

THE JEFF'S 51 COUNTDOWN

February 19, 2022

#1 – “What Goes Around... Comes Around” by Justin Timberlake – This song makes countdown history this year as it joins, “Piano Man” by Billy Joel, and “How You Remind Me” by Nickelback as the only songs in the history of mankind to spend seven consecutive years atop the Jeff’s Countdown. In addition to the long streak at #1, this song has now spent 13 years in the Top 10 and 15 total years in the countdown. I dedicate the #1 song in my countdown to the #1 person in my life, Cindy Rogers. Two nights ago, when I was out playing poker with my friends, Cindy sent me a text message with a heart emoji. I of course responded with a “Love You.” A few beers later, I checked my messages again and saw the “Love You” response. At this point, my early onset Alzheimer’s set in and when I saw my response, I thought it was from her, so I responded “Love U2.” So yesterday morning when she got out of bed, she checked her messages and saw my response to my own response and was quick to inform me of my error. We had a good laugh about it and although that was just one small simple thing it reminded me why I love her so much - because of the little things like that. Because despite the many challenges life throws at us, we can always find the humor in our smallest foul ups and it becomes a story that we enjoy remembering and sharing with others many years later, like the “fish incident” or the time I dropped Allison as a baby, or the time we went camping and couldn’t fall asleep because of Mickey the dog. She also puts up with my many quirks and idiosyncrasies which actually might be the biggest reason why I love her. One of my biggest eccentricities, The Jeff’s Countdown comes to an end for another year with the video for this song. Until it comes around again, please enjoy this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOrnUquxtwA>

#2 – “Can’t Find My Way Home” by Blind Faith – With the television show *This is Us* concluding at the end of the season, this song, which was featured in Episode 2 of Season 1, comes full circle. It debuted in the Jeff’s 48 Countdown in the #34 position. That was actually in the middle point of Season 3 for the show because I didn’t start watching the series from the start. I decided to watch the pilot episode after realizing my wife, Cindy, was hooked on it a few years in. Having OCD such as I do, I have to start a series from the very start. I can’t just jump in at the middle. So, after watching that first episode with the plot twist ending, I was hooked as well. After watching the second episode which featured a second plot twist in addition to this song, the hook was set even deeper. In addition to binge watching the remaining episodes to get caught up so I could begin watching the shows with Cindy, I added this song to my playlist and put it in regular rotation. I grew to really appreciate this song and the brief but productive career of Blind Faith. It’s a shame they only ever recorded one album and completed one tour, before going their separate ways. I dedicate this #2 song to #2 for the Philadelphia Eagles, Darius Slay. After Slay came to the Eagles in a trade in 2020 and signed a new contract, I was concerned it was just a money grab given his relatively disappointing

2020 season. He really turned it around in 2021 though, putting together a Pro Bowl season in which he found his way to the end zone several times including "at his former home" versus the Lions. While the Eagles fizzled out in the playoffs, Slay laid down some exciting play this season and gave us Eagles' fans a reason to cheer. With Slay returning and three mid first round draft picks, hopefully the Eagles will return to prominence in 2022. While we wait out the off-season, we can watch this live performance of a jazzed-up version of this song from a somewhat more mature Steve Winwood and Eric Clapton: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8L82II1Njo>

#3 – "Breakeven" by The Script – This edition of the Jeff's Countdown makes it eight consecutive appearances in the Top 5 for this song, and it fittingly breaks even, holding steady in the #3 position for a second consecutive year. In total, this song has appeared in the countdown twelve consecutive years. I dedicate this #3 song to #3 for the Philadelphia Phillies, Bryce Harper. Despite a historically bad Phillies' bullpen in 2021, Harper was able to do enough at the plate to keep the Phils competitive throughout the year. He finished the season with a .309 average, 35 homers and 42 doubles. In the process he won the National League Most Valuable Player Award for the second time in his career, his first one with the Phillies. Over each of the past four seasons the Phillies have finished the regular season within two games of the breakeven point. If they could ever get a few solid relief pitchers, perhaps they could harness the Bryce Harper talent and do better than breakeven. Major League Baseball is on the brink of losing games this year due to a work stoppage so perhaps none of this will matter anyway. Until the labor dispute is resolved we can at least watch the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzCLLHscMOw>

#4 – "Counting Stars" by OneRepublic – Although this song never moved higher than #2 on the U.S. Pop Charts, it did reach #1 in several other countries including Canada and the United Kingdom. This year it garners Top 4 status in the Jeff's Countdown for the first time, following four consecutive years in the Top 10. In total, this song has spent eight years in the countdown. I dedicate this one to the late Bernard Lown, who passed away on this day last year. Lown invented the cardiac defibrillator in the early 1960s, a device that now saves about 500 lives a year in the United States and Canada alone. In addition to his work on the defibrillator, Lown also completed extensive research in the area of heart health. His investigations led to many medical breakthroughs, among them the coronary care unit. His work made possible and safe much of modern cardiac surgery, as well as a host of other innovations. Lown was one of the stars of heart health, perhaps one of the stars being counted in the video for this song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hT_nvWrelhg

#5 – "Collide" by Howie Day – After two straight years at #2, this song drops three spots into its current position. It hangs onto a Top 5 position though, giving it six total years inside the Top 5. This song has reached the Top 20 in all 17 years of its countdown history. I dedicate this one to the recently retired Tom Brady. Among his many records, Brady has been Super Bowl MVP five times. He's been MVP of the big game more times than any other player has even appeared in the game save one (Charles Haley). Brady is easily the best player who has ever played the game of football. He's a good

athlete, but what sets him apart from the rest is his work ethic, intelligence, and quite simply, his desire to be the best. His competitive fire burns so hot he went to great lengths to keep his body in shape so he could play into his age 44 season. At his advanced age of 44 he was still one of the top quarterbacks in the game. That's not as old as this song, but similarly, this song is one of the greats of the Jeff's 51 Countdown: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca9ub9rpNK4>

#6 – "Blurry" by Puddle of Mudd – This former #1 song in the Jeff's Countdown celebrates 20 years of countdown inclusion with a one-spot increase from #7 last year. Puddle of Mudd's most successful song debuted at #8 in the Jeff's 32 Countdown and has never fallen outside of the Top 10 in its 20 years. It spent two years in the countdown's #1 spot, those being the Jeff's 43 and Jeff's 44 Countdowns. I dedicate this one to my oldest daughter, Allison Rogers. Currently living in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, for the Spring semester, she has a little over a year to go before she graduates from Virginia Tech with an architecture degree. Before I begin to look forward to what she'll be doing in the next phase of her life, I'll look back to what she was doing in the previous phase. Four years ago today, Allison was a high school senior at Elkton High School and member of the girls' basketball team. The Elks spent that Valentine's Day evening in a close battle against one of their big rivals, Harford Tech. With about a minute left in the game, the score was tied, and a timeout was taken. Elkton inbounded the ball following the timeout and set up a play. After a series of passes, Allison got the ball about 15 feet from the basket, turned and faced the basket and took an open shot. The shot was a perfect swish. It gave the Elks a two-point lead and following a stop on defense, a two-point win. The game was Allison's 88th consecutive game for the Elkton Girls' Varsity. She ended her career with a 91 consecutive games played streak and I'm pretty sure that still stands as the longest streak since she's been on the team given that last year's season was cancelled due to Covid. As with all my kids, I'm so impressed by the level of commitment Allison gives in all facets of her life, whether it be in school, athletics, or anything else. Her commitment is clear, while this video is "Blurry": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYORD6ht3zY>

#7 – "Wonderwall" by Oasis – After debuting in the Jeff's 26 Countdown at #23, this song went on an 8-year hiatus before returning in the #28 spot in the Jeff's 35 Countdown. It's retained a spot in the countdown every year since, and this year it moves into the Top 10 for the first time. I dedicate this one to James Webb, who spent 7 years as administrator of NASA. He took over that position 61 years ago tomorrow. NASA's most recent project, which bears his name, The James Webb telescope, launched on December 25, 2021. The telescope was fitted with cables manufactured by my company, W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. The GORE® SpaceWire Assemblies transmit high-speed digital signals like video, telemetry, sensor or control data to various command and data handling systems without noticeable signal loss over the large distances in the huge telescope. In a next step, the signals are sent to the satellite antenna and from there to the ground stations. Our cables were selected because they can be exposed to extreme temperatures from below -220 degrees Celsius (or -370 degrees Fahrenheit) and other harsh conditions. Although space exploration has seemingly slowed in the past decade or two, this is still an exciting time to witness what we are

learning about our universe and what may be beyond it. Technology such as the James Webb telescope is a modern wonder, and the video for this song is pretty wonderful as well: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bx1Bh8ZvH84>

#8 – "Shape of You" by Ed Sheeran – For a second consecutive year this song moves up one singular spot in the countdown. After debuting in the Jeff's 47 Countdown at #21, this song moved up to #15 and then to #10, and then #9. On December 22, 2021, this hit became the first song in the history of Spotify to reach 3 billion streams. I'm sure I'm responsible for at least a few dozen of those streams. I was interested to learn a few other facts about this song late last year. Sheeran had Rihanna in mind when he began writing it. He was later convinced to record it for himself, but in thinking about Rihanna he infused the rhythm from the song "No Scrubs" by TLC. I jokingly refer to the Jeff's 29 Countdown as my "dark time" because of the inclusion of "No Scrubs" in the #22 position that year. The knowledge that Ed Sheeran considers the "No Scrubs" beat worthy of replication in his song gives me some vindication for what I've always considered a questionable choice for that Jeff's 29 Countdown which I threw together at the last minute as I battled a few demons during that time of my life. But I digress. I dedicate this one to Brian Flores, former head coach of the Miami Dolphins. Flores was recently fired by the Dolphins despite back-to-back winning seasons. That was the first time the Dolphins experienced back-to-back seasons above 0.500 since Dave Wannstedt was head coach in 2002 and 2003. Flores has since filed suit against the NFL alleging he was the victim of racial discrimination. Flores claims that he has evidence that Dolphins owner Stephen Ross offered him \$100,000 per game to lose such that Miami would hold a better position in the draft. Flores also released text messages from his former boss Bill Belichick, who mistakenly texted him congratulations for getting the Giants head coaching job when he hadn't even interviewed for it. It was later confirmed by Belichick that the text was a mistake and meant for Brian Daboll. It was obvious from the text thread that the Giants had already decided to give their head coaching job to Daboll and were only interviewing Flores to fulfill their obligation to interview at least two minority candidates from outside the organization. My heart really went out to Flores after reading those text messages. I experienced a similar situation a few years back when I thought I was in line for a new position at work only to learn later that I wasn't going to be considered for the position I thought was available. Of course my situation wasn't discrimination based on the color of my skin, but it was a real disappointment to me, and I can only begin to feel how horrible Flores felt when he learned the congratulatory text was meant for someone else, and he wasn't even getting a real chance at the job. I also strongly believe Miami wanted to purposely lose games and hired Flores just to cover up their discriminatory tendency. If your goal is to lose games, why not make yourself look good and hire a black coach? When you've accumulated the draft picks and are ready to start winning you can then hire the white coach you want and not suffer any backlash because your prior coach was black. There is no doubt in my mind that this was the Dolphins' plan and I hope they get exposed for it. It's likely Flores never gets another shot at being a head coach in the NFL because he has filed this suit, but I applaud him for standing up for what is right and his effort to make things fairer for those who come after him. I've never been a fan of quotas in the hiring process. I think the best candidate should get the job. In this case though it's clear that Flores was a worthy

candidate and deserved better than what he received. I hope Flores' suit changes the shape of the NFL, just like this song changed my perception of that #22 song in the Jeff's 29 Countdown: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGwWNGJdvx8>

#9 – "Hold Me Now" by Thompson Twins – This year marks 9 years in the countdown for the #9 song, and this is its highest ever position. It moves up one spot from its previous high last year. I dedicate this one to Howard Hesseman, who died from complications of colon surgery two weeks ago. Hesseman is best known for playing the character, Dr. Johnny Fever on *WKRP in Cincinnati*. That was one of my favorite sitcoms growing up, but I also watched *Head of the Class* in which Hesseman played the teacher, Charlie Moore. That of course was the show where Robin Givens first came to fame. Hesseman's fame seemed to fade following that show, but he continued with lesser roles in various television shows and movies up until about 4 years ago when his health began to fade. This song by the Thompson Twins isn't fading at all and the video for it can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9694K85Xc8>

#10 – "Take Back the Night" by Justin Timberlake – Making its eighth appearance in the countdown, this song remains in the Top 10 for a sixth consecutive year. It debuted in the Jeff's 44 Countdown at #27 and moved up to #14 the following year. It then began its Top 10 run with a move to #10. It peaked at #3 in the Jeff's 49 Countdown. I dedicate this one to women's soccer superstar, Carli Lloyd. The two-time Olympic gold medalist and two-time FIFA Women's World Cup champion retired from her sport last year. My children were all soccer players in their youth and my daughter Allison in particular, has always been a fan of the U.S. Women's National Team. Lloyd was a significant contributor to the team over her 16-year international career. The highlight of her career was a three-goal performance in the United States' 5–2 win over Japan in the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup Final. In that game, Lloyd became the first player ever to score three goals in a FIFA Women's World Cup final. I'll never forget where I was when that game was played. My family and I were in Manheim, PA, for a travel basketball tournament that weekend. We decided to stay at the Pinch Pond campground for an easier commute to the games that weekend. We stayed overnight Sunday for an extra day of camping. Allison didn't want to miss watching the World Cup Final live that Sunday evening, so we found a local restaurant, The Quentin Tavern, where we could watch the game. Lloyd's performance was historic and made me a fan. The following spring, we travelled to Pittsburgh to watch Lloyd and the National Team play a match versus Costa Rica. A few years later we watched her play live again in New York. I've watched Michael Jordan and Wayne Gretzky play, and I feel strongly that Carli Lloyd belongs right with those two as the greatest in their sport. Justin Timberlake is one of the greats of the Jeff's Countdown and this is the video for his second most successful countdown song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEzREJbln-o>

#11 – "Regulate" by Warren G. featuring Nate Dogg – After popping into the Top 10 two years ago, this song now holds steady at #11 for a second consecutive year. In total, it's made six total countdown appearances, debuting at #34 and climbing as high as #9. This year, I found a new version of the song, the jamming remix which features both Michael and Maureen McDonald contributing the "I Keep Forgettin'" lyrics in the

refrain. I dedicate this to the former football player, coach, commentator, and video game promoter, John Madden. The winning head coach of Super Bowl XI, who passed away late last year, will not soon be forgotten. His professional football career began with the Philadelphia Eagles, my favorite team. Although he did not achieve success as a player, Madden quickly transitioned to coaching. At the age of just 32 years old, Madden ascended to become the head coach of the Oakland Raiders. He was the youngest ever NFL head coach at that point in time. He coached the Raiders for just ten years, but in those ten years he collected seven division titles, and in the three years the Raiders didn't win the division, they finished in second place. Following his coaching career Madden moved on to broadcasting. He quickly became the lead football analyst for CBS. Teamed with Pat Summerall, Madden soon became the most popular color commentator in football, and perhaps in all of sports. He lent his name, voice, and creative input to EA Sports, for the video game which would come to be known as Madden NFL Football. Madden was also a pitchman for Miller Lite and made many entertaining commercials for Miller during their "Tastes Great... Less Filling" campaign. I always enjoyed those commercials and of course I've grown to enjoy Miller Lite as well. I also enjoy watching the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp5wID1FWOk>

#12 – "Kids" by OneRepublic – This favorite of mine failed to achieve success just about anywhere else other than the Jeff's Countdown, but I've loved it since its release in 2016. It was included in the first Jeff's Countdown following its release, the Jeff's 47 Countdown where it landed at #46. It took a big jump to #32 the following year, and then made additional incremental increases to #27 and then to #21 last year. I dedicate this song to one of my own kids, Courtney Rogers. Now a sophomore at North Carolina State University, Courtney has achieved outstanding academic success in both high school and college. She's a math whiz and good in many other subjects as well. As a biomedical engineering major, Courtney is looking for her first opportunity to work in the engineering field this summer. She's completed her application to be a Gore summer intern and I recently entered a recommendation for her. I hope she gets the opportunity to work for Gore this summer. If she gets the right commitment, which I'm hoping will be in new product development for our medical division, I know she will really enjoy it and most likely want to work for Gore long term. I'm hoping for that outcome as a Gore stockholder, not just as a parent, because I know Gore will be better off with Courtney as an associate. She has a few more years to work all of this out, but for now I'm just really proud that she is one of my kids. I'm proud to carry the flag for Courtney, just like I'm proud to carry the flag for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1si7o17oiXM>

#13 – "How You Remind Me" by Nickelback – This former seven-time #1 song in the Jeff's Countdown holds on for a 21st straight year of inclusion. All 21 of those years have been within the Top 25. I dedicate this one to Jim Brendemuehl, a former mentor of mine. Jim and I worked together at The PQ Corporation Utica Plant between the years of 1995 and 2000. Jim taught me a lot during that time and gave me a lot of ideas, many of which I still utilize today. My Vendor Blacklist (found here <https://esfl.com/jeffs-vendor-blacklist/>) was inspired by Jim's "Vendor of the Month" concept. Once a month, Jim would choose one of our vendors and ask them to take us out to lunch to talk business. During lunch, Jim would inform the salesperson that they were chosen as his

vendor of the month. Jim regretfully informed them that this meant they needed to tell us what they were going to do to retain our business. It usually meant they needed to cut their price or improve their service. It didn't always work, but many times it did, and overall, it allowed us to cut our costs and raise our profit margins. If they chose not to do anything for us, Jim would put them on the blacklist, and let them know they would be replaced. While I never came up with my own "Vendor of the Month Club," I did create my own Vendor Blacklist, adding companies to that list who provided poor service, poor quality product, or some other reason not to use them going forward. In a capitalist economy, the best way to ensure we get good products and services is by not using companies that provide poor products and services and by encouraging others not to use them either. Today, I add yet another company to my Vendor Blacklist, that being Johnson Fitness. We purchased a treadmill from Johnson Fitness, formerly known as Leisure Fitness, in the Fall of 2020. Along with the treadmill, we purchased a 5-year warranty which was billed as a "worry free" warranty. I also confirmed with the salesman that any repairs would be performed with technicians who worked directly for their company. A few months after the purchase we had problems with the belt pulling to one side of the treadmill. It took several calls and a threat to return the treadmill before someone finally came out and serviced our machine. A year later, the belt developed a crease and tear at the splice, making the treadmill essentially unusable. I once again called for repairs and once again it was difficult getting a repair person to come out and fix our treadmill. This time, Johnson Fitness notified us that a third party was in place for fulfilling our warranty claim. Of course, both companies did everything in their power not to service our machine. It took 55 days and more than 20 communications until someone finally came out and repaired our machine this past Friday. That's unacceptable service for a warranty sold to me as being "worry free". To anyone reading this, I encourage you to not purchase any products from Johnson Fitness. I do encourage you to visit my Vendor Blacklist webpage (link above) which now also includes my list of vendors on probation, and my list of my favorite vendors. I also encourage you to watch the video for this song found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aiay8I5IPB8>

#14 – "You Make My Dreams" by Daryl Hall & John Oates – After 26 editions of the Jeff's Countdown without a Hall & Oates song, this duo with Philadelphia roots and 29 Top 40 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 finally broke through with this song in 2018. That was the Jeff's 47 Countdown where this song debuted at #40. Since then, it's been a steady climber moving to 29,23,15, and now 14. I dedicate this one to Spencer Silver, who was born on this day in 1941 and died in May of last year. Silver was an American Chemist and inventor who worked with his fellow 3M colleague, Art Fry, to develop the Post-it note. I've dedicated a song in the past to Fry, and now it's Silver's turn. Silver serendipitously developed the adhesive for the Post-it note when he was trying to formulate a super strong adhesive for the assembly of aircraft parts. His prototype wasn't strong enough for use in airplane assembly, but after collaborating with Fry, and understanding his idea for a "bookmark sticky," the two discovered the adhesive was the near perfect for that application. When applied to paper, the adhesive was strong enough to stick, but weak enough to be removed. It could also be re-stuck multiple additional times, making it the perfect product which now can be found in offices and homes everywhere. Each year more than 50 billion Post-it notes are sold worldwide. This story

serves to demonstrate than an inventor's dream to create a world changing product can really come true, even if the initial result is a failure. All dreams can come true with the right amount of hard work and serendipity as long as the dreamer continues the hard work even if the serendipity isn't immediate. Hall & Oates weren't lucky enough to appear in the first 26 countdowns, but they continued to dream and now here they are with the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EErSKhC0CZs>

#15 – "Piano Man" by Billy Joel – As the record holder for most years in the #1 position with 11 total times on top, this song continues to rack up countdown appearances. It's the only song to be included in every single edition of the Jeff's Countdown although this year it drops outside of the Top 10 for just the third time in 31 years. The #15 ranking matches it's lowest ever position. I was set to dedicate this song to Neil Young after reading recent news blurbs which reported that he was pulling his music from Spotify due to the broadcasting of misinformation on the Covid 19 vaccines. I'm pro vaccine and have grown frustrated by the circulating false claims such as the vaccine alters DNA, that it's a form of microchipping the general population, or that it's manufactured from fetuses. When I heard Young was asking Spotify to remove The Joe Rogan podcast from their lineup of available media, I figured it was due to vaccine misinformation such as that. I was all set to unsubscribe from Spotify and add them to my Vendor Blacklist, but before making that move I decided I should really listen to this controversial show for myself before making a final decision. I researched the subject and came to learn that Dr. Robert Malone was the guest on the controversial podcast in question. I found the podcast and listened to the whole 3 hours and 6 minutes of it. In my opinion, there were no outlandish claims, no misinformation, and nothing that warranted censorship. Malone, who helped develop the mRNA vaccine technology and received the Covid vaccine himself, was simply presenting his case that Pfizer and governments around the world were suppressing dissenting data and opinions on the vaccines in an effort to push for widespread adoption. Malone was quick to point out that correlation does not imply causation, and when he speculated on the reasons for suppression of negative vaccine information, he was quick to indicate his points were simply that, speculation. Malone never once discouraged vaccination. He simply stated his opinion that vaccination should be a choice, especially when it comes to children. As a scientist, it's easy for me to weigh information like that Malone presented, weigh the risks on either side of the equation, and make an informed decision. After listening to Malone, I can appreciate his arguments, but it doesn't change my stance that vaccination is the proper decision for most people, even children. However, I cannot condone the actions of Neil Young, Twitter, and others who seek to censor Rogan and subject matter experts such as Dr. Malone who only wish to offer a differing opinion based on their analysis of the relevant data. When we talk about the bounds on Free Speech, the example of one yelling "fire" in a crowded theater is often cited. It's one thing to yell "fire" in a crowded theater, it's another thing to hand out pamphlets to theater goers on the topic of fire prevention. I'd say what Malone is doing is more of the latter and not the former. The three hours I spent listening to that podcast was time well spent. For one thing, it convinced me to maintain my subscription to Spotify. I would have missed Spotify. In addition, I came to learn of Dr. Mattias Desmet, a professor in the field of psychology whose work was referenced by Malone in the podcast. Desmet cautions

against the power of Mass Formation Psychosis, the point when society "becomes decoupled from each other and has a free-floating anxiety in a sense that things don't make sense. When this happens, their attention gets focused by a leader or series of events on one small point, just like hypnosis. This is what Dr. Malone believes is currently happening in society when it comes to the vaccination. The pro-vaxxers are convinced their position is the correct one and everyone who believes differently should fall in line with them, to the extent they are not concerned about the suppression of conflicting data or anyone who feels differently on the subject, regardless of their qualifications. Though many other expert psychologists believe the phenomenon of Mass Formation Psychosis is not real, I believe it is and that it's a danger and it's something we need to be aware of as a society. I therefore dedicate this song to Dr. Mattias Desmet. That was a long and torturous path to get to this song's dedication, but the song itself has been around a long time with a unique countdown path, so perhaps this extended entry is appropriate. As always, the entry ends with the video for the song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxEPV4kolz0>

#16 – "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana – Generally considered to be the song which brought grunge to the mainstream, this track has always been one of my favorites, but it took 26 long years before it garnered Jeff's Countdown status. It wasn't until the Jeff's 47 Countdown that it made its first appearance, debuting at #28. It steadily climbed the countdown ranks the next few years until reaching #16 last year. This year it holds steady at #16. I dedicate this one to my daughter, Danielle, who is full of teen spirit and will be turning 16 later this year. Dani is a great student, an outstanding athlete, and all-around amazing kid. What really blows me away is how responsible she is, especially for teenager. She never needs parental persuasion to get out of bed in the morning. She gets up on her own each and every day and is always ready to leave the house at our agreed upon departure time, even on Wednesdays, when we leave an hour and a half earlier than normal so she can attend her weekly Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting before the start of school. In the year and a half she's been attending those meetings, she's never once skipped a meeting to sleep in. In a big believer that the most important ability in life is availability. Making the commitment to being on-time for meetings and for school each and every day is a precursor for success in life after school, and I know Danielle is going to be successful in whatever she chooses to do in life. I just hope she remembers to enjoy her remaining teenage years and takes the time to smell the proverbial roses. The video for this song is probably too old for her to enjoy, but my contemporaries and me can certainly enjoy it by clicking here:

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

#17 – "The Distance" by Cake – This is another former #2 countdown song that just couldn't quite ever break through to the top spot. It debuted in the leadoff spot in the Jeff's 36 Countdown. From there it worked its way up and landed at the #2 spot in the Jeff's 41 Countdown. After a drop to #3 the following year, it spent one more year at #2 before beginning a more significant slide. This year it reversed recent fortunes with a five-spot advancement from #22 last year. I dedicate this one to Melissa King, winner of the Season 17 *Top Chef* competition. I'm not a fan of *Top Chef* or of any of the cooking television shows. I'm simply using this as an in to get a recent quote of mine in public

print. At work the other day, a leader on my team helped me through a tough situation. I emailed her a thank you and she responded by saying she appreciated my gratitude because she was concerned she may have been creating a “too many cooks in the kitchen” scenario. To that I responded by saying, “Too many cooks in the kitchen is not an issue as long as one of them is willing and able to be top chef.” By the time she got back to me she had already quoted me in a meeting. I was proud about that, so I wanted to make sure and get this quote in writing before it goes viral and someone else takes credit for it. So, you read it here first. Right before you watched the video for this song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_HoMkkRHv8

#18 – “Heathens” by Twenty One Pilots – This song is in its second year of retreat after topping out at #5 just a couple of years ago. It debuted at #37 in The Jeff’s 46 Countdown and skyrocketed to the #10 position the following year. After another rise to the #6 position the subsequent year, it reached its peak of #5 in the Jeff’s 49 Countdown. I dedicate this one to women’s tennis star, Chris Evert. The winner of 18 career grand slam singles titles was recently diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Fortunately for her, it was caught in Stage 1, thanks in part to a proactive hysterectomy she had done in response to her sister’s diagnosis a few years earlier. It was discovered that Chris had the same genetic marker as her sister, who sadly died of the same disease in 2020. All her pre-op testing came back negative for cancer, but Chris proceeded with the surgery anyway to reduce her risk. As it turned out, a biopsy of her fallopian tubes indicated the presence of Stage 1 cancer. Despite the cancer being removed during the surgery, Evert will still undergo chemotherapy as a preventative measure, but she is expected to fully recover – thanks to being proactive with her health. Evert made her U.S. Open debut in 1971, the year in which I was born. Her career spanned to her retirement in 1989, the year I graduated from high school. I was a big tennis fan during my high school years which was during the heart of her rivalry with Martina Navratilova. Evert’s Czechoslovakian rival would eventually surpass her as the game’s biggest female star, but Martina would never surpass her on the list of all-time grand slam singles titles. Both ended their respective careers with 18. Speaking of 18, here is the video for the #18 song in this year’s countdown: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UprcpdwuWcg>

#19 – “Don’t You (Forget About Me)” by Simple Minds – When it came to inclusion in the Jeff’s Countdown, I actually forgot about this song for a long time. It was released in 1985, the inaugural Jeff’s 21 Countdown dropped on February 19, 1992, sans this song, and it wasn’t until the Jeff’s 47 Countdown in 2018 that it finally broke through and joined the ranks of my top songs. Now it’s climbed all the way to the Top 20 and doesn’t appear to be slowing down. I dedicate this one to the late Dustin Diamond who passed away on this day last year. Many of us forgot about the actor more commonly known as “Screech” once the original *Saved by the Bell* series left television. Whether it was due to typecasting or the fact that he just wasn’t that good of an actor, Diamond was never able to match the success he achieved on *Saved by the Bell*. It certainly wasn’t due to a lack of trying. Diamond tried acting in films, stand up comedy, singing, writing, wrestling, Celebrity Fit Club, and several other vocations with limited or no success. He even made his own sex tape which didn’t go over very well, initially taking credit for his appearance in it only to later deny it was he in the video. Even in the *Saved by the Bell*

reboot *New Class*, Diamond's character couldn't advance beyond the position of assistant principle at good old Bayside High. Sadly, Dustin died on this day last year at the relatively young age of 44. While many may have forgotten Dustin Diamond, they followers of the Jeff's 51 Countdown certainly aren't in that group. They haven't forgotten about this song either: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gLvqjIvokc>

#20 – "Flagpole Sitta" by Harvey Danger – The highest debut song in the Jeff's 50 Countdown is back for another year, moving up nine spots in the process. As the Covid-19 pandemic rages on, this continues to be one of the songs on my "Covid Soundtrack." I've been lucky in that I have yet to contract the virus, yet that doesn't mean 100% well, so I feel like I can really relate to the lyric in this song which goes: "I'm not sick but I'm not well." If and when the pandemic ends, I'm guessing I'll still really like this song, but if the pandemic continues another year, this song could very well reach the Top 10. I dedicate this song to one of my favorite professional athletes of all-time, Nolan Ryan. Major League Baseball's strikeout king turns 75 years old today. I first became a fan of Ryan in 1980, when he moved to the National League as a member of the Houston Astros. Back then, the Astros and the Philadelphia Phillies had a strong rivalry, and although the Phillies were the team I supported in that rivalry, I grew to appreciate how great Nolan Ryan was. The Phillies had Steve Carlton who I also loved, and that duo represented two of the greatest pitchers in baseball at that time. The two battled for the title of best pitcher in baseball throughout the 1980s and went back and forth as baseball's all-time strikeout leader, a title Ryan eventually took as his own due to his nearly unparalleled longevity. Ryan pitched for 27 years before finally retiring at age 46 following the 1993 season. As that season approached its end and it became clear that it would be Ryan's final year, I looked for an opportunity to watch him pitch in person, something I wasn't lucky enough to have done prior to that. On August 14, 1993, I travelled from my home in Eastern Pennsylvania to Cleveland, Ohio, so I could watch Ryan pitch the next d. Ryan and his Texas Rangers faced the team formerly known as the Cleveland Indians. The Rangers won that game 4-1, and Ryan made it through the requisite number of innings to claim the victory. It was Ryan's 324th and final career victory. I treasure the memory of watching Nolan Ryan get one final victory in his long and illustrious career. I'm not sure I'll ever look back on the Covid-19 pandemic and treasure the memories of it, but it will lead me to remember this song for sure: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYsMjEeEg4g>

#21 – "Lose Yourself" by Eminem – This is one of those rare songs that has won both a Grammy and an Oscar. Those awards are on top of the honor of eleven straight years of inclusion in the Jeff's Countdown of course. During those eleven years, this song has never been ranked higher than #17 or lower than #30. I dedicate this year's #21 song to Joel Embiid, who wears #21 for the Philadelphia 76ers. Embiid is single handedly keeping the 76ers in playoff contention with 40 point or more efforts on a near nightly basis. It's a shame that Sixers management hasn't done a better job of surrounding Embiid with teammates capable of playing at a championship level. They have certainly had enough high draft picks over the years to do it, but other than the pick they used to select Embiid, they blew most of the rest. The biggest blunder of those wasted picks might have been Ben Simmons. The all-star guard basically quit on his team during the

playoffs last season, and selfishly refuses to work on his shooting. He is now an albatross on the organization. The Sixers haven't been able to trade him, and he refuses to play for the team, which further deteriorates his value. After feeling like the team was on track to a championship with further development a few years ago, it has now devolved into a purgatory situation. The 76ers have lost themselves and I don't think there is much hope unless they can attract a significant free agent or two next off-season. Until then you can watch B-Rabbit lose himself in the video for this song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YuAzR2XVAM>

#22 – "Plush" by Stone Temple Pilots – Despite never reaching the top spot, I consider this the second most successful song in the history of the Jeff's Countdown. It has appeared in all but two additions of the countdown, putting it in second place in terms of most appearances all-time. Though it peaked at #2, this song spent three years at that position and eight total years within the Top 5. This year marks the first time it's fallen outside of the Top 20. I dedicate this one to Edgar Allen Poe, who on this day in 1845 saw his now famous poem, "The Raven" published in the New York City weekly newspaper, *The Evening Mirror*. Poe lived several years of his short life in the city of Baltimore and was the reason Baltimore named their NFL football team the Ravens back in 1996. Among other things, Poe is considered to be the inventor of the detective fiction genre. He was also a significant contributor to the emergence of the science fiction genre. He was the first well-known American writer to earn a living through writing alone, though it was not a very lucrative living for him. I've always flirted with the idea of making my living through writing, but it's always been the economics of it that's held me back. Thus, engineering remains my profession and writing remains my hobby, and the Jeff's Countdown blog rolls on with the video for this song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5UOC0C0x8Q>

#23 – "Superheroes" by The Script – This song was released in July of 2014. It debuted in the Jeff's 44 Countdown the following winter and has remained a countdown constant ever since. It's climbed as high as #21 and has never been lower than its debut position of #43. I dedicate this one to Slovenian cycling sensation Tadej Pogačar. The two-time Tour de France champion won cycling's main event last year at the age of just 22. No previous multiple tour winner was ever that young at the time of his second victory. Now 23, Pogačar will attempt a third Tour de France victory this summer. This year's course will be a tough test for Pogačar as it features cycling's great equalizer, cobblestones. Stage 5 will feature 11 sectors of cobblestone roads in the north of France. The dangerously bumpy and slick cobbles can lead to flat tires and crashes which can cause riders to lose big chunks of time. They can also cause crashes which can knock riders out of the race. If Pogačar can survive the cobbles on Stage 5 he will surely be favored to win his third consecutive Tour. I'm excited for this year's Tour de France because I will be in France for a few days this summer, and I'm currently planning to watch Stage 5 live. I could be witnessing history as I watch the superheroes of cycling this summer. Until then, we can all watch The Script's superheroes in the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIm1GgfRz6M>

#24 – "Inside Out" by Eve 6 – This stalwart of the Jeff's Countdown celebrates its 24th consecutive appearance in the countdown by moving into the #24 position. It debuted in the #16 spot in the Jeff's 28 Countdown and climbed as high as #2. It spent three years in the Top 5 and six total years in the Top 10 but was never able to crack the top spot. For the past 15 years, this song has hung out between the #18 and #39 positions. I dedicate this one to my fellow Widener University Alum, Billy "Whiteshoes" Johnson, who today celebrates his 70th birthday. I never got to watch Billy play at Widener. Back then, I didn't even know Widener existed. But I do remember him playing for the Houston Oilers in the NFL in the late 1970s. Billy was famous for wearing white shoes while at Chichester High School when everyone else was wearing black shoes. He made white shoes cool, and by the 1980s, everyone was wearing white. Not only is he famous for his shoes, but he is also regarded as one of the first players to participate in end zone dance celebrations. More than 40 years after he first performed it following a touchdown, his "Funky Chicken" end zone dance is ranked 3rd on journalist Kevin Dillon's list of Top 10 NFL Signature Celebrations of All-Time, following only the Icky Shuffle and the Lambeau Leap. One of the things needed to consider a player's end zone celebration for inclusion on an all-time best list is repetition. The player must get to the end zone fairly frequently. For the 5' 9", 170-pound Billy Johnson, he got there on a regular basis in spite of his size. During his NFL career, Johnson scored a total of 54 touchdowns, half of them scored on special teams where he excelled. He also scored a touchdown in and was named MVP of the 1975 Pro Bowl. He was named to the NFL's 75th and 100th anniversary teams, quite a feat for a guy too small to be given a Division I or even Division II football scholarship. Billy Johnson makes the small college student like me proud, both on the inside and the out. I'm not sure if the members of Ev6 went to a small college, big college, or any college at all, but this is the video for their song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8Xb_7YDroQ

#25 – "25 or 6 to 4" by Chicago – After kicking off the Jeff's 51 Countdown with the #51 song, the artists formerly known as Chicago Transit Authority this time slot in at the midpoint of the countdown. The #25 spot represents this song's peak position and an increase of 7 spots from last year. It first appeared at #47 in the Jeff's 48 Countdown and has steadily climbed the countdown ranks since its debut. I dedicate this one to NFL running back James Robinson. The Jacksonville Jaguar, who wears uniform #25, won a job during the Jaguars' training camp in 2020 despite being an undrafted free agent. He quickly ascended to the top of the Jags' depth chart and finished the season second among all rookie running backs in rushing yardage. I drafted Robinson in the 20th round of my Conference Room Quarterbacks Fantasy Football League that year, and he outperformed several of the players drafted in the first round of the league. This past season, Robinson was on my Eastern States Fantasy Football League roster and performed admirably despite the many issues with the 2021 Jaguars team and their head coach. Robinson was so well respected among his teammates that one teammate, quarterback Trevor Lawrence, called out head coach Urban Meyer for not giving Robinson enough playing time. Meyer was fired a few weeks later. James Robinson's season ended in Week 16 when he tore his Achilles tendon. It was a sad ending to a tumultuous season. Now #25 is out 6 to 4 months while he recovers. Hopefully he's

back in time for the 2022 season. While he rehabs, we can all watch the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uAUoz7jimg>

#26 – "The Man Who Can't Be Moved" by The Script – The song about the ultimate example of patience, has patiently waited in the middle 70% of the Jeff's Countdown over the course of its now 12 years of inclusion. It has never exceeded the #8 position, and it's never been lower than #31. I dedicate this one to the late Lou Ottens, the Dutch engineer and inventor who patiently toiled for several years working on the development of various recording media. Ottens, who worked for Phillips, is responsible for the compact audio cassette which he started working on in 1960 and completed in 1963. His patent was made available to other manufacturers which helped boost the adoption of the cassette. By the mid-1980s sales of albums on cassette exceed sales on vinyl and the cassette remained the medium of choice until 1993, when sales of compact discs finally surpassed those of cassettes. Ottens also worked on the development of the CD, still while working for Phillips, truly demonstrating that he was a man who couldn't be moved. To watch Script lead singer Danny O'Donaghue not be moved, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS9o1FAszdk>

#27 – "Psycho" by Puddle of Mudd – This chart topper on the Billboard Hot 100 Hot Modern Rock tracks went as high as #8 in the Jeff's Countdown and has spent all 14 of its countdown years within the Top 30. I dedicate it to Irv Cross who passed away last February. The former cornerback for the Philadelphia Eagles wore uniform number 27 during his playing career. Cross' playing days were before my time, but I remember him for his work on the NFL Today pregame show on CBS where he shared the stage with Phyllis George, Jimmy "The Greek," and of course the eternal Brent Musberger. Cross was the first African American to work as a sports analyst on national television. I don't remember a lot about those pregame shows, but I do remember Cross being a knowledgeable and well-spoken analyst. I also remember enjoying that pregame show much better than those of today. The same can be said for the video for this song – I enjoy it more than most of the videos made today: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDdeOncpD5E>

#28 – "American Girl" by Tom Petty – After spending the last two years in the #36 position, this song regains some positive momentum with an advancement of 8 spots. It debuted in the Jeff's 47 Countdown at #44, and advanced to #39 the following year before its two-year run at #36. I dedicate this one to the late Paul Orndorff. Known as Mr. Wonderful in pro wrestling circles, Orndorff died from dementia at the age of 71 in July of 2021. I was a fan of pro wrestling in the 1980s and 90s and Orndorff was one of my favorites. When he turned from heel to fan favorite following the inaugural WrestleMania, it was the first time I experienced such a transition in wrestling. Prior to that I thought bad guys were always bad guys and good guys were always good. Just a few months prior to that first WrestleMania, Orndorff made his World Wrestling Federation debut. His first WWF match took place on this very day in 1984 in New York City's Madison Square Garden. On the same card, Hulk Hogan became WWF Champion when he escaped the Camel Clutch to defeat The Iron Sheik. Hogan and Orndorff became tag team partners following their WrestleMania match, but Orndorff eventually

got jealous of Hogan and became a heel once again – the life of a wrestling superstar as I would come to learn. Heel or hero, Orndorff always entertained and when it comes to wrestling, he will go down as one of my favorites. When it comes to music, Tom Petty will go down as one of my favorites also, and this is the video for my favorite song of his: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12_RbUfdpW0

#29 – "Closer to Love" by Mat Kearney – This song, which has reached as high as #2, settles into its lowest ever countdown position in this, its 13th year of inclusion. It debuted at #19 in the Jeff's 39 Countdown and spent its first 12 years within the Top 20, before dropping out for the first time this year. I dedicate this one to Wilbur Scoville. The American chemist and pharmacist was born on this day in 1865. He is most famous for developing the "Scoville Scale," which measures the pungency, or spiciness, of hot peppers. His test and associated measurement scale were standards for more than 100 years. Scoville used chemical extraction to isolate the components in peppers which cause them to be spicy hot. His means of comparison were still rather qualitative however, and as science has progressed his test and measurement scale have been replaced with high-performance liquid chromatography, or HPLC for short. Regardless of the new measurement technology, Scoville will always be celebrated by pepper lovers everywhere. Though not a pepper lover myself, researching Wilbur has brought me closer to that love, and to acknowledge that I offer the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMRXXBGotnw>

#30 – "Flood" by Jars of Clay – Now in its seventh year in the countdown, this 1995 breakthrough song for Jars of Clay holds steady in the #30 position for a second consecutive year. I dedicate it to another steady performer, one who wears #30 on the basketball court, Stephen Curry. The two-time NBA MVP made his 2,974th career 3-pointer on December 14, 2021, to pass Ray Allen and become the NBA's all-time leader in made 3-pointers. Curry is credited with revolutionizing basketball by inspiring teams and players to routinely utilize the three-point shot. That recipe has worked for his Golden State Warriors, as during his career he has led the team to five straight NBA Finals appearances, winning three of them. I first became a fan of Stephen Curry in 2008 when he led his Davidson Wildcats to the Final 8 of the NCAA Tournament. In my NCAA Draft Pool that year, I drafted Davidson, a 10 seed, with my 8th round pick. Davidson's success led me to victory, enabling me to win the pool even though I didn't draft the eventual champion, Kansas. I've had a soft spot in my heart for Stephen Curry since then, and I've also been a fan of his brother Seth as well. Seth is a former Duke Blue Devil and current Philadelphia 76er. Both brothers and their father, Dell, have scored a flood of 3-pointers during their respective careers. The video for this song is about a different kind of flood and can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNGLU_VsePg

#31 – "Natural" by Imagine Dragons – I'm often frustrated by the lack of quality rock bands in today's pop music. Imagine Dragons are one of the few current pop artists that I put into the category of quality rock band, and this is my favorite Imagine Dragons song. It debuted at 40 in the Jeff's 49 Countdown and moved up to #34 last year. This year, it moves up another three spots. I dedicate this one to Rainn Wilson, a natural comedic

actor, who was born on this day in 1966. Wilson played the character, Dwight Schrute, on the television show, *The Office*, for the entire run of the series, 2005 to 2013. I was recently talking to a work colleague about being careful in how we wanted to share information regarding a potential raw material shortage because I didn't want to incite a panic. That led to a discussion of famous panics in pop culture and I immediately thought of the Fire Drill opening scene from *The Office* (viewable here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO8N3L_aERg). Wilson which just a small part of the absurd humor of that scene, but it was his character that was responsible for inciting the panic, a natural behavioral pattern for him. The Dwight Schrute character is also famous for his bizarre homelife which is almost as unusual as that seen in the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I647GU3Jsc>

#32 – "Stolen" by Dashboard Confessional – This song celebrates 15 years of countdown inclusion this year but does so in its lowest ever countdown position. Its previous low point was its debut position of #31 in the Jeff's 37 Countdown. The high point for this song was the #5 spot which it occupied in the Jeff's 42 Countdown. I dedicate this one to the late Carolyn Shoemaker who discovered 32 different comets over the course of her career. Shoemaker, who passed away last August, was a 7th grade schoolteacher before quitting her job to be a stay-at-home mom. After her children had grown up and moved out, she went back to school to study astronomy as a student at Lowell Observatory. At the age of, you guessed it, 51, she began searching for Earth-crossing asteroids and comets at the California Institute of Technology, and the Palomar Observatory. A few years later she began work as an astronomy research professor at Northern Arizona University. I laud Shoemaker for her later in life career change and for how successful she was. Her heart was stolen by the study of astronomy. To see hearts being stolen in another sense, you can watch the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j82FBbgpUy4>

#33 – "Adventure of a Lifetime" by Coldplay – The lone surviving Coldplay song in the Jeff's 51 Countdown drops two spots from its peak position of #31 last year. In total, this song has now spent six years in the Countdown. I dedicate this one to Bette Nesmith Graham, who lived an adventure during her lifetime, going from secretary to inventor to successful businesswoman. In addition, she gave birth to a Monkee. Bette began her professional career in the 1950s as a secretary for Texas Bank and Trust. After years of frustration from not being able to correct mistyped letters on her electric typewriter, Bette came up with the idea of using a small amount of white paint to cover up errors she made typing. She mentioned the idea to her son Michael, who was studying chemistry at the time, and the two of them worked together to invent the original formula which one day became Liquid Paper. Bette started her own business to sell the new product and it quickly became very successful. She eventually sold Liquid Paper to the Gillette Corporation for USD \$47.5 million in 1979. Her son meanwhile went from budding chemistry student to musician, songwriter, actor, producer, and novelist. Michael Nesmith was best known as a member of the pop rock band the Monkees. While the Monkees have never reached the Jeff's 51 Countdown, I did enjoy their music and their television show as a kid. I was sad to hear that Michael passed away last year at the age of 78. The Monkees were one of the first bands to put music and video together.

Coldplay put music and monkeys together in a more recent video which you can watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtXby3twMmI>

#34 – "Hurt" by Johnny Cash – For a man who wrote over 1,000 songs during his career, the song he performed but didn't write is the one that makes the countdown. I was surprised to learn a few years ago that it was Trent Reznor who wrote and originally performed this song with his band Nine Inch Nails, not Cash. The song is so distinctively Johnny Cash, I always thought Nine Inch Nails was the cover artist. Regardless, it's the Cash version I like, and the one that has now appeared in the Jeff's Countdown two consecutive years, moving up eight spots from its debut position of last year. I dedicate this one to the late Betty White. Famous for playing the character Rose Nylund on the *Golden Girls*, White was born on this day 100 years ago. She fell just 17 days short of being able to celebrate her 100th birthday. As it was, she still lived a long and productive life. Her acting career began when she was just 17 years old, and she worked longer in the television industry than anyone else, earning herself a Guinness World Record in 2013. I was a *Golden Girls* fan back in the late 80s and early 90s and Rose was certainly my favorite character on the show. Her naivety, humor, and interplay with the rest of the cast was quite entertaining. I also enjoyed watching her documentary, *Betty White: First Lady of Television*, a few years ago. The documentary highlighted the fact that Betty White was not only a great actress, but she was also a great person as well. Likewise, Johnny Cash was a great person (outside of his drug and alcohol induced rages of course). He was also a great performer, and this is the video for his song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AHCfZTRGiI>

#35 – "Jane Says" by Jane's Addiction – In early December, when Spotify gifted me a playlist of my top played songs of 2021, I was a bit surprised to see this song at the top of the list. I didn't realize I was playing it that frequently, but obviously I was. This is another song that falls into the category of those I rediscovered recently from listening to the Lithium Channel on SiriusXM. Interestingly enough, the channel which advertises itself as the 90s Alternative and Grunge channel was playing this song which originated in the 1980s. It was first released in 1987. The original version of the song did not include kettle drums which may be one reason I didn't fancy it from the start. A later release, the one played on Lithium, features kettle drums and scat vocals from Perry Ferrell. I fell in love with this version last year, due in large part to those kettle drums, which is what led to all my plays on Spotify. If not for Spotify, I would not have accumulated all those repeat listens, and perhaps this song would never have achieved countdown status. Therefore, I dedicate this song to the co-founder of Spotify, Martin Lorentzon. After several years of admiring it from a distance, I finally broken down and paid for a subscription last year. It is more than worth the \$11 a month I am now paying to essentially have access to any song I want at any time. It also saves on storage space as I no longer buy and store compact discs or other physical storage mediums to house my music. I also don't have to put up with the commercials on YouTube to be able to listen to songs. Being able to watch the video is another story. I still count on YouTube for that as evidenced by the video links such as this one that I provide with each Jeff's Countdown entry: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7Q_8q3XXrQ

#36 – "The Rain Song" by Led Zeppelin – This song debuted in the Jeff's Countdown last year, following a very wet Spring in 2020, at a time when it always seemed to be raining when I walked my dog. I always have my headphones on while walking my dog, and on one of those rainy walks I pulled up this song on Spotify. I was so tired of the rainy weather, "The Rain Song" simply popped into my head and I played it. I continued to play it over the course of that Spring and really grew to appreciate Jimmy Page's immaculate orchestration and Robert Plant's unequaled lyrics. It quickly became one of my favorite songs and hasn't left my playlist since. I dedicate this one to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The 19th Century American Poet once wrote that "the best thing one can do when it is raining is to let it rain." That was essentially my philosophy that first time I played "The Rain Song" while walking my dog in the rain. Had it been a warm and sunny Spring that year, perhaps this song would still be on the outside of the countdown looking in. As it is, the song moves up two spots in its second year and appears poised to make a continued run in the countdown in the years to come, as long as it doesn't hit a "dry" spell that is... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRt4hQs3nH0>

#37 – "Best of Times" by Styx – Now in its 25th year in the Jeff's Countdown, this former #1 song suffers a precipitous drop of 13 spots into its lowest ever countdown position. It debuted at #17 in the Jeff's 27 Countdown and quickly climbed to #4 the next year. It went to #1 in the Jeff's 31 Countdown but could not hold the top spot for more than a year. It did remain in the Top 10 for 14 consecutive years, however, and spent all 24 of its prior years in the Top 30 until its drop to #37 this year. I dedicate this one to Jon Thatcher, who last weekend won the 2021 championship of the Eastern States Fantasy Football League. Jon's bradford shadowtalons became the first expansion team to win the championship in my league since 2003. In the process, my former high school classmate beat another Pennridge High School alumnus, Jeff Morris, in the championship game. Jeff's team, the mainline maulers, was also an expansion franchise this season. We had four total new teams in the league this year as a significant change to our rules led several teams to drop out. In an effort to keep the numbers up, I went back to my roots and recruited two of those four new team owners from the ranks of my former Pennridge classmates. My fellow alumni, who were also basketball players at Pennridge along with me, did not disappoint in terms of being competitive at fantasy football. That competitiveness was ingrained in us on the hard courts of the Pennridge gymnasium as we tried to keep up with the bigger and more talented competition. Despite losing many more games than we won, those were the best of times for us all. For Jon and his shadowtalons the best of times are also now, and we can celebrate his victory with the video for this song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fzJGxpcenc

#38 – "If You Ever Come Back" by The Script – Celebrating ten consecutive years in the Jeff's Countdown is this 2011 release from The Script. It debuted at #32 in the Jeff's 42 Countdown and climbed as high as #16 before drifting downward in recent years. It drops five spots from last year when it checked in at #33. I dedicate this one to Michael Theo, one of the primary members of the cast of *Love on The Spectrum*, the Netflix original series which follows young adults with autism who attempt to find love. One of my favorite cast members, Michael, hasn't had very good luck thus far trying to find love. In Season One, the girl he was paired up with suffered an anxiety attack and left

him mid-date. In Season Two, Michael had a speed dating connection with Heather, which led to several dates, including the two having dinner with each other's parents. After Michael met Heather's parents though, she seemed disinterested in Michael's attempts to make another date. Michael's friend Bri suggested that Heather's behavior might be her polite way of indicating that she wasn't into him. This led Michael to call Heather and tell her he only wanted to be friends to which she agreed. The two haven't communicated since then. Heather took a big hit on social media with Michael's fans when they claimed she ghosted him. Heather denied those claims, saying that the show's producers only allowed the cast members to contact each other at specific times and those pre-determined times did not fit her busy work schedule. Regardless of who was to blame for the breakup, I hope Michael will keep a key under the mat and the door to his quarters unlatched in the event Heather ever comes back. Perhaps Michael can take a few notes on how to do that from the video to this song:

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

#39 – "Champaign Supernova" by Oasis – This song debuted at #15 in The Jeff's 26 Countdown, spent a second year at #19, and then went on hiatus for 23 straight years. Now it returns to the countdown for another run. Hearing this song played on the Lithium channel on SiriusXM over the past year renewed my affinity for it. It also led me to assess how much I like Oasis compared to Coldplay, two bands that to me seem to have a similar sound. From the assessment I determined I like Oasis more, and that I should have two Oasis songs in my countdown and one Coldplay song and not vice versa as has been the case over the last several years. Thus, one of my two Coldplay favorites exits this year, and "Champaign Supernova" re-enters. I dedicate it to Jeff Bezos, who today celebrates his 58th birthday. Bezos is the founder and current executive chairman of Amazon. His net worth is closing in on \$200 billion USD and he is Top 5 in the world in terms of total net worth. Bezos started Amazon back in 1994, when longtime retail giant Sears was making the decision to abandon their catalog service to focus on their in-store sales. Bezos had the foresight to understand the future impact of the emerging Internet and the previously untapped potential for on-line sales. Sears, on the other hand, moved in the complete wrong direction and continues to die a slow and painful death. Amazon continues to grow and explode much like an actual supernova. To watch the video for "Champaign Supernova" you can place an order for it on Amazon, or simply follow the link provided here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tI-5uv4wryI>

#40 – "Something About You" by Level 42 – After debuting in The Jeff's 43 Countdown, fittingly in the #42 position, this song has bounced around between its debut position and the #35 position. It peaked at #35 last year, and this year it drops five spots. I dedicate this year's #40 song to Howard Stern and Robin Quivers, who recently celebrated 40 years together on the airwaves. I've listened to the Howard Stern Show over the years, starting in the mid-1980s when their WKRX show in New York was simulcast to WYSP in Philadelphia. In more recent years I've listened to the show on SiriusXM. I'm not a devoted listener to the show, as I also like to listen to sports talk, various podcasts, and music, but I do listen on and off, especially this time of year. I find that my political views are similar to Stern's as is my taste in music and television, with the exception of his affinity for *The Bachelor* franchise of course. Among the many

antics they pull on the show, my favorite is the phony phone call to Swap Shop/Tradio, especially when they call trying to sell chickens and chicken related products. Howard and Robin won't be around for another 40 years so I'm going to enjoy them while they are still on the air. I'm also going to enjoy the live performance of this song which can be viewed from the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmKFZ9fu2Kk>

#41 – "Little Guitars" by Van Halen – This band, in all their incarnations, has always been one of my favorites. While I've consistently loved almost all their music, my favorite Van Halen song has changed frequently over the years. From "Jump" to "5150" back to "Jump" to "Right Now" with "Summer Nights" my perennial standby over the summer months. Following the death of Eddie Van Halen in 2020, I listened through the majority of the Van Halen catalog in memoriam, and as I did so I determined that "Little Guitars" was my new favorite. To recognize my love for Eddie I started last year's countdown with back-to-back Van Halen songs, the second of which was "Little Guitars," a debut song in the countdown. This year it moves up 9 spots as my affection for it continues to grow. I dedicate this one to my fellow Eddie Van Halen enthusiast, Steve Nowicki. The comedian and contributor to the Howard Stern Show on SiriusXM is a amateur guitarist who built his own 5150 guitar and recently attended "Eddie Van Halen Con." Yup, he's a bigger Eddie Van Halen nerd than I am, but he can actually play a guitar so he's still probably cooler than me. Regardless, Eddie Van Halen was truly a great musician and a great person. His greatness is certainly on display in this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6umKShwSVQA>

#42 – "Cumbersome" by Seven Mary Three – Back for a second year in the countdown is this post-grunge hit from the one-hit wonder band named after the C.H.I.P.S. character Jon Baker. The lame band name matches the quality of their music outside of this song, which isn't great. But obviously I think very highly of this song as it moves up six spots from last year's #48 debut position. I particularly like the vocals in this song. They're a bit grungy and I love the way Jason Ross holds the "c" in cumbersome for a full second or two. I dedicate this one to Jean-Pierre Blanchard, who on this day in 1793 conducted the first balloon flight in the United States. The Frenchman made his first successful voyage ten years earlier in France and crossed the English Channel by balloon in 1785. On January 9, 1793 he launched his balloon from the prison yard of Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and landed at the Clement Oak in Deptford, Gloucester County, New Jersey. One of the flight's witnesses that day was President George Washington, and the future presidents John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe were also present. I'm not sure how many if any U.S. Presidents ever watched Seven Mary Three perform live, but you can watch them perform on video by following this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjNn4bbbgSw>

#43 – "Possum Kingdom" by Toadies – I was a big fan of the Grunge genre when it went mainstream in the early 1990s, but back then, I stuck mostly with those bands that crossed over to the pop charts. The bands I liked back then included Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, and Stone Temple Pilots. And those bands were the ones I've stuck with threw the years. More recently however, I started listening to the Lithium channel on

SiruisXM radio. The channel which advertises itself as playing Grunge and 90s Alternative, has helped me broaden my exposure to Grunge in the form of bands like Rage Against the Machine and Alice in Chains to name a few. The channel also exposed me to the Toadies, who make their Jeff's Countdown debut this year with this catchy tune based on the folklore surrounding Possum Kingdom Lake outside of Fort Worth, Texas. I dedicate this one to the seventh President of the United States, Andrew Jackson, who on this day in 1835 announced a celebratory dinner after having reduced the United States national debt to zero. This was the first and only time the U.S. Government was debt free. Since then, the U.S. debt has continued to climb and at the time of this writing is in the neighborhood of \$28 trillion. I'm not an economist, but it doesn't take an economist to know having that much debt isn't a good thing. Ultimately the government will increase taxes on the rich to raise the cash it needs to keep the country running and that ultimately will lead to the downfall of the nation as the rich leave the country to avoid the taxes, taking their knowledge, spirit of innovation, and other resources with them. I'm guessing the eventual fall of the U.S. Empire won't happen until after I've passed on to the next life, but for the benefit of my descendants, I hope they are able to see the fall coming far enough in advance to take the appropriate course of action, whatever that may be. I also hope they avoid the dark secrets hidden behind the boathouse on Possum Kingdom Lake. And I hope all this talk of debt crisis and dark secrets doesn't make you afraid. I didn't mean to scare you... so help me Jesus. If you want to risk further fear you can watch the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkwD5rQ-d4>

#44 – "The Promise" by When in Rome – Much like the #47 song in this year's countdown, this song also became one of my favorites after I watched the movie *Napoleon Dynamite* for the first time. This song of course is played during the famous tetherball scene, the final scene in the movie. This tune has spent nine total years in the countdown, peaking at #24, a position it reached on two separate occasions. I dedicate this one business management guru, Tom Peters. The Maryland native, who authored several books and articles on the topics of management and customer service, shares the "under promise and over deliver" philosophy with me. The premise of this philosophy is that a customer will measure their satisfaction in proportion to what is promised to them, not necessarily the absolute output of the supplier. I wholeheartedly agree with that philosophy, but for me, I also like to make sure I'm always keeping my promises. For example, I promise to always include a video at the end of my entry for each song in the Jeff's 51 Countdown. Here is the fulfillment of that promise for Song #44: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HI_xFQWiYU

#45 – "Hanginaround" by Counting Crows – Consistent with its title, this song has been hanging around the lower echelon of the countdown for four years now. The #45 position is in fact the peak position for this song after it debuted at #48, spent a second year in that same position, and then moved up one spot to #47 last year. On the one-year anniversary of the Storming of the U.S. Capitol Building, I dedicate this song to the late Brian Sicknick, the Capitol Building police officer who died the day after he responded to the attack on the Capitol. He was pepper-sprayed during the riot and then had two thromboembolic strokes the next day. He was placed on life support and died soon after.

Although his death wasn't directly linked to the attack on the Capitol, his being in the line of fire on that day certainly didn't help his overall wellbeing. The attack on the Capitol, an attack on the democratic process itself, didn't help the wellbeing of our nation either. It's a dangerous time for our country as most of the membership of one of our two major political parties seem to be favoring an autocratic form of government. At the same time the other political party seems to be governing in a completely partisan manner. Members of Congress no longer govern in the best interest of the people they represent, they govern in the best interest of their party. Rather than continue my essay on what's wrong with current politics, I'll end my rant there and provide a link to the video for this song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARiO_41Id8

#46 – "Break My Heart" by Dua Lipa – It's been a few years since I've added a contemporary song to the countdown ranks, but this one caught my ear a year or so ago and stuck with me ever since. I liked it enough to add it to my "Jeff's Favorites" playlist, and thus it went into my regular rotation. A few weeks ago, when Spotify presented me with a playlist of the top songs I listened to during calendar year 2021, this song was listed as the 29th most played by me last year. That wasn't all that impressive in of itself, but the playlist included a video message from Dua thanking me for listening to her song which I thought was cool. That led to a few more listens from me and ultimately an 11th hour decision to include it in this year's countdown. I dedicate this one to Michael Hutchence, the original lead singer of INXS, who passed away in 1997. As I researched "Break My Heart," I came to learn that, as the song came together in the studio, Lipa and her collaborators noticed a similarity with the INXS song "Need You Tonight" from the 1980s. Despite the similarity being unintentional, Lipa's team decided to give Hutchence a writing credit and a publishing credit, thus sharing in the profits of this song with his estate. I thought that was a classy move which not only gave me a newfound respect for Dua Lipa, but also moved me to remember Hutchence and his incredible influence on the music of the 1980s. You can judge for yourself just how similar this song is to the INXS staple by watching the video for it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj2U6rhnucl>

#47 – "Forever Young" by Alphaville – I became a fan of this song after I watched the movie *Napoleon Dynamite* for the first time almost nine years ago. It is played in the high school dance scene where Napoleon abandons his date, the more popular Trisha, to dance with Deb, the less popular but closer friend. The theatrical power of that one scene has kept this song in the countdown for nine straight years now. It has never move higher than #24, but it remains in my regular rotation, and remains in the countdown for at least another year. I dedicate this one to the late Randy Rhodes, the legendary guitarist who remains forever young in the minds of his fans everywhere. Rhodes was elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2021, a well-deserved honor for the former member of Quiet Riot and former sideman to Ozzy Osbourne. I was never a big fan of Rhodes until I began listening to Tom Morello's "One Man Revolution" show on the Lithium channel on SiriusXM Radio. Morello, a legend on the guitar in his own right, is always quick to include Rhodes as one of his biggest influences. Morello gave a speech at Rhodes' Hall of Fame induction in which he quipped that, "you could study Randy's songs in a university-level musicology class and bang your heads to them in a 7-Eleven parking

lot.” Rhodes died in 1982, when his tour bus driver, who was also a pilot, took him flying in a small private aircraft early one morning while on tour with Ozzy Osbourne. The bus driver/pilot crashed after attempting to buzz Ozzy’s tour bus which was parked on the local air strip. The crashed tragically killed Rhodes, Ozzy’s makeup artist who was also on board, and the daredevil tour bus driver. Rhodes was only 25 years old at the time of his death. The future of head banging music was forever altered from that point forward. I don’t think anyone ever banged their head to Alphaville, but that takes nothing away from the greatness of this song in its own genre:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1TcDHrkQYg>

#48 – "Addicted" by Saving Abel – After spending nine years in the Top 20 of the Jeff’s Countdown, this song has receded a bit in recent years and now finds itself in its lowest ever countdown position. It debuted in the Jeff’s 39 Countdown at #17 and worked its way up to its peak position of #3 just four years later. All told this song has spent nine years within the Top 20. I dedicate this one to Emily Warren Roebling, the savior of the Brooklyn Bridge Project. The construction of the bridge began on this day in 1870 under the supervision of her husband, Washington Roebling. Washington’s father, John Roebling, was the primary designer of the bridge, and was set to be the chief engineer of the project when he tragically died of tetanus in 1869 following an accident at the bridge site. Washington took over supervision of the project after his father’s death. He literally immersed himself in the project, as he was not only the project leader, but he also completed frequent dives in the East River to inspect the placement of the caissons used to create the bridge’s foundation. Washington did not rise from his dives at the proper speed which led to decompression sickness. The illness affected him so severely that he became bed ridden. As the only person to visit her husband during his sickness, Emily Roebling relayed information from Washington to his assistants and reported to him the progress of work on the bridge. An engineer herself, she developed an extensive knowledge of strength of materials, stress analysis, cable construction, and calculating catenary curves through Washington's teachings. For the decade after Washington was confined to his sick bed, Roebling was dedicated to the completion of the bridge. She took over much of the chief engineer duties, including the day-to-day supervision of the project. Emily and her husband jointly planned the bridge's continued construction. She dealt with politicians, competing engineers, and all those associated with work on the bridge, to the point where people believed she was behind the bridge's design. If it weren’t for Emily Warren Roebling’s dedication to her husband and the project, it might have taken several additional years to finish the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge. As it was, it took 13 years to complete. That’s the same number of years this song has been included in the Jeff’s Countdown, and this is the video for it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1VpdGn3JxE>

#49 – "Beverly Hills" by Weezer – Continuing its slide toward the bottom of the countdown ranks, this one-time Top 2 song is now flirting with falling out of the Top 50. It debuted at #11 in the Jeff’s 35 countdown and reached its peak of #2 just two years later. It ended up spending eight total years within the Top 15, before settling it to the middle to latter recesses of the countdown. I dedicate this one to Beatrice Hicks who was born on this day 103 years ago. Hicks was the first woman engineer to be hired by

Western Electric, the primary equipment manufacturer, supplier, and purchasing agent for the Bell System from 1881 to 1984. She was also the co-founder and first president of the Society of Women Engineers. Despite entering the field at a time where engineering was viewed as an inappropriate career choice for women, Hicks held a variety of leadership positions and eventually became the owner of her own engineering firm. As a father of two daughters in college, one majoring in architecture and another majoring in biomedical engineering, I appreciate the inroads Hicks made for women in the field of science. Of course, that's in sharp contrast to the career choice made by the women in the video for this song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HL_WvOly7mY

#50 – "Rolling in the Deep" by Adele – I like the fact that Adele titles her albums with her age at the time of writing. That means I'm not the only one who celebrates their age with music. For the #50 position in this year's countdown, Adele and I can celebrate together with this song which this year makes its 11th consecutive appearance in the countdown. It reached #6 on two separate occasions and spent a total of seven years in the Top 15. I dedicate this one to the late J.R. Richard. As a member of the Houston Astros pitching staff of the late 1970's, Richard often dueled with my hometown favorite team, the Philadelphia Phillies. Led by Richard, Ken Forsch, and Nolan Ryan, the Astros had a great pitching staff in the late 70's and early 80's but were never a great hitting team. That led to a lot of great pitching duels. During the 1980 season, Richard suffered a stroke and collapsed while playing catch during pre-game warmups. The stroke was caused by a blood clot in his neck and the condition which caused it brought a sudden end to his major league career at the age of 30. Later during that 1980 season, the Astros and Phillies dueled in the National League Championship series. The series was one of the most closely contested playoff series in the history of Major League Baseball. Four of the five games went to extra innings and the composite score was 20 to 19. The Phillies won that series and went on to win their first World Series, but one wonders if they would have made it past the Astros had Richard been able to play. While we ponder that question, you can check out the video for this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYEDA3JcQqw>

#51 – "Alive Again" by Chicago – At the start of 2020, I was primed to begin my great concert reconciliation of the 20s decade. Prior to then, my concert-going strategy was to see my favorite performers multiple times. Artists such as Van Halen, Billy Joel, and Styx were among those I've seen several times each. My strategy changed after twice passing on the opportunity to see Tom Petty in concert during the summer of 2017, and then sadly mourning his death that Fall. Not acting on one of those opportunities to go see Petty quickly became one of my biggest regrets. I later decided to stop frequenting artists I'd seen before and start prioritizing the acts I had yet to see, especially those artists who were starting to get up there in years. On February 26, 2020, I began my new paradigm by travelling to Hershey, PA, to see Hall & Oates. I thoroughly enjoyed that concert despite the fact both Daryl and John were a bit past their prime. But that was as far as I got in 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic shut down the live music industry shortly thereafter. The start of 2021 wasn't much better, but as the warm weather of Spring approached, the availability of vaccines became a reality, and entertainers reboarded their tour buses, I once again turned my focus to live music. The band I targeted this time was

Chicago. I was never a huge fan of Chicago, but my friend Tom Martin was, and he gave them a recommendation a few years ago which I always remembered. So, in July, with our antibody levels raised from vaccination, Cindy and I ventured over to the BB&T Bank Pavilion to see Chicago. For that brief period of time between the Spring Delta variant wave and the Fall surge, we got to take advantage of some great live music, a performance that easily lived up to Tom's hype, and one that made me feel "Alive Again" for sure. Around this same time, I was in the process of changing positions at work. After ten years working in the same area, I applied for a leadership position on a different team. It was a difficult decision to leave the stability and security of a team on which I had a 10-year history of success and move to a team with known issues and a high rate of turnover. One of the people who helped me make the decision was my former leader, Greg D'Arcy. When I talked to Greg about the opportunity, he significantly raised my confidence by telling me he thought I was an ideal fit for the position. That message was exactly what I needed to move forward with the process. I applied, interviewed, and got the new position. When the hiring champion contacted me and offered me the job, it was another instance where I felt "Alive Again." It was a few weeks after the concert, and I distinctly remember walking down my office hallway later that day humming this song which I still had in my head from the concert. In a year of unpredictability and change, I dedicate this one to Greg, for being my coach and mentor for the last ten years, and for giving me the confidence to try something new. Ten years is a long time, but that's not nearly as long as this song has been around, as evidenced by how dated this video is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtt5JPstK0w>

Return to the Jeff's Countdown Website: <https://esffl.com/jeffs-countdown/>