

‘Louie Louie’ Singer Jack Ely Dies

Jack Ely, a former singer with garage band The Kingsmen whose largely slurred version of the song “Louie Louie” became a staple of rock radio, has died in Oregon at age 71, his son said.

Ely died this week at his home in Redmond of what appears to have been skin cancer, said his son, Sean Ely.

“His religious beliefs didn’t incorporate medical stuff so we’re not really sure” about the cause of death, he said.

Jack Ely was with The Kingsmen in 1963 when they recorded a version of the rhythm and blues song “Louie Louie” that had been written in 1955 by singer Richard Berry.

Ely’s slurred lyrics on the recording, which reached No. 2 on the Billboard charts, led to rumors he had sneaked obscenities into the song. The FBI opened an investigation in a futile attempt to determine all the words on the recording.

Ely later left the band which went on to record other hit songs without him, including “Money (That’s What I Want)” and “The Jolly Green Giant.”

He later went on to train horses at a ranch in Oregon, Sean Ely said. In 2012, he released a Christian album called “Love Is All Around You Now.”

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