



# THE BEATLES

## Handout 1 - "Music's Gold Bugs"

### ***The Beatles: Music's Gold Bugs (excerpt)***

*Al Aronowitz, Saturday Evening Post, March 1964*

BRIAN SOMMERVILLE is a balding 32-year-old Londoner whose jaw juts out like the southeast corner of England when he thinks he is about to say something important. At Kennedy International Airport in New York on February 7, 1964, Sommerville's jaw was projecting so far he was almost unable to open his mouth to speak. A thousand screaming teenagers were trying to wriggle toward a thin white line of nylon rope that had been stretched across the terminal building lobby. Three thousand more were screaming from behind bulging metal railings atop the roof, where they were the guests of New York disc jockeys, who had invited them to take the day off from school.

Next to Sommerville a New York Journal-American photographer was tugging angrily at his arm, shouting, "We bought an exclusive story, and we can't even get a picture of them looking at us – what did we pay you money for?" At Sommerville's other arm a phalanx of British correspondents was complaining that the police wouldn't let them into the pressroom.

There wasn't space left in the pressroom anyway, and one of the cops tried to throw out a Capitol Records executive who had arrived without an identification badge. Disc jockeys equipped with tape recorders were pointing cylindrical microphones at the mob. Flashbulbs exploded. From the back of the lobby came word that two girls had fainted. Hemmed in and harassed, Sommerville's jaw signaled a pronouncement. "This," he said in the intonations of a nation that has been accustomed to ruling the world, "has gotten entirely out of control." Sommerville is press officer of a rock'n'roll group known as the Beatles. Their plane had just landed.

Amid a fanfare of screeches, there emerged four young Britons in Edwardian four-button suits. One was short and thick-lipped. Another was handsome and peach-fuzzed. A third had a heavy face and the hint of buckteeth. On the fourth, the remnants of adolescent pimples were noticeable. Their names were Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney, John Lennon, and George Harrison, but they were otherwise indistinguishable beneath their manes of moplike hair.

After they were ushered into the floodlit uproar of the pressroom, Brian Sommerville, acting as master of ceremonies, stepped to a microphone, again thrust out his jaw, and addressed the reporters. "Gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen," he said, "will you please shut up!" The first question from the American press was, "Do you believe in lunacy?" "Yeah," answered one of the Beatles, "it's healthy." Another reporter asked, "Would you please sing something?" "No," replied another Beatle, "we need money first." Still another reporter asked, "Do you hope to take anything home with you?" "Yeah," a Beatle replied, "Rockefeller Center." At first, few of the reporters could remember which Beatle was which. But by the end of their two-week visit to America, each of them had become a distinct personality. Each of them, in fact, had become a star.