

J.D. Crowe

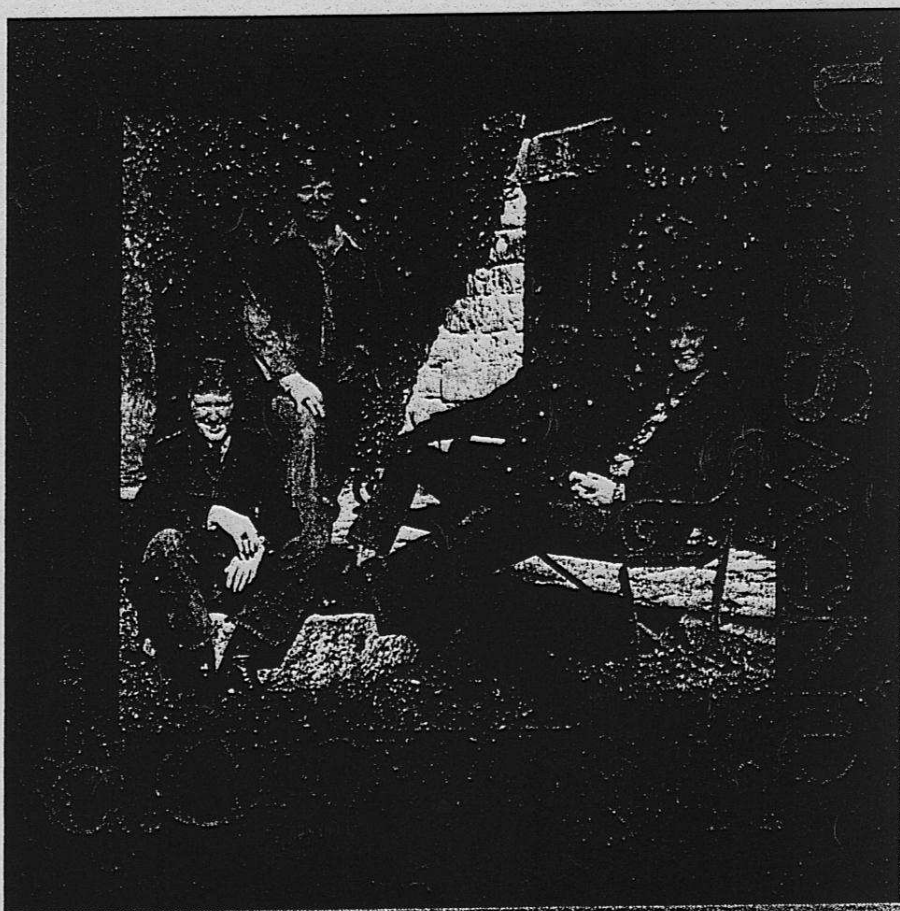


AcuTab transcriptions Vol. I

Complete tablature transcriptions of the solos – and selected backups – from two recordings by J.D. Crowe & the New South, *Flashback* and the classic *New South* album from 1975.

Songs from:

J.D. Crowe & The New South



Rounder 0044

This album – often known as the *Old Home Place* album – was released in 1975. Many students of bluegrass history describe it as the first modern bluegrass record. Without a doubt, this album set a standard for the many young bluegrass artists coming up at that time and its influence on the development of the music could hardly be overstated. It also brought Tony Rice, Ricky Skaggs, and Jerry Douglas to the attention of the larger bluegrass audience.

"All we were trying to do was get a good record. I don't think anyone knows what a record is going to do, what it is going to become when you are recording it. We weren't trying to change the music. Tony would bring in a song and say, 'Hey, I think we can do this,' and I'd say, 'Sure, let's give it a try.' If it worked, I'd say, 'Hey, that's great – we'll give it a shot.' I think that's how things happened."

Old Home Place

Key of B \flat
Capo 3, play in G
 $\text{♩} = 122$

written by Dean Webb & Mitchell F. Jayne
Lansdowne Music / Winston Music Publishers - ASCAP
© 1963 renewed 1991 Worldwide
used by permission

First break

It's been ten long years since I left my home in the holler
where I was born. Where the cool fall nights make the wood smoke
rise and the fox hunter blows his horn.

The B chord in measures 3 and 11 is played by sliding an index finger barre up from 2-4. The slide back down from 4-2 can be done with the index fretting only the 3rd string.

In measure 15 we encounter a true 'classic' lick. If you have worked through much Scruggs material, you may have run across this one which utilizes a technique called a 'hammer-pull.' This fairly common move involves hammering from the 2nd to the 3rd fret and then pulling right back off from 3-2. A little practice should allow you to add the lick to your repertoire. Since the pull-off is not picked you have to really give the string a good yank!

The backup from the next page is chock full of Crowe signature licks, many of them being J.D.'s creative interpretations of Scruggs. The lick in measure 22 is a perfect example in which you slide up into a D-position/G chord. Another is the 'thumb wrap' used in measure 25. Here you fret the 5th string with the thumb coming from the other side of the neck. If this is new to you it may take a bit of work to accomplish the stretch. Keep at it - it is an important lick.

Measures 28-29 use the same chord form (F-position) moving it up one fret. The trick is that J.D. moves up with the last note of measure 28. Be careful with the lick in measure 30; the left hand fingering is shown in the tab. There is a position shift in the middle of measure 31, also indicated in the tab.

2x 10d Old Home Place

Back up for first verse

4/4

G B7 C G

It's been ten long years since I left my home in the holler

7 D G B7 C

where I was born. Where the cool fall nights make the wood smoke

13 G D G

rise and the fox hunter blows his horn. I

19 B7 C M L I G M R I R L R R R R R R

fell in love with a girl from the town. I thought that she would be

25 D R L T I G B7 R L M I R C M I L G I R L R L I M

true. I ran a way to Charlottes ville and

31 I M R I M R L D G

worked in a saw — mill crew.

"Years ago I heard a Tommy Collins record and it had this great guitar lick on it. You know, I think it was Buck Owens that was playing guitar. Anyway, that's where I got that lick (measure 30). I still play it; it fits in a lot of things. It's become almost like a signature lick in this song and if you don't play it it feels like there's something missing."

2cd Some Old Day

Key of G
play open in G
♩ = 75

written by Cirtain & Stacey
© Golden West Melodies – BMI

Back up for first verse

I've been working out in the rain tied to a dirty old ball and chain. Oh dear mother I'll come home some old

day. Some sweet day they'll turn me loose from this dirty old calla — boose. Oh dear

mother I'll come home some old day.

This classic example of Crowe-style backup comes right out of the Scruggs repertoire. Since the whole thing is played in closed positions (no open strings) you can transpose these licks into any key simply by moving the positions up or down the neck.

The left hand positions given for the first few measures are used throughout this backup and are the positions which J.D. uses most commonly. These licks could be played using the index and middle fingers, or an index barre, with the ring finger reaching for the higher notes. Whichever position feels most comfortable to you is what you should use but, in either case, remember to keep the basic position in place when reaching up for the occasional notes a few frets higher.

The chord forms for the last part of measure 14 go from an F-position/D chord to a D-position/G chord. The actual switch takes place with the last note of measure 14 giving a nice anticipated arrival of the G chord. During the proofing of these tabs, J.D. was not sure what he played in this section (measures 14-16) so what is shown is at his suggestion. He indicated that it was possible that he just stopped playing at this point as the recording seems to show.

When playing this style of backup, J.D. modifies his right hand technique slightly. He drops the wrist area of his hand onto the head and lifts the two anchor fingers from the head. This dampens the sound just a bit and provides a nice, warm tone. The same effect is used on *I'll Just Pretend*.

"I probably saw Earl do that but it may have just come from experimentation. You just lay your hand on the head, you don't apply pressure. It changens the tone to a softer, mellower sound. On songs like this you don't want a real aggressive backup. This gives you a little smoother, subtle tone."

Home Sweet Home Revisited *cd 10*

Key of F
Capo 3, play in D
♩ = 91

written by Rodney Crowell
© Sixteen Stars Music – BMI
used by permission

The musical score is written for guitar in 4/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a G major chord and a D major chord. The second staff begins with an A major chord and a D major chord. The score includes various guitar techniques such as pinches, forward rolls, and a 'collapsing' ring finger technique. The tempo is marked as 91 beats per minute.

This solo may throw a few curves but, at the relaxed tempo at which it is played, it should not be a problem. J.D. plays this in D, capoed up three frets, and the 5th string is also capoed up only three frets – to a B^b note (8th fret) – instead of five as you might expect when playing in D.

The picking pattern in measure 3 is a bit odd. The 5th string that follows the pinch could be omitted if it seems too difficult – J.D. actually strikes it more as a rhythmic placeholder. Alternately, you could leave out the 5th string in the pinch and play a forward roll.

The chordal lick in measures 6-7 is another one that can be used effectively anywhere on the neck. It is reminiscent of a picking pattern commonly used by steel guitarists. The position is simply an F-position chord form with the note on the 5th fret of the 2nd string (7th fret in measure 7) fretted by 'collapsing' the ring finger into a barre without moving the other fingers. This may take some practice but once you get the hang of it, it is a very handy technique. You can even use it to accomplish a very steel-sounding lick by hammering-on with the collapsing ring finger.



Janice McLaughlin

Larry Rice, J.D., and Tony Rice in Morrow, OH 1974

cd4

Sally Goodin

Key of A
Capo 2, play in G
♩ = 128

traditional

Back up – intro to banjo break

1 7 13 19 25 31

D G D G D G D G D G

continued on the next page

Could there be a better fundamental exposition of roll-style backup than J.D.'s playing behind the fiddle on *Sally Goodin*? Despite the repetition, this one is presented almost in its entirety – only the backup behind the guitar is omitted. Even the greenest of beginners should be able to play through this with ease, hopefully picking up the lesson that 'less is more' when it comes to backing up a fiddle.

The brush played in measure 36 pops up several more times throughout this song. It is played with the thumb brushing down from the 5th to the 2nd strings, with the thumb coming to rest – but not striking – the 1st string. Leaving a rest for the first beat of the next measure is another trademark Crowe technique which is particularly effective when backing up a fiddle. Perhaps the tab to the right more accurately portrays the rhythm.

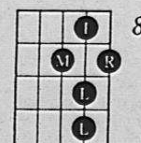
t i t m t t t t t m t m t

cd 4

Sally Goodin

Banjo break

If you've ever learned the Earl Scruggs version of this tune, most of the positions should be familiar. Left hand fingerings are given throughout the solo where they might not be obvious. The position that forms the basis for the tune is shown at right. Hold the index, ring, and middle fingers in place and use the little finger to reach up for the notes at the 10th and 11th frets. Any of those notes fretted with the little finger could also receive a little choke. This form is used from the beginning of the break until halfway through measure 4. At this point, switch to the fingering shown above the tab, and then to a D-position/G chord at measure 5. Measure 6 returns to the fingering with which we started. This switch occurs many times during the break so be watching for it.



The back up on the next page picks up after the guitar solo – when the fiddle comes back in. Much of what is presented will be very similar to the opening back up, but watch for the subtle variations. Of special note is J.D.'s tendency to break up the forward roll and end measures with a 1st/3rd pinch. It provides a nice little punch to this part of the tune – the more adventurous, 'jazzier' feel. You'll notice in the final part of the backup that he returns to the unbroken roll once the fiddle returns to the final restatement of the melody, just as he did in the opening back up leading up to his solo.

ad 4

Sally Goodin

Back up for second fiddle break

continued on the next page

The string of hammers in measures 20-22 is not terribly difficult to execute, but be careful not to rush through them. Both the note prior to the hammer and the hammered note get a full eighth count. The brush in measure 16 is the same one described in the earlier back up for this tune.

cd 4

Sally Goodin

Backup for second fiddle break, continued to ending

4/4

G D G

7

D G MR D G

13

D G

19

D G

25

D G

31

D G

37

continued on the next page

cd 4 Sally Goodin

continued from the previous page

43 49 55 61 67

D G D G D G D G D G

This backup – which continues from the previous one – features a very distinctive G⁷ lick (measures 10-13). J.D. improvised this in the studio. Count it carefully and watch the tied notes in measure 12. Another move which has become associated with J.D. is found in measures 20-22, and in several other places in this tune. The fingering given is but one of the ways in which J.D. plays this lick. Use whatever left hand fingering best suits you.

"You know, I've never really been happy with my break on this tune. I don't think I was up for it; I just wasn't in the mood to play that song when we recorded it. If you listen, you'll notice that I actually cut my break short. The rest of the guys did a great job and Ricky just played the devil out of it. I probably should have gone for another take but everything else was so good, I didn't touch it."

"Now I can play it a lot better than that break. It worked out fine, and it's not a bad solo, but I was just not satisfied with it. In my mind, I could do it better. I did not have the feel – the flow – that I wanted to get."

cd6

Nashville Blues

Key of D minor
 play open in D minor
 tuning: F#DFAD
 ♩ = 130

written by Earl Scruggs
 © Scruggs Music Inc. – BMI

First break

The musical score for the 'First break' of 'Nashville Blues' is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 130 beats per minute. It is in the key of D minor, using the F#DFAD tuning. The score is composed of seven staves of guitar tablature. Chord changes are indicated by letters (Dm, A, D) above the staves. The music features various fingerings (t, m, i, m, t, m) and techniques like hammer-ons (h), pull-offs (p), and slides (s). Measure numbers 7, 13, 19, 25, 31, and 37 are marked at the beginning of their respective staves.

This opening solo is largely based on the Earl Scruggs recording. The song is a wonderful 'change-of-pace' piece which is not difficult to play. It also gives us a look at Scruggs' penchant for coming up with interesting tunes by playing standard 'G' licks in a different tuning.

cd 6

Nashville Blues

Second break

The musical score for the 'Second break' is written in 4/4 time and consists of 37 measures. The notation includes fret numbers (0-5), picking patterns (t, m, i, m, t, m), and chord changes (Dm, A, D). The score is divided into systems of staves, with measure numbers 7, 13, 19, 25, 31, and 37 indicated at the start of their respective systems. The key signature is one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 4/4.

Chord changes and measure markers:

- Measure 1: Dm
- Measure 7: A
- Measure 13: Dm
- Measure 19: Dm
- Measure 25: A
- Measure 31: Dm
- Measure 37: Dm

Be careful with the chokes at the beginning of measures 2 and 5. Pick the note, let it ring for a full eighth count, and then choke it up. This choke is meant to actually raise the note one half step rather than a more typical, indeterminate blues-type choke. Listen to J.D. and you'll hear it.

The string of hammers in measures 27-30 features an interesting, 'off-time' roll. The syncopation may take a bit of getting used to as the accents fall in unexpected places. Crowe improvisation in action!

cd6

Nashville Blues

Third break

Third Break musical notation (measures 1-24). The notation includes chords (Dm, A, D), fret numbers (0, 2, 3, 5), and picking patterns (t, m, i, m, t, i, m, t). A *ritard* instruction is present at measure 15, and a *harmonics* instruction is present at measure 19.

At measure 15 we run into the instruction, *ritard*, in the tab. This is Italian for slow down, so make sure that you do. It is a very nice effect. Listen to J.D. – or Earl – play it and you can see how it's done.

"I did not go back and learn this note-for-note from the Flatt & Scruggs recording. I just played it the way I remember Earl doing it and then added a few little off-beat things that I like (measures 27-30 of the second break). Me and Tony used to do that sort of thing a lot – he was good at that."

"We might have played this on the show once or twice after we recorded it but I bet I've haven't played this song in twenty years!"

ed7 You Are What I Am

Key of C
Capo 5, play in G
♩ = 124

written by Gordon Lightfoot
© Moose Music Ltd. – SOCAN

First break

4
4
You make time stand still You do it

7
D G A
now and you always will. You take me as I am

13
C D G D G
you make me feel like a brand new man.

Another trademark look at the style that established J.D. as an heir-apparent to Earl Scruggs. Two things particularly bear special mention. The pull-off in measure 11 is followed by an unexpected rest – a typical Crowe technique. Make sure to leave the proper eighth count space or the timing will be badly thrown off. It may help to move the index finger in that space without picking a note – at least until you get the feel for the lick. The lick in measure 16 is also quite representative of the way in which J.D. injects a subtle variation into a standard phrase.

We also get a look at J.D.'s tendency to play a two-note pinch for quarter note kick off or lead in licks. Measure 9 in all three breaks provides a good look at this, which seems to have first come into prominence as a part of the Crowe style. You will see many more examples of this throughout the book.

"I'll tell you where that came from really. It was bad P.A.s. Playing the two notes gives you more volume and I got in the habit of doing it. After a while it just becomes part of your style, even without realizing it. But it was just because the dang sound systems were not adequate and you had to do everything you could to get that punch – to get those lead lines out front."

cd 7 You Are What I Am

Second break

4

7

13

mandolin solo

19

25

31

G A C D E

t m i h p s l r

The lick in measures 10-11 is one that J.D. uses fairly often. It is a common phrase that you may already know, possibly as the 'Old Joe Clark' lick. Left hand fingering is given in the tab but is not repeated throughout the book when the lick pops up several more times.

The mandolin solo occupies measures 18-25. J.D. would typically vamp the chords in this space.

cd7 You Are What I Am

Third break

Tina Break

4/4

0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 | 0 2 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 4 2 0 | 1 0 0 0

m t m m | t i m t | m t m t | t i m t | m i t m | t i t m

7

0 2 0 0 | 0 2 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 | 0 2 3 3 | 3 3 2 0 | 2 2 2 4

h 0 p 0 | h 0 p 0 | t m t m | m t m t | m i m t | t i m t

13

5 4 2 0 | 1 4 4 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 | 0 2 3 0 | 0 0 0 0

m m m t | i m t m | m i t m | t m t m | t m t m | t



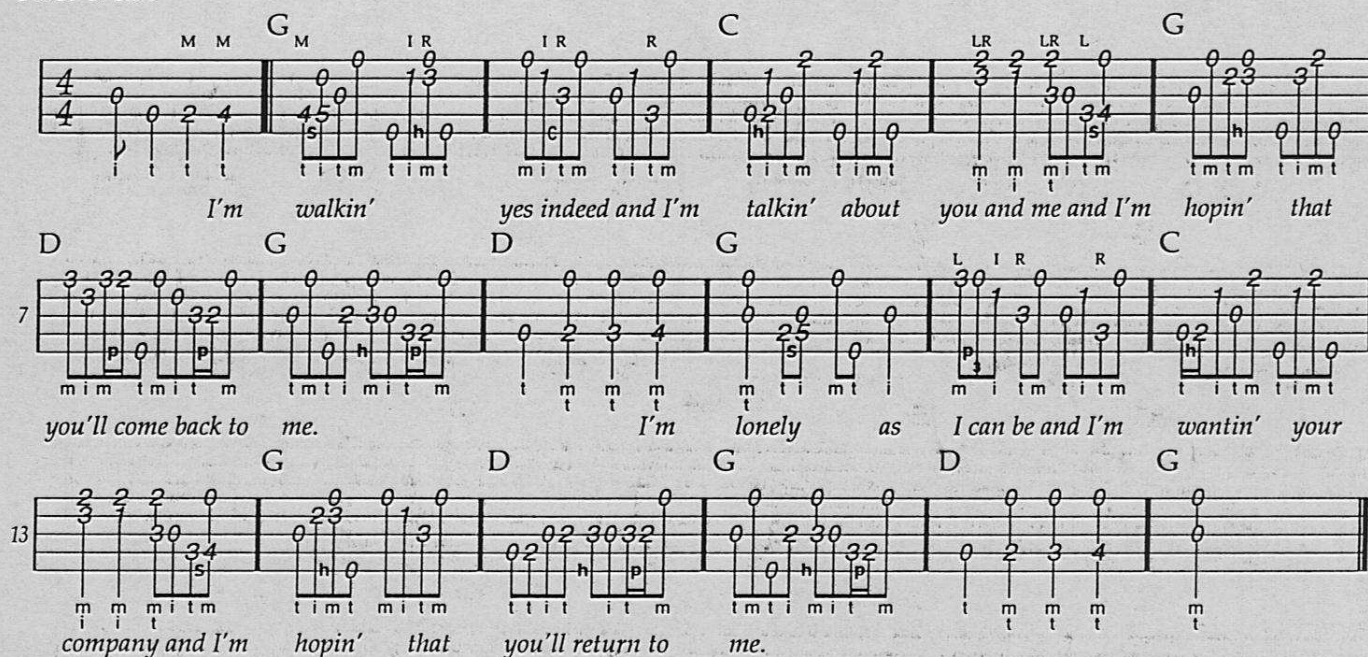
The New South, circa 1974 – Larry and Tony Rice, Bobby Slone, J.D.

cd 9 I'm Walkin'

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 127

written by Antoine Domino & Dave Bartholemew
© EMI/Warner Bros. Publications – BMI

First break



I'm walkin' yes indeed and I'm talkin' about you and me and I'm hopin' that
you'll come back to me. I'm lonely as I can be and I'm wantin' your
company and I'm hopin' that you'll return to me.

Throughout these two solos we see the bluesy 'Crowe-isms' that distinguish J.D.'s playing from Earl Scruggs. This is especially evident in the second break, measures 10-17, which was improvised. None of the individual moves are all that tricky but the steady stream of hammers and pull-offs may take a bit of work to accomplish.

The left hand fingering shown for the ending is how J.D. does it. You could substitute the ring finger for the little finger if it is more comfortable. The choke shown in measure 1 involves picking the note, letting it ring for one eighth count, and then choking it up on the next eighth count. Don't pick the note twice. Be careful with the timing here – listen and count carefully. The brush at the end would be played by brushing up with either the middle or index finger – or both.

"I wanted an ending for this tune that didn't sound like everything else. I was fooling around one day and I came up on that little rhythmic pattern and it reminded me of the 'Charleston' sound. I've heard recordings of bands from the 1920's that ended stuff like that. That's where I got that."

"It's a hard lick – the syncopation, the way it's timed out. Everything has to be just right. If a guy misses one lick you've destroyed the ending. Once you mix it up you can't get back in it!"

I'm Walkin' cd 9

Second break

4/4

0 0 0 | 0 2 3 4 | 3 3 2 0 0 | 2 3 0 2 | 3 2 0 0 | 0 2 3 1 0

t m m m | m t m t m t m | m i m t m i t m | t i t m t i m t | m m m i t m | t i m t m i t m

G C G

7 0 2 3 2 0 | 0 2 3 0 3 2 | 0 2 3 4 | 0 2 3 2 3 | 0 2 0 2 | 3 2 3 2 2

t i t m t i t t | i m t i m i t m | t m m m | t m t i m t | m i m t m i m t | m i m t m i m t

D G D G C

13 3 2 3 2 3 2 0 | 2 3 2 3 2 0 | 0 2 3 2 0 3 2 | 0 2 3 0 2 | 3 2 3 3 3 | 1

m i m t m t m i | t m t i t i t m | t t i i t m | t m t i m i t m | t m t i m i | i

G D G G⁷ C

19 *mandolin solo*

25 0 2 4 | 0 2 3 3 0 | 3 3 2 0 0 | 3 2 0 2 | 3 2 0 0 | 0 2 3 2

i t t t m | t t m t i m t | m i m t m i t m | t i t m t i m t | m m m i t m | t m t i m t

D G C G

31 3 3 2 0 0 | 0 2 3 0 3 2 | 0 2 3 4 | 0

m i m t m i t m | m t i i t m | t m t m t m | t

D G D G

Ending

4/4

5 3 5 3 | 5 3 0 | 3 4 0 | 3 4 0 | 0

m m i i t | m t t m | p p | p p | b

L I L I | I L I | M I | M I

X ad 11 Cryin' Holy

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 135

traditional

First break

1
4
4
2 3 0 2 0
t i m i t
Cryin' holy
G
0 0 0 0 0 0
m t i m t i m
0 2 0 2 0
t i t m t i t
2 3 0 3 0
h 0 m t i m t i m
0 0 0 0 0
t i m t m i t m
C
3 2 0 1 2
p i t t i m t

7
2 1 1 0 L
m i t i m i t m
G
0 0 0 0 0 0
t m t i m i t m
0 2 3 0 2
h h
t m t i t
R I R
0 0 0 0 0 0
m t m t m
2 3 3 2 0
h 0 p i t m t m t
0 0 0 0 0
m i m i m i m

13
2 3 0 0 2 0
h h t
D
0 0 0 0 0 0
t i m t i m t i
G
0 2 3 0 4
m i t m t i t m
0 0 2 3 0
t t i t m
0 2 3 0 2
h h m i t m
0 0 0 0 0
t m m i t

19
0
0
m

These two solos, as well as those for *Long Journey Home* and *When The Angels Carry Me Home*, offer a textbook example of straightforward, melody-style picking. If you follow the words printed below the tab you will see that J.D. matches them almost perfectly in the kickoff.

"On a song like this, you need to have the melody in your head - especially if you're doing the kickoff. I'm hearing the words like a singer would sing them, and I can't see playing this one all garbled up. I stick basically to the melody on songs that lend themselves to that. There's such a thing as putting too much in there, and you can lose that groove if you start doing that."

"I just hear them played that way and I guess I don't want to hear them any other way. It's such a good feel and flow when you get in the groove and you're playing the melody - just like you're speaking the words on the instrument."

col 11 Cryin' Holy

Second break

[illegible]

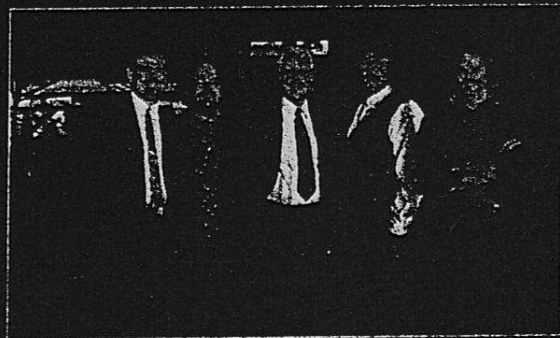
Ricky Skaggs and Tony Rice join J.D. for a reunion in 1993 (Ronnie Simpkins on bass)

Joe Wages

Songs from:
J.D. Crowe & The New South's

Flashback

J.D. CROWE
& The New South



f l a s h b a c k

When *Flashback* was released in 1994, there had not been a release from the New South since *Straight Ahead*, nearly eight years earlier. The album was both a critical and popular success, reaching #1 on the *Bluegrass Unlimited* album chart.

*"For years, I used the Bell Brand banjo strings, back before they went out of business. I used those because I asked Earl once what he used and he said Bell Brand. For the *Flashback* sessions I went back and got a set of Bells that I had saved since the 60's. I figured they would be rusted and not worth fooling with, but when I opened the pack they were just as shiny as new! I played that set through four days of recording and then a couple of gigs before I started breaking them."*

Waiting For You (cd) 1 X

Key of A
Capo 2, play in A
♩ = 118

written by Richard Bennett & Curt Chapman
© Muhlenberg Music Inc. - BMI

First break

The first break consists of three staves of music. The first staff (treble clef) starts with a G chord and contains measures 1-4. The second staff (treble clef) starts with a C chord and contains measures 5-8. The third staff (treble clef) starts with a G chord and contains measures 9-12. The notation includes various guitar-specific symbols such as 't' for thumb, 'i' for index, 'm' for middle, 'a' for annular, 'h' for hammer-on, 'p' for pull-off, and 's' for slide. Chord changes are indicated by letters G, C, and D above the staff. A 'LR' (left-right) strumming pattern is marked in measure 7.

Second break - split with guitar

The second break consists of three staves of music. The first staff (treble clef) starts with a G chord and contains measures 1-4. The second staff (treble clef) starts with a G chord and contains measures 5-8. The third staff (treble clef) starts with a C chord and contains measures 9-12. The notation includes various guitar-specific symbols such as 't' for thumb, 'i' for index, 'm' for middle, 'a' for annular, 'h' for hammer-on, 'p' for pull-off, and 's' for slide. Chord changes are indicated by letters G, C, and D above the staff. A 'G7' chord is marked in measure 12.

The choke in measure 5 of the first break and measure 7 of the second is another stock Crowe lick which will pop up a few more times in this part of the book. The little finger reaches in from within a C chord; only the 3rd string note is choked.

Measures 9-11 of the second break feature more vintage Crowe. The right hand fingering indicates how J.D. plays it. You could substitute an alternating picking pattern though much of the effect of the lick comes from the 'Monroe downstroke' feel that repeated use of a single finger generates.

The G7-C transition in measures 12-13 is another one to store away for future use. The last note of measure 11 can be omitted.

Waiting For You (cd) 1

Back up for second verse

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. The guitar part is indicated by chord symbols (G, C, D) and fret numbers (0-12). The vocal part is indicated by letters (t, m, h, s) and fret numbers (0-12). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

Staff 1: G C G M R I R L (9) (5)
 Night after night I dream your love will re — turn. How

Staff 2: R L R I R M R A R L I M I D L M I L M M R
 long can a man go on, by now I guess I should have learned. When you're

Staff 3: G I L L I I L I M C I L I M
 lonely and wondering a — bout the way things used to be don't

Staff 4: G L M M R D M L T I G
 pass me by and don't forget our love that once was a dream.

The slide into a D-position/G chord (measures 6-7) is essentially the same one we encountered in the backup for *Old Home Place*. Listen closely to J.D. play this as the accents and phrasing are very difficult to capture on paper yet they are classic examples of the 'looseness' that characterizes the Crowe sound.

Measure 11-12 and 19-20 offers two variations on a well-known – and fairly tricky – Scruggs lick. Watch the fingering and the timing carefully, especially the grace note slide in the middle of the lick. The note is 'anticipated' by being played on the final count of one measure and then allowed to ring through the first count of the next.

The note in parenthesis at the end of measure 14 could also be omitted. J.D. most likely played this note unconsciously to fill the space before starting the next lick. The repeated hammer-on in measures 17-18 are played by barring the index finger across the 2nd/3rd strings at the 8th fret and hammering with the middle finger. The position is a variant of the F-position chord form

The lick in measures 5-6 is another one that J.D. modified from the Scruggs vocabulary. The Scruggs influence is apparent but the Crowe touch is unmistakable.

"Earl hits that lick direct where I use what I call a more bluesy sound. I learned to incorporate that slide – that sustaining slide – in front of that lick. It's one of those things that just happened. I didn't plan it, it just worked. I did it one time and it worked. I thought, 'Hey, that sounds pretty good,' so I kept doing it."

I'll Just Pretend (cd) 12

Key of C
Play open in C
♩ = 87

written by Jessie Mae Martin
© Wing/Acuff Rose – BMI

Backup from intro through first verse

This backup utilizes the same bag of tricks that we saw in *Some Old Day*. As in that song, the positions are all closed so you can use them anywhere on the neck, though they are most effective in the higher register. Similarly, the left hand fingering shown in measure 6 is used throughout. Here is another divergence between Crowe and Scruggs. Earl would typically finger this sort of thing with the index and middle fingers using the ring finger to reach the notes two and three frets higher. Either one will work.

One that we have not seen before in this book, but which is another staple, is found in measures 3-4. This lick also represents one of J.D.'s subtle tweaks of a Scruggs lick. It is based in an F-position chord form and can be used anytime you are in that position. Part of the trick to playing this is keeping the little finger in place on the 1st string. Though the fingering suggests that an index finger barre across the 2nd and 3rd strings might be used, J.D. does not finger it that way.

The very last note in measure 21 is slid back down the neck after it is picked. The slide is not to a particular spot on the neck – again it's a 'feel' thing.

I'll Just Pretend (cd) 2

Backup for third verse to ending

C F G

I'll try my best to for — get you to love you now is such a

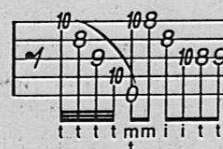
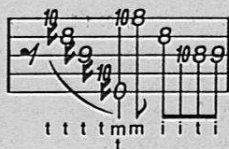
C F

sin. As I'm fac — ing all my friends dear they'll under —

C G C G C

stand I won't pre — tend.

The brush in measure 15 is played using a technique which J.D. employs fairly often. The thumb brushes back from the 1st to 5th strings using the back of the thumb pick. Just as the thumb gets to the 5th string, the middle finger picks the 1st string resulting in a uniquely powerful sound. This 'back brush' is hard to notate exactly, but two more detailed attempts are provided below. In the first, the brush notes are shown as grace notes leading up to the pinch and in the second, they are shown as 32nd notes. This little move is fairly tricky to play as well so spend some with it – and the recording.



"When you're playing backup, you have to be careful not to override what the singer is doing. You don't take away, you add. You want to make him sound good; that's the whole key. Whoever is out in front, that's who the others should try and make sound better. Of course people who are into banjo will always listen for the backup, and that's all well and good, but you don't ever want to be up there louder than your lead singer."

"If you do a hot lick, you want it on the rest line, in other words, in the space between the words. You don't want to do it while your singer is singing the word. You don't have room for a lot so I always try to be subtle about it."

Nashville Skyline Rag Cod 14 x


Key of C
Play open in C
♩ = 140

written by Bob Dylan
© 1969, 1976 Big Sky Music
International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved
Reprinted by Permission of Music Sales Corporation

First break

The musical notation for the first break of 'Nashville Skyline Rag' is presented across five staves. The key signature is C major, and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 140. The notation includes fingerings (numbers 1-4), fret numbers (0-12), and chord names (C, F, G, D, E, A, M, R, L, I, S). Notes in parentheses indicate optional notes. The piece ends with a double bar line at measure 29.

A bluegrass banjo classic written by Bob Dylan? That's right – from Dylan, to Scruggs, to Crowe, to you.

The many notes in parentheses are ones that can be omitted. J.D. does not play this song precisely the same way each time and these notes are often played 'unconsciously' rather than intentionally. They should be played somewhat lightly and certainly  accented if you find it easier to play the complete roll.

Another thing to keep in mind is that J.D. generally plays the hammer from the 2nd-3rd fret on the 3rd string interchangeably with a slide. In this, and all the other tunes, you should feel free to use whichever works better for you.

The chords at the end of this solo (measure 29) are shown as being picked by the middle and index fingers. What is meant is that you should brush back with these two fingers, almost like a light strum. J.D. says that he sometimes strikes his vamp chords like this and at other times he pinches the chord with all three fingers.

Nashville Skyline Rag (cd) 4 x

Second break

The chokes in measure 12 involve choking the 2nd string only. Watch the fingering closely in 18-19.

The ending for this tune presents something of a dilemma. Since J.D. does not have a 'set' version of this piece, he was unable to say with any certainty how he played the ending on the recording. While what is indicated above seems most likely, two alternate versions are presented below. J.D. played both of them in trying to suggest what he might have done in the studio.

2x 2 RIVER

"You know, I've never even heard Dylan's cut of this song. The only way I ever heard it was Earl playing it live. I'm going to have to try and find that record."

Long Journey Home (cd) 6 x

Key of A
Capo 2, play in G
♩ = 144

traditional

First break

Measures 1-6: G major. Lyrics: "Lost all my money but a two dollar bill. Two dollar".

Measures 7-12: C major, G major. Lyrics: "bill boys, two dollar bill. Lost all my money but a two dollar".

Measures 13-18: D major, G major. Lyrics: "bill. I'm on my long journey home.".

Diagram 19: Slide technique on the 19th measure.

Here is another good look at how J.D. plays the unadorned melody of a tune. Nothing fancy, just the melody in a solid, driving, roll style. Another very subtle Crowe touch can be seen by examining the difference between measures 2 and 10. The same melodic fragment is being stated in each measure but in the first, J.D. plays a reverse roll without hitting the 5th string, something that you can find fairly often in his playing. Measure 10 shows a more common roll. *When The Angels Carry Me Home* contains some other good examples of this technique.

J.D. says that he sometimes starts the lick in measures 14 and 17 with a slide and sometimes plays it as shown. He uses them interchangeably in his playing in general.

Long Journey Home (cd) 6x

Second break

Sheet music for the "Second break" section, featuring a 4/4 time signature and various musical notations including notes, rests, and fingerings.

The music is organized into four systems, each with a key signature change indicated above the staff:

- System 1 (Measures 1-6):** Key signature G. Notes: 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 3 0 0 3 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 3 0 0 3 2. Fingerings: t t i m t i m | t t i m i t m | t m t i m | t i m t m i t m | t t i m t i | t i m t m i t m.
- System 2 (Measures 7-12):** Key signature C. Notes: 0 0 0 0 | 0 2 0 0 | 0 2 0 0 | 2 3 0 0 | 2 3 2 3 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 3 0 0 3 2. Fingerings: t t i m t i m | t t i m t i t m | t t m t i m t | h h 0 p 0 | m i t m t i t | t i m t m i t m.
- System 3 (Measures 13-18):** Key signature D. Notes: 0 0 0 0 | 3 0 2 0 3 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 0 2 2 3 | 0 2 3 0 2 | 3 0 2 0 2 3 | 0 0 0 0. Fingerings: t m t m | t i m t m i t m | t i t m t i t | t t i m i t m | t i m t m i t m | t t i m i t.
- System 4 (Measures 19-20):** Key signature G. Notes: 5 4 5 4 | 5 4 5 4. Fingerings: s m t m.



Joe Wages

Greensboro, NC 1993

If I Could Only Go Back Home Again (cd) 7

Key of C
Play open in C
♩ = 112

written by Richard Bennett & Wanda Barnett
© Indian Gap Publishing - BMI

First break

First break musical notation. The first system consists of two staves. The top staff is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains four measures of music, each starting with a chord symbol (C, F, G, F) and a fret number (2, 1, 3, 0). The bottom staff is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains four measures of music, each starting with a chord symbol (G, C) and a fret number (0, 2, 2, 0). The lyrics are: "I'd walk the road to where it all began and find the man I lost back home again."

Second break - split with dobro

Second break musical notation. The first system consists of two staves. The top staff is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains four measures of music, each starting with a chord symbol (C, F, G, F) and a fret number (2, 1, 3, 0). The bottom staff is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains four measures of music, each starting with a chord symbol (G, C) and a fret number (0, 2, 2, 0). The lyrics are: "I'd walk the road to where it all began and find the man I lost back home again."

Ending

Ending musical notation. The first system consists of two staves. The top staff is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains four measures of music, each starting with a chord symbol (F, G, C) and a fret number (2, 1, 3, 0). The bottom staff is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains four measures of music, each starting with a chord symbol (G, C) and a fret number (0, 2, 2, 0). The lyrics are: "I'd walk the road to where it all began and find the man I lost back home again."

The hammer that begins measure 6 in both breaks is made with the ring finger. You essentially hammer into an F chord. The brush that ends the tune is played by brushing down with the thumb across the top three strings.

Ever Changing Woman (cd) 3

Key of F
Capo 3, play in D
♩ = 113

Words and Music by Dave Kirby and Claude Putman
© 1980 Sony/ATV Songs LLC and Sony/ATV Tunes LLC
All Rights Administered by Sony/ATV Music Publishing
8 Music Square West, Nashville, TN 37203
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

First break

Second break - split with mandolin

Ending

Here are three nice turnarounds played in D (actual key of F). Most banjoists are always searching for nice fill licks in D and this tune presents several that will complement your vocabulary. As with *Home Sweet Home Revisited*, the 5th string is only capoed to the 8th fret.

You will notice a number of variations of a 2-3 hammer-on on the 4th string leading to an open 4th (tonic note). What is shown in the tabs represents an attempt to match the recording, but J.D. plays these interchangeably. Listen carefully to J.D. play these and try to capture the subtle variations.

The first two chords in measure 4 of the ending are held for just a moment and then slid downward.

'Til My Dying Day (cd) 8

Key of F
Play open in F
♩ = 112

written by Richard Bennett
© Muhlenberg Music - BMI

Backup for first verse

I wish you could know how much I missed you since the day that you told me good —
bye. Do you think our time together was a vain love? Do you
miss me on those cold and lonely nights?

The 'passing tones' lick in measure 2 has a very interesting dissonant sound to it which J.D. may or may not have really planned to play. It is likely that the lick to the right is what he would more commonly play. In either case, the last note in the measure is a part of the B \flat chord that actually begins in the following measure. This is a typical - and very effective - technique, anticipating the new chord by one count.

The main F chord in this backup is based on a D-position (measures 1, 5, 13, 15). The B \flat chord in measures 3-4 is based on an F-position as are the C chords in measures 7-8, and 14, and the F chord in measures 9-10. Many other fingerings are given in the tab.

The lick in measures 11-12 is very similar to one we saw in the backup for *Waiting For You*. Looking over the two will help you to see how easy these closed-position licks can be transposed simply by moving them up or down the neck.

The many instances of notes in parentheses indicate occasions where a note is muted during the transition from one chord position to another. The tab will show the target note, or where the chord is headed. In truth, what is actually happening in many cases is that J.D. is playing the 1st string to plug a rhythmic hole and the muted note is the inadvertent result.

A good example can be seen in measure 16. The slide shown from the 7th-3rd fret is not meant to be an exact slide and the 1st string note may be picked with the left hand somewhere between the 7th and 3rd frets. It is not a precise move and the feel is far more important than the technique.

'Til My Dying Day (cd) 8

Banjo break

Backup for last chorus/ending

Though the banjo break shown above does seem to match the recording, J.D. now plays it a bit differently. The two measures shown to the right would replace measures 6-7 in the solo. The slide on the 3rd string in measure 7 above is made while sliding down from the D-position/F chord to the 1st position F chord. The note in parenthesis on the 1st string is muted during the slide.

The brush in measure 8 of the ending uses the same technique that was presented in the ending for *I'll Just Pretend*. You may want to refer to the performance notes for that song for a more detailed description of the technique.

"I like to play in F without a capo, if the song lends itself to that and it's comfortable for me. If you want to work a lot with your 4th string open, then you're going to have to capo and play in D. We do 'Why Don't You Tell Me So' and I kick it off in open F, in the first position."

Still Loves This Man (cd) 9

Key of B \flat
Capo 3, play in G
♩ = 120

written by Richard Bennett
© Muhlenberg Music Inc. - BMI

First break

There is a lady in my heart and mind the way she
loves me is so very fine. With hands so soft like snow on the
trees and in my heart she will always be.

19

The slide at the end of measure 8 is not played forcefully - you might say that it is more implied than stated. Watch the hammers/pull-offs in measures 16-17. All of the notes are eighths so be sure to resist the tendency to rush through them. The note before each hammer or pull-off gets one solid count before the left hand hammers or pulls. Be especially careful in measure 17 where you have a hammer followed immediately by a pull-off.



© 1996 Becky Johnson

The New South at the IBMA Fan Fest, 1996

Mr. Engineer (cd) 10

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 100

Words and Music by Jimmy Martin

© 1961 CHAMPION MUSIC CORPORATION

Copyright Renewed

CHAMPION MUSIC CORPORATION is an MCA company

International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

Back up for second verse

The tablature is written on three systems of six-line staves. Each measure is divided into three eighth-note triplets. Fingering is indicated by numbers 1-5 on the strings. Chords are labeled above the staff: C, D, G, and IR. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the measures. The first system contains measures 1-6, the second system contains measures 7-12, and the third system contains measures 13-18. The lyrics are: 'I'm gonna catch me a freight train Lord I'm leaving this lone - some town. The one I loved and gave my heart to for someone else she's turned me down.'

If you have not had experience with this style of $\frac{3}{4}$ time triplet backup, this one may take a while to get under your belt. The timing may seem odd at first but it is a very common and extremely useful rhythmic figure for slow waltz-time ballads. Even if the pattern is unfamiliar to your fingers it should be recognizable to your ears.

Each measure of the tab is broken down into three sets of eighth note triplets. The best way to count it is to say *trip-o-let, trip-o-let, trip-o-let* where you would normally have said *one, two, three*. You may remember that a triplet divides what would normally be two eighth notes into three, so we are now counting nine even counts per measure.

The hardest part about the timing is counting the rests that occur throughout the triplet patterns. They can be tricky to count. If your counting skills are at all shaky, this is one where you will want to study the recording carefully.

Many of the left hand positions will be obvious and many others are given in the tab. The 3rd string choke in measure 15 is a quick choke up and right back down.

"I don't know if I really came up with this style of backup, but I guess I put it out there where it was noticed. It's just old blues licks, triplets, guitar riffs, and saxophone licks that I had heard over the years. Jimmy had done this song as a duet and I had always wanted to do it as a high lead trio. The song lends itself to that so well on the chorus. We used to play it a lot back when I was with Jimmy. He and Paul Williams sang it and did it faster than we do it now. We laid it back more into a blues."

When The Angels Carry Me Home (cd) 12

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 130

traditional

First break

When the angels carry me home, when the angels carry me home. I want to see Jesus first of all when the angels carry me home.

As was mentioned in the notes for *Long Journey Home*, this tune shows several examples of J.D. playing a reverse roll – sometimes called forward/backward – without hitting the 1st string. You can see this in measures 2, 6, and 10. This can be a nice way to add some variety to a standard roll sound.

"Angels and Long Journey Home really are similar. If you don't watch it you'll get them confused. In fact, I have kicked off one when it was supposed to be the other. The tunes are close and I do the same sort of kickoff."

"That lick there (measure 7) is one of those that just came out one day. I was sitting around playing and I hit it. Sheer accident, I guess. It was while we were rehearsing, getting ready to record. Richard had written a song (Waiting For You) and I had never heard it. I like learning a song when I've never heard another banjo player on it. That gives me the edge because if you've heard someone else play something, that melody will stick in your mind when you start to play the song. I like to be the first to work through a kickoff or break to a new song. Anyway, I was trying different things and I hit that lick and it fit real well and felt good."

When The Angels Carry Me Home (cd) 12

Second break

4/4

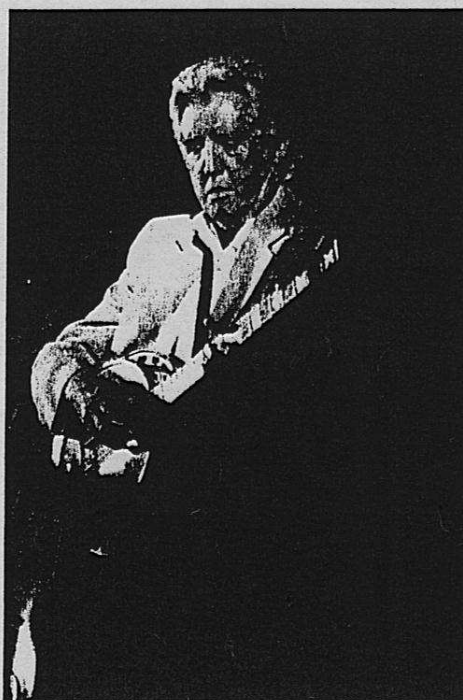
G C

7

D G

13

19



Graves Mountain, VA 1994

Sledd Ridin' (cd) 11

Key of A
Capo 2, play in G
♩ = 146

written by Dale Sledd & Sonny Osborne
© Rocky Top Music - BMI

First break

continued on the next page

This tune makes for another nice change of pace instrumental, and it really is not particularly hard to play. The only tough spots might be the triplet hamer/pull in measure 19, the backward slide in measure 36, and the ascending D-chord section in measures 38-43. The fingerings are given and, with a little practice and close listening, you should be able to get it.

"I've been playing this song so long that I think a lot of people thought it was one of mine. Of course Sonny recorded it years ago. I always liked the song and thought, 'One of these times I might record that, after a few years.' This particular cut is like my break on Sally Goodin. I have played it so much better. I've got live tapes of us doing it and when I hear them I think, 'Why didn't I record it like that?' The feeling wasn't there; it wasn't in the groove like I've played it before. Sometimes it just doesn't come off like you want it too.

Sledd Ridin' (cd) 11

Second break

7

13

19

25

31

Chord symbols: G, C, D, Am, A7

On this solo we see lots of subtle, improvised variations on the structure from the opening break. Some are very subtle indeed, like the grace note pull-off in measure 4 or the rest at the beginning of measure 5. Others are more apparent such as the quarter note passages in measures 8-9 and 15-16.

The fingerings for the ending section (measures 26-31) are shown in the tab. The two notes in parentheses in measure 30 are muted slightly by dropping the 'heel' of the right hand down onto the strings. This is a very useful ending which calls to mind Earl Scruggs' classic ending on *Groundspeed*.