

# When 'The Laughter Went Away'

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With a new book of rare photographs, lensman Harry Benson recalls a turning point for The Beatles in 1966 (and the joint he didn't smoke).

Few photographers were more trusted by The Beatles than Harry Benson, sent to Paris in 1964 to shoot them for England's Daily Express newspaper. He shared a room with George Harrison and captured a Beatle's-eye view of Beatlemania. When teens mobbed their limo, Benson was on John Lennon's lap, snapping away. They composed "I Feel Fine" before his eyes (photo No. 6). When they hit No. 1 in America, Benson suggested a pillow fight to celebrate. "It went on for half an hour -- they were laughing," says Benson. Now he has collected hundreds of iconic moments, including many previously unseen images, for his new book, *The Beatles: On the Road 1964-1966* (Taschen, \$700, 1,964 numbered copies). Benson had more laughs as the Fabs conquered America and made *A Hard Day's Night* in 1964. "But by 1966, the laughter went away," he says. He visited the band in Chicago and caught Lennon's reaction to the scandal he sparked by saying, "We're more popular than Jesus" (photo No. 4). Recalls Benson: "John was sobbing. People were burning Beatles records. The others were fed up with him. Ringo turned his back. John said, 'Harry, why did I open my big mouth?'"