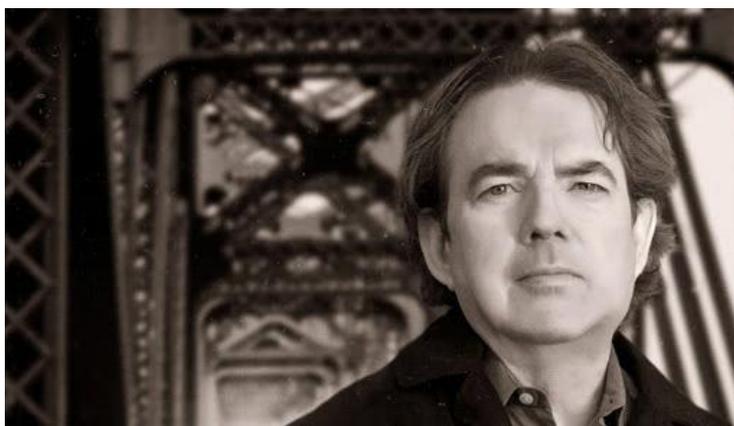


**The following interview with  
JIMMY WEBB  
was conducted by the Library of Congress  
on April 8, 2020**



**Library of Congress: Why do you think Glen Campbell was such a perfect performer for this song?**

Jimmy Webb: “Wichita Lineman” is a very good record; producer Al DeLory was pioneering, with a minimalist string writing style that is devoid of most of the “effects”; glissandos, vibratos, trills, slides and such that infect a lot of string writing, including my own. The result is a very pristine wide-open feel to the music that compliments the lyrics. Glen’s performance, so full of pathos, is like no other singing he’s ever done on record. The monolithic Wrecking Crew is in attendance but control their awesome chops to augment the overall simplicity. Glen used to say about the song and the arrangement, “It just fits.”

Glen’s voice was a songwriter’s dream. Five octaves of smooth unsullied perfection. Notice how the mixers lead with Glen’s voice and build everything else around that. He knew his own strength.

**LOC: What are some of the personal reactions that you have gotten from listeners about the song over the years?**

JW: One woman wrote to me from Texas to say that she and her husband, now deceased, played the record almost every day. “I just don’t understand though, even after all these years why the young man had to be electrocuted at the end,” she complained! Several people have written under the misapprehension that the lineman was a football player. On a much more flattering note, some have said, including many of my peers--Billy Joel, James Taylor and Duane Allman included--that “Wichita Lineman” is a “nearly perfect song”.

**LOC: Do you have a particular method to songwriting, meaning: do you try to write every day? What time of day? What comes to you first--music or lyrics?**

JW: I write when the spirit moves me, scribbling madly in notebooks almost constantly, scouring the piano for that pesky lost chord. I'm inspired by other writers. I like most the thrill that moves through me when I hear a great song by another writer.

**LOC: "Wichita" has been covered by an assortment of interesting singers including Johnny Cash, Johnny Mathis, Tom Jones and even REM. Is there any particular version that you especially liked? If so, why?**

JW: When James Taylor covered "Wichita" it was an epiphany for me, as someone who always looked wistfully through the window of rock 'n' roll, to hear such a thoughtful well-conceived performance from a rock artist. He was nominated for a Grammy for that cut. He sends subliminal messages to the listener in his vocal, like when he goes up for the last note and then hangs it there for a small eternity.