



## Episode 1, 2012: Beatles Autograph

Michael Mischner: Almost every summer when we were boys, our parents took us for summer vacation down to Miami Beach. Early in 1964, we heard that the Beatles were going to come down here.

James "Jimmy" Mischner: This was the first time they hit the shores of the United States, and I decided to write Charles, the maître d at their hotel, to see if he would get me their autographs. We know that the Beatles were performing at the Deauville Hotel on February the 16th.

Michael: Two weeks later, this came in the mail.

Jimmy: Signed by Ringo Starr!

Michael: And this room service menu, signed by John Lennon.

Jimmy: It was unbelievable. I always imagined that Charles got John Lennon's autograph by delivering room service to his room. I can imagine that he got Ringo Starr's when Ringo was at the pool. We have treasured these autographs for over 48 years.

Michael: But a lot about them has remained a mystery. Are these autographs real?

Tukufu Zuberi: I'm Tukufu Zuberi and I was definitely a fan of the Beatles. Their impact on American pop music was groundbreaking. Those early hit songs and first US TV appearances were a beachhead in what became known as the "British Invasion". So, when I heard about this story, I was like, "Yeah, I want to do this. I dig the Beatles."

Michael: This is the Deauville Hotel room service breakfast menu and it's signed by John Lennon.

Tukufu: Whoa. What does that say? "To Jimmy..."?

Michael: "To Jimmy, with luck, The Beatles - Ringo Starr." And this is a postcard that Charles included.

Tukufu: The Mischner Brothers always wondered exactly how Charles had managed to get the Beatles' signatures.

Michael: "Dear Jimmy, this is the best I can do for you... the time I managed to get the pictures there was only one Beatle in the room and he did the autograph, as you will see, it was Ringo Starr. With best wishes, Charles."

Tukufu: Who was Charles?

Jimmy: He was the Maitre d at the evening meal at the Deauville Hotel.

Tukufu: Jimmy and Michael had met the Maitre d when they vacationed at the Deauville with their family in the summer of 1963.

What was his last name?

Jimmy: Don't know his last name.

Tukufu: Where did he live?

Jimmy: Don't know where he lived?

Tukufu: "PS – Hope you can use the other autographs?"

Michael: He sent several autographs on Deauville Hotel memo pads. One was for Bob Hope. Vic Morrow. A comedian named Myron Cohen. And then Cynthia Lennon, who was John Lennon's first wife, prior to Yoko Ono. I kept all of this stuff together, including the envelope that it was sent in.

Tukufu: Michael's been holding on to the autographs, but everything is addressed to Jimmy. Jimmy, Jimmy, James. Who? Who? How did? Jimmy? Are you keeping them for Jimmy or what?

Michael: No.

Jimmy: About two weeks after I received the autographs, I needed some money for a date.

Michael: So, he needed five dollars, and I said, "No, I'm not going to give you five dollars, but I will buy the Beatle autographs from you for those five dollars." It's been a source of a lot of good-natured teasing over the last 48 years. In fact, what I've said is that I'm going to use the proceeds from this to pay for my retirement. Of course, that's if, if you find out they're really authentic!

Tukufu: I'm here in Miami Beach and as you can tell I'm happy. The weather's beautiful. This investigation should be fun. If these autographs are real, I'm not sure Mike could retire on them, but they might be worth thousands.  
1964 is the year The Beatles exploded onto the American scene.

*News Report: 3,000 screaming teenagers are at New York's Kennedy Airport to greet, you guessed it, The Beatles.*

Tukufu: The nation fell in love with the cheerful, irreverent lads from Liverpool and their high octane TV appearances.

*Ed Sullivan: Ladies and Gentlemen, The Beatles. [Beatles performing on Ed Sullivan Show]*

Tukufu: I knew about the famous Ed Sullivan show in New York, but I've never heard of a second taping in Miami.

Okay. Here it is, The Deauville Hotel. Here is a video of the Beatles playing at the Deauville Hotel on the Ed Sullivan Show.

*Ed Sullivan: Now tonight, here in Miami Beach, The Beatles!*

Tukufu: So, the Beatles were at The Deauville. I'm not a signature expert. I really need to talk to somebody who knows more about signatures than I do. I'm sending copies of the autographs to an expert, Roger Epperson.

Hey, How you doing Roger? So, did you get the scans I sent you?

Roger says he can help, but warns their signatures changed a lot in their early years, as they went from unknowns to signing hundreds of autographs at a time. It's going to take him a

while to track down examples from that 1964 trip for comparison. In the meantime, I want to find out more about the Beatles visit to Miami. Would it even be possible for this mysterious maitre d, Charles, to get close enough to the Beatles to secure these autographs? Beatles author and expert Bruce Spizer agrees to meet me at the Deauville Hotel.

Bruce Spizer: And this is where it happened, this is inside the Napoleon room. That's the stage the Beatles performed on. This is how it looked back in 1964. All the fans going crazy, they said they actually got in three and a half thousand people.

Tukufu: That seems like that was really packing this place tight.

*RADIO BROADCAST: Here come the Beatles! Here they come! Here they come! There's Ringo!*

*Young Woman: I touched him, that's all I can say!*

Bruce: By the time they were at the Deauville, they were certainly at the height of Beatle Mania.

Tukufu: So at this moment, when they arrive in Miami, they're, like, bona fide superstars?

Bruce: Like never before. Now, the people in New York warned the people in Miami. You know, "Be on guard, the airport is going to be besieged."

*Radio Broadcast: "... thousands of local teens storming the Deauville Hotel..."*

*Radio Broadcast: "They're trying to get in the elevator too and the police are standing by trying to keep them from getting in the elevator"*

Bruce: But they didn't believe it was going to be quite that bad, and three to seven thousand people showed up. The Deauville Hotel staff certainly must have been warned by Ed Sullivan's people that pandemonium would be here. But once again the Deauville staff thought they could handle it, but they really couldn't.

Tukufu: But why the Deauville?

Bruce: Why the Deauville? Because Ed Sullivan and the owner of the Deauville apparently knew each other. And for The Beatles, it was the perfect situation. They play New York, they fly down to Miami, they do the Ed Sullivan show, and they've got a vacation in Florida.

Tukufu: Bruce tells me around 70 million people watched the Beatles Miami performance on TV. How would Charles have gotten access to The Beatles to get these signatures? Bruce has the same question, so he spent some time looking for the Deauville's mysterious maitre d.

Bruce: Well we knew he was maitre d at the Deauville, but unfortunately, the Deauville changed hands in management and ownership a couple of times. So, any employment records are presumed destroyed. So, we weren't able to find out Charles's last name. And without a last name, we really haven't been able to track down Charles.

Tukufu: But whoever Charles was, the other autographs he sent suggest he had the powers of persuasion.

Bruce: I have no way of telling you whether these four signatures are real or not. I can tell

you Myron Cohen was on The Ed Sullivan Show with The Beatles, so he was there.  
Tukufu: Okay. He was there.

Bruce: We know Bob Hope was there.

*Interviewer: Have you gotten a Beatles wig yet?*

*Bob Hope: "I'm buying one for Crosby."*

Bruce: Monday, February 17th, Bob Hope announced in Miami "Of course I dig The Beatles. My kids would take away my television set if I didn't." And "best wishes, Cynthia Lennon", she was there.

Tukufu: Bruce says, as the maitre d, Charles could have encountered any of these celebrities in the restaurant. But he doesn't think the Beatles ever ate there. He guesses Charles could have procured the autographs somewhere else.

Bruce: Now here we are, up on the 12th floor of the Deauville and this was the room that the Beatles stayed on.

Tukufu: Paul and Ringo were in here?

Bruce: Yep, two Beatles in this room.

Tukufu: So if Ringo would have signed something in his room, this is the room where he would have signed it.

Bruce: This would have been the room he would have signed it.

Tukufu: Okay.

Bruce: Fans were trying to do things like dress up as maids and try to get in that way. The manager was very sensitive about this so the staff was really informed, you know, that they also couldn't be swept into Beatle Mania, that they pretty much had to stay away from the Beatles.

Tukufu: Did Charles risk his job to get John and Ringo's autographs for Mike and Jimmy?

Tukufu: Handwriting expert Roger Epperson finally has an answer. He's meeting me at the Hard Rock Café where they have a painting from that '64 visit, signed by the Beatles. What did you find out about the other four autographs that I sent you?

Roger Epperson: I was going to start with, uh, Myron Cohen, and I've picked up a known exemplar from a Las Vegas hotel that he signed an autograph for. As we can see here, they're absolutely identical. That one's definitely real.

Tukufu: Whoa, okay.

Roger: Bob Hope. As you can see here, this one is without question authentic too.

Roger: Vic Morrow. It's a perfect match. Dead on. Cynthia Lennon here, she always put a dot at the end of her signature. If you line them up, they're exactly identical.

Tukufu: So my guy is really holding some signatures.

Roger: Oh, absolutely.

Tukufu: Now, let's get down to the Beatles.

Roger: The thing with the Beatles, they're a little bit trickier than these guys. As they're rising to fame and they've sign many, many, many, many autographs, it usually digresses.

Tukufu: So this should be good for us to use because the four signatures on here were supposedly, uh, gotten while the Beatles were here in 1964 doing the Ed Sullivan Show at the Deauville Hotel.

Roger: Well, let's start with the John Lennon. Let's take a look at this one.

Tukufu: So here we are, the Napoleon Ballroom. This is where it all happened.

Jimmy and Mike: This is it. Love it!

Tukufu: And this is the stage where the Beatles played.

Jimmy: That's Awesome.

Tukufu: Right here. So, how do you guys feel being where the Beatles played back in 1964?

Michael: I love it, love it!

Jimmy: I can't believe it, I can't believe it. I'm going to pinch myself.

Michael: It's exciting.

Tukufu: You wanted to know if these were authentic.

Michael: Yes.

Tukufu: Every single one of these four signatures are authentic.

Michael: Great!

Jimmy: That's great!

Michael: Good, good.

Jimmy: That's super.

Mike: That's great. That's what we were hoping for.

Jimmy: That's great.

Tukufu: But are the Beatles autographs real?

Roger: So from comparing the two from the same week, I have to say, this John Lennon and the Ringo Starr is not authentic.

Tukufu: Oh man! Oh no!

Roger: That's too bad.

Tukufu: Oh man!

Roger: The J is definitely different. This isn't the type of J he normally made. Ringo's "R" is much rounder here than it is here. The underline doesn't have the star that he put underneath his name.

Tukufu: This autograph is not from Ringo Starr.

Jimmy: Really?

Tukufu: And as you can see this is not John Lennon's signature.

Michael: The "J" for sure is different.

Jimmy: That's right.

Michael: Disappointing, so now we know.

Jimmy: Well now, now we know.

Tukufu: Ringo Starr didn't sign, John Lennon didn't sign, who do you think signed it?

Jimmy: I always heard that the road manager, you know, signed in lieu of the artist.

Michael: Could it possibly have been the road manager?

Tukufu: It's definitely possible.

Tukufu: So their tour and road managers signed in their place?

Roger: Many, many times and they look pretty good. They fool a lot of people. Just so they could satisfy that autograph hunger. But in regards to the John Lennon and Ringo Starr autographs, that's not their style of signature.

Tukufu: The road manager didn't sign it.

Jimmy: Ok, ok. Could it have been Cynthia Lennon?

Tukufu: Cynthia Lennon could've signed it, we know that she was there as well.

Roger: That's certainly not her handwriting either.

Tukufu: But what about Charles? I show Roger that along with the autographs came a postcard from Charles, the maitre d.

Roger: Let's take a look at the way he wrote "Beatle" here and here are very similar. Let's look at the way he wrote "Jimmy" – it's nearly identical. This one Charles definitely signed.

Tukufu: Whoa! This photo here was signed by Charles. Okay.

Jimmy: Ok. Unbelievable.

Michael: Oh man.

Jimmy: Michael and I have teased each other; he's teased me that he will retire on this. It can still be his retirement, might not be as much, but it's his retirement.

Michael: I'm sincerely not mad at Charles; I think he thought he was doing something nice for a couple of boys.

Tukufu: You believe that he had good intentions in it. That means something to you.

Michael: It does.

Jimmy: Yes it does.

Tukufu: Now, that kind of meaning is priceless.

Jimmy: Exactly. Exactly.

Michael: Right. You're right.