

The Colorful (and sometimes black and white) World of Beatles U.S. Picture Sleeves

in chronological order
Updated 27/1/23

The Parlophone Company in England very rarely used picture sleeves to promote the single (45) releases of their artists. In fact, there were only two original British picture sleeves for Parlophone/Apple releases: "Penny Lane" and "Let It Be." Polydor releases contributed a couple more. But in the States, there were numerous picture sleeves (PS) and title sleeves issued with Beatles records in the sixties. For completeness' sake, this article will trace all PS releases on Beatles singles up to the present. EP releases are not considered.

Fakes exist of almost every original PS. Any copies with blurred writing (especially the small writing in the Capitol logo) or photographs should be considered fakes. Other notes are found below.



Capitol 5112

I Want to Hold Your Hand/I Saw Her Standing There

Capitol Records received from Parlophone mono mixes of their fifth Beatles single. Instead of "This Boy," Capitol chose to release "I Saw Her Standing There" as the B-side of the single. At this time (in late 1963), that song had not yet appeared on the Vee Jay album, *Introducing the Beatles*, although that LP was about to be released as a result of the success of this single. Sleeves printed for use on the east coast (Scranton factory) differ from those made in for distribution with copies from the LA factory. The eastern PS is cropped so that it displays all of George's head. The western PS is cropped so that part of George's head is chopped off. The slightly larger "west coast" version of the photo became a standard for Capitol; it was used several times on different releases. The West Coast sleeve exists in two varieties: one having the thumb tab on the side listing "I Want to Hold Your Hand" first, and another having the thumb tab on the side that lists the B-side first. Copies with the thumb tab on the A-side are more common.

This PS is in black and white. One may find worn out copies doctored with black magic marker so that they appear to be in better condition. One way to check for this is to look inside the sleeve to see if any magic marker bleeds through the sleeve.

NOTE: The sleeve was reissued twice: in 1984 and 1994. Both reissue sleeves are addressed below.

Scarcity: 3 (EC), 4 (WCA), 9 (WCB)

Note: The picture sleeve to "I Want to Hold Your Hand" was the first Beatles picture sleeve, even though other companies had released singles prior to its release. There are no authentic picture or title sleeves to "Please Please Me" (Vee Jay 498) or "From Me to You" (Vee Jay 522).

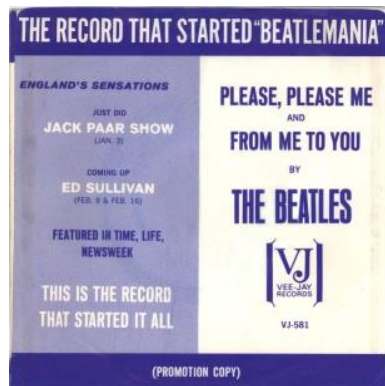


Capitol 5112

I Want to Hold Your Hand/I Saw Her Standing There

Special promotional picture sleeve issued only by WMCA radio. WMCA's deejays were known as the "good guys." Several promotions (unrelated to the Beatles) were made by the group of disc jockeys. This PS, to be given out by the radio station with the record, features one side normal, while the other side of the sleeve promotes the station and pictures and names the six deejays. Reportedly, exactly 570 copies of the sleeve were made, corresponding to their frequency on the radio dial, although some reports say that an even 1000 copies were printed. All of these copies were given out to listeners.

Scarcity: 9



Vee Jay 581

Please Please Me/From Me to You

Blue and white TITLE SLEEVE for promo record. This is known as "the record that started Beatlemania" sleeve because that line is written across the top of the sleeve. Sleeve advertises the upcoming appearance by the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show. It is extremely rare and has been counterfeited. Most counterfeits are unable to duplicate the manner in which the original sleeves were cut and folded.

Scarcity: 10



Vee Jay 581

Please, Please Me/From Me to You

This PS, for commercial copies, featured the photo from the front of the *Introducing the Beatles* album, this time in black and white. The sleeve is an attractive one, with some of the print in color. It has been [counterfeited](#) more than once, though, due to its rarity. No original has a "curved cut" at the top of the sleeve. If you have the "Love Me Do" sleeve or the "Christmas sleeve," the cut is the same on this sleeve as on those more common sleeves.

Scarcity: 5



MGM K-13213

My Bonnie/The Saints

Green title sleeve, featuring "The Beatles" in large letters. As soon as it appeared that the Beatles might have a hit in the United States, MGM Records -- which held the rights to issue Polydor recordings in the USA, decided to release the contents of the German "My Bonnie" EP in America (Polydor EPH-21610, released in July, 1963). The title sleeve to this January, 1964, release appears to be a shameless promotion of the Tony Sheridan material. Perhaps that is true for the LP, but this 7" title sleeve bears a close resemblance to the original EP cover.

Scarcity: 4



Swan S-4152

She Loves You/I'll Get You

The Swan single was never actually out of print, but the company decided to reissue the record (now with a black label) when Beatlemania reached the US. With the record came this black, white, and red PS.

This picture sleeve has been counterfeited. The counterfeit's picture lacks the quality of the original. Also, some counterfeits have perforated edges; not so with the original.

Scarcity: 3



Capitol 5150

Can't Buy Me Love/You Can't Do That

This sixth Parlophone Beatles single was the second Capitol single in the United States. By this time, the Beatles were so popular that over 3,000,000 advance copies had been ordered by dealers. These were sent out as quickly as possible, with standard Capitol sleeves. There was a picture sleeve for this single, but because of the bulk order, very few copies were issued. The photo is the same as the photo on "I Want to Hold Your Hand," and the sleeve is black and white. This is a very rare sleeve which has been counterfeited rather well. Fakes that I have seen have the number "5150" in thinner print than the original and have a [different title typeface](#). There are other fakes with [colored print](#); all genuine copies look like the photo above. If you are thinking of buying a CBML sleeve, get a money-back guarantee to its authenticity first. Also, some original sleeves have been "doctored" with magic marker, as mentioned with the "I Want to Hold Your Hand" sleeve. Since so few copies were made, all of the original picture sleeves to "Can't Buy Me Love" are East-Coast "straight-cut" sleeves.

Scarcity: 7

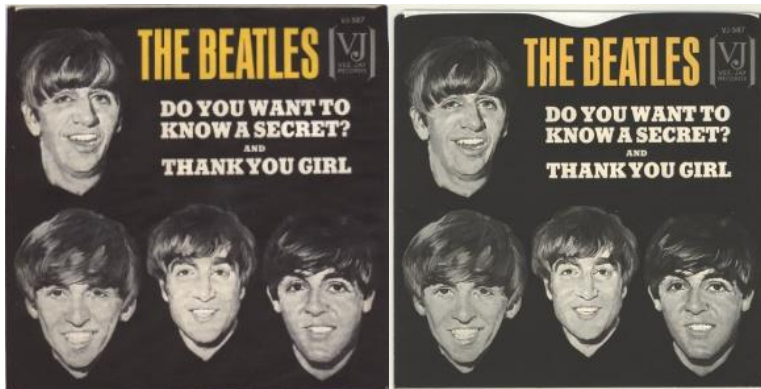


Capitol Custom RB-2637/2638

The Beatles Talking/You Can't Do That

This title sleeve (manila envelope) was issued with the rare promo single. These were issued to promote a record store chain (Wallich's Music City) and radio station [KFWB](#) (or KFWBeatles, as they called themselves at the height of Beatlemania).

Scarcity: 10



Vee Jay 587

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

This sleeve features a black background and a drawing of the four Beatles. This drawing also appeared on the poster of *Beatles vs. Four Seasons* and on the album *Songs, Pictures, and Stories of the Fabulous Beatles*. East Coast and West Coast versions of the sleeve are shown above.

Scarcity: 4



MGM K-13227

Why/Cry For a Shadow

Red title sleeve with black print. The graphics on this sleeve are very similar to the graphics on the more common "My Bonnie" sleeve and to the MGM album, *The Beatles With Tony Sheridan and Guests*. "The

Beatles" appears in large white print. The original sleeve is 7 1/4" wide; one known fake is only 7" wide. This sleeve is somewhat hard to come by, although budget copies (with a drill hole through them) are easier to find.

Scarcity: 7



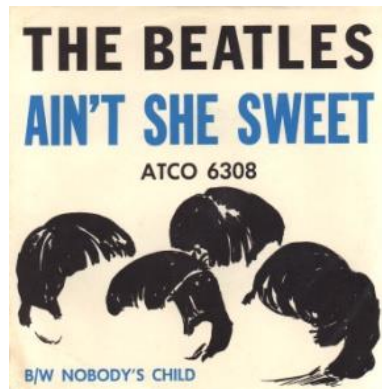
Tollie 9008

Love Me Do/PS I Love You

Purple sleeve with a drawing of the Beatles. This drawing was also used on some copies of the album *Beatles and Frank Ifield on Stage*. Nice colors.

NOTE: There were no genuine picture sleeves to Tollie 9001, "Twist and Shout," although fantasy sleeves exist.

Scarcity: 4



Atco 6308

Ain't She Sweet/Nobody's Child

By this time, the rights to release "new" material that had been released by Deutsche Grammophon (German Polydor) belonged to Atlantic/Atco Records in the USA. Although MGM had released the "known" EP tracks, four other songs remained unreleased in any form in the United States – which Atco released on record. This blue, black, and white sleeve features stylized Beatles "mop tops." Sleeve has a smooth texture; some counterfeits are flat. Another fake has [green print](#) instead of blue. Many originals are found with "drill holes" through them. As always, these affect the value.

Scarcity: 6

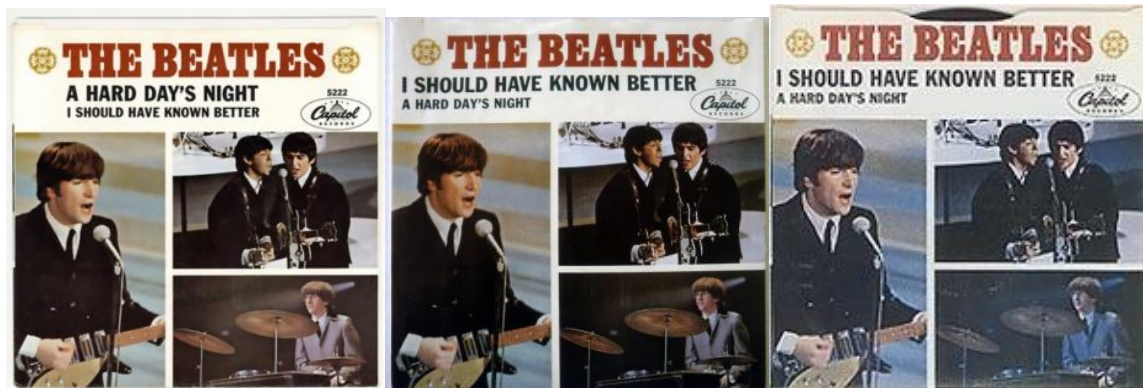


IBC BRS-1/2

Beatles & Murray the "K" as it Happened

This is the picture sleeve to an interview disc by famed "5th Beatle," disc jockey Murray Kaufman. Sleeve features a b/w photo of the group with Murray. Most copies of the sleeve were stapled to a mailer; consequently, the sleeve usually has two staple holes in it. The sleeve appears on semi-gloss paper, with a straight cut across the top of the sleeve. The singles were mailed out through the Murray the "K" Fan Club. The record came in a Murray the K mailer, which also contained a membership card and letters from the club.

Scarcity: 5

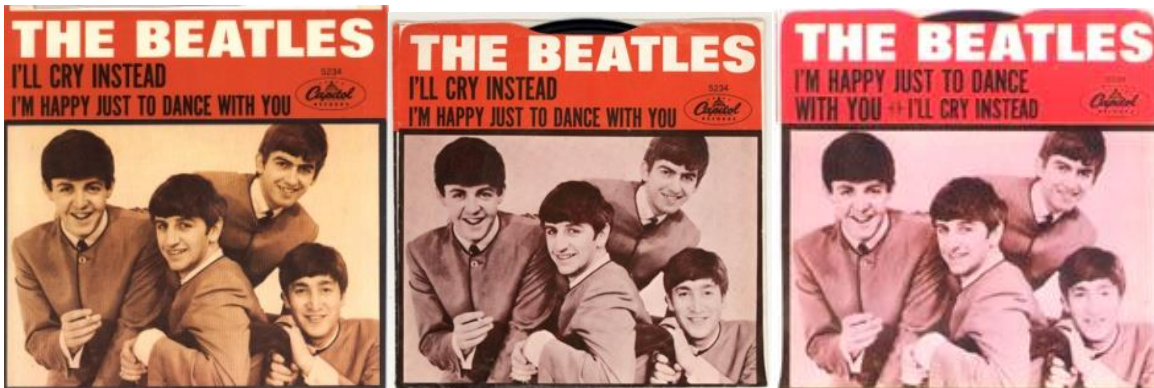


Capitol 5222

Hard Day's Night/I Should Have Known Better

Instead of using the non-film song, "Things We Said Today" (the British B-side), Capitol decided to feature another of the film songs as the B-side of this single. This sleeve features three color shots of members of the group in concert. The east-coast sleeve exists in two varieties: one showing the open side with "A Hard Day's Night" on top, and another listing the B-side first. Copies having the B-side on top on the open side are more common.

Scarcity:



Capitol 5234

I'll Cry Instead/I'm Happy Just to Dance With You

Two follow-up singles from the soundtrack album were issued by Capitol. This one is red, black, and white, and features the same photo as the PS to "I Want to Hold Your Hand." This sleeve is one of the less common Capitol sleeves. The West Coast sleeve exists in two varieties: one having the thumb tab on the side listing the A-side first, and another having the thumb tab on the side that lists the B-side first. Copies with the thumb tab on the B-side are more common.

Scarcity: 5 (EC); 6 (WCB); 7 (WCB)

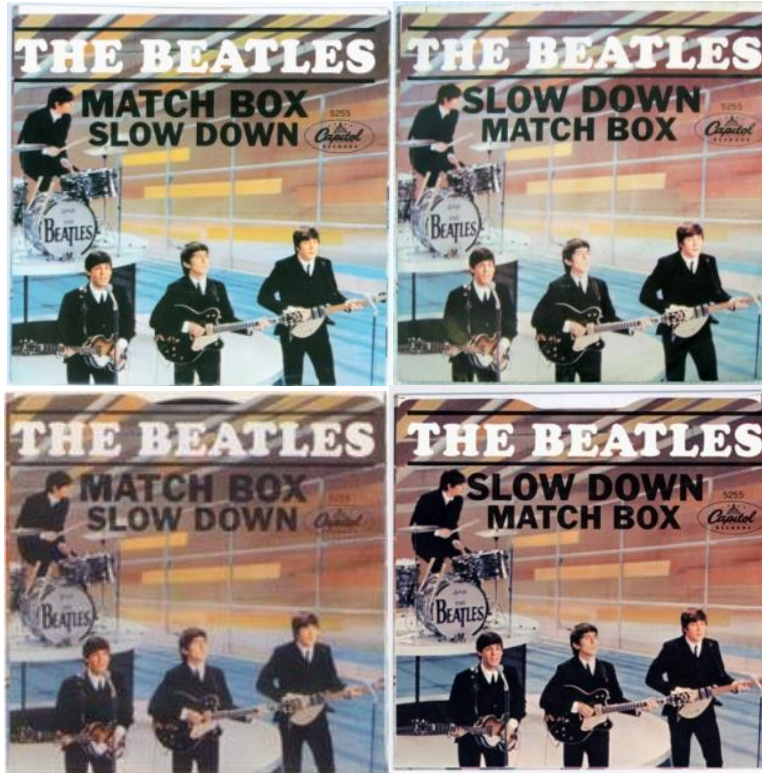


Capitol 5235

If I Fell/And I Love Her

Sometimes, this single is listed with "And I Love Her" as the a-side. The sleeve is blue, black, and white, and features 1963 photos of the Beatles – the same photograph that appeared on the *Four by the Beatles* EP (Capitol EAP-1-2121). The east-coast sleeve exists in two varieties: one showing the open side with "And I Love Her" on top, and another listing the B-side first. Copies having "If I Fell" on top are more common.

Scarcity: 4

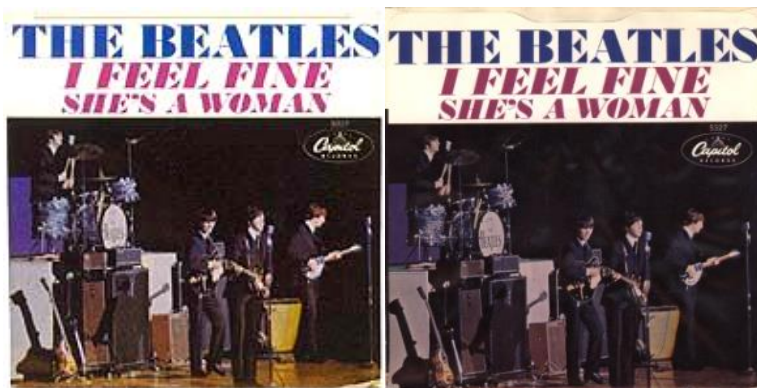


Capitol 5255

Matchbox/ Slow Down

Featuring a color photo of the Beatles at a concert appearance at the Ed Sullivan Show, this is the same photograph that adorns the cover of the *Something New* LP (Capitol ST-2108). These two songs had been recorded with the American market in mind and had been part of the *Long Tall Sally* EP in England. Although the label shows the A-side as “Matchbox,” the picture sleeve lists it as “Match Box.” The east-coast sleeve exists in two varieties: one showing the larger side with “Match Box” on top, and another listing the B-side first. Copies having the A-side on top are slightly more common. The west-coast sleeve also exists in two varieties: one having the thumb tab on the side listing “Match Box” first, and another having the thumb tab on the side that lists the B-side first. Copies with the thumb tab on the A-side are more common.

Scarcity: 4 (EC), 5 (WCA), 8 (WCB)

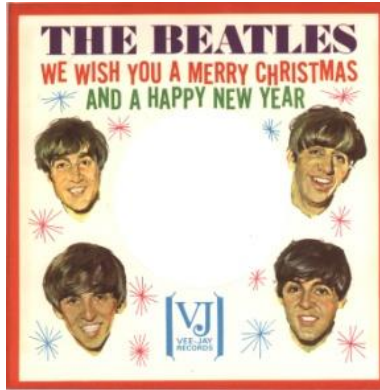


Capitol 5327

I Feel Fine/She's a Woman

In the UK, this was the single that consecutively followed "A Hard Day's Night," but in the USA several singles had intervened. A nice color photo adorns this sleeve, which is one of the most common of Beatles picture sleeves.

Scarcity: 3

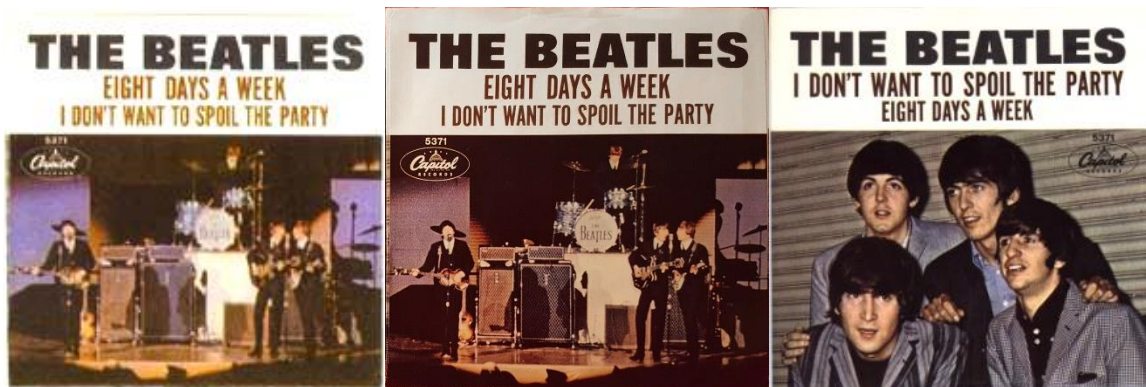


Vee Jay (no number)

Christmas sleeve

Vee Jay Records lost the rights to press new Beatles records on October 15, 1964. As a means of selling out some of their back stock, this sleeve was issued with the various Vee Jay and Oldies singles. It features the same drawings as the VJ 587 sleeve.

Scarcity: 4



Capitol 5371

Eight Days a Week/I Don't Want to Spoil the Party

This single preceded the album *Beatles VI* by a few months. These were not the best color photos of the group, but the sleeve helped sell the single.

Some west-coast copies have the thumb tab on the side with "Eight Days a Week" at the top; others have the tab on the side with "I Don't Want to Spoil the Party" at the top.

Scarcity: 3



Capitol 5407

Ticket to Ride/Yes It Is

Even though this single was hot, the sleeve is fairly uncommon. One known counterfeit depicts no shadowing behind the group. On east-coast copies, "Ticket to Ride" usually appears on top on the "small" or "open" side of the sleeve; a few copies have "Yes it Is" on top on the open side. I find it good to mention now that Eastern sleeves of most Capitol singles, including this one, feature the words "Printed In USA" in a line or in a circle. One known counterfeit of this and other sleeves does not feature those words.

Scarcity: 4 (ECA); 8 (ECB); 5 (WC)



Capitol 5476

Help!/I'm Down

The nice color photo shows the Beatles in the Bahamas, during the making of the film. One reason to buy the US *Help!* album was to obtain a set of pix from the movie. The west-coast sleeve exists in two varieties: one having the thumb tab on the side listing "Help" first, and another having the tab on the side that lists "I'm Down" first. Copies with the thumb tab on the "I'm Down" side are more common. The east-coast sleeve also exists in 2 printings; copies listing "I'm Down" first on the open side are much more common.

Scarcity: 3 (ECB and WCB); 5 (WCA); 7 (ECA)

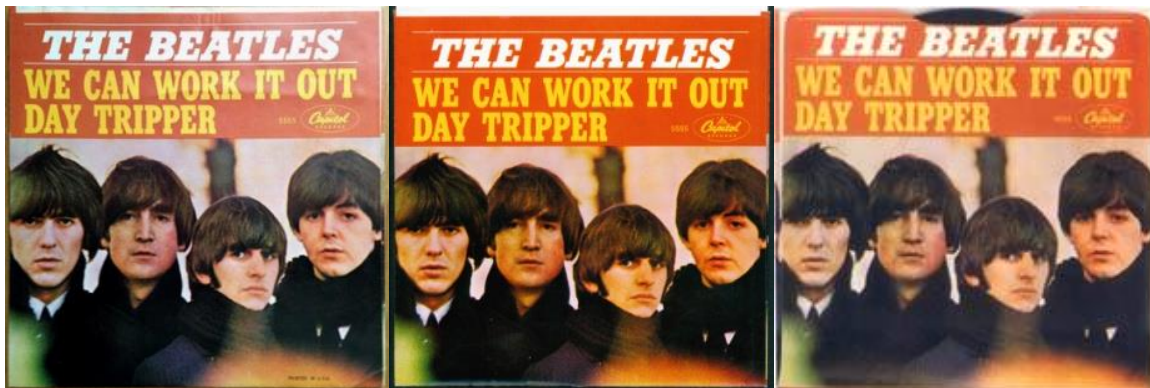


Capitol 5498

Yesterday/Act Naturally

This was not a very attractive shot of the Beatles in suits, but it's still a photograph that's not found on any album cover. Since the tracks were not on the US *Help!* album, these songs weren't on any US album until nine months later. Capitol marketed "Act Naturally" as the a-side, although fans preferred "Yesterday."

Scarcity: 3



Capitol 5555

We Can Work It Out/Day Tripper

The single to accompany *Rubber Soul* featured a picture sleeve with a brown strip across the top and a photo from *Beatles For Sale*. By this time, American fans were probably wondering what the group actually looked like in late 1965! This was the first occasion on which Capitol did NOT issue a single from the accompanying album, and *Rubber Soul* hit #1 easily without any singles. Capitol seemed to have full faith in the Beatles' ability to sell albums without plugging them with singles. The single was billed as a double-A-side, and both songs had strong appeal. On east-coast copies, "Printed in USA" usually appears on the "small" or "open" side of the sleeve; a few copies have this print on the other side.

Scarcity: 3 (ECA); 7 (ECB); 4 (WC)



Capitol 5587

Nowhere Man/What Goes On?

These songs were tracks from the UK *Rubber Soul* album, but in the United States they were held over to be released as a single. Later, the songs came out on the *Yesterday...And Today* album (Capitol ST-2553). More (old) color photos of the group appear on this sleeve. Nearly all west-coast copies have the tab on the B-side, and nearly all east-coast copies have "Nowhere Man" on top on the open side.

Scarcity: 3

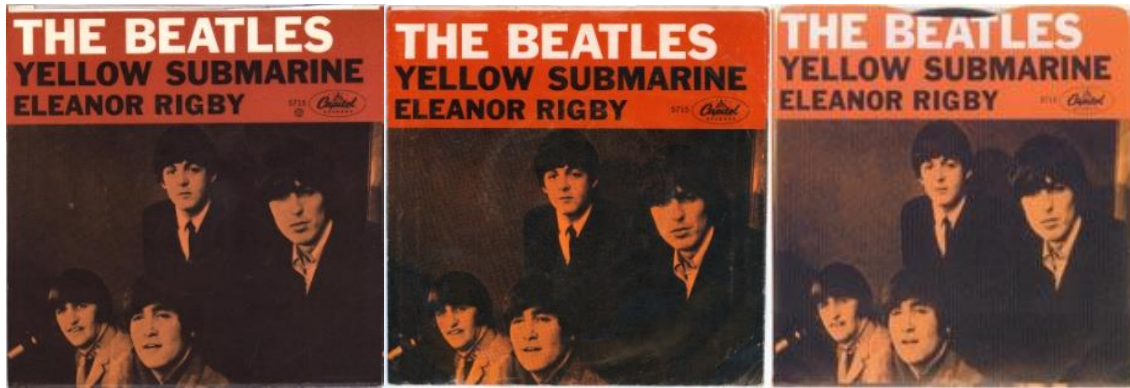


Capitol 5651

Paperback Writer/Rain

Finally some recent photos appeared on a picture sleeve, and this was a fairly attractive presentation. There are two west-coast sleeves to this single. The more common west-coast sleeve has the thumb tab on the side that has "Rain" at the top; the less common sleeves have the thumb tab on the "Paperback Writer" side.

Scarcity: 3 (others); 5 (WCA)

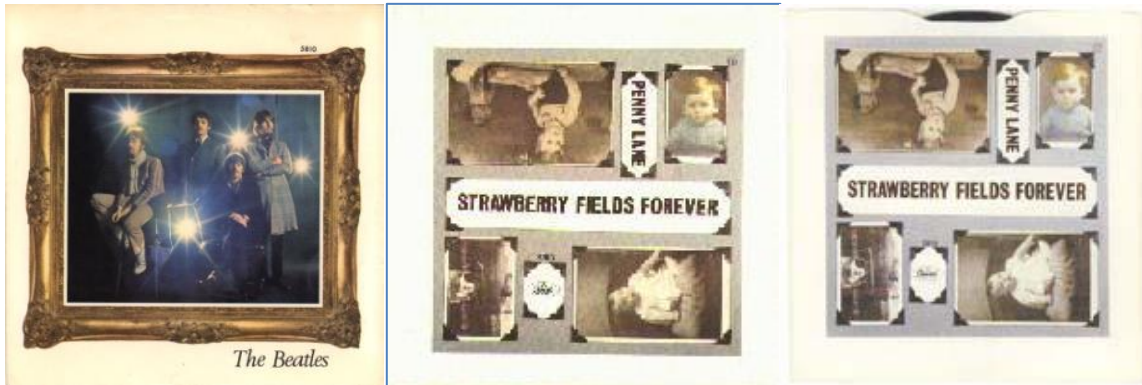


Capitol 5715

Yellow Submarine/Eleanor Rigby

A tinted photo of the group at a New York press conference in 1965 adorns the picture sleeve to this double-A-sided single. The sleeve which is mostly red to brown in color. On most east coast copies, the "Printed in USA" logo appears on the "small" or "open" side of the sleeve; on a few copies it appears on the other side.

Scarcity: 3 (others); 7 (ECB)

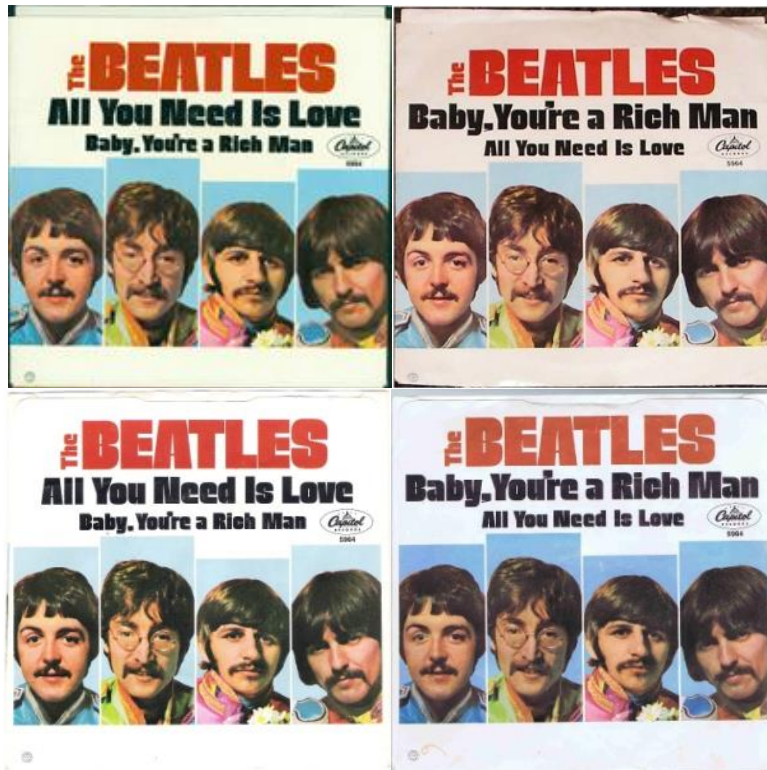


Capitol 5810

Penny Lane/Strawberry Fields Forever

This sleeve is essentially identical to the UK sleeve. It features a nice composition of new photographs. Both the sleeve and the promotional insert plugged "Strawberry Fields Forever," but buyers preferred "Penny Lane."

Scarcity: 3

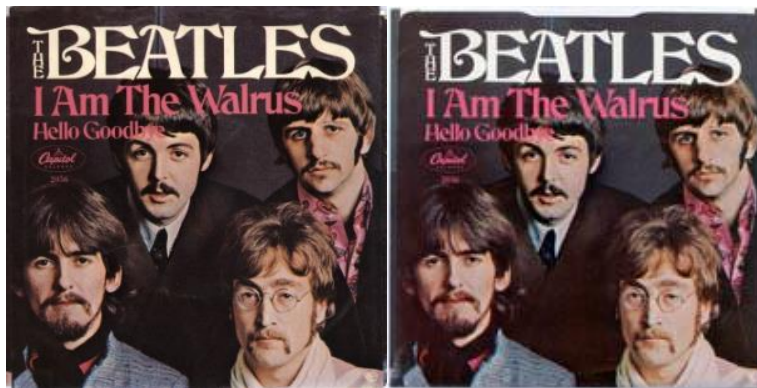


Capitol 5964

All You Need Is Love/Baby, You're a Rich Man

This single followed the success of the *Sgt. Pepper* album, which again went to #1 without the benefit of any singles. The photo is from that album. The two sleeves each exist in two varieties: West-coast sleeves with the thumb tab on the "Rich Man" side are much more common. Copies of the East Coast sleeve with "All You Need" as the open side are much more common.

Scarcity: 2 (ECA, WCB); 6 (ECB, WCA)



Capitol 2056

Hello Goodbye/I Am the Walrus

This sleeve depicts a very attractive color photo of the Beatles in their finery.

Scarcity: 3



Capitol 2138

Lady Madonna/The Inner Light

The sleeve is mostly purple and features the heads of the group members poking, as if from around a corner. East Coast and West Coast sleeves have the "small" (or "open") side of the sleeve on opposite sides. One fake has a darker purple (almost blue- violet) than the original. Some copies were issued with a slick paper insert promoting the Beatles USA fan club. The sleeve is hard to find in Near Mint condition.

Scarcity: 3

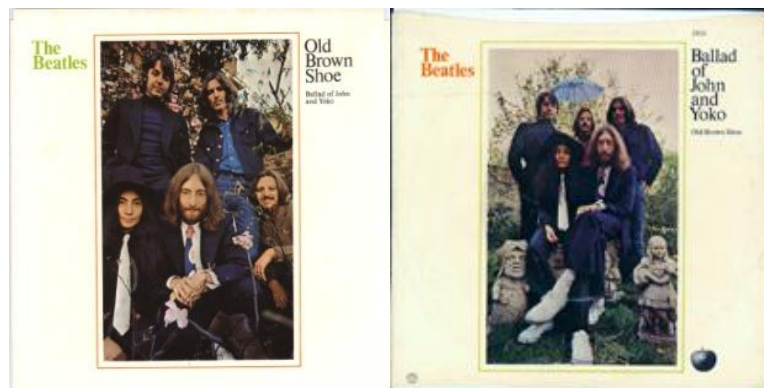


Apple

Error Sleeves

Apple employees report that these are very rare "error" sleeves that were mistakenly printed without the usual hole in the middle.

Scarcity: 7

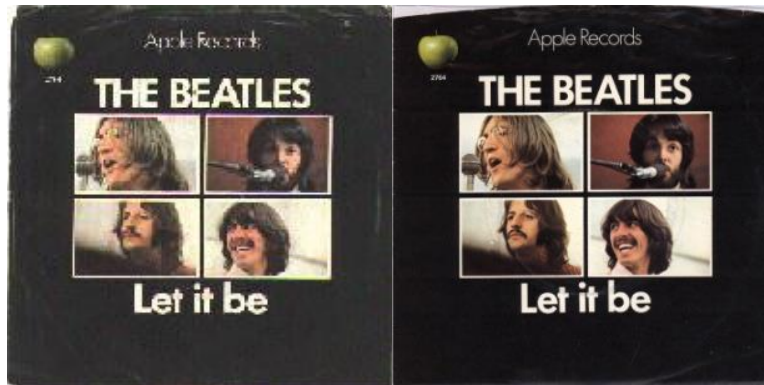


Apple 2531

Ballad of John and Yoko/Old Brown Shoe

For some reason, Capitol/Apple let one single, "Get Back," go by without adding a picture sleeve. This sleeve is noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, it is the only sleeve accompanying a standard single that pictures someone other than the members of the group. Yoko Ono can stake her claim as 5th Beatle based on her appearance on this sleeve and her singing on the White Album. Secondly, although the record was released in England without a picture sleeve, the two photographs taken here were made in order to promote this single. Speaking of the White Album, it went by without any singles, although it too hit #1 on the charts: a tribute to Beatles excellence.

Scarcity: 3

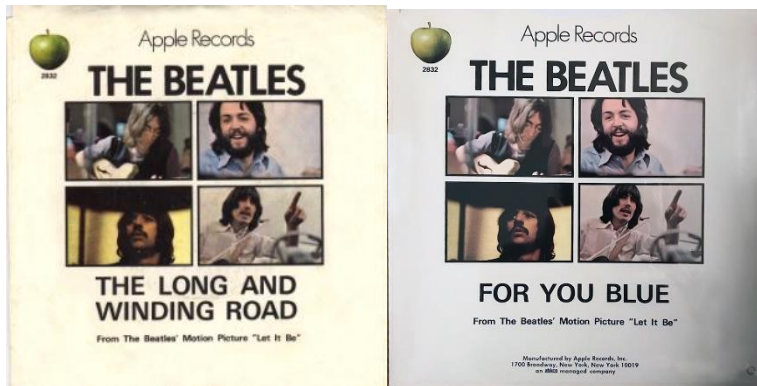


Apple 2764

Let It Be/You Know My Name

Another single before this, the double a-side "Something"/"Come Together," went by without a PS. This one featured the same sleeve as in the UK, with a layout very similar to that of the coming album. Beware of copies doctored with magic marker.

Scarcity: 3



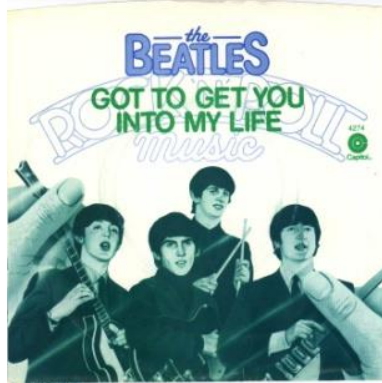
Apple 2832

Long and Winding Road/For You Blue

Capitol/Apple issued one "posthumous" single during 1970 in the United States, and this was it. The sleeve has a white border and four pix from the film. This was a fairly attractive sleeve for what would be the four Beatles' final release...at least until 1995.

There are only two known West Coast copies of the sleeve.

Scarcity: 4



Capitol 4274

Got to Get You Into My Life/Helter Skelter

Six years went by without any Beatles singles. Then in the midst of Capitol's preparation of a compilation album, the Helter Skelter movie about Charles Manson appeared. A single was drawn, including "Helter Skelter," and sleeve graphics were designed. Tactfully, by this time "Got to Get You Into My Life" was deemed to be the A-side. This sleeve featured a drawing of one of the photos from the *Beatles Second Album*. This was also the cover to the new compilation album, *Rock and Roll Music*. This sleeve continued to be available for many years.

Scarcity: 1



Capitol 4347

Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da/Julia

Years later, a single was issued from the White Album. This sleeve was numbered, like the original album. The sleeve continued to be issued with later pressings, so only lower numbered sleeves (under 1000) have higher values.

Scarcity: 1

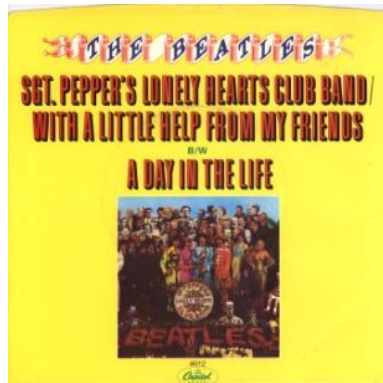


Capitol 4506

Girl/You're Going to Lose That Girl

A promotional single was issued to promote the sale of *Love Songs*. This sleeve (which resembles the album cover) was going to be issued with the commercial single. The commercial singles never emerged, but the sleeves were sold to dealers by folks who had connections to the printers.

Scarcity: 1

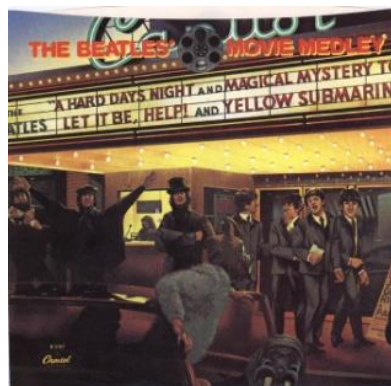


Capitol 4612

Sgt. Pepper's LHCb/With a Little Help from my Friends//A Day In the Life

In order to make money off of the popular disco movie, Capitol issued this sleeve and a picture disc of the album. The sleeve is mostly yellow and pictures the album cover.

Scarcity: 2



Capitol B-5100

Movie Medley/Fab Four On Film

The cover features the cover to *Reel Music*, which this single was made and issued to promote. The Medley was made before Capitol obtained stereo mixes of certain songs which are featured on the album. The B-side was pulled just before it was released, due allegedly to royalties considerations involving Walter Shenson, although this single and the 12" promotional single, [Capitol SPRO-9758/9](#), contain it.

Scarcity: 3

Capitol B-5107

Movie Medley/I'm Happy Just to Dance With You

This sleeve lists the new b-side and number. It is otherwise the same as the above. It is very common.

Scarcity: 1

Collectibles 1501, 1502, etc. various titles

In 1982 and in 1987, Collectibles Records issued singles of the Hamburg and Sheridan material. Many of these had picture sleeves.

Scarcity: 1



Capitol B-5189

Love Me Do/PS I Love You

This picture sleeve was issued in conjunction with the "20th Anniversary" celebration; the same photograph was used on reissues of the British single. It's a lovely, early color photograph.

Scarcity: 1



Capitol 5112

I Want to Hold Your Hand/I Saw Her Standing There

When the single was taken off of the Star Line and reissued for the 20th anniversary of the Beatles' arrival in America, the sleeve was also reissued. A touched-up version of the photo (which retouching actually goes back to 1964) was included on the sleeve. Paul's cigarette was removed from his hand. There is also print at the bottom left of the sleeve. There are other differences between this and the original. A different sleeve accompanies the "30th anniversary" reissue single (below).

Scarcity: 1



Capitol B-5439

Leave My Kitten Alone/Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da (alternate)

The a-side circulated on radio stations as the first single from the upcoming *Sessions* album. The album was never released, although bootlegs exist from several countries. The PS, a black and white picture of the group in suits, got out to the public in large quantities. The sleeve was once priced much higher, but due to lack of interest, the values have come down greatly.

Some have said that this sleeve is a "fantasy"--that there were no real sleeves made by Capitol. Their reasoning comes from the fact that there are several inconsistencies and inaccuracies on the back side. That opinion, though, is false. This is not a fantasy sleeve but is a legitimate Capitol printing.

Scarcity: 4



Apple 7PRO-79551/2

Love Me Do/PS I Love You

Exactly 5000 copies were supposed to be pressed for this special 30th anniversary giveaway. The first 5000 people who sent in a coupon after purchasing the CD single were sent this record and sleeve. The front of the sleeve is identical to the 20th anniversary release, but the back cover more closely resembles the British edition than the US version. The a-side has the version of the song which features Ringo on drums.

Scarcity: 6



Capitol 5112 (NR 58123)

I Want to Hold Your Hand/I Saw Her Standing There

Another ten years: another reissue single. The sleeve was also reissued. Paul's cigarette has been restored to his hand (see notes on the 1984 reissue without it. The sleeve imitates the west coast version (George's head cropped), including the thumb tab. In the Capitol logo, this sleeve has prominent periods (dots) on the line "REG. U.S. PAT. OFF."; the original sleeve has no such dots.

The sleeve and record were issued in a plastic bag with a 30th anniversary sticker, showing the Beatles drum logo and reading "1964-1994" and "It was thirty years ago today." The bag also has another sticker with a bar code on it. The actual catalog number of the record, NR 58123, is found only in the matrix. There was also a 30th anniversary compact disc promo single, with picture sleeve, numbered DPRO-79319.

Scarcity: 4



Apple NR 58348

Baby It's You + 3

This EP was released with a paper picture sleeve instead of the traditional cardboard cover and was the first Beatles single of unreleased material to make it out of the vaults (see "Leave My Kitten Alone," above). The project for the release of this record had begun as early as 1982, when the "Beatles at the Beeb" radio show was first aired. One of the four songs was sung by John, one by Paul, one by George, and one by Ringo.

Scarcity: 1-2



Apple NR 58497

Free as a Bird/Christmastime is Here Again

This was the first single release from the Anthology project that reunited the ex-Beatles after 25 years. A demonstration tape of one of John's unreleased songs became the basic track for the a-side. The three surviving ex-Beatles added vocals and instrumentation to create a strangely Beatle-like song. Since Paul contributed the chorus, FAAB is the first Lennon & McCartney song to be written in many years. The B-side was the core of the 1967 Christmas single, released here in stereo for the first time.

Scarcity: 1-2



Apple NR 58544

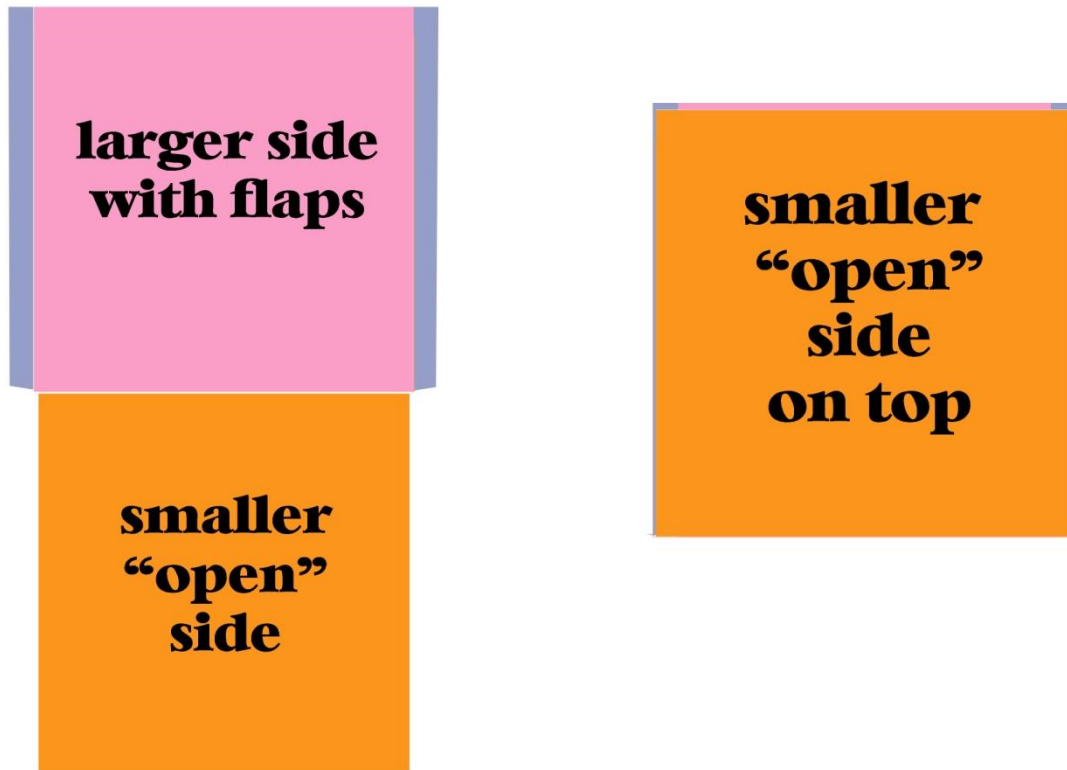
Real Love/Baby's In Black

This single was recorded a year after "Free as a Bird", again as part of the Anthology project. The a-side is featured as the lead track on the *Anthology 2* album. The core recording for the song was a demo tape of John's "Real Love," a version of which appears on the *Imagine Soundtrack* album.

Scarcity: 1-2

East-Coast Capitol Records picture sleeves – from 1963 to early 1967

The sleeve is constructed of a single sheet of glossy paper that is printed on one side. One half of the sleeve is larger, having flaps. As the sleeve is folded together, the flaps are first folded down. Then the smaller, “open” side of the sleeve is folded up and glued onto the larger back side, as shown in the following diagrams.



"Near Mint" condition sleeves -- with no ring wear and no creasing -- are particularly desirable. Prices for "VG+" copies (which have a wrinkle or two and maybe a little ring wear) generally run about half of the "near mint" price.

Sleeves that show a fair amount of ring wear and/or have quite a bit of wrinkling (VG) sell for one-fourth of the "near mint" price.

Sleeves with a lot of general wear: writing, seams split, tape, larger tears (G) sell for one-tenth of the "near mint" price.

Sleeves that are really ruined (fair or poor condition) are generally worth almost nothing, unless the sleeve is very rare.