



**Questions for Discussion  
with Doug Bradley and Craig Werner**

Authors of ***We Gotta Get Out of This Place:  
The Soundtrack of the Vietnam War***  
(University of Massachusetts Press)

*Doug Bradley, author of DEROS Vietnam, has written extensively about his Vietnam, and post-Vietnam, experiences. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in March 1970 and served one year as an information specialist (journalist) at U.S. Army Republic of Vietnam (USARV) headquarters near Saigon.*

*Craig Werner is a widely-respected music writer whose book *A Change Is Gonna Come: Music, Race and the Soul of America* is used in dozens of classes on popular music. He is a member of the Nominating Committee of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.*

Bradley and Werner teach a course together on music, media, and the Vietnam War at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

In describing their book, Bradley and Werner wrote:

***We Gotta Get Out of This Place** casts a new and unique light on the music of the 1960s, emphasizing the way that actual listeners embedded music in the fabric of their daily lives, and the way that music helps heal psychic wounds.*

*The book includes the voices, often in the form of solos composed specially for this book, of many of the most prominent writers and musicians who have contributed to the story, among them Eric Burdon, Country Joe (of Country Joe and the Fish), James Brown, John Fogerty, Bruce Springsteen, Karl Marlantes, William Ehrhart, Yusef Komunyakaa and Alfredo Vea.*

*It reaches past the myths and distortions that dominate our cultural memory to see Vietnam for what it was: a shared story of suffering and survival, of love surrounded by unfathomable loss.*

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Q: So many books have been written about the war in Vietnam, what makes this one unique/different?

Q. Why is “We Gotta Get Out of This Place” the Vietnam veterans national anthem?

Q. Why do you think so many of the Vietnam veterans Bradley and Werner interviewed were able to talk about a song but had a hard time talking about their war experience?

Q: Did you like the use of “solos” in the book? Which one was your favorite and why?

Q: Why do you think the music of the era is so influential with Vietnam Vets? How does the fact that so many of their peers at home were listening to the same music influence that?

Q. Sometimes the same song took on different meanings for the soldiers in Vietnam. What’s your favorite example of a song that meant one thing to a listener in America and something quite different to a soldier in Vietnam?

Q. What was the military’s take on the music of that era? Did they make it accessible to GIs in Vietnam? Why?

Q. Why do you think the authors included a Vietnam Vets Top 20 in the book? Did you associate any/all of those songs with Vietnam?

Q: What’s your favorite story from the book about the healing power of music?

Q. There are lots of famous voices in the book, but the commentary by “regular GIs” is among the most moving. What does the average GI have to tell us about war, especially the war in Vietnam?

Q. The authors have stated that “*We Gotta Get Out of This Place* reaches past the myths and distortions that dominate our cultural memory to see Vietnam for what it was: a shared story of suffering and survival, of love surrounded by unfathomable loss.” What’s your reaction to that very powerful statement?

Q: Is there anything else you would like to know about this book, the process of writing it, and what impact the authors hope it might have?