

## **DEBBIE & A MILLION GHOSTS**

Took to the Sahara in a Willys jeep. Two guys from Switzerland, our guides Mohammed and Abdul and Franko from Bremen.

Sun, stones and sand, sand, sand, sand.

Rest on the way, tuna and aish baladi\*, turshi\*\* and tea with a road construction crew - just about to cut a road through the desert.

Gigantic bulldozers, moving entire oceans of sand.

Played a few songs for Mansour, a boy in a purple jumper. Had pointed to our guitar and asked, "Oud?!"

When I stopped playing, he asked me for money.

His radiant smile in the evening sun as we said goodbye. Waved until we were out of sight.

Reached Crystal Mountain just before it got dark.

Abdul and Mohammed go to pray towards Mecca.

Each of us all to ourselves. Silence. Silence. Silence.

Campfire made of thistles and shrub wood. Food, tea, songs and stories. Photos.

"You can take my picture, no problem. Remember me in your country."

Later, the moonshine, bought the day before in the oasis, from the "Brandyman".

Mohammed and Abdul tell the story of the British captain who went crazy in the desert. Debbie, his wife, had run off with that young guy....

So now the captain saw "a million ghosts"...and ran around the desert at night yelling her name all the time "DEBBIE, DEBBIE...".

All the while aiming his Browning at the stars and shooting holes into the night.

Fell asleep under a half-full moon and a wow-show of falling stars.

Woke up in the middle of the night. Got up. All gone. No one left. Willys gone, guides gone, friends gone. All alone.

In the moonlight an enormous monolith. It stood exactly where our fire had been and it looked like...Brezhnev.

Morning tea with Mohammed and Abdul in a field of petrified plants.

\* Egyptian flatbread \*\* pickled veggies

© George Leitenberger 1996