

Lance And Ted Turn 65

By *Alexander Baron* - Aug 2, 2015



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Lance Ito and Ted Turner were both born August 2, 1950, so turn 65 today. These are two men who pursued entirely different careers and who will be remembered for entirely different reasons: the former for his role in presiding over one of the most infamous and absurd trials in history; the latter for his long-standing contribution to contemporary music.

If you are not familiar with the name Lance Ito, very briefly, the Japanese-American was born at Los Angeles, and graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles taking up a post in the District Attorney's office then becoming a judge.



Lance Ito

In June 1994, there was a double murder in Brentwood, Los Angeles. The evidence pointed overwhelmingly to OJ Simpson, who became the most famous American ever to be indicted for a double murder. Because of the racially charged atmosphere at the time it was considered important to bring in someone “racially neutral” to try the case, and Judge Ito fitted the bill. Cameras were permitted in the courtroom, and this became if not the very first ever televised trial then the most important ordinary criminal trial ever to be broadcast to date.

Those of a certain vintage will remember the way **this trial played out**, in particular the at times bumbling presentation by the State, the outright duplicity of the Defense, and not least, Judge Ito’s incompetence and his playing to the camera.

While the acquittal earned Simpson the lasting contempt of first white Americans and eventually of most blacks, the trial brought Ito nothing but ridicule, including and especially when he was parodied by the Dancing Itos, who first appeared on *The Tonight Show* presented by Jay Leno.

Lance Ito has kept a very low profile since the Simpson trial, but whatever he does for the rest of his life, the bulk of his obituary will be devoted to this one case.



Ted Turner playing live on December 22, 1973

Although Ted Turner is likewise keeping a low profile these days, **his legacy** is a far more wide-reaching and edifying one. Born at Birmingham, England, David Alan Turner became a founder member of **Wishbone Ash**, one of the most influential bands in rock music of this or of any past or future era.

He left the band after the *Wishbone Four* album to be replaced by Laurie Wisefield, who did an exemplary job. He returned to Wishbone Ash in 1987 before leaving again, although he turned up at Martin Turner's Garden Party in 2012 at which Laurie Wisefield also put in an appearance. In between stints with the band, Ted underwent something of a spiritual journey; a follower of Buckminster Fuller – who inspired the song *Why Don't We?* – he has worked on a number of projects in and around music.



Based in Scottsdale, Arizona, whatever he may yet achieve, Ted Turner will be remembered not only as a founder member of Wishbone Ash but as an influential guitarist in his own right.

So gentlemen, happy birthday to you both, and thanks for the memories, even for the ones you, Lance, would rather forget.

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