

## Emotional Paul McCartney pleads:

# 'Tell them we're good people!'

By BARBARA LEWIS

LONDON — "Politics and pot are keeping the Beatles apart," Paul McCartney said as he sat before a crackling fire in the much-used family room of his stone mansion in the exclusive St. John's Wood section of London.

"Help me...if you can," he said emotionally. "Plead my case for me. Tell them in the United States that I want to go there desperately."

"Tell them" he continued, pointing toward his American-born wife Linda, "that we're just ordinary family people. I'm 30 years old now and a responsible citizen. We have 3 children. I LIKE," he emphasized, "people over 30. And then there's this silly marijuana charge against me that's keeping me from getting a visa."

The U.S. State Department's refusal to grant McCartney permission to enter the U.S. and the deportation order against John Lennon are the wedges that prevent a reunion of the group that a decade ago changed the young around the world.

### Lennon can't leave

"If John leaves the States they won't let him back in. He can stay until they rule on his appeal, anyway. But they won't want to leave until Yoko finds her daughter. So for the present, even though we would probably want to get together again, it's the U.S. Government that's keeping us apart. Please, tell them we're good people," he repeated.

"It's all very unfair," Linda said, pouring coffee she had just brewed.

"Linda makes the best coffee," Paul said. And as if to underscore the point he added, "It's the best. It's American, like Linda."

### "Jail the pushers"

"We're not criminals," Linda insisted. "We've never taken hard drugs of any sort. We'd like to see pushers jailed. But smoking marijuana is something else."

As an American citizen, Linda could return to the U.S. but she won't leave McCartney to do so. In the meantime, her father and brother, who happen to be Paul's lawyers, come to see them. They had all been out together the night before and the McCartneys were in the process of packing for a holiday in the sun with their 3 children.

"Like I was saying," McCartney went on, "we're ordinary people who take vacations and talk to people on the beach. We've met a lot of American couples like that...just sitting and talking."

The casualness of meeting other people is not afforded to the McCartneys at home. Here they are virtually barricaded from the outside by a high green electronic gate. Visitors must announce themselves into an impersonal hole in the fence. A housekeeper's voice magically opens the double doors, which swing into a paved courtyard and re-

veal Paul's fire-engine red Lamberghini and Linda's Rolls Royce convertible.

### "Zoo gang"

The housekeeper opens the door to their home and guests are met by a parade of their dogs: an old English sheep dog named Martha, a Dalmation named Lucky, their offspring a Dalmation-sheep dog called Captain Midnight, and a golden Labrador called Poppy. They jumped over a hobby horse in the hall and ran in and through a playpen in the family room.

"They're our 'zoo gang'," Paul jested, and then explained that he had just completed writing the theme song for a new television series for NBC called "The Zoo Gang," which will star Brian Keith, Lili Palmer, John Mills, and Barry Morse.

This was the second time in recent months that McCartney has been asked to write theme music. Only recently he completed the music for "Live and Let Die," the new James Bond film. Paul is modestly reticent to agree with the strategy of both producers who believe the McCartney magic will insure the success of their projects.

### Memories not enough

"I don't know if 'Zoo Gang' will be a hit or not. Of course, I hope it will be, as I hope everything I do will be. I am anxious to make a name for myself NOW. That's why I work so hard. Obviously, I don't drive myself to make more money. But it is important to me to be an entity unto myself. I don't want to be like a retired general talking about his last war."

"I don't want to be someone who WAS. You know what I mean?" he asked. "David Cassidy is NOW. People here are screaming for David Cassidy. They don't pass him on the street and say, 'you know who he used to be'. I want to be part of today. And I want my children to see me work."

His 3 children — Heather, 10, Mary, 3 and 18-month-old Stella — provide him with his basic motivation, he said.

"Look, Heather knows who the Beatles are," Paul said. "But my 3-year-old has no idea who they are and surely the baby will not know what the Beatles were. Kids are only interested in what's now — not what was. Adults are interested in what was. I don't want to stay away from the public and say that I was a Beatle. David Cassidy says 'I AM David Cassidy'. And, right now, he has it all over me."

### New record album

If McCartney were in the driver's seat, the Beatles would be together, although he has not seen George Harrison and John Lennon since their bitter split 5 years ago. He saw Ringo Starr recently when Ringo came to England to finish a new album which will reunite the Beatles on a single LP, if not in person.

"Ringo called and asked, if I would cut a few tracks. I was more than happy to do it. He came here and we went down to the stu-

dios. If George and John were here it would have been like old times," he said poignantly. George and John had done some tracks for the LP in Los Angeles earlier.

After the first few months of their separation, the four began to make contact with one another by letter and phone, Paul said.

"It hurt at first. I thought it was the end of my career. We were all very angry. But now all is forgiven. John asked me if I would play at one of his concerts last year. I guess I could have gotten a visa then, but I had commitments with Wings (the group he and Linda formed about a year ago). We had a tour of Germany going and I couldn't get away."

### Talk of the past

Ringo played the drums and Paul the piano during the session. They talked about the past but not about the future, Paul revealed.

"I didn't want to ask him about getting together again. He asked me to play on his album as a favor and I didn't want to ask him to return the favor again immediately. I will when the appropriate time occurs."

Besides the obstacles placed by the government action, there is nothing to keep the famous four from reuniting now that Allen Klein has relinquished his management interest in George, John, and Ringo, McCartney cited.

Paul, who looked at Klein as the catalyst of the separation said, "I never thought I would feel sorry for Klein. He made it difficult and put us against each other. But I guess I feel a little sorry for him now. He's out anyway, and for me that's a good sign."

If it's not possible for the four to recapture what they had, then Paul sees them working together in various combinations. "Maybe Ringo and George and I will do something or George and John will work together at different times. I don't think any of us would have any trouble drawing an audience."

### Moderate success

Meanwhile, Paul has been content to work with Wings and has an extensive tour of England planned for May with the group, which has achieved moderate success in Britain and on the Continent. Right now they have a hit with "My Love," which was written by Paul and Linda, and they are about to release an album, called "Red Rose Speedway," in conjunction with the tour.

Paul is most serious about a career and recently signed Vince Romeo to manage him. Vince had been an agent with CMA and as such represented Grand Funk Railway among other clients. Grand Funk retained Linda's brother and father as legal counsel and they in turn recommended Vince to Paul.

As the red lights of an electronic sculpture blinked in the background, Linda summed up the reaction to Wings. Paul looked on approvingly as Linda said, "We love show business, don't we?"

She's been playing the organ with Wings and enjoying it, but admits that the critics have not been generous with their praise.

"I'm afraid whatever we do will always be a letdown. We'll always be compared to the Beatles and measured accordingly," she said.