**[Steve "StarSparks" Brick](https://m.facebook.com/Steve-StarSparks-Brick-219988316786/?__tn__=C) published a note.**

[**the back-story of old chief rolling papers**](https://m.facebook.com/notes/steve-starsparks-brick/the-back-story-of-old-chief-rolling-papers/237070044318/)

**“Ahh, the Lone Star,” Old Chief Rolling Papers sighed in reverie. “The grand old bar on the corner of Fifth and Thirteenth with the lizard on the roof. I remember it back before it became Korean Deli! I recall standin’ there with a long-neck bottle of Shiner Bock, watchin’ Townes sing ‘Pancho and Lefty’ with his eyes shut tight, skinny as a pole and ragged as the flag above the Alamo. In less than five minutes he transformed a small, smoky Manhattan club full of hardcore New Yorkers into a prairie campfire, where crickets sang, stars glimmered and a band of lonesome cowpokes stared into the dancing flames, regretting lost love and their misspent youth. The dude was something of shaman!”**

**This is how Old Chief Rolling Papers first met the Texas Troubadour:  Townes was in L.A. recording *Our Mother the Mountain*, living in Malibu with a borrowed car. “I’d get up every morning and cruise up and down the coast highway with the radio goin’ loud classical music,” Van Zandt later told Robert Greenfield.**

**Meanwhile the Old Chief had been hawking his wares at a wayside next to the beach when around the bend came Townes Van Zandt blasting Beethoven. This was no chance meeting at some arbitrary bend in the road. Rolling Papers had purposely chosen this mystical spot where Santeria devotees sacrificed chickens and surfers came to lay flowers, light candles and incense and make offerings of oranges at a shrine to an obscure grimacing Polynesian Ocean God, someone had carved with great skill and detail into an old weathered eucalyptus stump that poked out of the sand.**

**The Old Chief had quite a rep as a sacred medicine jeweler, whose bear claw necklaces and silver-capped raccoon penis bone talismans have been a favorite of rockers over the years like Steve Tyler of Aerosmith and Brian Ritchie of Violent Femmes. His snakeskin armbands have adorned the Neville Brothers and Wild Tchapatoulas while his rococo gypsy rings have been seen glittering on the knuckles of Richie Havens and Doctor John.**

**But none of that interested Townes. He had no use for jewelry other than fodder for a crap game. Nor was he one to wear his mojo on his sleeve. What caught his eye was the Old Chief’s blankets. And in a flash he bought them all. As he was loading them into his car, Rolling Papers, who knew another hoodoo man when he saw one, suggested if Townes was at all inclined to make a supplication to the ancestors, that this was indeed, the right time and place to do it. With that Van Zandt grabbed a copy of *Hank Williams’ Greatest Hits* that he just happened to have with himand sent the disc flying out into the turbulent surf, then handed the empty jacket to the Old Chief, who immediately smeared a halo around Hank’s photograph with chicken blood (courtesy of the Santerias) as he began to sing in broken Lakota (courtesy of two years at Bard College and his subsequent travels with the TV Indian/shaman Sun Bear) while dancing, part Mardi Gras strut/part Oglala stomp, as he waved the picture of Hank above his head, punctuating his archaic prayers with occasional hawk cries. Townes, inspired by the spontaneous ritual reached for his guitar to join in. But instead of breaking into a rendition of an old favorite Hank tune, Van Zandt began to play the blues, picking slow, soulful notes in the style of his other hero, Lightnin.’  A moment later the Old Chief whipped out his Zippo and immolated the album cover while they, and a pack of surfers who just arrived on the scene, watched dumbfounded.**

May 12, 2012 at 2:58am · Public

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