

UNEARTHED GEMS

It's been 40 years since the Flatlanders recorded a seminal all-night session that in the minds of many birthed the Americana movement. Long thought to be lost, the results of that session have just been compiled on the new release *The Odessa Tapes*. "We weren't thinking we were making a record," says Texas singer-songwriter Joe Ely, who along with Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Butch Hancock comprised the core of the band. "We drove from Lubbock to Odessa, Texas—130 miles—recorded 14 songs and then got in the car at sunrise and drove home."

Tucked away in a closet for 35 years, the tapes were found to contain original versions of 10 songs the Flatlanders later rerecorded for *All American Music*, their first album. Four never-before-released songs were discovered as well. Recorded on archaic three-track tape, Ely ended up using a rare three-track machine—the same one used to record Nat King Cole—to reformat the sessions. "What surprised me most is how casual we sound," he says. "We had never recorded together before, and it just flowed. It's a great lesson in how to be relaxed in the studio."



Butch Hancock, Joe Ely, Jimmie Dale Gilmore

The Flatlanders, 1972

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