

# “The Long Black Veil”--Lefty Frizzell (1959)

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Essay by David Frizzell (guest post)\*



*Lefty and David Frizzell*

I started working with my brother Lefty in 1956, opening his shows and road managing for him.

Don Law was Lefty’s producer with Columbia Records and had booked Lefty’s next recording session for March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1959 in Nashville, TN. Lefty and his family was living in California at that time so a tour was booked so we could drive to Nashville. We arrived in Nashville the last part of February and, when we got to Nashville, we stopped at a convenience market on the outside of town and Lefty called Don saying, “We made it.”

Don told Lefty, “Don’t move, I know where are you and I’ll meet you there. I got some songs for you. I’ll be right over.”

When Don drove up, he handed Lefty a small reel-to-reel tape saying, “Lefty, listen, especially to the third song. I think you are going to like it.”

I met Don Law for the first time that day; Don later that year produced my first session for Columbia Records.

Lefty carried a small Wollensak tape recorder with him and the three of us walked into the convenience market and we heard the third song on the tape—“The Long Black Veil.”

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, Lefty and I met Don and some of the *very best* musicians at the time at the Bradley Film and Recording Studio in downtown Nashville:

Grady Martin – Guitar  
Harold Bradley – Guitar  
Don Helms – Steel  
Joseph Zinkan – Bass  
Buddy Harman – Drums  
Marijohn Wilkin - Piano

Three songs were recorded that day: “Sin Will Be the Chaser for the Wine,” “Knock Again True Love,” ... but the attention and the excitement all went for the third song, “The Long Black Veil,” a song written by Marijohn Wilkin and Danny Dill.

Lefty sang “The Long Black Veil” that day but Lefty didn’t just sing “The Long Black Veil” that day, Lefty *performed* “The Long Black Veil” that day and to think that Lefty had only heard the song a few days before.

*David Frizzell is a Grammy-nominated country singer and recording artist. He is best known for his many hit country duets with Shelly West. He is also the younger brother of Lefty Frizzell. David Frizzell’s website is [www.DavidFrizzell.com](http://www.DavidFrizzell.com).*

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