

# Snafu

are a British rhythm and blues/rock band, originating in the 1970s, featuring vocalist Bobby Harrison and slide guitarist Micky Moody.

## History

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In 1972, vocalist and drummer Bobby Harrison had just left blues-rock outfit Freedom and started to record his first solo LP, *Funkist*. Featured on this album was Micky Moody, then lead guitarist with the ailing Juicy Lucy. The collaboration between the two was so successful, that after the demise of Juicy Lucy they decided to form a completely new group and play American-inspired funk and R&B-flavoured rock.

Bobby Harrison had a background of playing with Procol Harum, and participated in the recording of their all-time classic, "A Whiter Shade of Pale". Soon after, however, Harrison was told to leave the band due to 'internal differences'. After Procol Harum, Bobby Harrison formed Freedom, whose first line-up recorded a couple of singles and a soundtrack for an Italian film. Commercial success sadly eluded them and Freedom disbanded in 1972. After that, Harrison occasionally gigged with Juicy Lucy, where he became friends with guitarist Micky Moody.

Born on 30 August 1950, into a Northern working-class family, Micky Moody from an early age became infatuated with the sound of the electric guitar. Later - when Moody had formed his first band at school - his father managed to get him his first gigs at the local working men's club. This band, called The Roadrunners, featured on bass and vocals one of Moody's classmates from school, Paul Rodgers, later the lead singer of Free. As the band started to improve, another bass player from the Middlesbrough area, Bruce Thomas (later of Quiver and Elvis Costello's The Attractions), was drafted and the group changed their name to The Wildflowers. After three months the group disbanded, and Moody went back to Middlesbrough to study classical guitar. However, he soon joined a local band called Tramline and was also a member of The Mike Cotton Sound. In July 1970, Moody was invited to join Juicy Lucy, with whom he stayed for three albums until Snafu was formed in October/November 1972.

Bobby Harrison and Micky Moody started writing together and auditioning new band members. They found former Tramline drummer Terry Pople (previously with Van Morrison), bass player Colin Gibson (formerly of Ginger Baker's Airforce) and keyboard /fiddle player Pete Solley (later in Whitesnake). Gibson suggested the name Snafu, a term he lifted from a Captain Beefheart song "Big Eyed Beans From Venus" on their 1972 album, *Clear Spot*. The musical influences were mainly American, and came from bands such as The Allman Brothers Band and in particular Little Feat, one of Harrison's favourite bands.

Richard Branson, who had recently built The Manor Studio, and had started recording a long composition by an unknown guitarist, Mike Oldfield, was also impressed with the efforts of Snafu, who arrived at The Manor Studio to record their first LP. Oldfield was working on *Tubular Bells* while Snafu were there and Solley played briefly on the recording.

The band's first, eponymously titled, LP and single received good reviews, but were less successful commercially. However, at the time when *Snafu* was released, the group successfully toured Europe with The Doobie Brothers and then the U.S. with the Eagles.

On the second LP, *Situation Normal*, Solley had taken over much of the control of the band, and there is a strong country-rock influence on the album. However, it was not as well reviewed as its predecessor. The band toured America as a support act for Emerson, Lake & Palmer, but participation in the tour was seen by many as a mistake.

The band recorded up to eight songs in session for the BBC around this time.

Snafu's third LP, *All Funked Up*, has long been seen as their 'great lost album' and is highly elusive in its original vinyl format. Solley had left to join Procol Harum. He was replaced first by Brian Chatton, then by John Miles and later by Tim Hinkley, who was a much-used session player at the time. They both play on the album, which again was recorded at The Manor.

During a tour of Germany, Moody was invited to join David Coverdale and he accepted. Harrison tried to keep Snafu together for a while with Clem Clempson on guitar, but it did not work.

Snafu are notable for combining the British rhythm and blues tradition with U.S inspired elements of funk and country music. Moody's distinctive guitar playing, often with slide, provided the band with a distinctive hard-edged R&B sound, particularly on such numbers as "Lock and Key" and "Hard To Handle".

(This chronology was adapted from original material by Alex Gitlin).

The band reunited in 2019, after more than four decades of inactivity.