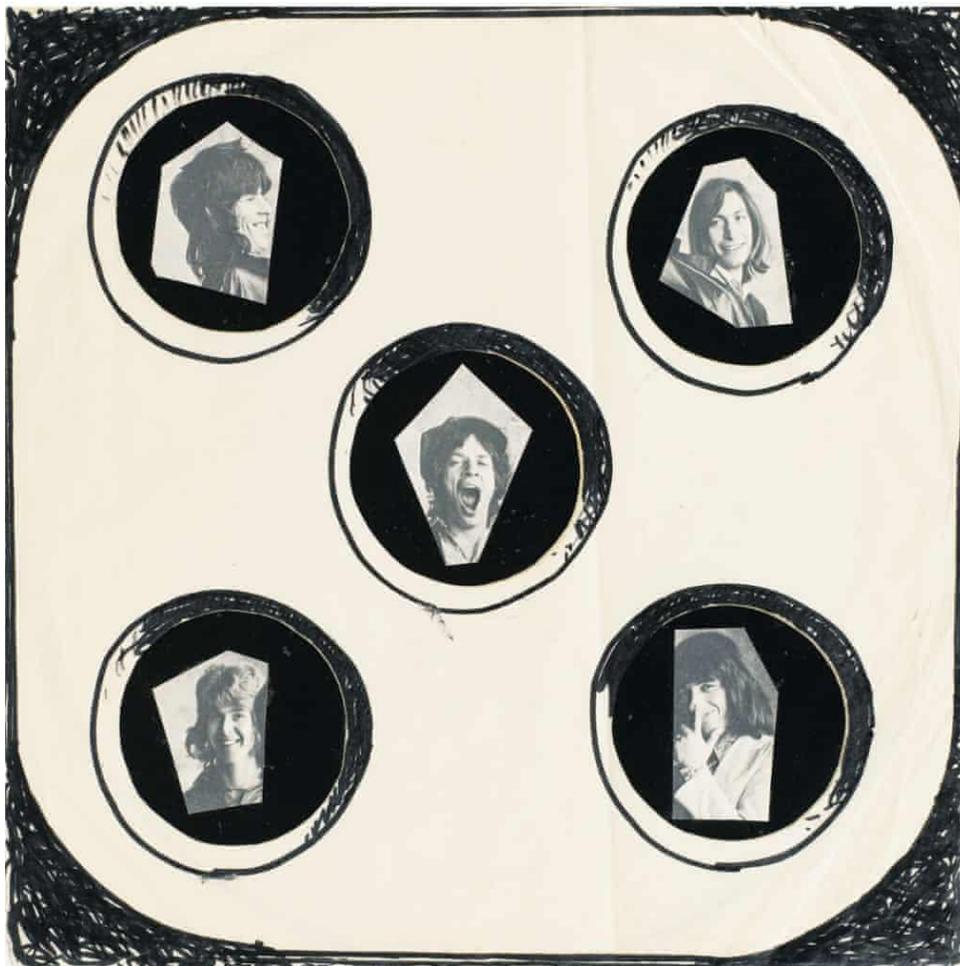


## Exile on Main Street

Sometimes images do speak as loudly as songs. The cover art of *Exile on Main Street* may be the Stones' loudest album cover. Prince Rupert Lowenstein had confirmed what the Stones had feared. Their former manager Allen Klein had helped himself to what was theirs while failing to represent their best financial interest. Mick, Keith, Bill and Charlie had not paid taxes for several years in a country with tax rates as high as 93%. It was impossible for the Stones to pay back what they owed and stay in Great Britain. So, they became reluctant but voluntary tax exiles on April 1, 1971. The album project, which began its life as *Tropical Disease*, the original working title, morphed into Exile around this time. The album was eventually released in the US about a year later on May 22, 1972 as *Exile on Main Street*. There are 235 different images on and in the album, by far the most on any Rolling Stones album, this is the story of those images.

## The Early Options



In 1972 Charlie Watts asked Man Ray, an 82-year old visual artist and photographer, if he would design the cover for the group's new album. The 82-year-old artist agreed and produced a die design in which the faces of the five Rolling Stones appeared inside black circles on a white background. Ray was inspired by the song *Tumbling Dice*, the first single from the album. The headshots for the pips were taken from "The Yawn" the Peter Webb photo used on the inner sleeve of *Sticky Fingers*.

## Man Ray's album cover design based on "Tumbling Dice"

Bill Wyman says Marshall Chess wrote the band, saying, "Hopefully, Man Ray will have seen you and will have come up with some ideas for a cover before you leave for America, Mick told me he conveniently changed his price from \$1,000 which he had quoted me, to \$5,000 for the Stones album cover. It was

obvious that he found out from some people that he could probably get more money from the Rolling Stones.” The Stones passed on his idea and Man Ray’s design became another of the great record covers that never happened.



“The Yawn” by Peter Webb

The music of *Exile on Main Street* naturally consumed most of the band’s attention and time. As the album’s production deadline draws nearer there is often a flurry of activity in a condensed period of time. The cover art for *Exile on Main Street* demonstrates this perfectly. It was not unusual for the Stones to have several album cover concepts in the fire, Man Ray’s idea was just one of them.

The Meetings

While the Stones were in Los Angeles at Sunset Sound studios finishing the record, graphic designer John Van Hamersveld and his partner Norman Seef, a rock photographer and creative director of United Artists and Blue Note Records, were contacted by the Stones to work on the design of a songbook with photographs for Warner Brothers. Van Hamersveld had dated Chris O'Dell, Jagger's personal assistant at the time, some years earlier when he was in London. It was presumably at her urging, that the Stones approached them. They did not know at the time, that they would end up working on *Exile On Main Street*. O'Dell's boyfriend while the Stones were in LA, former Band road manager and Mean Streets producer Jonathan Taplin, had recommended photographer Robert Frank for the album cover. He sent Jagger a copy of Frank's masterpiece, *The Americans*. Frank was flown in from New York.

Their first meeting was February 23, 1972 at 414 St. Pierre Road in Bel Air where Mick Jagger was staying

In June 1955, with the support of a Guggenheim grant, Robert Frank drove the pre-interstate roads of America for the better part of two years in his 1950 black Ford Business Coupe. He visited big cities and small towns in every region of the continental states. He photographed Americans. By the time he was done, he had shot 767 rolls of film and produced around 27,000 black and white images. He then began winnowing through them until he had the 83 photographs that would comprise his most famous work, *The Americans*.

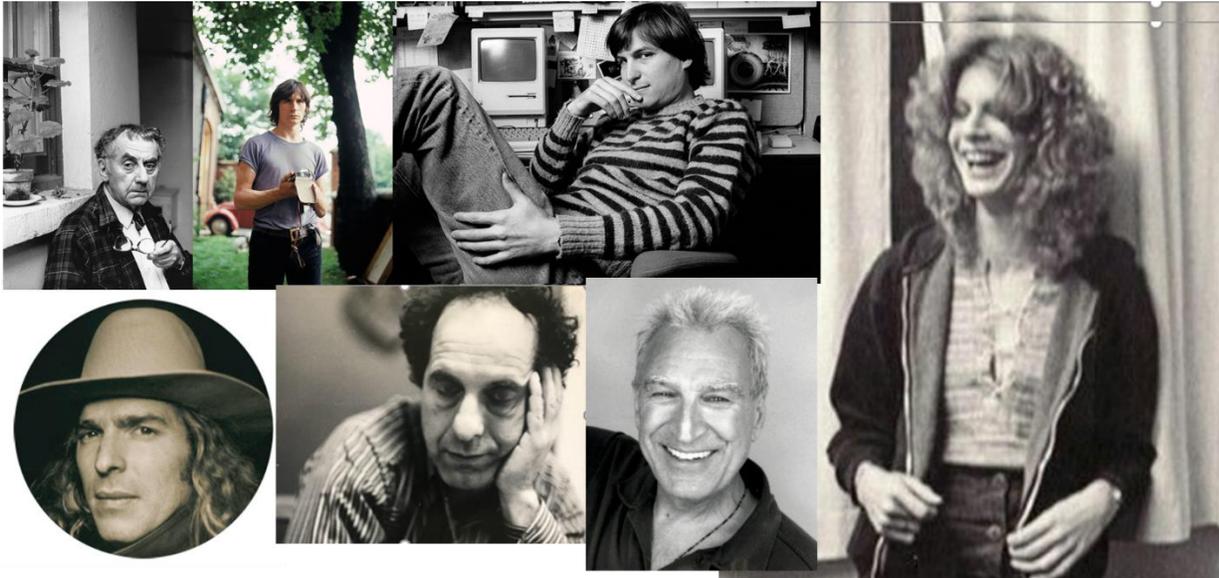
while in LA. Seef began photographing the band at the meeting. At that point in time the concept was all about *Exile*, the new working title for the record. They met with Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Marshall Chess, President of Rolling Stones Records. Photographer Robert Frank had also been invited to the meeting and he walked in with a small Super 8mm Canon camera. John van Hamersveld reports that he leaned over and told Mick in his ear, "He'd be great for the cover." Frank had already created one of the greatest works about exile and American life in *The Americans*. Frank would give them the concept for the whole album design, front and back, the gatefold, and even the sleeves that held the album's two records.

Charlie Watts takes up the story, "We need a cover so as you are mixing the record you'd done Mick and I would be looking through books to see styles and things like that." Mick adds, "Charlie and I went to loads of books shops and bought loads of photography books. And Charlie came up with this idea of Robert Frank." Charlie said, "Robert was perfect for that period, very American, the 50s and 60s, very iconic." Mick interjects, "We imagined it was going to be a photograph of the Rolling Stones, you know stark Robert Frank imagery. Then Robert sorta said no, you know, he didn't see it like that. He saw it doing the photography with Super 8. And I said, well yeah we give it a whirl." Charlie adds, "You can see something, but you wonder what the hell you're looking at. When it's done with him, finished, it will look fantastic."

So, this moment presented itself and later in the day after the meeting, Frank took Jagger and the Stones to downtown Los Angeles to photograph them in some night photos on the seedy parts of Main Street. The location was the 500 block of Main Street and the 100 block East 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Up until this outing the working title was *Exile*, after the trip, once the photos of the Stones were available, it became *Exile on Main Street*. Frank filmed the walking tour with his 8 mm then took the film strips and cut them up. The strips were used to fashion the album packaging.

Jagger wanted the album cover to reflect the band as a group of runaway outlaws who use the blues as their weapon against the world. He wanted an album cover that reflected this joyful isolation. It had to be perfect. Frank shot the band as they walked the seedy Skid Row neighborhood of LA that they were supposedly exiled from. But the cover did not come from those photos.

Marshall Chess asked for a second day of meetings with Seef and Van Hamersveld. The meeting began with Seef, who has his own photos and cover ideas, handing an album cover by another designer to Marshall. He passes it to Jagger for approval, but he rejects it. Marshall then hands Van Hamersveld a Robert Frank photo of a collage taken from a tattoo-parlor-wall during the time Frank was creating his photo documentary "The Americans". Mick is looking for Van Hamersveld and Seef to agree and they do. Van Hamersveld knew right away that Frank's photo, taken from among his many Americans outtakes, would be the one he would use to create the cover for this new album.



The players from top left clockwise: Man Guy, Jeff Webb. Norman Seef, Chris O'Dell, David Van Hamersveld, Robert Frank, Marshall Chess

The meeting attendees agreed to the concept of creating a cover based upon Robert Frank's photograph of a "tattoo parlor" wall, while incorporating new photographs of the Stones from their outing with some of Robert Frank's photographs from his masterpiece *The Americans* for the remainder of the cover and inner sleeves.

Seef had his pictures of the Stones and to this point he was kind of left out. Chess asked Van Hamersveld what could be done with Seef's photos, given that Frank's are the agreed ones for the cover.

Jagger had had an idea for a dockside scene symbolizing the band's move to France for tax reasons. He wanted a picture of the band coming down the ramp of a boat. Had they shot on the actual docks they would have caused a stir, so Seef and his staff built a dock scene at a Hollywood set where he used his staff as extras in vintage costumes. The lights, smoke, and confetti were ready and the shoot began at midnight after Keith arrived characteristically late. As Seef began to work with the band he egged them on, saying, "Hey guys, nothing is happening here." At that point one of Seef's staff who had been playing Mick's consort suddenly decided to kiss him. She grabbed Jagger, they both lost their footing and do a near-somersault as Seef kept shooting the sequence from the kiss to the fall. The shoot continued until the sun came up. The 12 shots in this fall sequence were among those under discussion.

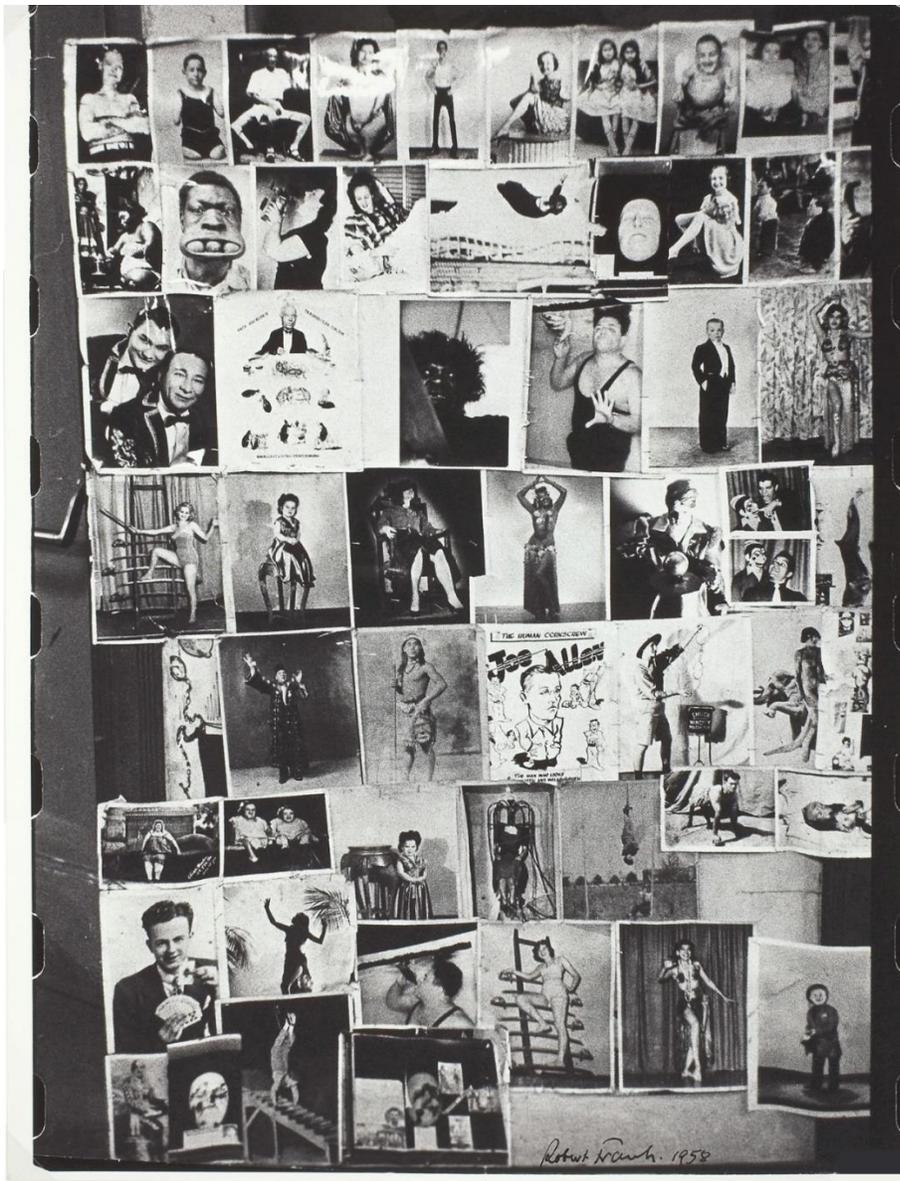
Van Hamersveld reports that Keith, sitting across the table, suddenly says, “Let’s make it a postcard thing that folds out,” demonstrating with his hands as he speaks. Then, Keith, totally loaded, fell to the floor. Everyone loves the idea and the kiss-to-fall sequence becomes the 12-postcard foldout that was included with the album.

As the meeting progressed. Jagger started to hand Van Hamersveld the cut-up film strips from the day before as well as his hand-lettered *Exile* titles and credits created with pens and paper Van Hamersveld had sent him. Van Hamersveld says Mick was explaining, “...this is the bag, this is that, this is the cover and that’s the back.” Van Hamersveld continues, “So, I took these elements home (Chapman Park Studio Building) and I made a cover out of them much like an art project rather than making it formal...And then those pieces of paper I pasted down, with tape, so that’s how you get that rough look. It doesn’t come from a typographer — it comes from Mick Jagger, with a pen in his hand.”

Van Hamersveld says he played a recording of “Sympathy for the Devil” as he assembled the *Exile* design in his studio. He worked with photostats, tape and glue and says most of the eight days he spent working on the design were focused on concept development. All the printing on the album is from Jagger’s hand. Van Hamersveld cropped the front cover down from the original 11-by-17-inch Frank photo of the tattoo parlor collage. The paste-up production model for the printer took about two days of work. Today, it is part of Seattle’s Experience Music Project collection.

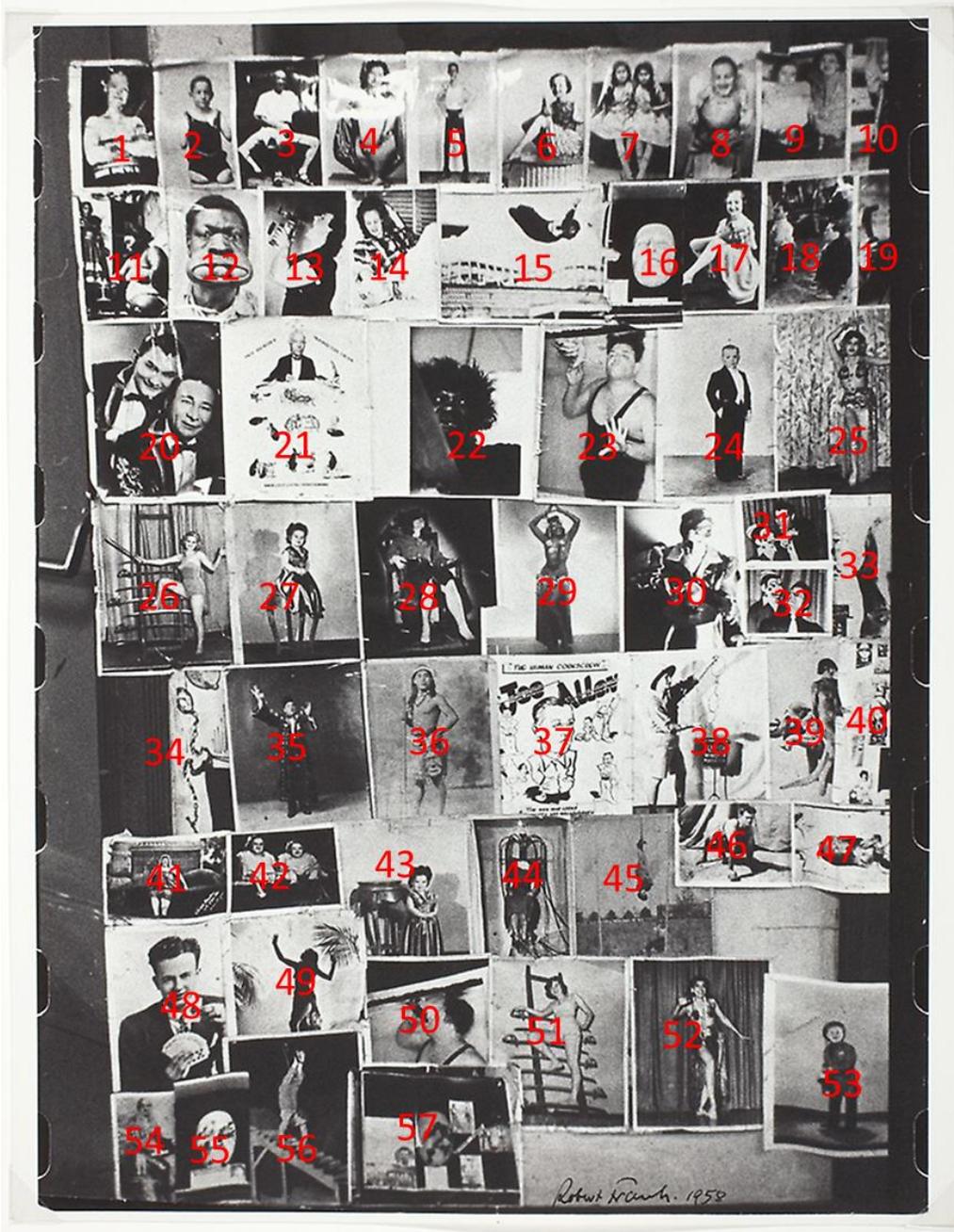
#### “Tattoo Parlor”

Named “Tattoo Parlor, 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue” Robert Frank’s photo was an outtake from his seminal 1958 book *The Americans*. It was a photo collage of freaks that had been arranged on the wall of a tattoo parlor. The photo appears to be relatively carefully arranged pitch cards. Performers autographed these pitch cards and sold them to raise money and promote themselves. Notice the signature on the fat lady pitch card. Some of the photographs in the collage date back to the 1920s, Van Hamersveld says. The photo could have been taken at Hubert’s Dime Museum housed at 228-232 West Forty-second Street in New York City, built in 1888 as a schoolhouse, according to some reports, more likely it could have been hanging in a parlor on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue around the corner from Hubert’s when it was photographed, based on the title given to it by Frank. “And then Robert Frank comes along with a camera, flips it up and takes a picture of it,” Van Hamersveld says. “Boom! And leaves. Having these freaks up on the wall while they’re tattooing people — it’s the bottom of the culture and Robert Frank is there taking a picture of it. That’s the beauty of it.”



Tattoo Parlor by Robert Frank dated 1958

Who are these people memorialized on this album cover? These are posed photographs, most likely the professional photos of people who played at Hubert's Dime Museum. The identities of some of them may never be known. Here is this author's good faith effort to identify as many of them as possible. Photos marked with an \* indicate the use of some speculative judgment those marked \*\* are more or less informed guesses. Those with no \* are confirmed identities. Below, find a number coded mark-up of the original used to identify many of the people featured on the cover. Additional details about many of the subjects can be readily found on the Internet.



1: Walter L. Gregory\*\*

2: Eddie Kissell, legless boy

3: Frank Lentini, three-legged man, sideshow performer

4: Ruth LaArgo Davis, the Mignon Penguin Girl, sideshow performer

5: Percy Pape, thin man

6: Frances O'Connor, armless circus performer

- 7: Daisy and Violet Hinton\*, conjoined twins
- 8: Earl Davis, acrobat, married to Ruth Davis (#4)
- 9: Two unidentified females
- 10: Unidentified subject
- 11: Alzoria Green the Turtle Girl
- 12: Unidentified "3 Ball Charlie"
- 13: Leona Young, fire eater
- 14: Joan Whisnant, armless guitar player, tending her infant with her foot
- 15: Charles "Zibby" Zibelman, legless swimmer
- 16: Someone's death mask
- 17: Frances O'Connor, armless circus performer
- 18: Angelo Rossitto and Johnny Eck, actors
19. Unidentified subject
- 20: Ward Hall and Harry Leonard, circus performers
- 21: Professor Heckler, flea circus
- 22: Hezekiah Trambles "Congo the Jungle Creep"
- 23: Charles "Zibby" Zibelman, legless swimmer
- 24: Clarence Chesterfield Howerton "Major Mite," circus performer
- 25: Unidentified, dancer
- 26: Estelline Ball Lovin Pike\*, sword swallower 1908-1990
- 27: Margaret Ann "Margie" Robinson, little person
- 28: Unidentified mentalist's assistant
- 29: Unidentified, dancer
- 30: Unidentified fortune teller
31. Russ Lewis, ventriloquist
- 32: Russ Lewis, ventriloquist
- 33: Unidentified subject
- 34: Pocket watch on a chain
- 35: Unidentified mentalist

- 36: Chief Amok the Bantoc Headhunter, sideshow performer
- 37: Joe Allen “The Human Corkscrew”, contortionist
- 38: Chuck Windley, magician
- 39: Charlotte Linda Vogel “Suzi the Elephant-Skinned Girl,” sideshow performer
- 40: Unidentified subject
- 41: Thelma Williams\*, fat lady
- 42: Two unidentified females
- 43: Margaret Ann “Margie” Robinson, little person
- 44: Olga\*\* the Headless Woman
- 45: Norman “Murray” Carrington Walters\*\*
- 46: Robert Huddleston “Pony Boy,” sideshow performer
- 47: Mary Yvette and Gladys Yvonne Jones McCarther, conjoined twins
- 48: Unidentified magician
- 49: Unidentified dancer
- 50: Charles “Zibby” Zibelman, legless swimmer
- 51: Unidentified assistant on sword ladder
- 52: Unidentified dancer
- 53: Andy Ratoucheff “Andy Potato Chips,” sideshow performer
- 54: Stefan Bibrowski, “Lionel The Lion Faced Boy,” circus performer
- 55: Unidentified subject-death mask?
- 56: Unidentified acrobat doing handstand down steps
- 57: Unidentified subject—death mask?

#### The Front Cover

R. J. Smith, Frank’s biographer, points out the best in-joke of all in Exile’s cover. Several photographs from *The Americans* are scattered throughout the art included in *Exile*’s album imagery. Smith says, “By inserting himself in the array, Frank was entering the circus tent with the Rolling Stones and the contortionists, and saying something about the role of artists in America. He wrenched *The Americans* out of the sanctified place it had settled into, mocking his own fame while reclaiming ownership of work that his fans felt belonged to them.”

The opened *Exile on Main Street* album cover is shown below. The front cover on the right was cropped from the Tattoo Parlor photo. The lettering on the front cover was done by Mick Jagger. The photos on

the rear of the album were taken during the walking tour of Main Street. They are arranged to evoke the image of the freaks on the front cover.



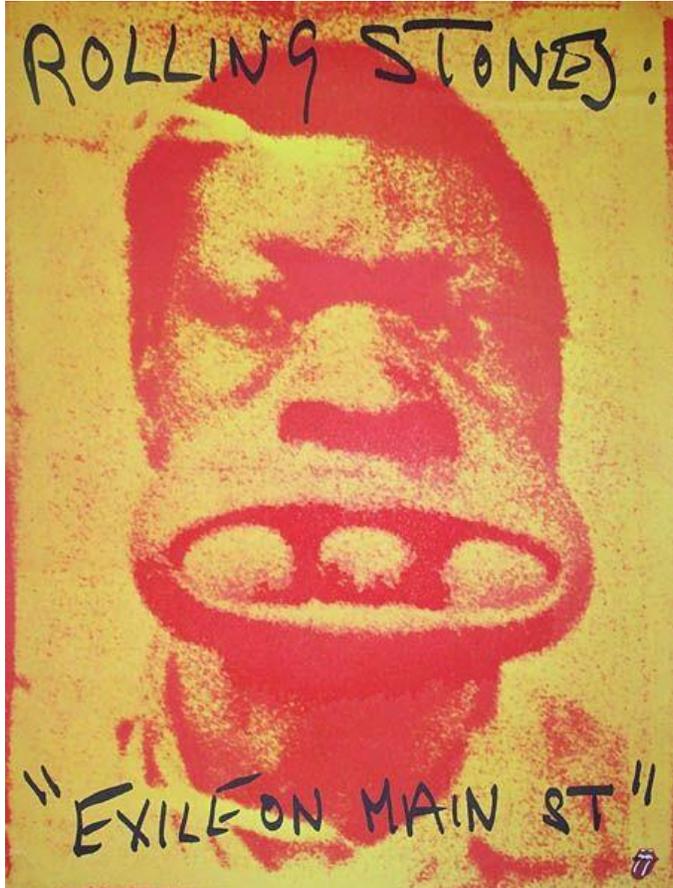
Exile on Main Street Album Front Cover

There were a few immediate stars from the cover. Hezekiah Trambles, "Congo The Jungle Creep" performed five times a day at Hubert's Museum in New York. He was a Haitian who wore a fright wig, black tights, garlands of animal skins and totemic geegaws in an improvised act of shenanigans that relied on traditional savage schtick. Joe "The Human Corkscrew" Allen, who appears in a postcard-style advertisement, was a contortionist with the ability to wiggle and twist through a 13.5 inch hoop. The unmitigated darling of the cover was "Three Ball Charlie," a 1930s era sideshow performer from Humboldt, Nebraska whose skills included the ability to hold a tennis ball, a golf ball, and a "5" billiard ball in his mouth at the same time. "Three Ball Charlie" was immortalized on a promotional poster, a billboard, t-shirts, and other memorabilia. Professor William Heckler's flea circus consisted of Act I: Chariot Race, Act II: Prince Henry, the Juggler, Act III: Playing Foot Ball, Act IV: Paddy Carrying a Flag and Jumping Through a Hoop, Act V: the Flea Hotel, Act



Hezekiah Trambles "Congo the Jungle Creep"

VI: Rudolph Operating the Merry-Go-Round, and Act VII: Several Fleas Dressed in Costume Dancing to Music. There are often touching stories about many of the world's exiles found on the cover, many of them available on the Internet, the flea circus may not be one of them.



#### Exiles on Main Street

The 500 block of Main Street is in LA's Skid Row neighborhood. A June 14, 1947 article from the Evening Independent describes the neighborhood the Stones would venture into 25 years later. "Skid Row is the Bowery of the West. It is the poor man's underworld; a cross section of American futility, the place where men who have lost hope go after they have jettisoned their dreams." Sound like anyone in this story?

Robert Frank's recording of the February 23, 1972 tour is available in part in at least two Youtube videos. Rolling Stones Rocks Off is at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INP-x94-SE&list=RD\\_INP-x94-SE&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INP-x94-SE&list=RD_INP-x94-SE&start_radio=1) Rolling Stones Exile on Main Street California 1972 is available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMuL28yOuP8>

In 1972 the 500 block of Main Street and the 100 block of East Fifth Street were populated by the following businesses. XXX indicates a vacant building. The photo, taken four years earlier, provides an accurate depiction of the general state of the neighborhood.

- |                               |                                      |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 500 Lorrays Mens Shop         | 528 Fair Army and Navy Store         | 557 Celias Gift Shop     |
| 502 Pershing Hotel            | 529 Paris Arcade                     | 561 Donut Express        |
| 504 Cys Chicken Fry           | 530 Altshule Sales Co.               | 564 Thrifty Drug Store   |
| 505 New York Discount Store   | Famous Department Store              | 600 Greyhound Bus Term   |
| 507 Los Angeles Tattuo Studio | Howard Sales and Surplus             | 103 Downtown Locksmit    |
| West Coast Tattuo Studio      | 513 Electra Sales                    | 108 Smiths Books Miss    |
| 508 Howard Jewelry and Loan   | 533 Optic Theater                    | 109 Monte Carlo Café     |
| Howard Loan and Jewelry       | 534 American Barber College          | 110 Lucky Pawn Shop      |
| 510 Leonide Hotel             | 535 Arceli                           | 112 Reyes Custom Tailor  |
| Loyal Café                    | 536 Ricks                            | 113 Hub Café             |
| 511 Ruths Shrimp House        | 540 Dreamland Dance                  | 114 Nessens Hat Shop     |
| 512 Jack and Jerrys Café      | Fentons Dreamland                    | 116 Sidney Charles Co.   |
| 512.5 Eagle Loan Office       | 544 H&G News                         | 116.5 Leland Hotel       |
| Eagle Music Exchange          | 546 Army and Navy Supply Store       | 117 XXX                  |
| 514 Galway Theater            | 549 Howell Hotel                     | 118 Able Workers Inc.    |
| 516 Dons Arcade               | 551 Arts Theater                     | 119 Leslies Grinding and |
| 518 Neros Books               | 552 Bills Chicken Stop (La Cocinita) | 121 Hotel King Edward    |
| 524 Shacks Fried Chicken      | 553 OK Jewlery and Loan              | King Edward Hotel        |
| 525.5 Dover Hotel             | 554 Allied Auto Parks                | 127 XXX                  |
| 527 Waldorf                   | 555 Harolds Café                     | 131 King Edward Café     |



500 Block Main Street Los Angeles circa 1968 (Galway Theater far right)

Robert Frank began taking photos immediately. He took a Polaroid of Chris O'Dell at Marshall Chess's new place on Mulholland Drive that ended up on the rear cover. The Stones entourage took limos down to the squalid site of their outing. At first, the homeless, drunk and destitute ignored the Stones party. Chris O'Dell described some of the reaction, "Hey, you Mick Jagger? You are, man, you are fucking Mick Jagger." Someone else said, "What are you doin' here man? Damn! This your band? Damn! It's the fuckin' Rolling Stones. We got the fuckin' Rolling Stones here, walking down the damn fuckin' street." The temperature was close to 61 degrees Fahrenheit at the time of their outing. O'Dell describes an amazing feeling of togetherness and unity with the Stones leading the way, street people behind. Everything and everyone seemed connected, the super-famous, super rich and the impoverished citizens of Main Street. O'Dell says she and the touring party were all stoned. Then the Stones party piled back into their limousines and drove back to Beverley Hills with its big mansions, expensive drugs and quiet streets to an evening of good food and wine.

The Stones, absent Keith, strolled along East 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Main Street, making stops at a pawnshop, a shoeshine business and The Galway, a pornographic theatre. Frank shot footage of the tour as they walked. Frank used his Super-8 movie camera and the Stones stills on Exile's cover are frames from that film.

#### The Rear Cover

Van Hamersveld described the process used to assemble the album parts including those obtained on the tour. Marshall and Jagger gave him a stack of photos made by Frank over the weekend, presumably the weekend of February 25-27. He left with the visual "ingredients" and arrived back at his Chapman Park Studio Building. There, he plays 'Sympathy For The Devil' and thinks about how to design the concept of a "pop art" package in a "beat style." Although he usually uses various kinds of medium for this project he used just the basics this time – drafting tape and ripped paper.

Let us listen to Van Hamersveld's voice, "I select the pictures from the ones Frank took. After our meeting, I organize the images as per Jagger's instructions while Marshall looks on. I am able to step back as an artist and see the opportunity in front of me. Jagger is really a pop artist, too. With all the images in place, I'm satisfied with my work. Upon the label's approval, Exile will soon hit the streets."

Van Hamersveld edited Frank's photos of the Stones and assembled them in a fashion to emulate the circus freaks and performers on the front cover. Presenting the Stones and their party in that style was intended to drive home the point of Stones as Exiles, jet-setting tax exiles, cocaine-fueled satyrs and perpetual outsiders. The photos were taken from Frank's Super 8 mm film which included shots on the Bel Air grounds that included Keith Richards as well as of the Main Street tour.

The rear cover of the album, seen in the photo above, primarily comprises photographs taken during the walking tour of Main Street. Exceptions are marked with an \* below. Let us have a look at what is there. To identify photos on the rear cover the rows are numbered and the columns are lettered.

Row 1: a\*: Mick Jagger and Keith Richards in studio, b: Charlie Watts, Norman Seef, Mick Taylor and Mick Jagger, c: Shoe shine price list -a spit shine was \$1.50 you could have you shoes dyed for \$2.50 or just the laces cleaned for \$0.25, d: Mick Taylor, Charlie Watts, Mick Jagger, Bill Wyman, Billy Preston and an unidentified black man

Row 2: a\*: Keith Richards b: Sweet Taste of Joy poster at Galway Theater, c: Norman Seef d: Mick Jagger e\*: Keith Richards sunglasses

Row 3: a\*: One bare foot one foot in white shoe, source unidentified may be from a Frank photo b: Charlie Watts, c: Mick Jagger, d: Mick Taylor and Bill Wyman e\*: Keith Richards and Charlie Watts

Row 4: a: Mick Jagger, b: Main Street Movies, c: Newspaper headline Father of Five Aids, Rescuer d\*: Keith Richards and Charlie Watts e: Mick in plaid jacket and unidentified pedestrian

Row 5: a: Mick Jagger with face obscured by interlocked fingers, b: Bill Wyman and Charlie Watts c\*: Keith Richards d: Bill Wyman e: Mick Jagger with hatted black man

Row 6:a: Mick Jagger with face obscured by interlocked fingers b: Chris O'Dell c\*: black woman in white holding cross, Robert Frank's 'Mississippi River, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1955' d: Mick Taylor and Norman Seef e (top): travel agency British flag neon sign at night e (bottom)\*: tongue logo with back of Sticky Fingers pants

The Mississippi River Baton Rouge photo appears again on the green inner sleeve. The newspaper appears on the red inner sleeve. Bill Wyman (red inner sleeve) and Charlie Watts (8 mm film of walk) are both photographed holding a copy of the Los Angeles Times that gives us the day the Exiles toured Main Street. Visible in the photos are two headlines, "Floor Falls Kills 2 Fireman," and "Father of 5 Aids Woman, Rescuer Stabbed." This appears to be an early edition of the paper because the copy of the late final in the LA Times archives runs the headline "Nixon Hears Peking Cheers" and "RTD Bus Crash Collision With Truck Kills 8." These headlines ran on Wednesday, February 23, 1972. The headline stories are found on page 3 and are summarized below.

On February 22, a fire broke out in the Union Manufacturing and Distribution Co. a manufacturer of tent equipment, located at 241 W. 116 St. in Los Angeles. Theodore "Ted" Alfred Currei, 34, and Sgt. Paul Randolph Widrig, 24, firefighters armed with hand hoses, died when a mezzanine floor fell on them. Currie had a wife Geraldine and three sons, Steve, 15; Craig, 13; and Kent, 11. Widrig left his wife, Deborah Lynn and an infant son.

Waiting for a traffic light at Beverly Blvd. and Rossmore Ave. 32-year old Clarence M. Steward, father of five, saw 18-year old Gordon Lydell snatch the purse of 56-year old Randi McAnally. Lydell ran and Steward gave chase. When he followed Lydell over a wall, Lydell was waiting for him with a knife and said, "I'm gonna stick you bad" just before he stabbed Steward. Police arrived and made an arrest just as Steward fell to the ground from loss of blood. He was taken to Valley Presbyterian Hospital. Lydell and a 17-year old girlfriend were booked on charges of assault with intent to commit murder. McAnally said, "I feel so sorry for that man. I wish it could have been me instead of him."

#### The Gatefold

The Gatefold was assembled in the same slap it together style used on the rear cover. The raw materials were the film strips from Frank's Super 8mm, strips of paper Mick Jagger had prepared with random song lyrics, and some of Frank's previous photographs.



### *Exile on Main Street* gatefold

Every image on the gatefold, but one, comes from the walking tour or Mick Jagger's pen. The contents of the gatefold are examined by column, numbered from left to right.

Column 1 includes a four-cell film strip of Jagger in profile outside the Galway porn theater 514 Main Street, followed by Jagger next to a movie poster. There are two lyric strips. The first says "Got to scrape the shit right off your shoes," from 'Sweet Virginia' and "Fever in the bunkhouse now," from 'Tumbling Dice.'

Column 2 is a Robert Frank photo called 'Detroit, 1955.' An oldies double feature is playing. For \$.50 an adult can see *A Woman's Face* (1941) and *The Atomic Kid* (1954) a child would pay \$.15.

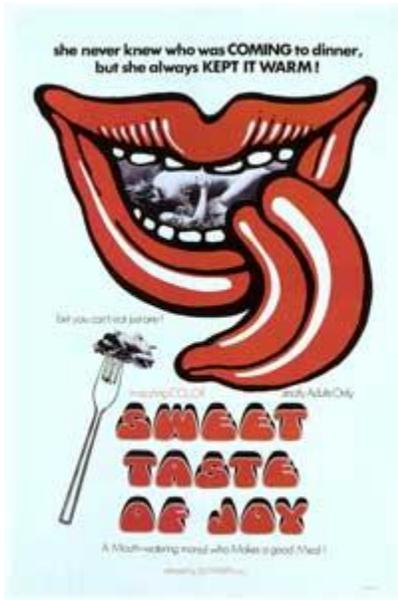
Column 3 are six versions of the lyric, "I gave you diamonds you give me disease," roughly from 'Turd on the Run.' The actual lyric is "they ripped off in my hands. Di'mond rings, vaseline, you give me disease," Jagger's written lyric appears over an image of Frank's box office photo in the last panel.

Column 4 includes three cells of a Mick Jagger profile and two cells of a full face with a pedestrian looking on.

Column 5 has one cell of Jagger in profile, three facial closeups and one cell with parts of Bill Wyman and Charlie Watts.

Column 6 has two photos of Jagger by the porn film poster at the Galway Theater and three cells of the poster itself. The last column has five shadowy photos, two of Jagger smiling, three of him pouting.

The movies in the 'Detroit, 1955' photo include *A Woman's Face*, about a female blackmailer with a disfiguring facial scar. She meets a plastic surgeon who offers her the possibility of looking like a normal woman. *Atomic Kid* is the story of a uranium prospector who is eating a peanut butter sandwich in the desert where atom bomb tests are being done. He becomes radioactive, and helps the FBI break up an enemy spy ring. Then on Main Street there is sex in the *Sweet Taste of Joy*.



The top of the porn poster on the Exile cover says, “She never knew who was COMING to dinner but she always KEPT IT WARM.” Below the lip and above the fork it says, “bet you can’t eat just one!” Above the SW in SWEET it says, “sizzling COLOR .” Above the T you’ll find, “strictly Adults Only.” The bottom says, “A Mouth-watering morsel who Makes a good Meal.”

Inside the mouth is a naked couple copulating, there is a fork with a naked couple copulating on the tip of the fork. *Sweet Taste of Joy* was a pornographic film made in 1970. It has been lyrically described thusly, “Impregnated by her boyfriend, Joy suspects that he plans to shirk his paternal obligations, and she makes her own plans to exact revenge. She enlists the aid of several of her promiscuous friends and lures her boyfriend to her apartment for a farewell supper. He is bound to the bed while Joy and her girl friends abuse him and use him to enact their wildest imaginings. Joy is somewhat distracted from her vendetta by sexual encounters with friends of both sexes, but her

boyfriend is repaid unquestionably for his lack of fidelity.”

#### Inner Sleeves

The inner sleeves comprise a mix of film strips from the Main Street tour and Robert Frank’s photographs. They were assembled in the same manner described by Van Hamersveld. All the wording on the album cover and sleeves is hand-lettered by Jagger. Jagger also made handwritten notes on the mock up for the inner sleeves. The arrangement on the left was for disc 1 the arrangement on the right for disc 2. There is a notation the disc 1 sleeve was to be opaque green-F varnish and disc 2 red-F varnish.



Proofs with Jagger’s notations

The inner sleeves arrayed with the opening to the right are shown below.



Inner sleeves disc 1 (green) and disc 2 (red)

The green sleeve of disc 1 has a Robert Frank photo called 'Bar Las Vegas 1955' in the upper left and another Frank photo in the lower right called 'Candy Store New York City 1955.' The upper right corner had a five-cell film strip of Keith Richards and a strip of five lyrics. The first is from Sweet Virginia, the next four are a nonsense rhyme "Ying yang youre my thing." The first two times the lyric is superimposed on the Candy Store photo, the bottom two times they appear alone. The lower right shows five cells of Jagger, two of a close up of his left eye and three facial views. The adjacent column begins with two cells with the 'Turd on the Run' lyric. There are three copies of the Mississippi River Near Baton Rouge photo with the lyric "soul survivor," from Soul Survivor superimposed on two of them. The top of another copy of the same photo is also visible.

A little less than half of the top of the red sleeve is taken by a Robert Frank photo of a casket escort in Oklahoma and two phots of Bill Wyman holding the Los Angeles Times from that day. Three and a fraction rows of photographs comprise the larger bottom of the red sleeve for disc 2.

Row 1 position a shows Mick Taylor and Charlie Watts and a bit of Billy Preston, 1b is aportion of the lyric "I dont want to talk about Jesus, I just want to see his face," from 'Just Want To See His Face,' 1c is

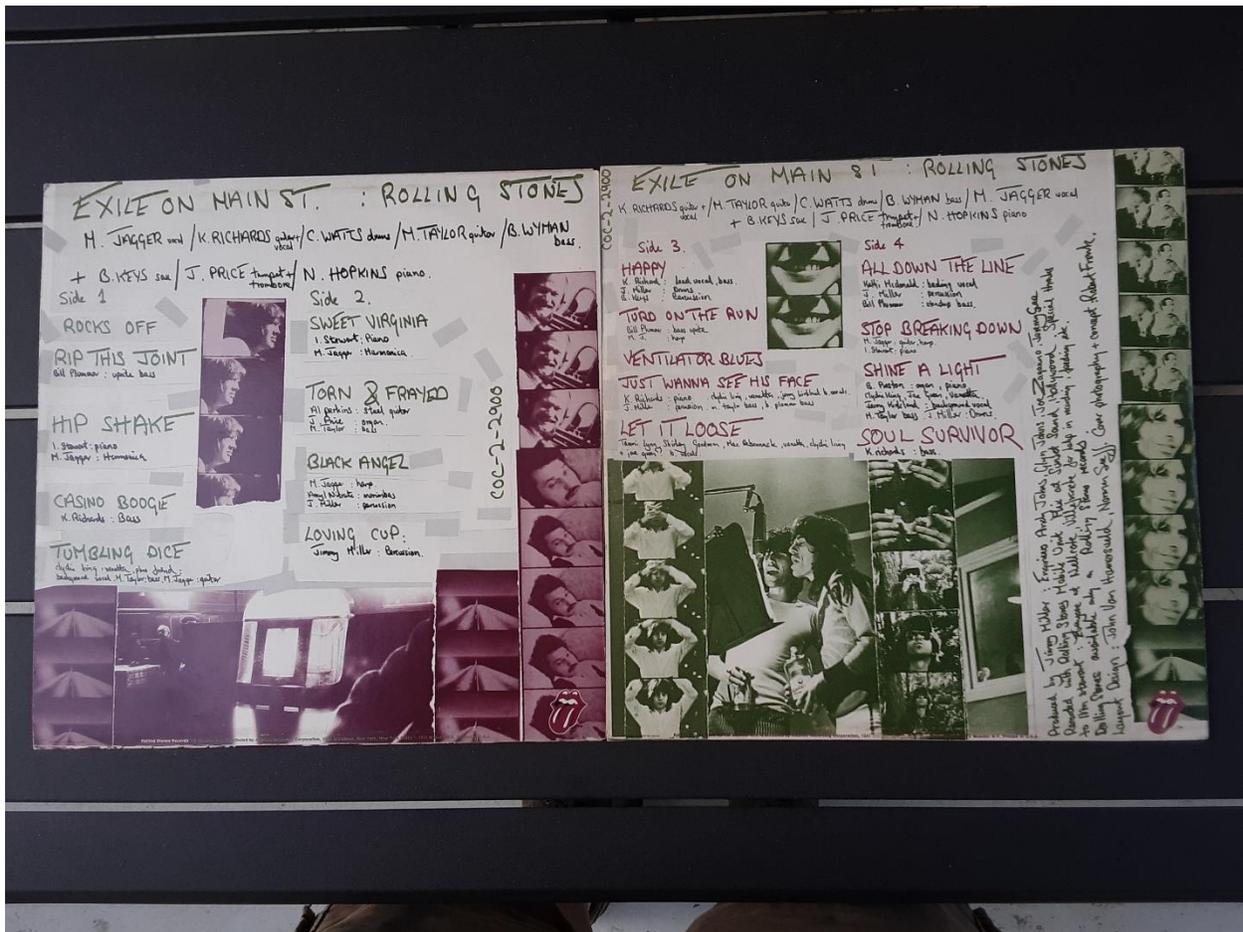
Wyman's hand holding the LA Times, 1d is Jagger's face, 1e is a portion of the same lyric, 1f is Keith Richards.

Row 2 is nearly identical except that 2c is Jagger's face.

Position 3a is another frame of Taylor, Watts, and Preston, 3b is a more complete view of the lyric, 3c is Jagger's face, 3d the lyric and 3e is Keith Richards.

The partial bottom row has Watts and Preston in 4a, the lyric in 4b and 4d, Jagger in 4c, and Jagger in 4d.

Flip the inner sleeves over and you will see the following.



Inner sleeves disc 1 (green) disc 2 (red)

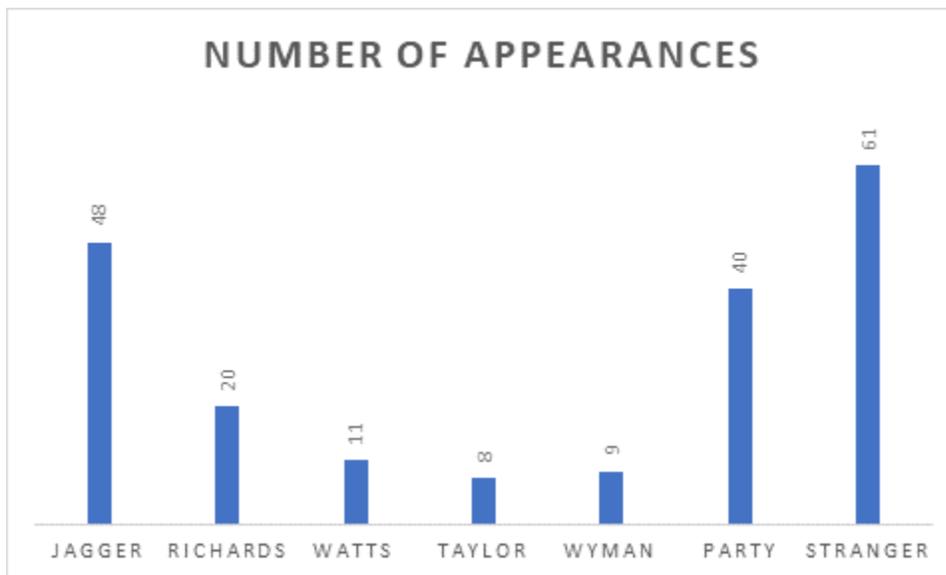
The red sleeve with green print holds disc 1. At the top in green print is "Exile on Main Street: Rolling Stones." This is followed by the Stones names and instruments as well as mentions of Bobby Keys, Jim Price and Nicky Hopkins all in black print. Three and half frames of Bobby Keys separate the side 1 and side 2 set lists, where song names are in green print, and contributing musicians in black print. The song names appear to have been written on strips of paper then taped to the sleeve.

Below the set lists are photographs. On the left boundary are three copies of Robert Frank's photo 'US 285 New Mexico 1955.' To the right of them is another Frank photo, 'Bar-New York City 1955.' On the

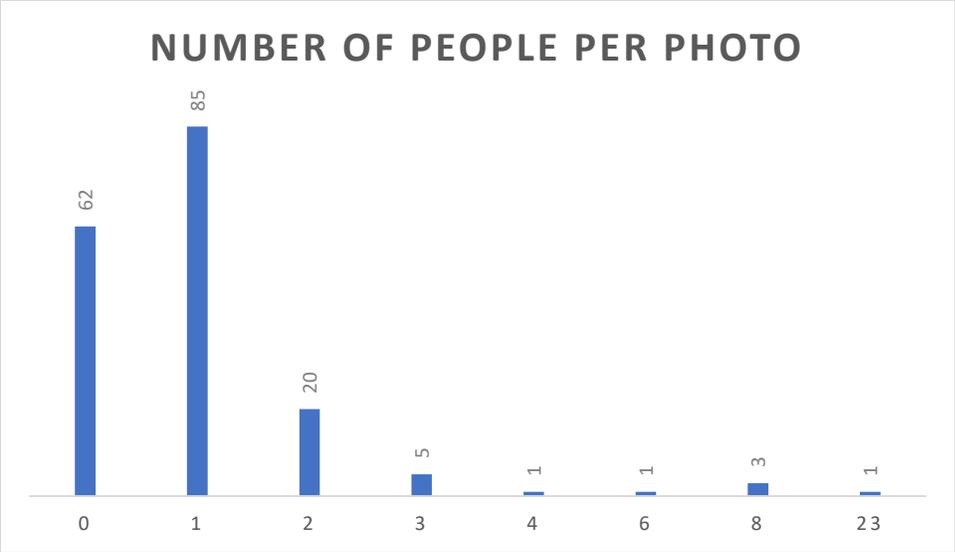
right of this is a strip of three copies of 'US 285 New Mexico 1955.' The right boundary includes three photos of Jim Price, trumpet player, and five photos of producer Jimmy Miller, the last of which is covered by a Rolling Stones logo.

Across the top of the sleeve in green print is "Exile on Main Street: Rolling Stones." This is followed by the Stones names and instruments as well as mentions of Bobby Keys, Jim Price and Nicky Hopkins all in black print. Two frames of a smile speculated to belong to Chris O'Dell separate the side 3 and side 4 set lists, where song names are in red print with contributing musicians in black print. Once again, the song names look like they were written on strips of paper and taped to the sleeve. Below the set lists you will find a strip of five photos of Mick Jagger flanking a Robert Frank photo of Keith and Mick in the studio, which is right bounded by a strip of five photos of Keith laid overtop the Frank photo. He is eating a sandwich in three of the five shots. The right side of the sleeve is topped by a strip of five photos of what I speculate to be Robert Frank and John Van Hamersveld. Beneath them is a strip of four photos of Nicky Hopkins and two copies of Robert Frank's photo 'US 285 New Mexico 1955.' One of them has a Stones logo on top of it. Between this strip of photos and the other horizontally oriented material in green print/script mix are the production credits which includes the notation, "everyone at Nellcote. Villefranche for help in recording, feeding, etc."

The complexity of this production is better appreciated with some simple counting. Neglecting the front cover there are 178 whole or partial images found on the rear cover, gatefold and inner sleeves of the album. They depict 197 people, the Stones account for almost half of them (96). The breakdown is as follows. 'Party' indicates a member of the Stones recording team or entourage. Strangers are unidentified people, most of them in Robert Frank's photos. Many 'appearances' are minimal, two of Bill Wyman's appearances, for example, show his arm holding a newspaper.



The majority, 83%, of the images have no one or one person in them. Jagger appears 48 times the same as all the other Stones combined. One Frank photograph has 23 people in it. Frank has 20 images from his masterpiece, *The Americans*, or other shots not taken during the walking tour.



Twenty-five of the images include strips of paper with short quotations on them. The most common quotes are from 'Just Wanna See His Face' and the disease quote that has been associated with 'Turd on the Run.' Several of these quotes appear as overlays on other images.





## Postcards

Each postcard has "the Rolling Stones" in red script across the top left corner and "Exile on Main Street" in red script in the lower right corner. The rear of each card includes a description of the scene depicted on the front. The descriptions follow.

Scene 1 of the fall from **Exile on Main Street**. Featuring Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Mick Taylor, Charlie Watts, Bill Wyman. *Mick and the stones arrive in exile, met by an auntie or two. Mick does the introductions. "Well here we are, this is my auntie."*

Scene 2: Keith doesn't believe it. *"His auntie he says, his auntie."*

Scene 3: Mick realizes it's no good. *"Believe wot you like she's my auntie."*

Scene 4: Mick reviews the situation. *"Is this it? Is this home and the welcome committee?"*

Scene 5: Disturbance frame right. He's still seasick.

Scene 6: Mick tries to make the best of it. *"Let's strum up a sing song and all have some fun."*

Scene 7: Mick's Auntie loves the idea. *"Oh fribbit me boy." She cries in her joy.*

Scene 8: Mick is taken by surprise. *"Fribbit me wot?" Mick says holding on tight.*

Scene 9: The situation goes to the dogs and the fall

sets in. *"Fribbit me thud crash and mumble."*

Scene 10: Taylor mumbles despondently. *"Well I was going to strum up a bit of a sing song."*

Scene 11: Mick Jagger is down but not out, he tries to dance saying *"Come on give us a tune."*

Scene 12: Taylor realizes the fall is complete, "they'll be forever Exiles on Main Street. He suggests early retirement. *"No better not, it's getting quite late and we'll be fogged in forever quite soon."*

The Billboard

Seef and Van Hamersveld were driving through Hollywood in Seef's dark green '69 Mustang convertible with the top down one day. Van Hamersveld thought if he took four of the front cover photos out and paste them in color into the billboard composition, he'd have a great design. Frank decided to interpret the five different personalities of the Stones with his picture choices. Clarence Chesterfield "Major Mite" Howerton is Mick Jagger. Three-ball Charlie is Charlie Watts. Circus performers Ward Hall and Harry Leonard represent Bill Wyman and Mick Taylor and Hezekiah Trambles is Keith Richards. Or, in the parlance of Van Hamersveld Mick is the butler, Charlie is three-ball, Bill and Mick are the matadors and Keith is the sideshow freak. It was not widely known that the four images, selected from the front cover of the album represented the five members of the band.

Van Hamersveld blew up the photos and pasted them on a board and the next day went over to Pacific Outdoor to look at a diagram of the billboard on the Sunset Strip. The finished billboard appeared at Sunset and La Cienega, at the top of the hill. The billboard became, "...the 'freaks' displayed on the Sunset Strip, a prestigious site for the art & rock scene."



The Billboard

The Stones were so pleased with Robert Frank's work on *Exile on Main Street* that they hired him to produce a documentary of their 1972 tour of the US supporting the new album. Frank's 1972 documentary of the Rolling Stones on tour shows the Stones engaging in heavy drug use, sordid sex, and good old-fashioned rock-and-roll. Called *Cocksucker Blues* it is perhaps Frank's best-known film and his least seen. Mick Jagger reportedly told Frank, "It's a fucking good film, Robert, but if it shows in America we'll never be allowed in the country again." The film was controversial enough that the band's legal team ended up slapping Frank with an injunction that made screenings nearly impossible. A court order

restricted the film, *Cocksucker Blues*, to being shown no more than five times per year, and only in the presence of Frank. This ruling served as an effective ban on the film. Frank has offered this take on the Stones: 'It's hard to have that much money and power and be human.'

#### Last Word

*Exile's* packaging is perfectly suited to the shaggy authenticity of the music it contains. Van Hamersveld said, "You have to realize that all of this is intuitive. Each person brings something to it. I brought something to it. Robert Frank brought something. Norman brought something." He never heard any of the *Exile* tracks until near the very end of his creative process, when Jagger played a tape for him and Seef at Seef's office. Van Hamersveld continues, "It was very timely, that we could show how decadent rock & roll had become. So, you send that out in front of all those people, the mirror of what their life is like. It was fantastic as a message." The art process was a shaggy authentic masterpiece worthy of this album many would eventually hail as the Stones' best.

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