

Yesterday And Today

Cover Designs

Rumors have been around for years that the cover to *Yesterday...and Today* was originally intended chosen as the famous "butcher shot." However, after considerable negative feedback, Capitol hastily replaced the photo with a random shot that they had lying around. That cover, designed from scratch in five days, became the replacement "trunk" cover. I have never believed that theory. I disapproved of the conventional theory because of the existence of several alternate cover designs. It made no sense to me that in a span of just five days between the release dates of the two versions of the LP, Capitol Records would have created several interesting design ideas – only to wind up choosing the most boring one.

In the early 1980's, I developed a theory that while, yes, the final design for the "trunk cover" was hastily put together, the existing mock-ups showed that the trunk cover was around at the same time as the "butcher" cover and may have been the original design for the cover. Thanks to the research of Bruce Spizer, I am now thoroughly convinced that the "trunk is original" hypothesis is correct. For those who require proof, purchase Bruce's book, *The Beatles' Story on Capitol Records, Part Two*, which is now available.

Given Bruce's essential reasoning and proof, here is what I have believed to be the order of composition of the *Yesterday...and Today* covers:



Photo courtesy Mitch McGeary's website

Those alternate slicks that have emerged show that the *Y & T* cover was not always intended to be a "paste-over." Nor was it intended to be a butcher cover. Shortly before the album was compiled, but after May 10, 1966 when the three *Revolver* songs were chosen and mixed into mono for the US album, designs using the "trunk" photo were mocked up. This particular design

puts the "trunk" photo at the right and fills the rest of the cover with writing. This was the original design, with the whole title in quotation marks. No slicks exist of the cover in this form; instead, a four color separation provides the only surviving indication that this cover had been designed.

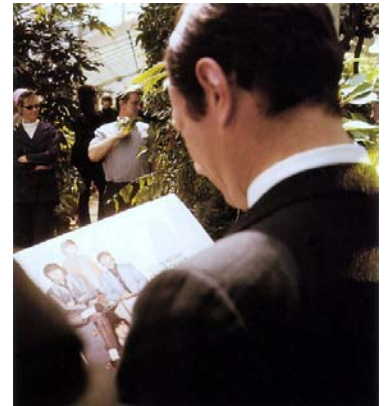


The mistake in putting the quotation marks around the whole title – instead of just around the "Yesterday" song title -- was quickly corrected. Had the LP been released then, it likely would have come out in this form. In addition to the four color separations, slicks were prepared of this modified design as it was being prepared for release.



This other alternate trunk cover was more creative in some respects. The group's name appears in bright red letters above the photo, which has been tilted. The white top part of the cover seems to detract from the simple beauty of the first version, however. Slicks were also

prepared of this form. Copies of this design exist with Capitol stamps showing a date of May 27, 1966. This fact likely indicates that the above design was the “final” one: the album cover that would have appeared on records had the Beatles not been in the process of rejecting the trunk photo and suggesting a new one altogether.



These trunk cover mock-ups were made prior to the butcher cover. On about May 20, 1966, when the Beatles saw the mock-ups for the new cover, they considered but ultimately rejected it and offered up the butcher photo. The Beatles were particularly keen on this new photo. The butcher photograph was supposed to demystify the Beatles. Ironically, however, John Lennon's comment that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus, taken out of context and circulated as the Beatles were touring (that same year) had much of the effect that the picture was supposed to have.

The butcher cover to the North American *Yesterday...and Today* album was a piece of "pop art satire." Also used to promote the "Paperback Writer" single in England, the cover was seen as little more than a bit of surrealism by the Beatles themselves. In the form in which it was released it is an unfinished piece. Intended to be gilted in gold, the photograph (called, properly, "A Somnambulant Adventure") was part of a group of three photos that were intended to debunk the Beatles' legendary status.

But the completed idea was not to see the light of day. Instead, the uncropped final "butcher" photo was sent to Ted Staidle, a professional photographer in the United States whose company -- Staidle and Associates -- prepared photographic proofs for Capitol Records during the 1960's. He created exactly two copies of the 16" by 20" proof -- one for Capitol and one for his files. Capitol's copy of the Staidle proof was kept by the record company and surfaced as the inside front cover to the *Rarities* album in 1980. Staidle's copy was kept by his offices for 35 years and sold at private auction.



When Capitol's art department approved of the new design, they selected the paper stock and chose the color scheme for the stereo banner (at the top of the stereo LP) and the font and color of the song titles. Originally, the album design was to feature quotes around "Yesterday," which we observe in the earlier trunk designs as well. Apparently the quotation marks were thought to detract from the design, because they were removed from later draft

designs. Like the early trunk cover designs, considerable thought went into the butcher cover.

Here's a slick without the Capitol logo, believed to have been prepared so that the logo would be sized and placed properly.



A copy of the above slick with the logo pasted on by hand with notes as to its placement has also surfaced. It is surely the only such copy. Once all of the type was in place, the cover was ready for release.



This sealed mono "first state" copy is from the collection of Robert York.



EXECUTIVE AND MANAGER OFFICES
CAPITOL RECORDS DISTRIBUTING CORP.
 HOLLYWOOD AND GENE AUTRY BOULEVARD, CALIFORNIA 91604 • TELEPHONE (213) 383-3000

June 14, 1966

Dear Reviewer:

In the past few days, you may have received an advance promotional copy of The Beatles' new album, "The Beatles Yesterday And Today." In accordance with the following statement from Alan W. Livingston, President, Capitol Records, Inc., the original album cover is being discarded and a new jacket is being prepared:

"The original cover, created in England, was intended as 'pop art' satire. However, a sampling of public opinion in the United States indicates that the cover design is subject to misinterpretation. For this reason, and to avoid any possible controversy or undesired harm to The Beatles' image or reputation, Capitol has chosen to withdraw the LP and substitute a more generally acceptable design."

All consumer copies of The Beatles' album will be packaged in the new cover, which will be available within the next week to 10 days. As soon as they are, we will forward you a copy. In the meantime, we would appreciate your dis-regarding the promotional album and, if at all possible, returning it, C.O.D., to Capitol Records, 1750 N. Vine Street, Hollywood, Calif. 90028.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

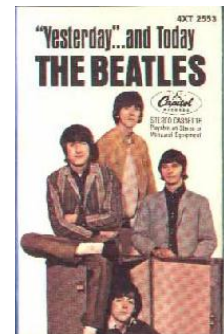
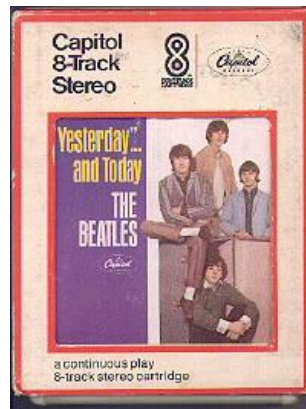
 Ron Tepper
 Manager
 Press & Information Services.

AT:m

As the radio stations got their copies, it seemed like every one of them was grumbling about THAT cover. [John Lennon and Yoko Ono would cause a similar stir two years later with *Two Virgins*.] So, before the official release date, Capitol issued a letter recalling the album. Pulling out another photograph of the Beatles by the same photographer (and reversing it), Capitol went to work fashioning a replacement cover for the album, using the photograph from the trunk cover design. The mental image was supposed to form that these guys were just humans after all. John reportedly said that the photograph was as "relevant as Vietnam. When he allegedly said this, he was trying to turn attention away

from the cover and onto the war.

In order to quickly replace the butcher cover, the background of the replacement photo was airbrushed white, and the printing from the "butcher" version was laid on top of the new graphics. Alternate forms do exist, but these lack the artistic flair that went into creating the pre-butcher "trunk" designs. Although the order had been given to destroy the old covers, it was more cost- and time-efficient to glue the new front cover on top of the rejected "butcher" covers. Doing this saved time, and the new records were on the stands within five days. This is an amazing turn-around time, considering the fact that the mono paste-overs are not exactly rare. It appears, though, that the Jacksonville, IL, plant did destroy nearly all of their butchers.



Tape copies of the *Yesterday...and Today* LP also featured the trunk cover, and since they were prepared after the recall of the butcher covers, no tape copies exist with the butcher cover

design. It appears that some thought was given, though, to rethinking the bland, whitewashed cover. When the eight-track tape of *Yesterday...and Today* was issued by itself in 1968 (apart from *Beatles VI*), some color was added to its cover. However, since by that time the album was no longer an important seller, the decision was made to scrap the idea of putting a more artistic cover on *Yesterday...and Today*. Instead, an RIAA "Gold Record Award" seal was added to the existing "white" trunk cover, and the other cover designs were never used. The cassette issue of the album also features the usual airbrushed cover.

Yesterday and Today Covers

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