

The Cosmic Cowboy

Murphy's back

United Press International
 NASHVILLE — The beatnik, the hip honky tonker, the Cosmic Cowboy — Michael Martin Murphy has been tagged with all the titles during the quarter century he has spent making music for money. In that time he has had three wives and three record companies, soared high on success and floundered on the ground floor of the music business.

The peaks and valleys are familiar places. He is reminded of them every time he looks out the window of his home in Taos, New Mexico, and gazes at the Colorado Rockies. The mountains tell him that success in the music industry is not riches, fame or No. 1 hits. Success is survival.

Murphy, 39, is a "lone wolf" singer-writer who happens to work in a business filled with sharks and shysters. That may explain why he has chosen life amongst the sagebrush and rattlesnakes for the last six years.

"I need to have a stimulating environment that is comfortable to me in order to be able to create," Murphy said in a phone interview from Taos. "For some reason, being in mountain-type country has always stimulated me the most, like Austin. Also, I am the kind of person who doesn't enjoy the politics and competition in the industry. I work more from a lone wolf point of view."

The decision to live in Taos with his third wife and children has cost him some money, maybe a lot of money. He is removed from where it's "happening," from the creative centers, from job contacts, from people.

"You have to, I had to do this, I

had to live in L.A. for five years," he said. "I had to pay my dues — dive into the center of it at one point in our lives to learn how it works."

Murphy was raised middle class and Southern Baptist-style in Oak Cliff, the eldest son of Pink and Lois Murphey. His first instrument was a plastic ukulele, and it was enough to spark an life-long interest in music.

He toiled around Texas in the '50s playing in Dallas' only beatnik bar, then changed his scenery in the late '60s by moving to Los Angeles where he studied Latin at UCLA by day and worked honky tonks by night. He wandered back to Texas in the '70s and became Austin's sainted Cosmic Cowboy as Willie Nelson and company were launching the "outlaw" movement in country music.

He thought his career was at its peak, but then he lost his wife, his voice, his band and his record label. He headed for his hideaway near the Rockies and emerged from the valley with "Wildfire," a song that earned him his first gold record and made him a star.

His record company wanted to push him to pop, but Murphey retreated to his country roots. The glitter of pop success dimmed somewhat back on the honky tonk circuit as Murphy made the full circle from valley to peak back to the valley.

Slowly, he has climbed back again. In 1983 the Academy of Country Music named him Best New Male Vocalist, 11 albums and 33 years after he first strummed that plastic ukulele back in Oak Cliff.

A greatest hits album is in the works, with some of the old songs being updated with a fresh sound, and he is working on a screenplay for a movie called "Wildfire."

Company's bugged

United Press International
 HOUSTON — A major corporation hopes a \$25,000 reward will prompt someone to reveal who installed or attempted to install an electronic listening device in the board chairman's office, an attorney said Tuesday.

Attorney Robert Shults said the reward will be paid to anyone supplying information before Oct. 1 leading to the arrest and conviction of the people responsible for installing, or planning to install, the surveillance equipment.

Evidence of the bugging was discovered in mid-June during a routine check for surveillance devices, Shults said. A ceiling tile in the chair-

man's office had been hollowed out, as if to hold a microphone, and a nearby area had been reinforced, as if to hold a recording or transmitting device.

Shults refused to identify the executive or the corporation, except to say it was a "major corporation" and a "diversified national business" with headquarters in the Galleria area of Houston.

Shults said the sweep for bugs "is routine but not regular" and the June search preceded discussions over "very sensitive" matters at the corporation.

A report of the finding was turned over to the FBI, he said.

Emerald Air suspends flights, faces \$\$ debts

United Press International
 AUSTIN — Saddled with \$13 million in long-term debt and leasing obligations, Emerald Air suspended operations Tuesday and filed for protection under the federal bankruptcy code.

But the Austin-based regional carrier said it hoped to resume service "in the near future."

Even though load factors were increasing, spokeswoman Debra Treffalls said efforts to negotiate a settlement of Emerald's debts since a new management team took over two years ago had been unsuccessful.

Emerald claimed net losses of \$9.4 million in 1982 and 1983 and \$3.5 million in the first three quarters of 1984. Treffalls said the company would ask the federal bankruptcy court to reschedule its debts while it attempts to resume service.

"We intend implementing a strategic plan that will make Emerald Air continue to be the fastest growing regional commuter carrier in the country," she said.

Treffalls said that as part of its reorganization plan, 80 percent of its 265-member, non-union workforce would be asked to staff the new company at original pay scales.

Those who are laid off might be eventually rehired, she said.

Emerald also said that full-fare tickets issued by other airlines or

travel agents would be honored by other airlines.

The first evidence of Emerald's financial problems surfaced July 16 when the airline temporarily suspended service to Austin and one Houston airport, and said it was laying off or transferring 25 workers.

But company officials termed the move a "reallocation of services."

On Aug. 13, the city of Austin gave the airline 20 days to pay \$58,000 in it owes the city in back rent for space at Robert Mueller Airport.

At that time, Treffalls said, "We have no intention of going bankrupt. Everybody usually runs on a little credit."

Using a fleet of prop planes, three retired Air Force officers formed Emerald as a cargo carrier in 1978 to haul freight out of South Texas for Emery Air Freight.

But Emerald, which began full passenger service in 1981, was reorganized in 1982 with the hiring of former Braniff executive Thomas R. McCauley as the company's president.

Air Transport World ranked Emerald as No. 1 in the nation last year among small regional-commuter carriers in miles flown and No. 2 in passenger boardings.

Cop charged with assault; photograph to be released

United Press International
 SAN ANTONIO — A photograph of a veteran police detective charged with sexual assault must be released to the public under the Texas Open Records Act, an attorney general's opinion said Tuesday.

Gary Pope, the city's legal advisor to the police department, said he sought the opinion after receiving requests for the photograph from the San Antonio media.

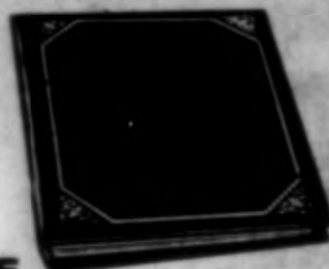
"I'll have to read it (the opinion)," Pope said. "I don't know what will come next."

The photograph is that of Jess Herd, a veteran police detective

charged with sexually assaulting a tourist during the city's Fiesta celebration in April. The woman told police she became lost and was attacked by Herd after she accepted a ride back to her hotel.

"Without doubt, the release of a photograph of a person arrested for sexual assault is highly embarrassing to that person ... but we cannot conclude ... that it is of no legitimate interest to the public sufficient to except it from disclosure," the opinion said.

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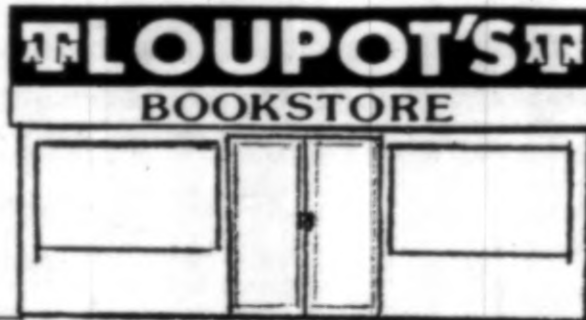
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