

John Lennon



Early Career

John Lennon was born on Wednesday, exactly on October 9, 1940 at 18:30 local time, at the maternity home of Liverpool, England. John is the precious gift to Julia Stanley and Alfred Lennon, John's full name is John Winston Lennon. It was given by his parent to matches the name of his grandfather who was also named John Lennon or nick named Jacks. In the middle name, his parent added with the name Winston, derived from the name of Winston Churchill (the British prime minister during World War II, also known as the most influential figure in the history of the world) (Radifan,2012:7).

Alfred Lennon, or known as Alf, was working in a commercial ship during World War. Alf himself had just seen his son, John, a month later after he returned from a cruise journey in November 1940 (Radifan, 2012:7).

In between 1942-1943, after the departure of Alf, Julia began to leave her family residence. He started living in a cottage that belongs to the husband of her eldest sister, Mimi. It is located at 120a Allerton Road, Woolton, the place is

not too far away with Mimi residence. Julia lived there with John Lennon Winston (Radifan, 2012:8).

Around 1945, George and Mimi Smith eventually got custody to raise John whose age was still 5 years old. They lived at 251 Menlove Avenue, Mendips, and Liverpool. In that small house, George and Mimi treat John as their own son. John's childhood is filled with good cop bad cop situation from his uncle and his aunt. Her aunt, Mimi, was known as a hard boiled person who upholds education as the first priority. On the other side, young Lennon always got more attention from his uncle. Lennon childhood was filled more with the presence of his uncle. George often spent time with John to teach him various things, start from painting, drawing, to reading. George also teach important language lesson to John, he said that words have many different meanings and should not be taken from what it looks on one side. This is exactly what Lennon does when he wrote a song (Radifan, 2012:9).

Aside from his uncle's teaching, Lennon also learn how to play music instrument that his mother taught, especially guitar banjo. His mother also introduced rock n roll music to Lennon, he adore Elvis Presley. Lennon started his first music career in Quarry bank high school. He formed a skiffle band called the Quarrymen with three members: John Lennon, Collin Hanton and John Duff Lowe (Radifan, 2012:10).

Around 1957, the Quarrymen perform at St. Peter's Church, Woolton and that's the moment where John Lennon met Paul McCartney. Not long after the destined meeting, Paul joined Lennon's band and started his debut on Friday, 18 Oktober 1957 for a conservative social club event in Liverpool. Paul McCartney officially became

the Quarrymen personnel and became the forerunner composer of the two greatest songwriters of all time as "Lennon / McCartney" (Radifan, 2012:13).

On February 6 1958, when the Quarrymen perform at Wilson Hill, John Lennon met with George Harrison. After a few conversations, it was decided that George became one of the Quarrymen personnel (Radifan, 2012:14).

On 12 July 1958, when the Quarrymen were still consisted of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Colin Hanton and John Duff Lowe, they did their first recording in a recording studio called Phillip's Sound and Recording Services at 38 Kensington, Liverpool. In the studio, they managed to record 2 songs "that'll be the day" and "in spite of all the danger". These two songs quickly became hit and very popular at the moment. At the emergence of John Lennon's career moment as a musician, he had to face with the death of his mother in a traffic accident. The event was described as John Lennon's heaviest blow to his life because he lost his mother, as well as his mentor in life (Radifan, 2012:15).

Career with the Beatles

As the time goes by, dealing with education that they had to take, around 1960, the Quarrymen was left with only three personnel, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison. When John Lennon was schooled in Liverpool College of Art, he met with Stuart Sutcliffe. After some time, Stuart officially joined the Quarrymen as the fourth personnel. His position is Bass. Not long after, in August 1960, Lennon invited Pete Best who is the son of the owner of Cabah

Coffee Club to fill the Drum position. Soon, they officially changed their name to the legendary name, the Beatles.

In October 1960, they were given a contract to play in Kaiser Keller Club in Hamburg, Germany. Since that, the name of the Beatles gains their first success in Germany rather than in the land of their birth in Liverpool, England. In July 1961, their bass player Stuart Sutcliffe decides to quit the band. Eventually, Paul McCartney replaced Stuart as the vocals as well as bass player (Radifan, 2012:17).

A young man walked into the Northern England Music and Electric Industries (NEMS) record shop in Liverpool and asked for a copy of the “My Bonnie” album the Beatles had recorded in Hamburg. The record store manager, Brian Epstein, who preferred classical music over the beat scene that was storming Liverpool, had never heard of the album or of the Beatles. Since his business strategy was to make any album available to his customers, Epstein made it a point to learn more about them, and on October 28, 1961, Epstein began to sell “Tony Sheridan and the Beat Brothers” on 45 rpm. To his surprise, it outsold albums by Elvis and Cliff Richard. This piqued Epstein’s curiosity about this band, which he originally thought was German, and on November 9, 1961, he went to The Cavern to hear the Beatles perform. He was somewhat surprised by their on-stage antics as they cracked jokes with the audience and turned their backs on the crowd as they sang and ate on stage, but it was clear the young crowd adored them. Brian was soon taken with the group and decided he wanted to become their manager. Brian’s proposal came at an opportune time. The Beatles had become more confident with

their business endeavors (Edmondson, 2010: 42). Brian Epstein invited the boys to his office on December 3 to discuss the terms under which he would manage them. Bob Wooler, who John referred to as his father during the meeting, joined them. John was impressed with Brian, but the other Beatles were not convinced he was the right person to manage them. A week after they met in Epstein's office, the Beatles agreed to the partnership. John was the only one old enough to legally sign the contract, so Brian had to follow up with the McCartney, Harrison, and Best families to have the boys' guardians provide legal consent (Edmondson, 2010:43). Unfortunately, in 1962 Brian Epstein becomes manager for the Beatles.

Shortly, Brian Epstein secured a recording session for the Beatles with the record label EMI. They returned from Hamburg in early June, and auditioned for producer George Martin a few days later. For the audition, they played a mixture of well known tunes and their original pieces. It took two months for them to hear the outcome of the audition, but this time the news was good. George Martin wanted them to sign a contract with Parlophone Records, a company that was part of EMI. Needless to say, the boys were ecstatic.

Lennon statement:

John kept shouting to Cynthia,

"This is it, Cyn, this is it, we're going to be making records. We're famous!"

George Martin indicated that Pete was not strong enough to play on the recording, and he wanted to hire a session drummer in his place. Finally, after discuss, John, Paul, and George understood, and they decided that it was time for

Pete to leave the band (Edmondson: 2010:45). After Pete was cut from the band, The Beatles had problems: they needed to face fans who were not happy that Pete was gone, and they needed to find another drummer. So, on 18 August 1962, Ringo Star officially joins with the Beatles, and first debuted with the Beatles in Horticultural Society Dance in Port Sunlight (Radifan, 2012:20).

In February, the Beatles went on their first national tour of Britain, When they were on tour, “Please Please Me” climbed to number one to the chart with the success of the single “Please Please Me” and their performance schedule, the Beatles seemed to be everywhere in Britain. On November, 22, 1963, The Beatles’ second album, “*With the Beatles*” is released, and the London Times and the London Sunday Times call “Lennon and McCartney” the most outstanding English composers of the year (Radifan, 2012:21).

In his whole life, Lennon was married twice. His first wife was Cynthia Powell and his second wife was Yoko Ono. Cynthia Powell was born on September 10, 1939 in Blackpool, England. Lennon met Cynthia Powell at a in a letter class at an art school in Liverpool in 1957. Cynthia and Lennon were married on August 23, 1962 at the Mount Pleasant Registry Office in Liverpool. Cynthia and Lennon had one child, John Charles Julian Lennon (derived from the name of John Lennon’s mother, Julia). John Charles Julian was born on April 8, 1963 at 07:45 morning, at Sefton Hospital. Lennon and Cynthia's marriage ended in divorce on November 8, 1968 (Radifan, 2012:11).

Solo Career with Yoko Ono

His second wife was Yoko Ono. Yoko Ono Lennon was born on February 18, 1933 in Tokyo, Japan. Yoko and John Lennon were married on March 20, 1969 in Gibraltar. Lennon knows that his married with Yoko Ono become controversial and be big publicity so during Lennon's last two years in the Beatles, he and Ono began public protests against the Vietnam War which happened between November 1, 1955 and April 30, 1975. They were spent their honeymoon at the Hilton Amsterdam campaigning with a week - long "Bed In" for peace between March 25 and 31, 1969, inviting the world's press into their hotel room everyday from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. they were spent their "Bed in" just keep silence on the bed and answer the question from press, also on their bed display "*Hair Peace*" and "*Bed Peace*". Lennon hoped the bed-in would inspire young people to protest in nonviolent ways, explaining that "violence begets violence, and the establishment knows how to fight violence, but they don't know how to fight candy. We just want to tell them here's an instance of how to protest by staying bed." He understood the contradictions between his public commitment to peace and his own personal struggles with violence, particularly against women. Years later he admitted:

"I was a hitter. I couldn't express myself, and I hit. I fought men and I hit women. That is why I am always on about peace, you see. It is the most violent people who go for love and peace. I will have to be a lot older before I can face in public how I treated as a youngster" (Edmondson, 2010:120).

Lennon and Ono They planned another “Bed In” in the United States, but were denied entry, so held one instead at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal. Lennon and Ono had one child, Sean Taro Ono Lennon. Sean Taro Lennon was born on October 9, 1975, at New York United States of America (Radifan, 2012:11).

Soon after John and Yoko were wedding, John changed his name to John Winston Ono Lennon during a ceremony reaffirming their commitment to one another atop Apple studio in front of the commissioner of oaths. 47 It demonstrated in part John’s love for Yoko and his growing understanding of her feminist beliefs—she was willing to change her name for him, and he was willing to change his name for her. When John and Yoko’s names were combined, there were now nine O’s in their names, John’s favorite number (Edmondson, 2010:121).

One of the best songs which are still popular that written and performed by Lennon is, “Imagine”. Imagine in the album imagine that released in May 1971(Wikimedia, 2014). This song is very controversial because the lyrics of the song have radical messages. Lennon stated in this song that *“Imagine there’s no heaven, It’s easy if you try, No hell below us, above us only sky, Imagine all the people, Living for today, Imagine there’s no country, It isn’t hard to do, Nothing to kill or die for, And no religion too, Imagine all the people, Living life in peace, Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can, No need for greed or hunger, a brotherhood of man, imagine all the people, sharing all the world”*. This lyric encourage the listener to imagine a world peace, without the barriers of borders or the divisiveness of religions and nationalities, and the focus of humanity should

be living a life in peace, without unattached to material possessions. Lennon has inspired to write the lyrics of the song “Imagine” from several poems of the poems Yoko Ono’s book, ”Grapefruit” in 1964. In the United States in October 1971, “Imagine” became the best selling single of Lennon’s solo career. It peaked at number 3 on the Billboard Hot 100. It reached number 1 in Canada on the RPM National singles chart, remaining there for two weeks. The song has since sold more than 1, 6 million copies in the UK; it reached number one following Lennon’s death in December 1980 (Goldman, 1988:397).

Monday, December, 8 1980 the day Lennon was assassinated was unusually warm in Manhattan. After a very productive recording session at the Hit Factory, Lennon and Yoko returned home. Their limousine pulled up in front of their New York apartment in Dakota at precisely 10:49 p.m.

Yoko exited the rented limo first followed by Lennon who was carrying a tape recorder and tapes from the day’s session. The tapes were of Yoko’s song “Walking on Thin Ice”. Mark David Chapman shot Lennon five times from his charter arms 38 revolver hitting Lennon with four of the bullets. Lennon was taken to the emergency room of nearby Roosevelt Hospital and dead on arrival at 11:07 pm.

References:

Edmondson, Jacqueline. 2010. *John Lennon: a biography*. Santa Barbara, California Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.

Radifan. 2012. *The Beatles Hits Collection*. Yogyakarta. Media pressindo.

Imagine

*Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today*

*Imagine there's no country
It isn't hard to do,
Nothing to kill or die for,
And no religion too
Imagine all the people,
Living life in peace*

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world.*

*You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one,
I hope someday you'll join us,
And the world will be as one*