

THE BEATLES B.C. -- Before Capitol

Part Four

Second Edition 01 My 13

Fakes and Fantasies

DEFINITION

A **counterfeit** or **fake** record is one that attempts to pass itself off as a genuine record that was actually issued by a legitimate record company at one time. Sometimes, counterfeits do not look exactly like the genuine copies that they mimic but are slightly different.

DEFINITION

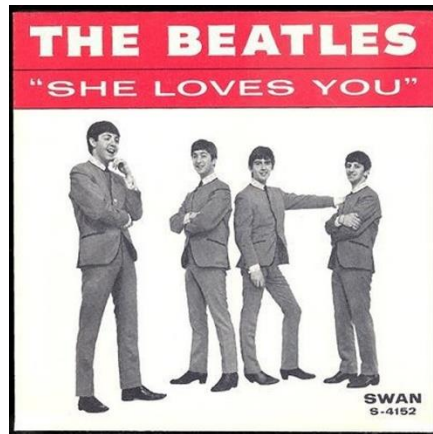
A **fantasy** record or sleeve is one that pretends to be a rare and otherwise unknown item. However, no legitimate record company ever pressed or printed an item like that one.

DEFINITION

A **pirate** copy of a record is a counterfeit that is made while the legitimate record is still selling. These lower quality "knock-offs" are intended to dupe people into buying them at a lower price than the genuine record album would cost.

While Vee Jay and Swan were still producing Beatles records, there was certainly no need for anyone to make "pirate," "counterfeit," or "fantasy" records on those labels. However, during the late 1960's demand arose for Beatles records on those two labels. Counterfeiters filled that void, making counterfeit copies of *Introducing the Beatles* and of the Swan "She Loves You" single. The 1970's and '80's saw even more counterfeits being circulated. Since there were no legitimate copies selling, these counterfeits are -- strictly speaking -- NOT "pirate" copies, even though they were not being sold as "collectors' items."





"She Loves You"/"I'll Get You" (Counterfeit) Swan 4152

white label with red print **OR** black label with silver print

Collectors have wrongly believed for some time that "thin print" copies with quotation marks were reissues available in 1966 and 1967 (just before Swan Records folded in 1967). These rumors are false, for Swan had a contract to release the single for two years and stopped pressing "She Loves You" in 1965. There are two common issues of these fakes:

1. The matrix numbers are **stamped into the trail-off by machine**. Unlike the genuine Swan issues, the matrix numbers are only 1/16" high, and neither the "Reco-Art" nor "Virtue Studio" company information appears in the matrix.
2. The matrix numbers are **etched by hand**, otherwise as above.

On both of these fakes, the words "DON'T DROP OUT" do not appear on the label. Style 3 labels, with quotation marks.

The "stamped matrix" fakes have been promoted as reissues. Even though these fakes are almost as common as the 'black label' issues and are not genuine, public opinion for years that they were genuine has caused them to sell for \$40 to \$50 each. The "etched matrix" fakes have been recognized as counterfeits and usually sell for under \$10. Some counterfeit/fantasy copies of the white and red label "She Loves You" were pressed in red vinyl. These tend to sell for about \$20, twice as much as the more common black vinyl counterfeits. Counterfeit picture sleeves are somewhat washed out, and instead of being folded like the genuine sleeves, both sides of the sleeve are the same size – and the copies that I examined had perforated edges.





"Komm, Gib Mir Deine Hand"/"How Do You Do It?"

(Fantasy) Swan 4197

Swan Records never had a license to press singles containing the "other" song that the Beatles had recorded in German. Since Capitol Records had released the English version of "I Want to Hold Your Hand," the license went to them. Capitol did release the German-language song on their *Something New* album in 1964.

This fantasy Swan record was made during the 1970's. The font used on the label is nothing like any of the genuine Swan variations. In case you were curious, the *real* record numbered Swan 4197 was "Gee Baby (I'm Sorry)" by the Three Degrees, a song that stayed in the top 100 for a few weeks in 1965.



"Please Please Me"/"Ask Me Why"

(Fantasy) Vee Jay 498 sleeves

Since the Beatles were complete unknowns in the USA in early 1963, **Vee Jay Records never issued a picture sleeve for their first release**. Bootleggers have filled the void by producing fantasy sleeves. Each of the above sleeves first appeared after 1980.

The first sleeve, shown above, features an early photo of the group. Like the actual single, the sleeve misspells "Beatles," using two T's. There are promotional markings on the reverse side, as though the sleeve had accompanied original white/gray label promo copies. In reality, the sleeve came about 20 years too late.

The second sleeve sports four drawings of the Beatles that Vee Jay actually did produce. These are the drawings that appear inside *Songs, Pictures, and Stories*, on the *Souvenir ... EP*, on the poster to *Beatles vs. the Four Seasons*, and on the picture sleeve to "Do You Want to Know a Secret". On this fantasy

sleeve, the brackets logo was used, even though Vee Jay hadn't come up with it in early 1963. The group's name is also spelled correctly. There are other fantasy sleeves, all of which are newer.



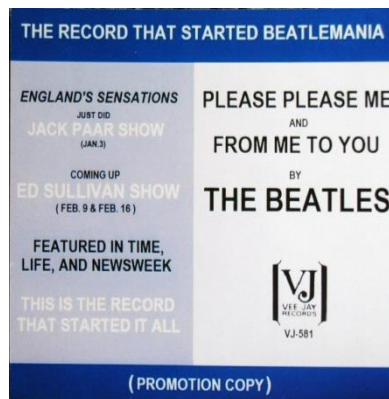
"From Me to You"/"Thank You Girl"

(Fantasy) Vee Jay 522 sleeves

As with the above single, **there were no original picture sleeves accompanying the Beatles' second single for Vee Jay.** Bootleggers have produced at least three fantasy sleeves for the record; these sleeves are of recent origin.

The first sleeve is a pale imitation of the genuine sleeve to Vee Jay 581, with the photograph flipped around.

The second sleeve uses the photo from the 1982 re-release of "Love Me Do." This second-generation picture is blurry. The third sleeve is a modern (post-2000) fantasy that looks nothing like a Vee Jay product from the 1960's.



"Please, Please Me"/"From Me to You"

(Counterfeit) Vee Jay 581 sleeve

The typefaces are all wrong on this counterfeit sleeve that dates to about 2000.



"Please, Please Me"/"From Me to You"

(Counterfeit) Vee Jay 581 sleeves

The first of these sleeves is actually a counterfeit/fantasy item, not intended to fool someone but to simply occupy the missing place of a rare item in someone's collection. The sleeve is clearly unlike the genuine sleeve, for the group's name appears here in green and in red on the original sleeve.

The sleeve on the right is a different matter! Look at the top (opening) of the sleeve. Genuine copies of the VJ 581 sleeve are cut so that the corners at the top are slightly rounded; copies that have the corners cut square are counterfeits.



"Please Please Me"/"From Me to You"

(Fantasy) Vee Jay 581 sleeves

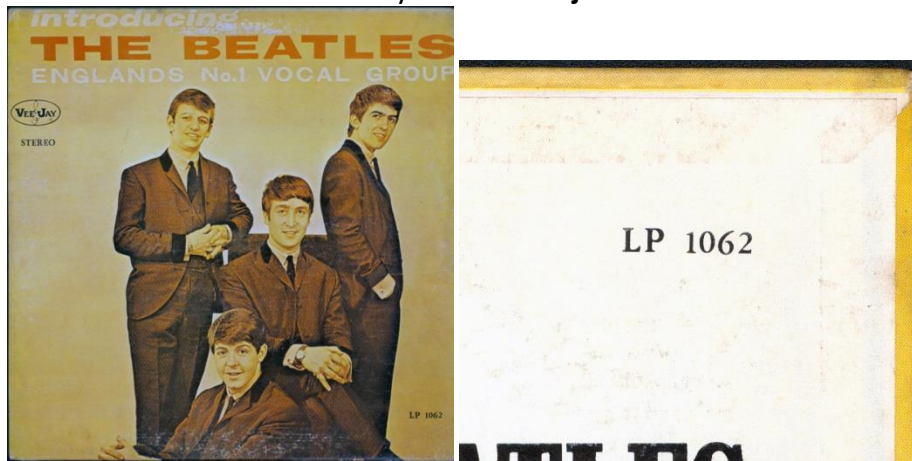
These are modern (post-2000) fantasy sleeves that look nothing like the original items. They should fool only the ignorant collector. Any sleeves using photographs other than the one used on the genuine sleeve are all modern fantasy items.

All genuine stereo copies of *Introducing the Beatles* play in true stereo and have the word "STEREO" on the label. Since true stereo copies are hard to find, they have been widely counterfeited, beginning in the 1960's. First, here are a few tips:

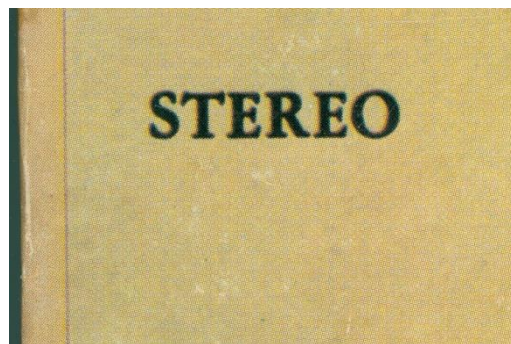
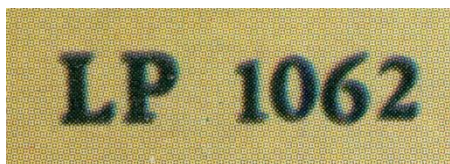
- If your copy has the "STEREOPHONIC" banner on the front cover, if chosen at random it would have over a 99% chance of being a fake.
- If your "stereo" copy lists "Love Me Do" in the song titles on the back, it now has a 99.999% chance (literally!) of being a fake. There are fewer than ten genuine copies with that configuration and perhaps a million fakes.
- If your "stereo" copy does not have the word STEREO on the label and does not play in stereo, there's no "chance" about it: you have a fake.
- If your copy, mono or stereo, has the title and artist name separated by the spindle hole in the middle of the record, there is no doubt: you have a fake.
- All genuine true stereo copies that have "Love Me Do" have Vee Jay's OVAL logo on the label -- not the BRACKETS logo. All known fakes are on the brackets logo, making it rather easy to tell.
- Copies where the label is all black with a large brackets logo are all fakes. There are many other kinds of fakes, however.

Clearly Counterfeit Covers

Let's first look at some fakes that are clearly identifiable **just from the cover**:

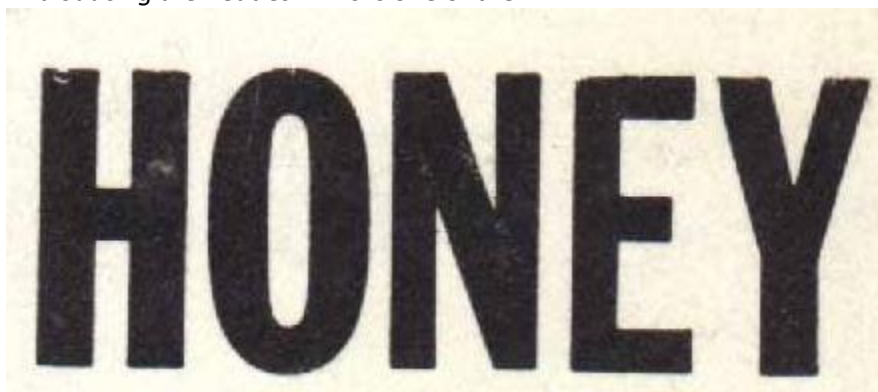


Fake Cover CC01: The cover is ugly and yellowed. The photograph is clearly a second generation copy. The word "STEREO" is printed clearly on the front cover (since the counterfeiters did not actually own a stereo album). In the lower right corner of the front cover is "LP 1062," which is also printed clearly. The back cover lists "Please, Please Me" and "Ask Me Why" and reads "LP 1062" in the font that is used on the front cover. These fakes date to the late 1960's.

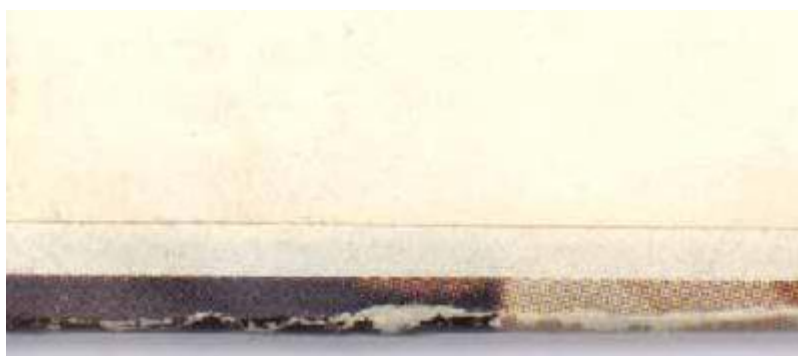


Fake Cover CC02: The cover is ugly and yellowed. The photograph is now a third generation copy. The words "STEREO" and "LP 1062" are fuzzy on the front cover, since it was shot off of the previous fake. There is a line running down the left side of the front cover. The back cover lists "Please, Please Me" and "Ask Me Why" and reads "LP 1062" in the font that is used on the front cover. These fakes date to the early 1970's.

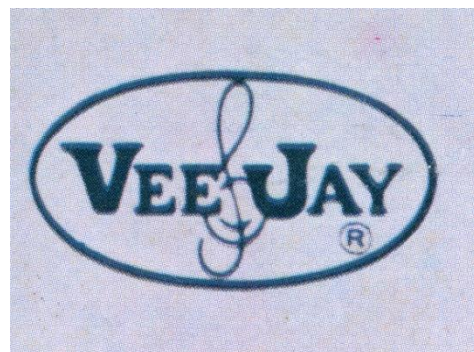
Fake Cover CC03: The front cover more closely resembles an authentic cover – without the additional printing found on CC01 and CC02, but the colors are washed out, and the Vee Jay logo is blurry. The back cover lists "Love Me Do." In a few cases, the back cover, too, can tip you off that you're looking at a phony copy of *Introducing the Beatles*. This is one of them.



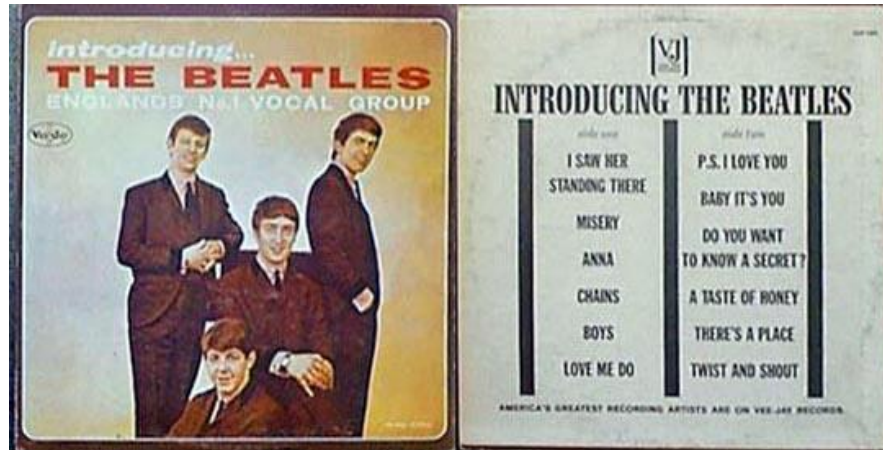
The printing of the columns and back cover information should be sharp and clear throughout. Here's a back cover from the mid-1970's where the "H" in "HONEY" has some printing defects. This particular cover is even easier to detect as a fake because the front cover does not wrap around to the back properly:



The front cover SHOULD wrap completely around, underneath the back cover slick. Most counterfeits made after the late 1970's do wrap properly, but this earlier one does not. Notice that the front cover slick suddenly "becomes white". This is because the counterfeiters made copies of an LP cover slick that was still constructed. This cover occurs with records made in the mid 1970's.



Fake Cover CC04: Whoever made this cover used a CC01 or CC02 as a template, but they also probably possessed a counterfeit with cover CC03. The back cover lists “Please, Please Me” and “Ask Me Why” and has “LP 1062” just like CC01-2, but the front cover looks more like a normal stereo cover. There has been some color correction, but the front cover as a whole is still blurry. The record label looks like the one usually found with CC03.



Fake Cover CC05: Here's another "easy loser." There are no genuine copies of the LP with a brown border around the album. Most likely, these were semi-fantasy items that were never intended to be passed off as genuine. Since they first appeared in the mid-to-late 1970's, some people have forgotten that they are fakes.



Fake Cover CC06: This fake, from the late 1970's, was supposed to resemble the genuine article. Apparent problems in photo quality made the counterfeiters decide to airbrush the background. George Harrison has a shadow behind him on all genuine copies -- and even on most fakes -- but not on this particular counterfeit. Another "easy to spot loser."

Counterfeit Labels

The vast majority of counterfeit copies of *Introducing the Beatles* cannot be easily identified by their covers alone. Chances are, though, if it claims to be in stereo and claims to have "Love Me Do" in the titles on the back, it's a phony. The best test to determine whether your item is genuine is to look at the symbols that are stamped into the matrix of the record. Since this can be difficult -- even confusing for some -- we'll take the next best route: to look at the **labels**.



Fake Record CR01: This counterfeit was color photocopied from a genuine MONO copy of the LP, so the title and artist's name are in the right place. The colors are strange, but it would fool most people. These usually came in a "stereo" cover (CC01-2), though, so again something is wrong. Notice that the color green is missing from the label. The record also lists "Please Please Me" and "Ask Me Why," since that's the kind of genuine copy that was being photocopied. The first of these come complete with fake "URJ" marking and a copied ARC date. There is also a symbol in the trail-off that looks like a circle with a + inside it.

Fake Record CR02: This style counterfeit label was very popular -- some copies date back to the 60's or early 70's and are found with cover CC02. Notice the thin print on the catalog number. Like the other fakes, the mono catalog number is shown on the label; the bootleggers did not have stereo copies to copy from. That's why the songs are in mono, too. Here, we see again the telltale sign -- that the word "STEREO" is absent, and the title and artist name are separated by the spindle hole. Either one of these is the sign of a fake. Labels of this sort are also found with cover CC03 and CC04.





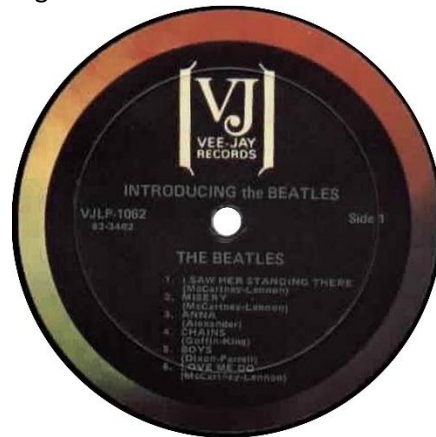
Fake Record CR03: This is an all-black label with large brackets. These were first introduced in the mid-to-late 1970's, along with fakes of *Songs, Pictures, and Stories* and *Hear the Beatles Tell All*. The label is of higher quality than some of the "rainbow label" fakes, but since the artist's name and title are separated by the spindle hole, it's a clear fake. Also, during the 1960's, Vee Jay never released a "large brackets" version of an "all black label." Finally, these usually come in covers claiming that the record is in stereo; the label does not say "STEREO" -- another sign of a counterfeit. Some "all-black" counterfeit labels from the same period list "Ask Me Why" and "Please Please Me" -- since the counterfeiters did not own copies that had "Love Me Do" and "PS I Love You" on them. However, be warned; they're fake. Some early records with the all-black label come with (fake) **mono** covers. These fake mono copies have the same problem with "HONEY" as we see on CC03. Others occur with cover CC05 (with the brown border). All-black labels are also commonly found with cover CC06 (empty background).



Fake Record CR04: By the late 1970's, some copies of the same style fake as CR02 were being made sloppily. Notice that the label is not the right size. Part of the color band is missing around the label's edge. Otherwise, it exhibits the same counterfeit characteristics as the label above. These, too, can be found with fake mono covers or with fake stereo covers. The fake covers in this case typically have even more trouble with "HONEY":



These covers were shot off of other fakes. The printing problems that the earlier fakes (CC03) were having are now more accentuated. The word "HONEY" is now missing a few chunks. The vertical bars across the label don't have sides that are truly straight, either. Throughout the back cover printing, there are bleed-overs and little bits missing.



Fake Record CR05: This counterfeit, from the early 1980's, looks slightly better. The colors in the color band are more realistic. However, the word "STEREO" is still missing, and the cover this record came with claimed it was in stereo. It's also got the title and artist's name separated. Another fake. The cover found with these records looks fairly nice from the front; most of the color issues have been corrected. The back cover, though, has the same problems with "HONEY" as we found on the covers that came with CR04.

NOTE: Quite a few counterfeiters didn't even own copies of the LP with "Love Me Do" on them. Instead, they were just copying covers that other fakers had made. They did own copies of the LP with "Please Please Me," so they simply used a recording with PPM and labels that read LMD. The result: copies that claim to have "Love Me Do" on them but do not. **Copies that do not play the correct songs** are typically counterfeits. And of course, the above rules for the label identification apply.

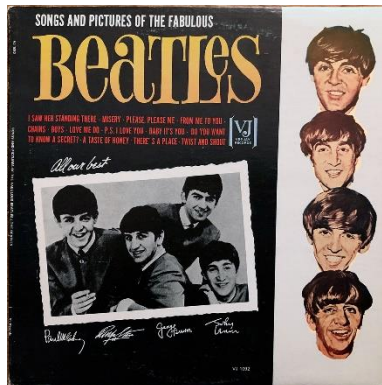
NOTE 2: Counterfeit copies DO exist that list "Ask Me Why" and "Please Please Me" on the back cover. Many of those fakes are of the earlier, easy to detect, variety. Once again, copies with covers claiming to be stereo need to have labels that say STEREO and records that actually play in stereo.



Hear the Beatles Tell All

(Counterfeit) Vee Jay LP PRO-202

All copies of the album with a wide white space at the top of the front cover are counterfeits. All copies on an all-black label with large brackets are counterfeits. These fakes came out circa 1977-78 and were made obsolete when Vee-Jay reissued the album.



Songs and Pictures [sic] of the Fabulous Beatles

(Counterfeit) Vee Jay LP 1092

When counterfeiters began to reproduce the *Songs, Pictures, and Stories* album, they found that reproducing the 3/4 fold-open cover was difficult. Some of them, beginning in the mid-1970's thought it would be clever to remove the "stories" and shorten the title of the LP. All copies of the album without the original gatefold cover are counterfeits. Some copies of this fake have their labels corrected so that the title and number match this LP; all genuine copies had regular (genuine) *Introducing the Beatles* records in them.



"Do You Want to Know a Secret?"/"Thank You Girl"

(Counterfeit/Fantasy) Vee Jay 587 sleeve

There were no genuine promotional sleeves for VJ 587. Any such sleeves that exist -- like the one above -
- are fantasy items. The graphics on the sleeve were taken from the regular commercial sleeve.



"Twist and Shout"/"There's a Place"

(Fantasy) Tollie T-9001

Copies in colored vinyl, like the one above from the 1980's, are obvious fakes. There are other fakes, too, with similar label styles. Since some labels resemble genuine copies of the single, you will need to look at the trail-off. Genuine singles have one or more pieces of information stamped into the matrix by machine. These may include the Monarch Records (MR) logo, the words "AudioMatrix," or other letter combinations. Counterfeit copies do not have these machine-stamped symbols but instead have the entire matrix etched in by hand.



"Twist and Shout"/"There's a Place"

(Fantasy) Tollie T-9001 sleeve

Tollie Records issued no picture sleeve with the "Twist and Shout" single. There have been several attempts to create fantasy sleeves for the record. The one on the left is a crude effort from the 1970's. Its cover image was copied from *Hard Day's Night* album photos. The fantasy sleeve on the right is from the 1980's. Its graphics were borrowed from the sleeve to VJ 587.



"Love Me Do"/"PS I Love You"

(Counterfeit) Tollie T-9008

As with "Twist and Shout," there is a genuine Tollie label style that has "Tollie Records" drawn in a box. However, these counterfeits (from the 1980's) have the word "TOLLIE" in thick, block letters. The genuine "hand drawn box" labels have "TOLLIE" in thin, curved print.



"Love Me Do"/"PS I Love You"

(Counterfeit) Tollie T-9008 sleeve

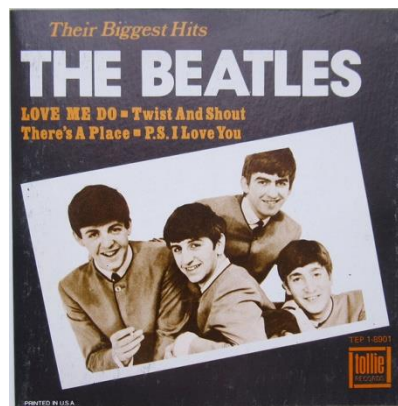
This fake is recent (1990's). It can be distinguished from the genuine sleeves by the "curve cut" thumb tab at the top. Genuine sleeves do not have this feature.



Untitled EP (no cover)

(Fantasy) Vee-Jay VJ-103/104

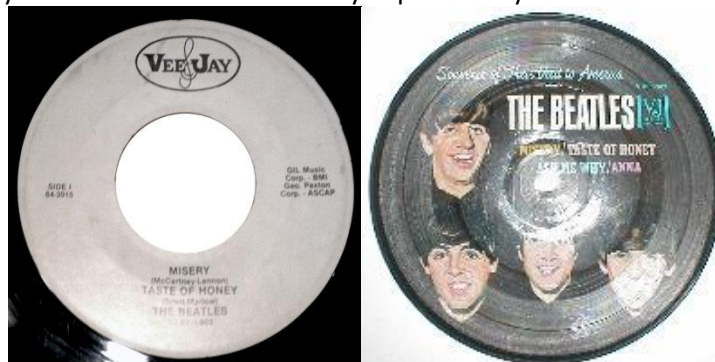
These fantasy EPs came out during the early 1970's. The labels look nothing like genuine Vee-Jay labels. The release of this EP may have prompted its repackage with fake Tollie labels (below).



Their Biggest Hits

(Fantasy) Tollie TEP 1-8901 EP

These fantasy EPs were manufactured during the mid to late 1970's. Some copies have labels that seem to resemble genuine Tollie labels. However, ALL copies of this EP or not, regardless of how genuine the labels look, are fantasy items. There were never any copies of any Beatles EP issued by Tollie Records.



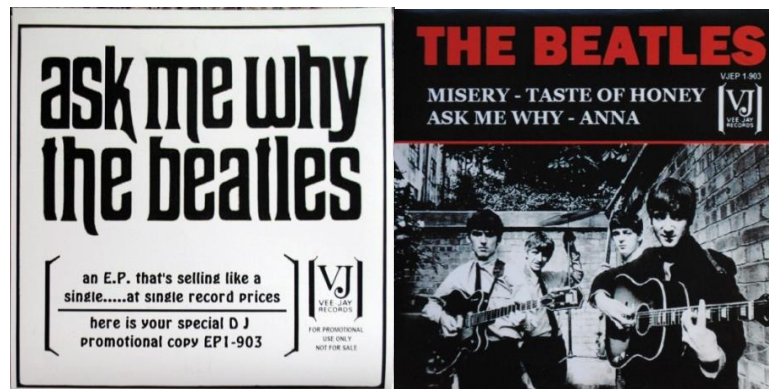
Souvenir of Their First Trip to America

(Counterfeit) Vee Jay EP 1-903

The Vee Jay EP has also been subject to counterfeiting since the 1970's.

The EP label on the left has a label slightly similar to the scarce "black label with oval logo"; however, the label is white. ALL copies of the EP that are "picture discs" are fantasy items.

The two sleeves shown below are both modern copies. The cut and folding of the “Ask Me Why” counterfeit sleeve are entirely unlike the original. The other sleeve is a fantasy that should fool no one.



The Beatles and Frank Ifield on Stage

(Counterfeit) Vee Jay LP/SR 1085

Counterfeits have been made of both the more common ("old man") cover and the rare (Beatles portrait) cover. The counterfeit labels (above) usually resemble a genuine label style -- all black label with "VJ". The label print is almost imperceptibly different from the genuine article. The label itself is a lighter (gray) shade than the genuine label, which is black. Also, the print on the label is slightly fuzzy on

the counterfeit. Therefore, check the matrix to determine whether the correct machine stampings appear.

Most of the covers are easier to distinguish. The most common counterfeit "old man" cover has the word "STEREO" printed in the lower right-hand corner. Original copies have a large STEREO at the top. The colors are also slightly different than on the genuine LP cover.

SOME counterfeit covers have no printing on the spine.

Some portrait covers do not have the word STEREO at the top **or** the mono number at the bottom. In other words, the front cover does not identify whether the record is in mono or stereo. These also have a blue "border" around the front cover, which no genuine copies have.

Newer portrait covers at first look like the original. Some newer fakes have an ampersand (&) in the title that features more open space than the original covers had. Some have the catalog number at the bottom in the wrong typeface and location. When in doubt, consult a knowledgeable dealer.



"Do You Want to Know a Secret", "Love Me Do",
"Please Please Me", "Twist and Shout"

(Counterfeit) Oldies OL-149, 150,
151, 152

Every one of the Vee Jay reissues on their Oldies label was counterfeited, beginning in the early 1970's. Some fakes, from the late 1970's, are easy to identify because the Oldies logo has been changed to black from white. All copies with "OLDIES" in black are cheap counterfeits.

More common, though, are counterfeits whose labels resemble the originals. The records themselves do not have the appropriate machine stamping. All genuine copies have the Monarch Records (MR) logo stamped in by machine; many genuine copies have the "AudioMatrix" stamp. The counterfeits lack these. Some counterfeits even have a fake (MR) logo etched in by hand.

The labels are a good way to spot most fakes quickly. Since most counterfeits are made by duplicating genuine label styles, their second-generation graphics are not as sharp as the real thing. In particular, the registered trademark symbol, ® is clearly visible on the real single over the large number "45" on the label. On most fakes (see above), it is almost completely missing or is very faint. Also, all genuine east-coast labels are semi-glossy; many counterfeits have labels that are flat.

The Beatles Before Capitol

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