johnny
with a love mean and true

She said "Baby I'll work for
you every day and
bring my money home to you"
One day he up and left her
and ever since that
She waits down at the end of that dirt
road for young Johnny to come back
Struck me kinda funny, funny,
yea, indeed
How at the end of every hard-earned
day, people find some reason to believe

Take a baby to the river,
Kyle William they called him
Wash the baby in the water,
take away little Kyle's sin
In a whitewash shotgun shack
an old man passes away
Take the body to the graveyard
and over him they pray
Lord, won't you tell us, tell us
what does it mean
At the end of every hard-earned day,
you can find some reason to believe

Congregation gathers down
by the river side
Preacher stands with his Bible,
groom stands waitin' for his bride
Congregation gone and the sun sets
behind a weopin' willow tree
Groom stands alone and watches
the river rush on so effortlessly
Wonderin' where can his baby be
Still at the end of every hard-earned
day, people find some reason to believe

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