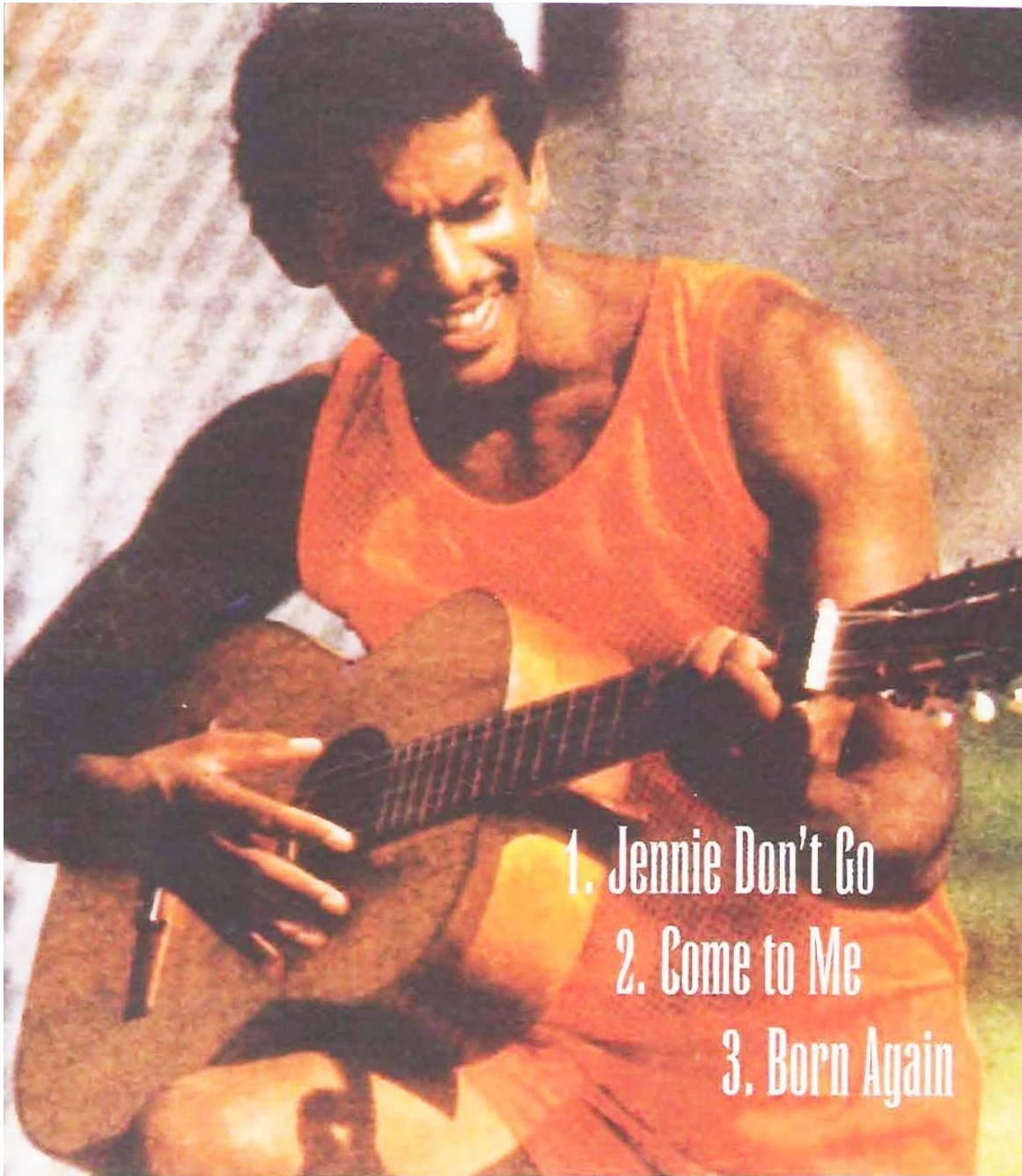

EDDIE MCDOWALL AKA AGENT 777



1. Jennie Don't Go
2. Come to Me
3. Born Again

Eddie McDowall learned to write music at the Krome Avenue detention centre. He and most

other detainees are enrolled in courses offered by the Dade school system. *Miami Herald* 86

***Born in Trinidad+Tobago
Immigrated to Canada at age 9
Parents: Cheifton and Iolyn Mcdowall
Born in St. Vincent, West Indies***

My father and mother brought 11 children to England, then to Canada. I had a happy upbringing, with so many siblings that there was always something to do. Around my teenage years, 16 or 17, it was time to look ahead and discover what I was going to do with my life. My father was very busy, and most of us kids had to make up our own minds on what road to travel. I first thought about joining the army, and then to become an airline pilot, but it ended up I had an idea to look at the artistic side of life, following the footsteps of a musician. It was obvious that I could learn the fundamentals of music through education. But “what next?” I thought. I needed an inspiration to write about. After high school, I went to Florida with my parents, who had a summer house in Fort Lauderdale. It started out as a summer vacation, but I ended up staying for five years. Within that time, I ended up living life in the fast lane. In the early 80s sex, drugs and rock n’ roll was the hip thing to do.

Although I dabbled in such a lifestyle, something always kept me from crossing certain lines. I thought if I was going to help people by creating music, then I needed to find out the ultimate. At age 24 I wasn’t really getting anywhere, because I still hadn’t found what I was looking for. I ended up in Pompano County Jail on a loitering charge for hanging out in the beaches. There in a crowded, dormitory jail I saw most people were trying to be a better criminal, and finding out how not to get caught. So it all seemed like a revolving door to me. I had a lot of time to reflect on my life, and analyze where I was going.

A volunteer librarian came pushing a book cart into the dormitory, giving out books to read. I went over and there was a man named Charlie, who looked to be in his 60s, with a warm expression on his face and his eyes full of light. I have always thought it was a good idea to respect your elders, when Charlie said to me “Here is a Bible” and told me that you need Jesus in your life, I listened to him. I thought to myself: I tried that kind of stuff before and walked away. Now I was still puzzled, thinking “here I am and not getting anywhere”. Then I thought I would give this God thing another try. It was too crowded to pray in the dormitory so I asked the Jailer to put me in self lock-up. I had a beef with life, and I was going to take it up with God, there in that cell around the middle of November 1985. I disrobed and thought: “naked I came to this world”. But calling on God, I felt embarrassed and wrapped a sheet around me. I said “God, why am I such a nice guy, and always getting the short end of the stick?” Then I realized I wasn’t such a nice guy after all: I had a flash-back, where I sold a bag of weed that weighed 20 grams and should have been 28. Who would have known that, but God? I said I was sorry and then an incredible thing happened: I heard an audible voice that said “Receive my Son”. I thought to myself, “who is that?” I remembered Charlie saying Jesus was the son of God. So I said “Jesus I want you”, and suddenly all my pain and suffering turned into joy. I became the happiest man in the world, in a split second. I felt an incredible release of joy and happiness that I never felt before. This is what I was looking for all along. When the jailer came to bring me food, all I could talk about was God. He said to me, “do you want to go to a Church meeting?” and I replied, “Yes”. There was a man who was preaching in the jail named Brother Brigits. He said that he had spent over 20 years in prison, and that God had changed his life, so here he was to tell us the good news of Christ so we wouldn’t end up in the slammer for 20 years like him. He said what

we need to keep us on the straight and narrow is to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I thought to myself, “if there were more to this, then I wanted it!” He prayed over me to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. So then the jailer took me into a different part of jail, with a few inmates in the corridor. I was going through such a life-changing experience, full of happiness the other inmates were asking me what I was high on, and do you have the stuff?(thinking that I had drugs). I said “no, it was Jesus that changed me!” I went into my room and knelt down to pray and asked God to fill me with his Holy Spirit. So I felt his joy again, and he spoke to me and said “Save my people!” When I went to see the judge, he asked what I was in for, and the charges were read to him; loitering. He said “that’s not a crime” and set me free. I found myself back on Fort Lauderdale Beach and ran into a buddy named Skip. I told him that I just got out of jail, so he invited me to his hotel room, where there was a party going on. They offered me a beer. There I was, full of this new life inwardly, but no foundation as a Christian. I really didn’t know how to preach or carry on a conversation about God; I just had an amazing experience. I thought I would identify myself with them and have a beer, then the joints came around and I thought I would be a cool Christian, and smoke some. The next morning I went to sit on the lawn chair by the hotel pool, and a few ladies that I knew came up to me and handed me a bunch of jewelry that they got from working the night before, telling me to go and sell it. Then another guy came around, giving me a bag full of cocaine to use and sell. I didn’t realize it but things that I wanted in my old life were being offered in the space of two weeks to seduce me back to my old ways. I took a walk on the beach to get my thoughts together. What I really wanted was this new life I found in Christ, not the old one, full of hardship and despair. Skip came up to me and said, “Hey Eddie, I got some cash, I want to buy some rock cocaine”. He was really edging me on to get it for him, so I thought “Okay, I will go and get it for him” so that he wouldn’t get ripped off (because of my connections). But even though I had made up my mind not to use any drugs, when I got to the fence at the coke house, I got him six rocks and headed back to the car. Then I saw a car looming towards me. Usually I would have blended in the crowd and got away, but I felt something stopped me and dropped the cocaine. An undercover officer got out of the car, picked up the coke and looked at Skip and his friends in their car. He asked, “who’s is this?” I said it was mine, and the officer told Skip and his friends to leave the area. He put me in his car and took me to Broward County Jail. There in the cell, I thought “God, how can I change myself and learn to live with this new Life?”

I saw a bunch of religious books there, and I started to read them. I got a hold of a pen and paper, and wrote somewhat about my life and thought it would be a good idea to make a song called “Born Again”. I prayed and felt the power of God come over me, and I made a pledge with him not to leave this place until I was strong enough to go out and tell people about him. God also speaks to me by inspiring thought, and it was time to go up to the judge and I felt God telling me to plead guilty, realizing Jesus had suffered on the cross and it would work out better for me to spend the time in jail, and wait on God. The judge gave me two years in the state prison; I was handcuffed, shackled and put on a bus and sent to North Florida (Sumter Correctional Institute).

Known as the Baby Rock, 18 to 30 year olds hot-headed criminals (Americans, Colombians and Haitians): rapists, and killers. All I knew was I was going to go and get a spiritual education to better myself. A busload of us newcomers was walking down the prison sidewalk and through the bars, other inmates were saying “who are your people?”-meaning to see what gang I belong to. I said “Jesus is my people”. We were kept for two weeks in orientation separated from the other inmates. Then I found out that the prison chapel was having activities 6 days a week. Out of 900 inmates about 60 of us would meet for the services. On one occasion the topic was the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in tongues. I went forward to receive this gift that then came upon me. During another service the pastor’s wife prophesied saying “many of you will be tested, but God wants you to trust him so he can deliver you”. There were all kinds of Christian volunteers from different dominations, coming into the prison teaching us about the Bible, with loud instruments and songs, singing and rejoicing in the Lord. I didn’t know Christianity was so much fun. I was then moved to dorm B, to mix with the other inmates. Now the word was out, because I had identified myself with Jesus so the other inmates had different plans for me. When I went into dorm B, I was confronted by a man who was the ring leader, named Red Dog. He was acting nice to me, offering to make my bed and make me feel welcome. He had other things in mind. They didn’t trust my sincerity, thinking my conversion wasn’t real. Prison is a place where grown men use force to manipulate people into doing something out of character. Red Dog came up to me and said, “make my bed”, I said, “no, I don’t want to”. Then he said, “I’m going to beat you up”, and I said, “God is not going to let you”. Usually they would wait until the guards are not looking, before they rush you. In the evening, as I was laying on my bunk, Red Dog came towards me so I started to pray in the spirit (tongues) out loud. He then stopped and went away for the time being. I found out that the chapel leader, Mr. Panzaette was offering a Bible course every Saturday morning for all who wanted to attend. Christian volunteers from Clearwater, Florida, were coming in to teach this course. So I signed up and on a Saturday morning, I was going to go take a shower and head down to Church. Prison inmates were carrying on with their funny business and I didn’t pay any attention to them. While I was in the shower, Red Dog and five of his buddies, showed up with a plan to knock me out and rape me. My back was against the wall as these guys turned towards me with evil intent. I thought to myself “If I try to punch my way out of this I will be overpowered”. So it was time to put my faith to the test. My mind was focused on God, I felt His peace rush through my body, and then I said the name of Jesus. Before anybody could touch me, all of a sudden these guys’ attitude changed and they couldn’t touch me. It was like all the evil fled from their body and mind. I walked out of there untouched to the laundry area to grab a towel and wrap it around me. A prison guard came in and asked what’s going on. I said “These five guys tried to rape me”. So he called for backup, and put all the inmates in lockdown. They took me to an investigation room and an officer took a report. In the end of reporting, I told him, “I said Jesus and they weren’t able to touch me”. The officer was nodding his head in amazement, as he was taking the report. Monday came around and I was taken back to dorm B. I was so happy about God protecting me in the prison, but the word got around about the 5 inmates who were put in lockdown so I was classified as a snitch for telling the truth. Now there was a contract out on

my life to kill me. As I walked into dorm B the other inmates were saying are you going to request self lockup, for my own safety. In my thoughts, God impressed on my mind to keep trusting Him. He wanted me to be a witness on the compound, and how could I do so if I was locked up 24 hours a day. The bell rang and it was time to go to work duties. I was walking down on the prison sidewalk, just humming to God and thanking him for being so good to me. I saw a different man from another dorm, coming straight at me swinging his fists. He was a ring leader from a different dorm, wanting to take revenge for his friends who were in lockdown. As he approached me, he took a swing and tried to bust my jaw. His fist deflected off my face. He stopped in his tracks, and said, "What's up with you?" I said, "Praise the Lord, man," and kept walking. That evening I couldn't wait to go to church, and praise God for all that he did for me. As I came in front of the church service, praising God, I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was the same guy who tried to bust my jaw earlier that day. He said "You are a man of God". I said, "Yes brother" and I acknowledged him. I was amazed he was in church that night after the incident/miracle, that took place earlier that day. Prison for me was an astounding experience where I saw the power of God come to life. As I was reading in the Bible about Daniel being in the Lion's Den, the Lion's mouths closed and they couldn't eat him. Earlier that day, I was basically following the Bible, exercising faith and seeing miracles. Another example where God saved me, occurred when I was in front of the print shop talking to some inmates from the church when another ring leader came over and looked at me and said, "I want you to be my boy". I answered him, "I am not about that, but I love you (spiritually) in the Lord". He then reached out to grab me and his hand stopped and he said, "Why do you have that shield around you?" Eventually he walked away, and my brothers and I gave the glory to God. I aced out of prison by getting my grade 12 diploma and a Bible certificate, as well as completing substance abuse courses. Then I came back to Canada and worked as an auto glass technician, and as a song writer, sharing my faith with my customers. I am currently involved with the International Christian Centre, where we cater to the street people bringing them food, music and counseling My volunteering does not end there, I have been a caregiver for my mother who suddenly became a widow over 15 years ago. It has been over 25 years now since my new life in Christ, which enabled me to stop smoking, drinking and using drugs.

May all the glory be to God who made a new man out of me.