

YOU HEARD IT HERE

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September 2022

Willin'

As summer is rolling to an end, and the reality of fall coming on and wine tastings resuming in September, the reality that a WineMinder article was due as well loomed. I hadn't given it much thought, but then inspiration came to me while listening to some of my favorite artists, such as Emmy Lou Harris (who I finally got to see in concert this summer). One of the songs that came up on the Spotify playlist was one called "Willin'". It's an interesting number, done as a song by a truck driver who has perhaps done some questionable things to survive, which includes perhaps doing drugs and alcohol to speed up or slow down his days. The chorus refers to what the original song writer, Lowell George of the group Little Feat refers to as the three "W's". Weed, whites and wine. Thus it's inclusion in the You Heard It Here wine music anthology.

The song was first recorded by Little Feat in 1971, but I suggest you listen to Linda Ronstadt's version as I think she carries it better (like every song she ever sang). You can also find covers of it by The Byrd's, Bob Dylan, Commander Cody, Gregg Allman, The Black Crowes, and many others. While it was never a big hit, the song has had staying power just for its favor among other artists. Let's look at the lyrics:

I been warped by the rain, <u>driven</u> by the snow I'm drunk and dirty, don't you know But I'm still willin' Out on the road late last night I'd see my pretty Alice in every headlight Alice, Dallas Alice And I've been from Tucson to Tucumcari Tehachapi to Tonopah Driven every kind of rig that's ever been made Driven the <u>backroads</u> so I wouldn't get weighed And if you give me weed, <u>whites</u> and wine And you show me a sign And I'll be willin' to be movin'	And I've been <u>kicked</u> by the wind, <u>robbed</u> by the sleet Had my head <u>stove</u> in but I'm <u>still</u> on my feet And I'm <u>still</u> willin' And I <u>smuggled</u> some <u>smokes</u> and <u>folks</u> from Mexico Baked by the sun <u>every</u> time I go to Mexico Ah but I'm still... And I've been from <u>Tucson</u> to Tucumcari Tehachapi to Tonopah Driven <u>every</u> kind of rig that's ever been made Driven the <u>backroads</u> so I wouldn't get weighed And if you give me weed, <u>whites</u> and wine And you show me a sign And I'll be willin' to be movin'
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There are some interesting imagery in the lyrics (for more on how these came to be go here <https://americansongwriter.com/little-feat-willin-2/>).

"Warped by the rain, driven by the snow, kicked by the wind, robbed by the sleet and my head stoved in..." paints pictures of what's going on with this person. You can also see he's done some questionable things, such as hauling illegal cigarettes and aliens across the border. And of course he needs weed and wine to get down, and whites (uppers) to keep himself on the road, driving the

backroads to avoid being weighed. It does make one feel better there are now stricter laws regarding trucker conduct, hours driving etc. So it wins a place for its reference to wine, but my favorite lyric of the song is, *"I've been from Tucson to Tucumcari, Tehachapi to Tonopah"*. While Tucson is relatively familiar, the rest, not so much. I wondered what that looks like, so here's the map and route...with that image I leave you with a link to Linda Ronstadt's version of the song.



Enjoy! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJHcD0kHTGk>