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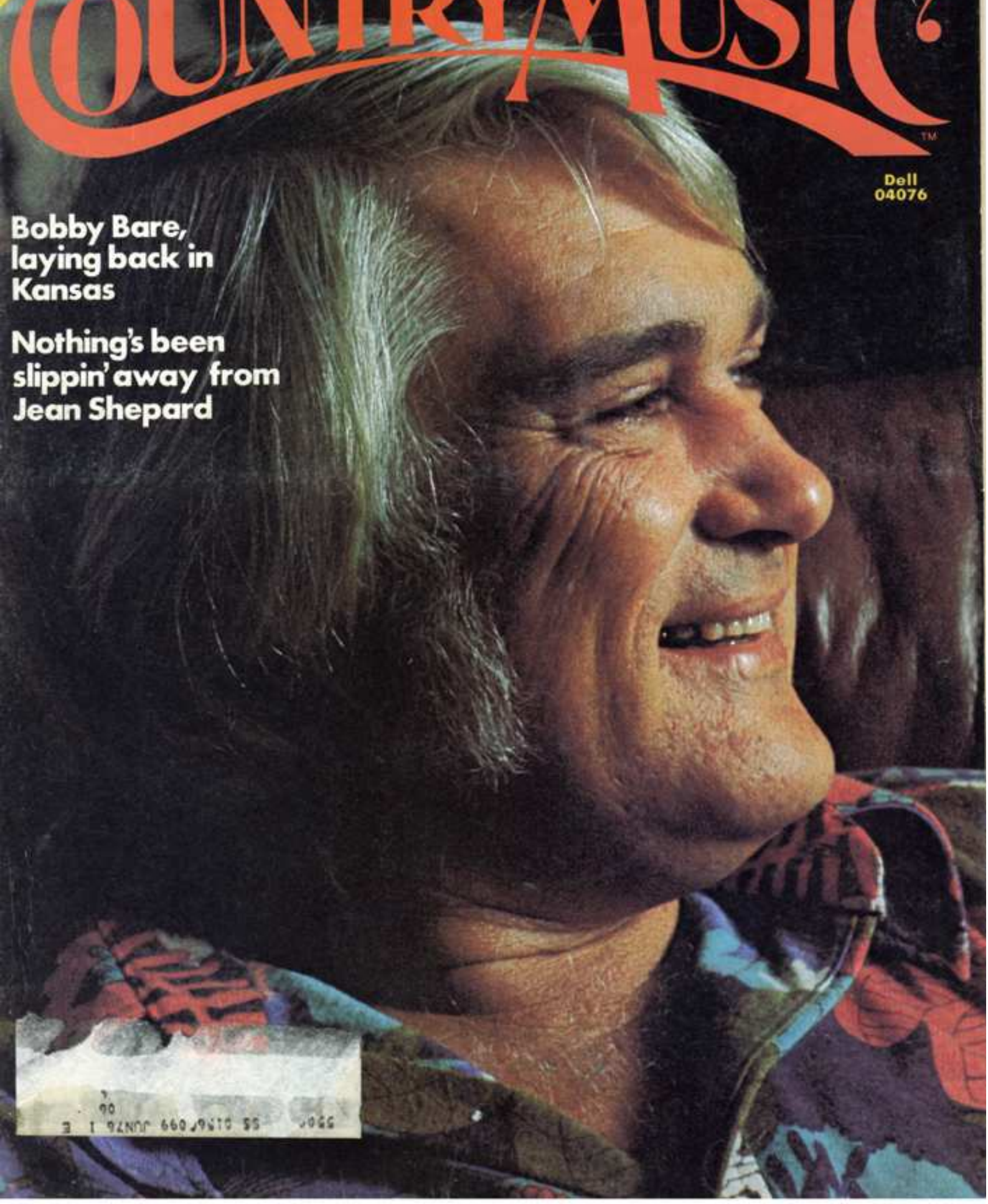
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COUNTRY MUSIC

Watch This Face: Crystal Gayle

If there is any family other than the Stoneman's and Carter's that resembles a music business dynasty, it may well be the Webbs. *Who?* You know, the Kentucky Webbs. You remember pretty little Loretta Webb, the one that married Moonney Lynn and went off to Nashville and got famous?

Well, Loretta has seven brothers and sisters. First, Jay Lee Webb and Peggy Sue became known as fine artists in their own *right*. Now, along comes baby sister, Crystal Gayle, and durned if she ain't the prettiest thing you ever saw. Ain't that just like a Webb?

Crystal Gayle is truly gorgeous. When I first saw her, in the offices of Top Billing (her booking agency) in Nashville, I tripped all over myself during the introduction. Nevertheless, I managed to croak out a stunned hello, and then we got down to the interview. Back-off guys, she's married—I'm as disappointed as you are. Her husband's currently a student at Indiana University, studying something that has to do with psychology. At present they both live in Bloomington, Indiana, but are planning to move to Nashville in the near future.

Oh well, I can listen to her records anyway—which brings me to the point, which is that she's *very* good. You could listen to her records if she looked like Ma Kettle in a chicken suit, and it wouldn't matter.

Ever since she was a kid, Crystal Gayle has been around music. Although she plays piano and guitar, she says she prefers not to accompany herself while she's on stage. She got her first taste of the limelight when she accompanied big sister Loretta on tours during summer vacations from high school. She liked the feeling, and deter-



"I'm camera shy," she says.

mined she would become a performer *in her own right*.

Certain things help when you're trying to make it in the music business: obvious things like talent, good looks, good career guidance, a producer who can do the utmost with your style, and so on. But it's tough no matter what you've got or who you are, especially if you happen to be Loretta Lynn's sister.

If the public or the *business* ever got the idea that you're trying to hitch a free ride on someone else's bandwagon, you might as well have your cowboy boots bronzed, because you won't be wearing them on stage. But Crystal Gayle has the brains to match her beauty, and the ability to be every bit as popular as her sister. She's not riding anybody's coattails.

Nor does she want to. She loves her sister and respects her as an artist, but she does *not* want to be thought of professionally as "Loretta's kid sister."

In her senior year at high school, Crystal Gayle signed a recording

contract with Decca records. Her first single, "I Cried The Blue Right Out Of My Eyes," was one of the top twenty country records across the nation. Later that year Crystal became a regular on Jim Ed Brown's TV show, "The Country Place." Since then, her records include "Show Me How" and "I Hope You're Havin' Better Luck Than Me." Just this year, she moved from MCA (Decca) to United Artists and her new producer, Kelso Herston. "I'm really excited about some of the things we've done," she says. "One of the songs, called 'Restless,' will probably be the single."

Although she and her husband had driven all the way from Bloomington to Nashville for the interview, Crystal looked wonderful as she talked to me of her hopes and dreams. She stroked her long, dark hair with one hand as she spoke.

"Did you come all the way to Nashville just for this interview?" I asked.

"Yep," she said, "I just really appreciate the opportunity to be in the magazine and let people know that I'm going to do whatever I do on my own. That's the only way I'd want it. What do you want me to do, smile or what? I'm camera shy."

Regretfully, as all good things must, our talk came to an end. We shook hands, and I told her that maybe when she got rich and famous, I'd do a longer piece on her. She said she hoped so.

And that is really one of the most interesting things about this business—to be around somebody like Crystal Gayle when they are just starting out, and to know that if they're given half a chance, nothing, not even having a famous sister, will stop them.

MARSHALL FALLWELL