

State Pen at Parchman for murder, and on his release sang the blues in roadhouses across the south before, in 1954, joining the seminal doo-wop band the Flamingos as replacement for Clarence Culver, almost immediately enjoying a number one Billboard hit with 'I Only Have Eyes for You'. McGoo reportedly shaved fifteen years off his age to gain his place in the act. His success was short-lived, however—in 1957 he was found guilty of violating the Mann Act when he eloped from Biloxi to Miami with his 15-years old niece, Maizy-Rae 'Double Zee' Placazette, for which offence he subsequently served another seven years, this time in Florida State Prison at Starke. Released in September 1965, he married the loyal Double Zee, who had in the meantime had founded the eponymous record label, which she intended to use as a platform to help McGoo relaunch his career. However, success and happiness were to evade McGoo, who was shot to death by his wife on December 25, 1965, after Double Zee caught him of 'making eyes' at Janet Leigh on the Bob Hope Christmas Special.

Two: 'Dahomey'—*Kingdom Porrain* (Shaka). Porrain (given name Robert Jordan, latterly Abu Muhammad Nkrumah) was a schoolfriend of Louis Eugene Walcott—later Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. In the 1950s, Jordan and Walcott performed together in a nightclub act, Calypso Gene and the Coconuts. In the late 1960s, both men became radicalised, although Walcott (then known as Louis X) chose the Islamic route, and Jordan (now Porrain) embraced Pan-Africanism. In 1977, after a decade of trying, Farrakhan finally converted Porrain from his African explorations to the Muslim faith, at which point Porrain adopted the hybrid moniker Abu Muhammad Nkrumah. Porrain released this track, the third of his so-called 'Roots Trilogy', in 1971. He later unsuccessfully sued author Alex Haley for appropriating 'Roots' as the title of his best-selling 1970s book and mini-series, in the process bankrupting himself. In the aftermath of the court case, Porrain renounced Islam and became a born-again Christian, re-adopting his given name. Robert Jordan is now a Pentecostal minister in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, where he owns a successful Lexus dealership and runs an internet business selling health foods and dietary supplements.

One: 'Down In Front'—*Lil Frenchie* (Oh Yeah). Detroit's half-French-Canadian, half-African-American Bernadette 'Lil Frenchie' Robideaux had a number of minor hits in the late sixties, culminating with this hyperkinetic, double-entendre laden gem, which peaked at 65 on the Billboard chart in June of 1970. Her career petering out into supper club cabaret, as did so many black music careers of the time, Bernie married playboy Quebec politician Pierre Boulanger in 1980, and when the latter was elected mayor of the province's capital city in the following year, she became known as the 'First Lady of Soul of Montreal'. In that persona she became a tabloid staple with her daring outfits, risqué performances and scandalous behaviour. In 1985 a sting by the Montreal Gazette exposed her 'hotel trysts' with snooker World Champ Cliff 'the Grinder' Thorburn, ultimately leading to the breakdown of her marriage and divorce. She and her husband reconciled, but their planned 1991 remarriage was postponed when polaroid photographs of Bernie snorting cocaine in Manhattan's Helmsley Palace hotel with comedian Richard Pryor, actress Moana Pozzi, and Bonnano mobster Gerlando 'George from Canada' Sciascia were published in the New York Post. Sciascia's indiscretion enraged low-key Bonnano boss Joey Massino, and his bullet-riddled body was found in a dumpster on Mott Street, in New York's Chinatown, later that year. Bernie and Pierre nevertheless tied the knot for a second time in 1993, and Bernie played a key role in the campaign that secured her husband his narrow re-election victory over Quebecois secessionist Alain 'Le Grande Al' Robideaux, in 1995. Bernie died in 2001, from complications resulting from a botched breast enhancement, but having endeared herself to the citizens of Montreal with her bubbly personality, unguarded manner and charity work, received what amounted to a state funeral, with celebrities including Leonard Cohen,