NIGHT TRAIN TO NASHVILLE
THE GREATEST UNTOLD STORY OF MUSIC CITY
PAULA BLACKMAN

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK
CHARACTERS

MAIN CHARACTERS

E. Gab “Blackie” Blackman  WLAC sales manager
Christine “Tee” Blackman  Gab’s wife
Eddie Blackman  Gab and Christine’s son
Susan “Gayle” Blackman  Gab and Christine’s daughter
Anne Duff Blackman  Eddie’s wife
William Sousa “Sou” Bridgeforth  New Era Club owner
Helen “Funny” Bridgeforth  Sou’s wife
Harriett Gail Bridgeforth  Sou and Helen’s daughter
James “Mister Jimmy” Stahlman  Nashville Banner newspaper owner
William “Hoss” Allen  WLAC disc jockey
Nancy Allen  Hoss’s wife
Cecil Rogan Allen  Hoss’s mother
Mamie Allen  Hoss’s grandmother
Gene Nobles  WLAC disc jockey
John “John R” Richbourg  WLAC news announcer / disc jockey
Lillian “Lilli” Richbourg  John’s first wife
Margaret Richbourg  John’s second wife
Albert “Shorty” Banks  Sou’s business partner
Katherine “Kat” Nuble  Sou’s mistress / New Era Club waitress
Mayor Ben West  former Nashville Banner employee / Nashville mayor
Governor Frank Clement  Tennessee governor
**Z. Alexander Looby**
civil rights attorney/activist

**J. Carlton Loser**
district attorney

**James Edwards**
Tennessee State Prison warden

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**WLAC MINOR CHARACTERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Truman Ward</td>
<td>station owner</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. C. Sowell</td>
<td>general manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Binns</td>
<td>station engineer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Oliphant</td>
<td>program director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Baker</td>
<td>former sales manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herman Grizzard</td>
<td>news and sports announcer/disc jockey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jimmy Ward</td>
<td>Truman’s son</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hugh “Baby” Jarrett</td>
<td>disc jockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilford Dudley</td>
<td>L &amp; C board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Mountcastle</td>
<td>L &amp; C board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Wood</td>
<td>advertiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernie Young</td>
<td>advertiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Cheek</td>
<td>car dealer advertiser</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Sloan</td>
<td>department store advertiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Harvey</td>
<td>department store advertiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Moore</td>
<td>Bible advertiser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sam Phillips</td>
<td>record producer/former WLAC employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Elizabeth Hicks</td>
<td>staff musician/vocalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordon Stokes</td>
<td>attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Whitehead</td>
<td>news announcer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
NEW ERA CLUB MINOR CHARACTERS

Christine “Kitty” Kittrell  
New Era Club vocalist

Ted Jarrett 
New Era Club house musician/composer/producer

Edward “Skippy” Brooks 
house band leader

Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown 
house band leader

Nathan Bellamy 
club manager

Wilma Jean 
Kat Nuble’s daughter

NASHVILLE BANNER CHARACTERS

Jack Phillips 
salesman

Fritz Stahlman 
assistant secretary

Dick Battle 
reporter

Charlie Moss 
managing editor

Robert Churchwell 
reporter

John Malone 
photographer

Ann Stahlman 
Jimmy’s daughter

STUDENT PROTEST MOVEMENT CHARACTERS

James Lawson 
activist leader

Rev. Kelly Miller Smith 
adviser

Rev. C. T. Vivian 
adviser

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 
adviser

Paul LaPrad 
student protester

Diane Nash 
student protester

John Lewis 
student protester

Guy Carawan 
musician
TIME LINE OF EVENTS

1922
Gab starts working full-time for the Castner-Knott department store
Truman Ward buys WLAC radio

1925
Sou moves to Nashville
The Grand Ole Opry broadcast debuts on WSM radio in Nashville
WLAC receives its radio broadcast license

1931
Gab goes to work at the Nashville Banner

1933
Nineteen-year-old Cordie Creek is lynched in Columbia, Tennessee

1934
Sou opens a pool hall on Charlotte Avenue

1936
Sou opens his first New Era Club adjacent to the pool hall

1941
Sou relocates the New Era Club to Fourth Avenue North

1943
Hoss Allen enlists in the army
1944
John Richbourg leaves WLAC temporarily for the navy
Sam Phillips is hired as John’s temporary replacement

1945
Black caddies from the Richland, Woodmont, and Belle Meade country clubs build a golf course under the Cleveland Street viaduct

1946
John Richbourg returns from the navy
Columbia Race Riot—Black residents fight back after James Stephenson and his mother are victims of racism; this event becomes the opening salvo in the civil rights movement
Gab arrives at WLAC radio; Gene Nobles begins broadcasting race records
B.B. King leaves Indianola, Mississippi, for Beale Street in Memphis
Hoss Allen returns home from the army
Nashville civic leaders’ proposal to build a city auditorium to replace the slums fails

1947
Sister Rosetta Tharp discovers Little Richard in Macon, Georgia

1948
Hoss Allen stars in the title role of Othello at Vanderbilt, resulting in his winning a scholarship to a prestigious summer stock theater in New England
WLAC radio applies for television broadcast license
Hoss gets part-time clerical job at new station WMAK

1949
Christine Blackman is elected head of the Nashville Council of Church Women
Gab hires Hoss Allen
City passes auditorium bond referendum
B.B. King debuts on Memphis station WDIA
1950
Sam Phillips opens a recording studio in Memphis
Robert Churchwell joins the *Nashville Banner*
Sixteen-year-old James Brown sent to prison
Eighteen-year-old Hal Hebb wounded in Korea

1951
B.B. King’s “3 O’Clock Blues” reaches #1 on R & B chart
Sam Phillips records Ike Turner’s masterpiece “Rocket 88”
Sou buys the Birmingham Black Barons
Ben West elected mayor of Nashville
Sou turns in his federal gambling tax stamp

1952
Thirty-two-year-old Frank Clement elected governor of Tennessee
Truman Ward sells WLAC back to Life and Casualty Insurance Company
James Brown is released from prison
Christine Kittrell records “Just Sittin’ Here Drinkin’”
University of Mississippi students vote Gene Nobles favorite deejay
Big Mama Thornton records “Hound Dog”

1953
Sam Phillips records Johnny Bragg and the Prisonaires
Gab’s nephew Buddy is killed in a plane crash
FCC awards WLAC a television broadcast license
Hoss Allen begins weekday *Top Five* broadcast

1954
Supreme Court issues *Brown v. Board* ruling
Sou hires Charley Pride as pitcher for Black Barons
Kitty Kittrell and Little Richard record “Lord Have Mercy” at the New Era
Frank Clement reelected governor
Sou indicted on federal gambling tax statute
Sam Phillips records Elvis Presley’s first hit, “That’s All Right”
Ray Charles records “I Got a Woman”
1955
City auditorium forces relocation of New Era Club to Twelfth and Charlotte
WLAC creates radio’s first self-censorship board
Hall Hebb joins the Prisonaires
Hoss meets his mistress, Della Reese
John Richbourg’s wife abandons her family
Sou is convicted on federal tax statutes, files appeal
Little Richard records “Tutti Frutti”
James Brown works as Little Richard’s understudy/replacement singer
Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to yield her bus seat

1956
Sou acquitted on appeal
Hoss Allen debuts James Brown’s hit record, “Please, Please, Please”
Triple zero bet breaks numbers bankers
B.B. King performs 342 gigs during the calendar year
Little Richard, Fats Domino, and others perform at first interracial concert
   in Tennessee
Little Richard records Royal Crown Hairdressing commercial

1957
Court-ordered school integration brings violent protests
Hattie Cotton Elementary School bombed
Jewish Community Center bombed
Life and Casualty tower opens
John Lewis enters Nashville’s American Baptist Theological Seminary

1958
James Lawson begins weekly civil rights lectures for college students

1959
Hoss takes over for Gene Nobles
Johnny Bragg pardoned by Governor Clement
Payola bribery scandal ensnares WLAC deejays
1960
Nashville college students protest segregation at downtown lunch counters
Hoss and John R charged in payola scandal
Z. Alexander Looby’s home bombed
Confronted by student protestors, Mayor West capitulates
Nashville becomes first Southern city to desegregate its public spaces
Martin Luther King Jr. speaks to Nashville’s student protestors
Johnny Bragg arrested
Gab fires Hoss for payola scandal misbehavior

1961
Hoss hired as southern sales representative for Chess Records
Gab hires Hugh Jarrett as Hoss’s replacement
Kat Nuble’s daughter’s death causes fallout, breakup of Sou’s marriage
Jimi Hendrix arrives at nearby Fort Campbell

1962
Gab advises John to create and sell a scrapbook to resolve financial issues;

Soul Book sells one hundred thousand copies.

Gab is honored with sales award for implementing a strategy to correct payola issues
Jimi Hendrix meets New Era Club musicians at Clarksville’s Pink Poodle Club
Student civil rights protests resume; fifteen-year-old Ella Bigham knocked unconscious by police
City auditorium attracts acts formerly seen at the New Era Club

1963
Nashville switches from city government to municipal government
Martin Luther King Jr. delivers “I Have a Dream” speech during the March on Washington
President Kennedy addresses civil rights during speech at Vanderbilt
Etta James records “Etta Rocks the House” at the New Era Club
Gab fires Hugh Jarrett, rehires Hoss; Gab implements a monitoring system known as “Blackie’s Bible”
Gab advertises Bible created by door-to-door salesman Sam Moore
President Kennedy assassinated
Hal Hebb murdered; Hal’s brother, Bobby, composes “Sunny”

1964
Noble Blackwell creates variety show *Night Train* for WLAC-TV; Jackie Shane and Jimi Hendrix appear
Cassius Clay/Muhammad Ali holds court at New Era Club

1965
Nancy divorces Hoss
Hoss creates *Night Train–*type musical variety show, *The !!!! Beat*

1966
Otis Redding replaces Hoss as emcee of final *The !!!! Beat* after Hoss becomes inebriated
After police crackdown on numbers runners, process server James Utley is wounded and his four-year-old daughter, Antoinette, is murdered

1967
Police raid Sou’s package store, confiscate his entire liquor inventory
Stahlman tries to prevent Martin Luther King Jr. and Stokely Carmichael from speaking at Vanderbilt; riots follow
Nashville civic leaders reroute the planned construction of I-40 in order to demolish Jefferson Street, home to 80 percent of the city’s colored-owned businesses

1968
Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated
Gab hires first Black newscaster on a national network, Don Whitehead
James Brown records “Say It Loud—I’m Black and I’m Proud”

1969
Nashville’s Black business district bulldozed to make way for a freeway
Former governor Frank Clement is killed in a car accident
Jimi Hendrix performs at Woodstock
John Richbourg discovers Joe Simon, produces Joe’s #1 hit, “The Chokin’ Kind”
James Brown performs at Nashville civic auditorium; John R honors him as the bestselling R & B musician of 1969

1970
Hoss is charged with second-degree murder following a deadly car crash
Johnny Bragg sent to prison for third time
Hoss tapes his radio programs from a home studio

1971
Hoss enters Cumberland Heights rehab center
Judge dismisses Hoss’s murder charges
B.B. King wins first Grammy award for “The Thrill Is Gone”
Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder perform in concert at Fisk University
Johnny Bragg receives third pardon

1972
Life and Casualty Insurance hires consultants who advise a switch to Top 40;
   Gab and John R oppose the program change
Hoss changes his format to Early Morning Gospel Hour

1973
John Richbourg retires in protest to format change
Gab hires Spider Harrison, first Black deejay on WLAC as John R’s replacement
Gab retires in protest to Top 40 format change
Gab Blackman, Faye Emerson, Christine Blackman, and Bill "Hoss" Allen on July 28th, 1953 at Hermitage Hotel.

Gab with Black caddies at the Woodmont Country Club.

John Richbourg, Don Whitehead, and James Brown on April 27th, 1970 at the Nashville Civic Auditorium.

Christine and Gab Blackman at the 1968 Grammy Awards.
Helen and Sou Bridgeforth circa 1946.

Sou Bridgeforth and Ted Acklen circa 1947 at the New Era Club.

Gab and Christine Blackman with grandchildren Paula, Brett, and Cris circa 1968 in Nashville.

WLAC Nauta Line, the Gab Blackman family in July 1969 at Old Hickory Lake.

Gab Blackman with Baby Chicks supplier Mrs. J. Carter, circa 1947.

Perplexed little boy stands before wreckage of Hattie Cotton School in Nashville on September 10\textsuperscript{th}, 1957.
Students March to Tennessee State Capital on April 19th, 1960.

Mayor Ben West, Reverend C.T. Vivian, and Diane Nash on the Nashville courthouse steps on April 19th, 1960.

Injured student Ewingella Bigham at segregation student protest on May 10th, 1963 at 6th Avenue, Nashville.
Hell's Half Acre circa 1950 at Capitol Hill, Nashville.

Colored YMCA Circa 1961 @ 4th Avenue North, Nashville.
Harriett Bridgeforth Jordan circa 1955.

Gab Blackman at WLAC microphone on September 20th, 1960, Nashville.

Sou Bridgeforth golfing circa 1950.
New Era Club—Nashville's Finest—with Sou Bridgeforth circa 1940.

Anne Duff Blackman, Eddie Blackman, Christine and Gab Blackman, Dr. and Mrs. Price Duff in August 1956 in Nashville.

Bill “Hoss” Allen and Mrs. Robert Worth Bingham in May 1946 at the Bell Meade Country Club, Nashville.

Sou Bridgeforth playing poker at New Era circa 1940.

Sou’s house guitarist George Yates playing at The New Era in 1962.