

“Slippin’ and Slidin’”/“Ain’t That a Shame”

First appearance in trade magazines: never

Label af1dj

Apple

P-1883

Apple label with “MFD. BY APPLE” on the full side.

Print reads “not for sale.”



Factories: Los Angeles

Label af2dj

Apple

P-1883

Apple label with “MFD. BY APPLE” on the full side.

Print reads “not for sale.”



Factories: Los Angeles

These were the promotional singles for both sides of a Lennon single whose release was withdrawn. Although publications have identified “Ain’t That a Shame” as the prospective A-side, and surely there are more copies of that promo single in the hands of collectors, it appears to be clear that both Capitol Records and John Lennon believed “Slippin’ and Slidin’” to be the A-side. First, the PRO- number of the “Slippin’” single is lower than the PRO- number for “Ain’t,” and the lower number normally indicates the A-side. Second, based on the PRO- numbers, John was readying the single for release in May 1975. He had appeared live twice on television in April – both times promoting “Slippin’ and Slidin’.”

The first of the two television appearances was recorded live on March 17th. John spent nearly 30 minutes with the interviewer, Bob Harris, on the BBC2 program, "The Old Grey Whistle Test" – a segment that they actually recorded in New York City. During that interview, John spoke briefly about his proposed "next" album. "I've got three quarters of a new album on scraps of paper," which he was planning to perform for a TV special. For that telecast (April 18th), John recorded "live in the studio" performances of his most recent single, "Stand by Me," and the new single side, "Slippin' and Slidin'."



Then on April 18th, John stepped in to perform at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel for a TV program that was scheduled to air on June 13th. This was "Salute to Sir Lew [Grade] – the Master Showman." John's appearance was somewhat ironic and tongue-in-cheek. Lennon had spent quite some time in the courts wrangling out a settlement with Sir Lew Grade and his company, ATV, which owned the Beatles' publishing company, Northern Songs. In 1973, John agreed to re-sign with ATV in exchange for higher royalties. The settlement completed in June 1974 acknowledged Lennon Music as being a co-publisher of the songs that John had written by himself as a solo artist. According to Rupert Perry's *Northern Songs*, both John and Paul had to agree, separately, to demonstrate that they had no animosity toward Sir Lew Grade. Paul's gesture was to create a television special (James Paul McCartney) and to write a theme song for an ATV series ("The Zoo Gang"). John's gesture of goodwill involved appearing in the television salute.



This was something that Lennon did rather sarcastically. His band that night was called the Brothers of Mother F***ers, but the announcer wouldn't say that on television. Even though their drumkit has BOMF on it, they introduced the band as "John Lennon, etc.." The band wore bald "two-faced" masks – supposedly in mockery of Lew Grade. They performed three songs that night, all owned in whole or in part by ATV. Only one of these was a Lennon song, "Imagine." The others were (again) his most recent single (which was cut from the broadcast) and "Slippin' and Slidin'." The song's lyric "Won't be your fool no more" resonates, given what was about to happen. "Imagine" wound up being the last song that John ever sang live on a stage.

According to *Lennon in America*, EMI told John in late 1975 that his contract with them was not being renewed (p. 108), about which he was angry. However, the book seems to contradict itself on that point, for earlier (p. 98) it indicates that John was considering a deal with Columbia, thinking that his relationship with EMI had grown "stale." However, it would seem that by September, John was already leaving EMI. By that time, he was preparing the edits, cover, and track listing for his hits collection, *Shaved Fish* – a collection that marked his departure from EMI. Although John had been planning to work on a new album in April, he was right to be bitter about ATV's ownership of his current songs. Before Sean Lennon's birth in October, it seems to me that John was phasing himself out of the music business. Whatever else may have been going on, this was John's last single for Apple (EMI) – and it was withdrawn.