

Scotty's Letter

Introduced By Richard Rodgers

Comments? Comments are welcome. Just use the link below to our message board.

<https://www.audiemurphy.com/msgb/viewtopic.php?t=4828>

IF YOU ASKED someone who remembers Audie Murphy to describe him you would likely hear commonly used terms like *war hero*, *fearless*, *movie star*, and *leader*. More obscure terms might be offered but the likelihood of their use only increases with the age of the person being asked.

One of these less-likely-to-be-used terms is *accomplished song writer*.

As a high school teacher, when I mention this particular term while describing Audie Murphy to students the following question (with response included) inevitably occurs:

Student: "Scuse me? Did you say 'song writer'?"

Me: "Why, yes – I did."

I then elaborate that Audie collaborated with several song writing giants including Scotty Turner¹ and that the many songs they produced were recorded by singing superstars such as Charley Pride, Harry Nilsson, Dean Martin, Porter Wagoner, Slim Whitman, Jerry Wallace, et cetera, et cetera, ad infinitum.

Student: "Seriously?"

Me: "Yes – very seriously. Please write it down – there's gonna be a quiz soon."

I always enjoy watching the respect and amazement for Audie grow when I drop these nuggets of "solid-gold"² in a student's lap.

Unfortunately, Audie's talent for song writing has become more obscure in the public's eye with the passage of time – and understandably so. After all, every generation develops its own preferred brand of music. It is inevitable that the popularity of current music fades with time.

But there is good news. The Audie Murphy Research Foundation is sharing a rare, and nearly forgotten letter written by Audie's very close friend and song-writing legend Scotty Turner in a response to the former Audie Murphy Memorial Fan Club president Lillian Bailey in August 1981. We hope you enjoy it and will share it.

¹ According to one source, ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Turner_\(songwriter\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Turner_(songwriter))). Scotty and Audie co-wrote 83 songs.

² A deliberate example of a pun. The term "Solid-Gold" is a recording expression used to describe hit songs and applied to some of Audie's songs including "Shutters and Boards" (see Appendix B, this article for the sheet music and listen to the song at YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtjqnktGT14>).

Letter to Lillian Bailey from Scotty Turner^{3, 4}



The Scott Turner Music Companies
524 Doral Country Drive
Nashville, Tennessee 37221
(615) 646-9750

Buried Treasure Music, Inc. A.S.C.A.P.
Captain Kidd Music B.M.I.
Scott Turner Production

August 23, 1981

Dear Lillian:

Many thanks for your kind letter and the enclosure. The news letter is very well done.

I just received some 'potentially' rewarding news yesterday with regard to a piece of material created by Audie and myself back in 1962. It seems that the corporation I am considering joining in the near future is involved with the guidance of the career of the young American boy (18 years old) who has become one of the most renowned bullfighters in Mexico. I believe the boy's name is David Renk.⁵ Possibly you may have read some articles about this new 'young hero' as he has been interviewed on many occasions.

At any rate his manager called me last week to inform me that every bullfighter has 'his own song' or piece of music that they play as he enters the arena, and could I possibly write a theme for David. I told his manager that I would give it my best effort. In trying to create something, I suddenly flashed back on a piece of music that Audie and I wrote in his den back in the early '60's, so I started searching for the tape, finally discovering it around 3 A.M. When I listened to it, I remember Audie saying that it reminded him of "Anzio" as I played our finished composition.

³ Scotty Turner's real name is Graham Turnbull.

⁴ Minor corrections to spelling and punctuation have been made by the editor.

⁵ David Renk is the correct spelling. Mr. Turner misspelled the bullfighter's name in the original letter as "Raines". For more information on Mr. Renk, visit: <https://www.texasmonthly.com/the-culture/the-lost-days-of-el-texano/>

Yesterday, I called the people and played the theme for them over the phone, and they reacted most positively, so plans are in the works right now to make David's "Dos Pasos" (that's what they call the Bullfighter's theme) that specific piece of music, namely "Anzio". They especially like the idea of a 1981 hero using America's hero's music as his theme, so I will let you know (after some upcoming meetings) when and where the composition will be used.

I am in the process of putting a recording group together and we plan to name the group "El Paso County". The sound will be Spanish or Tex-Mex as it is termed, only I plan to use a little 'Nashville' in the overall sound. It will be that group which will record the first cut on "Anzio" with a whole L.P. of Audie's and my music planned for the future.

With regard to your question as to my personal opinion of Audie, it would really have to take a 3-part answer to fully describe my feelings. Firstly, as a man, I always felt that Audie could have been the best at whatever he chose to do. Had he chosen 'Race Car Driving' as a career, he would have probably been one of the greatest competitors in that field; ... and the same theory would have applied had he been a 'Test Pilot' or a Submarine Commander. Audie was gifted with a special talent that few people have, that being the ability to be 'fearless with caution'. In our 11 years together, I never witnessed anything with relationship to Audie that could have been deemed either 'thoughtless' or 'unkind'. We made many trips together and he was always most congenial to all of the people he came in contact with, sometimes going far beyond the barriers of kindness expected from one of his stature. I could personally name literally hundreds of instances where he was especially kind to me. As a point in fact, not long after Audie became the godparent of my daughter, Adrienne, we were sitting in his den one night and I somehow found the courage to relate to Audie how proud I was of his heroics during W.W.II, and that someday I would like Adrienne to realize 'who' her godfather was. At that point I asked Audie if he would help me find a duplicate set of his awards that I could purchase and have framed for her. I suggested that possibly we could go to a war memorabilia store (if there was such a place) and I would gladly pay for the medals. Audie left the room and came back momentarily with an old shoebox. In the bottom of the shoebox there were 6 or 7 dust-covered medals and he stated, "here's a start for you". I never did ask him whether the awards were 'originals' or if they were from the film "To Hell and Back" but over the next 6 months he managed to locate for me a complete set, which I gladly paid for. That's just one instance of his kindness and compassion, and as I said previously, I could name many other thoughtful acts.

Secondly, with regard to Audie's creativeness, I can only state that he was an absolute perfectionist. On many occasions when we felt that a song we had created was 'completed' to the best of our ability, Audie would invariably call me the next day with some alternate lines, and they were always better than our original efforts. If, by chance, we were writing a song and we became 'hung up' on a line or phrase, rather than waste time trying to find a line at that time, we would move on to another idea, and come back to 'the problem song' later. I still have close to 60 unfinished pieces of material of that nature, and every once in a while, I will go to my files and take one of the songs and work on it. I must be very careful in completing these songs, for I want them to be as perfect as Audie would have wanted them to be. In time they will all be finished for everyone to hear, but not until I'm sure they are creatively correct.

Last but not least, I must say something about Audie's inner strength. I had known Audie for 6 or 7 years, and I always felt when I was with him that he was 'just another person' for that's the way he wanted it, but on one specific evening Audie noticed me 'shuddering' nervously, at one point during one of our sessions. He asked me "what was wrong" and I had to relate my feelings. I merely said, "I just realized that I'm sitting here, man to man, with the most decorated combat infantryman in American history, but I'd be proud to call you friend if you were just Audie Murphy, American Citizen". Audie's reply was simply put, but it meant a lot to me. He said, "I was a young man, and I was given a job to do, and I did it to the best of my ability." "It saddens me to realize that a lot of lives were taken, and I know that many brave fighting men were also fine family men, but the real heroes of W.W. II are not with us anymore". That short, but meaningful statement, opened up a whole new side of Audie Murphy to me, and the sense of respect that I had always held for him only grew stronger from that point on.

Audie was not especially thrilled with his acting endeavors, but one evening (when I was aware of "The Unforgiven" being shown on T.V.) I actually 'made' Audie sit and view the film, which in my opinion was one of his best efforts. After it was over, Audie looked over at me and merely said "Not bad", which, if you knew Audie as I did, was a statement of satisfaction, and I was glad to see him not being overly critical of himself.

I can honestly say that if I was approached by a columnist or reporter who asked me to expound on some 'sensational' or 'controversial' part of Audie's and my association, I honestly couldn't come up with one instance where I witnessed anything out of the ordinary. It goes back to the old idiom that if the 'plumber down the street did some small thing which is out of the ordinary' it would be unnoticed, but if someone like Audie or any other entity who is a public figure did the same thing,

small as it may be, the powers-that-be would blow it completely out of proportion. Certainly, Audie may have had some small 'faults' (for lack of a better word) but I still would like to know what they were, and even if I did discover 'one', his good points would grossly override any small fault he may have had. I always looked upon him as my friend and co-writer, and that's as far as it went. From the time I entered the music industry in the mid 50's I was in daily contact with superstars and luminaries, and they all carried strong human qualities, and when 'untruths' were printed about them it upset them to no end,, but you learn quickly to circumvent those thoughtless statements made by unknowledgeable, status seeking, fly-by-night writers and judge the person by your own personal experiences witnessed by you, when you were in the presence of that individual, and I'm proud to say that my friend Audie Murphy earned an A-plus when it came to personal conduct.

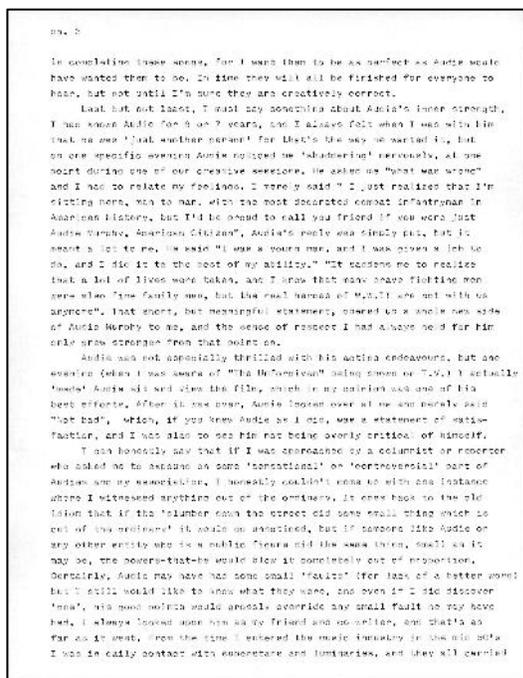
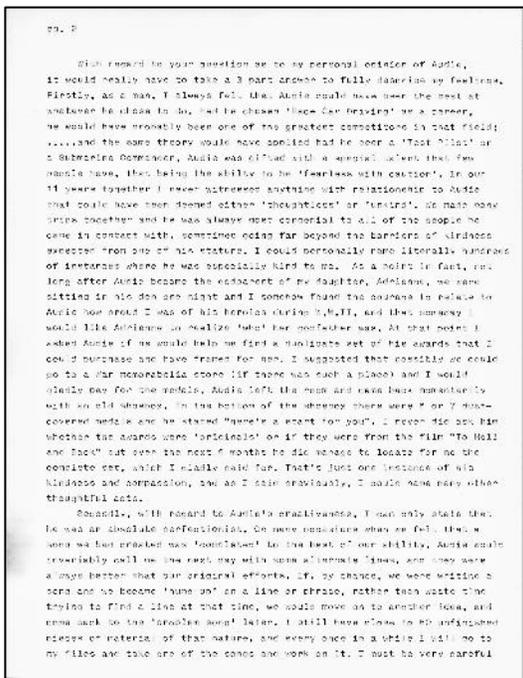
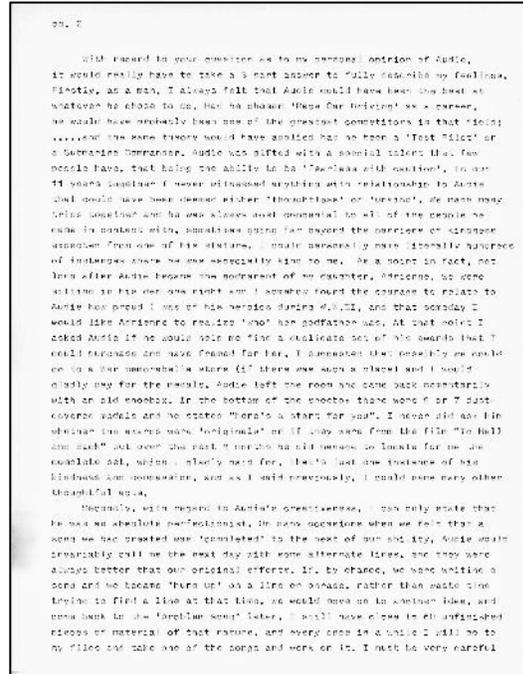
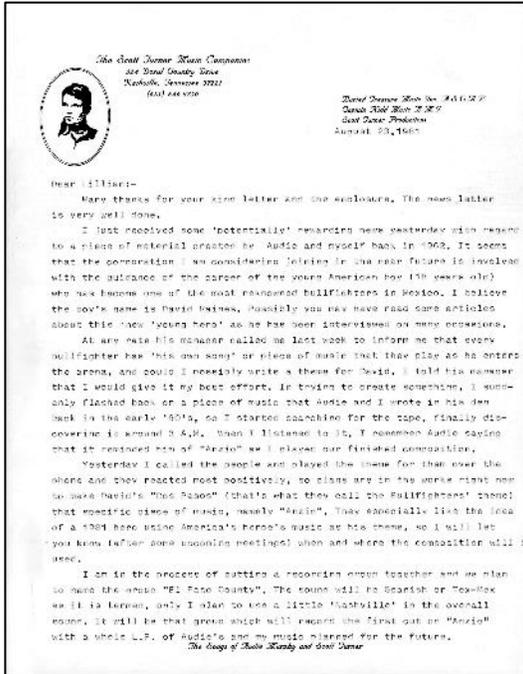
Good luck with your Journal and feel free to print anything you wish pertaining to my letters. I will keep you posted as to any new songs being recorded or any other facts pertaining to Audie's and my ventures.

Sincerely,

Scotty



Appendix A: Images of Original Letter⁶

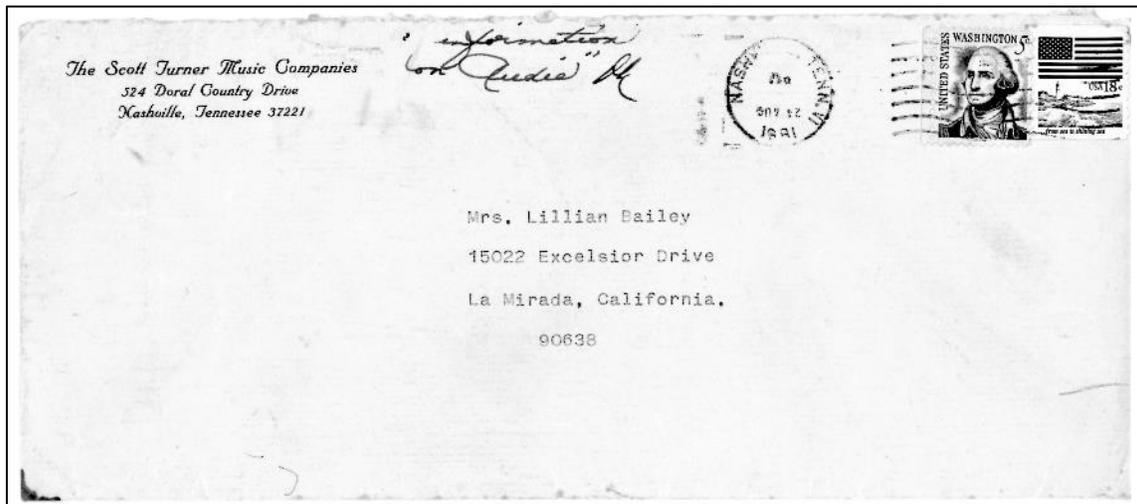


⁶ Provided as authentication and to help established provenance. From the collection of Lillian Bailey

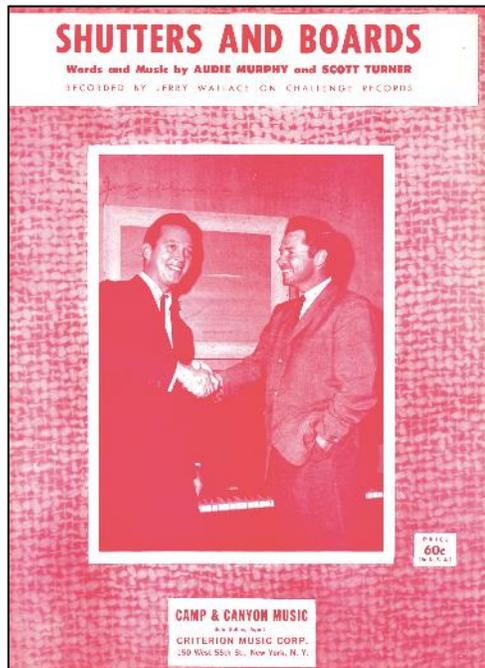
pg. 4

...and other individuals who are known to have been in contact with the artist, and who have been particularly prominent in the industry, have been contacted by the Foundation, and the results of these contacts will be reported to you. It is hoped that this information will be of interest to you, and that you will be able to identify any of the individuals mentioned in the enclosed, and if you are able to do so, please contact the Foundation at the address given above. It is also hoped that you will be able to identify any of the individuals mentioned in the enclosed, and if you are able to do so, please contact the Foundation at the address given above. It is also hoped that you will be able to identify any of the individuals mentioned in the enclosed, and if you are able to do so, please contact the Foundation at the address given above.

Sincerely,
Scott



Appendix B: Sheet Music for “Shutter’s and Boards”⁷



2

SHUTTERS AND BOARDS

Words and Music by
AUDIE MURPHY and SCOTT TURNER

Waltz Moderato (Not too slow)

Copyright © 1954 by Camp & Canyon Music, Inc., 440 N. Audie Ave., Hollywood 28, Calif. Published by CRITERION MUSIC CORPORATION, 154 W. 57th St., New York 19, N. Y. International Copyright Secured. Made in U. S. A.

Voice

1. The house that we built was made of shutters and boards. The side of the house that you were born in. I always felt a heart full of love now, the old side of the house. I never find sleep. I never find sleep. Oh, how I wish you were here with me by my side by my side.

⁷ Images provided from the collection of M.D. Marks.