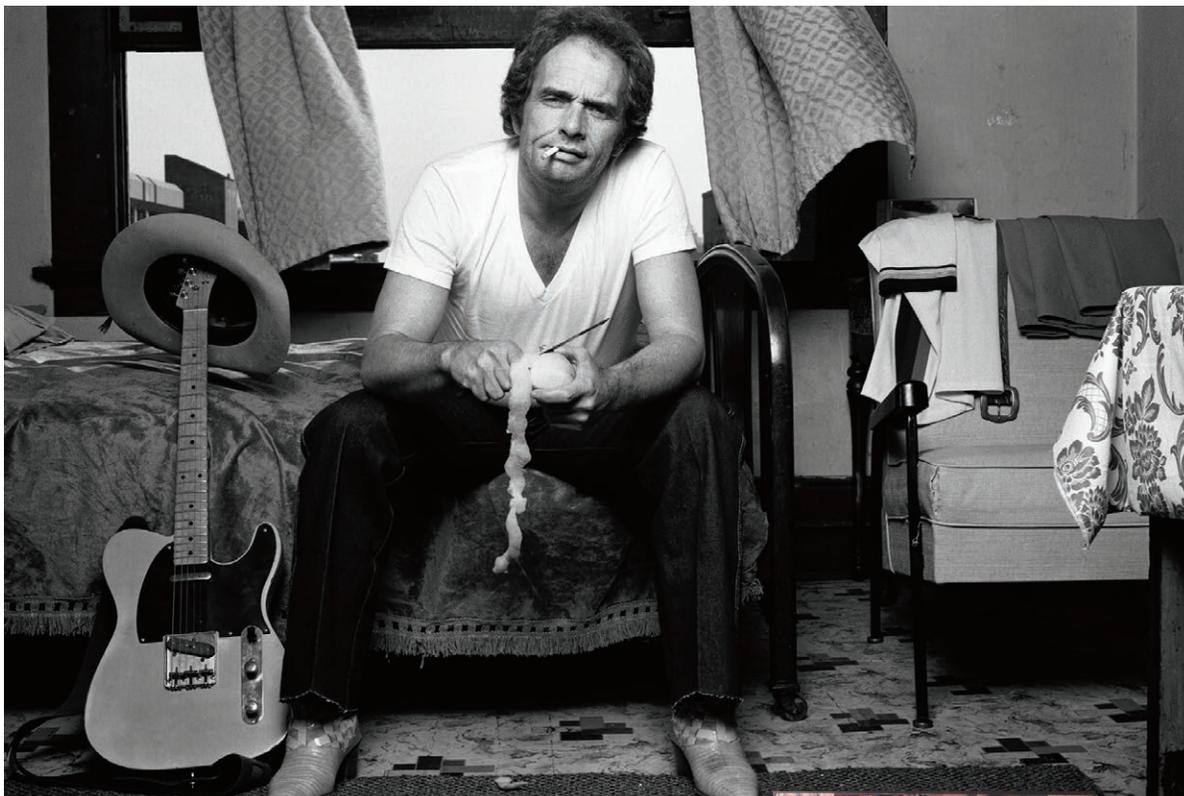


## ENCORE



PHOTOGRAPHER NORMAN SEEFF CHOSE “A FUNKY little hotel” in downtown L.A. to shoot this session for Merle Haggard’s 1981 album *Big City*. “With wry humor, Merle said, ‘This is what you learn in jail’ as he peeled the apple in one cut,” recalls Seeff. “He didn’t try to hide his past.” As the session progressed, a different facet of the country legend emerged. “He had a kind of duality,” explains Seeff. “One part was rough and tumble, a no-nonsense kind of guy. The other side was a sensitive and vulnerable artist.” Seeff and Haggard continued to work together, and one especially memorable session occurred the day before the Iraq War in 2003. “He was completely freaked out—really upset,” Seeff remembers. “He actually sang me an antiwar song. Merle was his own man, and certainly not one-dimensional. He always insisted all he wanted to do was write songs and be a great guitar player. He had no interest in being a star.”

