

relationship that started early. I was a 12-year-old accordionist playing 'Johnny Be Goode,' " Nils says. "When I hit 13 or 14, I got the visceral, emotional connection with Beck. I have followed him ever since. To me, Beck and Hendrix were on their own planets. I was a 16-year-old kid during Beck's Truth tour, and they all were kind enough to let me hang. I always had my Telecaster with me, and they got a kick out of that. I was honored to be around them." The special relationship with Beck has continued to this day. "I saw Jeff last month. He played Tempe, AZ (close to where Lofgren lives), and he was just great."

Lofgren has also caught the ear of Bob Dylan. "One day, Bob's managers called. They said he wanted to talk to me. Bob is not an easy guy to get to. I had to call three rooms and ask for four names – it was kind of funny. Now, I have met Bob before, so I wasn't caught off-guard. I finally get through to him, and he asks me what guitar I used, because he loved it. It turns out he wanted to borrow my guitar!

"About five or six years ago in Phoenix, I went up to see him to say hello.

He looked at me and asked me if I had a guitar or an amp. I said no, I had only stopped by to say hello, but he said to have his crew get me one. Dylan called me on stage for 45 minutes – they were just handing me instruments. Another time, when we had a day off near the end of Bruce's The Rising tour, Bob was playing at the Hammerstein Ballroom (in New York City). He pulled me onstage for an hour and a half. Bob's manager said to just come out and play whatever you want. His bass player told me to come up after the fourth number, and Bob immediately started trading licks with me on a Strat. He is pretty good on lead, but never gets credit for that part of his music. We ended up having a very healthy duel."

Stories like this are just part of Lofgren's everyday life. "I am a big fan of Derek Trucks as well as Warren Haynes. I love the Allman Brothers. On the reunion tour with Bruce in 2000, I was able to go on stage and jam with the Allmans during a night off. Gregg Allman has one of the few authentic voices we ever have heard. So I played with them, and then the next